

EMS tries to keep up with growth

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Staff Writer

As Canada's third fastest growing municipality with an average of 33,600 new residents each year, York Region's emergency workers are having a tough time keeping pace.

Demand for York EMS services increases 6 per cent each year.

It stands to reason resources need to keep up, community and health services commissioner Joann Simmons said.

"Growth and the make-up of the people, more seniors, for example, is a major factor in all of the region's services," she said.

York EMS has a \$40.5-million 2008 operating budget and, to meet a growing demand for service, the department has identified several capital initiatives as soon as next year and through 2018.

The requested 2009 budget items, totalling \$2.8 million, will be tabled at various committees in December and reviewed by council in January, Ms Simmons said.

Most urgent on next year's capital business plan are adding new vehicles and renovations to three existing stations.

After an ambulance has travelled 250,000 kilometres or served for 54 months, it needs to be replaced, the budget report states. The budget calls for \$1.8 million to buy 13 replacement ambulances. Another \$288,000 will buy four new paramedic response vehicles to replace a fleet of 2003-04 models.

Upgrading EMS stations sharing space with fire halls in Stouffville and Keswick will cost \$150,000 and \$300,000, respectively.

A new Pefferlaw paramedic response station will cost \$1 million, 75 per cent of



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Emergency services respond to a vehicle crash. With York Region having one of the fastest growing populations, York's EMS wants to make sure it is ahead of the game when it comes to providing service for you.

which was previously approved.

Long term, the biggest ticket item at \$11.6 million, not including land costs, is a new EMS operations centre and paramedic response station by 2012. It will replace the existing Newmarket station, which has reached capacity.

NEW STOUFFVILLE HALL

York EMS needs to buy 15 new ambulances between 2010 and 2018. The price tag will be \$2.5 million.

By 2011, a new permanent paramedic response station valued at \$1.1 million will

be built in King Township to replace a Nobleton facility.

A new station to provide service for the northern area of King Township and the northern Hwy. 400 corridor should be in place by 2011 at a cost of \$1.1 million.

In 2007, 350 paramedics in 19 regional stations attended more than 60,000 calls, records show.

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"We have a good, measured capital plan in place," she added.

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