



Image Source: Google Maps

# City of Whitehorse Zoning Bylaw Rewrite Round 1 Engagement Summary

## Final Report

February 2024



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## 1.0 Zoning Bylaw Rewrite Overview

A municipality's Zoning Bylaw (ZB) is among its most important planning documents, required to implement the vision and policy directions of their Official Community Plan (OCP) and guide the day-to-day review of development applications. The City of Whitehorse's ZB was adopted in 2012, and over the last decade 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 options.

### 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 involves formal circulation of the bylaw in alignment with the Yukon Municipal Act prior to adoption.

## 2.0 External Engagement Round #1 Overview

Round #1 of External Engagement included the following activities:

### What's Working Interviews

Interviews were conducted with interested and affected parties and rights holders gather input on the strengths and weaknesses of the current Zoning Bylaw and suggestions for improvement. The interviews were conducted in person between December 4th, 2023, and January 9th, 2024. The following groups were interviewed:

- First Nation Governments,
- Government of Yukon,
- First Nation Development Corporations,
- Architectural Firms,
- Engineering Firms, and
- Builders/Developers.

### Online Survey #1

An online community survey was conducted to gather feedback from the general public on how well the current ZB is working and how they would like Whitehorse to grow and develop in the future. The survey was available on the City website from November 29th, 2023, to January 6th, 2024 and received 417 responses.

### Written Feedback

Two residents sent written feedback to the City. This feedback is included in the high-level summary of feedback.

## ■ 3.0 High-Level Summary of External Engagement Round #1

### Zoning Bylaw Regulations

Most survey respondents were not very familiar with the current Zoning Bylaw and experienced challenges with its regulations, interpretation, and development permit process. Survey respondents and interviewees suggested more flexible zoning and regulations that allow for more creativity, efficiency, and innovation in urban development and reduce the constraints and requirements that hinder density and alignment with the Official Community Plan (OCP).

### Housing

Most respondents indicated a need for more diverse, affordable, and accessible housing options in Whitehorse, such as apartments, living/garden suites, supportive housing, and accessible housing. They supported various methods to enable more housing development, such as allowing more units per lot, smaller lots, taller buildings, and additional housing forms. They also supported allowing business owners to provide housing for staff in industrial and commercial areas. They shared their ideas on how to create complete communities with mixed uses, amenities, and transportation options.

### Parking

Most respondents supported reducing or removing minimum off-street parking requirements, especially in the downtown area and near public transit hubs. They also supported relaxing parking requirements if additional amenities, such as bicycle parking, electric vehicle chargers, or car share parking, are provided.

### City Design

Most respondents expressed a desire for more winter and sustainable design elements in Whitehorse, such as energy efficient buildings, renewable energy, green roofing, adaptive reuse, daylighting, passive solar design, bird-friendly design, xeriscaping, native landscaping, reduced light pollution, permeable paving, bright colours, sunlight exposure, community spaces, and snow and ice clearing. They also shared their thoughts on how to make Whitehorse more accessible and safe for everyone, especially pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities. They identified some buildings, sites, structures, or areas that capture the 'look and feel' of Whitehorse, such as historic buildings, Main Street, the Kwanlin Dūn Cultural Centre, and log skyscrapers.

### Active Transportation

Many respondents emphasized the importance of clearing snow and ice from sidewalks, roads, active transportation routes, and accessible parking stalls to ensure the city is accessible and safe in the winter. Many respondents also indicated a need for different neighbourhoods to be connected to the downtown area through active transportation routes. Bike paths should be paved and separated from car traffic. Design for pedestrian safety and accessibility with wider sidewalks, lighting, and traffic calming.

### Public Transit

Most respondents would like to see more efficient, reliable, and frequent public transit that connects the entire city. Covered bus stops with heating and wind breaks are also desired. Some respondents suggested that parking requirements could be reduced when located close to transit hubs.

## ■ 4.0 What's Working Interviews

The summary below outlines key findings from the What's Working Interviews. More detailed feedback from First Nation Governments, the Government of Yukon, Architectural Firms, and Engineering Firms can be found in [Appendix A, City of Whitehorse Zoning Bylaw Re-Write: Key Stakeholder Interviews](#). Feedback from First Nation Development Corporations and Builders/Developers was less comprehensive than feedback from other groups but has been incorporated into the overall summary below.

Participants expressed a need for a more adaptable, efficient, and innovative approach to urban planning and development in Whitehorse, with a focus on intensifying, addressing housing affordability, streamlining processes, and reducing development constraints. The recommendations suggest a vision for a dynamic and responsive urban environment that meets the needs of the community while promoting sustainability and economic viability. Key themes and recommendations for the Zoning Bylaw rewrite that emerged include the following:

- More flexible zoning and regulations that allow for more creativity, efficiency, and innovation in urban development and reduce the constraints and requirements that hinder density and alignment with the Official Community Plan (OCP).
- Waste management practices emerged as a significant constraint for increased density, with developers and architects advocating for more sustainable solutions such as smaller garbage bins, on-street pick-up by the city for smaller developments, and alternative methods for waste servicing.
- Elimination of parking minimums and promotion of transit and bike transportation, as well as density bonuses for public good enhancements such as affordable housing, green spaces, and active transportation improvements.
- Streamlining of the development permit (DP) process and empowerment of planners to make informed decisions and facilitate dialogue with developers and other departments and agencies. Reduction of the level of engineering details and geotechnical requirements at the DP stage.
- Permitting of more housing options and forms, such as garden suites, living suites, temporary housing, mobile and modular homes, and missing middle housing, as a means to address housing needs and affordability.
- Consideration of wildfire risk reduction, reconciliation, and historic land use interests in zoning regulations and development projects.



## 5.0 Online Survey

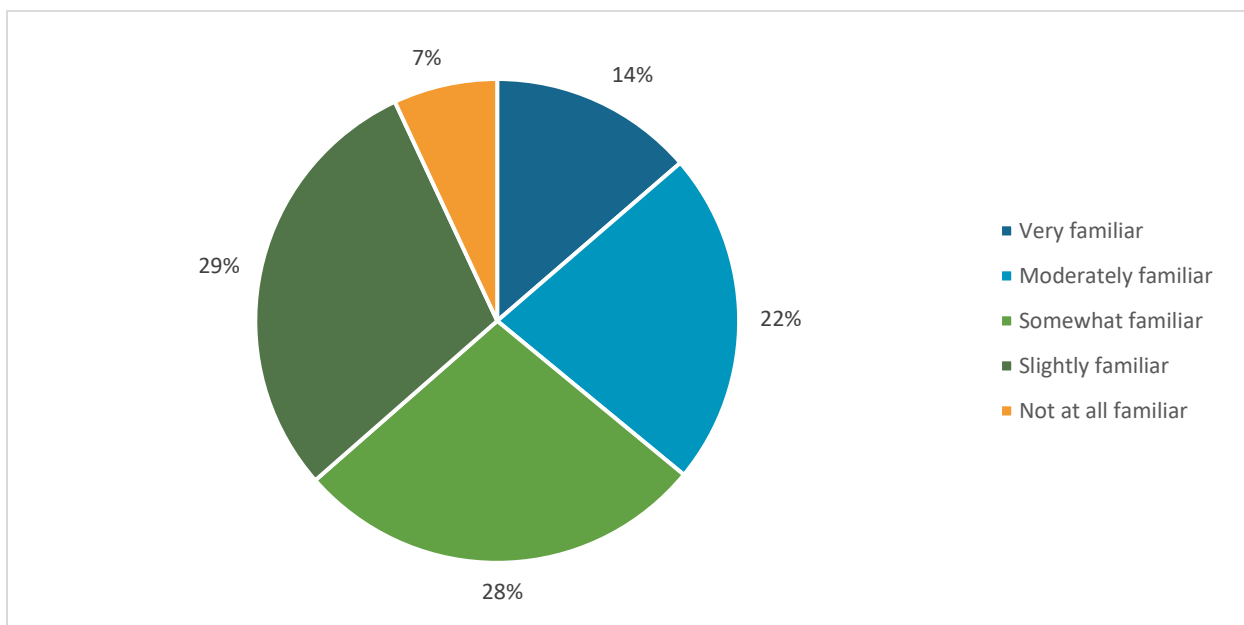
Community members were asked to provide feedback on several topic areas, including usability of the current Zoning Bylaw, housing, parking, and city design.

### 5.1 Current Zoning Bylaw

#### Familiarity with the Zoning Bylaw

Participants were asked how familiar they are with Whitehorse's current ZB.

Figure 5.1: How familiar are you with Whitehorse's ZB?



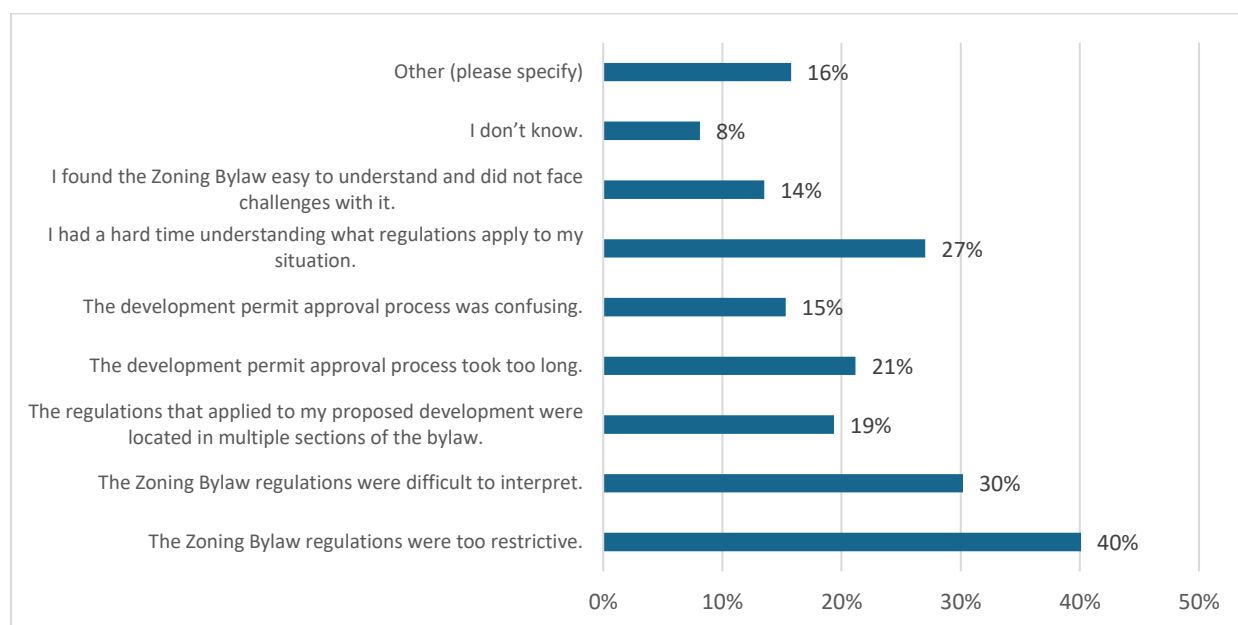
Responses: 417



## Challenges with the Zoning Bylaw

Participants were asked what challenges, if any, they have experienced when using the current ZB.

Figure 5.2: Based on your past experience, what, if any, challenges have you experienced when using the Zoning Bylaw?



Responses: 222

Those who answered “other” stated:

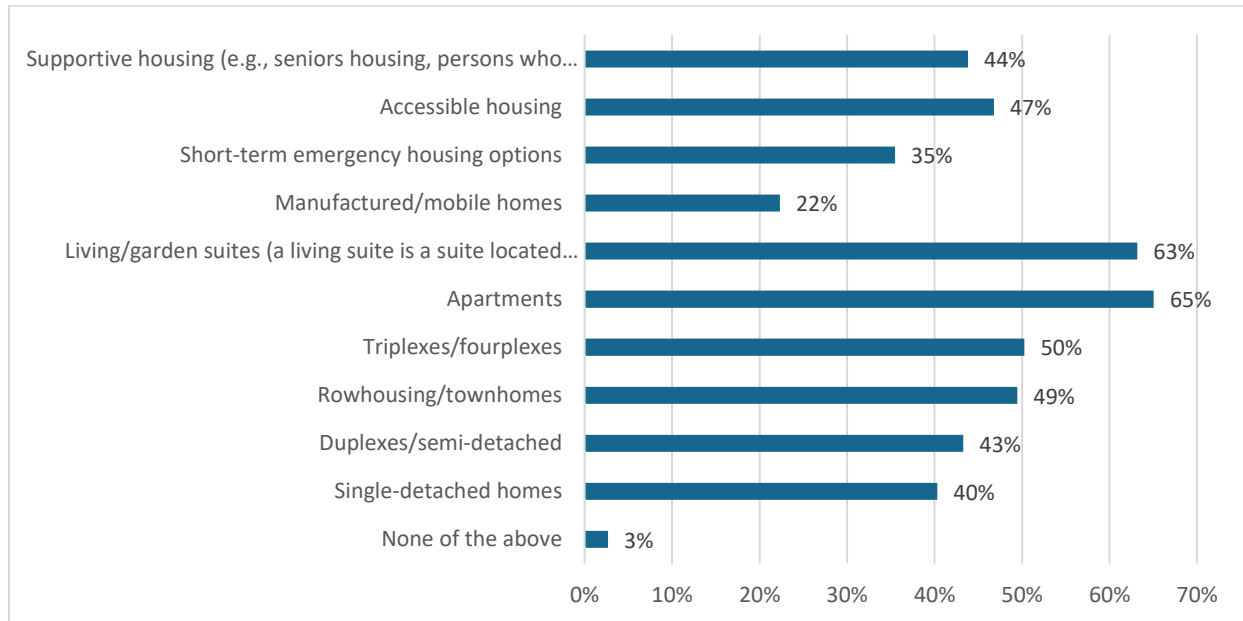
- Zoning maps, regulations, and definitions are complicated and difficult to interpret, making it challenging to understand which information applies to individual development circumstances.
- There is conflicting information located in different sections of the document.
- The process was straightforward.
- The development permit approval process is not clear and could be streamlined.
- Regulations are not enforced and are not applied consistently.
- Regulations are too permissive of activities that harm the environment (such as mining within City limits).
- The Zoning Bylaw is not in alignment with other City policies.
- Policies should allow for increased density, affordability, and creative or unique developments and retrofits.
- Parking minimums should be reduced.
- There are too many similar zones.
- There is confusion regarding what Environmental Protection Areas are and where they are applied, and passive recreation mean.

## 5.2 Housing

### Housing Types

Participants were asked what types of housing they believe Whitehorse needs more of.

Figure 5.3: What types of housing do you believe Whitehorse needs more of?



Responses: 372

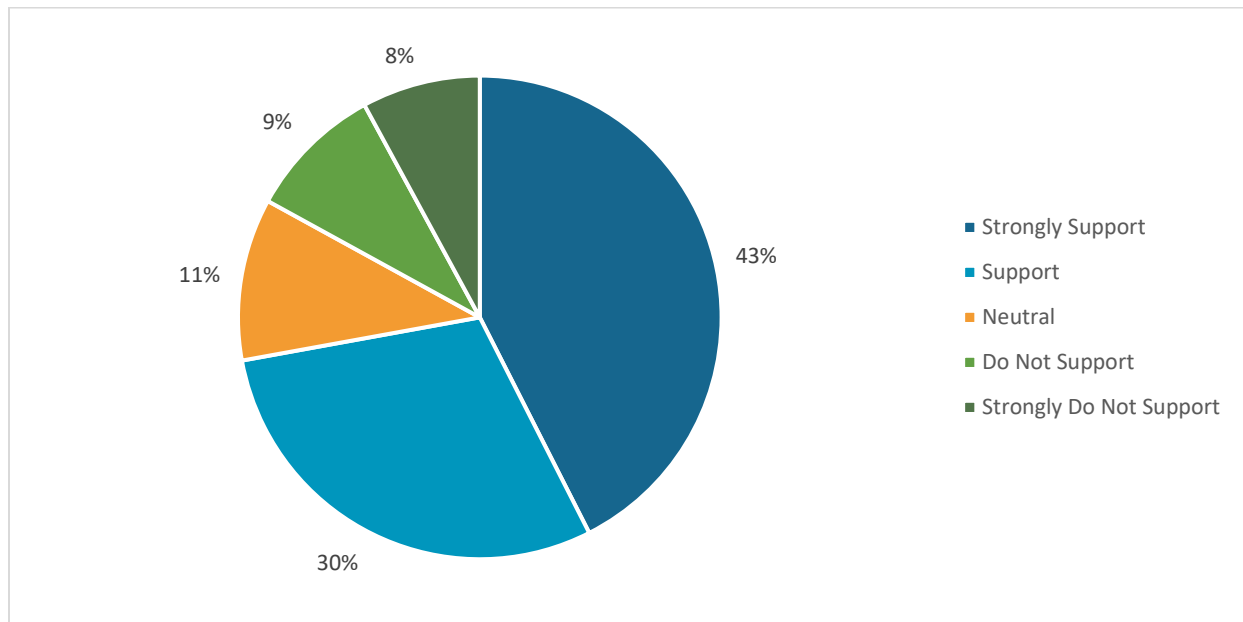
Participants who selected “supportive housing” were asked to specify their answers:

- Many respondents indicated a need for accessible, affordable seniors housing with varying levels of support, ranging from independent living to fully supportive living.
- Many respondents indicated a need for affordable housing, including nonmarket housing, affordable tiny homes, transitional housing, subsidized housing, and cooperative housing.
- Many respondents indicated that housing with specific services or for specific groups is needed, including:
  - People facing addictions,
  - Second stage or transitional housing,
  - People with physical and mental disabilities,
  - Mental health issues,
  - Women fleeing abuse,
  - Single parents,
  - Wrap around services, and
  - Accessible housing.
- Many respondents stated that all types of supportive housing are needed.
- Some respondents stated that increased housing density is needed.
- Some respondents stated that housing first initiatives to help the unhoused population are needed.

## Enabling Housing Development

Participants were asked to provide their level of support for a list of methods the City could explore to enable the development of more housing across existing and new neighbourhoods.

Figure 5.4: Allow more units per lot.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- More permissiveness/incentives for secondary suites are needed, including more than one suite allowed on a lot, smaller minimum lot sizes for garden suites, and allowed living suites in duplexes.
- This will help with housing supply and affordability.
- Increased density is efficient for servicing, public transportation infrastructure, and walkability.
- Density should be increased while also making areas more livable and walkable with schools, mixed use developments, greenspaces, and increased public transportation infrastructure.
- Some respondents thought this should only be done in zones that already permit high density, some thought it should be in mixed-use areas and on large lots, and some thought it should be done all over the city.
- More density in the Country Residential zone is needed.
- Medium density housing is needed.
- Depends on lot size, servicing, parking, and traffic.

Those who are **neutral** said:

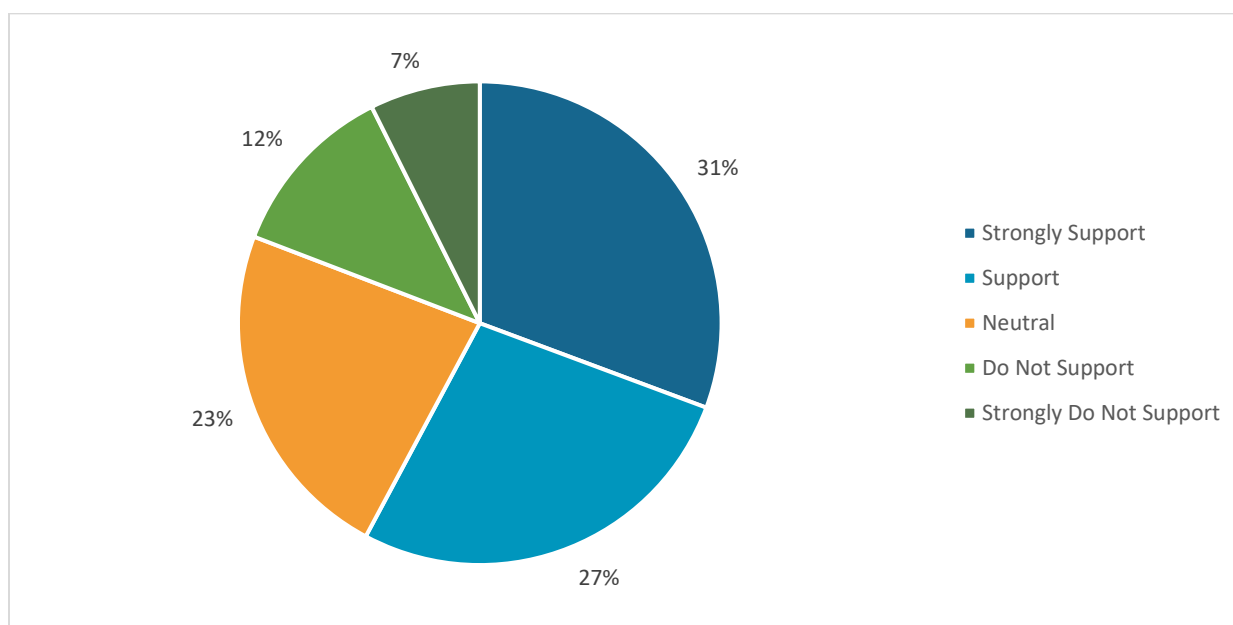
- It depends on the area of the city, the lot size, and type of housing.
- Only if there is sufficient parking.
- There are concerns about servicing capacity.

Those who **do not support** said:

- Yards are important for children to play in and for space to garden.

- This is supported only in certain areas with servicing capacity and larger lots.
- Dwellings will become too crowded and will cause traffic and parking issues.
- Infill leads to increased housing prices on existing lots.
- Existing lots are already too small for a family.
- The current infrastructure does not allow for more density.
- This will increase wildfire impacts.
- People purchased homes in neighbourhoods with the understanding that density will stay the same. Densification will impact the value of existing properties.
- Less density creates more access to nature.

Figure 5.5: Allow smaller lots.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- This supports the development of more affordable housing.
- Creating more density is supported.
- Smaller lots are a more efficient use of space, with more efficient servicing, public transit infrastructure, and walkability.
- RR lots should be subdivided.
- RR lots and large lots in older neighbourhoods could be subdivided.
- There should be opportunities for tiny home designs.
- This should only apply to new neighbourhoods.
- Not everyone wants a yard.
- Depends on dwelling type.
- More variety and diversity of lot sizes and dwelling types is good.

Those who are **neutral** said:

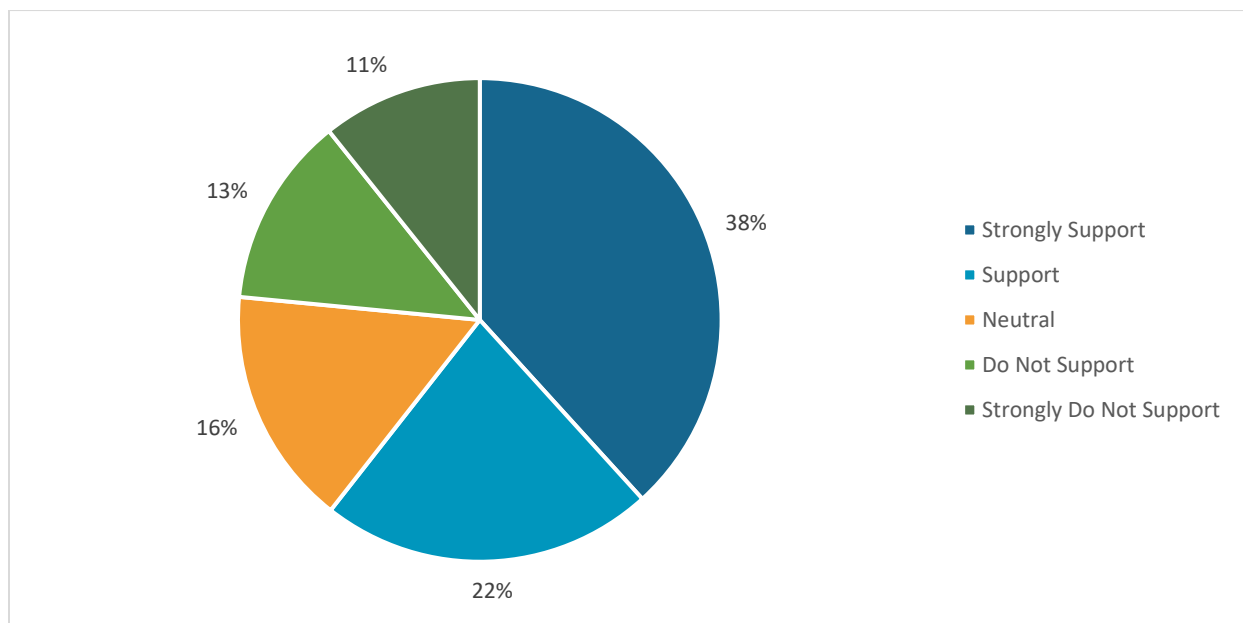
- There should be a diversity of lot sizes.
- Concerned about shortage of parking.

- If lots are smaller, dwellings should also be smaller.
- This should only apply in new neighbourhoods; existing neighbourhoods should remain as is.

Those who **do not support** said:

- There are already many small lots in the city, particularly in new developments and downtown.
- Whitehorse has a lot of land.
- Smaller lots cannot accommodate garden suites and do not allow for outdoor space.
- Depends on where this would be applied.
- Single detached homes on small lots are not an effective use of space.
- Residents need room for storage and outdoor space.

Figure 5.6: Allow taller buildings in the downtown area and/or near public transit hubs.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Some respondents think there should be a maximum of 5-8 stories, while others think there should be a maximum of 8-10 stories.
- Shadow studies should be required to reduce blocking of sunlight.
- Higher density should be built along transit routes and near transit hubs and should be mixed-use.
- This is a good option for additional affordable medium- and high-density housing.
- This will help reduce sprawl and allow for more efficient servicing and public transportation.
- Building heights should be more restricted near the waterfront.

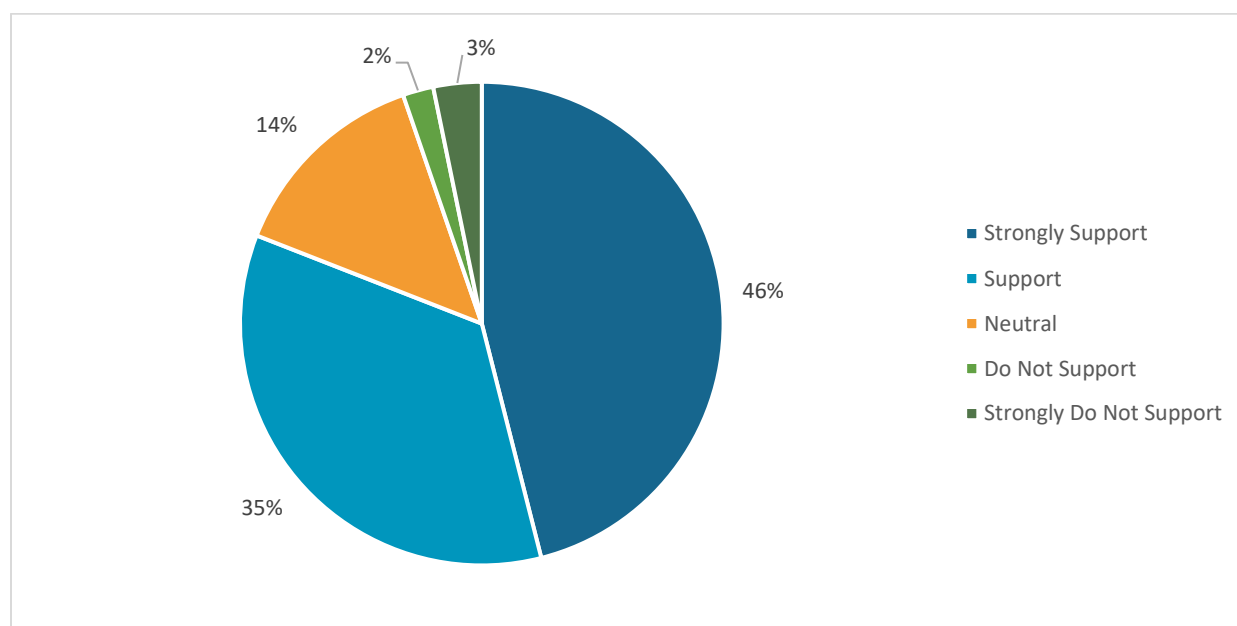
Those who are **neutral** said:

- Missing middle housing should be encouraged over higher density housing.
- Only if buildings do not block views of the cliffs or river, and do not block sunlight.
- Whitehorse has a lot of land.
- The maximum height should be 5-6 stories.

Those who **do not support** said:

- Taller buildings block sunlight and views.
- Maximum of six stories is sufficient.
- The maximum building height now is appropriate.
- Additional parking and road infrastructure would be needed downtown.
- This will negatively change the character of the downtown.
- Downtown is already dense enough; taller buildings should be allowed in other areas. III
- There are not currently transit hubs in Whitehorse.
- We need a mixture of housing types.

Figure 5.7: Allow additional housing forms (e.g., stacked townhouses, tiny homes, manufactured homes).



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Many respondents said that tiny homes should be encouraged.
- More affordable, diverse, and creative housing types are needed.
- This will allow for diverse solutions to the housing shortage.
- Only in new developments or where it fits with the character of the area, not in existing neighbourhoods.
- Only if they are affordable and there are appropriate regulations in place.
- Some respondents do not support manufactured homes, while others support them.
- Increased density should be encouraged.

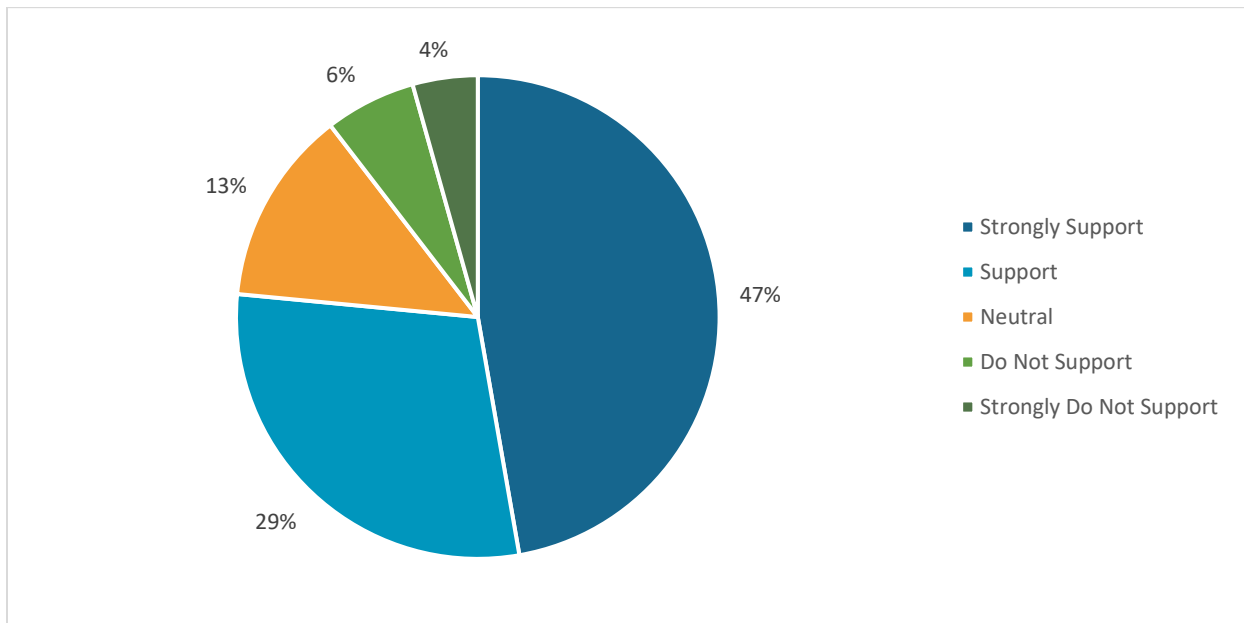
Those who are **neutral** said:

- Tiny homes are not an efficient use of land.
- Existing neighbourhoods should remain as is.

Those who **do not support** said:

- Residents want more space.
- This will result in poor quality housing.

Figure 5.8: Allow both a living suite and garden suite on the same lot.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Only on lots where servicing permits it.
- Only if adequate parking is provided.
- Only if lots are large enough.
- Supports aging in place.
- As long as they aren't too large or tall.
- This is beneficial for extended families/multiple generations to live on the same lot.
- Increasing density is a good idea.
- Local traffic may be impacted.
- This will help increase affordable rentals.
- Restrictions on short-term rentals are needed.

Those who are **neutral** said:

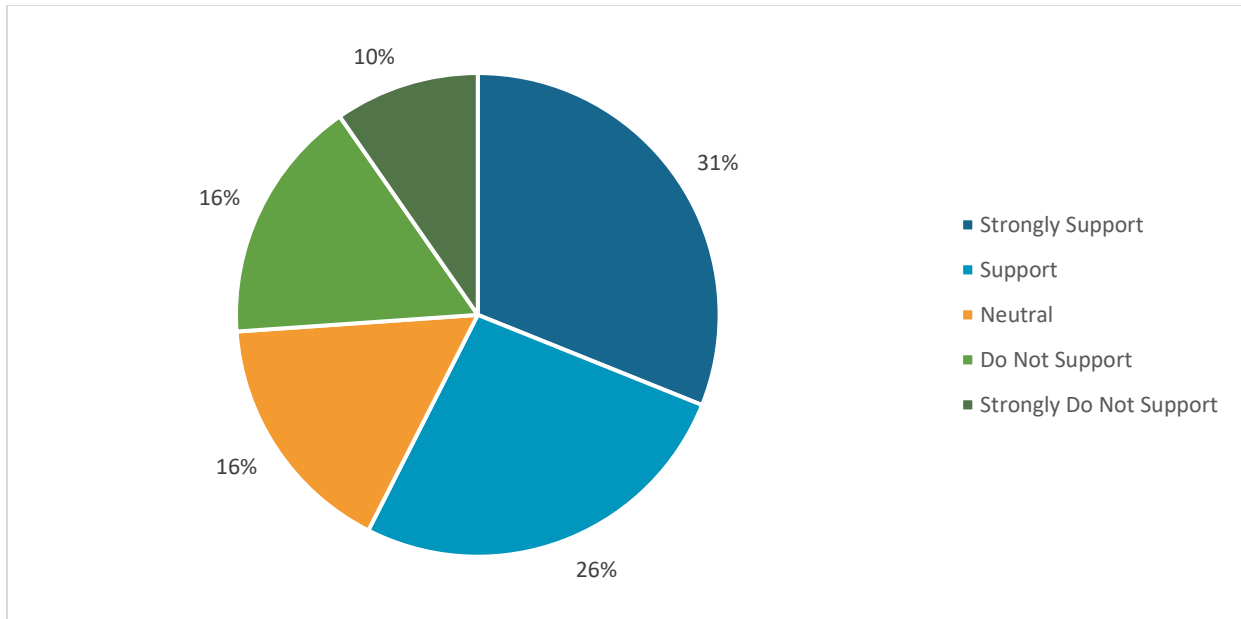
- Depends on the size of the lot and the density of the area.

Those who **do not support** said:

- This will cause problems with lack of parking.
- This will cause a strain on infrastructure.
- This will increase the prices of existing lots.



Figure 5.9: Allow living suites and garden suites in multi-unit dwellings (i.e., townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes).



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- This should depend on lot size.
- Better public transit, active transportation, and shared greenspace must accompany increased density.
- This would support multi-generational living.
- Density is supported.
- Parking may cause issues.

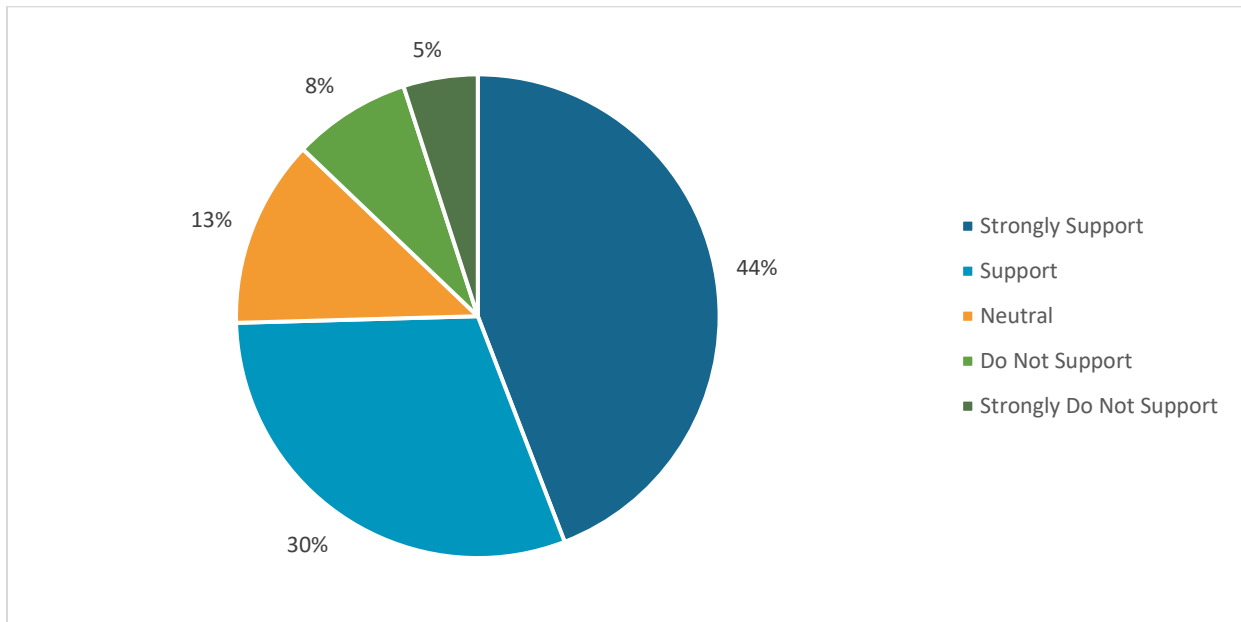
Those who are **neutral** said:

- Depends on lot size and surrounding density.
- More information on how this would work is needed.

Those who **do not support** said:

- The lots are already too small and will become too crowded/dense.
- This will cause parking issues.
- This could cause issues with condominiums.
- Maybe a living suite, but not a garden suite.

Figure 5.10: Allow living suites and garden suites in any residential zone in the city.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- This is a way to increase quickly density without as many negative impacts and lower costs.
- Residents should be able to be creative with housing solutions.
- This can create more rentals.
- Depends on the size of the lot.
- Impacts on traffic and parking need to be considered.
- If the lot is large enough this should be allowed.

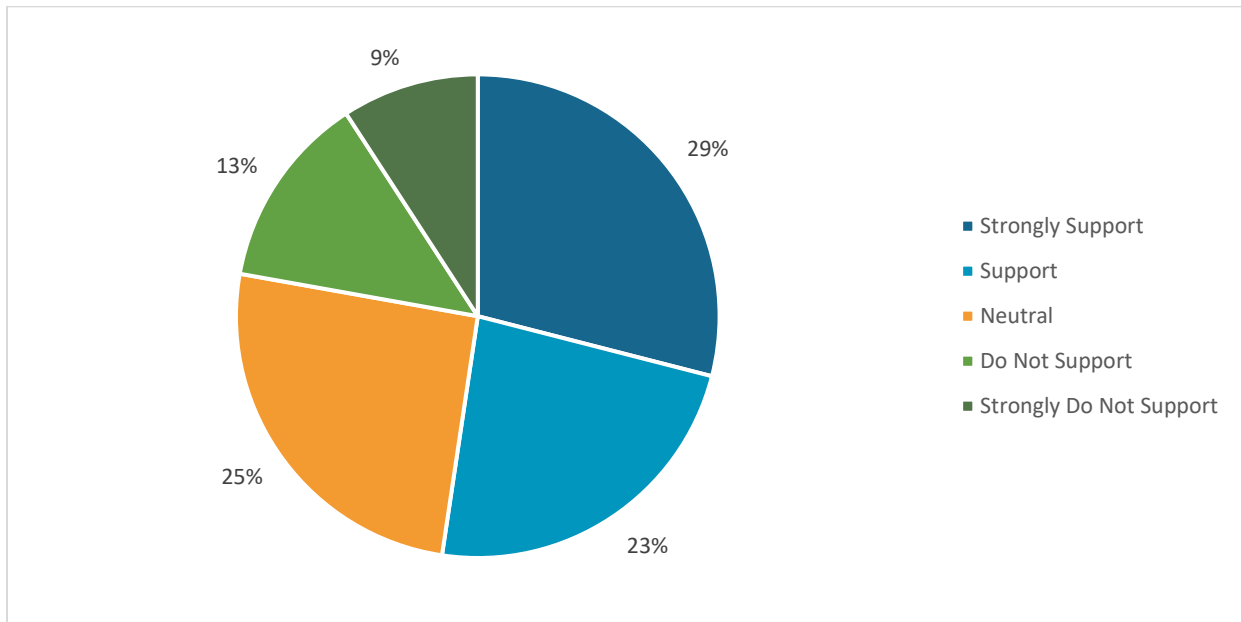
Those who are **neutral** said:

- It should be allowed where it makes sense (i.e., on large enough lots, enough parking provided)

Those who **do not support** said:

- There should be consideration of infrastructure and lot size.
- Densification would impact property values.
- Not everyone wants to live in a dense area.

Figure 5.11: Reduce minimum building setbacks where more dwelling units are provided.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Only if it does not negatively impact neighbours or infringe on public space.
- Smaller setbacks are better for smaller lots.
- Large setbacks are too restrictive.
- Smaller front yard setbacks help create more connected, social communities.
- As long as the fire code is considered.

