



2023 Business Plan Emergency Program Service All Electoral Areas (1385)

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Services*

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Cariboo Regional District Emergency Program Service was created as a result of provincial legislation requiring that Regional Districts develop an emergency management organization and prepare an emergency plan for their jurisdiction.

The CRD Emergency Program was established in 2004, authorized by Bylaw No. 3934. All electoral areas participate in this service and taxation is based on the assessed value of land and improvements. There is no requisition limit.

All Electoral Area Directors, representing Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K and L, are responsible for the governance of this service.

2023 Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

- 1. Goal:** To develop and deliver a community FireSmart program in the CRD's South Cariboo Community Wildfire Protection Plan area of interest.
Rationale: Wildfire continues to pose a risk to public safety in the Cariboo region. Education programs such as FireSmart are seen to increase community resilience to wildfire (living with fire) through fostering community adoption of appropriate risk-reduction principles and activities.
Strategy: Use staff time and UBCM Community Resilience Investment (CRI) grant funding to design and deliver the program.

- 2. Goal:** To develop and deliver a short-term flood and fire mitigation information campaign to communities throughout the region to enhance the emergency program's preparedness function.

Rationale: Flood and fire emergencies are a frequent occurrence in the CRD. Providing private property and business owners with educational materials and opportunities to engage on preparedness and mitigation tactics aims to increase disaster resilience and adaptation to climate and environmental change.

Strategy: Use staff time and Canadian Red Cross Society 2017 Wildfire grant funding to engage an appropriate consultant to design and deliver the project.
- 3. Goal:** To undertake a planning process to determine strategic direction and operational parameters for the CRD emergency program as recommended by the 2021 Emergency Program Key Findings Report.

Rationale: Continuing to implement the 2021 Emergency Program Key Findings Report recommendations aims to ensure efficient regional service delivery while preparing the program to meet the changes to the provincial Emergency Program Act as anticipated in 2023.

Strategy: Use staff time and up to \$ 9,500 of previously allocated funds (Covid Restart) to develop a plan with a consultant.
- 4. Goal:** To implement the 24-hour Duty Officer concept as recommended by the 2021 Emergency Program Key Findings Report.

Rationale: The CRD emergency program service is expected to function 24/7/365. Staff are required to respond to calls routed through the CRD after-hours emergency line, the Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre, and the Fire Operations Coordination Centre. Adequate resourcing is necessary.

Strategy: Budget for, and develop, an appropriate staffing schedule, on-call policy, procedures, and training to ensure service continuity for evenings, weekends and holidays.
- 5. Goal:** To participate in the CRD Business Continuity Planning process.

Rationale: The CRD allocated Covid Restart funds for the development of a Business Continuity Plan to facilitate interdepartmental coordination, communications, and appropriate and timely resourcing to reduce business interruption impacts across all departments and functions during disasters.

Strategy: Use staff time and previously allocated funds (Covid Restart).

2024

- 1. Goal:** To continue to augment the CRD Emergency Plan by developing hazard-specific annexes to support emergency operations.

Rationale: The CRD EOC frequently activates for emergency response due to interface wildfires. Hazard and function specific annexes to the core plan will provide appropriate operational guidance during emergency response.

Strategy: Use staff time and UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) grants.

Significant Issues & Trends

Communities across the Cariboo Regional District are continuing to experience frequent and severe wildfires, floods, landslides, and extreme weather events such as heat domes and drought.

These climate change conditions require more coordination, communication, and better preparedness from all agencies with emergency management roles and responsibilities. As a region-wide service, the CRD emergency program is required to work closely with a number of agencies and departments including:

- Neighbouring regions, municipalities, First Nation communities; and
- First responders, dispatchers, qualified professionals, utility owners/operators; and
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans, RCMP; and
- Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Forests, BC Wildfire, Water Management Branch, Ministry of Transportation, BC Housing, BC Emergency Health Services, Interior Health Authority, Northern Health Authority, and BC Conservation Service.

The necessary coordination for effective emergency response can be challenged by the geographic size of the region, inconsistent interoperable communication systems, staff changes, reduced volunteerism, and increasing expectations from the population.

The CRD Emergency Program Service business plan aims to address these issues and trends while readying for the changes to the provincial Emergency Program Act. These changes are anticipated to bring forward new provincial financial compensation guidelines, additional compliance and enforcement regulations, and more responsibility for the local government within the mitigation and preparedness pillars.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

1. **Goal:** Ensure that the service is appropriately resourced to meet the emerging and increasing emergency program/disaster resilience needs of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. **Rationale:** The CRD has seen a marked increase in the scope, variety, and scale of emergency events over the past five years directly increasing the resources and time needed to respond effectively. In addition, the Provincial initiative to renew/revise the Emergency Program Act will require local governments to deliver on all four emergency planning pillars (preparedness-mitigation-response-recovery).

Strategy: Build the necessary internal capacity to respond to the increasing demands by supplementing the current staff to carry out legislated requirements.

- All staffing positions filled.

2. Goal: To develop a flood annex to the CRD Emergency Plan.

Rationale: The CRD EOC has activated for flood emergencies five times in the past four years. Hazard specific annexes will provide appropriate operational guidance during emergency response.

Strategy: Use previously allocated funds to hire an external qualified consultant to work with staff to complete the annex in 2022.

- Staff completed the flood response annex draft without additional resourcing requirements, preparing for alignment with 2023 provincial emergency program act modernization and the provincial flood plan.

3. Goal: Ensure Cariboo Regional District Emergency Plan is updated annually and that the service is prepared for the implementation of the new Emergency Program Act.

Rationale: The CRD emergency plan will require significant updating as the changes to the Emergency Program Act take effect over 2022 and 2023.

Strategy: Prioritize and implement the Emergency Program Key Findings Report recommendations to ready for the additional demands to the service as required currently and by the new Emergency Program Act.

- The CRD's Emergency Plan has been reviewed and revised, draft prepared for presentation to committee in early 2023.

4. Goal: Review the region's Emergency Notification System for ease of use, regional fit, and cost effectiveness.

Rationale: The Region's emergency notification system is undersubscribed and requires significant resourcing to maintain and administer. A review is required to determine if options better suited to regional use exist.

Strategy: Allocate resources to prepare a report and present the findings to the CRD and participating Municipalities.

- Review and internal report completed; scheduling of presentations underway.