DILLON CONSULTING

Township of South Stormont

Fire Master Plan Update

Final Report

June 2023 - 21-2654

Table of Contents

Acronyms, Abbreviations, Definitions

Executive Summary

1.1 Summary of Recommendations x

1.1.1 Administration/Leadership: x

1.1.2 Fire Prevention/Public Education:..... x

1.1.3 Firefighter Training: xi

1.1.4 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response:.....xii

1.0 **Introduction** **1**

2.0 **Community Risk Assessment** **3**

3.0 **Administration and Leadership** **4**

3.1 Fire Chief (Full-time) 4

3.2 Proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer (Full-time) 5

3.3 District Chiefs (Volunteer)..... 6

3.4 Administrative Assistant (Full-time) 6

3.5 Administrative Workspace..... 7

3.6 Department Senior Management Team..... 8

3.7 Transitioning to One Single-Unified Fire Department..... 8

3.8 Annual Department Report and CRA Review 9

3.9 Applicable By-Laws 10

3.9.1 Establishing and Regulating By-Law 10

3.9.2 Rates and Fees By-law 10

3.9.3 Open-Air Burn By-law 10

3.10 Fire Protection Agreements 10

3.10.1 Medical Tiered Response Agreement 11

3.10.2 Automatic Aid Agreement – Township of South Glengarry 11

3.10.3 Automatic Aid Agreement – City of Cornwall 11

3.10.4 Automatic Aid Agreement – Municipality of South Dundas 11

3.10.5 Dispatch Services Agreement 11

3.11 Departmental Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines 12

3.12 Departmental Records Management 13

3.13 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Prevention Plan 14

3.14 Strategic Priorities 14

3.15 Administration/Leadership Summary and Recommendations 15

4.0 **Fire Prevention and Public Education** **17**

4.1 Division Staff Resources 17

4.1.1 Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer (Full-time) 18

4.1.2 Fire and Life Safety Educators (Volunteer) 19

4.1.3 Fire Prevention/Public Education Committee 20

4.2 Fire Prevention Policy 21

4.3 Public Education Programs and Activities 21

4.3.1 Smoke Alarm Program 23

4.3.2 Seniors' Education Program 25

4.3.3 School Education Program 26

4.3.4 Public Education Awareness Program 27

4.4 Fire Inspection Program 27

4.5 Building Plans Examination 31

4.6 Building Pre-Incident Planning 32

4.7 Fire Investigations 33

4.8 Fire Prevention/Public Education Summary and Recommendations 33

5.0 **Firefighter Training** **36**

5.1 Existing Training Coordinator (Volunteer) 37

5.2 Proposed Training Staff Resource Strategy 37

5.2.1 Proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer (Full-time) 38

5.2.2 Proposed Training Officers (Volunteer) 39

5.2.3 Proposed Training Committee 40

5.3 Existing Firefighter Training 40

5.4 Training Facility 41

5.5 Proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program 41

5.5.1 Initial NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I – Certification Strategy 42

5.5.2 Ongoing NFPA 1001 – Firefighter I and II – Certification Strategy 43

5.5.3 Ongoing NFPA 1021 – Fire Officer I – Certification Strategy 44

5.5.4 NFPA 1521 – Incident Safety Officer – Certification Strategy 45

5.5.5 NFPA Technical Rescue – Certification Strategy 46

5.5.6 Summary-Proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program. 50

5.6 Firefighter Training Summary and Recommendations 50

6.0 **Fire Suppression/Emergency Response** **52**

6.1 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Historical Call Volume 53

6.1.1 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume 54

6.1.2 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Month of Year 55

6.1.3 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Day of the Week 56
6.1.4 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Time of Day 57
6.1.5 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – By Station 58
6.2 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Existing Conditions 59
6.2.1 Turnout Time 59
6.2.2 Travel Time 60
6.2.3 Fire Suppression GIS Modelling Methodology 60
6.2.4 Historical Call Locations 61
6.2.5 Existing Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Capabilities 62
6.3 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Improvement Strategies 64
6.3.1 Projected Community Growth 64
6.3.2 Proposed Fire Station Location Strategy 68
6.3.3 Proposed Fire Suppression Staff Resource Strategy 80
6.4 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Summary 83

7.0 **Apparatus and Equipment** **85**

8.0 **Communications and Technology** **86**

Figures

Figure 1: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume (2016 to 2021) 54
Figure 2: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Month of Year 55
Figure 3: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Day of the Week 56
Figure 4: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Time of Day 57
Figure 5: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – By Station 58
Figure 6: Historic Call Locations 61
Figure 7: Existing Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Capabilities 63
Figure 8: Future Development Areas 67
Figure 9: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) - Relocated to Moulinette Road and Highway 401 70
Figure 10: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Relocated to Moulinette Road and McNiff 72
Figure 11: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Existing Location – Daytime Crew 74
Figure 12: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Moulinette Road & McNiff Avenue – Daytime Crew 76

Tables

Table 1: Applicable Fire and Life Safety Qualifications/Certifications 18
Table 2: Applicable Training Staff Qualifications/Certifications 36
Table 3: Applicable Fire Protection Services Qualifications/Certifications 37
Table 4: Authorized Technical Rescues 48
Table 5: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Relocation Strategies 77

Acronyms, Abbreviations, Definitions

BCIN	Building Code Identification Number
CRA	Community Risk Assessment
E&R	Establishing and Regulating
ESTC	Emergency Services Training Centre
FMP	Fire Master Plan
FPPA	Fire Protection and Prevention Act
FT	Full-time
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
MW	Megawatt
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OBC	Ontario Building Code
OFC	Ontario Fire Code
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
OFM	Office of the Fire Marshal
OP	Official Plan
O. Reg.	Ontario Regulation
PFSG	Public Fire Safety Guideline
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SOGs	Standard Operating Guidelines
SSFR	South Stormont Fire and Rescue
TG	Technical Guideline

TLTI	Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands
Township	The Township of South Stormont
VF	Volunteer Firefighter
WSIA	Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Executive Summary

The current Fire Master Plan (2016 FMP) for the Township of South Stormont (Township) was approved by Council through Resolution 30-2016 on February 17, 2016. At the request of the Township this report has been prepared as an update to the 2016 FMP, to specifically respond to new regulatory requirements within the Province and projected community growth. The 2016 FMP contained a total of 36 recommendations. The analyses presented within this 2022 FMP Update have considered the current status of each of these recommendations and, where applicable, identified further recommendations may be warranted.

The new **Ontario Regulation 378/18 – Community Risk Assessment** (O. Reg. 378/18) requires all municipalities in Ontario that existed on July 1, 2019, to complete a Community Risk Assessment (CRA) no later than July 1, 2024. **O. Reg. 378/18** requires municipalities to:

a. Complete and review a community risk assessment as provided by this regulation; and,
b. Use its community risk assessment to inform decisions about the provision of fire protection services[1]

As part of this 2022 FMP Update reporting process a Community Risk Assessment as defined by **O. Reg. 378/18** was prepared for the Township of South Stormont. This stand-alone document was presented to Council on October 12, 2022, by the Fire Chief. The findings of the Township of South Stormont Community Risk Assessment and specifically the **'Identified Risks'** have been used to inform the analyses contained within this 2022 FMP Update report. Collectively this process of completing the Township's CRA and updating the Township's FMP will proactively position the municipality for attaining compliance with **O. Reg. 378/18**.

The new **Ontario Regulation 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** (O. Reg. 343/22) requires all municipalities to ensure that its firefighters (full-time and volunteer) complete the mandatory training, and receive the required certification prior to July 1, 2026. This

[1] Ontario Regulation 378/18 Community Risk Assessment, Mandatory use, 1. (a) and (b)

regulation identifies 43 types of fire protection services and the corresponding mandatory training that will be required to be considered for certification. The certification covers a broad range of fire protection services, such as a firefighter entering a building to conduct an interior attack on a fire, a fire officer supervising an interior attack on a fire, a fire inspector conducting a fire inspection and a training officer delivering instruction to firefighters.

For the municipalities in Ontario that utilize volunteer firefighters to provide fire protection services, such as the Township of South Stormont, this new regulation will require the development of a comprehensive training/certification program, and potentially a review of the fire protection services they provide. The analyses and recommendations presented within this 2022 FMP Update report are intended to provide the Township of South Stormont (Township) and the South Stormont Fire and Rescue (SSFR) with a comprehensive strategy for responding to the requirements of **O. Reg. 343/22**.

To support the analysis of the current and future fire suppression services provided by SSFR as part of this 2022 FMP Update this report presents a summary of predicted future growth. The planned growth is driven, in part, by the Township's Official Plan (2018). To qualitatively inform the fire suppression emergency response coverage analysis, Township staff identified future development areas and planned time horizons. Of existing development applications and projected growth, much of the development is expected to occur in the Long Sault and Ingleside development areas. It will be important for the Township to monitor the timing of development in coordination with the implementation of this 2022 FMP Update report.

It should be noted that this 2022 Fire Master Plan Update was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such it should be recognized that the pandemic had a direct impact on the department's ability to deliver programs and services where direct public interaction was required. This includes conducting fire inspections and delivering public education programs. In some instances, the pandemic may also have also impacted the ability of volunteer firefighters to respond to emergencies.

In summary, this 2022 FMP Update report is intended to become an appendix to the current 2016 FMP to continue supporting Council and senior staff with a strategic framework to assist in making decisions regarding the provision of fire protection and

emergency services based on in-depth analyses of its "local needs and circumstances" as defined by the **Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997** (FPPA).

1.1 Summary of Recommendations

The following is a summary of recommendations contained within the 2022 FMP Update report:

1.1.1 Administration/Leadership:

1. That consideration be given to hiring the proposed full-time Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
2. That the Fire Chief implement a Department Senior Management Team and, in conjunction with the CAO, develop defined terms of reference and work plan. At a minimum it is recommended this team is comprised of the Fire Chief, proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer, four District Chiefs and the Administrative Assistant;
3. That the Fire Chief and proposed Department Senior Management Team develop and implement a process for developing a vision and mission statement;
4. That the Fire Chief develop an Annual Department Report, including an annual Community Risk Assessment review/update, for Council;
5. That the current Open-Air Burning By-law No. 2009-40 be reviewed and updated;
6. That all fire protection service agreements be reviewed and updated as appropriate, in consultation with the service providers;
7. That further user training be provided to staff, who are responsible for completing and submitting fire department records; and,
8. That strategic priorities for the South Stormont Fire & Rescue Services be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

1.1.2 Fire Prevention/Public Education:

9. That the current position description for the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer be updated;
10. That the Fire Chief implement four (one per station) volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators, who will also become members of the Fire Prevention Committee;

11. That defined terms of reference for the proposed Fire Prevention Committee be developed and included with an updated Fire Prevention Policy;
12. That the current Fire Prevention Policy, dated July 25, 2017, be reviewed and updated;
13. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee conduct a review of historical smoke alarm programs and initiatives of SSFR in the development and implementation of a new comprehensive smoke alarm program;
14. That, once completed, the proposed new comprehensive smoke alarm program be included within a stand-alone department operating guideline and updated Fire Prevention Policy;
15. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop and implement:
    a. a comprehensive seniors' education program;
    b. a comprehensive school education program; and,
    c. a comprehensive public education awareness program;
16. That the proposed fire inspection frequencies (goals and objectives) presented within the 2016 Fire Master Plan be reviewed, considered and included within an updated Fire Prevention Policy;
17. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop a department guideline for seeking fire code compliance, as referenced in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
18. That the responsibility for conducting building plans examinations, as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update, be reviewed; and,
19. That SSFR develop a department operating guideline for completing building pre-incident plans, as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

1.1.3 Firefighter Training:

20. That SSFR implement the proposed volunteer Training Officers as presented in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
21. That SSFR implement the proposed Training Committee; and,
22. That SSFR implement the proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program and Firefighter Training Certification Strategies.

1.1.4 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response:

23. That a comprehensive analysis of the operational/administrative and location needs of replacing/relocating fire stations be developed;
24. That consideration be given to prioritizing the construction of a new Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) at its current location, and a location for a new Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) be identified and lands acquired;
25. That SSFR continue to maintain Fire Station 3 (Newington) in its current location until further consideration of the longer-term needs of the Township are considered;
26. That consideration be given to implementing the proposed Daytime Crew – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault);
27. That a financial strategy for the future hiring of four full-time firefighters as presented within 2022 Fire Master Plan Update report be developed and provided to council for consideration during the 2024 budget process; and,
28. That consideration be given to developing and implementing a Volunteer Firefighter (VF) Recognition Strategy.

1.0 Introduction

This 2022 FMP Update report is intended to be read as a companion document (appendix) to the Township's current 2016 Fire Master Plan. The scope of the analyses presented within this report is strategically focused on the following core areas:

- A review of the status of all recommendations contained within the 2016 Fire Master Plan;
- Analyses of all new legislation impacting the delivery of fire protection services in Ontario since the completion of the 2016 Fire Master Plan; and,
- Analyses of the impacts of current growth projections and development plans within the Township of South Stormont, revised since the completion of the 2016 Fire Master Plan.

For the sections presented within the 2016 FMP including Facilities, Apparatus, Maintenance, and Equipment, Emergency Management; and Communications the scope of this 2022 FMP Update was limited to a status review of any previous recommendations, and identification of any new gaps or challenges identified during the stakeholder consultation process completed in developing this report.

The analyses presented within this 2022 FMP Update report have also been directly informed by the recently completed Township of South Stormont Community Risk Assessment, and specifically all **'Identified Risks'** and those **'Key Findings'** that were assessed as having a high-risk level. Additional updated data was also provided by SSFR, including updated historical emergency response data, updated Standard Operating Guidelines and department polices to inform the analysis and recommendations presented in the following sections.

Stakeholder consultation, including sessions with members of Council, senior corporate and department staff and the volunteer firefighters, was also a core element of informing the analyses presented with this update report. Stakeholder consultation included the use of:

- Council virtual workshop;
- Individual interviews with key staff and stakeholders;
- Virtual sessions with each volunteer station; and,
- Project meetings with senior staff.

2.0 Community Risk Assessment

Ontario Regulation 378/18 – Community Risk Assessment (O. Reg. 378/18) requires all municipalities in Ontario that existed on July 1, 2019, to complete a Community Risk Assessment (CRA) no later than July 1, 2024. With the support of Council, the Township of South Stormont approved the development of the Township's new Community Risk Assessment to be proactively prepared for compliance with this new legislation, and to directly inform this 2022 FMP Update report. **O. Reg. 378/18** requires municipalities to:

a. Complete and review a community risk assessment as provided by this regulation; and,
b. Use its community risk assessment to inform decisions about the provision of fire protection services"[2]

The Township of South Stormont Community Risk Assessment, prepared by Dillon Consulting Limited, was received by Council on October 12, 2022. The methodology and analysis utilized to develop the Township's CRA was directly informed by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) **Technical Guideline – 02-2019** (TG – 02– 2019) which recognizes the value of understanding the fire risk within a community, and the importance of developing fire-risk reduction and mitigation strategies, in addition to providing fire suppression services.

The Township's CRA identifies fire-related risks in the context of both **'Identified Risks'** and **'Key Findings'**. The primary difference between these is the amount of quantitative data available for analyses. Although the process of risk prioritization is applied within the Township's CRA to both the **'Identified Risks'** and then **'Key Findings'** it should be recognized that there is a higher degree of quantitative data available related to the **'Identified Risks'**. As a result, the analyses within this 2022 FMP Update report has considered all of the **'Identified Risks'** and only the **'Key Findings'** that were prioritized by SSFR as having a high level of risk.

[2] Ontario Regulation 378/18 Community Risk Assessment, Mandatory use, 1. (a) and (b)

3.0 Administration and Leadership

The 2016 FMP identified nine recommendations directly related to the administrative functions and leadership of SSFR. To complete our analyses of this division additional information was requested from SSFR to supplement the feedback we received through the stakeholder consultation process. This section presents a summary of our findings related to this division and the current leadership roles within SSFR.

SSFR currently utilizes a combination of full-time (FT) staff and volunteer firefighters to provide fire protection services.

3.1 Fire Chief (Full-time)

The Township's previous Fire Chief retired during the summer of 2022. As the 2016 FMP was initiated under the leadership of the former Chief, his input into this report was a core component of the stakeholder consultation process. This input was further supplemented through consultation with the current Fire Chief as part of completing the master planning process. The analyses within this update report will highlight the significant progress the department has achieved in responding to the recommendations of the 2016 FMP.

A new 'Position Description' for the Fire Chief was created in 2020 that includes a summary of the roles and responsibilities of this position, as well as key performance indicators. Our review indicates that this document is very comprehensive and accurate in describing the position of Fire Chief.

The 2016 FMP identified challenges related to pre-amalgamation conditions and related culture within SSFR. That plan identified a strategic goal for SSFR to become **'one single-unified fire department.'** This report recognizes that change management processes, and specifically organizational culture changes, take time and ongoing efforts to accomplish. Our research and findings indicate that since 2016 SSFR has made many positive steps towards the goal of being a single-unified fire department. In order to maintain the positive momentum of this change management process, we believe one of the primary objectives of the new Fire Chief should be to continue to move the department towards achieving this goal.

3.2 Proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer (Full-time)

In our view the existing senior administrative and operational workload within SSFR exceeds the existing full-time staff resources capabilities. This includes maintaining and developing new department policies, procedures and standard operating guidelines required to comply with the applicable legislation including the OHSA. A new position (Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer) has also been identified to facilitate a dual role within the department that includes supporting the Fire Chief in the overall leadership and management of the department, and to fulfill the role of a full-time Training Officer to oversee and facilitate the delivery of the department's firefighter training program. This role is specifically needed to enhance SSFR's current firefighter training initiatives in order to comply with the new **Ontario Regulation 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** (O. Reg. 343/22).

The analysis presented within this 2022 FMP Update will illustrate that SSFR has an increasing gap in its ability to deploy a fire suppression crew during normal business hours (i.e., Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.). This issue was initially identified in the 2016 FMP and reflects the challenges of operating a solely volunteer fire suppression model. The addition of this new full-time position supports the proposed implementation of a fire suppression crew during these hours (discussed in **Section 6.3.3.1**. of this report).

This new position will also provide continuity in the leadership of the department in the absence of the Fire Chief due to vacation, illness, or other approved vacancies. This also supports future succession planning at the senior leadership position.

Recommendation 1: That consideration be given to hiring a full-time Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer.

3.3 District Chiefs (Volunteer)

Prior to the 2016 FMP being adopted by the Council each of the fire stations was assigned a Deputy Fire Chief. These positions have now been reorganized into the rank of District Chiefs. Department Operating Guideline 25.02 – Duties of District Chief, approved on May 6, 2020, identifies a summary of the duties assigned to these positions and the major responsibilities of their roles.

Our research indicates that the four current District Chiefs have each been appointed by Council through by-laws including By-law No.2016-036 and 2019-071. Our research also indicates that the current Establishing and Regulating (By-law No. 2021-099) has been updated to reflect this organizational change and the position of District Chief.

3.4 Administrative Assistant (Full-time)

At the time of preparing the 2016 FMP the Township employed a full-time employee whose duties were split approximately 50% between the Fire Department and Parks and Recreation Department. The 2016 FMP recommended (Council Recommendation 3) that this position be transitioned to a full-time fire department administrative assistant. This recommendation has been successfully completed resulting in a full-time administrative assistant who is assigned to support the fire department and by-law enforcement.

