



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 4, 2009
Contact: Kevin Wallinger
Contact No.: 604.829.4370
RTS No.: 07908
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: February 17, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager, Human Resource Services
SUBJECT: Emergency Operations Centre Renovations

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve a budget of \$370,000 for renovations to the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and THAT funding be provided in advance of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

The Emergency Operations Centre is a critical component of the City's public safety and emergency services responsibilities. For the past 20 years, Council has demonstrated a high level of commitment and leadership to emergency management and preparedness.

Completion of these renovations in a timely manner will ensure the City is better prepared to coordinate an emergency response. In addition, it will provide further evidence of Council's role in supporting City Departments, the Office of Emergency Management and our public safety volunteers.

SUMMARY

Planned renovations to the Emergency Operations Centre will meet the BC Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) standards and provide maximum flexibility for coordinating the City's response to emergencies and major special events.

Changes to floor space design, access to IT networks and infrastructure and state of the art audio/visual technology will maximize situational awareness and the ability to share information with partners using a common operating picture. A common operating picture is a consolidated view of the activities of all agencies responding to an incident. This enables decision makers to set priorities and direct emergency response activities with a current, high level global view. This benefits the city as resources from different agencies can be shared and coordinated between city departments and external agencies that would normally respond independently.

Key changes planned include:

1. Replacing the main display panels with state of the art projection systems which will allow viewing of any combination of 1 to 40 images (computer, video or television) simultaneously in high definition.
2. Addition of Smartboards in the main EOC theatre and conference room which will allow for enhanced coordination of planning and operational activities.
3. Addition of video monitors throughout the facility to provide real-time updates and situational awareness to staff in remote locations around the building.
4. Modification of the floor space to allow for moving of workstations, access to phone and data systems needed to meet numerous possible configurations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to request Council approval of a budget of \$370,000 for renovations to the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) with funding to be provided in advance of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

BACKGROUND

The Emergency Operations Centre was built in 1998 and is co-located with E-Comm 911 in a seismically engineered facility at 3301 East Pender Street. New technology, business practices and functional relationships have developed necessitating changes to the spatial layout and technological infrastructure required to provide effective coordination of City services during an emergency.

DISCUSSION

Emergency management has evolved significantly over the past 10 years as a result of lessons learned from major events and emergencies around the world. Events such as Hurricane Katrina, earthquakes in Turkey and China and the Okanagan forest fires in 2003 have raised the public's awareness and expectation that governments at all levels are taking the appropriate steps to ensure the safety and resiliency of their communities.

The City of Vancouver has invested significant resources into infrastructure improvements and community engagement and has more recently begun to strengthen the core functions of emergency management: the planning, training, exercising and validation of the program. In continuing this effort, it is critical to have a state-of-the-art facility with which senior staff can coordinate the efforts of all City departments during major events or incidents.

To meet urgent operational requirements and prepare for major events and exercises the City's EOC must be renovated prior to March 31, 2009. The 2009-2011 Capital Plan provides \$370,000 for these renovations. Submission details have been reviewed and approved by the Capital Plan Review Committee. Based on an existing commitment from the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP), a joint grant program from the federal and provincial governments, over \$20,000 is expected to be recovered, with a possibility of securing additional funding, if the work is substantially complete by March 31, 2009. Funds are reimbursed using standardized JEPP reporting with itemized receipts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2009-2011 Capital Plan provides \$370,000 for renovations to the Emergency Operations Centre. Approval for funding for this project in advance of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget is requested so that the renovations can be completed prior to March 31, 2009, to meet urgent operational requirements, to facilitate participation in major events and exercises (pre-Olympic, Olympic and ongoing), and to be eligible for funding recovery opportunities with the Federal government. If approval is deferred until the Capital Budget approval process is completed (May 2009), the Emergency Operations Centre will not be able to fully meet operational requirements efficiently or effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Project management is being coordinated by Emergency Management staff to complete this renovation. Work will be done in phases and by different sectors (construction, equipment purchasing and data cabling). Each will go through the appropriate procurement processes.

CONCLUSION

Emergency management is a critical core function of government at all levels. Modest investments over time enhance capabilities and provide assurance that optimal levels of departmental coordination and public safety can be achieved. Accordingly, staff recommend that Council approve a budget of \$370,000 for renovations to the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and that funding for this project be approved in advance of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

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