

Strathcona County 2018 Parkade Incident

After Action Review: Final Report
December 10, 2019



iStrategic Advisors Inc.
Involvement, Ideas and Innovation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following stakeholders are acknowledged for sharing their frank and constructive perspectives toward this After Action Review. The following is a summary of the groups of interviewees and contributors to this report.

- Mayor and Councillors
- County Executive Team
- County Departments including Gallery@501 directly impacted and relocated for recovery
- County Departments including Emergency Management Program staff indirectly impacted and supporting recovery
- County Incident Management Team (in the Emergency Operations Centre)
- County Recovery Team
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment staff
- Strathcona County Library staff
- Vicky's Bistro and Wine Bar owners

ACRONYMS

The following are acronyms contained within this report:

AAR	After Action Review
BCM	Business Continuity Management
BCP	Business Continuity Plan (also known as Business Continuity Planning)
CC/CH	Community Centre/Community Hall
CCP	Crisis Communications Plan
DEM	Director Emergency Management
DDEM	Deputy Director Emergency Management
DOC	Department Operations Centre
EAC	Emergency Advisory Committee
ECC	Emergency Communications Centre (also known as the 9-1-1 PSAP)
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ESS	Emergency Social Services
ESSP	Emergency Social Services Plan
IAP	Incident Action Plan
ICS	Incident Command System
ICP	Incident Command Post
IMT	Incident Management Team
IT	Information Technology
JIC	Joint Information Centre
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
PIO	Public Information Officer (also known as Information Officer or IO)
PSAP	Public Safety Access Point
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RMWB	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
SC Alerts	Strathcona County Alerting System
SCEMA	Strathcona County Emergency Management Agency
SCES	Strathcona County Emergency Services
SCEMA	Strathcona County Emergency Management Agency

1. INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the After Action Review (AAR) of the Strathcona County (County) Parkade Incident.

An AAR is a leading practice (ICS Canada, 2019) activity completed by an organization (and/or a community) following a major incident. This was a major incident at the Strathcona Community Centre and County Hall (CC/CH) complex.

An independent consulting team from iStrategic Advisors Inc. (iStrategic) was contracted by the County to conduct an impartial examination of the response and recovery to the Parkade Incident. The AAR project began in June 2019 and was completed in December 2019. The completion of the AAR over this period is not atypical from an industry perspective.

This examination follows the timeline from the initial response at 06:18 p.m. on November 6, 2018 through to May 8, 2019 and the final recovery efforts and re-entry to the Community Centre and the Parkade.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the review is to identify lessons from the Parkade Incident toward improvements of Strathcona County Emergency Management including the response and recovery from major incidents.

An AAR answers three questions regarding those lessons:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- What actions are needed?

The scope of this project included a review of the following overall response and recovery elements for the Parkade Incident:

- information flow and communications;
- the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC);
- business continuity planning and management; and
- the recovery of and re-entry to the CC/CH.

The following was out-of-scope and not addressed in this report:

- Strathcona County Emergency Services (SCES) operational response;
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) operational response and investigation;
- security and facilities review in the County;
- legal, insurance, or financial analysis related to the incident; and

- public engagement.

Methodology

Three evaluation methods were used to complete the review:

- interviews;
- document review; and
- scan of other After Action Reviews.

The interviews included over 75 stakeholders (see Appendix A) in over 50 individual or group interview sessions. Before the interviews, interviewees were given a list of broad and open-ended questions about response and recovery to prompt their thinking and frame the conversation. Individual responses were kept confidential.

The document review (see Appendix B) included a review of County emergency management-related policies and procedures, plans, and incident management guidelines. Additionally, a review was completed of documentation resulting directly from the Parkade Incident - both from the Incident Management Team (IMT) in the EOC and by the Recovery Team.

The document review also considered various aspects of County plans (e.g., Municipal Emergency Management Plan or MEMP) and plan resources (e.g., EOC Guide) including how current and/or complete they were. Additionally, the document review looked at the readiness (i.e., awareness, education, training, and exercising) by the County for execution of the plans.

The scan of lessons from other AARs (see Appendix C) included those prepared by the County from past incidents and a scan of other relevant AARs across North America.

Finally, a wide-set of industry leading emergency management standards, guidelines, and professional practices (see Appendix D) were considered to support the analyses and recommendations.

This report is presented in the following sections:

- Executive Summary
- Incident Timeline
- Incident Overview
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Conclusions
- Appendices

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 6, 2018 at approximately 6:20 p.m., there was an explosion on the 2nd level of the underground parkade of the Strathcona County Community Centre – an event that shook the community.



Source: Unknown

County Emergency Services, County Enforcement Services, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had an extensive number of first responder resources at the scene. Within an hour of the incident, an initial Incident Management Team assembled at an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Fire Station One.

A second explosion occurred at approximately 7:52 p.m., an exacerbating moment as it drastically shifted the approach by everyone including the tactical response of the RCMP.

What was first believed to be a fire incident was subsequently determined to be a crime scene. As such, the RCMP assumed authority for the incident and immediate area.

The incident was fluid and active following the two explosions. Simply stated no one could with full assurances state “the community was safe” until all appropriate emergency response and critical investigative actions could be completed. This was a complex and challenging environment as almost everyone had more questions than facts.

This incident required a prioritized focus on life safety - first responders and the public, stabilization of the incident including fire suppression, and a tactical armed response by the RCMP.

By the next day, November 7, 2018, the County had a full Incident Management Team (IMT) at the EOC and was continuing its response and initiating recovery of municipal services. The County continued to communicate with internal and external stakeholders, community partners, and residents in the coming days and months.

As a result of the incident over 600 County staff were displaced to alternate locations in the days following – some staff working from home, others at alternate County facilities, and others in leased spaces. In addition, tenants were disrupted including a large number of library staff and those involved in the operations of Vicky’s Bistro and Wine Bar.

In time, the RCMP released the complex back to the County in several phases – first, the County Hall, then the Community Centre, and finally the parkade. The County undertook extensive steps to assess the structural and environmental state of the complex prior to initiating remediation and restoration of all areas of the Community Centre/County Hall (CC/CH). Where and when safe, County staff were returned to their normal working areas, some after months in various recovery locations where municipal services were being maintained.

While most residents and businesses in the County were not displaced nor directly impacted by the Parkade Incident, the impact was a change moment for the community. Similar to the 2017 van attack in the City of Edmonton, such incidents shake the innocence of our communities.

Over six (6) months and \$14 Million later, on May 8, 2019, the Parkade and Strathcona County Library re-opened, signifying the completion of the recovery and restoration activities, a return to “normalcy”, and a “new normal” for the County.



Source: Strathcona County

In June 2019, based on Council’s direction to conduct an external review of the County’s response to and recovery from the incident, an After Action Review (AAR) was initiated.

The review was to answer three questions:

- What went well?
- What could be improved?
- What actions are needed?

Context

The continuum of emergency management (Figure 2.1; see a larger image in Appendix F) is often referred to as the four pillars of emergency management¹.

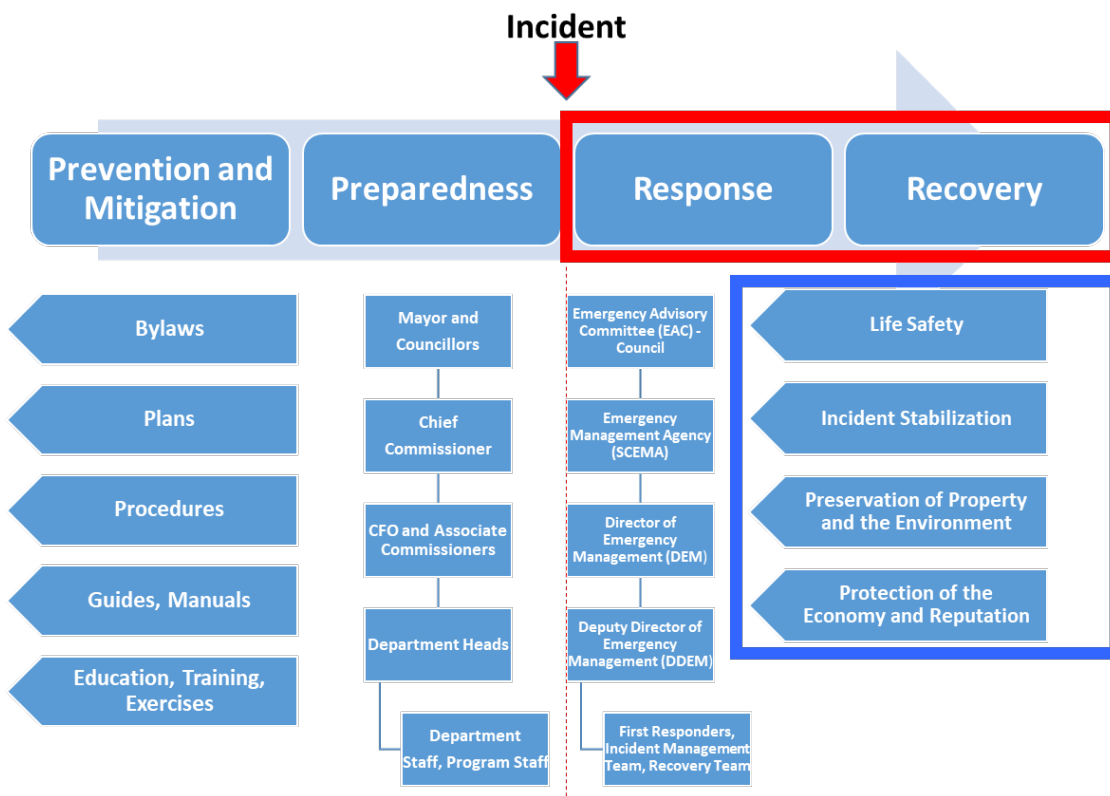


Figure 2.1 Four Pillars of Emergency Management (iStrategic)

¹ Four Pillars of Emergency Management, Public Safety Canada, 2016

The four pillars of emergency management and key components of the Strathcona County Emergency Management are illustrated above.

Prevention/mitigation and preparedness are those activities completed before and after an incident, while response and recovery (see Figure 2.1 and items in red border) are activities performed during the incident.

Effective and efficient response and recovery to a major incident requires addressing the problems caused by that incident; and further, requires preparation in the form of plans and readiness (i.e., education, training, and exercises) before an incident.

Readiness (Merriam-Webster, 2019)

The state of being fully prepared for something.

The more complete and user-friendly plans are, and the readiness of teams – the more optimal response and recovery will be.

The priorities (see Figure 2.1 and items in blue border) of incident management are life safety, incident stabilization, preservation of property and the environment, and other stakeholder interests such as the economy and the reputation of the community. These priorities are essential to the decisions and actions of teams.

The results of the AAR, based on interviews with over 75 people, an extensive review of documentation, and an assessment of what was done relative to leading practices in emergency management, identified four key areas or themes where opportunities for improvement exist. These themes are:

- Plans and readiness;
- Incident management;
- Crisis communications; and
- Business Continuity.

Plans and readiness must be completed in the first two phases of the continuum. Plans and readiness require everyone from Council through to front-line staff, to know the plan and to perform their roles and responsibilities. Council is responsible for

Incident (NFPA, 2019)

An event that has the potential to cause interruption, disruption, loss, emergency, crisis, disaster, or catastrophe.

establishing the County Emergency Management Bylaw (Appendix E) that define how the County will respond to emergencies. Administration is responsible for developing the plans, procedures, guides and manuals that will be used and implemented in the event of an incident as well as providing the education, training, and exercises to ensure an appropriate state of readiness.

Incident management occurs in the response and recovery phases of the above continuum. The organizational structure, roles and responsibilities are different during an incident than for day-to-day management of the County. The structure, roles, responsibilities, and processes for incident management, including business continuity, must be prepared and validated in advance of an incident. The incident management process focuses on incident problems and incident objectives, all leading to results focused on those problems – in this case an explosion, fire, smoke and disruption of municipal services leading to response and recovery. Staff on incident management teams are responsible for executing the plans during crisis.

Crisis (Strathcona County, 2019)

An adverse incident, or series of events, that has the potential to seriously impact Strathcona County's residents and/or staff.

