



Item No. 3(iii)

Council Focus Area 2008/2009

Public Safety

November 13, 2007

Introduction

Public Safety has been identified as a top priority for HRM from the beginning and in the development of outcomes, citizens have identified safety as a primary concern. Citizens expect:

- timely an appropriate emergency response;
- a feeling of safety when in their neighbourhoods or elsewhere in HRM; and
- buildings properties and infrastructure in HRM to be safe, healthy and well maintained.

The umbrella of Public Safety consists of Fire, Integrated Emergency Services, Police/RCMP Services. However, all of the Council Focus areas are inter-related when it comes to Public Safety and are collaboratively working together to ensure that our communities are safe, healthy, and well maintained for the citizens of HRM.

To address root causes of crime, improve public education, and enhance community safety, HRM Fire and Police are striving to develop new partnerships and enhance existing ones through community and government participation and engagement.

Council's approval of the 07/08 budget directed Public Safety to develop effective long term resource strategies and service level reviews to address public safety needs. Council also recognized that it will take time to prepare and develop implementation strategies.

HRM Police, RCMP and Fire will continue to do their job - working with the community to provide timely emergency response, enforcement of HRM laws and bylaws, crime prevention and investigation, education and problem solving. Results demonstrate that we are more responsive, show a decreasing trend in crime rates and that overall public perception is increasing around public safety.

Issue: *Public Safety - Policing*

During the Council Focus Area discussion last year, Policing represented an issue with Council and the main concern was with determining adequacy of police resources and having effective outcomes. The re-alignment of Community Projects to Police continues to reflect a more balanced and coordinated response to bylaw issues.

Direction: **Long-Term Policing Strategy**

Outcome

1) Council requested the Board of Police Commissioners to review HRM Policing Services with a view to developing an effective, long-term police resource strategy; assess the impact of any changes to the service delivery model of policing resulting from upcoming negotiations of the Provincial Police Contract.

2) Requested the Board of Police Commissioners to report to Council regarding the need to increase police resources and police funding to ensure an effective level of policing which meets public expectations and addresses the complex environment of the police service delivery model.

Progress

Through the HRM Board of Police Commissioners, the consulting firm of Perivale + Taylor has been hired to undertake the study. Anticipate report to Board of Police Commissioners early 2008.

32 New Police Officers funded by the Province of NS hired for 2007:

- 22 HRP
- 10 RCMP.

Officers to provide a coordinated and rapid response to emerging street crime and drug issues to address new and ongoing youth crime and violence in HRM. Both agencies have implemented Crime Reduction Strategies supported by re-deployment of resources. As reflected in the HRM Police Business Plan, HRP has implemented a foot/bicycle patrol strategy in the downtown core of Halifax and expanded the Quick Response Units in the rest of their service area. RCMP formed a 10-member Street Crime Team (e.g. QRU).

Key Results:

- Downward trend in violent crime rates (e.g. 2 QTR Crimes Against Persons -12.7 %)
- Quicker response times
- Over all satisfaction with police at 80% from Corporate Research survey second quarter, 2007. Slight increase from 2006.

Notwithstanding the reduction in violent crime there are still areas of concern within the Municipality.

Next Steps:

Police expect to review the findings of the Perivale + Taylor Report, the Mayor's Round Table on Violence and the Provincial Crime Reduction Strategy and advocate on the next steps that are reasonable and within the mandate of Police and RCMP.

There are a number of root causes impacting public safety and Police, in collaboration with Community Development and other partner agencies will develop an appropriate response to the above findings that reflects their ability to influence the social issues and the resource requirements to enable us to get ahead of the curve on these social issues.

Direction: By-Law and Enforcement Service Level Review

Outcome:

- 1) Harmonized By-Laws and an effective By-Law service

Progress:

The CAO's re-alignment of 2005 reallocated resources and responsibilities which continues to reflect a more balanced and aligned response to bylaw issues, through a consolidation of bylaws, improved training and efficiencies in coordinating by-law response. There has been an increase in voluntary compliance with neighbourhood unsightly issues, a decrease in mandated remedy work, and a decrease in files requiring Committee intervention.

Business Units participated in the Customer Relationship Management Accountability Project which created more appropriate Service Standards that could be measured.

- 1a) Review of Dangerous & Unsightly Property Complaints.

Calls for Service

2006 - 5,489 2007 - 5315 (YTD)
Average 400 calls for service per month

Owner Compliance

Dangerous & Unsightly Premises Inspections
2006 - 91.2% 2007 - 92.75%

Solid Waste Removal

2006 - 90% 2007 - 92.83%

- 1b) Assessment of Animal Control

Animal Services unit is fully Operational, handling more than 11,000 calls last year. A new shelter contract in place providing stability in our canine sheltering needs. The impact of By-Law A-300 is being assessed with regards to future service and shelter requirements.

