



City of Whitehorse

2022-2024 Strategic Priorities



Introduction

In January and February of 2022, Whitehorse Council worked creatively and collectively on developing Strategic Priorities for 2022-2024. Two full-day sessions were held on January 4 and 5 and a half-day session on February 7. Past Strategic Plans (see appendix) were reviewed, and similarities were noted as part of the process. Substantial consideration was given to current and future issues the community faces, and this Council is determined to address many of them.

The City of Whitehorse rests on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. We acknowledge the Elders—past, present and emerging—of all the land we work and live on and their ancestral spirits with gratitude and respect.

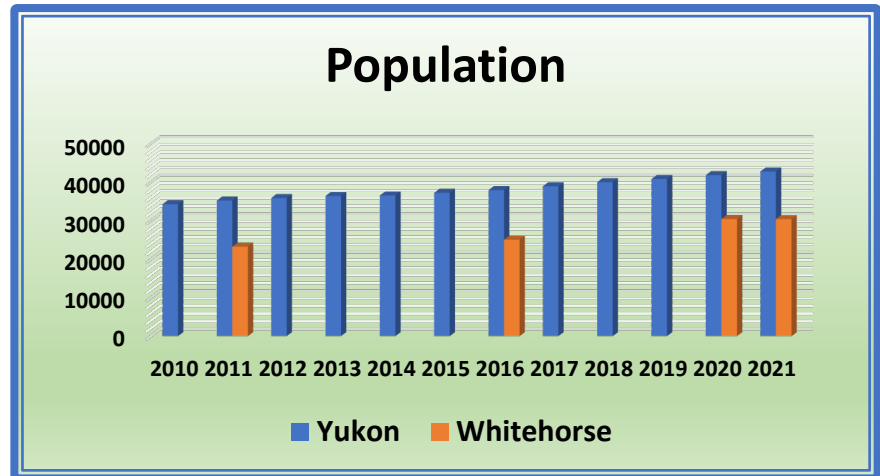
We're working together to make the City of Whitehorse a better place now and for future generations. We're focusing on what's important to you, improving how we do business, and ensuring we plan for our future to build a strong, resilient Whitehorse. Council is focusing on what is important to all community members by improving lines of communication, finding efficiencies, being innovative, and building a path forward together. We have heard your concerns about housing needs, land development challenges, inclusivity, community safety, the environment, First Nations relationships, and how we engage. We have also heard it is essential to everyone that the operation of the City is efficient, effective, innovative, and transparent.

The Strategic Priorities were developed to guide this Council's goals on what we want to accomplish. There are endless possibilities to make the City of Whitehorse an even better place, and this is just the beginning. This Council is here to listen and learn from community members to ensure a bright future. Considering all current challenges and issues combined with a strong desire to improve our community, we will collectively make a difference.

Background

Council recognizes that Whitehorse has incredible strengths. A vibrant community surrounded by wilderness, Whitehorse is the capital of the Yukon and the centre of rich cultural heritage, focusing on recreation, education and a strong economy.

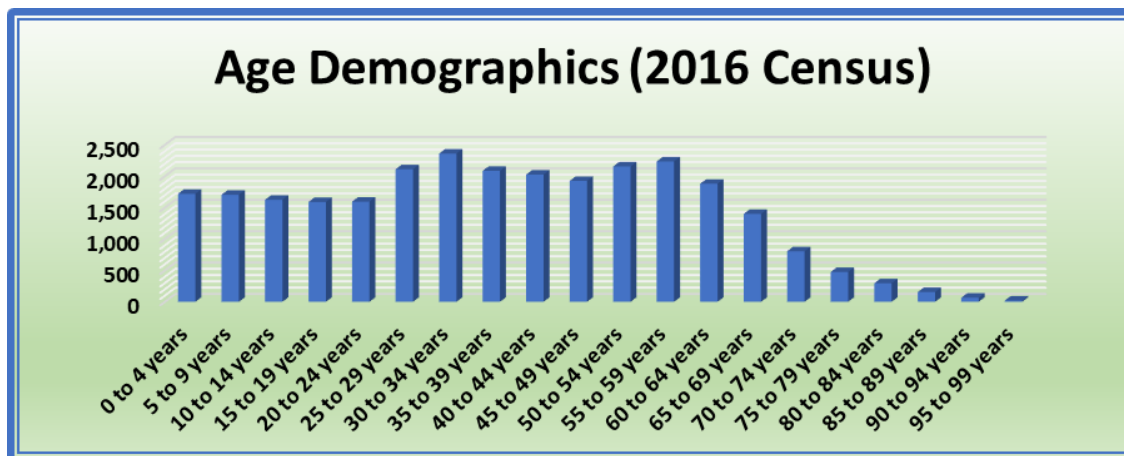
71% of Yukon's total population lives in the City of Whitehorse.



