

## **REPORT**

***Office of the Chief Administrative Officer  
Fire and Rescue  
Climate Action, Planning and Development  
Electrical***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** July 10, 2023

**From:** Lisa Spitale,  
Chief Administrative Officer  
**File:**

On behalf of SMT  
**Item #:** 2023-489

**Subject:** City Staff's Heat Plan Response to Extreme Heat in New Westminister:  
Accelerated Workplan and Funding for Summer 2023

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT Council approve the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the \$268,000 one-time budget increase to be funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund; and

THAT Council direct staff to implement Scenario 3 – Align the City's accelerated heat response workplan with BC Hydro's program.

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the recommendations to approve and proceed with the 2023 accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the one-time budget request of \$268,000 funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund; and to seek Council approval to align the 2023 accelerated Heat Plan response workplan with the BC Hydro portable air conditioner program.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the June 26, 2023 Regular Council meeting, Council approved the following resolutions:

THAT Council endorse the recommendation from the Utility Commission as set out in this report; and

THAT Council endorse the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the \$268,000 one-time budget increase to be funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills in the Climate Action Reserve Fund; and

THAT Council direct staff to pursue the following Next Steps as outlined in this report:

- (a) Direct staff to seek endorsement of the budget amount from the Utility Commission;
- (b) Direct staff to bring this report back at the July 10, 2023 Regular Council meeting for Council approval or rejection

Council also directed that:

1. CAPD provide Council with a workplan and budget to accelerate “Stream 2 Climate Action team” actions; and
2. Proposed building and business licensing regulations aimed at removing barriers to the installation of air conditioners in units.

Attachment 1 provides a copy of the June 26, 2023 Council report.

## **ANALYSIS**

Starting with the two additional Council requests:

### **CAPD Workplan and Budget**

The Climate Action team is working on developing the Stream 2 Climate Action Team workplan and budget. This budget enhancement request will be provided to Council at the August 28, 2023 Regular Council meeting.

### **Proposed Regulations**

With respect to proposed building and business licensing regulations aimed at removing barriers to the installation of air conditioners in units, City staff from Fire, Building, Social Planning and Business Licensing are working with the City solicitors. It is anticipated that proposed regulations will be brought forward to Council in the Fall.

Moreover, the Emergency Management Office and CAPD are working with the City Solicitor to assess the feasibility of a regulatory requirement on owners of multifamily

residential complexes to have a Heat Response and Preparedness Plan for its residents if their structure does not provide climate control. No additional funding is required to add this initiative to the workplan.

### The Utility Commission Meeting

As per the next steps directed by City Council, staff convened a meeting with the Utility Commission. The meeting was held on June 29, 2023.

On June 27, 2023, the Provincial Government announced a program with BC Hydro to provide portable air conditioners to vulnerable populations over a three year period:

<https://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/residential/rebates-programs/savings-based-on-income/free-product-install-and-advice.html>

Staff provided the Utility Commission with the June 26<sup>th</sup> Council report. Moreover, given the Province's announcement on rebates for portable air conditioners, staff sought the input from the Utility Commission regarding potential changes or refinements to the City's heat plan in response. Staff created three scenarios; they are:

Scenario 1 - Change the City's accelerated heat response workplan and have New West residents receive their air conditioners directly from BC Hydro.

- This scenario would reduce the City's one-time budget ask by \$126,000 to a total of \$142,000.

Scenario 2 - Do not change the City's accelerated heat response workplan.

- The City's program will be faster than the 3 year roll out from BC Hydro and has the ability to be more targeted to our vulnerable populations.
- This scenario results in no change to our workplan and one-time budget ask.

Scenario 3 – Do both. Align the City's accelerated heat response workplan with BC Hydro's program.

- This scenario continues with the City's accelerated heat response workplan, has the ability to be more targeted to our vulnerable populations and will allow more New Westminster residents to participate and benefit.
- Staff have created a Modified Stream 1 Accelerated Heat Plan for this scenario.

