



building communities together

2025 Business Plan Emergency Program Service All Electoral Areas (1385)

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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.

2025 Business Plan Goals, Rationales & Strategies

- 1. Goal:** To adapt and enhance the CRD's Emergency Program Services functions and plans in accordance with the substantial changes mandated by the Emergency and Disaster Management Act and the upcoming regulations.

Rationale: The Province of British Columbia enacted the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) in November 2023. The modernized act requires substantial changes to local government emergency programming, resourcing, and service provision through incorporating new deliverables for preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. This goal is in alignment with the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Strategy:

- (i) Undertake a formal review process of EDMA and its associated regulations (as they are made available), and determine the changes needed to CRD plans, policies, procedures, and practices.

(ii) EDMA includes Indigenous engagement requirements that foster relationship-building and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and cultural safety into emergency management practices. Allocate funds from the Indigenous Engagement Requirements Funding Program Contribution Agreement to facilitate ongoing collaboration with First Nations governments and to develop tools for recording agreements, and outcomes related to Indigenous engagements.

- 2. Goal:** To use appropriate grant funding to continue to augment CRD Emergency Program Service operations and planning functions in line with provincial legislation.

Rationale: UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) grants support local government emergency program service functions such as Emergency Operations Centre Training and Equipment, Evacuation Route Planning, Cultural Safety, Emergency Support Services, etc. This goal is in alignment with the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Strategy:

(i) Apply for UBCM or other grants to support emergency program service functions in line with planned and emerging priorities.

(ii) Work with Williams Lake First Nation and the City of Williams Lake to implement the approved \$89,850 grant from the UBCM CEPF for Evacuation Route Planning.

- 3. Goal:** To further develop the FireSmart program throughout the CRD and ensure that the CRD has access to future funding through the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) program FireSmart Community Funding and Supports grant.

Rationale: Wildfires continue to pose a significant risk in the Cariboo region, and advancing FireSmart principles is key to reducing this threat. Last year, the CRD hired a full-time FireSmart educator and rolled out a district-wide program to expand FireSmart initiatives. This goal will advance the FireSmart program in the CRD and positions us to secure future funding for continued initiatives. This goal is in alignment with the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Strategy: Allocate staff time and \$391,516.56 from the UBCM Community Resilience Investment (CRI) FireSmart grant to implement the program, with an additional budget of up to \$30,000 set aside to address potential grant shortfalls.

- 4. Goal:** To improve resource identification and situational awareness in the EOC, establishing and training a pool of contractors from the local communities.

Rationale: During an EOC activation, it's vital to ensure that critical information flows both to and from the community. Operational Community liaisons can help the EOC understand local needs and conditions, leading to more effective responses during emergencies. Their local knowledge is an asset, ensuring better decisions in emergency situations and they can be mobilized quickly. This goal is in alignment with the 2024 Strategic Plan.

Strategy: Dedicate staff time and \$15,000 to develop the program framework, related contracts, and accompanying training.

- 5. Goal:** Conduct a region wide test of the Cariboo Chilcotin Emergency Notification System.

Rationale: The Cariboo Regional District utilizes VoyentAlert! as its platform for emergency alerts and notifications. The transition to this new system occurred last year, and it is vital to ensure that all residents are fully informed about its functionality and benefits.

Strategy: Allocate a budget of \$5,000 to launch a campaign aimed at encouraging more people to register for the service, followed by testing the system.

Significant Issues & Trends

A Changing Legislative Landscape

In November of 2023, the Province of British Columbia, under the guidance of the newly created Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), enacted the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) which has been released, but the supporting regulations are either in development or are slated for development. The required changes in EDMA includes a significant emphasis on planning and preparation, requirements to engage with Indigenous Governing Bodies (IGBs), and changes to emergency processes such as States of Local Emergency (SOLEs) and evacuations.

Increasing Numbers, Duration and Impact of Disasters

Considering the influence of a changing emergency management landscape and the need for adaptation to this new reality cannot be overstated. Climate change poses multifaceted challenges to emergency preparedness and response efforts, necessitating a proactive approach to adapt to evolving situations and their influence on the built environment. Local government emergency management programs are having to adapt quickly to changing conditions, such as an increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, shifting precipitation patterns, droughts, floods, and wildfires directly influence the occurrence and severity of emergencies. Consequently, integrating adaptation strategies into emergency management plans becomes imperative for enhancing resilience and minimizing vulnerabilities.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

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.

Status: Complete – 2024 Strategic plan

Goal: To adapt and adjust the CRD's Emergency Program Service functions and plans to meet the significant changes required under new legislation as per the modernized Emergency and Disaster Management Act.

Status: Ongoing and carried over - regulations are in development.

Goal: To use appropriate grant funding to continue to augment CRD Emergency Program Service operations and planning functions in line with provincial legislation.

Status: Complete - 108 and surrounding areas evacuation route plan has been developed using the UBCM CEPF grant funding.

Goal: To further develop and deliver the FireSmart program throughout the CRD through conducting FireSmart education and activities, establishing a FireSmart committee and hiring a FireSmart Educator.

Status: Complete; the next phase of the FireSmart program is continued in 2025.

Goal: To participate in the CRD Business Continuity Planning process.

Status: In progress; CRD Business Continuity Planning process is led by administrative services.