



# Governance & Services Committee

**TO:** Governance and Services Committee

**FROM:** David Komaike  
Director of Engineering Services

**DATE:** September 09, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Central Okanagan Search and Rescue – Building Needs Analysis Report

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**Purpose:** To present to Governance and Services and the Regional Board the results of the building needs assessment completed on behalf of Central Okanagan Search and Rescue.

## **Executive Summary:**

In 2020, Central Okanagan Search and Rescue saw their busiest year ever in their 67-year history. This included more than 20,000 hours volunteered by COSAR members on tasks, equipment preparation and maintenance and training. A Building Needs Assessment was completed in December/2020 by Urban Systems and this report highlights the needs of COSAR to secure a new home with centralized equipment storage and, hopefully, a centralized location to improve COSAR response time.

The analysis reviews the age, remote location, inadequate layout and structural deterioration of the existing COSAR building. The report confirms that the existing building and location fail to meet minimal requirements for housing equipment, training/meeting rooms, and parking. The current COSAR facility is at its “end of life” and further repairs or additions may not be in the best interest of either COSAR, the RDCO or the City of Kelowna, who own the facility.

The need for COSAR services and community commitments are increasing year-over-year. Along with that are requirements to increase COSAR membership and equipment to keep up with community needs. COSAR is looking for a new facility in order to maintain the professional community commitment and search and rescue capabilities they have been providing since 1954.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Governance and Services Committee, receives for information, the Central Okanagan Search and Rescue's Building Needs Assessment Report.

Respectfully Submitted:



David Komaike  
Director of Engineering Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Corie Griffiths  
Director of Corporate Services

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**Implications of Recommendation:**

Organizational: COSAR and the Regional Rescue Program work cooperatively to provide first responders and technical rescue service within a defined scope.

Financial: The RDCO provides a grant to COSAR to assist with operational needs.

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**Background:**

Central Okanagan Search and Rescue (COSAR) made a presentation to the Regional Board in May 2019, outlining the services they provide to the surrounding communities. In summary:

- Registered non-profit organization.
- Runs on volunteers – 52 members, are not paid for their service.
- One of 80 SAR groups. Fifth busiest in the province.
- Responds to over 60 tasks per year, 10,000+ hours training, admin, logistics, services equipment, fundraising and community service.

COSAR offers the following services to support Search and Rescue operations:

- Urban/Wilderness Reach
- Sustained Marine/Underwater Search
- Tracking
- Wilderness Rope Rescue (Search Access and Recovery)
- Basic First Aid
- Civil Emergency Logistical Support
- Access to H.E.T.S. Response (Helicopter)

COSAR works closely with the RDCO – Technical Rescue Program (via the Regional Rescue Program) whereby both groups use similar equipment and trained personnel. The main difference between the two programs relate to the speed and duration of any response.

- The Technical Rescue Program is staffed largely by fulltime emergency responders and is able to respond rapidly to any event, particularly when the location of the victim is known or easily determined.

- COSAR is able to provide a sustained response and access a much broader area within remote regions or when the victim location is remote or unknown. COSAR has access to additional provincial resources to support extraordinary activities.

### Financial Considerations:

COSAR currently occupies the former City of Kelowna – Ellison Fire Station located at 4680 Old Vernon Road. The old two-bay Firehall and Quonset hut are leased to the RDCO and subleased to COSAR for \$1.00.

The RDCO provides COSAR with an operating grant for approximately \$25,000 per year (less utilities). Improvements and repairs to the building fall to the lease holder.

COSAR receives Provincial funding for specific equipment and training. These funds cannot be directed towards facilities.

### Organizational Issues:

The British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) provides a framework for a standardized emergency response in British Columbia and ensures a coordinated and organized response to all emergencies, especially when multiple agencies are involved.

BCERMS outlines the concept of a ‘lead agency’ and supporting agencies’ depending on the type of event:

Incident Type	Regional Rescue Program Role	COSAR Role
<b>Rope Rescue</b>	Lead Agency – rapid response, search and rescue of victims where their location is known or can be estimated	Support Agency – deployed when sustained action response, additional resources required or victim location cannot be quickly determined. Transition to lead role as determined by incident commander.
<b>Swift Water Rescue</b>	Lead Agency – rapid response, search and rescue of victims where their location is known or can be estimated	Support Agency – deployed when sustained action response, additional resources required or victim location cannot be quickly determined. Transition to lead role as determined by incident commander.
<b>Marine Rescue</b> (Okanagan, Wood, Duck and Kalamalka Lakes)	Lead Agency – rapid response, search and rescue of victims during early stages of response.	Support Agency – deployed during extended search, additional resources required or specialty equipment required. Transition to lead role as determined by incident commander.

<b>Marine Rescue</b> (All other minor lakes)	No Response	Lead Agency – search and search of victims, extended search or specialty equipment required under the direction of the RCMP.
<b>Missing Person</b>	Support Agency – Standby to provide assistance (rescue) as required. Emergency Program (EOC) may provide site support as requested.	Lead Agency – coordinate and execute the search for missing persons under the direction of the RCMP.
<b>Confined Space Rescue</b>	Lead Agency – rapid response, search and rescue of victims during early stages of response.	No Response – available for support as directed by the RCMP.
<b>Ice Rescue</b>	Lead Agency – rapid response, search and rescue of victims during early stages of response	No Response – available for support as directed by the RCMP.

Attachment(s): COSAR Building Needs Assessment