

**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE: Overview of Planned Regional Emergency Management Program Activities for 2022**

**FROM: Gary Kent, CPA, CGA, ICD.D, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services**

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an overview of planned activities of Regional Emergency Management and Corporate Security for 2022 as required under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.9* and Ontario Regulation 380/04.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Regional Emergency Management and Corporate Security program will ensure the Region is compliant with the compliance requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.
  - Program activities that were modified or paused during the pandemic will be resumed over 2022, incorporating lessons learned and process improvements as necessary.
  - The updated Region of Peel Emergency Plan will be presented to the Emergency Management Program Committee in the spring of 2023.
  - The program will also resume work related to both business continuity planning and corporate security improvements.
  - The program will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to prepare for and respond to local emergencies as well as larger provincial and international events.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

The Region is required, under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.9* (the “Act”) and Ontario Regulation 380/04, to achieve the Essential Level Standard of an Emergency Management Program. To achieve this standard the municipality must comply with the 15 elements of the Act. Since 2003, the Region has successfully achieved the legislative requirements each year as verified by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

With the termination of the Region’s declared emergency on March 24, 2022 along with current and projected clinic operations, Regional Emergency Management and Corporate Security has begun to resume programs and operations that were paused or modified over the previous two years. Normally a summary of these activities would be provided to the Emergency Management Program Committee in the fall as required by the Act, however due to the municipal election cycle are being reported at this time.

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Over the duration of the pandemic, vaccination program and with several smaller emergency events that have occurred since the Region of Peel Emergency Plan (the “Plan”) was last updated in 2015, reflections and lessons learned have been collected and collated which will be incorporated in to the 2023 update to the Plan. Further, Corporate Security will continue to implement security improvements that were either paused or identified during the pandemic.

### **2. Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act Compliance Activities**

Annually, Regional Emergency Management is required to ensure that the Region remains compliant with requirements of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. Within the requirements are activities designed to ensure the Region is positioned to effectively respond to significant events or emergencies within the Region including exercises, training, planning and process improvements.

For the previous two years, compliance requirements have been modified by the province while communities concentrated on their pandemic and vaccination responses. At this time, it is assumed that the pre-pandemic compliance requirements will be required for 2022. Throughout 2022, Regional Emergency Management will track efforts towards meeting or exceeding the annual requirements with the intent of both achieving and submitting a compliance package to the province, no later than mid-December.

With respect to exercises and training, Regional Emergency Management will proceed with the planning and execution of both, albeit on smaller scales than in pre-pandemic years. Exercises will likely be in the form of tabletop scenarios in order for individual programs and services to implement their respective recovery strategies from the pandemic with larger exercises likely in 2023. Regional Emergency Management has traditionally provided classroom style training for stakeholders but recognizes the need to be able to deliver in both digital and in person settings. As such, staff have been updating existing content for use in both streams. This work will continue throughout 2022 with the piloting of digital sessions in the early fall.

In early April, the province informed the Region of its compliance with the Act for 2021. Appendix I of this report contains the confirmation notice that was received.

### **3. Region of Peel Emergency Plan Revisions**

Entering the pandemic, Regional Emergency Management had begun updating the Plan. With the activation for Regional Emergency Operations Centre, efforts were paused for the duration of 2020 and much of 2021. Efforts resumed in the fall of 2021 to continue the work but were subsequently paused during the Omicron surge resulting in the Plan not being ready for review at the May 2022 Emergency Management Program Committee meeting. Regional Emergency Management has resumed work on the Plan and will be commencing with an internal review process with relevant stakeholders so that the Plan may be presented at the May 2023 Emergency Management Program Committee.

With the additional time, Regional Emergency Management will work with stakeholders to advance supporting plans such as business continuity, departmental and divisional plans along with hazard and consequence specific plans. Through this effort, it is expected that significant progress will be made on updating current pandemic plans with the observations

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and lessons learned from our recent pandemic experience as requested at the November 4, 2021 Emergency Management Program Committee meeting.

