

DATE: April 14, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Adam Davey, Director of Community Services & Public Safety

SUBJECT: Emergency Preparedness Week and Update of the City's Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA)

ATTACHMENT(S): Attachment 1 - Hazards, Vulnerabilities & Risks in the City of Prince George (2020 Update)
Attachment 2 – PowerPoint Presentation

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated April 14, 2021, from the Director of Community Services and Public Safety, titled "Prince George Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, 2020 Updated Report."

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the report is two-fold. One, to provide information on the upcoming Emergency Preparedness Week, from May 3-7, and two, to provide information on the recently updated and digitally available 'Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment' for Prince George. Further, as we approach freshet and wildfire season, the intent of the presentation is to encourage residents to plan and prepare their own household emergency kits.

BACKGROUND & DISCUSSION:

1. Emergency Preparedness Week occurs in the first week of May. This year we will be educating Prince George citizens on the importance and the contents of a 72-hour kit and our local evacuation zones. The City's emergency page on our website provides more information: <https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Services/Pages/Emergency%20Response%20and%20Safety/EmergencyPlanning.aspx>
2. The HRVA (Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment) was recently updated and will be digitized and publically available on the City web page. An HRVA is a requirement of the *Emergency Program Act* (EPA) and is a foundational document for the emergency management plan. An HRVA ranks the most likely emergency events to occur in a community using likeness and consequence. The HRVA was last completed in 2009. The assessment was updated in 2020 and most of the hazards remained the same. The most likely events to impact the City were determined to be atmospheric hazards, disease, hazardous materials (HAZMAT), fire and floods. The City underwent comprehensive wildfire planning and exercises in 2019. In

2020, focus shifted to HAZMAT. Following the end of Covid lockdowns, planning and exercises for 2022 shall resume.

3. As identified in the HRVA, the upcoming summer season has potential for the City to experience some regularly occurring emergency events:
 - Flooding¹ is a yearly occurrence here in Prince George, however our community except for a couple neighborhoods is quite resilient. The Provincial River Forecast Centre anticipates an El Nina spring with cooler and wetter temperatures. Snow pack is above normal (132 & 122% of normal for this time of year for the Upper West and East Fraser Regions that flow into PG) in watersheds in our locality. We are not anticipating any significant flooding unless heavy rains or excessive heat occurs in the month of May/June. Still some potential for more snow in higher elevations.
 - Forest fires in the region are likely and some Provincial weather predictions indicate that a drier summer may occur. As we have seen in the past can lead to an increase in forest fire frequency regionally. Fire seasons are difficult to predict and can occur with minimal hot dry weather patterns.
4. Background of the Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA):

The HRVA is an ‘all-hazards’ risk assessment that helps guide decisions to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from hazards that pose a risk to a community. An HRVA is a foundational document for every emergency program and is a requirement mandated by the Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation of the BC Emergency Program Act. Section 2(1) of this regulation requires local authorities to prepare emergency plans that reflect the local authority's assessment of the relative risk of occurrence and the potential impact on people and property from emergencies that could affect all or any part of the jurisdictional area for which the local authority has responsibility. The results from the HRVA are the cornerstones of the planning process and will be used to develop planning priorities and help make risk-based choices to address vulnerabilities, mitigate hazards, and prepare for response and recovery from disasters.

Limitations: The HRVA is effective at predicting *likely* events that can impact a community. Its weakness lies in protecting communities from rarely occurring, unlikely or onetime events. Despite the weakness, being prepared for the most-likely events will better prepare the community for any emergency situation.

5. Combined with the HRVA, our community has undergone several exercises that have assisted in our preparation for an emergency event. The wildfire evacuations of 2017/18, the Wildfire tabletop exercise series 2019 and just prior to the pandemic a multi-jurisdictional hazardous material spill scenario utilizing a combined EOC was developed. These events and exercises allow for increased opportunity for learning and improvements.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we encourage all residents to take a moment to better prepare your household for emergencies by ensuring your 72 hour Emergency Supply Kit is good to go. For assistance in deciding on supplies for your Emergency Supply Kit, check out the City's hyperlink:

¹ “Freshet” is the technical term used for river flooding events.

<https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Services/Pages/Emergency%20Response%20and%20Safety/EmergencyPlanning.aspx>

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021/04/26