



## **Studies and Reports to be Integrated (2002-2009)**

### **A) Sustainability**

#### **1. Integrated Community Sustainability Plan – 2007 – City of Whitehorse**

- The City of Whitehorse has been practicing and adopting the principles of sustainability for a number of years. This report includes many City of Whitehorse previously adopted sustainable practices and policies.
- Like many urban communities across Canada, Whitehorse's existing infrastructure is aging and needs to be replaced. There is not the ability for municipalities across Canada to raise the dollars necessary to repair and replace infrastructure and to manage growth. Municipalities do not have the legislated ability to raise the amount of money necessary to respond to what has been referred to as the "infrastructure deficit".
- In response to the "infrastructure deficit" the Government of Canada established a program called the New Deal for Cities and Communities. This program provides funding from federal gas tax revenues. The Yukon Government and Canada entered into the Gas Tax Agreement in 2005. As part of the agreement all Yukon communities and Yukon First Nations are eligible for gas tax funding for capacity building, planning and infrastructure.
- The City of Whitehorse entered into a contribution agreement for planning and capacity building with Yukon Government in 2006 to complete an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

#### **2. Whitehorse Strategic Sustainability Plan – 2007 – City of Whitehorse**

- To build on the ICSP, the City of Whitehorse chose to develop a seven year Strategic Sustainability Plan.
- The City hosted several visioning and charrette exercises to develop a vision and principals to provide a basis from which the City will make decisions for the future.
- The vision: "Whitehorse will be a well planned self sustaining community that is a lead in energy conservation and innovation that maintains and conserves wilderness spaces for future generations. Whitehorse will continue to strive for a better quality of life that is reflected in its vibrant economy and social life."
- Each principle contains specific strategies and actions for implementation over the next 7 years.
- Principles are: Thriving environment; community development; leadership; diverse local economy; equity; cultural identity; education.

## **B) Environmental Studies**

### **1. Geo-hazard Risk Study, 2002**

- In 2002, the City of Whitehorse contracted EBA Engineering to conduct a detailed terrain analysis, risk assessment to evaluate the slope stability of the Whitehorse Escarpment.
- Their results were used to delineate High, Moderate and Low risk zones that could be used to guide development planning.
- The zonal concept provides an opportunity to carry out detailed assessments of specific properties whereby site specific recommendations would be applied (i.e. building design, setbacks, placement of engineered structures to reduce potential landslide impacts).

### **2. Watershed Management Plan, 2004**

- This Watershed Management Plan is intended to set the direction for managing the City of Whitehorse source water areas for the long-term protection of source water quality.
- This marks the first time that a formal process has been undertaken in recognition of the importance of the watershed of the upper Yukon River basin for producing an ample supply of safe, high quality drinking water. The Watershed Management Plan is also guided by the knowledge that the watershed fulfills many other economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental needs; for example, as captured in the Yukon River Corridor Plan.
- The Watershed Management Plan was prepared to assist the City with adopting a “source-to-tap” approach to drinking water protection, often referred to as a multi-barrier approach.
- The plan covers the Yukon River Corridor downstream from the Yukon River Bridge at Marsh Lake to the outlet from Schwatka Lake, as well as the sub-watersheds entering the Yukon River between these points. The influence of land use decisions and activities further up river (for example, along the shores of Marsh Lake) are recognized in the Watershed Management Plan.

## **C) Parks & Recreation**

### **1. City of Whitehorse Trail Plan – 2007 – Inukshuk Planning and Development Ltd.**

- The Trail Plan is a document that will give guidance to the City of Whitehorse for trail planning, development and programming over the coming decade.
- It takes an adaptive management and “best practices” approach to trail system management. For staff it sets out Council’s operational framework including direction on priorities, expected outcomes, and guidelines necessary to guide day-to-day operations.
- For trail users and the public, the plan identifies strategies to resolve conflicts and complete a comprehensive network of trails that meet a variety of user needs.

### **2. Parks & Recreation Master Plan – 2007 – Inukshuk Planning and Development**

- The new Parks & Recreation Master Plan will be implemented over 10 years.
- With the exception of the formal establishment of the Chadburn Lake area as a park with it’s own management plan, the Parks & Recreation Department has met or

exceeded its performance targets in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities, facility development and leisure programming.

## **D) Downtown & Riverfront**

### **I. Downtown Plan – 2007 – UMA Engineering Ltd.**

- Developed to supplement the 2002 OCP
- Similar to the OCP by providing broad recommendations and policies. However, it goes into greater detail for Downtown by dividing it into several sub-areas.
- The sub-areas are: Downtown Commercial Core, Old Town, Downtown South, Downtown North, Riverfront and the North End Service Commercial area.
- The plan recognized that each sub-area supports the overall function of Downtown while offering a unique contribution.
- Specific policies and recommendations are provided for each sub-area relating to character, design, acceptable land-uses and activities.
- **Minor recommendations were implemented into the 2002 OCP. However several larger integrations into the new OCP should be made including:**
  - Develop design guidelines for new development.
  - Encourage the integration of social and affordable housing with market housing in locations throughout Downtown.
  - Support a comprehensive coordination of streetscape improvements along in the Downtown Commercial Core area.
  - Establish a Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), Downtown Housing Committee and Downtown Whitehorse website.
  - Encourage the redevelopment of high potential sites.
  - Maintain and improve the area along the escarpment as a quality urban park with continuous trail system.

### **2. Detailed Riverfront Plan – 2006 – Cohlmeier Architects Ltd.**

- The City of Whitehorse retained Cohlmeier Architects to assist with the planning and design of the riverfront.
- The study area is bounded by Main Street, First Avenue, Strickland Street and the Yukon River.
- The Detailed Riverfront Plan includes the detailed drawing of the landscaping, parking, streetscaping along First Avenue and provides specific analysis relating to trails, parking and view corridors.
- Also included within the plan are the results of two Open Houses held in late 2005 and early 2006.
- Council adopted the Detailed Riverfront Plan as the new vision for the riverfront in 2006.
- A major component of the design is the proposed Arts and Heritage Village at the foot of Main Street.
- The primary focus is on the design of the Riverfront. This level of detail is not applicable to the new OCP. Therefore the final design should not be integrated.

- **Within the document however are several policies relating to pedestrian movement, landscaping, views, etc that could be integrated into the new OCP. These include:**
  - New development should enhance and not restrict pedestrian movement along the riverfront.
  - Street design should facilitate pedestrian connections from Downtown to the Riverfront.
  - Angled parking along First Avenue.
  - Ensure views at the ends of Elliot, Steele and Jarvis Streets.
- **Important:** Since the plan has been completed some changes have been made. The proposed Cultural Centre design is outdated and should be revised. In addition, the proposed Arts and Heritage Village development has been scaled back in scope.

### **3. Downtown Retail Strategy – 2006 – UMA Engineering Ltd.**

- The Downtown Retail Strategy was created in conjunction with the Downtown Plan.
- Primarily a retail market study for Downtown Whitehorse.
- The study includes:
  - Inventory of existing retail-commercial infrastructure – Retail = 41%; Service = 51%, Office = 8%
  - Downtown merchandising gaps – the inventory and public surveys identified a number of underrepresented uses including restaurants, pubs, speciality clothing, speciality grocery stores and art galleries.
  - Strengths and weaknesses of Downtown Whitehorse: Strengths include vibrant Main Street, dominant retail and service centre, Riverfront potential, a strong arts community and the power mall (Argus) is located close to Downtown and not on the Highway. Weaknesses include merchandising gaps, under-developed sites and clusters, transit service, crime and a perceived parking issue.
  - Retail and service provider surveys and public surveys – parking cited as a main concern. Retail Strategy recommends a Downtown Parking Management Strategy.
  - Retail analysis – population projections and sales projections do not support more big-box development, another grocery store, electronics and furniture stores. Downtown could support more clothing stores, restaurants, pubs and speciality stores.
  - **Recommendations and OCP Implications:**
    - Need for the establishment of a Downtown BIA.
    - Establish commercial design guidelines
    - Actively pursue redevelopment – revise current planning initiatives and relevant policy changes (i.e. mixed use, height limits)
    - Require Retail Market Impact Studies – require developers to prepare market impact studies as part of the development approvals process.
    - Focus on redevelopment in the Downtown North area (Qwanlin Mall, old Canadian Tire site, Yukon Centre, Jamieson Block).
    - Need for a Downtown Parking Management Strategy.
    - Other relevant findings relating to the OCP: The document notes the benefits of the Argus development as it produces spin-off benefits for the

rest of Downtown. Locating the development near Downtown is much better than along the Highway. The report cautions that many municipalities have been irreparably damaged by highway-oriented shopping centres.

## **E) Roads and Transportation**

### **1. City-wide Transportation Study – 2004 – UMA Engineering Ltd.**

- 4 goals of project that complement the 2002 OCP:
  - Community and Economic Quality Goal
  - Mobility Goal
  - Transportation Planning Goal
  - Sustainability-Affordability Goal
- Examines what issues would arise if no improvements made to road network. Current status of road network and future analysis. Also proposes infrastructure improvements and transportation safety.
- **OCP Implications include:**
  - Recommendation to extend 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue northward through the Qwanlin Mall to Ogilvie Street as a pedestrian corridor.
  - Encourage the choice for all modes of transportation within the City by prioritizing for multi-modal transportation facilities.
  - To redistribute and accommodate traffic in Porter Creek it is recommended to provide a new road connecting Pine Street to the Alaska Highway.
  - Newer (but still outdated) pedestrian network map.
  - Newer (but still outdated) bicycle network map.
  - Future studies:
    - program for wheelchair accessibility in the Downtown area
    - pedestrian network plan
    - bicycle network plan
    - strategic transit plan
  - Existing parking supply in Downtown is sufficient. No increase to public parking in Downtown for now. Do not consider a multi-level parkade for the short term.

### **2. Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program – 2003 – City of Whitehorse**

- In 2003 the City of Whitehorse submitted a proposal to the Urban Transportation Showcase Program for the reduction in transportation related greenhouse gas emissions.
- During the process a charrette was held in late 2002 to find ways of reducing GHG emissions.
- One method proposed is the “Driving Diet” program. This program encourages alternative modes of travel by removing barriers to active transportation (i.e. cycling, walking) and changes driving habits through education as well as by implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies.
- The range of measures proposed to reduce GHGs include:

- Infrastructure Changes – road diets (reducing the number of motor vehicle lanes), improvements to trails and bike lanes, improvements to transit stops (i.e. shelters), roundabouts.
- Public Education and Outreach – anti idling campaigns,
- TDM – TDM describes programs that reduce the amount of drive alone travel by promoting walking, bicycling, carpooling, transit, etc.).
- Monitoring program set up to determine success of “Driving Diet” program.

## **F) Demographics and Demand**

### **I. Demographic and Economic Analysis of Housing Demand – 2009 – Vector Research**

- In 2009, the City of Whitehorse contracted Vector Research to conduct a housing demand study to be integrated into the new Official Community Plan. The study will help form the basis of the introductory chapter on demographics and demand.
- The study provides an analysis of several demographic factors thought to drive the demand for residential property in the City. Statistics Canada and Yukon Bureau of Statistics were the primary sources.
- The demographic factors included: average household income, home ownership rate, age distribution, population growth, housing density, mobility, housing prices, mortgage rates and housing affordability.
- The table below summarizes the findings:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Historical Trend in Whitehorse</b>	<b>Influence on Housing Demand</b>
Average Household Income	Increase	Increase
Home Ownership Rate	Increase	Increase
Age Distribution	Increase in Home Buying Age Population	Increase
Population Growth	Increase	Increase
Housing Density	Decrease	Increase
Mobility	Decrease	Increase
Housing Prices	Increase	Decrease
Mortgage Rates	Decrease	Increase
Housing Affordability	Decrease	Decrease

- The report also provides three economic scenarios to forecast growth or decline. Under the economic decline scenario there will be an overall decrease in housing demand. Under the natural economic growth scenario and economic boom scenario there will be an increase in housing demand.

### **2. 10 Year Demand Forecast for Commercial and Industrial Land in Whitehorse – 2009 – Gerein Appraisal and Consulting**

- A second report examined commercial and industrial land availability and demand within Whitehorse.

- The study includes: (1) a review of the current inventory of commercial and industrial land; (2) an analysis of the real estate market activity and building permits; (3) a forecast based on that analysis.
- Three sources were used for this study: an inventory of the current land stock, land sales since 2002 and building permits.
- The study found that if current conditions prevail 50 commercial lots will be required in the next 10 years. The study found that the demand will be met by vacant land and rezoning.
- For industrial development, the study found that between 50 and 60 lots will be required to satisfy demand. After examining the current land stock and growth pattern of the City the study suggested that new development of industrial/commercial property may be necessary.