

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Finance and Administration
January 13, 2022

Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

Emergency Management Program Annual Compliance Review

1. Recommendations

Council receive this report for information.

2. Summary

This report provides an update to Council on activities undertaken by York Region to comply with annual requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04 in 2021 while actively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to legislative requirements, this report also provides an overview of other emergency preparedness and response activities undertaken by the Emergency Management Program to enhance York Region's resilience, as well as priorities for 2022.

Key Points:

- York Region has completed all the annual regulatory requirements of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04 in 2021
- The York Region Business Continuity Program enabled the corporation to ensure continued delivery of high priority business functions and services during the ongoing COVID-19 response
- York Region Emergency Management continues to support the northern six municipalities to deliver emergency management programs on a cost recovery basis (current agreement to 2022)

3. Background

York Region has consistently met the annual regulatory compliance for its Emergency Management Program since legislation came into effect in 2004

Each year Council receives an update on York Region's Emergency Management program and any necessary updates to the bylaw and/or Emergency Plan. To fulfill the Provincially legislated requirements, municipalities must verify they have completed all the elements outlined in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, which include:

- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
- Identification of critical infrastructure
- An emergency plan
- Training and education
- Emergency exercise
- Public education

York Region’s past investments in emergency preparedness, planning, training, exercises, public education and business continuity have enabled the corporation to meet the ongoing challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic

The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any other emergency event previously encountered in York Region’s 49-year history. On March 23, 2020, the Regional Chair signed an Emergency Declaration in response to COVID-19. Almost two years after activating the Region’s emergency management structures, COVID-19 continues to impact all areas of the corporation, which are supported through the established emergency and crisis management structures, that York Region is able to pivot to virtual delivery approaches to meet the unique challenges poised by COVID, efficiently and safely.

4. Analysis

In addition to completing all mandatory elements for 2021, York Region partnered with local municipalities to assess and rank hazards and threats

Each municipality must conduct an annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment to ensure that Emergency Management Programs are based on the identification and assessment of local hazards.

In the fall of 2021, York Region partnered with local municipalities, York Regional Police (YRP), and other stakeholders to conduct its annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. Regional staff, subject matter experts, and local municipal Community Emergency Management Coordinators and both conservation authorities reviewed the likelihood and consequences of the hazards most likely to affect York Region.

The top threats identified in 2021 through this exercise are noted in Table below.

Top Hazards on the 2021 York Region Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

Hazard	Level of Risk
Infectious Diseases (COVID-19)	Very High
Electrical Energy Outage (winter)	High
Infectious Diseases (Other)	High

Hazard	Level of Risk
Cyber Attack	High
Winter Weather	Moderate
Water/Wastewater Disruption	Moderate

In coordination with local municipalities, the critical infrastructure database has been reviewed and updated

The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* requires each municipality to review and update critical infrastructure within its jurisdiction annually. Critical infrastructure is defined as those Regional assets such as water, wastewater facilities and Paramedic stations, essential to meet vital human needs, sustain the economy, protect public health, ensure safety and security and maintain continuity and confidence in government. Updates identified in the critical infrastructure database better positions York Region in managing risk.

In 2021, York Region partnered with local municipalities and YRP to review the critical infrastructure database. York Region Data, Analysis and Visualization Services consolidated the updated database, and provided maps identifying critical infrastructure to our municipal partners.

The Emergency Plan has been reviewed and updated

Each municipality must review and update its emergency response plan annually. The Regional Municipality of York’s Emergency Plan (the Plan) outlines how the Region will respond to emergencies. The Plan identifies the members of the Regional Emergency Control Group and summarizes their roles and responsibilities. In 2021, the Plan was reviewed with each member of the Regional Emergency Control Group. The following noteworthy changes have been made to the Plan:

1. Clarification regarding the appointment of the Acting Regional Chairperson
2. Notification procedures: York Region Emergency Management Program staff is now assuming responsibility for notifying Regional Emergency Control Group members.
3. The York Region Emergency Operations Centre, previously located at 17250 Yonge Street in Newmarket, has relocated to the new facility at 17150 Yonge Street. The secondary location (to be used as a back up if necessary) is located at 17250 Yonge Street.

