



orals
1-23-07

January 20, 2007

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* Advisory Member

Dear Members of the City Council,

During the Summer of 2006, the Alexandria Citizen Corp Council's Improvement Identification Subcommittee distributed a questionnaire to 20 of the 84 citizen and business based associations across the city of Alexandria. The focus of the questionnaire was to explore citizens' view of the city's state of emergency preparedness, and find out where they felt the city could improve.

Executive Summary:

Questionnaire response — 6 out of 20 associations responded to the questionnaire, representing 30% of the sample population and 7% of the association population at large.

Collection gathering methods — Committee members used email, telephone, and in person interviews to collect data.

Among the key opinions and perceptions we learned from the questionnaire:

- **Process for Emergency Communications not clear:** The city's approach to communicating during an emergency or disaster is unclear to most respondents.
- **Flu pandemic is a concern:** A majority of respondents are concerned that a flu pandemic will have a severe impact on the community.
- **Evacuation procedures are not clear:** The process for emergency evacuation is not clear to most respondents.
- **Education for emergency preparedness is needed:** Respondents do not know what they are supposed to do during an emergency or disaster.
- **Flooding is a concern in various neighborhoods:** Respondents are concerned about how to respond during a flooding situation.
- **Volunteers are critical:** Overwhelmingly, respondents believe that volunteer organizations are critical to providing a successful crisis response.
- **Basic services are adequate:** Most respondents are content with daily emergency services from the police and fire departments.
- **Overall, respondents' perception is that Alexandria is not ready for a major disaster or emergency.**

Summary of Recommendations:

Based on questionnaire responses, the city should explore the following areas to improve residents' perceptions of emergency preparedness efforts:

Education of Public

- Increase resident awareness of city's emergency preparedness by all means possible including: the Alexandria Newsletter, Alexandria City web page, E-News, DASH buses, and YouTube.
- Educate residents on how they will be notified in the event of an emergency and what emergency response actions they are supposed to follow.
- Develop a list of emergency preparedness recommendations for civic associations.
- Explain why evacuation is normally impractical and a measure of last resort.

Summary of Recommendations (Continued):

Communications

- Publish a summary of the city's emergency plan.
- Create readiness planning templates for use by individual households, faith-based organizations, and civic and business associations.
- Set up and advertise a phone number for respondents to call with questions regarding emergency response.
- Provide targeted outreach efforts to non-English speaking residents and residents with special needs.

Focus on Coordination

- Explore opportunities for using additional volunteers at city agencies during emergencies and disasters.
- Develop systems and procedures for improved coordination between volunteers, volunteer organizations, and city agencies.

The Citizen Corps Council would be happy to provide more detailed information or answer further questions. As per our charter, we are here to advise and support the City Council in making Alexandria safer through citizen participation. Please note that the CCC will conduct a similar questionnaire in September of 2007.

Best regards,

/signed/

France Hoang
Chair
Alexandria Citizens Corp Council

cc: James Hartman, City Manager

Enclosures

Alexandria Citizen Corps Council (CCC) Improvement Identification Subcommittee

Emergency Preparedness Questionnaire

About the Citizen Corps

The Citizen Corps is responsible for creating opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and the network of first responder organizations, such as public safety departments, EMS, Health, and Transportation and Environmental Services. The Citizen Corps will also encourage Alexandrians to prepare their families, neighborhoods, communities and offer, where appropriate, assistance to the emergency response agencies.

QUESTIONS

Alexandria Preparedness

1. Is Alexandria disaster ready? The City's leadership has made major efforts to prepare for any emergency---- natural or man-made. Based on your own experience, do you believe the City is prepared to handle any major emergency or disaster that may arise?
2. What is the City doing successfully that gives you confidence that Alexandria and its citizens are prepared to handle any major emergency?
3. Do you believe the City could improve its "readiness" and, if so, how should it improve?
4. On a scale of one to 10 (one =low and 10=high), where would you rank "emergency preparedness" vis a vis the City's other major responsibilities?

Individual Preparedness

5. Do you, individually, believe yourself and your family to be "prepared" and "ready" to handle any major emergency occurrence if it were to occur in Alexandria?

Contributors to Preparedness

6. In your view, what are the key features of "effective preparedness"? In what priority order would you rank these key features?
7. To what degree (scale of 1 to 10) do you believe volunteer organizations are essential to any successful preparation and response to natural or man-made disasters, and how critical do you view their participation in Alexandria's "readiness"?

Flu Pandemic

8. What impact do you think an outbreak of pandemic flu in the United States would have on your family and or business?

Areas for Improvement

9. Now that you have discussed the status of our City's "readiness", what specific recommendations would you like to make to prepare Alexandrians for any emergency?

