



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Corporate Services & Clerk

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Laura Moy, Director Corporate Services & Clerk
Date to Council: November 9, 2021
Report Number: CS-2021-32
Subject: Rodent Abatement

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report CS-2021-32 entitled “Rodent Abatement”, **be received**.

And that direction **be given** on the preferred option outlined in this report for rodent abatement measures;

And further that, should Council direct Administration to implement Options 2 or 3 outlined in Report CS-2021-32, pilot program costs of \$10,000 **be referred** to the 2022 budget deliberations.

Background

Rodents, such as rats and mice, are pests that are found year round and typically live outdoors and then migrate inside when cool weather approaches. They are found around buildings, in gardens, near garbage or composters, and within homes, including in the roof and in drains. While nocturnal animals, rodents will become active during the day if food and water sources are scarce.

Concerns regarding the presence of rats within Town, primarily in residential areas, have been raised over the last four to five years.

The number of calls received by the Town related to rats, which are recorded in the Town's Service Request software (Issuetraq and Cityworks), are as follows:

| 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------|------|------|------|--------------|
| 13 | 11 | 4 | 14 | 10 (to date) |

While the Town's 2022 Budget Survey did not specifically ask about rodent control, 27 respondents (46%) commented on rats and asked that the Town provide funding for a rodent abatement program.

An informational report, [Corporate Services & Clerks Report No. 27/17 entitled Rodent Control](#), and [Attachment 1](#) to the report was presented at the September 12, 2017 Regular Meeting of Council whereat Council approved an enhanced education campaign to assist residents in identifying and protecting their property from rodents and greater property standards of enforcement. The Town also mandated that refuse be placed in hard sided containers for collection in the urban areas.

On the Town's website, there is a [dedicated webpage](#) regarding wildlife control and a [fact sheet](#) on rodents. This information has been promoted on the Town's social media, in the annual ESWA Collection Calendar, and as an education tool to residents expressing rodent concerns.

Two Public Information Centres were held in 2018 and 2019 on urban wildlife with representatives from local pest control companies to provide information on their services and how to deter wildlife from living on residential properties.

At the January 26, 2021 Regular Meeting of Council, motion (RCM -28/21) was passed directing Administration to review the recently approved rodent control subsidies in several Ontario municipalities and to report back on the outcomes and deliverables of these subsidy programs.

Subsequently, [Report CAO-2021-11 Rodent Control Subsidy - Summary of Municipal Programs](#) was presented at the June 22, 2021 Policies & Priorities Committee (PPC). Delegations were also heard detailing residents' experiences with rodents on their respective properties. At the meeting, Administration was directed to draft a framework of potential options for a rodent control subsidy program and funding for Council consideration (PPC-06-21).

Comments

Rodent Abatement Process

In consultation with local pest control companies, a typical rodent abatement service will vary depending on the property situation, and would entail:

- A pest control technician attending the property to inspect where the rodents are originating from and to lay safe bait stations in strategic locations on the property.
- Most local companies use bait station blocks (a tamper-resistant container designed to hold block bait on a rod that rodents gnaw) and caution against the use of loose bait, like pellets, which can be accidentally eaten or tampered with by children, pets, or unintended wildlife.
- Follow up inspections are conducted to re-bait the bait station, generally on a monthly basis depending on the 'package/contract' the property owner purchased with the local pest control company, and remove the bait stations at the end of the package/contract timeframe.
- Some local pest control companies also provide services to seal areas/cracks of the home where rodents are getting in for additional fees.
- Technicians will also advise the home-owner on rodent control prevention based on their observations on the property such as removal of food sources, standing water, clutter that provides a living space for the rodents, etc.

Local pest control companies also noted food sources do include bird feeders, gardening and composting which attract rodents all of which are allowable within most municipalities. While a property owner may be endeavouring to eradicate the rodents on their property, if other area property owners in the area have food and other sources that attract rodents, eradication may not be achievable.

