



**CITY OF RICHMOND**

**REPORT TO COMMITTEE**

**TO:** General Purposes Committee

**DATE:** January 12, 2000

**FROM:** Jeff Day, P. Eng.  
Director, Engineering

**FILE:** 2050-01

**RE: Public Safety Building**

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended:

1. That Council approve the interim strategy to provide space for the RCMP in the second floor West Wing of the Interim City Hall to address their short term space requirements; and
2. That Council authorise staff to initiate a planning process to identify a strategy to establish a facility that meets the long term needs of the RCMP and the City by 2005; and
3. That staff report back within a 6-month period on building, siting options, and financing considerations including public/private partnership opportunities.

Jeff Day, P. Eng.  
Director, Engineering

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<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Budget.....	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
RCMP.....	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

## STAFF REPORT

### ORIGIN

The need to establish and provide for adequate infrastructure protection has long been recognized along with the desire to initiate long term replacement plans for all of the City's infrastructure, including Civic Buildings.

On August 4, 1999, the City received first notice under Section 9.2 of the Municipal Police Unit Agreement from the RCMP, regarding the "critical shortage of space at the premises and the need to correct deficiencies". Under the agreement the City has until August 3, 2002, to comply with the requests to the "satisfaction of the Commissioner".

### BACKGROUND

The process of developing a long-term life cycle and replacement plan for City of Richmond facilities has been underway for some time. At the early stages of preparing this plan the old City Hall was identified in a similar fashion and selected for replacement due to a number of significant maintenance, health and safety issues, plus space concerns.

The priorities prepared by staff to develop this process identified that several categories of buildings be analysed for safety and seismic stability during the early stages. These included:

- Public Safety Buildings (Police, Fire/Rescue);
- Public Use Buildings (Arenas, Pools, Community Centres); and
- Corporate Use Buildings (Works Yard, etc.).

Within the first category of Public Safety Buildings a number of actions have been completed with respect to the Public Safety Building, whilst planning continues for the Firehalls. Replacement strategies within this group cannot be finalized until such issues as response times, locations, and service agreements (Airport, Tri-Cities, etc.) are resolved. In response to the letters from the RCMP, staff are presenting overall findings for the Public Safety Building in advance and independent of the other Public Safety Buildings.

### ANALYSIS

**Building Condition** - The Richmond Public Safety Building, housing both the RCMP and Provincial Courts, was constructed in 1972 and expanded by three additional floors in 1978. The original building is now 28 years old and is 50,000 sq. ft. in size.

As part of the Civic Building's preventative maintenance program, staff had previously programmed for the replacement of the roofing system and rectification of a number of ventilation, plumbing and electrical system problems within the facility.

Although the building is in good shape and well maintained, its operational systems, space, and accessibility are worn, outdated and no longer serve the public or police effectively. However, in most situations, solutions can be implemented that will permit the facility to operate to its optimum life cycle, which typically for a building constructed in the 1970's is a 50-60 year period enabling the City to consider long term leasing options for clients such as Provincial Courts.

**Seismic** - The structural and seismic review completed in 1998 identified the Public Safety Building, amongst others, as a "high life safety risk" in the event of a "code design earthquake". This fact in itself represents only a risk assessment and not the sole factor to consider replacement.

Council Policy No. 2002 establishes that new free standing buildings categorized as emergency reception centres (or other essential functions) in the "Richmond Emergency Plan" shall be designed and constructed to allow for post disaster use.

Given the high priority and level of importance that Richmond citizens and Council have placed on police services, the impact of losing the Public Safety Building and occupants as a command centre following a disaster would be critical. The need to provide for law and order is paramount and instrumental in decisions for upgrading building seismic codes

Space Assessment - At this time the RCMP occupies 38,000 sq. ft. with an additional 4,400 sq. ft. off site. Provincial Courts occupy the 12,000 sq. ft. balance.

In order to re-confirm the original data (Henry Hawthorn – 1990) staff requested a revised staffing and space assessment study be conducted. (APRA – May 1999). These latest estimates, prepared using data and population growth projections from the City's 1999 OCP and crime statistics from Victoria, indicate that in 1999, 47,625 sq. ft. is required, increasing to 50,383 sq. ft. in 2005, and by 2011 physical space needs for the RCMP will be 55,000 sq. ft.

## DISCUSSION

The most significant shortfalls of the Public Safety Building for continued RCMP use is the lack of post disaster capability, space, public access and cell design. In order to address the most critical of these concerns and provide the opportunity for staff to develop an effective solution that will meet the long term requirements of the RCMP and the City, the following two phased approach is recommended.

### **Phase I: Provide interim solution to RCMP concerns.**

#### **Option 1: Resolve key concerns in Public Safety Building and provide additional off site space to meet the needs of the RCMP**

Staff's analysis confirms that the RCMP can share accommodations until 2005 in the Public Safety Building, providing Victim Services and other non-operational services to be identified by the RCMP are continued off site. To accomplish this, the existing RCMP space should be re-programmed and an additional 12,000 sq. ft. of space made available by renovating the second floor of the west wing of the Interim City Hall. The estimated cost of this solution is approximately \$250,000.

The resolution of the remainder of the RCMP's concerns (standard of cells and public access) will be addressed upon confirmation of the future use of the Public Safety Building. The RCMP is in agreement with this proposal with the understanding that it is an interim solution until 2005. This option is recommended because in addition to the maintenance work already programmed by staff, it should satisfy the requirements outlined in the RCMP letter of notice.

#### **Option2: Totally relocate RCMP into Interim City Hall**

Relocate the RCMP into the Interim City Hall providing 54,900 sq. ft. of space. This option is not recommended for a number of reasons. Firstly, extensive modifications would be required to re-purpose the facility requiring building code upgrades for the cellblock and prisoner transfer; and secondly, the seismic stability of the facility is not post disaster. Initial cost estimates to relocate the RCMP is \$3.5 million.

**Option 3: Move Provincial Courts into Interim City Hall and reallocate 12,000 sq. ft. of court space to RCMP for a total of 50,000 sq. ft.**

This option is also not recommended for similar reasons. Firstly, because of costly and extensive building modifications to satisfy BCBC standards, building code and occupancy related issues; secondly, that the Interim City Hall building is not post disaster; and thirdly, would not address the space and post disaster concerns for the RCMP who would remain in the Public Safety Building.

Estimated costs for this option are in excess of \$4 million, which in part could be recovered through lease payments.

**Phase II: Development of long term strategy.**

To establish the solution that will meet the requirements of the RCMP and the City by 2005 and beyond, there is a need to plan space and siting options with the RCMP and other stakeholders. Once this preliminary plan is complete, preferred solutions including the future use of the Public Safety Building, and funding scenarios including a possible Public Private Partnership opportunity at a location in close proximity to City Hall, will be reported back to Council by staff within six months.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Staff have included a \$1 million budget in the 2000 Provisional Capital Budget to rectify the Public Safety Building's deficiencies and basic renovation costs required to lease the vacated Interim City Hall.

**CONCLUSION**

The long term objective by staff is to develop and present an organized program of facility rehabilitation, renovation and replacement within the next two years, and clearly identifying the steps required to achieve the goal of adequate infrastructure protection. Our priorities will continue to focus towards public safety, public access and corporate use.

In recognizing the specific needs of the Public Safety Building outside of this program, and accelerating the process by which replacement may be considered, provides the RCMP with immediate additional space while we gain the flexibility to plan and design the most effective long term solution that will meet the City's future needs.

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