SUBJECT: Standardization of Emergency Response Vehicles - Emergency Medical Services (HES10003) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Chevrolet Tahoe Special Service Duty 4X4 vehicle, manufactured by General Motors, be approved as the City’s standard for Hamilton Emergency Services – Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) for a period of four (4) years (2009 through to 2012).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As Per the Corporate Purchasing Policy, Section 4.14, Policy for Standardization, it is recommended that Hamilton Emergency Services, Emergency Medical Services (HES-EMS) purchase the Chevrolet Tahoe 4x4 SUV, as a standard replacement for existing Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) used by Paramedics and Paramedic Supervisors.

Since 2000 EMS has used multiple types of vehicles and this has assisted in identifying the most appropriate model for the Paramedics and Supervisors given the space requirements are notably less than other Fire and EMS applications. In recent years EMS has been using the Tahoe and more recently Ford Expeditions. Both of these
vehicles have sufficient space, come with 4x4 capabilities and are available in the special service package, built specifically for emergency service use. Historical collision data indicates that the Special Service package provides superior protection for the occupants in the event of a rollover, or side impact damage.

EMS has established that a smaller more compact vehicle is better suited for its operations. The Tahoe is of similar capital cost to the Ford Expedition. The Mechanical Section reports that the Tahoe maintenance requirements are low relative to the emergency usage and high kilometres, and reports that the unit is reliable and considered safe. The Paramedics and Supervisors were consulted and support the Tahoe for safety and manoeuvrability. Given that EMS does not need the added space of other HES vehicles, and that the Tahoe has advantages in fuel consumption and that the Tahoe is preferred by staff, it is recommended that EMS standardize to this vehicle.

BACKGROUND:

The 2009, Council approved EMS Capital Budget, included the purchase of three (3) replacement Emergency Response Vehicles, as part of the EMS scheduled replacement program that is based on a six (6) year life cycle plan.

The ERVs are staffed by front-line Paramedics and Supervisors who spend a large portion of their shift in these vehicles. The ERVs are used to respond to emergency calls and would rarely transport patients. In addition, the ERV acts as a mobile office and command post for the Supervisors in that it is equipped with wireless network computers and communication equipment. The rear of the ERV contains custom made cabinets and drawers to hold the required medical equipment and supplies.

When purchasing the ERVs, ergonomics and safety are included as key considerations along with environmental and economic factors in choosing the best vehicle for the EMS purpose.

In the past two (2) years EMS has been using both the Chevrolet Tahoe and the Ford Expedition as Emergency Response Vehicles, as the size of both of these vehicles is the closest match to the intended paramedic purpose. In addition, both these units are available with the Special Service Duty package i.e. built specifically for Emergency Services with heavy duty transmissions, suspension, braking systems and electrical equipment (necessary for emergency response), but void of the cosmetic features of the standard showroom vehicle, thus they are sold at a lower cost.

EMS now has a similar number of Ford Expeditions and Chevrolet Tahoes in the EMS fleet and EMS has been able to compare the two (2) vehicles.

Both vehicles meet the basic Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Emergency Response Vehicle Standards for an ERV and there have been no health and safety concerns filed by staff in regard to either unit. However, recent staff feedback is that the Paramedics' and Supervisors' preference is the smaller Chevrolet Tahoe over the larger Ford Expedition.
The Tahoe also has flex fuel management capabilities (E85 Ethanol) and active fuel management, which automatically changes the engine to run on four (4) cylinders instead of eight (8) under light loads and/or slower speeds providing energy savings.

The Mechanical Section has six (6) years of mechanical experience with the Tahoe as an EMS ERV and reports that they have found the vehicle to be reliable, easy to mechanically maintain and repair. The Mechanical Section also notes that given the very high kilometres and engine hours that EMS puts on these vehicles each year, the frequency of necessary repairs is relatively low. There is less history with the Expedition, but to-date it seems reliable.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

Purchasing Policy #14 – Policy for Standardization, Section 4.14, sub section (1) allows for a management decision-making process to select a Good and/or Service that meets common needs or requirements.

Purchasing and maintaining one (1) make and model of vehicle in this capacity will provide professional commercial quality reliable equipment to front-line staff. This will allow for continuity and consistency of training and interoperability.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The City of Hamilton (City) purchases the lowest priced equipment tendered regardless of specific brand requirements. Staff does not recommend this, as it will result in the City being required to purchase non end user supported/recommended equipment that may lead to operational issues, end user dissatisfaction, compatibility issues and health and safety concerns.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial:**
Full funding is provided for these emergency response vehicles through the Vehicle Capital Reserves.

**Staffing:**
There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendation contained in Report HES10003.

**Legal:**
There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation contained in Report HES10003.
POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

Purchasing Policy #14 – Policy for Standardization states that standardization is a management decision-making process that examines a specific common need or requirement and allows the Client Department(s) to select a Good and/or Service that best fills that need to become a standard.

The establishment of the Chevrolet Tahoe Special Service Duty SUV 4X4 vehicle, as the standard will result in a single source purchase.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Corporate Services Department, Finance & Administration Section
Corporate Services Department, Financial Services Division, Director
Corporate Services Department, Purchasing Section, Manager of Purchasing
Hamilton Emergency Services, EMS Division, Operations Supervisors
Hamilton Emergency Services, EMS Division, Paramedics
Hamilton Emergency Services, Fire Division, Mechanical Section

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Human health and safety are protected.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
A skilled, innovative and diverse workforce is attracted and retained.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes ☐ No