

## Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Community and Protective Services Committee

**From:** Scott Mathers, MPA P.Eng.,  
Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic  
Development

**Subject:** Municipal Compliance Annual Report

**Date:** January 29, 2024

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development the following actions be taken related to the Municipal Compliance Report:

- a) the following report on the Municipal Compliance Annual Report, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Executive Summary

This report provides an annual activity summary of Municipal Compliance Services resulting from all the important work of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (MLEO), administrative staff, policy researchers, internal and external compliance partners and tendered contractors in keeping our community enjoyable and safe. 2023 was the first full year in which staff could totally focus on community requests for service generally unrelated to the COVID pandemic. The numerous cross collaborative teams remain committed to continuous improvement and maintaining an open dialogue with the community on important compliance matters.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This report reflects the Well-Run City strategy of continuing to deliver municipal services that meet the needs of a growing and changing community.

## Discussion

### Service Overview

The goal of Municipal Compliance Services is to achieve compliance with Council's by-laws and applicable Provincial legislation. This is achieved by employing the most efficient and effective means, independent of political or other external influences.

Investigations of alleged or potential by-law infractions are initiated: in response to public concerns or complaints; through referrals from partner agencies including but not limited to: London Police Service, London Fire Department, Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario, Middlesex London Health Unit; proactively by MLEOs; and through proactive community enforcement blitzes.

Municipal Compliance Services partners with many of the above noted agencies where they lead operational plans related to events such as St. Patrick's Day, Homecoming and Frosh week; targeted enforcement of specified premises; public protests and specified criminal investigations.

Municipal Compliance Services investigates and enforces most by-laws enacted by City Council in an effort to maintain community standards and public safety. MLEOs respond to concerns or complaints from the community, conduct impartial investigations and undertake a variety of measures to ensure bylaw compliance. Where by-law violations

are identified, either in response to a complaint or proactively, there is a strong initial focus on education and voluntary compliance. Where compliance is not achieved, or where repeated complaints are deemed valid, MLEO's have a number of tools available to ensure compliance.

Depending on the type of alleged or confirmed violation being investigated and/or acted on, a MLEO may take compliance actions based on their evaluation of the situation and discretion including, but not limited to:

- a) Verbal Warnings
- b) Notice of Violation
- c) Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP)
- d) Orders or Work Orders
- e) Inspection Fees
- f) Remedial Work, including work by tendered contractors
- g) Commencing a proceeding under Parts I, II, or III of the Provincial Offences Act
- h) Referral to the City Solicitor for applicable relief by way of action, or application, in the Superior Court of Justice

In order to provide dedicated compliance services, Municipal Compliance Services is comprised of three specialized sections: Parking Services; Community By-laws and Animal Welfare Services; and Licensing, Policy and Special Operations.

### ***Activities at a Glance***



### **Partnered Solutions**

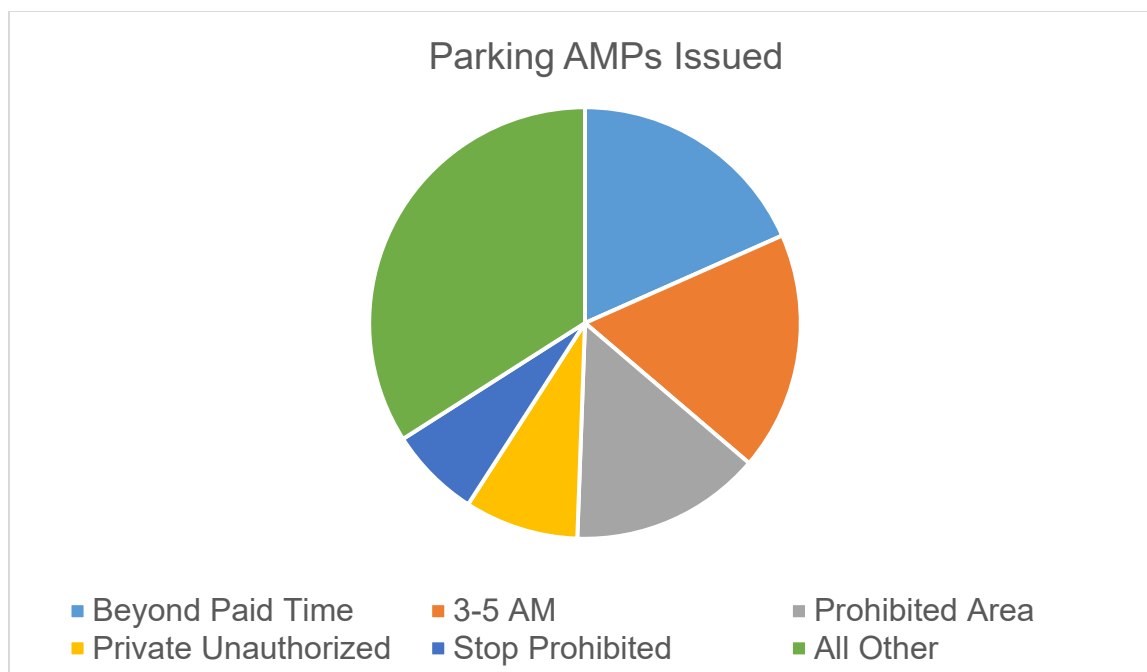
In an effort to engage in open communications with partner agencies to explore solutions to community issues and discuss emerging trends, Municipal Compliance together with Corporate Security and Emergency Management meets with the following agencies monthly:

- London Police Service
- London Fire Prevention
- Middlesex London Health Unit
- Alcohol and Gaming Commission
- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
- Outreach Organizations

## **Parking Services**

The primary role of Parking Services is to ensure that London's traffic and parking by-laws are enforced. The general principles which support parking regulations focus on public safety, efficient transportation infrastructure, parking requirements of first responders and accessible parking needs. In Q1 2021, at the direction of Council, parking enforcement services were transferred from a tendered contracted service to a City led service delivered by City staff. In 2023, Parking MLEOs issued 63,229 Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP) totaling over \$4M.

The top five violations are depicted in the chart below.



## **Accessible Parking**

Accessible parking spots are available on public and private parking areas for vehicles operated by or carrying a person with physical disabilities. An accessible parking permit issued by Service Ontario must be displayed on the dash of the subject vehicle. Parking Services provide official accessible parking signs with guidelines to businesses and multi-unit residential properties. Annually and where staffing resources permit, an accessible parking blitz is undertaken during the pre-holiday shopping season in December. A two-day blitz was undertaken in December 2023 resulting in 72 AMPs issued.

Parking Services is also pleased to offer limited free parking to any veteran displaying an official veterans license plate (Poppy Plate) on their vehicle.

## **Honk Mobile App**

Parking Services has an established partnership with Honk Mobile to provide for mobile parking payments (cell phone app) at on street and municipal parking lot locations. The Honk app was highly utilized during the COVID pandemic in an effort to provide for free parking in selective downtown locations. As per Council direction, free parking via the Honk app will be discontinued in early 2024. Paid parking continues to be provided at 22 municipally operated parking lots.

