

# Commercial & Industrial Land Study

## Online Survey: Input Summary

In November 2018, the City of Whitehorse (Planning & Sustainability Services Department) and a consulting team led by Groundswell Planning initiated a project to develop a *Commercial & Industrial Land Study* focused on areas outside of the downtown core. Public engagement kicked-off with an online survey that was open to property owners and businesses currently operating in the four zones of interest for the study: *CH-Highway Commercial*, *CIM-Mixed-Use Commercial/Industrial*, *IS-Service Industrial*, and *IH-Heavy Industrial*.

Survey invitation letters were sent by mail on November 5<sup>th</sup> to approximately 350 property owners and businesses, followed by a reminder letter mailed on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The survey was produced using Survey Monkey and was active from November 5<sup>th</sup> until January 15<sup>th</sup> through a link posted on the project website at [www.whitehorse.ca/commercialindustrial](http://www.whitehorse.ca/commercialindustrial).

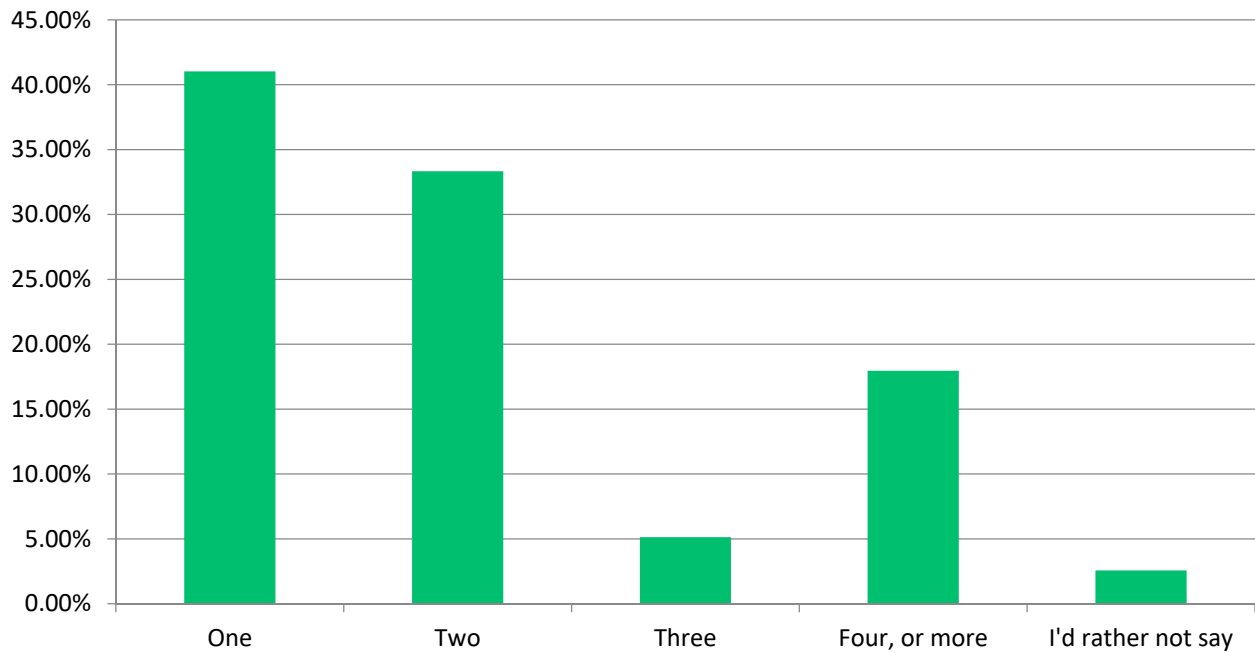
A total of 41 surveys were completed; 2 were submitted by respondents outside of the study's zones of interest and have not been included in this summary. The 39 surveys counted represent an 11% sample of the intended survey participants. The survey featured 19 questions. Some questions were required, while others were optional. Two questions allowed respondents to skip past sections that did not interest them. The average time taken to complete the survey was 7 minutes.

The percentage totals in this document are calculated to reflect the number of people who responded to each question, and do not reflect the total number of surveys completed. Due to the small audience and sample size, written responses have been generalized and some information has been omitted for privacy purposes. Summaries are intended to show the variety of topics mentioned, and do not necessarily reflect the number of times the topic was mentioned by different respondents.

The draw for the survey's incentive prize (a \$100 gift card to Home Hardware) occurred on February 4<sup>th</sup>, and the winner was contacted by email.

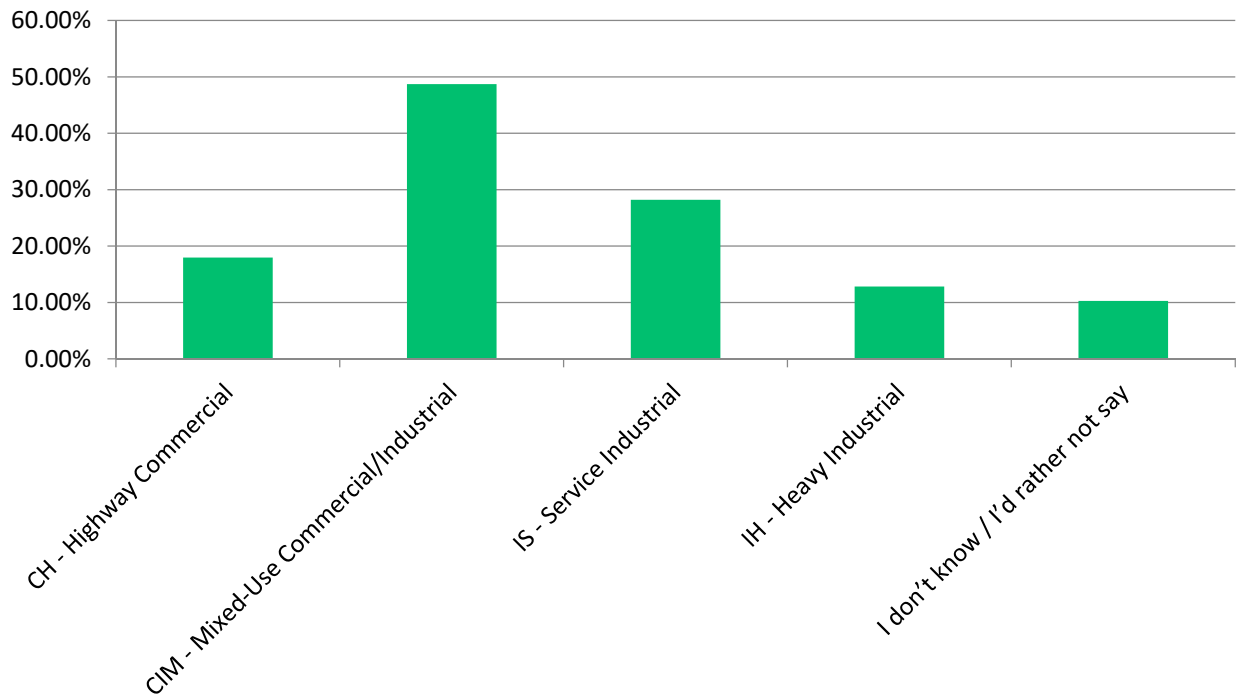
**Q1: How many commercial and/or industrial properties do you own or operate on?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
One	41.03%	16
Two	33.33%	13
Three	5.13%	2
Four, or more	17.95%	7
I'd rather not say	2.56%	1
<b>Total Properties</b>		<b>77+</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



