

**Comité de transition  
de l'agglomération  
de Montréal**

**Québec** 

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**TRANSITION COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS  
REGARDING THE CIVIL PROTECTION PLAN FOR THE  
AGGLOMERATION OF MONTREAL**

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**March 16, 2005**

## ***Introduction***

As part of its mandate of promoting a smooth and orderly transition, the Transition Committee has taken an interest in the implications of the reconstitution of 15 municipalities on the civil protection plan for the Agglomeration of Montreal.

Legislation concerning municipal reorganization makes the Agglomeration responsible for developing and adopting a civil protection plan. The central municipality and its boroughs and the reconstituted municipalities will have the responsibility of establishing the municipal civil protection plan.

Therefore reconstituting the municipalities requires some changes in the municipal civil protection plan which was adopted on December 13, 2004 by Montreal City Council. The Transition Committee believes that for the civil protection plan to be effective everyone involved must be informed as soon as possible about the intervention structure which will take effect when the 15 Montreal municipalities are reconstituted.

## ***The Civil Protection Act***

The following elements are essential to the effectiveness of any civil protection plan: the rapid flow of information; decision-making based on clear channels of authority and division of responsibilities; and quality co-ordination among the various interveners involved depending on the nature of the crisis or disaster.

The civil protection plan stems from the new *Civil Protection Act* (L.R.Q. S-2.3) which came into effect on December 20, 2001 and was inspired by the recommendations of the Nicolet Commission report "*Pour affronter l'imprévisible*", which examined the actions of various public interveners during and after the January 1998 ice storm.

The purpose of the new *Civil Protection Act* is to improve protection of citizens and their property during disasters. Civil protection is a shared responsibility between the Quebec government, the municipalities and the citizens. The act encompasses areas such as prevention, preparedness and recovery operations of the situation after the event. The Act encourages the accomplishment of these specific goals:

- A better understanding of risks and risk management;
- A better-prepared population;
- Preventive behaviour;
- Best use of resources;
- Creation of a real civil protection culture.

The *Civil Protection Act* gives to municipalities important responsibilities for planning local civil protection. To this end the Act introduces two principal means of implementation – the overall civil protection plan and the emergency preparedness plan itself.

- **The civil protection plan**

The *civil protection plan (Le schéma de sécurité civile)* is a regional planning tool prepared by each regional municipality and each regional authority (the City of Montreal for now, the Agglomeration of Montreal once the municipalities are reconstituted) together with local authorities. Starting with an inventory of major disaster risks and an evaluation of the vulnerability of the populations concerned and the resources available for emergencies and disasters, the *civil protection plan* must determine protection goals and measures to be taken to achieve them.

This plan will be developed based on orientations and regulations which should be made public by the Ministry of Public Security. The plan will cover the areas of prevention, preparedness, intervention and recovery operations. Creating the plan will be a two-year consultation and development process under the responsibility of the Montreal Centre for Civil Protection (*Centre de sécurité civile de Montréal*), leading to its adoption by the Agglomeration. Articles 36 to 38, 40 and 41 of the Act make regional municipalities or urban agglomerations such as Montreal responsible for periodic follow-up of the actions of local municipalities under it.

- **The emergency preparedness plan**

Local municipalities must include actions foreseen in the overall civil protection plan in their local emergency preparedness plan (*Le plan de sécurité civile*). This plan is a reference document combining all measures related to the organization of civil protection and the protective measures agreed on during preparation of the overall civil protection plan. The measures cover prevention, preparedness, intervention and recovery operations in an area or a community affected by a disaster. The plan contains essential information about intervention in the event of a disaster including the name and contact information for the person in charge of responding (Article 39, L.R.Q. S-2.3).

Local municipalities are in charge of organizing civil protection unless they delegate it to another municipality or a regional authority.

However, the Act foresees the possibility of a municipality declaring a state of emergency for up to five days when a real or anticipated major disaster affects the life or health of people within it. The declaration must include the type of disaster, the area involved, the circumstances justifying it, and the length of time it applies. It gives certain temporary powers to the mayor, pro-mayor, municipal official or person in charge of civil protection, including control of access to traffic lanes in the disaster area, the evacuation of people and requisition of accommodation facilities (Articles 42-52 L.R.Q. S-2.3).

