

# Bradford Firehall Relocates

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Bradford's old Fire Hall on Holland Street was so small that one of the town's five firefighting vehicles had to be parked elsewhere. Dispatch was through the Bradford Police Department, and fire trucks had to manoeuvre their way through often heavy traffic in the centre of town, whenever they were called out.

The facility was obviously inadequate for a department that was providing fire protection, not only for the rapidly growing town of Bradford, but also for about 70% of the township of West Gwillimbury, and a portion of King township. It was no surprise when Bradford Council approved the construction of a new Fire Hall.

Four companies were invited to bid on the new facility. Three of the four estimated a final cost in the area of \$1.2 million, or more, depending on the architectural design.

The fourth, Inducon Design, offered a new concept called "Design Build", and a firm price of \$978,000. "That's one of the main reasons we went to this kind of facility", said Ted Mendrek, Captain of the Fire Prevention Bureau, and the project manager. "I think up to this point, everyone is satisfied."

Construction on the Melbourne Drive site began in June, and is all but completed. The fire department has already moved in, only eight days behind schedule.

The new structure houses 6,000 square feet of apparatus space, and 4,000 square feet of administration offices. There is room for up to eight vehicles in the garage. Other features of the facility include male and female locker rooms, a kitchen, a 57' training and hose drying tower, and a diesel-powered generator that can provide power to the whole building in the case of an emergency.

The improvements have not been limited to the building. Any delays in response time that might have resulted when the fire department was moved to the west end of town, have been offset by the installation of Opticom lighting at both signals. This allows the trucks to alter the signals in their favour, saving up to a minute on the trip through town.

The Hall was designed to serve a population of up to 30,000 people, and house a full-time firefighting force. Although there are presently no sleeping accommodations, the facility was built to allow the addition of a second storey some time in the future. The necessary ductwork and plumbing are already in place in the ceiling.

At the moment, Bradford has a volunteer fire department, with 25 part-time firefighters. It will be up to Council to decide if, and when, to make the switch to 'full time'. "It all boils down to finance", says Mendrek.

The impact of amalgamation is also still to be determined, and will depend on decisions made by the transition team, as to "what level of service they want to provide to their residents".

Some of the questions to be considered include the extension of fire safety inspections to West Gwillimbury, construction of a second fire station in the township to obviate the need for Inter-municipal Fire Suppression contracts with Cookstown and Schomberg, and the use of West Gwillimbury taxes to help pay for Bradford's new fire hall. Bradford has taken out a \$1 million debenture for the hall.

The fire department has its own 'wish list'. It is hoping that future allocations will permit the purchase of an aerial apparatus. At present, the town is relying on Newmarket, whenever aerial equipment is needed. That need could very well increase.

"We've already do have twelve high rises in town", warns Mendrek. "Council is aware of that, but...the building had to come first."

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