



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Council Agenda

Monday, November 24, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Welcome to the

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

Council Chamber, City Hall
4807 - 52nd Street
Yellowknife

All presentations pertaining to items on the Agenda for the meeting shall be heard under the “Delegations Pertaining to Items on the Agenda,” portion of the Order of Business. All presentations pertaining to items not on the Agenda shall be heard under the “Delegations Pertaining to Items Not on the Agenda” portion of the Order of Business.

The following procedures apply to all delegations before Council:

- a. all delegations shall address their remarks directly to the Presiding Officer and shall not pose questions to individual Members or Administration;
- b. each presenter shall be afforded five minutes to make their presentation;
- c. the time allowed to each presenter may be extended beyond five minutes by a resolution of Council;
- d. after a person has spoken, any Member may, through the Presiding Officer, ask that person or the City Administrator relevant questions; and
- e. no debate shall be permitted on any delegation to Council either between Members or with an individual making a presentation.

Please refer to By-law No. 4975, the Council Procedures By-law, for the rules respecting the procedures of Council.

COUNCIL:

Mayor Ben Hendriksen

Councillor Stacie Arden-Smith
Councillor Garrett Cochrane
Councillor Ryan Fequet
Councillor Rob Foote

Councillor Cat McGurk
Councillor Tom McLennan
Councillor Steve Payne
Councillor Rob Warburton

All annexes to this agenda may be viewed on the City’s website www.yellowknife.ca or by contacting the City Clerk’s Office at 920-5602.



Item No.

Description

OPENING STATEMENT

1. Councillor Arden-Smith will read the Opening Statement.

The City of Yellowknife acknowledges that we are located in Chief Drygeese territory. From time immemorial, it has been the traditional land of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all other Indigenous Peoples including the North Slave Métis, and all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

AWARDS, CEREMONIES AND PRESENTATIONS

2. There were no awards, ceremonies or presentations for the agenda.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Previously
Distributed

3. Minutes of Council for the special meeting of Monday, November 10, 2025 are presented for adoption.

4. Councillor Arden-Smith moves,
Councillor _____ seconds,

That Minutes of Council for the regular meeting of Monday, November 10, 2025 be presented for adoption.

Unanimous	In Favour	Opposed	Carried / Defeated
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DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

5. Does any Member have a conflict of interest in any matter before Council today?

CORRESPONDENCE & PETITIONS

6. There was no correspondence nor were there any petitions for the agenda.

STATUTORY PUBLIC HEARINGS

7. There were no Statutory Public Hearings for the agenda.



Item No.

Description

DELEGATIONS PERTAINING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

8. Public Presentations regarding the draft budget 2026.
1. NWT Art Centre Initiative regarding their budget proposal; and
 2. Yellowknife Tennis Club regarding the draft budget 2026 and tennis court resurfacing.

MEMBER STATEMENTS

9. There were no statements for the agenda.
10. Are there any Member statements from the floor?

INTRODUCTION AND CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor Arden-Smith will introduce the following reports:

11. Governance and Priorities Committee Report for November 10, 2025.
12. There was no business arising from this meeting.
13. Governance and Priorities Committee Report for November 17, 2025.
14. Councillor Arden-Smith moves,
Councillor _____ seconds,

That for the purpose of encouraging development on vacant land and addressing underutilized lots and derelict buildings, that Council direct Administration to bring forward:

- 1. A by-law to amend Tax Administration By-law No. 4207, as amended, to create a definition and new tax class for vacant land; and**
- 2. A by-law to regulate vacant and abandoned buildings.**

Unanimous	In Favour	Opposed	Carried / Defeated
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15. Councillor Arden-Smith moves,
Councillor _____ seconds,

That Council appoint Edwin Shu, an accountant, pursuant to Audit Committee By-law No. 4127, to serve on the City of Yellowknife (City) Audit Committee for a three-year term commencing November 25, 2025 and ending November 24, 2028.

Unanimous	In Favour	Opposed	Carried / Defeated
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<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
16.	There was no new business for the agenda.
17.	Is there any new business from the floor?
<u>ENACTMENT OF BY-LAWS</u>	
18.	There were no by-laws for the agenda.
<u>DEFERRED BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS</u>	
19.	There was no deferred business and there were no tabled items for the agenda.
20.	Is there any deferred business or are there any tabled items from the floor?
<u>OLD BUSINESS</u>	
21.	There was no old business for the agenda.
22.	Is there any old business from the floor?
<u>NOTICES OF MOTION</u>	
23.	There were no notices of motion for the agenda.
24.	Are there any notices of motion from the floor?
<u>DELEGATIONS PERTAINING TO ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA</u>	
25.	There were no delegations pertaining to items not on the agenda.
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE ENQUIRIES</u>	
26.	There were no administrative enquiries for the agenda.
27.	Are there any administrative enquiries from the floor?
<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Monday, November 10, 2025 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Monday, November 10, 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. Fequet,
Councillor R. Foote,
Councillor C. McGurk,
Councillor S. Payne, and
Councillor R. Warburton.

The following members of Administration staff were in attendance:

K. Thistle,
C. Caljouw,
D. Gillard,
C. Greencorn,
T. Mackenzie,
C. Saunders,
E. Thompson,
C. White, and
S. Jovic.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
	(For Information Only)
1.	Mayor Warburton read the Opening Statement at the Special Council Meeting held immediately preceding this meeting.
	(For Information Only)
2.	There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.



(For Information Only)

3. Committee heard a presentation from Brian Patterson, a representative of Uban Systems Ltd., regarding Yellowknife Transportation Plan - Existing Conditions Interim Report.

(For Information Only)

4. Committee deferred a memorandum regarding whether to adopt for information the Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 as prepared, and direct Administration to use the plan for long-term decision making and investment in Climate change mitigation and adaptation to an upcoming Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting.

Committee noted that the Climate Action Plan (“the Plan”) 2026-2036 replaces the Corporate and Community Energy Action Plan (the “CCEAP”) 2015-2025 and is the City’s first climate plan encompassing both mitigation and adaptation efforts to address climate change and negative impacts on the community. Action items will be brought forward through an implementation plan with budget and/or funding allocations in alignment with the schedule outlined in the Plan.

The review of the CCEAP has revealed the prior actions have led to a 20% decrease in Yellowknife’s community GHG emissions from 2009 to 2023. This reduction resulted mainly from a decrease in air travel and decrease in emissions from residential buildings due to fuel switching for heating. However, our emissions are trending upwards from 2021 to 2023, with a 16% increase over two years. GHG emissions from off-road transportation i.e. air travel (40% or 108,195 tCO₂e), Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) buildings (24% or 64,026 tCO₂e) and on-road transportation (20% or 53,965 tCO₂e) represent the major contributing sectors to the City’s 2023 Community GHG emissions estimates. Together, these three sources account for approximately 84% of the City’s Community GHG emissions and approximately 89% of Community energy use. There is a long way to go to reach net-zero – a commitment made by both the federal government, through its *Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*, and the GNWT.

Continuing with business-as-usual is not an option; substantial additional action is needed to put us on track. The forecast to 2050 shows a decrease in our emissions of 23% from 2023 which would put us nearly 200,000 tCO₂e over our net-zero target.

Yellowknife is experiencing the impacts of climate change. These include community-wide evacuations from wildfires, costly infrastructure damage due to permafrost thaw, and changes to our way of life and individual well-being. In the coming years, Yellowknife is expected to see increasingly warmer and shorter winters, more precipitation in the form of snow, further permafrost degradation, hotter and drier summers, more intense wildfires, and more extreme weather among other climate hazards. By proactively planning for climate change, we can be better prepared for, and have increased resiliency and capacity to respond to, the impacts of climate change – and save money down the road. Acting now will help prevent disruptions to our daily lives, service delivery, and economy, and keep Yellowknife safe for all.



The CCEAP included aspirational emissions reduction targets; the City has not met our own targets and are not on track to reach national and territorial commitments. This has been in part due to a lack of detailed, concrete actions within the plans and a failure to fund initiatives that would substantially reduce our emissions. The Plan, while it does not contain an overarching emissions reduction target – aside from a commitment to net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, has taken a new methodological approach. It outlines feasible and effective actions, qualitative measures for success, mechanisms to report progress and ensure accountability, and opportunities to create realistic but ambitious targets down the road. Budget 2026 includes money to begin the implementation and projects as identified in the Plan. In future years, funding and budget considerations will be required to support the Plan.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1: People First

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| Focus Area 1.1 | <u>Reconciliation</u>
Continuing to nurture positive and respectful relations with Indigenous governments, organizations and peoples. |
| Focus Area 1.3 | <u>Liveable Community</u>
Supporting all residents to participate in the social fabric and physical space of our community. |
| Key Initiative 1.3.3 | Supporting design standards that are multi-modal including recognizing Yellowknife's advantages as a winter city. |
| Key Initiative 1.3.4 | Providing public transit that meets user needs. |
| Key Initiative 1.3.5 | Advocating for enhanced outreach and social support services. |
| Key Initiative 1.3.6 | Working with all partners towards a safe, supportive and compassionate community for all. |

Strategic Direction #2: Service Excellence

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| Focus Area 2.1 | <u>Asset Management</u>
Planning, implementing and maintaining assets to reliably, safely and cost effectively deliver services for current and future community needs. |
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Strategic Direction #3: Sustainable Future

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| Focus Area 3.1 | <u>Resilient Future</u> |
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	Enhancing Yellowknife as a great place to live, visit, work and play now and into the future.
Key Initiative 3.1.1	Advancing energy initiatives, including district energy options to energy retrofits.
Key Initiative 3.1.2	Implementing the Solid Waste Management Plan.
Focus Area 3.2	<u>Growth Readiness</u> Ensuring land development supports economic readiness and community priorities.
Key Initiative 3.2.2	Completing land development tools and strategies that support growth readiness.
Key Initiative 3.2.4	Sustaining infrastructure capacity for future growth.
Focus Area 3.3	<u>Robust Economy</u> Doing our part to stimulate and amplify economic development opportunities.
Key Initiative 3.3.4	Implementing the Food and Agriculture Strategy.
For Information Only	Administration presented the progress update on Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 at the June 24, 2025, Governance and Priorities Committee.

Applicable legislation, by-laws, studies, plans include:

1. *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*;
2. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act SNWT 2003, c.22*;
3. *GNWT 2019-2023 Climate Change Action Plan*¹;
4. *GNWT 2030 Energy Strategy*²;
5. Community Plan (2020), By-law No. 5007, as amended; and
6. Corporate and Community Energy Plan 2015-2025.

Plan development process

In fall 2024, the City officially launched the development of the Climate Action Plan and began working with a consultant, Stantec Consulting Ltd. Over the course of seven months, Stantec completed a literature review, produced two key background reports, and began the engagement process.

¹ https://www.gov.nt.ca/ecc/sites/ecc/files/resources/128-climate_change_ap_proof.pdf

² https://www.inf.gov.nt.ca/sites/inf/files/resources/gnwt_inf_7272_energy_strategy_web-eng.pdf



Multiple public, stakeholder, and rightsholder engagement opportunities took place from December 2024 to March 2025. Strategies for engagement included invitation letters to Indigenous governments from the Mayor (3 sent), a public roundtable (8 attendees), a public survey (149 responses), and stakeholder meetings with NAKA Power, GNWT Energy, GNWT Environment and Climate Change, and several local NGOs including Ecology North, Alternatives North, and Seniors for Climate.

Based on the information collected from the engagement sessions, the City drafted actions for the Plan and completed a second round of engagement from April to July 2025. This round of engagement included rightsholder meetings with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and North Slave Métis Alliance, a public survey (56 responses), a public roundtable (20 attendees), a presentation to the True North Rotary Club, and stakeholder meetings with GNWT Energy, GNWT Environment and Climate Change, Arctic Energy Alliance, Yellowknife Community Garden Collective, and the Bottle Shop Recycling Depot. This phase of engagement informed revisions to the draft Plan.

City administration from various departments provided technical expertise throughout the development of the Plan and participated in targeted staff workshops.

Structure of the Plan

The first section of the Plan encompasses context for climate action in Yellowknife, including the results of the Energy GHG Emissions Inventory, the Climate Vulnerability Assessment, previous City energy plans, and alignment with other City, territorial, and federal plans and policies.

Next, is an outline of the plan development process and the vision and guiding principles. These principles, that build upon existing City approaches and Council's Strategic Directions 2023-2026, include:

- a) *Partnership-Driven Action*
- b) *Feasible, Measurable, and Impactful Projects*
- c) *Advocacy and Policy Support*
- d) *Community Engagement and Education*
- e) *Resilience and Adaptation*
- f) *Community Wellbeing and Social Capital*

The body of the Plan is made up of six themes, each with goals, strategies, and actions. The six major themes are:

- 1. Sustainable Transportation
- 2. Waste Management
- 3. Resilient and Efficient Buildings and Infrastructure
- 4. Responsible Land-Use and Planning
- 5. Governance and Accountability
- 6. Community Preparedness and Emergency Response



Actions within the Plan focus on both corporate (e.g., City-owned or operated) and community assets and include direct actions the City will take, opportunities to incentivize and educate residents, prospective partnerships with community groups or Indigenous governments, and areas to advocate for policy changes or resource-sharing from other levels of government.

Lastly, the Plan includes implementation processes that provide mechanisms to achieve the actions, timelines, and reporting requirements.

- Energy & Green House Gas Emissions

While this Plan does not provide a specific estimate of GHG emissions reductions to be expected through implementation, actions in the Plan were selected in part for their ability to directly reduce GHG emissions. Through end-use fuel switching, energy efficiency improvements, and energy source decarbonization, these actions are expected to reduce emissions and costs of electricity and fuel bills for the City and residents. The City will continue tracking GHG emissions throughout the implementation of the Plan.

- Environmental

Actions within the Plan are expected to have several benefits for ecosystem health. This includes maintaining, expanding, or improving green spaces, preserving our natural stormwater and sewage management capacity, increasing the longevity of landfill cells at the Solid Waste Facility, and improving air quality.

- Public Safety

Preparing our community members and adapting our infrastructure for the impacts of climate change inherently improves public safety. Actions within the Plan include increasing the fire resistance of buildings, FireSmart landscaping, educating residents on how to prepare for climate impacts, and increasing access to Better Air Facilities during smoke and extreme temperatures.

- Traffic & Transportation

One of six themes in the Plan is geared towards making transportation more sustainable. This includes increasing public transit services, enhancing active transportation infrastructure, and decarbonizing on-road vehicles – both personal vehicles and City fleet. Combined, these actions will reduce GHG emissions, reduce traffic congestion, and advance equity by increasing transportation options for the third of residents who do not have a drivers license in Yellowknife.

- Cost of Living

Several actions within the Plan may lead to reduced cost of living for residents in the long-term. For example, increasing local food production may reduce food insecurity, incentivizing developers to build energy efficient and resilient buildings lowers energy costs for future occupants, and retrofitting existing buildings reduces those costs for existing occupants. In addition, expanding public transit and increasing access to active



transportation may reduce the need for individuals to own, operate, and maintain private vehicles. Every effort should be made to ensure that Plan implementation does not result in cost-of-living increases in the short-term.

- Legislative

The *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act* establishes a legally binding commitment for the Government of Canada to reach net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. The Act also establishes a GHG emissions reduction target of 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

The GNWT has committed to reduce GHG emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The GNWT is also in the process of developing an integrated adaptation and energy strategy expected to be released in Spring 2026.

- Aligning City Plans

Climate change affects all aspects of the City's operations and planning in some form, and therefore climate action must be a collaborative effort from all City departments and be integrated into all City plans. The Plan aims to align with and build upon existing City plans to streamline energy and emissions reductions and adaptation measures. Forthcoming plans, such as the Community Plan Comprehensive Update and the Transportation Plan, also provide an opportunity to incorporate a climate lens across departments. The Plan outlines avenues to build mitigation and adaptation efforts into these forthcoming plans.

- Financial

Related budget will be reviewed and allocated each year according to actions that are planned to be undertaken by responsible departments throughout Plan implementation. The amount required will be presented during annual budgeting process.

Committee noted that human-caused climate change poses serious risks to our infrastructure, natural environment, and human health and well-being. Addressing the causes of climate change requires that all levels of government take immediate action. Both the Government of Canada and the Government of Northwest Territories have already committed to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Making up roughly half of the territory's population, Yellowknife has a significant role to play reaching these goals.

The Plan hinges on partnership-driven action, primarily with the GNWT, local Indigenous governments, and community organizations, and was designed in part through engagement with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the North Slave Métis Alliance (**Focus Area 1.1**).

Seeking to advance equity and reconciliation, the Plan includes actions that support those most vulnerable to climate change, including unhoused people, tenants, the elderly, and low-income individuals, by reducing energy and food costs, increasing access to clean air in homes and in the community, and improving access to more affordable modes of transportation (**Focus Area 1.3**).



The Plan promotes responsible asset management through monitoring and budgeting for climate impacts and rethinking our design and procurement of new assets to ensure resilience to our changing climate going forward (**Focus area 2.1**).

Finally, the Plan seeks to implement impactful solutions that reduce our emissions while enhancing resilience to climate change to make Yellowknife a healthy, resilient community for all, now and into the future (**Strategic Direction #3**).

(For Information Only)

5. Councillor Arden-Smith left the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

(For Information Only)

6. Committee continued its discussion regarding a memorandum regarding whether to adopt for information the Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 as prepared, and direct Administration to use the plan for long-term decision making and investment in Climate change mitigation and adaptation.

(For Information Only)

7. In response to a question from Committee, Administration noted that they had conversations about Climate Action with ECC and GNWT regarding legislative policy and will maintain these dialogues. Administration undertook to provide a defined metric of success for prior plans or initiatives.
8. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Monday, November 17, 2025 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Monday, November 17, 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. Fequet,
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,
C. Caljouw,
D. Gillard,
C. Greencorn,
C. MacLean,
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)
Mayor Hendriksen read the Opening Statement. |
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| 2. | (For Information Only)
There were no disclosures of conflict of interest. |
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3. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to encourage development on vacant land and address underutilized lots and derelict buildings by:**
- (i) **Amending By-law No. 4207 to create a new tax class for vacant land; and**
 - (ii) **Bringing forward a by-law to regulate vacant and abandoned buildings**

Committee noted that in Yellowknife, the need for additional housing is growing, driven by population pressures and a constrained supply of developable land. The city's unique geography and limited land base make it especially important to ensure that all available lots are being used efficiently. Vacant and abandoned buildings not only represent missed opportunities for housing and commercial development, but also pose safety hazards, detract from the city's visual appeal, and hinder economic growth. These properties can become sites of vandalism and community concern.

With increasing demand for residential and commercial space, there is strong interest in incentivizing property owners to develop key locations. At the July 14, 2025, Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting, members inquired about the possibility of taxing vacant land at a higher rate to encourage development. As a result, Administration was tasked with exploring the feasibility of creating a new tax class for vacant and undeveloped land. Specifically, committee members asked Administration whether the City has the legal authority to introduce a new property class for vacant land and, if so, whether it can be limited to the downtown area.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1:	People First
Focus Area 1.2	<u>Housing for All</u> Doing our part to create the context for diverse housing and accommodation options.
Key Initiative 1.2.1	Setting the context and foundation for a fulsome continuum of housing options, from social to market to workforce accommodation.
Focus Area 1.3	<u>Liveable Community</u> Supporting all residents to participate in the social fabric and physical space of our community.
Key Initiative 1.3.3	Supporting design standards that are multi-modal, including recognizing Yellowknife's advantages as a winter city.
Strategic Direction #3:	Sustainable Future
Focus Area 3.1	<u>Resilient Future</u> Enhancing Yellowknife as a great place to live, visit, work and play now and into the future.



Focus Area 3.2

Growth Readiness

Ensuring land development supports economic readiness and community priorities.

Key Initiative 3.2.2

Completing land development tools and strategies that support growth readiness.

Key Initiative 3.2.3

Modernizing development incentive options.

Focus Area 3.3

Robust Economy

Doing our part to stimulate and amplify economic development opportunities.

Motion #0141-22

That Council direct Administration to:

- (i) utilize the Revitalization Initiative Fund toward the development of City owned lands within the Downtown by contributing to the Land Fund to facilitate:
 - a. selling Lots 8, 9, and 10, Block 31, Plan 65 (5016, 5018 and 5022 50th Street) for less than appraised value, pursuant to a Request for Proposal process; and
 - b. selling Lot 34, Block 30 (50/50 Lot) for less than appraised values, pursuant to the Terms of Reference/Request for Proposal attached to and forming part of the memorandum to committee dated September 12, 2022.
- (ii) transfer \$2.275 million dollars from the Revitalization Initiative Fund to the Land Administration Fund to cover the land value of the properties listed above;
- (iii) transfer \$141,000 dollars from the Revitalization Initiative Fund to the Downtown Improvement Reserve to support Development Incentives; and
- (iii) to close the Revitalization Initiative Fund.

Applicable legislation, by-laws, studies, plans include:

1. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act S.N.W.T. 2003;*
2. *Property Assessment and Taxation Act S.N.W.T. 2023;*
3. Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended;
4. Land Administration By-law No. 5078; as amended;



5. Development Incentive By-law No. 5097;
6. Tax Administration By-law No. 4207, as amended;
7. City of Yellowknife Vision for Downtown Revitalization;
8. Retail Revitalization Strategy;
9. City of Yellowknife Economic Development Strategy (2020-2024);
10. 2010 Smart Growth Development Plan; and
11. City of Yellowknife Housing Needs Assessment.

Legislation

Section 15 of the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* gives municipalities the authority to establish two or more property classes by by-law.

15. (1) The council of a municipal taxing authority may, by bylaw, establish two or more classes of property and describe the kind of assessed property that is to comprise each class.
- (2) Where no bylaw is passed under subsection (1), the assessed property in the municipal taxation area is deemed to comprise one property class.
- (3) Subject to section 15.1, a bylaw or an amendment or repeal of a bylaw made under this section becomes effective on January 1 following its enactment. R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.54(Supp.), s.2; S.N.W.T. 2010, c.16, Sch.A, s.31(3), (5).

City of Yellowknife Tax Administration By-law No. 4207 currently establishes the following six property classes:

- (1) Class 1 – Residential
- (2) Class 2 – Multi-Residential
- (3) Class 3 – Commercial and Industrial
- (4) Class 4 – Mining and Quarrying
- (5) Class 5 – High-density Parking
- (6) Class 6 – Agricultural

By-law No. 4207 would need to be amended to establish a new property class for vacant land. A by-law creating a new property class that is passed in 2026 will take effect in 2027.

Establishing New Property Classes

(i) Vacant Land

Vacancy taxes—also known as the underused housing tax, vacant home tax, or empty homes tax—are increasingly being adopted in cities across Canada. These policies aim to discourage property owners from holding vacant, unutilized residential properties that are neither occupied nor rented. The goal is to alleviate pressure on housing markets and reduce the number of unused dwellings.



However, with a residential vacancy rate of just 1.8% in Yellowknife in 2024¹, the issue of unoccupied or unrented residential properties is not currently a concern for the city. Rather, the more pressing challenge is the limited availability of developable land, which makes it imperative to ensure that all available lots are being used efficiently to meet growing housing demand.

As noted above, while vacancy taxes on residential dwellings are becoming more common across Canada, there are currently no known examples of similar taxes being applied to vacant residential land. This may be due to the scarcity of undeveloped land in larger urban centres. Yellowknife does have limited number of vacant and underutilized parcels, particularly within the urban core.

Although the legislative framework exists to establish additional property classes and tax rates, to ensure fairness and effectiveness, the creation of a new property class for vacant land would require clear definitions, criteria for vacancy, and mechanisms for exemptions (e.g., for properties undergoing active development or facing legitimate barriers such as environmental remediation).

(ii) *Contaminated Sites*

Within municipal boundaries, there are currently two properties comprising 13 lots identified as contaminated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. These lots are vacant and could be considered for a higher mill rate through the creation of a new “Contaminated Vacant Lots” property classification.

While this approach could generate additional tax revenue, it is unlikely to incentivize development, as remediation of contaminated sites often involves complex and costly processes that prohibit development. The City has had development incentives to support clean-up of contaminated sites for over fifteen years but to date there have been no applicants.

(iii) *Low-Density (Surface) Parking*

Approximately 40% of the development footprint in Downtown Yellowknife is currently dedicated to surface parking, excluding on-street parking areas. Recent amendments to the Zoning By-law have reduced parking requirements for Downtown developments, aiming to shift this balance.

Council may wish to consider implementing an increased mill rate for low-density parking lots to encourage large property owners—including real estate investment trusts (REITs), the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of Canada—to consolidate surface parking and pursue redevelopment opportunities.

¹ CMHC Rental Market Survey – Yellowknife 2024 Edition (<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-data/data-tables/rental-market/rental-market-report-data-tables>)



While this may result in increased demand for on-street parking in the short term, it could also promote greater use of transit and active transportation options over the medium to long term, aligning with broader sustainability and urban densification goals.

Vacant and Abandoned Buildings

A vacant land tax would not apply to properties that contain buildings or dwellings, even if they are unoccupied and slated for future demolition. This could create a loophole, where owners retain derelict structures to avoid taxation, potentially delaying redevelopment and the creation of new housing or commercial space.

In Yellowknife, vacant and abandoned buildings pose safety hazards, detract from the city's visual appeal, and hinder economic development. These properties are subject to vandalism and are a source of concern for residents. With increasing demand for residential and commercial space, there is a growing interest in incentivizing property owners to redevelop key locations.

To address similar challenges, the City of Whitehorse adopted a Vacant and Abandoned Buildings By-law, which regulates, prohibits, and imposes requirements on vacant and abandoned buildings. The by-law mandates that owners secure and maintain such properties to prevent damage, unauthorized entry, and safety risks. It also requires a permit with a sliding fee scale, starting at \$1,500 in Year 1 and increasing to \$8,000 by Year 4.

Currently, Yellowknife has limited tools to address concerns related to abandoned, vacant, and boarded-up buildings. Given the public safety risks and the underutilization of valuable real estate, a similar by-law could provide a more effective regulatory framework. Such a measure could complement the Development Incentives By-law, supporting increased development activity while addressing the challenges posed by underutilized lots and derelict structures.

Committee noted that given the urgent need for more housing and the limited availability of land within city boundaries, it is increasingly important to ensure that all developable lots are being used to their full potential. Vacant and abandoned properties not only represent missed opportunities for development but also contribute to a range of urban challenges, including safety hazards, reduced property values and increased risk of vandalism. These issues hinder economic growth, discourage investment, and undermine the City's efforts to create vibrant, livable communities.

Together, a Vacant Land Tax and a Vacant and Abandoned Buildings By-law would form a comprehensive strategy to address underutilized properties in Yellowknife. These measures would support Council's goals for downtown revitalization, housing development, and economic growth, while promoting fairness and accountability among property owners.

In response to a question from Committee, Administration undertook to provide clarification on whether, when a property remains on the action list but is not sold, ownership automatically reverts to the City.



Committee recommended that for the purpose of encouraging development on vacant land and addressing underutilized lots and derelict buildings, that Council direct Administration to bring forward:

1. A by-law to amend Tax Administration By-law No. 4207, as amended, to create a definition and new tax class for vacant land; and
2. A by-law to regulate vacant and abandoned buildings.

MOVE APPROVAL

(For Information Only)

4. Committee accepted for information a memorandum regarding upcoming meetings of the Capital Area Committee in 2026 to review potential developments in the designated Capital Area.

Committee noted a Capital Area Development Scheme, By-law No. 3934 was adopted by City Council in 1996 following the construction of the Legislative Assembly Building. The intent of the original Scheme was to preserve the natural setting around the Legislative Assembly site; to ensure that the Capital Area was developed to a high standard of land use planning and design practices. The Committee was established to develop cooperative decisions between the City and Territorial governments for the development and management of the area.

The Capital Area is identified in orange in Figure 1 below. On July 26, 2017, Council adopted By-law No. 4940, a by-law to approve an updated Capital Area Development Plan. This by-law also formed the Capital Area Committee, for the purpose of Plan implementation as well as maintenance and initiatives within the “Governance Area.” Included in the Capital Area Development Plan was a vision that the Capital Area would be an evolving expression of the Northwest Territories and of Yellowknife; to support a diverse and vibrant Capital City. The updated Plan shifted the focus of the 1996 Scheme from the Legislative Assembly site-based on natural area preservation to a focus on people (residents and visitors alike), the environment, the city facilities and benefit to the Northwest Territories as a whole.

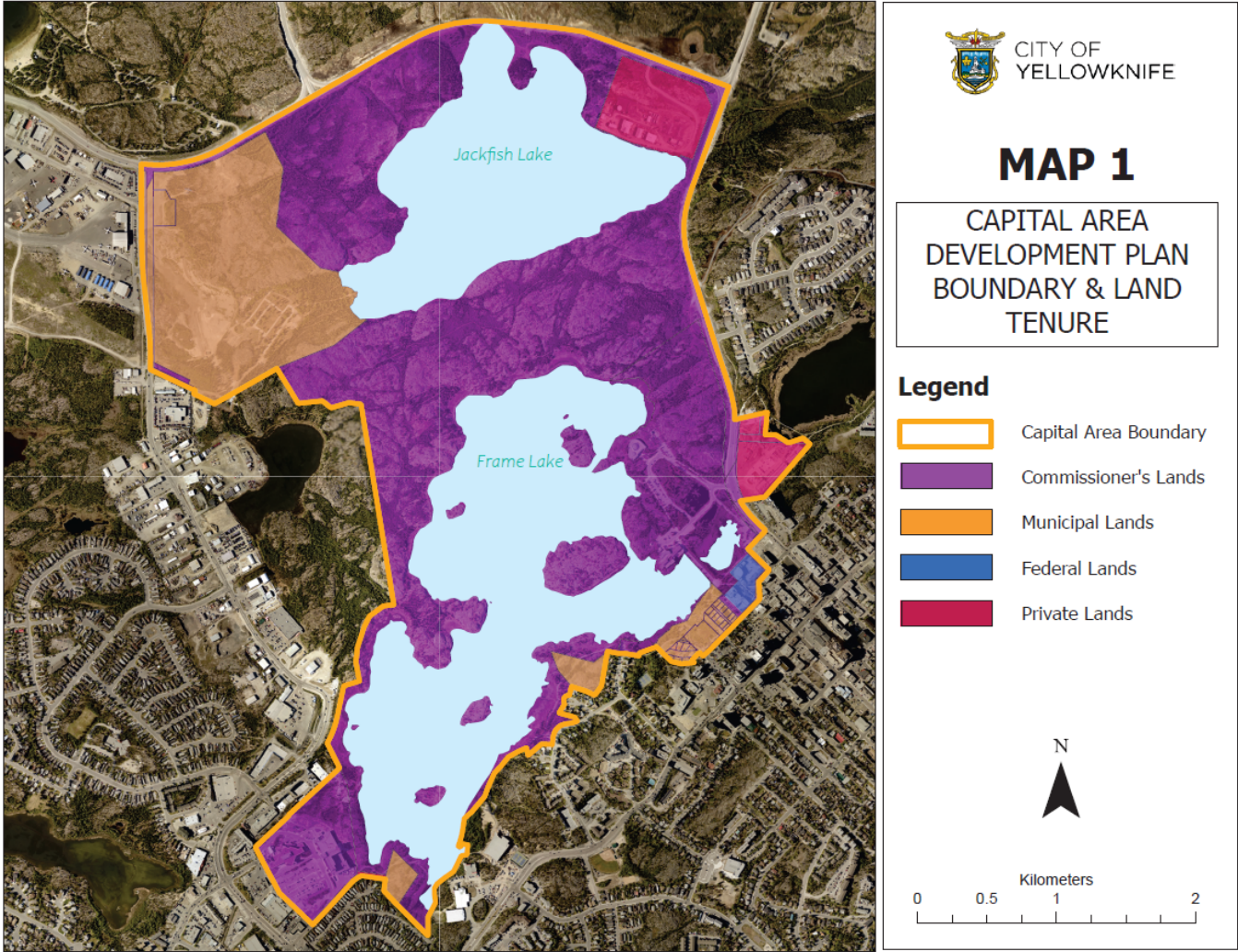
The Capital Area Committee approach combines various administrative roles for plan implementation. The Committee roles, as identified in the Plan are for land use, development, operations and maintenance planning, as well as implementation of the initiatives outlined in the Plan. The Committee Terms of Reference identify a structured reporting mechanism to elected officials which retains the administrative and operating aspect of the Committee. Each year members were to include \$50,000 in their budgets to support the plan; the City did so until 2024 when Council removed the allocation as no other member was committed to the contributions or committee meetings.

The need to hold meetings of the committee now arises from several proposals within the identified development area. Review by the Committee is required prior to moving forward to decisions by different agencies. Proposals include: the *Truth and Reconciliation*



Commission of Canada (TRC) IRS Survivors Monument; City request to obtain land adjacent to Frame Lake for development purposes and expansion of the Bristol lot for development.

Figure 1: Capital Area Development Plan Boundary and Land Tenure (updated 2025)



Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1: People First

Focus Area 1.1

Reconciliation

Continuing to nurture positive and respectful relations with Indigenous governments, organizations and peoples.

Key Initiative 1.1.1

Continuing to strengthen relations with Indigenous governments and peoples.

Focus Area 1.2

Housing for All

Doing our part to create the context for diverse housing and accommodation options.



Focus Area 1.3	<u>Liveable Community</u> Supporting all residents to participate in the social fabric and physical space of our community.
Key Initiative 1.3.1	Providing affordable and diverse recreation and arts opportunities for residents.
Key Initiative 1.3.3	Supporting design standards that are multi-modal including recognizing Yellowknife's advantages as a winter city.
Strategic Direction #3:	Sustainable Future
Focus Area 3.1	<u>Resilient Future</u> Enhancing Yellowknife as a great place to live, visit, work and play now and into the future.
Focus Area 3.2	<u>Growth Readiness</u> Ensuring land development supports economic readiness and community priorities.
Key Initiative 3.2.1	Advocating for the transfer of vacant commissioner's land for growth.
Key Initiative 3.2.2	Completing land development tools and strategies that support growth readiness.
Key Initiative 3.2.3	Modernizing development incentive options.
Key Initiative 3.2.4	Sustaining infrastructure capacity for future growth.
Focus Area 3.3	<u>Robust Economy</u> Doing our part to stimulate and amplify economic development opportunities.
Key Initiative 3.3.1	Supporting all aspects of tourism and visitor services, including the accommodation levy and creation of the destination marketing organization.
Key Initiative 3.3.2	Implementing and renewing strategic economic diversification options.
Key Initiative 3.3.3	Aligning with regional and territorial economic opportunities.



Applicable legislation, by-laws, studies, plans include:

1. *Community Planning and Development Act S.N.W.T 2011,c.22;*
2. Community Plan By-law No. 5007, as amended;
3. Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended;
4. Building By-law No. 5058;
5. Land Administration By-law No. 5078, as amended;
6. Capital Area Development Plan By-law No. 4940, as amended;
7. Smart Growth Development Plan, July 2010;
8. Reconciliation Framework (2021) & Action Plan (annual);
9. Accessibility Audit Report & Implementation Strategy (2018);
10. Arts and Culture Master Plan (2022);
11. 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness (2017);
12. Development & Design Standards (ongoing); and
13. Wayfinding Strategy & Implementation Plan (2019).

(For Information Only)

5. Councillor Arden-Smith left the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

(For Information Only)

6. Committee continued its discussion regarding a memorandum regarding upcoming meetings of the Capital Area Committee in 2026 to review potential developments in the designated Capital Area.

(For Information Only)

7. Committee accepted for information an update on Council's 2025 – 2026 Work Plan.

Committee noted that:

COUNCIL'S 2025 – 2026 WORK PLAN

- In June 2023, Council approved the 2023-2026 Strategic Directions for its term in office.
- Subsequently, Council approved an implementation action plan for their Strategic Directions (the "Work Plan"), which considered challenges arising from the tumultuous year that was 2023.
- In May 2024, Council reviewed a revised 2024-2026 Work Plan and, among other things, directed Administration to use the Work Plan to prioritize initiatives and tasks.
- In November 2024, Administration provided an update to Council on Work Plan accomplishments and looking ahead to 2025.



- On May 5, 2025, with less than two years left in Council's term of office, Committee heard a status update on the 2025 – 2026 Work Plan initiatives, Administration's prioritization of those initiatives, and how such work is advancing Council's Strategic Directions. Council subsequently approved a revised work plan on May 26, 2025.
- This update is intended to provide the latest status of Work Plan initiatives as of the end of October 2025 and to demonstrate Administration's new tool for organizing and tracking the Work Plan, Envisio. Administration will provide a further Work Plan update in late January 2026, following adjustments required after the adoption of Budget 2026.

ENVISIO

Development of a renewed performance measurement framework and dashboard is a Tier 1 initiative on Council's Work Plan. The intent of this initiative is to help guide work planning, resource management, establishment of priorities, and reporting. As part of this initiative, the City is employing a new cloud-based software called Envisio.

Envisio is a strategic planning and performance management software commonly used in the public sector. Administration can use Envisio to track and communicate progress on Council's priorities, goals, and Work Plan initiatives while eliminating the manual processes required for managing Word or Excel work planning documents. Examples of other Envisio Work Plan reports are attached to this memo.

Applicable legislation, by-laws, studies, plans include:
Council's Strategic Directions 2023 – 2026.

(For Information Only)

8. Committee recessed at 1:37 p.m. and reconvened at 1:47 p.m.

(For Information Only)

9. Councillor Payne left the meeting at 1:47 p.m.

(For Information Only)

10. Committee continued its discussion regarding Council's 2025 – 2026 Work Plan.
11. Councillor Cochrane moved,
Councillor Warbuton seconded,

That Committee move in camera at 1:47 p.m. to discuss a memorandum regarding whether to appoint someone to fill a vacant position on the Audit Committee and a legal matter.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



- (For Information Only)
12. Committee discussed a memorandum regarding whether to appoint someone to fill a vacant position on the Audit Committee.
- (For Information Only)
13. Committee discussed a legal matter.
- (For Information Only)
14. Councillor McGurk moved,
Councillor Warburton seconded,

That Committee return to an open meeting at 3:10 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- (Business Arising from in Camera Session)
15. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to appoint someone to fill a vacant position on the Audit Committee.**

Committee noted that there is a vacancy on the Audit Committee for an accountant.

It is the practice of the City to advertise all committee vacancies. The City advertised the vacancy, specifying that it be filled by an accountant on the City's website and social media sites.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Council Goal #1 People First.

- Motion #0459-96: "The following policy be adopted with respect to appointments to municipal boards and committees:
- i) The maximum consecutive years that an individual may serve on any one board or committee is six.
 - ii) Individuals who have served the maximum six-year period on one municipal board or committee shall be eligible to be appointed to another board or committee.
 - iii) No individual shall be precluded from serving concurrent terms on more than one municipal board or committee.
 - iv) Notwithstanding that an individual appointee has served less than six years on a particular board or committee, Council may, after the expiration of the first or subsequent terms of that appointee, advertise for applicants to fill a vacancy on that board or committee.
 - v) Notwithstanding clause (i.) of this policy, should the City receive no applications to fill a vacancy on any particular



board or committee, the six year maximum limitation may, at the discretion of City Council, be waived.

Applicable legislation, by-laws, studies, plans include:

1. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, and
2. Audit Committee By-law No. 4217, as amended.

Consistency

The Audit Committee has recommended staggered terms for Committee members.

Legislation

Audit Committee By-law No. 4127 requires outside members to reside in Yellowknife and be independent from City Council, management, auditors, legal counsel and major contractors. Section 4.a.ii(1) states that the currently vacant position must be filled by an accountant.

Procedural Considerations

The Audit Committee helps to enhance the auditor's real and perceived independence by providing an intermediary link between the auditor and Council. The Audit Committee limits the reliance Council must place on the technical expertise of the independent auditor.

Committee noted that the Audit Committee is intended to function with a full complement of six members. Having the term of a new member expire in three years will conform to the staggered term recommendation.

Committee recommended that Council appoint Edwin Shu, an accountant, pursuant to Audit Committee By-law No. 4127, to serve on the City of Yellowknife (City) Audit Committee for a three-year term commencing November 25, 2025 and ending November 24, 2028.

MOVE APPROVAL

16. The meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.