

RE: LETTER FROM THE GVRD DATED 1988 NOVEMBER 14
TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS STUDY

ITEM 29
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 77
COUNCIL MEETING 88/12/12

PURPOSE: To provide additional information on the study, and on the preliminary steps that are being taken to implement the recommendations as contained in the Executive Summary.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT

Introduction

Appearing on the agenda for the 1988 December 12 meeting of Council is a letter from Mayor G.J. Blair, Chairman of the GVRD, regarding a study that has been completed on the transportation of dangerous goods in the Greater Vancouver area.

This report supplements the information in the letter from the GVRD, and gives Council an overview of how the study was initiated and carried out, and the approach in terms of how the recommendations as contained in the study are to be implemented.

Background

Concerns relating to the transportation of dangerous goods in the Lower Mainland have been addressed on previous occasions, but never in a comprehensive manner involving all modes of travel throughout the entire regional area. For example, in 1982 the Federal Government submitted a report entitled "Railroad Transport of Dangerous Goods in the Greater Vancouver Region" (also known as the Eisler Report after its principle author). This led to a number of public hearings by the Railway Transport Committee in Burnaby and Vancouver, and significant improvements in the safety of operations at Westridge Terminal on the Burrard Inlet. Although positive results were achieved, the focus of that study was on rail only, and it was recognized at that time by various organizations including Burnaby Municipal Council that what must be addressed is a comprehensive review of the movement of dangerous goods by rail, road and marine throughout the Greater Vancouver area. This recognition eventually led to the establishment of a task force that carried out the study that is the subject of this report.

The final report that was released following the completion of the study is comprised of five separate items: 1) Executive Summary; 2) Volume I - Report & Recommendations; 3) Volume II - Current Status Report; 4) Volume III - Communications Program; and Volume IV - Risk Analysis Model. The Executive Summary provides an overview of the study including major findings and recommendations. Council members will find the Executive Summary loosely inserted in their envelopes together with the agenda for the December 12 Council meeting. The Executive Summary and the four volumes have been placed in the Aldermen's Office. This material is also available in the Clerk's Department for viewing by the public and the media.

Major Aspects of the Study

• Study Period

The study was begun in 1987 April and completed in 1988 June.

• Task Force

A Task Force was formed to coordinate and give general direction to the study. Serving on the task force was the Regional Manager, GVRD (who represented the Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley municipalities) and a deputy minister from both the Federal and Provincial levels of government.

Study Director

Dr. A. N. Boydell served as the Study Director. Working under the general direction of the Task Force, he was primarily responsible for:

- preparing a comprehensive study program (scope, methodology, objectives, etc.)
- overseeing the activities of Working Groups and, where necessary, consultants
- conducting public information meetings
- preparing reports.

Working Groups

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The following Working Groups were formed and structured to report to the Study Director.

- Rail Transport Working Group
- Marine Transport Working Group
- Truck Transport Working Group
- Emergency Response Working Group

Working Groups were given specific terms of reference and assigned responsibilities that primarily included the collection and analysis of data.

Mr. Walter Scott, Transportation Planner in the Planning & Building Inspection Department, actively participated as a member of the Truck Transport Working Group.

Working Groups had memberships composed of representatives from all levels of government, transportation companies, labour organizations, industrial producers and users of dangerous goods and public groups.

Public Participation

A key component of the study was public participation. This was primarily achieved by holding public meetings which were chaired by the Study Director and open to anyone wishing to attend. Two public meetings were advertised and held in different communities throughout the Greater Vancouver area.

The public was encouraged to submit letters to the Task Force and Study Director at any time.

Newsletters were used to keep interested individuals and groups informed on status as the study progressed.

Current Status

The final report was presented to representatives of the GVRD and the provincial and Federal governments in late summer of this year. It was formally released to the public on October 04.

The Study Director held a series of briefing sessions for senior staff members of all municipalities in the GVRD. Burnaby senior staff attended a briefing session on September 16.

On October 26, the GVRD Board of Directors adopted the six recommendations as noted in the letter from the GVRD which appears on this agenda.

From time to time at their regular monthly meetings, the Regional Administrative Advisory Committee (composed of managers from all the municipalities in the GVRD) and the Regional Emergency Planning Committee (composed of emergency program planners from all the municipalities in the GVRD) will review progress on the efforts being made to implement the study's recommendations. This action, which is consistent with the type of follow-up that these organizations have undertaken on previous occasions, will further ensure that progress continues on improvements involving the transportation of dangerous goods in Burnaby and throughout the entire regional area.

Another group that may have a key role to play in regard to the study is the Burnaby Major Emergency Planning Advisory Committee. This Committee, which oversees emergency preparedness planning for the Municipality, is composed of the Director Engineering, Fire Chief, Medical Health Officer, Transportation Planner, a member from the RCMP Administrative Support staff and the Administrative Assistant to the Municipal Manager who also serves as the Committee's Chairman. The Committee will periodically review progress on the implementation of the study's recommendation, and if it has any comments to make, the Chairman will refer them to the Municipal Manager in accordance with the established reporting procedure.

The next step in the process is extremely vital and is being addressed at this time: establishment of a Tri-level Advisory Council to monitor and oversee the implementation of the study's recommendations, and to ensure that in the future, this type of multi-jurisdictional organization is in place so that issues and concerns involving the movement of dangerous goods can be investigated and resolved on an ongoing basis with, as may be appropriate, input from the public at large (this is the first of the 23 recommendations in the Executive Summary). In order to achieve the formation of a Tri-level Advisory Council, an initial meeting to be attended by representatives of the GVRD and the two senior levels of government has been tentatively scheduled for 1989 January 19. It is expected that this meeting will lead to the formation of a Tri-Level Advisory Council with authority to perform specific duties as set out in an approved terms of reference.

Conclusion

The study has comprehensively reviewed the transportation of dangerous goods throughout the Greater Vancouver area, has addressed the need for organizations to be prepared to effectively respond to major emergencies and has developed a "computerized risk analysis model" which staff will analyze to determine if it would be of use in preparing for emergencies in our community. The final report includes 23 recommendations and work on the first of these (establishment of a Tri-Level Advisory Council on Dangerous Goods) is presently under way.

It is still too early in the process to predict what the ultimate impact of this study will have on Burnaby and the entire Greater Vancouver area. However, it is generally believed that definite benefits will be derived, especially in the form of better communication between the three levels of government (at this time there is a serious communication gap in that there is no structured vehicle in place whereby officials from the federal, provincial and municipal governments regularly interact with one another on matters involving the transportation of dangerous goods). The study also contains a number of other recommendations which, if implemented, would also definitely be of benefit to our community, e.g., improved system of inspecting and identifying leaking tank cars, improved marine radio communications in Burrard Inlet, creation or updating of data bases and improved training programs.

Staff will ensure that Council is kept fully informed as progress is achieved on all relevant aspects of this matter throughout 1989 and as appropriate thereafter.

Council at its meeting on September 12 inquired if it is possible to reduce the level of dangerous goods that are transported through Burnaby. Council can expect to receive a report on this inquiry at the January 30 Council meeting.

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