

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Emergency Management Program Update

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**INFORMATION
ONLY**

The purpose of Bellevue's Emergency Management Program is to create a resilient and disaster ready community that is able to protect against, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. While there is an Office of Emergency Management charged with facilitating these efforts, this is a Citywide endeavor that impacts not only all City of Bellevue departments, but also neighboring jurisdictions, non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, and individual Bellevue residents. Understanding how the emergency management program operates within Bellevue is critical in order to make sure we are able to build a more resilient City together.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) builds resiliency in Bellevue by constructing and administering a comprehensive plan that includes an all-hazard approach and engages the whole community to better respond to and recover from emergencies. The comprehensive emergency management plan defines that Bellevue uses the incident command system in coordination with King County, Washington State, and Federal Emergency Management Agency, as defined in RCW 38.52 and to meet the criteria established in WAC 118-30.

Emergency management is a Citywide, cyclical process through which OEM endeavors to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. This is a continually evolving process and many of the phases can occur congruently depending on what is happening.

Bellevue is a beautiful City, however some of that beauty makes it susceptible to many different natural and human caused hazards. Our City is susceptible to earthquakes, wind/snowstorms, civil unrest, extreme weather events, flooding, terrorist attacks, cyber-attacks, and the list goes on and on. The focus in emergency management is to prepare residents and staff to be ready for those hazards.

Every day, emergencies happen in our community. Fortunately, most are small, isolated incidents such as a car accident, small cooking fire, or a downed tree. These incidents are managed by the City's well-trained staff from various departments, and most do not involve the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). However, when incidents escalate, are complex, involve multiple City departments or negatively impact a larger portion of our community, OEM is here to help coordinate and assist the response

efforts. This is often facilitated by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is staffed by employees from across all City of Bellevue departments to ensure a more efficient and effective response.

To be successful in response, it all begins with planning. Planning is a foundational piece of emergency management. By design, almost all of OEM's emergency plans are what OEM calls "all-hazards" plans, meaning they can be adapted and applied to any hazard.

In emergency management, OEM has three main types of plans: strategic, operational, and tactical.

- Strategic Plans provide a framework for how the City responds (i.e., the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan).
- Operational Plans: Focus on the execution of one function of emergency response or recovery (i.e., the Shelter Management Plan)
- Tactical Plans: Plans developed for a specific incident or event (i.e., the 4th of July response)

Currently OEM has several different plans in development that will help provide guidance for the City's emergency response and recovery efforts.

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) provides a framework for how the City responds in an emergency. This is on target to be completed in December 2025. Part of this plan includes the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) which outlines how the City will continue to provide essential services in the event of an emergency with limited personnel and/or resources.

Another change will be the addition of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Transportation Department secured a grant and is leading an initiative to develop this plan which will help the City identify strategies to mitigate or eliminate risks. Having an approved plan will help make Bellevue eligible for a number of grant opportunities.

Earlier this year, Bellevue finished the first "official" Shelter Management Plan, which provides guidance for how the City will open and operate an emergency shelter for displaced residents. This was developed through extensive collaboration with COB departments, including Legal, the City's Diversity Team, and especially the Parks Department who were instrumental in the development of the Plan. A key component of this plan was ensuring emergency shelters are accessible to all residents. For example, right now Parks & OEM staff are working on ensuring all signage and forms are available in Bellevue's top languages so that individuals with Limited English Proficiency can successfully navigate the shelter environment.

Additionally, in 2022, Parks funded the purchase of ADA specific shelter supplies, ranging from prescription glasses for those who may not have theirs available in an emergency to specialized mobility assistance devices. The next step with shelter management will be to train staff in their role so they are prepared to work in a shelter. Each department has pre-identified staff that could be reassigned if needed and training efforts are underway.

Finally, our last piece of exciting news is that the multi-year EOC Technology Upgrade has been completed. Using a combination of grant and City funds, OEM and IT (with some support from FAM) were able to upgrade much of the equipment in the EOC to ensure it can facilitate better operations.

This includes new display processors to promote situational awareness, better sharing capabilities to allow for more rapid information dissemination (including with partners outside the EOC), and Microsoft Teams capabilities to facilitate a possible hybrid EOC activation. This upgrade has significantly improved the capabilities and interoperability to ensure full response as a city.

Preparedness

Everyone in Bellevue has a role in preparing for an emergency. Personal preparedness is key – as a rule OEM tells everyone they should be prepared to be “on their own” for approximately two weeks following a disaster. We know this can be difficult for many in our community and that is why we partner with the State of Washington and King County to support the Prepare in a Year program which breaks down essential preparedness into manageable tasks over a calendar year. Staff have resources available by emailing OEM@bellevuewa.gov if you are interested in more details.

Another opportunity we wanted to highlight for those that want “extra credit” is the upcoming Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class being held this Fall. The CERT program is for anyone who lives, works, or plays in Bellevue that wants to become more involved in their community and learn more involved disaster response skills such as: fire safety, disaster medical, search and rescue, disaster psychology, and basic incident command structure. Registration is live, and more information can be found on our website, <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/fire/emergency-management>.

Conclusion

The Office of Emergency Management is dedicated to fostering emergency preparedness in Bellevue and relies on individuals to do their part to be better prepared so we can build a more resilient City together.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

This program supports Council’s target areas of a Safe and Prepared Community.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with the information provided.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A