



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

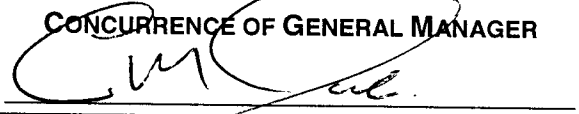
To: Community Safety Committee **Date:** August 19, 2002
From: Sandra Tokarczyk **File:** -
Manager, Community Bylaws
Re: **Community Bylaws Program Service Level Review**

Staff Recommendation

That the Community Bylaws Department service levels, as presented in Attachment 1, "Existing Programs", of the Manager of Community Bylaws report (dated August 19, 2002), be approved as the basis for the preparation of the Community Bylaw Services Program 2003 Annual Budget.



Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER


Staff Report

Origin

On June 12, 2002 the Community Safety Committee received the Community Bylaw Department's Service Level Review report and presentation. As a result of this discussion, the following items were referred to staff for reporting:

1. Graffiti Program
2. Liveability Issues Enforcement
3. Proactive Enforcement Opportunities

The following information provides information on the service delivery around the above Committee referrals.

1. Graffiti Program

The referral recorded at Committee identified "*a need for public relations regarding the City's graffiti program*".

Staff from various groups of city staff have looked at the issue of graffiti in our community. Richmond, in comparison to other lower mainland communities, enjoys a relatively "clean" environment. BC Hydro has advised that they are currently reconsidering their graffiti removal policy, due to monetary considerations. This would limit the graffiti removal services provided by them and could negatively impact Richmond, with other public utilities likely following suit.

The timely removal of graffiti increases community pride, property values, and positively impacts business, tourism activities, and is in keeping with the cities strategic vision.

Staff have identified a promising new approach that we believe could be far more effective in the:

- 1) timeliness of removal of graffiti from public structures (lamp standards; hydro and post boxes, newspaper boxes, bus stop benches, etc.) and private properties;
- 2) financing of graffiti removal services off of city-owned structures; and
- 3) documenting acts of vandalism for possible court or investigation purposes by the RCMP, and at the same time using the digital image for billing purposes.

Time and staff resources do not allow us to develop our ideas in time for consideration in the 2003 budget cycle. We propose, therefore, to further develop our idea and present a report, complete with funding options, to Committee during 2003. It is anticipated that with the right funding structure, partnerships, and community support, we could deliver the program within existing levels of service funding.

2. Liveability Issues - Noise Enforcement

The June 12, 2002 referral recorded at Committee identified “a need to review the process of enforcement for noise” (eg. barking dogs, building construction, false alarms).

There are two outstanding Council referrals on noise-related liveability issues:

1. Council, Committee of the Whole, August 28, 2002

That staff bring forward those bylaws which deal with dogs, to allow the committee to address matters relating to

a) barking dogs

b) when the appropriate time would be to bring dogs in for the evening; and

c) the fines imposed when dogs were impounded by the SPCA.

2. Council, Committee of the Whole, July 17, 2002

That staff report to the Public Works & Transportation Committee on:

a) the feasibility of allowing building demolitions to occur only M-F;

b) the houses during which construction is permitted to occur on weekends;

c) the removal of trees and shrubs from outside property lines and whether developers could be fined for the illegal removal of such landscaping; and

d) requiring developers to place portable washrooms on development properties.

Disturbance from barking dogs, building construction, house and car alarms, party noise, vehicle mufflers, and early garbage collection becomes more pronounced for a variety of reasons. Some of which relate to Richmond becoming more urban and our population ageing. Noise has and will continue to become an important issue as people try to relax in their home – their last sanctuary or oasis away from their busy personal or work lives.

People are generally tolerant of occasional noise disruptions. However, when the noise disrupts their family’s sleep or the noise is of a continuous nature, then people become frustrated and complain to the City. They expect the City to deliver immediate relief. Staff are as also frustrated with our current set of enforcement tools which yield slow results on resolving noise issues.

The City currently contracts with the Richmond SPCA (barking dogs) and Environmental Health unit (alarm and construction noise) to address specific noise complaints. Both the SPCA and Environmental Health are discussing their service delivery contracts with City staff, with both agencies unsure about the future of their enforcement service delivery. These discussions are still preliminary and their outcome and subsequent impacts on services and 2003 budgets are not yet known.. They will be reported to Committee when the issues are fully understood and possible financial or staffing resource impacts understood.

In the absence of an all encompassing approach to the issue, it appears that the best way to tackle these liveability noise issues is one by one. We need to have a hard look at our current methods of enforcement and available legal tools, ask ourselves why they are not working; and are there better methods available employed by others or is something new worth pursuing.

