



# Corporate Report

NO: R196

COUNCIL DATE: October 6, 2008

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: October 3, 2008

FROM: Fire Chief

FILE: 0530-01 / 7130-50

SUBJECT: Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. endorse the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is titled "Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management", which is attached as Appendix "A" to this report; and
2. consent to the adoption of the Greater Vancouver Regional District Bylaw Number 1079, 2008 Regional Emergency Management Service Establishment attached as Appendix "B", which is based on the MOU and which will act to establish the Metro Vancouver Integrated Emergency Management service and a cost sharing arrangement for this service.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council endorsement of the terms and conditions of an MOU related to a proposed regional emergency management service and Council consent to the adoption of a by-law by the Region that will establish the service and a cost sharing arrangement for the service.

## BACKGROUND

The Joint Emergency Liaison Committee (JELC) is a partnership between local governments in the Lower Mainland and the Province of British Columbia. Using a cooperative model it has focused on cross-jurisdictional emergency planning and preparedness through the establishment of task-focused working groups. JELC is co-chaired by the City Manager of Vancouver and the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. In 2002, working groups were established in the areas of Critical Infrastructure, Disaster Debris Management, Disaster Response Routes,

Emergency Information Communicators, Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Technical Communication, Regional Emergency Management (Governance), Hazardous Materials and Provision of Water. JELC has determined that the current structure for emergency management within the Region is not sufficient in respect to addressing disasters on a Region-wide basis. It has concluded that a higher level of preparedness and coordination is necessary and better education is required.

The Metro Vancouver Board, the Mayors Committee, RAAC, and the Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) have supported this conclusion and have endorsed moving forward with a new model for regional coordination of emergency management planning for the Lower Mainland and to better ensure that regional services and infrastructure are properly addressed in the context of potential cross-municipality disasters.

## **DISCUSSION**

The proposed model proposed by JELC as described in the attached MOU and its appendices:

- integrates a layered approach that brings together local, sub-regional, regional and provincial involvement to emergency management;
- includes legislation that encourages and facilitates integrated regional emergency planning;
- enables the GVRD to manage their assets in emergencies, coordinate regional emergency planning and support post disaster recovery;
- recognizes and formalizes the province's role in emergency management; and
- facilitates local, regional and provincial communication, collaboration and decision-making.

The model calls for the Region to:

- assist in responding to emergencies that cross municipal boundaries or have impacts or demand for response that exceed the capability of a member local government;
- coordinate multi-jurisdictional response or cross-jurisdictional response to emergencies; and
- assist in building relationships, planning for responses to region-wide emergencies and to determine roles and responsibilities before such events take place.

Local government responsibilities for emergency management will remain as they are, which include:

- establishing and maintaining an emergency management organization, bylaws, etc. as required under the legislation; preparing and maintaining local emergency plans;
- declaring a Local State of Emergency when required;

- analysing hazards, risks, critical infrastructure, and business continuity;
- responding to emergencies within their own jurisdiction;
- training and engaging staff and volunteers in emergency preparedness, response and recovery; and
- identifying the need for and developing relationships, agreements, and memorandums of understanding, etc. with others.

Provincial Government responsibilities for emergency management will continue to include:

- coordinating and supporting local authorities during response;
- coordinating and allocating resources when required, based on provincial priorities; and
- ensuring and facilitating communications between local, regional, provincial, federal government agencies and with external stakeholders.

To give effect to the terms and conditions of the MOU, it is necessary that Metro Vancouver adopt a By-law. In this regard, an appropriate by-law has been drafted and on May 23, 2008, the Metro Vancouver Board gave three readings to GVRD Bylaw 1079, 2008 titled “Greater Vancouver Regional District Regional Emergency Management Service Establishment By-law”, which is attached as Appendix “B” to this report. The By-law requires the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities, following consent by member municipalities, prior to final adoption by the Regional Board.

The new Bylaw provides the structure for Regional involvement in emergency management. For example, it allows a partnership to be established and the region to support the Inter Municipal Emergency Radio System (IMERS) and/or regional coordination in areas such as disaster debris management.

### **Financial Implications:**

The cost apportionment model contained in the proposed By-law, which is common to many Metro Vancouver functions, is based on the ratio of the total property assessment value of the municipality in comparison to the total property assessment in the Region. Consideration of an alternate funding mechanism is being reviewed; however, the Regional Finance Advisory Committee (RFAC) has recommended that the bylaw proceed, as drafted, to allow the process of establishing the partnership to proceed. Given the much broader policy implications, RFAC has recommended to the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee (RAAC) that a task force be struck to examine the cost-sharing model in more detail. RAAC is also recommending the bylaw proceed.

The budget for this service in 2009 is expected to be \$300,000, which will be shared between member municipalities. The proposed By-law allows a budget of up to \$500,000 in future years. Based on the assessment-based cost sharing formula, Surrey’s share of the 2009 budget will be approximately \$20,000, which will increase to \$34,000 in future years if the budget for the service increases to \$500,000 in future years. Surrey is currently contributing \$20,000 to the JELC initiative. As such, for

2009 the new service will have no impact on the GVRD levy in Surrey, as the current levy for JELC, which will be eliminated, will cover the levy for the new service in 2009. The levy for this service will be included as part of the GVRD levy that is included in the property taxes collected by the City on annual basis.

### **Implementation Plan:**

Once consent has been received from participating Metro Vancouver members and approval from the Inspector of Municipalities is achieved, the By-law will be formally adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board and the regional will actively begin its emergency planning and coordination role.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed model for Regional involvement in emergency management enhances the region's capacity to meet its vision as "a disaster-resilient region".

The proposed model does not change the jurisdictional responsibilities or authorities of local governments but rather complements them. On this basis, it is recommended that Council:

- endorse the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is titled "Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management", which is attached as Appendix I to this report; and
- consent to the adoption of the Greater Vancouver Regional District Bylaw Number 1079, 2008 Regional Emergency Management Service Establishment attached as Appendix "B", which is based on the MOU and which will act to establish the Metro Vancouver Integrated Emergency Management service and a cost sharing arrangement for this service.



Len Garis  
Fire Chief

Attachments: **Appendix "A"** - Memorandum of Understanding – Integrated Partnership for Regional Emergency Management  
**Appendix "B"** - GVRD Bylaw No. 1079, 2008