

What We Heard

Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw Renewal

Phase 1

December 2023

ADVISE

SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

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Project Overview

The City of Edmonton is undertaking a comprehensive renewal of the current [Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw](#) (Bylaw 13145). The bylaw ensures responsible pet ownership and creates safe and healthy neighbourhoods. This bylaw renewal initiative recognizes that the needs of residents have changed since the Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw was passed by City Council in October 2002. A renewed bylaw will promote responsible pet ownership, provide for effective education and compliance, as well as recognize new and emerging trends that impact residents, businesses and environment. As part of this project, license conditions, fees, fines and offences will be reviewed to ensure they continue to contribute to public safety and align with public views, emerging trends in animal care and the safe and healthy integration of animals into our communities.

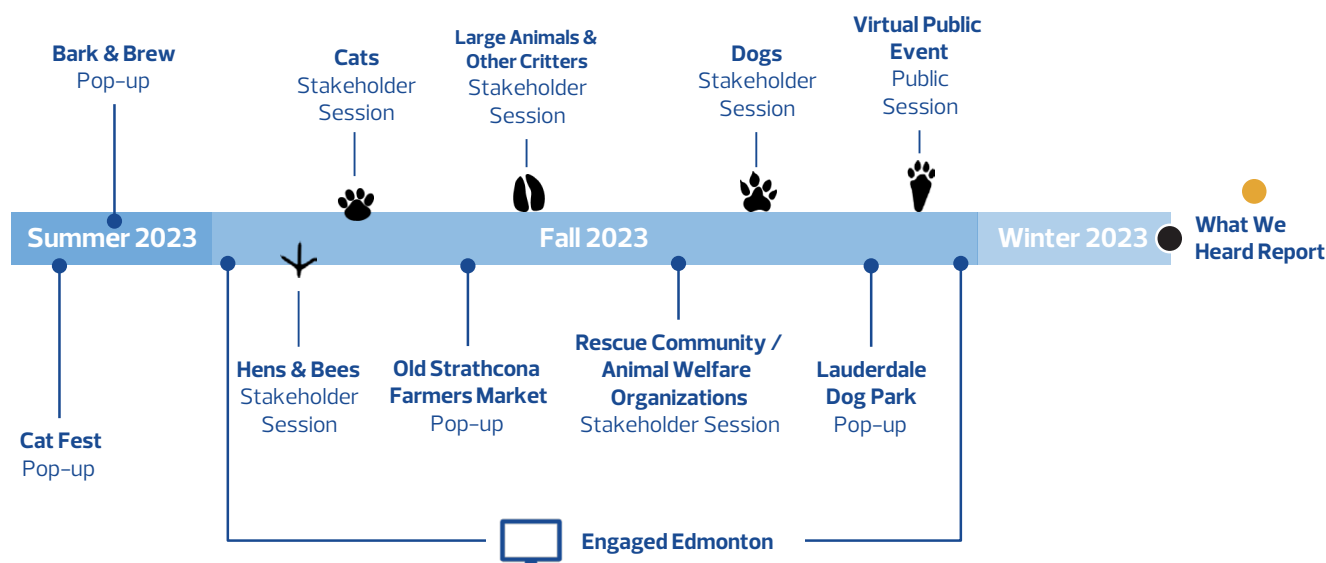
Public engagement for this project is being conducted in two phases. Phase 1 engagement took place from May to November 2023. Both the public and stakeholders were invited to provide their feedback about what is working with the current bylaw, what could be improved and what could be added. The timeline of Phase 1 engagement is summarized below in Graphic 1.

This report summarizes feedback from Phase 1 public engagement.

