

# Memo

To: Mayor and Members of Council  
From: Municipal Enforcement Services  
Date: September 9, 2022  
Subject: Burlington Coyote Incident Impact and Response

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## Purpose:

Provide Council an update on the recent coyote interaction in Burlington in relation to the town's coyote protocol;

## Key Facts:

- In April of 2012 staff implemented coyote management initiatives which were approved by Council, including the online reporting tool
- In June of 2020 Town of Oakville staff provided Council with an update to the town's coyote management program highlighting the new [Coyote Education and Response Procedure](#)
- Since implementation, the Town has found success in "living with wildlife" by providing science-based education to promote coexistence
- The Burlington and Oakville Coyote Management group (BOCM) provided recommendations document to Oakville and Burlington dated February 2022
- On August 9, 2022, Oakville staff provided a response to the BOCM group including actions taken, as summarized in Appendix C
- In August of 2022, the City of Burlington released information of three separate unprovoked attacks on humans believed to be by the same coyote
- On August 24<sup>th</sup>, the City of Burlington released information that the reported coyote had been eliminated
- A [report](#) to the City of Burlington's Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee is expected for the meeting to be held on September 14, 2022 and to Council on September 20, 2022.
- In an ongoing effort to reduce human- wildlife conflict throughout Oakville, staff emphasize the importance of practices outlined in the Coyote Education and Response procedure which addresses the Town's plan of action in the event of a local human interaction.

## Background

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> staff became aware of a series of unprovoked attacks on humans by a coyote in Burlington. Staff are communicating with the City of Burlington to gather more information on the incidents and any actions or circumstances that may have contributed to the unusual behavior exhibited by the coyote.

This information will enable staff to assess:

- Contributing factors to ensure they are addressed within the Oakville procedure
- Any potential impact on Oakville residents
- Effectiveness of the Burlington response
- Opportunities to improve the existing procedure

Oakville's current approved response procedure highlights actions that would be taken by the Town in the unfortunate event of an attack on a human. This would include the following actions:

- Provide information on town website and/or through social media
- Notify CAO, Halton Region Public Health, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)
- Coordinate with partner agencies (Oakville Humane Society, MNRF, Coyote Watch Canada, Oakvillegreen) to investigate the attack which will include action of person before/after attack, whether feeding or pets were involved, action of person towards coyote, how incident was resolved)
- Determine if den/pups are in the area
- On town property, work with partners to attempt to locate and humanely eliminate the responsible coyote, which will be tested for rabies, and also be given a full necropsy to determine general health. Trapping coyotes is a very difficult undertaking and may not be achieved. Trapping is to be carried out by the town (licensed trapper) only
- Investigate area for evidence of coyote attractants (food, shelter, water, unattended pets) and provide information about how to remove them or remove attractants, as appropriate
- Distribute information to immediate neighbourhood on coyote behaviour and methods to deter coyotes
- Encourage watching hazing video
- Staff or community partner available to demonstrate proper hazing techniques, provide information on responsible pet ownership
- Post sign(s) in open area to alert other residents, where appropriate

Since the beginning of 2022, staff have received 446 reports inputted through the online reporting tool. 360 were sighting reports, 3 were den sighting reports, 73 were reports of being approached or followed, and 10 were reported as a physical interaction with a dog.

Staff responded to coyote reports through the following actions:

- 32 investigations conducted
- over 250 hours of staff time dedicated to the program
- a public meeting was conducted, and Q & A information was posted on the website
- a hazing demonstration was facilitated
- new signage was installed in the parks and trails where required
- 3 mobile signs were displayed throughout the Town of Oakville
- regular monitoring of the reporting tool
- worked with OMHS at key locations where coyote presence was identified to conduct off leash dog enforcement and education
- over 1200 flyers were distributed to residents

Staff will continue to deliver services under the approved coyote education and response procedure that supports effective coexistence in the Town. Staff are prepared to provide knowledge and process information to assist in supporting Burlington's program and meet with community groups such as BOCM as needed.

