

# PLAN IT WHITEHORSE



## Progress on the New Downtown Plan

The City has begun work on a new Downtown Plan. This Plan will be based on the Official Community Plan and other relevant planning initiatives and will tackle a wide range of downtown issues. The project will establish a long-term vision for the future of downtown, identify goals and lay out strategies to meet these goals. Once completed, the Downtown Plan will act as a framework for the future land use, zoning, policies and by-laws. The City has hired UMA Engineering Ltd. to work with us on this project. We are aiming to have the Plan completed by January 2006.

The first public meetings were held in early May. These events were successful, with 165 people at the open house and 33 people participating in the workshop. Discussions were focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the downtown.

The open house also featured a display of downtown photos. We gave out disposable cameras to interested residents, who then took to the streets to document the downtown. From the resulting 400 photos, a display was created to show the key issues illustrated by the photographers. This photo display was a great way for our citizens to show us what they like and don't like about downtown Whitehorse.

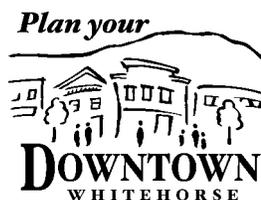
The second open house and workshop were held in mid June. At these meetings we discussed the public input to date as well as some preliminary planning strategies. For these meetings, the downtown was divided into six areas: the Downtown Commercial Core, Downtown South, Downtown North, Old Town, Riverfront and North End Service Commercial Area.

For each area, the top five issues identified by the public at the previous meeting

were outlined and a proposed vision statement and preliminary plan ideas were presented. We are currently summarizing the results of these meetings.

Over the summer, we will develop a Draft Plan. In October, a third set of public meetings will be held to discuss the Draft Plan. Your input is key to the development of a practical plan that reflects your vision for downtown.

Watch the City Page in the newspapers and [www.planning.whitehorse.ca](http://www.planning.whitehorse.ca) for details. For more information please contact Zoë Morrison at 668-8338 or [zoe.morrison@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:zoe.morrison@city.whitehorse.yk.ca).



## Feedback on the Downtown Plan

At the first open house we circulated a short feedback form asking several specific questions about the strengths and weaknesses of Downtown Whitehorse. Thirty completed feedback forms were received.

The five most cited Downtown assets were:

1. Walkability, pedestrian mobility, accessibility and centrality.
2. Beauty of the landscape, natural geography, river and mountain views.
3. The area's rich history, cultural resources and heritage buildings.
4. Riverfront access and open spaces that are well used by tourists and locals.
5. Strong, vibrant and attractive downtown

core and Main Street.

The five most cited challenges were:

1. Dominance of vehicular traffic, congestion, and pedestrian safety.
2. Maintaining Whitehorse's character and sense of history in the face of commercial progress, particularly chain stores.
3. Need for more downtown population, lack of housing options, particularly, affordable multi-family residences.
4. Lack of infrastructure in residential areas and problems with the current methods of financing needed upgrades.
5. Maintaining Main Street vibrancy as north end commercial develops.



Unveiling of the Raven's House by Alyx Jones, a new sculpture in Shipyards Park

## Impressions of a Student Planner

Three weeks ago as I was riding into town from the airport, I heard a trivia contest on the radio. The question was: "When was Main Street first paved?" Having lived in Vancouver most of my life, I had no idea. Then further into town I noticed a street with bike lanes and a middle turning lane. I am currently studying to be a planner and I recognized this road layout as a 'road diet.' It is a fairly new idea in transportation planning.

I arrived at the hostel where I was staying and was shown where the garbage, recyclables and compost each go. Municipal composting is also a fairly new idea. Later that night I noticed that there were wind turbines on top of a

mountain. I quickly developed the impression that Whitehorse is not just at the frontier geographically.