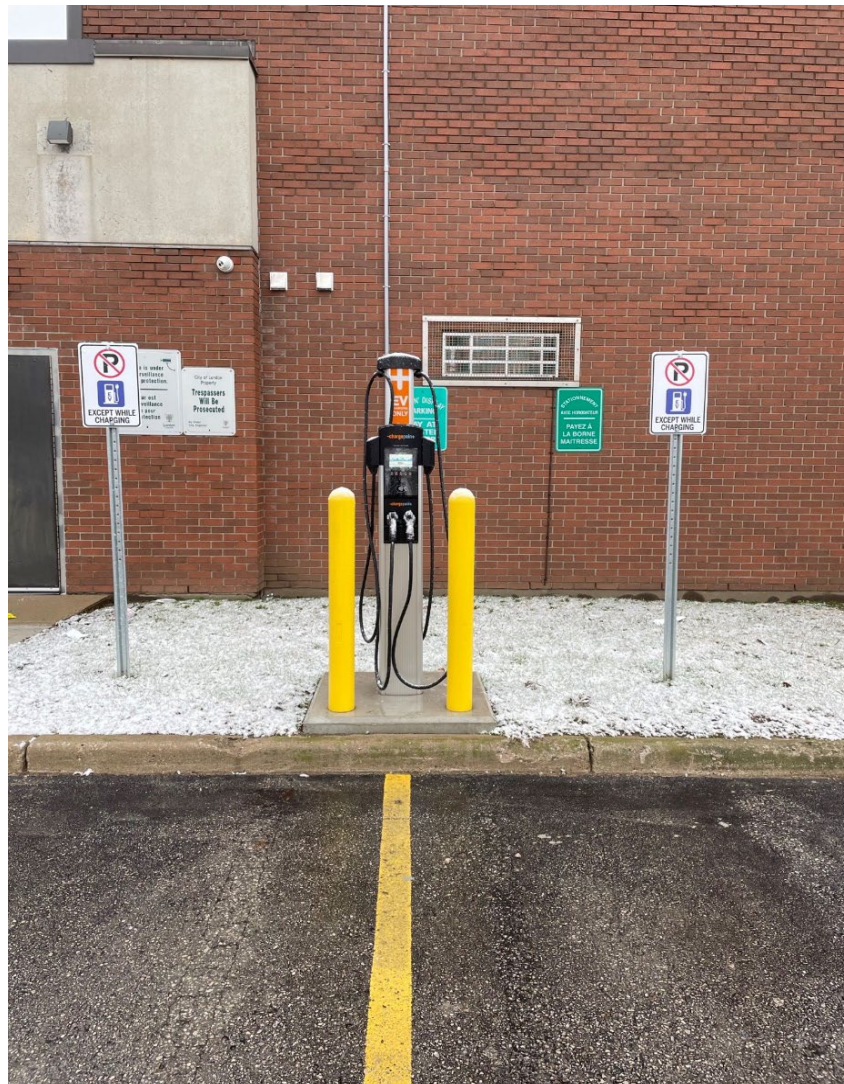
## **Private Parking Enforcement Program**

Another parking service provided to address unauthorized parking on private properties is the Private Parking Enforcement Program. This program has been offered for several years and is a deterrent for private property trespassing specifically at commercial and multiple unit residential properties which are located near high demand parking premises

such as hospitals, educational facilities and entertainment facilities. Unauthorized parked vehicles are issued an AMP. There were 28 new properties enrolled in this program in 2023 for a total of 396 properties. A total 6,044 AMPs were issued at 217 properties totaling \$320K.

### Climate Change and Parking

In an effort to address parking violations related to Climate Change initiatives, numerous AMPs were issued where vehicles were stopped/parked in dedicated bus routes or bike lanes. Additionally, AMPs were also issued where non-electric vehicles were parked at designated electric vehicle charging stations.



*Designated Charging Station*

### Automated Licence Plate Recognition

Parking Services currently utilizes mobile technologies to issue AMPs in the field to address parking violations. Staff are exploring technology options which will include vehicles outfitted with an Automatic Licence Plate Recognition system (ALPR) for parking enforcement. The ALPR vehicle will utilize cameras and GPS to determine the location and the length of time a vehicle has been parked on the street for time-based parking offences. It will also be used in municipally operated parking lots to determine if vehicles are parked without authorization.





*Automated Licence Plate Recognition Vehicle*

### **Occupant Noise Enforcement**

In an effort to relieve London Police Service (LPS) from attending most occupant noise calls for service, in Q1 2023 a specialized noise-parking unit was created to address occupant noise calls. A protocol was developed whereby all noise complaints were received and triaged by LPS and where no criminal or unsafe conditions were determined, MLEO's were dispatched.

Initially, for the purposes of officer safety, evening hour complaints were attended by officers in pairs; daytime complaints were attended by single officers. As a result of identified safety concerns, specifically in multi-unit residential settings, in Q2 2023 and moving forward, all noise occurrences are now attended in pairs. In 2023, MLEO's responded to 2,184 occupant complaints resulting in 226 warnings and 57 penalties totaling \$11K. From a cost and efficiency perspective the largest benefit of this unit is that noise and parking calls for service have offsetting daily peaks and valleys. When noise complaints peak in the evenings, parking requests are low; when parking enforcement demands are high such as for morning school zones, noise complaints are low. MLEO's in the community by-laws units continue to address non occupant noise calls related to issues such as barking dogs and mechanical noise.

Where noise issues are associated with entertainment premises related to loud music (live or DJ), MLEOs partner with the City's Music Office to suggest sound dampening solutions. In some situations, the timing of the live acts as well as speaker location are simple solutions to address noise issues.

### **Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP)**

The Municipal Act permits municipalities to implement a system of Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMP). This legislative process is an alternative method of issuing Provincial Offences Act (POA) tickets for by-law matters. The AMP system of enforcement transfers by-law disputes from the courtroom to the municipality through the use of screening officers and independent hearing officers who are able to modify (reduce), cancel, or affirm penalties. AMPs can be served on a vehicle (parking violations) or by mail, email or fax (parking and other by-law offences). London has been using the AMPs system since 2019; additional By-laws are added to the AMPs schedule regularly.

In 2023, 3,209 non parking related AMPs were issued for a total of \$1.2 M in penalty fees. These AMPs were in response to tree, licensing (rental, short term rental, towing), property standards, waste management and other violations.

In 2023, there were 4,726 screenings processed by City screening officers. These do not include screenings where the appellant agreed to pay the penalty fee on the day of the scheduled screening. Over 10,000 screening requests are received annually. Staff also processed 274 hearing request disclosures. For most of the hearings, staff led the evidence before a Hearings Officer (an independent City appointee).

As part of a continuous improvement project, staff are exploring a streamlined process of administrative hearings in an effort to reduce staff resources required for parking related matters.

## **Animal Welfare Services**

### **London Animal Care Centre**

For the protection of residents and visitors to London as well as other companion animals Animal Services are offered via a tendered contract as well as internal services. The animal shelter known as the London Animal Care Centre (LACC) is designed to receive stray animals primarily from Animal Services Officers as well as the general public. Licensing services for companion animals are also offered at LACC. The center also adopts out available dogs, cats and other small animals. In addition, the City of London's cat adoption center known as the Catty Shack is operated by LACC as a bundled service with a specific focus on adopting cats.

Animal Services Officers enforce several animal related by-laws. In 2023, LACC handled 21,230 calls for service and an additional 1,821 after hours emergency calls. This is an essential service to the public; each of these calls are addressed with professionalism and a desire to reach long-term compliance through education first. Where compliance is not achieved or for repeat offences, enforcement actions are taken. This resulted in the issuance of 1,402 AMPs for animal related violations such as unlicensed animals and off leash animals. In addition, Animal Services Officers investigated 357 dog bite occurrences. It is important to note that there has been a pronounced increase in bite investigations which occurred in and around homeless encampments.

In 2023 there were 47,151 companion animals licensed. This totals \$1.2M in licensing fees. These fees contribute to cost containment of Animal Welfare Services offered to the community. A large success to the increase in licensing fees is attributed to proactive educational compliance projects undertaken during the summer months. The start of the 2024 licensing season (November / December 2023) has seen the largest number of licence renewals during that period in the over 40 years that LACC has been providing animal welfare services to the City.

A key performance indicator of community animal shelters is the live release rate. This statistic measures the number of animals returned to their prospective owners and adopted out in relation to the number of animals euthanized particularly related to shelter capacity. The metric accepted as the industry standard to achieve a no kill community is to achieve a 90% live release rate. In 2023, LACC achieved a 94% live release rate; this is the highest rate accomplished over the past five years. LACC has met the threshold for a no kill community by obtaining a live release rate of 90% or higher since Council adopted this metric in 2014.



