

CRD Fire Dispatch Report—March 28, 2018

The CRD brief identifies the following benefits from an integrated fire dispatch and reinforces a 2011 study by Planetworks:

- Improved operational capacity and effectiveness in the region
- Consistent protocol communications would lead to better managed fire grounds
- Improved communication and collaboration among departments, as well as improving responder safety
- Potential decrease in response times and improve public safety
- Immediate dispatch from a single site versus having calls transferred to another dispatch centre
- Singular dispatch could enable supplementary agreements to dispatch to closest responder versus a designated department
- Enable/improve mutual aid responses between communities

It is evident few of these benefits can be realized if several local councils depart for Surrey; particularly, if their only objective is to save few dollars.

The report offers general observations that:

- we have at least **two** disaster-hardened sites that could serve as regional dispatch centres that provide for at least **four** work stations. Saanich has room for expansion.
- our current dispatch staffing for three separate centres is excessive and work load could be increased from 1:7,000 calls for response to 1:12,000.
- instead of five staff currently on duty, this would require approximately three staff on peak duty (times three shifts), plus one or two for special events for a 10-20% savings.

However, South Island Communication Centre (SICC) suggests that:

- it might be better to separate fire dispatch from the new regional 9-1-1 and police dispatch.
- the regional fire dispatch centre could be leased from a municipality and administered by an independent body.

There are three additional factors to consider:

- Determine whether to use possible **FDM** or **Intergraph** as the basis for CRD fire dispatch.
- Location of backup facility; preferably a “hot” site.
- And, the need for an advanced station alerting system to service rural volunteer services.

Conclusion: A regional integrated fire dispatch makes sense for the CRD and its member municipalities and would be consistent with the expected outcomes of the recent Capital Integrated Service and Government Initiative (CISGI) report. It is an obvious follow-up to the ongoing implementation of new SICC; your 9-1-1 and police dispatch centre.

“the establishment of a regional fire dispatch service that meets the needs of all fire departments in the region aligns with the regional initiatives to improve service and gain efficiencies through consolidation of services.”

CRD Staff Report, March 2018

My colleague will now give you some suggestions as to what all this information means and how to use it to make recommendations to the CRD Board and then to your member municipal councils.

Submitted by J. D. Anderson, resident of Saanich, March 28, 2018