



Corporate Report

NO: R137

COUNCIL DATE: May 30, 2005

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: May 27, 2005
FROM: Fire Chief FILE: 0290
SUBJECT: 2005 Community Excellence Awards

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve an application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities' 2005 Community Excellence Awards (Best Practices category) for a proposal to have the City of Surrey provide hazardous materials response services to the Capital Regional District (CRD).

BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey began discussions approximately six months ago with the Capital Regional District about the potential for a partnership regarding hazardous materials (hazmat) response services. The CRD, which governs the Greater Victoria area, has been considering options for improving its hazmat response capacity for several years. The significant cost of these specialized services, combined with Surrey's hazmat capability and recognition as a hazmat leader in B.C., served as the basis for the discussions.

The CRD board voted May 11 to direct staff to prepare a draft agreement to have Surrey provide hazmat response services to the CRD's municipalities and electoral areas on a contract basis. The draft agreement will be reviewed by our legal services and is expected to be ready for approval by Surrey Council and the CRD Board within approximately 60 days. If accepted by both jurisdictions, the hazmat response agreement is anticipated to be operational before the end of 2005.

Key scope elements of such a proposal may include:

- Surrey providing hazmat services for CRD incidents of a pre-determined severity.
- Surrey conducting an annual training exercise with the CRD's lead firefighters.
- CRD to cover all equipment, transportation and other costs for the program.
- Payment of an annual retainer fee and reimbursement for all costs related to CRD incidents.

INTENT

To obtain the required Council approval for an application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities' 2005 Community Excellence Awards (Best Practices category) in regards to an innovative proposal to have the City of Surrey provide hazardous materials response to the Capital Regional District.

DISCUSSION

Applications for the Union of B.C. Municipalities' annual Community Excellence Awards are due June 20, 2005 and must be supported by a resolution from a Municipal Council or Regional Board. The Best Practices category recognizes local governments that have "improved or revised an existing program or service."

The proposal for a hazmat response partnership between Surrey and the CRD is an excellent example of best practices for a variety of reasons:

- Maximizing resources – It makes best use of Surrey's existing specialized hazmat infrastructure and skill base. The agreement would help keep our hazmat team's skills sharp and also optimize resource utilizations.
- Cost savings – The contract arrangement is estimated to save the CRD very substantial dollars in the first five years, when compared to the alternative of developing its own comparable hazmat infrastructure and skill base.
- Fiscal responsibility – Taxpayers in Surrey and the CRD benefit from this cooperative arrangement.
- Intergovernmental cooperation – The agreement is an example of the potential opportunities created by partnerships between different jurisdictions.

The proposed agreement easily meets the three award criteria: improved efficiency, effectiveness and demonstrated cost-effective solutions; applicability to other UBCM members; and improved public accountability and awareness of local government. On this last point, the proposal has already experienced favourable media coverage in the CRD area.

CONCLUSION

By applying for this Best Practices award, the City of Surrey has an opportunity to share this innovative, cost-effective solution with other UBCM members and, on a larger scale, help enhance the quality of local government in British Columbia. The award would also bring further recognition to the City of Surrey for its leadership and its ongoing pursuit of excellence.



Fire Chief