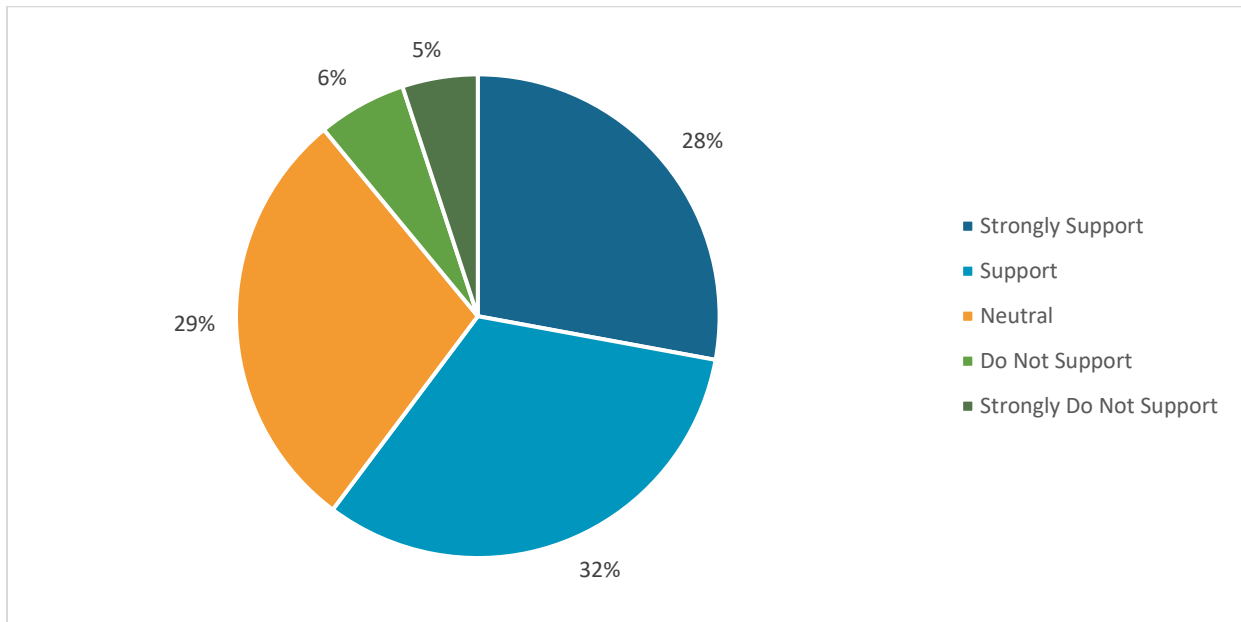
Those who are **neutral** said:

- Only if infrastructure and lot size allow for it.
- More information is needed on what the impacts of this would be.

Those who **do not support** said:

- This creates higher fire risk.
- This would become unsafe.
- This would just allow developers to build very large homes.
- Setbacks are needed for greenspace.
- This creates too much density and congestion.
- This impacts neighbour's views and sunlight.

Figure 5.12: Increase allowable site coverage where more dwelling units are provided.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Only if shared or public amenity space is provided.
- As long as this doesn't result in larger more expensive housing.
- Some design regulations would be needed.
- Increased density is good.

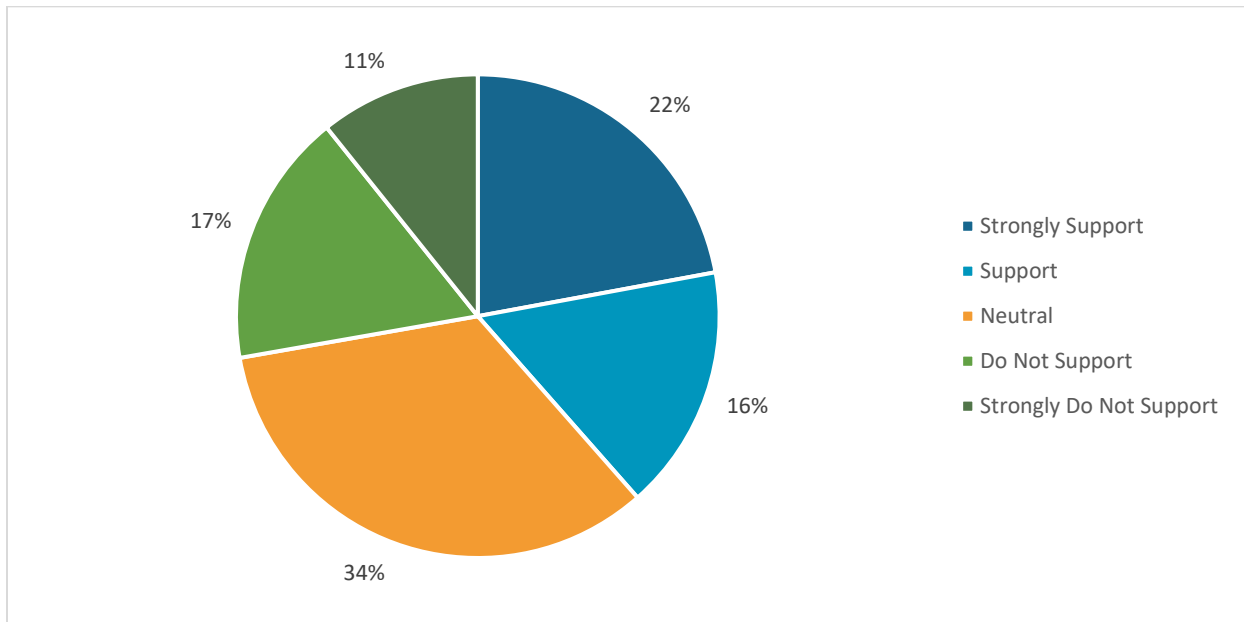
Those who are **neutral** said:

- Impacts on fire suppression, parking, traffic, and servicing should be considered.
- More clarification on this is needed.
- This should be decided case-by-case.

Those who **do not support** said:

- Adequate distances are needed between neighbouring buildings for parking and safety.
- Greenspace is needed.

Figure 5.13: Reduce amenity space requirements where more dwelling units are provided.



Responses: 349

Those who **support** said:

- Some amenity spaces are rarely used and increase the cost of development.
- There should be access to nearby public amenity spaces.

Those who are **neutral** said:

- Some respondents did not understand this question.
- If public amenity space is easily accessible, then yes.
- It depends on the type of amenity space.

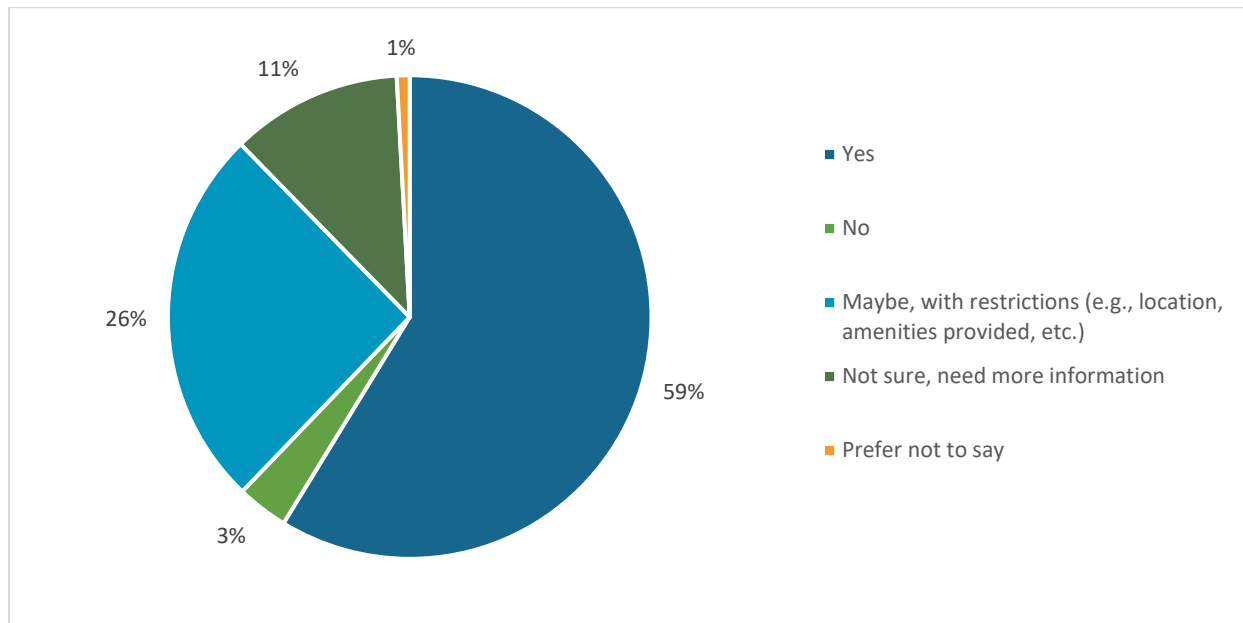
Those who **do not support** said:

- Amenities are needed when increasing density to create a healthy neighbourhood.
- Parks and green spaces are important.
- This results in more people parking on the street.

## Housing in Industrial and Commercial Areas

Participants were asked whether they support the City exploring allowing business owners to provide housing for staff in industrial and commercial areas.

Figure 5.14: Are you supportive of the City considering allowing business owners to provide housing for staff in industrial and commercial areas?



Responses: 349

Additional comments from respondents who said **yes** include:

- There need to be regulations in place to ensure employees are not taken advantage of.
- This would help create more affordable housing.
- Industrial areas should be provided active transportation routes, public transportation access, and other amenities.
- More people living in industrial or commercial areas would potentially decrease crime in these areas at night.
- Employers providing housing would help with attracting and retaining employees.
- Mixed-use neighborhoods and housing above businesses are supported, as they create a more vibrant community.
- Only employees should be allowed to live in this type of housing.
- This would be beneficial for seasonal employees.
- This type of housing should only be permitted if the housing is safe, suitable, and compatible with adjacent uses.

Additional comments from respondents who said **maybe, with restrictions** include:

- Many respondents stated that regulations need to be in place to ensure housing is suitable and safe.
- Regulations are needed to ensure employees are not exploited or given sub-par living conditions, particularly for seasonal or temporary foreign workers.

- Amenities would need to be provided, such as transit access, parks, and commercial services to ensure the areas are livable.
- It needs to be understood that these areas would not be serviced like other residential areas.
- More information is needed about the amount of housing needed, potential regulations, servicing, and access to amenities.
- There should be regulations in place that this housing is only allowed to be provided for employees.

Additional comments from respondents who said **no** include:

- This will create unlivable conditions for staff, including a lack of community, limited active transportation, nuisances from industrial activities, and potential exploitation from employers.

Additional comments from respondents who said **not sure, need more information** include:

- This could lead to the exploitation of employees.
- These areas should be designed thoughtfully with access to amenities, to avoid becoming work camps.

## Complete Communities

Participants were asked for their ideas on how the City could transition existing residential areas into complete communities.

## Responses: 274

### Mixed-use

- Many respondents support more flexible, mixed-use zoning with commercial uses in residential areas for both new developments and existing residential areas.
- Many respondents would like to see more diverse commercial uses within walking distance in residential areas, including clinics, retail, grocery stores, gyms, restaurants, community centres, corner stores, employment areas, and gas stations.
- Some respondents would like commercial uses within residential areas to be limited to necessities, with other services being located in central hubs, such as downtown.
- Others would like to see more diverse commercial uses, like local retail, restaurants, and personal services located in residential areas.
- Many respondents support allowing residential dwellings above commercial uses.
- Some respondents stated that commercial uses should be permitted in infills within residential areas.
- Schools and government services should be located in each neighbourhood.
- Many respondents stated that increased density is necessary to create more vibrant, mixed-use communities.
- Build commercial nodes with mixed uses and higher density housing around them.
- Some respondents stated that the City should provide incentives to develop commercial uses in residential areas.
- Current residential zoning is too restrictive.
- Some respondents stated that parking minimums should be removed within neighbourhoods.
- Commercial developments within residential areas should not require off-street parking, creating more space for development.
- Incentivize commercial development in residential areas.



- The city has done a good job creating complete communities.
- Increase flexibility for home-based businesses.
- Remove single family zoning and residential only zoning and include a mix of residential uses.
- Industrial and residential uses are not compatible.

### **Density**

- Many respondents support increased density throughout Whitehorse, particularly near transportation routes and commercial hubs to create complete communities and support commercial uses in residential areas.
- Some respondents would like to see higher density in new developments, not in existing areas.
- Increased density can be achieved by allowing larger buildings and more dwelling units on a lot.

### **Transportation**

- Most respondents agree that active transportation is essential for complete communities, including safe, separated bike lanes, interconnected trails and pathway systems for all ages and abilities, and sidewalks.
- Many respondents indicated a need for different neighbourhoods to be connected to the downtown area through active transportation routes.
- Active transportation routes need to be maintained, cleared of snow, and have appropriate lighting.
- Most respondents would like to see more efficient, reliable, and frequent public transit.
- Many respondents would like the city to not be designed around cars and to be able to access daily needs without driving.
- Many respondents want to reduce or remove parking minimums.
- A few respondents would like to see less bike lanes.

### **Public Space**

- Many respondents support retaining natural greenspace and trails.
- Many respondents would like each community to have access to outdoor public spaces such as parks, sports fields, and community gardens.
- Some respondents would like to see both indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces and community events.

### **Planning**

- Many respondents agree that community plans/comprehensive plans should be developed prior to development with consultation from the applicable community.

### **Feasibility**

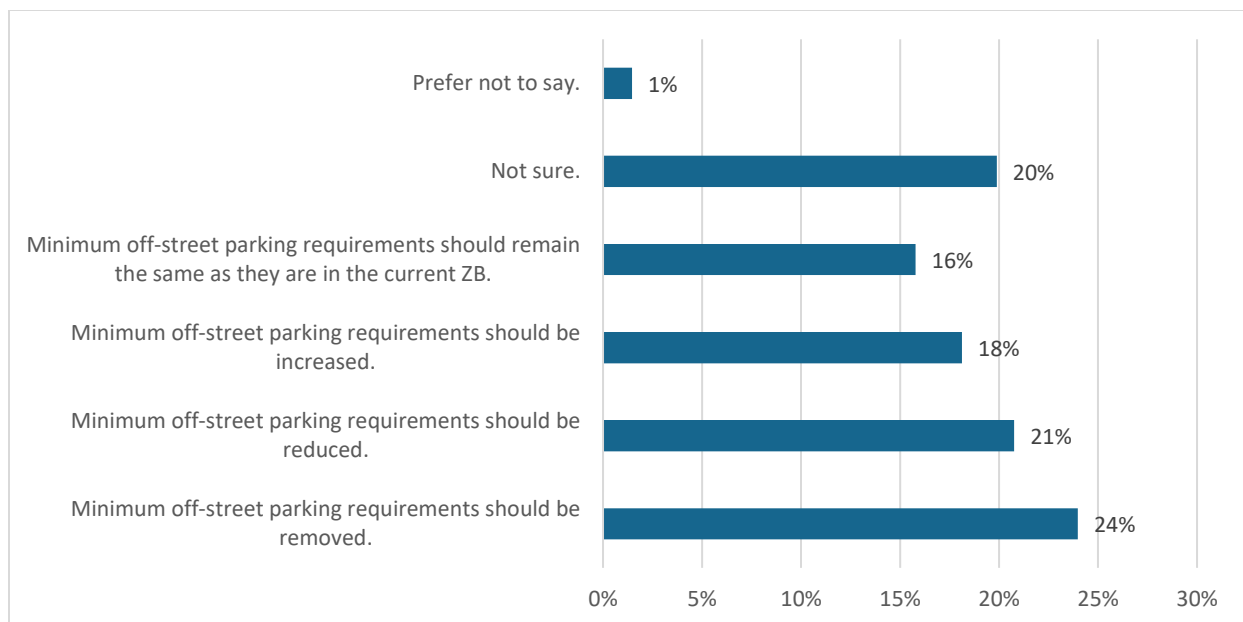
- This may not be feasible in Whitehorse, due to financial constraints, city staff capacity, and sprawl.

## 5.3 Parking

### Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements

Participants were asked whether, in their opinion, minimum off-street parking requirements should be removed, reduced, increased, or kept the same.

Figure 5.15: Please select the statement below that you agree with most regarding minimum parking requirements in Whitehorse.



**Responses: 342**

Participants were asked in what areas of the city their answer to the previous question should apply.

### Responses: 218

Those who answered **minimum off-street parking requirements should be increased** said:

- Some respondents said downtown.
- Some respondents said everywhere in Whitehorse.
- Some respondents said in all residential areas, with some indicating Whistlebend in particular.
- A few respondents said commercial areas.

Those who answered **minimum off-street parking requirements should be reduced** said:

- Many respondents said downtown.
- Some respondents said near public transit and active transportation routes.
- A few respondents said residential areas.
- A few respondents said everywhere in Whitehorse.
- A few respondents said for new developments.
- A few respondents said commercial areas, particularly big box stores.

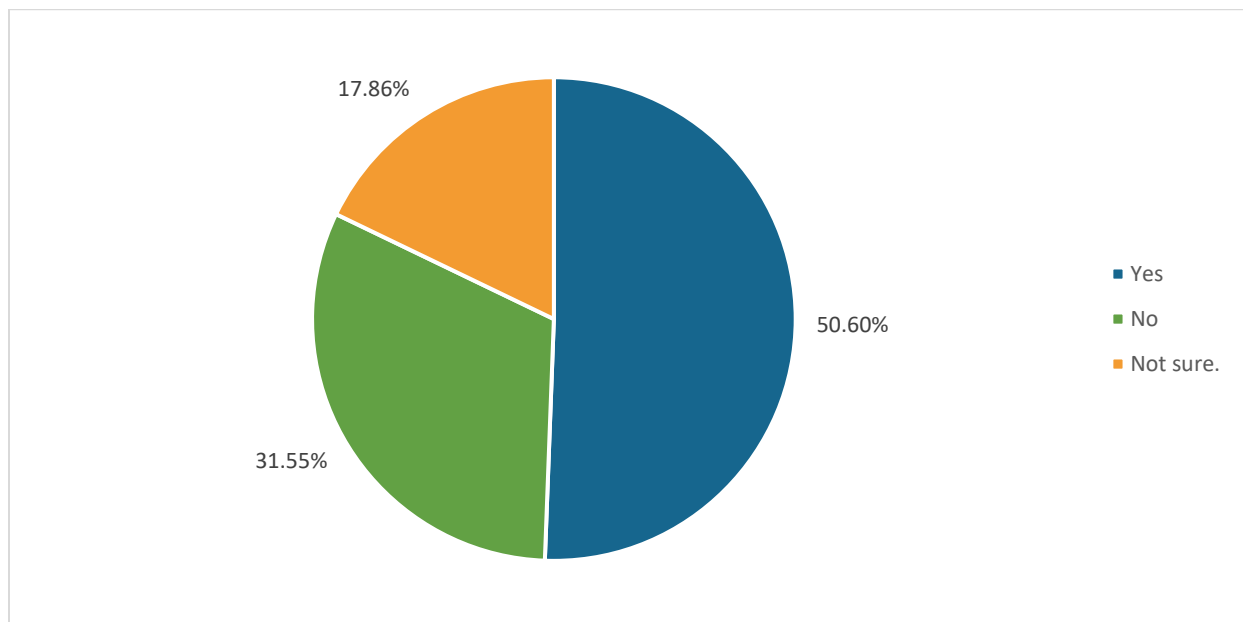
Those who answered **minimum off-street parking requirements should be removed** said:

- Many respondents said everywhere in Whitehorse.
- Many respondents said downtown.
- Some respondents said in commercial areas.
- Some respondents said in residential areas.
- Some respondents said near public transit hubs.
- A few respondents said in new developments.

### Parking Requirement Relaxations

Participants were asked whether, in their opinion, the City should consider relaxing parking requirements if additional amenities, such as more bicycle parking, indoor bicycle parking, electric vehicle chargers, car share parking, etc., are provided.

Figure 5.16: Should the City consider relaxing parking requirements if additional amenities, such as more bicycle parking, indoor bicycle parking, electric vehicle chargers, car share parking, etc., are provided?



Responses: 336

Additional comments from respondents who said **yes** include:

- Many respondents believe that car-dependency needs to be reduced.
- Many respondents said high quality and secure bike amenities are needed.
- Some respondents said this needs to be done in addition to creating better active transportation infrastructure.
- This would incentivize people to use active transportation.
- Bicycle parking should not be given in exchange for parking, it should be required regardless.
- Car share is supported.
- Some respondents said that relaxing parking for EV chargers may not be a good idea, as reliance on cars will be maintained, the Yukon power grid cannot support them, and they do not operate well in winter conditions.

- Increased access to public transit is needed. Parking requirements could be reduced when located close to transit hubs.
- A few respondents said street parking can cause challenges for snow removal.

Additional comments from respondents who said **no** include:

- Some respondents said residents of Whitehorse are reliant on cars because the city is spread out, there is a lack of public transportation infrastructure, and due to winter conditions.
- This would increase street parking, which has a negative impact on pedestrians and cyclists.
- Some respondents said that not everyone has the ability to cycle or walk as their main mode of transportation.
- Even if people bike, they likely still have a car to park.
- There are already too many bike lanes.
- We do not have adequate power for EVs.
- Increasing EVs will not help with traffic and car congestion.
- A few respondents said this should be up to the developer.
- A few respondents said these things are needed, but they should not result in a reduction in parking.

Additional comments from respondents who said **not sure** include:

- These amenities are important but using them as an incentive for people to stop driving will not work.
- If these amenities are provided, transit and active transportation infrastructure needs to be improved as well.

## 5.4 City Design

### Winter City Design

Participants were asked whether there were any particular winter design elements they would like to see or that would work well in Whitehorse.

#### Responses: 259

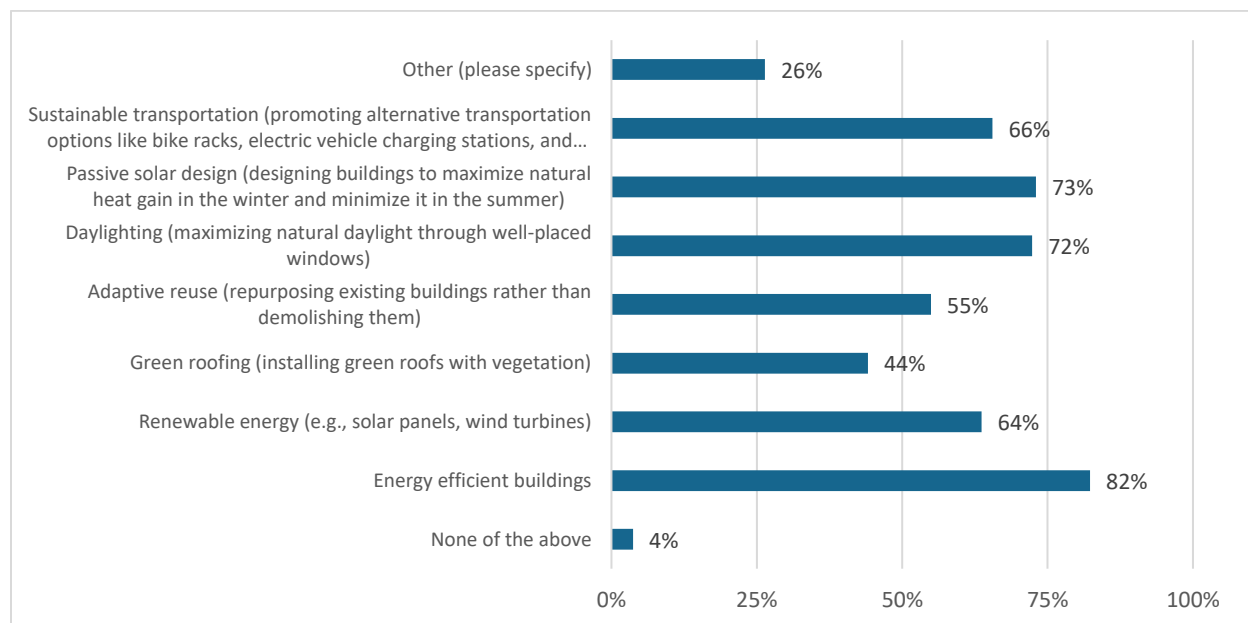
- Many respondents emphasized the importance of clearing snow and ice from sidewalks, roads, active transportation routes, and accessible parking stalls to ensure the city is accessible and safe in the winter.
- Many respondents would like to see bright colours used in the design of public spaces and housing developments.
- Many respondents would like sunlight exposure to be emphasized in building design, incorporating large south facing windows, rooftop space, and lightwells.
- Indoor and outdoor community gathering and activity spaces that are usable and accessible year-round.
- Community activities year-round (i.e., markets, festivals, street vendors).
- Some respondents support all of the design elements shown in the survey graphic.
- Some respondents would like to see narrow, tall buildings to maximize sun exposure, while other would like to see shorter buildings to maximize sun exposure.

- Some respondents want to see more activated public spaces in the winter, including infrastructure for winter recreation (e.g., skating, cross country skiing), public events, winter festivals, and outdoor gathering spaces.
- Some respondents support increased landscaping including trees and shrubs that are designed to block wind along sidewalks, pathways, and parking lots and stay green throughout the winter.
- Increased lighting for pedestrian and cyclist safety is needed.
- It is important to avoid increased light pollution by using dark skies friendly lighting styles.
- Decorative lights are desired to create a nice environment in the winter.
- Some respondents would like to enable the use of winter modes of active transportation including kick sledding, cross country skiing, fat biking, and ice skating.
- Many respondents would like the city to create more enjoyable and safe active transportation routes and streets/sidewalks with elements such as pedestrian scale lighting, trees or snow mounds for wind blocks, and evergreen landscaping.
- Create a pedway or covered pathway system for pedestrians in the winter.
- Covered bus stops with heating and wind breaks.
- Sheltered bike racks that accommodate fat bikes.
- Accessibility for all ages and in all seasons is important, including accessible transportation and clearing ice and snow from public spaces.

## Sustainable Design

Participants were asked whether there are any sustainable building or design practices they would like to see or that would work well in Whitehorse.

Figure 5.17: Are there any sustainable building or design practices you would like to see or that would work well in Whitehorse?



Responses: 322

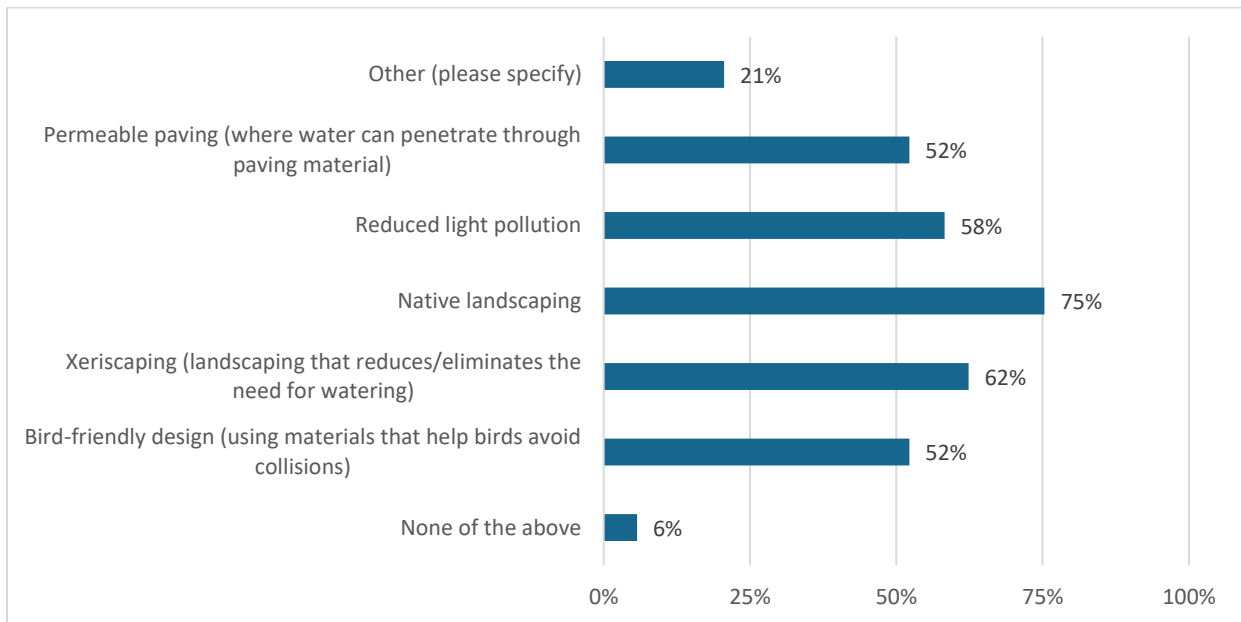
Respondents who answered **other** said:

- Create an accessible, safe, year-round active transportation network and public transportation network throughout the city to decrease car dependency.
- Sustainable building practices, such as daylighting, rooftop amenities, net zero building design, retrofitting older buildings to be more energy efficient, grey water recycling, and disaster resilient materials are supported.
- Increase density.
- There are mixed responses on green energy sources. Some respondents suggest implementing more green energy sources (such as hydro generation, geothermal, and heat pumps) while others do not think certain green energy sources are appropriate in the Yukon (such as solar and wind energy).
- Landscaping to increase the urban forest in the city is supported.
- Prohibit mining within city limits.

