

## The City of Yellowknife – Building a Better Future!

Located on the ancient Precambrian shield adjacent to Great Slave Lake, the community of Yellowknife is at the core of Chief Drygeese territory, the traditional territory of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and within the Tłı̨çhǫ's Mǫwhì Gogha Dè Nı̨łłèè. From time immemorial, Yellowknife has been the primary use area of the Yellowknives Dene and part of the traditional use area of the Tłı̨çhǫ. Métis have also called this area home since the 1800's. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Yellowknife is a dynamic, diverse and inclusive urban and remote community. Home to over 21,000 residents, Yellowknifers live, work and recreate in one of Canada's truly remarkable winter Cities.

Yellowknifers are also both driving and being driven by change locally, territorially, nationally and internationally. Climate change, geo-politics, commerce, art and culture put our city and our collective ideas on a crowded world stage. Together, residents, businesses and newcomers create a unique way of life blending the past, present and future possibilities through the rich forces of Indigenous cultures, pioneering and can-do attitude, passion for innovation and always striving to do better.

Yellowknife is a work in progress and a natural centre for business, tourism, transportation, logistics, political decision making, art and culture. Here, we support debate, celebrate and create opportunities. We also support communities across the Northwest Territories in times of need such as emergency evacuations.

Building a better future is ongoing. Yellowknife is a proud community with much to offer and the City of Yellowknife is committed to working hard to advance Council's strategic directions of People First, Service Excellence and building a Sustainable Future.

## 2024 Was a Year of Getting Back on Track

Yellowknife endured several significant unforeseen disruptions in rapid succession over the past three years: pandemic, labor disputes, and wildfires and evacuations.

Mayor, Council and Administration at the City of Yellowknife responded to each event with a clear focus on serving Yellowknifers to the best of our ability with limited information, clarity and experience.

Together, the Mayor, Council and Administration moved passed these events while continuing to deliver all core municipal services to residents, businesses and other NWT communities.

Thankfully, this past year, the wildfire season did not present itself as anticipated and we were able to get back to doing what we planned. That said, we did not foresee the rise and impact encampments would have on our work.

In 2024, encampments, homelessness and supporting our vulnerable populations took effort, compassion, energy, and resources from every corner of City Hall we did not foresee at the start of year.

Working closely with the Government of the Northwest Territories and our community partners, we witnessed formal and informal acts of kindness, innovation, and professionalism to keep both our community and our population safe. Municipal Enforcement Officers exercised courage and diplomacy. The Fire Chief made himself available to vulnerable community members, to assist individuals making good choices for themselves and their community members. Community Services and Solid Waste Facility teams cooperated by providing time, temporary fencing and access to address an evolving situation. We gladly participated in an ad-hoc interagency working group to coordinate information and services.

# BUDGET MESSAGE

The City of Yellowknife is experiencing the rising costs of doing business. We cancelled our Lift Station #1 Request for Proposal as all bids were substantially higher than budgeted. We also received notices from both NAKA and the NWT Power Corporation on their General Rate Applications to increase rates to all users.

Nevertheless, we advanced several important milestones to support Council's Strategic Directions.

## People First

Progress towards Reconciliation, Housing for All and making a Liveable Community were key milestones in 2024 including:

- Updated our Emergency Management Plan;
- Completed our Yellowknife Street Outreach Evaluation;
- Supported Council's Roundtable on Homelessness;
- Allocated multi-year funding for Reaching Home;
- Completed Park upgrades across the City as well as updates at both the Field House and Curling Club; and
- Continued progress on our new Aquatic Centre that is opening in 2025 and incorporated an Indigenous themed mosaic in a tiled wall in the Aquatic Centre.

## Service Excellence

Over the past year, we completed several service improvements both within City Hall and outside. These accomplishments include:

- Updated transit routes and fee structure;
- Expanded Access for All;
- Updated the grant review processes;
- Updated Public Presentation to Council procedures;
- Improved Emergency Management information on our Website;
- Established Emergency Email Distribution processes;

- Advanced Livery License modernization;
- Responded to over 1500 requests for Municipal Enforcement;
- Added Municipal Enforcement capacity for Transit, Library and Visitors Centre;
- Responded to a 6% increase in calls (4,008 by September) for the Fire Department and Emergency Services over 2023, and
- Updated Development Appeal Board fees.

## Sustainable Future

Gains towards building a sustainable future have been made in 2024. We have:

- Adopted a new Land Administration By-law;
- Welcomed 50,000 visitors to our Visitor Centre;
- Completed Housing Needs Assessment Study;
- Completed Home Energy Program study;
- Completed Solid Waste Facility improvements;
- Advanced work for Building Incentives By-law;
- Advanced Hotel Levy for Destination Office by-law;
- Supported over 200 participants in the City's Bike Rodeo;
- Advanced road safety through targeted efforts involving check stops, speed limits enforcement, and impaired driving detection; and
- Advancing work in support of Giant Mine Remediation

## Turning a Corner: Delivering on Council Priorities

Council has reached its half-way point in its term. Progress on their Strategic Directions has been steady despite unforeseen events of 2023. Looking to 2025, the City will be focussing on completing key initiatives on Council's Strategic Directions and begin turning attention to preparing for a municipal election in 2026.



We have a robust work plan for 2025 that includes:

## **People First**

In 2025 we are planning for:

- The Aquatic Centre Opening
- Completing Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Updating the Community Plan

## **Service Excellence**

We are going to:

- Advance a Corporate Modernization Agenda
  - Records and Information Management Audit
  - Development of various Financial Policies
- Finalize Collective Bargaining (small PSAC, IAFF)

## **Sustainable Future**

- Launching a new Tourism Strategy
- Advance the Water Intake and Replacement
- Updating Water and Sewer Upgrades
- Delivering Summer 2025 resurfacing Program

## **Foundations for Growth**

Once approved, the annual Budget lays out the resources that are allocated to support core services and Council's strategic directions. Administration has proposed a Budget that seeks to advance Council's broad vision while continuing to ensure that core and essential services are delivered in a reliable, cost-effective and sustainable manner. While we look to 2025 and the future, we are looking to strike a balance of service delivery and investments to support the sustainable growth of our community. The future remains uncertain, however together we are committed to People First, Service Excellence and Building a Sustainable Future.

# BUDGET MESSAGE

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