



Subject: Four Day Work Week

Report Number: CAO 23-06

Department: Office of the CAO

Submitted by: Joanna Kurowski, Human Resources Manager

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, April 24, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

THAT report CAO 23-06 titled Four Day Work Week be received; and

THAT a 12 month pilot project of a four day work week model for frontline staff from May 2023 to April 2024 be approved and staff be directed to create a formal policy for Council consideration regarding adding four day work week as one of the work options available for staff.

BACKGROUND

At the March 14th, 2022 Council meeting, a resolution passed that Council approve the Hybrid Work Model (Policy 6-010). Out of 210 staff and 47 eligible to participate, 33 staff members took advantage of this work model. Staff concluded that the current hybrid work model turned out to be highly successful as sufficient staff coverage has been provided with no service interruptions or decrease in levels of service. There were also no concerns with staff availability for in-person meetings or required events and tasks.

The hybrid work model has had a positive impact on current staff allowing employees a better work-life balance. This model has also positively impacted our recruitment and retention status as it allows us to attract top talent from a wider pool of candidates.

DISCUSSION

Although the hybrid model works well for most office staff, this arrangement was not suitable for frontline operations staff (i.e. Public Works and Recreation, Parks and Culture Operations) who, by the nature of their work, would not be an appropriate fit. Staff would like to have an option of better work-life balance for the frontline staff as well and recommend testing four day work week model for this group of employees.

Staff recognizes the significant positive impacts of the hybrid work model and recommends developing a four day work week program which not only offers an option of better work-life balance, promote a more positive culture and staff retention and attraction, but also allows for maintaining business continuity and the same or better levels of service to the Town residents and businesses.

The four day work week pilot program would only be applicable to employees who are unable to work under hybrid work model and would be available only when departmental operations would not be negatively affected by this change. This pilot project would not affect the hours of operations of Town's facilities.

In direct similarity to the hybrid work model, research as well as experience by other municipalities and private companies suggest that employees who have a better work-life balance are more committed to their jobs and feel more valuable by their employers. This in turn, leads to increased job satisfaction and higher levels of productivity.

By decreasing the number of work days, employees have more time to engage in activities outside work, such as spending time with family and friends, pursuing hobbies or simply resting and recharging. This can reduce stress and burnout, lead to improved physical and mental health and result in decreased use of personal days. Also, with an additional day off each week, employees may be compelled to call in sick less, and book personal appointments during their additional day off.

Four day work weeks can serve as an effective strategy for improving employee retention, boosting productivity and attracting top talent. A shorter work week may also attract new employees and make the Town more competitive in the labour market. Job seekers today are looking for companies that offer a great work-life balance, and implementation of a

four day work week can be a powerful recruitment tool. The implementation of a four day work week may also have positive effects on employee retention.

A number of Ontario municipalities have successfully implemented four-day work weeks as a potential solution to improve work-life balance and boost productivity. Specifically, both the Towns of Aylmer and Springwater municipalities have both implemented

compressed work week pilot projects. Both of the municipalities, due to successes of their pilot projects, have adopted four day work week models as a permanent option for employees.

IMPLEMENTATION

The idea is to expand daily work hours from eight (8) to ten (10) hours per day and create a work schedule allowing for a regular 40-hour work week to take place over four days versus five thereby allowing employees to have an additional day off work each week while providing the municipality with the same or improved service levels without affecting the hours of operations.

Departments taking part in this project will need to consider sufficient staffing requirements to develop specific work schedule and maintain business continuity. Possible different scenarios covering five work days with a four day work week model would be created by different departments as the work schedules would have to pertain to departmental operations and must not have negative impact on business continuity.

CONSULTATION

In consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, all Managers as well as Employees throughout the planning process, staff noted that there is not a one-size-fits-all model and would consider a departmental implementation, for example:

Public Works – recognizes a four-day work week is only applicable during non-winter months as the varying service levels during winter operations negate any advantages of four-day work week (April – October/November)

Engineering – would only be appropriate during the 3-4 month window when not impacted by construction projects activities

Fire Services – are interested in exploring a 10-hour shift model that fits within their operations

Staff will continue to seek and evaluate feedback and recommendations from all departments and employees as the program is implemented. This will also include bargaining staff (i.e. Tillsonburg Hydro).

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

There are no financial implications and no additional funding is required for this program.

CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

Goal – The Town of Tillsonburg will strive for excellence and accountability in government, providing effective and efficient services, information, and opportunities to shape municipal initiatives.

Strategic Direction – Enhance employee engagement and training as foundation for exceptional customer service; Position Tillsonburg as a leader in the municipal sector.

Priority Project – *Immediate Term* – Employee Engagement Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Policy 6-010 Hybrid Work Model

Appendix B – Town of Springwater Report on Flexible Work Arrangements/Compressed Work Week Update

Appendix C – Town of Alymer HR Policy on Compressed Workweek

Links to most recent media coverage regarding municipalities implementing four day work week:

CBC News – Rural Ontario municipalities are adopting four day work week - [Rural Ontario municipalities are adopting the 4-day work week. What does it take to get others on board? | CBC News](#)

HR Director – Another municipality joins four day work week movement - [Another Ontario municipality joins 4-day workweek movement | HRD Canada \(hcamag.com\)](#)