The 2016 FMP also recommended (Operational Recommendation #2) that a formal job description be created for the Fire Department Administrative Assistant position. This recommendation has also been completed.

This new position's primary role is to provide administrative support to the Fire Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, District Chiefs, By-law Officer and the proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer. For example, this includes reviewing reports, preparing tender, and purchasing documents, document printing, preparing and approving burn permits, and technology support. This position has also attained the qualifications to proctor OFM exams in support of the department's firefighter training program.

The workspace for this position is located in a shared office with the by-law officer, next door to the Fire Chief's office at the Township Office located at 2 Mille Roches Road in Long Sault. When required, this position provides a back-up role to other corporate administrative staff. This may include coverage for public inquires at the Township's main front counter, or coverage in the absence of other corporate administrative staff (vacation, illness, etc.). We recognize that these additional responsibilities take time away from this position's primary role with the fire department; however, having staff flexibility such as this is not uncommon in smaller communities, such as the Township of South Stormont.

Our research indicates that since this position transitioned to full-time status in support of the fire department it has evolved into a position that is integral to both the day-to-day and strategic direction of the department. In our view this supports our recommendation for this position to become a member of the proposed Department Senior Management Team.

3.5 Administrative Workspace

Historically fire departments, and particularly those operated by volunteer firefighters, develop an environment that is often referred to as a 'second family'. This environment includes a high degree of trust and respect as core factors of the interpersonal relationships within an individual fire station, or the broader fire department.

The 2016 FMP introduced the strategy of considering the option of developing one of the fire stations as a headquarters for SSFR. This strategy was presented as an opportunity to locate workspace (offices) for all full-time staff, and administrative functions of SSFR under one roof in a centralized location. Our research and stakeholder consultation to prepare this report continues to support the Township considering the development of a headquarters station for the SSFR.

3.6 Department Senior Management Team

Our research and consultation indicate that historically there have been several efforts made to include the District Chiefs (former Deputy Fire Chiefs) and other senior staff in the department leadership/decision making process. This includes several different forms of committees and teams to maintain the positive momentum of this change management process.

Our stakeholder consultation indicates a positive shift in the degree of collaboration and consultation at the senior management level within the department. To further support this we are recommending that a formal senior management team be created and guided by clearly defined terms of reference.

Recommendation 2: That the Fire Chief implement a Department Senior Management Team, this team includes the Fire Chief, proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer, four District Chiefs, supported by the Administrative Assistant.

3.7 Transitioning to One Single-Unified Fire Department

The 2016 FMP included a recommendation (Operational Recommendation #1) relating to the importance of team building and transitioning to one single-unified fire department. During the stakeholder consultation process to prepare this report there were many comments about the department taking positive steps towards this objective.

A clear example of this is the transition of the workplace culture at Station 4 (St. Andrews West) since completion of the 2016 FMP. Our review indicates that through several changes in staff and leadership assigned to this station the working environment within the station has transitioned to positive and supportive of being part of one single-unified department.

It is evident that the SSFR is now engaged in a process of positive change that includes all levels of leadership as well as the culture within the department. To further support this evolution, it is recommended that the department also consider initiating process for developing a **'vision statement'** and **'mission statement'** as recommended in the 2016 FMP.

The importance of fire department vision and mission statements is contained within the OFM's Public Fire Safety Guideline (PFSG) 03-02-13 "Master Planning Process for Fire Protection." A vision statement should identify a vision for the future that all individuals within the department can work towards. A mission statement should identify the goals and objectives of the department, identify the primary stakeholders (e.g., volunteer firefighters), and acknowledge the types of services and programs the department is committed to providing.

Recommendation 3: That subject to approval of this 2022 Fire Master Plan update the Fire Chief and proposed Department Senior Management Team develop and implement a process for developing a vision and mission statement.

3.8 Annual Department Report and CRA Review

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation #4) that the Fire Chief develop an Annual Report for presentation to Council and the Community. Our research indicates that the Fire Chief created an Annual Report in 2017; however, because of other workload priorities and then the COVID-19 pandemic no further reports have been developed.

The new O. Reg. 378/18 Community Risk Assessment now requires the Township to review its CRA on an annual basis, as a minimum. The Township is responsible to update the CRA to reflect any significant changes in the nine mandatory profiles, or if the review identifies any other significant matters. CRAs must be formally renewed at least every five years. In our view there is a benefit to merging the processes to review the Township's CRA and create an Annual Report. This combined process would provide a high degree of accountability and transparency on behalf of the Fire Chief in reporting to the community and Council in identifying any evolving changes or trends within the community as well as reporting on the services and programs provided.

Recommendation 4: That the Fire Chief develop an Annual Department Report, including an annual Community Risk Assessment review/update, for Council as identified in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

3.9 Applicable By-Laws

As referenced in the 2016 FMP there are several by-laws applicable to the operations of a fire department.

3.9.1 Establishing and Regulating By-Law

As recommended by the 2016 FMP a new Establishing and Regulating By-law was developed and approved by Council on December 15, 2021. Bylaw No. 2021-099 provides a comprehensive over of the fire protection and fire prevention services to be provided by SSFR.

3.9.2 Rates and Fees By-law

By-law No. 2021-015 was approved by Council on March 10, 2021, providing the authority for the Township to impose fees or charges with respect to activities provided by the Township.

3.9.3 Open-Air Burn By-law

By-law No. 2009-40 was approved by Council on June 10, 2009, providing authority to regulate conditions where fires may be set in the open air within the Township. In our view this by-law is over ten years old and should be reviewed and updated.

Recommendation 5: That the current Open-Air Burning By-law No. 2009-40 be reviewed and updated.

3.10 Fire Protection Agreements

As referenced within the 2016 FMP there are multiple approaches within the fire service to share services or procuring services including mutual aid, automatic aid, tiered response, and dispatch agreements. The following sections provide a summary of our review of the current fire protection agreements in place within the Township. It is recognized that while this report recommends that some agreements be reviewed and updated, all parties involved in the agreement need to be involved in those processes.

3.10.1 Medical Tiered Response Agreement

South Stormont Fire and Rescue has a Medical Tiered Response Agreement with the Cornwall SDG Paramedic Services, in association with the Ottawa Central Ambulance Communications Centre. This agreement was updated as per By-Law 2022-013, dated February 16, 2022.

3.10.2 Automatic Aid Agreement – Township of South Glengarry

This agreement was signed on August 17, 2011, for a five year term where the Township of South Glengarry provides fire protection services to 18065 Glen Falloch Road. In our view this agreement needs to be reviewed and updated, in cooperation with the Township of South Glengarry.

3.10.3 Automatic Aid Agreement – City of Cornwall

This agreement was signed on May 25, 2016, identifying that the City of Cornwall agrees to provide aerial apparatus support to the Township of South Stormont, and the Township of South Stormont agrees to provide automatic aid response to defined areas within the City of Cornwall. In our view this agreement needs to be reviewed and updated, in cooperation with the City of Cornwall.

3.10.4 Automatic Aid Agreement – Municipality of South Dundas

This agreement was signed on April 21, 2021, that includes a range of fire protection services including ice/water rescue to be provided by the Township of South Stormont to the Municipality of South Dundas. Our research indicates that this agreement was recently reviewed and approved by both municipal councils.

3.10.5 Dispatch Services Agreement

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation #5) that consideration be given to updating the dispatch agreement with the City of Brockville Fire Department to include the NFPA 1221 performance measures.

Following completion of the 2016 FMP the Fire Chief initiated an investigation into alternate service providers for the fire dispatching and paging services required by the Township. As a result of that investigation on September 7, 2016, Council

approved a new Memorandum of Agreement with the Cornwall Community Police Services Board to provide communications services to SSFR.

Article 3.2 of the new agreement states that "The Board will page/dispatch the Fire Service at a level of service equal to or exceeding the standards of dispatch services, as agreed"[3]. Our review of the agreement indicates that there is no specified level of service included. The dispatching of emergency calls has two standards: NFPA 1061 and 1221. NFPA 1061 is a standard for the certification of the dispatchers in their job performance, and NFPA 1221 is the standard for the efficient call taking and dispatching of emergency calls. Both standards are best practices for the dispatching of fire services. NFPA 1221 and 1061 are currently being consolidated into new standard, NFPA 1225: Standard for Emergency Services Communications.

In our view, consideration should be given to updating the current agreement to include the NFPA 1225 consolidated performance measures as the levels of services to be provided for emergency call taking and dispatching and the certification requirements of dispatchers.

Recommendation 6: That the applicable fire protection service agreements be reviewed and updated in cooperation with the agreement parties.

3.11 Departmental Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation #7) that consideration be given to enhancing the process for developing and approving department policies, procedures, and operating guidelines. Our research indicates that many of the department's standard operating guidelines (SOGs) have been updated and improved with a new format that includes the initial date of development as well as the date of any update. The new format also includes the date of approval by the Fire Chief or designate.

Within the fire service ensuring that all applicable policies, procedures, and operating guidelines remain current should be considered a major priority. Corporate, departmental, and personal liability could be put at risk if these

[3] Memorandum of Agreement between the Cornwall Community Police Services Board and the Corporation of the Township of South Stormont, Article 3.2

documents are not accurately updated to comply with applicable legislation and Council approved service levels.

3.12 Departmental Records Management

As referenced in the 2016 FMP the records management process within a fire department is a core function for both internal recording keeping, as well as compliance with legislative requirements, such as Ministry of Labour firefighter training records. SSFR is currently utilizing the ICO Fire RMS software solution for many of its records management needs.

Through our research and stakeholder consultation several challenges were identified related to the use of ICO software. In our view these challenges can be summarized as either the user having insufficient training with the software, general familiarity and confidence in using computer technology, and the interface capabilities of the software.

We recognize that in a fire department such as SSFR there are a wide range of records management needs, as well as a wide range of computer skills among department personnel. It is however important that in certain circumstances the user be qualified and capable of using the applicable computer technology and records management process. For example, department Operating Guideline **No. 25.04 – Duties of Captain** states that a Captain is responsible for "preparing response reports"[4]. Therefore, all Captains should be fully trained and capable of utilizing the ICO software program to prepare and submit emergency response incident reports as required by the OFM.

Our research also identified that the Township is in the process of implementing a number of other software solutions. It is unknown at this time as to how these additional tools may further assist SSFR in its records management requirements. However, it is anticipated that there will be a positive impact. Our research also identified that the department's Administrative Assistant has been in contact with the ICO software supplier related to the software interface capabilities.

[4] SSFR Operating Guideline 25-04, Section 5.0 Responsibility 3.

Based on our research there is an identified need to ensure that all required records management users are trained and qualified to use the applicable technology.

Recommendation 7: That further user training be provided to all staff, as required, who are responsible for completing and submitting fire department records.

3.13 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Prevention Plan

First responders including full-time and volunteer firefighters are at an increased risk to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) due to the nature of their work. A Ministerial Order, under the Ministry of Labour Act, directed employers to provide the Minister with their respective PTSD Plans in support of the Supporting Ontario's First Responder Act, which amended the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA), 1997. Under the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, there is a presumption that a diagnosis of PTSD for certain workers is work related. Details relating to the Plan are to be shared within the workplace to prevent PTSD.

The Township of South Stormont has a PTSD plan that is applicable to all employees including the volunteer firefighters.

3.14 Strategic Priorities

The analyses contained in the 2016 FMP recommended the approval of these four strategic priorities for the delivery of fire protection and emergency services within the Township of South Stormont:

i. Recognize the historical dedication and commitment of the members of South Stormont Fire and Rescue in the transition to **"one single, unified fire department"**;
ii. The utilization of a Community Risk Profile to determine the fire safety risks within the Township as the basis for developing clear goals and objectives for all fire protection and emergency services to be provided by the South Stormont Fire and Rescue services;
iii. The optimization of the first two lines of defense including public education and fire prevention, and the utilization of fire safety standards and fire code enforcement to provide a comprehensive fire protection program within the Township based on the results of the Community Risk Profile; and,

iv. Emphasis on strategies that support the sustainability of fire protection and emergency services that provide the most effective and efficient level of services resulting in the best value for the community.

Based on our analyses and stakeholder consultation these four strategic priorities continue to represent Council's commitment to providing the optimal level of fire protection services in achieving the most effective and efficient level of fire protection services resulting in the best value for the community.

We do recommend that the references to a 'Community Risk Profile' be updated to a "Community Risk Assessment' as required by O. Reg. 378/18.

Recommendation 8: That the strategic priorities for the South Stormont Fire & Rescue Services as recommended in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update report, be reviewed, prioritized, and provided to Council for information and acceptance as appropriate.

3.15 Administration/Leadership Summary and Recommendations

With Council's support, and the leadership of the former and current Fire Chiefs, SSFR has made significant progress towards completing the recommendations for this division contained within the 2016 Fire Master Plan report. In our view this progress can be measured by the increased awareness and commitment that is evident throughout the department to becoming one single-unified fire department. The analyses presented within this 2022 FMP Update report are accompanied by recommendations to further support this transition.

Unfortunately, the retirement of the former Fire Chief will result in another change in leadership within this department. In our view, with the support of the Council and corporate senior staff this should not have a negative impact on the positive progress that has been over the past several years. Based on our analyses and stakeholder consultation the recommendations presented within this 2022 FMP Update should provide a solid framework and work plan in support of the strategic priorities identified.

The Administration/Leadership recommendations include the following:

1. That consideration be given to hiring the proposed full-time Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
2. That the Fire Chief implement a Department Senior Management Team and, in conjunction with the CAO, develop defined terms of reference and work plan. At a minimum it is recommended this team is comprised of the Fire Chief, proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer, four District Chiefs and the Administrative Assistant;
3. That the Fire Chief and proposed Department Senior Management Team develop and implement a process for developing a vision and mission statement;
4. That the Fire Chief develop an Annual Department Report, including an annual Community Risk Assessment review/update, for Council;
5. That the current Open-Air Burning By-law No. 2009-40 be reviewed and updated;
6. That all fire protection service agreements be reviewed and updated as appropriate, in consultation with the service providers;
7. That further user training be provided to staff, who are responsible for completing and submitting fire department records; and,
8. That strategic priorities for the South Stormont Fire & Rescue Services be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

4.0 Fire Prevention and Public Education

The 2016 FMP provides a comprehensive analysis of the Township's legislative responsibilities with respect to the public education and fire prevention programs a municipality must provide. The analysis also references Section 2. (1) (b) of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) that states, "Provide such other fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances"[5]. The introduction of **O. Reg. 378/18 Community Risk Assessments** provides municipalities with a new tool to identify specific fire related risks within a municipality that may require the revision of an existing public education or fire prevention program, or the implementation of an additional fire protection service.

The analyses within this section will focus on the relevance of SSFR existing public education, fire prevention programs and staff resources to respond to the Township's CRA **'Identified Risks'** and the **'Key Findings'** assessed as having a high-risk level.

4.1 Division Staff Resources

The new **Ontario Regulation 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** (O. Reg.343/22) will affect all staff (full-time or volunteer) responsible for the delivery of fire inspection, fire investigation and public education services. This new legislation will require all SSFR full-time and volunteer firefighters assigned to deliver these programs to have the applicable qualifications/certifications included in **Table 1.**

[5] Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 Section 2. (1) (b)

Table 1: Applicable Fire and Life Safety Qualifications/Certifications

Service/Program	Applicable Qualifications/Certifications	Completion By
Conducting fire and life safety inspections	Level I – NFPA 1031 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner	July 1, 2026
Conducting fire and life safety inspections including in facilities that store, handle or use flammable/combustible liquids	Level II - NFPA 1031 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner	July 1, 2026
Conducting fire cause and origin investigations	Fire Investigator – NFPA 1033 Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator	July 1, 2026
Providing fire and life safety education	Fire and Life Safety Educator, I – NFPA 1035 Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications	July 1, 2026

4.1.1 Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer (Full-time)

The 2016 FMP recommended (Council Recommendation 15) that the previous part-time Fire Inspector's position be transitioned to full-time. This recommendation has been successfully implemented and SSFR now has a full-time Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer. Our research indicates that the Township implemented a formal position description for this full-time position on January 23, 2020. However, the current position description does not include the requirements of the new O. Reg. 343/22 within the education section.

The Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer has attained the required qualifications, including the Level II - NFPA 1031 Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner and the Fire Investigator – NFPA 1033 Professional

Qualifications for Fire Investigator. At the time of preparing this report this individual has not attained the required qualifications for a Fire and Life Safety Educator I – NFPA 1035 Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter.

The current individual in this position has also attained the NFPA 1001 – Level II – Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and the NFPA 1021 – Level II – Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications. This individual is also a volunteer firefighter assigned to Station 1. The ability to perform firefighting duties is included within the 'operations' section of the position description implemented by the Township. However, the qualifications required for a firefighter are also not included in the education section of the current position description.

In our view the dual role of this position is a benefit to SSFR. As the hours of work of this position are Monday through Friday daytime this position is available when other volunteer firefighters may not be. It is recommended that the SSFR's current position description for the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer be updated to include qualification/certification requirements listed in O. Reg. 343/22 for fire inspectors, public education officers, and firefighters. It is also recommended that the dual role of this position be expanded within the current position description.

Recommendation 9: That the current position description for the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer be updated as recommended within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

4.1.2 Fire and Life Safety Educators (Volunteer)

The 2016 FMP recommended (Council Recommendation 15) that SSFR create a position of volunteer Fire Inspector at each of the four stations. At the time of preparing the 2016 FMP there were two Fire Inspectors (volunteer) who had been historically assisting in fire prevention activities within their respective station response districts. At that time, it was thought that by expanding the number of volunteer Fire Inspectors they could assist the proposed full-time Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer.

SSFR has not proceeded with creating the four proposed volunteer Fire Inspector positions. We support this decision because the introduction of the new

O. Reg. 343/22 and its required qualifications/certifications for both firefighters and fire prevention/public education officers makes the 2016 FMP recommendation extremely difficult for a volunteer firefighter to attain.

The Fire Chief has recently announced his intention to establish volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educator positions at each of the four fire stations. Based on our research and stakeholder consultation we support this direction. Through the stakeholder discussions with the volunteer firefighters there was widespread support to be more active in public education activities within their respective station response areas. In our experience this willingness and interest to protect their local communities is an inherent value of the historical volunteer firefighter model.

O. Reg. 343/22 will require that, in addition to the qualifications/certifications for firefighters, those volunteer firefighters who also act as a Public Education Officer will also need to attain the applicable qualifications/certifications of a Fire and Life Safety Educator I.

Recommendation 10: That four volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators (one per Station) be established.

4.1.3 Fire Prevention/Public Education Committee

Our research and stakeholder consultation indicates that SSFR has historically utilized a Fire Prevention Committee with a range of forms and membership. The 2016 FMP provides an overview of this historical use, as well as support for its continued use. The new Fire Chief has also indicated his intent to implement a Fire Prevention Committee comprised of the full-time Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer and the four proposed volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators. We support this reorganization of the Fire Prevention Committee and its primary role to oversee and implement an enhanced public education program.

In our view one of the historical challenges of past Fire Prevention Committees in SSFR has been the absence of clear terms of reference for its operation and membership. We recommended that developing defined terms of reference be the first objective of this new committee once it is formed.

Recommendation 11: That defined terms of reference for the proposed Fire Prevention/Public Education Committee be developed and included with an updated Fire Prevention Policy.

4.2 Fire Prevention Policy

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 9) that the existing Fire Prevention Policy be updated and included within the proposed updated Establishing and Regulating By-law as an appendix. Our research indicates that a more comprehensive fire Prevention Policy was approved on July 25, 2017; however, it was not included as an appendix to the updated Establishing and Regulating By-law No. 2021-099 as recommended.

