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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 26, 2012
FROM:	GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P.Eng. MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE SERVICES & CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL
SUBJECT:	FIRE AT 1156 DUNDAS STREET

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Development and Compliance Services & Chief Building Official, the following report regarding the recent fire at 1156 Dundas Street **BE RECEIVED** for information.

BACKGROUND

FIRE EVENT

On the evening of September 15, 2012, emergency crews responded to a fire at 1156 Dundas Street, the former McCormick's cookie factory. This is a vacant building that has been mostly stripped of services and equipment.

The fire appeared to have originated on the main floor of the north (rear) section of the building complex. The area involved is a single storey with a full basement. The on scene Incident Commander (IC) requested assistance from the Police to evacuate the immediate areas of concern adjacent to the building. Once the crews had established a perimeter around the building, the IC turned his attention to the possible evacuation of a larger area.

AIR QUALITY CONCERNS

The smoke plume was in a northwest to southeast direction and was physically migrating along Ashland Ave. before dissipating. The decision was made to evacuate those areas directly to the east of building and south to King St. The area to the west was not a concern as it is an empty lot. Police barricaded access to Dundas Street in both directions from Kellogg Lane to Oakland Ave. and used a 911 call back system to contact each residence in the described areas and posted officers at the access points.

The IC had discussions with a Ministry of Environment (MoE) officer from the Spills Action Center on at least two occasions. The MoE does have an Air Monitoring van, however it is not staffed outside of normal working hours. Their specialized van based in Hamilton, ON requires 24 hours' notice to arrive at a requested location. Although the Fire Department has air quality monitors, they can only test for a few specific chemicals. However, particulate monitoring is carried out by the MoE.

The Middlesex London Health Unit is normally not an active participant with the everyday fires in the City. However, discretion remains with the first responders and the jurisdictional Emergency Operations Centre. If episodic exposure conditions require health risk assessment then the Medical Officer of Health or Health Unit may be invited to contribute advice for this circumstance. In the past, the Health Unit has provided health risk assessments after the fires have been controlled by the first responders for the site.

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SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS

The building is secured (boarded up) to prevent unauthorized entry, however, on occasion the building has been breached by persons unknown. City staff continues to monitor this location and secure any openings in the building against entry.

Fire crews check this facility on a regular basis and preplan for a fire response, including; placement of apparatus, water supply hook ups, aerial attacks etc. Fire has put in place an additional aerial truck to respond for any alarm at this address and the On-Call Chief is automatically contacted as a support person.

DAMAGE AND REMEDIATION

Although the fire was contained, the heat caused a steel column and a portion of the roof to buckle, but no collapse occurred. The remainder of the building was not structurally affected by the fire and it does not pose a health and safety concern.


The Building Division has issued Orders under the *Building Code Act* for the areas affected. A number of structural repairs are required and this work will be carried out in the very near future.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND TAX SALE

Prior to the fire, the City had retained Sendex Environmental Corp. to conduct a Phase I environmental site assessment ("ESA") of the property. This assessment has been completed and a Phase II environmental site assessment is underway. Council has directed Administration to expedite the Council-approved procedures to be followed after a failed tax sale with respect to this property.

Staff have proceeded with the completion of the Environmental Site Assessment study on the property pursuant to the Council Policy for Failed Tax Sales and related Procedures. The anticipated completion date of the Phase II ESA study is mid-December.

Once the ESA study is complete, a staff report on the study findings and a recommendation will be presented to Municipal Council through the Corporate Services Committee; anticipated timing is January 2013. Until Council has resolved whether to vest the property, the municipality is not in a position to sell or receive any offers to purchase.

RECOMMENDED BY:

GEORGE KOTSIFAS, P.Eng. MANAGING DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE SERVICES & CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL