

REPORT

Fire & Rescue Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: August 28, 2023

From: Erin Williams
Fire Chief
File:

Item #: 2023-543

Subject: 2023 Stream 1 Accelerated Heat Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to develop regulations for cooling centres and continue advocacy to support our vulnerable population living in multifamily residences.

PURPOSE

This report is to inform Council of staff's progress on the Stream 1 Accelerated Heat Plan approved by Council on July 10, 2023.

BACKGROUND

On July 10th, 2023 Council approved the Accelerated Heat Plan with a budget of \$268,000 funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund. Council also approved alignment of the Accelerated Heat Plan with the BC Hydro portable air conditioner program.

EXISTING POLICY AND PRACTICE

The Emergency Management Office (EMO), in collaboration with other City Departments, Fraser Health Home Health, Senior Services Society and community organizations, continue to develop and implement extreme heat mitigation strategies while maintaining this three step response strategy introduced in early 2022.

1. Provide accessible public spaces where people can cool off

2. Undertake extensive in-person outreach to building managers, seniors, people with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness
3. Implement a communication strategy to inform the public of the risks that extreme heat events pose to everyone in the community

The EMO's goal is to mobilize the community, increase resiliency, prepare and manage the events when they occur.

ANALYSIS

EMO is collaborating and coordinating with other City Departments to align communication and planning efforts. Likewise, we continue to engage our faith-based and non-profit community partners while securing new partnerships to provide outreach for heat and general emergency preparedness.

RESOURCES

Accelerated Heat Plan Update

- EMO identified 126 high-risk multifamily residences housing vulnerable populations. At the time of writing, 19 air conditioner units have been distributed for placement into building common rooms with another 5 to be established soon and approximately another 10 by the end of summer. EMO and Fire are continuing to connect with the remaining buildings to discuss heat response plans for their buildings.
- Fraser Health Home Health is assisting with distributing another 25 smaller single room a/c units to vulnerable people who cannot mobilize to the common room air conditioned spaces or cooling venues.
- Staff has engaged the Seniors Services Society to identify and provide outreach targeting the most vulnerable seniors and to provide summer shuttle bus service when cooling venues are activated.
- EMO with the Seniors Services Society has developed the "Cool Callers" program. To call at-risk seniors who opt into the program during a heat event. Advertising is being created for this program.
- Seniors Services Society is commencing a monthly heat engagement outreach for low income seniors at Century House.
- The City supports the Connect and Prepare Program to facilitate social connectedness and emergency preparedness. This program was expanded to two

other buildings as well as Ross Tower with heat outreach being incorporated into discussions.

- EMO has distributed Heat Preparedness Information brochures to buildings housing vulnerable populations for distribution to property managers and strata for posting.
- EMO distributes timely education to selected properties for residents just prior to forecasted heat events
- EMO collaborates with Social Planning to communicate and support faith based and non-profit organizations with water distribution and heat response information.
- A 'Stay Cool' information map was produced and circulated to into the community and into our outreach strategy.
- Fire has been performing roaming patrols during heat events to provide water and outreach support to the unsheltered population.
- Emergency Management and Social Planning have ordered the necessary supplies for 150 unsheltered heat response kits for the homeless and is working on finding cooling venue sites focusing on the unsheltered populations.
- Climate Action is working with Empower Me to deliver heat preparedness information in eight different languages through eight local community groups and non-profit organizations. They are also providing personal support to residents with questions regarding City cooling programs and other resources, and navigating the provincial air conditioner program application process.
- City staff have reached out to our legal team to review the feasibility of requiring a heat response plan from owners of multifamily residential buildings.
- With a goal of creating cooling requirements for new construction, City staff are watching activity at the Provincial level and note that the Building Safety Standards Branch is seeking feedback on a proposal to include cooling requirements in the next iteration of the British Columbia Building Code anticipated to be published in 2024. The proposal includes:

At the outside summer design temperature, required cooling facilities shall be capable of maintaining an indoor air temperature of not more than 26°C in at least one living space in each dwelling unit.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Staff continue to consult with Emergency Management and Climate Readiness BC and other municipalities in order to continue to build upon its resiliency efforts within the City.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently there have been 65 A/C units ordered to date, as well as other heat related supplies as reported in the Accelerated Heat Plan. The plan is currently on budget and is expected to meet financial targets.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The Emergency Management Office continues to lead the Stream 1 Accelerated Heat Plan and is collaborating with Climate Action, Fire, Communications, Electrical, and Parks, in addition to Fraser Health Home Health Authority, the Seniors Services Society and our community partners.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. THAT Council direct staff to develop regulations for cooling centres and continue advocacy to support our vulnerable population living in multifamily residences; or
- 2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION

The EMO will continue to monitor the forecasted weather and focus our efforts on our Accelerated Heat Plan with City Departments and partner agencies. The EMO will also continue to deploy air conditioners, provide outreach to vulnerable populations, residents, faith based and non- profit organizations and to provide information on ways the community can become more resilient during an emergency.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Cory Hansen, Emergency Management Coordinator

This report was reviewed by:
Brad Davie, Deputy Fire Chief
Leya Behra, Manager, Climate Action
Serena Trachta, Acting Director Climate Action, Planning and Development

This report was approved by:
Erin Williams, Fire Chief
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer