

City of Whitehorse Zoning Bylaw Rewrite
Round 2 Engagement Summary
Final Report





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Introduction 1.0

This report provides a summary of the feedback gathered by the project team throughout the engagement period. This document focuses specifically on outlining the feedback received through surveys, a Council meeting, and a series of public pop-up events.

A separate memo will outline how this input and public comments have been used to shape the final rewrite of the Zoning Bylaw (ZB).

2.0 Zoning Bylaw Rewrite Overview

The City of Whitehorse's Zoning Bylaw (ZB) is among its most important planning documents, required to implement the vision and policy directions of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and guide the day-today review of development applications. The City's ZB was adopted in 2012, and over the last thirteen years the document has been incrementally revised and amended in response to emerging issues and zoning amendments.

In March 2023, the City adopted their 2040 OCP, which sets out the City's long-term vision, guiding principles, and supporting policies for growth and services. An update to the ZB is needed to aid in the implementation of the OCP's vision for growth and development in the City, to ensure that the ZB aligns with all City bylaws and policies, and to create a bylaw that is clear, concise, and easy to interpret by City Administration, developers, and residents.

The Zoning Bylaw Rewrite includes four phases:



WE ARE HERE

Phase 1: Understanding Needs

Phase 1 includes the project launch, background and best practices research, the first round of external and internal engagement, and the development of Zoning Bylaw policy needs.

Phase 2: Section by Section Rewrite

Phase 2 involves drafting the new Zoning Bylaw using information gathered in Phase 1.

Phase 3: Sharing the Draft

In Phase 3, the Draft ZB will be shared with the public through a variety of online and in-person engagement methods to gather feedback.

Phase 4: Refine, Circulate, and Adopt

Phase 4 involved formal circulation of the bylaw in alignment with the Yukon Municipal Act prior to adoption.



3.0 External Engagement Round #2 Overview



Phase 3 of the preparation of the Zoning Bylaw was titled "Sharing the Draft," in this phase the second major round of zoning bylaw focused engagement occurred (building on the initial round of engagement that occurred in early spring 2024, and the related Short-Term Rental engagement in summer 2024). Community engagement activities for this round of engagement were designed to be informative and straightforward, providing in-person and online opportunities to engage the public. Using both in-person and online methods of

engagement allowed the project team to reach a wider audience to provide feedback and increased the number of residents and interested parties who were able to participate in the process.

Engagement tasks undertaken in Round #2 Engagement are outlined below:

A. Hello To Council #2. Administration met with Council on May 7 and 8, 2025, to discuss the Draft Zoning Bylaw and share the content with elected officials prior to the community engagement.

B. In-Person Engagement. The Draft Zoning Bylaw was presented to the public for review and feedback in a series of traditional open houses and pop-ups, including:

- May 21 Open House at the Yukonstruct Society Building Approximately 15 Attendees
- May 22 Pop Up at the Canada Games Centre Engaged with approximately 60 people
- May 28 Open House at the Old Fire Hall Approximately 40 Attendees
- May 29th Pop Up at the Fireweed Market Engaged with approximately 45 people
- June 10th Pop Up at the Canada Games Centre Engaged with approximately 30 people
- June 12th Pop Up at the Fireweed Market Engaged with approximately 50 people

Attendees were provided information on how to visit the Virtual Open House and Online Survey via the Engage Whitehorse project page and encouraged to provide feedback via those mediums in addition to conversations with project planners at the events.

C. Virtual Open House. To supplement the in-person engagement, a Virtual Open House (VOH) was created to share the project information in a virtual visiting room and provided a longer window of time for resident feedback. The VOH included the same information boards, maps and other documents utilized for the in-person engagement events.

The VOH was available on the City website from May 16 to June 20, 2025, and had approximately 595 visits and 221 unique visitors to the site.

D. Online Survey. To complement the in-person and VOH engagement opportunities, a link to the online survey was integrated into the VOH tool and available on the Engage Whitehorse project page to gather feedback from residents and interested parties.

The survey was available on the City's website and via the VOH tool from May 16 to June 20, 2025, and received 224 responses. The survey findings are summarized in the section below.



4.0 High-Level Summary of External Engagement Round #2

4.1 **Online Survey Summary**

Housing

Many respondents are concerned that Whitehorse will lose its character and resemble every other major cities downtown with tall buildings. Some respondents emphasized the importance of maintaining what makes the city visually unique, especially in historic neighbourhoods. Some respondents support higher density. Many respondents support reducing light pollution.

