



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Monday, June 2, 2025 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 12:05 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber. The following Committee members were in attendance:

Chair: Mayor B. Hendriksen,
Councillor S. Arden-Smith,
Councillor G. Cochrane,
Councillor R. Foote,
Councillor C. McGurk,
Councillor T. McLennan,
Councillor S. Payne, and
Councillor R. Warburton.

The following members of Administration staff were in attendance:

S. Van Dine,
M. Begalka,
D. Gillard,
C. Greencorn,
C. MacLean,
B. Osburn,
K. Pandoo,
K. Thistle,
C. White,
G. White, and
S. Jovic.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
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| 1. | (For Information Only)
Councillor Payne read the Opening Statement at the Special Council Meeting at 12:00 p.m. |
| 2. | (For Information Only)
There were no disclosures of conflict of interest. |



(For Information Only)

3. Committee heard a presentation from Lisa Vass, a representative of the Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1), and Angelique Rossouw, a representative of the Yellowknife Catholic School (YCS), regarding the 2025 School Tax Levy. Ms. Vass noted that YK1 is requesting an increase in the school mill rate from 2.96 to 3.3. Ms. Vass further noted that based on this increase in the mill rate, the total revenue amount is \$8,038,923 for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. Ms. Rossouw noted that the YCS is requesting an increase in the municipal mill rate of 3.3. Ms. Rossouw further noted that based on this increase in the mill rate, the total revenue amount is \$5,052,646. In response to a question from Committee, Ms. Vass advised that the school mill rates have not been adjusted in over 20 years.

(For Information Only)

4. Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to adopt the 2025 Municipal Tax Levy and 2025 School Tax Levy by-laws.

Committee noted that Council sets municipal mill rates annually to generate property tax revenue in accordance with its adopted budget and sets school mill rates based upon revenue requisitions from the two school boards. Once final municipal and school mill rates are set, the City sends a final property tax bill to all property owners and ratepayers.

The proposed municipal mill rates set out in this memorandum and the accompanying by-laws will result in sufficient tax revenues to fund the approved 2025 Budget.

When Council adopted Budget 2025, it required a municipal property tax increase of six point zero two percent (6.02%). A slight increase in the City's assessment base subsequently decreased the requirement to five decimal eight six percent (5.86%). Consequently, Administration is recommending that an increase of five decimal eight six percent (5.86%) be approved.

Also note that on May 9th, 2022, Council directed Administration to set mill rates to achieve a Commercial to Residential mill rate ratio of 2.13. As the recommended mill rates for 2025 attempts to maintain this ratio, the five point eight six percent (5.86 %) tax increase will apply to all ratepayers.

Committee noted that Council's policies, resolutions or goals include:

Budget Policy (Council Motion #204-19)

Balancing the Budget

The budget shall be balanced except when reasonably unforeseeable circumstances occur. The Budget shall be considered balanced if:

1. fund balances are within the minimum and maximum limits prescribed in the Stabilization Funds policy statement; or
2. the change in balance of each fund meets or exceeds the plan to establish minimum fund



balances as prescribed in the Stabilization Funds policy statement.

Stabilization Funds

Council shall establish and maintain fund balances as follows:

1. General Fund: no less than 10% and no more than 15% of budgeted expenditures.
2. Solid Waste Management Fund - no less than 5% of budgeted expenditures;
3. Water & Sewer Fund – no less than 5% of budgeted expenditures;
4. Land Development Fund – amount sufficient to fund future land development;
5. Service Connection Failure Assistance Fund - no less than Nil;
6. Capital Fund – amount sufficient to fund expenditures according to the Asset Management Plan; and
7. Reserve Fund - amount sufficient to fund expenditures according to the Long-Term Financial Plan and the Asset Management Plan.

Fund balances may be used at Council’s discretion for emergencies, unanticipated economic downturns, and one-time opportunities. Minimum fund balances shall be restored in the following year or according to Long-Term Financial Plan.

