

# Sudbury aims to share service shop with out-of-town ambulances

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board offers to pay for full-time service tech at Lorne Street garage

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Ambulances from the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board, which operates emergency vehicles in an area from Foleyet to French River, may soon be sharing service space at the city's Lorne Street garage. (Yvon Theriault/Radio-Canada)

Sudbury could soon be helping out some friends in the ambulance business.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board, which operates emergency vehicles in an area that spans from Foleyet to French River, recently approached the city with a plan to share space in its Lorne Street garage.

The shop currently services Sudbury's fleet of ambulances, loaders, and plows.

The MSDSB would just need to occasionally send 15 ambulances in for service. And in exchange, they would supply Sudbury with funds to hire a full-time service technician.



Kevin Fowke, the city's General Manager of Corporate Services, says he's welcoming an idea from the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board which would see them pay for a full-time technician at Sudbury's Lorne Street garage. (Markus Schwabe/CBC)

Sudbury's general manager of corporate services, Kevin Fowke, says it's a win-win situation for both providers.

"MSDSB will be paying for a full time employee, as well as the installation of a vehicle hoist in the city's Lorne Street service shop, which will give them a dedicated, qualified mechanic to work on their own fleet," Fowke said.

Service districts like those the MSDSB covers use several small providers, and can get repairs depending on those contractors' availability.

Sharing space with Sudbury's operations will allow them to have a dedicated professional to service a portion of their fleet.



Sudbury city councillor Rene Lapierre says he's not keen on the idea of having out-of-town ambulances serviced at the city's Lorne Street garage. (Yvon Theriault/Radio-Canada)

But Councillor René Lapierre said the plan didn't take into consideration the sometimes hectic schedule of service technicians in the Lorne Street shop.

"There are some days our turnover is very good," Lapierre said. "There are others, not so much. If we take that on, which vehicles are we going to make a priority? Ours or theirs?"

Fowke said he wasn't concerned about running into hectic schedules.

"If throughout the course of time we found that it wasn't creating capacity, we certainly aren't in the business necessarily of servicing other's needs at the cost of ours and we would have to evaluate that."

"But we are satisfied there would be a small increase to capacity."

The plan still has to be approved by city council at a later date. Should that happen, Fowke said he's ready for discussions with the MSDSB.

"We're hoping obviously this is successful," he said. "It's a fairly small piece for us. And we think it's got benefits for both parties and so we are hoping that it continues."