Parking

Many respondents expressed the desire for more parking options in Whitehorse. Some respondents indicated a need for a parkade downtown to give more parking options that don't take up space on the street. Many respondents stated if parking were to be reduced, the public transit system would need to be more efficient and connect the entire city. Some respondents do not support reducing parking in the Urban Core because many homes have more than one car and street parking is perceived as already limited.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Respondents were split on supporting and not supporting the changes to short-term rentals. Some respondents who are short-term rental operators believe the proposed changes are too restrictive and will impact their ability to earn income. Some respondents expressed support believing that the housing market will improve for buyers and renters. Some respondents are concerned the changes will impact the tourism industry by giving temporary workers less options to stay.

Urban Agriculture

Many respondents strongly support allowing market gardens as a "home-based business". Many respondents strongly support allowing indoor agriculture within industrial and commercial/industrial zones.

City Design

Many respondents would like to see more routes for active modes of transportation, and routes that are pedestrian friendly. Some respondents expressed concern that Whitehorse will lose its character and what makes it unique if there's a push to increase density. Some respondents expressed the need for more green spaces and landscaping throughout the city. Feedback was mixed regarding the proposed setback changes.

Simplifying the Bylaw

Many respondents support reducing the numbers of pages, zones, uses and sections in the draft zoning bylaw. Many respondents are indifferent with how the bylaw is proposed to be administered.

4.2 **In-person Engagement Summary**

Housing

There was broad support for initiatives enabling more housing development in Whitehorse. Some residents support allowing mobile homes in general and to provide housing for new workers.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

There were mixed views on STRs as many rely on STRs for supplemental income and dislike increased regulation. There were concerns raised about the clarity and fairness of new STR regulations (e.g., one STR per person vs. per property, primary residence requirements). There was support for licensing, inspections, and increased fees for STR operations, as well as strong enforcement for non-compliance.



STRs are seen as vital during major events, for temporary workers, and for situations like hospital stays or leaving abusive relationships. Some fear regulations will not improve housing availability and could negatively affect tourism and available rental stock; others hope regulation will lower rents and increase long-term rentals. There was some feedback received about whether STR restrictions will make housing more affordable or simply shift the burden elsewhere (e.g., raise hotel prices).

Parking

There was general support for reducing or removing parking requirements downtown to allow for more development and walkability, with some opposition from residents facing parking shortages. Some residents suggested that the City consider resident parking passes, senior priority parking, park-and-go systems, and a new parkade. There were some concerns raised about whether alternative transportation infrastructure would replace the need for parking.

Walkability and Active Transportation

There was support for measures to improve walkability and reduce car dependence, such as increased density and reduced parking minimums. However, some residents feel Whitehorse remains too spread out for effective transit and active transportation.

Building Heights

There was mixed support for taller buildings downtown to increase housing. There was some opposition to increased heights in Hillcrest and near Old Town due to concerns about neighborhood character, sunlight, and infrastructure capacity. And concerns were noted about the lack of transparency and communication regarding height changes in zoning proposals.

Agriculture and Parks

There was some uncertainty about regulations in agricultural zones and building homes before starting farm operations. There was support for hobby farm regulations and some concerns about balancing density with preservation of park/natural spaces. Some residents had a positive outlook on integrating new park space with development.

Permits and Zoning Processes

There were some complaints raised about slow and restrictive permitting processes hindering development and investment. Residents requested clearer, more efficient zoning bylaws and permit processing.

Miscellaneous Feedback

There was a desire for better enforcement and clearer amenity space requirements. Some suggested improvements to subdivision and site design, raised concerns over environmental impacts of EV charging, and support for consolidation of zones. Some requested more proactive and direct engagement methods, including town halls, better notification to stakeholders, and more in-depth analysis of potential regulation impacts.

Community Engagement

Some residents stated their frustration with current engagement methods (open houses, surveys), with many preferring town-hall-style meetings and better notification processes. Some raised concerns that impacted residents and property managers are not being adequately informed or consulted on City projects.



4.3 Additional Feedback Received Summary

Infill Development

Respondents noted that there are many underdeveloped areas in established Whitehorse neighborhoods that could support new residential infill. It was noted that most identified infill lots are currently designated as greenspace, but amending the Official Community Plan could allow development with minimal environmental and social impact. It was noted that infill lots are close to existing infrastructure and would be economical to develop, requiring only land surveys and geotechnical assessments. Developing infill was seen as faster, easier, and less impactful than building entirely new neighborhoods.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

There were concerns raised about the six-month cap on STRs in primary residences, as this could reduce accommodation for visitors and create burdens for operators. It was noted that the draft bylaw introduces additional STR restrictions, including a night-cap and listing limit, which may be redundant and difficult to enforce. Parking requirements for STRs in commercial zones were identified as an area of the bylaw that needs clarification. It was suggested that temporary zoning exemptions for STRs be permitted until a comprehensive, data-driven STR policy can be developed. STRs are seen as beneficial for tourism and property owners, with some people suggesting STR impacts on long-term housing supply are minimal (less than 1% of Yukon housing units). It was noted that policies should incentivize more housing construction rather than restrict STRs.

Tourism and Visitor Accommodation

It was noted that visitor accommodations are supported in most commercial zones, with policies encouraging mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and visually appealing developments. Tourism-related uses are supported, while balancing resident needs and enhancing visitors' experiences. Accessibility was seen as to be addressed, with at least one fully accessible unit requited per 20 hotel/motel rooms.

Parking, Electric Vehicles and Sustainability

Concerns were raised about the proposed changes to parking minimums downtown and the impact that reduced parking would have on the economy and housing. It was recommended that changes to parking in downtown are implemented in phases and in consultation with residents. It was noted that new requirements for bicycle parking and EV charging support sustainability, however there were questions on the net environmental benefit of these transportation modes.

Building Design and Stepbacks

Concerns were raised about building stepbacks as they would reduce housing supply, increase costs, and diminish affordability. Suggestions were shared about encouraging simpler, box-shaped building designs to maximize affordable housing and energy efficiency.

Fire Management and Landscaping

Recommendations were shared to improve fire-safe landscaping, including removal of vegetation near buildings and use of non-combustible materials. It was suggested that the city limit conifers and require non-combustible building materials to reduce wildfire risks.

Mining and Temporary Uses

It was recommended that the bylaw include flexible language to support mineral exploration while safeguarding long-term city planning goals. Concerns were shared that zoning changes should not impact existing mineral rights or access.



Urban Agriculture

It was recommended that the city permit principal residences on agricultural lands to support farm operations. It was also suggested that the city keep diverse agricultural uses (e.g., market gardening, apiculture) in major agriculture zone definitions. Concerns were raised about restrictive livestock allowances limiting agricultural viability.

Other Zoning and Development Topics

It was noted that the bylaw should clarify lot width calculations on pie lots, update childcare centre requirements, and resolve any ambiguity with respect to fence height. It was suggested that the City allow more flexibility in multiplex housing, caretaker suites, parking allocations, and building heights in certain zones. Feedback was also shared about zoning that affects insurance eligibility and affordability for mixed-use or duplex buildings.

Bylaw Administration and Clarity

Concerns were raised that the new bylaw may create significant administrative burdens for city staff. It was suggested that the bylaw include clear language, fewer typos, explanatory visuals, and summarize guidance to improve usability for business owners and residents. It was recommended that the bylaw should increase transparency, streamline permitting, and use plain language to ensure accessibility and predictability in development processes.



5.0 Online Survey

Community members were asked to provide feedback on several topic areas of the draft zoning bylaw including housing, parking, short-term rentals, urban agriculture, city design, and simplifying the bylaw.

5.1 Housing

Participants were asked to rate their level of support with the new housing updates. 55% of people responding were in support of the updates, whereas 13% did not support the proposed changes, indicating a favourable level of support from respondents.

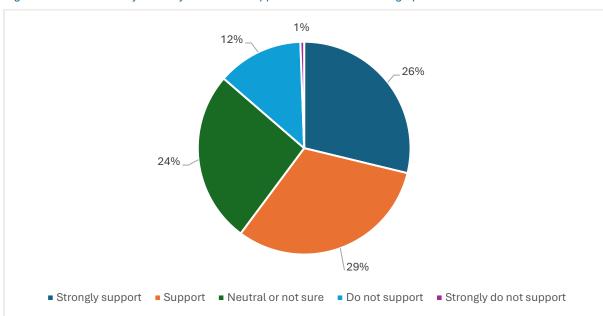


Figure 4.1: How would you rate your level of support with the new housing updates?