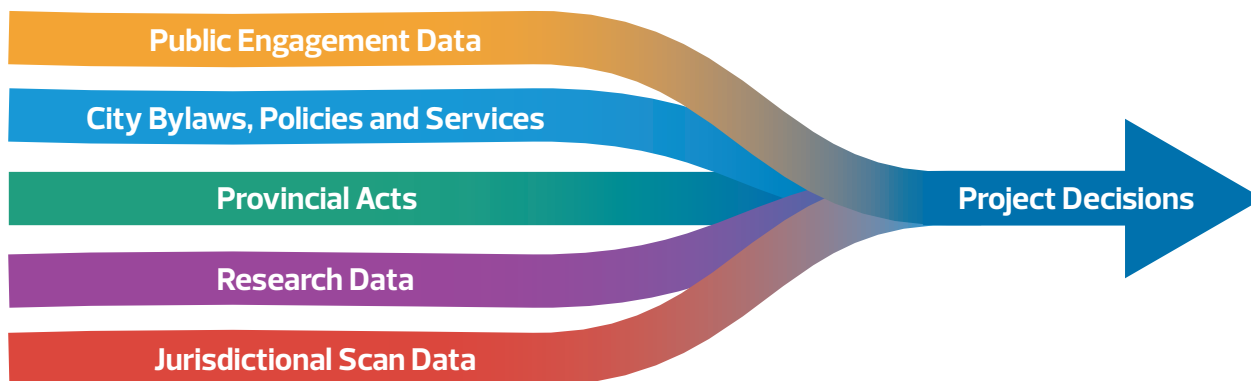
Phase 2 engagement is planned for Spring 2024 where the public and stakeholders will have additional opportunities to explore potential changes to the bylaw.

Graphic 1 – Timeline of Phase 1 Engagement

We are here ●



WHAT WILL INFORM THE RENEWED ANIMAL LICENSING AND CONTROL BYLAW?



Public Engagement Data

Feedback from both phases of engagement will be analyzed to inform the renewed Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw. Other inputs into the renewed bylaw include current practices and guidelines already in place (for example, hen enclosures), City Bylaws, Policies and Services.

City Bylaws, Policies and Services

Bylaws Influencing the City:

- + [Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw](#)
- + [Public Spaces Bylaw](#)
- + [Parkland Bylaw](#)
- + [Zoning Bylaw](#)

Policies Influencing the City:

- + [Business Licencing](#)

City Services:

- + Animal Welfare
- + [Pet Licensing](#)
- + Bylaw Enforcement

Provincial Acts

- + [Animal Protection Act](#)

Research Data

The bylaw review also includes a two-phased research approach to be completed in Spring 2024. Phase 1 includes in-depth discussion groups and interviews, as well as an online general public survey through the Edmonton Insight Community. The second research phase will include a quantitative online survey of Edmontonians to assess and evaluate proposed bylaw changes.

Jurisdictional Scan Data

Comprehensive jurisdictional scans were completed to analyze existing bylaws and frameworks across various municipalities.

All of these inputs will create a holistic, forward-thinking renewed bylaw rooted in progressive animal welfare and responsible pet owner initiatives.

A draft bylaw will be presented to City Council who will be the final decision makers regarding the new Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw.

Public Engagement Overview

CITY OF EDMONTON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

The City's Public Engagement Spectrum defines the public's level of influence in engagement processes. Phase 1 public engagement for the Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw project sits at the ADVISE level on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum. The public and stakeholders were invited to share their feedback and perspectives on the current bylaw and their input will be considered in drafting the renewed bylaw.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM



The Phase 1 engagement activities outlined in this report were designed to gather feedback on what is working well, what may need to change and identify what is missing from the current bylaw.

Visit edmonton.ca/PublicEngagement for more information on the City's public engagement process.

GBA+ CONSIDERATIONS

The City of Edmonton has adopted a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) process to consider more equitable access to programs and services.

A GBA+ process was used to better understand experiences and to encourage an inclusive and diverse analysis of the issues and solutions to animal licensing and care. This includes consideration of demographic information including dwelling type, access to green space, home ownership versus renting, age, gender, family status, race and income.

The project team aimed to create spaces where participants felt comfortable to express diverse perspectives. Pop-up events and in-person stakeholder sessions were held at locations that were easily accessible, and at varying times to maximize participation. Pop-up events were held in public parks, Old Strathcona Farmers' Market and City of Edmonton facilities in an effort to reach diverse populations. Pop-up events, the virtual public event and Engaged Edmonton website were promoted on social media to reach a broader audience and encourage pet owners and non-pet owners to participate.