Elizabeth L. Jones

From: Rob Krupicka [Rob@Krupicka.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2007 8:14 AM
To: krupickaaide@comcast.net
Subject: FW: 2007 CCC PRIORITIES

Please make copies for council.

From: Francis Q. Hoang [mailto:francehoang@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, January 20, 2007 3:28 PM
To: Mark.Penn@alexandriava.gov; Amanda Babcock; Hall, Andrew B.; Christina Richardson; councilmangaines@aol.com; DeCourseyM@usa.redcross.org; dsmithccs@verizon.net; Ed Walters; Ekeland Brian; kernow01@att.net; Kim.Purcell@alexandriava.gov; matternessd@usa.redcross.org; MgwScrp03@aol.com; modonnell05@comcast.net; pparet@mac.com; Rob@krupicka.com; Self-Kyler, Sarah LT CHINFO; twalczkowski@earthlink.net
Subject: 2007 CCC PRIORITIES

Dear fellow CCC members:

Based on input from the entire CCC, including staff and advisory members, here is the list of CCC priorities for 2007 in rank order.

France

| Rank | Priority |
|------|---|
| 1 | In cooperation with city officials, the identify concrete roles (if any) for volunteers in specific emergencies for which the city plans, such as fire, flood, terrorism, and pandemic flu. |
| 2 | Develop means to distribute Readiness Plans to every household in Alexandria |
| 3 | Prepare/Identify a standard Household and Business Readiness Plan for Alexandria |
| 4 | Develop means to distribute Readiness Plans to every business in Alexandria |
| 5 | In cooperation with CERT, VIPS, Neighborhood Watch, MRC, and the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau, conduct a skills assessment of existing volunteers, with special emphasis on skills identified by the city as needed in an emergency. |
| 6 | Establish mechanism to push readiness materials to citizens through existing distribution lists |
| 7 | Recruit and train volunteers in skills identified as necessary in the event of an emergency. |
| 8 | Develop recommendations for outreach to non-English speaking and special needs populations |
| 9 | Recruit and train volunteers to conduct presentations on Household Readiness Planning |
| 10 | Support the City in promoting the use of E-News as a method of alerting residents and business to emergency issues. |
| 11 | Plan and Conduct Be Ready Alexandria Expo 2007 or similar event |
| 12 | Recruit and train volunteers to conduct presentations on Business Readiness Planning |
| 13 | Conduct CCC brainstorming of priorities, goals, and tasks |
| 14 | Evaluate the need and recommend methods for establishing an ongoing record of people with special needs and requirements to ensure that the Emergency Services would have such information when reacting to both local and major emergencies. |
| 15 | Promote the use of NOAA radios as a method for residents and business to obtain information about emergency situations. |
| 16 | Support the City in its trials and evaluation of an Outdoor Warning System |
| 17 | Update CCC website |

| | |
|----|---|
| 18 | Update CCC promotional materials |
| 19 | Investigate the possibility of using cable television as a method for educating residents about emergency preparedness. |
| 20 | Solicit and compile citizen association recommendations for improvement |
| 21 | Solicit and compile CCC recommendations for improvement |
| 22 | Investigate the need for, and, if necessary, launch an accreditation program for amateur radio operators to a in support of the professional services of both Alexandria and the surrounding districts. |
| 23 | Develop and implement a volunteer recognition and award program |





Alexandria Citizen Corps Council
Improvement Identification Subcommittee
Emergency Preparedness Questionnaire Results

Alexandria, Virginia
January 20, 2007

Overview



During the summer of 2006, the Improvement Identification Subcommittee conducted a Questionnaire of 20 of the 84 citizen and business based associations across the city of Alexandria. The focus of the Questionnaire was to explore residents' view of the city's state of emergency preparedness, and find out where they felt the city could improve.

- **Purpose of the Questionnaire** – the purpose of the Questionnaire was to explore residents' view of Alexandria's emergency preparedness
- **Number of associations questioned** – 20 out of 84
- **Number of responses received** – 6 out of 20 associations responded
- **Percentage of responses** – 30% of the sample population, and 7% of the association population at large responded to the Questionnaire
- **Collection gathering methods** – committee members used email, telephone and in person interview methods for data collection

Executive Summary

What we learned from the Questionnaire:

- **Process for Emergency Communications not clear:** The city's approach to communicating during an emergency or disaster is unclear to most respondents.
- **Flu pandemic is a concern:** A majority of respondents are concerned that a flu pandemic will have a severe impact on the community.
- **Evacuation procedures are not clear:** The process for emergency evacuation is not clear to most respondents.
- **Education for emergency preparedness is needed:** Respondents do not know what they are supposed to do during an emergency or disaster.
- **Flooding is a concern in various neighborhoods:** Respondents are concerned about how to respond during a flooding situation.
- **Volunteers are critical:** Overwhelmingly, respondents believe that volunteer organizations are critical to providing a successful crisis response.
- **Basic services are adequate:** Most respondents are content with daily emergency services from the police and fire departments.
- **Overall, respondents' perception is that Alexandria is not ready for a major disaster or emergency.**

Respondents feel that Alexandria is not ready to deal with a major disaster



Question 1 - Is Alexandria disaster ready? The City's leadership has made major efforts to prepare for any emergency---natural or man-made. Based on your own experience, do you believe the City is prepared to handle any major emergency or disaster that may arise?

