



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee

Date: January 29, 2019

From: Cecilia Achiam
General Manager, Community Safety

File: 09-5126-01/2018-Vol 01

Re: **Emergency Programs Overview (2018-2020)**

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled "Emergency Programs Overview (2018-2020)", dated January 29, 2019, from the General Manager, Community Safety, be received for information.

Cecilia Achiam
General Manager, Community Safety
(604-276-4122)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE
Corporate Business Service Solutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO <i>for</i> 	

Staff Report

Origin

This report is in response to a referral made at the May 15, 2018, Community Safety Committee:

- (1) That staff examine the development of emergency response plans, including a public education component and report back; and,*
- (2) That a plan for Emergency Programs staffing is developed including appropriate budget implications and report back promptly.*

Background

The Provincial *Emergency Programs Act (1996)* (the Act) gives local authorities the responsibility for the direction and control of emergency response within their respective jurisdictions.

Under the Emergency Management Organization Establishment Bylaw No. 9232, Council has established the Emergency Programs Department to be responsible for enhancing the City of Richmond's state of readiness to effectively respond to and recover from emergencies by engaging City departments, residents, businesses and regional Emergency Management partners.

The Community Safety Division has organized its services, including Emergency Programs, to align with the four-phases of the BC Emergency Management System.

1. Mitigation – Identifying risks and taking actions to reduce or eliminate those risks.
2. Preparedness – Ensuring plans are in place to facilitate an effective response.
3. Response – Emergency operations necessary to protect life, property and infrastructure.
4. Recovery – Sustaining business operations and rebuilding to restore economic viability.

The City's Emergency Programs fall mainly within the preparedness and response phases under this framework.

Additionally, the BC Auditor General of Local Governments (AGLG) conducted a review of the emergency programs of the Town of Sidney and published a report titled "Emergency Management in Local Governments" on March 26, 2018. It followed with a perspective booklet titled "Improving Local Government Emergency Management", to outline considerations for local government councils and board members in August 2018. Staff have taken into account the findings and suggestions in these reports and other best practice materials when reviewing the City's Emergency Programs to ensure alignment with current best practices.

Analysis

Referral 1- Emergency Plans

Preparedness

The primary goal of emergency planning is to ensure the development of hazard-specific, realistic and scalable emergency plans that clearly describe roles and responsibilities of key staff and response agencies to protect people, property and the environment in an emergency or disaster. The Act requires local governments to develop emergency plans based on the risks identified in the Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA). An HRVA identifies specific hazards and risks for a community and identifies the threat impact and likelihood of their occurrence and the potential impact they would have on city infrastructure, operations, economy, residents and businesses. Subsequent to their creation, the emergency plans are reviewed periodically to remain current.

In 2008, the City conducted an HRVA and identified seven hazards specific to Richmond. The current HRVA has served the City’s emergency planning process for 10 years. In light of changes in densification, climate-change, pipelines and technology, an updated HRVA is essential for the review of emergency response plans. On February 12, 2019, Council approved an additional-level funding request to commission a new HRVA.

In response to the Council referral specifically to the development of emergency response plans, Emergency Programs staff review the emergency plans periodically, in consultation with the subject matter experts from various City departments and/or external experts, to ensure that operational procedures and other information in the plans remain current. The plan review process is followed by a functional validation with orientating, training and exercising with relevant response partners.

The status of the HRVA, the seven existing emergency response plans and a proposed Recovery Plan are in Table 1.

Table 1: Emergency Plan Review Schedule

CURRENT PLANS	
PLAN	STATUS
Evacuation Plan	Internal review completed and plan exercised in 2018
Information Plan	Internal review completed and plan exercised in 2018
Dangerous Goods Spill Response Plan	Internal review completed and plan exercised in 2018
Emergency Management Plan	Internal review and exercise to be completed in 2019
Emergency Social Services Plan	Internal review and exercise to be completed in 2019
HRVA	External review to begin in 2019.
Pandemic Plan	External review and exercise is anticipated to be completed in 2020 pending the outcome of an additional-level funding request to the 2020 budget process.

