

## Report to Committee

☐ For Committee Direction

☒ For Committee Information



<b>TOPIC:</b>	Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016 Review Report	April 22, 2025
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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016 for Council's review.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee accept the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016 report as information.

If Council directs any changes, a motion will be required in the Business Arising from the Committee of the Whole.

### RATIONALE:

The Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw is a significant focus area for Enforcement Services and has not been reviewed since 2016. Council directed Administration to bring forward the Bylaw for review and possible amendments. Administration has proposed amendments for Council's consideration and invites feedback and guidance on the proposed changes.

### REPORT INFORMATION:

An Animal Control or Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) Bylaw aims to ensure the well-being of both animals and the community by establishing clear guidelines for pet ownership, management, and care. Morinville adopted its first dog control bylaw in 1943. Since then, Morinville has increased the legislative expectations to include cats and all domesticated animals residing within Morinville.

Morinville's current Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw #5/2016 outlines expectations for pet owners regarding dogs, cats, domestic animals housed outdoors, and all exotic animals within the municipality of Morinville. Operationally, this Bylaw has effectively addressed conditions and situations that Community Peace Officers in Enforcement Services have been involved with since its adoption in 2016.

The Bylaw is designed to:

- **Promote Public Safety:** Regulating the behavior and movement of animals, especially those that are potentially dangerous, may reduce the risk of harm or injury to people, other animals, and property. This includes addressing issues like dangerous or aggressive pets.
- **Ensure Animal Welfare and Overpopulation:** Establish standards for how pets should be treated, including access to food, water, shelter, and medical care. This ensures that animals are not neglected or mistreated.

- **Control Nuisances:** Addressing issues such as excessive noise (barking dogs), unsanitary conditions (uncollected pet waste), and other nuisances that may impact the quality of life for neighbors and the community.
- **Ensure Compliance with Best Practices:** Encouraging responsible pet ownership through education and enforcement of rules regarding pet identification (e.g., licensing, microchipping), leashing requirements, and containment.
- **Protect the Environment:** Prevent animals from negatively impacting local ecosystems or wildlife, such as keeping pets secure to prevent them from harming local fauna.

By enacting such a Bylaw, Morinville ensures a balance between the rights and responsibilities of pet owners and the need to maintain a safe, healthy, and pleasant environment for all residents.

The Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw represents one of the larger areas of responsibility for Enforcement Services. As a result, this Bylaw is examined annually, with a comprehensive review completed approximately every 10 years. It has been 8 years since the last review.

The Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw is responsible for, on average, 104 files per year, resulting in an average of 302 specific incidents being investigated in Morinville. This represents an annual average of 30% of total bylaw-related investigations.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Morinville Enforcement Files</i>	<i>Total Incident Types</i>	<i>Total Bylaw Incident Types</i>	<i>Total RPO Bylaw Files</i>	<i>Total RPO Incident Types</i>	<i>RPO % of Total Investigations</i>	<i>RPO % of Bylaw Investigations</i>
<b>2022</b>	642	1405	1069	66	269	19%	25%
<b>2023</b>	633	1297	910	116	319	25%	35%
<b>2024</b>	608	1401	1029	131	319	22%	31%
<b>3- year Average</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>1368</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Reactive calls for service, including public calls for assistance, referrals from other departments, and pound services, along with proactive work such as proactive patrols and permitting processes, serve the Responsible Ownership Bylaw.

Proactively, Administrative and Enforcement Services staff seek annual licence renewals, and officers patrol trails and parks to enforce off-leash, licencing and dog park rules.

## AMENDMENT CONSIDERATIONS

To prepare this report, findings from annual reviews were compiled for inclusion in a larger review.

Updates being considered are:

- **Licence requirement removal** - Explore different identification opportunities that do not require a municipally controlled licence system.
- **Review and update infraction penalties**—Review fine amounts to ensure that the penalties levied are a proper societal deterrent.
- **Review and update dog park expectations**—Review current dog park practices and the method for enforcing rules in off-leash parks to ensure best practices are followed.
- **Move the fees section to the Fees and Charges Bylaw**—Fees are procedurally required to be in a bylaw, and Administration is recommending they move to Fees and Charges Bylaw 19/2024.
- **Update and modernize language** – Explore different terms that may be easier for residents to understand, improve readability, reduce duplication, and provide clearer legal expectations.
- **Remove “grandfathering,” which is no longer required**—Clean up sections that are no longer applicable because the processes changed with the adoption of the current Responsible Pet Ownership. For example, licencing and permit expectations changed, but approvals before the change were grandfathered in the current bylaw.

## NEXT STEPS:

Administration will review the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw and include amendment considerations from this report. Enforcement Services will research and review these possible considerations, and any emerging trends related to animal control bylaws.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:

At the December 10, 2024, Regular Meeting of Council, Council directed Administration to return to Council in T1 of 2025, with the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw 5/2016 for Council review and possible amendments.

At the June 25, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, Council accepted the 2023 “Animal at Large Report” as information.

At the August 22, 2023, Regular Meeting of Council, Council accepted the “Morinville Dog Park Rules Report” as information.

At the August 30, 2016, Regular Meeting of Council, Council approved the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading of the “Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw 5/2016”.

At the May 24, 2016, Regular Meeting of Council, Council approved the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of “Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw 5/2016”.

**ALIGNMENT:**

The proposed Responsible Ownership Bylaw amendments are in alignment with Goal 2 of the Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan:

Goal 2 - Community Safety & Wellbeing

Objective 2.3: Continue to support, collaborate, and educate through a multifaceted approach to community crime prevention, safety, and well-being.

**CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT:**

Regional bylaws were reviewed to identify emerging trends and specified penalty considerations.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Alternative 1: In Business Arising from Committee of the Whole

That Council direct Administration to bring forward a draft Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016 that included the following amendments based on the discussion at Committee of the Whole:

- *[add/include/remove] [insert amendment]*

Implications: Administration will utilize internal operations resources to review the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016. A review will include amendment considerations from this report. Enforcement Services will research and review these possible initiatives and any emerging trends related to animal control bylaws.

<b>PRESENTER:</b>	Sgt W. Norton, Enforcement Services Supervisor	<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw Review PowerPoint</li><li>• Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw No. 5/2016</li></ul>
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Sgt W. Norton, Enforcement Services Supervisor	
<b>CLEARANCES:</b>	M. Hay, Interim Chief Administrative Officer S. Edwards, General Manager, Community & Infrastructure Services B. Boddez, Manager, Community Safety Services/Fire Chief	