Asset Management

Asset Management shall be implemented according to the Asset Management Plan and the Ten-Year Capital Plan adopted by Council. The annual budget shall be prepared in accordance with these Plans, and shall include sustainable transfers from the General Fund, Water and Sewer Fund, and Solid Waste Management Fund to the Capital Fund.

Committee noted that applicable legislation, by-laws, studies or plans include:

1. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act* S.N.W.T. 2003, c22;
2. *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.P-10; and
3. City of Yellowknife Tax Administration By-law No. 4207, as amended.

Legislative

The *Cities, Towns and Villages Act (CTV Act)* stipulates that Council must adopt a balanced budget in advance of each fiscal year, and that the budget must include estimates of all



anticipated expenditures and revenues. It further stipulates that if a municipality incurs a deficit, it must be eliminated by the end of the next fiscal year.

Section 76 of the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* directs Council to establish a municipal mill rate, by by-law, for each property class in the municipal taxation area for the purpose of raising property tax revenue for use by the municipality. It also directs Council to establish an education mill rate based on the education district authorities' requests.

Procedural Considerations

In January 2025, the City sent an interim tax bill to property owners as per the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*. The amount of the interim tax bill was 50% of the 2024 tax levy. In order to determine the final 2025 tax bill for City ratepayers, the final mill rates must be approved by Council prior to the issuance of the final tax bill in June. The interim tax bill amount will be deducted from the final tax bill to determine the balance amount each ratepayer will still owe for the year.

Financial Considerations

When the 2025 Budget was adopted in December 2024, Administration estimated that a tax increase of six point zero two percent (6.02%) would be required to meet the tax revenue target of \$40,513,126. Since then, the Assessment Roll values have been finalized and some changes were made by the Board of Revision, resulting in a slight increase in the assessed values. The Assessment Audit during the first revision determined that adjustments were required to some Multi-Residential and Commercial/Industrial Properties. Consequently, these changes are requiring that only five point eight six percent (5.86 %) of tax increase be in place to meet the City's 2025 tax revenue requirement of \$40,513,126.

Education Mill Rate

For the 2025/2026 school year, Yellowknife Education District No. 1 requested \$8,038,923 in tax revenues, compared to the \$7,005,779 they requested for the 2024/2025 school year.

On the other hand, the Yellowknife Catholic School Board (YCS) requested \$5,052,646 in tax revenues for 2025/2026, compared to their request of \$4,613,000 for the 2024/2025 school year.

Consistency

It has been Council's practice, as agreed to by the school districts, to set the same mill rates for both school districts.

Department Consultation

Consultation on the revenue requirements for the City is conducted amongst all departments when the budget is developed.

Council's Direction

On December 12th, 2022, Council directed Administration to develop a Mill Rate Policy. This initiative is on Administration's 2025 Work Plan.



Committee noted that on May 9, 2022, Council directed Administration to set 2022 mill rates to achieve a Commercial to Residential mill rate ratio of 2.13. The proposed 2025 mill rates attempts to maintain this ratio and will enable the City to meet its tax requirement of \$40,513,126.

The following table summarizes the 2024 and 2025 assessment and taxation distributions between Non-Residential and Residential properties under the recommended mill rates:

Assessment and Tax Distribution					
	Total Assessment		Tax Responsibility		Mill Rate Ratio
	Non-Residential	Residential	Non-Residential	Residential	
2024	38.16%	61.84%	56.33%	43.67%	2.13
2025	38.10%	61.90%	56.16%	43.84%	2.12
% change	-0.15%	0.09%	-0.30%	0.39%	-0.06%

The school mill rates have been calculated to raise the amounts specified in the school boards' requisitions. These rates remained unchanged between 2019 and 2024, but for the 2025/2026 school year, both School Boards have requested higher tax revenues resulting in an eleven point forty-nine percent (11.49%) increase in the school mill rate.