GBA+ Tactics

- + Online and in-person opportunities for the general public and stakeholders
- + Pop-up community events to meet people where they are and provide an additional option for feedback and speak to project team members
 - + Locations for in-person pop up events were accessible by multiple modes of transportation, where possible
- + A virtual public event provided an additional opportunity for the public to share their feedback and ask questions
- + Stakeholder meetings were held at City owned facilities, which were accessible, had significant parking and were on public transit routes
 - + Meetings were held in the evening for people to participate after work
- + Leveraged existing relationships with community organizations that represent diverse Edmontonians in an effort to maximize outreach



WHO WE ENGAGED

The City of Edmonton engaged with diverse participants during Phase 1 engagement including pet owners, non-pet owners, targeted stakeholder organizations and the general public. This approach ensured a wide range of perspectives were providing feedback on the current bylaw.

Stakeholder organizations with a vested interest in animals were invited to participate, including representatives from:

- + Animal Welfare Organizations and the rescue community
- + Veterinarians
- + Pet stores
- + Pet business owners
- + Doggy daycares
- + Dog walkers
- + Dog trainers
- + Livestock rescues/shelters, small animal rescues (including rabbits), reptile, bird sanctuaries and interest groups
- + Cat rescues, Cat Colony Managers and cat organizations
- + Local Bee/Hen organizations including educators, commercial bee organizations and participants in the City's Urban Hens and Beekeeping Programs
- + Wildlife organizations, experts and professionals
- + Facebook pet and animal groups

HOW WE ENGAGED

A variety of in-person and online tools and tactics were used to reach as many Edmontonians as possible to generate feedback on the current bylaw. Providing multiple opportunities to participate helps to reduce barriers by meeting people in person where they are at, and using online spaces where people can contribute on their own time, at their own pace.

Public Opportunities

Engagement opportunities for the public included pop-up events, a virtual public event and Engaged Edmonton online Ideas tool.

IN-PERSON

Pop-up Events

Two pop-ups piggybacked on already scheduled local events, Cat Fest and Bark & Brew, and two additional pop-up events were held at Old Strathcona Farmers' Market and Lauderdale Dog Park. The purpose of the pop-ups events was to raise awareness about the public engagement opportunities, encourage participation and provide a fast, accessible way for people attending an event or visiting a space to provide their feedback. Project team members asked participants key project questions and documented conversations.

ONLINE

Virtual Public Event

A virtual public event, held November 2 on Zoom, provided an online opportunity for the public to participate in a facilitated conversation about the current bylaw.

Engaged Edmonton

The 'Ideas' tool on Engaged Edmonton, the City of Edmonton's online engagement platform, provided the public with an additional opportunity to share their experiences on the current bylaw. Participants were invited to write an idea on the comment board and like or comment on others' ideas. This tool was open for feedback from August 22 to November 5, 2023 and gathered feedback on six different animal categories including:

- + Dogs (*Barking Lot*)
- + Cats (*Cat-a-logue*)
- + Bees (*Bees Please*)
- + Chickens (*Chick Inns*)
- + Rabbits (*Rascally Rabbits*)
- + Large Animals (& Other Critters)

Project Email Address

The project email address was posted on Engaged Edmonton, the edmonton.ca project webpage and shared at all public and stakeholder sessions. This allowed people to share feedback at their convenience.

A summary of Phase 1 in-person and online engagement activities for the public are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1 PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: PUBLIC

Activity	Date and Time	Participation Numbers	Location
In-person Engagement Activities for the Public			
Pop-up Event Cat Fest	May 20 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	28 Interactions	Homes Alive West End 17531 Stony Plain Road NW
Pop-up Event Bark & Brew	May 27 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	44 Interactions	Alex Decoteau Park 10201 105 Street NW
Pop-up Event Old Strathcona Farmers' Market	September 23 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	30 Interactions	10345 Whyte Avenue
Pop-up Event Lauderdale Dog Park	October 14 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	32 Interactions	11004 127 Avenue NW
Online Engagement Activities for the Public			
Virtual Public Event	November 2 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	28 Attendees	Zoom
Engaged Edmonton	August 22 – November 5, 2023	2,100+ Aware visitors 1,200+ Informed visitors 129 Engaged visitors 3,100+ Total site visits	engaged.edmonton.ca/animalbylaw
Project Email Address	May – Ongoing	Approximately 50	animalbylawrenewal@edmonton.ca

Stakeholder Opportunities

Phase 1 engagement opportunities for stakeholders included in-person and online sessions from September to October 2023. Stakeholders from various animal organizations were invited to participate including animal welfare organizations, veterinary professionals, pet business owners, doggy daycares and subject matter experts.

Table 2 PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES: STAKEHOLDERS

Activity	Date and Time	Participation Numbers	Location
In-person Engagement Activities for Stakeholders			
Cat Organizations Session	September 21 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	16 Participants	Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre (Alumni Room)
Rescue / Animal Welfare Organizations	October 4 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	14 Participants	Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre (Alumni Room)
Dog Organizations Session	October 17 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	10 Participants	Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre (Multi Purpose Room B)
Online Engagement Activities for Stakeholders			
Bees and Hens Session	September 13 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	11 Participants	Zoom
Large Animals & Other Critters Session	October 12 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	11 Participants	Zoom

HOW WE COMMUNICATED

The City used various communications channels to build awareness and encourage participation in Phase 1 engagement activities. These channels included news media, social media, posters, postcards, Engaged Edmonton, the edmonton.ca project webpage and targeted stakeholder invitations.



DIGITAL AND PRINT INFORMATION

The City [project webpage](#) provided information on the project, Frequently Asked Questions, project email address and information regarding public engagement opportunities.

EMAILS

75
Emails

Emails were sent to Community Leagues, Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators and the City's Revitalization team asking to share the opportunities for engagement with community members to bolster the reach of the engagement.

Posters and postcards with QR codes linking to Engaged Edmonton were distributed to Animal Control Officers, Animal Care & Control Centre customer service representatives, Edmonton Public Libraries, Edmonton Service Centre, Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians, pet stores and other stakeholder organizations

2,000 **150**
Postcards Posters

Public engagement opportunities were shared in four Public Service Announcements from September to November.

4
Public Service
Announcements

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms, including the City's Facebook and Instagram, were used to promote awareness of the engagement opportunities and encourage participation.



Animal Care and
Control Centre
Facebook page



City of Edmonton
Facebook page



X

7

Posts

21,933

Impressions

182

Engagements



Instagram

5

Stories

7,041

Accounts Reached

81

Engagements



Nextdoor App

4

Posts

28

Comments

25,185

Impressions

13

Posts

33

Comments

15,719

Impressions

606

Engagements

6

Posts

27

Comments

26,312

Impressions

26

Engagements

WHAT WE ASKED

The public engagement process aimed to understand diverse perspectives and this feedback will be considered in drafting a renewed Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw. The public and stakeholders were asked to share their feedback and perspectives on the following questions:

- + **What is working in the current bylaw?**
- + **Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?**
- + **What is missing from the bylaw?**



Public Engagement Summary and Results

WHAT WE HEARD

This section describes the themes heard throughout the engagement process and is organized by animal category and the key project questions.

Any differences in stakeholder **S** and public **P** feedback have been noted below.

An **'Other Ideas'** section has been added to each animal category. Although this feedback may not relate directly to the project, it was reviewed and will be forwarded to the appropriate area of the City for consideration.



DOGS

Through all the various engagement activities, the dog category received the most feedback. Of the feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **57%** was related to dogs.

What is working in the current bylaw?

Licensing fees were considered fair and there was support for the City to continue to charge lower fees for low-income and senior dog owners. Both the public and stakeholders supported lower licensing fees for spayed or neutered dogs. The current bylaw is not breed specific and all participants commented that they would like to see this remain in the renewed bylaw.

Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?

