



To: Community Safety Committee
From: John McGowan
Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue

Date: November 29, 2011
File:

Re: Training Site at 7611 No. 9 Road - Richmond Fire-Rescue

Staff Recommendation

- 1. That the Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager of Law and Community Safety be authorized to negotiate and execute on behalf of the City a licence agreement between Lafarge Canada Inc. and the City for the use of a portion of 7611 No. 9 Road as a fire fighter training facility...
2. That the capital and operating costs for the training facility be considered as part of the 2012-budget process.
3. Staff be directed to meet with the owners of the property to the north of the proposed site and to report back to Council if the neighbours express any concerns prior to the execution of the agreement with Lafarge Canada Inc.

John McGowan
Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue
(604-303-2734)

Atts. 3

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY
ROUTED TO: CONCURRENCE CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Law Y [x] N []
Sustainability (Environmental) Y [x] N []
Development Applications (Zoning) Y [x] N []
Facilities Services Y [x] N []
Business Licences Y [x] N []
Budgets & Accounting Y [x] N []
RCMP Y [x] N []
REVIEWED BY TAG YES [x] NO [] REVIEWED BY CAO YES [x] NO []

Staff Report

Origin

This report supports Council's Term Goal:

*"The City will have a stable, effective, and knowledgeable workforce to serve Council and the community now and into the future through:
9.3 Education programs that are effective for smooth and seamless transition"*

Representatives of Lafarge North America approached City staff offering free use of several acres of their industrial Richmond lands for the purposes of establishing a fire fighter training ground north of their cement plant (*see Attachment I*). This report provides Council with information to assist in its consideration of Lafarge's offer.

Findings Of Fact

Lafarge is an international company, being the largest diversified supplier of construction materials in the United States and Canada. Lafarge has been operating in Richmond since 1958 when they established their first North American plant in the area of No. 9, Nelson and Dyke Roads.

Richmond Fire-Rescue is interested in developing a suitably sized outdoor training site within Richmond to conduct their fire and rescue training exercises outside of an urban residential setting. Lafarge has offered the City's Fire-Rescue Division use of their property in Richmond and is prepared to enter into a formal agreement with the City for this purpose.

Richmond Fire-Rescue responds to many types of fire and rescue emergency 9-1-1 calls that often bring their own unique twists and challenges. Training exercises, both small and large-scale are key to Richmond Fire-Rescue's success. Frequent training keeps emergency responders sharp and ready to deploy when needed, and safe while they perform the emergency service.

Richmond Fire-Rescue operates from seven fire halls located in urban residential or commercial office settings. The existing fire hall sites are of varying sizes with many having some form of training incorporated within them. The existing fire hall sites and the training features in these urban fire halls lend themselves well to single company exercises where they practice auto extrication, ladder and rope rescue. However the existing fire hall settings and site sizes preclude the conducting of the following types of outdoor training exercises:

1. Multiple company exercises with yard drills like hydrant, hose and nozzle deployment management.
2. Evening training with its associated lights, mechanical equipment and personnel noise.
3. Live fire burns that create smoke.
4. Emergency vehicle driver training.
5. Simulated rescue events like: train car derailment, complex confined space rescue, live electrical wire, gas fires and shutoff, and hazmat equipment deployment.

Currently, No. 1 Fire Hall is the largest outdoor training site available to Richmond Fire-Rescue for multiple-company drills. The site is problematic given it has:

- Many adjunct functions operating on the same site including outdoor emergency vehicle apparatus repairs, traffic operations trailer; staff and visitor parking for the fire hall and fire headquarters.
- The potential risk for public pedestrian intrusion onto or near a live training site.
- Residential neighbours across the street to the south and the west requiring noise and nuisance considerations.

Richmond Fire-Rescue has recently used, with permission and free of charge, large public parking lots such as malls and movie theatres to conduct their emergency vehicle driver training. Unfortunately compensation is being sought for their continued use. Richmond Fire-Rescue has sent equipment and crews to Langley to use their live-fire burning facility, incurring staff overtime and facility usage fees.

City staff has explored several different Richmond locations in an attempt to accommodate a fire-training site. Sites explored included: Sidaway Road and Sea Island near YVR. For a variety of reasons these sites are not suitable, leaving Richmond Fire-Rescue without a viable large outdoor training area.

The creation of large outdoor fire fighter training sites is common within metro Vancouver with many sites established including: Vancouver, Surrey, Coquitlam, North Vancouver, Abbotsford and the Township of Langley. Local training sites are established within City boundaries to avoid travel time; overtime costs and the continued on-duty emergency service delivery to their respective Cities. Richmond Fire-Rescue will explore the opportunity of sharing the proposed training site with Richmond RCMP.

The Lafarge Canada Inc. ("Lafarge") property available for Richmond Fire-Rescue's use is approximately 2.5 acres and is located north of Lafarge's plant (*see Attachment 2*) at 7611 No. 9 Road. The site is large and has a level compact surface, ideal for emergency driver training and the inclusion of training features like the previously approved flashover simulator. The site is outside of the urban setting in an Industrial (1) zoned area where heavy industrial uses are permitted. Zoning has advised that the proposed fire training facility is considered to be in compliance with the existing permitted zoning and defined uses.

Should Council consider this report and its recommendations favourably, then Richmond Fire-Rescue staff would personally meet with the owners of the property directly north, adjacent to the training area. The owners would be apprised of Richmond Fire-Rescue's future on-site training activities and how the site is planned to be used. The meeting will allow Richmond Fire-Rescue an opportunity to answer questions and as needed, adapt its activities to move forward in a positive way. Lafarge owns the properties directly surrounding the site to the east, west and south of the training area. In the event the owners express concerns regarding the proposed use then these concerns would be reported to Council prior to the execution of the agreement with Lafarge.

The site is a former landfill with buried products that are considered solid in nature. The landfill is capped by a minimum of 1 metre of natural products in the area that Richmond Fire-Rescue would be operating a training site. Lafarge continues to work with the Ministry of Environment on a ground water monitoring program.

Lafarge and City staff has discussed the current condition of the site and the potential impact of fire's training activities. The identified environmental considerations and strategies to manage them are as follows:

1. Containment of Contaminants

The intent is to prevent the spill or spread of contaminants during practice. The strategy is to create a training center that uses propane fires that do not produce hydrocarbons. In the rare case that normal products are used to create a fire the products of combustion would be contained to the site. Regular maintenance of the containment areas to prevent spillage or overflow is the best approach.

2. Water Spray

Much like contaminants, potable water can cause problems in open watercourses if directly applied (due to chlorine content) or if allowed to run over a dirty or uncapped surface and draw pollutants like hydrocarbons, sediment, or concrete dust into the watercourse. The strategy is to mitigate by controlling run-off from the site and passing it through appropriate quality controls (i.e. silt fencing, oil-water separator, etc, depending on concern), or alternately, directing flow to open field or soils where it can infiltrate into the ground without running off into the ditch/watercourse.

3. Air Quality (related to burns)

Metro Vancouver regulates air quality, and advice will be sought from them. Richmond Fire-Rescue would follow established community standards as set out in the City's Fire Protection and Life Safety Bylaw No. 8306 for their own open burns. The Fire Department is specifically exempted from the need to issue itself a permit (ref. Section 4.5.1) when burning for training purposes. Fire-Rescue would check with Metro Vancouver to assess daily air quality concerns when considering training open burns that use normal combustible materials.

4. Landfill Closure

The proposed site for the training center is located atop of a closed landfill under the direction of the Ministry of Environment. All potential improvements, buildings and activities performed on site will be in compliance with any conditions or rules set out by the Ministry of Environment. Richmond Fire Rescue has provided Lafarge Canada with a list of potential training activities and buildings that are contemplated on the site; Lafarge Canada is in agreement with these proposals.

No environmental issues requiring further action were identified by either party.

Richmond Fire-Rescue would be looking to introduce onto the site temporary structures and training props, including:

1. a portable classroom
2. a low-rise modular container style training structure (*see Attachment 3*) to practice smoke and rapid intervention techniques
3. electrical and gas line props to simulate various emergency situations
4. water hydrants

Lafarge's offer allows the City's Fire-Rescue Division access to a site without the City having to purchase or use its existing land holdings for this purpose. Any structures or props introduced onto the site would be done in a manner that would allow for easy site decommissioning. The installation and annual operating expense for these structures and props would be the responsibility of the City. The annual operating business implications have been discussed and prepared in conjunction with the City's Facilities Services staff.

Should Council wish to pursue the partnership, then it would be appropriate for:

1. Staff to negotiate and execute a licence agreement between the City and Lafarge for the use of the portion of 7611 No.9 Road shown on Attachment 1.
2. Richmond Fire-Rescue to prepare and include the capital and operating business costs for the 2012 budget process.

The basic terms of the licence agreement would be:

1. Term: 10 years, with an automatic annual renewal and subject to termination with 6-months prior notice after the initial 10 years.
2. Permitted Uses: fire fighter training facility.
3. Licence fee: none.
4. Utilities: City will pay all utilities for the license area.
5. Training site improvements: City may install or place improvements on the site and will maintain ownership of these improvements.
6. Environmental Condition: Lafarge Canada Inc. is responsible to the Ministry of Environment for the condition of the site.

- 7. Maintenance: City is responsible for maintaining all buildings and site conditions during the tenure of the agreement.
- 8. Decommissioning: City will leave the site in appreciably the same condition as when obtained.

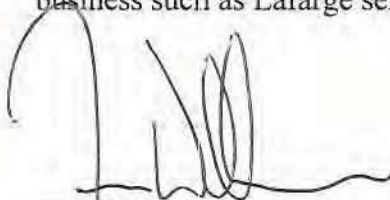
Financial Impact

The start-up financial impact for the City is estimated at \$200,000 (capital) with an estimated annual operating business implication (OBI) of \$35,000 which would include a portable classroom, a low-rise modular container style training structure to practice smoke and rapid intervention techniques, electrical and gas line props to simulate various emergency situations and water hydrants as well as general site maintenance of grounds and fences. If Council is supportive of the agreement, then detailed figures can be included in the appropriate 2012 Capital and Operating City budget request process.

| Item Description | Capital Cost (estimated) | OBI (estimated) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Portable Classroom | \$0 | \$10,000 |
| Modular Fire training | \$200,000 | \$10,500 |
| General Site | \$0 (Valued at 2.7M) | \$15,000 |
| Total | \$200,000 | \$35,500 |

Conclusion

Both Lafarge and the City benefit from the proposed partnership and creation of a fire fighter training site. The establishment of a community partnership with a long-time Richmond business such as Lafarge serves to further strengthen community bond.



Tim Wilkinson
Deputy Chief - Operations
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Location Map



Proposed training site



Proposed Richmond Fire-Rescue Training Site
7611 No. 9 Road (northwest corner)

Overspray area

Primary Training Area
(licence area)



Modular Fire Training Building

