

## **COUNCIL REPORT**

**To:** Mayor and Council

**From:** Fire Department

**Date:** January 26, 2026

**Subject:** Colliers Emergency Program Review

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council receives this report for information.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On November 8, 2023, the Government of British Columbia introduced the Emergency Disaster Management Act (EDMA) to modernize emergency management practices. This legislation was developed in response to the increasing frequency and complexity of emergencies, including wildfires, floods, pandemics, and cyber threats. Some of the significant additions to the EDMA include:

- Mandatory engagement with Indigenous communities, in alignment with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA);
- Defined responsibilities for local authorities, Indigenous governing bodies, and critical infrastructure owners;
- Post-event reporting requirements, the ability to declare a Local Recovery Period (LRP), and;
- Risk assessment and planning obligations for critical infrastructure.

On July 28, 2025, staff presented a recommendation to Council to award a contract of \$45,000 to Colliers Project Leaders to conduct an Emergency Program Review for the District of Mackenzie (District), using funding allocated from the Indigenous Engagement Requirement (IER) Funding Program received from the Province of British Columbia in 2024 and 2025 to align with EDMA requirements.

## **EMERGENCY PROGRAM REVIEW SUMMARY**

This review evaluated existing emergency plans, governance structures, and emergency management practices, as well as strengths and gaps in the emergency program. As part of this review, a roadmap was developed to guide staff on program development, capacity building, and compliance over the next several years.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The District has strong foundations in place for the emergency program, such as an Emergency Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP), Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA), strong working relationships with regional partners, mutual aid agreements with the McLeod Lake Indian Band, and willingness from staff to learn, collaborate, and improve the program.

During the review, some of the gaps that were identified included:

- An outdated Emergency Program Bylaw that requires updates to come into compliance with the EDMA.
- Existing key plans, such as the ERRP and HRVA that require updates to reflect changes under the EDMA.
- Documentation and plans for the Emergency Operations Center that require updates to align with current best practices and to provide clarification.
- Current relationships exist with local First Nations, however there is room to grow those relationships through information sharing and collaboration.
- Staff members are provided with basic training, however a comprehensive training program should be developed to standardize training.

### **STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Update and modernize the Emergency Program Bylaw
- Update the District's Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Analysis
- Update the Emergency Response Plan
- Continue building relationships with local First Nations
- Update Emergency Operations Center manuals
- Implement a structured training program
- Develop a recovery framework for emergency management
- Create a Business Continuity Plan
- Update the Evacuation Route Plan

### **COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

#### **Community and Social Development**

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident

engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

**Strong Governance and Finances**

- As the municipality's elected governing body, we serve all residents and businesses in the community. We engage residents and stakeholders on important issues and make our decisions through open and transparent processes. We are careful in our use of resources, mindful of the need to maintain programs and services, while also meeting the community's infrastructure needs.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Micaiah Taylor, Deputy Emergency Program Coordinator

**Reviewed By:** Corporate and Financial Services

**Approved By:** Chief Administrative Officer