



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

## MEMORANDUM TO COMMITTEE

**COMMITTEE:** Governance and Priorities

**DATE:** May 8, 2023

**DEPARTMENT:** Public Safety

**ISSUE:** Whether to approve strategic priorities for the Municipal Enforcement Division for 2023/24.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the following strategic priorities for the Municipal Enforcement Division (MED) 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.

### BACKGROUND:

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 April, 2022, Council approved the following strategic priorities for 2022/23:

- Continued emphasis on incorporating reconciliation with Indigenous peoples into public safety and enforcement activities, to build on the work that has already taken place;
- Strategic proactive enforcement and prevention activities to enforce the Highway Traffic By-law, particularly the speeding provisions;

- Proactive enforcement of unauthorized parking, to ensure unobstructed access for emergency vehicles; and
- Continued emphasis on Municipal Enforcement visibility and public engagement in the community.

MED has made notable progress on the 2022/23 Strategic Priorities, as outlined in the attached Strategic Priorities Update. MED has been taking a broad view at operations, with changes to procedure and practice to create efficiency in how MED works in and with the community.

**COUNCIL POLICY / RESOLUTION OR GOAL:**

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

**APPLICABLE LEGISLATION, BY-LAWS, STUDIES, PLANS:**

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. 4063, as amended;
4. Public Parks and Recreation Facilities By-law No. 4564; and
5. MED Operational Review and Strategic Plan (October 2014).

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

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 2023/24 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.

**ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council adopt other strategic priorities to support MED in setting enforcement goals for 2023/24.

**RATIONALE:**

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.

Over the past year, multiple reports have been made to MED regarding pedestrian safety and MED Officers have been dealing with more infractions related to intersection safety. In these cases, MED Officers have been working to gain compliance through education and enforcement. MED plans to take a strategic approach to these issues by conducting enforcement operations and educational campaigns.

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

The City has received concerns from residents regarding emergency vehicle access at locations across the community, specifically on streets that are narrower than others. MED Officers have also been more active in fire lanes throughout the City over the past year in response to a similar Strategic Priority set for the 2022/23 year. MED Officers will continue to be proactively focusing on these enforcement areas.

3. Prioritizing Municipal Enforcement engagement and visibility in the community, particularly in the downtown core.

This priority is aligned with MED's community policing model which is focussed on public engagement, relationship building and obtaining wilful compliance through communication. It is also responsive to public calls for MED to conduct more foot patrols, particularly in the downtown core and on city trails. The primary functions of MED in the downtown core are problem solving, deterrence and community outreach, all with the goal of increasing public safety. This year, MED plans on forming robust foot and bike patrol schedules, specifically focusing on the downtown core. This will allow officers to have an increased, highly visible and approachable presence in the community.

4. Continued emphasis on incorporating reconciliation with Indigenous peoples into Municipal Enforcement activities, to build on the work that has already taken place.

Reconciliation is a core value that Council and City Administration continue to champion. As the capital city of the NWT, Yellowknife is a crossroads for Indigenous peoples and groups from across

the north. Our community has a large Indigenous population representing all areas of the Northwest Territories and beyond – at least 24% of City residents are Indigenous.

The aim of reconciliation in this context is to enhance the relationship between the Indigenous community and MED in order to come to a position of respect and trust by recognizing historical harms and experiences, building empathy, finding common ground, combatting biases and a mutually supportive way forward. MED will continue this work through outreach with Indigenous organizations and groups including working with YKDFN on areas of joint interest and additional training for officers in the areas of working in cross-cultural environments, reconciliation, de-escalation and crisis intervention. MED will also be participating in events throughout the year that support and recognize reconciliation.

<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>
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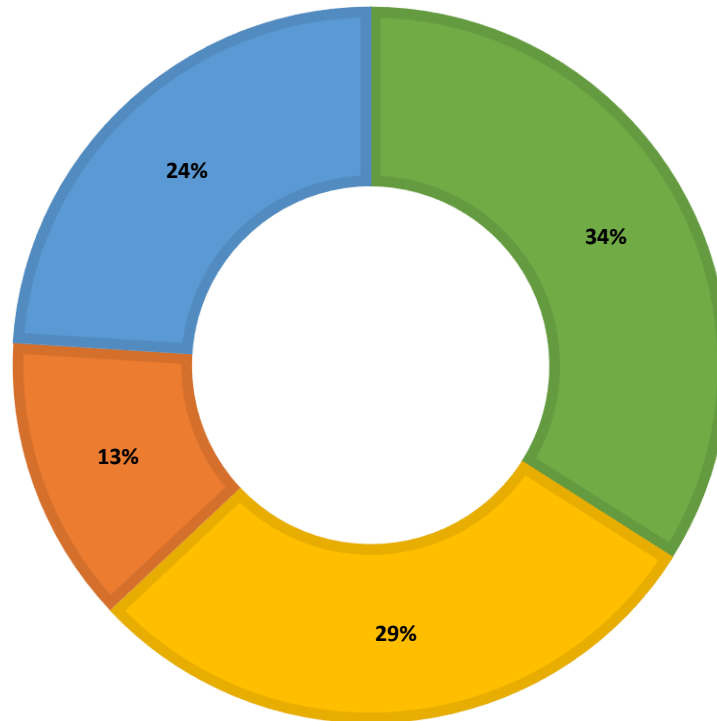
2022/23 Strategic Priorities Update.