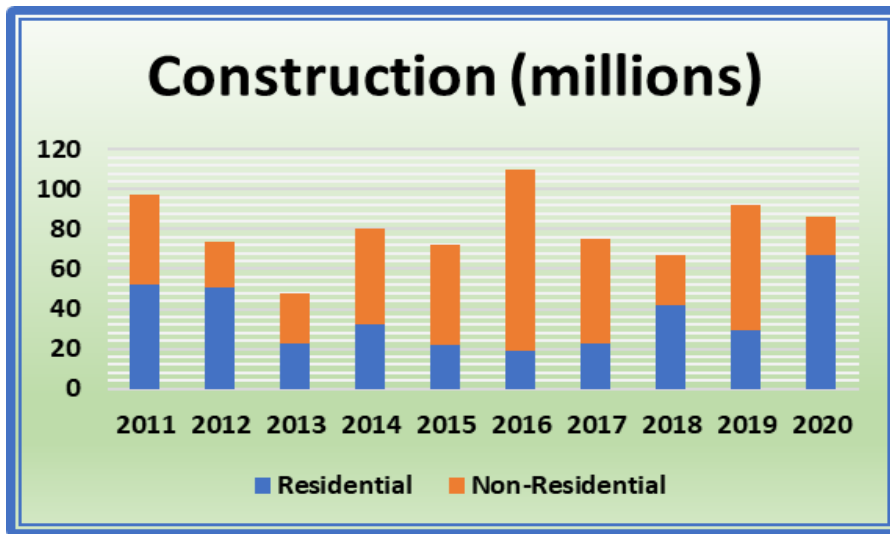
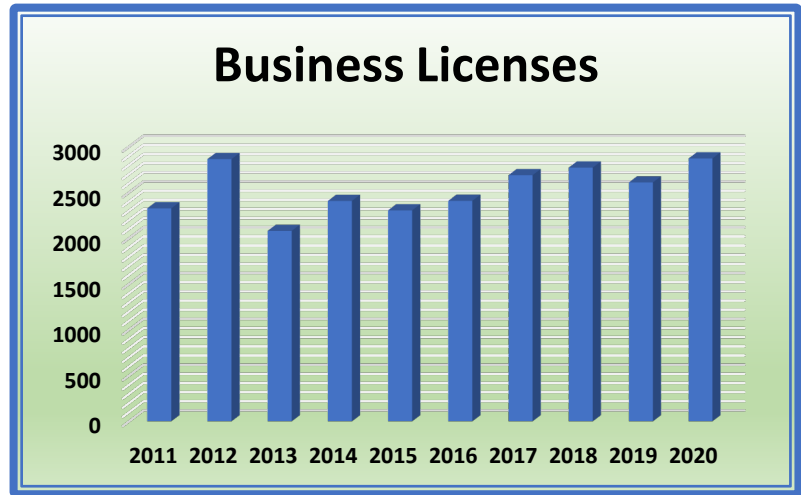
The 2021 “Looking to the Future” report predicted significant growth for Whitehorse.

