



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 12:05 p.m.

Report of a meeting held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 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, (via teleconference)
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>
1.	(For Information Only) Mayor Hendriksen read the Opening Statement.
2.	(For Information Only) Mayor Hendriksen offered his deepest condolences to the residents of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, following the tragic mass shooting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, and noted that he will issue a statement on behalf of the City of Yellowknife.



(For Information Only)

3. There were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

(For Information Only)

4. Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to authorize the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Yellowknife, the City of Whitehorse, and the City of Iqaluit regarding arctic security and NORAD/CAF/DND Investments in northern municipalities.

Committee noted that as Canada advances defence modernization initiatives in the North, including NORAD modernization, and DND infrastructure upgrades, municipalities are increasingly required to respond to federal operational needs while also ensuring local infrastructure, services, and housing systems remain sustainable and resilient.

Yellowknife, Whitehorse, and Iqaluit share similar pressures and opportunities related to:

- (i) Infrastructure readiness and modernization;
- (ii) Housing demand and workforce needs;
- (iii) Climate resilience and vulnerability of core municipal systems;
- (iv) Municipal participation in Arctic sovereignty and security planning; and
- (v) The need for predictable, long-term federal investments that support both civilian and defence objectives

The proposed MOU formalizes inter-capital collaboration and supports a unified northern municipal voice when engaging with the Government of Canada, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), NORAD, and other federal and territorial partners.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #3:

Sustainable Future

Focus Area 3.2

Growth Readiness

Ensuring land development supports economic readiness and community priorities.

Key Initiative 3.2.4

Sustaining infrastructure capacity for future growth.

Focus Area 3.3

Robust Economy

Doing our part to stimulate and amplify economic development opportunities.

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. Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024; and
2. Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024 Implementation Plan

Legislative and Governance

The proposed MOU is non-binding and does not create legal, financial, or regulatory obligations for the City. It does not alter Council authorities or decision-making powers and is consistent with the City's role under territorial and municipal legislation. Any future agreements, funding commitments, or project approvals arising from this collaborative work would be brought forward to Council through established governance processes.

Financial and Infrastructure

Northern municipalities face a significant and growing infrastructure gap due to aging assets, climate impacts, population pressures, and the high cost of construction and operations. Increased federal defence activity further intensifies demand on municipal systems. The MOU does not impose direct financial costs on the City; rather, it is intended to improve access to predictable federal funding, capacity support, and coordinated investment to address infrastructure deficits and reduce long-term municipal risk.

Economic Development

Defence and Arctic security investments present opportunities for local employment, business development, workforce training, and long-term economic diversification. The MOU supports a coordinated approach to ensure these investments contribute to community-wide economic benefits, local procurement opportunities, and labour force development, while mitigating unintended cost pressures such as housing and service shortages.

Indigenous Relations

The MOU acknowledges the importance of Indigenous participation in northern planning and development. Each Party retains responsibility for engaging with relevant Indigenous governments and organizations consistent with territorial protocols and best practices. Coordinated, early-stage municipal involvement in federal planning supports improved alignment with Indigenous priorities, reconciliation efforts, and shared regional outcomes.

Intergovernmental and Strategic Considerations

A coordinated approach among northern capitals strengthens municipal credibility and influence with federal and territorial partners. It supports earlier engagement, clearer communication, and better alignment between national security objectives and local infrastructure, housing, and service capacity.

Committee noted that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) supports Council's strategic priorities related to infrastructure resilience, economic opportunity, intergovernmental collaboration, and positioning Yellowknife as a leading northern capital. As federal attention and investment in Arctic security, NORAD modernization, and CAF/DND



operations increase, northern municipalities are facing growing pressures on housing, infrastructure, services, and municipal capacity. The MOU provides a coordinated framework for Yellowknife, Whitehorse, and Iqaluit to collectively advocate for sustained, climate resilient, dual-use infrastructure and for meaningful municipal participation in federal planning and investment decisions.

Authorizing the Mayor to sign the MOU strengthens Yellowknife's ability to influence federal and territorial partners while preserving municipal autonomy and flexibility. The non-binding agreement formalizes collaboration among northern capitals, enhances the credibility of joint advocacy, and improves alignment between defence investments and community needs. Not proceeding would risk reduced influence, fragmented engagement, and missed opportunities to secure capacity funding and infrastructure investments that benefit both national security objectives and local quality of life. The collaborative approach reflected in the MOU is supported by northern municipalities and aligns with the interests of federal, territorial, and Indigenous partners seeking coordinated, effective Arctic planning and development.

Committee recommended that Council authorize the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Yellowknife, the City of Whitehorse, and the City of Iqaluit regarding arctic security and NORAD/CAF/DND investments in northern municipalities.

Committee noted that this matter will be considered under New Business at the Special Council meeting on February 18, 2026.

5. **Committee read a memorandum regarding whether to authorize the Mayor to travel to the Town of Inuvik, NT from June 16 – 18, 2026 to participate on the 2026 Arctic Development Expo panel.**

Committee noted that Mayor Ben Hendriksen has been invited to participate as a speaker at the Arctic Development Expo, taking place from June 16 – 18, 2026. This invitation was received after the memorandum authorizing the Mayor and Members of Council to attend various conferences was submitted in early January.

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Motion #0223-25 It is the policy of the City of Yellowknife that Members of Council submit a written travel expense claim together with a travel report of activities while on City sponsored travel upon their return. Council must approve all City-sponsored travel and attendance at conferences, workshops, and seminars by a formal resolution of Council either prior to the commencement of travel or at the first regular Council meeting following the start of travel. Members will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred for approved travel while representing the City in an official capacity.



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

1. Council Remuneration By-law No. 4982, and
2. Financial Administration By-law No. 4206, as amended.

Committee noted that Travel authorizations should align with Council priorities and respond to emerging opportunities and must be considered and approved by Council on a case-by-case basis in advance of each conference.

The cost estimate for attendance at the 2026 Arctic Development Expo is as follows:

Arctic Development Expo (June 16 – 18, 2026)

Accommodation	\$ 1,000.00	(x 4 Nights)
Flights	\$ 850.00	(Return Flight)
Meals and Incidentals	<u>\$ 795.25</u>	(\$159.05 per day x 5 day)
Total	\$ 2,645.25	

An additional consideration is the reduced number of Councillors able to attend the NWTAC Annual General Meeting in Yellowknife, NT due to availability constraints. This has resulted in a surplus of \$5,650 that may be allocated to additional travel.

Committee noted that participating in the Arctic Development Expo panel will enable Mayor Hendriksen to further advance Council’s goals and priorities for our community.

Committee recommended that the Mayor be authorized to travel to the Town of Inuvik, NT from June 16 – 18, 2026 to participate on the 2026 Arctic Development Expo panel.

MOVE APPROVAL

(For Information Only)

6. Committee accepted for information a memorandum regarding Planning and Development Department Service Level Standards and Housing Accelerator Fund Statistics.

Service Level Standards

Committee noted that the Planning and Development Department continues to support smart growth permitting services and launched standards tracking in March 2024. The implementation of department service standards supports new growth and development across the city. Council has updated by-laws, that are now in effect and regulate services or processes provided to the public.

- City of Yellowknife Zoning By-law was approved March 14, 2022;
- City of Yellowknife Building By-law was approved May 30, 2022;
- Land Administration By-law was approved June 24, 2024; and
- Development Incentives By-law was approved December 9, 2024.



In 2025, the total estimated construction value was \$149.3 million dollars; up from \$62.9 million in 2024. These values represent \$55.4 million in residential investment and \$93.9 million in non-residential (commercial, industrial) investment. A total of 502 building permits were issued in 2025; up from 332 building permits in 2024.

Planning applications submitted as complete and processed in 2025 totalled 102; up from 41 planning applications in 2024.

The Service Standard Timelines were established based on appropriate staffing levels and are counted from the submission of a Complete Application to the Planning and Development Department.

Planning and Development Service Standard Timelines:				
	Standard Days	2025 Actual Days(avg)	% Standard Met	Number of Applications
Pre-Development Meeting (an appointment with admin)	15	1	100%	52
Complete Application Review (written response)	15	12	78%	90
File Information Request, Planning	30	27	73%	11
File Information Request, Building	30	5	98%	84
Building Permits				
Part 9 Residential (to decision)	10	3	95%	191
Part 9 Complex (to decision)	20	3	100%	81
Part 3 (to decision)	30	4	100%	36
Water and Sewer Connect / Disconnect	15	3	100%	10
Lands Permits				
Land Lease Application (decision)	60	35	100%	3
Land Purchase Application	60	44	75%	4
License Of Occupation	60	11	100%	2
Encroachments	60	n/a	n/a	0
Grading Permit (DP required > 0.6 m average across the lot)	45	27	100%	2
Development Permits				
Residential Parking Permit	20	n/a	n/a	0
Sign Permit	20	7	100%	6
Development Permit - Variance	90	50	88%	12
Development Permit - Other	90	n/a	n/a	0
Residential less than 5 units and Change of use	90	20	94%	16
Recreation, Commercial, Industrial and other uses	90	60	80%	5
Residential more than 5 units and all DP requiring Development Agreement	120	112	100%	1