CURRENT PLANS	
PLAN	STATUS
Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Plan	External review and exercise is anticipated to be completed in 2020 pending the outcome of an additional-level funding request to the 2020 budget process.

The outcome of the plan review process is that these emergency plans remain functional, with minor updates to modernize the language, update roles and align with current legislation and regional best practices. Other plans, such as the CBRNE and Pandemic Plans would benefit from external expertise and are on the 2020 work plan to be completed pending an additional-level funding request to be submitted to the 2020 budget process. Staff will also apply for any grants or funding opportunities as they become available.

Business Continuity Planning

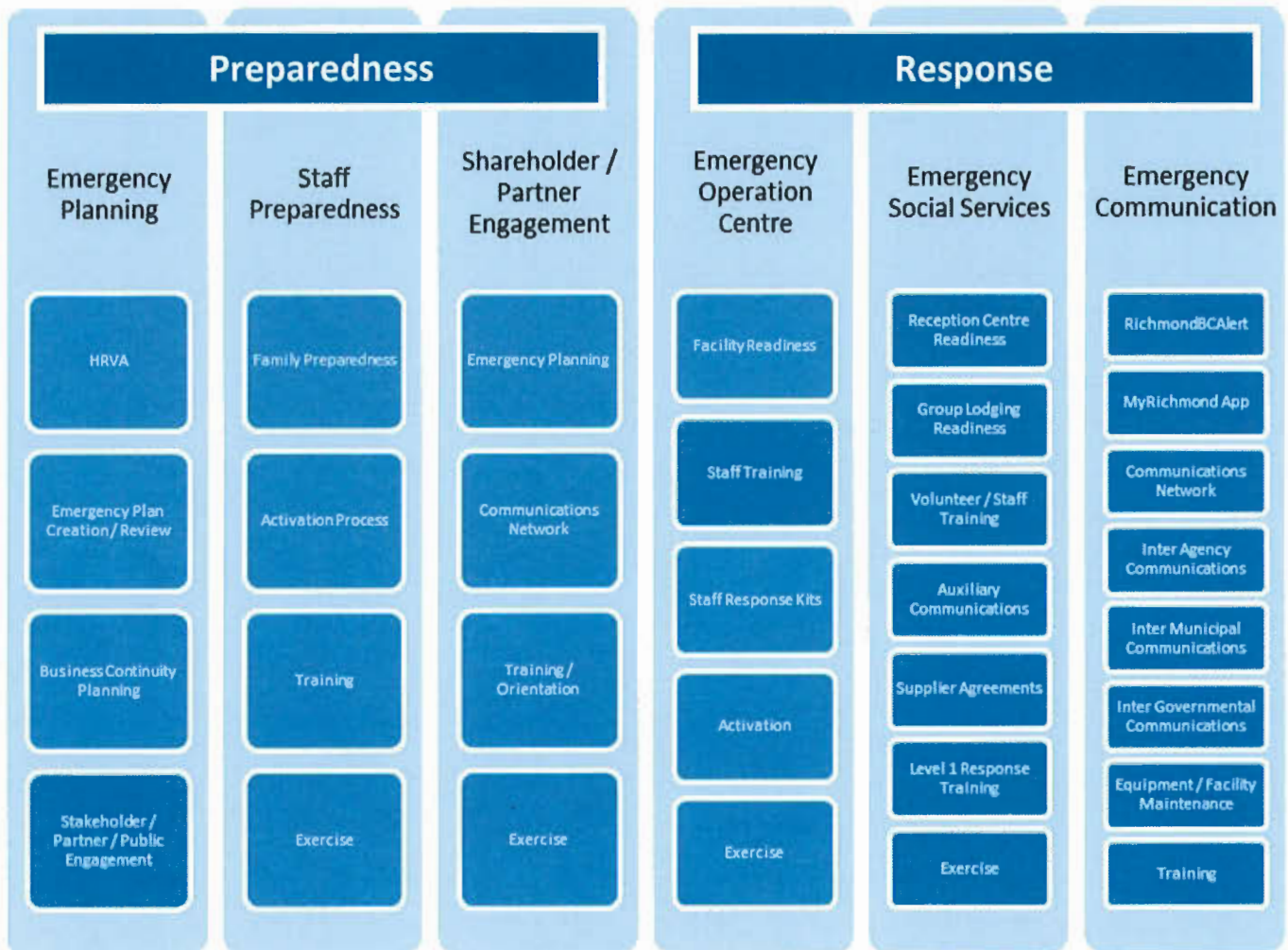
A key complementary discipline to emergency preparedness is business continuity planning. Business continuity planning helps to ensure an organization can continue to deliver its products or services following a disruptive incident. The process includes identifying vital business functions, conducting business impact analysis, and developing plans to recover these functions to minimize service interruption to Richmond residents. Emergency Programs is working closely with the Corporate Business Service (CBS) Solutions department, which has been tasked to help City departments develop their respective Business Continuity Plans (BCP).