### **Proposed Modified Stream 1 Accelerated Heat Plan**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Assign to:</b>
1	Assess identified buildings with vulnerable populations for suitability and implementation of a common cooling area.	Fire / EMO / FHA
2	Create a Heat Preparedness Plan template for voluntary adoption into buildings with no common cooling areas.	Fire / EMO
3	Engage building representatives to retrofit a common cooling room.	Fire / EMO/ Buildings
4	Engage with partners to provide support to facilitate eligible New West residents to take advantage of the Provincial program; if necessary, supply a temporary air conditioning unit until the Provincial program is completed and then re-deploy the air conditioning unit.	Fire / EMO / FHA / Senior's Society other NGOs
6	Collaborate with non-profit and faith-based organizations, and FHA, to establish best practices for heat response materials.	FHA / NGOs / FHA / COMMS
7	Public outreach specific to heat education in vulnerable areas through community "Pop Up" events.	Fire
8	Collaborate with Senior Services Society to create new, and increase current, outreach services.	EMO / Senior Services
9	Provide targeted outreach to FHA Home Health clients.	EMO / FHA
10	Collaborate to provide Heat Preparedness information through Energy Save New West program communication channels.	EMO / FHA / Comms / Climate Action
11	Collaborate to provide Heat Preparedness information in home language community workshops through the Energy Save New West Empower Me program	EMO / Climate Action
12	Translate Heat Preparedness literature and posters to other relevant languages.	EMO / Comms
13	Collaborate with Communications to update sign board information for activations.	EMO / Comms

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Assign to:</b>
14	Collaborate with non-profit & faith based organizations to produce active outreach strategies.	EMO/ Social Planning
15	Collaborate with Parks to expand “Stay Cool” Mapping for distribution with other heat publications.	EMO / Parks
16	Establish a centralized inbound information phone service for elderly who do not utilize internet services.	EMO / IT
17	Assess feasibility and implement an outbound “Cool Callers” program during heat events.	Senior Services
18	Collaborate with non-profit and faith-based organizations to establish cooling venues for the unsheltered in a heat response.	Social Planning / EMO / NGOs
19	Expand outreach to the unsheltered during heat events.	EMO / Fire / Social Planning
20	Implement a cooling kit program including distribution with cooling supplies for unsheltered and low income.	Social Planning / EMO / Fire
21	Determine the feasibility of a regulatory requirement for owners of multifamily residential complexes for a Heat Response Plan.	Fire / Buildings

\* NGO = non-government organizations supporting appropriate vulnerable populations

**Utility Commission Recommendations**

The Utility Commission held two votes.

1. Commission members voted to support Scenario 3 – Do both. Align the City’s accelerated heat response workplan with BC Hydro’s program.
2. Commission members voted to support the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the \$268,000 one-time budget increase to be funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund.

**Both of these recommendations from the Utility Commission are reflected in the Options for Council.**

## **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Advancing an extreme heat response plan is a high priority involving several City departments including Fire, Climate Action, Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Electrical, Finance and the CAO.

### **OPTIONS**

There are two set of options for Council's consideration.

With respect to the accelerated Heat Plan, Council has 3 options:

Option 1 - Council approve the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the \$268,000 one-time budget increase to be funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund.

Option 2 – Council not approve the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the budget.

Option 3 – Provide staff with alternate direction.

### **Staff recommend Option 1**

With respect to the BC Hydro portable air conditioner program, Council has 3 scenarios to consider:

Scenario 1 - Change the City's accelerated heat response workplan and have New West residents receive their air conditioners directly from BC Hydro.

Scenario 2 - Do not change the City's accelerated heat response workplan.

Scenario 3 – Do both - Align the City's accelerated heat response workplan with BC Hydro's program.

### **Staff recommend Scenario 3**

## **ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1 - June 26, 2023 Regular Council report

## **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:

Brad Davie, Deputy Fire Chief  
Leya Behra, Manager of Climate Action  
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

This report was reviewed by:

Cory Hansen, Emergency Management Coordinator  
Erin Williams, Fire Chief  
Jackie Teed, Acting Director CAPD  
Rod Carle, General Manager, Electrical  
Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering and A/Deputy CAO

This report was approved by:

Jackie Teed, Acting Director CAPD  
Rod Carle, General Manager, Electrical  
Erin Williams, Fire Chief  
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer