



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 12:05 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber. The following Committee members were in attendance:

Chair: Deputy Mayor R. Warburton,
Mayor B. Hendriksen, (via teleconference)
Councillor G. Cochrane,
Councillor R. Foote,
Councillor C. McGurk, and
Councillor S. Payne.

The following members of Administration staff were in attendance:

S. Van Dine,
C. Caljouw,
D. Gillard,
C. Greencorn,
C. MacLean,
K. Pandoo,
G. Schaan,
R. Solatorio,
K. Thistle,
C. White,
G. White, and
S. Jovic.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
1.	(For Information Only) Deputy Mayor Warburton read the Opening Statement.
2.	(For Information Only) There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.
3.	Committee read a memorandum regarding a Response to Council's request made at the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting on November 10, 2025, regarding the draft Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 and implementation details for 2026 and 2027 actions.



Committee noted that Administration presented the draft Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 (“the Plan”) to Council at the November 10, 2025 Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting accompanied by a staff memo. Minor amendments have been made to the Plan, per Council’s request, and a revised version was provided to committee. Notably, action 5.2 a) has been revised to eliminate the creation of a committee of council. Instead, implementation of the Plan will be guided by an implementation working group made up of representatives of local Indigenous governments, youth, environmental organizations, and private business. Other changes include minor adjustments to the implementation timeline.

In addition, further implementation details for actions to be taken in 2026 and 2027 are outlined in schedules A and B. To facilitate the budgeting and delegating of duties, the schedules include the lead department(s) and budget required for that year.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1:	People First
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
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.
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.
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.

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;
6. Corporate and Community Energy Plan 2015-2025; and
7. Draft Climate Action Plan 2026-2036 (DM#808057).

Plan Implementation

Revised changes in the implementation section of the Plan will ensure long-term actions are initiated in the short-term, they are broken into feasible annual tasks, that budget is allocated where necessary, and that actions from the Plan make their way into the appropriate department work plans.

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



Committee noted that the amendments to the Climate Action Plan and the provision of implementation details are at the request of Council. They will help ensure that the Climate Action Plan is successfully implemented and will improve transparency in the process.

Further, with the revised implementation details, the Plan will become a tool 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).

Committee recommended that Council adopt for information the draft Climate Action Plan 2026-2036, as amended.

MOVE APPROVAL

4. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to adopt a Public Engagement Policy.** Committee noted that the City of Yellowknife recognizes public engagement as a core component of good governance and effective decision-making. While the City has a strong culture of engaging residents, it has not had the benefit of a formal, citywide Public Engagement Policy to ensure a consistent and predictable approach to public participation prior to major initiatives, policy discussions, and decision-making processes.

Creating and implementing a Public Engagement Policy will:

- Establish the City’s commitment to meaningful, inclusive, and transparent engagement.
- Provide a standardized framework for public participation across all departments.
- Strengthen trust between the City and the community by ensuring decisions reflect community values and priorities.
- Support informed decision-making and improve overall service delivery.

The Policy will be implemented through the City’s Public Engagement Framework, supported by internal Public Engagement Guidelines & Toolkit, which provide detailed operational guidance. Together, these tools will formalize and enhance the City’s existing engagement practices, ensuring consistency and accountability in how the City interacts with residents.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1:	People First
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 1.3.2	Pursuing diverse community engagement methods.



Council Motion#0063-21

That:

1. The Community Energy Plan Committee be dissolved and that the City conduct a Community Roundtable annually to report on implementation of the City's Community Energy Plan;
2. The University Post Secondary Advisory Committee be dissolved and that the City support a network of stakeholders;
3. The Terms of Reference for the Heritage Committee be amended to change frequency of meetings;
4. The City conduct a Community Roundtable annually with respect to Reconciliation; and
5. Council direct Administration to draft and bring forward a Framework for Public Engagement that utilizes various approaches to engagement.

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

Cities, Towns and Villages Act SNWT 2003, c.22

Strategic Alignment

Embeds engagement as a core governance practice, advancing Council's priorities for People First, Service Excellence, and Sustainable Future.

Operational Impacts

Provides clarity and consistency for staff, reducing duplication and improving efficiency.

Financial

Minimal cost to adopt; training and toolkit development can be phased within existing budgets.

Risk Management

Reduces risk of public dissatisfaction, project delays, and reputational harm by ensuring predictable and inclusive engagement processes.

Equity & Accessibility

Engagement activities must adhere to inclusive design standards: accessible venues and materials, plain-language summaries, translation/interpretation, culturally appropriate methods, and targeted outreach to underrepresented groups.

Public Input

Members of the public will be invited to provide feedback on the Public Engagement Policy and Framework in the weeks leading up to Council Meeting on February 25, 2026. Administration will compile and present a summary of all input received for Council's consideration prior to adoption.



Committee noted the recommendation to adopt a citywide Public Engagement Policy aligns with Council’s strategic commitment to transparency, trust-building, and inclusive governance under its People First and Liveable Community priorities. The need for a formalized approach has arisen because the City is managing increasingly complex initiatives—such as housing strategies, infrastructure planning, and reconciliation partnerships—that require standardized engagement practices to ensure meaningful participation. Currently, ad hoc approaches create inconsistency, reduce predictability, and risk excluding important voices. While the City has a strong culture of engagement, it lacks a formal framework, and best practices across municipalities emphasize the need for a policy to provide consistency and accountability. A citywide policy offers uniform standards and scalability, unlike department-specific or case-by-case approaches. Without this policy, the City risks continued inconsistency, diminished public trust, potential opposition to major projects, and misalignment with strategic objectives.

Committee suggested minor amendments to the Public Engagement Policy and Public Engagement Guidelines & Toolkit and left it with Administration to finalize.

Committee recommends that Council:

- (i) Adopt the Public Engagement Policy; and**
- (ii) Direct Administration to implement the Public Engagement Framework and internal Guidelines & Toolkit.**

MOVE APPROVAL

(For Information Only)

5. Committee discussed a City Facility Water Testing Update. Administration provided an update on water testing at City facilities following initial results indicating elevated lead levels in drinking water. Administration noted that the City notified the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) and undertook corrective actions. Administration further noted that the City subsequently engaged additional technical support to re-test the affected facilities and all remaining City facilities, including two truck fill supply locations. OCPHO has now been provided with the testing results, with the exception of the Somba K’e washroom facility and the Precambrian Building office space, which are scheduled for testing later this week due to January weather conditions and ongoing renovations. Administration is proceeding to the next stage, including developing remediation plans in consultation with OCPHO and completing follow-up testing. The situation is considered well under control, and information on the City’s website is up to date.
6. The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.