*One of many adopted companion animals*

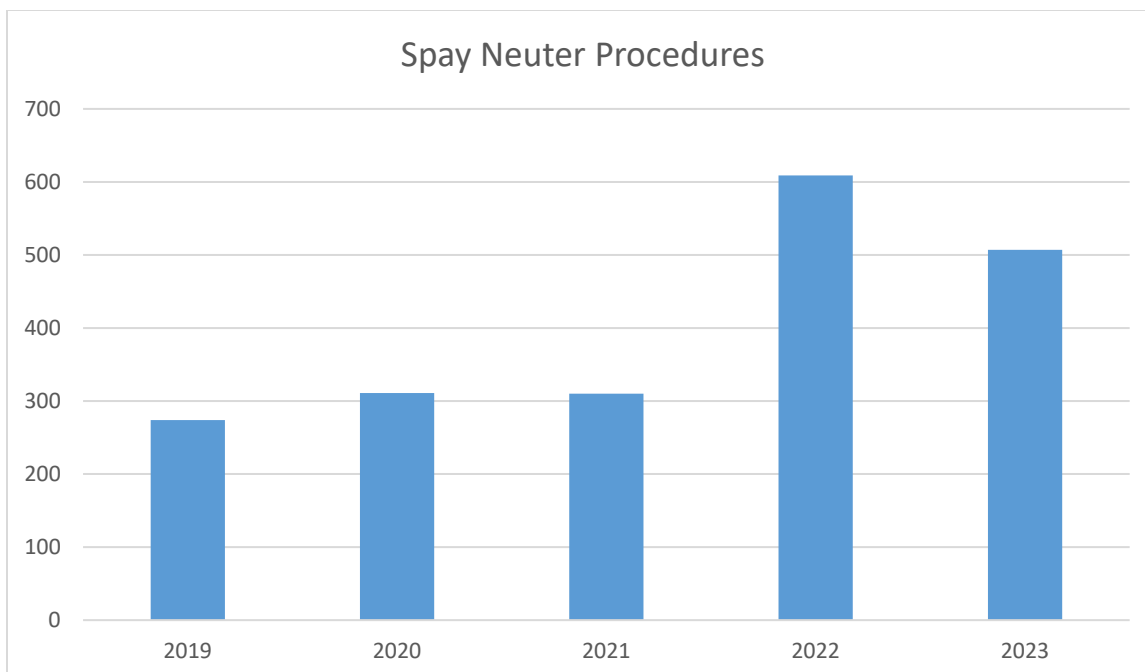


*Catty Shack*

### **London Animal Shelter Services**

Municipal Compliance Services also operates the London Animal Shelter Services (LASS) facility. This animal clinic provides veterinary services to LACC as well as numerous services to locally certified animal rescue organizations. The facility also provides a subsidized (Low Income Program) spay neuter program intended to ease the financial burden some Londoner's face when considering spaying or neutering their pet. The facility also operates a Trap Neuter Return program in an effort to manage feral cats in the community. Spaying or neutering helps reduce pet overpopulation by eliminating unwanted litters, reducing the burden of homeless animals in the community and animal shelters. A total of 1,662 surgeries were performed at LASS in 2023. The following chart depicts the volume of spay/neuter surgeries performed as per the Low Income Program and Trap-Neuter-Return programs.





*Typical surgery at LASS*

## **Community Compliance**

### **Community By-laws**

Teams of MLEO's in several community by-law units enforce the majority of By-laws passed by Council under Provincial legislation such as The Municipal Act, Building Code Act and Planning Act. These By-laws relate to matters regarding building maintenance, property maintenance, business licensing, land use, noise, signage and public nuisances. Mobile licensing issues related to vehicles for hire (taxis, private vehicles) and towing services (under Provincial oversight beginning in 2024) are also addressed. Issues such as public property encroachments and other impacts on public property are also enforced. The main principles supporting these by-laws focus on public safety, nuisance control and consumer protection. A total of 10,473 complaints were addressed in 2023 in



response to community requests and proactively. A total of 903 contractor actions were undertaken in response to continued non-compliance or repeat offences.

