

TOWNSHIP OF AUGUSTA

REPORT NUMBER: 2021-048
REPORT TO COUNCIL: May 25, 2021
RE: United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Regional
Fire Service Review by Pomax Consulting
AUTHOR: Robert Bowman, Fire Chief

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council for the Township of Augusta continues to operate its fire service under a single tier model and

FUTHERMORE directs the Fire Chief to continue to work closely with the Township’s neighbouring fire services to deliver the most cost-effective fire service possible for its’ residents.

BACKGROUND:

On April 26, 2018, a workshop was held with the CAOs from the local municipalities to look strategically at fire services in Leeds and Grenville and receive input/feedback on potential opportunities, including a Counties-wide fire service. A request by the Leeds and Grenville Fire Chief’s to have a representative participate in the workshop was declined. Dillon Consulting facilitated the workshop and consensus was achieved on the following courses of action:

1. Community Risk Assessment
2. Professional Qualifications and Standards Assessments
3. Services and Program Review
4. Effective Communications

A committee of CAOs/City Managers was formed to evaluate the proposals, ultimately selecting Pomax Consulting as the successful firm. The committee subsequently agreed to remain involved in the study by sitting on the steering committee. A request for fire service members to sit on the steering committee resulted in an overwhelming response with almost every Fire Chief willing to participate. Unfortunately, after some delay, the Chiefs were informed by Leeds and Grenville Counties CAO Andy Brown, that the fire service would not be represented on the steering committee. The compromise for this was that the steering committee and Pomax would meet one week and the following week the meeting would include the Fire Chiefs. While this format did allow for regular meetings, it could not be considered a collaboration, as there was normally only one steering committee member present at most meetings with the Fire Chief’s.

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On Wednesday March 10, 2021, the UCLG Modernization Shared Task Force received the final report from Pomax on the Leeds and Grenville Fire Service Review. As a result, Mayor Malanka has asked me to provide Council with a detailed review of the Pomax's report and recommendations.

The report includes 23 main recommendations in addition to multiple other suggestions throughout the report. We have grouped these recommendations and suggestions into five categories to provide clarification.

ANALYSIS:

Category One: Amalgamation

Pomax's recommendation:

- 1. a single, centrally managed, fire service for the counties and municipalities to take advantage of greater coordination of human and physical resources with a focus on the reduction of fire incidence, and subsequent reduction in cost and response activity. As dedicated and concerned as we believe the current fire chiefs to be, it is highly unlikely that the municipal fire services will be able to coordinate and cooperate as a group of 12 to achieve the efficiencies and effectiveness that can be accomplished through a single counties-based fire protection organization;*

The first recommendation in Pomax's report is the amalgamation of Fire Services within Leeds and Grenville. Pomax states that there could be significant cost savings in completing the amalgamation, however, they do not give a definitive amount and the data compiled in the tables contained in this report shows no significant savings to be found.

To try and determine the total cost of amalgamation, I compiled the most recent available FIR data and I have taken each municipalities percentage of taxable assessment and multiplied it by the current cost of fire services to determine the possible new cost of a single, centrally managed, fire service to each municipality. Taxable assessment is not the only way to determine cost, I have also completed an average municipal percent based on taxable assessment, call volume, population, and land area.

You will find all this information in the tables 1-4.

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Table 1

	(FIR 2018) Fire Department Total Expenses Before Adjustments	(FIR 2018) Phased in Taxable Assessment 2018	Municipal % of Total LG Phased in Taxable Assessment	Fire Expenses x Municipal % = POST Amalgamation Cost	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease \$\$	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease %
Athens	\$125,833	\$313,708,626	2.31%	\$308,132	\$182,298.54	144.87%
Augusta	\$579,886	\$780,678,410	5.75%	\$766,800	\$186,913.58	32.23%
Brockville	\$5,835,565	\$2,180,460,619	16.07%	\$2,141,697	-\$3,693,868.42	-63.30%
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	\$707,971	\$770,180,573	5.68%	\$756,488	\$48,517.37	6.85%
Elizabethtown Kitley	\$724,373	\$1,087,123,716	8.01%	\$1,067,797	\$343,423.93	47.41%
Front of Yonge	\$251,897	\$319,848,861	2.36%	\$314,163	\$62,265.62	24.72%
Gananoque	\$909,151	\$513,946,300	3.79%	\$504,809	-\$404,341.59	-44.47%
Leeds 1000	\$1,308,369	\$2,166,334,088	15.97%	\$2,127,821	\$819,452.19	62.63%
Merrickville	\$351,251	\$364,271,940	2.68%	\$357,796	\$6,544.95	1.86%
North Grenville	\$946,599	\$2,385,953,326	17.58%	\$2,343,536	\$1,396,937.06	147.57%
Prescott	\$465,900	\$330,502,183	2.44%	\$324,627	-\$141,273.46	-30.32%
Rideau Lakes / Westport	\$1,121,183	\$2,356,201,589	17.36%	\$2,314,313	\$1,193,130.24	106.42%
Total	\$13,327,978	\$13,569,210,231		\$13,327,978	Total	
Reduction in Cost %	0.0%					
Reduction in Cost \$\$	\$0					

Table 1 shows the current cost of each fire service in Leeds and Grenville and if amalgamation were to happen, what the new cost to each municipality could be based on taxable assessment. This is with \$0.00 or 0% reduction in cost.

Information sourced from <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2018.htm>

Legend:

Red is an increase in cost from single tier fire services.

Green is a decrease in cost from single tier fire services.

Yellow is the percent/dollar value of potential reduction in cost.

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Table 2

	(FIR 2018) Fire Department Total Expenses Before Adjustments	(FIR 2018) Phased in Taxable Assessment 2018	Municipal % of Total LG Phased in Taxable Assessment	Fire Expenses x Municipal % = POST Amalgamation Cost	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease \$\$	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease %
Athens	\$125,833	\$313,708,626	2.31%	\$246,505	\$120,672.23	95.90%
Augusta	\$579,886	\$780,678,410	5.75%	\$613,440	\$33,553.66	5.79%
Brockville	\$5,835,565	\$2,180,460,619	16.07%	\$1,713,357	-\$4,122,207.74	-70.64%
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	\$707,971	\$770,180,573	5.68%	\$605,191	-\$102,780.30	-14.52%
Elizabethtown Kitley	\$724,373	\$1,087,123,716	8.01%	\$854,238	\$129,864.54	17.93%
Front of Yonge	\$251,897	\$319,848,861	2.36%	\$251,330	-\$566.91	-0.23%
Gananoque	\$909,151	\$513,946,300	3.79%	\$403,848	-\$505,303.47	-55.58%
Leeds 1000	\$1,308,369	\$2,166,334,088	15.97%	\$1,702,257	\$393,887.95	30.11%
Merrickville	\$351,251	\$364,271,940	2.68%	\$286,237	-\$65,014.24	-18.51%
North Grenville	\$946,599	\$2,385,953,326	17.58%	\$1,874,829	\$928,229.85	98.06%
Prescott	\$465,900	\$330,502,183	2.44%	\$259,701	-\$206,198.76	-44.26%
Rideau Lakes / Westport	\$1,121,183	\$2,356,201,589	17.36%	\$1,851,451	\$730,267.59	65.13%
Total	\$10,662,382	\$13,569,210,231		\$10,662,382	Total	
Reduction in Cost %	20.0%					
Reduction in Cost \$\$	\$2,665,596					

Table 2 shows the potential costs for each municipality in Leeds and Grenville if there was a 20% reduction in cost or just over \$2.6million to fire services through amalgamation.

