



**Organizational
Service Delivery Review**

Rural Municipality
of Ste. Anne – Fire Protection Services

April 20th, 2023

Disclaimer

This written communication (the “Final Report”) has been prepared for the Rural Municipality (“RM”) of Ste. Anne (the “RM” or “Municipality”) and the Government of Manitoba (“GoM”) per the terms of the Statement of Work, executed on December 1, 2022, between the RM and Deloitte LLP (“Deloitte” or “we”).

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2 This Report must be considered as a whole and selecting portions of the report, or the factors noted by us, without considering all factors and analyses together could create a misleading view of the process underlying this report. The preparation of this report was a complex process and considers various scenarios and is not necessarily susceptible to partial analysis or summary description. Any attempt to do so could lead to undue emphasis on any factor, calculation, or analysis.

5 All analysis and recommendations outlined within the Final Report are based upon interviews with the RM and identified relevant stakeholders, data collected from the RM, and other additional information provided as at the date of this report.

3 The Final Report is based on information collected and assessed over the course of this project and serves as a view of the opportunities identified and selected to date based on high-level financial, operational, and regulatory assumptions. Any insights and/or considerations on the opportunities presented are subject to further diligence and alignment with the RM’s management.

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Executive summary



Executive Summary - Introduction and Approach

Deloitte was engaged to assist the Rural Municipality of Ste. Anne’s Fire Protection Services (the “RM” or the “Department”) with a review of the current structure of the organization, operations, and service delivery. The purpose of the review was to focus on ensuring the most efficient, protective, and cost-effective services to the residents, businesses, and surrounding ecosystems, through the identification of improvement opportunities. The scope of review included, but was not limited to:

- Jurisdictional boundaries of protection zones
- Fire protection service agreements
- Financial efficiencies
- Reporting and operating structure
- Availability and recruitment of resources
- Alternatives for equipment and Fire Department upgrades

Objectives:

The objectives of the review included determining the best course of action to address the following stated **key questions** as posed by the RM:

1. Is the current zone structure efficient and/or do we need more or fewer zones?
2. Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?
3. Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?
4. Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?

Approach:

To address the key objectives of the review and to provide viable actionable recommendations, a multi-phased approach was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the current state of operations. The review explored various options and opportunities for improvement to be recommended. Our approach included the following stages:

Document Review
Derive and analyze useful information from existing documents

Stakeholder Interviews
Elicit stakeholder reactions and suggestions

Jurisdictional scans
Evaluate fire protection approaches taken by similar RMs

Executive Summary – Summary of Findings

Through the course of the review, various findings were uncovered for further exploration. The findings were categorized into three pre-determined areas of focus, designed to address the key objectives of the review and to explore value-add opportunities. The summary of findings included:

Areas of Focus

Area Coverage

- The current zone coverage breakdown is functional, however, possible opportunities to streamline coverage and operations exist and should be considered.
- Regular internal reviews of the zone structures with surrounding RMs and Municipalities for the provision of fire protection services could improve overall financial and service efficiency.
- The RM should re-evaluate the potential to invest in a new Fire Department based on the community need and RM capacity at set intervals.

Operational Efficiency

- The Fire Departments within the RM are currently faced with recruitment issues due to an aging population and sparse population density.
- The volunteer availability and scheduling is a challenge during busier periods where staffing availability can become limited.
- Stakeholders reported that occasionally there were misassignments from the 911 dispatch center for specific calls that were on the border between two of the coverage zones resulting in dispatching the wrong Fire Department.

Financial Efficiency

- The RM should consider a formalized process for managing capital to allow for proper oversight for major capital replacements or repairs.
- The RM incurs the costs to train volunteers. However, once volunteers are trained, they are not required to provide their services to the RM in return.
- The RM faces issues with the current collection process for collecting outstanding payments due to attending calls for out-of-province individuals.

Executive Summary – Opportunities

The findings were analyzed, and opportunities were identified to address the key objectives as well as explore additional opportunities that could add value to the RM’s fire protection services. The following is a summary of the key opportunities within each area of focus:

Overview of Opportunities

Financial Efficiencies

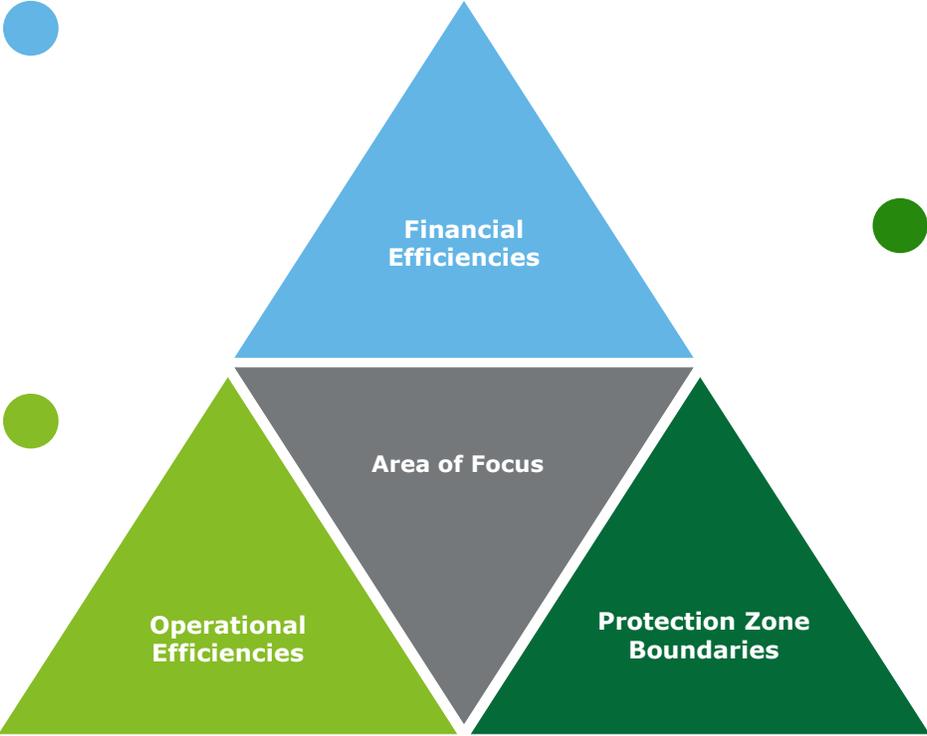


Opportunities were identified to improve the budgeting process, consolidate key spending items, and improve the current collections process to improve the collection of outstanding payments.

Operational Efficiencies



Multiple opportunities to improve operational efficiencies were identified, including improving internal communications, leveraging intermunicipal connections, and analyzing a potential investment into a new Fire Department.



Area Coverage

Multiple options were identified and explored for further consideration to achieve optimal area coverage. The goal is to reduce the maximum response time in each zone and time it takes to get to the farthest point in each of the zones.

Executive Summary - Implementation Plan

Timeline

Short < 6 months, Medium < 12 months, Long > 12 months

Key Objectives (See Slide 4)	Theme	Recommendation	Implementation Duration			
			S	M	L	Recurring
Question #1 - Is the current zone structure efficient and/or do we need more or fewer zones?	Area Coverage	The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.				
Question #2 - Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?	Operational Efficiencies	It is recommended that the Giroux Fire Department be maintained as currently established. The replacement of the pumper and recruitment of two additional volunteers is recommended for optimal efficiency and effectiveness as a supporting department in the RM.				
Question #3 - Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?	<i>Based on the analysis conducted, it is not a recommendation to develop a new department</i>					
Question #4 - Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?	Financial Efficiencies	Implement a formalized capital replacement plan.				
	Financial Efficiencies	Enforce group collections on outstanding insurance payments.				
	Financial Efficiencies	Develop a return of service policy for newly trained recruits.				
Value-Add Recommendations	Area Coverage	Establish a recurring process to regularly review fire protection zone structures.				
	Operational Efficiencies	Establish the required 911 dispatch enhancements to eliminate miscommunications.				
	Operational Efficiencies	Establish a recruitment referral system to be used amongst geographically close RMs.				
	Operational Efficiencies	Implement programs to improve the use of technology for continuous communication during fire calls.				
	Operational Efficiencies	Incorporate a scheduling system for firefighter volunteers during busier periods.				

Background & Approach



Background

The RM of Ste. Anne, currently home to 5,584 (2021 Census of Population) residents, is divided into 4 fire protection zones. Each zone is protected by one Fire Department, those being: the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department, Richer Fire Department, Steinbach Fire Department, and La Broquerie Fire Department. The RM currently owns and operates two fire departments, Giroux Fire Hall and Richer Fire Department. It is important to clarify that Giroux Fire Hall is a supporting fire hall consisting of one water pumper truck that provides additional water support to surrounding fire departments.

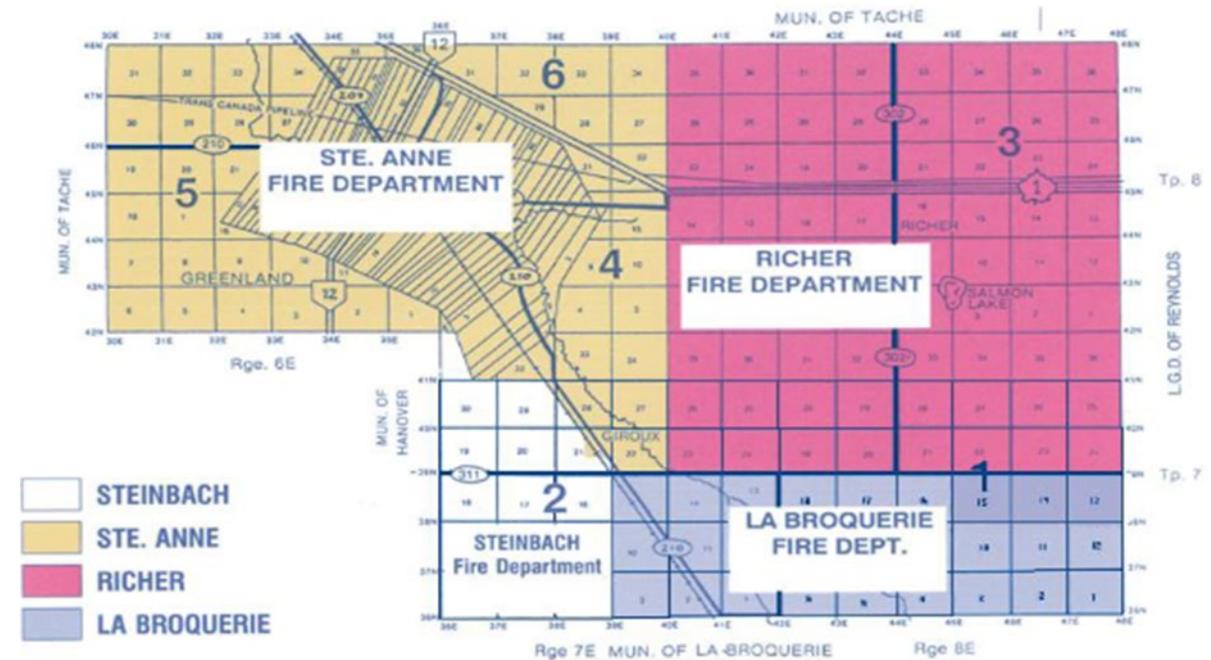
For the purpose of this review, the term 'fire department' refers to the fire hall/building structure used by the municipalities to provide fire protection. Each zone has a response system in place that is serviced by the Fire Department within the zone. The RM has intermunicipal agreements for fire protection services with each of the neighbouring municipalities and the Town of Ste. Anne. In addition, Mutual Aid Agreements are utilized when a department has depleted all resources and requires additional assistance.

The workforce that operates these fire departments consists of paid on-call volunteer firefighters. The firefighters who respond to emergency calls and provide fire protection services are community members, who volunteer to be on call and receive payment only when responding to emergency calls, or attending regular scheduled practices, authorized training, and station duties.

The RM identified that there is a new fire service resource established in Blumenort, which expressed the potential ability to provide emergency service coverage in addition to Ste Anne's current partners. Considering this option with possible equipment upgrades, rising costs due to inflation, a growing RM with a shifting population base and associated volunteer availability and dependability, the RM felt an independent review of the fire protection service delivery model was required in order to determine what would be the best option to balance effective response capabilities with fair and reasonable taxation.

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF STE. ANNE

FIRE DEPARTMENT AREA MAP



Revised February 2012

Objective

The goal of this review was to support the RM in an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of fire protection services within the municipality.

In order to guide the review to achieve the greatest value-add, the following key questions were explicitly highlighted to guide the assessment before the Council of the RM:

1

Is the current zone structure efficient and/or do we need more or fewer zones?

2

Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?

3

Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?

4

Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?



Approach

Deloitte's approach involved multiple phases to provide recommendations that address the objectives of this review for the RM. This involved gathering documentation and data and performing interviews of stakeholders to understand the current state of operations (see Appendix A & B). From there and utilizing our jurisdictional scan, we identified opportunities for process improvement, increasing efficiency, and optimizing resource allocation. Through further data analysis we were able to provide effective recommendations.

	Approach	Objective
Document Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained and reviewed various documents relative to the RM's Fire Department operations, financials, and processes Conducted review of the requested documents and analysis of the information provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop our understanding of the RM's operations To inform our understanding for targeted interview questions and benchmarking
Stakeholder Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted interviews with the Richer and Giroux Fire Departments Fire Chiefs Consulted with the RM of Ste. Anne Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Facilitated a series of 5 one-on-one interviews with Fire Chiefs from the surrounding regions where they have intermunicipal fire protection agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help identify core services and intermunicipal activities To identify findings and opportunities for improvement To ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their opinions and provide ideas for improvements
Jurisdictional Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through discussions with the Fire Chiefs from surrounding regions, Deloitte conducted a jurisdictional scan of similar entities of comparable size Additionally, we collected and analyzed publicly available data to establish benchmarks for best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore best practices implemented in similar entities of comparable size To identify externally based opportunities to improve the RM's operations and efficiencies

Areas of Focus

During the initial planning stage of the review, we established the following areas of focus that would guide and validate both the current state assessment and key recommendations.

Our opportunities and recommendations were categorized into the following areas of focus as requested by the RM:



Area Coverage

The focus of Area Coverage recommendations are tailored to minimize the time of response due to the crucial nature of fire protection services.

Questions answered:

- 1. Is the current zone structure efficient and/or do we need more or fewer zones?**



Operational Efficiency

The focus of Operational Efficiency recommendations are tailored to improve the current state of operations within the Department by considering capacity, best practices, and stakeholder preferences.

Questions answered:

- 2. Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?**
- 3. Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?**



Financial Efficiency

The focus of Financial Efficiency recommendations are tailored to serve the Department in reducing or eliminating costs while continuing to provide excellent service delivery.

Questions answered:

- 4. Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?**

Intermunicipal Agreements Overview

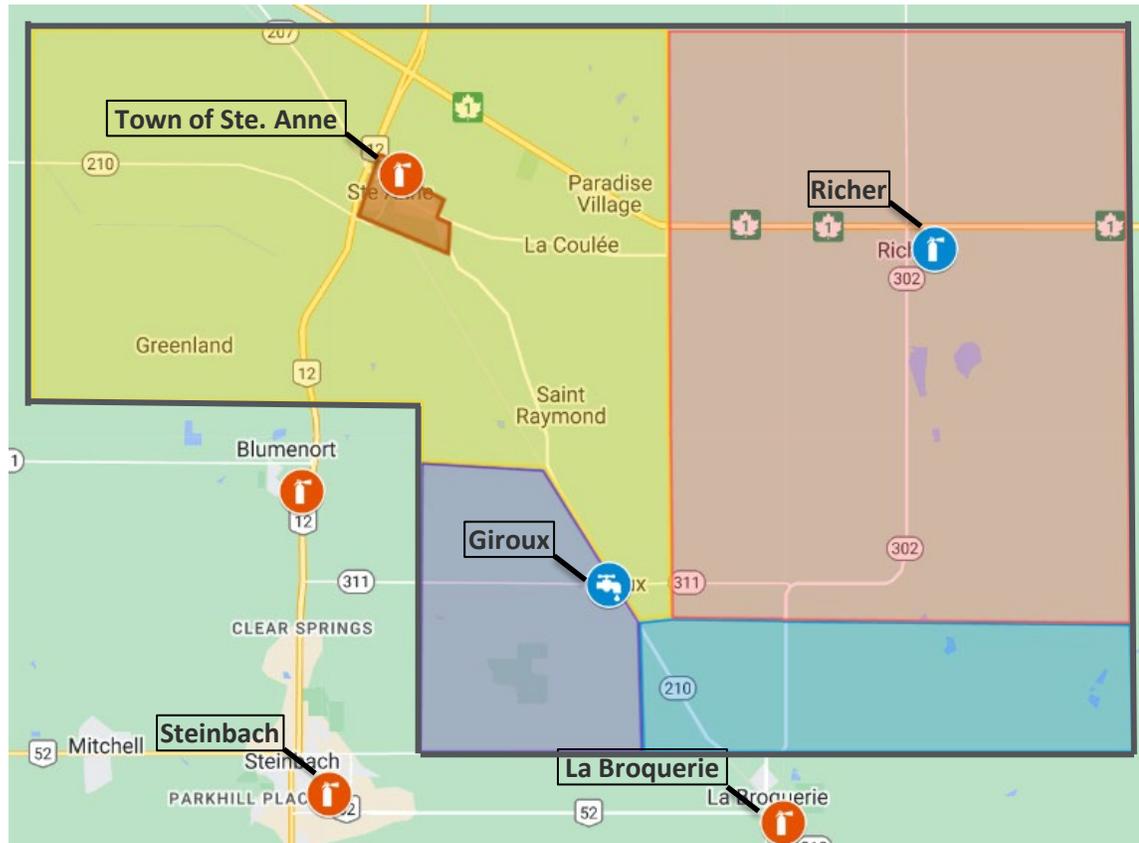
In order to gain a stronger understanding of the current state of the RM’s service delivery, the following table summarizes each existing intermunicipal agreement. Each municipality has varying agreement structures and terms. A detailed list of the documents reviewed can be found in Appendix A.

INTERMUNICIPAL AGREEMENTS		
Stakeholders	Agreement terms	Agreement Cost
RM of Hanover	Reciprocal agreement between RM of Ste. Anne and RM of Hanover to provide services when requested based on the pre-determined rates.	Pre-determined reciprocal rates
RM of Reynolds	The RM of Ste. Anne to provide the RM of Reynolds volunteer firefighting services for a specific coverage area.	\$2,400 annual + reciprocal equipment rates
Town of Ste. Anne	Mutual agreement for the Town of Ste. Anne to provide coverage for a certain district within the RM of Ste. Anne.	2023 estimate - \$144,000 with \$3,000 added to the base amount annually
RM of La Broquerie	The RM of La Broquerie to provide fire protection over a certain district within the RM of Ste. Anne.	\$17,000 annual retainer fee
City of Steinbach	The City of Steinbach to provide service coverage over a certain district within the RM of Ste. Anne.	~\$48,000; annual contribution amount determined by computing the portion of the properties assessment value within the protection area compared to the total properties assessment value within the RM

***The agreements highlighted above were considered in greater detail to provide estimates and assumptions for the area coverage analysis and recommendations**

Zone Structure Overview

To understand the breakdown of the RM’s current zones of fire protection jurisdictions, the following map provides a detailed visualization of the entire RM area defined by the black border and the designated fire protection zone areas within the RM. The size, structure, and location, along with the respective responsible Fire Department for each area is defined below.



	ZONES			
	Town of Ste. Anne	Richer	Steinbach	La Broquerie
Estimated area coverage (sq. km)	200 km ²	206 km ²	41 km ²	48 km ²
Estimated surface border (km)	65.4 km	57.8 km	25.7 km	34.1 km
Distance from Fire Department to farthest point (km)	14.0 km	12.4 km	10.6 km	16.7 km
Response time to farthest point (estimated minutes ¹)	12	15	17	20

LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne Protection Zone	
Town of Richer Protection Zone	
City of Steinbach Protection Zone	
RM of La Broquerie Protection Zone	
RM Operated Fire Department	
RM Operated Supporting Hall	
Supporting Fire Department	

¹All time estimates provided within this report have been estimated using Google Maps

Assessment - Area Coverage

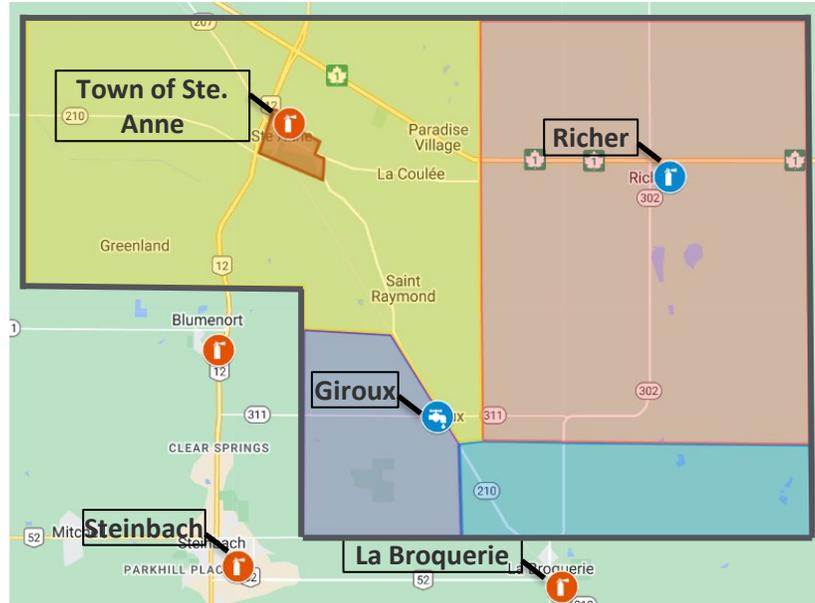


Area Coverage

The following section seeks to assess if the current Area Coverage is sufficient to optimize the response time due to the crucial nature of the fire protection services.

Question #1 - Is the current zone structure efficient and/ or does the RM need more or fewer zones?

The RM coverage zone maps have been in place for decades. The maps and intermunicipal agreements were analyzed in detail. Additionally, various stakeholders from neighbouring RMs and cities were consulted as supporting service providers and neighbouring service receivers. Based on the information gathered, the following three options were identified for consideration:



LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne Protection Zone	
Town of Richer Protection Zone	
City of Steinbach Protection Zone	
RM of La Broquerie Protection Zone	
RM Operated Fire Department	
RM Operated Supporting Hall	
Supporting Fire Department	

OPTION #1

Have the La Broquerie Fire Department cover the zone that is currently being serviced by the agreement with the City of Steinbach

OPTION #2

The newly built Blumenort Fire Department could be engaged to cover the current zone covered by the City of Steinbach and the southern portion of the area currently covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department

OPTION #3

The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.

