

## **Updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy**

**Date:** June 24, 2025

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Municipal Licensing & Standards

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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Toronto's urban wildlife is incredibly diverse, with thousands of unique species calling the city home. In particular, coyotes have lived in Toronto's communities for many years. Coyotes have adapted well to urban environments and are a consistent feature in many cities across North America. It is normal to see a coyote in residential, commercial, or industrial areas, and in or around parks, trails and ravines.

The City of Toronto monitors coyote activity and has relied on its existing Coyote Response Strategy to guide its response. The Strategy (last updated in October 2013) prioritizes deterrence and public education to minimize coyote encounters. It focuses on removing open food sources, preventing dog-coyote interactions, and coyote-proofing properties.

This staff report responds to several Council and Committee directives, notably to update the Coyote Response Strategy and report back on items related to the Downtown Coyote Action Plan, which was received by the Economic and Community Development Committee on May 6, 2025 ([2025.EC20.4](#)). The City of Toronto's updated Coyote Response Strategy, renamed the Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy ("the Strategy"), is attached to this report as Attachment 1. The updated Strategy organizes best practices for coyote management into a comprehensive operational document to guide City responses and support public participation in wildlife management efforts.

This report recommends City Council's endorsement of the Strategy and that Council make several requests to the province: to outline detailed criteria for when provincially led redevelopment projects will include coyote and/or wildlife-specific studies, share costs for coyote management (which reiterates a previous request), and review provincial wildlife conflict management regulations. This report also outlines additional actions, including creating a proposed Wildlife Response Team, developing a comprehensive public education campaign in 2026, creating reliable and responsive channels for public updates related to coyote incidents, and clarifying how wildlife management is factored into construction and development projects.

This report was prepared in consultation with City Planning, Customer Experience (311), Development Review, Environment, Climate and Forestry, Parks and Recreation, Policy, Planning, Finance and Administration, Solid Waste Management, Toronto Building, Toronto Public Health and Transportation Services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to continue to review and amend the updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy, in Attachment 1 to the report, as appropriate and when necessary.
2. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to host public sessions and design other programming as appropriate in each of the City's Community Council Areas on the updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy while continuing to reallocate existing financial resources for public education efforts on coexistence in 2025.
3. City Council request the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, in consultation with the Executive Director, Development Review, to include guidelines for wildlife management within the Construction Management Plan as an advisory comment in the Notice of Approval with Conditions issued through the Site Plan Control application review process.
4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards to establish a new Wildlife Response Team in order to effectively support the full implementation of the Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy.
5. City Council request the Government of Ontario to outline detailed criteria for when provincially-led redevelopment projects will include coyote and/or wildlife-specific studies.
6. City Council notify the Government of Ontario of the resources and costs necessary to respond to coyote interactions in Toronto and reiterate its request for the Government of Ontario to share the costs of wildlife management.
7. City Council request the Government of Ontario review the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, to incorporate updated best practices for wildlife management and to support wildlife management in urban areas, including disruptions to wildlife caused by urban densification.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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To implement the updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy and to strengthen the City's proactive response to wildlife issues (related to coyotes, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, foxes, birds, etc.), this report proposes the creation of a new Wildlife Response Team within Toronto Animal Services (TAS).

An increase in conflicts with coyotes in 2024 and 2025 demonstrated a need for dedicated City resources to proactively and reactively manage wildlife issues. Meeting this need on an ongoing, sustainable basis is not possible with Toronto Animal Services' existing staff complement. The creation of a Wildlife Response Team would enhance responses to service requests and minimize the need to redeploy resources from other service lines (which can impact service standards for other requests). It would also position staff to, where possible, address emerging or surge demand for MLS enforcement to maintain service levels, such as additional wildlife feeding patrols in areas of high rodent activity and/or enhanced area-specific enforcement for dogs off-leash, issues that are both connected to wildlife conflicts.

The estimated annual resource requirement for a complete Wildlife Response Team is up to \$1.4 million for 11 FTEs (including salary, benefits, equipment, and training), which would cover a total of 8 Animal Control Officers, 1 Dispatcher, 1 Supervisor, and 1 Manager. One-time costs for fleet acquisitions for the Team would be \$260,000. Next steps on the Team would be assessed and proposed as a new and enhanced request for the Mayor's consideration during the 2026 budget process. However, in the meantime Municipal Licensing and Standards staff will leverage existing resources, where possible, within the 2025 Operating Budget, to begin limited implementation of the plan.

In addition, staff will also outline \$50,000 for a public education campaign and communications strategy as a new and enhanced request for the Mayor's consideration during the 2026 budget process, with the purpose of keeping pets and people safe and responsibly sharing space with wildlife.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

## EQUITY IMPACT

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The City of Toronto's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#), adopted by Council on April 6, 2022, calls for the "co-creation of protocols with Indigenous organizations and collectives that use Indigenous knowledge and processes to support working together in right relations." The updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy aligns with this commitment by reflecting the values of being in relationship with all beings, in reciprocity and respect, and with the understanding that all life is sacred.

