City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To:	Community Safety Committee	**Date:**	December 2, 2010
From:	Phyllis L. Carlyle General Manager, Law & Community Safety	**File:**	09-5125-01/2010-Vol 01
Re:	**Virtual Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Proposal**		

Staff Recommendation

1. That Council authorize the submission of a proposal for a Virtual Emergency Operations Centre project.

Phyllis L. Carlyle
General Manager, Law & Community Safety
(604-276-4104)

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES ☑	NO ☐
REVIEWED BY CAO Deputy	YES ☑	NO ☐

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Staff Report

Origin

In a major emergency or disaster, it may be difficult for decision makers to respond to or communicate with the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as a result of infrastructure damage, inability to access bridges, tunnel failures, or traffic congestion. There is an opportunity for a grant to develop and demonstrate the technology for a Virtual EOC environment that would allow for remote user participation and additional information sources to provide improved situational awareness.

Background

The Centre for Security Science is a joint endeavour of Defence Research and Development Canada and Public Safety Canada. The Centre invests in science and technology to improve Canada's ability to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from accidents, natural disasters, or terrorist and criminal acts that impact the safety and security of Canadians.

One of the Centre's research funding programs is the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Research and Technology Initiative (CRTI) program which funds projects in science and technology that will strengthen Canada's preparedness for, prevention of, and response to potential CBRNE threats to public safety and security. Through this collaborative, coordinated initiative, the federal science and technology community and its partners are working to enhance Canada's capability and capacity to respond to CBRNE threats to public security. There is a competitive application process through which the projects are evaluated by subject matter experts based on targetted investment priorities ,and if approved, CRTI would allocated funding from their current budget of $18 million dollars to complete a number of projects. An estimated additional funding of $10 million may also become available for allocation.

Analysis

The submission of a grant proposal is recommended to develop and demonstrate an operational Virtual EOC environment where data inputs from the Geographic Information System (GIS), sensor information, video and other sources provide improved situational awareness within the EOC and to remote user participants. The proposed project seeks funding of $350,000 with value-in-kind contributions from project partners of staff time of $445,424 for a total project value of $795,424. Confirmed project partners include Public Safety Canada, Emergency Management BC, Province of New Brunswick, and the Corporation of Delta. This is a three year project that is expected to be completed May 31, 2013.

The project proposal is for the development of new technology for a Virtual EOC through to the technology demonstration stage. A technology demonstration project transitions into system-level prototypes that can be used in an operational setting to demonstrate their impact and utility to operational communities. The results of this stage would see proof of technological feasibility and assessment of science and technology suitability for use. It is expected that the resulting product from this project will be used by staff in emergency response.

The City's application for a Virtual EOC project would be considered through a competitive process. As an island community with an international airport, connected to other communities by bridges and a tunnel, the City is well positioned, by these unique factors, to be a successful candidate. The City is a geographical location where a Virtual EOC would be a tool that would significantly contribute to the success of a response to an emergency.

Decision makers require good information to make informed decisions. With a Virtual EOC, data such as maps, weather, resources allocated, situational awareness, and operational readiness could all be easily transmitted to all participants simultaneously. Decisions could be made in collaboration with other subject matter experts in a timely fashion, thus allowing responders to do so in an efficient and effective manner. This tool would prove priceless during an emergency but can also be used as a planning tool and for situational awareness during other large scale activities and or events within the City.

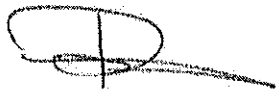
In times of crisis, a virtual EOC would enable the exchange of information and ideas; assist in the creation of plans and permit greater understanding of the situation when the need is greatest. Having up-to-date information readily available would permit the responders and agencies to do their jobs assisting the community, the businesses and stakeholders effectively.

Financial Impact

None

Conclusion

This project presents an opportunity for the City to leverage grant funding to develop and implement a Virtual EOC that can be operationalized during an emergency so that remote users can participate in the decision making within the EOC and provide enhanced situational awareness through additional data sources.



Deborah Procter
Manager, Emergency Programs
(604-244-1211)

DP:dp