An internal steering committee, comprised of senior-level staff, was established for governance and corporate oversight. To date, the BCPs of select essential services provided by the City are in the process of being finalized.

City Resilience

To be truly resilient when a significant emergency occurs, Richmond staff, residents, businesses and institutions need to be prepared and ready to respond in the event of an emergency. The following diagram, (Figure 1) provides a high-level overview of the components within the City’s Emergency Programs department that are required to achieve community resilience in the city.

Figure 1: City Resilience Diagram



Response

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC):

In the event of an emergency that requires a coordinated response, the City will activate its EOC virtually or physically following the Incident Command System (ICS) framework. City personnel and other response agencies gather to provide policy direction to the on-site Incident Commander(s), coordinate resource requests from the site(s) and manage all on-site activities¹. To ensure the EOC is in a constant state of readiness, staff regularly test communications equipment and maintain

Did you know?

During 2018, the EOC was activated four times to support emergency responses at:

- *Freshet Flood Risk Event*
- *Wildland Fire Event*
- *Ledcor Tugboat Spill Event*
- *Wind Storm Event*

¹ The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized approach to the command, control and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective.

an inventory of essential supplies. A debrief with stakeholders and partner agencies is conducted after each event to identify gaps and make improvements to response and communication protocol and procedures.

- Twice a year, Emergency Programs coordinates training and exercise opportunities for volunteers and staff, who have designated responsibilities in emergency plans, with specific roles in the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) to ensure and exercise readiness for deployment.
- The City’s EOC exercises align with the Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management in Metro Vancouver (IPREM), Regional Exercise Programs for 2018-2021, allowing for greater coordination to regional planning, response and recovery capabilities.
- Stakeholder and Partner Engagement: following best practice recommendations by the AGLG, to increase readiness for future incidents, Staff have prioritized relationship building with government and industry partners, the public and neighbouring municipalities to enhance preparedness and strengthen response capacities.

Emergency Social Services (ESS)