The updated Fire Prevention Policy includes a more comprehensive list of the fire prevention and public education services provided by SSFR as recommended by the 2016 FMP.

The recommendations presented within this 2022 FMP report may result in changes to the existing fire prevention and public education services provided by SSFR. Subject to these changes being approved by the Fire Chief, the current Establishing and Regulating By-law No. 2021-099 and Fire Prevention Policy should be updated to ensure consistency in the definition of the fire prevention and public education program service levels. Including performance measures, or performance indicators, for the approved service levels (where possible) will also provide Council and staff with the opportunity to monitor and report to the public on the fire protection services being provided.

Recommendation 12: That the current Fire Prevention Policy, dated July 25, 2017, be reviewed and updated.

4.3 Public Education Programs and Activities

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 10) the approval and implementation of a proposed fire and life safety education activities and program cycle, and that this cycle be included within the Fire Prevention Policy, and included as an appendix to an updated Establishing and Regulating By-law. This

recommendation was based on the research and information available at the time of developing the 2016 FMP.

In addition to the analysis and recommendations of the 2016 FMP there is now further analysis available in the Township's new Community Risk Assessment to inform the development of a more comprehensive community public education program and risk reduction strategy. In our view the following **'Identified Risks'** and **'Key Findings'** that are presented within the Township's new CRA should be considered as priorities for developing an updated comprehensive community public education program and risk reduction strategy:

Identified Risks:

- Group C – Residential Occupancies represent 96.3% of the Township's existing property stock, and over the five-year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, were associated with 73.7% of the structure fires within the Township;
- The 2016 Census data indicates that 54.1% of the Township's Group C-Residential building stock was built prior to the introduction of the 1981 Ontario Fire Code;
- Seniors (those 65 years and over) are considered to represent one of the highest fire risk groups across the Province based on residential fire death rate. According to the 2016 Census, seniors represent 19.2% of the Township's total population;
- Of the fires occurring in the Township over the five-year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, the leading cause of unintentionally set fires was due to misuse of ignition source at 29.8% (17 fires), compared to 29.9% in the Province; and,
- Of the fires occurring in the Township over the five year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, the second most common cause of unintentionally set fires was due to mechanical/electrical failure at 14.0% (eight fires), compared to 15.4% in the Province.

Key Findings (High Risk):

- In addition to registered vulnerable occupancies, the Township has five schools and two licensed daycare facilities, representing higher fire life-safety risks due to the number of children attending these facilities;
- All reported fire related civilian injuries (two) and fatalities (one) occurred in Group C – Residential Occupancies;
- Of the fires occurring within the Township over the five year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, 15.8% of fires had a reported ignition source of miscellaneous, which is 5.9% higher than the Province (9.9%);
- Of the fires occurring within the Township over the five year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, 12.5% of fires had a reported ignition source of 'electrical distribution', which is 3.5% higher than the Province (8.8%);
- Over the five year period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, of the fire loss incidents in Group C – Residential occupancies, 8.8% of incidents did not have a smoke alarm present (compared to 17.3% in the Province);
- Over the five year period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019, of the fire loss incidents in Group C – Residential occupancies, 50.0% of incidents had a smoke alarm present and operating compared to 45.2% in the Province; and,
- For the period from January 1, 2015, to December 31, 2019, the second highest percentage of emergency call volume responded to by SSFR as defined by the OFM response types was property fires/explosion calls representing 14.8% of total emergency call volume.

4.3.1 Smoke Alarm Program

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 10) that SSFR Home Smoke Alarm Program be updated as a department Standard Operating Guideline. Operating Guideline No. 19-01 – Fire Prevention updated on July 27, 2017 includes information referencing the department's Alarmed for Life Program. A smoke alarm program is one of the municipality's legislated responsibilities. As such it is our experience that there should be a stand-alone operating guideline for the Township's smoke alarm program that provides a comprehensive overview of the

program goals and objectives, including identified performance measures for tracking its efficiency and effectiveness. The analyses within this section recommend that SSFR review its current smoke alarm initiatives and develop a new comprehensive smoke alarm program. Once completed we recommend that the new program be included within a stand-alone department operating guideline and updated Fire Prevention Policy.

The Fire Marshal of Ontario recently announced that there were 133 fire-related deaths within the Province in 2022. The Fire Marshal stated during a press conference, "That is the highest total in more than 20 years in Ontario"[6]. The Fire Marshal also stated that, "Ontarians incorrectly believe they have more than five minutes to escape a blaze when in actuality studies suggest it's actually 60 seconds or less"[7]. In our view these factors emphasize the critical importance of smoke alarms and home escape planning, and the need for the fire service to further prioritize public fire and life safety education programs.

The OFM has recently announced 'Operation Safer' a summit for Ontario fire services and fire-safety stakeholders to be held on June 13th and 14th, 2023. The goal of this summit is to provide delegates with tools and resources to effect behaviour change and heighten awareness among Ontarians about the vital role working smoke alarms play in reducing fire deaths and injuries.

SSFR has historically complied with the regulatory requirements through several strategies including a 'Home Safe Home' program that included volunteer firefighters visiting homes to ensure residences have a fire-safe home environment. The department has also provided several versions of the 'Alarmed for Life Program' that included home visits and the supply of free smoke alarms. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the department was limited to offering an on-line smoke alarm verification survey that included only 138 surveys being submitted.

In our view the CRA applicable **'Identified Risks'** clearly supports the need for a review and implementation of a more comprehensive smoke alarm program. The **'Identified Risks'** indicate that 96% of the building stock in the Township is

[6] Global News, OFM reveals 133 fire-related deaths in Ontario for 2022, highest in two decades.
[7] Global News, OFM reveals 133 fire-related deaths in Ontario for 2022, highest in two decades.

residential, and over the past five years these homes accounted for over 73% of the structure fires in the community. In addition to these two factors over 50% of the Township's residential homes were built prior to the current fire code that now requires smoke alarms on every level of a home. The CRA also indicates that nearly 20% of the Township's population are seniors, who represent one of the highest fire risk groups across the Province (based on residential fire death rate).

Our research and stakeholder consultation indicates that approximately 50% of the current residential occupancies in the Township are likely to be non-compliant with current smoke alarm requirements.

In our view there is sufficient evidence to warrant a review of all historical smoke alarm programs and initiatives of SSFR in the development and implementation of a new comprehensive smoke alarm program. During consultation with the members of SSFR it was identified that there is interest in their involvement with delivering public education programs to the community. It was identified that some approaches of program delivery worked better than others for the volunteers.

Recommendation 13: That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee conduct a review of historical smoke alarm programs and initiatives in the development and implementation of a new comprehensive smoke alarm program.

Recommendation 14: That once completed, the proposed new comprehensive smoke alarm program be included within a stand-alone department operating guideline and updated Fire Prevention Policy.

4.3.2 Seniors' Education Program

As referenced above the current population of the Township is comprised of approximately 20% of seniors. The CRA also indicates that a further 17.5% of the current population is within the ages of 55 to 64 representing a cohort aging towards seniors. Collectively this represents an estimated total population of approximately 37% of Township's current population.

Experience within the fire service, and communities like South Stormont, indicates that there is an increasing trend towards seniors, and those aging towards being

seniors, wanting to age in their family homes. The result is a larger population of an older (senior) demographic living alone.

As indicated above, seniors represent one of the highest fire risk groups across the Province based on historical residential fire death rates. Based on our experience these factors support the need for a public education program that is dedicated to the current and future seniors within the Township. There are numerous examples of these types of programs within the industry, including those available from the OFM (such as 'Remembering When'). In our view the proposed Fire Prevention Committee should conduct a review of all available senior education programs and implement a new comprehensive seniors' education program within the Township. In our view the proposed seniors' education program is an example of a fire and life safety program that could be delivered by the proposed volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators to target groups such as:

- Church groups;
- Organized seniors groups;
- Seniors' facilities; and,
- Homecare providers.

Recommendation 15(a): That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop and implement a comprehensive seniors' education program.

4.3.3 School Education Program

The Township's new CRA also identifies that there are five schools and two licensed daycares located within the Township. Children under the age of 14 currently represent approximately 16% of the Township's total population. Children are also recognized as the second most vulnerable population next to seniors.

Within the fire service there are numerous examples of school education programs, many of these target specific age groups and school grades such as grades 2, 4 and 6. In our view there is sufficient evidence to support SSFR developing a comprehensive school education program that includes in-school programs that provide curriculum-based fire and life safety learning.

In our view the proposed school education program is an example of a fire and life safety program that could be delivered by the proposed volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators.

Recommendation 15(b): That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop and implement a comprehensive school education program.

4.3.4 Public Education Awareness Program

In addition to the programs listed above there continues to be a need for a broader more comprehensive public fire and life safety programs within the Township. In our view this should continue to consider the proposed fire and life safety education activities and program cycle presented in the 2016 FMP. This information should also be included within the Fire Prevention Policy and included as an appendix to an updated Establishing and Regulating By-law.

Our research indicates that the full-time Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer participates in school visits, trade shows, and works to deliver presentations to community groups (such as girl guides, boy scouts and seniors). There is also fire safety information available on the Township's website, covering topics such as smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, home escape planning and farm fire safety. Our research indicates that there is limited use of technology such as social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and broader media campaigns.

In our view the implementation of the volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators will provide an opportunity to expand the department's existing fire and life safety programs as proposed within this 2022 FMP Update.

Recommendation 15(c): That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop and implement a comprehensive public education awareness program.

4.4 Fire Inspection Program

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 13) that the Township of South Stormont adopt the recommended frequencies (performance measures) for completing fire inspections. Our research and stakeholder consultation indicates that the current Fire Prevention Policy, dated July 25, 2017, was updated to include the

proposed fire inspection frequencies (performance measures). However, the updated Establishing and Regulating By-law No. 2021-099 was not updated to include the Fire Prevention Policy as an appendix, as recommended. The result is that Council has not endorsed the current fire inspection frequencies (performance measures) currently listed in the department's Fire Prevention Policy.

Department Operating Guideline No. 19:01-Fire Prevention, updated on July 27, 2017, describes the department's procedures for conducting fire inspections. This guideline describes two types of fire inspections including 'regular' and 'special'. Regular inspections are those defined as inspections of buildings and businesses. Special inspections are defined as responding to public complaints, inspecting vulnerable occupancies, occupant loads and investigations. There is no reference to any goals and objectives for the current fire inspection program, or performance measures that could be utilized to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the current fire inspection process or program.

In our data collection process to complete this 2022 FMP Update we were provided with Fire Prevention Annual Reports completed by the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer. These reports represent the four-year period including 2017 to 2020. These reports provide an overview of the fire prevention /public education programs and activities completed each year. Our review of these reports indicates that they provide a very 'high level' overview of the Fire Prevention Officer's workload, with minimal information about annual performance measures to assess the effectiveness of the programs presented. For example, the Annual Reports reference within the fire prevention responsibilities that these include *"*Examination of drawings and plans for construction of new buildings and renovations of existing buildings for items within the jurisdiction of the Fire Prevention Division*"*. There is no indication of how many drawings and plans were reviewed during this four-year period, or any indication of the amount of time (hours) involved. In our view the value of these reports is minimal towards providing applicable information to measure the effectiveness of the existing fire prevention/education programs.

Our analysis of the Fire Prevention Annual Reports and consultation with the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer indicates that SSFR is currently unable to attain the fire inspection frequencies included within the current Fire Prevention Policy. In our view this supports the need to re-evaluate the current fire inspection program,

including frequencies (performance measures) and the responsibilities of the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer as described in the Fire Prevention Annual Report.

In addition to the analysis and recommendations of the 2016 FMP there is now further analysis available in the Township's new Community Risk Assessment to inform the development of a more comprehensive fire inspection and risk reduction strategy. In our view the following **'Identified Risks'** and **'Key Findings'** that are presented within the Township's new CRA should be considered as priorities for updating the departments fire inspection program and risk reduction strategy:

Identified Risks:

- The Township has six buildings with a total building area (footprint) that exceed 50,000 square feet (4,655 square metres). These buildings are predominantly located in Long Sault and Ingleside; and,
- The Township of South Stormont currently has three registered vulnerable occupancies.

Key Findings:

- In addition to registered vulnerable occupancies, the Township has five schools and two licensed daycare facilities, representing higher fire life-safety risks due to the number of children attending these facilities.

Based on our analyses, including the results of the Township's new CRA, the fire inspection frequencies (performance measures) included in the department's current Fire Prevention Policy remain applicable to the Township's current fire inspection legislative requirements and existing fire risk.

Non-Compliance: As referenced in the Fire Prevention Annual Reports there may be instances where the buildings in the Group 'D', E' and 'F' classifications may not have had a recent fire inspection. As a result, a current fire inspection may identify multiple fire code infractions, or fire code infractions that could result in the need for owners to invest further financial commitment to attain compliance. Multiple re-inspections may also be required to attain compliance. Collectively, these may require an adjustment to the proposed fire inspection frequencies as compliance is

achieved, e.g., there may be a need to reconsider the proposed two-year cycle for these occupancies' types in the short term.

Compliance: Based on our experience and consultation with the new Fire Chief we agree that protocols should be developed, and approved by Council, that inform the process for fire department staff to seek fire code compliance. Like fire services in many other smaller communities in Ontario, SSFR has historically followed a process of seeking compliance by building positive relationships with building owners. This process, typically referred to as a **Community Focused Model,** relies on building a trusting working relationship with building owners to work together in evaluating options and working together towards fire code compliance. This process continues to prioritize resolving life safety issues, but recognizes that in some instances there may be more than one option to achieve compliance. In our view the department would benefit from including a description of a Community Focused Fire Inspection Model in the department's Fire Prevention Policy.

Based on our analyses and stakeholder consultation we continue to support the fire inspection frequencies contained with the department's current Fire Prevention Policy as being applicable to the Township's existing fire risks. We also continue to support the Fire Prevention Policy being included within the Establishing and Regulating By-law as an appendix.

It is recommended that SSFR update the current Fire Prevention Policy to include the proposed fire inspection goals and objectives, and update department Operating Guideline No. 19:01-Fire Prevention.

Recommendation 16: That the proposed fire inspection frequencies (goals and objectives) presented within the 2016 Fire Master Plan be included within an updated Fire Prevention Policy.

Recommendation 17: That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop a department guideline for seeking fire code compliance, as referenced in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

4.5 Building Plans Examination

Approval of plans for new construction or site alternations from the perspective of fire protection is a critical component of fire prevention. In Ontario the degree of plans review performed by a fire department varies widely between jurisdictions. Building plans can be reviewed for sprinkler, fire alarm and detection, and suppression systems; and site plan and subdivision approval for items affecting fire services, such as fire department access and water supply.

Building plans review involves the evaluation of design plans before construction begins and can be related to actual construction or to a new manufacturing process. Plans review includes evaluating architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, and/or fire protection drawings to ensure compliance with a variety of codes and standards, including the Ontario Building Code.

Determining the level of plans review performed by the fire department is a decision that typically requires discussion and collaboration between the fire, building, and legal departments of a municipality. The overall plans review process within a municipality is intended to ensure proper construction and appropriate built-in fire protection systems, which are vital to both building occupants and emergency response safety.

Our analysis indicate that the participation of the fire department in the building plans review process has increased since the transition of the Fire Inspector/Public Education Officer position to full-time was completed. The vision of this position, as presented within the 2016 FMP, was to enhance the department's fire inspection and public education programming. Involvement in the building plans review process was not identified as a core role of this position.

It is our understanding that staff who are involved in the building plans review process are required to complete the Ontario Building Code (OBC), General Legal, and Fire Protection examinations and obtain a Building Code Identification Number (BCIN). While this training is not required for all fire safety inspections, it does provide the same immunity from liability afforded to building inspectors. Based on the findings of the Township's new CRA there is a warranted need to further expand and enhance the fire department's current fire prevention and public education

programs. In our view this should be considered the priority of the Fire Inspector/Public Education Officer. It is recommended that the function of building plans examination be reviewed and removed from the responsibility of the Fire Inspector/Public Education Officer.

Recommendation 18: That the responsibility for conducting building plans examinations, as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update, be reviewed.

4.6 Building Pre-Incident Planning

The process of building pre-incident planning is intended to provide a proactive awareness within fire departments about key building features, possible hazards, and other pertinent characteristics about an existing occupancy. Pre-fire planning is typically conducted by fire suppression staff with information provided from a variety of sources including existing information from the municipality, information gathered from the building owner, and site visits. The value of building pre-fire planning is to provide site specific hazards and information to fire suppression crews in advance of responding to an emergency incident.

Our research and stakeholder consultation indicates that SSFR has historically participated in a number of forms of building pre-incident planning. In our view this is a role that could be overseen by the proposed Fire Prevention/Public Education Committee and led at each station by the proposed volunteer Public Education Officer positions. With the support of the volunteer firefighters at each station, building pre-incident planning could be completed by the firefighters for specific buildings within their respective immediate response areas. Collectively these building pre-incident plans could then be shared on a common records management platform with all stations to further inform the department's strategies and tactics in the event of an emergency at one of these locations. Subject to approval of this recommendation, priority should be given to creating pre-incident plans for all vulnerable occupancies and high-risk buildings within the Township as part of the department's pre-incident planning process. The current E & R By-law No. 2021-099, Section B.3.1 authorizes SSFR to develop and maintain Pre-Incident Plans.

Recommendation 19: That SSFR develop a department operating guideline for completing building pre-incident plans.

4.7 Fire Investigations

The Township is legislatively required to conduct fire investigations to identify the origin and cause of a fire. Department Operating Guideline No. 13/04 – Scene Security and Evidence Preservation dated March 4, 2020, details the department's process for stabilizing and securing a fire scene to preserve all applicable evidence for an investigation. Operating Guideline No. 19.05 – Fire Cause Determination details the department's roles and responsibilities for conducting a fire investigation and the applicable procedures to be followed by staff.

4.8 Fire Prevention/Public Education Summary and Recommendations

The analysis within this report indicates that SSFR has continued to make progress in providing the applicable fire prevention and public education programs since completion of the 2016 FMP. However, this is an area of the department's services and programs that has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council's strategy to proactively complete a new Community Risk Assessment as required by O. Reg. 378/18 provides the opportunity for SSFR to review and update the current fire prevention and public education programs. Where applicable the analyses within this 2022 FMP Update have utilized the CRA **'Identified Risks'** and **'Key Findings'** to inform the recommendations presented. Collectively the recommendations of this report support the development of a community fire risk reduction strategy that targets the strategic priority of providing the most effective and efficient level of services resulting in the best value for the community.

The strategic priorities contained within the proposed FMP are presented to provide Council with a framework to optimize the use of fire prevention and public education programs in providing the most cost effective and efficient level for fire protection services that provides the most value to the community.

