

Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting
to be held via Zoom and in person in Council Chambers
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
at 9:30 a.m.

1. **Call Committee Meeting to Order**

We acknowledge that Penticton, where we live and work, is on the traditional lands of the Syilx People in the Okanagan Nation.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the January 21, 2026 Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the January 21, 2026 meeting as presented.

3.2 Minutes of the February 25, 2026 Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the February 25, 2026 meeting as presented.

4. **New Business**

Laven 4.1 Work Plan Update

Laven 4.2 Deer Count Plan and Community Communications

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Committee recommend the inclusion of a yearly volunteer deer count into the urban deer management plan;

AND THAT the Committee recommend robust and pro-active public communications during rutting and fawning season to advise the public of the potential for aggressive deer during these periods.

Laven 4.3 Strategy Development Workshop

(Verbal)

5. **Next Meeting**

The next regular Urban Deer Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2026 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

6. **Adjournment**

Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting
held via Zoom and in person in Room B
Wednesday, January 21, 2026
at 9:30 a.m.

Present: Dan Chetner, Biologist, Chair
Joni Reimer, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, Vice-Chair
Andrea Wallace, BC SPCA
Sioban Darlington, BC Government Wildlife Sector
Jodi McKay, BC Wildlife Federation (via Zoom)

Regrets: Wilbert Borren, Community Member
Jasmine Han, Community Member
James Pepper, Penticton Indian Band
Maryse Pellerin, Community Member

Council Liaison: Jason Reynen, Councillor

Staff: Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services
Hayley Anderson, Legislative Assistant

1. **Call to Order**

The General Manager of Development Services called the Urban Deer Advisory Committee to order at 9:32 a.m.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adopt the agenda of January 21, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the November 26, 2025 Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the November 26, 2025 meeting as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **Appointment**

4.1 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee appoint Dan Chetner as the Committee Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee appoint Joni Reimer as Committee Vice-Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **Delegations**

5.1 Gemma Almendros, Biologist, snpink'tn Indian Band

Gemma Almendros provided the Committee with an overview of the local Indigenous perspectives of working toward meaningful actions that will have long term sustainability.

The Committee agreed to hear from, Matt MacPherson, Okanagan Nation Alliance who provided shared the Syilx perspective on deer and human management.

5.2 Dr. Jason Fisher, Principal Researcher, ACME Lab, Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria

Dr. Fisher provided the Committee with a presentation of the basics of deer management. This presentation outlined deer behavior and their importance within the ecosystem. The presentation provided an overview of the most common management strategies and the general outcomes associated with each strategy.

The General Manager of Development Services left the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

6. **New Business**

6.1 Work Plan Tracker (For information only)

7. **Next Meeting**

The next regular Urban Deer Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2026 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

8. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adjourn the meeting held on January 21, 2026 at 11:15 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Hayley Anderson
Legislative Assistant

Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting
held via Zoom and in person in Room B
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Dan Chetner, Biologist, Chair
Joni Reimer, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, Vice-Chair
Maryssa Bonneau, Penticton Indian Band
Wilbert Borren, Community Member
Sioban Darlington, BC Government Wildlife Sector
Andrea Wallace, BC SPCA (via Zoom)

Regrets: Jasmine Han, Community Member
Jodi McKay, BC Wildlife Federation
Maryse Pellerin, Community Member

Council Liaison: Jason Reynen, Councillor

Staff: Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services
Hayley Anderson, FOIPPA and Records Management Specialist

1. **Call to Order**

The Chair called the Urban Deer Advisory Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adopt the agenda of February 25, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 **Minutes of the January 21, 2026 Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting**

The minutes of January 21, 2026 were not adopted.

Maryssa Bonneau joined the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

4. Delegations

4.1 Chris Zettel, Corporate Communications Officer, City of Cranbrook

Chris Zettel, Corporate Communications Officer, City of Cranbrook provided the Committee with an overview of the approach taken by City of Cranbrook and the Province to manage deer population within the community.

4.2 Kindry Dalke, Director of Corporate Services, District of Invermere

Kindry Dalke, Director of Corporate Services, District of Invermere provided the Committee with an overview of deer within the community and measures implemented to maintain the population.

5. Next Meeting

The next regular Urban Deer Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2026 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

6. Adjournment

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Urban Deer Advisory Committee adjourn the meeting held on February 25, 2026 at 11:15 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Hayley Anderson
Legislative Assistant



Memo to Committee

penticton.ca

Date: May 27, 2026
To: Urban Deer Advisory Committee
From: Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services
Subject: Work Plan Update

File No: RMS 0540-20

At the inaugural meeting of the Urban Deer Advisory Committee Meeting held on November 26, 2025, the Committee supported the general work plan presented, with the goal of developing and presenting a draft urban deer management plan to City Council by the end of the Committee's mandate (July 2026).

Original timeline:

- Meeting 1 (November 26th)
- Meetings 2 (January 21): Subject matter expert presentations, spink'tn / indigenous approaches on wildlife and deer
- Meeting 3 (February 25): Delegation from other communities (Cranbrook and Invermere) sharing experiences for those communities
- Meeting 4 (March 25): Planning for deer count and planning for public communications
- Meeting 5 (April 15): Strategy development workshop I
- Meeting 6 (May 27): Strategy development workshop II
- Meeting 7 (June 24): Finalize strategy and recommendations for Council, Committee wrap up
- Meeting 8 if necessary (July 29): Finalizing any outstanding items if necessary/ Committee wrap up

Given the cancellation of meetings in March and April due to lack of quorum, we are behind on the scheduled activities and will need to abbreviate the original workplan to fit our new timeline. Staff are recommending the May 27th meeting being slated for discussion on deer count planning, public communications (proposed topics for the March meeting) and a workshop on the strategy development (originally proposed for the April and May meetings).