### Environmentally Friendly Design

Participants were asked whether there are there any types of environmentally friendly design they would like to see or that would work well in Whitehorse.

Figure 5.18: Are there any types of environmentally friendly design you would like to see or that would work well in Whitehorse?



Responses: 316

Respondents who answered **other** said:

- Increase the city's urban forest by planting more trees.
- Implement fire smart practices with fire resistant plants and trees.
- Various landscaping methods are supported, including planting bee-friendly flowers, edible gardens, native plants, and xeriscaping.
- Implementing night-sky friendly lighting.
- Prohibit mining within city limits.
- Designing for safe and accessible active transportation.

## Accessibility

Participants were asked how they think Whitehorse could be made more accessible for everyone.

### Responses: 243

- Many respondents indicated that the main challenge to accessibility is snow and ice in the winter. Better snow and ice clearing is needed, particularly for accessible parking spots, curb cuts and ramps, sidewalks, and active transportation pathways.
- Many respondents stated that the city should be designed for safe, accessible active transportation.
- Bike paths should be paved and separated from car traffic.
- Design for pedestrian safety and accessibility with wider sidewalks, lighting, and traffic calming and applying universal design principles.
- Prioritize affordable and accessible housing, potentially with minimum accessibility requirements in developments.
- Supportive housing for people with disabilities and those facing housing insecurity.
- Prioritize aging in place.
- Ensure public spaces and sidewalks are accessible with curb cuts, ramps, wider doorways, textured paving.
- Require all business owners to have accessible buildings, particularly in the downtown.
- More accessible parking is needed.
- Outdoor seating in public spaces and along trails.
- More inclusive wayfinding (larger font, visible colours, different languages, braille).
- A more comprehensive public transit system, including increased frequency and number of routes and bus shelters for staying warm in the winter.
- More accessible public washrooms are needed, particularly in the downtown area.
- Engage directly with residents who have different accessibility needs.

## Safety

Participants were asked to share specific areas of the city where they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, if any, and ideas they have to make the space more comfortable.

### Responses: 240

- Removal or maintenance of empty/derelict buildings downtown.
- Concerns around safety and increased crime downtown because of an increase in the homeless population, open drug use, a lack of people in the area, and empty businesses.
- Some respondents emphasized that criminalizing homelessness and drug use is not the answer and that more community services should be available.
- The shelter downtown does not have adequate social supports in place.
- Many respondents stated that they feel unsafe biking in the city and would like to see bike lanes separated from cars and pedestrians with lights and signage to indicate that cyclists are present.
- Some respondents specifically stated that the bike lane along Chilkoot way is dangerous.
- Many respondents stated that they feel unsafe walking downtown, specifically near the shelter at nighttime due to a lack of lighting and a lack of people present.
- Traffic calming downtown is needed for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.



- Activate streets downtown so there are more ‘eyes on the street’ and a feeling of community.
- Some respondents feel it is unsafe driving near bike lanes because they are confusing and not well indicated.
- Traffic calming and slower speed limits in residential areas and downtown.
- Many intersections feel unsafe while driving in the winter.
- Improved street lighting for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, including along pathways, roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, and parks.
- Suggestions for increasing pedestrian safety include separating bike lanes and pedestrian pathways, widening sidewalks, and adding pedestrian controlled lighting to crosswalks.
- Snow clearing on sideways and active transportation pathways is needed.

## Character

Participants were asked whether there is a building, site, structure, or area of the city that captures the ‘look and feel’ of Whitehorse that they would like to see more of.

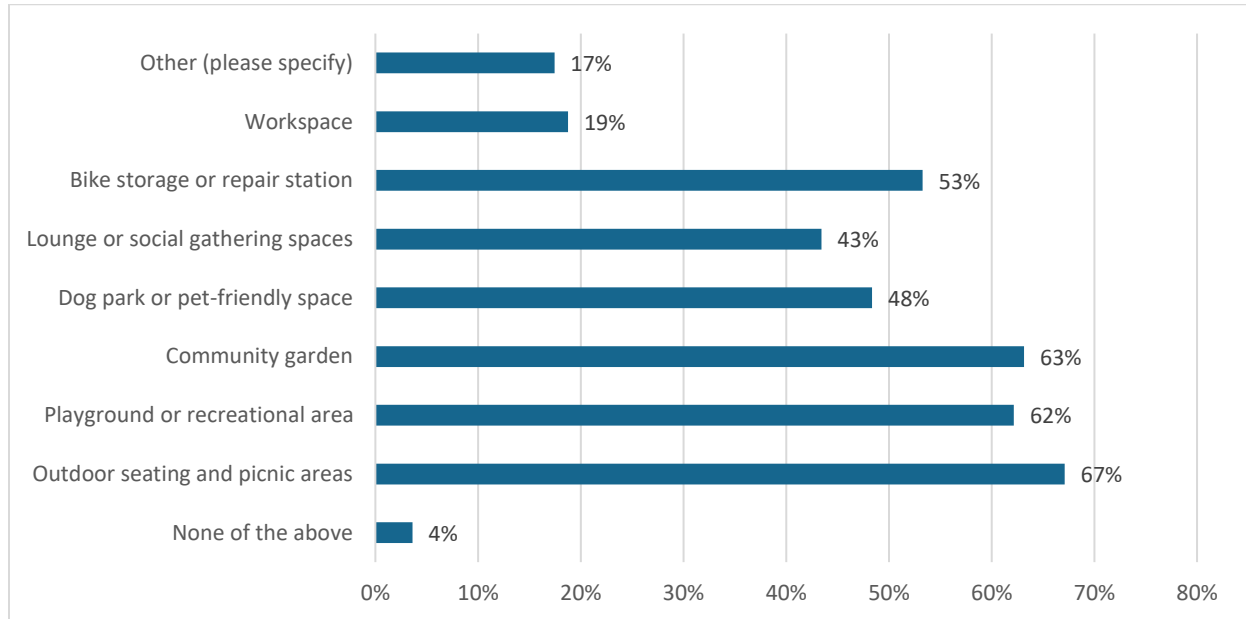
## Responses: 217

- Historic/character buildings.
- Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.
- Historic log skyscrapers and log cabins.
- Some respondents like the look and feel of new modern buildings, while others feel they do not fit in Whitehorse and do not have character.
- Public art and colourful buildings.
- Many respondents said that main street captures the look and feel of Whitehorse, but some indicated that it needs more activation through lighting, events, public space, and local businesses.
- Riverdale neighbourhood.
- The community feel of Shipyards Park.
- The closer lots, walkability, mixed housing types, and traffic calming in Takhini.
- The waterfront, including the bike path along the river, greenspace, and schools, provides access to nature combined with mixed-use development.
- Increased density to create more walkable neighborhoods.
- Mixed use developments with housing and restaurants.
- Greenspaces and access to nature.
- The mix of development types on Hawkins Street.

## Amenity Space

When a multiple housing development is built, a percentage of the lot is required to be developed as amenity space (e.g., open spaces, play areas, picnic areas) for the use of residents. Participants were asked which amenities or features would be important to them in an amenity space?

Figure 5.19: Which of the following amenities or features would be important to you in an amenity space?



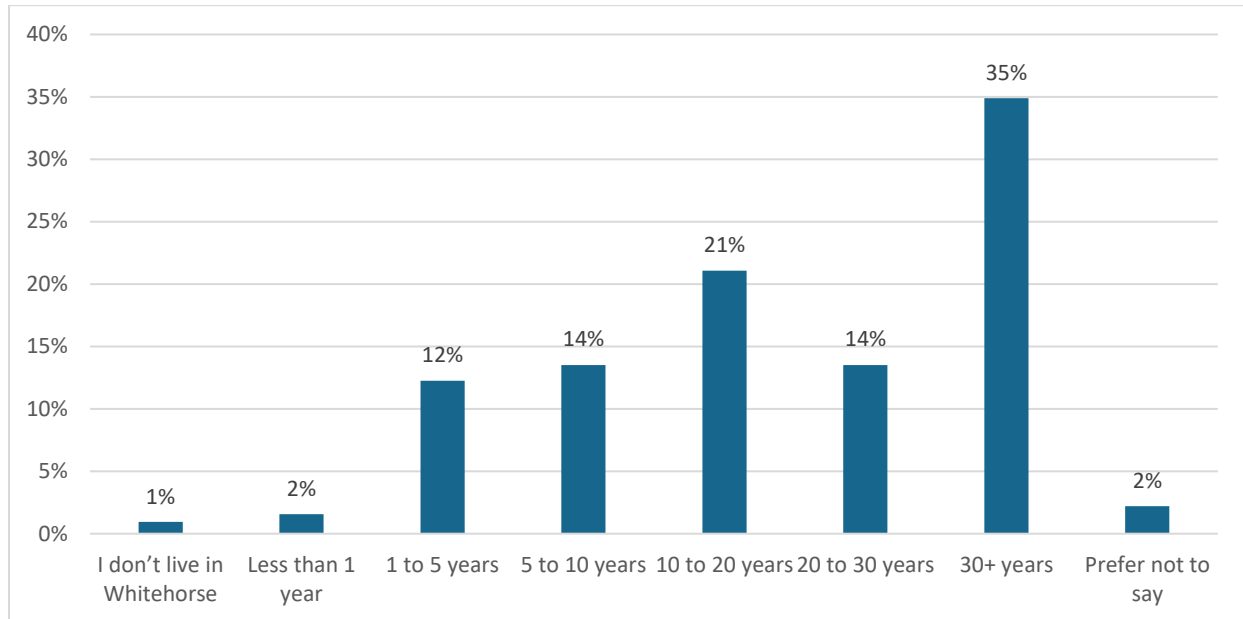
Responses: 304

Participants who answered other said:

- Access to safe active transportation infrastructure.
- Forested/natural green space.
- Amenity space requirements should be removed or reduced as they are not used.
- Nearby public parks should be provided instead of amenity space.
- Increased parking or garages.
- Community gathering spaces.

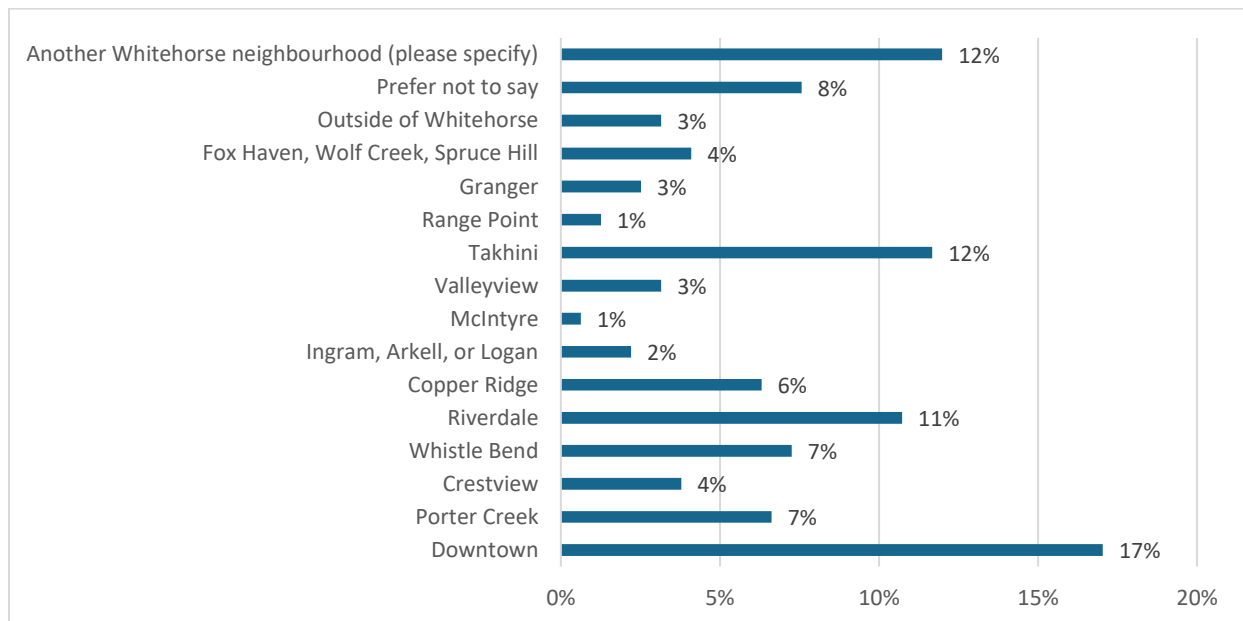
## 5.5 Demographics

Figure 5.20: How long have you lived in Whitehorse?



Responses: 318

Figure 5.21: What neighbourhood/community do you currently live in?

