



To: Community Safety Committee
From: Chuck Gale, P. Eng.
General Manager, Community Safety
Re: **Community Safety Buildings Project - Update**

Date: May 24, 2002

File: 2052-02

Staff Recommendation

That a referendum on financing options not be undertaken as part of the Communications Strategy for the Community Safety Buildings.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chuck Gale'.

Chuck Gale, P. Eng.
General Manager, Community Safety

Att. 1

Staff Report

Origin

The Communication Strategy for the Community Safety Buildings was developed to build support for the project in the community and to gather input on key issues.

At the Community Safety committee meeting May 16 the General Manager, Community Safety was directed to:

Review and report to Committee on various scenarios with respect to interim financing options, including holding a referendum to determine the financing option preferred by the public.

The following report provides a schedule of key milestones for June to November 2002, including the date of the internal financing options report and the impact of the timing of this report on the deadline for a decision to hold a referendum. Staff have also identified a further opportunity to gather input from the community on their receptivity to the various internal finance options, which will be discussed in relation to the need for a referendum. (*Attachment 1 - Community Safety Buildings Workplan – June to November, 2002* provides a quick reference for key milestones).

Analysis

An outstanding issue for Committee, in the Community Safety Buildings plan, is whether to hold a referendum in conjunction with the November civic election. The following resolutions were carried at the January 14, 2002 Council meeting:

R02/1-15 ***That an opinion referendum be held on the replacement of community safety buildings at the 2002 General Local Election***

the question on Resolution No. R02/1-15 was not called, as the following tabling motion was introduced:

R02/1-16 ***That Resolution No. R02/1-15 be tabled until staff report to Council on internal financing options for the replacement of the community safety buildings.***

Internal Financing Options

The report regarding the internal financing options, which includes what Council can hope to realize from *Scenario 4 – Land Development* (city-owned property at 6080 River Road), was referred to back to staff on May 16th. A staff report on internal financing options, will be presented to a General Purposes meeting in July, as a companion report to the Manager, Policy Planning's report, regarding the overall vision for the River Road property.

Referendum

Information obtained from the City Clerk indicates the deadline for a Referendum Bylaw report is September 6th. If Council chose to include an opinion referendum in the next civic election, staff anticipate a preliminary report outlining the questions to be included in the referendum, must be prepared for the July 9th, Community Safety Committee. This is in anticipation of the possible cancellation of committee meetings in August.

A Referendum Bylaw report would then need to be prepared to be presented at the September 6th General Purposes meeting.

Telephone Survey

Staff have investigated the merits of conducting a random telephone survey to ascertain Richmond residents' attitudes towards, and preference for, different financing options for the replacement of the Community Safety Buildings. A survey would take approximately four weeks to complete, and it could include the option of completing the survey in either English or Cantonese. The survey could be completed prior to the July 9th decision of Committee regarding a referendum.

The benefit of conducting a telephone survey, is that in a short period of time, Council could have reliable data regarding residents' attitudes towards different funding options. Information received from the consultants that conducted the Community Safety Focus Groups indicate that a survey of 300 Richmond residents would give a high degree of certainty that same results would be achieved if all Richmond residents were interviewed. On the downside, there is not the same degree of transparency with a survey as there is with a referendum.

Neighbourhood Meetings

In addition to a possible telephone survey, three community open houses have been planned to solicit public input. They are:

- **Bridgeport Fire Hall:** Tuesday, June 17, 2002, 4-8 p.m., 9100 Bridgeport Road.
- **Hamilton Fire Hall:** Monday, June 18, 2002, 4-8 p.m., Hamilton Fire Hall, 23031 Westminster Highway.
- **Community Safety Building:** Wednesday, June 19, 2002, 4-8 p.m., 6960 Gilbert Road

An information display on the proposals will be available for viewing from 4 to 8 p.m. each evening and staff from the Community Safety Division will be on hand to answer questions. A brief formal presentation will be made at 7 p.m. each evening. In addition, members of the community will be asked to answer a brief survey regarding the replacement of the Community Safety buildings and the options for internal financing.

Through these neighbourhood meetings, staff will also be able to gauge how receptive the public is to the overall Community Safety Buildings project.

