



To: Richmond City Council **Date:** September 3rd, 2002
From: Councillor Linda Barnes **File:** 0340-20-CSAF3
Chair, Community Safety Committee
Re: **EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM SERVICE LEVEL REVIEW**

The Community Safety Committee, at its meeting held on August 28th, 2002, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

That:

- (1) the report (dated August 13, 2002 from the Manager, Emergency & Environmental Programs), regarding Emergency Services Administration service levels, be received for information; and*
- (2) letters be sent to the Minister of Public Safety and the Solicitor General and the Office of the Premier urging the provincial government to restore the Provincial Emergency Program's funding for Emergency Management Training and the Personal Disaster Assistance program.*

Councillor Linda Barnes, Chair
Community Safety Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That:

- (1) Emergency Services Administration service levels (as presented in Attachment 2, "Existing Programs", of the report dated August 13, 2002 from the Manager, Emergency & Environmental Programs) be approved as the basis for the preparation of the Emergency Services Program 2003 Annual Budget;
- (2) the 2003 Emergency Services Program budget submission include an Additional Level Request for the Emergency Social Services program, as set out in Attachment 2, "New Programs"; and
- (3) letters be sent to the Minister of Public Safety and the Solicitor General and the Office of the Premier urging the provincial government to restore the Provincial Emergency Program's funding for Emergency Management Training and the Personal Disaster Assistance program.

Staff Report

Origin

On March 25, 2002, Council approved a draft Emergency Social Services (ESS) Plan and referred it for public review. The issue of funding to complete and maintain the plan was also discussed, with Council resolving to fund this work in 2002 from within previously approved sources. As part of these discussions, senior staff committed to re-visit this issue in the planning stages for 2003 programs and service levels.

During the June 12, 2002 service level discussion at Community Safety Committee, an additional issue was raised concerning the potential financial impacts to Richmond as a result of pending provincial funding cutbacks to Emergency Management Training and Personal Disaster Assistance (PDA) for families displaced from their homes due to an emergency.

This report presents these items as part of the Emergency Services Program service level review, and seeks an approved basis from which to prepare the 2003 annual budget. In addition, the report seeks approval to send letters to the Solicitor General and the Office of the Premier urging that provincial funding for Emergency Management Training and PDA programs be re-instated.

Analysis

Emergency Social Services (ESS)

The ESS Plan represents an integral component of the City's overall emergency program and is a requirement under the provincial Emergency Program Act. The ESS Plan addresses how the basic needs of individuals (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) will be provided for in both small, moderate and major emergency situations. A trained and active volunteer network, as well as participation and support from businesses and agencies in Richmond, is also a critical aspect of the ESS Plan.

In order to implement, advance and maintain the ESS Plan on a regular basis, annual funding of \$70,000 is required. As a result of the decision concerning funding in 2002, staff have not advanced the program further in order to ensure that we focus our efforts on protecting the City's current investment in the draft plan, without committing ourselves beyond what can be maintained within current service levels. To do this, we have:

- Capped the number of volunteers at 120 – new volunteers are not being recruited.
- The procedures required to complete the ESS Plan are not being developed, i.e. the detailed information staff at Community Centres would need to carry out their assigned responsibilities.
- The plan has not been actively promoted to the public, other than what is necessary to complete the public review process as directed by Council.
- Other aspects of identified Emergency Program initiatives have been delayed, such as the development of the overall Emergency Plan, additional staff training and exercises, etc.

As part of this report, staff are seeking approval to include the \$70,000 funding needed to advance the ESS Plan as an item for consideration in the 2003 Additional Level budget deliberations.

Provincial Funding Cutbacks – Training and PDA Programs

The City of Richmond actively takes advantage of two specific items which are funded through the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), both of which are targeted for funding reduction:

1. **Training and Program Support** – PEP establishes and schedules training sessions (through the Justice Institute) related to emergency management and pays all associated costs. The City covers the cost of staff time and travel expenses for City staff who attend the training.

Funding to the Emergency Management Division at the Justice Institute is reduced by \$250,000 for the 2002-2003 fiscal year and will be reduced by an additional \$200,000 for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This equates to a significant reduction in training opportunities, course development and program support provided by the Justice Institute, under contract to PEP, for our region and community.

The City utilizes these contracted services to train key staff and develop areas of the Emergency Program in cooperation and in tandem with neighbouring municipalities. These services prepare staff to fulfill the roles they will have during an emergency and enable them to perform well under those situations.

In order to deliver the same level of training to our staff, additional annual costs to the City are estimated at \$15,000. If this level of training is not maintained, the integrity of the program would not be preserved. During an emergency, the community will look to staff for direction and guidance. Without the appropriate training, staff may not be able to perform their emergency roles effectively.

2. **Personal Disaster Assistance (PDA)** – Provincial funding provides for up to 3 days of accommodation, food and clothing for one or two families evacuated from their homes after an emergency. Only residents who have no other means available to care for these basic personal needs are eligible under the program. The City coordinates the arrangements and works with the displaced individuals under our ESS program.

The PEP funded PDA program is slated to end on April 1, 2004.