Information sourced from <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2018.htm>

Legend: Red is an increase in cost from single tier fire services. Green is a decrease in cost from single tier fire services. Yellow is the percent/dollar value of potential reduction in cost.

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Table 3

	(FIR) Fire Department 2018 Total Expenses Before Adjustments	Taxable Assessment %	Call Volume %	Population %	Land Area %	Average Municipal %	Fire Expenses x Average Municipal % = POST Amalgamation Cost	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease \$\$	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease %
Athens	\$125,833	2.31%	1.97%	3.03%	3.78%	2.77%	\$369,696.21	\$243,863.21	193.80%
Augusta	\$579,886	5.75%	6.01%	7.40%	9.31%	7.12%	\$948,428.56	\$368,542.56	63.55%
Brockville	\$5,835,565	16.07%	29.65%	21.47%	0.62%	16.95%	\$2,259,429.70	-\$3,576,135.30	-61.28%
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	\$707,971	5.68%	6.75%	7.13%	9.21%	7.19%	\$958,538.98	\$250,567.98	35.39%
Elizabethtown Kitley	\$724,373	8.01%	6.36%	9.91%	16.50%	10.20%	\$1,358,873.45	\$634,500.45	87.59%
Front of Yonge	\$251,897	2.36%	3.20%	2.77%	3.80%	3.03%	\$403,934.34	\$152,037.34	60.36%
Gananoque	\$909,151	3.79%	7.69%	5.19%	0.21%	4.22%	\$562,181.45	-\$346,969.55	-38.16%
Leeds 1000	\$1,308,369	15.97%	10.34%	9.52%	18.11%	13.48%	\$1,797,165.55	\$488,796.55	37.36%
Merrickville	\$351,251	2.68%	2.10%	3.09%	6.34%	3.55%	\$473,583.99	\$122,332.99	34.83%
North Grenville	\$946,599	17.58%	10.34%	16.55%	10.42%	13.72%	\$1,828,732.76	\$882,133.76	93.19%
Prescott	\$465,900	2.44%	6.62%	4.25%	0.09%	3.35%	\$446,352.50	-\$19,547.50	-4.20%
Rideau Lakes / Westport	\$1,121,183	17.36%	8.98%	9.70%	21.61%	14.41%	\$1,921,060.52	\$799,877.52	71.34%
Total	\$13,327,978						\$13,327,978.00	Total	
Reduction in Cost %	0.0%								
Reduction in Cost \$\$	\$0								

Table 3 shows the potential cost for each municipality in Leeds and Grenville through amalgamation based on the average municipal percent of the four categories. This is with \$0.00 or 0% reduction in cost.

Information sourced from: <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2018.htm>, Brockville Fire Dispatch Statistics, and Wikipedia for Land Area.

Legend: Red is an increase in cost from single tier fire services. Green is a decrease in cost from single tier fire services. Yellow is the percent/dollar value of potential reduction in cost.

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Table 4

	(FIR) Fire Department 2018 Total Expenses Before Adjustments	Taxable Assessment %	Call Volume %	Population %	Land Area %	Average Municipal %	Fire Expenses x Average Municipal % = POST Amalgamation Cost	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease \$\$	Amalgamation Increase / Decrease %
Athens	\$125,833	2.31%	1.97%	3.03%	3.78%	2.77%	\$295,756.97	\$169,923.97	135.04%
Augusta	\$579,886	5.75%	6.01%	7.40%	9.31%	7.12%	\$758,742.85	\$178,856.85	30.84%
Brockville	\$5,835,565	16.07%	29.65%	21.47%	0.62%	16.95%	\$1,807,543.76	-\$4,028,021.24	-69.03%
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	\$707,971	5.68%	6.75%	7.13%	9.21%	7.19%	\$766,831.18	\$58,860.18	8.31%
Elizabethtown Kitley	\$724,373	8.01%	6.36%	9.91%	16.50%	10.20%	\$1,087,098.76	\$362,725.76	50.07%
Front of Yonge	\$251,897	2.36%	3.20%	2.77%	3.80%	3.03%	\$323,147.47	\$71,250.47	28.29%
Gananoque	\$909,151	3.79%	7.69%	5.19%	0.21%	4.22%	\$449,745.16	-\$459,405.84	-50.53%
Leeds 1000	\$1,308,369	15.97%	10.34%	9.52%	18.11%	13.48%	\$1,437,732.44	\$129,363.44	9.89%
Merrickville	\$351,251	2.68%	2.10%	3.09%	6.34%	3.55%	\$378,867.19	\$27,616.19	7.86%
North Grenville	\$946,599	17.58%	10.34%	16.55%	10.42%	13.72%	\$1,462,986.21	\$516,387.21	54.55%
Prescott	\$465,900	2.44%	6.62%	4.25%	0.09%	3.35%	\$357,082.00	-\$108,818.00	-23.36%
Rideau Lakes / Westport	\$1,121,183	17.36%	8.98%	9.70%	21.61%	14.41%	\$1,536,848.41	\$415,665.41	37.07%
Total	\$10,662,382						\$10,662,382.40	Total	
Reduction in Cost %	20.0%								
Reduction in Cost \$\$	\$2,665,596								

Table 4 shows the potential cost for each municipality in Leeds and Grenville through amalgamation based on the average municipal percent of the four categories if there was a 20% reduction in cost or just over \$2.6million.

Information sourced from: <https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/fir/ViewFIR2018.htm>, Brockville Fire Dispatch Statistics, and Wikipedia for Land Area.

Legend: Red is an increase in cost from single tier fire services. Green is a decrease in cost from single tier fire services. Yellow is the percent/dollar value of potential reduction in cost.

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Pomax's recommendations:

2. *a single Director/ Chief of Fire Services for the counties with the proven ability to strategize and build an organization with an emphasis on protecting the public through prevention and education;*
3. *two deputies or assistants to help the director achieve her goals;*
4. *two administrative assistants to support the management team;*
5. *five public education and prevention coordinators assisted by part time coordinators and volunteers;*
6. *a lead training instructor;*
6. *a part time training instructor (assisted by volunteers);*
7. *a full-time statistician to provide vital information required to achieve value for public money and best practice decision making;*
8. *a professional fleet manager to administer, purchase, and coordinate all apparatus;*
10. *a marketing manager, possibly part time, to assist the management team with promoting fire safety;*

The Pomax report recommendations above show the potential administrative staff for a single, centrally managed, fire service. On page 26 of the Pomax report, exhibit 5 shows Pomax's estimated cost however, the administrative positions recommended above are not included in Pomax's exhibit 5. Pomax's exhibit 5 also included 2 District Chief's positions which are not listed in the recommendations above. We have corrected Pomax's exhibit 5 to include the administrative assistant positions with a base salary to provide a better understand of the administrative staff salaries for a single, centrally managed, fire service.

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Table 5

POMAX - Exhibit 5 First Year Estimated Costs (Adjusted)

	#	Salary	Benefits	Total
Director/Chief	1.0	\$160,000	\$42,816.00	\$202,816.00
Deputy	2.0	\$130,000	\$34,788.00	\$329,576.00
District Chief	2.0	\$115,000	\$30,774.00	\$291,548.00
Admin	2.0	\$50,000	\$13,380.00	\$126,760.00
Pub Ed FT	5.0	\$109,000	\$29,168.40	\$690,842.00
Pub Ed PT	1.2	\$109,000	\$29,168.40	\$165,802.08
Training FT	1.0	\$100,000	\$26,760.00	\$126,760.00
Training PT	0.5	\$100,000	\$26,760.00	\$63,380.00
Stats	1.0	\$110,000	\$29,436.00	\$139,436.00
Fleet	1.0	\$115,000	\$30,774.00	\$145,774.00
Marketing	1.0	\$60,000	\$16,056.00	\$76,056.00
			POMAX Estimated Total	\$2,358,750.08
			Current Total	\$2,903,137.38
Benefits	26.76%		Difference	\$544,387.30

Table 5 shows there is a potential savings of just over \$500,000 in salaries for administrative staff in a single, centrally managed fire service.

There is no reference in Pomax’s amalgamation recommendations to firefighter wages. Most firefighter in Leeds and Grenville are paid on-call and receive some monetary value for their dedication to our communities, even though they are typically called volunteer firefighters. With a single, centrally managed, fire service the wages for all paid on-call firefighters would be brought up to the current highest paid wage for paid on-call firefighters as you would not expect paid on-call firefighters to take a decrease in pay. Through a single, centrally managed, fire service, we would be providing a target for a union organization to step in and unionize all 400+ firefighters in Leeds and Grenville, causing the increase in Table 6 to be much more significant. Bringing all paid on-call firefighters up to the current highest wage rate would be an increase of over \$400,000 (Table 6). This means that the Pomax’s proposed administrative staff and firefighters with a single, centrally managed fire service would result in an estimated savings of around \$100,000.

Using the average municipal percent (Table 3) for Augusta Township of 7.12%, we would be saving \$6,700 out of the potential \$100,000 in the total wages savings for a single, centrally managed, fire service.

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Table 6

Volunteer Firefighters - Current

Salary / hour	Dept	Firefighters	Hours	Total
\$8.00	1	25	150	\$30,000.00
\$14.80	4	43	150	\$95,460.00
\$15.50	6	26	150	\$60,450.00
\$15.92	11	24	150	\$57,312.00
\$17.19	Augusta	38	150	\$97,983.00
\$17.56	7	28	150	\$73,752.00
\$18.23	5	55	150	\$150,397.50
\$20.00	9	25	150	\$75,000.00
\$20.00	12	72	150	\$216,000.00
\$22.53	8	71	150	\$239,944.50
\$25.32	10	42	150	\$159,516.00
		449	Total	\$1,255,815.00
		Total with all wages at \$25.32		\$1,705,302.00
			Diff.	\$449,487.00

Table 6 shows the monetary value for paid-on call firefighters in Leeds and Grenville. The blue line shows how much the cost would be if all paid-on call firefighters were brought up to the highest wage.

Pomax’s recommendations:

17. that Gananoque should be dispatched by Brockville which will assist consistency and efficiency in record keeping and mutual aid response;

Page 19 - Establishing and maintaining common service standards will enable the public and internal stakeholders to determine expectations and or limitations of the fire service.

Most residents in Leeds and Grenville have part-time on-call fire services in their community and they are aware of the additional emergency response time compared to full-time fire departments. The majority of residents know they should be prepared for emergencies and through Fire Prevention fire services educate residents on how to prevent emergencies and should an emergency occur how to help themselves until emergency personnel can arrive.

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Category Two: Stations

Pomax's recommendation:

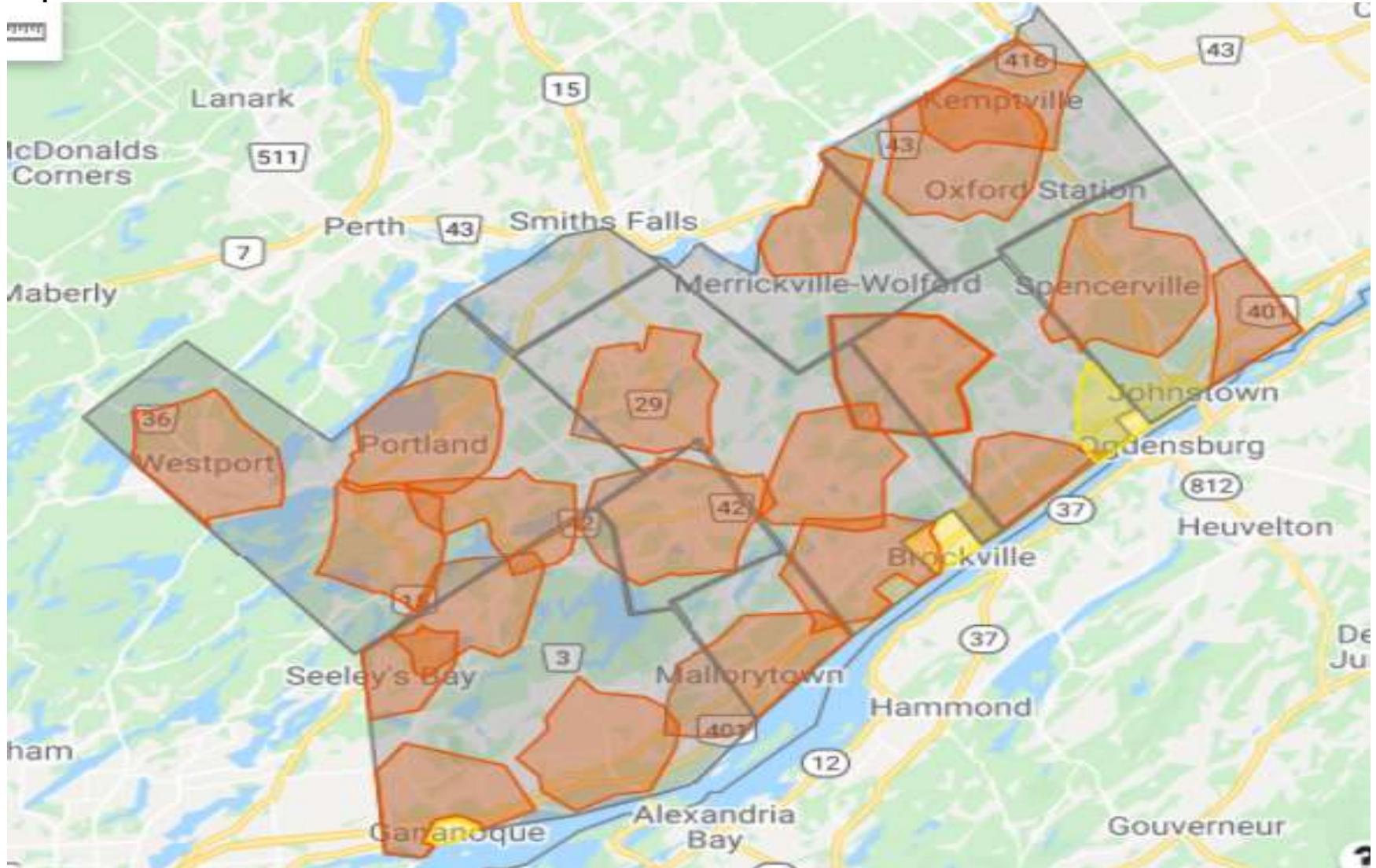
21. reducing the number of fire stations based on data; although we recognize this as a controversial recommendation, some fire stations respond to only three to five fires a year, sometimes fewer. Municipalities would be unlikely to establish new fire stations to respond to this number of fires annually.