Emergency Management partnered with all nine local municipalities, YRP and other community stakeholders to find innovative ways to continue to provide staff training and public education during the pandemic

The Public Education and Awareness Program provides public education on local hazards and personal preparedness for emergencies. Elements of this year's program include:

- Partnership with Corporate Wellness to deliver three workshops focussed on psychological health and safety.
- Emergency Preparedness Week activities focused on understanding local hazards and increasing personal emergency preparedness.
- A 5-part series of Resilient Region Lunch and Learn workshops enabled staff from York Region, YRP, and local municipalities to learn about specific hazards and risks in York Region.
- The Emergency Preparedness Guide continues to be an information source about emergency preparedness. It is distributed throughout the Region to promote emergency preparedness amongst our residents. A version is also available on the Region's website. The Guide will be reviewed and updated in 2022.
- Through Corporate Communications, York Region residents have been provided with risk specific information on COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, the York Region COVID-19 webpage has received over 30 million views.

York Region conducted emergency exercises to test the REOC recovery and demobilization processes

Each municipality in Ontario must conduct an emergency exercise to test its emergency plan. York Region conducted a Demobilization Exercise on October 5, 2021. The exercise involved Regional Emergency Control Group members and tested considerations and procedures that will be required in the future to effectively demobilize the Regional Emergency Operations Centre response and structures established to support the response to COVID-19. York Region also conducted other exercises in support of the ongoing COVID-19 response such as dry runs of mass vaccination centre modeling.

In 2021, Emergency Management trained staff on their specific roles and responsibilities in emergency response and the Incident Management System

Regional Emergency Control Group members and Regional Emergency Operations Centre support staff received training throughout the year to ensure mandatory annual training requirements under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* as follows:

- Procedures used to activate and operate under the Emergency Plan
- Procedures to notify members of the Regional Emergency Control Group
- Contents of the Emergency Plan including roles and responsibilities of the Regional Emergency Control Group and response organizations
- Communications, infrastructure and technology employed in the Regional Emergency Operations Centre

- Components of the Emergency Management Program including Hazard Identification, Risk Analysis and critical infrastructure

York Region's Business Continuity Program continues to support organizational resiliency and continuity of operations during the pandemic

Since 2015, York Region's Business Continuity Program has supported the organization to prepare for business disruptions and emergencies by developing business continuity plans and training staff in their roles and responsibilities. In response to COVID-19, York Region was able to adapt business continuity plans and leverage data to enable the continued delivery of high-priority services and facilitate quick identification of less time-sensitive business functions that could be reduced or ceased for redeployment of staff to support the Region's response to COVID-19.

In addition, external Business Continuity training was also delivered through the Disaster Recovery Institute (DRI) for key York Region Business Continuity contacts.

York Region provides emergency management support to the northern six municipalities.

Since 2017, York Region Emergency Management has been engaged through a Memorandum of Understanding, on a cost recovery basis, supporting the emergency management programs of the northern six municipalities (*Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Stouffville*). The agreement provides emergency management support through 2022.

In 2021, this program supported these municipalities through the following activities:

1. Emergency Management Program Compliance: this included reviewing and/or updating existing emergency plans and by-laws, updating hazard identification risk assessments, and reviewing critical infrastructure data.
2. Emergency Management Training: Approximately 220 staff from across the N6 municipalities trained to improve emergency response and recovery skills.
3. Virtual emergency exercises were conducted, engaging approximately 190 local municipal staff. Recommendations following the exercises included the development of a Virtual Standard Operating Procedure and documentation system for the N6 municipalities.
4. Additional support to the N6 beyond included supporting Business Continuity Planning and Flood Management initiatives.

5. Financial

Costs associated with implementing the York Region Emergency Management

Program initiatives and meeting legislated compliance were included in the 2021 operating budget. All Eligible COVID related expenditures have been submitted for cost recovery through established processes.

6. Local Impact

The ongoing key to success in emergency management is our partnership with local municipalities and key stakeholders. In 2021, York Region Emergency Management continued to work with municipalities to ensure a coordinated approach to the challenges posed by COVID-19, while partnering in Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, critical infrastructure data base updates, training, and public education activities to our residents.

7. Conclusion

York Region has completed all legislative requirements for an emergency management program in 2021.

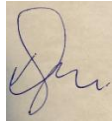
The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reinforced the value of having a responsive Emergency Management Program supported by strong partnerships. The *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and Ontario Regulation 380/04 requires municipalities to annually meet regulatory requirements and maintain a program that can respond to major incidents.

The corporation's business continuity program has supported the organization and its partners to deliver essential programs and services throughout 2021. The program continues to collaborate with all nine municipalities in emergency planning activities, hazard identification and risk assessment, critical infrastructure identification and mapping, and overall emergency response.

It is recommended Council receive this update for information on the annual regulatory compliance activities.

For more information on this report, please contact Morris Faccin, Manager, Emergency Management Program at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71212. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by:

A small, square image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'D. Rennie'.

David Rennie
Executive Director, Strategies and Initiatives

Approved for Submission:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'B' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

December 16, 2021

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