DISASTER RECOVERY REVIEW FOR KEY CITY OF ROCHESTER OPERATIONS RECORDS

Prepared for:
City Clerk/Records Management Officer
City of Rochester, New York

Charles Zettek Jr.
Director, Government Management Services
Project Director

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June, 2001

SUMMARY

In August, 2000, CGR was engaged by the City of Rochester's Records Management Officer (RMO), who is also the City Clerk, to undertake a disaster recovery planning survey for a representative cross section of major city departments. CGR surveyed 12 departments, and reviewed 35 different records series at 22 locations, to identify possible issues that departments might face if key records series were damaged or destroyed due to a disaster at those locations, such as a fire or flood.

CGR found that a number of departments have thought through records management issues and have taken appropriate steps to protect their critical records, or at least have sufficient back-up to permit the operations to recover quickly.

CGR did, however, find a number of instances where important records series should be replicated and/or further protected and/or backed up. In several cases, CGR identified historically significant records which should be protected as soon as possible. CGR recommends that the City, through the RMO, should seek funding to protect these records and provide for backups to these records.

In addition, CGR found that the departments maintain their own records inventories in different formats and in different levels of detail. CGR recommends that the City, through the RMO, should seek funding for a large Inventory and Planning grant for the purposes of updating the master city records inventory and identifying which record series are critical to city operations.

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OVERVIEW

CGR was engaged by the City of Rochester to develop a disaster recovery plan for City records based upon a grant received from the State Archives and Records Administration (SARA). Given the size of the grant, CGR and the City's Records Management Officer (RMO) agreed that CGR would identify a disaster recovery plan for at least the top priority site for each of the City's major operating departments, which would be expected to include approximately 30 records series at various sites in the departments. In fact, CGR reviewed 35 records series, located in 12 different departments.

The intent of this project was to:

❖ Identify and inventory records at a given site,

❖ Identify what records are considered to be vital to the operations at the site,

❖ Identify the risk factors that might affect the integrity and/or availability of those records, and

❖ Assess the business impact of any records being lost or destroyed,

❖ Develop recommendations for cost-effective methods of protecting the records or otherwise replacing them so that the business operations of each site can be maintained.

Once the project was initiated, it became clear that CGR's approach should be to develop a thorough understanding of how the records series were used in the day-to-day business operations of each department. CGR could then determine what steps the department should take to minimize the impact of a disaster at the site where the records were kept. Given this increased emphasis on "front end" identification and description, CGR elected not to write this report as a cookbook disaster recovery plan for individual sites. Rather, CGR has described in detail why the important records series it identified should receive additional

management attention from the RMO and city departments, and how to proceed to begin to address the issues identified.

CGR prepared a preliminary report which was submitted to the RMO in December, 2000 based on a sample cross-section of departments. This final report includes the assessment and recommendations for all of the records series reviewed.

PROJECT APPROACH

As a starting point, CGR developed a general survey questionnaire which was distributed to all City departments. Twelve departments returned the questionnaire and each identified the three operations in the department that would be most critically affected if the records in that operation were damaged or destroyed. CGR subsequently interviewed 49 individuals, including key contacts, personnel directly involved in operations identified as critical, and City staff who direct the three areas most relevant to records management or disaster planning: John Noble, Archives and Records Center (Department of Finance); Thomas Green, Information Systems (Department of Finance), and Ralph Privitere, Emergency Coordinator (Rochester Fire Department).

CGR reviewed records in 12 departments:

1) Communications
2) Community Development
3) Economic Development
4) Emergency Communications
5) Environmental Services
6) Finance
7) Fire
8) Law
9) Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET)
10) Parks, Recreation and Human Services
11) Police
12) Rochester Public Library (RPL)

CGR also reviewed the City's Emergency Plan and any records inventories provided by individual departments.

CGR discussed with each department all of the areas identified in their initial survey response. In addition, as a result of interviews with department personnel, two series not originally identified in the surveys were added to CGR's review.

By the completion of the project, CGR had reviewed 35 records series, in 22 separate locations, in 12 different departments.

CORE OBSERVATIONS

CGR offers a number of observations based on our assessment of how key records series are managed in the 12 departments.