The rural environment of Leeds and Grenville is an important factor in considering the closure of stations. While Pomax's recommendation is based only the number of fire responses, Leeds and Grenville fire services respond to many additional types of emergencies, and a fire station is usually a focal point of a rural community.

Pomax's recommendation states that fire stations that respond to less than 5 structure fires a year be considered for closure, which would include the station in North Augusta. Closing this station and other stations within Leeds and Grenville would decrease service to residents, increase response times and put residents lives at risk. Most residents would see an increase in insurance costs as they would no longer be near a fire station and would not have the tanker shuttle certification that also assists in providing insurance discounts.

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Map 1:



Map 1 shows all the current fire stations in Leeds and Grenville and an 8km travel distance.

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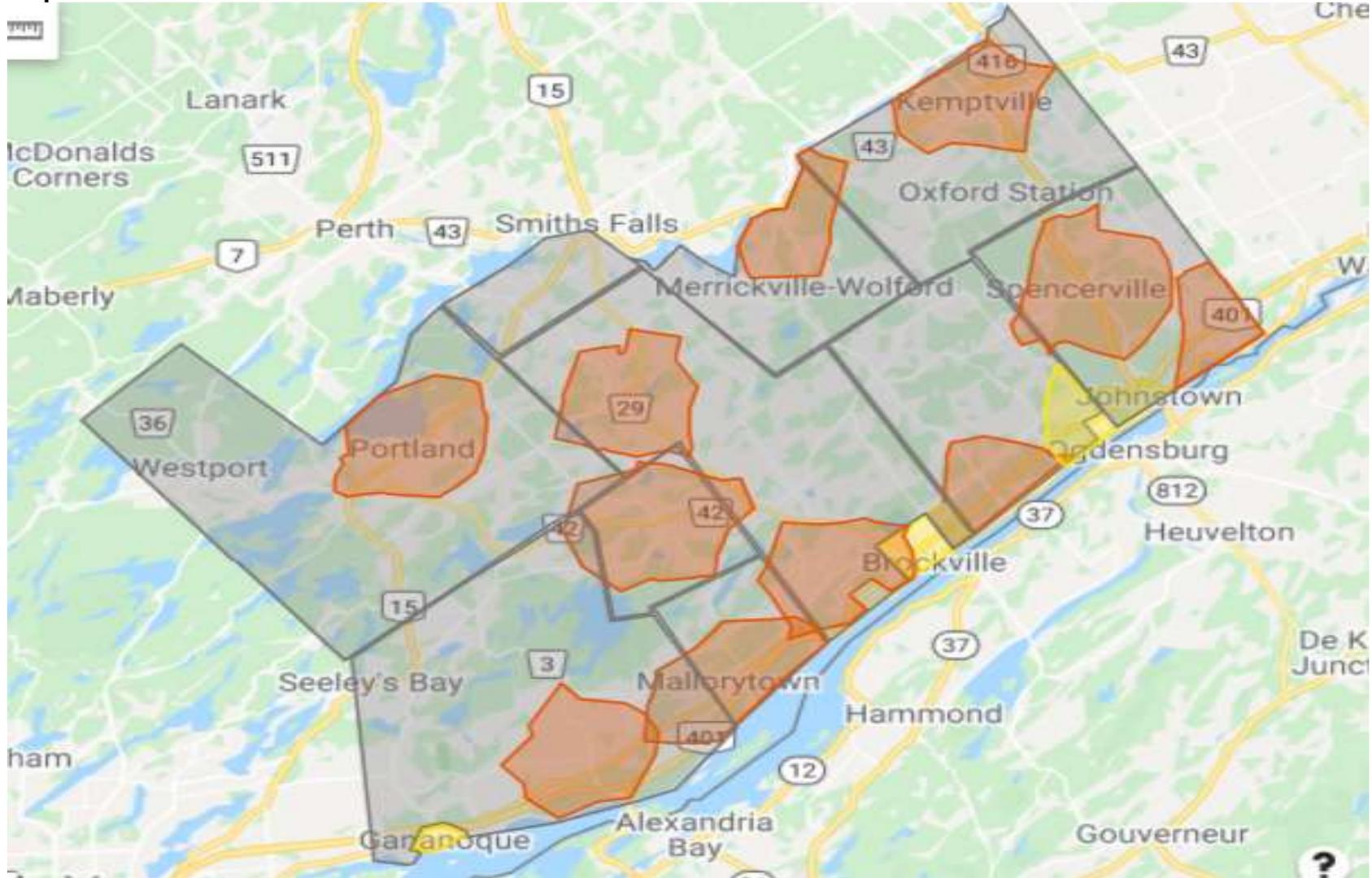
Table 7:

	Structure Fires						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	Average
Elizabethtown Kitley 1	15	13	19	17	32	96	19.2
North Grenville 1	14	16	7	15	4	56	11.2
Merrickville	9	7	9	9	9	43	8.6
Brockville 1	8	12	6	11	3	40	8.0
Edwardsburgh Cardinal 2	5	9	7	14	4	39	7.8
Augusta 1	8	6	8	4	11	37	7.4
Elizabethtown Kitley 3	6	5	9	3	10	33	6.6
Front of Yonge	6	9	3	5	9	32	6.4
Prescott	9	5	4	6	7	31	6.2
Athens	3	7	8	5	7	30	6.0
Edwardsburgh Cardinal 1	7	11	2	6	3	29	5.8
Leeds 1000 Islands 1	7	4	6	7	3	27	5.4
Gananoque	3	4	4	4	11	26	5.2
Rideau Lakes 2	8	3	5	4	5	25	5.0
Augusta 2	7	6	6	3	2	24	4.8
Leeds 1000 Islands 3	7	2	3	3	6	21	4.2
Leeds 1000 Islands 4	4	2	6	2	3	17	3.4
Rideau Lakes 3	3	2	3	6	2	16	3.2
Rideau Lakes 1	4	4	1	2	5	16	3.2
Elizabethtown Kitley 2	3	2	2	3	4	14	2.8
Rideau Lakes 4	2	2	2	3	5	14	2.8
Leeds 1000 Islands 2	2	3	1	1	4	11	2.2
North Grenville 2	0	0	1	5	5	11	2.2
Brockville 2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.4

Table 7 lists all the structure fires within Leeds and Grenville Fire Departments over the last 5 years, using statistical data from Pomax. The highlighted stations are the ones that respond to an average of 5 or less.