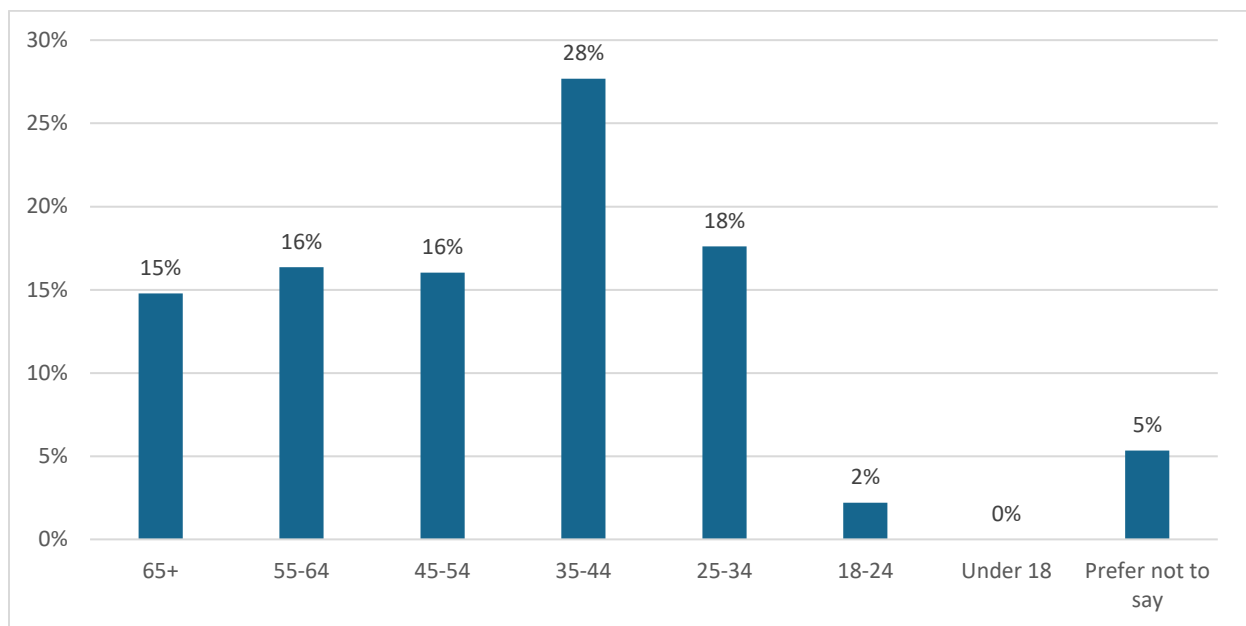


Responses: 317

Other neighbourhoods indicated include:

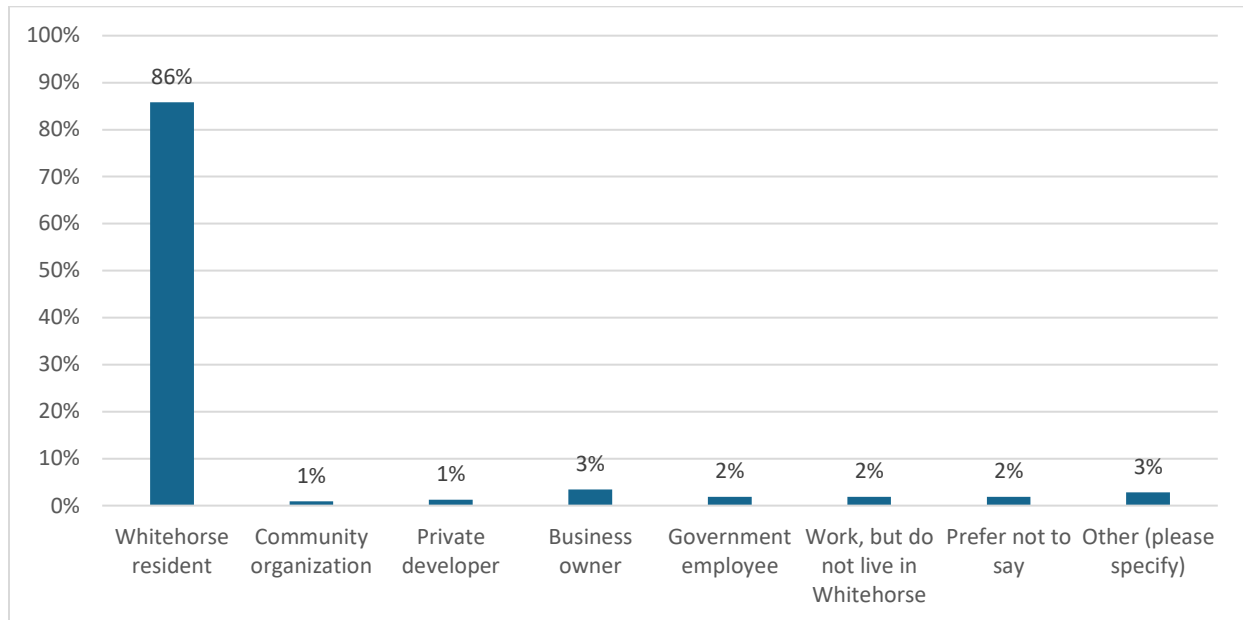
- Cowley Creek
- Fish Lake Road
- Hidden Valley
- Hillcrest
- Mary Lake
- Raven's Ridge
- Whitehorse Copper

Figure 5.22: How old are you?



Responses: 318

Figure 5.23: Please select which best describes you and the perspectives you are sharing.

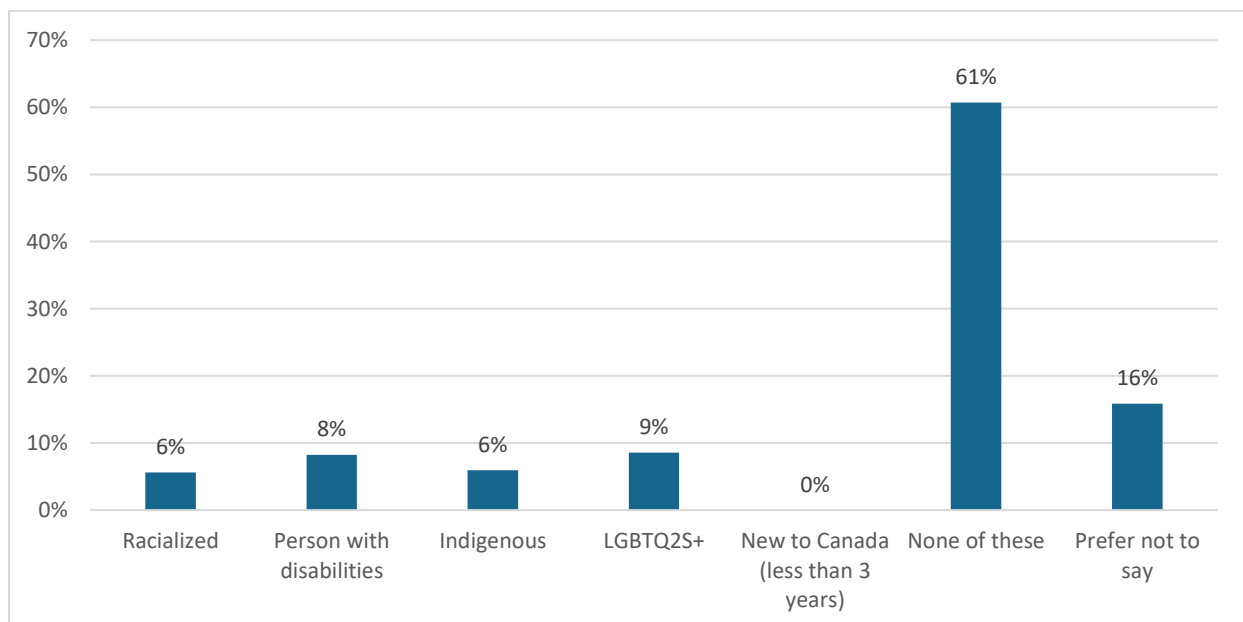


Responses: 318

Other:

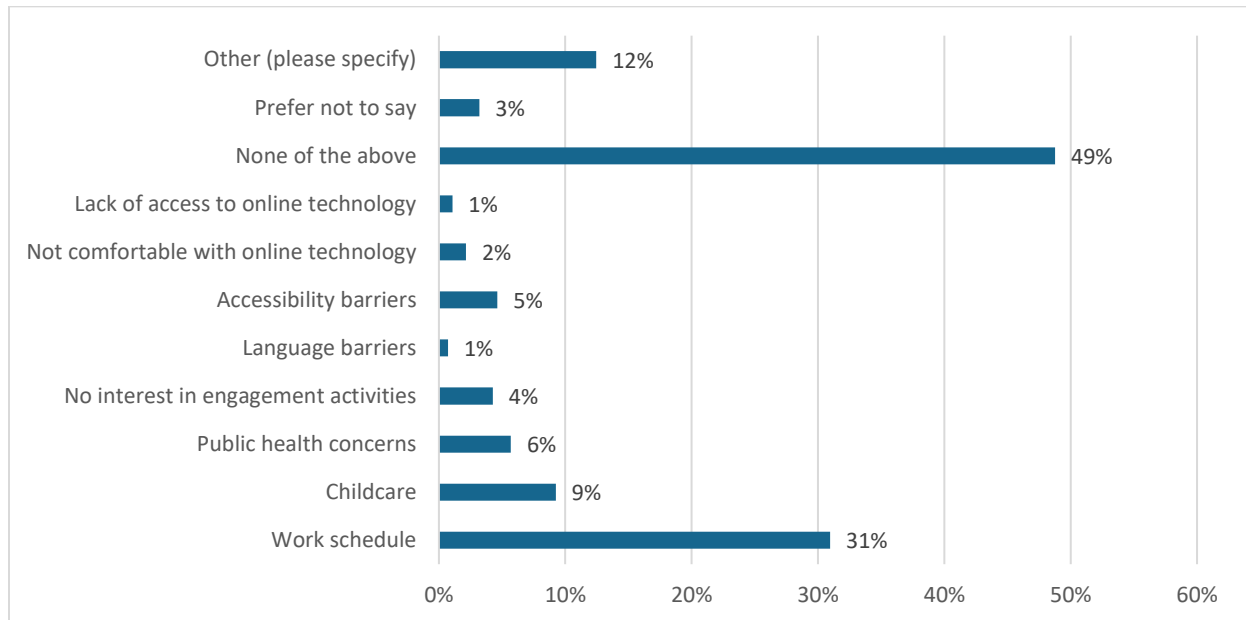
- Planner
- Front line worker
- Commuter cyclist

Figure 5.24: Do you identify with any of the following groups?



Responses: 303

Figure 5.25: Is there anything that would prevent you from participating in future engagement activities?



Responses: 281

Those who answered other said:

- The City already has a vision and does not listen to community feedback.
- There is not enough advertisement for engagement events.
- Time and length of survey.

## 6.0 Next Steps

Feedback provided through the first phase of engagement, along with best practices research, a technical review of the current Zoning Bylaw and other City policies will inform the preparation of the Draft Zoning Bylaw.

Once a Draft Zoning Bylaw is created, a second round of engagement will be completed to gather feedback on the draft and confirm direction of the bylaw. Amendments will then be made to the Draft Zoning Bylaw, based on the feedback received in the second round of engagement, and the bylaw will then go through the formal adoption process.



**APPENDIX**  
City of Whitehorse Zoning Bylaw Re-Write:  
Key Stakeholder Interviews

A



# CITY OF WHITEHORSE ZONING BYLAW RE-WRITE

DATE:	January 18, 2024
TO:	Bridget Pillar, Community Planner (ISL)
CC:	Brian Conger, Community Planning Manager (ISL) and Courtney Laurence, Community Planner (ISL)
RE:	Key Stakeholder Interviews

## 1 INTRODUCTION

3Pikas was retained by ISL and the City of Whitehorse to provide general advice and engagement support to facilitate the Zoning Bylaw re-write project.

The scope of this first round of engagement involved:

- 1 Reviewing background documents;
- 2 Organizing and facilitating meetings with key stakeholders;
- 3 Summarizing the findings in a memo.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of the interviews with key stakeholders was to:

- Gather input on what's working and what's not working with the Zoning Bylaw; and
- Gather feedback into what could be done to improve the Zoning Bylaw.

### 1.2 METHODOLOGY

A preliminary list of key stakeholders was submitted to the City of Whitehorse and ISL for input. The list was revised based on the input received. 3Pikas reached out to both First Nation Governments and First Nation development corporations, architectural firms, engineering firms, and builders / developers. One-on-one interviews were scheduled and interviews were held in person between December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

In total, eleven organizations were contacted. Eleven organizations responded to the invitation and nine interviews were scheduled and completed. The organizations contacted:

- **First Nation Governments**
  - Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (Lands and Resources / Capital and Infrastructure Departments)
  - Kwanlin Dün First Nation (Lands and Resources Department)
- **Government of Yukon**
  - Land Development Branch (Department of Community Services)
- **First Nation Development Corporations**
  - Chu Níikwän LP
  - Da Daghay Development Corporation
- **Architectural Firms**
  - Kobayashi + Zedda Architects / 360 Design Build
  - s.no Architecture
- **Engineering Firms**
  - Copperbelt Engineering
  - Greenwood Engineering Solutions
- **Builders / Developers**
  - NGC Builders / Keish Street Developer
  - Evergreen Homes and Construction

Interviews were not conducted with Da Daghay Development Corporation or s.no Architecture.

Interviews began with a high-level overview of the project. In order to encourage more profound discussions and active participation, a predetermined script was intentionally avoided. Instead, participants were provided the freedom to express their opinions openly on a subject they considered significant.

This memo is intended to reflect discussions with the participants. The following section provides a snapshot of the main takeaways from the interviews.

## 2 TAKEAWAYS

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### 2.1 FIRST NATION GOVERNMENTS

The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (Lands and Resources / Capital and Infrastructure Departments) and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (Lands and Resources Department) were interviewed.

- Interested in maintaining jurisdiction and authority over Settlement Lands. Don't want to see authority feathered by the zoning bylaw.
- First Nation designations would require some collaboration in order to ensure that the zoning can implement the First Nation's vision.
- Maximum flexibility is required.
- KDFN's Citizen's use of parcels should be rooted in the implementation of the SGA.
- McIntyre is unique and requires maximum flexibility and a different treatment to accommodate a blend of uses (e.g., government services and residential use).
- Need to incorporate reconciliation.
- Environmental use should consider traditional use cabins and traditional site development.
- Minimum lot sizes for certain zone don't work on some of the site specific selections.
- A historic land use interests should be considered existing – not new applications – this is a good example of what reconciliation is.

In essence, these comments underscore a consensus that reconciliation should be front and centre. In the context of the zoning bylaw, reconciliation means respecting historical interests. There is a desire for more flexibility; recognizing that some of the First Nation Settlement Land parcels are very unique and require different treatment.

### 2.2 GOVERNMENT OF YUKON

Planning and implementation staff from the Land Development Branch (LDB) were interviewed. Additionally, LDB submitted additional input in the form of a spreadsheet (summarized below) identifying changes that LDB believe would contribute to a more effective Zoning Bylaw for the City of Whitehorse.

In drafting this list, LDB considered the themes produced by the COW, the OCP, and the Branch's mandate to 'facilitate private-sector development'. LDB is hopeful that the proposed changes can result in a zoning bylaw that is more flexible and permissive, while regulating where it is pertinent.

#### **General Comments from Interview:**

- Intensification of existing urban area that are newly developed or redeveloped.
- The LDB mandate is to support private sector and First Nation development. As such, LDB encourages changes to zoning provisions and regulations that support both private section and First Nation development and advocate for market friendly provisions and regulations.