Toronto Animal Services (TAS) will continue to explore active working relationships with the City's Indigenous Affairs Office in order to engage directly with communities about changing the narrative regarding connections between humans and animals. Learnings will be incorporated into TAS' and Strategic Public and Employee Communications' public education efforts and materials. Resulting resources will be translated into various languages and where possible, supported through accessible visuals (for example, in signage and posters). In addition, TAS will continue building partnerships with community groups to strengthen the City's ability to address issues with wildlife before conflict arises and to reframe the ways in which residents interact with wildlife in the city.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On May 6, 2025, Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [EC20.4 - Downtown Coyote Action Plan](#) which requested a report back on various items related to the Downtown Coyote Action Plan.

On March 27, 2025, City Council adopted [EC18.8 - Developing an Urgent Downtown Coyote Action Plan](#). Council directed the Executive Director of MLS to distribute educational material to residents downtown and Councillor offices. Council also directed staff to develop a Downtown Coyote Action Plan that includes a review of best practices, technology and tools for diversion, an assessment of different approaches for coyote response, wildlife planning in City-led development, and a summary of authorities and relevant regulations.

On October 23, 2024, Economic and Community Development Committee adopted [EC16.10 - Updating the City's Coyote Strategy](#), which requested Toronto Animal Services to review and update the City's Coyote Response Strategy, 311 intake processes for reports, and available public information on coyotes.

On July 22, 2022, City Council adopted [EC31.5 - Updates to Chapter 349, Animals](#). Council amended [Chapter 349, Animals](#) to define and prohibit wildlife feeding and require dog owners to remove excrement within 24 hours.

On October 11, 2013, City Council adopted [LS23.3 - Coyote Response Strategy](#), which adopted Toronto Animal Services' Coyote Response Strategy.

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Purpose of Report**

This staff report responds to several Council and Committee directives to update the City's Coyote Response Strategy and report back on items related to the Downtown Coyote Action Plan. The City of Toronto's updated Coyote Response Strategy, renamed

the Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy (“the Strategy”), is attached to this report as Attachment 1. The updated Strategy organizes best practices for coyote management into a comprehensive operational document to guide City responses, supports public participation in wildlife management efforts, and incorporates direction from the Economic and Community Development Committee to provide thresholds and escalation protocols for the City’s response to a range of coyote interactions.

This report also provides information and recommendations on creating reliable and responsive channels for public updates related to coyote incidents (including updating 311 language to provide clarity to the public), provides an assessment of additional resource needs and how wildlife management is factored into construction and development projects, and identifies additional requests to the Government of Ontario to support the City’s wildlife management efforts and review provincial wildlife legislation. It also provides an update on the implementation of the City’s Downtown Coyote Action Plan.

### *Background*

Coyotes have lived in Toronto’s neighbourhoods for many years, and it is normal to see coyotes during the day and at night, and across different areas of the city. Encounters with coyotes are more likely to occur when several factors are present: direct and indirect feeding of wildlife, off-leash dogs, active construction or redevelopment projects, significant human and dog density, and/or a lack of green space.

Coyotes tend to avoid humans; however, repeated encounters with humans in which coyotes are rewarded by food or do not feel threatened can increase their tolerance for being near people (known as ‘proximity tolerance’). Using behavioural techniques to compel wildlife to move away from humans is known as aversion conditioning, and its practice is intended to strengthen healthy boundaries, particularly once coyotes display food conditioned behaviour. Failing to respond to aversion conditioning and/or attacking or biting a person unprovoked are examples of problematic coyote behaviour.

When confronted by a dog, it is normal for a coyote to behave defensively. Because dogs and coyotes come from the same scientific family, coyotes perceive dogs as competitors for territory and resources, just as they do non-familial coyotes and wolves. Understanding what triggers coyote behaviours and working to maintain human-wildlife boundaries can mitigate the potential for negative encounters.

### *Overview of regulations*

City of Toronto staff investigate and enforce bylaws in the Toronto Municipal Code to target issues that contribute to human-wildlife conflicts, including:

- [Chapter 349, Animals](#) (the Animals Bylaw), which prohibits the feeding and attempted feeding of wildlife, requires dogs to be kept on a leash no longer than 2 metres except in designated areas of City parks, and requires dog waste to be picked up within 24 hours when on the owner’s property and immediately if not.

- [Chapter 608, Parks](#) (the Parks Bylaw), which prohibits the feeding of wildlife in parks and killing or attempting to kill, maim, injure, trap or disturb wildlife without a permit.
- [Chapter 629, Property Standards](#) (the Property Standards Bylaw), which sets out minimum standards for property maintenance, including that properties and yards must be well-maintained.
- [Chapter 548, Littering and Dumping](#) (the Littering and Dumping Bylaw), which prohibits garbage accumulation and dumping.

Coyotes are drawn to people feeding wildlife, whether through direct feeding, discarded food, or food left out for other animals. The prohibition on wildlife feeding aims to reduce food availability and coyote interest in remaining near humans. Coyotes are also attracted to rats, which they feed on. Keeping properties in a good state of repair to prevent rodents from congregating and entering sites can help maintain boundaries with coyotes.

When prevention fails, the province's [Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997](#) ("FWCA") sets out rules for managing wildlife conflict, including removal. The FWCA positions municipalities to determine which situation-specific response to employ on municipal land or private property. The province promotes coexistence (with an emphasis on not feeding coyotes so as to prevent their increased tolerance for being near humans and subsequent conflict). The province also requires that coyote activity that poses a threat to public safety is referred to police services. Provincial rules for coyote incident-specific responses in the FWCA are as follows:

- **Trapping:** Must comply with all prescribed humane and precise technical standards and must generally be carried out by licensed agents (for example, trappers, hunters).
- **Killing:** Cannot cause unnecessary suffering and cannot be implemented using adhesives or poison.
- **Relocating:** Permitted within 1-kilometre of the trap site for wild animals. The province has noted that relocation is generally intended for small animals (for example, squirrels or raccoons) and is used for coyotes or foxes only in rare cases, such as to transfer an injured, young coyote to live long-term in a sanctuary (such situations would occur on a case-by-case basis and would require permission from the province).

Relocation requires additional green space and is considered inappropriate for coyotes as they may return to their homes given their territorial nature. If successfully relocated, they may engage in problematic behaviour in the new area, be killed, or spread disease if they are ill.

### *2013 Coyote Response Strategy*

City staff use the [Coyote Response Strategy](#) to guide responses to coyote activity. This Strategy (last updated in October 2013) prioritizes deterrence and public education to Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy

minimize encounters, outlines the province's authority over wildlife management in urban areas, and provides information on City responses.

When MLS staff receive coyote reports for investigation, they follow an approach consistent with this Strategy. Officers follow up with the caller to confirm and document information, gather available visual evidence, and provide support. Depending on the situation, staff may visit the site for an inspection for attractants and to conduct aversion conditioning on coyotes they encounter. Investigative findings may prompt additional responses, such as broader or more intensive public education, habitat modification (including referrals to divisional partners in the City to lead responses), and further response escalation depending on the severity and frequency of the activity and degree of potential impact to the surrounding community.

### *Coyote service request trends*

An overview of service request (complaint) volumes for coyote activity in Toronto is provided in Table 1 below. Public safety encounters are reports of incidents that do not result in an attack or bite (for example, lunging, stalking or snarling), and are commonly linked to food, dens, or pups being nearby. In Table 1, the number of attacks and bites to people and pets in 2025 have been confirmed through investigation, while other reports are unverified – these numbers could include multiple complaints regarding one incident, reports of a dog mistaken for a coyote, etc.

**Table 1: Service request (complaint) volumes for coyote activity in Toronto (2019-2025)**

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (to May 31)
<b>Coyote Sightings (Sightings and Public Education)</b>	1263	1788	3510	3729	2452	2584	1883
<b>Coyote Public Safety Encounter (no Bite/Attack)</b>	73	70	79	121	180	303	218
<b>Attack or Bite to Dog</b>	36	20	30	29	49	91	15
<b>Attack to Human (Injury Other than Bite)</b>	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Bite to Human</b>	0	1	3	2	1	1	0



## Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy

Per direction in [2024.EC16.10](#), Attachment 1 contains an updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy (“the Strategy”), which organizes best practices for coyote management into a comprehensive operational document to guide the City’s response to coyote activity and support public participation in wildlife management efforts. The Strategy is an operational document, and staff are recommending Council endorse and provide staff with the authority to update it as required in the future. The attached Strategy updates the 2013 version in the following ways:

- Outlines the necessity of living responsibly with wildlife as a long-term, sustainable approach to coyote management, which aligns with the City’s commitment to integrate Indigenous worldviews into strategic policies per the [2022–2032 Reconciliation Action Plan](#).
- Provides information on how to identify coyotes, understand their presence in cities, differentiate between normal and problematic behaviour, and what to do in the event of an encounter.
- Clarifies the role of public participation in coyote management efforts through reporting activity to 311 and complying with bylaws around feeding wildlife, maintaining properties, and keeping pets leashed.
- Describes the City’s role in ensuring bylaw compliance through education and enforcement (including around reducing food availability), delivering public education in multiple formats, monitoring service requests, and responding to coyote activity.
- Introduces a Coyote Incident Classification and Response Table to guide City responses to confirmed coyote reports and provide clarity to the public about the thresholds for when the City will escalate its responses. The Table is provided as a high-level guide to staff and the public and is subject to variation in any given case, as the City’s response will always consider the particular circumstances at play and may vary depending on the circumstances of a specific investigation.

Development of the updated Strategy was based on:

- Scientific research into coyote behaviour and ecology in urban areas and on-the-ground experience of TAS staff.
- [Engagement of a third-party panel](#) of wildlife experts regarding (i) incidents in Toronto’s downtown communities between November 2024 and March 2025 and (ii) the efficacy of strategic operational approaches to coyote management to coyote management.
- A scan of best practices from comparable North American jurisdictions: British Columbia, Burlington, Calgary, Collingwood, Markham, Mississauga, Niagara, Oakville, Ottawa and Vaughan in Canada and Chicago, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Town of Superior (Colorado), and Tucson in the US.



- Engagement of experts including Coyote Watch Canada, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Wildlife Centre, and Turtle Protectors.
- Feedback received from residents across the city during the delivery of more than 15 public education sessions between 2021 to 2025, with staff hosting demonstrations of aversion conditioning and answering questions alongside external experts.
- Public input gathered from a walkabout of coyote hotspots downtown in March 2025 alongside members of the expert panel, meetings with an organization of residents in Toronto's downtown communities focused on community safety and coyotes, as well as communications received online, through investigations, and through submissions and deputations on the Downtown Coyote Action Plan ([2025.EC20.4](#)).

The updated Strategy is intended to be a complement to the [Downtown Coyote Action Plan](#), which was received by the Economic and Community Development Committee on May 6, 2025 ([2025.EC20.4](#)). The Downtown Coyote Action Plan is designed to enable swift, interdivisional City responses downtown due to the overlap of conditions that can cause wildlife conflict and outlines responses to downtown-specific conditions, whereas the updated Strategy provides a broad operational framework for responses to coyote activity citywide and is also intended as a public education tool.

#### *Thresholds and timelines for response escalation*

In Item [2025.EC20.4](#) (the Downtown Coyote Action Plan), the Economic and Community Development Committee requested that staff consider thresholds and estimated ranges of time for escalation protocols in the updated Strategy's Coyote Incident Classification and Response Table.

Staff have defined several thresholds for when response escalation may be required. These include attacks, bites or deaths of pets; aggressive behaviour to humans; and attacks or bites to humans. Corresponding City responses and additional details are outlined in Attachment 1.

Providing set timelines for escalation is challenging because responses are situation-specific and iterative. Staff deploy a comprehensive suite of responses and continually adapt them based on what is effective, with the objectives of de-escalation and conflict prevention. Several responses require collaboration across the City and with external partners while others take time to produce results, such as successful behavioural changes in residents. Escalating to an assessment for removal happens after response options are exhausted or an emerging situation requires consideration. Emergency services, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health and others may also be involved in such cases.

Although an estimated range of time for escalation is challenging to provide, in practice, staff respond swiftly to reports of coyotes attacking/biting people or pets or killing pets (called 'dangerous acts by a coyote'). In 2024, staff responded to over 90 reports of a dangerous act by a coyote and closed investigations in under 5 days 73% of the time. The remainder were closed between 5 to 30 days. Closing a case means that staff have addressed the caller's needs and/or initiated the appropriate next step. It does not mean

that the broader conflict has been resolved in the area if the situation is more widespread. Staff are committed to working to maintain an average of 5 days investigation time from start to close when investigating dangerous acts by a coyote, although it should be noted that this requires the willing participation of parties that reported the concern and that exceptional cases may require more intensive mitigation efforts.

Coyote bites and attacks are responded to swiftly, consistent with the Division's priority response model that is designed to prioritize urgent complaints that present a health and safety issue. The priority response model sets out service standards within which complainants should expect a first communication from MLS. Service standards are published publicly on the [City of Toronto's webpage](#), and MLS' existing service standards for coyote-related requests are as follows:

- Within 2 hours for a report of a coyote actively attacking or biting a human
- Within 24 hours for:
  - A report of a coyote attack or bite on an animal or human, if the coyote is no longer in the area
  - A report of a coyote posing a threat to public safety (for example, lunging, stalking or snarling)
- Within 5 days for a report of a coyote sighting

TAS will continue to investigate all reported encounters and incidents with coyotes and may begin an investigation sooner than the operational service standard. If increased resources via a Wildlife Response Team are approved in 2026, staff will work to set out specific targets for improving relevant service standards.

#### *Additional Council and Committee requests*

The updated Strategy also responds to additional Council and Committee requests:

- Per [2024.EC16.10](#), the updated Strategy clarifies City responses to attacks to supervised pets resulting in injury/death or consequential injuries to humans. Staff monitor coyote reports for the presence of groups/families of coyotes, including whether the group is behaving normally and support the public via education and resources on deterrence and coexistence.
- Per a request in [2025.EC20.4](#) to review proactive measures to manage wildlife feeding from waste and other sources, MLS consulted with Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste Management, Toronto Public Health and Transportation Services. Proactive measures include enforcing bylaws for waste storage and disposal, property maintenance, and littering and dumping. These efforts are currently in place and the updated Strategy includes education to help residents and private property owners understand what is and is not allowed and how discarding food or feeding wildlife can increase the risk of wildlife conflicts.