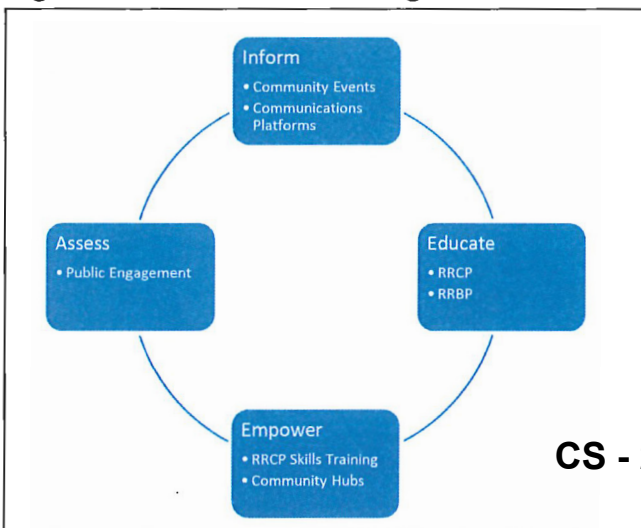
When an event occurs, ESS is provided on a short-term basis to preserve the emotional and physical well-being of those affected by an emergency, including response workers. These temporary services may include emergency food, clothing, lodging, transportation and counselling. Trained staff and volunteers would assess the needs of the individuals and provide referrals for various services to local businesses and organizations.

To continually improve on meeting the provincial mandate and increase response capacity, Emergency Programs staff are planning to facilitate an introduction to the ESS program to Community Services staff at community centres as part of the community emergency hub initiative.

Public Resilience

Emergency Programs continually engages the Richmond public in their communities, at schools, public events and businesses to measurably increase their preparedness and skills to reduce the loss of life, personal injuries and damage to property through education/public engagement and to provide access to emergency planning information (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Public Resilience Diagram



Based on IPREM data, residents may be on their own in a major emergency for a minimum of 72 hours before help arrives. Emergency Programs provides information to residents about important hazards and risks, guides the development of family emergency plans and empowers residents by establishing neighbourhood zones using the community centres as a focus to mobilize

neighbours through the community emergency hub program.

- The City launched the Richmond Resilient Communities Programs (RRCPP) on November 15, 2017, to provide preparedness and response information to individuals, families and businesses in order to reduce injuries and to lessen the economic and psychological impacts caused by major disasters. Staff continue to encourage Richmond residents to purchase home insurance to alleviate some of the burdens the evacuee may face during the recovery.
- As of the end of 2018, staff facilitated 15 workshops at Richmond community centres, which reached 233 participants and totalled 60 hours of education. Following the completion of the workshop, staff, volunteers and the public are offered the following skill development courses: Rapid Damage Response, Food Safe, Disaster Psychosocial, Fire Safety, Light Search and Rescue, and First Aid.
- Current plans for growing the RRCPP program include the introduction of a business emergency resilience program, emergency resilience education for youth and the expansion of the community emergency hub program. For example, Emergency Programs has entered into a partnership with School District No. 38 (SD38) and the Richmond District Parents Association (RDPA) to promote the RRCPP throughout Richmond schools at the start of the 2018/19 school year to increase the number of participating households.
- Emergency Programs is working with the business and commerce community for support through the ESS supplier agreement program or service partnerships for distribution of preparedness resources at public engagements.
- Staff are continually exploring internet-based engagement opportunities with the public on a variety of social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, Twitter) to disseminate preparedness information to the public. Emergency Programs staff and volunteers deliver brochures and information leaflets to businesses including malls, churches and restaurants.
- Emergency Notification System: The Act requires that the City provide emergency notification of disaster and emergency response information to the public. Emergency Programs launched the RichmondBCAlert in May 2015 and have been actively soliciting Richmond subscribers to this service. Currently, over 32,500 residents are subscribed to the notification service. Staff continue to promote registration to the notification service during community engagement initiatives.