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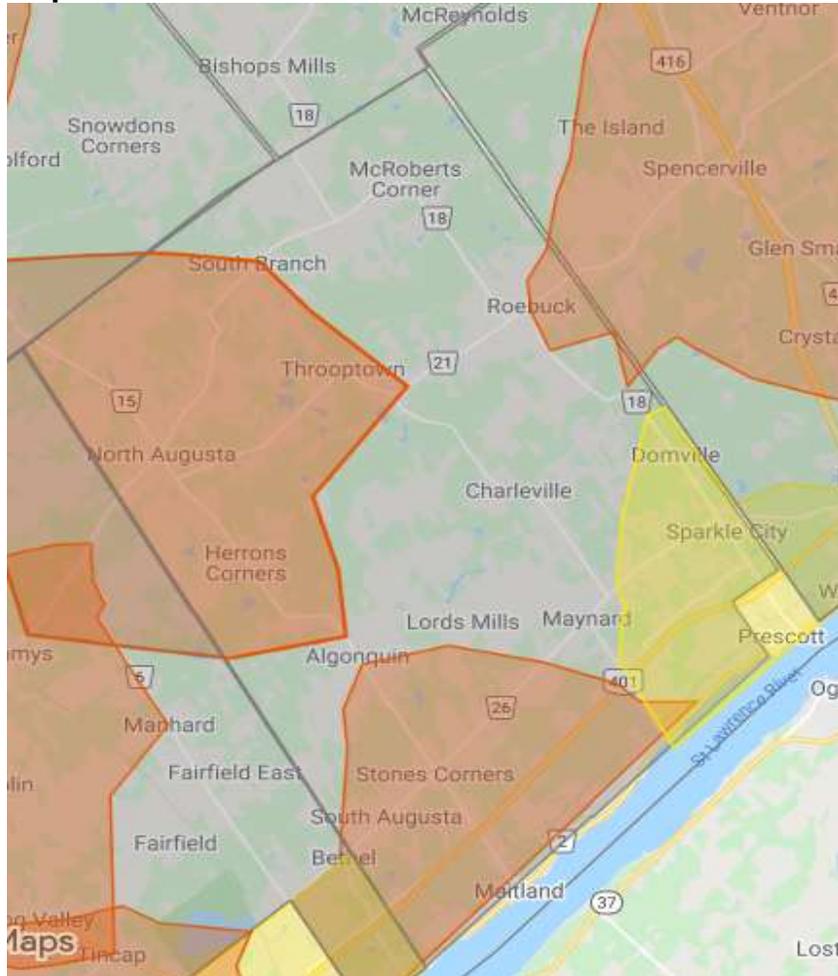
Map 2:



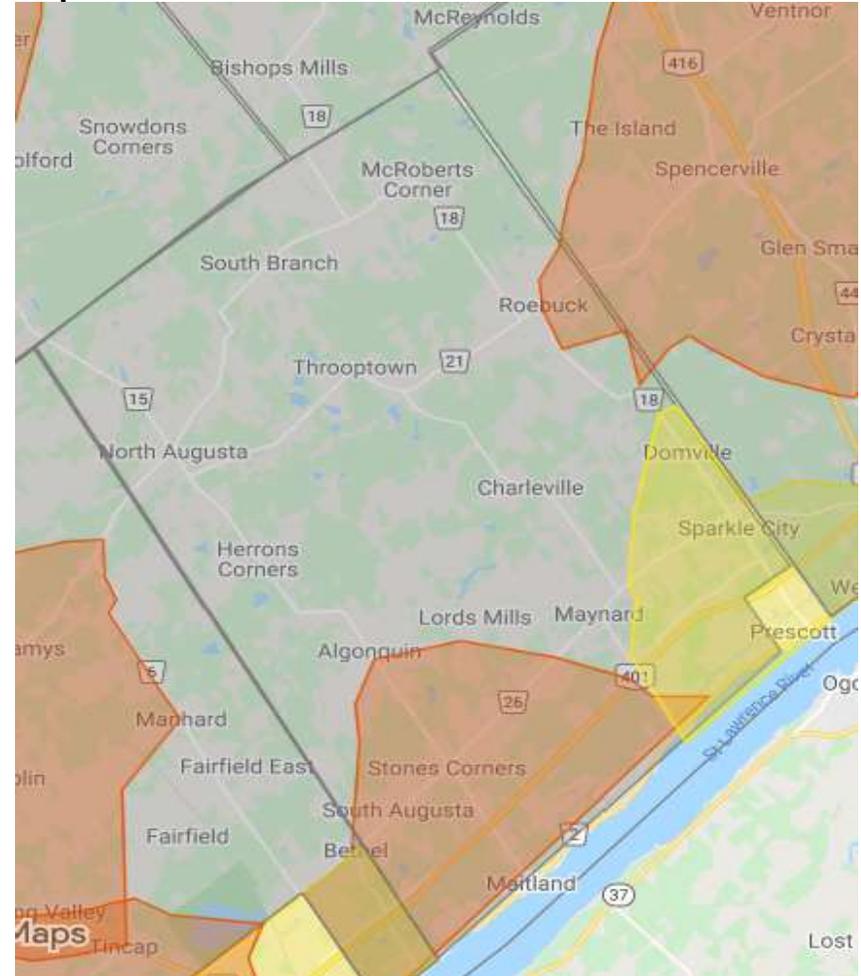
Map 2 shows the Leeds and Grenville Fire Stations that would remain after Pomax's recommendation of station closures for those stations that respond to less than 5 structure fires a year.

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Map 3



Map 4



Map 3 is a close-up of Augusta Township's coverage with 8km of the fire stations, with our current two stations.

Map 4 is a close-up of Augusta Township's coverage with 8km of the fire stations, with the closure of Station 2 in North Augusta as per Pomax's recommendation.

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Category Three: Equipment

While there are no main recommendations regarding equipment there are several other recommendations throughout the document that reference equipment.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 17 - Municipalities should develop useful lifecycles and monitoring for all vehicles and equipment which would assist with the creation of capital expenditure forecasts out to twenty years. Shorter apparatus life cycles – for example, replacing pumpers at a seven-year benchmark instead of 15 or 20 years – might result in higher trade in or resale value and be fiscally advantageous to acquire new fire apparatus with improved firefighting technology safety features.

Page 18 - Every vehicle purchased should be managed to support both the amortization and planning of its replacement at the end of its useable life.

Page 19 - Establishing standard usage cycles and lifespans to support the safety of personnel and manage any potential liability of the municipalities and county.

Having shorter apparatus cycles may be beneficial, however the used fire truck market in Canada is very limited as the vehicles deteriorate quicker due to weather. The price of steel and the exchange rate at the time of needing a new fire truck must also be taken into consideration as they directly affect the cost of building or purchasing a vehicle as many parts for fire trucks are manufactured in the United States. For example, in 2013 Augusta Fire Rescue purchased Pumper 2 from Arnprior Fire Trucks at a cost of \$415,840. In 2015 Augusta Fire Rescue purchased Pumper 5 which was identical to Pumper 2 at a cost of \$514,150. Arnprior Fire Trucks told us that fire trucks normally go up 5% a year, however due to the price of steel/aluminum it was an increase of 23%.

Augusta Fire Rescue ensures that all equipment and vehicles that have a legislated life cycle are tracked and replaced at the end of their life cycle. For fire trucks, this is included in the 20year apparatus replacement plan that Council is presented yearly.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 17 - The development of a common specification for each vehicle type will ensure consistency and an understanding of costs associated with each and assist in planning and cost forecasting of future purchases.

Page 17 - All county municipalities would benefit from having common specifications and requirements for fire service vehicles and establishing longer term contracts with manufacturers.

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Page 18 - The purchase of stock apparatus versus developing individual specifications will result in savings.

Page 18 - Municipalities should use Request for Proposal methods rather than developing specifications and tenders for apparatus and equipment. Manufacturers build every day and have knowledge on trends that local firefighters and managers don't.