Both the public and stakeholders found the current bylaw's definition of 'barking' vague. Suggestions were made to provide a clearer definition and more structure to regulations associated with barking. This included explaining when barking would be considered excessive based on time of day and the length of time of barking. Clarity around the definition of 'nuisance dog' was also mentioned.

Some people at the Lauderdale Dog Park pop-up said they would prefer the 2 metre leash requirement length extended. Feedback at the pop-up, Virtual Public Meeting and from Engaged Edmonton stated that the two metre leash length

worked in busy areas but would like the City to consider longer leashes in less busy areas such as parks. There was general support from both the public and stakeholders who work with dogs to ban retractable leashes. Participants supported increasing fines for repeat offences to encourage compliance. For example, dogs off leash in areas where leashes are required.

Both the public and stakeholders suggested mandatory dog training and education for owners whose dogs have been involved in bite incidents.

P

The public was generally supportive of keeping the three dog limit as-is, but one participant proposed that the City allow more than three dogs in specific cases, such as inheriting a dog when already owning three.

S

Stakeholders who work with foster and rescue dogs were in support of increasing the 3 dog limit, with some participants mentioning the Calgary bylaw allows 6 dogs. An increased dog limit would allow more than 3 dogs for those who wish to rescue.

What is missing from the bylaw?

There was general support and agreement by the public and stakeholders on the following three topics:

Animal abandonment

- + Reducing or eliminating animal abandonment issues through clear definitions, fine and potential mandatory education for repeat offenders

Safer transportation regulations

- + Safer transportation rules for dogs, including banning the transportation of dogs in truck beds, on drivers' laps and in other unsafe situations

Breeder regulations

- + Requirement for breeders to have a business license tied to specific requirements to ensure safer breeding environments

S

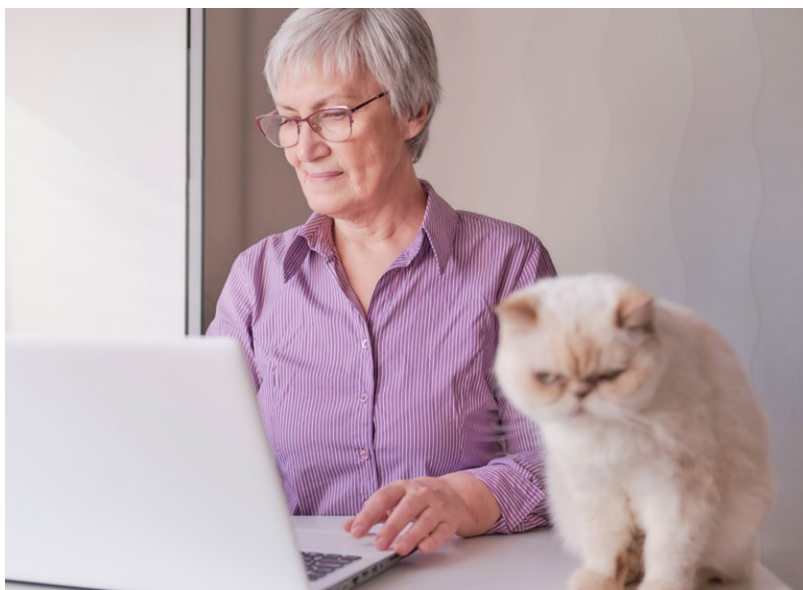
Stakeholders who work with foster and rescue dogs also provided specific feedback including:

- + Adding 'rescue organization' to the bylaw including registered non-profit, charity, etc.
- + Reviewing the licensing structure for foster organizations due to the temporary nature of placements
- + An overarching license applicable to foster organizations rather than licensing individual dogs

Other Ideas

The public and stakeholders shared their perspectives on a number of topics for the City to consider including:

- + Enhanced lighting for safety, washroom facilities, garbage cans and other amenities at dog parks and off-leash areas
- + Additional fenced, small dog only dog parks and off-leash areas across the city
- + Increased enforcement of leash regulations to prevent issues like attacks and bites caused by off-leash dogs in leash-required areas
- + Educational campaigns on dog control, leash requirements, proper training and responsible pet ownership
- + Introduce reward and incentive programs to promote responsible pet ownership, including licensing and microchipping
- + Encourage the creation of more pet-friendly environments in public spaces like transit, malls and restaurants
- + Explore the possibility of digital pet licenses for easier management and tracking
- + Enforce regulations regarding proper fencing for dog owners who fail to comply with the standards



CATS

The cat category also generated significant feedback and is summarized below. Of the total feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **21%** was related to cats.