Respondents' comments:

- Poor evacuation capabilities within the city
- The city lacks emergency response education
- Flooding and flood response by the city is problematic
- Respondents with emergency background are mistrustful of the city's level of preparedness
- Traffic will be unmanageable in a disaster
- City's response for weather related events, such as snow removal, is poor
- Old Town is favored over other areas for emergency response efforts
- Lack of news regarding Alexandria's preparedness activities



Respondents feel that the City has taken basic measures for emergency preparedness but it's not enough

Question 2 - What is the City doing successfully that gives you confidence that Alexandria and its respondents are prepared to handle any major emergency?

Respondents' comments:

- Educating the elderly is a concern
- The city is good at responding to standard daily emergencies
- The city has distributed some emergency materials
- There is evidence that the city has performed some emergency planning
- Residents do not know how to respond in the event of an emergency
- There is a lack of knowledge regarding the City's preparedness

Respondents recommend increasing emergency and hospital services



Question 3 - Do you believe the City could improve its "readiness" and, if so, how should it improve?

Respondents' comments:

- The city needs to provide more education on emergency preparedness.
- Hospital "surge" services must improve.
- Hospital Emergency Room services require more staffing during normal hours and emergencies.
- The city lack's an evacuation plan.
- The city lack's a contingency plan.
- Educate the public on emergency communications and the city's emergency plan.
- Enhance emergency communications between the city and residents.



Respondents generally rank the city's emergency preparedness low at 4 out of 10.

Question 4 - On a scale of one to 10 (one =low and 10=high), where would you rank "emergency preparedness" vis a vis the City's other major responsibilities?

Respondents' comments:

- Average rating was 4.25 out of 10, where 1 is low and 10 is high.
- One respondent asked, "how much is the city willing to spend on preparedness?"

Respondents offered mixed responses regarding their personal emergency preparedness, half felt prepared and half were not prepared



Question 5 - Do you, individually, believe yourself and your family to be "prepared" and "ready" to handle any major emergency occurrence if it were to occur in Alexandria?

Respondents' comments:

- Respondents asked how they would contend with lengthy power outages and lack of food and water?
- Respondents felt they would need more personal preparedness.

Respondents believe effective preparedness means the city must provide education in emergency preparedness and a strong response during a crisis



Question 6 - In your view, what are the key features of "effective preparedness"? In what priority order would you rank these key features?*

Respondents' comments:

- The city must explain how it will communicate during an emergency.
- Residents need personal emergency plans for their families.
- The public needs to be trained in emergency response.
- Residents lack knowledge about shelter availability and location.
- The city needs to provide a larger investment in emergency preparedness.
- The city should provide strong emergency response, and transportation and supplies for residents.

*Residents did not provide ranked responses on this question because most only provided a single example of effective preparedness.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that volunteer groups were critical to the success of Alexandria's emergency readiness



Question 7 - To what degree(scale of 1 to 10) do you believe volunteer organizations are essential to any successful preparation and response to natural or man-made disasters, and how critical do you view their participation in Alexandria's "readiness"?

Respondents' comments:

- Volunteer groups are essential to emergency response efforts.
- State and local groups are also essential to emergency response.
- Government agencies that provide disaster response must coordinate their response activities with volunteers.
- Volunteers must have confidence in the emergency response system.



Respondents feel that a flu pandemic will have a devastating impact on the city

Question 8 - What impact do you think an outbreak of pandemic flu in the United States would have on your family and or business?

- Respondents' comments:**
- A flu pandemic will have devastating results on the city.
 - Businesses will suffer greatly from the flu pandemic.
 - Citizens were concerned about receiving medical care, their personal safety and the impact on the city at large during a pandemic.
 - The city is prepared for the flu.
 - Planning for the flu pandemic is needed.