- **Implementation of the municipal civil protection plan**

In this context and according to the Act, on December 13, 2004 the Montreal City Council, supported by the Montreal Emergency Preparedness Centre, adopted a new municipal plan entitled "Plan municipal de sécurité civile de la Ville de Montréal – plan de sécurité civile, module central section corporative". As well as a list of interveners, contact information for responders, and procedures to follow in the event of a disaster, the Montreal municipal civil protection plan provides that:

- The mayor ensures liaison with elected members of the Executive Committee and elected officials of boroughs involved in the disaster.
- Depending on the type of disaster or crisis and what is needed to respond, the mayor may form either a Mayor's Committee for Emergency Measures made up of elected officials, political staff and municipal officers, or a crisis management group also made up of elected officials assisted by municipal officers.
- A representative of the mayor's office attends the occasional round table discussion of the "Centre de coordination des mesures d'urgence".
- The municipal co-ordinator directs and co-ordinates the "Centre de coordination des mesures d'urgence" and makes recommendations to the mayor on measures to be taken which are beyond the powers delegated to him.
- The municipal emergency preparedness committee may be convened as needed to advise the emergency preparedness co-ordinator.
- On a crisis or disaster site, the co-ordinator is assisted by a site manager who reports regularly on the evolving situation and to obtain any assistance deemed necessary. The borough manager must make his resources available to the co-ordinator or site manager.

Every borough currently has a local emergency measures plan under the responsibility of the borough manager. Such mechanisms should be foreseen for the general managers of reconstituted municipalities starting January 1, 2006. (See in the Appendix the adaptation proposed by the Transition Committee modifying the diagram for boroughs in the municipal civil protection plan.)

***The reconstitution of certain municipalities and the civil protection plan***

Acts 9 and 75 establish a sharing of responsibility for civil protection between a regional authority, in the case of Montreal, the Agglomeration, and the local municipalities. The Agglomeration is responsible for the development and the adoption of the civil protection plan while the related municipalities are responsible for applying it. In this context, the reconstitution of 15 municipalities by January 2006 raises a certain number of concerns about the civil protection roles of the mayor and the general manager in the event of a disaster or crisis in their area.

In effect, the version of the municipal civil protection plan adopted in December 2004 refers only to the responsibilities of the mayor of Montreal, elected members of the Executive Committee and borough mayors. The reconstitution of municipalities in the Agglomeration of Montreal calls for certain changes in the responsibilities of mayors of reconstituted municipalities and their emergency measures chiefs.

The logic of the *Civil Protection Act* requires that the reconstituted municipalities and boroughs remain locally responsible for communications, public works and aid to disaster victims in their emergency measures plans. To this end, the Transition Committee has formulated the following recommendations so that the mayors and general managers of reconstituted municipalities can in fact assume their responsibilities under the Civil Protection Act.

***Transition Committee's recommendations regarding the adaptation of the Montreal municipal civil protection plan to the context of the creation of the Agglomeration of Montreal***