The following tables summarizes the 2024 Municipal and School property tax amounts for the Residential and Commercial/Industrial classes as well as the potential total property tax payments in 2025 under the recommended mill rates:

Assessed Values - Residential					
Year	Details	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$750,000	\$1,000,000
2024	Municipal Tax	\$1,650	\$3,300	\$4,950	\$6,600
	School Tax	\$740	\$1,480	\$2,220	\$2,960
	Total Tax	\$2,390	\$4,780	\$7,170	\$9,560
2025	Municipal Tax	\$1,748	\$3,495	\$5,243	\$6,990
	School Tax	\$825	\$1,650	\$2,475	\$3,300
	Total Tax	\$2,573	\$5,145	\$7,718	\$10,290
Increases from Prior Year	Municipal Tax	\$98	\$195	\$293	\$390
	School Tax	\$85	\$170	\$255	\$340
	Total	\$183	\$365	\$548	\$730



Assessed Values – Commercial/Industrial					
Year	Details	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
2024	Municipal Tax	\$7,015	\$14,030	\$21,045	\$28,060
	School Tax	\$1,480	\$2,960	\$4,440	\$5,920
	Total Tax	\$8,495	\$16,990	\$25,485	\$33,980
2025	Municipal Tax	\$7,425	\$14,850	\$22,275	\$29,700
	School Tax	\$1,650	\$3,300	\$4,950	\$6,600
	Total Tax	\$9,075	\$18,150	\$27,225	\$36,300
Increases from Prior Year	Municipal Tax	\$410	\$820	\$1,230	\$1,640
	School Tax	\$170	\$340	\$510	\$680
	Total	\$580	\$1,160	\$1,740	\$2,320

Committee recommended that Council:

1. Adopt By-law No. 5108, a by-law to set the 2025 Municipal Tax Levy by applying mill rates as follows:

Residential	6.99 mills
Multi-Residential	7.62 mills
Commercial and Industrial	14.85 mills
Mining and Quarrying	18.50 mills
High Density Parking	8.63 mills
Agricultural	6.80 mills; and

2. Adopt By-law No. 5109, a by-law to set the 2025 School Tax Levy by applying mill rates as follows:

Residential	3.30 mills
Multi-Residential	3.30 mills
Commercial and Industrial	3.30 mills
Mining and Quarrying	4.67 mills
High Density Parking	3.30 mills
Agricultural	3.30 mills

5. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to approve recommended Strategic Priorities for the Municipal Enforcement Division for 2025/26.**

Committee noted that in 2014, an operational review of MED recommended that the City set high-level strategic priorities for municipal enforcement on an annual basis. On March 25, 2019, Council adopted a By-law Enforcement Policy intended to uphold effective



municipal by-law enforcement and provide transparency to the enforcement process for the public. It requires that the City prioritize proactive enforcement on matters related to public safety. All other by-law enforcement action is undertaken in response to complaints. In addition, the Policy calls for Council to set strategic priorities for municipal enforcement annually. In May 2024, no consultation with Council was done due to change in leadership at the City Manager position.

In May, 2023, Council approved the following strategic priorities for 2023/24:

- Focusing on pedestrian and intersection safety issues through the strategic enforcement of the Highway Traffic By-law;
- Engaging in strategic enforcement and prevention activities concerning unauthorized parking, specifically focusing on access for emergency vehicles;
- Prioritizing Municipal Enforcement engagement and visibility in the community, particularly in the downtown core; and
- Continued emphasis on incorporating reconciliation with Indigenous peoples into Municipal Enforcement activities, to build on the work that has already taken place.

Since then, MED has made progress on the 2022/23 Strategic Priorities, as outlined in the Strategic Priorities Update for 2024/25. MED is in the process of undergoing an operations framework review for modernization of established procedures, training methods, and policies.