[Appendix A - 2022 Reporting Tool Statistics](#)

[Appendix B - Burlington & Oakville Coyote Management \(BOCM\) Recommendation Responses provided by the Town of Oakville](#)

## Appendix A

### Coyote Reporting Tool Statistics January 1, 2022- August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Ward Number	Sighting	Den Sighting	Approached/ Followed	Physical Interaction	Grand Total
1	27		3		30
2	52	2	16	6	76
3	143		20	1	164
4	34		5		39
5	27		2		29
6	69		26	2	97
7	8	1	1	1	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>446</b>

### Physical Interaction Breakdown

2 dogs deceased

- Maltese type, owner walking dog on leash
- Dog was missing overnight and found DOA, no confirmation of cause, suspect coyote

Attack on a dog-with injuries

- English bulldog in rear yard
- Dog attacked on front lawn
- Yellow lab walked by den site
- Dog bit on legs near den site

Attack on a dog-no contact/ injures

- Woodhaven park- miniature poodle in yard
- Woodhaven- walking dog on Sedgewick (near den)
- Lakeshore/ Sandwell- lab type dog on walk, no contact
- Joshua Creek- on a walk with dog, jumped out of bushes, no contact

## Appendix B

Recommendation	Actions	Reason
Impact analysis	Enhancements to the reporting tool included in budget request	To enhance user experience and the ability for staff to review and analyze reports submitted.
Additional Signage	Additional signs were added	Signs are regularly reviewed by Parks and Open Space and MES on a proactive and reactive basis with signs added accordingly
Changes to sign message	Information already captured except the recommendation to call 911	911 is available to all life-threatening emergencies – not effective on sign
By-law updates to address feeding coyotes	Property standards and lot maintenance by-law to be conducted in Q1 2023 will consider wildlife feeding	Wildlife feeding will also be considered in the animal control by-law review, expected in 2024-25
Coyote education in schools	Staff have reached out and do work with impacted schools.	OMHS also supports wildlife/coyote education. Flyer distribution in areas in areas where coyote interactions are reported and may include areas nearby schools (as approved by <a href="#">Coyote Education and Response Procedure</a> )
Increase fence heights	Not moving forward	Increased height will not prevent coyotes from accessing a yard
Allow awning structures to prevent coyote access	Not moving forward	Parks and MRW prohibit encroachments, may be unsightly and is not likely to prevent coyote access
Frequent and nightly by-law officer patrols to wooded areas	Not moving forward	Do not want to interfere with natural coyote behavior where hazing is not appropriate.

		Significant resources would be required – resulting in reduced service or additional budget
Scientifically measure coyote population	Not moving forward – Feedback provided to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)	Significant resources with specialized equipment and staff would be required.
Provide coyote contraception program	Not moving forward – Feedback provided to MNR	Under purview of MNR
Aggressive hazing program	Not moving forward	Existing program supports humane hazing, supported by education. No effective for staff to respond after an interaction – most effective hazing is done at the time of the interaction. Education supported through our <a href="#">Hazing video</a> available at <a href="#">Oakville.ca</a>

## Burlington & Oakville Coyote Management Recommendation Responses

**1. Conduct an impact analysis by neighbourhoods to identify various controls that should be implemented to safeguard residents, children, and pets from coyote attacks.**

The Town of Oakville actively reviews public information that is provided through the reporting tool to assist in identifying areas in which there are multiple coyote sightings or concerns. This information is used to help provide additional localized information such as flyers that are distributed to residents who live close to where an encounter or den may have been reported. Information from the reporting tool also assists in providing information on possible den sites if barriers may need to be placed. If a report of this nature is received, officers will respond by distributing flyers for information, checking nearby parks to ensure there are adequate garbage receptacles and signage posted. We continue to promote effective messaging such as not leaving pet’s unattended while outside, not feeding wildlife, ensuring proper storage for garbage and other attractants that can attract wildlife that are food sources for coyotes, and, to practice hazing techniques where appropriate.



**2. Improve both the quantity and quality of signage relating to coyotes and ensure it offers meaningful information on what to do in the event of sightings.**

Based on the outline of this recommendation, all of the details are included in our standard coyote awareness signage. The only component our sign does not include is to contact 911 in the event of a life-threatening emergency. Given that the 911 call number is available to any emergency it is not seen to be an effective tool for use on the sign. The sign actively directs viewers to go on our website for coyote information and educational documents for review. The number of signs is reviewed frequently by either Parks and Open Space or Municipal Enforcement Services staff on a proactive or reactive basis with several signs added to parkland each year.