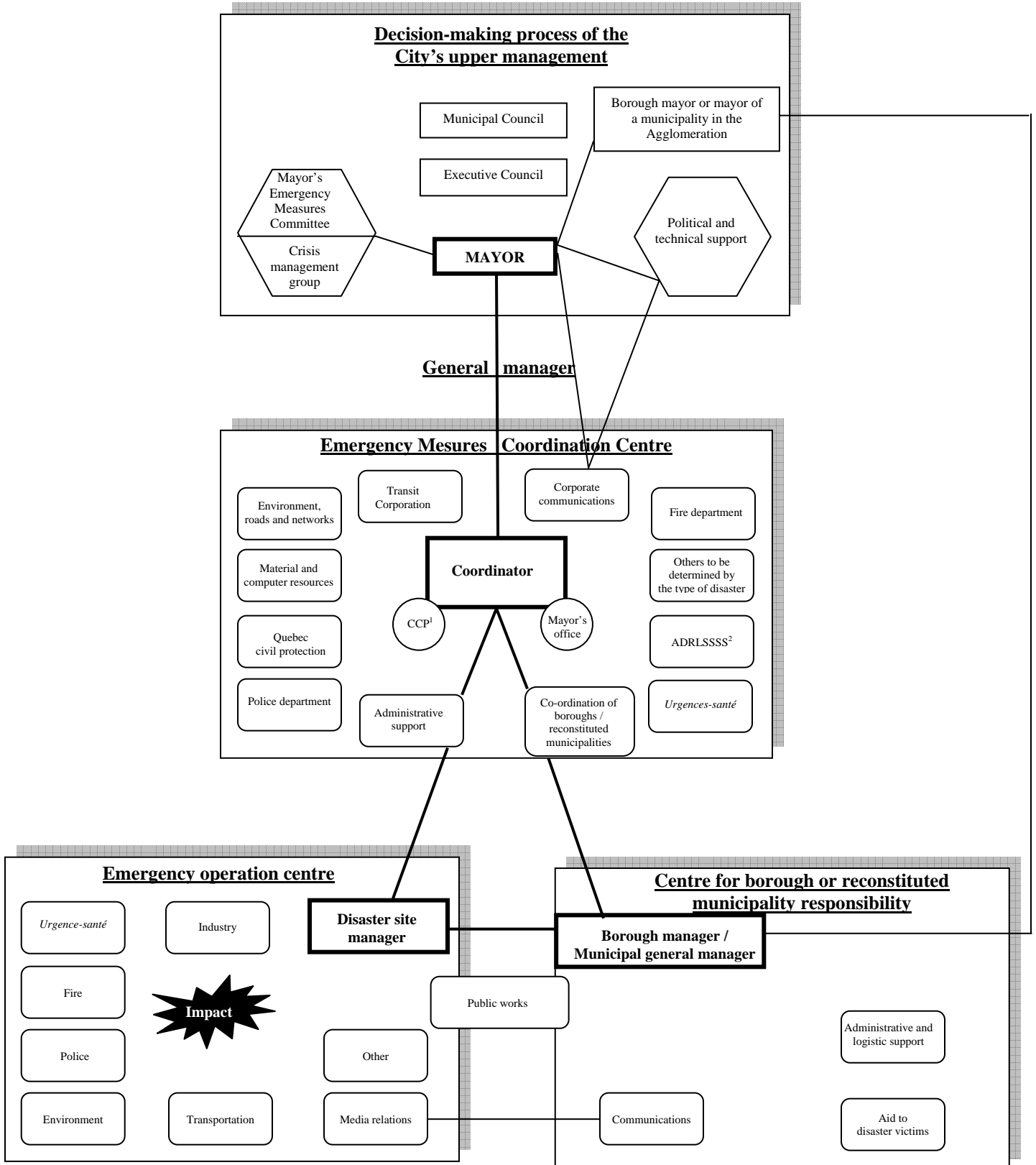
To meet the requirements of the *Civil Protection Act* and respect the division of responsibilities between the Agglomeration and the reconstituted municipalities, the Transition Committee believes that the mayor of Montreal must remain in charge of the civil protection plan and be responsible for emergency measures. However, the municipal civil protection plan adopted last December by the City of Montreal should be modified to include the following elements:

- 1) If a crisis or disaster arises in the territory of a reconstituted municipality or a borough, the mayor of Montreal should advise and involve the respective mayor. The latter should be involved in public communications especially during an evacuation notice.
- 2) If the mayor is absent or unable to act, the President of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal should be responsible for the municipal civil protection plan and emergency measures.
- 3) If a mayor's committee for emergency measures or a crisis management group is formed involving a reconstituted municipality, its mayor should be included.
- 4) A representative of the mayor of a reconstituted municipality affected by a disaster may attend meetings of the "Centre de coordination des mesures d'urgence" under the same authority as the representative of the mayor of Montreal.
- 5) Coordination between the "Centre de coordination des mesures d'urgence" and the Centre for Local Responsibility should be assured in the same way that the municipal civil protection plan and the boroughs' emergency measures plans are coordinated.
- 6) The reconstituted municipalities should develop local plans respecting the Agglomeration's civil protection plan. The boroughs' current emergency preparedness plans should be adapted to account for the reconstitution of municipalities.
- 7) The general managers of reconstituted municipalities should designate a local chief of emergency preparedness in the municipal staffing plan which must be approved by the Transition Committee.

- 8) Effective liaison should be established between the mayor of Montreal, the mayor of the reconstituted municipality concerned and the municipal co-ordinator responsible for the "Centre de coordination des mesures d'urgence".
- 9) Regardless of the governance structure of the Agglomeration, the mayors of reconstituted municipalities should be represented on any public security commission of the Agglomeration of Montreal where issues related to civil protection are debated.
- 10) The municipal emergency preparedness plan should foresee the establishment of a protocol for delegation of responsibilities between the mayor of Montreal and the reconstituted municipalities concerning the application of this plan when a disaster is minor and locally contained. The protocol would establish situations where the mayor of Montreal would delegate his responsibility to the mayor of a borough or reconstituted municipality. It could be developed and submitted to the Agglomeration Council after notice to appropriate authorities.

APPENDIX

**Proposed Structure for  
The Municipal Emergency Preparedness Plan  
2005**



<sup>1</sup> Centre for Civil Protection

<sup>2</sup> "Agence de développement de réseaux locaux de services de santé et de services sociaux"