Responses: 210

Increasing Building Heights

Participants were asked if they had any comments on the proposed building height increases (Responses: 117).

Those who did not support the proposed building height increases stated:

- They do not support the proposed building height increases
- They are worried that the city will lose its character and start to look like every other major city's downtown
- They are concerned that sunlight will be blocked by taller buildings
- They do not want building heights to increase in Hillcrest because it's a historic neighbourhood with primarily single-story homes



Those who supported the proposed building height increases stated:

- They support the proposed building height increases
- They want higher density neighborhoods
- · Buildings should be taller
- They would like impacts to sunlight and city character to be taken into consideration when designing and constructing

5.2 Parking

Reducing Parking Requirements in Downtown

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Downtown area. The overall responses were mixed with 34% in support with the reduction and 35% were unsupportive. Taken together with the 19% of respondents who took a neutral position there was no clear outcome based on survey results.

Compared to feedback on reducing parking requirements in the Urban Core and Urban Centres, respondents were more favourable to reduced parking requirements in the Downton.

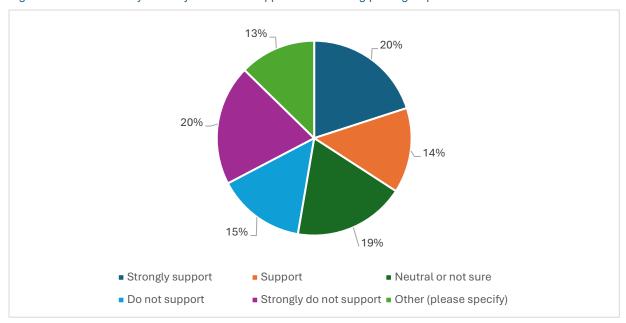


Figure 4.2: How would you rate your level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Downtown area?

Responses: 205

- Access to other modes of transportation (ex. transit and biking) needs to improve before parking requirements in the Downtown is reduced
- Add a parkade to reduce the need for street parking



Reducing Parking Requirements in the Urban Core

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Urban Core. Similarly, the responses were mixed with 31% of people in support and 42% not in support of the reductions in the Urban Core. Taken together with the 20% of respondents who took a neutral position there was a slightly negative response from respondents.

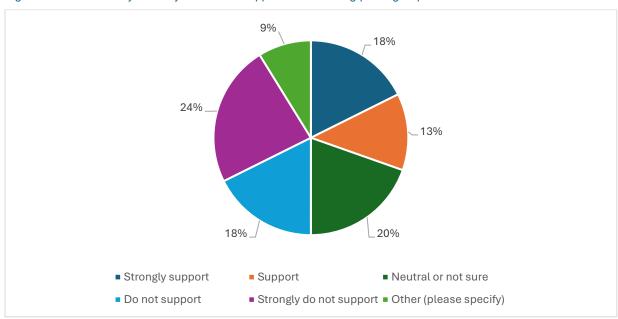


Figure 4.3: How would you rate your level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Urban Core?

Responses: 204

- Public transportation needs to improve before reducing parking requirements
- Areas in the Urban Core are already struggling with finding parking because many homes have more than one car



Reducing Parking Requirements in the Urban Centres

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Urban Centres. 30% support the reduction in Urban Centres whereas 43% do not support. Taken together with the 16% of respondents who took a neutral position there was a slightly more negative response from respondents compared to reducing parking in the urban core

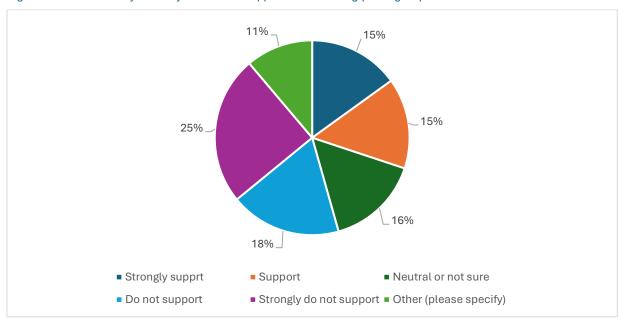


Figure 4.4: How would you rate your level of support with reducing parking requirements in the Urban Centres?