The Fire Prevention/Public Education recommendations include the following:

9. That the current position description for the Fire Prevention/Public Education Officer be updated;
10. That the Fire Chief implement four (one per station) volunteer Fire and Life Safety Educators, who will also become members of the Fire Prevention Committee;

11. That defined terms of reference for the proposed Fire Prevention Committee be developed and included with an updated Fire Prevention Policy;
12. That the current Fire Prevention Policy, dated July 25, 2017, be reviewed and updated;
13. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee conduct a review of historical smoke alarm programs and initiatives of SSFR in the development and implementation of a new comprehensive smoke alarm program;
14. That, once completed, the proposed new comprehensive smoke alarm program be included within a stand-alone department operating guideline and updated Fire Prevention Policy;
15. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop and implement:
    a. a comprehensive seniors' education program;
    b. a comprehensive school education program; and
    c. a comprehensive public education awareness program;
16. That the proposed fire inspection frequencies (goals and objectives) presented within the 2016 Fire Master Plan be reviewed, considered and included within an updated Fire Prevention Policy;
17. That the proposed Fire Prevention Committee develop a department guideline for seeking fire code compliance, as referenced in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
18. That the responsibility for conducting building plans examinations, as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update, be reviewed; and,
19. That SSFR develop a department operating guideline for completing building pre-incident plans, as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

5.0 Firefighter Training

The current **E & R By-law No. 2021-099, Section B.6.1 – Training Program Standards** authorizes SSFR to deliver a firefighter training program that includes the majority of the NFPA training standards included within the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification**.

The new **Ontario Regulation 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** (O. Reg.343/22) will affect all staff (full-time or volunteer) responsible for the delivery of firefighter training. This new legislation will require all SSFR full-time and volunteer firefighters assigned to deliver these programs to have the applicable certifications identified in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Applicable Training Staff Qualifications/Certifications

Service/Program	Applicable Qualifications/Certifications	Completion By
Providing training and education to other fire personnel	Fire and Emergency Services Instructor I – NFPA 1041 Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications	July 1, 2026
Providing training and education to other fire personnel including lead instructor roles at live fire and above or below grade technical rescue practical training	Fire and Emergency Services Instructor II – NFPA 1041 Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications	July 1, 2026

For all staff (full-time and volunteer) responsible for providing fire suppression and emergency response services this new legislation includes an extensive list of the minimum certification standards for each of the fire protection services being provided. The minimum certification standards are directly related to the job performance requirements for each fire protection service. For example, the job performance requirements for a firefighter to facilitate an exterior attack differ significantly from those required to complete and interior attack, and the job

performance requirements to conduct an interior attack that also includes rescue are even more extensive.

Based on our review of the existing fire protection services being provided by SSFR it is our view that at a minimum the firefighter qualifications/certifications listed in **Table 3** will be required.

Table 3: Applicable Fire Protection Services Qualifications/Certifications

Roles and Responsibilities	Applicable Qualifications/Certifications	Completion By
Firefighter	Firefighter Level I – NFPA 1001 – Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications.	July 1, 2026
Firefighter	Firefighter Level II - NFPA 1001 – Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications.	July 1, 2026

5.1 Existing Training Coordinator (Volunteer)

In 2022 SSFR implemented the position of volunteer Training Coordinator as a first step towards organizing the training of volunteer firefighters at all of the stations. This position has been focusing on many of the firefighter training components presented within this report. A priority of this position has been developing a strategy for responding to the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** legislation.

A formal position description has not yet been developed to identify the roles and responsibilities for this position. Based on our analyses and stakeholder consultation to prepare this report it is our view that there is a critical need for the Township to implement a full-time Training Officer. Further information and a recommendation regarding this position is presented within **Section 5.2.1 – Proposed Training Officer (FT)** of this report.

5.2 Proposed Training Staff Resource Strategy

The following sections present the proposed staff resource and leadership strategy to facilitate a new Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program.

5.2.1 Proposed Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer (Full-time)

Based on our analyses in preparing this 2022 FMP Update there is sufficient evidence to support the need for the Township of South Stormont to hire a full-time Training Officer. In addition to the current challenges of complying with the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** there are other key factors that support this position.

Historically the Township of South Stormont has benefitted from the utilization of volunteer firefighters (V). The tradition of community members volunteering to protect their neighbours and local communities has been, and continues to be, one of the strongest core values of SSFR. The evolution of the fire service has continually added to the commitments required of a volunteer firefighter. Fire services today, including those solely operated by volunteer firefighters, are faced with the same increasing fire risks and health and safety requirements as those of any large urban center. The fire-related life safety risks for both the residents and the firefighters responding to a structural fire in a home in South Stormont are the same as any other community in Ontario. Relying on the volunteer firefighters to comply with the current training requirements, develop new training programs, and deliver the high-degree of training required to safely conduct fire suppression operations is not a sustainable strategy. In our view this supports the need for a full-time Training Officer.

Over the past decade SSFR has seen the turnover rate of volunteer firefighters increase. The department has also historically not been able to recruit and retain the recommended number of volunteer firefighters required at each station. Recently the Township conducted a volunteer firefighter recruitment process and was able to hire seven new members. Of the seven, only one has attained a portion of the new **O. Reg. 343/22** firefighter certification requirements. Six of these recruit candidates will require all the training necessary to become a qualified firefighter. The recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters is one of the most significant challenges for municipalities across Canada. Our analyses of the Township's current number of volunteer firefighters, including their years of service, predicts that the turnover of members will be an ongoing and annual challenge. To sustain the use of volunteer firefighters the Township of South Stormont is going to need to implement

a process that includes the annual recruitment and training of new volunteer firefighters. In our view this further supports the need for a full-time Training Officer.

The **Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1** (OHSA) requires employers to maintain accurate records of all training provided to employees. Volunteer firefighters are employees of the Township. Training records need to be complete and readily available in the event of an audit or injury. The implementation of the proposed comprehensive firefighter training program is going to result in an increased workload to maintain and oversee accurate training records for all volunteer firefighters as well as the full-time members of SSFR. In our view this also further supports the need for a full-time Training Officer.

5.2.2 Proposed Training Officers (Volunteer)

The 2016 FMP identified that historically SSFR has assigned the role of Training Officer to one of the volunteer Captains at each of the department's four stations. The role of these positions was described as to review, plan, prepare, modify, and deliver training programs at the stations they were assigned to.

O. Reg. 343/22 requires anyone responsible for facilitating firefighter training to be certified to the NFPA 1041 – Level I - Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications. The department currently has a number of volunteer firefighters who have attained this qualification. These include a range of volunteer ranks including District Chief, Captains and firefighters. Based on understanding of the current and future training demands for the volunteer firefighters it is recommended that SSFR implement a policy whereby there is a minimum of one certified NFPA 1041 – Level I volunteer Training Officer assigned to each station. In the event there is interest from other volunteer firefighters to attain the applicable NFPA 1041 – Level I certification this should be supported by the department.

Recommendation 20: That SSFR implement the proposed volunteer Training Officers as presented in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

5.2.3 Proposed Training Committee

The analyses to prepare this 2022 FMP Update indicate that SSFR has utilized varying forms of a Training Committee in the past. In our view the utilization of a Training Committee, chaired by the proposed full-time Training Officer, and including membership of the proposed four volunteer Training Officers, should be a strategic priority of developing the proposed comprehensive firefighter training program.

The implementation, or reorganization, of this committee should include the formalization and approval of defined terms of reference. These should recognize the core leadership role to be provided by this committee in facilitating and coordinating the development, delivery, and monitoring of the proposed comprehensive firefighter training program.

Recommendation 21: That SSFR implement the proposed Training Committee as presented in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

5.3 Existing Firefighter Training

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 16) that SSFR develop a comprehensive annual training program for firefighters based on the NFPA Professional Qualification Standards. Our analyses of the information provided by SSFR to complete this 2022 FMP Update, and our stakeholder consultation (including the volunteer firefighters assigned to each station) indicates that the department has not yet implemented the training program recommended. In our view, the current quality of firefighter training within SSFR has improved since completion of the 2016 FMP. Implementing the proposed comprehensive annual training program has, in our view, been impeded by two key factors including:

- The absence of a qualified individual and support team to develop and oversee a firefighter training program that includes the participation of volunteer firefighters at all four stations; and,
- Further commitment of time to participate in additional firefighter training has, and continues to be, a significant challenge for the volunteer firefighters work-life balance.

Throughout the stakeholder consultation process with Township's full-time staff and volunteer firefighters training was consistently raised as an area of concern. Comments received included references to the following:

- Inconsistencies in the training provided across the four stations;
- Increasing demands on the volunteer firefighters to complete training;
- Inconsistencies in the number of firefighters participating in training sessions; and,
- Varying amounts of time committed to training at each station.

In our view the implementation of a comprehensive annual firefighter training program that is applicable, and consistently delivered at all four fire stations, is a necessary step towards further transition towards becoming one-single unified fire department. The new O. Reg. 343/22 legislation also further supports the need for a comprehensive annual firefighter training program as this new legislation makes it mandatory for all firefighters in the Township of South Stormont to attain the required firefighter qualifications/certifications by July 1, 2026.

5.4 Training Facility

The SSFR recently requested the approval of Council to re-purpose the Community Hall space at Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to a full-time training facility for the fire department. This additional space will provide a large classroom for the sole use by the SSFR to support the enhanced training initiatives that will be required to comply with the new O. Reg. 343/22.

In our view the approval of this request by Council is further evidence of the support for the SSFR within the community.

5.5 Proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 16) that SSFR develop and implement a Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program. The 2016 FMP references the **Occupational Health and Safety Act** (OHSA) and specifically the Section 21 Guidance Notes for Firefighters as the mandatory components that should be included as part of a Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program.

In addition, the 2016 FMP identifies that the core elements of a comprehensive annual firefighter training program should include:

- Identifying training needs in relation to services provided;
- Coordinating / scheduling theoretical and practical training;
- Monitoring and evaluating in relation to outcomes achieved;
- Evaluating (on an ongoing basis) in relation to industry best practices and legislative requirements;
- Overseeing program objectives and records management; and,
- Assessing (on an ongoing basis) program delivery for efficiency and effectiveness.

Based on our analyses and stakeholder consultation SSFR continues to work towards the implementation of a comprehensive annual firefighter training program. In our view the initial firefighter certification strategy (referenced in the following section of this report) is an example of the proactive steps SSFR is taking to comply with the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** legislation. It is also a positive movement towards implementing a standardized training program for all volunteer firefighters in the Township. The following sections will present an overview of the complexities of responding to the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** that extend beyond firefighting and include Company Officer, Technical Rescue, and Incident Safety Officer Certifications. The following sections present strategies proposed for SSFR to comply with the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification,** with priority given to the components required prior to July 1, 2026.

5.5.1 Initial NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I – Certification Strategy

The Fire Chief has recently initiated a program to begin training the 40 current volunteer firefighters, and six volunteer recruit candidates who do not have the required NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I certification. This initial certification training program will focus on providing the necessary training for these 46 current volunteer firefighters to attain the NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I certification.

The Township has retained the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands (TLTI) Emergency Services Training Centre (ESTC) to facilitate the NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I training program. TLTI operates in partnership with the OFM to delivery fire

service training programs using Adjunct Instructors across southern Ontario. Qualified Training Instructors provided by TLTI's ESTC will be facilitating the NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I training program locally through a session that started in January 2023. This session provides the 46 current volunteer firefighters two optional dates to attain this mandatory certification. At the time of preparing this report 19 of the 46 volunteer firefighters attended the sessions in January.

It is important to recognize that a firefighter must attain the NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I certification before beginning the mandatory NFPA 1001 – Firefighter II training program. It is also important to note that all firefighters (full-time and volunteer) in Ontario must attain the mandatory NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I and II certifications prior to July 1, 2026.

In our view it will be important for the Township and senior leadership within SSFR to communicate to all volunteer firefighters the importance of the new mandatory training certification. **O. Reg. 343/22** was developed by key stakeholders representing applicable groups from across Ontario, including volunteer firefighters, to further enhance the safety of all firefighters in the Province.

5.5.2 Ongoing NFPA 1001 – Firefighter I and II – Certification Strategy

In addition to providing the required training for all current volunteer firefighters to attain the NFPA 1001 -Firefighter I and II certifications there will be an ongoing need within SSFR to provide this training for new recruits in the future. In our experience, revising the current employment requirements for a recruit candidate to include the NFPA certifications prior to hiring would significantly reduce the number of potential candidates the Township would receive. In our view it would also narrow the list of candidates to those focusing their career goal on becoming a full-time firefighter.

At the time of preparing this report 23 of the existing 46 volunteer firefighters requiring the initial NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I - Certification Strategy presented in **Section 5.5.1** of this report have registered to attend one of the two sessions scheduled. Tentatively that means the department still needs to implement a further strategy to train the remaining 23 existing volunteer firefighters in advance of the July 1, 2016 deadline. In our view the department should be implementing a process very soon to require that the remaining 26 volunteer firefighters confirm their

intentions to complete the required mandatory certification process or indicate their intentions to retire as of July 1, 2026.

In our view the department should be preparing a contingency plan for additional recruitment of volunteer firefighters in the event that some or all of the 23 remaining volunteer firefighters confirm their intent to retire as of July 1, 2026.

The NFPA 1001 – Firefighter I certification must be completed prior to beginning the Firefighter II training. Based on our understanding of the initial NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I - Certification Strategy the department will have trained 23 of the existing volunteer firefighters prior to summer of 2023. In our view that provides sufficient time for the proposed Training Staff Resource Strategy to be implemented. This would provide the opportunity for proposed new full-time and volunteer training staff to prepare and schedule an initial NFPA 1001 – Firefighter II training session for the fall of 2023. Completing the required NFPA 1001- Level II training could then be achieved by scheduling a second and third additional training session during the winter of 2023 and spring of 2024.

Once all the existing volunteer firefighters have attained their required NFPA 1001 – Firefighter Level I and II certifications then this training should become a core element of any future volunteer firefighter recruit training program. It is recommended that this training become a component of an ongoing **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program**.

5.5.3 Ongoing NFPA 1021 – Fire Officer I – Certification Strategy

O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification also requires that all Company Officers (supervisors) attain the NFPA 1021 – Fire Officer I – Certification. Our analysis indicates that most of the current SSFR Company Officers have attained this certification either through the OFM 'grandfathering' process or other training. The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 19) that SSFR develop and implement a Company Officer training program. Within the current SSFR organizational structure we have defined a 'Company Officer' as any position, or rank that facilitates the role of a 'supervisor' as defined by the OHSA.

As indicated in the 2016 FMP municipalities are required to ensure a sufficient number of supervisors (officers) are trained to oversee the workforce. Within the

Occupational Health and Safety Act, Part III, Duties of Employers and Other persons, Section 12, subsection (2) states that: "Without limiting the strict duty imposed by subsection (1), an employer shall, "(c) when appointing a supervisor, appoint a competent person;"

As an employer, the Township of South Stormont is legislated by this section of the OHSA to ensure that all supervisors, which includes the role of incident commander, be competent.

The OHSA defines a "competent person" to mean a person who:

a. "is qualified because of knowledge, training and experience to organize the work and its performance;
b. is familiar with this Act and the regulations that apply to the work, and,
c. has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace: ("personne competente")"

As referenced in the 2016 FMP a Company Officer training program should include Incident Command training. This training is a requirement of the applicable **OHSA Section 21 Advisory Committee Guidance Notes.** As SSFR does not currently have a formalized Company Officer Training Program it is recommended that this training become a component of an ongoing **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program.**

5.5.4 NFPA 1521 – Incident Safety Officer – Certification Strategy

The Incident Commander (Company Officer) has the overall responsibility for managing an emergency scene, including the safety of all staff (volunteer firefighters) under their command. **OHSA Section 21 Firefighter Guidance Note No. 2-4 – Incident Safety Officer** identifies the circumstances under which an Incident Safety Officer should be appointed, and actions that the employer (Township) should consider. This guidance note also identifies the applicable OHSA legislation for this position including:

- Clause 25(2)(a) for providing information and instruction to a worker; and,
- Clause 25(2)(h) for taking every precaution reasonable to protect workers.

Historically SSFR has relied on the experience and qualifications of senior company officers to also fulfill the roles and responsibilities of Incident Safety Officer. As referenced in this Section 21 Guidance Note, fire-fighting activities are becoming more complex in nature. In the Township of South Stormont it is reasonable to assume that a fire scene may include the response of volunteer firefighters from multiple SSFR stations, as well as additional firefighters from other communities. The result would be a very complex incident as described by the **OHSA Section 21 Firefighter Guidance Note No. 2-4 – Incident Safety Officer**.

There is a need for SSFR to develop and implement the role of Incident Safety Officer, including a related department operating guideline. **O. Reg. 343/22** identifies the required certification for this position as the NFPA 1521 - Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer Professional Qualifications. In our view this training could be facilitated by implementing the proposed Training Staff Resource Strategy. It is recommended that this training become a component of an ongoing **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program.**

5.5.5 NFPA Technical Rescue – Certification Strategy

The 2016 FMP recommended (Operational Recommendation 18) that SSFR investigate options such as expanding the agreement with the City of Cornwall, or investigating agreements with the City of Ottawa, to include any services required above the awareness level for technical rescues including Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue and Slope/High Angle Rope Rescue. **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** references technical rescues including:

- Hazardous Materials Response;
- Rope Rescue;
- Structural Collapse;
- Confined Space;
- Trench Rescue;
- Surface Water Rescue;
- Swift Water Rescue; and,
- Ice Water Rescue.

Technical rescues require a higher degree of skills and competencies for firefighters to safely and effectively respond to these types of incidents. The applicable NFPA standards for each of these technical rescues identify three levels of training including awareness, operations and technician. These levels are defined as:

- **Awareness:** This level represents the minimum capability of a responder who, in the course of their regular job duties, could be called upon to respond to, or could be the first on the scene of, a technical rescue incident. This level can involve search, rescue, and recovery operations. Members of a team at this level are generally not considered rescuers.
- **Operations:** This level represents the capability of hazard recognition, equipment use, and techniques necessary to safely and effectively support and participate in a technical rescue incident. This level can involve search, rescue, and recovery operations, but usually operations are carried out under the supervision of technician-level personnel.
- **Technician:** This level represents the capability of hazard recognition, equipment use, and techniques necessary to safely and effectively coordinate, perform, and supervise a technical rescue incident. This level can involve search, rescue, and recovery operations.

Our analyses of the documentation provided by SSFR and stakeholder consultation including the current Establishing and Regulating By-law No. 2021-099 indicates that SSFR is authorized by Council to conduct the technical rescues identified in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Authorized Technical Rescues

Technical Rescue	Training Level	SSFR Training Qualifications
Vehicle Extrication	Technician	NFPA 1670 – Standard for Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents
Hazardous Materials Response	Operations	NFPA 472 – Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents
Water & Ice Rescue	Technician	NFPA 1670 – Standard for Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents
Urban Search & Rescue	Technician	NFPA 1670 – Standard for Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents
Farm & Silo Rescue	Awareness	NFPA 1670 – Standard for Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents

The Township's new CRA includes an **'Identified Risk'** with a high-risk level for vehicle extrication that states "Between 2015 and 2019 vehicle collisions and vehicle extrications combined accounted for 93.3% (251) of all rescue responses of South Stormont Fire & Rescue." Based on our review of the current training/certification qualifications of all current volunteer firefighters there appears to be a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters assigned to each station to maintain this level of service. However, it should be recognized that sustaining the current 'technician' level of response will require SSFR to prioritize the training of all volunteer firefighters to the Firefighter 1001 Level II certification (that includes auto extrication rescue) prior to July 1, 2026.

The Township's new CRA does not identify hazardous materials response as an **'Identified Risk'** but does identify it as a **'Key Finding'** with a high-risk level that states, "There are roads within the Township that have been identified as dangerous good routes that may require hazardous materials response." Based on our review of the current training/certification qualifications of all current volunteer firefighters it is evident that SSFR would currently have a challenge in deploying a sufficient

number of volunteer firefighters to provide the current 'operational' level response to a hazardous materials incident. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to reducing the current service level from an 'operations' level to an 'awareness' level. It is also recommended that the Township consider initiating discussions with neighbouring communities, including the City of Cornwall or potentially the City of Ottawa, to develop an automatic aid agreement that would provide for an 'operations' level response.