Prepared: April 28, 2023; MR

Amended: May 3, 2023; MR

MUNICIPAL ENFORCEMENT REPORTABLE OCCURRENCES  
BREAKDOWN 2022/23

■ HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT ■ PARKING\*\* ■ RECONCILIATION, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND VISIBILITY\* ■ ALL OTHER DUTIES



\* Not all data collected accurately reflects these categories as these categories may be more qualitative than quantitative.

\*\* Does not include parking meter violations.

- ***Continued emphasis on incorporating reconciliation with Indigenous peoples into public safety and enforcement activities, to build on the work that has already taken place.***

Over the past couple of years, MED has made significant progress on this recurring priority. It should also be noted that MED has been successful in recruiting and promoting more Indigenous employees, including MED leadership. All current MED officers have taken Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training and have participated in the GNWT's Living Well Together program. MED is currently in the process of rebranding some aspects of our image and through this process we are identifying areas that may be changed to reflect and support reconciliation and Indigenous identity.

Specifically, we have undertaken work that is not included in the Municipal Enforcement Reportable Occurrences Breakdown, shown above, as these areas are more qualitative than quantitative:

- Participating in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) march that was organized by the Dene Nation;
  - Participating in the National Addictions Awareness Week march organized by the Tree of Peace;
  - Respectful engagement with Indigenous community members by various means, including on patrol in the community;
  - Including wording that specifically supports reconciliation in MED Procedure and Safe Practice Review 2022/2023;
  - Participating in Orange Shirt Day (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation);
  - All current officers haven taken Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training as well as the GNWT's Living Well Together program;
  - Changing MED patrol vehicle decals to remove colonial symbols in support of reconciliation and visibility in the community; and
- ***Continued emphasis on Municipal Enforcement visibility and public engagement in the community.***

This priority has recurred since adoption of the By-law Enforcement Policy by Council. This highlights the importance of community policing. MED has made notable progress on this over the past three years, including changing the approach to how enforcement is conducted and moving to more of a community minded focus. MED Officers achieve this through conducting high visibility patrols in the downtown core and throughout the community by vehicle, on bike or on foot. MED management is also a part of the Good Neighbour Committee, a group of downtown stakeholders and government agencies that have a joint interest in downtown issues.

This year, MED has undertaken the following work/participated in the following events in an effort to enhance community visibility and engagement.

- Patrol vehicle decal changes which were well received by the public, as well as marking all patrol vehicles, focusing on visibility.
  - Increased foot patrols downtown and at the Yellowknife Public Library;
  - All MED Officers received bicycle patrol training, building our capacity to conduct bike patrols;
  - Working with local businesses to obtain coupons to give out to children wearing helmets while riding bikes or otherwise observed being safe or acting responsibly;
  - Daily four lane enforcement (50<sup>th</sup> Avenue restricted hours);
  - Terry Fox Run (pedestrian and traffic safety);
  - Bike safety presentations to youth and giving out bike helmets; and
  - Various parades, processions and marches.
- ***Strategic proactive enforcement and prevention activities to enforce the Highway Traffic By-law, particularly the speeding provisions.***

MED Officers have been proactively patrolling and conducting stationary enforcement to deal with speeding. Officers have setup speed enforcement operations at locations throughout the City, targeting speeding vehicles. From April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023, there was a 24% increase in speed enforcement, compared to the previous year.

- ***Proactive enforcement of unauthorized parking, to ensure unobstructed access for emergency vehicles.***

MED Officers have been making proactive patrols of the various fire lanes throughout the City as a way to ensure emergency vehicle access is not obstructed. Officers have also been educating the public on the importance of keeping fire lanes/fire hydrants clear at all times. An important step in fulfilling this priority was Council approving a change to the specified penalty for these offences, increasing the penalty to \$250.00 from \$75.00, on the recommendation of Administration. This shows the public and the courts that this type offence is serious in nature as it is directly related to public safety. From April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023, fire lane/fire hydrant and obstructing traffic enforcement increased by 112%, compared to the previous year.