



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Monday, June 19, 2023 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Monday, June 19, 2023 at 12:05 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber. The following Committee members were in attendance:

Chair: Mayor R. Alty,
Councillor S. Arden-Smith,
Councillor G. Cochrane,
Councillor R. Fequet,
Councillor B. Hendriksen,
Councillor T. McLennan, and
Councillor S. Payne.

The following members of Administration staff were in attendance:

S. Bassi-Kellett,
C. Caljouw,
S. Hove,
C. MacLean,
W. Newton,
K. Thistle,
C. White,
G. White, and
S. Jovic.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	(For Information Only) Mayor Alty read the Opening Statement.
2.	(For Information Only) There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.
3.	(For Information Only) Committee discussed timing of GPC/Council Packages. Committee noted that on April 24, 2023, Council passed a motion directing Administration to consider changing the timing of distribution of meeting materials to be sent out farther in advance to give Council time to



review material in advance of a meeting. Committee further noted that Council had concern regarding current processes for distribution of meeting material. Committee noted that Council Members expressed a desire for time to read, review, research and address questions arising from material released the weekend before the meeting and to give the public more opportunity to speak to Council or reach out to members based on agenda. Committee noted that extending current process and timelines means not only extending timelines for decisions by at least a week, but means increasing Administration lead time on bringing issues to Council. Committee further noted that there are tools available if Council feels they need more time on any issue.

Committee resolved to maintain status quo with respect to timing of GPC/Council packages.

4. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to approve the 2023-2026 Council Strategic Directions.**

Committee noted that since being elected in October 2022, Council has worked to confirm its mission, vision, principles and high level strategic directions that are supported by focus areas and proposed key initiatives for the next four years.

These strategic directions reinforce and complement the core services and mandated responsibilities that the City continues to uphold and deliver upon, while providing key areas of focus that Council believes are important for the community over the next four years. Confirming strategic directions can (a) ensure transparency for Council's key high-level priorities, (b) focus on the steps required to get there and (c) guide Council when making decisions regarding the allocation of resources.

On May 15, 2023, Council approved the draft 2023-2026 Strategic Directions release to the public for engagement and review. The draft Strategic Directions document was posted on the City website and comments were encouraged through PlaceSpeak from May 30th to June 9th. Five (5) residents made eight (8) comments.

Committee noted that applicable legislation, by-laws, studies or plans include:
Council's Goals & Objectives 2019-2022

Public Input

Between May 30 and June 9, five (5) residents made eight (8) comments using the Placespeak platform. Comments generally highlight areas where residents seek to reaffirm Council direction and propose actions that support the strategic directions.

Theme	Comment
Infill Trails and access to nature	"Yellowknife is a...community with a strong sense of pride in our unique...natural beauty". This natural beauty, currently accessible to Yellowknifers on our doorstep, is the reason why many residents including myself live here. It is a huge advantage that Yellowknife has over other Canadian cities, and must be preserved. Trail and nature protection, particularly close to the downtown core, should be a priority for this council. The continued eroding of Frame Lake and Niven trails, as well considering green spaces such as that adjacent to Rotary Park and Tin Can Hill



	<p>for development, will not preserve this access to nature, nor does it show a sense of pride in our natural beauty nor a vision for a sustainable future.</p> <p>Old/used sites need to be prioritized for development over easy-to-develop new sites - this is a no-brainer in terms of developing a sustainable and livable city that puts people first. Trails and natural green spaces within our city provide an affordable recreational amenity for citizens - continuing to erode these will do the opposite and prohibit people without a vehicle from accessing nature.</p> <p>Promoting and maintaining trail access throughout the winter should continue to be prioritized and expanded. Planning for equipment and manpower in the future should be taken into account here, particularly given that snowfall will increase in the coming decades. It would be nice to know if the City adopted any of the 2023 targets as recommended in their Trail Enhancement and Connectivity Strategy (2018) and whether or not they have been achieved.</p>
Biannual updates	<p>On page 7, I'm delighted to see the commitment for biannual reports to the community on the City's "progress, results, and adjustments" in relation to Council's strategic directions. I very much look forward to reading these. It would be great to see these biannual progress reports available on City's website and posted on your social media. Can you confirm that biannual refers to every 6 months rather than every 2 years? I do hope it's the former.</p> <p>Also, it's great to see so many previous plans (some many years old) referenced. It would be great to see progress reports on these and any future plans incorporated into the new biannual reports - including areas of focus and action items, with target dates for action.</p>
Active transportation Design standards	<p>My main area of interest is active travel, and so I'm glad to see the document mention 'multi-modal travel', including in winter. The Doc speaks of "Responsiveness to the needs of the public", a "liveable community" and a "sustainable future". Many cities around the world have realized, particularly in the past decade, that old designs for our public spaces were not putting people first nor compatible with a sustainable future, and many have made the necessary adjustments. YK could be a Canadian leader here by considering the legacy of its decisions and actions for generations to come. I'm glad the Development and Design Standards are being reviewed. I hope that this review will genuinely consider modes of travel other than the car. Our city streets currently do not consider the safety of children, pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users, and many feel they cannot use alternative modes as a result. Road widths, particularly around residential streets and downtown, are huge, with half the street width taken up by one or two distantly parked vehicles - this wasted space could be dedicated to proper active travel lanes, sidewalks and other community spaces. I'm not convinced that a review of the Planning and Design Standards alone will result in a cohesive active travel network, especially given that much of city road design is done by outside designers.</p> <p>There needs to be an overall vision for active travel first that will inform and link in with the new development and design standards. A new active transportation strategy needs to be developed - one that is far more ambitious and detailed than the last. One which takes into account international best practices, especially in other winter cities which do this right. There is huge potential here for our compact city. Maps of active travel routes are needed or a fragmented substandard network will result; a piece-meal approach with no overall vision is unlikely to result in a good end product. The city should not be put off by their one attempt at a segregated bike lane ten years ago. It would greatly help if professionals with experience designing for winter cities with great active travel options are involved in the design process, as well as during the review of the Design Standards and development of active travel plans.</p> <p>The design standards should include the need for a sidewalk outside every residence, so that parents can feel confident in the safety of their children walking down the road to a friends house or to school. We need more pedestrian crossings, and ones that don't have a 3 minute wait, as is currently the case at a number of our crossings.</p>
Bicycle lanes Multi modal transportation	<p>An additional point - the current design standards, as well as the city website, seem to lump in bicycle lanes with trails and recreational sports. While there is of course overlap, a shift in this perspective would be helpful. Many of the city's trails are not very well suited for bike lanes as</p>



	they do not provide a direct route, do not have sufficient width, are not maintained well enough (winter and summer), nor are they properly linked up with the road network elsewhere. Space needs to be dedicated for active travel, including protected bike lanes, on our existing roads and streets.
<p>Infill</p> <p>Tin Can Hill</p> <p>Natural green spaces</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review the Strategic Directions document. I am concerned with ensuring two things- . that Yellowknife continues to be a liveable city (the Mission), and that future growth is environmentally and fiscally responsible.</p> <p>1. I am all for infill of vacant lots to keep the city compact. But there needs to be some natural green space that is accessible within city limits and walking distance for residents without vehicles. this is very important for mental health. I believe that Tin Can Hill is the most valuable natural green space left in the City and it should be left undeveloped.</p> <p>2. Development of Tin Can Hill (the most immediate proposal relates to the polytechnical university on the Hill) is environmentally and fiscally irresponsible and not to the city's benefit. The GNWT options paper is a flawed document with incorrect assumptions and faulty reasoning. There are viable and fiscally attractive options available in the downtown core and Capital area that would assist with the City's oft-repeated desire for downtown revitalization, retain a much-used green space, and be more convenient and flexible for students and university administrators. The city is losing a once in a lifetime opportunity to revitalize downtown if it gives in to GNWT pressure to locate the university on Tin Can Hill.</p>
<p>Substance Abuse issues</p> <p>Homelessness</p> <p>Tin Can Hill</p>	<p>With the long wish list of things to do, I don't know how you can possibly have the resources to tackle very many of them.</p> <p>Priorities for me are the substance abuse issues/homelessness as well as removing Tin Can Hill from development. Put the university somewhere else, and stop throwing money away by giving away land. I don't understand the financial decisions of past councils. Please stop the financial bleeding wasting money by giving away things like the 50/50 lot and Tin Can Hill.</p> <p>Regarding substance abuse/homelessness, people I know first hand have been physically assaulted downtown. This issue is beyond out of control and the downtown is a disaster because of it.</p>
<p>Social Issues</p> <p>Clear goals/initiatives</p>	<p>This strategic direction document is very vague. As a community we would benefit from seeing the goals and tactics that the city will be taking to accomplish your vision. It is hard to give constructive feedback on a document that is very broad and gives little information on what major initiatives the city will be focusing on, how much it will cost and what is the benefit to the community as a whole.</p> <p>As a concerned citizen I would like to see strategic efforts being made to provide social supports to the houseless community and what is the city doing to make the city more safe?</p>