**3. Current municipal by-laws should be amended to permit the laying of charges and assessment of fines for persons who feeds coyotes.**

The town is reviewing the possibility of incorporating a violation specific to feeding wildlife on private property for future by-law amendments. Currently, the town has by-laws in place that speak to conditions that would promote or encourage an inviting habitat for coyotes such as long grass and garbage or compost that is improperly stored. We also have violations for feeding wildlife within our parks.

**4. Provide appropriate coyote management education in schools and parks that border creeks.**

The town is currently trying to coordinate with the school boards to provide an age-appropriate education and awareness component for children. We will also continue to use our approved program from any interactions near a school and will provide information through that process. This may include an officer attending the area, the distribution of flyers and to patrol for attractants including properly installed garbage receptacles.

**5. Change municipal by-laws to permit residents to increase fence heights in order to deter coyotes from entering residents' properties.**

At this time, the town will not be increasing fence heights. Coyotes are very agile and can jump high and climb fences like a ladder. Increasing the fence height will not prevent coyotes from accessing your yard.

**6. Permit residents' whose properties back onto wooded areas to place an awning structure at the top of their fence to prevent coyote jumps.**

The Parks and Municipal Right of Way by-laws prohibits any component of a fence from encroaching onto town land. It is also a restricted activity under the Property Standards by-law and an addition like an awning structure may cause a safety concern for other wildlife.

**7. Request for frequent and nightly by-law officer visits to wooded areas to have known coyote dens.**

A large portion of coexistence is knowing how to identify what is considered normal and abnormal coyote behaviour and practicing humane hazing techniques when it is

appropriate. Officers are tasked with enforcing a large variety of bylaws throughout the Town of Oakville, including responsibilities as outlined in the [Coyote Procedure](#). Resources required for staff to attend wooded areas throughout the night, when it is expected for coyotes to be present, would likely not have a great impact on resolving the reported coyote concerns. In implementing this, it would take away from the resources available for other urgent matters such as:

- trees with broken limbs that pose an immediate danger to persons
- open pits or insecure vacant properties
- property standards matters that pose an immediate danger to residents

To assist Oakville residents, the town provides education and awareness about coyotes, including how to practice hazing, through annual meetings, communication channels such as social media and site or community-specific meetings. Currently, we have officers responding to conduct site visits and we will continue to respond when appropriate. In an instance of a reported den, officers will attend the location to verify if one is present. Measures such as temporary signage and barriers may be installed to alert residents of a den.

**8. Scientifically measure the size of the coyote population in West Oakville, Bronte and Burlington.**

This is not something within the Town of Oakville purview to monitor. This would require special resources and a specific knowledge base. The town will provide this feedback to The Ministry of Natural Resources who would be the best organization to review this request.

**9. Institute a program of coyote contraception to limit the size of the coyote population.**

Similar to the request above, a contraception program for wildlife would not fall under the purview of the town of Oakville. Any wildlife programming in terms of population review or interference would be best addressed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

**10. Initiate a program of aggressive hazing to instill fear in coyotes.**

Currently the town believes our program provides the best assistance for humane hazing efforts. We have an educational video available on our website that provides information on how to practice hazing, which is a community effort. It is imperative that humane hazing is done promptly when a coyote is displaying a behaviour that is not appropriate. Some examples of these behaviours would include:

- a coyote entering into your yard
- a coyote displaying “shadowing” behaviour where it may be watching or following behind you on a walk
- a coyote that is coming close to you or your pet.

It is not effective for staff to respond to a report for a coyote, reactively, after an interaction has occurred, for the purpose of deploying humane hazing techniques when it is likely that the coyote or the inappropriate behaviour, is no longer present. Our best form of practice is to work within the community to respond effectively at the time of interaction to ensure that proper hazing is facilitated. Currently we have had over 40,000 views of our educational [hazing video](#).