

PLAN IT WHITEHORSE

April - Aug - Dec

2004 Newsletters

Are you, In the Zone?

A main function of the City's Planning Department is to draft and enforce land use regulations. The broad use of land is determined through a public process and presented in a document referred to as the Official Community Plan (OCP).

The City completed a two-year review and public consultation process in 2002 to develop a new **Official Community Plan (OCP)**. The next phase of the process is to update the Zoning Bylaw regulations to reflect any new land use policies of the newly adopted OCP. The Zoning Bylaw amendment process will be undertaken by the City in 2004 and will include public and stakeholder consultation.

The Zoning Bylaw contains permitted uses of each zone and the specific regulations that guide development. For example, the

OCP allows for temporary secondary dwellings in all residential zones to accommodate ageing relatives on a time limited basis. This type of dwelling is sometimes referred to as a garden suite and the intent is to enable residents the ability to provide their ageing parents independent living that is in close proximity to care if needed. Strict measures will need to be in place to ensure these garden suites are not used as rental accommodation.

The Zoning Bylaw will define, for example, what constitutes a garden suite and the specific development regulations that will guide the final product. Regulations would include, and not limited to, setback distances from property lines, the minimum lot size that can accommodate the garden suite, maximum gross floor area, and the exterior

finish of the garden suite to name a few.

Zoning Bylaw regulations are prescribed to ensure maximum safety within a neighbourhood as well as minimize potential nuisances, such as excess noise, noxious odors, and aesthetics to name a few.

It is beneficial to be aware of the allowed uses and regulations of your zone as these regulations can directly impact your quality of life. Please call Mike Gau at 668-8333 or email newzoning@city.whitehorse.yk.ca for further information regarding the City's Zoning Bylaw amendment process.

The zoning bylaw can be viewed online at www.city.whitehorse.yk.ca or borrowed from the Whitehorse Public Library. Copies are also available for purchase at the Planning Services Department for \$10.00 each.

Lifestyle—Home-based Businesses

The home-based business (HBB) is becoming an increasingly popular lifestyle alternative, which introduces commercial activity into a residential zone. The HBBs popularity may be attributed to the more relaxed lifestyle or business cost savings it affords. The HBB can also have a positive impact on the quality of life of the broader community with a decrease in commuter traffic and traffic pollution.

The City of Whitehorse is responsible for regulating HBBs to ensure that residential zones are not negatively impacted by commercial ventures. Maintaining a quiet, safe, and aesthetic residential environment is key. The enforcement of the bylaw regulations is done on a complaint basis.

In Whitehorse the HBB is divided into two classes known as the HBB Minor and the

HBB Major, which allows slightly more intensive uses. The HBB Minor is allowed in all residential zones and is regulated to have little or no impact on the neighbourhood. No customer traffic can be generated and only residents can be employed. A common business type is a consulting service.

The HBB Major is permitted only in select residential zones and allows an additional non-resident staff person to work out of the home. Some business traffic is permitted.

With both classifications retail sales are only permitted as ancillary use to the principal business. This means if you create it you can sell it. The intent of this regulation is to minimize retail traffic and competition with commercial districts, such as Main Street.

A one time City permit (unless you move or change the nature of your business) is required to operate a HBB. The permit process is one way the City can help ensure the intent of the HBB is being met and the character of a residential neighbourhood is not being negatively impacted. The permit fee is \$25.00. A City Business License is also required, which is \$110.00 annually.

If you are thinking of starting a HBB please contact John MacDougall, Development Officer, at 668-8334 for more information.

This is the first of a series of three newsletters the City intends to issue each year. The intent is to keep you informed about City processes and initiatives.

Doing a Bit on the Side

In Whitehorse we have a number of creeks that are significant in both ecological and human contexts. The longevity of creeks such as, McIntyre Creek, Wolf Creek and Cowley Creek depend largely on riparian areas.

