



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Community Safety Committee
FROM: Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws
RE: Community Bylaws - Enforcement Program

To Community Safety - Aug 23, 2001
DATE: July 18, 2001
FILE: ~~6060-01~~
1810-01

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That approval be given to hire an additional bylaw inspector in the Community Bylaws Department at no additional cost.

Sandra Tokarczyk for

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Manager, Community Bylaws

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

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

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 Bylaw 7141 was adopted and put into effect;
2. The cost of hiring an inspector; and
3. Provide a business case analysis for the proposed 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 boulevard maintenance enforcement program services would address:

long grass	plantings
sidewalk & road intrusions	debris
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 only. The proactive portion would be to ensure that the entire block, where the complaint site is located, is in compliance. The proactive approach applies to long grass and sidewalk or road intrusions only.

PROJECTED WORKLOAD

Staff have attempted to provide as accurate a forecast of the 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 and less 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

Some components of the Boulevard Maintenance program are new in 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 for long grass, road or sidewalk intrusions); 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.

Vegetation Safety Issues

Data not available. Addressing safety related vegetation issues is a matter of determining the urgency of the situation and communicating the concern to the appropriate party for action.

If the work should be done immediately, meaning someone has sustained an injury or submitted a damage claim through our Law Department, then the Parks crews would fix the problem the same or next day. The first attendance would be at no cost to the homeowner however they would be advised of their responsibility to maintain the vegetation in the future. Statistical data on the works would be collected.

If the work is non-critical, but still a safety issue, then the homeowner would be given one week to address. This time may vary by an additional week depending on the owner's circumstances. In the case of non-action, the City's contractor would complete the works, in consultation with the property owner. Bylaws would co-ordinate the collection of statistics and process paperwork associated with these works.

TABLE 1 - PROJECTED WORKLOAD SUMMARY

Boulevard Issue	No. of Cases
Vegetation (Growth & Obstruction)	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 or Unsightly Premises Bylaws.

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.

Also considered was the value of the Water Department's works in addressing 30 obstructed fire hydrants annually. The 45 hours of work equated to \$1,575.00 with a potential \$360 in overhead revenue.

A revenue figure of \$1,500 for each of the first and second years of the program is likely, levelling off at \$500 in subsequent years. The revenue and program performance activities are set-up and easily tracked/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 with the overhead rates.

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: \$0	

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 bylaw liaison officers. The \$4,000 Provincial Weed Control Grant also helps to defray the net cost of the program.

The full-time option is preferable as it enhances efficiency and customer service, is cost neutral, and provides for consistency in the program's application from year to year.

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.

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. A full-time staff resource can be provided at no additional cost and provides for the delivery of service in an efficient manner.



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Manager, Community Bylaws