

## **Council Question**

**February 19, 2021**

With regards to the rezoning at 107 Range Road, how does the Climate Change Emergency, the City-wide Transportation Study and COVID impact Administration's analysis?

### **Climate Change Emergency:**

In September 2019, citizens urged Council to show leadership by making climate change issues a priority so that the city can make progress on reducing harm to the environment. Council subsequently declared a Climate Change Emergency in the City of Whitehorse for the purpose of enhancing and accelerating action on its commitment to protect our community, economy, and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change. There are three areas where the City can accelerate its actions: community GHG emission reduction, corporation GHG emission reduction and adaptation.

Decisions on where land uses are located impact the transportation choices of the people who access them and, by extension, the GHGs produced by the community. While drive-through facilities increase convenience, they also increase vehicle idling. Natural Resources Canada states *"There's no question about it – unnecessary idling gets you nowhere; instead, it wastes money and fuel, and produces greenhouse gases that lead to climate change."*, further that *"Eliminating unnecessary idling is one of many actions that we can take to help reduce fuel use, greenhouse gas emissions and consequently, slow the rate of climate change"* and states that *"idling for over 10 seconds still uses more fuel and produces more CO2 than restarting your engine"*. Drive-through shopping can quickly become a part of a daily routine where vehicles are kept idling during the service period. There is a high proportion of population nationwide using the drive-through facilities daily. Drive-through's increase sales as much as 70 percent for some national chains. Drive-through establishments are built for convenience. QSR Magazine states that the drive through has always had speed at its crux, but rising pressures pushed duration spent in the drive-through up in 2019. Research from QSR Magazine found that *"Customers spent an average of 255 seconds from speaker to order window in 2019, about 20 seconds longer than in 2018"*.

It may be questioned, "What about the saving the vehicle trip downtown by allowing the drive through off of the highway – doesn't that negate the benefits of limiting drive-throughs?" See "trip chaining" below for a response.

A recent study at the University of Alberta identified 22 Canadian municipalities which adopted a partial ban on new drive-through fast-food establishments from 2002 to 2016 and five others which adopted a full ban. Reasons cited for banning fast-food drive-through's include health promotion, environmental concerns from idling, limiting litter and pollution, to protecting the local economy. Cities across the United States are also banning the construction of fast-food drive-throughs, in a bid to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and combat climate change.

### **City-wide Transportation Study**

The City-Wide Transportation Study intends to provide high-level direction and objectives for transportation in Whitehorse over the long term (20 years), as well as provide key direction to specific transportation issues over the short to medium term (5-10 years). The Study will provide a framework to work towards an optimized transportation network, address existing complex transportation safety issues, quantify the expected level of service from the public, and confirm, along with the new OCP, our vision and priorities as a community in shaping a transportation network that includes all modes such as walking, cycling, taking transit, goods movement, and driving.

Downtown Whitehorse is the commercial and economic core of the city. Trips to downtown often combine multiple purposes, reducing the number of trips taken overall. For example, a single trip may consist of stopping to go to the post-office, grocery store and pick up food for the way home. This is known as “trip-chaining”, which reduces the number of trips and kilometers traveled without requiring people to shift away from driving private automobiles. If services and amenities are spread far apart from each other, it increases the distance required between each stop and could result in an increased number of trips to access the same services. Moreover, trip-chaining is known to benefit existing businesses located in close proximity to each other (such as in Downtown) by offering increased convenience to customers to already make trips to Downtown.

The addition of Quick Service Retail to a land use adds a high level of convenience to potential customers near or passing by. The added convenience is known to create an induced demand which can, in turn, change the land use into a significant trip attractor, by attracting passing by and new trips to the proposed land use that did not exist before. It is estimated that QSR eating and drinking establishment with a drive-through component will attract almost 1000 trips per day (to and from). In a stand-alone location without complimentary services nearby, the number of trips will increase. In a cluster of services, this demand could be accommodated by trips which are already occurring to access other nearby services.

#### **COVID-19**

The Government of Yukon has temporary measures in place during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. These measures were approved under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and allows the government to take rapid action if needed. The Government of Yukon has required that people transiting through Yukon to Alaska, NWT or other parts of Canada are required to complete their transit in Yukon within 24 hours of their entry, and shall avoid unnecessary contact with others when they stop for food or fuel. It is ~900km from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek. Whitehorse is approximately half way along this route and the Government of Yukon suggests Whitehorse as a place for lodging, food and fuel services for travellers coming from Watson Lake to Beaver Creek. During the pandemic, travellers are required to stay on the highway route and not travel off the highway for non-essential reasons. Food and beverage establishments exist along the highway today and provide an opportunity for eating and drinking, fuel services and amenities such as washrooms. If approved and constructed, the proposed drive-through based eating and drinking establishment could be in place for life of the building (~60+ years). Administration believes it is important to consider the pandemic, however an amendment to the zoning bylaw grants property rights that will be in place long after the pandemic is over.