What is working in the current bylaw?

The current licensing fees for cats were considered fair by the majority of participants and there was support for the City to maintain lower fees for cat owners who are low-income or seniors. Participants also supported lower licensing fees for spayed or neutered cats.

Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?

The current bylaw states that cats cannot roam on private property, other than the owner's property, but cats can roam on public property.

The general public strongly recommended that cats not be allowed to roam freely. Concerns with roaming cats included disease transmission, general nuisance and chasing away birds.

S

However, cat stakeholder organizations strongly supported allowing cats to continue to roam and highlighted the challenges of enforcing anti-roaming regulation.

P

Regarding the six cat limit per household, the public deemed six a reasonable number.

S

Stakeholder groups proposed increasing the number, especially for those fostering cats. When discussing whether the cat limit should correlate with square footage, one stakeholder recommended that the limit should be determined by an owner's responsible ability to care for cats, rather than square footage measurements.

P

The public supported mandatory microchipping and suggested that licensing discounts be provided for cats that are microchipped.

S

Stakeholders who work with cats identified that mandatory microchipping of cats would be hard to enforce. Stakeholders also proposed waiving license and registration fees for animal rescue organizations.

What is missing from the bylaw?

S

Stakeholders recommended including definitions for 'feral cats' and 'cat colonies' in the renewed bylaw as well as outlining cat colony caretaker responsibilities. Stakeholders expressed reluctance to register cat colonies fearing the cats would be captured and removed. Stakeholders who work with feral cats are not in favour of licensing them and believe they should not be considered 'owned cats'.

P

Some members of the public who opposed roaming cats suggested implementing a higher licensing fee for cat owners who permit their cats to roam freely. This addition could help decrease the number of roaming cats in the city.

Other Ideas

The public and stakeholders shared their perspectives on a number of topics for the City to consider including:

- + Pets in buildings should align with the Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw and landlords/condominium associations should not have the authority to ban or restrict pets
- + Encourage responsible pet ownership through reward and incentive programs for licensing and microchipping
- + Establish a city-operated website allowing rescues to post photos and details of rescued animals, aiding owners in locating lost pets
- + Implement a feral cat education program for the public
- + Foster partnerships between the City and rescue organizations for better collaboration
- + Support for cat identification measures like microchipping and tattoos
- + Stakeholder support for the Public Trap Neuter Return Program and Don't Skip the Chip Program
- + Enhanced public education and awareness of programs



Bees

The feedback gathered on bees is summarized below. Of the total feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **9%** was related to Bees.

What is working in the current bylaw?

The public and stakeholders were satisfied with the existing Urban Beekeeping program and believe it fosters bee population growth.

Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?

S

Stakeholders suggested simplifying the permitting and registration process, especially for beekeepers managing multiple sites. They also identified the need for clarity on rooftop hive requirements and the role and impact of commercial and multiple site hives in the city. Some stakeholders pointed out inconsistencies between regulated hive sizes and those available commercially.

Additionally, participants recommended that the city establish a maximum limit on the number of beehives allowed.

What is missing from the bylaw?

Participants suggested implementing a structured inspection log for bylaw officers to promote bee safety, bee health and proper urban beekeeping.

Other ideas:

The public and stakeholders shared their perspectives on a number of topics for the City to consider including:

- + Enhanced public education around bees
- + Review of the current neighbour notification letter requirement for beekeeping as some participants feel it is unnecessary
- + Growing concern around unlicensed hives
- + Beehive status updates on City webpage – active or non-active
- + Approval for backyard beekeepers to sell small amounts of honey
- + City inspections completed via video



Hens/Chickens

The feedback on hens/chickens is summarized below. Of the total feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **10%** was related to Hens.

