

City of Whitehorse
Minutes of the meeting of the

Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee

Date	July 31, 2024
Location	City Hall, Heritage Boardroom
Committee Members Present	Bryony McIntyre - Chair John Vogt Suzanne Greening Greg Thompson Laura Prentice
Absent	Simon Lapointe Natalie Leclerc Joel Gaetz
Staff	Mike Gau, Director of Development Services Peter Duke, Manager of Planning and Sustainability Aaron Kuntz, Planner II, Planning and Sustainable Service Selena Kaytor, Executive Assistant

* Indicates virtual participation

1. WELCOME

The meeting commenced at 5:30 pm.

Introduction of Aaron Kuntz, Planner II, Planning and Sustainable Services.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY THE CHAIR

The Committee chair provided acknowledgement of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation Traditional Territories.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as amended (addition of items 6 and 7).

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The minutes from June 26, 2024, were approved with amendments.

5. PRESENTATION- Housing Accelerator Fund and Development Incentives

Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) and new proposed Development Incentives were presented by Aaron Kuntz and Peter Duke, which focusses on the 'missing middle'. The HAF program defines the missing middle as as garden suites, secondary suites, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, row houses, courtyard housing, and low-rise apartments (4 storeys or less).

- The presentation included several HLDAC recommendations that had been submitted to City Council earlier in the year.
- The HLDAC committee reviewed and discussed the overview of the HAF action plan, addressing some clarifying questions.
- Builder workshops will be scheduled with the building community in the fall and winter.
- The list of eligible sources for the accelerator fund allocation was given, which includes items identified in the approved action plan, affordable housing, drinking water, etc.

Latest KDFN land developments presented by Greg Thompson

- 76 units are set to undergo development. Greg discussed the accelerator fund, highlighting the extensive range of allowable expenses. For example, an allocation of \$850K was designated for the development of road infrastructure and Range Point.

Question on the Housing Needs Assessments

- The Housing Needs Assessment is conducted using a five-year benchmark to ensure accountability of municipalities. Infrastructure Canada released their robust housing needs evaluation, which will be integrated into the City of Whitehorse's housing needs assessment and is anticipated to be released in 2025.
- Yukon Housing has introduced a methodology that involves public engagement. The City is looking for possible synergies of using their model.

6. Update on the building permit situation

- There were three main reasons that caused delays in getting building permits.:
 1. This was the first year the City had five inspectors working on building permits; unfortunately, two of them left, leaving the department understaffed.
 2. With the increased knowledge and experience coming to the department in early 2024, it was realized that application standards were not meeting minimum standards of the NBC and may have resulted in construction likewise not meeting minimum standards. A more appropriate application standard was implemented quickly, causing builders to have to alter their applications, resulting in a delay of issuance. Plans to roll these changes out to the industry earlier were disrupted due to the loss of staffing.
 3. Compounding these staff and application standards is that this is likely the second busiest building season in history due to applications from last year's lottery and this year's all coming in at roughly the same time.
- In response, the City immediately took steps to address the backlog and ability to recruit new staff:
 - Retained the services of professional staff recruitment consultant
 - Hired three external consultants to conduct plan reviews

- Added virtual inspections option for select builders
- Brought in staff from other City departments to assist with application coordination, pre-reviews, plan reviews and inspection tasks
- Requested assistance from YG for building official services
- Wrote letter to EMR requesting sale agreement extension without penalty for builders who cannot meet timing commitments due to permit delays
- The committee discussed the current situation and potential impacts for next year and future years.

7. Max building heights question addressed

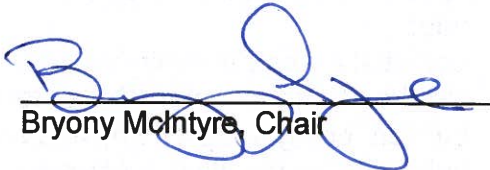
- Peter Duke provided a short update and confirmed Planning work is continuing to clarify this in the new zoning bylaw.

8. Continued Discussion on Land Development Model:

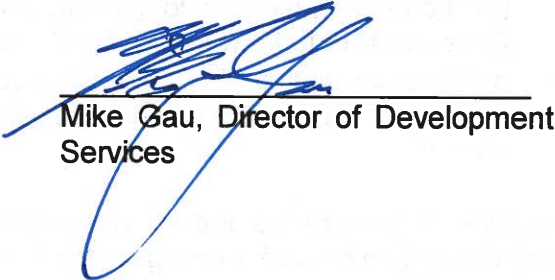
Ongoing discussions regarding land development and land availability included the following points and others:

- Laura Prentice confirmed that there will be no land lotteries released this fall; however, several lots are set to be completed. It is anticipated that 98 lots in phase 12 and 15 lots in phase 13 may be available in the summer of 2025.
- YG has been averaging 150 lots, which is primarily because of limitations in capacity, availability of gravel, and the shortage of truck drivers. Should probably aim for 250 lots/year. End goal is 7900 homes. City should be staffing up for required planning and development impact.
- HLDAC previously discussed the Yukon Government Land Development and Lot Preparation/Release Process diagram and were able to discuss as far as the detailed design and tender phase at their last meeting. A list has been developed to outline the issues for HLDAC to tackle to make recommendations. The timelines for the development agreements were also discussed.
- The City has two coordinators from the Engineering department that builders and developers may contact (Kinden Kosick and Taylor Eshpeter) to set up meetings and serve as a link between them.
- The rules need to be clear for the private sector regarding what the building requirements are for new subdivisions. Peter described the differences between Development Cost Charges (DCCs) for land development and private sector developments.
- Two components to the Development Funding Strategy project that Peter is working on:
 - a) Development Levies including DCC rates and calculations, catchment areas, and benefitting areas
 - b) Latecomer bylaw = front-ending infrastructure. Will include options to ensure a contractor could recuperate their fair share of the project from others that build later. Peter will send the development strategy to the committee when it is complete.

c) ADJOURNMENT: 7:57 pm



Bryony McIntyre, Chair



Mike Gau, Director of Development Services

Recommendation: HLDAC Recommendations on Building Permitting Delays and Impacts

The Committee has identified a number of ripple effects of this summer's building permit slowdown that will have impacts into the building seasons of 2025 and 2026. These include:

- potential for permit expiry as individuals may not be able to start work within the required 6-month period if they receive their permits in the late fall/early winter;
- builders being caught by having excess lot inventory as they have not been able to build in 2024 resulting in excess carrying costs per year and potential inability to be in a position to acquire new lots in late summer 2025 when the next phases of Whistle Bend are due to be released by Yukon government; and
- potential impacts to the timing of development and release of lots in Whistle Bend that may result from a lack of access to the right City staff to support the development project.

In consideration of the above, the Committee Resolved and approved that Council direct Administration to work to mitigate the long-term effects of the current permit issuance slowdown by:

1. Provide for extensions of all building permits issued in 2024 for at least 6 months to ensure that the permits are in place for spring of 2025.
2. Ensure that the bylaw to implement HLDAC's previous recommendation (to allow builders to apply for permits but not pay their fees until they activate their permits) is enacted to allow builders to apply early and work to even out permit volumes over the winter/spring.
3. Look at potential to prioritize review of building permits for new residential builds.
4. Discuss potential impacts these delays will have on the next phases of Whistle Bend with YG to ensure the release of lots result in the maximum number of homes being built.
5. Continue to access external contracting support on an annual basis to support any backlogs or staffing issues.
6. Investigate creative ways to access qualified building inspectors by:
 - discussing potential secondment possibilities with Yukon government;
 - assessing potential arrangements (like temporary assignments) with other municipalities located outside Yukon; and
 - assessing the salary and benefits package for the Building Inspector position to create incentives for qualified individuals currently working in the private sector to apply to work with the City of Whitehorse.

Draft Motion:

Adoption of *HLDAC Recommendations to City Council on the Building Permit Delays and Impacts*

2024-08-

THAT the *Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee (HLDAC) Recommendations 'Building Permit Delays and Impacts'* be adopted.

