



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Public Works and Transportation Committee
FROM: Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws
RE: **Boulevard Maintenance Regulation**

DATE: May 15, 2001
FILE: 6060-01

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That an additional bylaw inspector position be approved for the Community Bylaws Department.

Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Engineering.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Maintenance	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Water	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	
Budget.....	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

This report is a companion to the staff report from the Director of Engineering on the issue of boulevard maintenance regulations.

Community Bylaws staff were asked, at the November 21, 2000 Public Works and Transportation Committee, to provide the following information:

1. The amount of revenue which could be generated from "forced cleans", if the proposed bylaw was adopted and put into effect;
2. The cost of hiring an additional inspector; and
3. Provide a business case analysis for the proposed additional inspector.

To best address Committee's questions, this report is structured to:

- a) outline the scope of the Boulevard Maintenance Program;
- b) project the workload;
- c) project the revenue; and
- d) provide two service delivery options, with costs, for consideration.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

The proposed boulevard maintenance enforcement services would address: long grass, plantings, sidewalk intrusions; debris; and obstruction of: sight lines, traffic signal devices, and fire hydrants.

The program would contain the following components: inspection, education; administrative paper work; and physical clean up services (as required). The services would be delivered using a combination of proactive and reactive approaches. The reactive portion means attending a site, based on a complaint. The proactive portion will be to ensure that the entire block, where the complaint site is located, is in compliance.

PROJECTED WORKLOAD

Staff have attempted to provide as accurate a forecast of the anticipated workload as possible. Coquitlam's experience was used to base Richmond's projected workload. Fire Hydrant obstruction data was available and is included as part of this program.

Data on the number and dollar value spent by City crews addressing urgent "safety" vegetation issues were not easily retrieved from Richmond's records. A summary of the workload is shown in Table 1 "Projected Workload Summary" on page 3 of this report.

Boulevard Maintenance – Coquitlam’s Experience

The Boulevard Maintenance program is new to Richmond. In order to gauge the workload and cost of the program we looked at Coquitlam’s actual experiences. Coquitlam has a population base of 112,278 (roughly 50,000 less than Richmond). The following facts were obtained from Coquitlam staff:

- they receive 100+ complaints annually on boulevard maintenance issues. This figure does *not* include any safety issues that were addressed;
- they achieve a 95-98% voluntary compliance ratio;
- the majority of staff time is spent in the inspection, education and administrative paperwork components of the program; and
- their peak service periods are from Spring to the end of Summer.

When using the Coquitlam figures and applying them to Richmond, the annual workload would be projected at 150 cases. The caseload figure is considered low as it would likely be affected by two factors:

1. the pro-active enforcement approach (which includes reviewing the entire block where a complaint has been received on a single property); and
2. the potential for the property owner’s resistance to comply with the new boulevard maintenance regulations.

Experience has shown that the public resists strongest to newly introduced regulations during the first and second years of the program. A noticeable drop is seen after the second and subsequent years of the program. However, to be on the conservative side of workload projection, the figure of 150 cases was used.

Fire Hydrant Obstructions

The Water Department addresses 30 obstructed fire hydrants issues per year. This equates to 45 hours of work and a total cost to the City (not recovered) of \$1,575.00 per annum.

Urgent Vegetation Issues

Data not available. Addressing urgent safety related vegetation issues is a matter of communicating the concern between the various interested parties (Transportation, Parks, and Community Bylaws) and collecting the statistical and monetary data for future analysis. This work is administrative in nature and doesn’t place an additional load on any inspector nor city crew. Therefore no figures are included in the workload summary.

TABLE 1 - PROJECTED WORKLOAD SUMMARY

Boulevard Issue	No. of Cases
Vegetation Intrusion	150
Fire Hydrant Obstruction	30
TOTAL	180

To put the 180 workload figure into perspective, a Community Bylaw Inspector will on average handle a total of 142 cases and 18 permits annually relating to the condition or use of a property (based on year 2000 statistics).

REVENUE PROJECTION

The City receives revenue from the 23% overhead rates that are applied to any forced clean works done under the Boulevard Maintenance Bylaw.

Revenue projections, as with workload projections, are difficult to forecast given two main factors:

1. voluntary compliance abilities of the bylaw inspectors; and
2. the dollar value of the works to which the overhead rates apply.

In projecting the revenue, the city's data in addressing the Unsightly Premises Bylaw was considered. In 2000, 401 cases were addressed with only 15 forced cleans required (12 under the Weed Control Act and 3 under Unsightly Premises Bylaw). The 15 works totalled \$4,370.95 – which equated to \$1,005.32 (23% overhead) revenue to the City.

The figures used to project the number of cases and revenue were considered appropriate for a well established program. This would equate to an additional \$500.00 revenue to the City per annum. What these figures fail to take into consideration is the proactive enforcement approach and the public's reaction to the regulations particularly during the first and second years of the enforcement program.

Forced cleans are more likely going to be needed in the areas where the city previously provided free vegetation trimming services to the individual property owner (eg. along major arterials). For this reason, the value of the forced cleans and revenues are seen to be low.