Page 19 - Common equipment specifications that are appropriate for the circumstances and within the goals of the fire service should be an objective that takes precedence over personal preference.

Currently fire trucks are purchased by each municipality for their specific needs. If Leeds and Grenville were to amalgamate to a single, centrally managed, fire service, certain type of fire trucks would still be needed in certain areas of the United Counties. For example, in Augusta when we purchase a new Pumper, we ensure that it has a larger pump on it to allow us more water flow due to our large industrial properties.

While common equipment specifications could assist in bulk purchasing, additional training and equipment would be required to allow for these common specifications. For example, currently Augusta Fire Rescue uses SCOTT brand SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus), and our firefighters know and understand every inch of this equipment. If we were to switch to a different brand, we would require extensive training on it to allow our firefighters to be comfortable with it and this extra training would undoubtedly cost more than the savings.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 17 - Municipalities may realize a savings by contracting with a small number of mechanical and maintenance service providers to monitor and repair fire trucks (apparatus maintenance hubs). Additional savings might occur by including other municipal vehicles into the common contract. The logistics of moving fire trucks for service would have to be considered.

Page 17 - Municipalities with the ability to provide the service (mechanical work) should also be encouraged to do so on a cost recovery basis.

Currently Augusta Fire Rescue has all truck maintenance completed by J&L Truck and Trailer in Brockville. The owner is Captain Jeff Stewart, who is a member with Augusta Fire Rescue and employs people from Augusta Township. Captain Stewart provides excellent service and savings to our department by picking fire trucks in the morning on his way into work, returning the vehicle at night, and if possible, responding to an emergency with the fire truck while it is at J&L. We also receive a discount on all work completed which is another savings to our taxpayers.

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Having maintenance hubs could be beneficial to the municipalities within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, however as Pomax stated the logistics would have to be considered to ensure best service to our residents. Completing maintenance in house could be considered by municipalities, though the expertise and equipment required to work on fire trucks must be considered. This would not allow Augusta Fire Rescue the same advantages that we currently receive when vehicles are being serviced by J&L.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 18 - Municipalities within the county should coordinate the purchase of fire department related resources. Savings may be realized if economy of scale purchasing is developed and would result in consistent and alike equipment across all fire stations.

Page 18 - Long-term contracts should be considered to benefit from economy of scale and improved efficiency by reducing efforts associated with administering the purchasing process. Current practices may result in a department operating a number of apparatus from different manufacturers, as well as having additional costs related to the administration of separate contracts.

Page 19 - Promotion and acceptance of longer-term contracts will realize savings, not only for product price but also from reducing staff and administration time during the procurement process.

Page 19 - The development of standing agreements to support the acquisition of both consumable and capital supplies:

Page 19 - A cooperative, or county-led, just in time delivery approach, in an effort to reduce any emergency procurement, stockpiling, or warehousing of supplies. Alternatively, there may be times when a cooperative purchasing program can centrally purchase and warehouse supplies such as personal protective equipment.

Page 18 - Fleet monitoring technology should be used to evaluate individual vehicle cost and operation.

Pomax states that as a single, centrally managed, fire service we could see savings with shared purchasing, and common specifications of equipment. While savings could be found, Leeds and Grenville would not be large enough to have the economy of scale required to see significant savings.

In speaking to a couple of suppliers including E-One (one of the largest fire truck manufacturers in North America) they stated that at best, if five identical trucks (pumpers), with custom chassis (which is an additional \$100,000.00+/truck) were ordered at the same time we may save 2-3%. However, I believe there would not be a

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time that a single, centrally managed, fire service in Leeds and Grenville would require 5 identical trucks at the exact same time.

Also, bunker gear suppliers have said that if a single, centrally managed, fire service were to buy all new bunker gear for every firefighter at the exact same time, we might be able to save 5-7%. To get all firefighters on the exact same schedule would take up to a decade to achieve.

Having long term contracts can be beneficial for a municipality as they are able to accurately budget for items as you know the price. Long term contracts can also be a disadvantage for municipalities as it does not always allow you to take full advantage of new technology, after continued use the product may not meet the department's needs, the dollar value and the price of steel change quickly. Following a municipalities procurement By-Law, (getting 3 quotes, completing a Tender or RFP), allows a municipality to get the best price and technology at the current time.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 18 - Vehicle purchase agreements should include a training program, to be delivered by the manufacturer, at the destination. This will ensure the employer meets its requirements under Occupational Health & Safety legislation.

Page 19 - All equipment should be supported with the proper and documented training of personnel.

Page 19 - A communications strategy must be developed and delivered to the equipment users, so they understand why changes take place (whether or not they are pleased with those changes).

It is well known that all manufacturers provide training on a new vehicle upon delivery. With the last two Pumpers that Augusta Fire Rescue purchased we received training from Arnprior Fire Trucks as well as Waterous for our compressed air foam system. As the compressed air form system was new, we also brought in InFoamation (expert trainers from Arizona) to conduct additional training for our firefighters.

Augusta Fire Rescue ensures that all firefighters are trained on all equipment prior to it being placed in service, this includes large apparatus and small equipment, and all our training is documented in our Firehouse software. Augusta Fire also has bi-weekly or monthly meetings and officer's meetings and during these meetings all equipment to be purchased is discussed for feedback and comments. This feedback and comments are then brought forward to our equipment committee for consideration to assist in researching and purchasing most equipment, vehicles and station builds.

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Pomax's recommendations:

Page 19 - Redistribution of equipment to stations and municipalities based on usage cycles and lifespan to ensure best value of equipment.

Moving a firetruck purchased by our taxpayers to another municipality would likely be very politically sensitive as many local associations and community groups have donated/ contributed considerable money to their municipalities department's vehicles.

Pomax's recommendations:

Page 19 - Effectively manage purchasing of legislated or required items, as some items have life spans imposed by regulation or industry standards (bunker-gear, helmets have shelf life).

Page 19 - Developing effective measures to manage and track the utilization of each piece of equipment.

Augusta Fire Rescue tracks our equipment in our Firehouse software to ensure we are meeting NFPA standards/Section 21 Committee life and maintenance cycles. Many of the equipment recommendations made in the Promax report have already been undertaken in Augusta.

Category Four: Data

Pomax's recommendations:

13. municipalities should immediately concentrate on a strategy to coordinate a single outcome data gathering methodology for all fire services, and plan to improve data and information so that whatever decision jurisdictions might make with respect to fire service response models can be taken based on fact, rather than an assumed understanding of the efficacy of fire service response;

14. that all fire departments gather information at fire scenes to help evaluate the effectiveness of fire department programs. For example, assessing occupant behaviour and causes will enable a department to implement a public fire safety education program targeting similar causative activities;

15. that as it becomes time to replace records management technology or within three years, whichever is sooner, fire services should switch to the same platform as is being used by the Brockville dispatch agency;

16. that technology and information systems; for example, tablets and record management systems for public education and prevention reports, should be used to reduce human effort and forestall the pressure to hire additional administrative staff or deputies;

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22. that, in conjunction with recommendations 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, and 20 the counties, municipalities, and fire service adopt a primary strategy and culture of detailed data and information capture, analysis, and management to assist the judicious delivery of needed services – but not every service – and implement workforce control strategies to avoid volunteer fatigue by responding, to the extent possible, only to those incidents that offer proved value to the community. Long term planning relies upon detailed and accurate knowledge of response and outcome benefit history, and good planning requires historical reporting to identify trends and future needs to support a materials management improvement strategy (number of trucks and other assets, and how to employ them).