Although each department keeps its own list of the record series it is responsible for, this information is not systematically maintained. The last complete citywide SARA inventory was done approximately 10 years ago. That inventory record is kept only in the City's records center. The RMO does not have direct access to the list of all records series in City government, and there is no list which identifies the priority of records that are being kept throughout the City. Each department has been left to its own to determine what the critical records are and how to provide for them.

When the project plan for this study was first developed, the specific work objective envisioned focusing on specific _sites_ to identify Disaster and Business Recovery issues. However, CGR found that departments did not focus as much on sites as on specific records _series._ Thus, the emphasis of the project shifted somewhat to consider the disaster and business recovery implications for key records series. A consequence of this shift in focus was that CGR needed to evaluate more than 30 series, but fewer than 30 sites.

In most departments CGR evaluated, City staff had thought about records disaster and business recovery issues, and had identified what issues should be addressed. However, the response to these issues varied significantly from department to department. In

some cases, departments have sufficiently thought through and planned for what is needed to continue their business operations in the face of reasonably predictable disaster possibilities, and have obtained the resources needed (e.g. backup copies off-site, fireproof safes, etc.) In some cases, resource needs that have been identified have not been met, due to funding constraints within the overall City budget. Divisions in some departments have identified potential problems, but have not been able to devote the time and resources needed to address the problems. In a few cases, divisions have not considered their records issues serious enough to warrant taking action.

Three of the 12 departments – Finance, NET and RPL – have thought through records management issues and have either addressed the three top disaster recovery issues that they had self-identified or are addressing them now (e.g., Finance's exploration of a reciprocal arrangement with the City School District to provide backup for Information Systems operations). CGR found no major outstanding issues for the top three priorities in those three departments that require immediate attention. CGR also found that a fourth department – Communications – does not have significant records issues because it requires only access to communications tools to maintain operations.

For these reasons, CGR did not identify the need to develop a separate disaster recovery plan for each of these departments. Standard emergency and disaster response procedures covered in the City's Emergency Plan provide sufficient direction for those departments.

Within the other eight departments, CGR identified numerous record series in need of attention in specific and very different ways. CGR concluded that the most useful result for the city's RMO would be for CGR to break our findings and recommendations into priorities for action. Therefore, CGR has identified four priority levels, based upon the issues found for the various records series. The priorities are:

❖ **Critical** – issues which apply to a record series which is unique, irreplaceable and should have immediate attention to resolve disaster recovery management issues. In the two cases identified as critical, the record series identified contain irreplaceable data

for which no known backup exists, and where it would be difficult or impossible to re-create the data from any other known source.

❖ *Serious* - issues which apply to a record series that needs to be backed up and/or managed in a better way where there is a potentially serious impact on significant services to the public if the existing records are lost or damaged in a disaster

❖ *Significant* – issues which apply to a record series that should be backed up and/or managed in a different way where loss of the records as they currently exist would have a significant impact on the department's ability to conduct its routine operations.

❖ *Other* – issues which apply to a record series where some change in management of the records could improve department operations, even though the information could be retrieved from other sources in the event of a disaster.

TOP PRIORITY – CRITICAL ISSUES

Cemetery Records

At Mt. Hope Cemetery the City is in grave risk of losing original, unduplicated documents that are not only essential to daily operations, but also have valuable historical significance. These are records the City needs to keep in perpetuity. The status of vital records at Riverside Cemetery is similar and also of critical concern. Mt. Hope's situation is more urgent only because the cemetery is older and larger, its records have had far greater use and are in more deteriorated condition than Riverside's. However, any grant secured by the City hopefully could be used to address critical issues for both cemeteries, since both operate with original documents dating to the 1800s.

In summary, information is entered by hand in cemetery books today in virtually the same way it was entered in 1838, the year the city opened Mt. Hope. Vital records are not computerized in any way. The hand-written ledgers, including those dating back to the last century, are all original. They are used regularly, often many times in a single day. There are no backup copies for most of these documents, and the limited microfilm copies that do exist

are inadequate. Microfilm copies are missing information, and thousands of entries are written in difficult-to-decipher script with ink that is up to 162 years old.