**Q2: Which of the following zones applies to your property/business? If you own or operate on more than one property, select all that apply.**

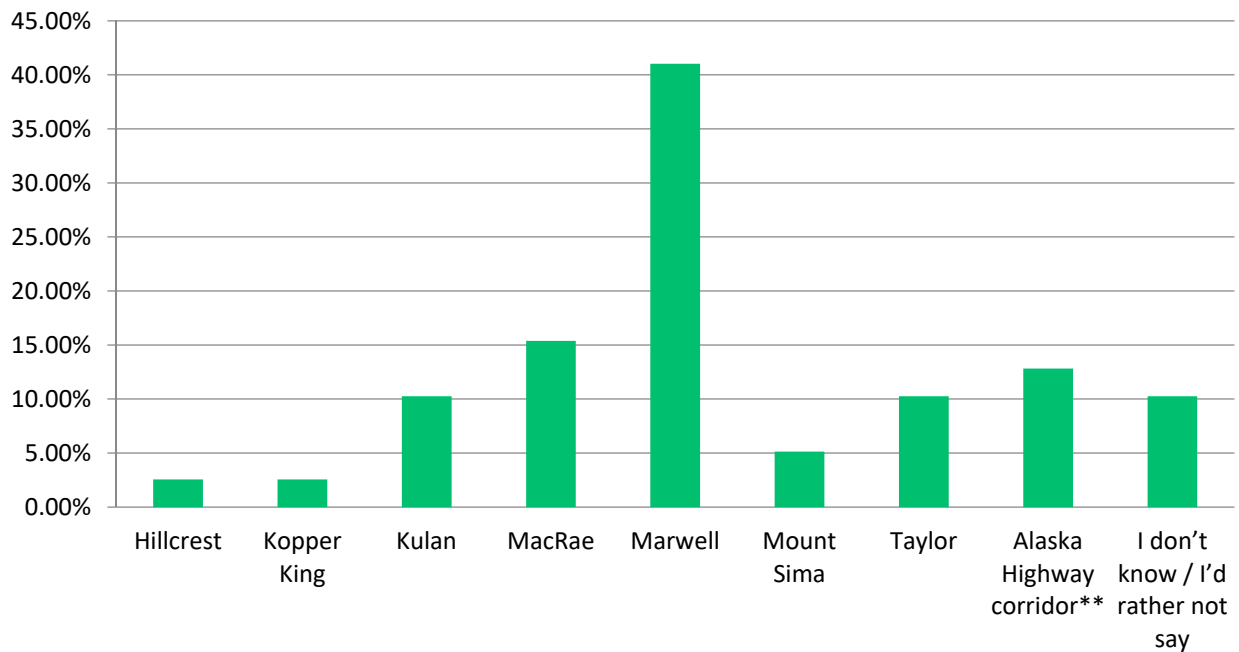
Answer Choices*	Responses	
CH - Highway Commercial	17.95%	7
CIM - Mixed-Use Commercial/Industrial	48.71%	19
IS - Service Industrial	28.21%	11
IH - Heavy Industrial	12.82%	5
I don't know / I'd rather not say	10.26%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



\*Answers indicating zones outside of the study's focus areas have been excluded.

**Q3: Which area is your property/business located in? If you own or operate in more than one area, select all that apply.**

Answer Choices*	Responses	
Hillcrest	2.56%	1
Kopper King	2.56%	1
Kulan	10.26%	4
MacRae	15.38%	6
Marwell	41.03%	16
Mount Sima	5.13%	2
Taylor	10.26%	4
Alaska Highway corridor**	12.82%	5
I don't know / I'd rather not say	10.26%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



\* Categories have been modified for this summary. Answers indicating Downtown and outside of Whitehorse have been omitted.

\*\*Includes locations near Hamilton Boulevard, Robert Service Way, and highway corridor locations that are not within a neighbourhood.

**Q4: Which of the following scenarios applies to you? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
I own property (or properties) and operate a business on this property (or properties)	58.97%	23
I own property (or properties) that I lease to another business (or businesses)	25.64%	10
I operate a business on property (or properties) owned by the business that I operate	20.51%	8
I operate a business on property (or properties) not owned by the business that I operate	17.95%	7
Other (please specify)	2.56%	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>39</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>0</b>

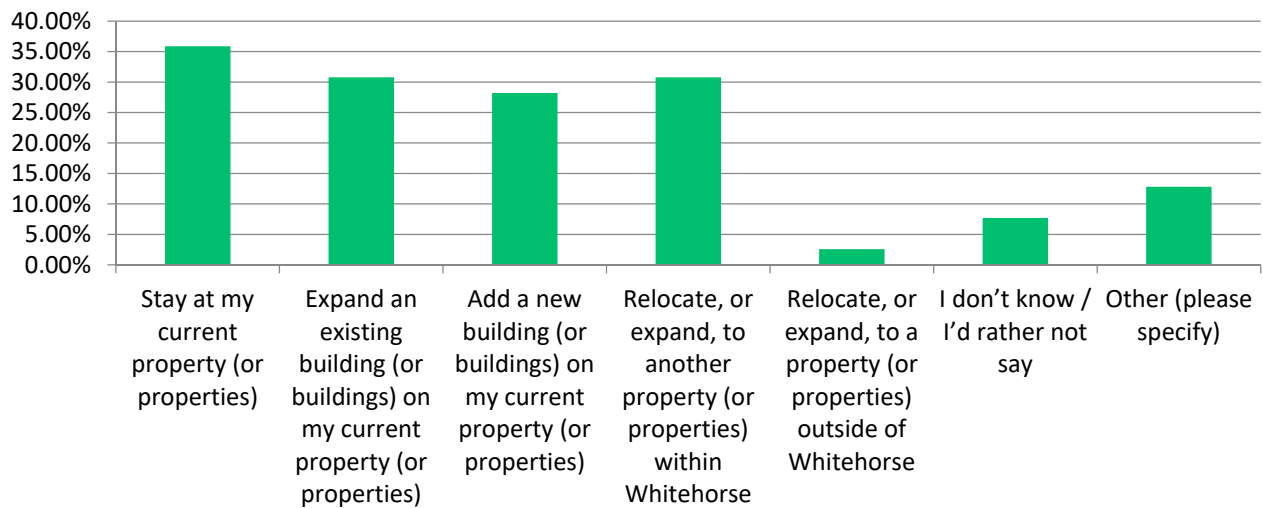


**Comments (summarized):**

- Residential home, also used as office and storage

**Q5: Which of the following describe your property/business plans over the next 10 years? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Stay at my current property (or properties)	35.90%	14
Expand an existing building (or buildings) on my current property (or properties)	30.77%	12
Add a new building (or buildings) on my current property (or properties)	28.21%	11
Relocate, or expand, to another property (or properties) within Whitehorse	30.77%	12
Relocate, or expand, to a property (or properties) outside of Whitehorse	2.56%	1
I don't know / I'd rather not say	7.69%	3
Other (please specify)	12.82%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

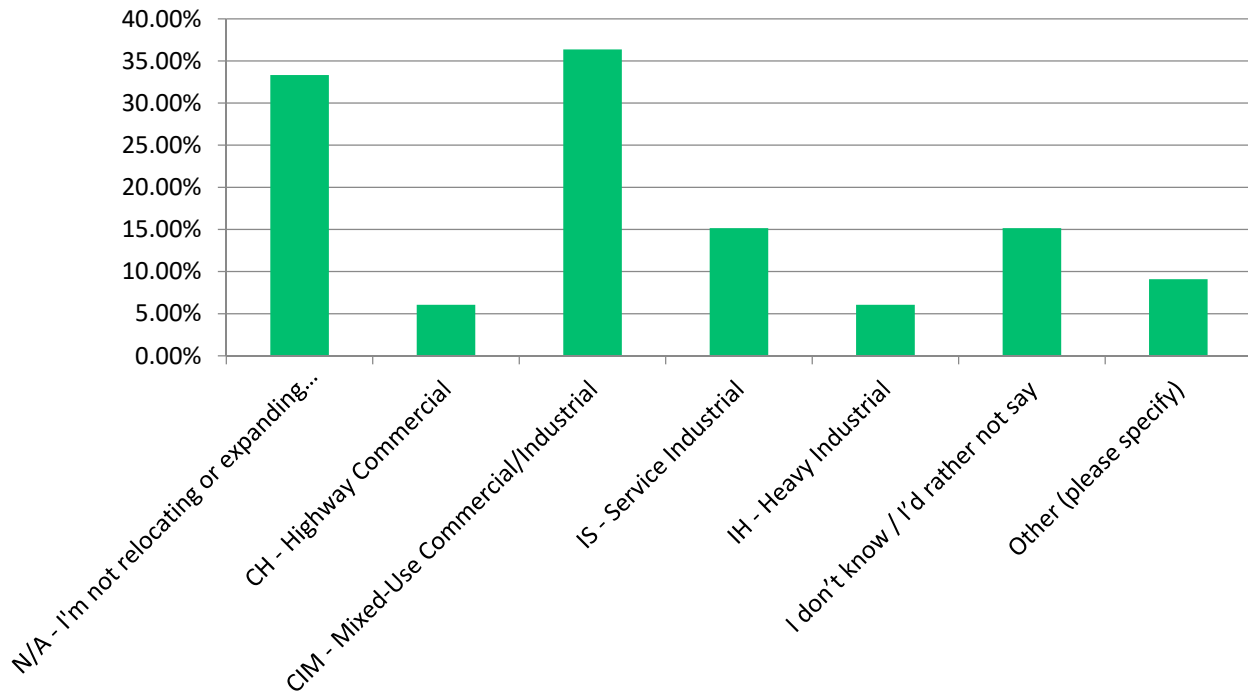


**Comments (separated and summarized):**

- Running out of space where we lease
- Subdividing
- Current buildings need to be torn down
- Selling to retire
- Selling my unique property because it's difficult to keep leased
- Rents are high, but not from an owner's perspective – taxes, water/sewer, and insurance costs drive the rent

**Q6: If you indicated plans to relocate, or expand, to another property (or properties) within Whitehorse over the next 10 years, what type of zoning might you be looking for? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I'm not relocating or expanding within Whitehorse	33.33%	11
CH - Highway Commercial	6.06%	2
CIM - Mixed-Use Commercial/Industrial	36.36%	12
IS - Service Industrial	15.15%	5
IH - Heavy Industrial	6.06%	2
I don't know / I'd rather not say	15.15%	5
Other (please specify)	9.09%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>33</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>6</b>

