SUBJECT: 2008 Heat Response Plan ECS08027(b) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City's Heat Response plan be implemented on the second day of a 40 degree Celsius humidex heat event (Heat Warning stage), (the first day of a 40 degree Celsius humidex heat event is a Heat Advisory), for the remainder of the 2008 heat season as a pilot, to assess the usage and operating impacts of opening municipally-operated cooling centres as well as extended operating hours for outdoor City pools during prolonged heat events.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Report ECS08027(b) provides information about Hamilton’s Community Heat Response Plan for 2008 and recommends implementing the previously recommended responses earlier in a heat event than was presented in Report ECS0807(a) on July 9, 2008.

Staff recommends implementing the City's responses at the second stage of the heat trigger system (Heat Warning) for the remainder of the 2008 heat season as a pilot. This will allow staff to determine the usage and operating impacts of municipally-operated cooling centres and extended operating hours for outdoor City pools during prolonged heat events.
BACKGROUND:

On July 9, members of Council were presented Information Report ECS08027(a) which outlined the responses planned by the City in the event of an episode of prolonged extreme heat. Council was advised that City activities, included opening of two municipally operated cooling centres and extending operating hours for outdoor City pools, would occur at the third stage of the heat trigger system, the Heat Alert Stage. These activities would be in addition to the media releases and community outreach that occurs at each stage of the heat trigger system.

Due to the low number of prolonged heat events, it is possible that the City will not experience a Heat Alert for the remainder of this summer. This would not allow staff the opportunity to implement this portion of the Heat Plan and determine the usage of municipally-operated cooling centres and outdoor City pools during extended operating hours, or the operating impacts of these efforts.

Planned Response

Keeping residents safe during an intense heat event is a shared responsibility between the City, community partners and our residents. We recognize that our community partners are often “first responders” when speaking to residents about how to take appropriate precautions during intense and prolonged hot weather. The City will continue to work with our community partners at the Advisory, Warning and Alert stage to ensure that the community and those identified at-risk are provided with critical information as well as support during intense heat events.

If approved, the City will increase its response as part of this community effort. City Cooling Centres would open on the second day of a 40 degree Celsius humidex heat event (Heat Warning stage) (the first day of a 40 degree Celsius humidex heat event is a Heat Advisory). In addition, outdoor pool hours would be extended into the evening.

During the pilot, the City will open two primary cooling centres. Both the Good Shepherd Family Centre (143 Wentworth Street, South) and Sackville Hill Seniors Centre (780 Upper Wentworth Street) will operate as cooling centres between the hours of 11:00 am and 7:00 pm. In addition, operating hours for outdoor City pools will be extended into the evening.

Upon completion of the pilot, a review will be conducted to determine the usage of municipally-operated cooling centres and extended outdoor pool hours. Operational issues will also be determined, and the effectiveness of these efforts will be assessed.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Due to the low number of prolonged heat events, it is possible that the City will not experience a Heat Alert for the remainder of this summer. This would not allow staff the opportunity to implement this portion of the Heat Plan and determine the usage and operating impacts of municipally-operated cooling centres and extended outdoor City pools during prolonged heat events.
**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial:

Cooling centre operation costs are estimated at $2,950 per day which includes staff costs, bus tickets as well as recovery charges from Good Shepherd (refreshments) and the Canadian Red Cross (cleaning and transportation of cots and blankets, repairs as necessary). Operating costs for extending outdoor pool hours are estimated at $2,000/day (includes staff and utility costs). Other operational costs have not been fully assessed; these will include service impacts in Ontario Works and Recreation resulting from staff reassignments.

The total cost for opening the cooling centres and extending outdoor pool operating hours at the second stage of the heat trigger system (Heat Warning), will be dependent on the number of occurrences. There were two days in 2007 when the City issued a Heat Warning – and one such day so far in 2008.

Any costs for 2008 will be absorbed within the Community Services’ operating budget.

Staffing:

No additional staff will be required. Extending pool hours and reassigning of staff from normal duties to manage cooling centres will result in operational issues and staff scheduling challenges, however these can be accommodated.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation of Report ECS08027(b).
POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

None.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Public Health Services

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☐ Yes ☑ No