
Subject: Initiation Report for 2020 Capital Funds – 911 Backup Rationalization

Confidential Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Recommendations

1. That financing in the amount of \$1,000,000, **BE INITIATED** from the capital budget for 911 Backup Rationalization (20001271) and that the project **BE FUNDED** as follows:
 - Capital Levy: \$1,000,000; and
2. That staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to amend Recommendation #2 of CSD 4-2017, the existing agreement with Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) respecting the Region's commitment to maintain 68 Church Street, St. Catharines as an interim backup 911/NRPS Communications Centre, to reflect that the NRPS 3 District facility be outfitted and maintained as the temporary and interim backup 911/NRPS Communications Centre until such time as a permanent backup centre is established.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to initiate funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 from the 911 Backup Rationalization project (20001271) to move the backup 911 infrastructure from 68 Church Street, St. Catharines to 5 Lincoln Street, Welland until the permanent backup 911 site is determined.
- NRPS 1 District is scheduled to move out of their current facility located at 68 Church Street, St. Catharines by the end of 2020.
- The NRPS backup 911 infrastructure is also located in the 68 Church facility. Once this building is vacated at the end of 2020, the infrastructure is at risk of being stolen, damaged, or rendered unusable.
- The Niagara Region in collaboration with the NRPS has identified 5 Lincoln Street, Welland (3 District Police Facility) as a suitable relocation site for the temporary backup 911 infrastructure.
- The capital funds will be used to renovate 5 Lincoln in order to accept the backup 911 infrastructure.
- At the present time Regional staff, local municipal staff and NRPS staff are planning for 5G 911 backup. The change to next generation capabilities is required by July 1, 2023. The project to transfer the existing 911 backup to District 3 provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to carefully plan and implement an optimal solution.

- The move of backup 911 to District 3 will allow Regional staff to identify opportunities to repurpose the 68 Church Street property.
- In the 2020 capital budget, this project was uninitiated because a full business case was still being reviewed and developed. As per section 4.2 of the Capital Asset Management Policy, an initiation report is required to allocate funding to the approved capital project and begin spending.

Financial Considerations

As part of the 2020 Capital Budget, a project budget of \$1,000,000 was approved to be initiated in the future by Council for 911 Backup Rationalization (Project #20001271). This project was approved to be funded 100% by capital levy. The construction costs for outfitting 5 Lincoln Street are dependent on final layout and detailed design, but are not expected to exceed \$650,000. The remaining funds under this project will be used toward the pursuit of the permanent backup 911 location.

The 2020 operating budget for the 68 Church facility that currently houses the 911 backup centre is \$573,438. This facility is to be vacated upon completion of the new 1 District Police Facility in St. Catharines in the fall of 2020. As part of the multi-year 2021 budget, Facilities staff forecasted an operating budget for 68 Church of \$645,838 assuming the building would be required to stay open to house the 911 backup infrastructure. It is anticipated that moving to 5 Lincoln Street in Welland will eliminate the need for this full operating budget at 68 Church Street beyond 2020.

It is anticipated that there will be no increase in operating costs for 5 Lincoln associated with relocating the 911 backup infrastructure.

Analysis

The Region is recommending the relocation of the backup 911 infrastructure to 5 Lincoln before 68 Church Street is vacated at the end of 2020.

Beginning in September 2019, Region staff began investigating possible relocation options for the backup 911 infrastructure at 68 Church Street. All promising locations were identified (including Niagara Region Headquarters) and site visits were conducted in order to take measurements and assess each building. After evaluating all locations, the 3 District Facility at 5 Lincoln Street in Welland was the only site that met all requirements for relocation:

- Different city than primary backup 911 infrastructure (Niagara Falls)
- Outside of downtown core and accessible by multiple routes

- Facilities staff member assigned to site on a full time basis
- Secure and unlikely to be a target of theft or vandalism
- Ample parking
- Accessible by elevator
- Amenities on site (locker rooms, washrooms, lunch room, break area)
- Backup generator in place with available capacity

In January 2020, Region and NRPS staff cataloged all components of the backup 911 infrastructure at 68 Church Street and verified that relocation is a viable option with the reuse of all equipment. Upon receiving this information, the NRPS confirmed that it was their preference to relocate the backup 911 infrastructure to 5 Lincoln Street in Welland.

On February 13, 2020, Niagara Region Clerk's Office was notified by NRPS Police Services Board of a Confidential Accommodations Steering Committee meeting that was held on the same day, where a motion was passed to amend the existing agreement with the Niagara Region to maintain 68 Church as an interim backup 911/NRPS Communications Centre, to reflect NRPS 3 District be outfitted and maintained as the temporary interim backup 911/NRPS Communications Centre.

The Niagara Region's Construction, Energy, and Facilities Management department believes that moving forward with this amendment is in the best interest of both the NRPS and Niagara Region. It will enable the Region to better maintain the security of the backup 911 infrastructure, while also investing in a long-term capital improvement to an owned facility, benefiting the NRPS and Region even after the interim backup 911 is no longer required.

Future of 68 Church Street

Before 68 Church Street is deemed surplus, staff from the Region and the City of St. Catharines are currently reviewing the future opportunities for the site. 68 Church Street is located within the St. Catharines *Downtown Creative Cluster Master Plan (2008)* and provides a redevelopment opportunity within the Downtown core for a more integrated mixed-use site.

Alternatives Reviewed

Another alternative reviewed was to leave the backup 911 infrastructure at 68 Church Street and make capital improvements to the building in order to keep it operational. In order to leave the infrastructure at its current location (68 Church Street), the building would require a capital investment toward the roof, HVAC, and security systems in the amount of approximately \$200,000. The operational costs to maintain the vacant building (heating, cooling, lighting, etc.) would also be fully incurred. Most importantly, housing this critical infrastructure in a vacant building presents a significant risk of theft

or vandalism. Even with a 24/7 security presence, the Region would not be able to guarantee the safety of the equipment.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report aligns with Council's Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 03 – Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Strategic Priority 04 – Sustainable and Engaging Government

Other Pertinent Reports

CSD 4-2017

Corporate Services Committee

November 29, 2017

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Appendices

Appendix 1

CSD 4-2017 - NRPS 1 District Project Update

Appendix 2

CSD 22-2020 - Confidential Memo - Appendix 2