Implementation

Once the Strategic Directions are finalized and approved in final form by Council, Administration will propose actions that address and advance these and interweave with current items on Administration's workplan. Council direction on prioritizing actions will be welcomed.

Committee noted that Council's Strategic Directions will provide direction and focus for the future of the City of Yellowknife and will help Council make decisions regarding priority setting, resources and budget allocation.

Committee suggested several amendments and left it with Administration to finalize.



In response to question from the Committee, Administration undertook to provide information whether the 2023 targets, as recommended in their Trail Enhancement and Connectivity Strategy (2018), have been achieved.

Committee recommends that Council approve the 2023-2026 Council Strategic Directions.

MOVE APPROVAL

5. **Committee discussed the Access for All Policy.**

Committee noted that on April 24, 2023, Council tabled a motion to adopt Access for All Policy. Committee further noted that on June 12, 2023 Council removed a motion from table and referred Access for All Policy to the Governance and Priorities Committee for discussion. Committee noted that if the City of Yellowknife (the City) is striving to ensure the participation of ALL Yellowknife residents in recreation and transit services regardless of their personal financial constraints they believe that the City must expand Access for All Program. Committee further noted that the current income cut off is too low and leaves some residents unable to participate. Committee noted that by raising the income cut off more residents would be able to live healthy lifestyles by engaging in sports and recreation, get around our community in a sustainable manner and ensure the Access for All Program achieves its stated goals.

Committee requested that the household income cut off to be eligible for Access for All be changed to the Low Income Measure (LIM) from the Northwest Territories Market Based Measure (NMBM); that household income be changed to net income from gross income; and the time period for the Access for All Program be extended from 24 months to 36 months.

(For Information Only)

6. Committee recessed at 1:34 p.m. and reconvened at 1:45 p.m.

(For Information Only)

7. Committee continued its discussion regarding the Access for All Policy.

Committee recommended that the Policy be amended as follows:

1. "Access for All Program" definition - means **three years** of an annual Transit Pass and three years of an annual Individual or Family Flexi Pass provided free of charge to Yellowknife residents who qualify under this Policy;
2. That the definition section be changed from "Northwest Territories Market Basket Measure Threshold" to the "**Yellowknife Low Income Measure**";
3. Section 4.1.1.a - The applicant's household income is at or below the applicable **Yellowknife Low Income Measure threshold** for the number of people in the household;
4. Section 4.1.2 - In this Policy, household income is determined by adding together all **net income**, as set out in the Notice of Assessment(s) from the Canada Revenue



Agency, for the year immediately preceding the application for all household members over the age of 18.

5. Section 4.2.4 - Access for All passes are valid for **36 months**; after which time, a resident must reapply.

Committee recommends that a revised Access for All Policy be brought forward to Council on July 24, 2023 for adoption to allow members that will be absent from the next Council meeting on June 26, 2023 to participate in discussion.

MOVE APPROVAL

(For Information Only)

8. Councillor Arden-Smith moved,
Councillor Fequet seconded,

That Committee move in camera at 2:00 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

(For Information Only)

9. Committee discussed a personnel matter.
10. Councillor Arden-Smith moved,
Councillor Hendriksen seconded,

That, pursuant to Section 118 (11) of Council Procedures By-law No. 4975 the meeting be extended beyond three (3) hours.

(For Information Only)

11. Councillor Arden-Smith moved,
Councillor Payne seconded,

That Committee return to an open meeting at 3:03 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

(For Information Only)

12. There was no business arising from the in camera session.
13. The meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.