## Proposing a Wildlife Response Team

Per a request in [2025.EC20.4](#) to explore resources required for a dedicated wildlife staff team, staff recommend the formation of a Wildlife Response Team within TAS.

Preventing negative wildlife encounters is a long-term endeavour. Efforts consist of early and consistent intervention when wildlife activity increases, enabling broad community participation, and proactively modifying landscapes and enforcing wildlife regulations.

Currently, TAS does not have dedicated resources to proactively manage wildlife. TAS' existing complement of 41 Animal Control Officers handle all animal-related responses for the city. 23 are allocated to enforcement (for dangerous acts, animal care, excrement, wildlife feeding, leashing, animal noise, and more) and 18 to mobile response (for cadavers, reactive coyote response and injured/distressed wildlife). TAS responded to a monthly average of 1,075 dog-related complaints alone in 2024. Common dog-related service request types include bites to humans, noise, confined dogs, dogs at large, dog attacks and bites to other animals, and leashing and licensing complaints. As an additional challenge, TAS is responding to a year-by-year increase in animal-related complaints – staff received 57,387 requests across Toronto in 2024, a 13% increase from 2023.

Given these limitations, the City currently meets the need for urgent wildlife response through overtime coverage and/or redeploying staff from other service lines, such as multi-tenant housing, property standards, and noise enforcement. The use of overtime and/or redeployment directly impacts the Division's ability to meet service levels. From November 1, 2024 – May 13, 2025, while staff were working intensively downtown, TAS responded to complaints across the city within target 68% of the time. This is a decrease from 84% in the previous year, November 1, 2023 – May 13, 2024.

To implement the updated Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy and to strengthen the City's proactive response to wildlife issues (related to coyotes, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, foxes, birds, etc.), in both downtown communities and citywide, staff recommend that City Council support the creation of a new Wildlife Response Team within TAS. This team will serve the following functions:

- **Mobile response to wildlife incidents** by using a data-driven approach informed by indicators like complaint volumes to proactively monitor and continually assess areas with high wildlife activity for the need for intervention.
- **Proactive actions to reduce potential human/pet-wildlife conflict** by taking steps that mitigate human, pet and wildlife interactions such as installing signs, targeting escalation factors for enforcement (feeding, off-leash dogs, etc.), and engaging external experts and other divisions as needed.
- **Public education and community engagement** through implementing strategies to deepen public engagement in conflict prevention such as providing education sessions, live aversion demonstrations, and engaging residents during in-field encounters.

- **Supplemental enforcement capacity** where possible to address emerging or surge demand for TAS enforcement, such as additional wildlife feeding patrols in areas of high rodent activity, or enhanced area-specific enforcement for dogs off-leash.

In 2025, MLS will leverage existing resources and begin partial implementation of the Wildlife Response Team by hiring 6 temporary FTEs at an impact of \$253,000. This will include 4 Animal Control Officers, 1 Dispatcher, and 1 Manager.

The estimated annual resource requirement for the complete Wildlife Response Team is up to \$1.4 million for 11 FTEs (including salary, benefits, equipment, and training), which will cover a total of 8 Animal Control Officers, 1 Dispatcher, 1 Supervisor, and 1 Manager. One-time costs for fleet acquisitions for the Team will be \$260,000.

Staff will propose a new and enhanced request through Municipal Licensing and Standard's 2026 Operating Budget submission for the Mayor's consideration. This request will assess the impacts of the temporary resources and outline considerations for the Team, which could include continuing to implement resources in a phased approach, converting temporary FTEs to permanent and/or adding additional FTEs to complete the Team.

## Public Education

Municipal Licensing and Standards has updated its internal protocols so that Strategic Public and Employee Communications and the local Councillor will be notified when multiple instances of pets being attacked, bitten or killed by coyotes are reported through 311. This change was implemented in response to a request from the Economic and Community Development Committee to create reliable and responsive channels for public and stakeholder updates related to coyote incidents and response ([2025.EC20.4](#)) and is also included in the updated Strategy. If there is a sustained increase in coyote service complaints through 311 and the trend of negative coyote encounters with pets continues, staff will initiate the following communications supports:

- Monitoring media and social media coverage to track the issue(s) to provide timely and accurate information to the media and community.
- Organizing public education sessions, including with local Councillor offices, where staff can educate residents on how to safely live with coyotes and use aversion techniques to deter coyotes.
- Promoting information sessions through targeted social media advertising, the City's [webpage](#) on coyotes and local Councillor networks.
- Providing regular community updates via the City's [webpage](#) on coyotes so that communities experiencing an increase in negative encounters can remain updated on City responses alongside their participation in management efforts.

Staff continue to monitor incidents reported by the public through our 311 channel and will bolster information sharing to ensure timely communications with stakeholders.

Staff are currently implementing a broad educational strategy on coexisting with coyotes that includes maintaining a dedicated [webpage](#) and providing social media updates, newsletters, resources for Councillor offices, updated signage, and the delivery of pamphlets, brochures and posters to high-activity areas. Additionally, staff are launching an education campaign in June 2025, paid through reallocating existing funding, with content on coexisting with coyotes and actions residents can take to stay safe. The annual “Leash Your Dog” campaign will also run again in summer 2025 with messaging about keeping dogs leashed to reduce negative encounters with wildlife.

Staff will also outline \$50,000 for a public education campaign and communications strategy as a new and enhanced request for the Mayor’s consideration during the 2026 budget process. If approved, the 2026 campaign will amplify existing public messages to broaden its reach and the resulting content will be reused in future years. Content will have a pet-friendly approach, as per the request from [2025.EC20.4](#), with information and tools on how to keep pets and people safe. Options under review include developing materials based on feedback collected from dog owners, implementing a social media strategy that geo-targets communities of dog owners, and collaborating with local veterinarians and pet establishments to support strategic approaches to public education outreach to residents. Messaging will also focus on responsibly sharing space with wildlife by not feeding animals, not littering, and using aversion techniques. The campaign will be multi-format (videos, graphics, posters) and will link back to the City’s [coyotes](#) webpage, which is an active hub for information.

Additionally, MLS staff are working with other divisions to incorporate coyote messaging into other City processes (for example, “Good Neighbour Guides” for construction projects) and other communication channels.

## **Wildlife Management for Local Development Projects**

The staff report on the Downtown Coyote Action Plan ([2025.EC20.4](#)) describes how wildlife management is planned for ahead of, during, and following construction on all City-led projects. The City’s Engineering and Construction Services Division takes various actions to protect and sustain all natural habitats in construction projects where there may be potential impacts but generally, the project proponent is responsible for contracting an environmental consultant or biologist to conduct a wildlife study (if required under provincial law).

MLS staff consulted other Development and Growth Services Divisions (City Planning, Development Review, and Toronto Building) and Environment, Climate and Forestry on measures for managing wildlife in privately led projects and make a recommendation below.

### *Guidelines for wildlife management*

Staff recommend that Council request Municipal Licensing and Standards, in consultation with Development Review, include guidelines for wildlife management as part of Construction Management Plans. Broadly, a Construction Management Plan describes activities likely to occur during construction and actions to be taken to mitigate

potential impacts to public health and safety and adjacent properties. Development Review often includes advisory comments related to Construction Management Plans in the Notice of Approval with Conditions through the Site Plan review process.

Working with Development Review, MLS staff will explore the potential to include these wildlife management guidelines as an advisory comment when providing a Notice of Approval with Conditions issued through the Site Plan application review process. While the guidelines are not enforceable, their inclusion could socialize developers towards proactively managing project impacts on surrounding wildlife.

This recommendation aligns with a similar action to incorporate rat control measures in construction projects within the City's proposed Rat Response Plan (being brought to Economic and Community Development Committee on July 9, 2025). Rat control and wildlife management are linked, in that they rely on minimizing food availability and securing sites against animal entry, and there is potential to consider these actions holistically.

### *Requests to the Government of Ontario*

Council requested staff make further recommendations that build on the previous request to the Government of Ontario, by identifying additional requests to support the City's efforts in responding to coyotes ([2025.EC20.4](#)).

Staff recommend Council request the Government of Ontario outline detailed criteria for when provincially-led redevelopment projects will include coyote and/or broader wildlife-specific studies. Wildlife disruption studies are currently limited to endangered species and are conducted only when required by law. They do not typically consider coyotes because, as a species, coyotes are not threatened by habitat loss since they can adapt to the food and shelter available across a range of landscapes. However, disruption of wildlife habitats (and of coyote habitats in particular) carries a public safety risk as it may displace coyotes, which, combined with food and shelter opportunities in adjacent urban areas, may make coyotes choose to remain near humans. Based on the expert panel's [assessment](#) of coyote incidents in Toronto's downtown communities between 2024 and 2025, areas located near ravines, railway tracks, and vacant or derelict sites are candidates for closer assessment of the need for a coyote or wildlife disruption study, as these areas are essential to conflict prevention because they provide more space for wildlife movement and refuge.

Staff also recommend that Council notify the Government of Ontario of the resources and costs necessary to respond to coyote interactions in Toronto and reiterate its previous request made in March 2025 ([EC18.8](#)) for the Government of Ontario to share the costs of wildlife management. To date, the City has not received a response to Council's request.

