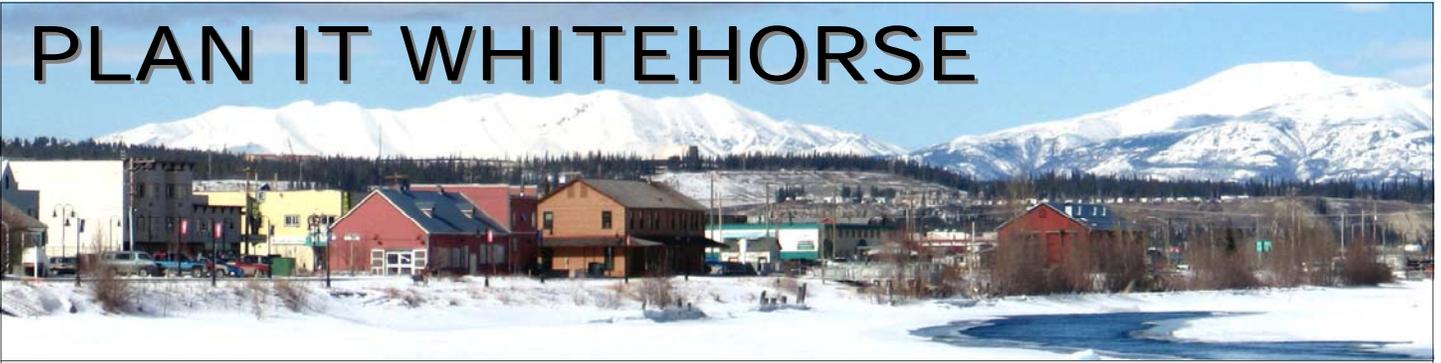


PLAN IT WHITEHORSE



Balancing Growth, Greenspace and Sustainability

On March 15th, the City of Whitehorse and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation held a workshop called “Balancing Growth and Greenspace”. Approximately 80 people participated in the workshop. The evening began with a presentation on how other communities have been able to balance development and greenspace protection using sustainability principles and proactive methods of community engagement. This was followed by a discussion on the planning process here in Whitehorse.

Sustainable development is difficult to define. The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This

does not mean that there will be no growth, but rather that there must be a new approach to managing growth.

Sustainable solutions vary from place to place, but for most Canadian municipalities sustainability means focusing on mixed-use development, efficient and compact land use, planning for a neighbourhood core, ensuring healthy, linked greenspaces and promoting alternative forms of transportation.

Whitehorse is a wilderness city, with extensive trails and beautiful greenspace throughout the residential neighbourhoods. This easy access to the outdoors is highly valued by our citizens. The last of the lots will be sold through lottery in 2006, which may impact housing prices and the construction industry. Finding a balance between development and main-

tenance of green areas is a challenge in any community.

From the interest in the workshop, it is clear that the whole community must be involved in shaping future development. Planning decisions, especially those related to balancing growth and greenspace, are complex.

Our Official Community Plan (OCP), which provides the basis for land use and development decisions, has many vision statements and policies that are based on sustainability principles. As we implement our OCP it is important that we continue to meet the goals of the community. The OCP can found on our website at www.planning.whitehorse.ca. Call our Department at 668-8335 to share your ideas about community planning and sustainable development.

A New Look at Public Participation

Sustainable planning and development is based on effective community participation. The issues are complex and success depends on individual action, local knowledge and on gathering support and ideas from the community.

The City has used citizen surveys, public meetings, formal public hearings, open houses, advisory committees and workshops to engage the community. Recently, there has been much discussion on the future of development. The City is looking to other municipalities for new approaches that will result in plans that are acceptable to citizens, developers and politicians.

Participation techniques include, but are not limited to, visioning exercises,

citizen committees, community mapping and design charrettes. These techniques are based on access to accurate information, timely public participation and significant compromise on all sides.

Visioning exercises are tools to identify community goals and aspirations. They encourage people to create a picture of their community in the long term and can reveal core values, preferred approaches and potential outcomes.

Design charrettes have been used successfully by several Canadian municipalities to resolve controversial planning problems. Charrettes bring together a design team with diverse range of expertise including planners, engineers, civic leaders, architects, educators, students,

community representatives and government staff to collaborate on design solutions. A charrette typically lasts from three to five days, with the design team and the community working together to identify values, develop concepts, select preferred options and refine plans. This method is effective in generating creative solutions to difficult problems quickly. Last fall, three City staff completed a Charrette Training put on by the National Charrette Institute.

Developing plans that meet the diverse needs of all members of the community is a difficult process, requiring considerable work and compromise. The City will continue to use a range of innovative approaches to public involvement to develop sustainable community plans.

Talk of the Town

Downtown Plan

The City is finalizing the new Downtown Plan. It was reviewed by City Council and the Downtown Advisory Committee and was presented to the public at an Open House in December. The Plan will go to Council for approval this spring. The public hearing that is part of the bylaw adoption process will be the last chance to comment on the plan before it is formally accepted.

Zoning

The new Zoning Bylaw is finally close to adoption! The Public Hearing was held in February and the Second and Third

Readings were scheduled for March 27th.

Riverfront Development

This will be an exciting summer on the Whitehorse Riverfront. The reconstruction of First Avenue, repaving and lighting of the Rotary Park trail and the installation of new lighting for the Robert Campbell Bridge, will get underway this year. In Shipyards Park, improvements will include the restoration of the heritage buildings and a new park building, picnic shelter and viewing platform. These projects are funded through Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund and will begin once the contribution agree-

ments are in place.

Coming & Going

We are pleased to announce that Christine O'Connor will be joining the Department in April as the new Senior Customer Service Representative.

After eight years, John McDougall has left the City to take a job with Challenger Geomatics. John has worked as the Development Officer for the last five years and he will be missed by both staff and the public. Marcel Barrault will be filling in until a permanent Development Officer is hired.

Planning Institute of British Columbia

The Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) is an association of professional planners in British Columbia and the Yukon. PIBC members work in the public service and the private sector, in a variety of fields including land use planning, environmental management, land development, heritage conservation, social planning, transportation planning and economic development.

PIBC is affiliated with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), which has 6000 members across Canada. To become an accredited member, a planner must have a relevant educational background, two years of planning experi-

ence and must pass an oral examination. Accredited planners are entitled to use the MCIP professional accreditation.

All PIBC members must participate in continued professional development. To this end, the Yukon Chapter of the PIBC recently held a roundtable discussion on sustainability and public participation. In June, many local PIBC members will be heading to Vancouver for the *World Planner's Congress - Sustainable Urbanization: Turning Ideas into Action*.

For more information please contact Zoë Morrison at 668-8338 or the PIBC website at www.pibc.bc.ca.

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New Landscaping Regulations

The most beautiful, healthy and attractive cities are green cities; places with tree-lined streets, colourful planter boxes and interesting landscaping. Here in Whitehorse, the new Zoning Bylaw sets out landscaping regulations designed to keep our streets green.

These regulations include, for example, details about the number and location of shrubs and trees. They also include guidelines for the screening of storage areas and waste containers. The regulations were drafted with both

safety and the local climate conditions in mind.

The Bylaw contains different regulations for industrial, commercial, residential and institutional zones. The new guidelines will not be applied retroactively to existing development or to the majority of residential zones.

The City, through the Transportation Showcase, has taken a step towards greening our streets by installing new planter boxes for trees and shrubs along First Avenue.