At Mt. Hope, records are falling apart, some information is already very difficult to read, there are holes in some pages, pages are loose, torn and falling out. Covers are falling off numerous books. Some books are taped together with binding tape. However, without these books, the cemeteries cannot do their work. The books show who is buried where. Within 4-5 years some of the information in Mt. Hope's most important records may no longer be retrievable – not because of a disaster but because they are deteriorating before one's eyes. What's the impact of losing these records, through deterioration or disaster? According to Nancy Hilliard, Director of Cemeteries, "We could not bury the next day….We could not locate where people are. To recreate it [the records] would be almost impossible."

At Mt. Hope, all records are chronological, not alphabetical, which means finding information for individuals who do not know the date of an ancestor's death, is extremely time consuming. Both cemeteries (with 200 acres and 375,000 persons buried at Mt. Hope and 123 acres and 75,000 persons buried at Riverside) are managed using record management processes which don't seem to have changed since the 1800s.

Mt. Hope is unique, and not only because it is the final resting place of Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and other notables. It is the first of the great American Victorian cemeteries to be developed by a municipality. No other U.S. municipality, to the director's knowledge, owns a cemetery as large as Mt. Hope. "Most we know of are 20 – 80 acres."

As far as CGR could find, the City has never requested a grant to preserve and protect cemetery records. Nancy Hilliard, the cemetery director, has applied for capital improvement funds in the past, but Thomas Green, head of Information Systems, says the cemeteries' needs outstrip the technology budget he has available.

The Rochester Genealogical Society has stepped in to input information from some of the oldest internment records at Mt.

Hope.   Although the Society's work is valuable it is not proceeding, on a volunteer basis, at a rate that is acceptable. In 10 years, only a small fraction of the vital records have been inputted into a computer program. At this rate the Society cannot save the records fast enough. Deterioration has a huge head start.

None of the records at Mt. Hope are stored in a fireproof, waterproof, or secure location. Years ago there was a fireproof vault at Mt. Hope but in removing asbestos the City ruined the vault.

CGR believes that original maps at Mt. Hope may also be at risk. The maps have been duplicated, but because originals are considered valuable in sales solicitations, many apparently see regular use.

Recommendation 1

The City should seek grant or other funding and/or collaborations with other local groups to create duplicates of these records for daily operations, and preserve the originals, which are unique historic documents. (Note – application was submitted following CGR's preliminary report in December 2000).

Water Bureau Records

At 10 Felix Street, headquarters for the Water Bureau, the City is at great risk of losing records that are essential to operate, maintain, and upgrade Rochester's water system. The most important records are 600 "field books" that provide detailed information on water mains, valves, and fire hydrants. A second critical series involves some 3,000 one-of-a-kind maps, plans, schematics, and drawings that would be impossible to replace. All of these records are stored in one large room, along with essential computer data and the only backup tapes. In the memorable words of a staff member, "If fire struck this room, we would be wiped out." Fire and lightening have struck the Water Bureau facility in the past, but have not harmed the records area. However, even an act of vandalism could have a devastating impact on the City.

Field Books

The field books have been compiled, on an on-going basis, since before 1900. They provide essential data on the 600 miles of water mains within the contiguous City limits and the water transmission system linking Rochester and its water source at Hemlock Lake. Virtually all major Water Bureau activities are dependent on these books.

If they were destroyed or damaged, it would impossible to reconstruct most of the information in them. Maps that have been developed from field notes and sketches contain only part of the information essential to water operations. Many system features (e.g., location of joints, location of vertical bends) are noted only in field notes. The books are complete but if the City loses any portion it will face situations where it will have to dig – physically uncover parts of the water system – to obtain needed information.

Field books contain 80-100 pages of data. About 95% of the books are in good condition, but 5% show signs of wear, with torn covers and loose pages. Many of the oldest books are written in lead pencil, old inks, or script that is becoming increasingly difficult to read, yet the information in these old books is still relevant. The older the book, the more likely the City has replaced the water main section it describes. As piping is replaced, the Bureau updates corresponding maps, but most original pipes are left underground, due to the high cost of removal.

