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PROPOSED REGION OF YORK EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BY-LAW

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 23, 2004, from the Chief Administrative Officer:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council enact a by-law to adopt an Emergency Management Program in accordance with the *Emergency Management Act*.
2. The Regional Solicitor be directed to prepare a by-law for presentation to Council.

2. PURPOSE

The *Emergency Management Act* requires municipalities to develop and implement an emergency management program and adopt the program through a by-law. The By-law must include:

1. An Emergency Plan;
2. Identification and assessment of various hazards and risks to public safety that could give rise to emergencies and identification of the facilities and other elements of the infrastructure that are at risk of being affected by emergencies;
3. Training programs and exercises for employees of the Region and other persons with respect to the provision of necessary services and the procedures to be followed in emergency response and recovery activities;
4. Public education on risks to public safety and on public preparedness for emergencies; and
5. Any other element required by the standards for emergency management programs as prescribed by the *Emergency Management Act*.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the actions taken by the Region of York to comply with the *Emergency Management Act* requirements.

3. BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States, the Ontario Government moved to implement comprehensive reforms to emergency and disaster management, consistent with international best practices. Bill 148 changed the name of the *Emergency Plans Act* to the *Emergency Management Act*. The revised Act mandated provincial ministries, municipalities and designated agencies, boards, and

commissions to be prepared for major emergency situations. The proclamation of the *Emergency Management Act* in 2003 also shifted the focus for dealing with emergencies.

Previously, the focus was on preparation of plans, covering mainly emergency preparedness and response arrangements. Now, the focus has shifted to the development, implementation and maintenance of comprehensive emergency management programs, which are mandatory for Ontario communities and provincial ministries. These programs must be premised on a risk management approach and will ultimately incorporate a full range of measures to reduce priority risks, including prevention/mitigation; preparedness, response, and recovery measures.

Under the *Emergency Management Act*, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has been granted authority to make regulations setting standards for the development, implementation and maintenance of emergency management programs required by communities and provincial ministries. To address the increasing public safety risks in Ontario, the *Emergency Management Act* requires each municipality to develop a Community Emergency Management Program.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Emergency Management Ontario has developed the general requirements for the community emergency management program. This framework is based on the Partnerships Towards Safer Communities Programs, which is administered by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs. The community emergency management program has been divided into three levels of requirements: Essential, Enhanced and Comprehensive. It should be noted that the province has not yet enacted provincial regulations prescribing the requirements for these program levels. However, York Region has met the Essential Level Program requirements.

The *Emergency Management Act* requires municipalities to develop and implement an emergency management program that is adopted by Council By-law containing the following components:

- Emergency plan;
- Identification of critical infrastructure;
- Hazard identification and risk assessments;
- Training programs and exercises for employees and other persons with respect to the provision of necessary services and procedures to be followed in emergency responses and recovery activities; and
- Public education on risks to public safety and on public preparedness for emergencies.

The Region has undertaken the following actions to comply with these mandatory requirements.

4.1 Regional Emergency Plan

The Plan has been updated administratively to ensure the accuracy of contact information and general procedures and to conform to *Emergency Management Act* requirements and terminology.

4.2 Identification of Critical Infrastructure and Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment

The Region retained the services of the Zeta Group in early 2003 for the purpose of conducting a Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment to serve as a rational foundation to plan and develop risk mitigation strategies and emergency preparedness programs and services in York Region and its constituents. Since hazards and risks are not constrained by municipal boundaries, the approach of the study was to perform a region-wide risk analysis including the nine area municipalities in the Region. Therefore, the report contains sections that pertain to the Region and its constituent municipalities as a whole, as well as a separate Appendix for each jurisdiction containing its risk analysis and critical infrastructure identification and categorization results.

4.3 Training and Exercises

The *Emergency Management Act* requires that the emergency management program contain training programs and exercises for York Region employees and other persons with respect to the provision of necessary services and the procedures to be followed in emergency response and recovery activities. The Region provides training and in partnership with our emergency management major stakeholders and conducts exercises to support the Region's emergency plan.

The Region coordinated various initiatives to improve its response capability as a result of the lessons learned from the Power Outage and the SARS emergencies. Facility-specific emergency and evacuation training and exercises have also been conducted.

4.4 Public Education

The emergency management program must include public education on risks to public safety and on public preparedness for emergencies. Key regional activities in this area include:

- Developing and providing, in partnership with local municipalities, information to the public about hazards in their communities and how to prepare for emergencies and disasters;
- Planning and coordinating various public emergency preparedness initiatives, including exhibitions in Georgina and Newmarket and dissemination and translation of emergency preparedness handouts and materials.

4.5 Next Steps

Ongoing work is underway to enhance the Region's emergency management program components against the Framework for Community Emergency Management Program, advocated by Emergency Management Ontario. The key Emergency Management Program initiatives for 2005 will include:

- Developing a new emergency plan framework and components, including the development of a Corporate Business Continuity Plan;
- Conducting employee training and exercises;
- Providing the public and regional employees with information on emergency preparedness;
- Developing an emergency preparedness strategy for people with special needs;
- Developing and implementing an annual program review process; and
- Reviewing and maintaining preparedness arrangements such as Mutual Aid Agreements, and Memoranda of Understanding.

4.6 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Emergency Management Program represents another initiative towards achieving the goals in *Vision 2026* through supporting safe and secure communities and enhancing our human resources and partnerships. The emergency management program best protects public safety and creates disaster-resilient communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Program costs of \$125,000 to achieve the key Emergency Management Program initiatives have been included as part of the 2005 proposed budget submission to Council. There will be no increase over the 2004 approved budget for these initiatives as a result of the completion of 2004 program priorities and re-allocation of program costs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

At this time, it is not possible for the region or municipalities to fully assess their level of program compliance with the proposed Enhanced and Comprehensive Levels because provincial regulations remain under development. The designated Community Emergency Management Coordinators believe that there are partnership opportunities with respect to conducting risk assessments, training and exercises and public education activities to avoid program cost increases and duplication of effort.

7. CONCLUSION

The *Emergency Management Act* requires municipalities to develop and implement an Emergency Management Program including the Emergency Plan by Council by-law. As

a result of the actions take by the Region to comply with the five legislative program requirements prescribed by the *Emergency Management Act*, it is recommended that Council approve the Emergency Management Program By-law and revised Emergency Plan. The Plan has been updated to administratively conform to the *Emergency Management Act*. The Region can play a key role as a service provider and a partner to the local municipalities by assisting them to increase their emergency management capacity through a joint emergency management process.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.