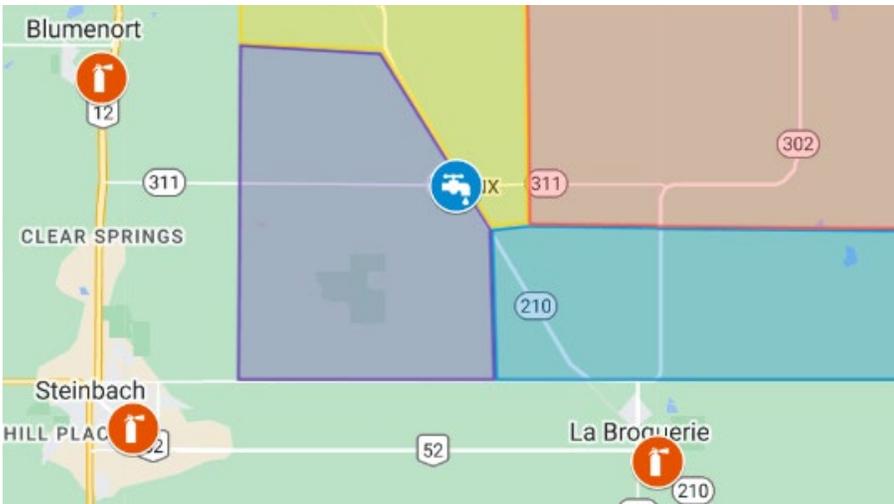
Area Coverage – Option #1 Background

Based on potential viable alternatives identified through stakeholder engagement, proximity to the RM, and capacity to serve, the following alternative relating to area coverage has been identified for further consideration:

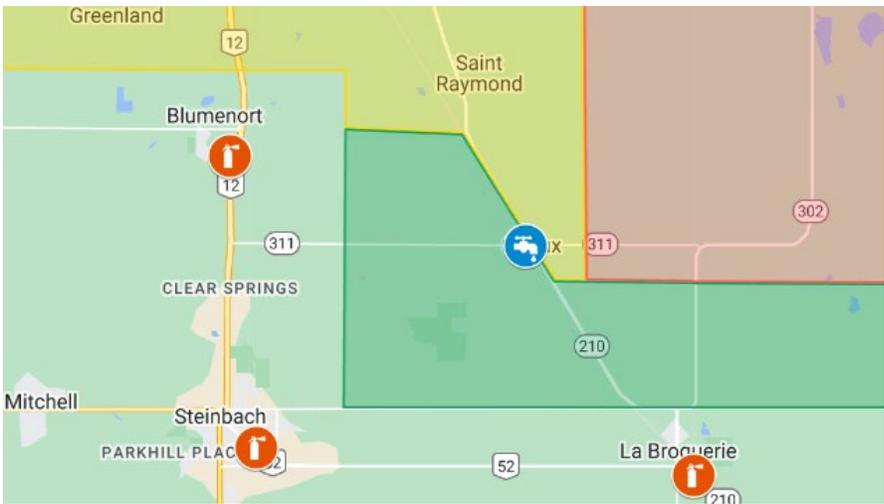
Option 1

Have the La Broquerie Fire Department cover the zone that is currently being serviced by the agreement with the City of Steinbach

Current Coverage



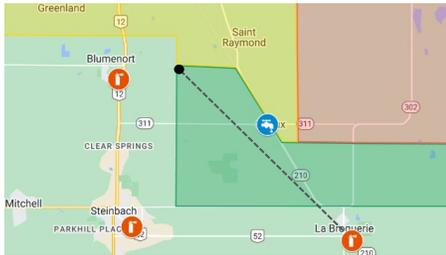
Proposed Coverage



LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne Protection Zone	
Town of Richer Protection Zone	
City of Steinbach Protection Zone	
RM of La Broquerie Protection Zone	
Proposed La Broquerie Zone	
RM Operated Fire Department	
RM Operated Supporting Hall	
Supporting Fire Department	

Area Coverage – Option #1 Response Time Analysis

A response time analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the travel time for the Fire Department to reach the farthest location in their respective zone.

	Current State	Proposed Option #1
	Steinbach Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Steinbach zone	La Broquerie Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Steinbach Zone
Farthest distance (km) into Steinbach Zone	15.8 km	16.1 km
Estimated driving time required (mins)	16 min	14 min
Area Coverage		

If the La Broquerie Fire Department were to take over the current Steinbach Fire Department zone, the response time from the Fire Department to the farthest point in the new zone would decrease by an estimated 2 minutes due to ease of accessibility to major highways.

Area Coverage – Option #1 Financial Analysis

To assess the potential financial impact of the La Broquerie Fire Department covering the current Steinbach zone, a cost analysis was completed using a prorated approach to evaluating the coverage area differential and the existing contract costs.

ADDITIONAL COST ON LA BROQUERIE CONTRACT

GIVEN	
La Broquerie Agreement cost	\$17,000
Steinbach Agreement cost	\$48,753
La Broquerie Protection area (km ²)	48
Steinbach Protection area (km ²)	41
CALCULATION	
Steinbach Agreement cost	\$48,753
(less) Fire protection costs for Steinbach Km ² based on La Broquerie agreement rates	(\$14,520)
Estimated Cost Savings	\$34,233

Using the existing fixed annual retainer paid to the RM of La Broquerie from the RM of Ste. Anne of \$17,000, the estimated cost to engage the La Broquerie Fire Department is **\$14,520** based on an increase of area coverage to 41 km². The financial benefit received would be the elimination of the current City of Steinbach contract which was estimated using the 3-year average of **\$48,753** representing the annual retainer paid to the City of Steinbach. **If the RM of Ste. Anne were to eliminate the existing City of Steinbach fire protection service agreement and engage the RM of La Broquerie and increase of area coverage, the estimated financial benefit to the RM would be the difference of \$34,233 in estimated cost savings.**

Area Coverage – Option #1 Summary

Option #1

La Broquerie Fire Department to cover the zone that is currently being serviced by the agreement with the City of Steinbach

PROS

- With Option #1, the RM would eliminate the existing contract with the City of Steinbach and consolidate the responsibilities to the RM of the La Broquerie agreement.
- Response time to the farthest point in the coverage area would decrease by an estimated 2 minutes.
- The RM would benefit with an estimated cost savings totaling \$34,232.

CONS

- By having La Broquerie cover additional area and eliminating the City of Steinbach agreement, the risk of having multiple calls occur simultaneously within the proposed larger coverage area increases and may result in the RM having to leverage its Mutual Aid agreements with surrounding RMs to assist if this situation were to occur.

CONTINGENCIES

- The proposed recommendation is contingent on the availability, capacity, and agreement of the RM of La Broquerie to provide additional fire protection services to accommodate the proposed change in zone boundary.
- The estimated financial benefit will depend on the negotiation of contract considerations for the proposed expansion of area coverage.

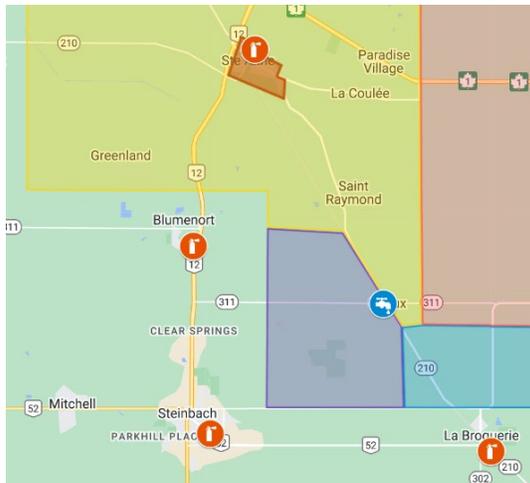
Area Coverage – Option #2 Background

Based on potential viable alternatives identified through stakeholder engagement, proximity to the RM, and capacity to serve, the following alternative relating to area coverage has been identified for further consideration:

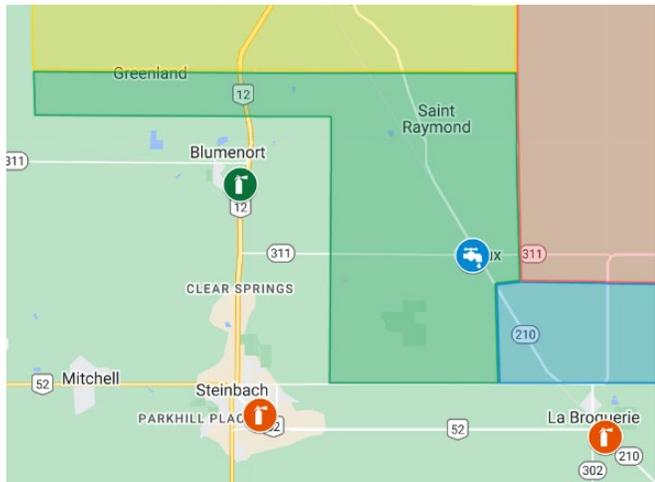
Option 2

The newly built Blumenort Fire Department could be engaged to cover the current zone covered by the City of Steinbach and a southern portion of the area currently covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department

Current Coverage



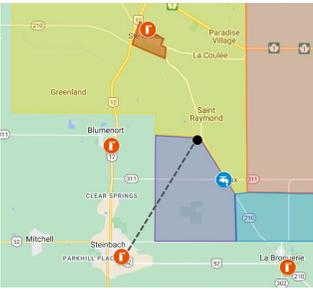
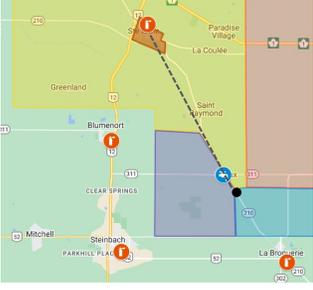
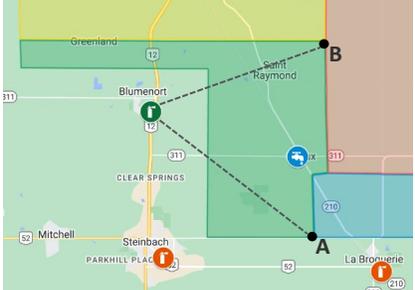
Proposed Coverage



LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne Protection Zone	
Town of Richer Protection Zone	
City of Steinbach Protection Zone	
RM of La Broquerie Protection Zone	
Proposed Blumenort Zone	
RM Operated Fire Department	
RM Operated Supporting Hall	
Supporting Fire Department	
Proposed Fire Department	

Area Coverage – Option #2 Response Time Analysis

A response time analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the travel time for the Fire Department to reach the farthest location in their respective zone.

	Current State	Current State	Proposed Option #2	
	Steinbach Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Steinbach zone	Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Town of Ste. Anne zone	A	B
Farthest distance (km) in the zone	16.3 km	14.4 km	15.7 km	14.6 km
Estimated driving time required (mins)	16 min	12 min	14 min	15 min
Coverage Area				

The Blumenort Fire Department is centrally located between both zones. **The response time to the farthest point in the current Steinbach coverage zone (A), is shorter by 2 minutes; however, this option is not closer to the farthest point in the Town of Ste. Anne coverage zone (B),** due to the Town of Ste. Anne’s Fire Department’s proximity to major highways, **adding 3 minutes** to the response time. Therefore, option A could be considered; however, option B would not be a viable option.

Area Coverage – Option #2 Financial Analysis

To assess the potential financial impact of Blumenort covering the current Steinbach zone and a portion of the Town of Ste. Anne zone, a cost analysis was completed, using a prorated approach to evaluate historical call volumes within the proposed area, the existing contract costs, the type of calls and associated call volumes. Additionally, a single firehall response by Blumenort was estimated as ranging between \$1,800 per hour and \$2,200 per hour.

CALL TYPE	A. STEINBACH FIRE DEPARTMENT - 2022 CALL RESPONSES				B. TOWN OF STE ANNE FIRE DEPARTMENT - 2022 CALL RESPONSES				
	# of incidents	% of total	Staff hours (hours)	Avg # of responding personnel	# of incidents	% of total	Staff hours (hours)		Avg # of responding personnel
							Min	Max	
● Structure fire	1	14%	58.5	17.0	1	25%	2	5	17.0
● False alarm	3	43%	31	14.3	2	50%	1	1	14.3
● MVA ¹	2	29%	67.7	13.0	1	25%	1	2	13.0
● MVE ²	1	14%	23.8	12.0	-	-	-	-	-
● Total number of responses	7	100%	181	14.0	4	100%			

¹MVA ("Motor Vehicle Accident")

²MVE ("Motor Vehicle Extrication")

BLUMENORT'S COST - RESPONDING TO STEINBACH'S ZONE	
Minimum	Maximum
\$20,952	\$24,452

BLUMENORT'S COST – RESPONDING TO TOWN OF STE. ANNE ZONE	
Minimum	Maximum
\$8,961	\$21,200

NET ESTIMATED SAVINGS - BLUMENORT COVERS CURRENT STEINBACH ZONE		
	Min	Max
Steinbach's Agreement	\$48,753	\$48,753
Payment to Blumenort	(\$24,452)	(\$20,952)
Net estimated savings	\$24,301	\$27,801

NET ESTIMATED SAVINGS (INCREASE) - BLUMENORT COVERS THE PROPOSED PORTION OF TSA		
	Min	Max
Allocated Town of Ste. Anne agreement cost*	\$12,800	\$12,800
Blumenort's cost to cover Town of Ste. Anne's zone	(\$21,200)	(\$8,961)
Net estimated savings (increased)	(\$8,400)	\$3,839

* Agreement cost of \$12,800 is derived based on 9% of total agreement cost of \$144,000 - (4/45) allocation of the calls responded in the discussed protection area.