Implications for the Community Safety Buildings Work Schedule

If Council choose not to hold a referendum then work on all the Community Safety Buildings can proceed according to the schedule laid out in the Master Plan for Community Safety Buildings.

Holding a referendum will affect the schedule of work, as the scope of the project can not be finalized until the internal financing option is decided upon. There is sufficient funding in the 2002 Capital Program to allow work to continue on the Bridgeport and Hamilton Fire Halls only, as follows:

- **June** - Community Safety Headquarters is put on hold
- **June 28th** - The Request for Proposal for consultants for Bridgeport and Hamilton closes
- **July** - The consultant(s) is selected
- **August and September** - The consultant(s) works with City Staff to develop the internal programming and spatial design
- **October** - The design concepts will be used in Neighbourhood Meetings to gather community input on design
- **November** - Bridgeport Fire Hall is put on hold, work continues on Hamilton Fire Hall to the construction and permit drawings stage
- **January 2003** – Hamilton Fire Hall is put on hold

A significant issue lies at the heart of the question on whether or not to hold a referendum or undertake a telephone survey. Staff are concerned about the implications of doing either for the purposes of determining the best or most appropriate way to finance the project. If the issue was whether or not to undertake the project, a referendum or survey has some validity. But as has been clearly stated, the City will be replacing our community safety buildings ... the issue is how we want to fund the project. In considering the funding issue, it is staff's concern that the issue is far too complex to fairly and properly represent in either a telephone survey or a referendum question. It is staff's opinion that Council are best suited to decide on this complex issue.

That said, it is likely that any person faced with a question on financing options will ultimately select the option that has the least impact on them. Given the choices Committee is considering, the least impact options would be land development or casino revenues. The City is currently in the process of addressing the issue of gaming, and a final outcome, which would allow Committee to assess the funding available from that source, will not be known in time for consideration as part of the decision process for this project. The option of developing the River Road site would only address part of the funding need, as this one project is unlikely to net sufficient funds to fund the building project, (specifics will be available for July as noted above).

Finally, the financing of City initiatives is not a static issue. As circumstances change, Committee may find it appropriate and beneficial to alter the method of financing their operations. Commitment to a methodology through the Referendum or survey process could remove some of the flexibility necessary to ensure prudent management of City financial resources.

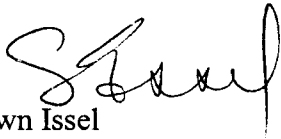
Financial Impact

The cost to conduct a random telephone survey is \$11,500 plus GST. It could be funded from the Community Safety Buildings Replacement account.

Conclusion

Council asked for more information regarding internal financing options, in particular *Scenario 4 – Land Development* before making the decision to hold a referendum. This report will be presented in July. The decision to hold a referendum must be made in July in order to meet the deadline for the next Civic Election. A random telephone survey could be conducted in June to determine Richmond residents' attitudes to the internal financing options prior to the decision to hold a referendum. Staff are not supportive of a referendum or survey on financing options, and are recommending against it. Removal of the referendum requirement enables Council to make its decision without the added pressures of the election timetable. A telephone survey could be used to gauge public interest in the absence of the referendum.

Until the internal financing option is determined, work will be limited to design for Hamilton and Bridgeport Fire Halls.



Shawn Issel
Manager, Divisional Programs

Community Safety Buildings Workplan – June to November, 2002

ATTACHMENT 1

	June	July	August	September	October	November
Bridgeport	June 17 - Neighbourhood meeting June 28 - RFP for Consultant	Mid July - Consultant hired	Early August - Begin design work with Fire Rescue	Sept 10 - Schematic Design Report to CS Committee	Early October - Neighbourhood meeting for design input	
Hamilton	June 18 - Neighbourhood meeting June 28 - RFP for Consultant	Mid July - Consultant hired	Early August - Begin design work with Fire Rescue	Sept 10 - Schematic Design Report to CS Committee	Early October - Neighbourhood meeting for design input	
Headquarters	June 19 - Neighbourhood meeting					
Sea Island	Mid June - Response from YVR					
Financing	Mid June – Random Telephone Survey (proposed)	July 15 - report to GP – City owned land 6080 River Road July 15 - Financing Options Report to Council, including decision to hold referendum, results of telephone survey		If Referendum, then Referendum Bylaw Report to Council		Referendum held as part of Civic Election