

## Coyote and Feeding of Wildlife Update Approval Report

### ISSUE

Coyote sightings and interactions have increased within city limits in recent years. This report provides an update on the City of Saskatoon's current approach to coyote management, provides information on approaches that have been implemented in other municipalities, and outlines the Administration's proposed path forward.

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that:

- 1) Administration be directed to proceed as outlined in this report, and;
- 2) The City Solicitor's Office be instructed to draft a bylaw to prohibit the feeding of wildlife, as outlined in this report.

### BACKGROUND

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) held on July 31, 2024, passed the following motions:

"That the Administration report on best practices regarding wildlife in the city, specifically aggressive coyotes, with options to keep our residents and wildlife safe from harm. Provide options for how residents can precipitate an elevated response when safety concerns become more significant."

"That the Administration report back on a bylaw to ban or restrict the feeding of wildlife within the City of Saskatoon."

Administration conducted a review which included meetings with other law enforcement agencies and other cities to help identify options on potential coyote response levels. A legal analysis was also conducted to evaluate considerations related to the development of municipal bylaws aimed at restricting the feeding of wild animals.

### DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

#### Coyote Data and Distribution

Coyote sightings within city limits has markedly increased in recent years. In 2024, the Urban Biological Services (UBS) team within the Parks Department received 214 calls regarding coyotes; see Appendix 1 for definitions and data maps. This compares to 78 in 2023 and 16 in 2022. A variety of ecological and human factors may have contributed to the high numbers of coyote calls in 2024, such as weather, prey population, other available food sources including reports of Saskatoon residents providing food, and legislative changes leading to increased coyote populations.

In Saskatoon in 2024, 64% of the coyote-related calls were resident sighting reports requiring no immediate response, while 36% of the coyote calls received required some form of response. A “response” is anything from a callback, site visit, or sign placement. Since 2014, UBS has received five calls classified as “conflicts” based on the incident description given in the call. Out of these five, four are classified as an “Incident” where no human contact occurred but the behavior was concerning to the resident. In the fall of 2024, Administration was made aware of one interaction where the Saskatoon Police Service was engaged to euthanize a coyote, believed to be the one related to the pet-attack.

Figure 2 in Appendix 1 shows the distribution of coyote-related calls received in 2024. Distribution is widespread (note that duplicate addresses show as a single plot point and that there were some callers who did not provide location information).

### Current Approach in Saskatoon

When the UBS team of the Parks Department receives wildlife and coyote-related calls, the focus has been on education and co-existence. The UBS team provides information and advice, records the sightings and places signage in appropriate areas.

The City does not currently conduct hazing, aversion conditioning or euthanize in response to aggressive interactions with coyotes. Hazing and aversion conditioning are both activities intended to modify and discourage undesirable coyote behavior, further information is provided in Appendix 1. Both the Provincial Conservation Officer team and Saskatoon Police Service are called to attend to and deal with dangerous coyotes.

Administration has improved collaboration and information sharing to and from other partners, specifically Meewasin and the RM of Corman Park. Collaboration has also increased with the Saskatoon Police Service and the Provincial Conservation Officer teams to ensure that if there is a serious complaint about a coyote, there will be a timely response.

Refer to Appendix 2 – City of Saskatoon Coyote Information Sheet for additional background on coyotes and the current approach.

### Provincial Conservation Officers

Province of Saskatchewan Conservation Officers have on occasion provided aid within city limits under limited circumstances, usually for larger animals such as moose and deer. In Saskatchewan, responsibility for coyote management typically falls to municipalities, as coyotes are not protected animals; however, Conservation Officers will continue to provide assistance, when able, in escalated situations where the animal is a threat, rabid, or displaying clear signs of illness.

### Saskatoon Police Service

The Saskatoon Police Service has several officers trained in animal euthanasia. In cases where an animal is injured or actively aggressive and there is an immediate danger, SPS will respond. Nuisance animal calls, including for coyotes, are not part of their mandate given other police priorities. As stated earlier, in the fall of 2024, the

Saskatoon Police Service with the assistance of Conservation Officers attended and euthanized a coyote that was behaving erratically, this response would continue to be available as needed.

### Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

Administration met with the cities of Regina, Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg. All other major prairie cities have seen urban wildlife interactions increase, especially related to coyotes. All cities surveyed promote coexistence as a primary method for interactions with coyotes, but also employ a variety of methods as summarized below:

- Regina: Scare coyotes away from city limits where possible; trap and release outside of city in specific circumstances; euthanize only as last resort;
- Calgary: In-house team handles calls/provides information; contractor checks activity, conducts hazing, and euthanizes if necessary;
- Edmonton: Utilizes a hybrid Park Ranger/contractor approach to provide education, identify hot spots, and conduct aversion conditioning. Approximately 20-30 coyotes are euthanized per year; and.
- Winnipeg: Coyote management is under the responsibility of Provincial Conservation Officers.

A detailed external scan, and a summary of relevant considerations on the methods employed by other cities can be found in Appendix 3.

### Potential Implications for the City of Saskatoon

Considering all factors, the Administration believes that the City's approach needs to be fortified to be more in line with other larger Western Canadian cities. Specifically, engaging the services of wildlife specialists to add components such as aversion conditioning and targeted euthanasia to the City's current education and coexistence approach.

A wildlife specialist is typically involved in education, data collection, tracking, predicting areas of concern, hazing, aversion conditioning, and euthanizing as a last resort following an investigation. Further work needs to be done to define the scope and costs of such a program. Contractor costs are unknown at this time, and Administration's preliminary discussions with various industry professionals has shown that conducting this type of work within an urban area is a very specific skill, in particular euthanasia. However, progress is being made, and with every meeting Administration feels that we are getting closer to a comprehensive solution.

### Bylaw Considerations

In Saskatchewan, *The Wildlife Act Regulations, 1981* (Regulations), speaks to the feeding of wildlife, which can be viewed in Appendix 4. The Province of Saskatchewan (Province) passed a general prohibition against intentionally feeding dangerous wildlife (unless exempted). This amendment to the Regulations was introduced in 2021 and was intended to alleviate the increased concerns related to dangerous wildlife encounters with humans. The Regulations make it an offence for a person to

intentionally feed a dangerous animal, which is defined as a bear, cougar, coyote or wolf or any other prescribed wildlife.

This prohibition, although clearly written, has been sparingly used in Saskatoon. We have seen incidents where homeowners have left out food in a park or on private property that has attracted deer and coyotes; however, the Conservation Officer team were not confident that these incidents met the test of intentionally feeding dangerous wildlife.

Broadly speaking, while the feeding of wildlife in the city has not historically been a significant issue, Administration notes that the implementation and enforcement of such a bylaw would be a useful tool in helping to deter residents from feeding wildlife and in helping to deter some of the unintended downstream impacts. As such, Administration recommends the development of a bylaw to prohibit the feeding of wildlife in the city. Key considerations of the Bylaw are noted below:

- The scope of the Bylaw would apply to feeding of wildlife on private property, public property and within city park spaces;
- The definition of “wildlife” would not include domesticated animals under the control of humans;
- The Bylaw is intended to address situations where wild animals are directly being fed or where food or waste is placed or left out as an attractant;
- The Bylaw would be administered and enforced by the Community Services Division;
- Enforcement options identified in the Bylaw included the issuance of Orders and Notice of Violations (tickets), and prosecution where necessary; and
- The Bylaw is not intended to address situations where bird feed is provided in a neat and clean manner.

Administration notes that challenges with the enforcement of the Bylaw are anticipated in that in some cases it may be difficult to identify the responsible party with certainty. Though on balance, with the implementation of the Bylaw and enhanced public education on the topic, it's anticipated that these will be useful measures in helping reduce coyote activity within city limits. A detailed summary of wildlife legislation and bylaws in other jurisdictions can be found in Appendix 5.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is noted that any costs associated with the implementation and enforcement of a bylaw to prohibit the feeding of wildlife are anticipated to be negligible as such work will be undertaken by existing staff and complaint volumes are anticipated to be minor. In the event that complaint volumes associated with feeding wildlife significantly increased, Administration would identify the need for additional staffing resources through the multi-year business plan and budget process at the appropriate time.

Administration intends to engage a wildlife specialist in the short-term utilizing funds from within existing budgets. For future years, Administration will bring forward service level options to the 2026/2027 Business Plan and Budget process.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, or social implications as a result of this report.

### **NEXT STEPS**

It is clear that the City's current and past approach is not addressing the rising concerns around increased coyote sightings and interactions within city limits. In summary, below are the next steps Administration intends to take going forward unless otherwise directed by City Council:

1. Administration will continue to monitor and refine the City's customer service response, which includes working with the Saskatoon Police Service and the Provincial Conservation Officer teams, so that if there is a serious complaint about a coyote there will be a timely response;
2. Given that spring is a very active time for coyotes and other wildlife, the Administration will activate an awareness campaign in Spring/early Summer on feeding wildlife and coyote encounters;
3. Although not successful to this point, Administration will continue to seek to engage a contractor to provide the more advanced components of a coyote management plan including aversion conditioning and euthanasia.
4. The Administration will bring forward a coyote management and response plan to be presented as a service option for the 2026/2027 budget deliberations; and
5. Based on the input from Committee and City Council, provide a bylaw amendment or bylaw to address the issue of feeding wildlife on public and/or private property.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Coyote Ecology and Data Maps
2. City of Saskatoon Coyote Information Sheet
3. Coyote Approaches in Other Cities
4. The Wildlife Act Regulations, 1981 (Saskatchewan)
5. Feeding of Wildlife Bylaws in Other Jurisdictions

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Written by: Konrad Andre, Parks, Operations Manager  
Reviewed by: Thai Hoang, Director of Parks  
Matt Grazier, Director of Community Standards  
Approved by: Celene Anger, General Manager, Community Services