If the RM of Ste. Anne were to eliminate the existing City of Steinbach and Town of Ste. Anne fire protection service agreements and engage the Blumenort Fire Department to cover the proposed area, **the estimated cost savings to cover the Steinbach coverage area would range between \$24,301 and \$27,801 and the estimated cost savings/increase to cover the Steinbach coverage area would range between an increase in costs of (\$8,400) and cost savings of \$3,839.**

Area Coverage – Option #2 Summary

Option #2

The newly built Blumenort Fire Department could be engaged to cover the current zone covered by the City of Steinbach and a southern portion of the area covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department

PROS

- With Option #2, the RM would eliminate the existing contract with the City of Steinbach, reduce the coverage area and associated costs with Town of Ste. Anne, and consolidate the responsibilities by leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department.
- The RM would benefit from the Steinbach zone coverage adjustment with a shortened response time of 2 mins and estimated cost savings ranging from \$24,301 and \$27,801.

CONS

- With the introduction of a new Fire Department to cover a portion of the RM, the Fire Chiefs of the related parties would need to be onboarded and provided with knowledge transfer of fastest routes, densely populated areas, and demographic considerations.
- It was noted that the estimated response time to the farthest point in the Town of Ste. Anne coverage area would increase by 3 minutes and there is a risk of increase in costs of approximately (\$8,400) .

CONTINGENCIES

- The proposed recommendation is contingent on the availability, capacity, and agreement of the Blumenort Fire Department to provide additional fire protection services to accommodate the proposed change in zone boundary.
- The estimated financial benefit will depend on the negotiation of contract considerations for the proposed expansion of area coverage.

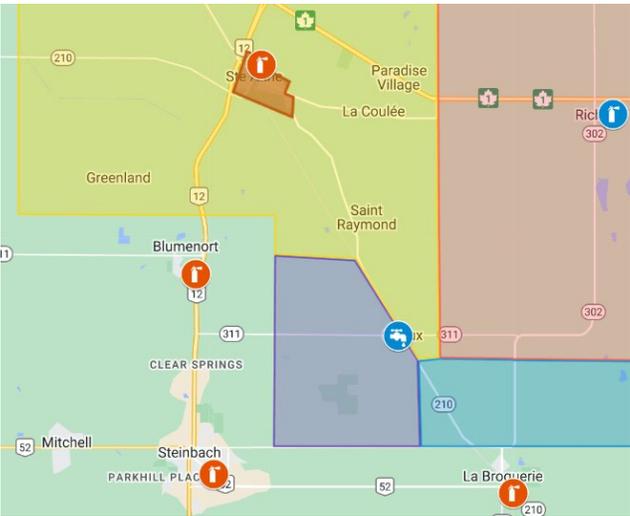
Area Coverage – Option #3 Background

Based on potential viable alternatives identified through stakeholder engagement, proximity to the RM, and capacity to serve, the following alternative relating to area coverage has been identified for further consideration:

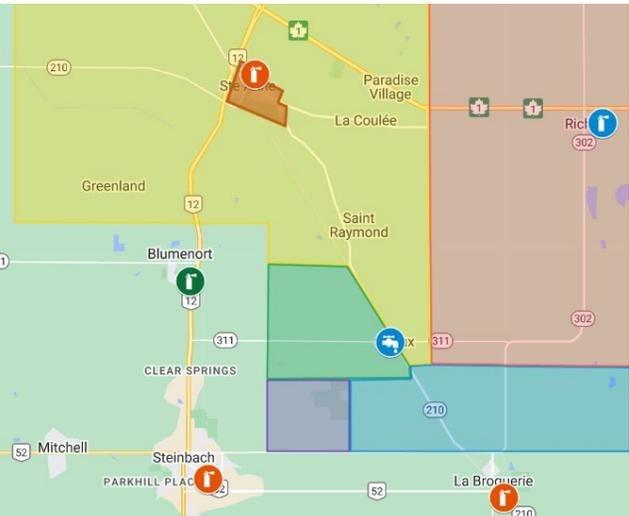
Option 3

The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.

Current Coverage



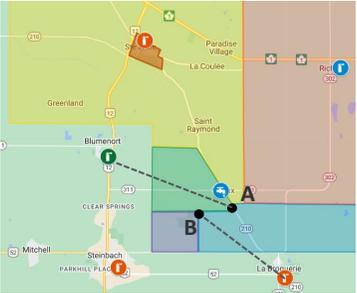
Proposed Coverage



LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne Protection Zone	
Town of Richer Protection Zone	
City of Steinbach Protection Zone	
RM of La Broquerie Protection Zone	
Proposed Blumenort Zone	
RM Operated Fire Department	
RM Operated Supporting Hall	
Supporting Fire Department	
Proposed Fire Department	

Area Coverage – Option #3 Response Time Analysis

A response time analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the travel time for the Fire Department to reach the farthest location in their respective zone.

	Current State		Proposed Option #2	
	Steinbach to the farthest point in the current Town of Steinbach zone		Blumenort Fire Department to the farthest points in the proposed coverage zone	
	A	B	A	B
Farthest distance (km) in the zone	18.2 km	12.5 km	12.6 km	11.3 km
Estimated driving time required (mins)	16 min	14 min	10 min	10 min
Coverage Area				

The Blumenort and La Broquerie Fire Departments are in close proximity to the current Steinbach zone. The response time to the farthest point in the **Blumenort zone would decrease by an estimated 6 minutes and response time to the farthest point in the La Broquerie zone would decrease by 4 minutes.** Additionally, the Blumenort and La Broquerie Fire Departments would **decrease the distance to the farthest point in the proposed coverage areas by 5.6 km and 1.2 km, respectively.**

Area Coverage – Option #3 Financial Analysis

To assess the potential financial impact of reducing the City of Steinbach zone by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department, a cost analysis was completed. Using the existing contract costs and area coverage, a prorated approach was used to evaluate the expected change in costs. Additionally, call types and volumes were used to determine the change in cost by applying a range of cost per call of \$1,800 per hour to \$2,200 per hour as provided by the Blumenort Fire Department.

Table A – ADDITIONAL ESTIMATED COST ON LA BROQUERIE CONTRACT TO TAKE OVER A PORTION OF STEINBACH

La Broquerie Agreement cost	\$17,000
La Broquerie Current Protection area (km ²)	48
Proposed additional coverage (km ²)	9
Estimated additional costs on La Broquerie based on La Broquerie agreement rates	\$3,188

Table B – ESTIMATED STEINBACH AGREEMENT COST

Steinbach Agreement cost	\$48,753
Current Steinbach Protection area (km ²)	42
Steinbach Protection area – proposed coverage (km ²)	11
Estimated updated Steinbach agreement cost	\$12,769

Area Coverage – Option #3 Financial Analysis - Continued

Table C - COST FOR BLUMENORT TO COVER PORTION OF STEINBACH ZONE

CALL TYPE	STEINBACH FIRE DEPARTMENT - 2022 CALL RESPONSES			
	# of incidents	% of total	Staff hours (hours)	Avg # of responding personnel
● Structure fire	1	14%	58.5	17.0
● False alarm	3	43%	31	14.3
● MVA ¹	2	29%	67.7	13.0
● MVE ²	1	14%	23.8	12.0
● Total number of responses	7	100%	181	14.0

¹MVA ("Motor Vehicle Accident")
²MVE ("Motor Vehicle Extrication")

	BLUMENORT'S COST - RESPONDING TO PROPOSED PORTION OF STEINBACH'S ZONE	
	Minimum	Maximum
Total estimated cost for Blumenort to cover all of Steinbach's current zone	\$20,952	\$24,452
Cost of La Broquerie zone portion	(\$3,188)	(\$3,188)
Cost of Steinbach zone portion	(\$12,768)	(\$12,768)
Estimated cost for Blumenort to cover the proposed area of the current Steinbach zone	\$4,996	\$8,496

SUMMARY – TOTAL EXPECTED COST SAVINGS			
Steinbach original agreement cost			\$48,753
		Min	Max
La Broquerie's expected fee to cover portion of Steinbach's zone	See Table A	(\$3,188)	(\$3,188)
Updated Steinbach fee	See Table B	(\$12,769)	(\$12,769)
Blumenort's expected fee to cover portion of Steinbach's zone	See Table C	(\$4,996)	(\$8,496)
		(\$20,952)	(\$24,452)
		Min	Max
Overall estimated costs saved (increased)		\$24,300	\$27,800

If the RM of Ste. Anne were to reduce the City of Steinbach agreement cost by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department, **the estimated cost savings would range between \$24,300 and \$27,800.**

Area Coverage – Option #3 Summary

Option #3

The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.

PROS

- If the RM of Ste. Anne were to reduce the City of Steinbach zone by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department, the estimated cost savings would range between \$24,300 and \$27,800.
- The response time to the farthest point in the Blumenort zone would decrease by an estimated 6 minutes and response time to the farthest point in the La Broquerie zone would decrease by an estimated 4 minutes. Additionally, the Blumenort and La Broquerie Fire Departments would decrease the distance to the farthest point in the proposed coverage areas by 5.6 km and 1.2 km, respectively.

CONS

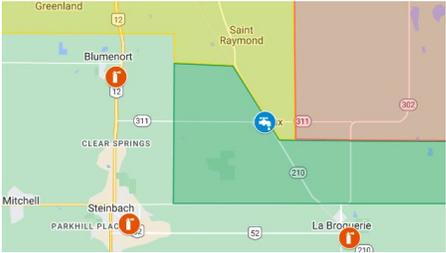
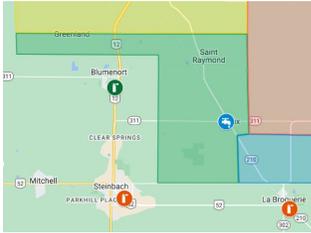
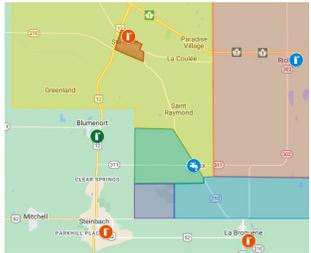
- With the introduction of a new Fire Department to cover a portion of the RM, the Fire Chiefs of the related parties would need to be onboarded and provided with knowledge transfer of fastest routes, densely populated areas, and demographic considerations.
- This option would also include entering into a new agreement with Blumenort Fire Department and ultimately increase the number of supporting departments that are responsible for fire protection within the RM.

CONTINGENCIES

- The proposed recommendation is contingent on the availability, capacity, and agreement of the Blumenort Fire Department to provide additional fire protection services to accommodate the proposed change in zone boundary.
- The estimated financial benefit will depend on the negotiation of contract considerations for the proposed expansion and proposed reconfigurations of each zone.

Area Coverage – Recommendation

Upon considering various options for remodeling the existing area coverage, the following summary is presented to identify the option that would provide the RM the highest economic benefit and a reduced response time to potential fire calls. Additional options were analyzed and considered (see Appendix C & D).

	Option #1	Option #2	Option #3
Alternatives	Have the La Broquerie Fire Department cover the zone that is currently being serviced by the agreement with the City of Steinbach	The newly built Blumenort Fire Department could be engaged to cover the current zone covered by the City of Steinbach and a southern portion of the area covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department	The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.
Summary	If the RM of La Broquerie were to increase its area coverage to the area currently serviced by the Steinbach Fire Department, the maximum response time would be expected to decrease by an estimated 2 minutes . Additionally, estimated savings from eliminating the City of Steinbach contract and increasing the cost of the La Broquerie contract would result in annual estimated savings of \$34,233 and decrease the total number of agreements for the RM.	If the RM were to engage the newly built neighbouring Fire Department of Blumenort to cover the current areas covered by the City of Steinbach and the southern portion of the Town of Ste. Anne area, the estimated response time would decrease slightly to the farthest point in the Steinbach zone, however it would cause significant delays to the farthest point in the TSA zone . From a cost perspective, the RM would benefit from decreasing estimated annual costs by for the Steinbach zone coverage area; however, would increase estimated costs in the Town of Ste. Anne coverage area .	If the RM were to engage the newly built neighbouring Fire Department of Blumenort to cover the northern portion of the area covered by the City of Steinbach and extend the La Broquerie’s current zone further west, The response time to the farthest point in the Blumenort zone would decrease by an estimated 6 minutes and response time to the furthest point in the La Broquerie zone would decrease by an estimated 4 minutes . From a cost perspective, the RM would benefit from decreasing estimated annual costs by \$24,300 and \$27,800 .
Updated map			

Recommendation – Based on the lower estimated response time and similar financial benefit gained, **Option #3** is recommended to be considered by the RM of St. Anne. However, Option #1 and parts of Option #2 remain viable alternatives.

Area Coverage – Additional Recommendation

Regular review of fire protection zone structure



Background

During our engagement with stakeholders, it was identified that the current fire protection zone boundaries in place for the RM of Ste. Anne, have not been reviewed in over a decade.

Establishing a recurring interval review of the boundaries would allow the CAO and Fire Chiefs to closely monitor any potential changes in community needs and identify high-risk areas as they become evident. Additionally, this will allow the RM to identify any potential economic efficiencies through the recurring review of the agreement zone structures.

Recommendation

It is recommended that more frequent reviews of the zone structure take place to assess if the division of the area is providing the most efficient and effective area coverage.

Benefits

- Improves overall effectiveness of fire protection, as the review helps ensure that the Fire Departments staffing/location/travel time is sufficient for the current zone structure.
- Provides the opportunity to assess potential financial efficiencies if the adjustment of zone boundaries impacts the costs of fire protection.

Key Activities

1. Schedule recurring meetings with the parties involved in the intermunicipal agreements to review current zone boundaries
2. As needed, utilize a third party to provide additional recommendations on agreement structures and financial efficiencies

Barriers

1. Changing zone structures will require agreements from multiple parties and any adjustments may impact several intermunicipal agreements

Assessment - Operational Efficiencies



Operational Efficiency

An analysis was completed on the potential development of fire departments within the RM. Two major areas of focus within operational efficiency seeks to answer question #2 and #3.

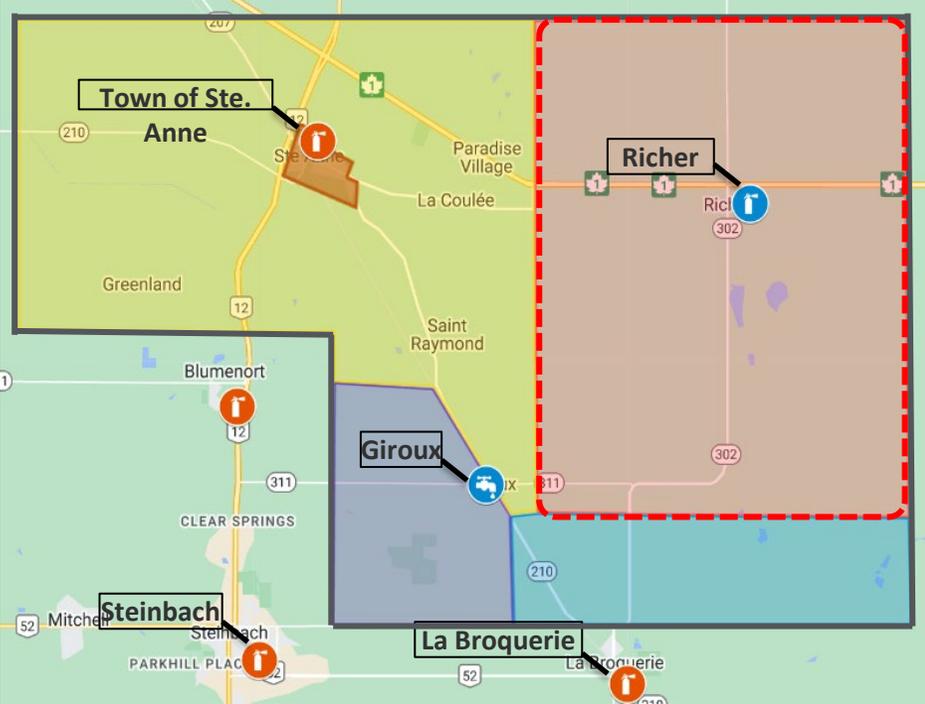
Question #2

Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?

Question #3

Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?

Throughout the review, additional opportunities for improvement to achieve operational efficiencies have been identified. Currently, the RM of Ste. Anne operates one fully functioning standalone Fire Department within the Town of Richer. The Richer Fire Department is responsible for fire protection services of a large zone within the RM. The RM of Ste. Anne operates a second supporting Fire Department within the Giroux area. Its purpose is to provide additional water to the surrounding Fire Departments. It is in a central location within the RM, however, it does not have a specified coverage zone.



The zone outlined in red is covered by the Richer Fire Department. The Giroux Fire Department does not cover a specified zone, however, is located strategically in the central area of the RM.

	Richer Fire Department	Giroux Fire Department
Role	Richer Fire Department responds to calls within its specified region as well as neighbouring regions engaged in fire protection service agreements or Mutual Aid agreements.	The Giroux Fire Department provides support to the RM of Ste. Anne and neighbouring RMs by providing supplementary water through the operation of one pumper truck.
Area coverage	Designated zone	Not designated
# of firefighters	18	2
Capacity	Fully operational	Support of one pumper truck

Operational Efficiency – Giroux Fire Department

Question #2 - Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?

When considering whether an investment in a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provides more effective coverage than the current intermunicipal agreements, it is important to factor in the capital requirements, recruitment potential, and community needs.

Currently, the Giroux Fire Department is staffed by two part-time volunteers, who operate a single pumper truck used by the RM and surrounding Fire Departments for additional support. The map displayed on the following slide highlights the location of the calls supported by the Giroux Fire Department in 2022.

In considering the ideal course of action to take with the Giroux Fire Department, the RM identified potential options to consider, these options were:

Giroux Fire Department



OPTION 1

Invest in upgrading the Giroux Fire Department to a fully operational standalone Fire Department.



OPTION 2

Maintain the Giroux Fire Department as currently established.



OPTION 3

Eliminate the Giroux Fire Department and liquidate all the related capital assets.

These options will be discussed in greater detail, highlighting the potential benefits as well as any barriers to implementation.

Operational Efficiency – Giroux Fire Department

Option 1

Invest in upgrading the Giroux Fire Department to a fully operational standalone Fire Department.

Currently, the Giroux Fire Department is a small supporting fire hall located centrally within the RM with one pumper truck and two part-time volunteers. In order to establish the Fire Department as a standalone operational Fire Department, the RM would be required to make a considerable investment similar to the construction of a new Fire Department (see page 38). In addition to the high initial capital costs, the Giroux Fire Department currently faces challenges with recruiting, as there are limited resources in the area to call upon.

Option 2

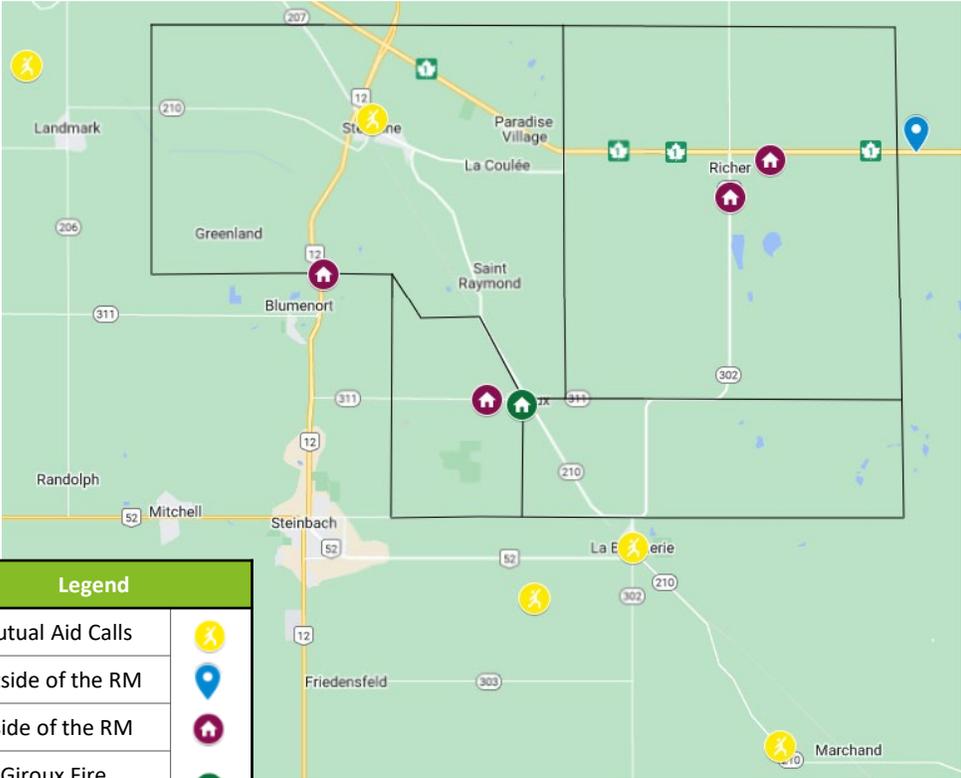
Maintain the Giroux Fire Department as currently established.

The Giroux Fire Department currently attends calls with other Fire Departments to provide additional water, primarily for structure fires. It was noted that the neighbouring Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department does not have a pumper truck and relies heavily on the use of the Giroux Fire Department pumper truck for water supply. Additionally, an estimated 42% of all Mutual Aid calls taken by the RM were taken by the Giroux Fire Department in 2022. Mutual Aid Agreements are utilized when a department has depleted all resources and requires additional assistance.

Although the Giroux Fire Department does not provide standalone fire protection services to any specified area, the Giroux Fire Department provides vital support through the provision of the additional pumper truck and the support provided through Mutual Aid calls.

The Giroux Fire Department’s central location within the RM, as exhibited on the map, provides access to all areas of the RM and neighbouring RM’s to assist with water supplies (as needed) based on its proximity to major roadways.

It was noted that while Giroux is well positioned to continue to provide water support to the area, the current pumper truck is approximately 30 years old and will require replacement in the near future. In addition, there are only two on-call volunteers, at times putting strain on the two resources.



2022 Giroux Fire Department Attended Calls Map

Operational Efficiency – Giroux Fire Department

Option 3

Eliminate the Giroux Fire Department and liquidate all the related capital assets.

During the process of identifying the best course of action for the RM to move forward with the Giroux Fire Department, the option to eliminate Giroux Fire Department and liquidate its assets has been explored. Factors considered included identifying the idle cost of the fire hall and the fair value cost for the equipment, building, and land.

If the RM were to consider eliminating the Giroux Fire Department, the proceeds would include:

	Financial benefit
Annual idle cost to operate the fire hall ¹	\$9,000 <i>annual</i>
Proceeds on sale of the pumper truck ²	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Proceeds on sale of land ³	\$42,700
Proceeds on sale of fire hall structure ³	\$72,800
Estimated Total	\$144,500 - \$154,500

If the RM were to eliminate the Giroux Fire Department and liquidate its assets, the RM would benefit from the estimated proceeds of sale ranging from \$135,500 - \$145,500 and estimated annual savings of \$9,000 per year. However, the elimination of the Giroux Fire Department would eliminate the existing support provided to dependent surrounding RMs and Mutual Aid calls, as discussed in Option #2.

1. The annual idle cost was determined by 2022 Giroux Fire Department expense report excluding costs incurred to address fire calls and practices
2. The proceeds on sale of the pumper truck were estimated by sourcing the average available market price for fire pumper trucks manufactured in 1993 (i.e., 30 years old)
3. The proceeds on sale of the land and fire hall structure were determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Report completed in 2021

Recommendation – Due to the community need, surrounding Fire Departments’ dependencies, and central location of the Giroux Fire Department within the RM, the option to eliminate the Fire Department and liquidate the assets would not be recommended, as the financial gain from the proceeds of sale do not outweigh the community need for having the Giroux Fire Department. Furthermore, due to the high startup costs and significant recruitment barriers, it is recommended that the RM not invest in upgrading the Giroux Fire Department into a standalone operational Fire Department. **Overall, it is recommended that the Giroux Fire Department upgrades the current pumper truck, considers adding two additional volunteers, and remains as a supporting department to the RM of Ste. Anne.**

Operational Efficiency – Investing in a new Fire Department

Question #3 - Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?

When considering whether the RM would benefit from a hybrid model by investing in a new department and leveraging some agreements, it’s important to factor in the capital requirements, capacity building, recruitment, and community needs. In addition, the feasibility, forecasted benefit, and potential risks must be measured.

In order to forecast the capital costs associated with acquiring land, equipment, construction of a fire hall, and all related costs, we leveraged the costs incurred by Blumenort between 2016 and 2019 to build a new Fire Department serving a comparable area with a similar demographic.

Assumptions used:

The land to be acquired for the proposed new Fire Department by the RM would be similar in size and cost compared to the land acquired by Blumenort.

The new fire hall will be of a similar size and built under Part 9 of the Building Code, similar to the Blumenort Fire Department.

Estimated costs are based on historical capital costs and are inflated based on estimated inflation rates as per Bank of Canada.

	Estimated costs – New Fire Department 2023
Land cost	\$225,357
Building, equipment, staff training & recruitment	\$3,316,784
Total estimated capital investment	\$3,542,141

Contingencies:

- The proposed opportunity is contingent on the availability of land for sale in the area where the RM would strategically build the new Fire Department.
- The proposed opportunity is contingent on the availability of equipment required to be procured in order to fully operate as a standalone Fire Department.
- The proposed building of a Fire Department would require volunteer firefighter availability and recruitment in order to operate.

Operational Efficiency – Investing in a new Fire Department (continued)

In order to measure the benefit received by the RM from the potential investment in a new Fire Department, the estimated annual cost savings were compared to the estimated pay back period required by the RM.

Based on information provided by a comparable entity, the estimated capital investment cost of establishing a new Fire Department in 2023 is **\$3,542,142**. Estimate based on provided information for a newly constructed fire hall.

In further exploring this potential recommendation, the following two options have been identified for further consideration:

Option 1	<p>The new Fire Department could eliminate the existing Town of Ste. Anne, City of Steinbach, and the RM of La Broquerie fire protection zones.</p>	Option 2	<p>The new Fire Department could eliminate the existing Town of Ste. Anne and City of Steinbach fire protection zones, leaving one agreement with the RM of La Broquerie in place.</p>
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	Option 1	Option 2
Agreement cost - Town of Ste. Anne	\$144,000.00	\$144,000.00
Agreement cost – Steinbach	\$48,000.00	\$48,000.00
Agreement cost - La Broquerie	\$17,000.00	-
Total estimated savings	\$209,000.00	\$192,000.00
Estimated annual operating costs of a new Fire Department*	(\$109,000.00)	(\$109,000.00)
Net estimated annual savings	\$100,000.00	\$83,000.00
Pay back period (years) (investment cost/ estimated net annual savings)	35.4	42.7

Contingencies:

- The calculations provided for estimated annual operating costs, net annual savings, and payback period have been completed without the consideration of change in inflation rates, finance rates, or general pricing.
- The provided estimate is contingent on the assumption of costs provided by the neighbouring Blumenort Fire Department’s investment and cost to operate.

*The annual operating costs were derived from the newly constructed neighbouring Blumenort Fire Department with the assumption that the operating capacity is similar to the proposed new Fire Department.

Operational Efficiency – Other factors for consideration

Through stakeholder engagement and discussions with other Fire Departments servicing the area, additional factors have been identified that could influence the investment and construction of a new Fire Department within the RM:

Risk factor	Consideration
Equipment procurement	Based on discussions with various Fire Chiefs in surrounding Fire Departments, it was identified that procurement of large necessary equipment could be difficult due to factors such as availability, cost, and shipment.
Recruitment	Due to the geographical population spread across rural communities within the RM and an aging population, where 67% of the RM’s residents are over the age of 35 (<i>StatsCanada</i>), recruitment of firefighter staff and volunteers to operate a newly developed Fire Department will likely pose a challenge.
Response time increase	With the elimination of existing agreements, the newly developed Fire Department would face an increase in response time to many areas that are currently serviced by surrounding RMs.
Proximity to Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department	With the Town of Ste. Anne’s central location, the close proximity of a newly developed Fire Department would likely deplete the resources for Town of Ste. Anne or duplicate the service availability.
Payback period	With a high payback period ranging between 35 to 42 years, the newly developed Fire Department would be subject to requirement improvements ranging from 10 to 60 years after construction (Based on <i>Government of Manitoba 2022 Annual Report</i> useful lives).
Changes in firefighting trends	With a high payback period, a newly developed Fire Department today will address the current community needs. However, there is an external risk of changing trends in fire protection service delivery and service needs.

Recommendation – Based on the considerably high payback period, initial costs, and various external risk factors, the option for the RM to invest in a new internally operated Fire Department would not be recommended.

Operational Efficiency – Additional Recommendations

911 dispatch enhancements



Background

It was identified that at times there is confusion with the 911 dispatcher as to which protection zone the emergency is in and therefore which Fire Department to call. This scenario primarily occurs when the call is communicated to the dispatcher as located along the border of two neighbouring zones.

If a department is mistakenly assigned a call that is not in their zone, the department is not compensated for attending this call.

Recommendation

We recommend that the RM explores overlapping boundaries in high-risk areas or where it is common that misassigned calls occur. The RM should identify the potential increase in cost associated with the retainer fee for the addition of overlapping boundaries. It should be communicated amongst RMs that the first dispatched Fire Department would be responsible for attending the call.

Benefits

- Improves emergency response time as a Fire Department is guaranteed to be on the scene.
- Provides financial stability for the Fire Departments as they would be compensated for attending calls in their zone/overlapping areas.

Key Activities

1. Discuss current zone structure and current challenges with 911 dispatcher representatives and neighbouring RMs
2. Evaluate the proposed recommendation of having overlapping boundaries for high risk or commonly misassigned areas
3. Update 911 dispatch policies, boundary maps, and agreements accordingly

Barriers

- 911 dispatch policies and procedures will require diligent review and approval prior to changes
- Updated zone maps will require agreement amongst all bordering RMs

Operational Efficiency – Additional Recommendations

Sharing of recruitment referrals among RMs



Background

With the geographical population density spread and aging population across the RM, recruitment of on-call volunteer firefighters has been flagged as a challenge. However, through stakeholder engagement, it was identified that at times the Fire Departments in the surrounding regions receive more applications than needed for firefighter roles, and applicants are kept on a waitlist.

Recommendation

It is recommended to implement a practice of sharing referrals within the region to ensure that, if one department is fully staffed, names of potential applicants are passed on to the Fire Departments in the area that may need resources.

Benefits

- Improves emergency response effectiveness, as all Fire Departments in the area would benefit from an improved staff compliment.
- Reduces the time that Fire Chiefs may spend on recruiting, as names of potential applicants would be shared with them.

Key Activities

1. Discuss recruiting practices with Fire Chiefs of neighbouring RMs
2. Request that all Fire Chiefs track the names of new applicants
3. On a recurring basis (i.e., monthly / quarterly), share the names of applicants that have applied to fully staffed RMs

Barriers

- This recommendation requires communication and collaboration between several Fire Chiefs
- Applicants may not live/work in central locations between multiple Fire Departments

Operational Efficiency – Additional Recommendations

Improved use of technology for continuous communication during a call



Background

Currently, the firefighting volunteers utilizes an application on their cellular devices, DispatchMe App, to notify them when a call occurs. A text, phone call and email is sent, and the app makes a notification sound indicating an emergency. The responders can respond in the app, or from the phone call or text indicating either “be there immediately”, “will be delayed getting to the scene but are on our way”, or “not available”. There is a monitor in the change room and a tablet set up in the pumper truck. Once the responders have responded in the App, a WhatsApp group is used to communicate further. On the group chat, members will say how far out they are from the hall if they are attending the call. Other members will post their availability as well as "if more members are needed, I can come", or "if needed I can be there at xx time".

Recommendation

It was identified that relying on a group messaging conversation during the emergency creates difficulties in tracking the respondents’ whereabouts. Implementing radios in firetrucks could be considered to enhance communication while the firefighters are travelling.

Benefits

- It is a requirement that 3 volunteers on the fire truck before the truck can leave the station to attend a call. The following recommendation improves emergency response effectiveness as the Fire Chiefs and firefighters can communicate while on route to the fire call.
- Improves the safety measures of operating the firetruck while ensuring vital communication with the team in emergency situations.

Key Activities

1. Source radios built for first responders and provide radios to each member
2. Assess the feasibility of implementing additional scheduling technology to track members in advance to understand if they are available if needed, or available at specific times, or unavailable for specific times

Barriers

- Members will need to learn to use the new technology
- Technology is constantly adapting, increasing the need to adapt to current technology solutions

Operational Efficiency – Additional Recommendation

Incorporation of volunteer scheduling during busier periods



Background

Currently, the RM does not closely track which volunteers are available. The Fire Chiefs have a general idea of who is around during the days and who can leave work to attend a call.

As it is a volunteer Fire Department, the department operates under the assumption that anyone that can attend a call, will attend.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a schedule be developed, specifically to manage volunteer availability during busier periods. The schedule would track who is out of town, who is available on long weekends and holidays, and who has employment that they can leave to attend calls if needed.

Benefits

- Improves emergency response effectiveness, as Mutual Aid can be called immediately when required staffing levels are not available within the Fire Department.
- Reduces uncertainty in high-stress environments by ensuring that Fire Chiefs and team members are aware of available resources.

Key Activities

1. The Fire Chief should discuss upcoming, known and regularly occurring scheduling conflicts with each member
2. Develop a high-level scheduling summary to share with each member
3. Update the schedule on a weekly basis or as needed

Barriers

- As the firefighters are volunteer, even though they have identified themselves as available there may be instances where there are conflicts, and they are unable to respond.
- Updates required in technology to support scheduling and tracking of availability

Assessment - Financial Efficiencies



Financial Efficiencies

The following section addresses opportunities for financial efficiencies and question #4.

Question #4 - Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?

During the review process, opportunities to improve financial efficiencies were identified through document analysis, stakeholder interviews, and through discussions with the supporting Fire Departments of neighbouring RM's. The following specific areas were identified along with associated findings:



Capital replacement schedule

Currently, there is no formal capital replacement schedule that would allow the RM and Fire Departments to plan for replacement of large equipment.



Outstanding payment collections

Currently, a large portion of the outstanding payments are not collected. It was noted that a large amount of the outstanding payments are from out of province drivers who require fire protection services when in the province.



Resource training cost retention

Several stakeholder interviews revealed that incurring costs to train individuals who later leave to work as full-time paid firefighters in other cities is a financially inefficient and common practice.

The following slides present recommendations for improving financial efficiencies in the areas identified above.

Financial Efficiencies

Implement a formalized capital replacement plan



Background

It was identified that the RM of Ste. Anne does not have a formalized capital replacement plan for the equipment and vehicles located at the Richer and Giroux Fire Departments.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a long-term capital replacement plan be developed to summarize the physical and financial needs of the Giroux and Richer Fire Departments. This will improve the efficiency of the RM's capital budgeting process by accounting for potential capital expenditures.

Benefits

- A capital replacement plan will help the RM budget and allocate reserves each year for required large repairs and replacements for the Fire Departments.
- Ensures replacements are made at the right time for the necessary equipment.
- Ensures consistency of capital replacement when there is a turnover in Fire Chiefs.