Staff are intending on presenting a draft 'deer management strategy' for the Committees discussion at the June 24th meeting based on the outcome of the May 27 workshop. Any further workshopping can be done at that meeting as well.

This information is provided for information and no direction from the committee is being sought.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Laven, RPP, MCIP
General Manager of Development Services
Urban Deer Advisory Committee Staff Liaison



Memo to Committee

penticton.ca

Date: May 27, 2026
To: Urban Deer Advisory Committee
From: Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services
Subject: Deer count planning and public communications

File No: RMS 0540-20

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Committee recommend the inclusion of the following components into the urban deer management plan:

- A yearly volunteer deer count; and
- Robust and pro-active public communications during rutting and fawning season to advise the public of the potential for aggressive deer during these periods

Background

The City has received input from multiple municipalities regarding their approaches to urban deer management, with the Committee receiving presentations from Cranbrook and Invermere as well as an overview of several communities approaches on urban deer management from Dr. Jason Fisher from the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. The Committee has learned about methodologies for population monitoring and strategies for public communication, among other topics.

These communities have a similarity in the importance of data collection to inform decision-making, as well as clear, proactive communication with residents to reduce conflict and improve public safety.

Staff have also undertaken a review of best practices in urban deer management across British Columbia and other Canadian jurisdictions. This research indicates that successful programs typically include:

- Routine population monitoring through structured counts or surveys;
- Strong partnerships with community volunteers and stewardship groups; and
- Seasonal public education efforts that address predictable changes in deer behaviour, particularly during rutting (fall) and fawning (spring) periods.

In many cases, municipalities have found that engaging trained volunteers in wildlife monitoring programs not only reduces costs but also increases community awareness, transparency, and trust in the data collected.

Additionally, consistent and coordinated messaging during higher-risk seasons is an effective strategy intended to reduce human wildlife interactions, including vehicle collisions and negative encounters in residential areas.

This report, based on this research recommends that the Committee direct the inclusion of a structured deer population monitoring program (deer count) and an enhanced seasonal communications strategy as core components of the City's Urban Deer Management Plan.

Deer count

The annual deer count would:

- Occur once per year over one day generally between December 1 and March 31, when vegetation is minimal and deer are more visible, improving count accuracy;
- Be organized by City staff, including route planning, data collection protocols, and volunteer coordination;
- See volunteers survey pre-determined neighbourhood routes at dawn or dusk and physically count the deer they see and recording the numbers

To ensure consistency, volunteers would receive basic training and clear guidance materials outlining safety procedures, identification techniques, and data recording standards.

The results of the annual count will be:

- Compiled and analyzed by staff to identify trends over time;
- Reported publicly through the City's website and/or an annual report to Council; and
- Shared with the Province and relevant agencies to support regional wildlife management efforts.

This approach is intended to establish a repeatable baseline dataset, improve understanding of local deer populations, and support evidence-based policy decisions over time.

No population reductions should be pursued until this baseline population data is established and reviewed year over year and compared to deer / sq km best practices.

Seasonal Communications Strategy

Staff are recommending a communication strategy that mirrors what is generally already in place, which emphasises advising the general public about deer behaviour in the rutting and fawning seasons, when deer tend to be more aggressive or territorial and most interactions between deer and humans and or pets occur. Staff are also recommending more targeted communication and signage where aggressive deer are reported.

- Rutting Season (typically October–December)

During the rut, deer particularly bucks can exhibit increased aggression, reduced fear of humans, and unpredictable movement patterns.

Communications during this period would:

- Advise the public to maintain safe distances and avoid approaching or feeding deer;

- Highlight increased risk to pets and encourage leash use;
- Remind motorists to exercise caution, particularly at dawn and dusk;
- Fawning Season (typically May–June)

During fawning season, does may become highly protective of their young, and fawns are often left unattended for long periods.

Communications during this period would:

- Educate residents that fawns left alone are typically not abandoned and should not be approached or handled;
- Encourage residents to keep dogs leashed and avoid areas where deer are known to congregate;
- Provide information on how to respond if a defensive deer encounter occurs;
- Reinforce the importance of minimizing disturbance in natural and semi-natural areas.
- Communication Methods

To maximize reach and effectiveness, the City would use a mix of communication channels, including:

- Social media and the City website;
- Local media releases and community newsletters;
- Signage in parks and high-traffic trail areas;
- Collaboration with community groups, schools, and local organizations.

Messaging would be clear, consistent, and focused on safety, coexistence, and respect for wildlife.

In cases where there were known instances of aggressive deer or negative deer/ human or deer / pet interactions, more targeted communications and physical signage will continue to be installed as is current practice.

Analysis

The foundation of the City's deer management strategy is the use of reliable data to inform decision-making and clear, proactive communication with the public. The recommendations outlined in this memo are intended to strengthen these core components by establishing a consistent annual deer count as part of the City's management program, alongside a robust and ongoing communications approach.

Together, the implementation of an annual deer count and a structured seasonal communications program will provide a strong foundation for evidence-based urban deer management. These measures will improve the City's understanding of local deer populations, enhance public safety, and support informed coexistence between residents and wildlife.

Staff are recommending that the committee support the inclusion of these elements as the basis of the urban deer management strategy.

Attachments

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Laven,
General Manager of Development Services