Committee noted that Council's policies, resolutions or goals include:

Council Motion #0083-19 That Council adopt the By-law Enforcement Policy (March 2019)

Committee noted that applicable legislation, by-laws, studies or plans include:

1. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, S.N.W.T. 2003, c.22;
2. *Motor Vehicles Act*, RSNWT, 1988, c.M-16 and *regulations*;
3. Highway Traffic By-law No. 5055;
4. Public Parks and Recreation Facilities By-law No. 4564, as amended;
5. Unsightly Lands By-law No. 3979, as amended;
6. Solid Waste Management By-law No. 4376, as amended;
7. By-law enforcement Policy, Council Motion #0083-19, 26 March 2019; and
8. Yellowknife Old Town Emergency Circulation Review and Parking Study, 5 August 2019

Legislative

The City's enforcement activities are guided by the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act (CTV Act)* of the Northwest Territories which grants legislative powers to municipal governments, including enforcement of by-laws. This mandates MED to enforce the *Motor Vehicles Act and regulations*, *All Terrain Vehicles Act* as well as City by-laws with an enforcement component.



Financial Considerations

Actions guided by Council's adoption of strategic priorities for Municipal Enforcement in 2025/26 are achieved through budget allocations and existing resources.

Consistency

Council direction on annual strategic priorities for enforcement ensures Municipal Enforcement aligns with broad Council goals and community needs. The identification of priorities confirms a consistent approach with respect to Municipal Enforcement and ensures resources are directed toward enforcement areas of greatest concern.

Context

The City of Yellowknife's By-law Enforcement Policy commits that any matter related to public or officer safety is always a priority for MED in addition to the priorities set by Council. Furthermore, the By-law Enforcement Policy clarifies that enforcement may be achieved through a range of activities such as: educating the public about regulatory rules, conducting inspections to ensure that rules are being followed, mediating between members of the public, and formal consequences (issuing tickets) for by-law contraventions where compliance is not forthcoming or harm has been done to the community. Whatever approach is taken, safety of the public and officers is always the primary consideration.

Council's annual direction on the By-law Enforcement Policy strategic priorities for enforcement ensures transparency to the public. Guidance on strategic priorities will assist MED Officers by providing better information and context to guide decision-making and priority setting in carrying out their enforcement duties.

1. Focusing on pedestrian and intersection safety issues through the strategic enforcement of the Highway Traffic By-law.

Traffic By-law enforcement was a major MED activity in 2024/2025 as it is a priority stated in the By-law Enforcement Policy, and is assessed to be a major public concern into the future. Strategic, proactive enforcement of the Traffic By-law—particularly in high-risk areas like intersections and school zones—helps prevent collisions and promotes safer driver behavior. School zones warrant special focus, as children are more at risk during busy times of day. Visible enforcement in these areas not only deters unsafe driving but also reassures families that their safety is a priority. Targeting these areas with a thoughtful and pre-planned enforcement schedule supports the City of Yellowknife's broader public safety strategic goals.

2. Engaging in strategic enforcement and prevention activities concerning unauthorized parking, specifically focusing on access for emergency vehicles.

Strategic enforcement and prevention of unauthorized parking—especially where it blocks access for emergency vehicles—should be a key priority due to the significant public safety risks. Throughout 2024/25, ensuring that these important access lanes remained open is a daily priority for MED. Proactive enforcement ensures emergency



services can operate effectively when every second counts, while also promoting public awareness of the consequences of illegal parking. This focus supports the City of Yellowknife's commitment to safety and helps keep essential infrastructure clear and accessible at all times.

3. Prioritizing Municipal Enforcement engagement and visibility in the community, particularly in the downtown core focusing on litter, unsightly lands, and ensuring a safe environment for all.

Prioritizing Municipal Enforcement engagement and visibility—particularly in the downtown core—is essential to enhancing public safety, addressing nuisance issues, and supporting community well-being. A visible presence helps deter by-law infractions such as illegal parking, public disturbances, and littering, while also making people feel safer and more comfortable in public spaces. Residents and visitors are more likely to feel secure when they see uniformed officers regularly patrolling the area. Increased engagement also supports efforts to address unsightly lands and garbage, contributing to a cleaner, more inviting downtown environment. These proactive measures not only promote compliance but also strengthen community trust and reinforce the City of Yellowknife's commitment to maintaining a safe, accessible, and vibrant urban core.

4. Developing strategic relationships with other local law enforcement agencies to facilitate cooperation and achieve greater public safety effects in the community.