Every time the City or a contractor wants to put a hole in the ground to provide some type of service or construct something, a "stakeout" request is made to the Water Bureau. The Bureau relies on its maps and field books to determine water main location, depth, size, etc. In the past year, the Bureau responded to 10,000 stakeout requests.

The books are in an open bookcase and are particularly vulnerable to fire, theft, and the ravages of time and repeated use. The Bureau is now discussing scanning these books, with the help of an intern under the supervision of an engineer. Cost estimates have not been developed, but staff estimates the project will take "two man years".

Maps, Plans, Schematics, and Drawings

The Water Bureau has approximately 3,000 essential maps, plans, schematics, and drawings for which no duplicates currently exist. They include:

- 700 40-scale mylars (1 inch = 40 feet of piping)
- 30 400-scale mylars (e.g., used by technicians in the field, among other uses)
- 700 40-scale hard copies
- 400 easement maps
- 100 conduit mylars
- 70 Conduit #2 maps
- 90 Conduit #3 maps
- 400 upland/conduit drawings (e.g., Hemlock Lake gatehouses, dams, spillways)
- 30 drawings, Mt. Read transmission line

CGR examined a number of the unique maps, which date as far back as the late 1800s. Many are the original "as built" maps of the water system. Some are oversized and/or on linen or other unusual papers. Staff refer to them regularly for a range of information, including details about reservoirs, building materials, sizes, and dimensions. The most unusual map in the collection is a 100-foot scroll on linen paper, dating to 1874, that describes the entire City water system at that time. This scroll is currently useful in providing essential information on alignment, depth of cover, and other details. Although most of the unique maps are in excellent condition, one particularly valuable set has a makeshift cover, consisting of cardboard pages that have been taped together.

These maps are stored in regular cabinets. None have ever been duplicated (although copies do exist for some 3,000-4,000 other maps and drawings). Staff members believe it would take a very sophisticated scanner, costing an estimated $20,000, and appropriate expertise to duplicate the maps and other drawings.

Recommendation 2

CGR believes that the City should take a multi-pronged approach to the critical records issues in the Water Bureau. Four ways to proceed would be to:

- *Develop an aggressive plan to scan the 600 field books in the Water Bureau, and store one set offsite. If outside resources are needed, the City should request grant funding for this project in the next available grant cycle.*

- *Develop cost estimates and seek grant funds to duplicate the 3,000 essential maps, plans, schematics, and drawings in the Bureau for which no duplicates exist.*

- *Immediately develop a place and a process for storing copies of Water Bureau computer backup tapes offsite.*

   - *Address as soon as possible the issue of records security in the new Water Bureau facility, scheduled to be built on the current Felix Street site within 3-5 years. Design discussions are currently underway. Consider now the best way to protect the Bureau's critical records (e.g., fire and waterproof safe, vault).*

SECOND PRIORITY – SERIOUS ISSUES

Hazardous Materials Records

The top three priority issues for the Fire Department (RFD) did not include Hazardous Materials records. However, based on interviews with Ralph Privitere, who serves a dual role as RFD Deputy Chief for Training and Special Operations and as the City's Emergency Coordinator, and other members of his group, CGR recommends that Hazardous Materials records receive priority attention.

It is clear from site visits and interviews with a number of RFD officials that there are numerous records issues for the Department, which is under substantial legal mandate to maintain extensive records for long time periods. All of the RFD's issues stem from the fact that departmental record keeping is heavily paper based and that an electronic management system, which is under discussion, is needed. As others have pointed out in previous funding requests, there is little question that the current status of Hazardous Materials information is inadequate and that

the RFD's ability to respond to emergency situations properly is constrained by the ability to rapidly access Hazardous Materials information.

Since 1986, hundreds of businesses and industries in Rochester have been mandated by federal law to send to the Fire Department reports on chemicals used in their workplaces. The information provided by business and industry fills drawer upon drawer of files in the RFD Special Operations office. It is all paper based, in different formats, and ranges from one page on a small business to hundreds of pages of single-spaced printouts for a large company. There are frequently as many as three to seven large folders filled with paper on a single company. It is not unusual, for example, for a company to list eight different locations for a single chemical, or to have hundreds of different chemicals listed. The problem, as summarized by Deputy Chief Privetere, is that "The information is monumental….It is not readily useful so we can protect ourselves and the community."