Over the years, this program has been extremely valuable to many residents during their recovery from an emergency. Individuals have an opportunity to have their immediate and basic needs met, thereby allowing them some time to deal with the trauma of the incident and help them get back 'on their feet'. With the elimination of funding in this area, residents will be left on their own to recover after an emergency.

In order to address this challenge, the City could consider the following options:

a) Discontinue the Program

This option would negatively impact both families and the responders. The families would not have immediate support to start their recovery and the responders would have the additional on scene task of managing the people, as well as the immediate emergency.

b) Maintain the Program with the City Covering the Cost

This option would not impact the families. The cost to the City is estimated at approximately \$9,000 per year, depending on the number of incidents.

c) Maintain the Program and Seek a Sponsor to Cover the Cost

This option would not impact the families. However, the City would need to undertake the process for finding a sponsor and cover the cost of the program (approximately \$9,000 annually) until a sponsor was found. Availability of sponsorship funding could vary from year to year, requiring the City to cover costs in those years a sponsor could not be found.

d) Re-evaluate the Program

The City would need to investigate changes to the program and the service delivery model. Options such as partnerships with agencies, billeting and group lodging could be investigated to determine the costs. The aim would be to provide as much service as possible for as little cost to the City. This would take additional staff time to organize and coordinate.

The Training and PDA program are two key provincial emergency services that the City of Richmond actively takes advantage of to advance our emergency program and assist displaced residents. Staff consider that these programs, which are of such benefit to the local community, should be retained. The province should be encouraged to seek funding reductions in other areas which have less direct community impact. These issues are outlined in the attached letter, Attachment 1, which staff recommend be sent to the Solicitor General and the Office of the Premier.

The full impact of the provincial cuts to Richmond and the region have not all been revealed. The next two budget years may see further reductions in service above and beyond the ones outline above.

Financial Impact

Attachment 2 presents the Emergency Services Administration "Existing Program" funding levels as the basis for preparation of the 2003 annual budget. Under the heading of "New Programs", staff are seeking approval to include \$70,000 for consideration in the 2003 additional level budget submission.

The financial impact to the City of the provincial funding reductions discussed in this report is also shown in Attachment 2 under the heading "Modifications to Existing Programs" and includes:

- 1) Training and Program Support – an increase in the yearly training budget of approximately \$15,000
- 2) PDA – an increase in yearly operating budget of approximately \$9,000

Staff are not seeking additional funding at this time to address these areas. Instead, we are suggesting that the provincial government be urged to restore funding to these two program areas.

Conclusion

This report is presented to seek direction concerning service levels to assist in preparation of the 2003 annual budget submission for Emergency Services Administration.

In addition, the report highlights the anticipated financial impacts to the City of pending provincial funding cutbacks. Other changes to the Ministry and PEP may also materialize in future budget years, with the full impact of the provincial budget cuts likely impacting the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This trend suggests that the provincial government is placing even greater responsibility for planning, training and exercising emergency plans at the local government level. Council should urge the provincial government to strive for efficiencies in other areas that do not dramatically impact the local community and restore funding to the training and PDA areas.



Suzanne Bycraft
Manager – Emergency and Environmental Programs

August 13, 2002
File: 5125-01

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Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
PO Box 9041
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E1

Dear Hon. Rich Coleman:

Re: Provincial Budget Cuts to the Provincial Emergency Program

The proposed budget cuts issued earlier this year will have a significant impact to the Emergency Program in Richmond for the years ahead. Specifically, the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) is intending to drastically cut funding to emergency management training and Personal Disaster Assistance (PDA) programs. The purpose of this letter is to urge the Ministry to review other areas for efficiencies and re-instate funding for these programs, which have tremendous benefit to local communities.

Currently, PEP contracts the Justice Institute to hold emergency management training and program support sessions throughout the province. Municipalities are able to send key staff with emergency roles to these sessions for a minimal cost (wages and expenses). Staff have an opportunity to further their skills and knowledge about emergency management. These skills are vital in preparing staff, who do not respond to emergencies on a daily basis, for their role during an emergency. The knowledge they gain is shared with all departments as they assist in revising or updating emergency plans for the City.

The PDA program directly assists the families in our community at a time when they need help the most. The PDA program, which funds up to three days of assistance for emergency living needs, provides the families with an opportunity to deal with and to recover from the trauma they have endured.

The funding for these programs is very important as they directly impact the community's ability to provide assistance during an emergency and the resident's ability to recover from an emergency. For these reasons, your Ministry is urged to look for efficiencies in other areas and re-instate the funding for these programs.

Yours truly,

Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor

MB:wm

pc: Hon. Gordon Campbell, Premier

Attachment 2

Ref. #	Department	Program/Service	Net Cost (approx. program and service level net costs)	Service Level	FTE (assign to programs and service levels)
EXISTING PROGRAMS					
01	Emergency Services Administration	Emergency planning to ensure a coordinated and managed approach to major emergencies or disasters, thereby minimizing the City's response costs to major incidents.	\$ 283,800	Daily	1.0
NEW PROGRAMS					
	Emergency Services Administration	Emergency Social Services Plan	\$ 70,000	Daily/On Demand	1.0
MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS					
	Emergency Services Administration	Emergency Management Training	\$ 15,000	On Demand	
	Emergency Services Administration	Personal Disaster Assistance Program	\$ 9,000	On Demand	