What is working in the current bylaw?

The public and stakeholders are satisfied with the hen keeping course requirements for the Urban Hens program.

S

Most participants in the Urban Hens program, support the hen enclosure requirements including the size of the coop area and hen run, covered coop area to help prevent the spread of Avian Influenza and hen keeping course requirement.

Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?

Stakeholders and the public found the application process challenging and suggested simplifying it. Other feedback included allowing more than six hens to increase coop warmth and account for the lifespan of aging hens.

What is missing from the bylaw?

P

One Engaged Edmonton participant asked the City to consider allowing roosters, and addressing noise concerns similar to that of barking dogs.

S

Stakeholders who are part of the Urban Hens Program suggested mandatory coop inspections by bylaw officers to ensure compliance (for example, enclosures and property size).

Other Ideas

The public and stakeholders shared their perspectives on a number of topics for the City to consider including:

- + Mentorship program for new potential hen owners
- + Larger waste disposal options for bedding and manure from coops
- + Video submissions of coop compliance as an alternative to in-person site visits
- + Standardized coop designs showcased on the City's website
- + Bylaw training for Animal Control Peace Officers to enforce the Urban Hens Program



Rabbits

Of the feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **5%** was related to rabbits. Rabbit feedback from the Large Animal & Other Critter stakeholder session has also been incorporated below.

Rabbits are not regulated in the current Animal and Licensing Control Bylaw. Participants were asked what could be improved about the way owned rabbits are regulated in the City.

P

The general public had little concern around rabbits.

S

Stakeholders who work with rabbits want to see rabbits regulated in the renewed bylaw. Suggestions included adding definitions, limits per household, mandatory licensing and spaying and neutering for all pet rabbits.

Other Ideas

The public and stakeholders suggested education for bylaw officers focusing on rabbit-specific issues and an educational campaign promoting responsible rabbit pet ownership.



Large Animals & Other Critters

For the purposes of this project, large animals include livestock and other critters such as birds, reptiles and snakes. Of the total feedback received on the Engaged Edmonton website, **8%** was related to Large Animals & Other Critters.

What is working in the current bylaw?

S

Livestock was not perceived as an issue or concern in Edmonton. Stakeholders who work with reptiles and birds were familiar with and had a general understanding of the Wildlife Act (existing provincial legislation). Many stakeholders felt that the Wildlife Act covers many of these animals and revising this section would be redundant.

Are there sections of the current bylaw that need to change?

S

Stakeholders who work with reptiles suggested reviewing language in the current bylaw that refers to 'poisonous snakes' and consider changing it to 'venomous.' One stakeholder commented that the language is vague and contradictory.

What is missing from the bylaw?

Several suggestions were brought forth as potential additions in the renewed bylaw.

- + Add a definition for animals who have escaped from their home or enclosure and are considered at large

- + Limit the number of birds per household
- + Require breeders (non and exotic breeders) to obtain a business license
- + Set a minimum standard of care for birds (ie. cage sizes)
- + Definition and limit for parrots

Both the public and stakeholders were in favour of banning ownership of exotic pets, especially those listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Participants also want the City to advocate against the ownership of rare or endangered species and prohibit the breeding of exotic animals such as birds and reptiles.

Other Ideas

The public and stakeholders shared their perspectives on a number of topics for the City to consider including:

- + Microchipping and licensing birds
- + Enhance public education around birds and responsible bird ownership
- + Retail stores to work with local rescue organizations to adopt / sell animals



Next Steps

The City project team is reviewing the feedback and perspectives gathered in Phase 1 public engagement. This feedback will be considered when drafting the renewed Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw in 2024.

Phase 2 public engagement is planned for 2024 and additional opportunities to participate will be available in the new year.

Visit [Animal Licensing and Control Bylaw Renewal Initiative | City of Edmonton](#) for more information and to stay up to date on this project.

