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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON MARCH 24, 2015
FROM:	J. M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER AND JOHN BRAAM, P. ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	HUMANE URBAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT POLICY: BEAVER PROTOCOL

RECOMMENDATION

That on the recommendation of The Managing Director, Planning and City Planner and The Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following action **BE TAKEN** with respect to the Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy:

- (a) the attached Appendix "A" Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy: Beaver Protocol **BE ENDORSED**;
- (b) the financial implications of the operational protocols **BE ASSESSED** to determine potential impacts on operational budgets and examine appropriate funding options.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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Community and Protective Services Committee– November 17, 2014 –Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy

PURPOSE

To establish a protocol for managing beaver activity in accordance with the Council approved Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy.

BACKGROUND

The City London Strategic Plan stresses the importance of a caring and compassionate public services. Referenced in the plan is the Humane Wildlife Conflict Policy which is the corner stone for the compassionate care of wildlife in our community.

This policy was endorsed November 25, 2014 by City of London Council through the following resolution:

"That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City

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Planner and the Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following actions BE TAKEN with respect to the Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy:

- a) the attached Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy BE ENDORSED; noting the necessity to create/develop operational protocols for the humane treatment of animals in conflict situations;*
- b) the development of operational protocols BE UNDERTAKEN through consultation with the applicable provincial and federal agencies and departments to review the risks and to assist in determining the appropriate mitigation measures and approvals if required;*
- c) the financial implications of the operational protocols BE ASSESSED to determine potential impacts on operational budgets and examine appropriate funding options; and,*
- d) the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to continue the on-going public consultation with respect to this matter;”*

To address *parts a, b and d*, staff have worked with various stakeholders and engaged with the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) to actively discuss the direction and form of a protocol for managing beaver activity to meet the intent of *part b)* of the resolution.

In developing a protocol to successfully implement the City’s Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy it was considered critical that the protocol ensure that beavers are treated in a respectful and consistent manner, balancing the various needs to protect the beaver and their habitat; the overall environment; City infrastructure; people and property. The protocol attempts to balance various competing priorities which include:

- Protecting beavers in their natural habitat;
- Promote the creation of new wetland environments;
- Protecting the existing environment; including trees and species at risk;
- Protecting critical City infrastructure;
- Protecting people and property from flooding; and
- Maintaining the use of the City’s pathway and trail system.

During the February meeting of AWAC, comments were provided and integrated into the newest version of the protocol provided as an appendix to this report. Subject to their comments being addressed, AWAC endorsed the draft beaver protocol.

Scope of Beaver Activity

Since the fall of 2014, the City has developed a beaver activity tracking inventory for the City of London. As shown in the attached figure, there are currently 37 locations identified throughout the City of London (Attached: Appendix “B” – Beaver Activity Inventory). These sites include creeks, rivers, stormwater management facilities, and stormwater sewers. It should be noted that beaver activity is widely distributed across the City and is not just located in a well-defined isolated area.

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Service Delivery

The implementation of the beaver protocol will require engagement of several service areas and City of London partners. Evaluation of sites and recommendations regarding the protection of municipal infrastructure will be made by the City’s Stormwater Management Division. Assessments related to planting and the protection of existing trees and the impacts to the City’s pathway system will be made by the Environmental & Parks Planning Division. Construction and day-to-day operation and maintenance of the structures will be performed by the Upper Thames River Conservation authority through an existing contract that will be reviewed prior to 2016. The partnership between these various groups working together to implement the beaver protocol will ensure that the various goals of the protocol will be achieved.

**Financial Implications of the Beaver Protocol
(November 25th, 2014 Resolution Part c)**

In the past, there has not been direct or consistent funding applied to the management of beaver activity. The Humane Wildlife Conflict Policy is outlined in the Strategic Plan for the City of London under “Strengthening our Community”, Element three (3) “Caring and compassionate services”, Strategy E “Provide compassionate care for animals”. As there are no financial resources allocated in the 2015 budget, consideration will have to be given to funding as part of the multi-year budget process. The beaver management service would be included as line items in both the rate and tax supported budgets.

Funding from the tax supported budget would be utilized for the proposed service provider, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. A preliminary estimate of future budget values for these services are \$25,000 per year for the next five (5) years. These budget estimates include the one-time costs and long-term costs related to the beaver activity solution. The one-time costs include the initial construction of beaver flow devices, existing tree protection, planting of beaver food trees, and as a last resort resettling of the beavers using live trapping methods. The long-term costs would include the inspection, operation, and maintenance of the various locations once the beaver activity solution has been established.

Funding from the Wastewater and Treatment budget would be used to assess sites where municipal infrastructure needs to be protected. These assessments will be led by the City’s Stormwater Management Division using either the expertise of in-house staff or out-sourced to external consultants. A preliminary estimate of future budget values for these services are \$20,000 per year for the next five (5) years.

It is proposed that 2015 be considered a learning year with a minimum of three (3) pilot projects located in various areas throughout London. These minor costs will be funded from an existing source of funding. The costs incurred over the 2015 pilot project season will provide the basis for more refined future budget projections.

**Continuous Improvement
(November 25th, 2014 Resolution Part d)**

The protocol will be reconsidered and brought back to AWAC and the Community and Protective Services Committee by the middle of 2016 following the first year of

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implementing the protocol. Going forward, any significant changes to the protocol will be reported back to the various stakeholders and Council prior to implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the operational beaver protocol will allow for the establishment of appropriate mitigation measures that comply with provincial and federal acts and regulations, balance public safety risks and a healthy ecological environment, all within an urban setting.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with the assistance of J. Mackay, M.SC. Ecologist Environmental & Parks Planning and A. Macpherson, OALA, Manager Environmental & Parks Planning. Staff would also like to acknowledge the participation of Alex Shivas, Coordinator, Lands & Facilities with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and Mike Callahan of Beaver Solutions LLC.

SUBMITTED BY:	REVIEWED AND CONCURRED BY:
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RECOMMENDED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
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Attach: Appendix "A" – Humane Urban Wildlife Conflict Policy: Beaver Protocol
 Appendix "B" – Beaver Activity Inventory