Scenario	Population in 2040	Annual Increase
Low	35000	722
Preferred	40700	1039
High	45500	2406

On average, the residents of Whitehorse are relatively young, with the community's median age being 37.2. While Whitehorse's population pyramid shows a growing population, Yukon's population is trending to a more significant proportion of seniors. By 2040, the 65 years and older demographic will represent 21% of Yukon's total population, compared to 13% in 2018; therefore, it is crucial that the City plan for all ages.

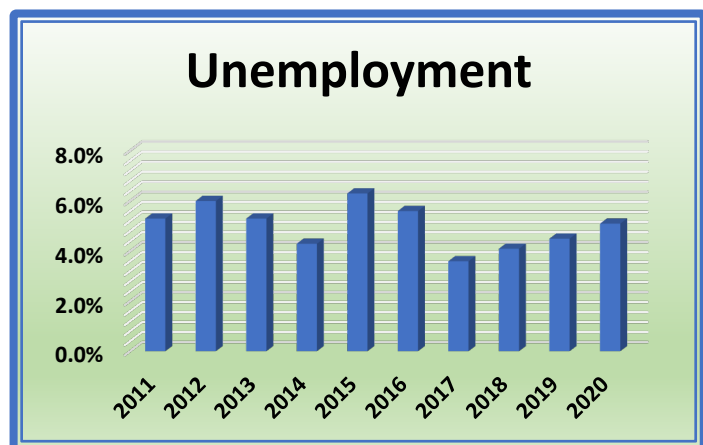


Business activity has grown substantially over the past eight years.



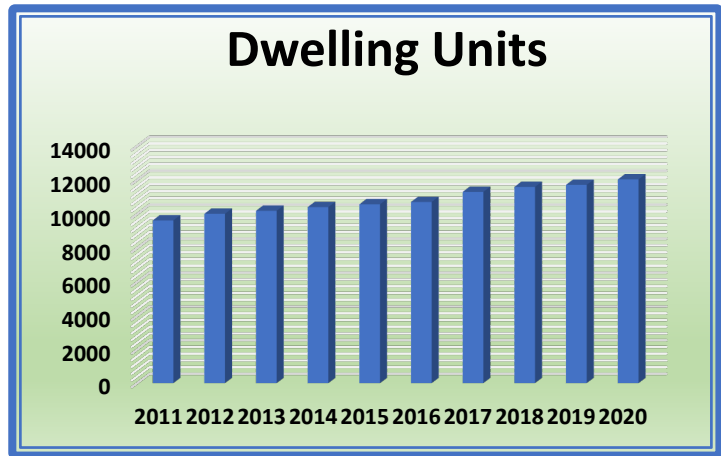
Residential and non-residential construction has been strong and steady for the past ten years.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has created some challenges, employment opportunities are abundant in Whitehorse.

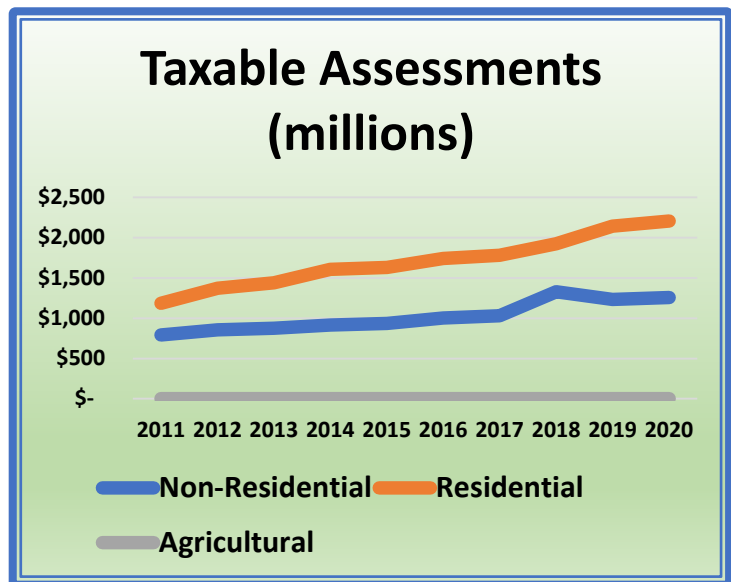


Whitehorse has continued to increase the housing supply, but the demand for additional housing stock of all types is high. We have been unable to keep up with the demand for the

last ten years, which has created other impacts and barriers to affordable housing, types of accommodation, and housing suitability.



Overall taxable assessments in Whitehorse have increased by 76% over the past ten years. This is an important metric when considering Whitehorse's challenges with affordable housing.



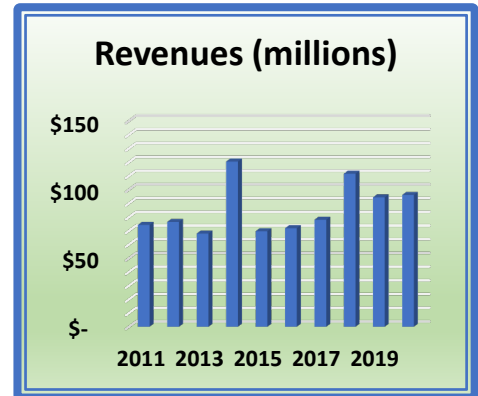
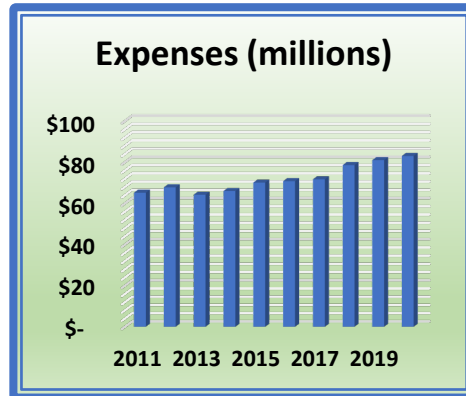
Whitehorse's Financial Position

Council provides strategic oversight to the organization and ensures that the corporation is fiscally responsible. It is important to recognize that Council is responsible for a half-billion corporation.

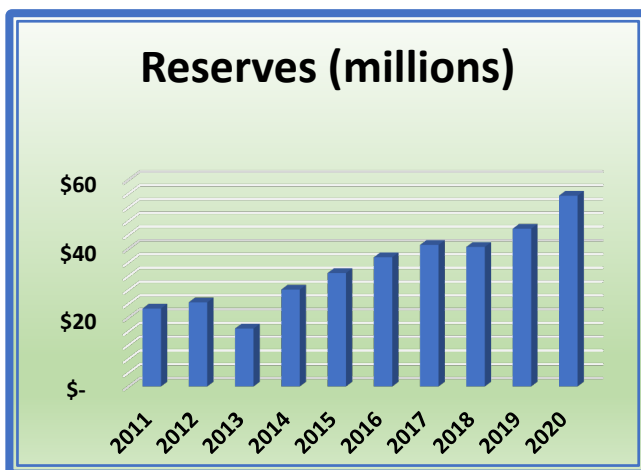
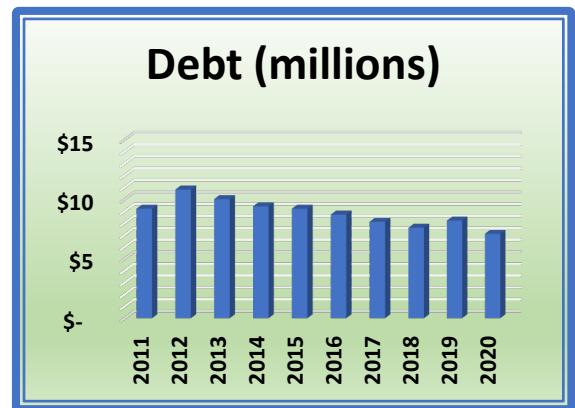
2020 Financial Position

Financial assets	\$ 89,877,492
Liabilities	-\$ 33,224,354
Non-financial assets	\$ 455,598,424
Total	\$ 512,251,562

Revenues and expenses have increased over the past ten years, reflecting the community's increased population and services and the expectations of Whitehorse residents.