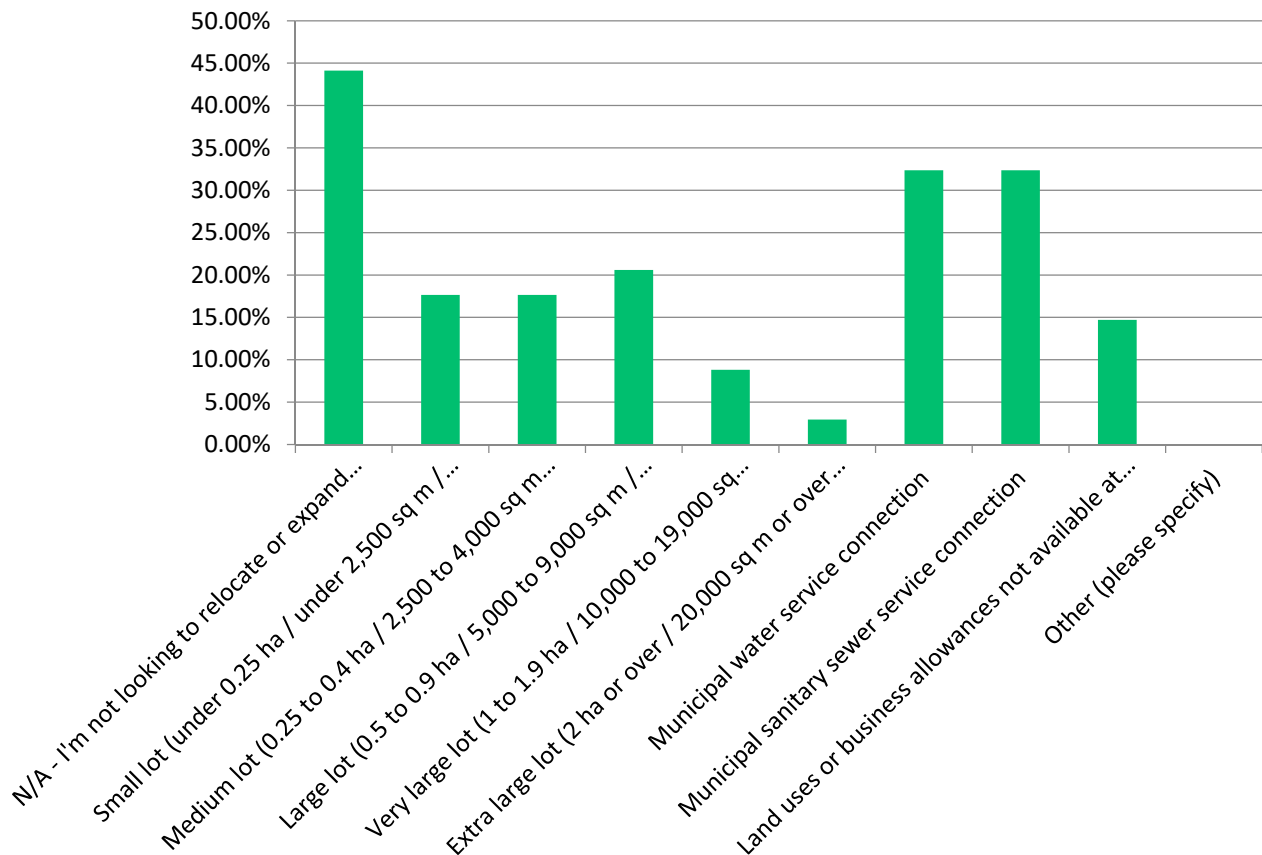


**Comments (separated and summarized):**

- CM1 (Mixed Use Commercial 1), CM2 (Mixed Use Commercial 2), or CMW (Mixed Use Waterfront)
- Residential
- Store-front on main floor with apartments upstairs
- Office use

**Q7: If you indicated plans to relocate, or expand, to another property (or properties) within Whitehorse over the next 10 years, what features might you be looking for? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I'm not looking to relocate or expand within Whitehorse	44.12%	15
Small lot (under 0.25 ha / under 2,500 sq m / under 27,000 sq ft)	17.65%	6
Medium lot (0.25 to 0.4 ha / 2,500 to 4,000 sq m / 27,000 to 45,000 sq ft )	17.65%	6
Large lot (0.5 to 0.9 ha / 5,000 to 9,000 sq m / 50,000 to 95,000 sq ft)	20.59%	7
Very large lot (1 to 1.9 ha / 10,000 to 19,000 sq m / 100,000 to 205,000 sq ft)	8.82%	3
Extra large lot (2 ha or over / 20,000 sq m or over / 210,000 sq ft or over)	2.94%	1
Municipal water service connection	32.35%	11
Municipal sanitary sewer service connection	32.35%	11
Land uses or business allowances not available at my current property (or properties)	14.71%	5
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>5</b>





**Q8: If you indicated plans to relocate, or expand, to a property (or properties) outside of Whitehorse, what are the prime factors influencing this decision?**

<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Answered</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>29</b>