Finally, staff recommend that Council request the Government of Ontario undertake a review of the [Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997](#), in consideration of new best practices, with additional attention to wildlife conflict management in urban areas and potential wildlife disruptions caused by urban densification. The City works to prevent conflict, but when wildlife conflict does occur, provincial regulations set out rules for how it must be managed on private or public property. These rules outline humane, technical, and geographic requirements, including limiting the relocation of wildlife to 1-Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy



kilometre of the trap site. Discussions with the province between 2024 and 2025 confirmed that relocation is generally intended for animals like squirrels or raccoons, and coyotes or foxes only in rare cases, for example, to transfer an injured, young coyote to live long-term in a sanctuary. The Government of Ontario may wish to consider reviewing the Act to provide clarity for the public on application of the 1-kilometre rule, including to which wild animals it covers, and how it applies in cases where a sanctuary outside the permitted range is willing to receive the animal. This review of the Act could also consider new best practices for managing wildlife conflict both in urban areas and as a result of densification. Densification is of specific focus because it may be accompanied by the transformation of green spaces used as wildlife corridors (for example, ravines and lightly treed areas) into spaces actively used by people and pets.

## **Additional Responses to Outstanding Directives**

### *Review of 311 reporting*

At the beginning of 2025, to respond to Council direction for staff to review and consider enhancements to the contact intake process for coyote incidents ([2024.EC16.10](#)), MLS worked with 311 to improve the online reporting platform, promoting easy access and accurate information for coyote sightings.

Staff continue to encourage the public to report instances of dogs chasing or harassing coyotes through 311 as this behaviour may provoke coyotes and lead to unsafe encounters, and for the public to report all instances of wildlife feeding, and not just for coyotes. 311 staff direct all wildlife feeding reports to MLS for appropriate action.

Staff were requested to (i) develop a coyote-specific feeding reporting option on 311 and (ii) to list behaviours such as stalking or snarling under “Coyote Posing a Threat to Public Safety” on 311’s website ([2025.EC20.4](#)). Residents can currently report coyote-specific feeding to 311, as there is a function to identify the type of animal(s) being fed. Staff are working to make coyote-feeding reports easier to access by implementing a link on the City’s coyote-specific reporting [webpage](#), with a planned implementation date of July 7, 2025. Staff are also working to update the language for the “Coyote Posing a Threat to Public Safety” service request to provide greater clarity to residents, with a planned implementation date of July 7, 2025.

### *Fines for feeding coyotes*

Through [2025.EC20.4](#), there was a request for staff to make recommendations that support higher set fines specific to feeding coyotes.

In order to establish higher set fines specific to feeding coyotes, a provision prohibiting the feeding of coyotes would need to be introduced in Chapter 349. Currently, the provisions that prohibit the feeding of wildlife in Chapter 349 (the Animals Bylaw) and Chapter 608 (the Parks Bylaw) apply to all wildlife, including coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and other animals.



Staff do not recommend establishing specific offences and/or fines for feeding coyotes due to enforceability concerns. The main challenge would be differentiating between feeding coyotes and feeding of other wildlife or unowned animals. Enforcing a coyote-specific feeding prohibition would require staff to confirm the individual doing the feeding and that the feeding was intended for and/or resulted in a coyote being fed. This would be particularly challenging as coyotes typically flee when humans approach and as food sources may attract multiple animals of different species. It is important for the City to prioritize reducing instances of feeding of any wildlife, not just coyotes. Animals tend to congregate in areas with easy access to food, which increases the likelihood of diseases and parasites, posing a risk to both public health and animal health, as well as to conservation efforts.

The current set fine for feeding wildlife in Chapter 349 is \$300. Staff recommend maintaining this existing fine amount, as it was recently introduced in 2023, and has been approved by the Regional Senior Justice. Where enforcement staff feel a fine of more than \$300 is merited, there is an option to proceed by way of a Part III information process rather than a Part I ticket (set fine) and a provincial court would determine the fine amount upon a conviction.

#### *Coyote reproductive control*

Staff were requested to consider the feasibility of incorporating reproductive control for coyotes in Ward 10 as an outcome from loss of habitat, in consultation with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), or other municipalities ([2025.EC20.4](#)).

MNR and TRCA have advised that: (i) non-surgical reproductive control is experimental and has not yet been undertaken in an urban setting, (ii) reproductive control does not guarantee coyote population size decrease, and (iii) reproductive control is not typically used in relation to habitat loss. A brief scan of jurisdictions did not reveal application of this approach. Where fertility control has been used, it is for unique reasons such as preserving the genetic integrity of endangered wolf species or more broadly to protect livestock or to manage coyote populations unrelated to habitat loss.

Current methods to administer fertility programs include baiting animals with treated food, capturing and injecting animals with reversible treatments and spay and neuter programs. Coyotes are possibly more suited for capture and injection programs because treated food may be consumed by non-target animals and food near urban areas may train coyotes to associate these areas with food. However, capture and injection programs are not well studied. Additionally, coyote capture is regulated through the FWCA, with MNR needing to provide permission for capture for reproductive control as a scientific research project by qualified individuals, and MNR does not currently support this approach for coyotes. While using reproductive programs for species such as feral cats, rats and pigeons are relatively well known, the mechanisms, objectives and public safety implications of these programs make them not comparable to situations involving coyotes.