Heritage Applications				
Heritage Designation	60	n/a	n/a	0
Heritage Restoration	90	n/a	n/a	0
Heritage Alteration	60	72	0%	1
90 days to decision by Council (when the Committee recommends Council approval)	90	n/a	n/a	0
Development Incentives				
Preliminary decision for tax incentives	30	30	100%	2
to GPC for review for up front grants	60	n/a	n/a	0
to preliminary decision for all other applications	60	55	71%	25
Zoning Amendment				
to GPC for consideration	120	89	80%	5
Community Plan Amendment				
to GPC for consideration	120	104	100%	1
Development Agreement				
Draft Agreement to applicant prior to DP Decision	n/a	0	100%	9

Housing

The final dwelling unit numbers for 2025 have been confirmed as:

- 3 dwelling units lost (demolition and not yet rebuilt);
- 124 total new dwelling units completed;
- 2 multi-unit dwellings completed;
- 10 secondary suites completed; and
- 47 affordable dwelling units were added to the market, which exceeds the city requirement for 6.37% (24) of units to be affordable.

Anticipated completion/start in 2026 (existing permits):

- 90+ units in permitted multi-unit dwellings; and 6 single detached dwellings;
- 50+ affordable dwelling units; and
- 52 predevelopment consultations complete, awaiting permit applications.

There has been strong interest, with 25 applications submitted, under the Development Incentives By-law No. 5097. It is anticipated that the City of Yellowknife will surpass 2025 in both applications and grants provided for the year 2026. The total amount of Development Incentives distributed to 9 residential applicants in 2025 = \$210,000.

Tracking of dwelling statistics began in 2023, with specific, though not exclusive, attention to Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) commitments to ensure measurement and tracking of the identified need and actual development. The dwelling unit numbers provided below represent final permitted; if a building permit or development permit is still open, it is not included below:

Requirements identified in Housing Needs Assessment:



- New units – 1059
- Affordable units – 846

City of Yellowknife Completed Dwelling Units since 2023 (the date HAF was signed):

- 2023 = 91 multi-unit dwellings, 12 SDD and 1 secondary unit
- 2024 = 250 multi-unit dwellings, 15 SDD and 6 secondary units
- 2025 = 108 multi-unit, 2 duplex (4), 2 SDD, 10 secondary units
- Total = 449 multi-unit dwelling units, 29 SDD and 17 secondary dwelling units
- = 495 – 17 (units lost) = **478 units added to the inventory**

Council Strategic Direction/Resolution/Policy include:

Strategic Direction #1: People First

Focus Area 1.2 Housing for All
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 Liveable Community
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.

Key Initiative 1.3.3 Supporting design standards that are multi-modal including recognizing Yellowknife’s advantages as a winter city.

Key Initiative 1.3.6 Working with all partners towards a safe, supportive and compassionate community for all.

Strategic Direction #2: Service Excellence

Focus Area 2.1 Asset Management
Planning, implementing and maintaining assets to reliably, safely and cost effectively deliver services for current and future community needs.

Key Initiative 2.1.1 Advancing the asset management framework, including long term funding strategies.



Focus Area 2.2	<u>Capacity</u> Balancing service levels with human and fiscal resources.
Key Initiative 2.2.2	Aligning organizational service capacity with service levels.
Strategic Direction #3:	Sustainable Future
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 3.2.3	Modernizing development incentive options.
Motion #0129-23	That in 2024, service level standards are developed for Planning and Development.

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

1. *Cities, Towns and Villages Act S.N.W.T. 2003;*
2. *Community Planning and Development Act S.N.W.T. 2011, c.22;*
3. Community Plan By-law No. 5007;
4. Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended;
5. Building By-law No. 5058;
6. Land Administration By-law No. 5078;
7. Development Incentive By-law No. 5097; and
8. Asset Management Roadmap (2022).

7. The meeting adjourned at 12:46 p.m.