A hazardous material, if it interacts (e.g., with heat, water, alcohol, chemical) can change to another substance or create byproducts, which in turn can be more or less hazardous than the original material. To respond effectively to a hazardous materials incident, Special Operations staff members may have to manually read through voluminous materials, refer to a shelf of printed resource books, or glean information from information available on computer files, which are limited, or take all of these steps. [Computer files consist of approximately 2,500 chemicals regulated by the Department of Transportation when they are being transported, which may or may not pertain to the same material on site at a company.] "What is not at our fingertips," says the City's Emergency Coordinator, are the "critical pieces and contact information." Researching a situation can be especially problematic during the middle of the night, when the Special Operations office is closed and no one is on site to answer the phone and locate information in paper-based files.

There are, on average, 75 hazardous materials incidents in Rochester annually, ranging from the routine to the serious. What the RFD has identified as ideal would be to have a computer system that would provide information on hazardous materials,

their location, and their toxicity under specific conditions. In addition, such a system could be used to address related issues, such as the need to keep files on equipment tests and exposure reports for hazardous materials technicians, both active and retired personnel.

Recommendation 3

The City should seek grant or other funding to either build a separate easy-to-access computerized data base for its current hazardous materials records data base, or incorporate that data base into a new RFD electronic management system planned for the whole department. CGR believes that since the hazardous materials information management problem is universal throughout the state, that this would be an attractive project for an organization interested in funding an innovative solution that could be replicated around the state.

Emergency Communication Records

The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC), 321 West Main Street, needs a place and a process for storing critical records offsite. Currently OEC, which operates the 911 call center in Monroe County, stores all computer backup tapes and CD-ROMs on its premises. This situation puts the City in a particularly vulnerable position, since roughly 80% of OEC 's work is City-related (Police Department, Fire Department, and contract ambulance services). Any disaster that would disrupt the call center could potentially destroy or severely damage the only existing backup files.

OEC data is valuable information to maintain. Every year, for example, OEC receives 6,000 to 7,000 subpoenas from legal bodies (e.g., district attorney, private attorneys) for data contained in OEC computer files. The information that should be backed up offsite includes:

- Statistical data: listing number from which a call originated, wait time before call was answered, operator answering the call, disconnect time.
- Event data: showing what happened when a call went to a dispatcher and he/she arranged follow-up emergency service(s).

- Other specific information from the OEC computer (server): (1) Speedshift, a software program, lists payroll and work schedule information for the 24-hour operation and (2) the core database, the repository for complaint investigations, policies, discipline, etc.

In recent years the OEC, which logs 1.2 million calls annually, has moved away from paper reporting and has fully computerized its operations. Making additional backups, according to Craig Johnson, Operations Manager, presents no problem for his organization. The City owns the OEC building and property on which it is built, and all but three of the nearly 180 employees are City employees (reimbursed by Monroe County). The computers and equipment at OEC are owned by Monroe County, and the three computer room operators are county employees.

Recommendation 4

OEC should identify a designated place offsite and a process for storing such backups. Because OEC is a joint Rochester- Monroe County operation, the proposed site and process should be approved by both organizations.

Rochester Economic Development Corps (REDCo) Records

REDCo, a 501(c) 3 organization, was created in 1983 to do economic development activities for the City, which under municipal law it cannot do on its own. Although it is legally a separate entity, REDCo is managed by the City. It has a board largely composed of outside directors, $12-15 million in assets, and annually oversees $3 - 5 million in loan, grant, and other expenditures. All REDCo records, including the only complete set of minutes and resolutions, are kept in one large area on the ground floor of City Hall. The records, which are used daily, relate to numerous activities including:

Investments in real estate projects within the City

- Various loan and grant programs, including the Small Business Administration (SBA) loan program
- Economic development zones
- Applications for state and federal grants

It would be a relatively simple and inexpensive process to duplicate three large binders containing REDCo meeting minutes and resolutions. The information in these binders is used for various purposes (e.g., reports to the SBA, annual audits, reports to City Council, as proof a specific loan received board approval). Unless the City duplicates this information, stores it in a separate location, and updates it regularly, it is at risk, in the event of a serious disaster, of losing all legal record of what the board of directors approved and how they approved it.