Working with the Planning and Development Services Department as the student planner, I have been given the opportunity to learn a lot about this city. So far, a few features of the city have struck me as particularly interesting. One thing I have noticed is that the city has recently seen the development of big-box retail outlets. This is not unusual, but what is unusual is how close these big-box stores are to the city centre. In other cities, big-box stores locate far away from the city core and compete with it. Here in Whitehorse this type of development is merely shifting retail

activity a few blocks north. Another thing that I have noticed is the infrequency of transit (which is non-existent on Sundays). The city has developed at a low density and this means that transit routes are long and have few riders. In a city that promotes alternative forms of transportation, this is unfortunate. Hopefully future developments will enable residents to rely less heavily on the automobile.

This summer, among other things, I will be working with the residents of Arkell to develop a neighbourhood sign. Watch the City Page in the newspapers for the details. For details please contact me, Chris Wolfe, at 668-8352.

## Update on the New Zoning Bylaw

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) provides broad guidelines and policy direction for the physical layout of the city. Specific land use and development regulations are specified in the Zoning Bylaw.

The Planning & Development Services Department has been working on a new Zoning Bylaw, which will implement many of the recommendations set out in the 2002 OCP. Changes to this bylaw can have significant impacts on homes and businesses in our city.

Our department prepared a draft Zoning Bylaw in 2004 and began public consultation in January 2005. This included open houses, meetings with community associations and individuals, and newspaper ads. In March, the bylaw received 1<sup>st</sup> Reading from City Council. A Public Hearing for the bylaw was to be held April 25, 2005 but Council chose to defer the hearing. It is expected that the bylaw process will restart in September.

In the meantime, we have compiled all the public input and are reviewing the points raised during the public consultation. When we resume work on the Zoning Bylaw, we will be able to address

those issues and if necessary make changes to the bylaw.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- Implementation of the policies in the OCP
- New landscaping regulations
- The designation of new Environmental Protection areas
- Infill development near Ponderosa Drive in Porter Creek and Boswell and Firth Crescents in Riverdale
- Expansion of Chadburn Lake Park
- Greenbelt zoning
- Garden suites
- Increased opportunities for redevelopment Downtown
- Landscape regulations for all zones
- New resort zoning
- New Marwell zoning
- Changes to minimum lot size in Country Residential zones

Copies of the Zoning Bylaw are available at [www.planning.whitehorse.ca](http://www.planning.whitehorse.ca) or free from our department at 4210 4th Avenue. Please call Senior Planner Mike Gau at 668-8333 for more information or email [newzoning@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:newzoning@city.whitehorse.yk.ca).

### Planning & Development Services

Planning: 867-668-8335  
Building Inspections: 867-668-8340  
Fax: 867-668-8395

#### Planning

**Anne Bruce** Planning Clerk 668-8335  
[anne.bruce@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:anne.bruce@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Lesley Cabott** Manager 668-8337  
[lesley.cabott@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:lesley.cabott@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Mike Gau** Supervisor/Senior Planner 668-8333  
[mike.gau@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:mike.gau@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Zoë Morrison** Planner 668-8338  
[zoe.morrison@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:zoe.morrison@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**John MacDougall** Development Officer 668-8334  
[john.macdougall@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:john.macdougall@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Pat Ross** Planning Technologist 668-8339  
[pat.ross@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:pat.ross@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Mike Ellis** Planner 668-8347  
[mike.ellis@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:mike.ellis@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Chris Wolfe** Student Planner 668-8352  
[chris.wolfe@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:chris.wolfe@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

#### Building Inspections

**Joy Janssens** Building Clerk 668-8340  
[joy.janssens@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:joy.janssens@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Cathy Henke** Building Clerk 668-8340  
[cathy.henke@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:cathy.henke@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Lyle Lonneberg** Building/Plumbing Supervisor 668-8340  
[lyle.lonneberg@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:lyle.lonneberg@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Nick Marnik** Building/Plumbing Official 668-8340  
[nick.marnik@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:nick.marnik@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Pete Craft** Building/Plumbing Official 668-8340  
[pete.craft@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:pete.craft@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

**Dave Brink** Building/Plumbing Official 668-8340  
[david.brink@city.whitehorse.yk.ca](mailto:david.brink@city.whitehorse.yk.ca)