**Comments (separated and summarized):**

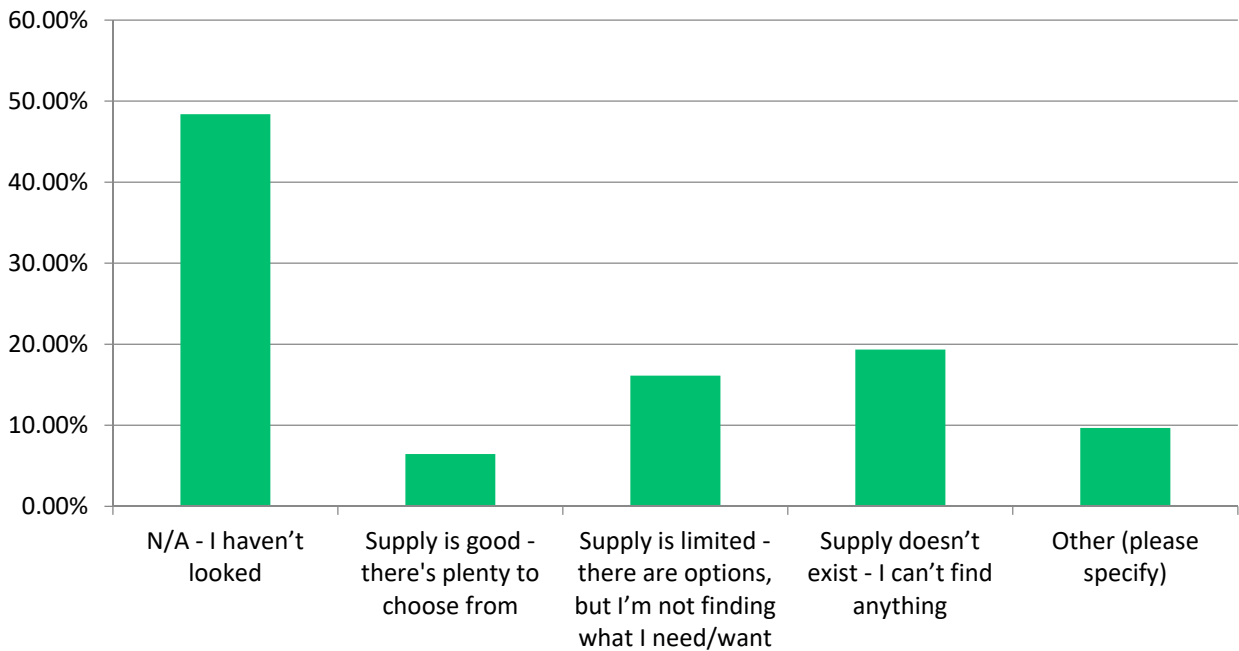
- Taxes are too high; service is too low
- Value of real estate and its trending direction in the area
- Wanting to live in the bush versus town
- Avoiding Whitehorse drivers
- Yukon politics/economy with regards to mining
- Accessibility to water and utilities
- Existing place is too small
- Business growth
- Move into a more appropriate area
- Currently do not own the property I am on
- Cannot find and/or afford what little commercial property that is currently available for sale
- Want to have the opportunity to add caretaker residence(s)
- Zoning – would like to add a residential rental property, but the zoning does not allow for it
- Wells in MacRae are not running at peak capacity since new developments have occurred

**Q9: If you're not interested to discuss commercial lands, you can skip ahead by choosing the option below. (Commercial lands are those zoned CH-Highway Commercial, and the commercial side of the CIM-Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial zone.)**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Skip me ahead to the industrial lands section	20.51%	8
Don't skip me ahead - I want to answer this section	79.49%	31
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

**Q10: If you have looked to purchase a commercial property in the last three years, how would you describe the market?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I haven't looked	48.39%	15
Supply is good - there's plenty to choose from	6.45%	2
Supply is limited - there are options, but I'm not finding what I need/want	16.13%	5
Supply doesn't exist - I can't find anything	19.35%	6
Other (please specify)	9.68%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>8</b>

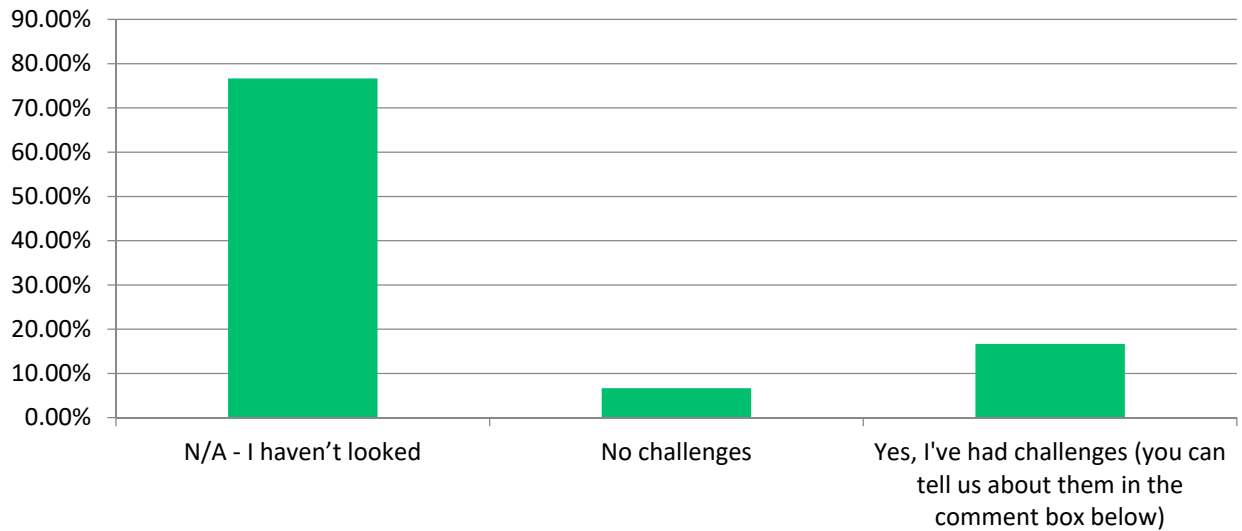


**Comments (summarized):**

- Tried to apply for land, but was denied because of zoning
- Tried to sell highway commercial property in the last 3 years, and got very limited interest
- CIM (Mixed-Use Commercial/Industrial) zoning benefits my lifestyle as an independent contractor

**Q11: If you have looked to rent a commercial property or building in the last three years, have you had any challenges finding what you're looking for?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I haven't looked	76.67%	23
No challenges	6.67%	2
Yes, I've had challenges (you can tell us about them in the comment box below)	16.67%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>9</b>