Developing strategic relationships with other local law enforcement agencies should be a priority to enhance coordination, improve information sharing, and achieve greater public safety outcomes across the community. Municipal Enforcement plays a vital role in maintaining order and compliance with by-laws, but many issues—such as traffic safety, public disturbances, and vulnerable person outreach—benefit from a collaborative, multi-agency approach. Strengthening partnerships with the RCMP, Fire Division, and other relevant agencies allows for more efficient use of resources, consistent enforcement, and a unified response to emerging challenges. This cooperation also builds public confidence by demonstrating that enforcement agencies are working together to keep Yellowknife safe, responsive, and well-served.

Committee recommends that Council adopt the following strategic priorities for the Municipal Enforcement Division (MED) for 2025/26:

- Focusing on pedestrian and intersection safety in school zones through the strategic enforcement of the Highway Traffic By-law; and
- Prioritizing Municipal Enforcement engagement and visibility in the community, particularly in the downtown core focusing on litter, unsightly lands, and ensuring a safe environment for all.

MOVE APPROVAL



6. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to enter into an Agreement with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to receive the City's allocation of federal DMAF funding for NWT communities for wildland fire resiliency.**

Committee noted that in 2022, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities (NWTAC) applied to the Government of Canada's Disaster Mitigation & Adaptation Fund (DMAF) on behalf of all the 29 Northwest Territories (NWT) communities within the treeline which are facing wildfire risk to conduct vegetation/fuel reduction in their community.

Funding of \$20 Million was approved in late 2022, with NWTAC working extensively to negotiate the terms of the contribution agreement that it would enter into with Canada; Canada is funding 100% of the work given the Indigenous communities served and the term extends to all funds being expensed by 2032.

Subsequently, the NWTAC is entering into agreements with all eligible NWT community governments for each community's respective allocation. The City's allocation is \$2.354 Million over the life of this project, and a minimum vegetation treatment/fuel management area of 130.8 hectares. The respective funding and fuel reduction allocations are based on the most recent Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), developed in partnership with the GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change's (ECC) Forest Management Division. The City's recent CWPP, which the City of Yellowknife's funding allocation is based upon, was finalized in January 2025.

Community governments will manage how this project is implemented on the ground, including local planning and engagement and hiring local contractors/workforce required. Indigenous consultation and applicable permits are conditions of the program. A Motion of Council is required for the Funding Agreement to be accepted by the NWTAC.

Committee noted that Council's policies, resolutions or goals include:

Strategic Direction #1: People First
Strategic Direction #3: Sustainable Future

Committee noted that applicable legislation, by-laws, studies or plans include:

Cities, Towns and Villages Act.

Financial

Council approval to enter into this contract is required.

Operational

Implementing the recommended actions of the City's CWPP requires resources and utilizing DMAF funds through a planned multi-year process allows for the orderly prioritized implementation, based on the updated CWPP in 2025.

Committee noted that completing work on the wildland urban interface around the City of Yellowknife in the event of a wildfire continues to be a top priority. Being part of an overall



project that is coordinated through the NWTAC, with technical and administrative support coming from the NWTAC, enables the City to focus on allocating efforts and resources fully towards the creation of these protective assets.

Committee recommends that Council authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to receive the City's allocation of federal DMAF funding for NWT communities for wildland fire mitigation through vegetation/fuel reduction.

MOVE APPROVAL

- (For Information Only)
7. Councillor Cochrane moved,
Councillor Warburton seconded,

That Committee move in camera at 12:25 p.m. to discuss a legal matter.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- (For Information Only)
8. Committee discussed a legal matter.

- (For Information Only)
9. Councillor Arden-Smith left the meeting at 1:04 p.m.

- (For Information Only)
10. Committee continued its discussion regarding a legal matter.

- (For Information Only)
11. Councillor Cochrane moved,
Councillor McGurk seconded,

That Committee return to an open meeting at 1:20 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- (For Information Only)
12. There was no business arising from the in camera session.
13. The meeting adjourned at 1:21 p.m.