

Community Services Report to
Emergency Management Committee
2024 February 08

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
EM2024-0029

2023 Status of Emergency Preparedness in Calgary

PURPOSE

To share information about disaster risks and provide confidence about the status of emergency preparedness in Calgary.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

- The Emergency Management Bylaw 25M2002 requires the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) to provide a Status of Emergency Preparedness Report annually to Emergency Management Committee. In addition, two reports and panel presentations are provided each year to allow meaningful conversations and ensure the Emergency Management Committee and Calgarians are well-informed on actions taken to address high risks for Calgary.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Emergency Management Committee recommend that Council receive this report for the Corporate record.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, 2024 FEBRUARY 8:

That Council receive this report for the Corporate Record.

GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

GM Katie Black concurs with the content of this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is important for Calgarians and Council to be well-informed about disaster risks and the actions being taken to address those risks.
- As disasters become more complex, frequent, and costly than ever before, we now have a “new normal” for emergency management in Calgary.
- The City of Calgary prepares for high-risk hazards by implementing strategies focused on reducing risk and increasing resilience.
- The *2023 Status of Emergency Preparedness in Calgary* (Attachment 2) report highlights the preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities undertaken by the Calgary Emergency Management Agency over the last year and forecasts future planning priorities.

DISCUSSION

The New Normal for Emergency Management in Calgary

This past year marked a transition to a "new normal" of emergency management that highlighted new complexities in our emergency management priorities. The impact of climate change means that we can no longer rely on the events of the past when assessing the risk and intricacies of future disasters. Calgary has become a leader in emergency management, but the

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complex risk environment we see today and what we are expecting in the future requires that the Calgary Emergency Management Agency and The City of Calgary remain adaptable.

The *2023 Status of Emergency Preparedness in Calgary* report (Attachment 2) summarizes Calgary's highest risks and highlights The City's emergency management accomplishments throughout the year, including:

- Providing support and emergency management expertise during an historical wildfire season, including the support of thousands of evacuees from Central/Northern Alberta during the spring wildfires and the Northwest Territories during the summer wildfires.
- Opening the Emergency Operations Centre for a total of 54 days, the longest it has been physically operational outside of the pandemic response in 2020.
- Deploying Canada Task Force 2 a total of 14 times to support other communities impacted by Canada's worst wildfire season in history. Canada Task Force 2 is a partnership between the federal and provincial governments along with The City of Calgary.
- Successfully planning and hosting the World Petroleum Congress in partnership with Calgary Police Service, welcoming oil and gas dignitaries from across the globe.
- Conducting two functional exercises to test The City's heat-related response and human-induced threat response, including illegal protests and demonstrations. An additional agency-specific exercise was conducted to test cyber threat responses. Two of these topics, heat-related risks and cyber risks, were further explored with the Emergency Management Committee through risk focus reports and panel presentations.
- Performing the annual review of the Disaster Risk Assessment (Attachment 3) with input from Agency subject matter experts to account for changes that may alter the assessment of risk year-over-year and to identify new emerging risk. The Disaster Risk Assessment assesses 66 individual hazards and threats that pose a risk to Calgary.

Future Planning and Community Preparedness for Calgarians

The *2023 Status of Emergency Preparedness in Calgary* report also includes future planning priorities such as:

- Strengthening the Agency's capacity to respond to emergencies through training, collaborative initiatives, and exercise programs.
- Focusing on urban resilience with a dedicated service working as part of the local development authority, applying the understanding of disaster risk to projects and policies related to Calgary's built environment to ensure the city is more resilient to future disasters.
- Building community resilience through focused emergency preparedness programming that meets the needs of the populations most vulnerable to disasters. In 2023 several community programs were initiated, including the inaugural emergency preparedness event on Neighbour Day and the development of service changes to better meet the needs of equity-deserving groups who are particularly vulnerable to the impact of disasters.
- Supporting climate adaptation by collaborating with the Climate Team and continuing to integrate climate adaptation principles and projected modelling into existing emergency management strategies.

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EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | engagement was not required |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken | |

Fifty-five City of Calgary business units and external groups are Agency members in the Calgary Emergency Management Agency, with representatives from a broad cross-section of sectors including: City services, emergency services, utilities, schools, transportation, business, non-profits, and environmental-focused agencies. The Calgary Emergency Management Agency helps connect efforts and expertise across all levels of the Corporation, government, non-profit groups, and private sector to advance resilience in the city.

In addition to being involved in the development and review of response plans and full-scale emergency exercises, Agency members also engaged in hazard- or event-specific tabletop exercises and contributed to a year-end survey to help direct future preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Calgary Emergency Management Agency members' work aligns with the *Social Wellbeing Policy* of prevention (d) *The City will aim to stop problems before they start, using a prevention approach* by ensuring the social impacts of disasters are being mitigated before disasters occur.

Environmental

Calgary is exposed to numerous environmental hazards that require coordinated preparedness and mitigation activities to reduce their risk. Of the top 16 priority high risks from the 2023 *Disaster Risk Assessment*, seven are environmental.

Economic

Calgary Emergency Management Agency members' work addresses the *Resilient Calgary Strategy* to create a resilient economy. Mitigation efforts will result in significant future savings.

Service and Financial Implications

Existing operating funding - base

Disaster response planning and preparation exist in the 2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets.

RISK

The City has eight Principal Corporate Risks and emergency preparedness contributes (directly or indirectly) to reducing these risks.

Additionally, the *Disaster Risk Assessment* identifies 16 high disaster risks, and these are the priority risks for planning and preparing efforts. Literature indicates that mitigating disaster risk and having strategies in place to decrease their impact is more socially, environmentally, and economically sound than managing disaster consequence.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. 2023 Status of Emergency Preparedness in Calgary Report
3. Disaster Risk Summary 2024
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
N/A		

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