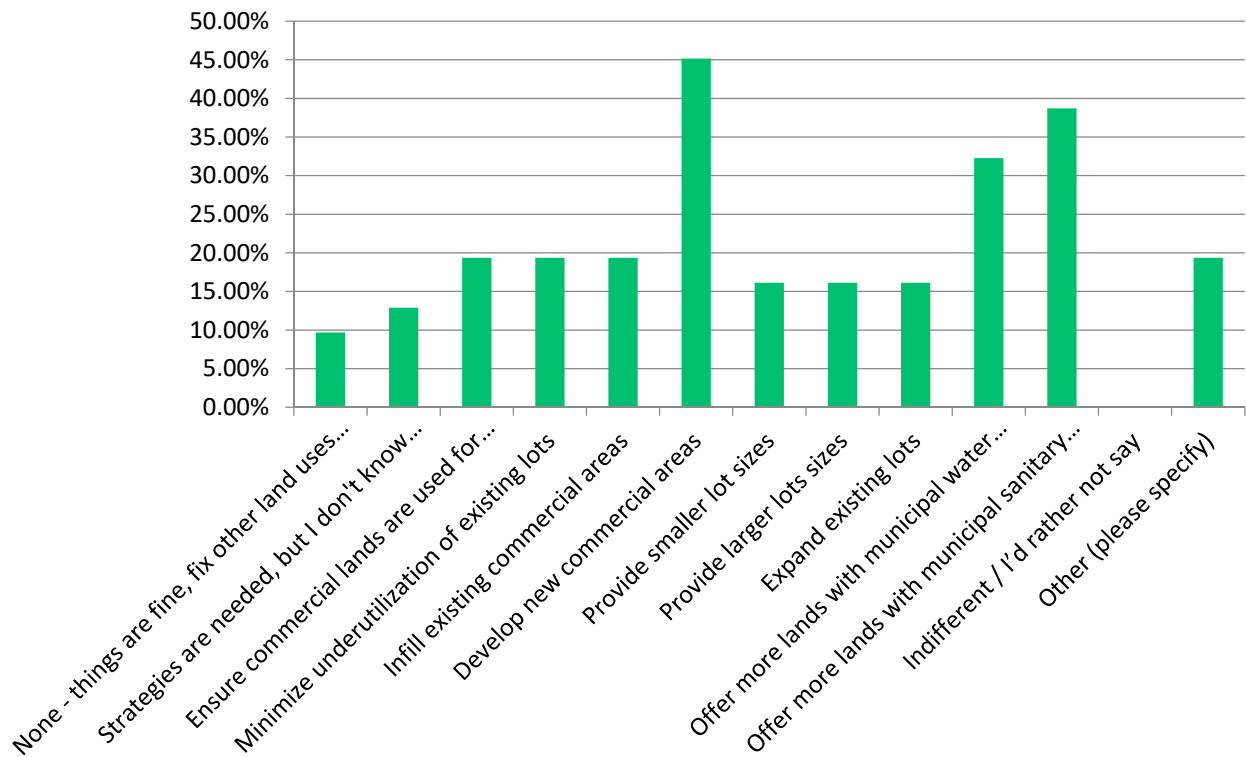
**Comments (summarized):**

- Very few enquiries when my highway commercial property was available for lease a couple of years ago – either businesses are not out there, or the property is not suitable/maybe both
- Needed to find an option with suitable shop and offices, was difficult – leasing now
- Hard to find heavy industrial lots – and if you do find any, they are very expensive to lease or buy
- Overpriced and nothing in city limits
- None in the right area, with proper zoning, proper size, and affordable

**Q12: What strategies would you like to see the City consider/pursue with respect to commercial lands? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
None - things are fine, fix other land uses instead	9.68%	3
Strategies are needed, but I don't know which ones	12.90%	4
Ensure commercial lands are used for their intended purpose	19.35%	6
Minimize underutilization of existing lots	19.35%	6
Infill existing commercial areas	19.35%	6
Develop new commercial areas	45.16%	14
Provide smaller lot sizes	16.13%	5
Provide larger lots sizes	16.13%	5
Expand existing lots	16.13%	5
Offer more lands with municipal water servicing	32.26%	10
Offer more lands with municipal sanitary sewer servicing	38.71%	12
Indifferent / I'd rather not say	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	19.35%	6

<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Answered</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>8</b>



**Comments (separated and summarized):**

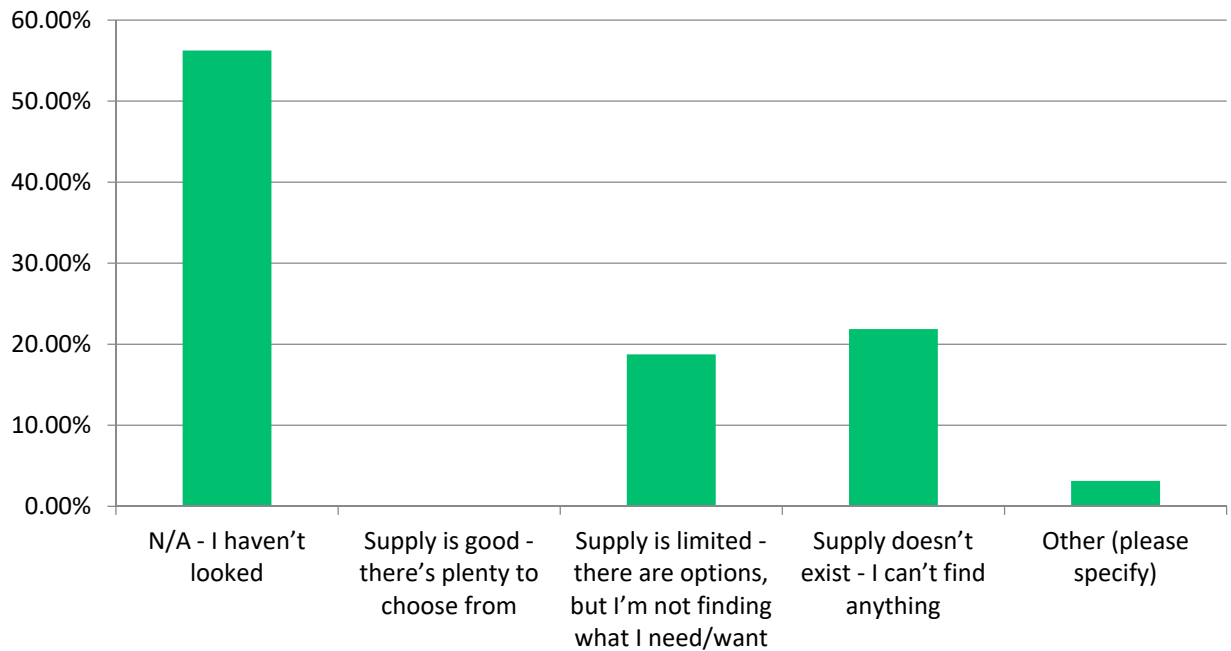
- Development should be allowed for legitimate plans
- Seems some employees in Planning are inconsiderate to some, and not to others
- Get on with redeveloping the Alaska Highway to improve access to lands near Hamilton Boulevard
- Increase mixed residential lots in Marwell area
- Develop First Nations land
- Ensure opportunities for mixed uses and staff/caretaker accommodation
- Many small businesses need additional streams of revenue (e.g. caretaker residences) – allowing them will help to grow our economy
- Allow rental properties on commercial properties over the allowed caretaker residence
- Caretaker residences allow employees to live closer to work and not have to commute