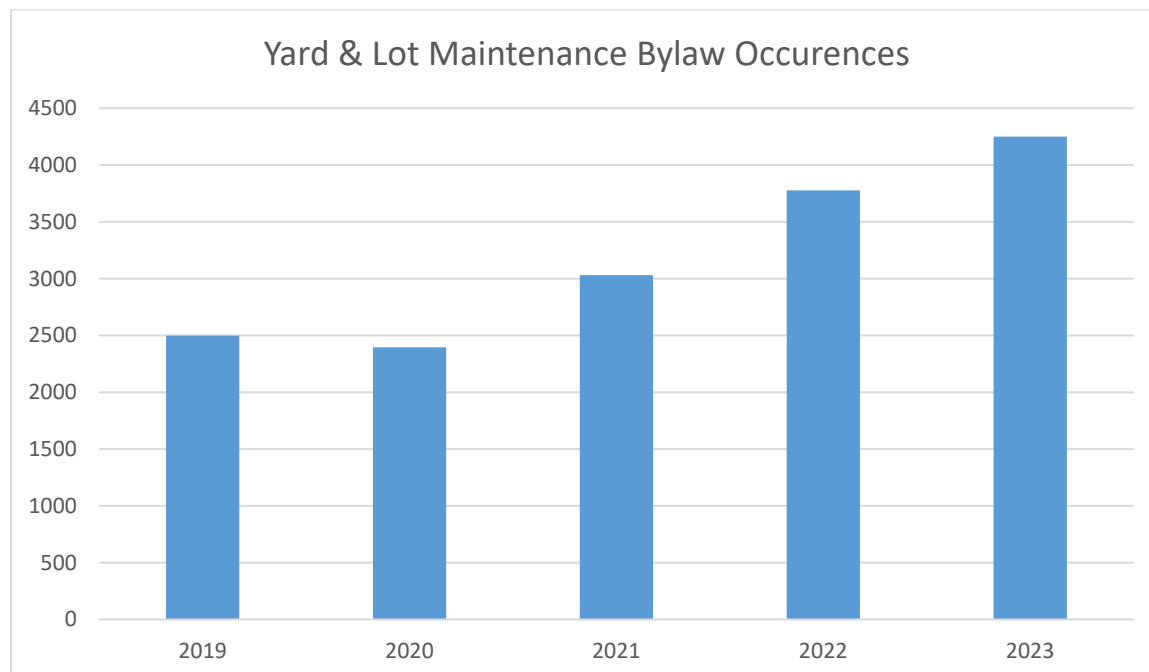
### Yard and Lot Maintenance

Historically, the most active complaint relates to the Yard and Lot Maintenance By-law. This by-law addresses unkept exterior property issues such as long grass and weeds, derelict vehicles, graffiti, litter and debris and uncontained refuse. Complaints are generally received from neighbours, real estate agents and the general public. The vast majority of complaint occurrences are in response to community concerns. However, in mid 2022, MLEO's initiated a compliance protocol to address high visibility violations proactively. In 2023 a total of 4,250 complaints were registered (130 of these were addressed as High Visibility Proactive).

Beginning in January 2024, a fee of \$50 will be charged for each Work Order issued under this by-law. Based on the number of Orders issued in 2023, fees totaling \$ 212 K are anticipated to be collected. These fees offset the cost of Municipal Compliance Services.

In Q1 2024, a housekeeping review of the By-law will be presented to CPSC.

The following chart depicts the calls for service related to Yard and Lot Maintenance By-law complaints.





*Property Maintenance Violation*

## **Property Standards**

Another common complaint pertains to interior and exterior building maintenance. Generally, exterior building maintenance concerns such as wall and roof maintenance are received from neighbours; interior complaints are received from tenants. The vast majority of property standards occurrences are in response to complaints however a proactive multi-unit compliance initiative (discussed below) has attributed to an increase in property standards files in 2023; a total of 922 complaints were actioned in 2023 in comparison to 521 in 2022. A recent complaint process review has expanded the opportunities for tenants to initiate complaints via Service London by phone, email or the Service London Portal.

Beginning in January 2024, a fee of \$75 will be charged for each Property Standards Order issued. Based on the number of Orders issued in 2023, fees totaling \$69 K are anticipated to be collected. These fees offset the cost of Municipal Compliance Services.

## **Zoning**

The Zoning By-law provides for land use regulations implementing the City's Official Plan. Common complaints pertain to illegal land uses, widened driveways, building setbacks, oversized vehicles other zoning related matters. Zoning files are more complex in nature (legal non-conforming) and require additional research which at times extends the compliance time frames. While MLEO's enforce Zoning By-law regulations, interpretations of the regulations are made by the Zoning Office. There were 797 zoning complaints investigated in 2023.

## **Licensing**

For the purposes of consumer protection, public safety and nuisance control, the City licenses a number of premises including restaurants and food shops, personal care services, auto related services, second hand stores and salvage yards, fast cash banks, adult entertainment services, vehicles for hire, rental premises and short term rental accommodations. In 2023, 1,884 licensing related complaints were investigated. Most of the complaints pertained to rental units as well as short term rentals.