Crisis communications also occurs in the response and recovery phases. This communication often begins with an alarm or warning (e.g., Emergency Communications Centre or 9-1-1 or Public Safety Access Point (PSAP)) through to alerting or notification and escalation to key incident management and Emergency Management Agency personnel. Ultimately, that alerting and notification must flow to identified stakeholders, both internal and external. This crisis communication must continue through all aspects of an incident.

Business Continuity (or Municipal Continuity) may begin in the response phase and is the focus of the recovery phase. Continuity (ISO 22301, 2017) refers to the ability of an organization or community to resume or have continuity of services, especially critical services, during a disruption or loss. Continuity planning includes the development of continuity strategies for a variety of recovery scenarios, including people, information and technology, facility, supply chain or major assets and infrastructure.

This incident clearly impacted facilities and people. Staff on business continuity teams are responsible for executing the plans.

The following illustration (Figure 2.2; see larger image Appendix G) illustrates the importance of plans, community leadership or governance, and incident management for effective and efficient Emergency Management in the County².

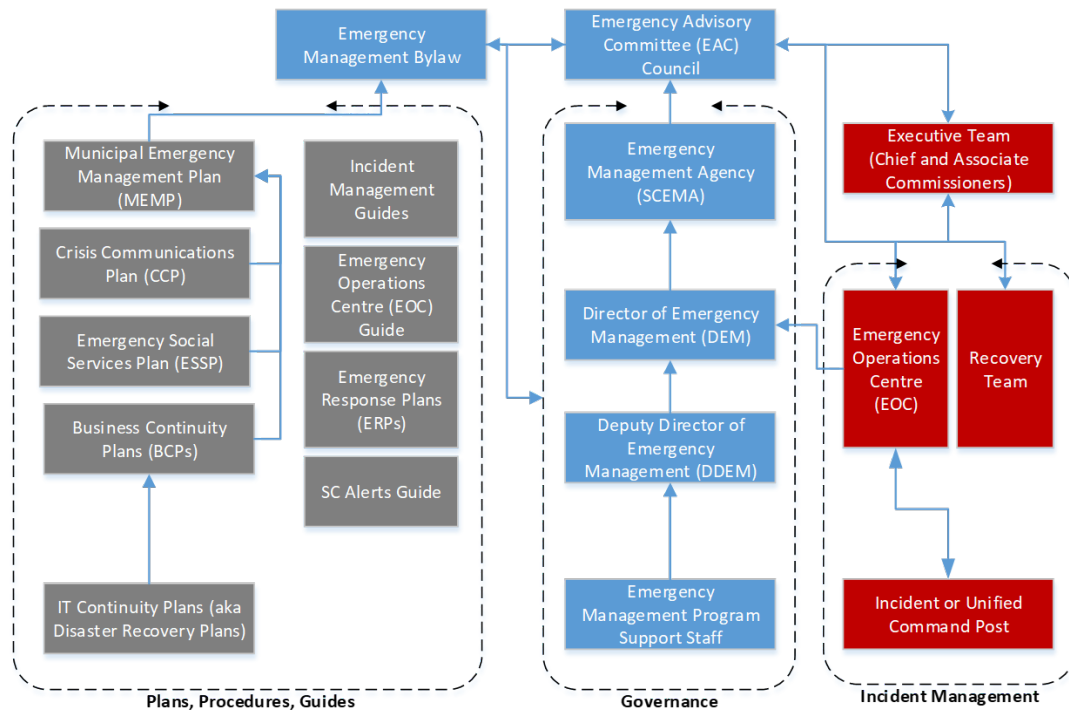


Figure 2.2: Emergency Management Linkages (iStrategic)

The County Emergency Management Bylaw frames the County Emergency Management responsibilities. The Bylaw then guides the requirements for plans, procedures, guides and readiness including education, training, and exercises.

The Bylaw also defines the Emergency Advisory Committee (EAC), the Emergency Management Agency (EMA), the Director of Emergency Management (DEM), and the Deputy Director of Emergency Management (DDEM) each play integral roles in supporting the County Emergency Management Program³ and supporting the consequences of incidents.

² Governance relationships as per Strathcona County Emergency Management Bylaw and Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) as of 2018

³ Program means a plan of action aimed at accomplishing a clear business objective, with details on what work is to be done, by whom, when, and what means or resources will be used, Business Dictionary, 2019

When incidents occur, especially major incident, an IMT and/or a Recovery Team, comprised of County staff from across various Departments, assemble in the EOC to support and coordinate the response and recovery actions by first responders and recovery teams at a scene and or recovery locations.

Findings

The following were key strengths of the response and recovery to the Parkade Incident.



Figure 2.3: “What went well”

- First and most importantly, the County and the RCMP ensured the safety (e.g., immediate evacuations) of residents, County staff, and County Council within the CC/CH. Despite some 600+ staff being relocated to alternate work areas, the focus on safety was demonstrated during the response and recovery, including re-entry to the CC/CH.
- Second, the County remained in full control and management of all municipal services and operations during the chaos of the initial hours and days of this

crisis incident. Unlike a major wildfire or a flood, often visible to many, this incident was essentially enclosed within the CC/CH. This contributed to the uncertainty by first responders – fire, emergency medical services, enforcement services, police - and the public.

- Third, the County ensured the early recovery and continuing provision of critical municipal functions and services. The collective efforts of many within the County ensured this major incident would not have cascading or compounding problems for the community.
- Fourth, the County worked with a broad set of community partners (e.g., RCMP, School Boards, Alberta Health Services, Library) and organizations (e.g., Heartland Alliance Church) toward the care and support of staff and citizens. Those efforts extended over the period of recovery, and continue today.
- Fifth, The County internal and external crisis communications following the first day.

The following are the key areas for improvement.



Figure 2.4: “What could be improved”

Plans and Readiness

The County has been a regional leader in the planning, education and training for emergency management and by definition incident management. Those investments have included many activities with industrial and other community partner organizations. Key findings include:

- The County Emergency Management Bylaw is substantive and clear as to County responsibilities related to emergency management.
- As members of the EAC, Council's role and responsibility for emergency management emphasizes their review and advice on the status of plans and programs on an annual basis. In addition, the EAC performs an integral role in the declaration of a state of local emergency. Further education, training, and exercises can reinforce the importance of the EAC role.
- The County MEMP has an appropriate description, process and requirements defined for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. However, the MEMP was not well integrated with Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), the Information Technology (IT) Continuity Plans (also known as Disaster Recovery Plans), the Emergency Social Services Plan (ESSP), and the Crisis Communications Plan (CCP). Additionally, there is no current community-wide hazard risk vulnerability assessment (HRVA) to assist decision-makers in identifying scenarios that need to be planned and, ideally, trained for.
- Education, training, and exercises of members of the IMT was insufficient and resulted in some persons not prepared for their role on the IMT. As well, the pre-established IMT rosters were not used to fill the IMT positions. Planning and exercises should be conducted in a more integrated and multi-jurisdictional manner within the community.

Incident Management

The County incident management structures and processes are documented in various guides and tools. Key findings include:

- There was no clear Unified Command at the Incident Command Post, nor was Unified Command used in the EOC. Unified Command is intended to optimize incident management and crisis communications when more than one jurisdiction having authority is involved.
- The EOC, which requires an organized and managed environment, had to contend with a large number of people not in traditional IMT roles. This resulted in some churn and confusion in the EOC.
- The MEMP states that if a Recovery Task Force is to be implemented that it will work through the Strathcona County Emergency Management Agency (SCEMA). This was not the case for this Incident. If a Recovery Task Force or Team is to be established, it should have a well identified structure and reporting relationship defined in advance of an incident.

Crisis Communications

While the County has an effective corporate communications capability, there is a need for a more integrated community approach to crisis communications and related plans.

This is especially true with response partners such as the RCMP – whether Unified Command is implemented or not. Key findings include:

- Many on Council, the Executive Team and the Senior Management Team received notification about the incident from a wide set of sources (e.g., social media, phone calls, emails, text). In some cases, that notification was not received until several hours into the incident.
- SC Alerts was not used to notify the IMT, members of the Senior Leadership Team, nor Executive Team; it was used for a single communication broadcast to County staff and Council.
- The Public Information Officer (PIO) and the EOC Director had a holding message for release to the public within hours of the Parkade Incident. They held on to that message waiting on coordination with the RCMP; rather, they should have released a County focused message to the public at an earlier point demonstrating the County was responding, was working with the RCMP, and would follow-up in the hours to come.
- Social media serves a purpose on a day to day basis and during major incidents. However, the approach to the highly variable and at times inconsistent or invalid information means the use of this media channel needs to be appropriately used by all, especially during crises.

Business Continuity

The County was fortunate to have an abundance of County and non-County facilities available for recovery of municipal services disrupted due to the incident. Critical municipal functions impacted were maintained throughout the incident, even if at modified levels of service (e.g., building inspections). Key findings include:

- Most of the County BCPs were not complete, comprehensive, or up-to-date. There was no evidence of structured, regular training and exercises of these continuity plans. This resulted in some churn within the EOC and delays in recovery actions.
- The integration of information technology continuity with prioritized business functions was not well documented.
- The primary recovery location in Ardrossan was determined to not be an effective strategy for this incident. This required significant planning within the Emergency Operations Centre to identify recovery locations and relocate services.

Going forward, a hazard or threat may not be one of a facility nature or origin. Rather, if the incident consequences were of a different nature (e.g., industrial explosion, loss of data and technology, ransomware), the community may be facing a more direct impact to critical municipal functions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed actions for consideration by the County.

1. Review the Emergency Management Program governance, roles, responsibilities, relationships, reporting, continuous improvement, and program priority setting to ensure legislative, Bylaw, and other corporate requirements are met. Based on that review, consider program changes.
 - a. Review and reinforce the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Advisory Committee (EAC) and the Strathcona County Emergency Management Agency (SCEMA) to optimize their important roles during major incidents including during response and recovery phases.
 - b. Adopt industry-leading practices (e.g., CSA Z1600, ISO 22301) for emergency management, business continuity and crisis management to guide the Emergency Management Program.
 - c. Increase annual and on-going education, training and exercises to ensure all Emergency Management related plans can be effectively executed by team members and supported by the SCEMA and the EAC.
 - d. Optimize the compilation of all incident information into a Final Incident Package ensuring consideration of privacy, legal, and retention requirements.
2. Establish the necessary Incident Management Team (IMT) activation and command protocols, and ensure the primary and secondary Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) have the necessary tools and technology.
 - a. Utilize existing IMT rosters as the basis for assignment to the EOC to ensure the highest level of incident management can be sustained through response and recovery phases.
 - b. Engage with other agencies (e.g., RCMP) toward establishing roles and responsibilities in major incidents including the use of Unified Command in an EOC and at Incident Command Posts (ICPs).
3. Enhance the Crisis Communication Plan (CCP) including crisis communications roles, responsibilities, and relationships to ensure known protocols support timely communication internally and externally during an incident.
 - a. Clarify the role and responsibilities of the Public Information Officer (PIO) versus Corporate Communications in support of the EOC and a Recovery Team.
 - b. Ensure the use of SC Alerts as the primary consideration for alerting, notifying, and escalating for major incidents for identified stakeholders.

4. Review, update, and maintain all emergency management related plans. Implement comprehensive Business Continuity Planning (BCP) within the Emergency Management Program including annual plan development, plan review, and plan maintenance supported by education, training, and exercises.
 - a. Conduct regular and standardized risk assessment and business impact analysis across all County Departments to ensure a single Executive Team approved list of critical business functions with pre-defined continuity requirements (e.g., Information Technology (IT) Continuity, Facility Continuity).

Conclusion

Strathcona County acted on the priorities and problems of the Parkade Incident, as they emerged and became known.

Life safety including the life safety and wellness of first responders, staff, tenants, and the community at large were front and center for the County through the duration of the incident including response and recovery (i.e., restoration and re-entry).

Stabilization of the incident was clearly one of the most challenging aspects of this incident. Simply stated, until the County and RCMP were completely satisfied about the extent and impact of the incident it could not be declared “safe or under control”.

Ultimately, the County focused on maintaining critical municipal services and worked efficiently and effectively toward the recovery of the Community Centre and County Hall. The response and recovery effort would last six (6) months.

Crisis communications is integral to the response and recovery of any incident. Following some initial challenges related to the stabilization of the scene and identification of all of the hazards and threats, the County provided ongoing internal and external crisis communications in the days, weeks, and months following November 6, 2018.

This journey was not without its challenges. The County should learn the lessons, from this and past incidents, and where appropriate advance Emergency Management - for the benefit of the County and its residents and businesses.

3. INCIDENT TIMELINE

This section provides a summary of key events related to the Parkade Incident.

Initial Events Timeline

The following provides the initial events timeline (see graphic illustration in Appendix H) from November 6, 2018 through November 20, 2018. The initial events include initial response and recovery actions along with key crisis communications in the form of media statements.

The following lists the date and approximate time (e.g., 6:00 pm), where known, for some initial events:

Day	Event
Nov. 6, 2018	A first explosion in the Community Centre at ~6:17 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	County Emergency Services Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) receives 9-1-1 call(s), fire/EMS dispatched within a minute at ~6:18 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	ECC receives information of security guard on site and evacuation underway at ~6:23 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	County first responding fire unit(s) on scene; additional fire and command units dispatched shortly thereafter at ~6:24 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	County EMS dispatched; RCMP arrived on scene shortly thereafter; Gas utility dispatched at ~6:24 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	Fire Chief/Director of Emergency Management (DEM) identifies initial Incident Management Team and first alternate EOC at Station #1; completed the initial incident assessment at ~7:00 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	Second explosion occurs in the parkade at ~7:52 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	10:00 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	First formal media statement issued by the County regarding closure of the Community Centre at ~11:30 p.m.
Nov. 7, 2018	Alternate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) established at Fire Station #6; the IMT and others including Council and Executive attend briefings in the morning and in the following weeks; subsequent briefings with Council at Elk Island Public School location at ~07:00 a.m.
Nov. 7, 2018	Relocation of key municipal functions displaced from the CC/CH to various locations; recovery underway
Nov. 10, 2018	Site Security Plan prepared
Nov. 13, 2018	Vehicle Removal plan prepared; coincide with RCMP releasing all CC/CH areas to the County
Nov. 16, 2018	Parking Plan and Staff Re-entry Plan prepared
Nov. 19, 2018	Staff Entry to WSP Plan prepared; the EOC initiates transfer of the incident to a Recovery Team; all structural and environmental assessments completed
Nov. 20, 2018	Activation of a Recovery Team to lead remaining activities for recovery including remediation, restoration and re-entry
Nov. 20, 2018	Deactivation of the EOC

Table 3.1: Initial Events List

Major Events Timeline

The following provides the major events timeline (see graphic illustration in Appendix H) from November 6, 2018 through May 8, 2019. The major events include the start of the incident, recovery including remediation, restoration, and re-entry. The re-entry includes Council, Executive, County employees, and public access.

The following lists the date and approximate time (e.g., 6:00 pm), where known, for some major events:

Day	Event
Nov. 6, 2018	A first explosion (later identified as on Parkade Level 2) in the Community Centre at ~6:17 p.m.
Nov. 6, 2018	Initial Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) opened at Fire Station #1 at ~7:00 p.m.
Nov. 7, 2018	Secondary EOC opened at Fire Station #6; response and recovery underway including relocation of municipal services disrupted at CC/CH at ~07:00 a.m.
Nov. 15, 2018	RCMP released remaining areas of the Community Centre and Parkade back to the County
Nov. 20, 2018	Re-entry of 440+ staff to County Hall
Nov. 21, 2018	Public access to the County Hall
Nov. 28, 2018	Relocation of Council from temporary space at School Board to County Hall Main Floor
Dec. 17, 2018	Re-entry of more displaced staff to the Community Centre
Dec. 20, 2018	Public access to specific areas of the Community Centre
Jan. 15, 2019	Re-entry of Council and 200+ staff to the Community Centre; additional Public access except Library and Parkade
Feb. 12, 2019	Council Chambers re-opened along with Agora Centre
May 8, 2019	Re-opening of the Library and Parkade including public access; the incident is formally over

Table 3.2: Major Events List

In addition, the following are a few key events related to crisis communications by the RCMP:

Day	Event
Nov. 6, 2018	RCMP release statement indicating emergency personnel on scene at Community Centre and roads in area are blocked off
Nov. 7, 2018	RCMP provide update; scene examination underway
Nov. 8, 2018	RCMP identify suspect in explosion
Nov. 10, 2018	RCMP had not determined a motive but did identify the deceased suspect died of self-inflicted injury; state importance that public should not speculate; indicated forensic examination phase began on Nov 9
Sep 17, 2019	RCMP reveal material used in the explosion

Table 3.3: Other Crisis Communications

4. INCIDENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a narrative summary of the Parkade Incident.

Early Minutes

On the chilly evening of November 6, 2018, many people at the Community Centre and County Hall (CC/CH) were completing their day while others were engaged in various activities and programs.

The Council meeting that day ended earlier than expected, a rare relief for some of the County leadership who had ventured home. There were also many County staff and members of Council completing last minute duties in the CC/CH.

The CC/CH had patrons at the Library, attendees to an Opioid display and presentation in the foyer outside the library, participants in Gallery@501 program areas, and customers in Vicky's Bistro and Wine Bar - all enjoying the community complex.

Then an explosion at or about 6:17 p.m., a shaking of the complex, and fire alarms. Many people had just left the parkade, some were in the area of the parkade, and others were on their way to the parkade.

The early moments of the incident included fire, heat, smoke, alarms, activation of sprinkler systems, evacuations, and finding a person who was later identified as the suspect in the explosions, with a self-inflicted fatal injury. It was later determined this was the first of two explosions, each bringing blast impacts. The explosions occurred on Level 2 of the underground parkade. The suspect was also found on the second level of the parkade.

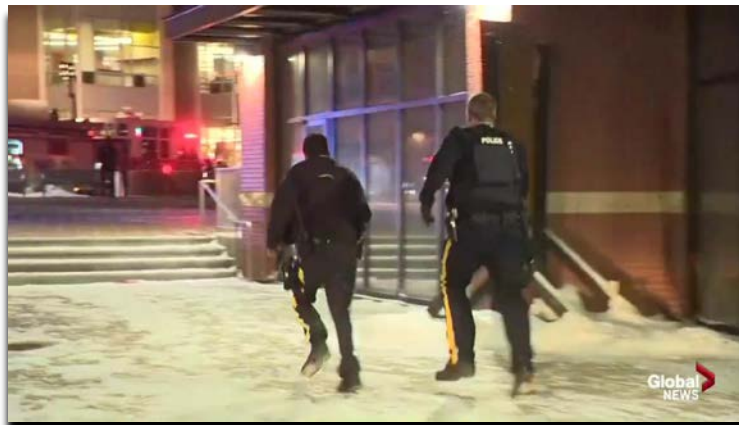
The Response

The response included the following major activities:

- emergency evacuations;
- assembly at designated muster points or other safe locations;
- initial crisis communications (i.e., alerting, notifications, and escalation);
- emergency response by fire/EMS (emergency medical services), enforcement services, and the RCMP;
- assembly of the Incident Management Team (IMT) at an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC); and
- on-going incident management at the EOC.

The explosion triggered the fire alarm and fire protection systems and led to multiple calls to the 9-1-1 service operated by SCES out of Fire Station One. Fire crews from Fire

Stations Six, Five and One were on scene within minutes of the first call. The RCMP were closely behind Fire/EMS.



Source: Global News

This was a complex and challenging environment as everyone had more questions than facts. This incident required a prioritized focus on life safety (i.e., for first responders and the public) and the stabilization of the incident (e.g., fire suppression and a tactical armed response by the RCMP).

Incident Stabilization

The act of establishing command, setting objectives, strategies, and tactics as well as initiating actions.

Due to the underground location of the explosion, no one knew exactly what was happening in the early moments of this incident. The unknown circumstances of the incident resulted in a number of additional emergency procedures (e.g., senior home evacuation) in the area, all out of an abundance of precaution.

Following the initial response there were notifications and escalations to County Emergency Management, County Executive Team, County Departmental Leadership, and Council.

The Fire/EMS Incident Command and the RCMP Incident Command were in contact with the Director of Emergency Management (DEM) and key members of the County Executive Team. An informal activation of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) saw team members of an initial Incident Management Team (IMT) establish a

temporary and alternate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Fire Station One. This initial EOC was required given the inability to access the primary EOC in County Hall.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

A team on-scene and/or at an Emergency Operations Centre to lead the response and recovery for an incident.

The initial IMT was comprised of the Director of Emergency Management (DEM) and members from Occupational Health and Safety, Facilities, Human Resources, Corporate Communications, and Transportation/Agriculture Services. These members conducted an initial and informal incident assessment. The RCMP also contacted members of the Executive Team and the DEM.

A second explosion occurred at or about 7:52 p.m., verified later to be the result of the fire and overheating of a vehicle gas tank, on Level 2 of the Parkade, near the initial incident.

The incident was fluid and active following the two explosions. Simply stated, no one could, with full assurances, state “the community was safe” until all appropriate emergency response and critical investigative actions were completed.

An RCMP Emergency Response Team and the Explosive Disposal Unit were also dispatched to the scene. This was a crime scene and as such the RCMP had the authority for the incident and immediate area.



Source: Strathcona County

Access to some businesses were closed to allow the investigation a safe area to proceed based on the interests of public safety.



Source: Unknown

During the initial hours, the County communicated directly with the RCMP and School Boards. Within hours, school boards were thinking about school the next day and given the incident area, schools were closed through to the following Monday.

With the investigation by the RCMP, including its Major Crimes Unit, it was necessary that validated information be communicated through designated communication channels, to appropriate individuals, when appropriate. This was a point of frustration for some, including the County.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

A location from which centralized emergency management support and coordination can be performed. Also known as an Emergency Coordination Centre.

The initial EOC was transitioned to Fire Station Six on the morning of November 7, 2018. From this alternate or secondary EOC, a full Incident Management Team led the management of the ongoing response and initial recovery of municipal functions through to November 20, 2018.

The Recovery

Recovery included the following major activities:

- initial relocation of key municipal services and people to other facilities and recovery locations;
- assignment of some County staff to work from home;
- on-going relocation of services and County staff;
- phased remediation and restoration of the County Hall and then the Community Centre; and
- staged re-entry, first to the County Hall, and second to areas in the Community Centre, as the remediation and restoration work progressed.

Initial recovery began in the EOC. Some of the initial municipal services recovery was spontaneous as County departments relocated to other facilities, while some were coordinated through the EOC. By November 19, 2018 a Recovery Team or Business Restoration Team was established and a hand-off to that team from the EOC Director was completed on November 20, 2018. At this time, the EOC was deactivated.

The Recovery Team became the primary entity for management of the on-going recovery and restoration of the CC/CH. One of the early challenges was the numerous personal vehicles, and in some cases personal property (e.g., passports), still in the CC/CH that could not be accessed immediately. Other recovery challenges were parking and accessibility issues in recovery locations.



Source: Strathcona County

Restoration required a wide set of complex activities including structural and safety assessments, elevator inspections, air testing, insulation replacement, many repairs,

painting, exhaustive cleaning, decontamination, and simple things like the care of plants and fish.

Over 600 staff were displaced from the CC/CH – some assigned to work from home, others (~140) working from a wide set of initial recovery locations including other County Department facilities and community organizations. In total over 900 staff were impacted directly or indirectly.

The initial re-entry of staff began on November 20, 2018 with the return of 400+ staff to the County Hall. Public access to the County Hall began on November 21, 2018 – a key recovery point. The re-entry of staff to the County Hall ensured the readiness of municipal services prior to public access to the building.



Source: Unknown

As improved recovery locations were identified, some staff were relocated to larger leased spaces in late November 2018. By then, the County understood the restoration costs for the CC/CH and the Parkade were in the order of \$14 Million. At the peak of restoration, there were over 100 contractors assisting the County. The County worked closely with its insurer, adjusters, and the restoration major contractor.



Source: Strathcona County

By mid-December 2018, staff and others (~200) returned to the Community Centre. Mayor and Councillors returned by mid-January 2019. Restoration continued, followed by re-entry to normal workspaces – all key municipal services continued. On May 8, 2019 with the opening of the parkade and the library, the incident came to a formal close.



Source: Strathcona County

The Impacts on the Community

Major incidents, by their very nature result in confusion, uncertainty, pain, and at times, death.

The following identifies the community of stakeholders impacted by the Parkade Incident.

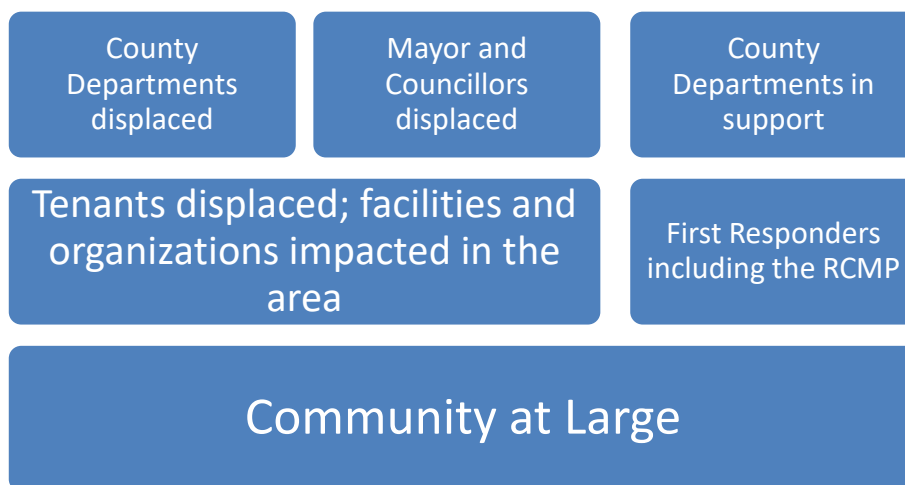


Figure 4.1: Community Impacted (iStrategic)

This AAR recognizes this incident impacted services, people and the CC/CH facility. The impacts included public concern and in some cases fear, Council and staff concerns for safety, loss and disruption of the Community Centre and County Hall for a period of time, disruption to community organizations and businesses including the impacts on the Library and Vicky's Bistro and Wine Bar.

County Family and Community Services saw an increase in needs. County staff experienced the trauma of the event. In response, the County communicated with the public and staff to provide the support and services needed.

Crisis Communications

It is important to contextualize this incident from a crisis communications perspective.

While residents and most businesses in the County were not displaced nor impacted by the Parkade Incident, the impact was a “change moment” for the community. Similar to the 2017 van attack in the City of Edmonton, such incidents shake the innocence of our communities.

This incident was for the most part “unseen” within the fire and smoke in the parkade. This reality of these unknowns is important, as they contributed directly to a situation of many not understanding what was happening. Unlike the 2011 Slave Lake Wildfires, the 2016 Horse Hills Wildfire in Fort McMurray, or the 2013 Southern Alberta Flooding

which were all visible to the public, the Parkade Incident specifics were not visible nor apparent to most including the first responders – fire/EMS, enforcement services, and police.

The County worked with the RCMP to identify known and validated information prior to releasing information to the public. Yes, the County and RCMP need to enhance their crisis communication protocols for ensuring timely release of such information.

Crisis Communications

Actions to inform and protect an individual, organization, or community resulting from a serious event that requires careful attention.

Having identified these challenges, the County could have issued a media statement a few hours earlier on the evening of November 6, 2018, even if only a holding statement advising the community that the County had a full response to the incident and was working closely with the RCMP toward stabilization of the incident. It is apparent the delay was due to the County who sought to coordinate with the RCMP the facts of the situation – facts that could not be fully stated on November 6.

In the end, such a statement would not have changed the response and recovery to the Parkade Incident. While an earlier media statement, as learned from other jurisdictions (see Appendix C, examples #7-9), may have contributed to awareness of the incident for the community, the County and RCMP were focused on public safety.

A worse scenario would have seen erroneous and misleading statements, conjectures or assumptions being released. This latter scenario is one we are all challenged with in an evolving society and environment, one with wide use of social media, where instantaneous answers are desired, and expected – possibly unrealistically.

Ultimately, staff and the public were kept safe. Precautionary actions included in-place sheltering or lock-downs at some facilities in the area, and closure of access to businesses in the surrounding area. In addition, the Elk Island Catholic School Board and Elk Island Public School board ensured the RCMP had room to conduct their extensive investigation at the County Hall and Community Centre by closing nearby schools and the school bus transfer location for several days.

Following November 6, 2018, and in the immediate days and weeks, the County demonstrated an effective crisis management approach including communication to the community through media statements, the County website, and with community partners.

During the duration of the incident the County issued 11 media releases and 12 media statements. Further, the County provided on-going communication to its staff throughout the crisis.

5. FINDINGS

This section provides the key findings based on four areas or themes identified in this review:

1. Plans and Readiness
2. Incident Management
3. Crisis Communication
4. Business Continuity

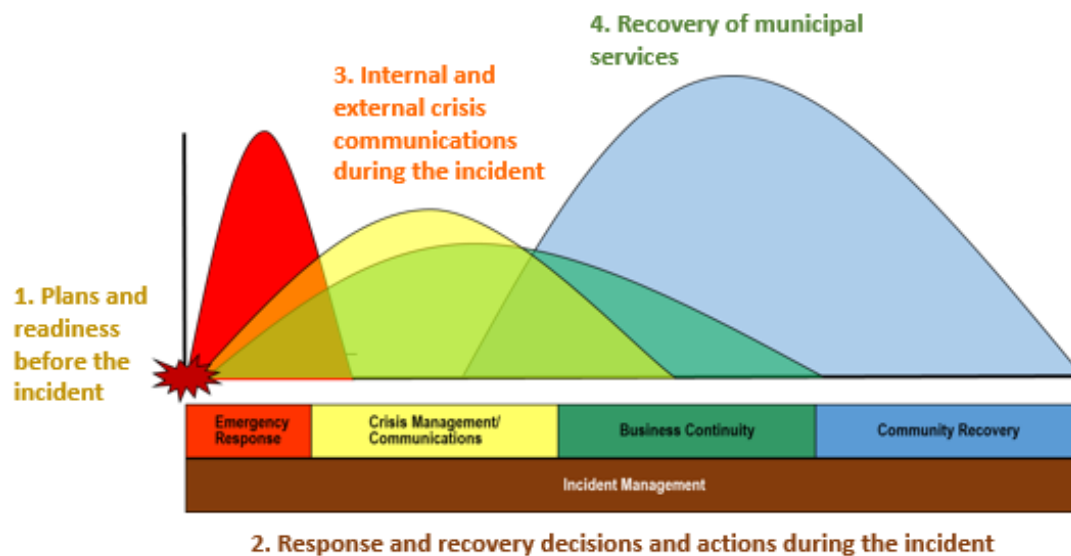


Figure 5.1: Major Themes (iStrategic)

Each theme is addressed based on four components:

- An introduction and background
- What we heard – essentially what went well and what needs to be improved
- What we learned – including document review and our analysis of lessons learned and leading practices

A consolidated set of recommendations are presented in a subsequent section.

Plans and Readiness

Introduction and Background

In Alberta, the *Emergency Management Act*, RSA 2000, c E-6-8 updated in November 2018, defines that Strathcona County is responsible for the direction and control of Strathcona County's emergency responses, and the preparation and approval of

emergency plans and programs. Also, the County must appoint an Emergency Advisory Committee (members of Council) and an Emergency Management Agency (responsible to Council) to conduct its responsibilities.

In addition, the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c M-26 provides for Council to establish By-laws and County Council has established the Strathcona County Emergency Management By-Law, 17-2018 (see Appendix E). One other item of legislation is the *Local Authorities Emergency Management Regulation* which defines expectations of municipalities in the areas of regional collaboration, training, emergency management plans and emergency management exercises. This regulation comes into effect January 1, 2020.

What We Heard

	Observations from Interviewees
What went well?	<p>The County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has many plans • has completed some education and training • has completed some exercises • has experienced several major incidents • has some very experienced members of the IMT, mostly in SCES • has pre-established IMT Rosters • has many facilities to support recovery relocations
What could be improved?	<p>The County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs enhanced awareness by Council of their roles and responsibilities; and the need for awareness and recognition by the EOC of Council and Executives roles • needs integrated planning with the RCMP, School Boards, other community and business organizations • needs consistent plan reviews and updates • needs comprehensive business continuity plans • needs ICS education and training for all IMT members • needs functional exercises involving all levels of the organization • should use the pre-established IMT rosters

What We Learned

Our document review revealed:

- inconsistent terminology and formats of plans
 - e.g., continuity versus resumption, critical business functions versus essential functions
- lack of industry aligned business continuity practices (with the exception of the Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) Business Continuity Plan (BCP))
- ineffective integration of plans especially MEMP with Business and IT Continuity Plans, Emergency Social Services Plan, and the Crisis Communications Plan

- a lack of an enterprise or corporate risk management program
- a lack of a current corporate level community wide hazard, risk, vulnerability assessment (HRVA)
- leading practice use of ICS principles and features
- wide set of ICS training including position specific for ICS roles
- a solid approach to IMT training, where it is applied
- completion of some AARs, primarily with SCES incidents

Our AAR review revealed:

- the 2011 AAR for the County support to the Slave Lake Wildfire identified the need for more education and exercises for DOCs and the EOC teams
- the County has not addressed some key past AAR recommendations including specifically Business Continuity

Our Analysis

The key findings are:

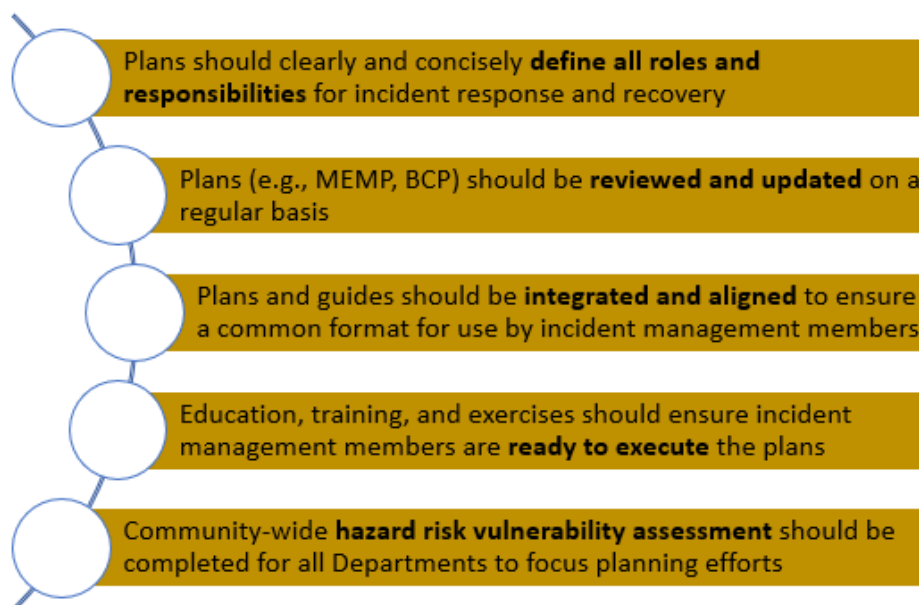


Figure 5.2: Plans and Readiness

Our analysis revealed:

- the County Emergency Management Bylaw is substantive and clear as to the County responsibility on many of the above observations and findings; however, it is not being implemented completely
- the MEMP has a reasonable description, process and expectations defined for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery; however, this plan must be updated with all other plans integrated to the MEMP
- plans, tools and processes exist; however, BCP, CCP plans were not current at the time of the Parkade Incident

- the lack of comprehensive education, training, and exercises contributed to challenges during the Parkade Incident
- good practice recommends on-going and annual plan review, maintenance and distribution

Incident Management

Introduction and Background

Management of incidents is more of an art than science; and often is seen as the “best decisions” made with the “best available information” at a given point in time. Ideally, this imperfect incident management process leads to identification of incident problems and incident objectives, leading to a focus on priorities (e.g., life safety, incident stabilization).

The County adopted Incident Command System (ICS) defines the structures, roles, responsibilities and processes for incident management. Effective incident management is characterized by the use of ICS principles and features including the development and execution of an Incident Action Plan (IAP).

What We Heard

	Observations from Interviewees
What went well?	<p>The County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had evacuation of people from the buildings • demonstrated a focus on safety throughout the incident • recognized the role of the RCMP and allowed them to lead at site • allowed the Incident Management Team in the EOC to lead the operational response in support of the scene • identified relocation of municipal services
What could be improved?	<p>The County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of Unified Command • needs to enhance accountability at muster points, especially for after-hours period • needs clear roles and responsibilities for the IMT and senior decision makers • needs staff on the IMT in the EOC that have the desired ICS training including position specific requirements

What We Learned

Our document review revealed:

- the type of incident (meaning Type 1 or 5) was not declared; by MEMP definition this was a Type 2 incident
- there was no clear declaration of activation of the MEMP
- SC Alerts was not used for notification to the IMT as per the SC Guide

Findings

- there was no clear use of Unified Command at the Incident Command Post or Site Command
- formal Emergency Advisory Committee meetings were not called; however, Council did meet in Special Council meetings focused specifically on the incident
- there was no clear use of Unified Command at the Emergency Operations Centre
- use of check-in and activity logs within the EOC was sporadic
- Occupational Health and Safety played a critical and integral role in the incident
- Facilities played a major role in leading the structural and environmental assessment and remediation and restoration decisions
- the EOC operated on a partial basis for all days (meaning ~12 hours per day); some scaled down staffing during period of EOC operations
- there were a large number of non-EOC persons in the EOC, at times
- there were daily meetings including briefings, many with a defined schedule
- Incident Action Plans were reasonably developed for the first 14 days and 9 operational periods, beginning on Nov. 7 through Nov. 20
- Incident Status Summaries were completed for some of the initial days
- recovery planning began early
- some of the recovery planning was under the Operations Section for first few days
- broad set of Recovery Team documentation in the form of agendas and minutes
- some incident information should be reviewed for legal and other privacy requirements
- the Final Incident Package was generally unstructured for EOC incident documentation

Our AAR review revealed:

- the 2015 AAR of the County Beverly Hills 562 Fires identified the need for pre-identified IMTs, the value of activating Emergency Social Services Plan to support incidents, the importance of using SC Alerts, the need for more ICS training including position specific, need to clarify the role of the PIO and timeliness of communication
- the 2016 AAR of the Orlando Response to the Attack on the Pulse Night Club identified the importance of Unified Command for municipal and police jurisdictions at an incident
- the 2018 AAR of the Mandalay Bay (Las Vegas) Active Shooter identified the value of a Unified Command structure for multiple jurisdictional response to and recovery from an incident

Our Analysis

The key findings are:

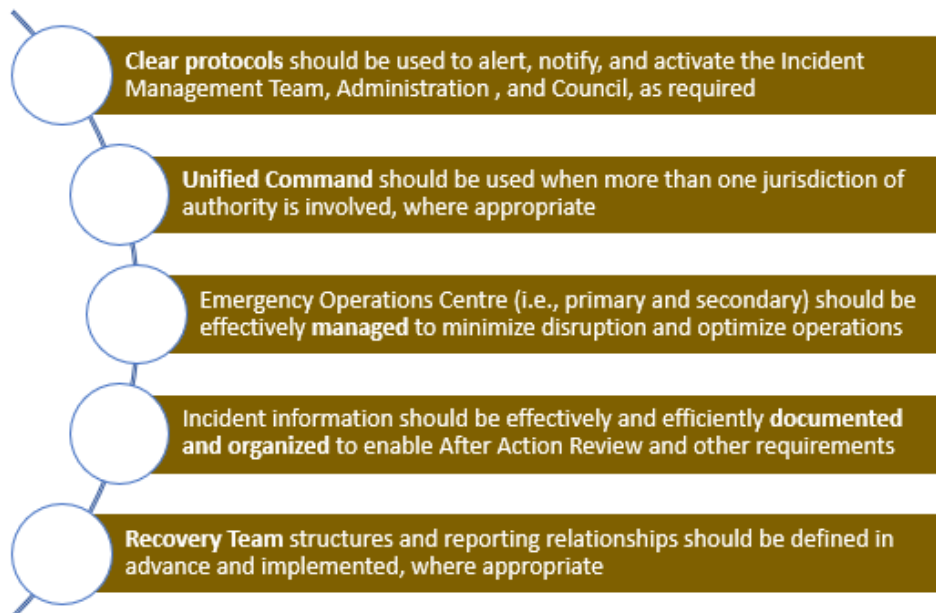


Figure 5.3: Incident Management

Our analysis revealed:

- Of the Incident Management Team respondents to an EOC post-incident survey ~50% had ICS 300 or lower; ~20% of the IMT had position specific training – prior to the incident; for those with ICS training ~85% felt that training assisted them during the incident; 65% did not feel prepared for their role; it is not known the perspectives as to why the lack of readiness
- many on Council and the Executive Team received notification about the Parkade Incident through a wide set of sources. In some cases that notification was not received until hours into the incident; SC Alerts needs to be more effectively used as it is designed
- Mayor and Councillors, the Executive Team, and the Incident Management Team in the Emergency Operations Centre have an integral role and set of responsibilities during a major incident – however, Mayor and Councillors and the Executive need a distinct location to meet and receive briefings and updates outside of the areas in the EOC used by the IMT; the EOC requires an organized and managed environment without undue chaos, and unnecessary interruptions and expectations
- the MEMP describes that if a Recovery Task Force is to be implemented that it will work through the SCEMA; this was not the case for the Parkade Incident
- appears Recovery Task Force and EOC working in parallel at times during the transition
- the County should consider if a structured incident management approach and environment such as an EOC should be used by a Recovery Team

Crisis Communications

Introduction and Background

Crisis communications begins with an alarm or warning (e.g., Emergency Communications Centre or 9-1-1 PSAP) through to alerting or notification and escalation to key incident management and Emergency Management Agency personnel through to communication with those impacted (e.g. staff, tenants) and those indirectly impacted (e.g., public).



Figure 5.4: Cycle of Crisis Communications (iStrategic)

What We Heard

	Observations from Interviewees
What went well?	The County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided early notification to the DEM/Fire Chief and some members of the EOC provided regular news releases to the public from November 7 forward provided early and on-going communication and briefing or information sessions between Executive Team/Department leads and staff
What could be improved?	The County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> needs to ensure clear protocols for timely, and structured internal notification and escalation, especially to IMTs, Executive Team, and Council (especially as the EAC) needs to provide early messaging to the community and public needs to ensure all Departments are getting all of the crisis communication and notices for briefings or information sessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• needs to clarify the role of corporate communications versus the PIO in the EOC• needs to improve ongoing communication and coordination with municipal partners including tenants in the CC/CH, RCMP, and businesses generally
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What We Learned

Our document review revealed:

- the Crisis Communications Plan (CCP) has extensive contact information; however, it needs to be integrated with the MEMP
- an opportunity to develop more messaging to support communication processes
- SC Alerts was not used to notify the IMT or members of the Executive Team; it was used for a single broadcast to County staff and Council

Our AAR review revealed:

- the 2016 AAR for the County response and support to the RMWB Wildfires identified the need to implement EOC and IMT activations through the Everbridge Software (SC Alerts)
- the 2016 AAR for the County response and support to the RMWB Wildfires identified the need to update the Emergency Communications Manual
- the 2015 AAR of the County Beverly Hills 562 Fires identified the need to clarify the role of the PIO and timeliness of communication

Our Analysis

The key findings are:

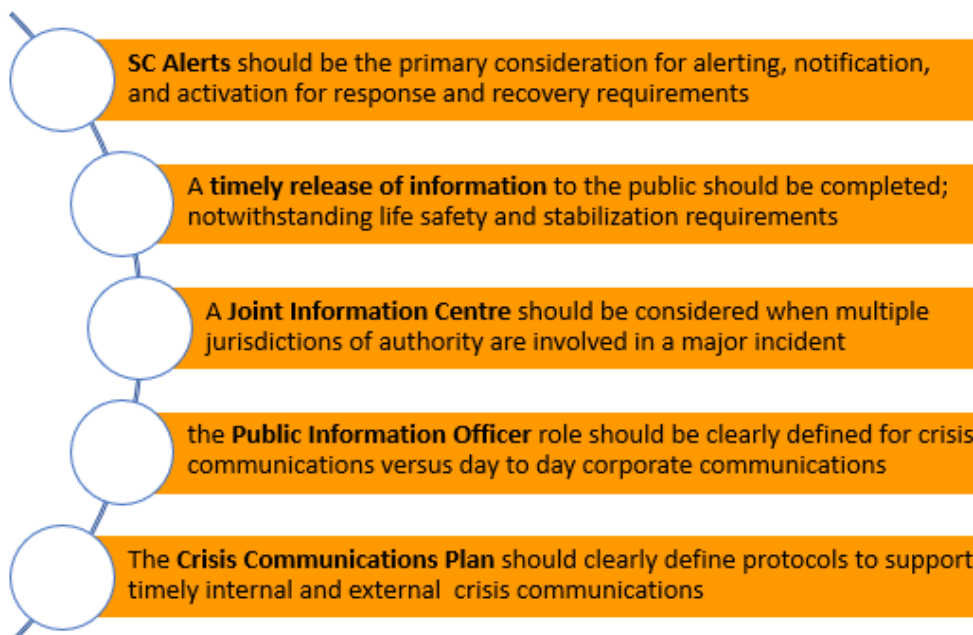


Figure 5.5: Crisis Communications

Our analysis revealed:

- the County acted effectively in developing and implementing SC Alerts in 2015 based on past lessons
- the SC Alerts Guide and system provides a broad set of processes to ensure early notification and escalation to the IMT, Executive, Council, and others
- SC Alerts should be the primary consideration for notification to the IMT, Executive, and Council for key information (e.g., location of an EOC, incident status summary)
- the County Corporate Communications had been working on updating the Crisis Communications Plan prior to the Incident; however, that update was not completed until after the Parkade Incident; notwithstanding the 2019 update, the CCP should be comprehensive and not primarily a Contact List
- the PIO and the EOC Director had a holding message for release to the public, they held onto that message waiting on coordination with the RCMP; rather, a County focused message to the public would have been optimal - demonstrating the County was responding, was working with the RCMP, and would follow-up in the hours to come
- concerns about crisis communication in a rapidly changing environment with multi-jurisdictional interests require those jurisdictions to coordinate in advance and during an incident
- a virtual or physical Joint Information Centre⁴ may have enabled coordination of crisis communication by the involved jurisdictions
- overall, the County demonstrated strong crisis communications internally to staff, and externally through to the public via media statements following Nov. 6

Business Continuity

Introduction and Background

Business Continuity is also known in municipal jurisdictions as Municipal Continuity. It refers to the ability of an organization or community to resume or have continuity of

Business Continuity

Documented procedures that guide organizations to respond, recover, resume, and restore services and functions to a pre-defined level of operations following disruption or loss from a hazard or threat.

⁴ Joint Information Centre (JIC) is a facility established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media. Public information officials from all participating agencies should co-locate at the JIC, ICS Canada, 2019.

Findings

services, especially critical services, during a disruption or loss resulting from an all or any hazards incident. Business Continuity includes continuity strategies for a variety of recovery scenarios, an all hazards approach regardless if the incident is related to people, information and technology, facility, supply chain or major assets, and infrastructure.

The essence of good practices (Disaster Recovery Institute, 2017) in Business Continuity require organizations and communities to a) understand the organization (e.g., complete a risk assessment and business impact analysis of loss or disruption to services), b) develop continuity strategies (e.g., recovery of a major facility), c) implement continuity plans (e.g., build and maintain plans), and d) validate and continuously improve (e.g., conduct education, training and exercise).

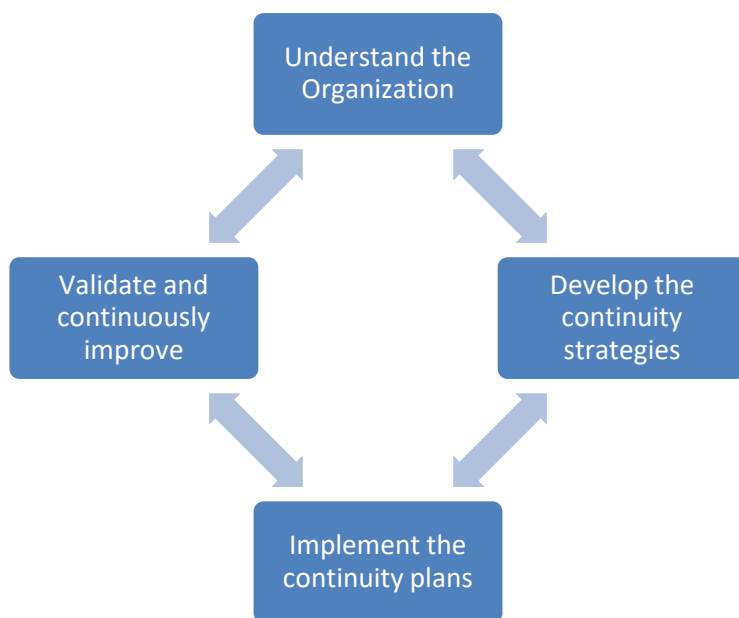


Figure 5.6 Cycle of Business Continuity (iStrategic)

What We Heard

	Observations from Interviewees
What went well?	The County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had ensured critical municipal functions were maintained during the incident • made some early decisions for relocation of services with staffing • focused on citizens and staff during the recovery efforts • had effective time and expense reporting
What could be improved?	The County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs current and user-friendly business continuity plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• needs a prioritized corporate list of critical business or municipal functions• needs to eliminate self-selected recovery locations• needs to pre-establish strategies and options for recovery location for critical business functions• needs tighter integration of IT continuity with prioritized business functions
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What We Learned

Our document review revealed:

- lack of current business continuity plans by most Departments
- lack of an overall corporate business continuity commitment; albeit it has been identified in the 4-year business plan
- well defined financial cost coding for response and recovery activities in this incident
- strong emphasis on procurement processes and authorizations in this incident
- some business continuity planning was occurring within the Operations Section in EOC
- some parallel planning of business continuity between the IMT and the Recovery Team within the EOC

Our AAR review revealed:

- the 2016 AAR for the County response and support to the RMWB Wildfires identified the need to update the Business Continuity Plans

Our Analysis

The key findings are:

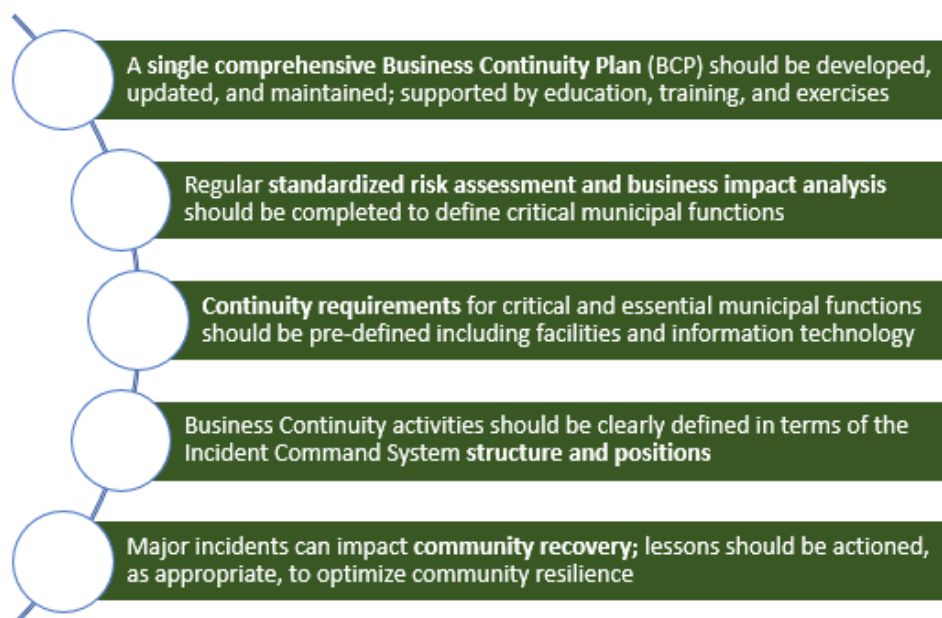


Figure 5.7 Business Continuity

Findings

Our analysis revealed:

- significant business function analysis and continuity planning efforts were required during the incident to compile business recovery priorities
- the EOC should not be the environment for day to day County operations and management; rather, these should be occurring in alternate recovery locations
- very positive support to County staff well-being, psychological, and other employment needs during the entire incident
- recovery coordination and communication with tenants/businesses could be enhanced
- a Business Continuity Management or Recovery Framework was built by the Recovery Team; this framework should be enhanced significantly going forward and in advance of an incident
- communications during the bulk of recovery became a function of corporate communications versus a traditional incident management PIO function
- the Recovery Team developed a stakeholder relations team; it was not clear as to the division of these duties versus incident communications or stakeholder liaison

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed actions for consideration by the County.

1. Review the Emergency Management Program governance, roles, responsibilities, relationships, reporting, continuous improvement, and program priority setting to ensure legislative, Bylaw, and other corporate requirements are met. Based on that review, consider program changes.
 - a. Review and reinforce the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Advisory Committee (EAC) and the Strathcona County Emergency Management Agency (SCEMA) to optimize their important roles during major incidents including during response and recovery phases.
 - b. Adopt industry-leading practices (e.g., CSA Z1600, ISO 22301) for emergency management, business continuity and crisis management to guide the Emergency Management Program.
 - c. Increase annual and on-going education, training and exercises to ensure all Emergency Management related plans can be effectively executed by team members and supported by the SCEMA and the EAC.
 - d. Optimize the compilation of all incident information into a Final Incident Package ensuring consideration of privacy, legal, and retention requirements.
2. Establish the necessary Incident Management Team (IMT) activation and command protocols, and ensure primary and secondary Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) have the necessary tools and technology.
 - a. Utilize existing IMT rosters as the basis for assignment to the EOC to ensure the highest level of incident management can be sustained through response and recovery phases.
 - b. Engage with other agencies (e.g., RCMP) toward establishing roles and responsibilities in major incidents including the use of Unified Command in an EOC and at Incident Command Posts (ICPs).
3. Enhance the Crisis Communication Plan (CCP) including crisis communications roles, responsibilities, and relationships to ensure known protocols support timely communication internally and externally during an incident.
 - a. Clarify the role and responsibilities of the Public Information Officer (PIO) versus Corporate Communications in support of the EOC and a Recovery Team.
 - b. Ensure the use of SC Alerts as the primary consideration for alerting, notifying, and escalating for major incidents for identified stakeholders.

4. Review, update, and maintain all emergency management related plans. Implement comprehensive Business Continuity Planning (BCP) within the Emergency Management Program including annual plan development, plan review, and plan maintenance supported by education, training, and exercises.
 - a. Conduct regular and standardized risk assessment and business impact analysis across all County Departments to ensure a single Executive Team approved list of critical business functions with pre-defined continuity requirements (e.g., Information Technology (IT) Continuity, Facility Continuity).



Source: Strathcona County

7. CONCLUSION

Strathcona County acted on the priorities and problems of the Parkade Incident, as they emerged and became known. The response and recovery effort would last six (6) months.

Life safety including the life safety and wellness of first responders, staff, tenants, and the community at large were front and center for the County through the duration of the incident including response and recovery (i.e., restoration and re-entry).

Stabilization of the incident was clearly one of the most challenging aspects of this incident. Simply stated, until the County and RCMP were completely satisfied about the extent and impact of the incident it could not be declared “safe or under control”. Rather, the RCMP Major Crimes Unit needed the time and patience of the community to complete their initial investigation of this unique and unfortunate incident. In the meantime, the actions of the County Emergency Services and the RCMP achieved the objective of stabilizing the incident.

Preservation of the environment and property took a lot of painstaking effort – from cleaning library books, through to careful cleaning of staff offices all toward a healthy environment for the entire community. Ultimately, the County focused on maintaining critical municipal services and worked efficiently and effectively toward the recovery of the Community Centre and County Hall.

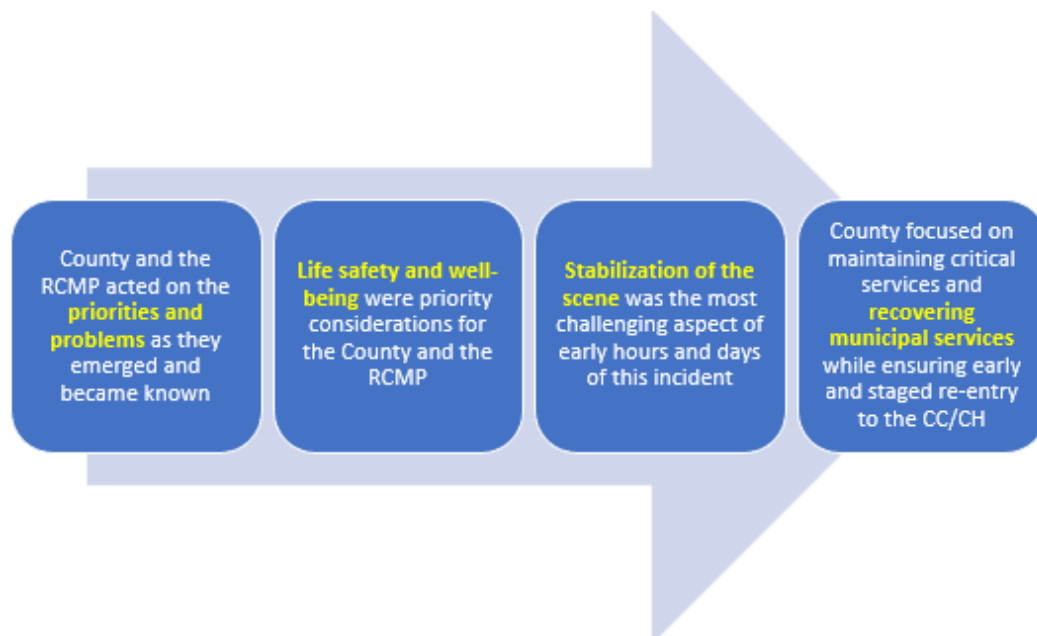


Figure 7.1 Measures of Success (iStrategic)

Crisis communications is integral to the response and recovery of any incident. Following some initial challenges related to the stabilization of the scene and identification of all of the hazards and threats, the County provided ongoing internal and external crisis communications in the days, weeks, and months following November 6, 2018.

This journey was not without its challenges. Ideally, emerging from these major incidents is a rebuilding or renewal, a stronger, safer, and more resilient organization or community. The County can learn the lessons, from this and past incidents, and where appropriate, advance Emergency Management in the County for the benefit of residents, businesses, and staff.



Source: Strathcona County

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Conclusion

Appendix A. Interviews

This appendix provides a list of the 56 interview sessions completed.

- 9 sessions, one with each of Mayor and Councillors
- 4 sessions, one with each of Executive Team
- 16 sessions, one for each of many key members of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Incident Management Team (IMT)
- 2 sessions with key members of the Recovery Team (note: a few members of the IMT were also on the Recovery Team and those interviews were combined)
- 14 sessions with Departmental representatives, including Gallery@501, directly impacted and relocated
- 8 sessions with Departmental representatives indirectly impacted and supporting the overall response and recovery
- 2 sessions with tenants including a large team from the Strathcona County Library and owners of Vicky's Bistro and Wine Bar
- 1 session with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

Appendix B. Documents

This appendix provides a list of key documents or document types reviewed for this AAR and understood to be in effect at the time of the Parkade Incident.

County Bylaw, Plans, and Emergency Management related documents:

- Strathcona County Emergency Management Bylaw, 2018
- Strathcona County Information Technology Services Disaster Recovery Plan, 2017
 - A revised version of this plan has been prepared in July 2019
- Strathcona County Emergency Operations Centre Guide, January 2018
 - A draft and revised version of this guide has been prepared in July 2019
- Strathcona County Departmental Emergency Response Plans, 2018, many updated prior to 2018
- Strathcona County Alert System Reference Guide, 2017
 - A revised version of this guide was prepared in April 2019
- Strathcona County Family and Community Services Emergency Social Services Manual
 - A revised version of this plan/manual has been prepared in March 2019
- Strathcona County Emergency Preparedness and Recovery Plan – Emergency Communications Manual, July 2015
 - A new Strathcona County Crisis Communications Plan was prepared in 2019
- Strathcona County Municipal Emergency Management Plan, 2014
- Strathcona County Business Continuity documents, 2010
 - A few departments have updated these since 2010
- Strathcona County Emergency Resource Directory, 2014
- Various Strathcona County Incident Management resources and guides including checklists, role descriptions, and IMT roster lists

Parkade Incident specific documents:

- Various IMT member and scribe notes
- Emergency Operations Centre Check-in lists
- Incident Action Plans (IAPs)

- Various ICS Forms including Assignment Lists, Safety Messages, Incident Status Summary
- Executive Team communication and updates to County employees and other stakeholders
- Various internal communications including meeting agenda's, frequently asked questions, briefings, and presentations
- Various hazard assessment and control documents
- Various Information Technology and Business Continuity assessment and prioritization documents
- Incident Management Team and Recovery Team reports including:
 - Site Security Plan
 - Vehicle Removal Plan
 - Parking Plans
 - Service Restoration Plans
 - Staff Re-entry Plan
 - Public Re-entry Plans
 - Relocation Site Plans (WSP Building, Staffing Placement, and other)
 - Staff Entry Plan for Recovery Locations (WSP)
- Recovery Team agendas and minutes
- Various County and RCMP media statements
- Various media articles

Appendix C. After Action Reviews

This appendix lists After-Action Reviews (AARs), also known as Post-Incident Analysis Reviews, from County (internal) and external sources that were reviewed. The following summarizes a few of these AARS where there are lessons relevant to the County further to the Parkade Incident.

County Reports:

1. **(2016) Strathcona County's Response to the 2016 Wildfires in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo After Action Report** (completed on July 26, 2016)
 - a. This incident began on May 3, 2016 and has a continued recovery by that Municipality to this date. The incident was one of devastating wildfires resulting in a community-wide evacuation of residents and a province-wide level of response and recovery supports. The County provided a significant fire response and Incident Management Team supports including over 25 persons and various equipment.
 - b. Among numerous fire specific and other recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. "Continue to develop and implement EOC and IMT activations through the Everbridge software" (p.5)
 - ii. "The Emergency Communications Manual needs to be updated, in order to clearly outline approval authorities in times of emergency as well as during emergent events such as the evacuee response" (p.8)
 - iii. "Engagement of OH&S for the coordination of mental health support services should take place as soon as possible after requests are received" (p.8)
 - iv. "Continue to take an all-County inclusive approach to ICS training and EOC exercises" (p.10)
 - v. "Currently, the BCP targets Type 1 or 2 (large-scale) incidents. The DEM/DDEM must improve the BCP documentation to provide scalability for smaller types of incidents and encourage its use at a departmental level" (p.11)
2. **(2015) Dueling Wildfires: April 22, 2015 Beverly Hills and 562 Fires After Action Report** (completed on December 21, 2015)
 - a. This incident began on April 22, 2015 and ended on May 5, 2015 within the County. The incident resulted in a significant County response

including opening the County Emergency Operations Centre supported by County Departments including Emergency Services.

- b. Among numerous fire specific and other recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Any activation of ESS (Emergency Social Services) provides good opportunity for keeping all staff trained and ready, even if no evacuation is required” (p.13)
 - ii. “Use of SC Alerts would ensure the simultaneous “auto-delivery” of a consistent message to all required Team Members, including identification of role and reporting instructions ...” (p.15)
 - iii. “Provide more strategically scheduled offerings of various ICS courses and workshops, including position and section-specific training exercises” (p.17)
 - iv. “The EOC Director must commit to following up sooner with the PIO Team to ensure messages are not delayed” (p.24)
 - v. “A minimum of one (1) hour notice of the time and place of an emergency meeting must be sent by the Chief Commissioner to as many Councillors as possible in the circumstances” (p.25)
3. **2011 Slave Lake Wildfire After Action Survey Report – Draft version**
(completed on November 9, 2011)
- a. This incident began on May 15, 2011 and was supported by the County. The incident resulted in the evacuation of over 10,000 people in the Town of Slave Lake and included support from across the province including the County. All Town critical services were lost or turned off during initial stages of the incident. The County provided 37 staff supporting incident management functions and several other resources for the fire response.
 - b. Among numerous observations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Establishment of both a permanent and an alternate location to act as the Emergency Operations Centre” (p.9)
 - ii. “... additional training to include ICS 300 (for operational commanders) and ICS 400 (for all command officers and County executives) was identified as a requirement” (p.10)

- iii. “The value of filling both the Command and General Staff positions with qualified and experienced personnel early in the process cannot be overemphasized” (p.12)
4. **2009 North Strathcona Wildfire After Action Report** (completed on December 2010)
- a. This incident began on May 3, 2009 and ended on July 3, 2009 and directly impacted the County. The incident resulted in the Declaration of a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) from May 5-7 and included support from Sustainable Resource Development, Salvation Army and other community groups. This incident resulted in direct costs to the County of approximately \$4.7 Million.
 - b. Among numerous fire specific recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Institute a sign-off for EOC role competencies” (p.41)
 - ii. “Messages should be disseminated using as wide a variety of communication tools as possible to ensure a rapid, comprehensive and timely dispersal of accurate and consistent information” (p.44)
 - iii. “Use of 24-hour tools such as the UPDATEline and 211 for dissemination of information to the public is highly effective, provided that the information obtained from these sources is always accurate and up to date” (p.49)
 - iv. “Clear protocols for delivering messages and information to and from the EOC require further development” (p.49)
 - v. “Open communication can greatly increase public confidence in response and remediation efforts” (p.52)
 - vi. “A special subledger accounting code established at the onset of a potentially costly event can greatly facilitate cost tracking, ...” (p.54)

Other Reports or Observations:

5. **(2017) September 2017 Kenow Fire Post Incident Assessment Common Themes Analysis (completed February 2018)**
- a. This incident began on August 30, 2017 with a lightning strike igniting a wildfire. By September 19, re-entry and recovery activities were underway and recovery operations continued for many months.
 - b. Among numerous wildfire and provincial level coordination specific recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:

- i. “When Unified Command is adopted by various agencies, a clear understanding of the time, space, responsibilities and authorities is approved and widely communicated by an overarching coordinating authority” (p.7)
- ii. “Communications and joint messaging must be included in the process for Unified Command. There needs to be one cohesive message being shared, and all involved parties must have access to the required information” (p.7)
- iii. “Incident Command System (ICS) training and use be mandated to ensure a common doctrine and lexicon is used in large scale emergencies, and common understanding and situational awareness can be better supported” (p.8)
- iv. “Every opportunity is taken to create a culture of collaboration and co-operation in emergencies, and that this be reinforced through regional and local emergency management collaboration opportunities, including regular exercises and training” (p.8)

6. (2016) A Review of the 2016 Horse River Wildfire, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Preparedness and Response (completed on June 2017)

- a. This incident began on May 1, 2016. The estimated insured losses were \$3.7 Billion with additional economic impacts to Canada’s GDP or Gross Domestic Product. This incident directly impacted the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and resulted in significant impacts on many other communities in Alberta support to evacuees or direct fire and incident management support to the municipality.
- b. Among numerous wildfire and provincial level coordination specific recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Continue to develop risk management frameworks as the foundation for ... policy” (p.38); it is noted that while this recommendation was specific to wildland urban interfaces it emphasizes the importance of community-wide risk management to inform policy and emergency prevention/preparedness decisions and investments
 - ii. “... create unified command of the ... the supporting organizations to the incident and associated emergency response should unify in coordinating and supportive roles ...” (p.41); it is noted that this observation included a broad set of partners including police

7. (2016) Pulse Tragedy After Action Report (completed in 2017)

- a. This incident began on June 12, 2016 and involved a hostile attacker at a nightclub. The incident resulted in significant and devastating impacts on many victims and the community at large.
- b. Among numerous recommendations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Social Media was a tremendous asset during this response. Social Media was used to communicate information to the media and the public. Social media pages and the City’s website were also used to disseminate available services, donations, transportation information, and investigation updates” (p.15)
 - ii. “A physical JIC (Joint Information Centre) location was not used during this incident. PIOs would have benefited from having one location to work together” (p.23)

8. (2014) External Engagement and Coordination – Parliament Hill Incident on October 22, 2014: After Action Review (based on RCMP report and completed on April 29, 2015)

- a. The incident began on October 22, 2014 and ended with the public opening of Parliament Hill on October 24, 2014. This was an active shooter incident resulting in the loss of a member of the military.
- b. Among numerous observations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “During a crisis situation, the importance of communication increases exponentially” (p.16); and “While traditional media plays an important role as a vehicle for communication during a critical incident, the increasing popularity of social media is evident” (p.17); and Moving forward, it is essential that the best practice of leveraging social media as a vehicle for all communications (i.e. during a critical incident and as a means to increase public awareness) (p.18)

9. (2013) Lac Megantic Rail Tragedy: Crisis Communications Lessons Learned – Again (an article completed on July 18, 2013)

- a. The incident began on July 6, 2013 and resulted in devastating impacts on the community of Lac Megantic including many victims lost and injured. The downtown core was critically impacted and destroyed.
- b. The following perspectives were shared about this incident:

- i. “organizations at the centre of crises must communicate within the first hours of an incident ... make use of all available media, social media and direct-to-stakeholder(s) ...” and “... must stick to the facts rather than speculate about what they hope or think might be true. Otherwise that credibility is quickly eroded and replaced by cynicism and distrust”

10. (2013) Town of High River After Action Report June 2013 Flood (completed July 28, 2014)

- a. This incident began on June 29, 2013 and resulted in a near-community wide evacuation including the relocation of the Emergency Operations Centre at the peak of initial response efforts.
- b. Among numerous observations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Establishing and maintaining credibility of the source and accuracy of information is critical to managing rumors” (p.15)
 - ii. “Revise and update the Municipal Emergency Management Plan to create an all-hazard plan that incorporates lessons from the flood and municipal best practices ... including Business Continuity Plan” (p.16)
 - iii. “Revise and update the training program for all emergency related staff including cross-jurisdictional/organization training” (p.16)

11. (2013) After Action Report for the Response to the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings (completed on December 2014)

- a. This incident began on April 15, 2013. The incident included two separate explosions resulting in numerous victims and impacted the community at large for many days. The scene was returned from the Boston Police to the City of Boston on April 22, 2013
- b. Among numerous observations, the following highlight a few related to themes found in the Parkade Incident:
 - i. “Strong Relationships and Successful Unified Command. Strong relationships created and maintained by key leaders were paramount to ensuring commanders, agency heads, and political leaders came together quickly to form Unified Command and facilitate collaborative decision-making after the bombings” (p.9)
 - ii. “Well-Planned and Organized Re-Opening of Boylston Street. The City had to await the conclusion of the FBI’s evidence

collection and crime scene processing before it could begin work to restore and reopen this vital economic and social area” (p.9)

- iii. “Lack of a Joint Information Center. The need to utilize a Joint Information Center (JIC) was evident during all phases of the week. While the UCC worked together to coordinate messages and host press conferences on the day of the bombings and the day the suspects were apprehended, a JIC would have better supported the management of the media requests necessitated by a 24/7 news cycle throughout the course of the week” (p.11)

Appendix D. Leading Practices

This appendix provides a list of a few relevant industry leading standards, guidelines and professional practices related to emergency management:

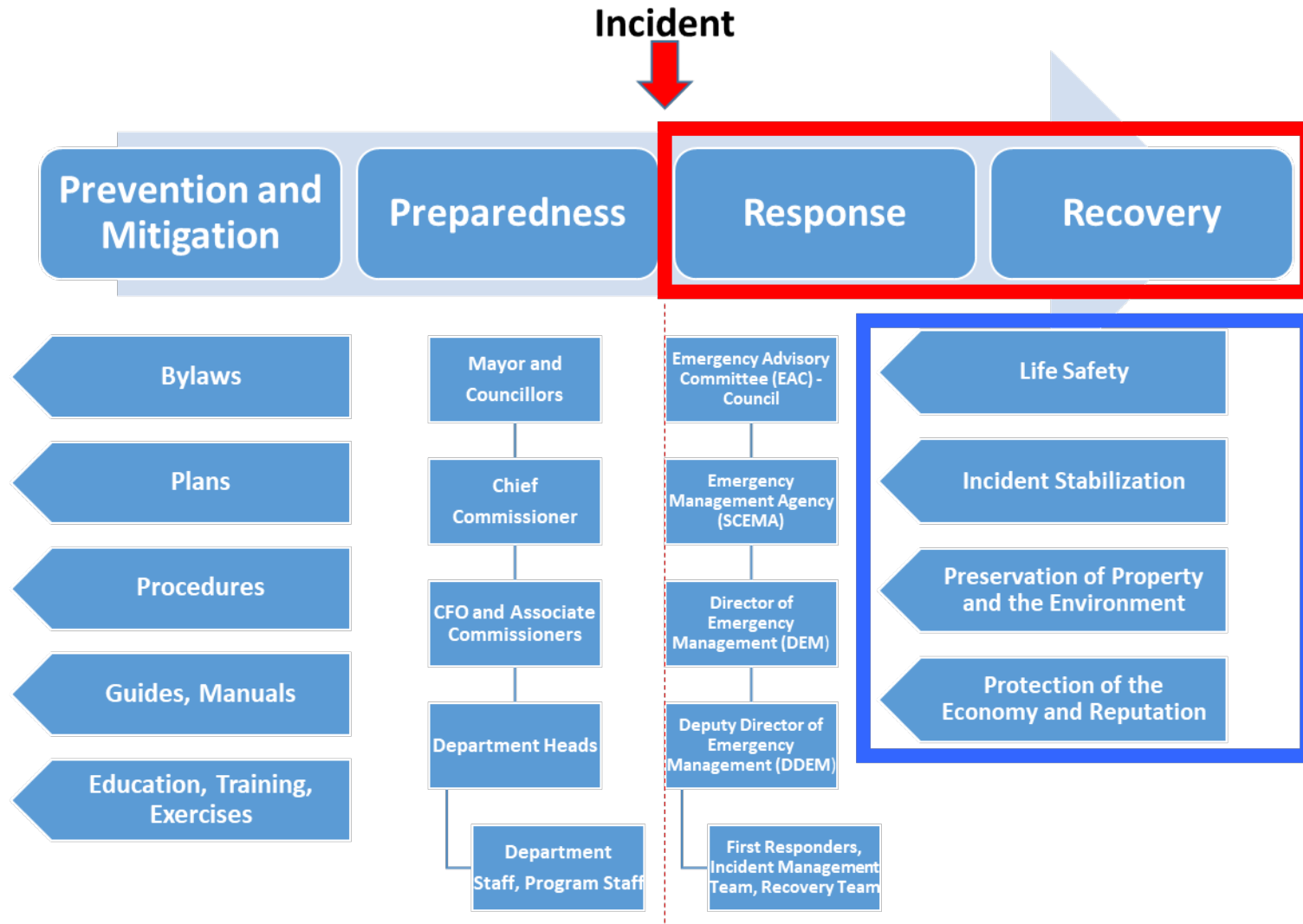
- Incident Command System (ICS Canada), 2019
- International Standards Association (ISO) ISO 22301:2019 – Societal Security Business Continuity Management Standard, 2019
- International Standards Association (ISO) ISO 31000:2018 - Risk Management Standard, 2018
- Disaster Recovery Institute (DRI) Canada Professional Practices, 2018
- Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Business Continuity Management (BCM) Good Practice Guidelines, 2018
- International Standards Association (ISO) ISO 22317:2017 - Societal Security Business Impact Analysis Standard, 2017
- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) CSA Z1600:17 – Emergency Management and Business Continuity Standard, 2017

Appendix E. County Emergency Management Bylaw

This appendix provides the Strathcona County Emergency Management Bylaw. Go to the following link: <https://www.strathcona.ca/files/files/at-lls-bylaws-17-2018-emergency-management-bylaw.pdf>

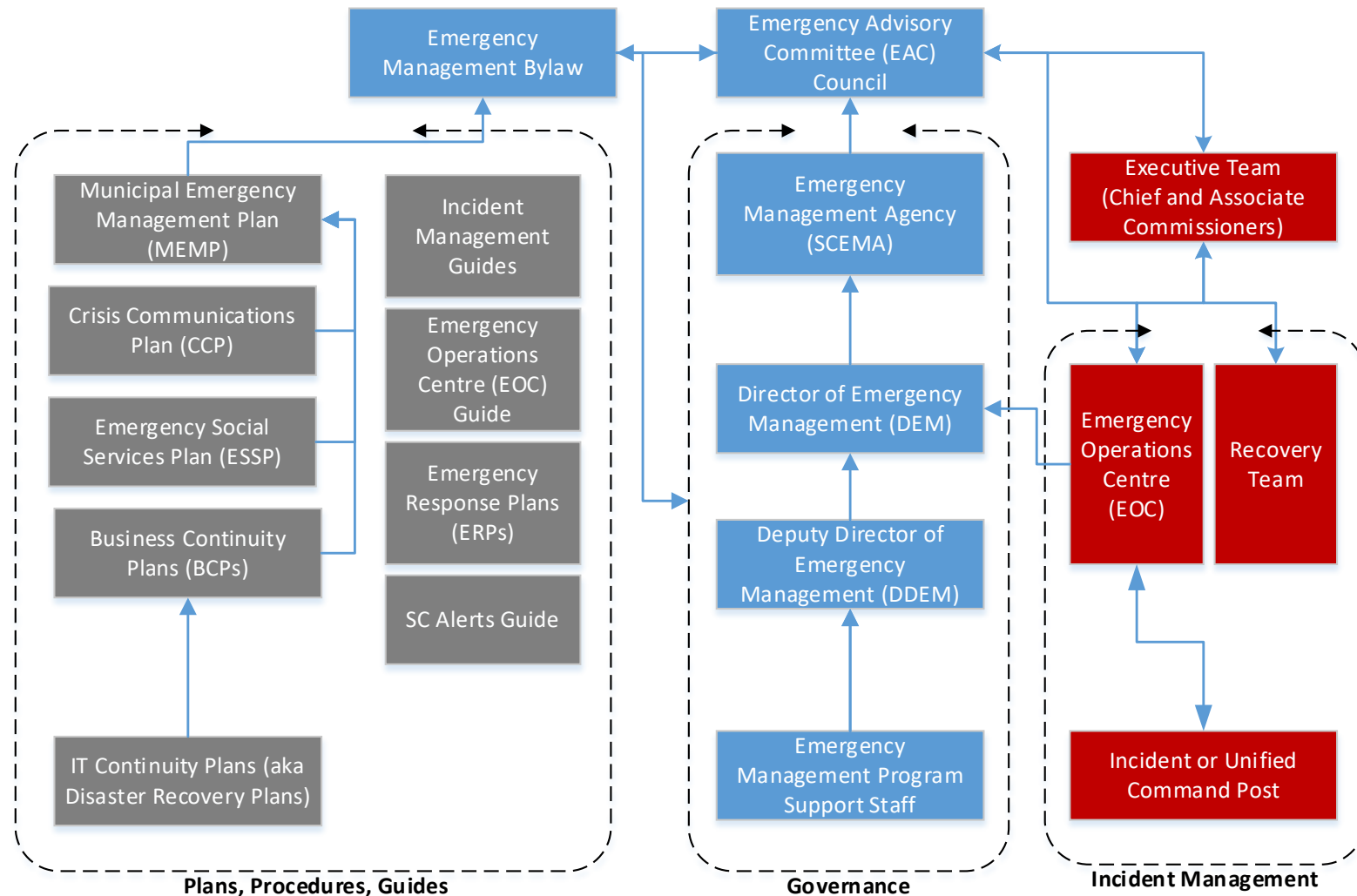
Appendix F. Pillars of Emergency Management

This appendix provides an illustration of the four pillars of emergency management including components of County Emergency Management.



Appendix G. Emergency Management Linkages

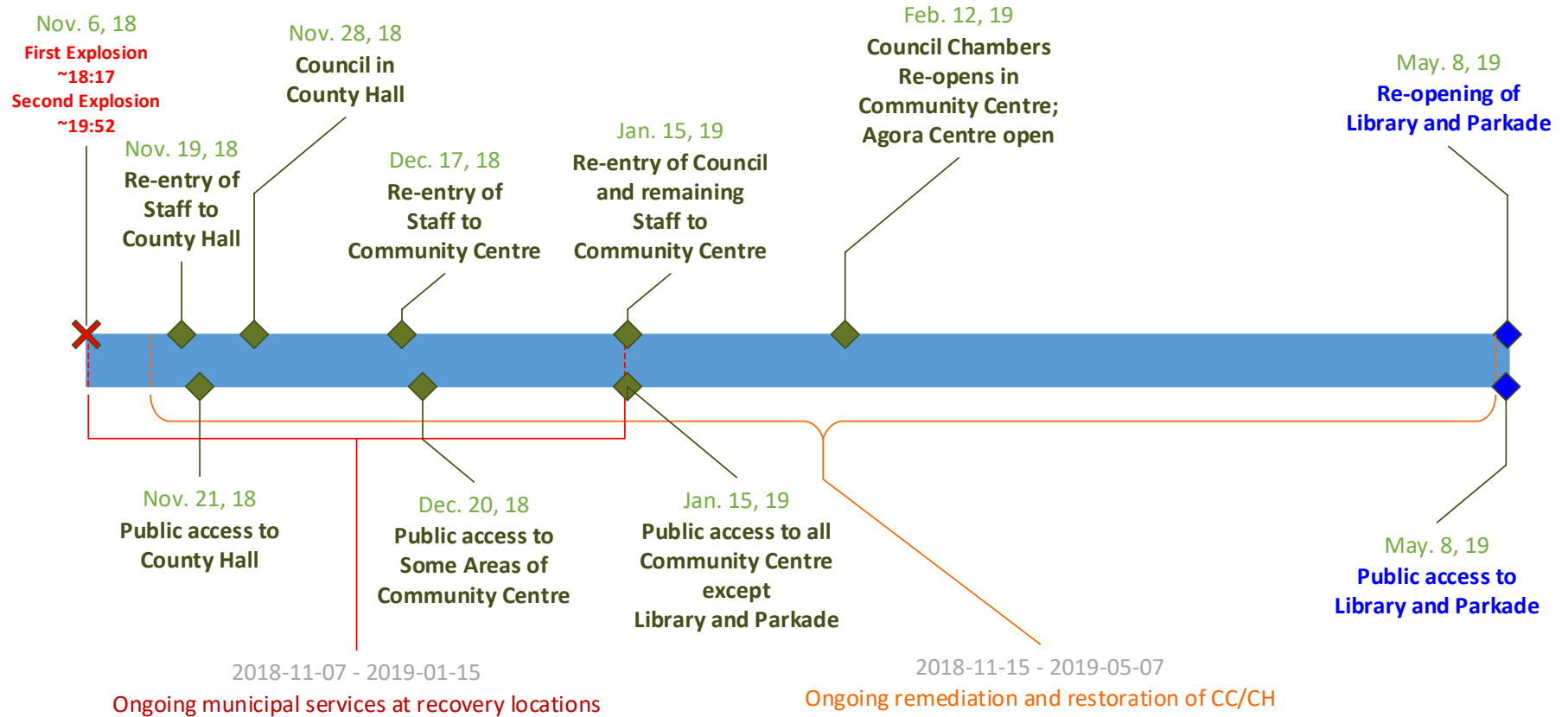
This appendix provides an illustration of key emergency management linkages including elements and relationships of plans, governance, and incident management.



Appendix H. Major and Minor Timelines

This appendix provides the major and initial event timelines as referenced in this report.

Major Events Timeline



Initial Events Timeline