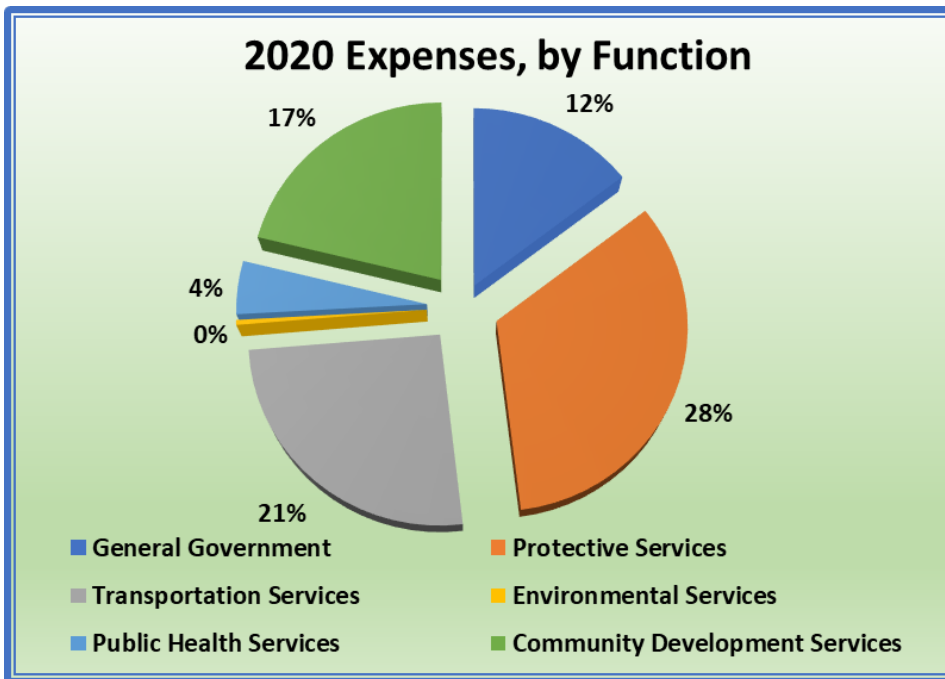
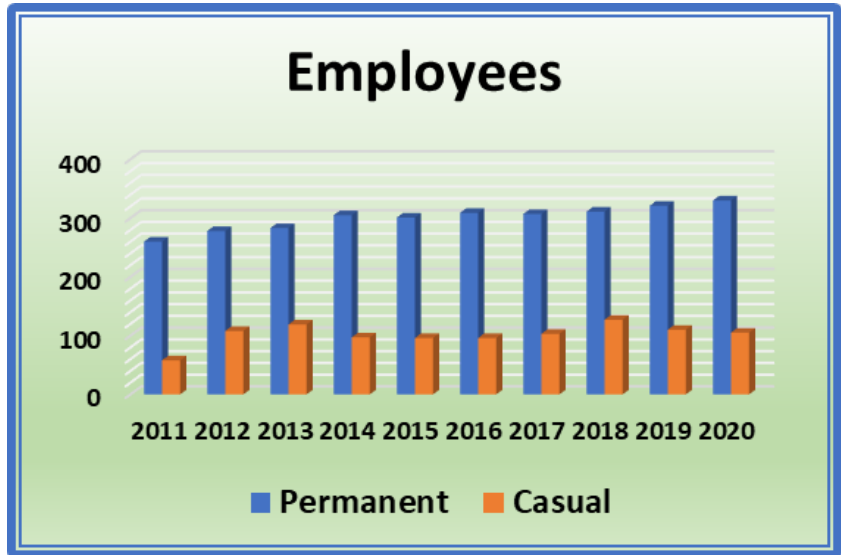
Overall debt has been reduced over the past nine years and debt, as a percentage of the overall budget, is low compared to like-sized municipalities.



Over the past seven years, Whitehorse has worked hard to increase reserves, recognizing the importance of asset management when ensuring the future of the corporation.