The Township's new CRA includes an **'Identified Risk'** with a moderate risk level for water rescue services that's states "The presence of the St. Lawrence River creates a need for specialized technical ice and water rescue services." SSFR recently completed a training session for ice/water rescue that qualified nine current volunteer firefighters. This training qualifies these nine volunteer firefighters to meet the new **O. Reg. 343/22** certification requirements. However, based on our review of the current training/certification qualifications of all other current volunteer firefighters it is evident that SSFR would currently have a challenge in deploying a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters to provide the current 'technician' level response to an ice/water rescue incident. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to reducing the current service level from the 'technician' level to an 'awareness' level. It is also recommended that the Township consider initiating discussions with neighbouring communities, including the City of Cornwall and City of Ottawa, to develop an automatic aid agreement that would provide for a 'technician' level of response.

As indicated previously within this report SSFR is currently unable to guarantee that all nine of these volunteer firefighters, or that a sufficient number of certified ice/water rescue volunteer firefighters would be able to respond to any incident involving ice/water rescue.

The Township's new CRA did not identify a specific **'Identified Risk'** or **'Key Finding'** related to urban search and rescue, however, the new **O. Reg. 343/22** includes requirements for this type of training related to fire suppression operations where entry into a building is required to perform rescue. In our view this supports the need for SSFR to maintain the current 'technician' level of training for this service. Based on our review of the current training/certification qualifications of all current volunteer firefighters there appears to be a sufficient number of volunteer

firefighters assigned to each station to maintain this level of service. However, it should be recognized that sustaining the current 'technician' level of response will require SSFR to prioritize the training of all volunteer firefighters to the Firefighter 1001 Level II certification prior to July 1, 2026.

The Township's new CRA did not identify a specific **'Identified Risk'** or **'Key Finding'** related to farm and silo rescue. Based on our knowledge of the Township's farming activities and the stakeholder consultation with the volunteer firefighters we believe the current 'awareness' training level should be maintained. OHSA Section 21 – Guidance Note No. 6-31 Agricultural Silos should be reviewed and considered in developing the 'awareness' training program.

It is recommended that the proposed technical rescue training become a component of an ongoing **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program.**

5.5.6 Summary-Proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program

In summary, the current state of training within SSFR has been identified by the key stakeholders, including the volunteer firefighters, as an area of concern. Our analyses to prepare this FMP Update validate that these concerns are associated with firefighter safety, public safety, and compliance with applicable legislation including **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification**. The proposed **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program** and proposed **Training Staff Resource Strategy** are intended to provide the Township of South Stormont and SSFR with an integrated plan to respond to all the training concerns identified.

Recommendation 22: That SSFR implement the proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program and Firefighter Training Certification Strategies as presented in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update.

5.6 Firefighter Training Summary and Recommendations

Historically smaller municipalities like the Township of South Stormont have relied on volunteer firefighters as their primary providers of fire suppression operations and emergency response services. Over the past several decades the complexities of these emergency response incidents, including the evolution of fire and life safety risks, have resulted in increased training demands for all firefighters including full-

time and volunteer (volunteer). The introduction of the new **O. Reg. 343/22 – Firefighter Certification** is a necessary step towards ensuring that all firefighters (full-time and volunteer) are provided with the required competencies to respond to these emergency incidents safely and effectively.

It should be recognized that the proposed **Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program** presented within this 2022 FMP Update will place further demands on the personal commitment of the current and future volunteer firefighters in the Township of South Stormont. These additional training demands are necessary to both comply with the applicable legislation presented and for the Township to provide the safest workplace possible for the volunteer firefighters.

The Firefighter Training recommendations include the following:

20. That SSFR implement the proposed volunteer Training Officers as presented in the 2022 Fire Master Plan Update;
21. That SSFR implement the proposed Training Committee; and,
22. That SSFR implement the proposed Comprehensive Annual Firefighter Training Program and Firefighter Training Certification Strategies.

6.0 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response

The current Establishing and Regulating By-law No. 2021-099 (E&R By-law) provides a comprehensive overview of the Council-approved fire suppression/emergency response services to be provided by SSFR. The E&R By-law also outlines the approved organizational structure of SSFR and the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Chief and other members of the department.

The E&R By-law also includes a definition of **"Limited Service"** that recognizes that the fire suppression and emergency response services provided by SSFR are currently provided by volunteer firefighters. As a result, this by-law identifies that the deployment of volunteer firefighters to emergencies (including structure fires) in sufficient numbers **"cannot in all instances be guaranteed"**[8]. In our experience this is the greatest challenge for municipalities across Canada, and for the Township of South Stormont, who provide fire suppression services utilizing solely volunteer firefighters. There is currently no guarantee that at any given time of the day that SSFR will have a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters to respond to any reported emergency. In our view this fact supports the importance of the strategic priorities that were presented within the 2016 FMP including:

> "The optimization of the first two lines of defence including public education and fire prevention, and the utilization of fire safety standards and fire code enforcement to provide a comprehensive fire protection program within the Township based on the results of the Community Risk Profile".

The Township's recently completed **Community Risk Assessment – Section 10.0 – Past Loss and Event History Profile** provides valuable insight into SSFR historical fire suppression and emergency responses. Analyses of this information, and similar information contained within the 2016 FMP, provides an understanding of the department's historical fire suppression and emergency response capabilities.

[8] Corporation of the Township of South Stormont, By-law No. 2021-099, Limited Service 9.

6.1 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Historical Call Volume

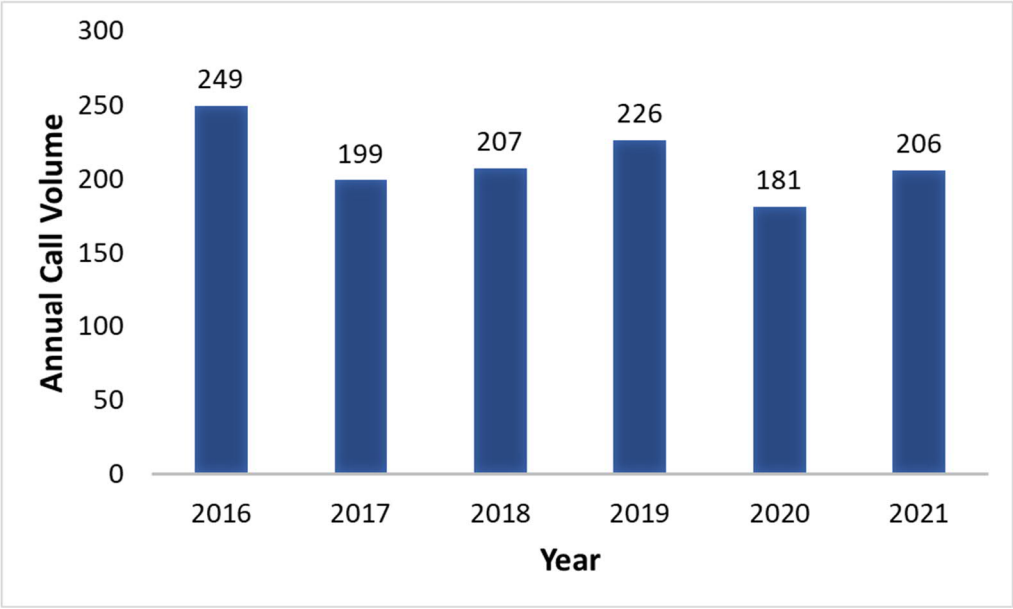
The following review of the historical fire suppression and emergency response services provided by SSFR represent the analysis of the Township's emergency calls for the period from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2021 (occurring within the Township of South Stormont), as presented within the Township's CRA.

6.1.1 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume

Figure 1 illustrates the total annual emergency call volume as presented within the Township's new CRA. Understanding the total number of annual emergency calls and assessing any existing trends is an important element in understanding the overall workload demand on SSFR, and specifically the volunteer firefighters. The average annual emergency call volume during this period was 211 calls per year. Most years experienced call volumes close to that average, with the most calls in 2016 and the least calls in 2020 (as a result of COVID-19 pandemic conditions). The 2016 FMP indicates that the average annual emergency call volume for the period from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2014 was 199 calls per year. Collectively this analysis indicates a 6% increase in the average annual emergency call volume from 199 calls per year to 211 calls per year from the previous FMP to the current FMP Update. From the 2010 annual call volume (184) to the 2019 (pre-COVID-19) annual call volume (226) represents 22.8% growth in annual call volume over the 10-year period.

It will be important for SSFR to continue monitoring this data on an annual basis as the Township enters a period of community growth. Increasing emergency call volume is one factor that may place further strain on the existing volunteer firefighter organizational model.

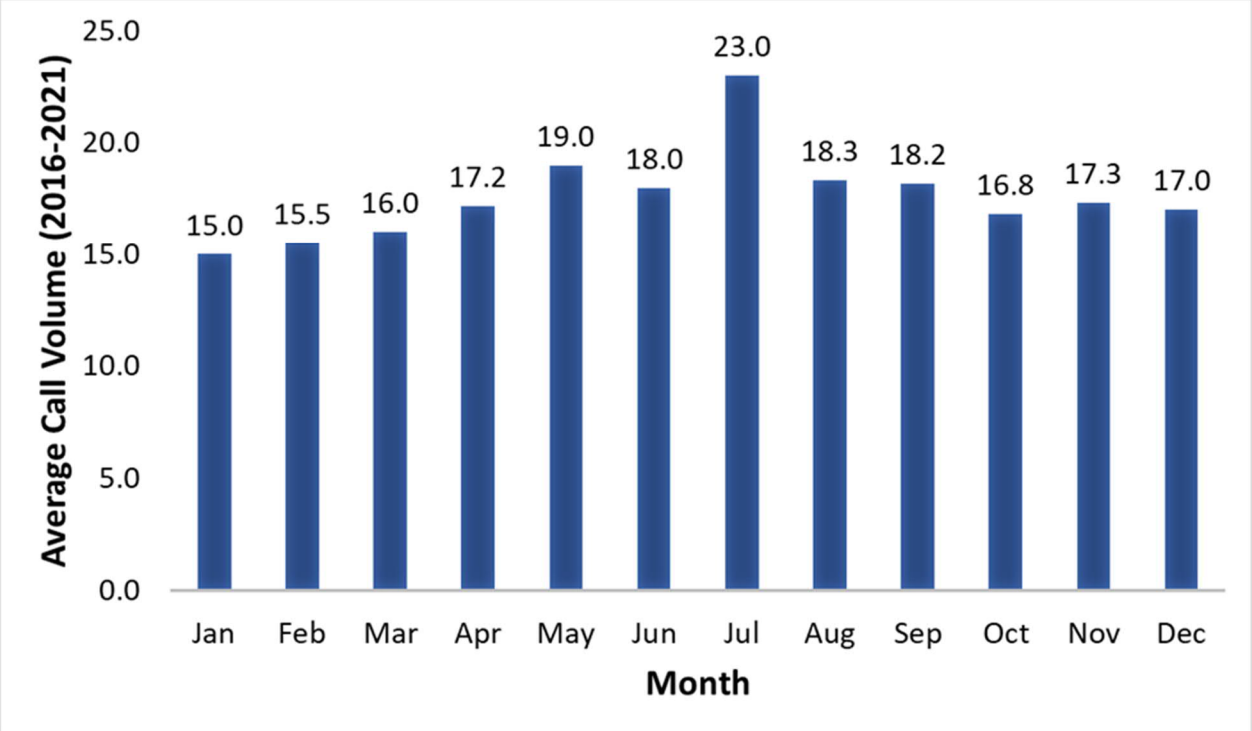
Figure 1: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume (2016 to 2021)



6.1.2 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Month of Year

Figure 2 illustrates the annual historical emergency call volume by month, which can be beneficial for identifying any potential variances that may be associated with seasonal trends (e.g., more motor vehicle travel during summer months, or use of heating devices during winter months). The average monthly emergency call volume for this period was 17.6 calls with the highest average of month occurring in July (23.0 calls) and the lowest average monthly calls occurring in January (15.0 calls). Continuing to monitor this information is also important as it is another factor that may place further strain on the existing volunteer firefighter organizational model.

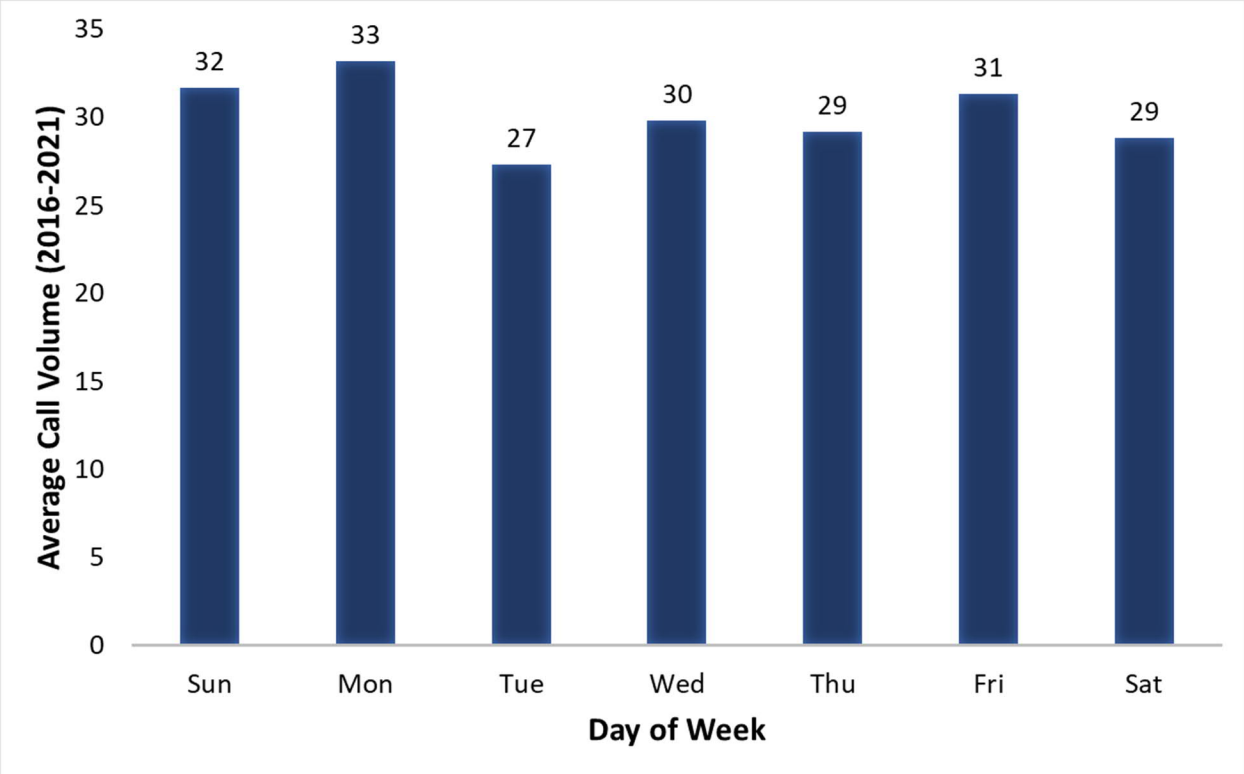
Figure 2: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Month of Year



6.1.3 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Day of the Week

Figure 3 illustrates the annual historical emergency call volume within the Township by the day of the week. This analysis indicates that the number of calls were fairly evenly distributed during the days of the week. There were a slightly fewer number of calls on Tuesdays than the other days of the week. This information is another factor that may place further strain on the existing volunteer firefighter organizational model as it indicates a consistent demand for service regardless of the day of the week.

Figure 3: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Day of the Week

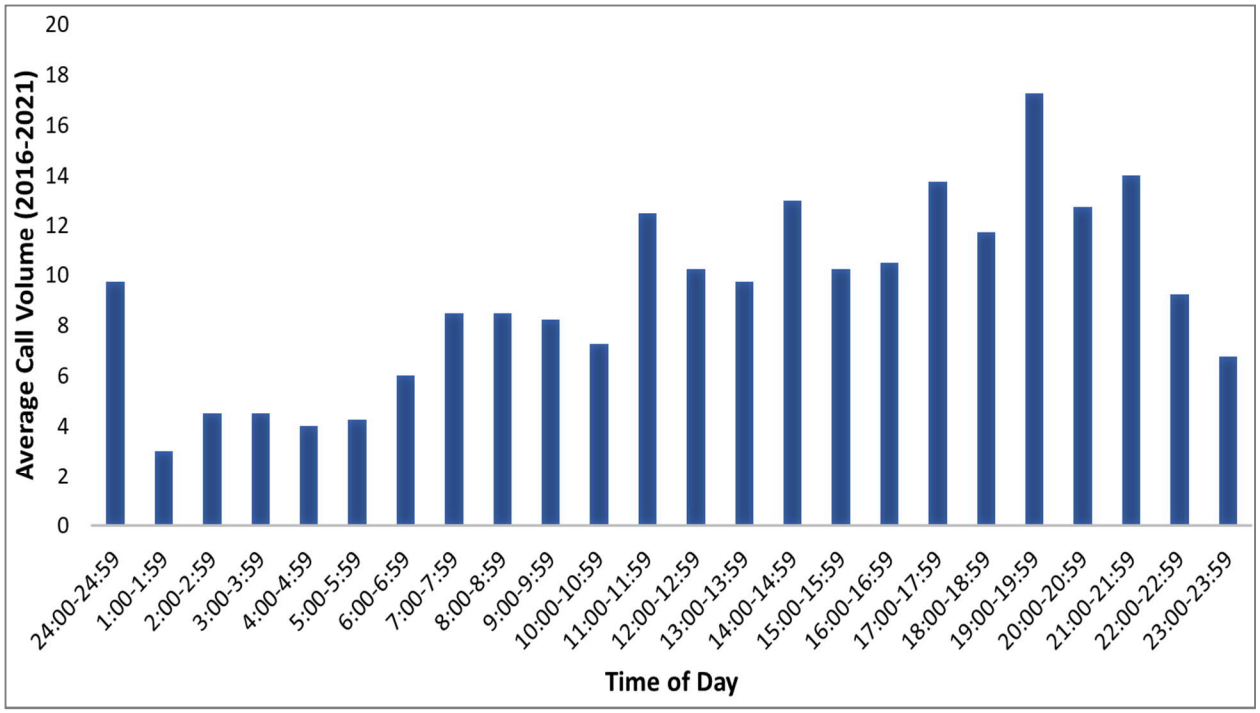


6.1.4 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Time of Day

Figure 4 illustrates the annual historical emergency call volume within the Township by the time of day. This analysis indicates that on average there were a higher number of calls between 11 am and 10 pm. In our experience this is typical of most communities and represents the time of the day when most people are more active. The time of day for an emergency call and specifically a fire suppression call is one of the most important factors to monitor when operating a volunteer (volunteer) fire department model. As previously indicated within this report the response of volunteer firefighters within the Township **"cannot in all instances be guaranteed"**.

Our stakeholder consultation sessions with the volunteer firefighters and other senior department staff consistently identified the existing challenge to assemble a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters during the normal business hours between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The analyses presented indicate that the number of historical fire suppression and emergency response calls increased during normal business hours.