Based on this feedback, staff do not recommend pursuing fertility control for coyotes related to habitat loss. The non-target impacts of this approach are not well known, including to the stability of the local ecosystem. Coyotes are a keystone species, which means the health of their ecosystem depends on them.

The TRCA recommends focusing on public education and enforcement as a sustainable, long-term solution. Similarly, MNR maintains the recommendation of pursuing coyote management with a focus on coexistence and minimizing the sources of habituation and conflict.

#### *Implementation of the Downtown Coyote Action Plan*

From November 2024 to May 2025, residents in Toronto's downtown communities reported an increase in coyote sightings and pet-coyote and human-coyote encounters. Consistent with the City's 2013 Coyote Response Strategy, and alongside a review of best practices employed by jurisdictions facing similar wildlife concerns, MLS staff worked quickly to respond to these reports. Staff deployed a multi-pronged strategy: (i) Investigating complaints, with staff following up with community members to verify, collect documentation, and provide support (ii) Conducting aversion conditioning when encountering coyotes to return the animals to a low tolerance for humans; (iii) Modifying landscapes to remove food sources and opportunities for shelter, including making referrals to divisional partners, and; (iv) Providing education and support to the public on how to conduct aversion, modify properties to deter coyotes, and limit the potential for an encounter by preventing wildlife feeding and keeping pets on leash and under close supervision.

It was made [public](#) on May 13, 2025, that the City took action to protect public safety and lethally removed two coyotes as a last resort (and in accordance with provincial regulations). This step followed a thorough three-part review over several months that included: (1) staff monitoring the situation, using aversion techniques on coyotes, enforcing bylaws and educating residents on how to participate in wildlife prevention and keep themselves and their pets safe; (2) hiring an independent, third-party expert panel with more than 30 years of combined experience to review the City's responses and recommend next steps; and (3) engaging two coyote expert companies to assess the coyotes in the area, evaluate the City's mitigation efforts, and engage in specialized aversion activities. Following removal, coyote complaints decreased to 0 in Ward 10 between May 13 – May 31, 2025, with a few sightings reported in Ward 10 in a sizeable park as of June 2025.

To maintain stable human-wildlife boundaries, staff continue to action the Downtown Coyote Action Plan ([2025.EC20.4](#)). Staff are responding to service requests, monitoring for reports of wildlife feeding, conducting routine waste audits, monitoring businesses that received Notices of Violations for improper garbage disposal for continued compliance, making referrals to divisional partners for food waste containment, and following up on work orders and referrals for infrastructure repairs, with larger items being reviewed for the potential for requiring capital investments.

Public education and communication remain a key focus, with staff continuing to leverage online public forums to share information about coyotes and actions to take

during a coyote encounter and ordering new signs to replace older ones in specific areas. Wildlife feeding, the presence of rats, and dogs off-leash remain factors that increase the likelihood of human-wildlife conflict, and the public should continue to participate in conflict prevention efforts that target these contributors and to report instances of wildlife feeding and coyote activity.

Staff will also continue to assess additional research, best practices and tools to support education and enforcement. For example, staff plan to assess the feasibility of and options for installing video surveillance to be used alongside Geographic Information System (GIS) software to identify litter hotspots and coyote movement in order to attempt to reduce (and potentially remove) attractants. Staff are also partnering with academic institutions like Toronto Metropolitan University and Humber College to analyze data to determine proactive uses. This research may include identifying trends in coyote activity by neighborhood, time of day, seasonal periods and pathways of movements. This larger assessment of activity across Toronto is designed to contextualize and support operational efforts and will incorporate Indigenous perspectives on wildlife stewardship to develop a holistic understanding of coexistence with wildlife in urban environments.

## **Next Steps**

The City is committed to working to prevent human-wildlife conflicts. At the time of writing, staff are actively implementing 311 reporting changes (by early July 2025) and launching the coyote and dogs public education campaigns.

If the report's recommendations are approved, staff will:

- Initiate public education in the City's Community Council Areas on the Strategy to socialize its approach as soon as possible in 2025.
- Continue to implement the actions identified in the Downtown Coyote Action Plan and monitor outcomes in 2025.
- Implement hiring for the Wildlife Response Team in 2025.
- Assess next steps on the Wildlife Response Team and 2026 public education campaign for inclusion in Municipal Licensing and Standard's 2026 Operating Budget submission.
- Refine the Strategy as necessary.

## **CONTACT**

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**SIGNATURE**

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Carleton Grant  
Executive Director, Municipal Licensing & Standards

**ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Coyote Coexistence and Response Strategy