The Organization

With the continued population increases in Whitehorse, services have also increased, resulting in additional employees to meet rising demand.



Protective Services and Transportation are 50% of overall expenditures.

Key Themes

During the strategic planning process, Council discussed many issues facing Whitehorse and aims to focus on the following key themes:

- Providing additional **housing, development, commercial and industrial opportunities** in Whitehorse has been limited for a number of years and has not kept pace with population growth, economic growth, and market demands. Whitehorse's traditional methodologies and policies and partnership with Yukon Government have not kept pace with the demand. This has led to:
 - Minimal bare land opportunities
 - Significantly increased housing prices and difficulties with affordability and attainability for owners and renters
 - Frustration by the community, by developers, and by entrepreneurs
 - Difficulty attracting workers to Whitehorse.
- **Engagement and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples** are significant to Council as it engages, includes, and partners with First Nations. The City is a partner with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation in meeting the diverse needs of all Whitehorse residents. Our City lies within the Traditional Territories of these two Yukon First Nations, and we value the history, culture, opportunities, and partnerships that we share with Indigenous Peoples.
- Council understands that **inclusivity, accessibility and diversity** require continued consideration in the delivery of services in Whitehorse. Although there has been positive change to date, there are ongoing opportunities to ensure that all citizens feel understood, included, accepted, and respected in their connections to the community.
- **Community safety** remains a top priority for Council. Community public safety can be enhanced through partnerships, advocacy, policy/bylaw changes, and improvements to existing prevention plans.
- **Climate change and adaptation** have been a priority for Whitehorse for many years and remain a priority today. In 2019, Whitehorse Council declared a climate change emergency, and this Council intends to continue to reduce its carbon footprint and adapt to change. With the increasing changes in wildfire behaviour, flooding, snow events, cold events, and increased knowledge around climate adaptation, Whitehorse must continue to reduce and adapt.

Service excellence has always been a priority, and this Council continues to advocate for exceptional performance in all aspects of the City's delivery of essential and support services. Improvements to snow and ice control management and traffic congestion have become crucial as the City grows and adapts to climate change. In addition, there are many opportunities to create sport, recreation, and tourism expansion to meet the community's expectations

City of Whitehorse 2022 – 2024 Strategic Priorities

Housing & Development

The City of Whitehorse believes that every person deserves a safe and affordable space to call home and works to ensure a variety of housing and commercial/industrial land is available and attainable now and into the future.

Improve the overall housing supply

- *Plan for the next subdivision in Whitehorse*
- *Create the ability for businesses to add staff housing on commercial and industrial lands*
- *Evaluate the opportunities for redevelopment of the municipal services building site and other sites*
- *Create a Housing Advisory Committee*
- *Host a housing summit*

Review opportunities to enhance the downtown core reflecting its place as the centre of our Capital City

Increase land development in Whitehorse

- *Explore new and innovative approaches to land development*
- *Evaluate opportunities to purchase and develop property*
- *Streamline building/development permit processing*
- *Create more opportunities for commercial and industrial land development*

Engagement and Collaboration

The City of Whitehorse values strong and meaningful relationships with Yukon First Nations & community members

Commit to moving forward in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation

- *Working together to ensure reconciliation and collaboration with both Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation is a priority on all levels*
- *Increase our knowledge and recognition of Indigenous culture and history in support of Truth and Reconciliation.*
- *Review the Declaration of Commitment agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council*

WE COMMIT TO MOVING FORWARD IN A SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION AND COLLABORATION TO CONTINUE BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE COMMUNITY THAT WE SERVE

Enhance civic engagement, communication, collaboration and consultation.

