## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 8 | **Name:** | Jake Tracy |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2020-0183 | **Date:** | June 2, 2020 |

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Motion 2020-0183 would request that the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) update all relevant emergency management and disaster recovery plans and documents to address pandemics, and would request that Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) create a pandemic response plan for King County. These documents would be due to Council by September 1, 2021.

**SUMMARY**

King County OEM develops and maintains a number of planning documents related to disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. These documents address a wide range of hazards, including, in some cases, public health emergencies such as pandemics. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Regional Coordination Framework, and continuity of government plans are some of the major plans maintained by OEM.

Additionally, PHSKC has a Pandemic Influenza Response Plan, which was adopted by ordinance in 2006 and was most recently updated in 2013. The plan provides guidance to PHSKC and regional partners regarding detection, response, and recovery from an influenza pandemic in order to limit the number of illnesses and deaths, preserve continuity of essential functions, minimize social disruption, and minimize economic losses.

Proposed Motion 2020-0183 would request that the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) update all relevant emergency management and disaster recovery plans and documents to address pandemics, and would request that Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) create a pandemic response plan for King County, building on the Pandemic Influenza Response Plan to address all types of disease that could reach pandemic status over the next fifty years. These documents would be due to Council, with motions acknowledging receipt, by September 1, 2021.

**BACKGROUND**

**OEM Plans**

King County OEM develops and maintains a number of planning documents related to disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. These documents address a wide range of hazards, including, in some cases, public health emergencies such as pandemics.

Plans maintained by the Office of Emergency Management include:

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.This is a plan for use by King County elected officials and staff. The plan covers the County's emergency management program, including mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery actions that may be necessary prior to, during, or after an emergency. The minimum contents of the plan are dictated by state law.[[1]](#footnote-1) The plan was most recently approved by the state 2017, with new version currently in review. The plan lists pandemics as a type of hazard threatening the County.

Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan is the result of collaboration with a number of regional partners, and is intended to promote "programs and projects that partner with communities to build a foundation of resilience before, during and after disasters."[[2]](#footnote-2) The plan discusses risks and vulnerabilities to a number of disasters, including "health incidents," and contains discussion of previous epidemics and pandemics, and priority vulnerabilities and impact areas from such emergencies. The plan is in the process of being updated.

Regional Coordination Framework.The purpose of this framework is facilitate a "systematic, coordinated, and effective response" to disasters occurring within King County by forming cooperative relationships between public, private, tribal, and nonprofit entities to share resources, minimize loss of life, and protect the environmental and economic health of King County. The framework focuses on the roles of different entities in emergency situations and does not contain specific guidance for individual types of disasters.

Continuity of Government Plans. These plans detail how the county will continue government operations during and after an emergency, and address King County's internal organizational structure, staffing patterns, facilities, and equipment that would be necessary to deliver services to the public.

**Pandemic Influenza Response Plan**

In addition to these plans authored by the OEM, PHSKC developed a Pandemic Influenza Response Plan, which was adopted by ordinance in 2006 and was most recently updated in 2013. The plan provides guidance to PHSKC and regional partners regarding detection, response, and recovery from an influenza pandemic in order to limit the number of illnesses and deaths, preserve continuity of essential functions, minimize social disruption, and minimize economic losses.

The plan describes actions various entities should take during each of four pandemic phases in a variety of scenarios. Actions include social distancing, isolation of cases, closing of theaters, stadiums, and community centers, canceling of large social gatherings and limiting mass transit to essential travel.

The first cases of the novel coronavirus ("COVID-19") were identified in China in late 2019. COVID-19, which spreads easily from person to person and can cause deadly respiratory illness, spread quickly around the world, with the first death in King County being identified on February 29th, 2020. While coronaviruses and influenza are different types of viruses, their symptoms and method of transmission are similar, resulting in a pandemic response that closely aligns to the actions described in PHSKC's Pandemic Influenza response plan. Other types of pandemic, which may spread through different means such as bacteria or parasites and have very different symptoms, could require a different response than described in the Pandemic Influenza Response Plan.

**ANALYSIS**

The proposed motion would request that OEM update all relevant plans and documents, including the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Regional Recovery Plan, and Continuity of Operations Plan, to address pandemics and with lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that the Regional Recovery Plan was never completed and thus cannot be updated.

The proposed motion would also request that PHSKC create a new Pandemic Response Plan, building on the existing Pandemic Influenza Response Plan and using lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic. At minimum, the plan would address the following:

* Known types of disease that could reach pandemic status and impact King County over the next fifty years;
* A response plan or plans addressing each type of disease meeting the criteria above;
* A plan or plans to ensure continuity of operations in King county government and maintenance of other essential services during all phases of a pandemic affecting King County; and
* Identification of critical infrastructure or resources that are currently lacking that would be required in order to respond to any of the pandemics described in the plan, the barriers to acquiring or developing the infrastructure or resources and recommendations for how to fill these gaps.

The motion would also direct PHSKC to include any other appropriate strategies or information in the plan.

The Pandemic Response Plan and updated OEM plans would be due to the Council, along with motions acknowledging receipt of the plans, by September 1, 2021. (Note that at the sponsor's direction, a striking amendment would change the requested date for transmitting the plans to Council to September 1, 2022.)

**AMENDMENT**

Striking Amendment S1 will be distributed in a separate amendment packet prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting. S1 would make the following changes to the proposed motion:

* Change the due date of the updated plans and new pandemic response plan to September 1, 2022;
* Request a status report briefing to Council on or before September 1, 2021;
* Remove the requirement for the pandemic response plan to create individual plans for different disease types;
* Request PHSKC to update other relevant planning documents;
* Update references to existing plans.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Motion 2020-0183

1. WAC 118-30-060 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Base Plan [↑](#footnote-ref-2)