Responses: 206

- Parking in the Urban Centres are already difficult and reducing parking requirements would make parking in the areas more difficult
- Public transportation needs to improve before reducing parking requirements
- There is not enough parking per residential unit
- Add a parkade to reduce the need for street parking



Reducing Parking Requirements in Higher Density Multiple Housing Developments

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with reducing parking requirements in higher density multiple housing developments. Roughly one third (32%) of respondents were in support and 43% of people were not in support. Taken together with the 16% of respondents who took a neutral position there was a slightly negative response from respondents.

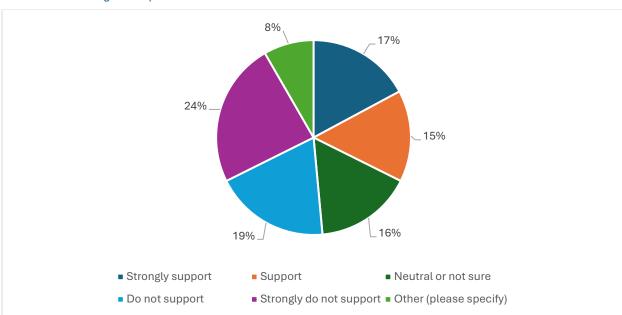


Figure 4.5: How would you rate your level of support with reducing parking requirements in higher density multiple housing developments?

Responses: 204

- Public transportation needs to improve before reducing parking requirements
- Having space to park an RV/boat/trailer is important
- If street parking is reduced there needs to be other options for people who drive such as a parkade or underground parking



Parking Changes

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support for parking changes in the zoning bylaw. Mixed reviews remain, with 34% were in support of parking changes and 39% were not in support. Taken together with the 19% of respondents who took a neutral position there was no clear outcome based on survey results.

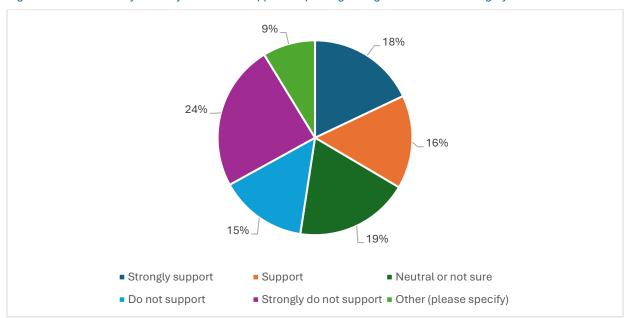


Figure 4.6: How would you rate your level of support for parking changes in the draft zoning bylaw?

Responses: 206

- If parking requirements were to change, there should also be a plan to improve public transportation and active transportation in the city
- · People with disabilities need ground level parking



5.3 Short-Term Rentals (STR)

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with the new STR regulations. Half of the respondents (50%) were in support of the new regulations whereas 36% were not in support, and 12% of respondents were neutral on the proposed amendments, indicating a favourable level of support from respondents.

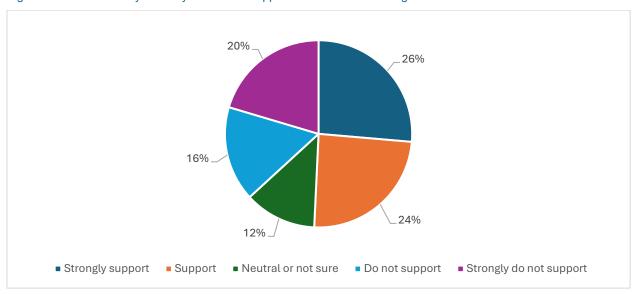


Figure 4.7: How would you rate your level of support with the new STR regulations?

Responses: 201

Participants were asked if they had any comments on the proposed STR content in the draft zoning bylaw (Responses: 94).

Those who do not support the proposed STR content in the draft zoning bylaw stated:

- · Current short-term rental operators say the proposed changes would impact their ability to earn income
- They believe the proposed changes are too restrictive
- The government should not set regulations around how someone uses their personal property
- They are worried that these changes will impact the tourism industry by increasing prices and giving temporary workers less options on places to stay

Those who support some but not all the proposed STR content in the draft zoning bylaw stated:

- They support the proposed changes to residential zones
- They either supported or do not support the proposed changes for the commercial zones



- They do not support the proposed change of short-term rental operators being required to live on the same property as the short-term rental
- There should be limits on the number of short-term rentals per person or per lot in commercial zones

Those who support the proposed STR content in the draft zoning bylaw stated:

- They support the proposed STR content in the draft zoning bylaw
- They believe the proposed changes will improve the housing market for buyers and renters
- The proposed changes will set clear guidelines for operators to follow

5.4 **Urban Agriculture**

Market Gardens

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support for allowing market gardens as a "home-based business". Relative to other topics, respondents were very supportive with the majority of participants (81%) supporting this proposed change that would enable urban agriculture.