Respondents are looking for the city to be proactive in its approach to business and associations

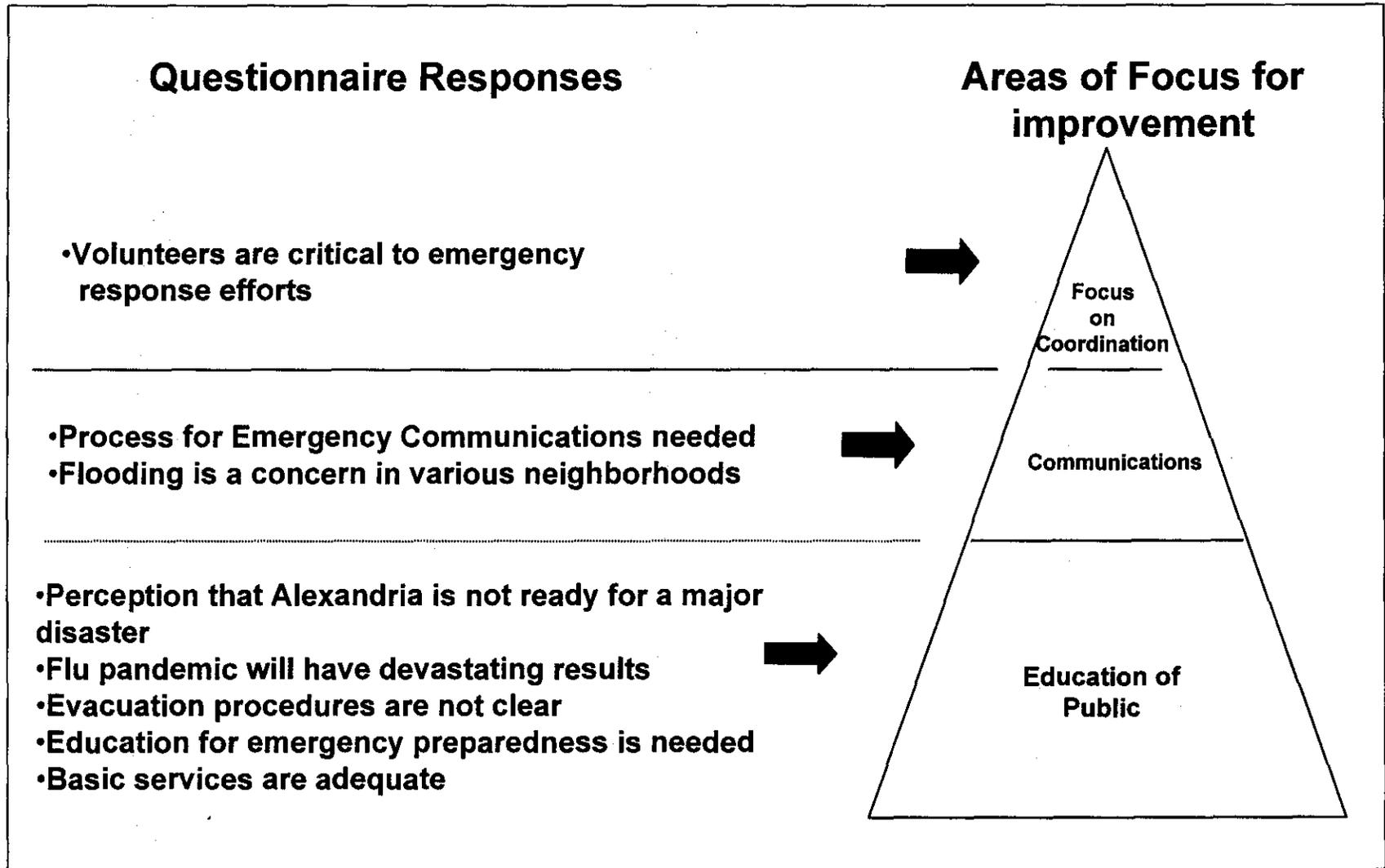
Question 9 - Now that you have discussed the status of our City's "readiness", what specific recommendations would you like to make to prepare Alexandrians for any emergency

Respondents' comments:

The city should:

- Work with civic associations to implement emergency preparedness.
- Leverage reciprocal emergency response agreements with counties other than those in close proximity.
- Develop connectors to the Eisenhower Corridor.
- Approach businesses and associations regarding emergency preparedness.
- Develop an emergency response plan for the 8,500 Patent and Trade Office (PTO) workers.
- Provide better flood control and response in Eisenhower valley.
- Educate residents on evacuation.
- Coordinate emergency communications between government agencies.
- Strengthen emergency related communications.

Questionnaire responses indicated 3 key areas for improvement



Recommendations



Based on Questionnaire responses, the city should explore the following areas to improve residents' perceptions of emergency preparedness efforts:

Education of Public

- Increase resident awareness of city's emergency preparedness by all means possible including: the Alexandria Newsletter, Alexandria City web page, E-News, DASH buses, and YouTube.
- Educate residents on how they will be notified in the event of an emergency and what emergency response actions they are supposed to follow.
- Develop a list of emergency preparedness recommendations for civic associations.
- Explain why evacuation is normally impractical and a measure of last resort.

Communications

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Focus on Coordination

- Explore opportunities for using additional volunteers at city agencies during emergencies and disasters.
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