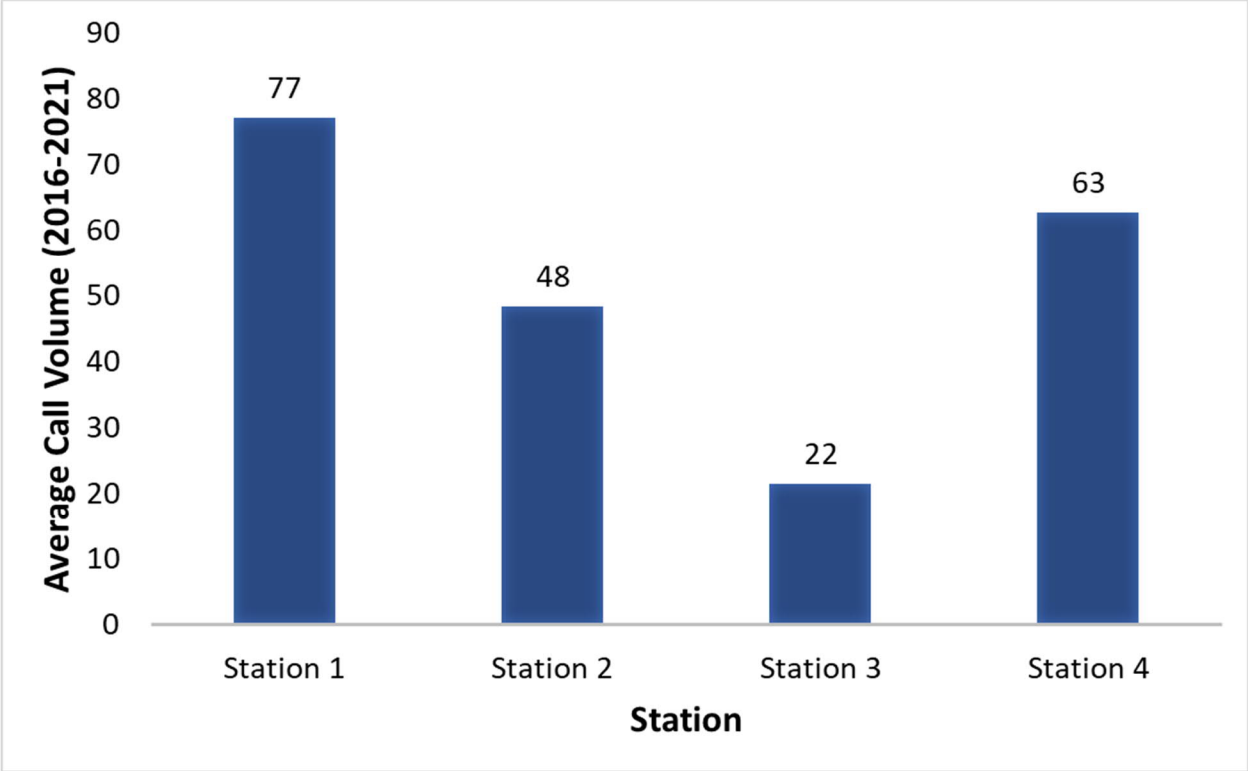
Figure 4: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – Time of Day



6.1.5 Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – By Station

Figure 5 illustrates the annual historical emergency call volume within the Township by station. This analysis indicates that Station 1 continues to respond to the highest number of emergency calls per year, representing 77 calls, or 37% of all emergency calls. However, in comparison to the findings of the 2016 FMP this is a decrease of 5% in the number of emergency calls per year. Station 4 responded to 63 calls, or 30% of the emergency calls during this period, an increase of 7% in comparison to the findings of the 2016 FMP. Station 2 responded to 48 calls, or 23% of all calls a decrease of 5% in comparison to the findings of the 2016 FMP and Station 3 responded to 22 calls, or 10% of all emergency calls an increase of 3% in comparison to the findings of the 2016 FMP.

Figure 5: Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – By Station



6.2 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Existing Conditions

The following analyses of the historical fire suppression and emergency response services provided by SSFR represent the **'existing conditions'** defined as the existing (current) fire suppression and emergency response capabilities of SSFR.

The 2016 FMP recommended (Council Recommendation No. 21) that the Township of South Stormont adopt the performance measures for providing fire suppression/emergency response services contained in the **NFPA 1720 - Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire suppression Operations, Emergency medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.** The current E&R By-law No. 2021-099 - Section B.1.1 - Basic Firefighting Services and Section B.1.2 – Structural Firefighting Services identify that SSFR **"shall exercise best efforts to conform to the most recent edition"**[9] of the NFPA 1720 standard.

Since the adoption of the 2016 FMP SSFR has been focusing on striving to achieve the response time performance objective referenced within the NFPA 1720 - Rural Area Demand Zone including **a minimum of six firefighters responding within a 14-minute response time (turnout time + travel time) with a performance objective of 80%.** The following sections will present an overview of the existing Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Capabilities of SSFR in response to this NFPA 1720 performance objective.

6.2.1 Turnout Time

Turnout times within the fire service differ significantly between a full-time firefighter who is working at a fire station and able to respond quickly compared to a volunteer firefighter (volunteer) who may be at work, at home or participating in a leisure activity. The turnout time for SSFR volunteer firefighters is calculated from the time when the volunteer firefighters are initially alerted to respond to an emergency until the time the volunteer firefighters arrive at the fire station and are ready to respond on an emergency fire apparatus.

[9] Township of South Stormont, By-law No. 2021-099, Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law, Schedule 'B', B.1.1 Basic Firefighting Services

The turnout time of SSFR volunteer firefighters has a significant impact on the overall emergency response time of fire apparatus arriving on the scene of an emergency incident. The analysis within the following sections will illustrate that since the completion of the 2016 FMP there has been a notable improvement in the turnout times of the volunteer firefighters, as well as the number of volunteer firefighters responding to each emergency incident.

As indicated in the 2016 FMP, where possible, continued priority should be given to strategies that sustain and further reduce the turnout times of the volunteer firefighters.

6.2.2 Travel Time

The fire service defines travel time as the amount of time that it takes for a fire apparatus to travel from the fire station to an emergency incident location. Travel time can be directly impacted by weather conditions, traffic congestion and the amount of distance required to travel to get to the emergency incident location. In a Township such as South Stormont that includes a large geographical area (447.5 square kilometers according to Statistics Canada) extended travel times should be expected.

6.2.3 Fire Suppression GIS Modelling Methodology

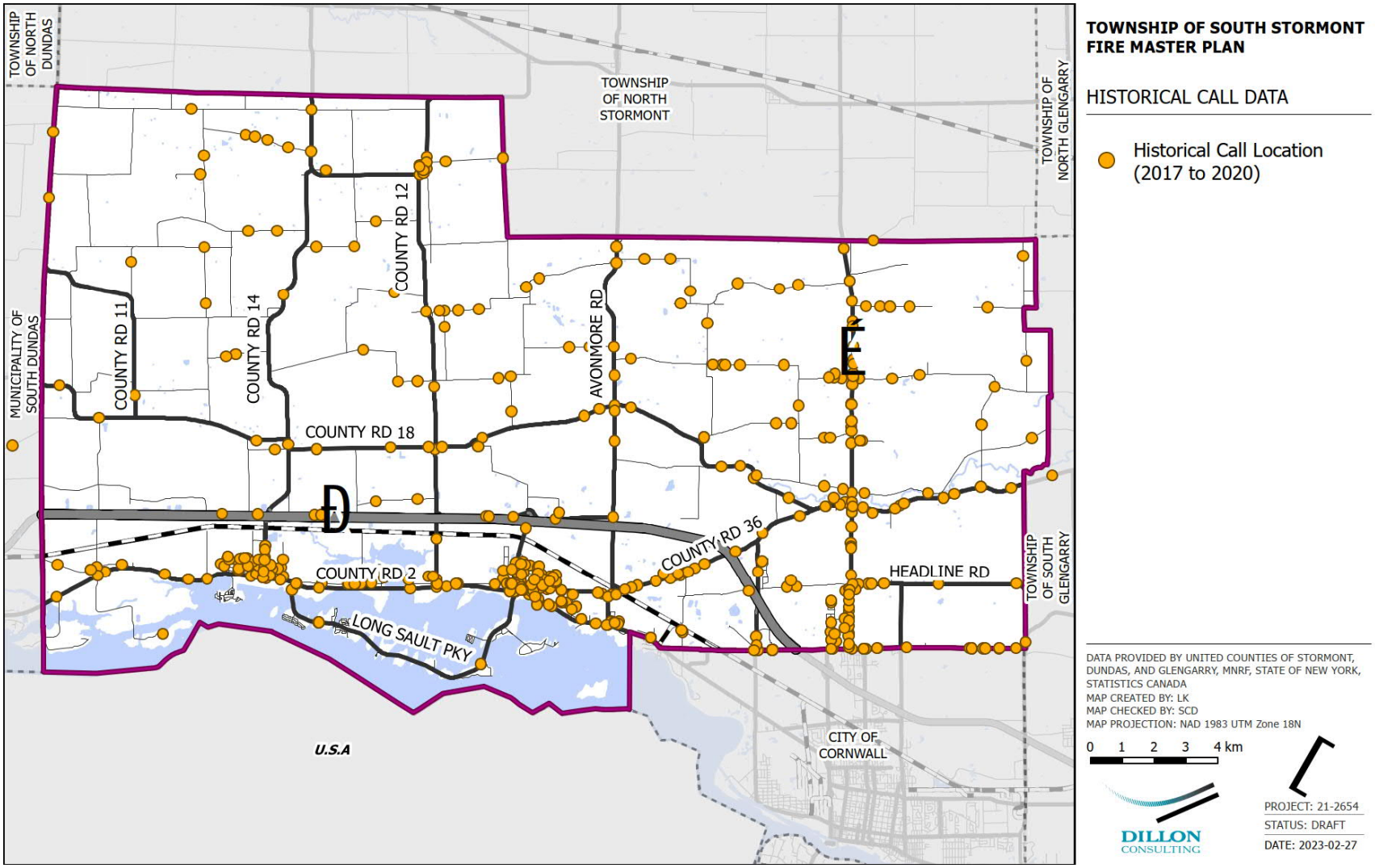
This report utilizes the same GIS modelling methodology as applied within the 2016 FMP to assess the existing fire suppression capabilities of SSFR. Where applicable the GIS model was updated to reflect the existing road network including road length, address ranges, and road class.

6.2.4 Historical Call Locations

Figure 6 illustrates the location of the geocoded[10] historical emergency call data included in the Township's new CRA. This model highlights the higher density of emergency calls in the communities of Ingleside and Long Sault. There was also a slightly higher concentration of calls in the Newington area and along the Highway 138 corridor. This model illustrates that in the rural areas of the Township the distribution of emergency call locations is quite even throughout the Township. As referenced in **Section 6.1.5 – Annual Historical Emergency Call Volume – By Station** there has been a shift in the location of emergency calls from the urban areas to the rural areas of approximately 10% over this period.

[10] Addresses from 2017 to 2020 SSFR historic call data were geographically located into a GIS-based file.

Figure 6: Historic Call Locations



6.2.5 Existing Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Capabilities

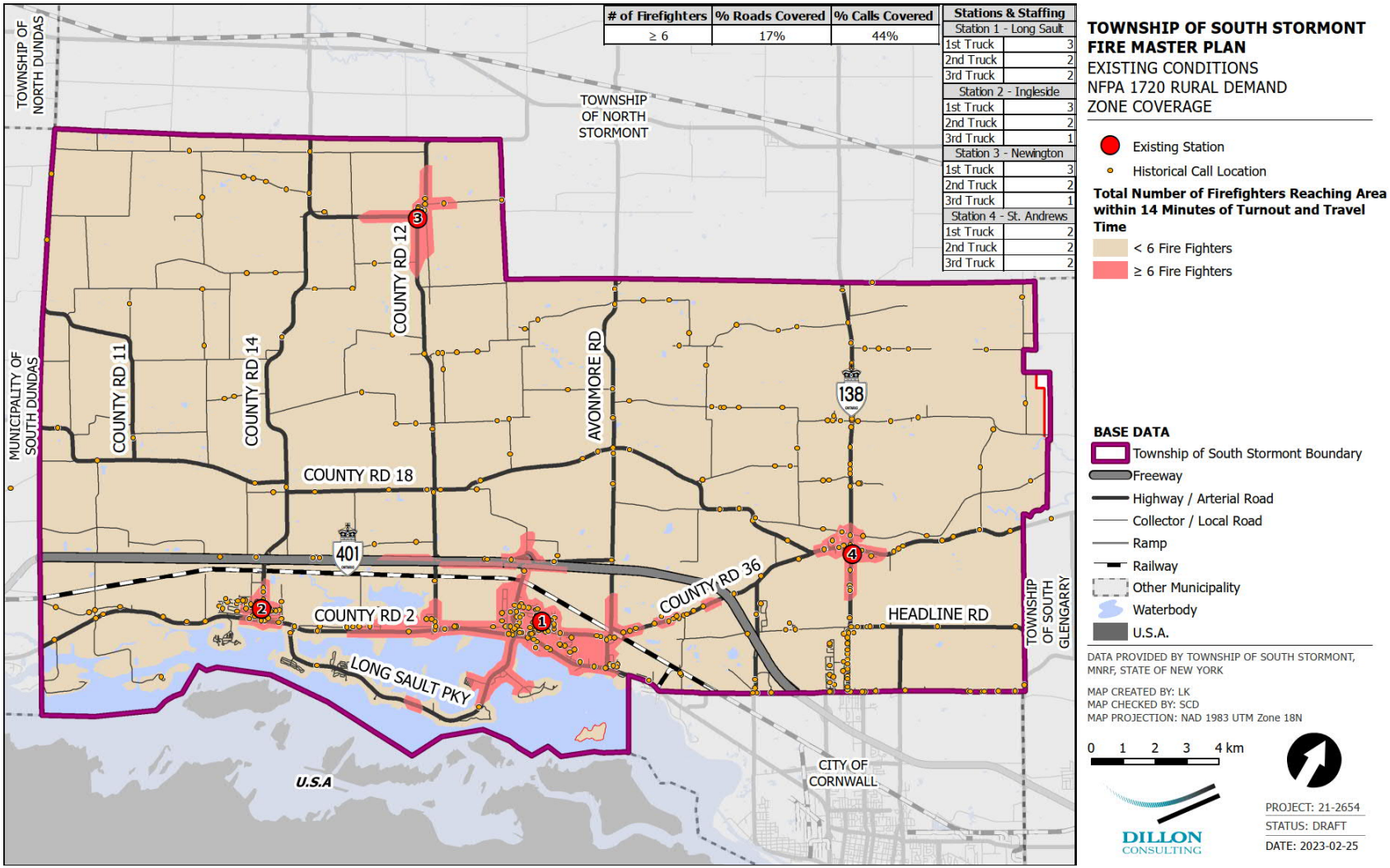
Figure 7 illustrates the existing fire suppression and emergency response capabilities of SSFR in comparison to the NFPA 1720 – Rural Demand Zone performance measure of deploying **a minimum of six firefighters responding within a 14-minute response time (turnout time + travel time) with a performance objective of 80%.** This model indicates SSFR has historically be able to deploy a minimum of six volunteer firefighters to 44% of the emergency call locations including 17% of the Township's Road network. In comparison to the 2016 FMP this reflects an improvement of 41.5% coverage of historical emergency call locations, and a 15.5% improvement in coverage of the Township's Road network.

In our view the improvement in the department's fire suppression and emergency response coverage can be directly attributed to an increase in the number of volunteer firefighters consistently responding to emergency calls in less time (turnout time) than identified by the 2016 FMP. This improvement has occurred at all station locations, with notable improvements at Stations 3 and 4.

Although the overall fire suppression and emergency response performance of SSFR has improved since the completion of the 2016 FMP, the department continues to have a significant challenge. The data review process and stakeholder consultation with senior department staff and the volunteer firefighters confirms that from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday (normal business hours) the department is currently unable to consistently deploy a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters. In our experience this is a common challenge for municipalities operating volunteer fire departments. The increasing demands associated with work-life balance, working outside of the community, both spouses working, and other personal priorities are making it increasingly harder for volunteer (volunteer firefighters) to respond during these hours. This challenge is also impacted by the fact that **"In consideration of the reliance by the Fire and Rescue Department on the response of Volunteer Firefighters, whose deployment to emergencies in sufficient numbers cannot in all instances be guaranteed"[11].** The fire suppression and emergency response future conditions analyses presented within the following sections consider these existing challenges.

[11] Township of South Stormont, By-law No. 2021-099, Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law, Limited Services 9.

Figure 7: Existing Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Capabilities



6.3 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response – Improvement Strategies

Since completion of the 2016 FMP SSFR has achieved a significant improvement in their emergency response capabilities in comparison to the NFPA 1720 – Rural Demand Zone performance measure of deploying **a minimum of six firefighters responding within a 14-minute response time (turnout time + travel time) with a performance objective of 80%.** This current performance of 44% is a very positive indicator of improvement, however, it should be noted that SSFR is still not achieving the NFPA 1720 – Rural Demand Zone performance target of 80% of all emergency incidents.

6.3.1 Projected Community Growth

As indicated in the 2016 FMP the NFPA 1720 – Rural Demand Zone performance objective is based upon a community with a density of less than 500 people per square mile. Although this rural population density continues to represent a large portion of the Township, there are local communities (such as Ingleside and Long Sault) where the current population densities exceeds the NFPA's rural measure of population density. Future community growth and intensification in these two communities will also result in further population density increases.

In 2021 the population density within the community of Long Sault was estimated to be 2,375 people per square mile. In the community of Ingleside, the population was estimated to be 2,190 people square mile. In the communities of Ingleside and Long Sault further improvements in SSFR fire suppression and emergency response capabilities should be considered in comparison to the NFPA 1720 – Suburban Area performance measure including a deployment of **a minimum of ten firefighters responding within a 10-minute response time (turnout time + travel time) with a performance objective of 80%.**

As part of this FMP Update, to support the analysis of the current and future fire suppression services provided by SSFR, Dillon worked with the Township to establish predicted future growth, which is driven in part by the Township's Official Plan (2018). This section presents the Assumed Future Growth, but first discussed the overall structure and land uses in the Township.

6.3.1.1 Land Use

The Township of South Stormont's Official Plan (OP) (2018) establishes a community structure for growth which includes a distinction between a collection of urban (18) and rural settlement areas (50). In urban settlement areas applicable districts include commercial, residential and employment. Section 3.0 of the OP will focus on directing growth over the next 20 years across the settlement areas. This considered much of the pending development applications with a focus on the Long Sault and Ingleside settlement areas. To direct and manage this growth to meet the needs of the community, the OP identifies a number of land use designations that are found within settlement areas. Some notable designations include: Residential Districts, Commercial Districts and Employment Districts.

6.3.1.2 Future Development Considerations

To qualitatively inform the fire suppression emergency response coverage analysis, Township staff identified future development areas based on two time horizons: one to nine years and ten years and beyond.

Each future develop area has a corresponding land use designation. This includes identification of a principal use of land for each of the designations in order to simplify the consideration of future development as part of the station location assessment. The applicable principal uses identified through this exercise are: residential, employment, and mixed use.

When considering future development areas, it is important to note that:

- The future scenario being assessed is based on a long-term horizon of development for the Township (20 years);
- The identified development areas are based on the best available information and the current known development potential. The actual timing and location of future development will depend on a range of factors, including servicing capacity, market demand, and developer interest. This could result in a longer horizon than the identified 20 years; and,

- The permitted uses in the future development areas are general. Implementation of the Official Plan will be carried out through tools such as a zoning by-law which will provide more detailed permissions around land uses within the identified future development areas.

