



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Chief Administrative Officer

To: Policies and Priorities Committee

From: Margaret Misek-Evans, Chief Administrative Officer

Date to Council: June 22, 2021

Report Number: CAO- 2021-11

Subject: Rodent Control Subsidy—Summary of Municipal Programs

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That report CAO-2021-11 Rodent Control Subsidy—Summary of Municipal Programs **be received.**

Background

Concerns regarding the presence of rats (rodents) in the Town, primarily in residential areas, have been raised over the last four years. Calls received by the Town are as follows:

| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 13 | 11 | 4 | 14 | 3 (to date) |

This issue was discussed previously by Council with a report provided at the September 12, 2017 Regular Meeting of Council. At that meeting, Council approved an enhanced education campaign to assist residents on how to identify rodents on their property, how to protect their property from rodents and how to remove rodents from their property. Council also directed that property standards be enforced and complaints regarding factors that attract rodents be addressed.

There is a [dedicated webpage](#) on the Town's website regarding wildlife control and a [fact sheet](#) on rodents. This information has been promoted on the Town's social media and

provided to individuals reaching out to the Town with concerns. Two Public Information Centres were held in 2018 and 2019 on urban wildlife with representatives from local pest control companies, and Tecumseh Home Hardware, in attendance to provide information and offer services at the 2019 open house.

At the January 26, 2021 Regular Meeting of Council, Council passed a motion requesting that Administration review the recently approved rodent control subsidies in several Ontario municipalities including Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland, and the Regional Municipality of Peel, as well as the cancellation of subsidies in Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto.

Administration was also directed to report back on the outcomes and deliverables of these subsidy programs to the Policies and Priorities Committee in a timeframe that allows for prospective consideration as part of the 2022 Budget.

Comments

A small number of Ontario municipalities offer some form of rodent abatement program either through direct service or a rebate program. The table below summarizes the particulars of each program.

| Municipality | Program Details | Annual Program Budget* | Year Program Initiated | Still Operating (Y/N) | Properties Serviced by Year |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| City of Windsor | Free of charge for properties with burrows. Owner contacts the City and an inspection is conducted. If active burrows are found, City dispatches exterminator and manages process. A maximum of six baiting sessions per property per year are provided. | \$127,000 | 2017 | Y | 2020: 1,575 2019: 1,617 |
| St. Catharines | Owner applies to City for program and schedules municipal property inspection. | \$10,000 (2020) | 2020 | Y | 2020: 77 2021: 22 to date |

| Municipality | Program Details | Annual Program Budget* | Year Program Initiated | Still Operating (Y/N) | Properties Serviced by Year |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services.</p> <p>City rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year.</p> | \$20,000 (2021) | | | |
| Welland | <p>Owner applies to City for program and schedules municipal property inspection.</p> <p>Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services.</p> <p>City rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year.</p> | \$15,000 | 2018 | Y | 2020: 30 2019: 30 2018: 48 |
| Niagara Falls | <p>Owner applies to City for program and schedules municipal property inspection.</p> <p>Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services.</p> <p>City rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year.</p> | \$50,000 | 2018 | Y | Not available Estimate 150 calls per year since 2017 |
| Lincoln | Owner applies to Town for program and schedules municipal property inspection. | \$15,000 | 2021 | Y (Pilot Project to run until | Not available |

| Municipality | Program Details | Annual Program Budget* | Year Program Initiated | Still Operating (Y/N) | Properties Serviced by Year |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| | Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services. City rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year. | | | January 2022) | |
| Region of Peel | Owner applies to Region for program and schedules municipal property inspection. Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services. Region rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year. | \$250,000 for rebate \$250,000 for staff | 2021 | Y (Pilot Project to run until March 2022) | 2020: 330 calls related to rats/rodents |
| Sault Ste. Marie | Owner applies to City for program and schedules municipal property inspection. Owner is responsible for scheduling and paying for exterminator services. City rebates 50% of the costs of rodent control up to \$200 once per year. | \$25,000 | 2017 | N (Cancelled in 2020 due to escalating costs.) | Not available |

*Unless noted, Annual Program Budget refers to the municipal budget line item for the rodent subsidy itself and does not include staff costs.

Rodent control in the City of Toronto is primarily undertaken by both Toronto Public Health (TPH) and Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S) in accordance with a Mutual Agreement dated July 25, 2000. This approach is based on the position taken by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in which rodents are considered a nuisance and not a public health

hazard, unless specifically linked to food premises or institutions. All rodent complaints related to private property are now investigated by ML&S, while TPH undertakes all investigations where food premises or institutions are implicated. There is no subsidy or abatement program in place and property owners are responsible for managing pest control.

Administration in the Towns of Ajax and Oshawa were also directed to investigate introducing a rat rebate program (2021 and 2017 respectively) however, both municipalities chose not to carry forward with a program due to estimated annual program costs and staff resources required to operate it.

Of the seven municipalities offering an abatement program, only one is free to residents (Windsor) and requires active burrows on site for extermination service. Three of the seven programs (St. Catharines, Welland, Niagara Falls), report that property owners are satisfied with the program. Program uptake is variable and none of the programs have been in place long enough to establish trends. Two municipalities have begun a pilot program to determine if a permanent program is warranted. Only Sault Ste. Marie has discontinued the program primarily due to cost as the annual budget recommended for 2021 jumped from \$25,000 to \$96,000 due to forecast demand. Annual funds for rebates had run out before September in both 2020 and 2019.

All of the Municipalities contacted for this report had a robust education program on their websites that is shared with all callers with respect to rat/rodent concerns.

Consultations

Chief Administrative Officer
Corporate Services & Clerk
Planning & Building Services

Financial Implications

As indicated in the table above, the costs associated with operating a rodent control subsidy program vary widely. Programs currently in operation are relatively recent, so trends are not well established in use or cost. With the exception of Peel Region, the program budgets summarized in the table are for rebating or covering the costs of external contracted extermination services and do not take into consideration municipal administration costs associated with customer service tracking, municipal inspection and financial transactions.

For the Town of Tecumseh to offer such a program would require a new annual operating budget allocation for the rebate program as well as consideration for internal administration requirements. The Town has experience with other rebate programs including rebates for the installation of backwater valve installation subsidy program and the disconnection of foundation drains from the sanitary sewage system. There was little to no uptake on these programs until significant rain events in September of 2016 and August of 2017. By way of example, from 2012 up to the rain event in 2016 there were eleven applications for the backwater valve installation program. Subsequent to the rain even in 2016 and 2017, there were 438 applications in total, which dropped to 32 in 2018 and has continued at this level

since that time. Administration of the program is managed by Public Works clerical and drainage staff, Building Services building inspectors as well as Finance staff.

For a new rodent control rebate program, interest is expected to be high and sustainability of the program over time is of concern. The primary concern would be the additional municipal inspection duties which would likely fall to the Town's By-law Enforcement Officer. With only one full-time employee in this capacity, it is anticipated that the introduction of such a program would necessitate re-evaluation of staffing capacity.

Link to Strategic Priorities

| Applicable | 2019-22 Strategic Priorities |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ensure that Tecumseh’s current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh’s plans and priorities. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Steward the Town’s “continuous improvement” approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Demonstrate the Town’s leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals. |

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐ Social Media ☐ News Release ☐ Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Lesley Reeves
Manager Strategic Initiatives

Reviewed by:

Brian Hillman, MA, MCIP, RPP
Director Planning & Building Services

Reviewed by:

Laura Moy, Dipl. M.M., CMMIII HR Professional
Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

| Attachment Number | Attachment Name |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| None | None |