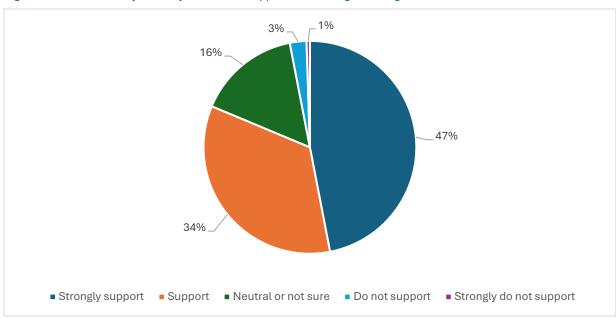


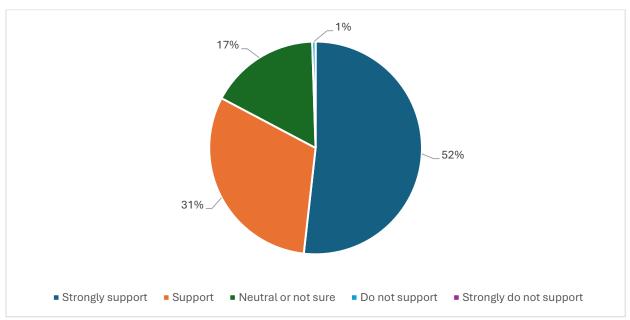
Figure 4.8: How would you rate your level of support for allowing market gardens as a "home-based business"?



Indoor Agriculture within Industrial and Commercial/Industrial Zones

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with allowing indoor agriculture within industrial and commercial/industrial zones. Most respondents (83%) were in support of this proposed change. Enabling agriculture in the City remains an important issue for people responding to the survey.

Figure 4.9: How would you rate your level of support with allowing indoor agriculture within industrial and commercial/industrial zones?





5.5 **City Design**

City Design Regulations

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with the new proposed amendments to city design regulations. Roughly two thirds (67%) of respondents were in support of the proposed amendments and only a small number of respondents (13%) were not in support.

5% 8% 34% 33% Strongly support Neutral or not sure Do not support Support Strongly do not support

Figure 4.10: How would you rate your level of support with the new proposed improvements to city design regulations?

Responses: 196

Participants were asked if they had any comments on the proposed city design amendments or stepback requirements in the draft zoning bylaw (Responses: 70).

Comments from respondents are summarized as follows:

Alternative modes of transportation

- Some respondents support more access for active modes of transportation to get around Whitehorse, and less focus on vehicles
- Some wanted Whitehorse to be more pedestrian friendly

Character

- Some respondents were concerned that Whitehorse will lose its character and what makes it unique if there's a push to increase density
- A few respondents stated that they don't support having buildings come right up to the sidewalk



FireSmart

A few respondents stated that there should be more emphasis on FireSmart throughout the city

Green space

· Some respondents noted that they would like to see more green spaces and landscaping maintained throughout the city

Light pollution

- Many respondents noted that they support reducing light pollution
- · A few respondents stated that they are concerned about visibility for pedestrians at night if light pollution is reduced

Parking

• A few respondents stated that they are concerned that there is not enough parking currently to support the goals of increasing density

Stepback requirements

• Feedback was mixed regarding the proposed stepback changes. A few respondents stated that they support the stepback requirements and a few did not support them.



5.6 Simplifying the Bylaw

Participants were asked to rate their level of support with reducing the number of pages, zones and sections in the draft zoning bylaw. Over half (55%) of the people responding were in support of the simplification and 35% of people were neutral or unsure.

2% 4% 4% 26% 35% 29% ■ Strongly support Support Neutral or not sure Do not support Strongly do not support Other (please specify)

Figure 4.11: How would you rate your level of support with reducing the number of pages, zones, uses and sections in the draft zoning bylaw?