Page iii - Operational decisions should be based on data, particularly outcome data which will inform decision makers whether the activities of fire departments deliver value to the residents and businesses of the municipalities. The current 'response based' practices of the fire services deliver little benefit to the communities. Decisions about the distribution of funds and efforts between reactive response (emergency response to a wide range of incidents) vs. proactive response (education and prevention) need to be based on outcome data and they don't exist in Leeds and Grenville. Establishing a useful, robust data repository – and using it – is of immediate importance.

Page 3 - Councils should enable and encourage – no, insist, that fire service leaders objectively examine existing data capture systems to ensure all data required to best support change is being collected and analyzed. That isn't happening now, although that isn't specific to fire services in Leeds and Grenville. Technology that automatically captures and analyzes data is an important part of a change environment.

Page 17 - Municipalities should investigate and implement technology to track fleet utilization. More specific to fire services, county-administered fleet software would enable a more collective picture of apparatus efficiency, would assist with planning vehicle replacement or retirement and redeployment between municipalities, and will assist in determining if vehicles are being used effectively and appropriately.

Page 47 - The fire services should use any outcome data they may have to find any alarms that turned out to be fires or CO, determine injury or circumstances, and modify their response guidelines as appropriate.

Page 53 - Our recommendation is for municipalities to concentrate on an immediate strategy and plan to improve data and information so that whatever decision jurisdictions might make with respect to fire service response models can be taken based on fact, rather than an assumed understanding of the efficacy of fire service response.

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Pomax has made quite a few recommendations on data and the importance of it. Most of their recommendations have already been undertaken and implemented by Augusta Fire Rescue. Most of the remaining recommendations can be achieved by simply modifying our regular documentation.

Through the Fire Department's Firehouse Software system, we already track outcome data and produce statistics and reports that we then use to provide our quarterly and yearly reports to Council. Firehouse allows the department to track all responses, training, staff, equipment, and maintenance. We prefer this windows-based program compared to the Crisis system currently used by Brockville Fire Dispatch as it is more user friendly and has expanded features. We have no difficulty in receiving data from Brockville to input into our system.

Category Five: Prevention/Emergency Responses

Pomax's recommendations:

12. that there should be an intense focus on fire prevention and public education to avoid the costs of maintaining a robust fire response organization;

Page iv - There are few fires, yet 90% of budgets are spent on preparing for emergency response and rescues with relatively little allocated to saving lives by preventing incidents in the first place. The greatest activity of fire services should be uncompromisingly educating the public about fire safety and prevention, inspecting business and commercial establishments for fire code compliance, and enforcing safety practices.

Page iv - Public education and prevention activities have to be aggressive. The current practices of having pamphlets available at fire stations or expecting the public to access fire department social media feeds such as Twitter or Facebook is mostly ineffectual. (<https://cjr.ufv.ca/journey-of-homesafe-community-risk-reduction-in-surrey/>)

Page 12 - But improvements can be made to public education efforts pending a more cohesive countywide approach.

- i. A decommissioned commercial, purpose-built fire safety house/trailer is stored at the Lyndhurst Training Centre. This unit should be replaced through a county wide capital budget initiative for coordinated fire and life safety education throughout the United Counties.*
- ii. An Ontario Fire Marshal's awareness program called Older and Wiser Safety Program for Seniors, and fire safety information related to cooking are offered by some UCLG fire services, they are not offered throughout the entire Counties.*
- iii. Some personnel involved in public fire and life safety education activities have not acquired a vulnerable sector check.*

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- iv. *Some staff involved in fire and life safety education endeavors have not yet certified to the following mouthful – NFPA #1035 Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist, and Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications.*
- v. *There is no indication that individual fire services have a quality management or assurance program in place to record and retrieve data and statistics to determine root cause analysis of incidents, or to create and implement effective fire and life safety education.*
- vi. *Cause determination is essential to establishing public education and prevention programs that meet the needs of the community. A one-size fits all approach, such as delivering standard Office of the Fire Marshal programs, while useful, may not be the best value for money or most effective.*

Fire Prevention is very important and beneficial to assisting in the education of residents however, to be aggressive, time and money is needed which can be difficult for rural part-time on-call departments. As a result, more fire departments are turning to social media to educate residents as it allows departments to reach a large group of people for a low cost. Augusta Fire's social media accounts are followed by over 3,800 people with a large portion being residents of our Township and area. The Fire Protection and Prevention Act requires that all municipalities provide fire prevention. It does not state that firefighters must be trained to NFPA 1035 as Pomax is indicating.

The report suggests that through inspections and investigations a single, centrally managed, fire service can provide more targeted prevention to assist in reducing our collective calls. To become a fully certified NFPA Inspector and Investigator you must take 450+ hours of training. This is extremely difficult for part time on-call firefighters to complete. For instance, here in Augusta Township, the Chief is the only certified inspector/investigator.

An example of a prevention campaign with almost unlimited budget and personnel would be campaigns to reduce drinking and driving. Millions if not billions have been allocated into reducing drinking and driving through several fantastic organizations such as SADD, MADD, OPP, etc. Ontario's DUI laws are extremely strict, and there is also the social stigma that goes along with it. Yes, with these campaigns the instances of drinking and driving have dropped significantly. Yet in the month of December 2020 over 430 charges for DUI were laid by the OPP. This does not include data from municipal forces, and that was only the people that were caught.

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/more-than-400-impaired-driving-charges-laid-in-ontario-since-end-of-november-1.5230406>

While these groups have helped in significantly reducing drinking and driving unfortunately it is still a concern within our province. While fire prevention can assist in reducing call volumes, I do not believe it will present significant savings as most of our emergency calls are not structure fires.

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A link Pomax provides takes you to the City of Surrey and what they did to improve their Fire Prevention. The City of Surrey is a composite fire department with Fulltime and Volunteers. From the City of Surrey firefighters web page, <https://surreyfirefighters.com/home-page/about-us/> I have found that full time firefighters work out of 15 of 17 fire stations. Surrey is a city that has a population of 518,467. Leeds and Grenville are mostly rural with a population of about 100,000 that is staffed by mainly part-time on-call firefighters.

The report from Surrey states that 3 items showed the most positive impacts. pg. 27 -

- 1) Home visits by on-duty Firefighters
- 2) Inspections and smoke alarm installs by homeowner request
- 3) Crew visits at incidents to check alarms and provide fire education.

Currently, Augusta Fire Rescue complete items 2 and 3 that Surrey listed. Home visits would require a huge amount of time on our part time on-call firefighters who would still need to respond to emergencies and training. Even if we could get a volunteer group, of approximately 10 people, it would take decades to go to each home in Augusta. The City of Brockville with full-time firefighters has been conducting home visits for about 10 years and have completed approx. 75% of the city.

