



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

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Report To: Council

From: Meaghen Reid, Director, Legislative & Legal Services/Town Clerk

Date: July 17, 2023

Report No: CORS-040-23

Subject: Wildlife Services

Recommendation: **THAT the Town continue to partner with the Town's current wildlife service provider and approve a single source award to Omega Canine Control in the estimated amount of \$63,876 (excluding HST) to provide wildlife response services on public (Town) property for a one year period from August 1, 2023 to July 31, 2024, with an option to renew for a second year;**

**AND THAT Council approve a service level increase and enhance customer service by expanding the wildlife response program to include requests for service on private property, in addition to the current public property response;**

**AND THAT a new user fee of \$240, before taxes, be introduced to recover the cost of responding to wildlife requests on private property and included within the Town's User Fee By-law, also on tonight's agenda;**

**AND THAT Council confirms the service standards for Animal Services, as outlined in this report;**

**AND THAT the Manager, Purchasing and Supply Chain Management be authorized to execute the contract, as outlined by the purchasing by-law, and the Mayor and the Town Clerk be authorized to sign any required paperwork.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's support to continue to partner with the Town's current wildlife service provider, Omega Canine Control for response to wildlife in distress on public (Town) property and to expand the program to include response to wildlife on private property.



## REPORT

### Background

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 provides a municipality with the authority to respond to wildlife concerns while providing a framework for wildlife conservation throughout the province. The Act requires that such response may result in the animal being released, relocated or provided appropriate rehabilitation and/or care. Wildlife response ranges from small to large animals throughout the community and may include, but is not limited to: coyotes, rabbits, skunks, foxes, squirrels, deer, possums, and birds.

Since 2014, the Town's Animal Services program has provided support for domestic animal requests for service while enforcing the Town's Animal Control By-law. The Town's Animal Services Officers are specifically trained to provide direct assistance to Milton pet owners and their domestic animals. Animal Services Officers work to pick up animals running at large, as well as sick or injured domestic animals while promoting responsible pet ownership through the Town's licensing program. Domestic animal services are offered Monday through Friday during the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. and on-call, after hours support is provided after 11:00 pm, during weekends and on statutory holidays.\_\_\_\_

Over the years, the Town has not had the ability or infrastructure to house, humanely rehabilitate wildlife or provide the professional services required for wildlife in distress. Since 2014, the Oakville Milton Humane Society (OMHS) had provided support to Milton for the humane treatment of sick and insured wildlife without funding from the Town. In 2021, the OMHS communicated that it had experienced increased costs to provide this service in Milton and that OMHS could no longer continue to operate the program without the Town contributing to the cost. On March 21, 2022, Council approved [Staff Report CORS-019-22](#) authorizing staff to enter into negotiations with the OMHS with respect to establishing a contract for the provision of wildlife response services. Town staff had engaged in discussions with OMHS staff in May and June 2022 to prepare a contract and a follow-up staff report for Council consideration. However, the Town and OMHS were unable to reach a mutual agreement on the service costs and, as a result, OMHS advised the Town of July 7, 2022 that they would withdraw wildlife response services to the Town of Milton on July 31, 2022. OMHS has continued to provide services to residents related to animal surrendering for a fee.

Due to the change in service, Town staff entered into a short-term agreement with Omega Canine Control to provide wildlife response services on public property on a per-call basis. Currently, calls about wildlife in distress on public property are being received by the Town's Municipal Law Enforcement Unit and after hours call center and dispatched to Omega Canine Control.



## Background

While the Town currently provides wildlife response to requests for service on public property, services for private property are not currently being provided. Although there are companies within the private sector that provide wildlife removal services on private property for nuisance matters, Town staff recognize that there are certain instances that may arise that could require the Town to respond on private property. As such, staff have prepared this report for Council consideration.

## Discussion

Since July 2022, when the Town began providing wildlife services through a third-party contractor, Town staff have received valuable feedback from residents related to the Town's wildlife program. Through this feedback, staff have identified that there may be a gap in service delivery related to private property. As noted above, the Town's contractor responds to requests for service on public property only in accordance with the existing agreement and with the established service levels by the Town. This has left residents with the only option of using private sectors companies to response to wildlife issues on private property.