## Short Term Accommodations

In 2022, Council approved an amendment to the Business Licensing By-law to address short term accommodations (Airbnb, Vrbo etc.). In 2023, Municipal Compliance engaged a host compliance tech platform to identify the location of short-term rentals. This third-party tech firm searches numerous host platforms to identify locations of rental accommodations. Previously, when it was not possible to identify the address of the rental premises until a booking was made, MLEOs would book a stay to collect evidence. This current process is far more efficient and cost effective.

In 2023, 317 applications were received to license short term rental premises. Only rental accommodations in principal residences are permitted. Of the 317 applications received, 224 were issued licenses, 67 are under review, 7 were refused and 19 were cancelled. A total of 115 AMPs were issued at \$500 each.

Municipal Compliance Services will be mapping the locations of 2024 licensed premises on City Map.

## Pool Fences

For the purposes of public safety, specifically the safety of children, complaints regarding fencing around pools on private property are given a priority response. In addition to complaints, MLEO's inspect all pool fence permits to ensure compliance with the pool fence regulations. In 2023, 282 complaints and permit inspections were addressed.

## Specialized Compliance

For the purpose of addressing Council's by-laws which require a specialized skill set or departmental administrative knowledge, Municipal Compliance Services have provided compliance guidance and AMP issuance training to a number of internal departments and partner agencies to efficiently and effectively address community by-law matters.

The following partnerships have been implemented:

- London Police Service – Public nuisance issues
- London Animal Care Centre – Animal related matters
- Environment and Infrastructure Services – Waste management, forestry issues

There are also some regulations contained in municipal by-laws which are not addressed by any City staff as they are regarded as civil matters between property owners (drainage, location of fences).

## Streets By-law and Public Property Compliance

A dedicated MLEO is responsible for addressing violations of the Streets By-law as well as other matters which negatively impact public property. This includes the use of public sidewalks (obstructions) encroachments onto City property (parks and storm water management ponds) and other public nuisance related matters. In 2023, a total of 879 complaints were actioned.

## MLEO Training

In an effort to provide ongoing training on enforcement processes, officer safety and emerging trends, MLEOs attended the following training sessions specific to their duties:

- Municipal Law Enforcement Officer Association – Basic training
- Ontario Association of Property Standards Officers – Level 1 training
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – Property safety audits
- STEP Training – 3 Levels – Officer safety, de-escalation techniques
- Canine Foundations – Animal behavior and defensive tactics/protective equipment



## **Licensing, Policy and Special Operations**

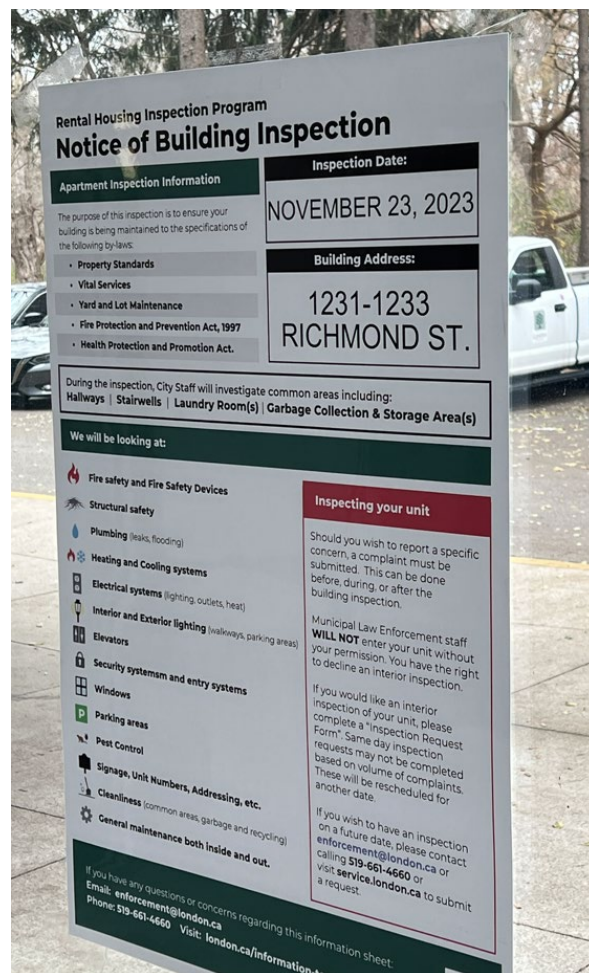
In Q4 2023, a mini reorganization in Planning and Economic Development Services realigned Licensing Administration with Municipal Compliance Services. This allows for more efficient and effective communications and data flow between the administration and compliance duties related to licensing.