Of the existing development applications and projected growth, much of the development is expected to occur in the Long Sault and Ingleside development areas.

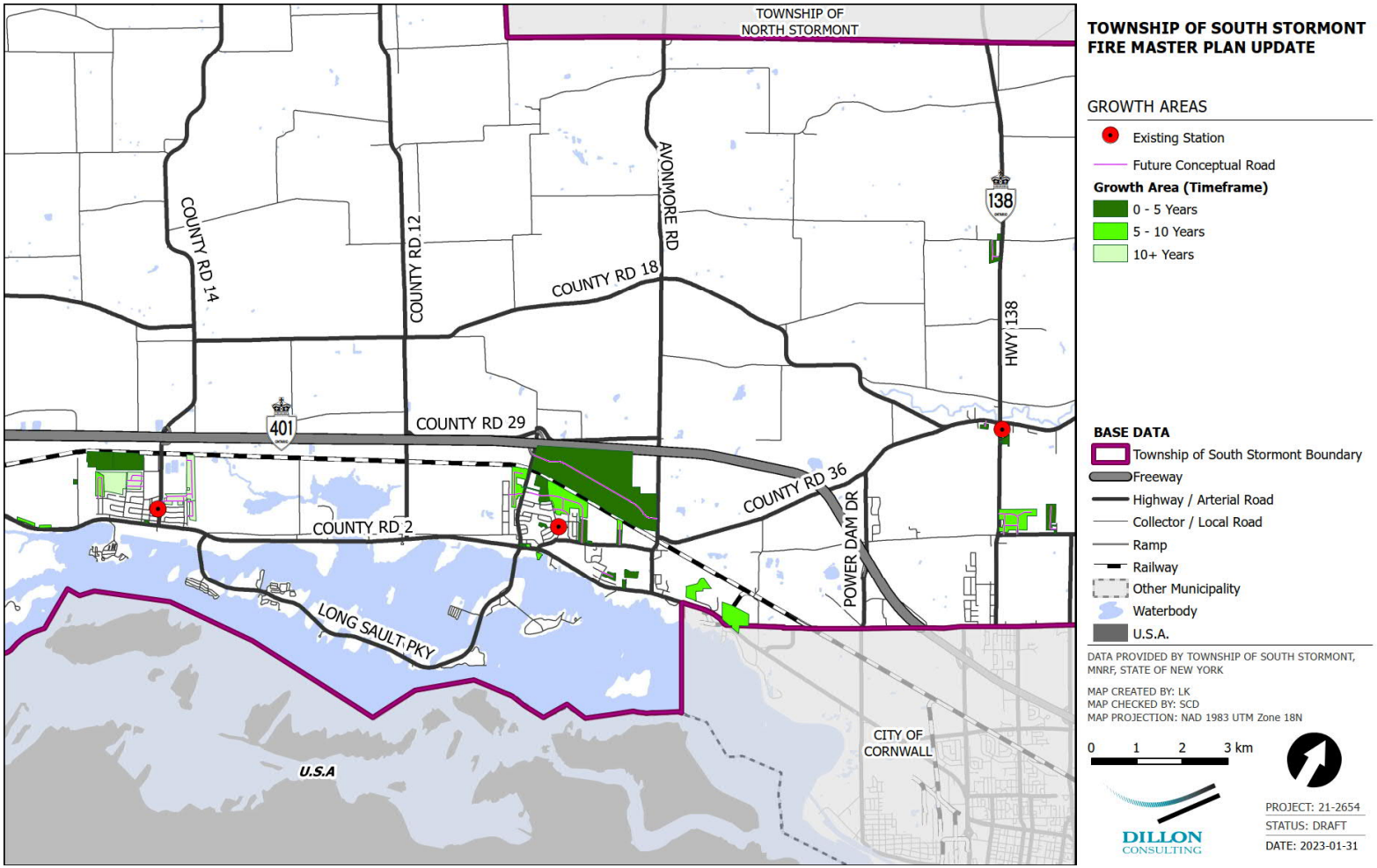
Long Sault is projecting the development of a collection of larger employment lands, (some as large as 100 acres). Smaller commercial developments are also expected throughout the community, along with a collection of mid to low density residential developments which range from seven acres to just below 100 acres.

Ingleside development will largely take the form of residential, with a collection of plans for low-to-high and low-to-mid density residential development ranging from 0.9 to 90 acres.

The future development areas identified by the Township are shown in **Figure 8**. **Figure 8** also shows approximations of future local and collector roads to serve the larger development parcels. Road network connectivity is essential for accessing future (and existing) development to provide emergency response coverage. In order to assess future station location options and emergency response capabilities, it was necessary to assume some additions within a future road network.

The analysis within the following sections considers information provided by Township staff to identify the locations and characteristics of the projected future community growth. These development areas and predicted timing are shown on each of the scenarios presented within the proposed fire station location strategy. It will be important for the Township to monitor the timing of development, including of the road network, as part of implementation of this 2022 FMP Update report.

Figure 8: Future Development Areas



6.3.2 Proposed Fire Station Location Strategy

The 2016 FMP identified several options for the Township's consideration related to the renewal/replacement of the existing fire stations including optional locations. Since completion of the 2016 FMP the Township has successfully replaced Station 4 (St. Andrews) at its previous location. The new fire station includes community space and provides SSFR with a significantly improved facility.

The 2016 FMP also included options for the relocation/renewal of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) and Fire Station 2 (Ingleside). The 2016 FMP also recommended consideration of the partnering of Fire Stations 2 (Ingleside) and Fire Station 3 (Newington) and the closure of Fire Station 3 (Newington). Based on our research and the stakeholder consultation to prepare this report several factors were identified that support the reconsideration of the 2016 FMP fire station location/renewal strategy. These include:

- An increase in the number of emergency incidents located in the rural area of the Township, and specifically the Fire Station 3 (Newington) immediate response area;
- An improvement in the turnout time of volunteer firefighters and the number of volunteer firefighters responding at all stations, and specifically Fire Station 3 (Newington);
- An identified need to further prioritize the fire station location/renewal strategy in recognition of the Township's current fiscal capabilities; and,
- In response to projected community growth and intensification.

The following sections present the updated fire station/location renewal strategy. It should be noted that the stations are presented in order of the station numbering, not the priority of station replacement. For example, Fire Station 2 is anticipated to be replaced prior to Station 1.

6.3.2.1 Fire Station 1 (Long Sault)

The analysis presented within the 2016 FMP considered the relocation of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and Highway 401. In that analysis the 2016 FMP also applied the predicted turnout times of 6.5 minutes for the first apparatus and 8.5 minutes for the second apparatus. These results suggested that SSFR would be able to provide emergency response coverage to 50.3% of the Township's roads and 71.7% of the historical call locations.

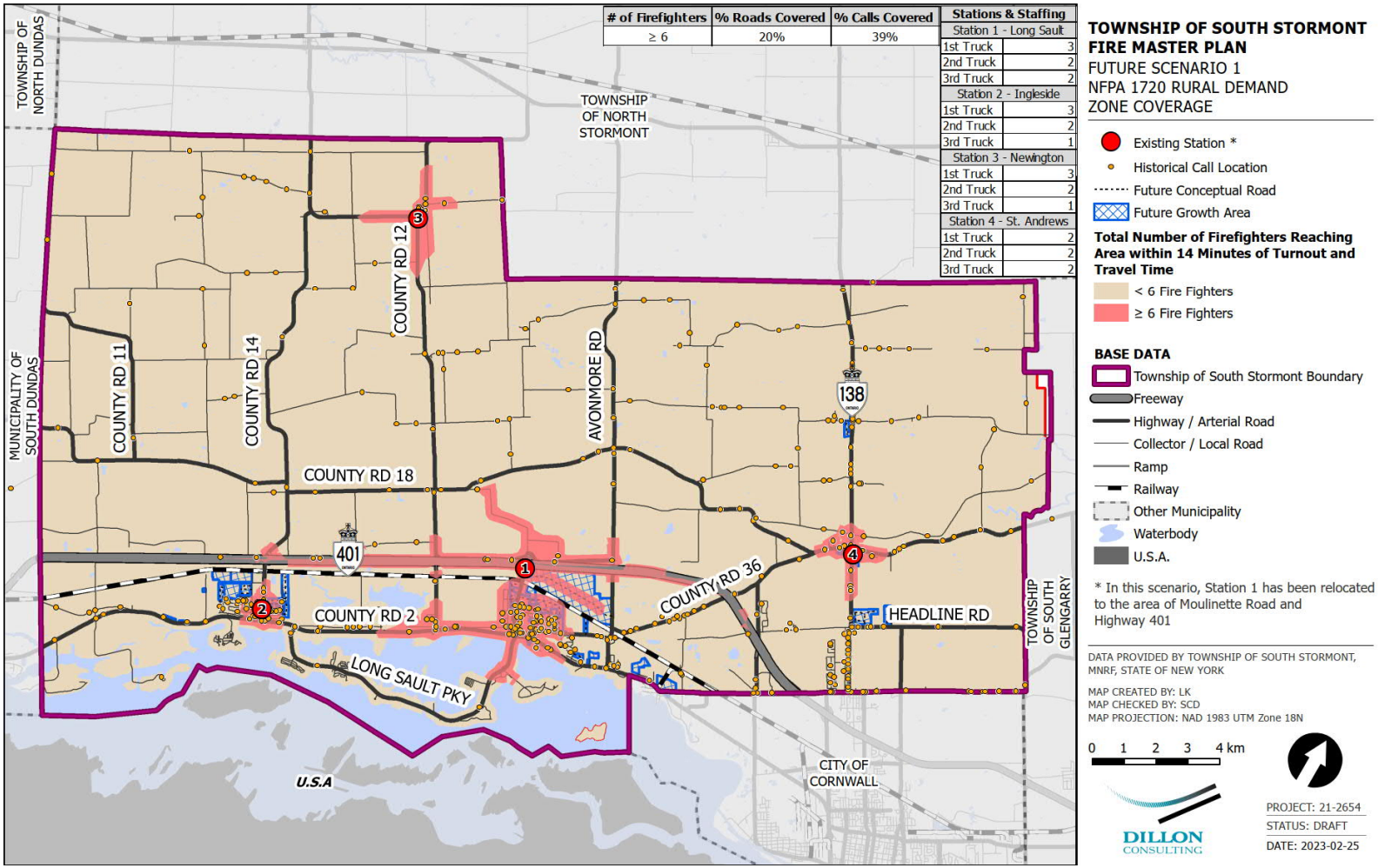
As indicated within this report SSFR has not been able to attain the predicted turnout times presented within the 2016 FMP for the first and second apparatus. However, SSFR has significantly improved their turnout times and number of volunteer firefighters responding.

Scenario 1 – Relocate Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Moulinette Road and Highway 401

Figure 9 illustrates an updated model of the predicted NFPA 1720 performance measures based on the department's current turnout times and deployment capabilities. This model indicates that relocating Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and Highway 401 would result in the predicted coverage of 20% of the Township's roads and 39% of the historical call locations.

This model indicates that the proposed relocation of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and Highway 401 would provide coverage to the future growth area between Moulinette Road and Avonmore Road south of Highway 401; however, it would also reduce the existing coverage in the area at the south end of Avonmore Road and along the County Road 36 corridor.

Figure 9: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) - Relocated to Moulinette Road and Highway 401

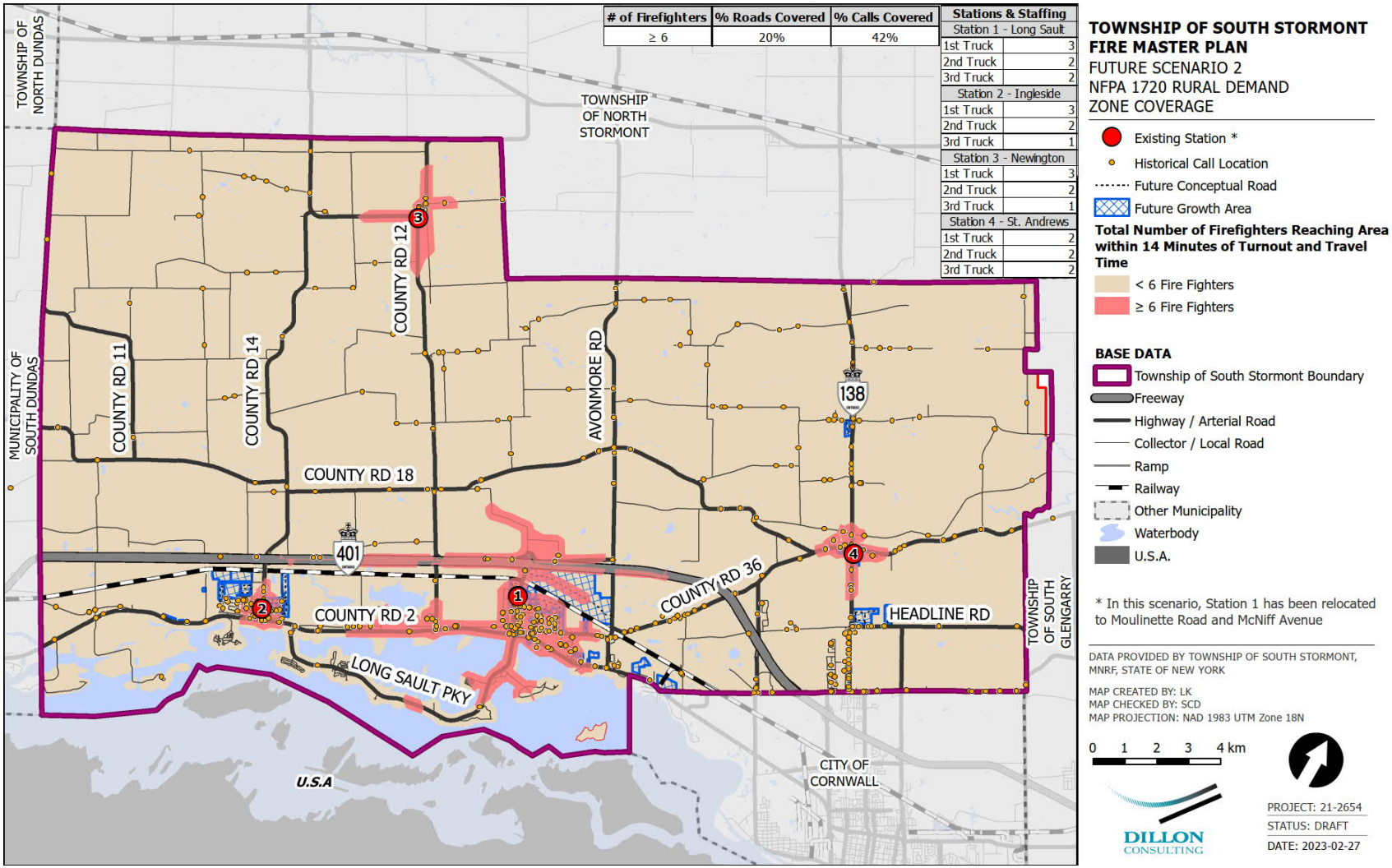


Scenario 2 – Relocate Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue

Figure 10 illustrates a model of the predicted NFPA 1720 performance measures based on the department's current turnout times and deployment capabilities. This model indicates that relocating Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue would result in the predicted coverage of 20% of the Township's roads and 42% of the historical call locations.

This model indicates that the proposed relocation of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue would also provide coverage to the future growth area between Moulinette Road and Avonmore Road south of Highway 401. This location would have a slightly less impact in the reduction of the existing coverage in the area at the south end of Avonmore Road and along the County Road 36 corridor.

Figure 10: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Relocated to Moulinette Road and McNiff

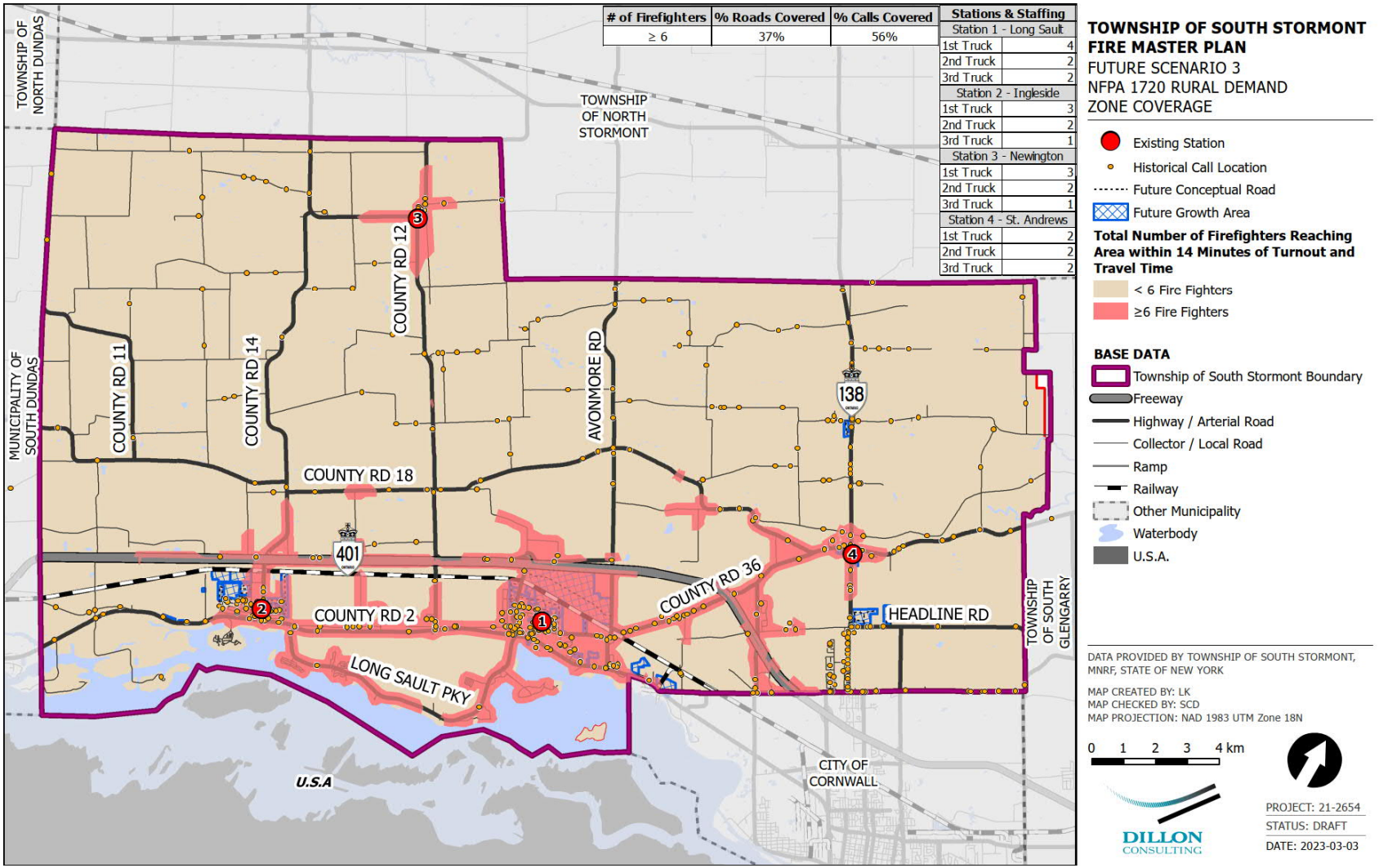


Scenario 3 – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) - Existing Location – Daytime Crew

In addition to considering the re-location of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) as an option to further enhance its existing fire suppression deployment capabilities, the analysis within this 2022 FMP Update has considered sustaining this station in its current location with an option of implementing a daytime crew with the ability to achieve a proposed two-minute turnout time. Further details regarding the proposed daytime crew strategy will be presented within the Proposed Fire Suppression Resource Strategies section (**Section 6.3.3.1**) of this report.

