

Town of Aylmer

Report CAO 49-22



Report Title:	Warming and Cooling Centre Policy
Submitted for:	Council – July 13, 2022
Report Author:	Andy Grozelle, Chief Administrative Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> Receive for Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommendation

Recommendation

That Report CAO 49-22 entitled Warming and Cooling Centre Policy, be received for information; and

That Council approve the adopting of the Warming and Cooling Centre Policy; and

That Council request increased federal and provincial funding for Health Units to develop uniform and comprehensive local responses to extreme heat and cold events; and

That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Minister of Health Canada, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry Ontario, Ontario Minister of Health, Ontario municipalities and the Southwestern Public Health Unit.

Executive Summary

This report seeks formalize measures the Town of Aylmer will take in response to incidents of extended heat or cold events. This policy is intended to be a starting point for the Town.

Background

The 2021 impact of a heat dome in British Colombia illustrated that extreme temperatures are not just an issue facing large urban municipalities. Small communities are susceptible to adverse affects and loss of life from heat and cold events. Small communities are also less likely to have extensive amenities or social supports to address the impact of extreme weather caused by climate change.

As the Town of Aylmer evaluates our response to extreme heat or cold events it is important to consider that it is still discretionary upon municipalities to provide any supports. This illustrates the lack of complex framework to address the foreseeable impacts of climate change and places vulnerable populations at heightened risk.

Analysis

The proposed Warming and Cooling Centre policy formally establishes what staff understand to be our normal operating procedures. Staff are not recommending enhancements until the efforts of our proposed advocacy upon this issue are known.

The underlying issue with warming and cooling centres is that they provide the illusion of a governmental safety net that is patchwork at best. The Town of Aylmer has no mandate related to public health and cannot provide a meaningful framework to support our vulnerable populations.

Items like in-home visits and transportation are required to support an effective response to extended extreme heat events and it is beyond the, expertise, resource capability and mandate of most municipalities to provide.

Larger urban municipalities often have Boards of Health that are comprised of their respective sitting councils. This results in some municipalities having a broader tool set and expertise to address extreme heat. Even these urban centres though do not have stable funding to establish comprehensive programs to address incidents like the BC heat dome. Reliance upon the local tax base to provide non-mandatory responses creates a wide range of policy approaches and service levels. As temperature extremes become more frequent there is a need to advocate for uniform public health program development in all jurisdictions to avoid preventable loss of life.

Conclusion

Staff recommend Council adopt the proposed Warming and Cooling Centre Policy and proceed with the advocacy described in this report.

Attachments:

Draft – Warming and Cooling Centre Policy

Strategic Priorities

- ☐ Pillar One – Dynamic, Inclusive Community
- ☒ Pillar Two – Planning for the Future
- ☐ Pillar Three – Economic Vitality
- ☒ Pillar Four – Environmental Stewardship
- ☐ Pillar Five – Public Service Excellence

Submitted by:

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Town of Aylmer