Inclusivity, Accessibility and Diversity

The City of Whitehorse welcomes all voices and diverse perspectives in strengthening its operations and services designed to achieve equitable opportunities for all

Develop and implement a plan to improve accessibility in Whitehorse

- *Improve City services to support aging in place*
- *Review accessibility policy and standards*
- *Increase accessibility for all*

Develop and implement a plan to improve inclusivity and diversity in Whitehorse

- *Evaluate the creation of an Inclusivity Advisory Committee*
- *Recommit to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities*
- *Evaluate opportunities for employment diversity within the organization*
- *Evaluate opportunities to ensure a respectful Whitehorse community*

Community Safety

The City of Whitehorse works to continuously strengthen its public safety

Evaluate opportunities for enhancing community safety

- *Support programming to assist with crime prevention*
- *Develop community safety improvements (in conjunction with partner government agencies, where applicable)*
- *Review the Vehicle for Hire bylaw*
- *Review crime prevention strategies*
- *Analyze flood risks and mitigation strategies*
- *Review and continue to implement the existing wildland fire plan*

Climate Change and Adaptation

The City of Whitehorse's operating model is based on the core principles of environmental protection, which support both our community and planet as we move into a changing future.

Create and implement a strategy to effectively respond and adapt to climate change

Improve active transportation opportunities and infrastructure

Invest in and enhance the transit system

Service Excellence

The City of Whitehorse continues to ensure services are accessible, easy to use, reliable and highly valued by residents, business owners and visitors.

Ensure Whitehorse continues to be fiscally responsible

Review Whitehorse's role in tourism advocacy

Evaluate traffic congestion along key transportation routes

Improve snow and ice control management

- *Conduct a snow and ice management program review, considering alternate delivery methods and accessibility standards*
- *Update the Snow and Ice Control policy*

Create sport and recreation facilities and opportunities

- *Create a legacy from the 2027 Canada Winter Games (if confirmed)*
- *Create more recreational programming*
- *Increase City programming space*

Evaluate options to expand Yukon River crossing infrastructure

Further Steps

These Strategic Priorities provide direction for Council, staff and the community for 2022-2024. It is important that this Plan is delivered during this time period however; other priorities may be added or removed as the world changes around us. We understand many of these priorities are longer-term, but we are committed to pursuing them now to build the base for future success.

The Plan will be reviewed annually, ensuring accuracy and prioritizations remain relevant.

2021 – 2024 Council



From left to right: Jocelyn Curteanu, Dan Boyd, Mellisa Murray, Michelle Friesen, Laura Cabott, Ted Laking, Kirk Cameron.

APPENDIX:

Past Strategic Planning in Whitehorse

2013 Strategic Plan

The 2012-2015 Council embarked on an extensive strategic planning exercise starting in December 2012 and finished in May 2013. This comprehensive 35-page document was developed in consultation with the community and included: Mandate; Mission Statement; Guiding Principles; Vision Statement; Vision Checklist; Strategic Focus Areas; Strategic Framework; Strategic Assessment; Strategic Priority Setting; and Strategic Action.

Strategic Focus Areas:

- Destination City
- Sustainable City
- Strategic Leadership
- Vibrant Economy
- Community Engagement

2017 Strategic Plan Update

The 2015-2018 Council reviewed and updated the 2013 Strategic Plan in early 2017. The document includes: Background; Mission; Values; Where We Are Going; Key Accomplishments; Future Planning Highlights; Department Plans; and, Key Capital Projects.

Strategic Topics:

- Planning for Growth
- Affordable Housing
- Operational Efficiencies
- Environmental Health

2019 Strategic Plan Update

Completed between November 2018 and January 2019, this update ensured the 2018-2021 Council's shared understanding of the organization's purpose and vision for the community. Issues and opportunities were identified and reviewed to arrive at Strategic topics for further consideration.

Strategic Topics:

- First Nations Relations
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Environmental Leadership
- Public Engagement
- Service Excellence

2020 Strategic Priorities Update

2018- – 2021 Council met on February 11 and 12, 2020 to review progress made in 2019. Council, along with Senior Management, focused on enhancing organizational and governance excellence through the following activities: identified topics of interest for discussion; explored each topic for excellence ideas; and, determined organizational excellence strategies for implementation.

Strategic Priorities:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Transportation
- Infrastructure Renewal
- Public Safety
- Housing