

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

REPORT

The Public Safety Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2022 June 15, received and adopted the attached report providing a status update on the implementation of Burnaby's Public Alerting System.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Wang
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer GM Community Safety GM Corporate Services Acting Chief Financial Officer GM Land and Facilities GM Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services GM Planning and Development Fire Chief Chief Librarian Chief Information Officer
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DATE: 2022 Jun 06

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY
SAFETY
GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE
SERVICES

SUBJECT: PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEM

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with a status update on the implementation of Burnaby's Public Alerting System.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to update the Public Safety Committee and Council on the status of the public alerting system (PAS), formerly referred to as mass notification system (MNS), project. The project is a collaborative effort that includes the Community Safety (Risk Management and Emergency Planning), Marketing and Communications, Public Affairs and Engineering (GIS) departments.

The approach to the public alerting system (PAS) was divided into six phases:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ COMPLETE | Phase 1 | Input Gathering and Evaluation |
| ✓ COMPLETE | Phase 2 | Scoping and Requirements |
| ✓ COMPLETE | Phase 3 | Request for Proposal |
| ✓ COMPLETE | Phase 4 | Installation and Implementation |
| ✓ COMPLETE | Phase 5 | Testing, Evaluation and Modification |
| ➤ IN PROGRESS | Phase 6 | System Launch and Go Live |

Since the last report to Public Safety Committee on February 22, 2021, substantial progress has been made on the project. Project phases 1 through 5 are now complete.

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From: *General Manager Community Safety*
General Manager Corporate Services
Re: *Public Alerting System*
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A soft launch of the system occurred in conjunction with the Extreme Heat Cooling Centre Open Houses events (held May 15 and 29). Event attendees were introduced to the PAS and encouraged to sign up to receive alerts. The official launch is scheduled for June 21, 2022, with the roll-out of the PAS communications plan.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The public alerting system will enhance the City response during emergency events which aligns with the following Council-adopted policies and plans/strategies: Community Safety Plan (2020), Social Sustainability Strategy (2011), Emergency plan (2020) and Extreme Heat Initial Response Guideline (2021).

3.0 BACKGROUND

The City of Burnaby's Community Safety Plan (CSP) was developed to enhance community safety and well-being under the vision of "Burnaby is a safe community for all". To achieve this vision, the plan identifies five priority areas:

1. Community Amenity Safety
2. Crime Prevention and Reduction
3. Transportation Safety
4. Emergency Services
5. Emergency Management

The public alerting system (PAS), formerly referred to as mass notification system (MNS), is identified as an initiative as outlined in the CSP. The PAS will augment existing emergency and disaster notification methodologies through the use of existing and emerging technological-based communication interfaces to provide emergency alerting capability. The system interfaces with mass notifications systems currently utilized by higher levels of government, including the BC Emergency Alerting System and the federal Alert Ready system.

The PAS is one of many communications tools within the City's Crisis Communications plan (in development). This overarching plan includes identification of a number of overlapping communications tools that the City can harmoniously utilize to notify persons of an emergency or impending disaster as legislated by the BC Emergency Program Act. Due to the public's growing reliance on the internet (including the internet-of-things) and cell phone technologies, the PAS tool can effectively (time-bound) and efficiently (qualitatively and quantitatively) disseminate messages to populations at-risk to a hazard.

4.0 CITY OF BURNABY – ALERTABLE SYSTEM

Through a rigorous RFP process, the City of Burnaby selected Alertable by PEASI, an internet-based public alerting system that can disseminate messages rapidly to subscribers via mobile/smart phone apps, email, and landline phones. Alertable is used

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by several BC jurisdictions, notably the cities of Vancouver, Surrey, White Rock, Port Coquitlam, the City and District of North Vancouver, the District of West Vancouver, Squamish, Fraser Valley Regional District, and Victoria.

The project team derived an alert usage criteria to send both Critical alerts and Advisory alerts. These have been defined as:

- **Critical Alert**—IMMINENT and LIFE THREATENING

An alert that is in response to an emergency that requires urgent action, is extremely severe (i.e. threatening to people's lives), and there is high certainty that the hazard will occur. When a *Critical Alert* is issued, people in the affected area need to be prepared to follow the directions and/or take immediate action for life safety or protection of property.

- **Advisory Alert**—BE AWARE and BE PREPARED

An alert that is in response to an emergency that is not immediately life-threatening, or where the City is not the lead agency in the emergency event, but the hazard is still important to be aware of as it may pose a risk to health or property, and could potentially escalate to become Critical if the situation worsens.

Information and messages for distribution via the PAS have been designed to meet Burnaby's unique needs. This allows alert administrators to access pre-scripted messaging content and quickly distribute the alert during an emergency.

Utilizing the City's Hazard Risk Impact and Vulnerability Assessment (HRIVA), hazards have been categorized by type: fire, hazardous materials, health, natural, environmental, public safety, and evacuation. Each category includes incident types related to the category, an incident description and key public messages or instructions. In addition, Official Community Plan and high potential incident areas have been uploaded to the PAS mapping layer using GIS polygons. These polygons, which can be easily modified if necessary, allow alert administrators easily geo-target alerts to populations within a specific area or zone.

The PAS system was soft-launched in May as part of the effort to sign up and educate members of the public who attended the Extreme Heat Cooling Centres Open House events on May 15 and 29. The PAS system is now fully updated with tailored Burnaby information and ready to be communicated to a broader audience.

Communications to the public are scheduled to begin June 21, 2022, including a media release, a dedicated page on the Burnaby.ca website (burnaby.ca/alertable) along with social media, e-newsletter, online and print advertising, printed collateral and internal communications.

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Objectives of the communications plan are to:

- get Burnaby residents to sign-up/subscribe to Alertable;
- get non-residents who work or go to school in Burnaby, have family members living in Burnaby, and/or those who live in neighbouring municipalities that closely neighbour Burnaby to sign-up/subscribe to Alertable;
- demonstrate that the City of Burnaby places a high priority on the safety of its citizens; and,
- instill confidence in the service.

Target audiences for the City's communications plan include:

- Burnaby residents and Burnaby-based businesses and organizations;
- Non-residents who work or attend school or other activities in Burnaby;
- Non-residents with family members living, working or attending school or daycare in Burnaby;
- Visitors to or people who commute through Burnaby;
- Residents of neighbouring municipalities (Greater Vancouver region); and,
- City of Burnaby Mayor and Council, committee members, staff and management.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The development of the City's public alerting system has been a comprehensive, collaborative process, and the system is now ready for use as a communications tool during emergencies. Members of the Public Safety Committee, Mayor and Council as well all citizens and businesses in Burnaby are encouraged to download the Alertable app to their mobile devices and subscribe to Alertable at the earliest opportunity.

Staff recommend that the Public Safety Committee forward this report to Council for information purposes.


Dave Critchley
GENERAL MANAGER
COMMUNITY SAFETY


Dipak Dattani
GENERAL MANAGER
CORPORATE SERVICES

DC:cp:lt

cc: General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Finance
General Manager, Lands and Facilities
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Fire Chief
Chief Librarian
Chief Information Officer