The reviews would be done in a team consultation process, including Community Safety Division departments and depending on the subject, representation from other appropriate City departments. The review process would include consultation with other key players (eg. local cities who share the same issues, and partner organizations who may have ideas). In the end, the process needs to be fair to those involved, effective, and swift in its response to the complaint.

There are no fewer than six major areas of concern regarding noise in our community. Complete reviews in consultation with others and developing possible new processes, and reporting all take time and need to involve our community safety partners. The first items reviewed will be those that are affected by existing contracts with the SPCA and Environmental Health and include the barking dog and construction noise items referred from the Committee of the Whole as well as the issue of continuous home alarm response.

Existing time and staff resources do not allow us to tackle and complete all of the identified issues in one year (2003). However, each member in Community Bylaws could take the lead on one of the items. The time spent on these types of issue reviews, coupled the with a move to a more proactive/education based program, and need for additional staff training, will ultimately affect the timelessness of the turnaround on the continuing and constant complaint workload. It is unclear at this time how the contract discussions and possible process changes would affect the 2003 budget.

3. Proactive Enforcement Opportunities

The referral recorded at Committee identified the need for *“a review of opportunities for additional or more proactive enforcement*

- (i) around parks and schools;*
- (ii) emergency related issues; and*
- (iii) special events*

rather than enforcement only by complaint.”

The Community Bylaws Department has traditionally, in the majority of its programs, had a complaint driven service delivery model with the exception of its noxious weed control, graffiti, and sign enforcement programs, which are mainly proactive.

Within the Community Safety Division, we are trying to move away from “enforcement by complaint” to a model which emphasizes “prevention and education” and partnership type of programs.

The Fire Rescue and RCMP operations have, for many decades, operated proactive education and prevention programs and more recently in the RCMP, root (community) problem solving. Currently more community partnerships and linking at neighbourhood levels are being explored.

In order to move Community Bylaws further away from the reactive enforcement model and into education, prevention, and root problem solving at the neighbourhood level, there are key items that need to be addressed, they are:

- (i) development of existing staff's problem solving and presentation skills through training;
- (ii) presentation and analysis of bylaw complaint statistics for the purposes of issue identification and exploration of education, prevention, root problem solving at the neighbourhood level; and
- (iii) identification, exploration, and implementation of "operational" organizational changes that lead us closer to the desired proactive enforcement approach.

This report already presents two opportunities for change, specifically in the areas of graffiti and liveability issues such as noise (barking dogs and construction) with additional opportunities presenting themselves regularly for exploration, such as a Liquor Control Flying Squad (for problem establishments).

In the area of organizational changes, the concept of special event planning for the Community Safety Division is already underway, with events such as Tall Ships and Halloween being pursued on a divisional and corporate level in 2003. In addition, the idea of bringing bylaw staff into community safety centres and into our neighbourhoods, is being explored.

Community Bylaws staff will be one of the many participants in the School Liaison education program, lead by the RCMP School Liaison Officer. This will be the first "education" experience for the parking and bylaws sections of the Community Bylaws Department. Safety information will be our main focus, with items offered on animal safety/responsible pet ownership and parking safely (geared at those nearing or at driving age).

The eventual change over in service delivery to a more proactive model will evolve with time as each bylaw is reviewed and ideas identified, evaluated, and worthy ideas implemented. This would be done within existing resources, with the transition being managed to carefully balance the current workload under the reactive program with the demands on the delivery of proactive programs. This suggested change in program delivery is in keeping with the City's Corporate Plan, specifically in the area of Community Safety. The change in service delivery to become more proactive would enhance the City's stated desire for increased interdisciplinary and neighbourhood approach to service delivery.

Financial Impact

None have been identified at this time. Any contractual changes with the SPCA or Environmental Health could affect the 2003 Community Bylaws budget.

Conclusion

Committee's three service levels referrals for Community Bylaws are within reach mostly in the 2003 and possibly into the 2004 work program. Services should be able to be delivered under the same level of service and budget structure, with careful managing of the workload and introduction of the service changes. The SPCA and Environmental Health contract reviews could affect the program delivery and are unknown at this time.



Sandra Tokarczyk
Manager, Community Bylaws

Attachment 1 – Community Bylaws 2002 Service Levels

Dept.	Department	Program/Service	Net Cost (approx. program and service level net costs)	Service Level	FTE (assigned to programs and service levels)
09	Community Bylaws	Management and enforcement of community bylaws	\$522,100	Daily	8.0
09	Community Bylaws	Management and enforcement of parking regulations	\$304,600	Daily	6.0
		TOTAL	\$826,700		14.0