Key Activities

1. Determine an estimated useful life for all equipment and vehicles used at the Fire Department
2. Determine the remaining useful life on all equipment and vehicles currently in use
3. Develop an annual capital replacement plan which the RM can review annually

Barriers

- Estimated useful lives of equipment currently in use may be difficult to determine

Financial Efficiencies

Enforcing group collections on outstanding insurance payments



Background

For motor vehicle accidents, it was identified that there is often a delay in insurance payment collections invoiced from out-of-province drivers and insurance companies. The following breakdown summarized the insurance payments collected in the year and amounts that remain outstanding for out-of-province drivers.

	Paid	Outstanding
2020	\$1,885	-
2021	\$2,324	\$3,204
2022	\$3,394	\$9,211

Currently, a collections agency is involved only after 90 days of materially high unpaid invoices and reasonable attempts to make contact.

Key Activities

1. Assess the feasibility of transferring the outstanding collections to a local collection's agency
2. Identify potential departments that would benefit from being engaged into a group collections agreement

Barriers

- Potential for high fees charged by the collection agency
- Insurance companies are slow to pay and could be dragging the process out to limit payouts

Recommendation

It is recommended that all collections be outsourced to an external collection agency. During stakeholder engagement, it was suggested that the RM and surrounding RMs engage a collections agency and potentially benefit from a discounted group rate to increase the frequency of successful collections and increase the amount of recovered funds.

Benefits

- External collection agencies have the time, expertise, and resources required to collect on outstanding claims.
- By delegating this task to an external agency, the RM's finance team can increase its capacity to focus on higher value-add tasks.
- Increased cost recovery and funds available to support fire services.

Financial Efficiencies

Development of a return of service policy



Background

It was identified that there is a high upfront cost to train, provide gear, and provide new uniforms to new volunteer firefighters. It is estimated that the approximate cost is \$10,000 per candidate. There is a concern that once the firefighters are trained, they may leave the RM to provide their services full time to a different region's fire protection services and are no longer able to serve as a volunteer firefighter.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a return of service policy be implemented, requiring the firefighter to service the RM for a specific number of years following the completion of their training. If the firefighter does not meet the return of service requirements, they will be considered in breach of contract and will be required to pay back a percentage of the costs associated with their training.

Benefits

- Lowers the financial risk for the RM when training and outfitting new firefighters
- Incentivizes the retention and lowers the turnover of firefighters as they are less likely to leave.

Key Activities

1. Draft a return of service agreement to be customized and reflect the specifics of volunteer fire fighting with in the RM
2. Have the agreement reviewed by the RM's legal representative prior to implementation

Barriers

- Return of service policy may hinder attracting new firefighters (potentially mitigated with incentives to staying – further training/support, change in rates, etc.)

Recommendations



Key Recommendations

Based on the explicitly stated objectives of the review as outlined in the key questions, the key recommendations are summarized below:

						<u>Timeline</u> Short < 6 months. Medium < 12 months, Long > 12 months
THEME	RECOMMENDATION	IMPACT	TIMELINE	EFFORT	OWNER	
Question 1: Is the current zone structure efficient and/or does the RM need more or fewer zones?						
Area Coverage	The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.	High	< 12 months	High	CAO	
Question 2: Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?						
Operational Efficiencies	Due to the effective coverage provided and the central location of the Giroux Fire Department, it is recommended that the Giroux Fire Department be maintained as currently established. The replacement of the pumper and recruitment of two additional volunteers is recommended for optimal efficiency and effectiveness as a supporting department in the RM.	Low	< 12 months	Med	Fire Chief & CAO	
Question 3 - Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?						
Operational Efficiencies	Based on the considerably high payback period, initial costs, and various external risk factors, the option for the RM to invest in a new internally operated Fire Department would not be recommended.	<i>Not recommended – No change necessary</i>				
Question 4: Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?						
Financial Efficiencies	Implement a formalized capital replacement plan.	High	< 12 months	Medium	Fire Chiefs & CAO	
Financial Efficiencies	Enforce group collections on outstanding insurance payments.	Medium	< 6 months	Medium	RM Finance Team	
Financial Efficiencies	Develop a return of service policy for newly trained recruits.	Medium	< 12 months	Medium	Fire Chiefs & CAO	
Financial Efficiencies	Establish multi-year terms for intermunicipal agreements.	Low	Recurring	Low	CAO	

Value - Add Recommendations

Through the course of the review, the following value-add recommendations have been identified:

Timeline

Short < 6 months. Medium < 12 months, Long > 12 months

THEME	RECOMMENDATION	IMPACT	TIMELINE	EFFORT	OWNER
Area Coverage	Establish a recurring process to regularly review fire protection zone structures.	Medium	Recurring	Low	CAO
Operational Efficiencies	Establish the required 911 dispatch enhancements to eliminate miscommunications.	Medium	< 12 months	Medium	CAO, Fire Chiefs, dispatch center Communications Officer
Operational Efficiencies	Establish a recruitment referral system to be used amongst geographically close RMs.	Medium	< 12 months	Low	Fire Chiefs of the RM and surrounding Fire Departments
Operational Efficiencies	Implement programs to improve the use of technology for continuous communication during fire calls.	Medium	> 12 months	High	Fire Chiefs
Operational Efficiencies	Incorporate a scheduling system for firefighter volunteers during busier periods.	High	< 6 months	Low	Fire Chiefs

Implementation Plan

The recommendations have been aggregated and summarized in the following table to be utilized by the RM in the implementation of the recommended activities:

Key Objectives (See Slide 4)	Theme	Recommendation	Implementation Duration			
			S	M	L	Recurring
Question #1 - Is the current zone structure efficient and/or do we need more or fewer zones?	Area Coverage	The zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach will be reduced by extending the La Broquerie coverage area further west and leveraging the newly built Blumenort Fire Department to cover the northern portion of the current Steinbach zone.	█			
Question #2 - Would an investment into a second department within the RM (Giroux Fire Department) provide more effective coverage than current intermunicipal agreements?	Operational Efficiencies	It is recommended that the Giroux Fire Department be maintained as currently established. The replacement of the pumper and recruitment of two additional volunteers is recommended for optimal efficiency and effectiveness as a supporting department in the RM.	█			
Question #3 - Would a hybrid model involving a new department and maintaining select intermunicipal agreements be the most effective?	<i>Based on the analysis conducted, it is not a recommendation to develop a new department</i>					
Question #4 - Are there financial efficiencies that could be identified through a review of the system?	Financial Efficiencies	Implement a formalized capital replacement plan.	█			
	Financial Efficiencies	Enforce group collections on outstanding insurance payments.	█			
	Financial Efficiencies	Develop a return of service policy for newly trained recruits.	█			
Value-Add Recommendations	Area Coverage	Establish a recurring process to regularly review fire protection zone structures.				█
	Operational Efficiencies	Establish the required 911 dispatch enhancements to eliminate miscommunications.	█			
	Operational Efficiencies	Establish a recruitment referral system to be used amongst geographically close RMs.	█			
	Operational Efficiencies	Implement programs to improve the use of technology for continuous communication during fire calls.	█			
	Operational Efficiencies	Incorporate a scheduling system for firefighter volunteers during busier periods.	█			

Appendices



Appendix A – Document Review

Deloitte obtained copies of the Department’s available documents to gain a stronger understanding of the current state of operations and to identify potential opportunities for improvements and efficiencies.

Our Project Team oversaw the collection and analysis of documents from several comparable entities with input from our Subject Matter Expert in order to help ensure that the Department is aligned with best practices and to identify any potential gaps or pain points that could be addressed.

DOCUMENT CATEGORY	DOCUMENTS REVIEWED
Fire protection boundary maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RM of Ste. Anne Fire Protection Boundary Map ➤ City of Steinbach Fire Protection Boundary Map
Intermunicipal agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fire Agreement with the RM of Hanover ➤ Fire Agreement with the RM of Reynolds ➤ Fire Agreement with the Town of Ste. Anne ➤ Fire Agreement with the RM of La Broquerie ➤ Fire Agreement with the City of Steinbach
Call logs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Giroux Fire Department call logs for 2019 – 2022 ➤ Richer Fire Department call logs from 2019 – 2022 ➤ Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department call logs for 2022 ➤ Steinbach Fire Department call logs for 2021 – 2022 ➤ RM of La Broquerie Fire Department call logs for 2021
Annual expense reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Giroux Fire Department annual expenses for 2020 – 2022 ➤ Richer Fire Department annual expenses for 2020 – 2022
Fire equipment capital history report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Richer Fire Department Capital General Ledger Listing
RM of Ste. Anne 2020 Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schedule “A” to By-law #05-2020 RM of Ste. Anne Development Plan

Appendix B – Stakeholder Interviews

Surrounding Region Fire Chiefs

Interviews were conducted with the 7 Fire Chiefs from surrounding rural municipalities and cities' fire departments to collect feedback on their independent operations.

An understanding on common practices in the surrounding regions was developed, as well as a perspective on the roles providing support to and receiving support from the fire department of the RM of Ste. Anne.

A comprehensive list of the interviewees and a summary of findings is presented below:

	Interviewee	Fire Department
Within the RM	Fire Chief Lynn Plett	Giroux
	Fire Chief Chris Wilkins	Town of Richer
Surrounding the RM	Fire Chief Kelvin Toews	City of Steinbach
	Fire Chief Alain Nadeau	RM of La Broquerie
	Fire Chief Robert Saindon	Town of Ste. Anne
	Fire Chief Don McDougall	RM of Reynolds
	Fire Chief Paul Wiebe	RM of Hanover

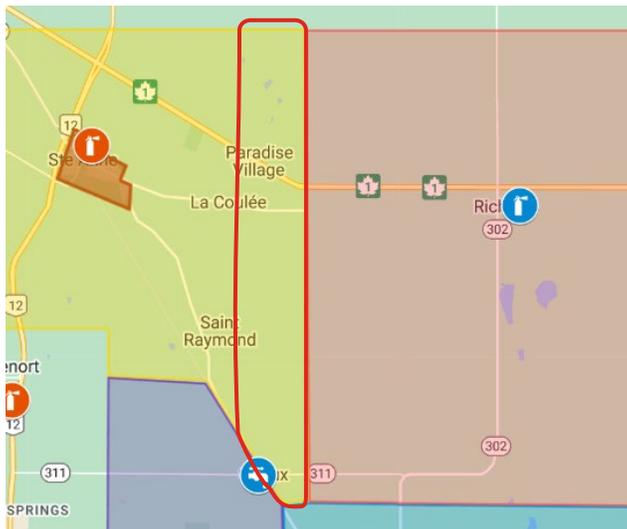
Appendix C - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #1

Through stakeholder interviews the following zone coverage adjustment was presentation as an additional modification for further consideration.

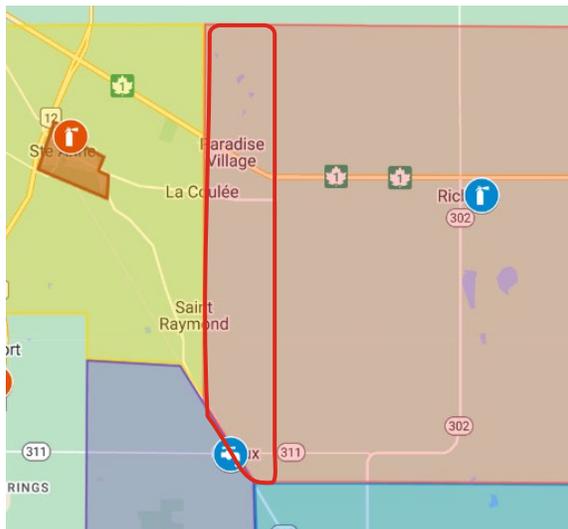
Additional Consideration #1

Leverage the RM's Richer Fire Department to cover a larger portion of the RM from the existing Town of Ste. Anne coverage zone.