Figure 11 illustrates the predicted performance that could be achieved if SSFR was able to implement a crew of four firefighters who could be readily available to respond Monday through Friday during normal business hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. This scenario illustrates that if these four firefighters could achieve a two-minute turnout time SSFR would be able to provide coverage to 37% of the Township's roads and 56% of the historical call locations.

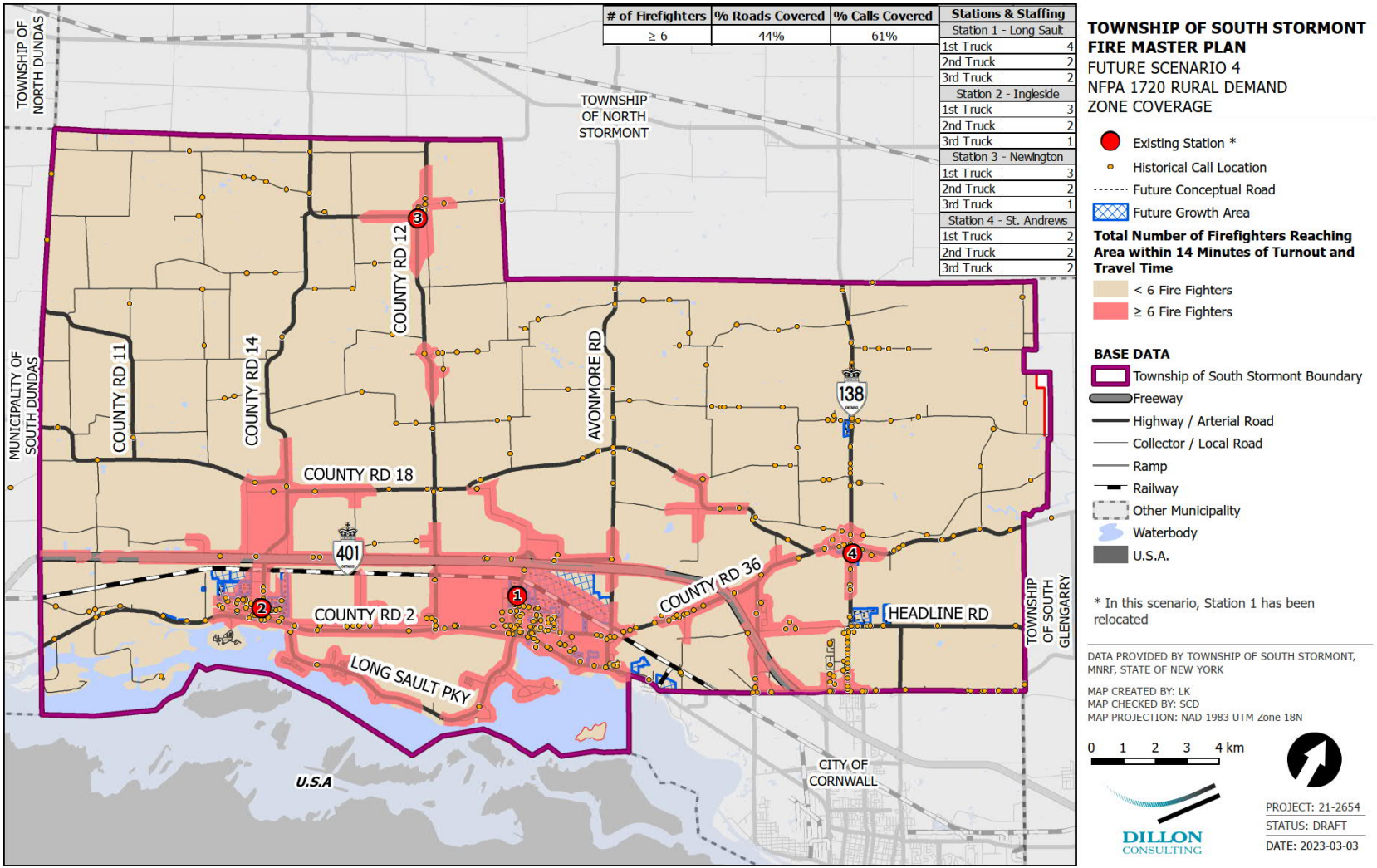
Figure 11: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Existing Location – Daytime Crew



Scenario 4 – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue - Daytime Crew

This scenario, shown in **Figure 12**, illustrates the predicted performance of both relocating Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to the area of Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue and implementing the same proposed daytime crew as presented in Scenario 3. The result of this analysis illustrates that if these four firefighters could achieve a two-minute turnout time form this location SSFR would be able to provide coverage to 44% of the Township's roads and 61% of the historical call locations.

Figure 12: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Moulinette Road & McNiff Avenue – Daytime Crew



Summary – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) Station Location Strategy

Table 5 illustrates a summary of the Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) relocation strategies presented above.

Table 5: Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) – Relocation Strategies

Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) Relocation Strategies	% Township Roads Covered	% Historical Calls Covered
2016 FMP – Existing Location	2.4%	3.4%
2022 FMP – Existing Location	17%	44%
Scenario 1 – Moulinette Road and Highway 401	20%	39%
Scenario 2 – Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue	20%	42%
Scenario 3 – Existing Location + Daytime Crew	37%	56%
Scenario 4 – Moulinette Road and McNiff Avenue + Daytime Crew	44%	61%

In summary, our research and the stakeholder consultation process to prepare this 2022 FMP Update has identified that the current Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) is no longer meeting the operational needs of SSFR. This building is at, or nearing the end of its life expectancy and would require significant capital investment to be upgraded to meet the future predicted demands of SSFR over the next 50-year life cycle of a building. For example, this station does not currently have the capacity to accommodate the proposed increased number of volunteer firefighters and is not designed to accommodate any future growth that would include full-time firefighters and the associated amenities.

The analysis presented within this 2022 FMP Update indicates that the current location of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) provides comparable emergency response coverage as to the options of relocating it further west and north (Scenario 1 & 2). The most significant benefit to the department's current emergency response capabilities is through the implementation of the proposed daytime crew. In our view this strategy could be accommodated in the current location and within the current state of the station.

The Township has identified the need to replace/relocate this fire station. However, the analyses presented within this 2022 FMP Update identifies that the most immediate need for capital investment for SSFR is the replacement of Fire Station 2 (Ingleside). In

our view a more comprehensive analysis related to the replacement of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) is required. This should include further consideration of this station's location related to the continued utilization of volunteer firefighters, as well as the future transition to full-time firefighters. In our experience the utilization of the volunteer and full-time firefighters within a 'composite fire suppression model' will require a more complex fire station design and supporting amenities. There are also design requirements to align with the best practices of a modern fire station.

The analysis indicates that the existing location of Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) may meet the longer-term needs of the Township and SSFR. However, it is our recommendation that further investigation of alternative locations be considered. This should include identifying optional locations adjacent to major intersections and not within a residential neighbourhood. For example, consideration should be given to the relocation of this station to the property adjacent to the current Township offices. This site provides greater access to Highway 2 as a corridor to access other areas of the Township. As an addition to the Township offices this site may provide more administrative/operational synergies than a stand-alone fire station option.

Recommendation 23: That as part of developing the financial strategy to replace Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) that the Township of South Stormont consider conducting a further comprehensive analysis of the operational/administrative and location needs of replacing/relocating Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) as part of developing the financial strategy to replace Fire Station 1.

6.3.2.2 Fire Station 2 – Ingleside

This fire station is not meeting the current operational needs of SSFR. The station was constructed with two large apparatus room doors that were intended to accommodate two large fire apparatus. SSFR currently deploys three large apparatus from this station creating a very challenging situation for deploying apparatus and storing apparatus. This situation also creates a very limited amount of space around the fire apparatus when they are stored causing limited access to the apparatus, and no space for training of the equipment located on the apparatus.

In our view the renewal/replacement of Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) should be considered the Township's **priority** for the fire department's current infrastructure needs. The 2016

FMP included options for the relocation of Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) that included partnering with Fire Station 3 (Newington). As indicated previously within this report this option is no longer recommended at this time. The analysis to prepare this 2022 FMP Update considered the option of relocating the existing Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) to the area of 45th Parallel Road and Dickenson Drive as referenced in the 2016 FMP. In our view the current location of Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) on Maple Street should be considered as a preferred location for this station. Alternatively, if this location will not accommodate a new fire station, then a location within proximity (i.e. within an approximate 500 metre radius) to this site should be considered.

The 2016 FMP included information related to the design and construction of fire stations. In our view the recent success of replacing Fire Station 4 (St. Andrews) including consultation with the volunteer firefighters assigned to the station should provide a good foundation for designing a new Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) on its current location.

Recommendation 24: That consideration be given to prioritizing the construction of a new Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) at its current location.

6.3.2.3 Fire Station 3 – Newington

In our view there is sufficient evidence to support sustaining the utilization of Fire Station 3 (Newington) in its current location at this time. The analysis to prepare this 2022 FMP Update indicates that there has been an increase in emergency response calls in this area, and that there has been an improvement in the turnout times and number of volunteer firefighters responding.

This station had some renovations in 2012; however, it still has limited space for training and administrative workspace. Based on our research and stakeholder consultation there is a more immediate need to replace the current Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) and Fire Station 1 (Long Sault). As the process for the replacement of these two fire stations proceeds, further consideration of the long-term needs of the Township, including the future use of Fire Station 3 (Newington), will be required. Therefore, this 2022 FMP Update recommends maintaining the current use of Fire Station 3 (Newington) at its current location.

Recommendation 25: That SSFR continue to maintain Fire Station 3 (Newington) in its current location until further consideration of the longer-term needs of the Township are considered.

6.3.2.4 Fire Station 4 – St. Andrews

In our view the recent replacement of Fire Station 4 (St. Andrews) reflects current industry best practices in fire station design and municipal planning. In addition to meeting the operational and administrative needs of SSFR this facility provides space for community use. The stakeholder consultation process with the volunteer firefighters assigned to this station identified their satisfaction with this new facility. However, comments were received seeking further consideration into how the joint training space/community use space is maintained.

6.3.3 Proposed Fire Suppression Staff Resource Strategy

The 2016 FMP identified several strategies related to the reduction of volunteer turnout times. These included increasing the total complement of volunteer firefighters assigned to each station, recruiting auxiliary volunteer firefighters, scheduling volunteer firefighters and the need to further prioritize culture change within the department in moving towards the goal of being **one single, unified fire department**. Where most applicable SSFR has implemented these strategies and improved the turnout time of the volunteer firefighters.

However, SSFR continues to have a significant challenge in providing a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters during the normal business of 7 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday. The current deployment model of SSFR relies solely on the utilization of volunteer firefighters. As such there is currently no guarantee that there will be any response by the volunteer firefighters. Based on our review of the historical data the risk of this happening appears to be low; however, there is a high risk that an insufficient number of volunteer firefighters will respond to achieve the current NFPA performance targets for emergency response.

6.3.3.1 Proposed Daytime Crew – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault)

Through consultation with the Fire Chief it was identified that there may be a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters and existing full-time staff to consistently deploy a daytime crew from Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) during the Township's normal business hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The successful implementation of this strategy would rely on the following:

- Availability of the current full-time Fire Chief;
- Availability of the proposed new full-time Deputy Fire Chief/Training Officer;
- Availability of the current full-time Fire Prevention Officer;
- Availability of current Township staff who are also volunteer firefighters; and,
- Recruitment of additional current Township staff to be volunteer firefighters.

The implementation of this strategy would require the Township's support to allow these current Township staff to prioritize their response to an emergency call over any other roles and responsibilities. The primary objective of this strategy would be to assemble a minimum of four firefighters (volunteer + SSFR staff) to provide a guaranteed response from Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) to any incident within the Township that was identified as having an immediate life safety risk. The implementation of this strategy would also require the development of a clear standard operating guideline identifying when this deployment would be utilized.

In our view this strategy reflects a proactive approach to enhancing the current fire suppression and emergency response capabilities of SSFR through the optimization of existing Township staff resources. The successful implementation of this strategy would also assist the Township in providing a transition towards implementing full-time firefighters and sustaining the use of the volunteer firefighter model.

Recommendation 26: That consideration be given to implementing the proposed Daytime Crew – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) as presented within the 2022 Fire Master Plan update report.

6.3.3.2 Proposed Full-time Firefighting Daytime Crew – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault)

In our view there is an identified need for the Township of South Stormont to begin the financial planning process associated with implementing a full-time firefighting daytime crew operating from Fire Station 1 (Long Sault). The successful implementation of the proposed daytime crew consisting of volunteer firefighters and SSFR current staff resources may delay this need, but it should be recognized that continued community growth and increasing emergency call volume will impact the sustainability of that strategy.

The major financial impact of this strategy will be the hiring of a daytime crew consisting of four fulltime firefighters including a Captain and three firefighters. To assist in managing the financial impact of this strategy the proposed implementation plan includes the following:

- Phase 1: Hiring a full-time Captain and one full-time firefighter; and,
- Phase 2: Hiring two additional full-time firefighters.

The proposed phasing of this hiring process recognizes the operational safety requirements of ensuring two firefighters are working together at all times at an emergency incident, and that a 'supervisor,' as defined by the OHSA, is available at all times (including while in the fire station). In addition to supplementing the existing fire suppression and emergency response capabilities of SSFR, the implementation of full-time firefighters would significantly enhance the existing fire prevention and public education programs provided by SSFR.

Based on our research and stakeholder consultation to prepare this 2022 FMP Update the Township should begin to prepare for the implementation of this strategy within the next three to five years, subject to the successful implementation of the proposed daytime crew consisting of volunteer firefighters and Township of South Stormont current staff resources.

Recommendation 27: That the Township of South Stormont begin the development of a financial strategy for the future hiring of four full-time firefighters as presented within 2022 Fire Master Plan Update report.

6.3.3.3 Proposed Volunteer Firefighter Recognition Strategy

In our view the dedication and commitment of the volunteer firefighters is evident in the efforts that have been made to reduce turnout times and the number of volunteer firefighters responding from all four stations. The recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (volunteers) is one of the most significant challenges facing communities across Canada.

Industry research has indicated that one area that should be considered by municipalities as part of their volunteer firefighter (volunteer) retention strategy is recognition. This could be in the form of honouring years of service, letters of commendation, or an open communication to the volunteer firefighters and the public. The industry research indicates that there is no defined recognition strategy that would be applicable to all communities. The development of this strategy should be led by the Fire Chief and Council.

Recommendation 28: That consideration be given to developing and implementing a Volunteer Firefighter Recognition Strategy.

6.4 Fire Suppression/Emergency Response Summary

The analysis presented within this 2022 FMP Update identifies the significant improvements that have been achieved in improving SSFR fire suppression and emergency response capabilities since completion of the 2016 FMP. In our view these improvements are directly related to a renewed commitment of the volunteer firefighters. In part, these improvements also provided further insight into the commitment of the volunteer firefighters to becoming **one single-unified fire department**.

Although these improvements are positive, it must be recognized that SSFR is still not achieving the NFPA 1720 fire suppression performance objective of deploying **six firefighters within a turnout time + travel time of 14 minutes to 80% of the emergency calls.** As indicated within this 2022 FMP Update consideration should be given to further improving the department's current fire suppression capabilities within the communities of Long Sault and Ingleside to deploying **10 firefighters within a turnout time + travel time of 10 minutes to 80% of the emergency calls** due to the higher population densities in these communities.

The recommendations presented within this report are intended to provide Council with a strategic framework to guide the further enhancement of SSFR emergency response capabilities to respond to the challenges identified. This includes further investment in the capital infrastructure requirements to replace Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) and Fire Station 1 (Long Sault). The recommendations also include a strategy to enhance the daytime response from Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) that is intended to supplement and improve the department's existing fire suppression performance. In addition, this analysis presented within this report highlights the need for the Township to begin developing a financial strategy for the future transition to the use of full-time firefighters.

The Fire Suppression/Emergency Response recommendations include the following:

23. That a comprehensive analysis of the operational/administrative and location needs of replacing/relocating fire stations be developed;
24. That consideration be given to prioritizing the construction of a new Fire Station 2 (Ingleside) at its current location, and a location for a new Fire Station 1 (Long Sault) be identified and lands acquired;
25. That SSFR continue to maintain Fire Station 3 (Newington) in its current location until further consideration of the longer-term needs of the Township are considered;
26. That consideration be given to implementing the proposed Daytime Crew – Fire Station 1 (Long Sault);
27. That a financial strategy for the future hiring of four full-time firefighters as presented within 2022 Fire Master Plan Update report be developed and provided to council for consideration during the 2024 budget process; and
28. That consideration be given to developing and implementing a Volunteer Firefighter (VF) Recognition Strategy.

7.0 Apparatus and Equipment

The 2016 FMP included six recommendations related to the apparatus and equipment utilized by SSFR. Our review of these recommendations indicates that several have been initiated. In our view all these recommendations continue to remain applicable to SSFR.

Based on research and stakeholder consultation SSFR has been investing in the replacement of its previous tankers as a priority since the 2016 FMP was completed. In our view this strategy is appropriate given the large rural area of the Township which has no fixed water supply. This strategy also supports the Fire Underwriters Tanker Shuttle Accreditation requirements.

In our view consideration should be given to the recommended transition of the major apparatus fleet of the South Stormont Fire and Rescue to combination pump-rescues as the next priority. For information the 2016 FMP apparatus and equipment recommendations included the following:

- That comprehensive Standard Operating Guidelines be developed and approved for all required South Stormont Fire and Rescue apparatus and equipment inspections;
- That consideration be given to transitioning SSFR major apparatus fleet replacement plan to 15 years of front-line service, 5 years of reserve service with a total life cycle of 20 years;
- That consideration be given to transitioning the major apparatus fleet of the South Stormont Fire and Rescue to combination pump-rescues;
- That consideration be given to implementing the multi-use vehicles presented within the proposed major apparatus plan presented within the proposed Fire Master Plan;
- That consideration be given to creating a major apparatus reserve capacity to include a minimum of one pumper; and,
- That the South Stormont Fire and Rescue develop a life cycle replacement plan for all equipment including firefighters bunker gear and self-contained breathing apparatus based on industry best practices and manufacturers' directions.

8.0 Communications and Technology

The 2016 FMP included two recommendations related to the communications and technology utilized by SSFR. In response to these recommendations it is our understanding that the Fire Chief initiated the first phase of a comprehensive **Fire Communications Technology Review** in 2022.

Based on review of the initial findings of Phase I it is clear that this review process and resulting identified improvements will have significant financial impacts for the Township. We understand that once the **Fire Communications Technology Review** is completed the Township will need to develop a corresponding financial implementation strategy.

Where possible, priority should be given to improving the current radio communications system utilized by SSFR to reduce the presence of any 'dead zones' where radios are not available.

The department should also work with the dispatch provider to ensure the details of incident data, including time stamps for: call time, alarm time, dispatch time, enroute time, on scene, return to station, etc. are collected and provided to the department. Ideally, data on the number of firefighters responding on each apparatus and the arrival times of each apparatus on scene, could also be recorded into the incident records and provided to the department. This would support the ongoing planning and review of the department's emergency response capabilities.