It is not as easy to resolve other records issues for REDCo (e.g., SBA files, grant files, certain other files). These records are used frequently, staff add materials to files on an on-going basis, and files contain information that is to remain confidential, including personal net worth statements and individuals' tax returns. The most important files appear to be the SBA files, which fill one large cabinet. Like the binders mentioned above, SBA files are, and need to be, readily accessible to staff members.

Recommendation 5

The RMO and key Economic Development Department officials should meet and agree on how best to protect the most critical REDCo records (e.g., vault, fireproof safe) since only portions of files could be recreated in the event of a disaster. In addition, the department should immediately make copies of the three large binders containing REDCo meeting minutes and resolutions and store the duplicates in a separate location.

Various Police Records

There are numerous issues involving critical records in the Rochester Police Department (RPD). Some issues (e.g., water leaks in the property clerk's basement location) will be resolved when RPD moves to the new Public Safety Building (PSB) now under construction in downtown Rochester. The move will not fix other issues noted below.

Records Unit

At Headquarters, RPD has 135,000 active criminal files (26,000 of them on a computerized system, referred to as MoRIS, that includes arrests since December 1997). The Department also has 750,000 separate fingerprint files (all on paper, except for prints

taken since 1999 that are included in MoRIS). In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of index cards – similar to outmoded library card files – that are essential for identifying the location of appropriate paper-based fingerprints and crimes. There are no backups to these card files, and the Department will need to rely on information in them for decades to come. Information Systems personnel are designing a database program that could be used to computerize the card files, which contain an estimated 350,000 individual records. However, no plan exists currently for obtaining the resources for data entry of the information.

Recommendation 6

The RPD should request funding in its annual budget appropriation, or request special grant funding, for data entry of these records once the new database has been created.

Information Systems

There are several records issues facing the information systems unit of the RPD. Except as noted, there are no recommendations for immediate action, since current conditions preclude any short-term solutions. However, each of these items should be addressed in the move to the new PSB.

There is currently no power supply backup for the information systems computer control center.

- There is no smoke detector in this center, and the one small fire extinguisher does not meet code and is mounted incorrectly.

- Full tape backups of the computer environment are done weekly, and partial backups are done on a daily basis, but the tapes are stored in the same building.

Recommendation 7

Backup tapes should be stored at a different location.

- There is no storage area in the existing center. Computer discs, some valued at thousands of dollars apiece, are not secured, nor is there any place to secure them.

- The scanning system used by information systems to scan crime reports is not capable of meeting the department's demands – currently RPD is significantly behind in imaging reports. Backup of paper files could be a concern in the event of a fire.

Street Ownership Records

The Department of Environmental Services' (DES) Maps & Records office houses the only records that describe who owns the streets in Rochester. The information is contained on 3x5 index cards, either typed or hand-written, stored in eight small filing cabinet drawers at Maps & Records in City Hall.

Whenever the City abandons streets within its boundaries – for example, to accommodate a new development – it cannot legally take such a step without first determining who owns the streets in question. There are more than 566 miles of streets in Rochester, and the City has easements for their use. However, John DeForest, Manager of Maps and Surveys, estimates 70% to 80% of the streets are not owned by the City, but by individuals (a situation apparently common to the 13 original colonies). According to DeForest, "we deal with abandoned streets probably 50 times a year. Every week someone is here and that sends us to the file repeatedly." The cards tell you not only which individuals own specific portions of each street, but also show street name changes over the years. That fact is crucial when researching ownership because a street's name may have changed several times in the course of Rochester's history, and may change again in the future.

Recommendation 8

The department should seek funding, either in its operating budget, or through a grant, to put this information on an electronic database. Perhaps the information should become one element of the city's GIS database. At a minimum, a summer intern should make a copy of every card, and date each card, so that the City has at least a copy of the records as of the date they were copied.

THIRD PRIORITY – SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Attorney Working Papers

The City's Law Department faces some unique records issues. For example, it currently has no way of duplicating critical paper records created by attorneys on cases that could develop over the course of years and involve substantial dollars (e.g., notes where the attorneys have worked out theories, notes on impressions when they met with witnesses); no comprehensive, computerized method of tracking legal deadlines; no comprehensive, computerized system for knowing which original documents not belonging to the City are in its possession and where they are located. Many of these problems are related to the fact that the Law Department does not have, due to annual budget constraints, case management software. The estimated cost of such software is $20,000 to $25,000, according to the Corporation Counsel.

In addition, the Department has other issues, as a tour of the facility shows. Water leakage is a problem, as evidenced by obvious signs of previous leaks in various places throughout the Department. In fact, in one lawyer's office there are three "stickies" on the sloping ceiling denoting "leak" and prompting the attorney to strategically arrange her computer and files. Although leaks have not caused any real problems to date in the fourth-floor legal library, there is one receptacle strategically placed in the library to catch leaking water.

Tarps quickly placed when leaks have occurred have saved most computer files and paper records for the past seven years. Yet potential water leaks, especially if they should occur after hours or on weekends, could be costly, in terms of lost records, for the Department.

One major concern, noted by CGR, is that in the Department there are boxes of original documents on loan from legal firms or companies related to cases the City is working on. These boxes are heavy, numerous, dispersed throughout the Department, and for the most part, are originals that are not duplicated elsewhere. Recommending the boxes be stored centrally in a safe location is not a practical solution.

Recommendation 9

Until water leakage can be fixed or the Law Department moves to other offices, the water bucket and tarp solution is the only viable solution for the water leaks. However, a case management system would be a major improvement for tracking records and documents into and out of the department. CGR recommends the Corporation Counsel continue to request funding for a case management system through the City's budget process.

Building & Zoning Historic Sanborn Maps

In the Bureau of Building & Zoning offices at City Hall there are 812 maps, roughly two feet by 30 inches that date to 1911, and show every building and street and alley in Rochester. These historic maps were created by the Sanborn Co. of New York. They were updated professionally until 1961, and now are updated by the Bureau because the maps are considered valuable, not only to them, but to some other City departments. These maps, which the Bureau says are used frequently, cannot be replaced and have never been duplicated. Examples of the information available from these maps include: type of construction; existence of an elevator; width of street; chimney location; existence of sprinklers and/or fire alarm; location of water services; and use of a building or other features (e.g., if site once used as gas station, then viewer knows there are tanks and hazardous materials issues).

The Sanborn maps are on old paper, and some edges are just starting to tear. Buildings & Zoning is very protective of the maps and allows only two or three designated people to actually touch them.

Recommendation 10

The City should consider putting the Sanborn information on the GIS information database to minimize future daily use of the original maps. In addition, it may be possible to obtain historic preservation or other grant funding to make a working copy duplicate of these maps, as they clearly have historic value.

FOURTH PRIORITY – OTHER ISSUES

Property Ownership Transfer Records

CGR recommends the City revisit the issue of how to better protect property ownership transfer records for the 68,000 properties in the City. Currently both the original records and the microfiche duplicates are stored together in Maps & Records' City Hall offices. Although personnel in the department primarily use the microfiche copies, approximately 10% of the time the information they need is not readily available and they must refer to the original documents. In addition, personnel need to update, on an on-going basis, all property transfer records. For both of these reasons, it is not practical to simply duplicate these records and store them offsite in order to better protect them. Instead CGR suggests the City reexamine whether a fireproof, waterproof filing system should be purchased. Currently the files take up eight large filing cabinet drawers. Approximately 15 years ago Maps & Records investigated purchasing a fireproof cabinet but cabinets of that era were too heavy for City Hall.

Recommendation 11

The department should investigate newer technology fireproof cabinets which might be lighter weight.

Finance Division Records – Department of Economic Development

The Finance Division in Economic Development has files that are similar to what would be referred to as customer credit files if they were in a commercial bank. The City loans funds at below-market level, awards grants, and in other ways seeks to create, expand, or strengthen businesses in Rochester, retain jobs in the City, or grow the tax base. The Finance Division files relate to all of these efforts. The central file contains some 200 individual files. In addition, two staff members maintain their own files outside of the central file.

Records issues for the Finance Division are similar to those noted for REDCo. Both sets of records are located in the same ground-level offices in City Hall. Finance Division files for loan & grant programs – ranging from $15,000 to $20 million in value – are

critical records; portions of files are unique and could not be recreated in the event of a disaster; files need to be accessible to numerous staff members; and a significant portion of the information must remain confidential. In a commercial bank such files would be in a secure, separate area and files would be checked in and out.

Recommendation 12

Duplicating all records appears to CGR to be an unworkable and unwarranted solution. However, the department should consider instituting a procedure whereby central, unique records are logged in and out of a database and kept secure.

Commercial Lease Records – Bureau of Housing and Project Development

The Bureau of Housing and Project Development in City Hall should have a place and a process for backing up files for commercial leases. Currently there are about 20 such leases and overall they generate an estimated $60,000 to $70,000 a year in revenue for the City. Although the Law Department prepares the original lease documents, it does not keep copies. Alan Fitzpatrick, who oversees real estate operations, says records for commercial leases are now kept only in Housing and Project Development. The records for any given property are maintained for the term of the lease, which typically is five years with one or more five-year options to renew.

Recommendation 13

The Bureau should make one clean backup copy of each lease record and store it in a separate file cabinet. This would insure that these records could be easily retrieved if the originals were damaged or destroyed.

Vehicle Registrations and Titles in Equipment Services

Equipment Services, 954 Mt. Read Blvd., will be on the City's mainframe computer system by spring 2002. Once this occurs, the Department will be able to solve some of the backup issues it now has (e.g., tapes and floppy disk backups are stored next to, or very close to, the original data, which could render those backups useless in any disaster).

Given the plan to put Equipment Services on the mainframe, CGR suggests only one change for critical records in this Department. The original vehicle registrations and titles for the 1,200 pieces of equipment the City owns (e.g., plows, refuse vehicles, police cars, fire trucks) are stored in a small file box that sits on an outside window ledge in the office of the secretary who is responsible for them.

Recommendation 14

CGR recommends that the department purchase a small lockable, water and fireproof box for these essential records and store them in a more secure location.

CONCLUSION

In reviewing a sample of 35 records series that various city departments had self-identified as being critical to their operations, CGR found that number of situations where loss of that series by a disaster would have a crippling effect on the operations of the department. In several cases, one-of-a-kind records exist which are not only used on a daily basis, but there are virtually no back-ups of the records, or ways to re-create the information from other sources. In other cases, department operations would be severely hampered by the loss of the records series in its original form.

As a final recommendation, CGR believes that it would be to the City's advantage to conduct an updated inventory of all record series in all departments, and to make that inventory centrally available to the RMO as well as the departments. As the inventory is being updated, it would be very helpful to have all divisions and departments identify critical records series, and whether or not a

back-up exists, and where. The findings and recommendations in this report were based on interviews and inspection of records in only a representative cross section of all city departments and divisions. Since the sample records series were self-identified by the departments as being most critical, it is likely that the most visible critical records series have been identified and reviewed in this project. However, it is also likely that a more comprehensive review of all city records will turn up some additional records which should receive a high level of management attention, i.e. would be classified as Critical or Serious Issues.

Recommendation 15

The City should seek a Records Inventory and Planning grant that would be used to fund the following:

- *Create an updated, complete records inventory which will incorporate the information that currently exists in various forms at the department level and create a master city records inventory,*

- *Identify what record series are "critical" to city operations and then verify that each critical series is backed up and/or preserved appropriately.*

As a final note, CGR commends city staff for recognizing the value of records they use on a daily basis. To a person, the staff CGR interviewed agreed that if the resources were available, even more should be done to preserve and protect city operating records. This report provides an initial set of recommendations showing how the City could take steps to address these issues, especially so that a disaster does not ruin or destroy irreplaceable information that the City needs to efficiently provide services to the public.