



**SUBJECT: Emergency management – declaration of emergency protocol**

**TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.**

**FROM: Fire Department**

Report Number: BFD 02-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-06

Date to Committee: September 17, 2020

Date to Council: September 28, 2020

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### **Recommendation:**

Direct the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) to integrate a decision matrix into the Emergency and Continuity Management Program (By-Law 046-2019) to encourage development of emergency-specific decision-making criteria to support termination of municipal emergency declaration; and

Endorse the decision-making criteria outlined in Appendix B of Burlington fire department report BFD-02-20 to be applied as a benchmark to guide the Mayor and/or Council in future decision making to terminate the declaration of emergency specific to the COVID19 pandemic.

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### **Background and Discussion:**

The City's Emergency and Continuity Management Program (By-Law 046-2019) is a Council approved program that supports consistent and integrated emergency prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery implementation and operation within the City's management system. By-Law 046-2019 – Annex 3 – Procedure for the declaration of a municipal emergency is guidance based on criteria adopted by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM). A positive response to one or more of the criteria may indicate that a situation, whether actual or anticipated, warrants the declaration of an emergency.

These criteria were considered and informed the decision to declare a municipal emergency on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 (four days after the Premier declared a state of provincial emergency). In addition, the municipal Emergency Control Group (ECG) and its support staff unanimously endorsed the decision of the Head of Council to declare a municipal emergency.

City of Burlington ECG mission priorities under declaration remain as follows:

1. Immediate life safety
2. Health of affected persons
3. Protection of the public
4. Continuity of critical and essential operations

ECG objectives include:

1. To continue to protect the community and staff against the spread of COVID19.
2. To continue to react to evolving impacts across the corporation and the community through measured response efforts.
3. To make principled and valued decisions as we continue to respond to and mitigate against impacts of COVID19.
4. To focus on the re-design of our services and refresh our way of conducting business, in alignment with provincial resumption phased strategies, public health guidelines and OHS guidelines.

As the City continues to monitor neighboring municipal emergency declarations in effect and ongoing response efforts, the City continues to plan forward to ensure that protective measures remain in place to achieve the above listed objectives.

By-Law 046-2019 sub-section 1.4 of Appendix B – Corporate Emergency Response Plan also provides guidance on the actions required when the decision to terminate the municipal declaration of emergency is made.

### **Strategy/process**

By-Law 046-2019 includes a decision tree to provide guidance on declaring an emergency within the municipality. Appendix A contains the current listing of criteria (adopted by the OFMEM) used in the decision-making process to declare the current state of emergency. In addition, the Service Re-design Strategy, endorsed by Council (CM-12-20 May 14, 2020), outlined the Governance and Decision Making guidance wherein the extent of the re-design in service delivery directs the decision-making process and ultimately, where the decision is made – Council or Burlington Leadership Team/ECG/Service Leads. A summary of these decisions is also included in Appendix A.

What By-Law 046-2019 does not contain is a similar decision tree/matrix to support the identification of criteria to inform decision making to terminate a municipal declaration of emergency. Accordingly, to better inform the Mayor and/or Council's decision making relative to terminating a declaration of emergency, a decision-making matrix is recommended as an addition to the existing Emergency and Continuity Management Program. The inclusion of a decision tree/matrix to terminate a declaration would support the establishment of emergency-specific criteria to be used in decision making.

In the case of the current emergency, the use of such a decision matrix would require the establishment of COVID 19 pandemic-specific criteria. The recommended criteria include:

- Health of our community as reflected in public health COVID numbers
- Region and sister municipalities status
- Comparable municipalities status
- Impact on temporary by-laws
- Impact on resource assistance from the province
- Service delivery status
- Sense of urgency

Appendix B contains details of the proposed criteria, order of consideration and suggested actions.

These criteria would be applied in the same way as the decision-making criteria to declare was enacted. As per sub-section 1.3 of Annex 3 – Procedure for the declaration of a municipal emergency: when considering whether to [terminate] an emergency [declaration], a positive response to one or more of the following criteria **may** indicate that a situation, whether actual or anticipated, warrants the [termination] of a [declared] emergency.

### **Options Considered**

Of the proposed COVID 19 pandemic-specific criteria, only one requires establishing a threshold. It is recommended the community public safety threshold be established at 10% of the population impacted and/or under 10 residents infected. This threshold would define the city's ceiling for community transmission tolerance.

Refer to proposed Criteria #1 in Appendix B.

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### **Financial Matters:**

Not Applicable

### **Total Financial Impact**

Not Applicable

### **Source of Funding**

Not Applicable

### **Other Resource Impacts**

Municipal assistance program has already begun, which does not require the emergency declaration to be in place. Future funding may be tied to declaration, although this requires confirmation.

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### **Climate Implications**

Not Applicable

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### **Engagement Matters:**

Neighbouring upper tier and lower tier municipal emergency management colleagues were consulted to gain a better understanding of benchmark criteria that could be incorporated to inform the Mayor and Council on the future decision to terminate the declaration of emergency:

Halton Region

Town of Oakville

Town of Halton Hills

City of Hamilton

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### **Conclusion:**

The decision to integrate a termination of municipal emergency declaration decision matrix into the Emergency and Continuity Management Program (By-Law 046-2019) will support the establishment of emergency-specific criteria to be used by the Mayor/Council for informed, objective decision making. In the case of the current emergency, the use of such a decision matrix requires the endorsement of COVID19 pandemic-specific criteria (contained in Appendix B). These criteria would be applied in the same way as the decision-making criteria to declared was enacted (refer to Appendix A).

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Rushton

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**Appendices:**

- A. BFD-02-20 – Appendix A: By-Law 046-2019 Declaration of Emergency Criteria and Summary of Service Redesign Decisions
- B. BFD-02-20 Appendix B: COVID19 Pandemic Declaration of Emergency Termination Decision Matrix

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.