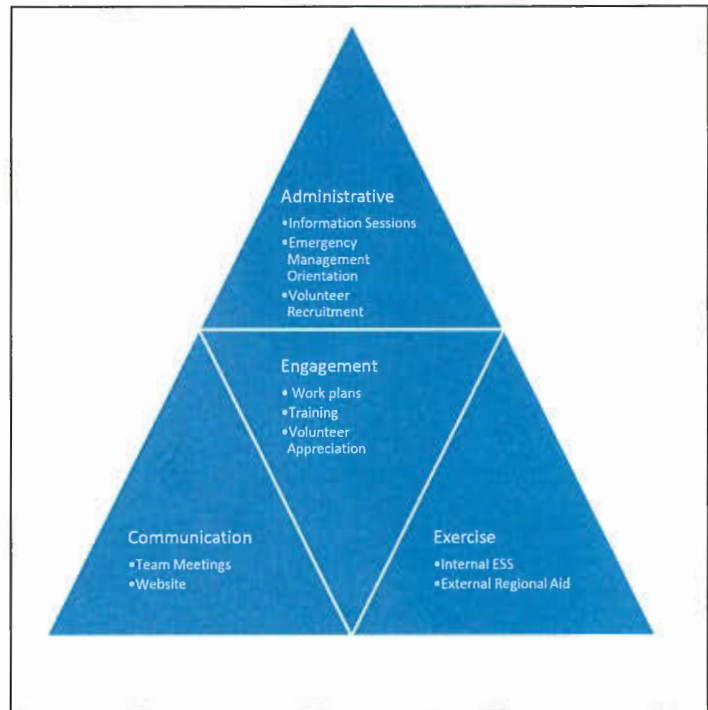
Emergency Volunteer Management

Key volunteer leaders are provided with on-going training and development at the City to take leadership roles in performing duties that extend the reach of the City's emergency response management capacity (Figure 3).

- Preparedness is a shared responsibility and volunteers are a critical component of the emergency management process. Emergency Programs volunteers currently support Emergency Social Services (ESS) and the EOC response, inclusive of amateur radio communications.

- The Emergency Programs has 80 active and well-trained volunteers. The goal is to recruit and train up to 140 volunteers to ensure that there is the capacity to sustain programs and services through prolonged/concurrent emergency events.
- Volunteers require continuous training and exercise to ensure the latest processes are incorporated. In addition to training funded by the City, Emergency Programs staff continue to leverage additional funding opportunities through grants to provide ongoing training and equipment to promote volunteer retention and to maintain community response capabilities.

Figure 3: Volunteer Development Diagram



Referral 2 - Emergency Programs staffing and budget implications

The City’s Emergency Programs are delivered to the community by four regular full-time staff. The department is comprised of a Manager, Emergency Programs; a Coordinator, Emergency Programs; a Coordinator, Emergency Social Services and Public Education; and an Emergency Programs Assistant. Auxiliary and temporary staff are procured as the need arises and as the budget permits. Auxiliary staff provides administrative support for emergency programs outreach and processing Richmond Resilient Communities Program (RRCP) workshop questionnaires, maps and feedback from the programs.

An operational service level review was completed on the Emergency Programs department in 2016. A recommendation was made to review the complement of coordinators to meet mandates under public education, planning and response. In 2017, Council approved an additional level request for one staff resource to meet the needs for development in emergency preparedness public education and growth of the RRCPs. This position was funded from the Council Contingency account in 2018 and approved in the 2019 budget process as an on-going additional level position.

This additional resource has enabled staff to schedule 16 presentations in 2019 at community centres and schools with an increased capability of presenting, by request, to community associations, stratas and churches. In addition, staff have further developed the community hub program at community centres where key neighbourhood emergency response plans are kept, volunteers are based and community resources are centralized. The ongoing review and revision of the community emergency plans and the maintenance of volunteer training are essential in keeping this neighbourhood hub model operational.

Staff feel that the existing work plan for Emergency Programs can be delivered at the current service level based on the above analysis. Additional resources or reallocation of existing resources will likely be required if the demand for emergency services and education/outreach continues to grow. Staff will continue to monitor and assess trends and report to council as appropriate.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

A safe community has consistently been one of Council's areas of focus. Staff continue to develop programs to support first responders during emergencies, promote emergency preparedness initiatives to ensure staff is supported and residents are resilient for emergencies.

Additionally, Staff continue to ensure that the City's emergency programs meet provincial legislative requirement and industry best practices with regular reports to the Community Safety Committee on its overall operations and program implementation activities.



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