



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

20.

Influenza Pandemic Response Planning

Date:	September 21, 2009
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Library Board of the planning that has taken place to ensure that the Library is able to respond to an influenza pandemic.

Library staff have been engaged in emergency planning for an influenza pandemic since 2005, in consultation with City of Toronto and Toronto Public Health. The draft plans that have been put into place have been tested in two City-wide exercises and most importantly, served the Library well in the spring 2009, when the H1N1 influenza pandemic alert was declared. The Library is in a position to respond effectively if an influenza pandemic emergency is declared.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no direct financial implications in 2009 arising as a result of this report. The work of the Emergency Planning Committee is managed within the workload of the existing Library staff. The cost of stockpiling of supplies in preparation for an influenza pandemic is included in the City Council approved budget.

Costs may arise from the declaration of an influenza pandemic emergency by the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (TEMPC). However, these are not quantifiable at this time and would be considered extra-ordinary expenditures.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

The Toronto Public Library is responsible for preparing for various types of emergencies that may affect the Library and/or the City of Toronto. The Board approved the *Toronto Public Library Emergency Plan* at its September 2007 meeting.

The City of Toronto Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has requested that the Library prepare an *Influenza Pandemic Response Plan* and a *Continuity of Operations Plan*. The first draft of these plans was completed by Library staff in 2006 and they have been reviewed and updated annually.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Pandemic influenza has been identified by Toronto Public Health as a risk requiring the development of response and continuity of operations plans. Key issues of the plan include identifying priority tier 1 functions, human resource, employee and labour relations policies, a procurement and stockpiling strategy and personal protective equipment and infection control recommendations. The issues and planning assumptions used in the Library plans are based on the Toronto Public Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu/pandemicflu_plan.htm).

The need for integrated planning was given world-wide attention during the SARS crisis in 2003. In the spring of 2009, the H1N1 influenza pandemic alert drew attention to coordinated planning and preparedness at the national, provincial and municipal level. The Library integrates its response under the larger umbrella of the City's plans.

COMMENTS

Proper planning for the Library's response to an influenza pandemic employs standards of two disciplines: emergency management and business continuity. It is standard practice in emergency management to use a cyclical model of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery to plan for emergencies. This model focuses on life safety issues through collaborative planning and response.

The standard of business continuity focuses on continuing an organization's operations by examining its priority or core operations and then planning to ensure continuity.

Influenza Pandemic Response Plan

The Influenza Pandemic Response Plan provides the overall framework for the Library's response to an influenza pandemic and continuity of library services, especially key services. This plan describes the roles and responsibilities of Library staff; it identifies priority Library functions and strategies to be used to sustain these functions during an influenza pandemic. The plan describes interdependencies with the City of Toronto and external to the Library's operations.

The Library does not have any essential services that are mandated by legislation. Key services include information services that the public would expect the Library to provide during an influenza pandemic, online and phone services would be particularly valuable to the public. In addition, the Library would need to maintain its contractual obligations, such as employee payroll and payments for contracted services such as cleaning, security guards, telephone and data network connections. The Library would also need to

maintain communication and human resources support for Library staff, to ensure their health and safety in the workplace.

Continuity of Operations Plan

The Continuity of Operations Plan establishes the procedures for dealing with absenteeism and supply chain disruptions due to an influenza pandemic. During a pandemic, it is estimated that 15 to 35 percent of the population will become ill, enough that they will not be able to continue their usual activities. The plan identifies the staff, resources, internal and external services that are required for the provision of key services.

Human Resources issues

A pandemic will likely cause a high level of anxiety among the general population. Employees will be concerned about their own health and the health of their families. Human resources practices regarding ill employees at work, staffing and redeployment, emergency scheduling will be adapted for the situation. The Library is coordinating its approach with that of the City and looking to Toronto Public Health for expert advice on the health risks and preventing the spread of influenza.

Emergency Preparedness

The TPL Emergency Planning Committee is responsible for ensuring that the system-wide emergency plans, service continuity plans and related policies and procedures are maintained and consistent with emergency requirements and relevant legislation. The Committee includes representatives from public service and support departments, the Joint Health and Safety Committee and reports to the Director, Information Technology & Facilities.

The first draft of the plans was completed in 2006, and the plans are reviewed and updated annually. In November 2007, the Library submitted its requirements for stockpiling of supplies for an influenza pandemic to the City, which confirmed in spring 2009 that the Library is included in its inventory of supplies. Aspects of the plans are tested regularly. The Library has participated in two City exercises, in 2006 and 2008. The recent H1N1 influenza pandemic alert provided an opportunity for the Library to assess its state of preparedness, the protocols for communication with the City's Office of Emergency Management and internal communications to staff. The Library is in a position to respond effectively if an influenza pandemic emergency is declared.

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