This unit within Municipal Compliance is also responsible for policy review including preparing committee reports on by-law housekeeping matters, addressing emerging by-law matters, coordinating special compliance projects, maintaining a database of vacant buildings and managing the process of Council approved demolitions.



*City Initiated Demolition*

In 2023, this unit focused on undertaking a number of proactive compliance initiatives regarding living conditions in multi-unit residential buildings. This initiative was implemented in response to issues raised at the Tenant Landlord Task Force – a working group of tenant / landlord associations and staff. In 2023, six compliance blitzes were undertaken involving 25 apartment buildings totaling 2,600 units. Prior to the site visits, the landlord and all tenants are notified of the inspection date. Dependent on the volume of inspection requests, MLEOs are invited into individual units to discuss property standards concerns. Building common areas are proactively inspected. As a result of the six blitzes, a total of 210 property standards Orders were proactively initiated. At one property, 41 Orders were proactively issued. Additionally, 46 Vital Service By-law violations were identified; all have been resolved.



*Recent notice of proactive apartment compliance blitz*

This unit also proactively addresses property maintenance issues in the Core as part of the Downtown Action Plan. In 2023, 255 Orders were issued addressing graffiti, debris, and unkept properties. This resulted in 24 property clean ups undertaken by City contractors at the expense of the property owner; this does not include BIA graffiti removal or CIR clean ups.

This unit also works very closely with staff employed under the Clean Slate Program. This program was created with initial funding and support from several City Service Areas including Municipal Compliance, Social and Health Development, Core Area & Urban Regeneration and Waste Management. The Clean Slate Program provides employment experiences and skills training opportunities for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness and/or with recent lived experience of being homeless to support them re-entering the workforce. The youth hired through this project are tasked with picking up loose litter from private property in the Core Area.

In Q3 2024, Municipal Compliance staff in partnership with Fire Prevention will report out to CPSC on continuous improvement initiatives to address vacant buildings.

### **Community Involvement**

Municipal Compliance staff believe in giving back to the community in which they live, play and work. Through that community spirit, they have raised funds for a variety of organizations and volunteered their valued time to assist with local charitable associations. These are just a few examples:

- United Way stair climb
- London Food Bank – Volunteering to collect food donations
- Home Instead – In home senior care – Purchasing Christmas gifts
- Cat Adoption Day – Catty Shack – Offering local animal organizations the opportunity to promote all they do in the community



*Parking Services staff volunteering at a Food Bank event*

## **Financial Considerations**

As part of the Multi Year Budget, additional staffing to support increased demands for veterinary services has been highlighted in Business Case #P-24 – Animal Welfare Services. The current staff complement is one Veterinarian and one Veterinary Technician. In 2023, a part time veterinarian was hired due to workload demands. The continuing increase in demand for service requires a team of two veterinarians and two veterinary technicians.

Also, as part of the Multi Year Budget, additional staffing to support increased proactive enforcement has been highlighted in Business Case #P-25 - Proactive Municipal Compliance. This business case recommends additional new MLEO and customer service positions over a four-year period to enhance the City's proactive enforcement program.

## **Conclusion**

This report provides an annual activity summary of Municipal Compliance Services resulting from the partnered work of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers, administrative staff, policy researchers, internal and external compliance partners and tendered contractors. The principles supporting the compliance initiatives of Council's by-laws focus on addressing public nuisances, consumer protection and public health and safety. There is a strong focus in the Strategic Plan on proactive compliance initiatives. In that regard, two business cases have been submitted as part of the Multi Year Budget which are fully supported by fee increases approved by Council in Q4 2023. The numerous cross collaborative Municipal Compliance teams remain committed to continuous improvement through new and amended by-law amendments as well as process modifications.

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