Pomax's recommendations:

18. that the county paramedic services, and the fire services establish a Fire – Paramedic Service Coordinating Committee. Part of the purpose should be to collect evidence to determine if fire response to medical and motor vehicle incidents is required and under what circumstances;

19. that the number of responses to incidents should be refined and reduced, based on data, particularly to medical incidents, motor vehicle collisions, and automatic alarms. These three categories make up the majority of fire department responses;

20. reducing the number of apparatus and firefighters that are dispatched to some incidents; again, medical incidents, motor vehicle collisions, and automatic alarms are examples. Research supports this recommendation;

Page iv - Fire services should work with other emergency responders, primarily the counties' paramedic services and paramedic dispatch service, to rationalize and reduce responses to medical incidents and motor vehicle collisions, again, based on activity and outcome data. The predominant activity of fire services is in responding to medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, and automatic alarms. Medical calls are sometimes responded to with multiple fire trucks, a practice for which there is no evidence of necessity but for which there is evidence that it increases danger to the public.

Page 47 - Fire services should consider modifying their response to alarms when there is no secondary information to suggest a fire is occurring.

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It is stated in Pomax's report that there can be significant savings if we lower call volume through prevention education and inspections. In looking back at the last 5 years of data from Augusta, Augusta Fire attended 60 structure fires. Out of those, I believe 21 might have been prevented with proper Fire Prevention and Education and a RECEPTIVE resident. If we could prevent all these 21 calls, we would reduce our call volumes by a maximum of 5 a year which is a cost savings, but not significant.

Pomax also stated that response to automatic alarms should be reduced. However, this is difficult as automatic alarms are the owner's responsibility and not usually at the same location over and over. The purpose of activated alarms is to give early notice to resident and fire departments to allow for a faster response. This is more important with rural departments, as most rural municipalities do not have hydrants and we need multiple fire trucks to respond to be able to bring water to the scene.

Most municipalities in Leeds and Grenville, including Augusta are trying to reduce false automatic alarms by having a Fees for Service By-Law, which includes a fine for 3+ false automatic alarms within a calendar year. Within the last 10 years, in Augusta there have been no occurrences of 3+ false alarms at a single location that would require us to implement the fees for service by-law.

Pomax also states that we should be reducing the number of vehicles that respond to emergencies. Augusta has a policy with "Run Plans" that is posted in both stations. This policy states what apparatus responds and in what order, based on the type of emergency and the area the emergency is located. Due to being a part time on call department we always have both stations paged to emergencies as we are unsure what firefighters we will have available especially during daytime response. Once our members arrive to the station, they know which equipment is needed as per our "Run Plan" policy.

Through our Medical Tiered Response Agreement with Leeds Grenville EMS, Fire Departments only respond to medical calls where, we can provide lifesaving intervention. Augusta Fire Rescue has been providing this service to our residents for over 15 years and our firefighters have been responsible for saving lives. Leeds Grenville EMS responded to 1634 emergency calls in Augusta Township in 2020 and Augusta Fire was only paged to 26 or 1.59% of those, which is evidence that we only respond to life threatening calls.

Being able to attend the scene prior to or at the same time as EMS for motor vehicle accidents allows us to be there to assist with the emergency, provide extrication, and mitigate other hazards that only the fire services is trained to do such as hybrid/electric vehicles, flammable liquids, proper power source disconnection to avoid a spark/fire, protecting the environment from leaking fluid etc.

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Table 8:

	Non-Tiered Response	Tiered Response
EMS Average Response time in Augusta	0:12:01	
Time to Determine AFR requirement	0:02:00	
AFR Average Response time	0:11:22	0:11:22
Total Time for AFR to respond	0:25:23	0:11:22

Table 8 shows the response time difference to motor vehicle accidents with our Tiered Response Agreement in 2020.

Especially when on Highway 401, firetrucks are used as blockers as they are the largest vehicle, which provides safety and protection for ALL first responders on scene. The MTO is also able to provide a blocker, however they must be called in and are not strategically placed so their response time is lengthy, and first responders need protection from traffic from the moment they arrive on scene. Augusta Fire Rescue has not been called to the 401 to specifically provide a blocker in the last 25 years.

Summary:

While I understand that this report may have a negative undertone, the lack of transparency to the Fire Chief's and the comparison to the Cities such as Toronto made throughout this report guide that. I believe a report of this caliber should have been completed using a rural microscope to ensure it provides the best service to the residents of Leeds and Grenville and specifically Augusta Township.

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, currently has no jurisdiction over fire services and if we are to follow the recommendations in the report and amalgamate to a single, centrally managed, fire service, I believe we would be doing a disservice to our residents. Pomax also states that we should consider the closure of some stations which includes the station in North Augusta. Closure of stations will cause response times to be longer, residents will have to pay higher insurance rate, lives, property, and the environment would be at risk. The FIR data in Tables 1-4 shows any savings generated through amalgamation to a single, centrally managed, fire service would only be experienced by less than half of the municipalities in Leeds and Grenville.

Throughout Pomax's report I was unable to find mention of the increase to part time on-call firefighter wages which I believe would almost negate the savings proposed in administrative staff positions. Amalgamation to a single, centrally managed fire service would generate a fire service with 500+ firefighters, which I believe would be a target for unions to step in and unionized our members which would certainly increase the cost to fire services in Leeds and Grenville.

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Five years ago, Augusta completed a Master Fire Plan, which included similar recommendations to Pomax's report and therefore are already implemented in Augusta Township. Augusta Fire Rescue has very comprehensive data tracking for all equipment, personnel, and emergencies. We use this data to provide Council with quarterly and yearly reports to assist in holding us accountable. Augusta Fire Rescue wants to ensure that all residents have a chance to receive Fire Prevention, which is why we are extremely active on social media to help us reach as many people as possible.

Pomax's report has a large focus on reducing call volumes especially medical calls, automatic alarms, and motor vehicle accidents. Augusta Fire Rescue supports the Medical Tiered Response Program. Fire services only respond to life threatening emergencies and over the last 15 years of providing this service to our residents Augusta Fire Rescue has saved many lives. Automatic alarms help protect residents and their property from fire, while also giving the fire service early notification. Not responding to automatic alarms would be a disservice to our residents. The fire service is the only first responding agency that can provide extrication at accident scenes, and there are many more hazards that fire services assist in mitigating which is why it is vital for fire departments to respond to motor vehicle accidents. If a resident requires assistance and Police or EMS is unable to help, it falls to the fire service. Therefore, we need to continue to look at other areas for cost savings and shared purchasing.

I believe that this report provides some suggestions to the Chiefs of Leeds and Grenville on investigating the options of sharing services like training, prevention, inspections. Although I do not believe that shared purchasing will result in significant savings, all shared purchasing opportunities will be investigated to provide our residents with the most cost-efficient fire service. The Chiefs can also investigate automatic aid agreements, which would allow the closest fire station in Leeds and Grenville to respond as well as the fire service from the municipality that the emergency is in. This will enhance our service to residents within the County and work on reducing costs.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

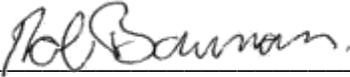
None currently

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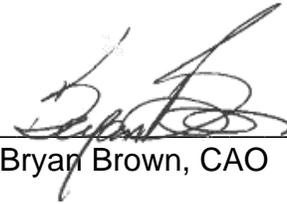
OPTIONS:

Option 1: That the Council for the Township of Augusta continues to operate its fire service under a single tier model and furthermore directs the Fire Chief to continue to work closely with the Township's neighbouring fire services to deliver the most cost-effective fire service possible for its' residents.

Option 2: That the Council for the Township of Augusta advise Counties Council that the Township of Augusta supports the recommendations made in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Regional Fire Services Review by Pomax Consulting.



Robert Bowman, Fire Chief



Bryan Brown, CAO