1c) Park Patrol and Mobile Parking Enforcement

The consolidation of Park Patrol and mobile parking enforcement continues to provide an enhanced and more efficient patrol and enforcement presence.

Park Patrol:

| 2006 (Aug - Dec) | 2007 (YTD) |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Park visits 10,321 | Park visits 25,102 |
| | SOTs issued: 28 |
| | Revenues: \$5,936 |

Mobile Parking Enforcement:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Tickets issued 7,124 | Tickets issued 12,445 |
| Rev \$191,140.00 | Rev: \$341,420.00 |

1d) Minimum Standards - M100 By-Law

Realignment to Community Development is complete. Responsibilities for enforcement of M-100 is now clearly delineated between Business Units and its performance is greatly improved.

2007 (YTD)

19 - Rooming Houses Licensed

20 - Pending with outstanding compliance issues.

176 - Inspections - Building alleged to be Rooming Houses and determined they are not.

513 - Additional Minimum Standards Inspections.

Fire Service - 95 M100 Inspections
- 92 Closed - 3 Open & active.

- 2) Correct civic address problems in the urban core areas of HRM impacting the delivery of 911 services and other municipal services.

Project is nearing completion - end January, 2008. 10,039 address corrections have been completed to date. The remaining Civic Address corrections in the urban/suburban area of HRM will be completed by the Civic Addressing Program. It is estimated that the remaining corrections will take 3-4 years through the program.

Police will be enforcing the Civic Addressing By-law C-300 in conjunction with Civic Address Program Staff.

Next Steps:

Staff continues to harmonize and rationalize by-law service delivery and coordination. The realignment of by-laws to the appropriate service delivery units (e.g. enforcement to Police, M100 to Community Development) addresses many of the inefficiencies and redundancies that were present under the previous structure. Coordination among the business units and improved response times to complaints will continue to be a focus for staff.

Issue: *Public Safety - Fire & EMO*

During the Council Focus Area discussion last year, Council identified concerns about volunteer capacity, pandemic and business continuity planning for all HRM business units, and having effective outcomes that are aligned with the approved service delivery standard.

Direction: Fire Service Strategies aligned with the Approved Service Delivery Standard

Outcome

Progress

1. Alignment of Fire Service strategies with service delivery standard

Volunteer Recruitments are continuously ongoing in all HRM. Current emphasis are in areas of low volunteer turnout during day time hours, especially in Emergency Response Zones 3 & 2 and areas of ER Zone 1.

Western Region (Black Point) May, 2007, 5 new Volunteer Members were recruited.

Station Location Program - New process has been developed changing the focus from a Consultant based report to utilizing existing internal resources to develop a Comprehensive Review of Fire Stations for future planning and alignment with the Regional Plan. Strategic property acquisition will be identified for future long term Capital Planning.

- Station Location Process will be going forward for CAO/EMT for approval by the end of the year.

Life Safety Issues - The identified major deficiencies in Fire Stations have been corrected. Maintenance programs will address minor deficiencies as well as provide for ongoing maintenance.

2. EMO Issues: Comfort Centres, Pandemic Planning and Business Continuity.

Draft Plan approved by EMO Planning and EMO Advisory Committees. Staff are also

working with the Capital District Health Authority on the use of non-traditional treatment facilities for the plan. The expected completion date of the plan is March, 2008.

EMO Comfort Centres - A facility profile has been developed and has been tested on the North Preston Community Centre. Profile being reviewed and revised prior to being implemented for use by all identified facilities.

3. Federal and Provincial Funding in support of Emergency Preparedness.

Ongoing funding of 75% Federal, 25% Municipal for the program is being received to sustain the commitment to Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Program. The ongoing funding has been applied to equipment and training for the team.

Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) Provincial - application will be submitted by the end of November 2007 seeking 50/50 funding for projects i.e. EOC Renovations and up to 5 generators for municipal comfort centres.

Next Steps:

On the Fire and EMO front, we continue to address the challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters in our Rural communities. This is an issue that affects all communities across Nova Scotia and nationally across Canada. To this end, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency is working with the Office of the Fire Marshal to develop a Recruitment and Retention Program for all Volunteer Fire Service across Nova Scotia which will include a diverse comprehensive promotional campaign.

As a means to address the issue of the lack of adequate training facilities for all our members, we are working with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia, to do a Provincial Needs Assessment of Training Facilities, Training Standards and Infrastructure. Funding was made available, through a Provincial Grant, which resulted in a HRM Fire Service staff member being seconded to the project. A report was compiled which will include recommendations and

budgetary issues and will be presented to the Provincial Government, December, 2007.

Finally, Fire intends to return to Council through the Budget and Business Planning cycle to address resource and funding issues for EMO programs.