Responses: 191

- · Development officers shouldn't have too much authority
- Public engagement should be required for variances
- Variances should be more challenging to get approved to encourage people to comply with the requirements in the OCP
- Let common sense local neighbourhoods decide
- · A document with a small number of pages can be complex and a document with a large number of pages can be simple. Not a useful metric.
- Virtual open house was challenging to view on smart phones
- Specific use "Industrial (Resources)" refers to "natural resource extraction," which could include extraction of mineral ores, not just soil and aggregate materials (e.g., gravel). Zone "Other -- Quarry (OQR)" is "to provide a site for the on-site removal, extraction, and primary processing of soil and aggregate materials found on or under the site." "Industrial (Resources)" is only permitted inside OQR.
- The definition of "Other -- Quarry (OQR)" should be broadened to harmonize with "Industrial (Resources)" by including extraction of any natural resources, not just gravel.
- Conserve all green spaces for recreational and cultural values.



Administering the Bylaw

Participants were asked how they would rate their level of support with how the bylaw is proposed to be administered. Slightly over half (55%) of people said they were neutral or unsure about how the bylaw is administered, whereas a third (33%) of respondents were in support of what was proposed. The largely neutral position of respondents is indicative that the topic was less important than others raised in the survey.

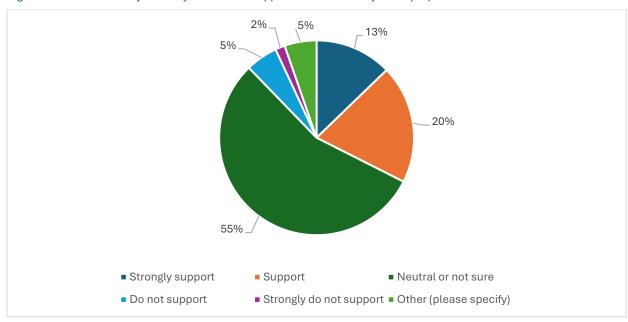


Figure 4.12: How would you rate your level of support with how the bylaw is proposed to be administered?

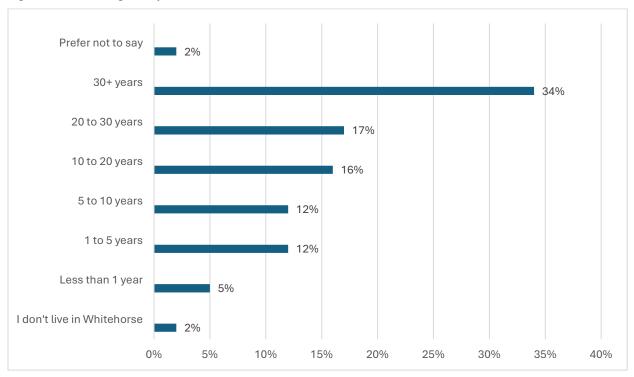
Responses: 188

- OK with appeal provision but do not support "Increasing flexibility in the size and scope of allowances (minor variances)". Leaves DO at risk of corruption - from undue influence and/or bribery by proponents/developers.
- As mentioned earlier, concerns about enforcement.
- I do not support increasing the security amounts for landscaping and hard surfacing
- Need local neighbourhood input. Consensus.
- Admin decisions are often inconsistent and change year-to-year. Rules change too often too.
- What is this question getting at? Devolving authority for a Planning Committee or staff to make minor decisions? Not clear what the change proposed is.
- The development of this zoning bylaw is taking place in parallel with the development of Chasan Chua (McIntyre Creek) Park boundaries, in which the City is an active participant and which was the subject of earlier public consultation. I sincerely hope that the two processes are synchronized. Otherwise, any conflict will create needless waste of effort and time for the City's other government partners in the park development.



Demographics 5.7

Figure 4.13: How long have you lived in Whitehorse?



Responses: 195



Another Whitehorse neighbourhood (please specify) 1% Prefer not to say Outside of Whitehorse 2% Fox Haven, Wolf Creek, Pine Ridge, Spruce Hill,... 3% Macpherson, Hidden Valley 1% Range Point 1% Takhini Granger 3% Hillcrest 8% Valleyview 1% McIntyre 0% Ingram, Arkell, or Logan 1% Copper Ridge 11% Raven's Ridge, Eagle's Eye 0% Riverdale 15% Whistle Blend 12% Crestview Porter Creek 12% Downtown 12% 0% 2% 4% 6% 8% 14% 10% 12% 16%

Figure 4.14: What neighbourhood/community do you currently live in?