While each area pest control company offers varying packages/contracts, most recommend a three-month minimum duration to endeavour to successfully eradicate the rodents. Each company reiterated costs do differ depending on the size of the home and level of rodent control needed. Based on an average rodent abatement situation, packages/contracts are approximately \$300 - \$400 per/property.

Examples of Other Communities Programs

As noted under Report CAO-2021-11, a small number of Ontario municipalities offer some form of rodent abatement program either through direct service or a rebate program.

Of the seven municipalities reviewed in the above-noted report who offer an abatement program, only the City of Windsor offers its program free to residents and requires active burrows on site for extermination service.

Three of the seven municipalities (Cities of 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.

The Town of Lincoln and Regional Municipality of Peel each began a pilot program in 2021 to determine if a permanent program is warranted. Both municipalities' pilot programs are anticipated to run until early 2022.

Sault Ste. Marie has discontinued their program primarily due to escalating costs as the annual budget recommended for 2021 increased from \$25,000 to \$96,000 based on the forecasted demand. Annual funds for rebates had maxed out before September in both 2020 and 2019.

All of these municipalities have a robust education program on their websites that is shared with all callers with respect to rat/rodent concerns.

Options

After reviewing the experiences of other municipalities and taking into consideration the concerns about rodents in the Town, the following options in respect of a rodent abatement program and continued education are provided for consideration:

1. Maintain 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, together with property standards enforcement, as previously directed.
2. Engage in a rodent abatement pilot program partially-subsidized by the Town, up to 50% of an established limit, once per year per property. If this option were preferred, Administration would develop a proposed pilot program model, process and regulations, including limited funding per property per year. A further report would be brought back to Council for consideration and approval prior to implementation.
3. Implement a rodent abatement pilot program for neighbourhood areas within a geographically-defined area where rodents have been identified as problematic. As a collective neighbourhood, the property owners in the defined area would need to ensure all preventative measures, such as removing food and water sources, are undertaken in order to participate in the rodent abatement pilot program. If this option were preferred, Administration would develop a proposed program model, process and regulations, including the limited funding per property per year. A further report would be brought back to Council for consideration and approval prior to implementation.

Subject to the direction of Council on Option 2 and 3, in accordance with the Town's Purchasing Policy, the procurement process would be followed to contract an extermination company for rodent abatement at a fixed rate per property.

Consultations

Planning & Building Services
Financial Services
Area Pest Control Companies

Financial Implications

As referenced in the CAO-2021-11 Report, the costs associated with operating a rodent control subsidy program vary widely amongst the municipalities currently engaged in a rodent abatement program.

Programs currently in operation are relatively recent, so trends are not well established in use or cost and most programs do not take into consideration municipal administration costs associated with managing the program, customer service tracking, municipal inspections and financial transactions.

For the Town of Tecumseh to offer a rodent abatement program, it would require a new operating expenditure in the budget, as well as staff support to administer the program. Municipal inspections would likely fall to the Town's By-law Enforcement Officer. Due to staffing capacity, it would be recommended that the appointed exterminator be responsible for property inspections which would be reflected in the procurement process.

Based on the local pest control companies' advice, the average household abatement program cost would be in the range of \$300 to \$400. Comparable municipalities such as St. Catharines, Welland, and Lincoln, have abatement program budgets between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year. Should Council wish to introduce a pilot rodent abatement program, it is recommended that funding start at \$10,000 and be referred to the 2022 Budget deliberations. At this time, there is no funding allocation for rodent control in the draft 2022 budget.

Link to Strategic Priorities

| Applicable | 2019-22 Strategic Priorities |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input 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 checked="" 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:

Christina Hebert, BA (Hons), MA, Dipl. M.A.
Manager Committee & Community Services

Reviewed by:

Chad Jeffery, MA, MCIP, RPP
Manager Planning Services

Reviewed by:

Tom Kitsos, CPA, CMA, BComm
Director Financial Services & Chief Financial Officer

Reviewed by:

Laura Moy, Dipl. M.M.
Director Corporate Services & Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

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