In general, the term 'riparian area' refers to the wall of vegetation that lines the edges or sides of a water body. The size of the riparian area can depend on the steepness of the banks, soil characteristics, and the adjacent water body.

So, why all the fuss over riparian areas? The importance of riparian areas can be illustrated using the Chinook salmon. The Chinook salmon is well known to Yukon peoples as this salmon species makes it way thousands of kilometers up the Yukon River to spawn in its tributaries, including the aforementioned creeks. Each year the Chinook Salmon draws many locals and tourists to the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Way.

Salmon are very sensitive to increases in water temperature, which is regulated by the shade providing riparian vegetation.

The riparian area acts as a filter to contaminants, dust or debris from adjacent developments ensuring clean water for the fish.

Riparian areas provide a source of organic material (leaf and branch litter) to the creek that enables a healthy food source for the Yukon River Chinook.

Riparian vegetation strengthens creek banks and helps prevent erosion. This is very important because silt and debris from eroding banks can be detrimental to spawning grounds.

Whitehorse's newly adopted Official Community Plan recognizes the importance of riparian areas by prescribing a no development zone of 30 meters along both sides of any river, stream, lake, or wetland.

Although policy statements are essential

in the protection of riparian areas your efforts towards stream protection can be extremely effective and has been proven in a number of communities.

Do you have a favorite creek within the City that you want to help preserve? If so, contact your City's Habitat Coordinator, Ross Burnett, at 668-8347 for more details.



Porter Creek's Healthy Riparian Area

Being A Winter City

What is a Winter City? At first glance that question is quite simple to answer. A winter city is one that will sustain temperature below freezing, experience decreased hours of daylight, snowfall and blowing snow.

The above definitely describes winter but does it fully define a Winter City. A true Winter City is one that has made an achievement with respect to its winter livability by making a concerted effort to accentuate the positive and mitigate the negative aspects associated with winter or Northern climates.

Some of the negative aspects associated with being a Winter City include: increased costs for snow management; health costs related to auto accidents, slips and falls; psychological depression related to lack of daylight;

decreased mobility; prolonged cold temperatures combined with ice, snow and wind chill; increased heating costs and energy consumption.

Unpack your bags because there are a number of positive aspects of life in Winter Cities. These can include a wide range of outdoor sports such as ice hockey, curling, downhill and cross country skiing, and figure skating; utilization of ice and snow for civic art; unique urban planning concepts for weather protection, intense cultural involvement; and winter tourism opportunities and recreation events.

Some positive examples of Whitehorse's winter include the Sourdough Rendezvous Festival, Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race, Frostbite Music Festival, a number of maintained outdoor ice

rinks, trails for both non-motorized and motorized winter activities and home to a champion snow and ice carving team.

Shipyards Park is an exciting new addition to Whitehorse and designed to encourage community gathering and a positive image of winter living.

You may have noticed our prevailing south east winds have created maintenance and design challenges within Shipyards Park. The City will be working to solve the wind issue and one winter design solution could be planting trees and shrubs as windbreaks in strategic locations.

Whitehorse is excelling at being a Winter City and we can all help create a positive image of winter by considering both the positive and negative aspects of winter living in the design of our City.

Planning Services Department Contacts

Phone: 867-668-8335

Fax: 867-668-8395

Anne Bruce, Planning Clerk, 668-8335.
Email: anne.bruce@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

Lesley Cabott, Manager of Planning Services, 668-8337.

Email: lesley.cabott@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

Mike Gau, Senior Planner, 668-8333.
Email: mike.gau@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

Marcel Barrault, Planner, 668-8338.
Email: marcel.barrault@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

John MacDougall, Development Officer, 668-8334.
Email: john.macdougall@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

Pat Ross, Planning Technologist, 668-8339.
Email: pat.ross@city.whitehorse.yk.ca

Ross Burnett, Habitat Coordinator, 668-8347.
Email: ross.burnett@city.whitehorse.yk.ca



Feedback regarding the format and content of this newsletter would be appreciated. Please direct your comments to any of the contacts above.