A revenue figure of \$1,500 for each of the first and second years of the program are more likely and levelling off at \$500 in subsequent years. The revenue figure of \$1,500 has been projected for 2001. The revenue and program performance activities can be easily tracked and analysed through the Amanda and PeopleSoft computer software programs.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

The following factors were taken into consideration when looking at service delivery options:

- the anticipated workload will likely exceed that of a full-time bylaw inspector.
- the peak demand for services are between March and October.
- the program isn't capable of paying for itself.

The above factors were considered in conjunction with the need to provide these services in the most *efficient* and *cost effective* manner.

Two options for providing the services are presented for consideration:

1. Full-time Staff Resource

Boulevard maintenance program services would be delivered using a regular full-time staff resource in the Community Bylaws Department. This would involve combining similar tasks to increase efficiency and collapsing existing seasonal programs for cost effectiveness.

2. Part-time Staff Resource

Boulevard maintenance program services would be delivered on a seasonal basis, from March to October, using a part-time staff resource in the Community Bylaws Department. This would involve running a single program for the sole purpose of addressing boulevard maintenance issues only.

Efficiency

Combining similar types of enforcement efforts into one program and placing them into a single unit increases staff efficiency, provides for better customer service, allows for consistency in the performance of the duties, and in this case provides for improved cost effectiveness.

It is advantageous to roll the new boulevard maintenance program together with the existing fire hydrant obstruction, weed (and water) control, and unsightly premises enforcement activities. These activities are all similar in that they relate to the condition of private property for which the owner is responsible.

The Community Bylaws Department already performs the weed and water control (on a seasonal basis) and unsightly premises (on a full-time basis) enforcement duties. Community Bylaws would add the boulevard maintenance and fire hydrant obstruction duties to their roster of services.

Effectiveness

The question of how to deliver the boulevard maintenance enforcement services in a cost-effective manner was considered in conjunction with addressing how to deliver services during the peak demand period.

Providing the service delivery through either **full-time** or **part-time** (seasonal) staffing was considered. Table 2, next page, compares the pros and cons of the full-time and part-time staffing options.

TABLE 2 - COMPARISON OF FULL-TIME & PART-TIME STAFFING

FULL-TIME STAFFING	
Pros of Full-Time	Cons of Full-Time
Enhances efficiency - spreads the workload evenly amongst staff to address demands. - allows for easy adjustment to the fluctuating service demand, based on weather conditions. - eliminates down time due to hiring/training.	Commits resources to a new program without benefit of a trial period.
More Cost Effective than part-time option.	
Provides for continuity of program by spreading knowledge with other bylaw staff.	
Provides for consistency in application of intent of bylaw from year to year.	
Net Incremental Cost: \$6,500 (In 2002 budget)	

PART-TIME STAFFING	
Pros of Part-Time	Cons of Part-Time
Allows for program services to be evaluated after several months experience without allocating full-time resources.	Decreases efficiency - unable to address the anticipated workload demand creating slow customer response. - less flexibility in adjusting to the change in demand for service (ie weather conditions) - staff time is expended on recruiting & training of new staff annually.
	Less cost effective than full-time option.
	Opportunity to ensure continuity (process and procedures) is reduced. Training of a permanent employee in the program will be needed so they in turn can train the seasonal employee annually.
	Inconsistency in applying bylaw intent may occur due to changing staff. Additional training of new staff to ensure consistency is required annually.
Net Incremental Cost: \$20,400	

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of running a full-time program would normally exceed that of the seasonal approach. However, program and funding efficiencies can be seen by combining two currently funded seasonal programs (Weed Control and Water Sprinkling Restrictions) and distributing the combined workload amongst the other four bylaw officers. The \$4,000 Provincial Weed Control Grant also helps to defray the net cost of the new program.

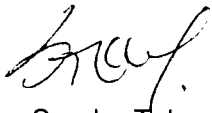
The full-time option, at a net incremental cost of \$6,500, is preferable as it enhances efficiency and customer service, is more cost effective, provides for consistency in the program's application from year to year, and addresses revenue reduction adjustment.

Running the program on its own, seasonally, is not cost effective with a net incremental cost of \$20,400. Additional expenses come into play such as access to a vehicle and cell phone. Other considerations with no monetary impact are: access to an available computer and workstation.

The 2001 budget currently contains an allowance for \$16,900 for the purposes of funding the operating balance of the Boulevard Maintenance Program. There is a projected shortfall of \$6,500 with the full-time option and a shortfall of \$20,400 with the part-time option. The \$6,500 shortfall can be covered off by the five month funding surplus as a result of the delay in hiring. A report on 2001's boulevard maintenance program experience would be prepared in the Fall of 2001. In 2002 a total of \$6,500 would be required at the additional level to cover the program expenses.

CONCLUSION

The Boulevard Maintenance Program is expected to generate a significant amount of work in the area of education, inspection, and to a very small degree enforcement. Additional staff resources are required to pursue the program which is not seen as cost recoverable. An efficient and cost effective program, using full-time staff is presented for consideration.



Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws