



Suzanne Flynn
Metro Auditor

600 NE Grand Ave
Portland, OR 97232-2736
TEL 503 797 1892, FAX 503 797 1831
suzanne.flynn@oregonmetro.gov

Date: March 19, 2013

To: Martha Bennett, Chief Operating Officer
Scott Robinson, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Tim Collier, Interim Director, Finance & Regulatory Services
William Jemison, Risk Manager, Finance and Regulatory Services

FROM: Suzanne Flynn, Metro Auditor

RE: Emergency Management Audit

My office has completed our preliminary work on an audit of Metro's emergency management program. I have decided not to proceed with the audit at this time. We considered two objectives for this audit, one focused on Metro's ability to meet the expectations of other governments in the region during an emergency, and the other focused on Metro's ability to meet its own needs in an emergency. Because Metro is reorganizing its efforts in each area, I do not feel that it is timely to proceed. The Metro Council is in the process of establishing the agency's future level of involvement in the region's emergency management efforts. My office just completed an audit of the Risk Management Program. Since emergency management is included in the Risk Management Program, the program needs time to implement changes before we can evaluate Metro's ability to meet its own needs in an emergency.

Background

Metro's emergency management efforts were split between external planning with partners and internal planning within departments. Externally, Metro has participated in emergency management planning with counties and cities in the region since 1993. These efforts included Council and senior management. Internally, the responsibility for preparing for emergencies was delegated to individual departments. Internal emergency planning efforts were considered an extension of a department's safety program.

Metro's Regional Emergency Management Efforts

Metro does not provide emergency services that ensure public health and safety. During an emergency, the agency can provide planning assistance and the use of its facilities, staff, money or equipment to support the region's emergency planning and response efforts.

Metro established its role in regional emergency preparedness in the 1990's. The Metro Council approved the Regional Emergency Management Work Plan in 1991. This plan focused on earthquake preparedness. In 1993, the Regional Emergency Management Group (REMG), a group that included Metro and other cities in five counties (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Columbia counties in Oregon, and Clark County in Washington) was formed. At the same time, the Metro Council approved a work plan that focused on regional emergency management areas related to planning, mitigation, response and recovery. The plan clarified Metro's role by giving it the responsibility to be the lead for

completing five of 21 work plan elements. Metro assigned staff to work on the following tasks based on funding availability:

- create a regional damage assessment model;
- develop a regional plan for disaster debris removal;
- clarify emergency management legal issues and responsibilities related to providing assistance;
- include seismic safety strategies in land use regulations and building codes; and
- develop a regional emergency transportation plan.

These tasks were generally completed by 1998.

Metro was a part of the group that secured a United Areas Security Initiative (UASI) terrorism planning grant in 2003. The City of Portland administered the grant that paid for emergency and disaster response planning in the five REMG counties. Metro assisted in planning for disaster debris removal and emergency transportation route planning.

In 2012, a new planning effort called the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) was formed. The membership of RDPO was drawn from the same five counties covered by REMG. RDPO's mission includes five core elements of disaster preparedness (prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery). RDPO work groups will include representatives from public safety (including health, fire and police) and public works, as well as private health care companies, utilities and non-profits. The scope and purpose of RDPO has not been finalized. As a result, Metro Council has not decided what role Metro will play in the group. RDPO recently hired a planning coordinator, and one of the responsibilities of this position is to help finalize the scope and purpose of the organization.

Metro's Emergency Management

Metro does not have an emergency management program. As a result, emergency management responsibilities, similar to work place safety responsibilities, were dispersed among several parts of the organization. We found no program budgets, performance measures, or management reports. There is also no comprehensive business continuity plan. This is a risk area that Metro's external auditor has raised in the past. Metro has been working to create a business continuity plan since 2007.

Documents describing emergency procedures were prepared and maintained by individual departments. The quality of these plans varied. These documents described how a department will initially respond to an emergency, but do not usually address long term issues (e.g. prolonged power outages or lack of access to key facilities) that might arise in a large scale disaster like an earthquake. During survey, we reviewed a 2006 audit of the emergency response plan for Metro's solid waste and recycling department. This audit contains good criteria for developing department specific emergency response plans. These criteria may be used in a future audit of Metro's internal emergency management program.

Survey Scope & Activities

Our survey work focused on Metro's regional and internal emergency management planning activities. We interviewed management and staff at Metro and the Metro Council Liaison to RDPO. We also interviewed directors at the American Red Cross and in the emergency management departments of the City of Portland, Multnomah and Washington Counties, and the State of Oregon.

We reviewed Oregon statutes, Metro's code and charter, and Metro Council Resolutions. Along with past audits, budget and planning documents, we reviewed Council resolution staff reports and department emergency procedure documents.

This audit was added to the FY2012-13 audit schedule. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Possible Future Audit Topics

- Is Metro's level of involvement in regional emergency planning efforts adequate?
- Is the Regional Disaster Debris Management Plan operational?
- Will Metro be prepared to resume operations in a serious emergency?