

Urban Chicken Pilot Project**Report Purpose**

To continue discussion and debate on the potential development of an Urban Chicken Pilot Project.

Council History

May 16, 2017 – THAT the May 16, 2017 Priorities Committee report Urban Chicken Pilot Project, without further work from Administration, be referred to Council for debate and decision.

November 29, 2016 – Council approved the Urban Agriculture Strategy, as set out in Enclosure 1 to the November 29, 2016 Transportation and Agriculture Services report.

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: n/a

Governance: n/a

Social: Taking a leadership role in creating and providing opportunities for residents to strengthen community identity, connect with agricultural roots, and offer diversity in lifestyle choices.

Culture: n/a

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: Animal Control Bylaw 18-2011

Legislative/Legal: *Animal Health Act* (SA 2007 cA-40.2)

Interdepartmental: Bylaw Services could be impacted due to the required changes to the Animal Control Bylaw in order to keep urban chickens.

Summary

The keeping of chickens in urban backyard flocks was identified in the 2016 Strathcona County Urban Agriculture Strategy (UAS). This is an emerging trend across Canada, with many cities creating pilot projects to evaluate the suitability of these programs for their residents. Preliminary results from these projects are mixed, with some being successful and some being disbanded. As a potential action of the UAS, Administration has undertaken preliminary research to begin the development of a pilot project suitable for the uniqueness of our community.

Throughout the public engagement of the UAS, the keeping of urban chickens was a topic that emerged numerous times, with polarizing views. Through detailed community conversations, it was indicated that residents would be interested in an urban chicken pilot project with close oversight and periodic review of performance and outcomes.

As a specialized municipality, Strathcona County must also consider the implications that urban chicken proximity could have on producers. As per the *Animal Health Act*, in the event of illness within domestic poultry populations, quarantine and potential destruction of all domestic birds (including backyard chickens) within a 10 km radius of the found infection could be required. Due to the large number of urban parcels spread throughout Strathcona County, an event requiring quarantine could greatly affect both backyard flocks and large scale producers (Enclosure 1).

Further, some municipalities who have initiated or investigated a chicken program have disbanded it for numerous reasons including, but not limited to: pests, complaints, and lack of registration. Others simply do not allow urban chickens.

Several considerations for an Urban Chicken Pilot program were brought forward and outlined in the UAS. In order to evaluate these considerations, programs from several comparable municipalities were examined (Enclosure 2).

In order to create a measured and intentional program, a limited scope Strathcona County pilot project would include, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

- Clearly defined registration and permitting requirements (which could include lot size and location)
- Breed, age and number of chickens would be stipulated (no roosters)
- Participatory educational requirements
- Subject to inspection (pre and post application)
- Clear best management practices (to protect animal and human health)
- Limited number of participants
- Clear evaluation criteria

On April 5, 2017 the Agricultural Service Board moved:

THAT due to the importance of the poultry industry in Strathcona County, the Agricultural Service Board does not support the development and implementation of a limited scope Urban Chicken Pilot Program.

Enclosures

- 1 Map: Potential Avian Disease Risk Areas
- 2 Urban Chicken Program Comparison