While private sector companies provide wildlife removal and assistance services, they may not necessarily provide response to calls about wildlife in distress and only response to nuisance matters. The division between Town response on private property and public property could be creating confusion and a gap in service provision to residents for wildlife service requests.

## Recommended Approach

Given the specialized response to wildlife calls that is required, the Town's Municipal Law Enforcement Unit reviewed alternate service options to expand the current program in order to provide humane, affordable, and efficient wildlife services throughout the community. This would include both public and private property.

Staff are recommending that the Town continue the existing contact with the current wildlife service provider to attend to requests for services related to wildlife in distress on public property. In addition, staff are recommending that the existing Animal Services Officers be authorized to attend to wildlife in distress and wildlife assistance requests for service on private property, for a recoverable fee. This would also require partnership with a local veterinarian clinic to assist with care that may be required.

This recommended service delivery approach and enhanced customer service would result in full response service for all wildlife requests with the introduction of cost recovery measures for service requests on private property.



## Discussion

There would be no change to the domestic animal services program or the Town's Animal Control By-law at this time.

### Program Cost Recovery

Introduction of user fees for responding to requests for service on private property would allow the Town to recover the cost of service provision at a rate that is comparable to industry rates.

It is common in municipalities throughout the GTHA that municipal animal services programs offer support to private property wildlife requests for service and many of the comparators surveyed have a recoverable fee associated with this response.

A user fee analysis has been conducted and a proposed rate of \$240, excluding HST, is recommended effective July 18, 2023 to recover the cost of wildlife response on private property.

### Resource and Expense Considerations

It is recommended that existing services on public property continue to be provided by the Town's existing third-party contractor with the increase to wildlife service standards on private property be undertaken by existing, internal Animal Services staff. The existing Animal Services Officer complement (2 full time Officers) would provide response to wildlife service requests for to distressed or deceased wildlife and wildlife assistance on private property in addition to their current work responsibilities. A job evaluation and compensation review has been conducted for the enhancement of this role to now include specialized skills and duties related to wildlife response.

Should the recommended service delivery option be approved, there would be an additional \$9,000 annually (estimated based on a bi-weekly pick up but the frequency may be less based on call volume) for care and disposal costs.

### Milton's Animal Services Program Service Standards

With the introduction of wildlife response on private property by Milton's Animal Services Officers, the Town will provide a fulsome and comprehensive response program for domestic and wildlife requests for service on both public and private property.

The Town's Animal Services program will include:

- Investigating animal related by-law infractions
- Patrolling the community for animals off leash in open spaces (parks)
- Responding to requests for pick up of stray domestic animals



### Discussion

- Reuniting lost pets with their owners
- Promoting responsible pet ownership through licensing
- Responding to injured domestic animals and wildlife in distress
- Responding to deceased wildlife on private and public property.
- Services offered Monday through Friday during the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. with on-call, after hours support provided after 11:00 p.m., during weekends and on statutory holidays.

### Financial Impact

The 2023 budget includes an annual budget of \$65,000 for the provision of wildlife services on public property. It is expected that the costs associated with the proposed contract outlined in this report can be managed within the approved budget.

It is expected that the new service of responding to wildlife requests on private property can be undertaken with existing Town staff. There will be a budget impact to the Town of approximately \$24,000 associated with upgrading the existing Animal Services Officer positions as well as an additional \$9,000 for wildlife care and disposal costs. User fees have been structured to provide for full cost recovery of the service. The additional costs and revenues associated with this service will be included in future operating budgets.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy McHarg  
Commissioner, Corporate Services

For questions, please contact: Mary Beth Mitchell, Manager of      Phone: Ext. 2133  
Licensing and Enforcement

### Attachments

n/a

Approved by CAO  
Andrew M. Siltala  
Chief Administrative Officer



## Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.