

# **The Regional Municipality of York**

Committee of the Whole  
Community and Health Services  
April 7, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services

## **Donation of Decommissioned Paramedic Services Ambulances in 2022**

### **1. Recommendations**

1. Council approve a change to the York Region Paramedic Services Ambulance Donation - Guidelines to include “other entities in need of donated ambulances for charitable or humanitarian purposes”.
2. Council approve the donation of two decommissioned ambulances to Nunavut communities through Ambulances4NU.

### **2. Summary**

This report seeks Council approval for an addition to the eligibility criteria for donating decommissioned ambulances, and approval to donate two decommissioned ambulances in 2022.

#### Key Points:

- Council has approved the donation of 12 decommissioned ambulances since 2014
- The current ambulance donation guidelines approved in [May 2021](#) only allow donations to registered charitable, not-for-profit or humanitarian aid organizations
- Ambulances4NU was the only applicant to request decommissioned ambulances during the period from February 1, 2021 to January 31, 2022
- Ambulances4NU is run by retired Ontario Paramedic Chief, John Prno, who facilitates the donation of ambulances from Ontario municipalities directly to Nunavut communities in need
- Although the request achieves the intent of the Region’s ambulance donation guidelines, Ambulances4NU is not eligible under the current guidelines because Ambulances4NU and the receiving Nunavut communities are not registered charitable, not-for-profit or humanitarian aid organizations
- The recommended inclusion of “other entities in need of donated ambulances for charitable or humanitarian purposes” to the Region’s ambulance donation guidelines would permit Ambulances4NU to be eligible

### 3. Background

#### **Council has approved the donation of 12 decommissioned ambulances since 2014**

Ambulances are decommissioned after five years or 250,000 kms as required by the Province. Since 2014, Council has donated decommissioned ambulances annually to organizations to support communities in Canada and internationally.

Previous donations have been used by charitable, not-for-profit and humanitarian aid organizations to provide training, first aid services at local community events, mobile mental health education as well as hurricane relief efforts in the Caribbean. Donations typically occur in the calendar year following Council approval. Attachment 1 lists the donations of decommissioned ambulances since 2014.

#### **Donation requests for decommissioned ambulances are evaluated using Council approved guidelines**

Council approved [guidelines](#) to support the recommendations for donations, most recently revised in [May 2021](#). The guidelines set out the process and timing for applications, eligibility criteria, and requirements to ensure the Region does not incur costs for shipping, permits and related costs.

### 4. Analysis

#### **York Region Paramedic Services received only one request for decommissioned ambulances for 2022**

Eligible organizations are required to submit a Request for Consideration of Ambulance Donation Form to Paramedic Services by January 31 for consideration in that calendar year. Requests submitted after January 31 will be considered in the following year. Paramedic Services only received one application for consideration for 2022. Ambulances4NU submitted an application for decommissioned ambulances on behalf of Nunavut communities in need of appropriate emergency vehicles.

#### **Ambulances4NU assists Nunavut communities in obtaining decommissioned ambulances from Ontario municipalities**

Ambulances4NU is operated by retired Regional Municipality of Waterloo Paramedic Chief, John Prno. After retirement he started to connect northern communities in need of ambulances with Ontario municipalities that regularly donate decommissioned ambulances. The [Regional Municipality of Peel](#) began donating ambulances to Nunavut via Ambulances4NU in 2019 and have donated a total of seven ambulances since then.

## **Nunavut does not have the resources to supply new ambulances to all communities**

The cost of providing health care in Nunavut is much higher per capita than the cost for providing health care in southern provinces with greater population density. This is partly because Nunavut communities are not connected by road and Nunavut has only one hospital. Therefore, residents must access much of their health care through medevac, an emergency air ambulance service that flies patients to the nearest hospital offering the necessary treatment. Communities provide emergency transportation for patients between health centres and medevac services, but funding is not available to supply ambulances for less populated regions. In the absence of ambulances, communities must use whatever vehicles are available. This can include police vehicles, firetrucks, all terrain vehicles and pick up trucks. These modes of transportation do not allow patients to be stabilized or protected from extreme weather conditions.

Most communities in Nunavut do not have traditional paramedic services. However, Nunavut communities that have previously received donated ambulances have started to assemble emergency services with firefighters, health care staff or volunteers providing urgent health transportation within the community.

## **Staff recommend amending the ambulance donations guidelines to include other entities in need of ambulance donations**

The current ambulance donation guidelines require applicants to be a registered charitable, not-for-profit or humanitarian aid organization. This requirement limits the type of applicants that may benefit from donated ambulances by excluding communities and non-registered organizations who do valuable humanitarian work. York Region seeks to correct this oversight by amending the guidelines.

Staff recommend allowing other entities where the request addresses a need for donated ambulances related to charitable or humanitarian purposes. The recommended change also includes the provision that the entity must be of sound repute which will be checked through internal processes. This is to ensure ambulances are donated to a legitimate recipient where ambulances will be used for the intended purpose.

Additionally, recommended changes include minor language adjustments to include the broader range of allowable applicant types and removes reference to the Community Investment Fund Guidelines since its new Program Framework is no longer relevant for reviewing ambulance donation applications.

The recommended changes are underlined and in bold on Attachment 2.

## **Specific Nunavut communities to receive donated ambulances will be decided later based on transportation details**

Ambulances4NU maintains contact with communities who have requested ambulances and confirms which communities are able to arrange and fund the sealift transportation based on the ambulance availability date and any COVID-19 restrictions. Ambulances4NU would

identify the communities who are best prepared to receive the donated ambulance and would arrange the delivery of the ambulances closer to the date of donation.

Currently, four communities have outstanding requests for donated ambulances: Pangnirtung, Nauyasat, Cambridge Bay and Baker Lake. Determining which of the communities will receive a donated ambulance depends largely on transportation options and weather. Transportation of ambulances to Nunavut is complicated by the reliance on sealift transportation. Due to weather, the sealift only runs between June and October each year. Some communities will only have access to one sealift date per season. Additionally, constantly changing COVID-19 restrictions impact delivery dates for shipments to Nunavut.

## **5. Financial**

In 2017, a trade-in program was initiated with the Region's ambulance vendor. The average trade-in value through this program in 2021 was \$19,000 per ambulance. The foregone revenue from the donation of two decommissioned ambulances is estimated at \$38,000.

The Region also incurs approximately \$4,000 to \$8,000 to inspect and prepare each ambulance for donation in accordance with local regulation. All other expenses, such as shipping and permits, are the responsibility of the recipient(s).

The disposal of other ambulances is in accordance with the Region's Disposal of Surplus Assets Policy and is reported annually to Regional Council in the Disposal of Surplus Assets Report.

## **6. Local Impact**

There is no direct local municipal impact associated with this report.

## **7. Conclusion**

Paramedic Services recommends that Council amend the guidelines and authorize the donation of two decommissioned ambulances to Nunavut communities to provide support for community emergencies.

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For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, General Manager at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72090. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

**Katherine Chislett**  
Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Approved for Submission:

**Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

March 17, 2022  
Attachments (2)  
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