Current Coverage



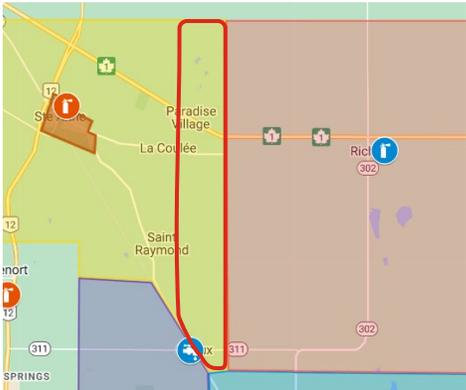
Proposed Coverage



LEGEND	
Town of Ste. Anne	
Town of Richer	
City of Steinbach	
RM of La Broquerie	
RM Operated Fire Department	
Supporting Fire Department	

Appendix C - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #1

A response time analysis was conducted specifically analyzing the area on the border of the Town of Ste. Anne and Richer zone. This area was highlighted as an area with frequent motor vehicle accidents and high occupational density for fires.

	Current State	Proposed Consideration #3
	Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department to the Richer zone boarder	Richer Fire Department to the proposed Town of Ste. Anne boarder
Farthest distance (km) in the specified zone	8.3 km	9.8 km
Estimated driving time required (mins)	8 min	9 min
Area Coverage		

If the Richer Fire Department was responsible for increased coverage with a decrease in the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department zone coverage, the estimated **response time to the highlighted area would increase by 1 minute and 1.5 km.**

Appendix C - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #1

The financial analysis conducted for the proposed portion of the area coverage utilized a prorated approach to evaluate the protection area sections highlighted in the zone coverage boundary map provided by the RM:

ASSUMPTION USED	
Current Town of Ste. Anne zone coverage (protection area sections)	66.5
Coverage taken over (protection area sections)	9
% of the total coverage	13.53%

ANALYSIS BASED ON THE CALL LOG PROVIDED BY TOWN OF STE. ANNE FOR PERIOD MARCH TO DECEMBER 2022

Calls in Town of Ste. Anne zone (A)			Estimated service time (B)	Estimated Richer's cost per hour (\$) (C)	Estimated cost for Richer (\$) (D = B x C)		Calls received in the estimated coverage taken over (E = 13.53% x A)	Estimated cost for Richer to take over the designated zone (\$) (F = E x D)	
Total calls (Mar - Dec 2022)	56	100%			Min	Max	13.53%	Min	Max
MVC/Auto Fire	26	46%	1 – 2 hours	4,000	4,000	8,000	4	14,075	28,150
Structure Fire	3	5%	2 – 5 hours	5,000	10,000	25,000	0	-	-
Hydro	3	5%	1 hour	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	-	-
Mutual Aid	3	5%	2 – 5 hours	6,000	8,000	25,000	0	-	-
EMS Lift Assist	9	16%	1 hour	3,000	3,000	3,000	1	3,654	3,654
Others	12	21%	1 hour	3,000	3,000	3,000	2	4,872	4,872
								22,602	36,677

PRORATED COST OF THE CURRENT TOWN OF STE. ANNE SERVICE AGREEMENT	
RM of St. Anne paid to Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department for 2023:	\$144,000
% of the total coverage	13.53%
Estimated payment to the designated coverage (G)	\$19,489

COST SAVING (INCREASED) (F - G)	
Min	Max
(\$3,113)	(\$17,188)

If the RM of Ste. Anne were to decrease the coverage area that the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department is responsible for and increase the area coverage of Richer Fire Department, the difference in estimated costs incurred would **yield an increase in costs ranging from \$3,113 to \$17,188 annually.**

Appendix C - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #1 Summary

Additional Consideration

Leverage the RM's Richer Fire Department to cover a larger portion of the RM from the existing Town of Ste. Anne coverage zone.

PROS

- With this consideration, the RM would leverage the existing RM's Fire Department and utilize Richer's available capacity.
- Leveraging the RM's Richer Fire Department would decrease the costs associated with the Town of Ste. Anne agreement by reducing the coverage area the Town of Ste. Anne is responsible for covering.

CONS

- It is important to consider the increase in response time to a the highly populated area of Paradise Village as the existing infrastructure allows for a faster response time by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department.
- Based on the provided average operating cost per fire, if the Richer Fire Department were to address the calls in the proposed area, this would result in increased estimated annual costs.

CONTINGENCIES

- The proposed recommendation is contingent on the availability, capacity, and agreement of the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department to reduce its annual agreement costs based on the decreased land coverage.
- The estimated financial benefit depends on the average cost per call, which is determined by the type of fire call.

Recommendation – Based on the estimated increase in response time to the proposed area by 1 minute and 1.5 km and estimated yield increased annual costs ranging from \$3,113 to \$17,188 it is **not recommended** for the RM to implement this consideration.

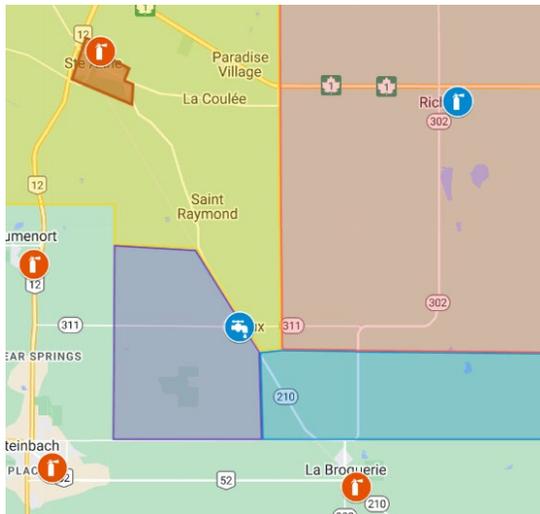
Appendix D - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #2

Through stakeholder interviews the following zone coverage adjustment was presented as an additional modification for further consideration.

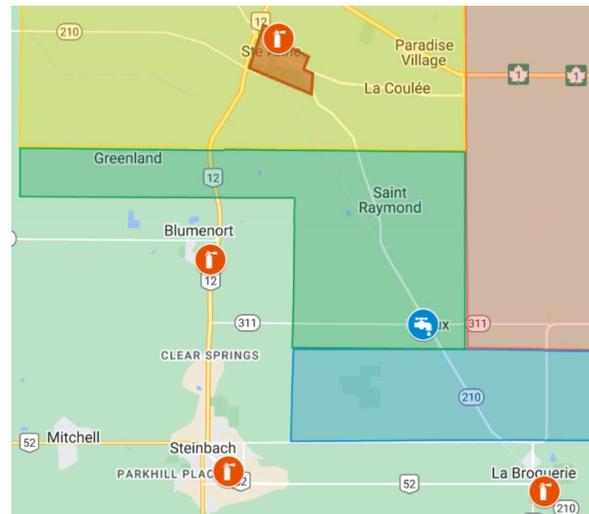
Additional Consideration #2

La Broquerie and the newly built Blumenort Fire Department could split coverage of the zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach. In addition, Blumenort could cover the southern portion of the area currently covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department

Current Coverage



Proposed Coverage

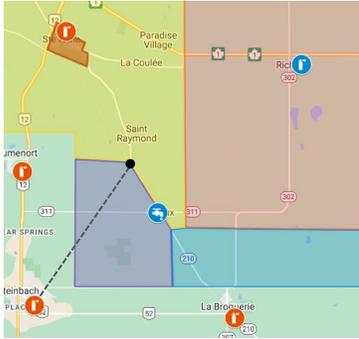
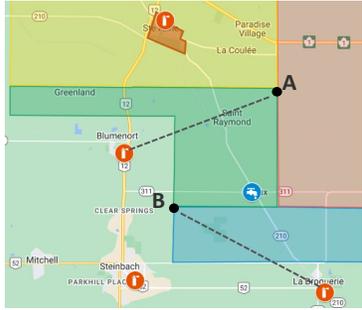


LEGEND

- Town of Ste. Anne
- Town of Richer
- City of Steinbach
- RM of La Broquerie
- Proposed** Blumenort region
- RM Operated Fire Department
- Supporting Fire Department

Appendix D - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #2

A response time analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the travel time for the Fire Department to reach the farthest location in their respective zone.

	Current State	Current State	Additional Consideration #2	
	Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Town of Ste. Anne zone	Steinbach Fire Department to the farthest point in the current Steinbach zone	Blumenort Fire Department (A) and La Broquerie Fire Department (B) to the farthest points in the proposed coverage zone	
			A	B
Farthest distance (km) in the zone	14.4 km	16.3 km	14.6 km	15.2 km
Estimated driving time required (mins)	12 min	16 min	15 min	12 min
Coverage Area				

The Blumenort and La Broquerie Fire Departments are in close proximity to the current Town of Ste. Anne and Steinbach zones. The response time to the farthest point in the proposed zone restructure would **increase response time by an estimated 3 minutes from Blumenort (A)** and **decrease time response by 4 minutes from La Broquerie (B)**. Additionally, the Blumenort Fire Department would increase the **distance to the farthest point in the proposed coverage area by 0.2 km (A)** and La Broquerie would **decrease the distance to the farther point in the proposed coverage area by 1.1 km (B)**.

Appendix D - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #2

To assess the potential financial impact of Blumenort and La Broquerie covering portions the current Steinbach zone and Blumenort covering the southern portion of the Town of Ste. Anne zone, a cost analysis was completed. Using the existing contract costs and area coverage, a prorated approach was used to evaluate the expected change in costs. Additionally, call types and volumes were used to determine the change in cost by applying a range of cost per call of \$1,800 per hour to \$2,200 per hour as provided by the Blumenort Fire Department.

GIVEN	
La Broquerie Agreement cost	\$17,000
Steinbach Agreement cost	\$48,753
La Broquerie Protection area (km ²)	48
Steinbach Protection area – proposed coverage (km ²)	24
Fire protection estimated costs for the proposed portion of the current Steinbach zone based on La Broquerie agreement rates	\$8,500

CALL TYPE	TOWN OF STE ANNE FIRE DEPARTMENT - 2022 CALL RESPONSES				
	# of incidents	% of total	Staff hours (hours)		Avg # of responding personnel
			Min	Max	
● Structure fire	1	25%	2	5	17.0
● False alarm	2	50%	1	1	14.3
● MVA ¹	1	25%	1	2	13.0
● MVE ²	-	-	-	-	-
● Total number of responses	4	100%			
	BLUMENORT'S COST – RESPONDING TO TOWN OF STE. ANNE ZONE				
	Minimum		Maximum		
	\$8,961		\$21,200		

¹MVA ("Motor Vehicle Accident")

²MVE ("Motor Vehicle Extrication")

Appendix D - Area Coverage – Additional Consideration #2

Additional Consideration #2

La Broquerie and the newly built Blumenort Fire Department could split coverage of the zone currently covered by the City of Steinbach. In addition, Blumenort could cover the southern portion of the area currently covered by the Town of Ste. Anne Fire Department

PROS

- The RM would eliminate the existing contract with the City of Steinbach, reduce the coverage area and associated costs with Town of Ste. Anne. The newly built Blumenort Fire Department and existing La Broquerie fire department would share responsibility over the coverage area.
- The RM would benefit with an estimated annual cost savings similar to Option #2 ranging from \$15,901 and \$31,640.

CONS

- With the introduction of a new Fire Department to cover a portion of the RM, the Fire Chiefs of the related parties would need to be onboarded and provided with knowledge transfer of fastest routes, densely populated areas, and demographic considerations.
- The response time to the farthest point in the proposed zone restructure would increase response time by an estimated 3 minutes from Blumenort and decrease time response by 4 minutes from La Broquerie. Additionally, the Blumenort Fire Department would increase the distance to the farthest point in the proposed coverage areas by 0.2 km and La Broquerie would decrease the distance to the farther point in the proposed coverage area by 1.1 km.

CONTINGENCIES

- The proposed recommendation is contingent on the availability, capacity, and agreement of the Blumenort Fire Department to provide additional fire protection services to accommodate the proposed change in zone boundary.
- The estimated financial benefit will depend on the negotiation of contract considerations for the proposed expansion of area coverage.

Recommendation – Based on the estimated **increase in response time** to the proposed area by 3 minutes and 0.2 km, is **not recommended** for the RM to implement this consideration. It should be noted that some areas will experience a shorter response time while others will increase.



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