Responses: 194

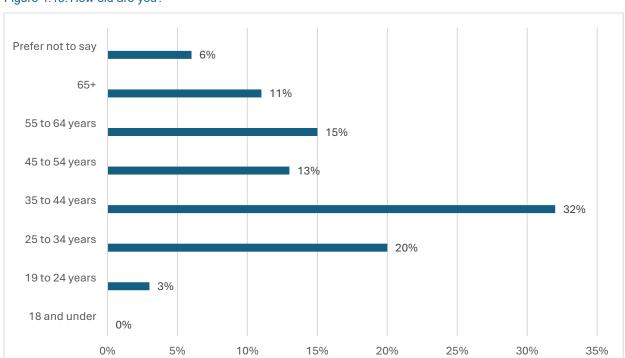
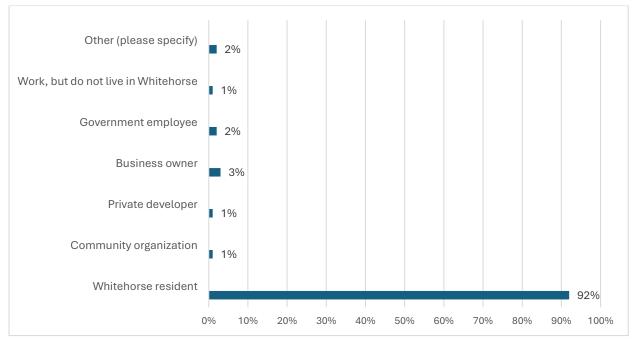


Figure 4.15: How old are you?



Figure 4.16: Please select which best describes you and the perspectives you are sharing (for example, completing the survey on behalf of an organization)



Responses: 193

Figure 4.17: Do you identify with any of the following groups? Please select all that apply.

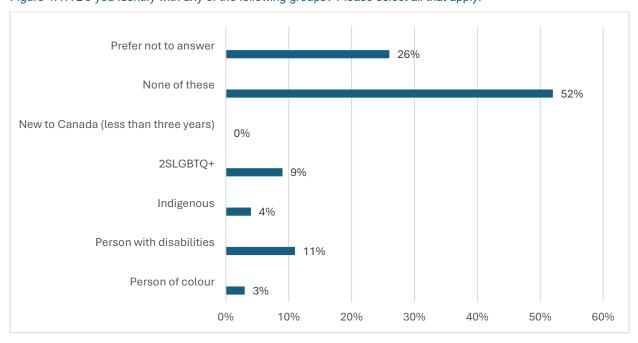
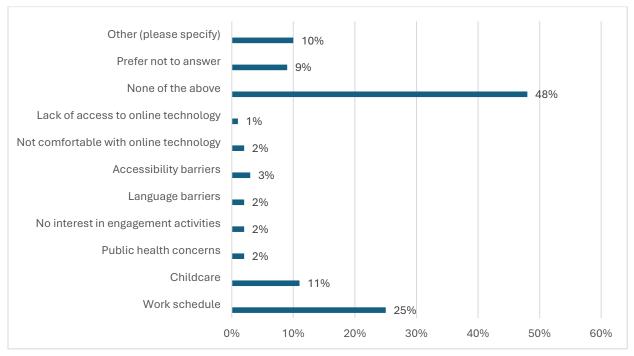




Figure 4.18: Is there anything that would prevent you from participating in future engagement activities? Please select all the apply.





Next Steps 6.0



The final steps in creating the new Zoning Bylaw involves formal circulation of the bylaw in alignment with the Yukon Municipal Act and the City's legal counsel to get a final set of seasoned eyes on the ZB prior to adoption.

- A. Advisory Group Meeting. At the final meeting with the Zoning Bylaw Advisory Group (ZBRAG) we will update them on public feedback outlined in this Engagement Summary and review and confirm potential edits to the ZB.
- B. "Circulation" Draft + Circulation. We will amend the Draft Zoning Bylaw based on Advisory Group feedback and make a circulation-ready copy. This circulation draft will be circulated internally to other City departments, to the appropriate approval authorities and the City's legal counsel for final review.
- C. Final Draft Zoning Bylaw and Mapping. Once feedback has been collected on the circulation Draft, we will prepare the Final Draft Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map for formal consideration by City Council.
- D. City Standing Committee Meeting. The Final Draft Zoning Bylaw will be presented to Council at a City Standing Meeting as part of the adoption process. Once adopted, the Final Zoning Bylaw will be usable both online and printed out if desired.