**Q13: If you're not interested to discuss industrial lands, you can skip ahead by choosing the option below. (Industrial lands are those zoned IS-Service Industrial, IH-Heavy Industrial, and the industrial side of the CIM-Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial zone.)**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Skip ahead to the next section	15.38%	6
Don't skip me ahead - I'd like to answer this section	84.62%	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

**Q14: If you have looked to purchase an industrial property in the last three years, how would you describe the market?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I haven't looked	56.25%	18
Supply is good - there's plenty to choose from	0.00%	0
Supply is limited - there are options, but I'm not finding what I need/want	18.75%	6
Supply doesn't exist - I can't find anything	21.88%	7
Other (please specify)	3.13%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>32</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>7</b>

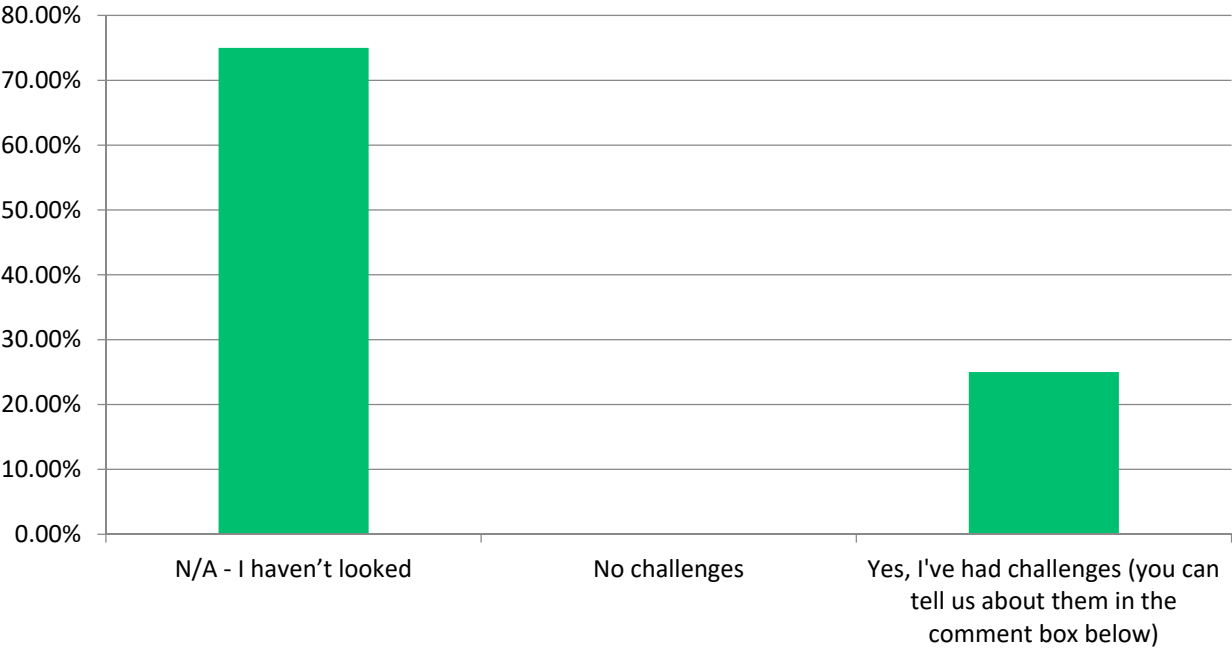


**Comment (summarized):**

- Supply does not exist for heavy industrial lots with or without a shop – if anything comes up, it is overpriced and expensive, or ends up in a bidding war

**Q15: If you have looked to rent an industrial property or building in the last three years, have you had any challenges finding what you're looking for?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
N/A - I haven't looked	75.00%	24
No challenges	0.00%	0
Yes, I've had challenges (you can tell us about them in the comment box below)	25.00%	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>32</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>32</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>7</b>



