



## **COMMUNITY SAFETY & SOCIAL SERVICES – AGENDA REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** 8 October 2024  
**Subject:** Extreme Weather Plan 2024-25 Update  
**Directorate:** Community Safety and Social Services

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### **Issue:**

The Community Safety and Social Services Standing Committee (CSSS) is being presented with an update on Airdrie's 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan.

### **Policy / Council Direction:**

Airdrie's Extreme Weather Plan aligns with Council's Social Policy (COM-63-C) and Council's 2023-26 Caring Community Focus Area.

### **Background:**

In December 2022, extreme weather displaced some Airdrie residents and Administration was requested to develop a list of supports and services in Airdrie and area for vulnerable and unhoused residents during extreme cold weather events.

In fall 2023, in an effort to support residents during extreme weather, Council established the Extreme Weather Emergency Response Fund for 2024. To better understand how these funds could be effectively used, Administration engaged community service providers and quickly identified that the community did not have a substantial or coordinated plan to help meet the needs of vulnerable and unhoused residents during extreme weather events.

As such, in Dec. 2023, the Extreme Weather Community Stakeholders' Group (EWCSG) was formed. The EWCSG is a collaborative group of community stakeholders that meets on a regular basis. The purpose of the group is to develop a coordinated community plan to help meet the needs of residents experiencing vulnerability during extreme weather events.

During the 2023-24 winter, two extreme weather events occurred (totalling 11 days). During these cold weather events, the following information and supports were offered:

- The City's Extreme cold weather warnings and tips webpage, which includes [a listing of social support services in Airdrie](#).

- City news releases and social media posts which notified residents of the extreme cold weather and safe, warm spaces they could go to, if needed (Genesis Place and the Airdrie Public Library served as daytime warming spaces; and the Airdrie Public Library served as an after-hours warming space).

During this time, Administration coordinated the community extreme weather response, which included: assisting with the purchase of supplies, and maintaining effective communication among the community groups as they delivered supports and services during extreme weather events. This work resulted in the creation of the 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan.

Airdrie's 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan (the Plan) defines extreme weather to include: extreme cold events, heat warnings, and air quality alerts (due to wildfire smoke)<sup>1</sup>. This Plan is an internal document. Its purpose is to outline a framework and process for providing a coordinated response amongst the community stakeholders. This includes safe, warm spaces, basic needs and outreach support to vulnerable and unhoused individuals in Airdrie during extreme cold weather. The Plan also outlines the information and supports offered during extreme heat and smoke events.<sup>2</sup>

The roles and responsibilities for the Plan are outlined below.

### **Extreme Weather Community Stakeholders' Group's Responsibilities**

- Coordinate, activate and deliver, the community's extreme cold weather response
- Purchase supplies and prepare in advance for the winter season.
- Work with the City of Airdrie to help communicate out the available supports/services during extreme weather events.
- Provide a funding report after each winter season detailing how funds were spent, outcomes, and suggestions for the next winter season.

### **The City of Airdrie's Responsibilities**

- Convene and help facilitate the EWCSG.
- Monitor extreme weather conditions on an ongoing basis.
- Work with Communications to communicate out extreme weather conditions/events to external community partners, Airdrie residents, and internal stakeholders via the City's social media and communications channels.
- Based on the EWCSG's response plan, communicate out the available extreme weather supports in Airdrie via the City's social media platforms.
- Provide financial support to identified community partners via extreme weather funding.
- Review and update the Plan on an ongoing basis.

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<sup>1</sup> The Plan utilizes Environment Canada's criteria for extreme cold events, heat warnings, and air quality alerts.

<sup>2</sup> Administration, working with Communications, developed a "Heat warnings and air quality alerts" webpage for the City of Airdrie website. Content includes direct links to Environment Canada's weather alerts and Airdrie's Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), as well as tips on how to stay safe during extreme heat. The Airdrie Public Library and Genesis Place are also listed as places residents can drop into during extreme heat and smoke events.

### **Extreme Cold Weather Response Elements**

The community partners, who comprise the EWCSG, will plan and lead the community response. Identified below are response elements that will be explored during extreme cold weather events:

- Daytime warming spaces
- Extended hours or after-hours warming spaces
- After-hours outreach support

In the span of the past 12 months, Administration, in partnership with EWCSG, have made significant steps in development of an extreme weather plan. The Plan was developed based on best practice research from other jurisdictions, internal guidance from key departments, close collaboration with community stakeholders, and through on-the-ground trial and error from last winter season. The Plan will be reviewed and revised as needed. Ultimately, the goal of this Plan is to help protect the health and safety of residents experiencing vulnerability during extreme weather events.

### **Council Committee Routed Through:**

The CSSS Standing Committee is the only Committee that Airdrie's 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan Update is being routed through.

### **Administration Recommendation:**

That the CSSS Standing Committee accept Airdrie's 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan Update for information.

### **Alternatives/Implications:**

N/A.

### **Budget Implications:**

The 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan will be supported by the remaining funds in the 2024 Extreme Weather Emergency Response Fund; and the 2025 Extreme Weather Emergency Response Fund, pending 2025 budget deliberations.

### **Communications and Engagement:**

Communications developed an Extreme Weather Communications Plan to support this extreme weather work. Administration, working with Communications, also developed internal and external communications materials to ensure Council, the general public, and internal departments are aware of the Plan's process and supports.

**Recommendation:**

That the Community Safety and Social Services Standing Committee accept Airdrie's 2024-25 Extreme Weather Plan Update for information.

Staff Presenter:	Pauline Clark, Angela Angel, Social Planner
Department:	Social Planning
Reviewed by:	Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	N/A

Team

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Leader and