Further, several of the recommendations identified through lessons learned processes of our pandemic response and smaller events, will be incorporated as appendices to the Plan. This will include training strategies to expand the functional understanding of emergency management practices such as the Incident Management System throughout all departments and divisions. In addition, in order to reinforce training, a multiyear exercise schedule will be included as an appendix. The aim of this appendix will be to not only coordinate the timing of exercises but also to systematically build on their complexity and where possible integrate regional exercises with those of other stakeholders such as our municipal and emergency services partners.

Further, staff will continue to coordinate and document joint planning efforts with external stakeholders such as our municipal partners. One area of specific attention will be review and update of mutual aid agreements with stakeholders within the Region of Peel as well organizations elsewhere in the province.

### **4. Continued Vaccination Program Support**

With the Corporate Security program joining Regional Emergency Management and the opening of the fixed vaccination sites in March of 2021, significant effort was and continues to support the Region's vaccination efforts. While the recent tempo has slowed around fixed vaccination sites, both Regional Emergency Management, through the Duty Officer, and Corporate Security will continue to be actively involved in the clinic operations. Specifically, the Duty Officer remains the reporting point for any critical events at the clinic sites, which are then prioritized and actioned with appropriate stakeholders such as Corporate Security, Health and Safety and others.

Both program areas have begun to resume work that was paused for the pandemic response and vaccination program but can and will adjust their priorities in the event there is surge in vaccination efforts.

### **5. Business Continuity and Security Planning**

Significant work in both business continuity and security planning were paused over the past two years. In both areas, over the pandemic, many observations and lessons learned were identified which will need to be incorporated into both short and long-term improvements.

With respect to business continuity, previous timelines for business disruptions were measured in weeks or in extreme cases a month or two. The duration of the pandemic has not only resulted in a need to revisit these timelines, but to do so with the understanding that our planning needs to account for much greater disruption periods. Further, by embracing newer technologies, many of the pre-pandemic assumptions of disruption impacts have been toughly tested and either mitigated or resolved. As such there is a need to both review and recalibrate our business continuity plans, incorporating as many of the lessons learned from our pandemic experience.

With the resumption of normal use of our regional facilities and spaces by both clients and staff along with planned capital improvements of sites, Corporate Security has already resumed with supporting improvements to the regional physical security and supporting

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security processes. In addition, staff have transitioned onsite security services to a new vendor at many regional locations over the course of late fall and early winter.

### 6. Emergent Issues Response and Support

While Regional Emergency Management focuses on planning, response and recover efforts for mainly local and regional events, a growing trend of external events with local impacts or consequences has been noted over the past five years. Events that had previously been supported mainly by the adjacent areas such as flooding and forest fires in Northern Ontario have recently been supported locally by both the region and our municipal partners.

For at least the last five years, the Region is annually asked by the province, to consider being a host community as part of contingency planning for flood and forest fire activity in Northern Ontario. Last year the province piloted a new model of operations for host communities where a coordinated partnership of Provincial, third party and regional / municipal service providers support evacuees at a hosting site with activities in the surrounding communities. This model was used to support individuals at a host site in the City of Mississauga in 2021 and would be the preferred model of operations should there be a need to host evacuees in 2022.

Further, an increase in the frequency of international events where regional services have been called upon to support displaced individuals has been noted over the past five years. Current events within the Ukraine may result in the need to form a coordinated regional working group with linkages to supporting external stakeholders.

Where operational capacity exists and there is a need for local supports, Regional Emergency Management will work with internal and external stakeholders to support provincial, national and international emergencies as appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

Regional Emergency Management and Corporate Security will ensure that the Region remains compliant with the requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and is positioned to effectively respond and support emergencies within the region and abroad. Further the program will continue to identify and implement operational and processes improvements, including those learned during the pandemic, with our internal and external stakeholders.

Lastly, an updated Region of Peel Emergency Plan will be presented to the Emergency Management Program Committee in the spring of 2023.

## APPENDICES

Appendix I – 2021 *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* Compliance Notice

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