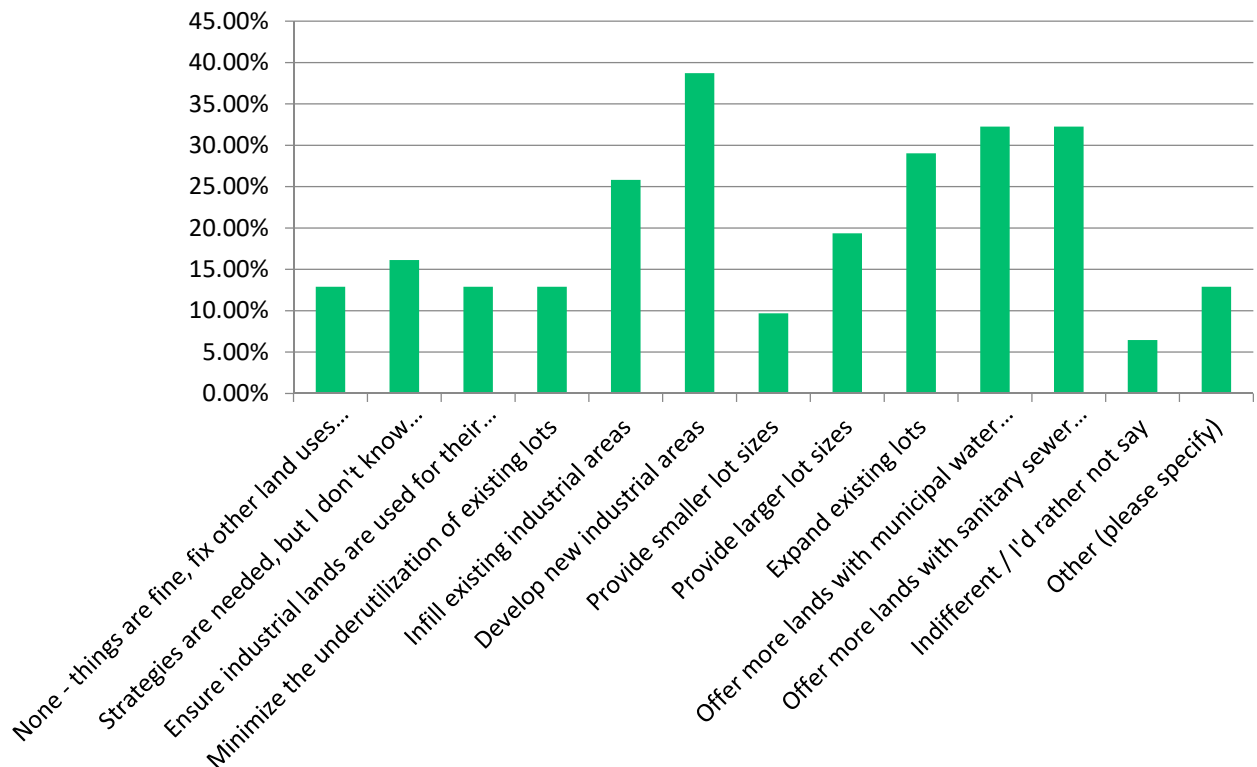
**Comments (summarized):**

- Can't find the right property – would have to build
- Many people ask if I want to rent out any of the shop that I rent for my business
- Commercial/service industrial shop space to rent is virtually non-existent – took 3 years to find my current place
- Need access to industrial lots for lease or sale near or in the Taylor industrial area



**Q16: What strategies would you like to see the City consider/pursue with respect to industrial lands?  
Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
None - things are fine, fix other land uses instead	12.90%	4
Strategies are needed, but I don't know which ones	16.13%	5
Ensure industrial lands are used for their intended purpose	12.90%	4
Minimize the underutilization of existing lots	12.90%	4
Infill existing industrial areas	25.81%	8
Develop new industrial areas	38.71%	12
Provide smaller lot sizes	9.68%	3
Provide larger lot sizes	19.35%	6
Expand existing lots	29.03%	9
Offer more lands with municipal water servicing	32.26%	10
Offer more lands with sanitary sewer servicing	32.26%	10
Indifferent / I'd rather not say	6.45%	2
Other (please specify)	12.90%	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>81</b>
<b>Answered</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>8</b>



**Comments (separated and summarized):**

- Be more open to offering land for business pursuits – it creates more income for the city
- Do not understand why the City cannot decide what to do – unqualified Planners
- My business owns and operates in Marwell – do not want zoning changed to light commercial, if this will affect the businesses that I lease to
- Utilize the downtown and surrounding core for mixed residential and small business
- Use space out of town for industrial
- I tried to have my Service Industrial lot expanded, but the green space behind the lot was too close to the adjacent residential area

**Q17: Please share any other information/comments that you would like us to consider in this study. You can also use this space to tell us about a specific challenge that you have with one, or more, of the properties that you own or operate on. Providing a municipal address allows us to investigate further, and will not appear in the survey summary.**

<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Answered</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>25</b>

**Comments (separated and summarized by theme):**

**MacRae:**

- Area wells have suffered greatly with expansion of new residential lots – are there plans to help subsidize this?

**Marwell:**

- I want my property to stay mixed-use
- A change to light commercial would mean kicking out tenants and revamping the building – would bankrupt me
- Hopeful the area will see an improvement to older properties as well as more mixed residential lots, and to see real estate values rise

**Taylor:**

- Access to services in existing industrial areas needs to be addressed – specifically, the Taylor Industrial area has no sewer/water, and has a dirt road
- Area is home to dozens of small Yukon businesses, employing Yukoners and paying significant city taxes for no return
- A discussion regarding the cost of local improvements in this area, including a fair plan for sharing those costs, should be considered a priority
- Condition of MacDonald Road is awful due to potholes
- Constant grading and calcium deposition on MacDonald Road is a problem – have contacted the City about it before
- The calcium used to reduce dust corrodes my business and personal vehicles
- Providing full services and paving is not a realistic option – considering the cost of chip-seal versus performing road work 5-6 times per summer

**Highway corridor:**

- Need to develop the Alaska Highway corridor – it's the most underdeveloped highway frontage I've seen in Canada

**Market (supply/demand/future):**

- City is not capable of deciding what will be needed in the future nor is it able to, as the situation is very fluid
- Best strategy would be to let the market decide what is needed
- Release land to private developers without undue restriction and the market will sort it out
- Seems to be little demand to buy commercial properties
- Huge glut of commercial space, but very little industrial or residential available
- Changes in world economy could see massive influx of immigration into a place like Whitehorse
- Strong emphasis on infrastructure of the city as a whole will be important, along with residential housing for entrepreneurs looking to live here

**Heavy industrial:**

- Extremely hard to find lots close to Whitehorse for a shop with heavy equipment – have been looking for 11 years
- If a heavy industrial lot comes up, it's way overpriced and I would never be able to pay for it

**Housing and caretaker residences:**

- Challenge is to find affordable housing for employees close to work
- I'm not allowed to provide housing on existing property as only one caretaker suite is allowed, even though we have space for more
- Really difficult to hire new skilled trades people right now, and the lack of housing is a huge factor – I need to be able to provide at least temporary accommodation, and if I can combine it with a caretaker residence, so much the better
- Make allowable caretaker residences larger, and allow two of them

**Other:**

- Have tried to get land north of Whitehorse, but have been denied – reason does not seem valid, I have legitimate plans and funds
- Seems the City is focused mainly on the south part of Whitehorse to develop
- Would be nice to vote in municipal elections as a business property owner in Whitehorse where taxes are paid, yet I reside outside of Whitehorse
- Theft is an issue (area unspecified)

**Q18: (OPTIONAL) Please provide your email address; it helps us to ensure that duplicate surveys are not submitted, and will not appear in the survey summary, or be shared.**

<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Answered</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>18</b>

**Q19: Would you like any of the following?**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>	
Enter me in a draw to win a \$100 gift certificate to Home Hardware (requires an email address above)	67.86%	19
Send me electronic updates on this study (requires an email address above)	60.71%	17
None of the above / no thanks	25.00%	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	<b>11</b>