- LDB wishes to see changes that would promote the development sector.
- Parking minimums should be eradicated.
- The City should simplify the zoning districts: Fewer zones would be better.
- The City should remove RR zone.
- RS and RS2 zones (e.g., Takhini North) create a much better built form (for example, no garage protruding onto the street and smaller setbacks).
- The current zoning bylaw is missing a 'Missing Middle Housing' zone. The built form in RCM3 and RCM are the closest to Missing Middle. However, whereas RCM3 captures the low-density end of the missing middle housing spectrum, RCM captures the higher end.
  - RCM3 is a great transition zone but should allow fourplex or other missing middle plex housing form. Transition should intensify.
- Old downtown zoning is a good example of upzoning and gentle intensification.
- The City should implement density bonuses. Look at FAR bonus from Edmonton.
- Transit oriented development (TOD): Adds value to transit but would need 15m transit servicing.
- ADUs and living suites should be allowed everywhere. The City should permit 4-6 units on every lots as of rights.
- The City should increase building heights.
- Front yard businesses in a residential area / neighbourhoods is a creative way to squeeze more value in an asset you already own.

#### **Formal Written Comment Organized by Themes:**

- **Urban Design**
  - Section 5.3 Lighting: Implements dark sky design standards for both roads (shielded, low in height, low in intensity, more frequent, warm in colour) as well as for buildings.
    - Provisions for dark skies in Jasper (Canadian context) weak on substance for roads, but good for structures, paths and other areas.
    - Better substance for roads.
  - Section 4.11 Temporary Use Development Permit: Alter Section 4.11 to allow for uses proposed in OCP (removal and off-site transport of granular resources).
    - It would be ideal to have a clear set of criteria that, if met, would secure a Temporary Use Permit and not be a discretionary decision. If all Master Plan requirements are met (and approved by City), a grading plan and a quarry management plan should be the only requirements needed to secure a permit.
  - Slope Setbacks Section 10.4.8 (b)(3): With geotechnical investigation, reduce all setbacks to (xx)M (15m seems sufficient). Where slope stability is unknown, or demonstrated to be unstable the distance should be informed by geotechnical studies.

- Setback distances under the OCP 2040 are unnecessarily prohibitive and should only be put in place for public health & safety reasons.
- Density Bonus: Offer increases in FAR as a bonusing provision for 'enhancements of public good' like affordable housing, low and midrise apartments, mixed-use development, on-site active transportation improvements, large format commercial 'wrapping', on-site parks, plazas, bike parking, etc.
  - By increasing the FAR, you create conditions where adding 'public good enhancements' are the economical choice, so a developer who adds affordable housing can actually make more money than one who doesn't. This also reduces regulatory burden, so developers are attracted to good urban form instead of forced to do it- generally improving the development conditions.
  - This form of bonusing can be administered by existing development review processes, so it is easy to implement (especially compared to other forms of bonusing like rebates, taxation breaks, etc.).
  - FAR used as bonusing in Edmonton: When inclusive design standards are met (section 5.50)
  - FAR versus Site Coverage Bonusing: FAR is a simpler method for developers, and doesn't 'cap out' at 100% like Site Coverage Bonusing does. Even though they can be used to provide the same actual amount of bonus, the Site Coverage bonus requires a calculation of the setbacks, height restrictions and site coverage to arrive at the actual FAR. By providing an FAR number, this calculation is already done- so developers can more easily see the impact of the bonus. The FAR tells you more important information as a developer.
  - No 'Financial Density Bonusing Zoning Contribution' (only amenity) should be required of developers. These contributions run counter to the whole point of bonusing, and reduce the economic benefit of the bonus.
- **Parking:**
  - Section 7.3 and 7.4: Eliminate all parking minimums (except accessible parking in 7.4).
    - Parking is expensive to develop, and results in land being unavailable for economically or socially productive uses (highest and best use). This cost is added to the price of units and adds to the cost of development throughout the City. Removing parking minimums would allow for the market to decide how many parking spaces are needed, and does not impose an arbitrary and expensive minimum onto developers.
  - Section 7.3.6: Incentivize Bike parking along active transportation routes.
    - Classic 'Staple' bike parking is the most cost-effective and compact way to increase bike parking (one parking stall can accommodate roughly 10-12 locked bikes).
  - Parking Bonusing: NOT AS GOOD AS REMOVING PARKING MINIMUMS (but a step in the right direction)- eliminate parking requirements for buildings that provide identified public benefit.

- Contributes to the ability of developers to react to market conditions; allowing them to only build what they have to in order for their development to succeed and placing minimum pressure on them to incur parking-related expenses.
- **Mixed-Use Housing:**
  - All new large format commercial (box stores) should have street frontage and be 'wrapped' in small format commercial.
  - Allow accessory commercial units (ACUs) in residential areas, including front-yard commercial with reduced front-yard setbacks.
    - Allows for residential areas to incorporate mixed uses without need for significant character changes to area. Allows for the market to seek-out areas where there is sufficient density to provide additional amenity spaces. Front-yard businesses would require development permit, but accessory commercial could be simple conversion. Ideally, this could create conditions for corner store and coffee shop businesses that only require lower foot falls/day to achieve profitability.
    - Preferable to having an accessory dwelling on a commercial lot as this requires the commercial zoning, which is spatially restrictive and poses challenges to home-conversion businesses.
  - Section 6.8.1 (d), 6.8.2, 6.9 (c), 6.9 (f), 6.9 (d), 6.9 (a): Remove restriction on traffic, limitations on clients, specific business types (though limitations on building/structure like venting, blowers, exhaust ports, etc. may be appropriate to keep). Remove restrictions on retail sales, sale of goods.
    - Cumulation of these requirements results in nearly all businesses being impossible to operate. Home businesses allow for entrepreneurship while lowering the amount of capital to start the business.
  - Section 6.10.1: Remove 6.10.1 restrictions.
- **Housing:**
  - Section 6.7.1: Consider allowing garden suites in side-yards, so long as they meet the setbacks from the house and lot lines that apply to the zone.
  - Section 6.7.8: Permit garden suites on properties with living suites.
    - Disallowing garden suites on properties with a living suite limits the options of property owners to add dwellings to their property, and enforces exclusionary low-density neighbourhoods.
  - Section 6.7.4: Allow mobile, prefabricated and modular homes to be used as garden suites in all zones, provided they meet the other requirements.
  - Section 6.7.4: Remove 'visual compatibility' provision for garden suites.
    - This requirement can introduce significant cost and stifles creative expression. This enforces a subjective status-quo and is left to the discretion of the building officer.

- Section 6.13 (b): Allow living suites in townhomes and duplexes.
- Section 6.13.2: Allow living suites and garden suites to be permitted on the same property.
- Section 6.13.3 (b): Allow living suites on lots that don't have lane access.
- Section 9.14: The RR zone doesn't allow secondary suites or other residential housing forms besides single detached homes. This is an outdated zone. Recommend that all RR lots be rezoned to another residential zone as a means to encourage more density in neighbourhoods.
- Allow mobile, prefabricated and modular homes in all residential zones, so long as they meet applicable zoning requirements.
- Consolidate residential zones to allow for added flexibility. Create a zone for 'Missing Middle' housing that permits for townhomes, plex buildings, ground oriented condominiums and low-rise apartments.
- Section 9.11: Allow six units on each lot.
  - Support for increasing density cap from 4 to 6 units. Good way for modest density increases. Consider means to retain character of Old Town.
- Allow multiple caretaker residences on a lot (2 per lot).
  - Support for allowing more than one caretaker suite on a lot to help address housing needs and encourage live-work arrangements. Supported in 2018 Marwell Plan.
- Consider means to allow temporary worker camps somehow through careful planning and mitigations.
  - Enables larger contractors working on public works contracts to house their workers if they are coming from outside Yukon.
- Enables larger contractors working on public works contracts to house their workers if they are coming from outside Yukon.
- Section 15: Consider streamlining measures to reduce zoning amendment timelines while respecting Municipal Act requirements.
  - Consider measures to overlap processes. OCP and zoning amendment overlap. For master plans, consider ways to overlap the plan adoption and zoning amendment (for example, Range Point).
- **Wildfire Risk Reduction**
  - FireSmart prescription could be a requirement for larger Master Plans.
    - Consider enabling through Master Planning Policy.
  - Work with CS Wildland Fire to develop a new section on wildfire reduction regulations. Could apply to building design; subdivision design; landscaping.
    - Unknown but CS Wildland Fire would likely have resources.

- Building materials; non-combustible zone around buildings; non-coniferous landscaping; trail breaks; etc.

## 2.3 ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

### General Comments from Interviews:

- Submitting detailed engineering at DP level creates unnecessary burden on the schedule and the client.
  - There is a higher level of design work required by engineering and the requirements are too detailed for this stage of planning and design.
  - The City is overzealous to dictate the engineering design.
  - The level of comments at DP stage is unreasonable. Some of the review happening at the DP stage should be taking place at the building permit stage.
  - Geotechnical requirement at the DP process is excessive.
  - Need a more iterative process with stronger dialogue.
- The planners / planning department should be involved in the DP approval process (especially for more complex projects). The planners are the ones closest to the OCP. As such, they are better positioned than a non-professional / technician (not trained in urban planning and without design background) to comment on a design and as to whether it aligns with the intent of the OCP and highest and best use.
  - In other Canadian Cities planners are in charge of shepherding the development approval process and are empowered to make decisions.
  - They collect comments and feedback from other departments and agencies and are empowered to ignore some of the comments that are outside of the scope of the project and deemed unreasonable. Development Officers at the City are not empowered to think critically, use best judgement, and be reasonable. They should be empowered to tell Engineering or Waste that their standards don't align with the OCP. Why are operators and technicians dictating how our City develops and what our City looks like?
- Council should not be voting on zoning amendments. Zoning amendments should be handled internally by planners who are tasked with ensuring alignment with OCP and other city policies.
- Loading bays for delivery and waste requirements don't make sense (especially in the downtown). The loading requirement should be removed.
- Visitor parking requirement should be removed.
- Waste and bins: Garbage haulers should provide smaller bins as an option for smaller developments. Current bins are considerably oversized for 4-unit developments (current thresholds for private waste service). The City needs to force garbage haulers to change their practices.
  - The 4-units threshold is inappropriate and should be increased to more than 8 units.



- Balconies are not utilized in northern environments. Need to implement more flexibility and the 5% requirement should be removed.
- Parking should be left to the developer and market driven. The City simply needs to improve street parking management.
- Site coverage are way too low. Carport and overhanging canopies should not be included.
- RS zoning: 6m setback is way too much.
- Landscape requirements are weak and landscaping should look better. There should be some flexibility as to where the landscaping goes (e.g., should allow to landscape between the property and curb).
- City should not limit height of buildings downtown. The City should allow creativity to be accepted.
- The 'visual compatibility' hinders creative expression.
- There are too many provisions / constraints. Minimum parking requirements, waste / bins, setbacks, site coverage, overhanging canopies, create excessive constraints. As a result, developers are not able to meet max densities (highest and best use). 410 Cook Street was provided as an perfect example where the requirements for waste servicing impacted a proposed 5-storey / 12 units development, which had to be reduced to 3 storeys / 8 units (resulting in a net loss of 4 housing units) (which was still lower than the maximum allowable density).
  - The City should be working with developers to get them to get to build the maximum number of units as prescribed by the maximum densities / highest and best use.
  - One architect referred to the Zoning bylaw / extensive requirements as “Death by 1000 cuts”. These onerous requirements kill projects and housing units.
- There should be considerations for higher density for TODs.
- The bicycle parking requirement needs to be better defined.
- Downtown regulations such as uniform trim, glazing, siding, create constraints.
- Bonussing: Thicker envelop should allow to reduce setbacks.
- Push for tactile surfaces for accessibility.
- Reduce the number of zones.
- Currently, the City of Whitehorse bylaws favour the provision of parking stalls over the provision of housing. Off-street parking should be a luxury and not a requirement.
- Some personnel in the Planning Department are anti-development. The Department tried to kill a downtown 8-plex we designed over the lack of a dedicated space to store cardboard. Fortunately, we prevailed since there are no such requirements in the Bylaw. The same tactic was used on another project over garbage receptacles.

- The City wants to make downtown streets more accessible in the winter. The City should assume maintenance of their own property. Crowd-sourcing snow clearing doesn't work and is dangerous.
- Housing should be allowed in any zone.
- Temporary housing should be permitted on company property in industrial zones.
- A rental suite and garden suite should be allowed on the same property.
- Adding density is a solution that can only work if the City removes some of the requirement constraints. Most developers are not able to achieve max densities within the current zoning provisions, regulations, and engineering standards. 410 Cook Street is a perfect example.
- Inclusionary housing could work to help housing affordability but will not work with the current zoning system. To work, the City would need to relax development requirements.

## 2.4 ENGINEERING

- Landscaping requirement is weak.
- The number of zones could be streamlined and simplified.
- Some of the lots in Whistle Bend are undersized, which creates design challenges. If the zoning is going to continue to create obstacles and constraints (i.e., parking minimums, onsite waste management, setbacks and site coverage) then lots need to be larger. The current lots on Keno are undersized.
- Industrial zones could be simplified.
- Standards for heights are too low.
- Garden and living suites should be allowed everywhere.
- Transit and bike transportation needs to be considered.
- Requiring 100% civil drawings at DP stage is a significant issue. 30% design should be appropriate.
- Engineering and Development Officers need to be more reasonable. Some of the staff don't know what reasonable means so the City should consider introducing a "Reasonableness Policy".
- Geotech requirement for DP process is unreasonable. This is a huge cost, which kills projects.
- Engineering requires too much details too early in the design process. Requiring 100% drawings at DP stage is not reasonable. The DP process should be more of a dialogue less of a detailed design stage.
- Waste requirements need alternate solutions. The built environment should not be shaped by operations.

## 3 CONCLUSION

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The interviews highlight a range of perspectives and recommendations related to the Zoning Bylaw. It reflects a diverse set of opinions from key stakeholders with extensive experience working with the Zoning Bylaw. Opinions of developers, architects, engineers, and planners emphasized the need for significant changes. A few overarching themes emerge from the detailed suggestions:

### **More Flexible Zoning and Regulations**

There was a consistent call for more flexibility in zoning regulations and a reduction in the number of constraints to allow for more innovative and efficient urban development. Architects and developers cautioned that simply allowing for increased density may not yield additional units without systemic changes to the Zoning Bylaw. Recommendations included reconsidering and removing requirements that hinder density / creativity and limit the maximum density achievable on a property. Waste management practices emerged as a significant constraint, with developers and architects advocating for more sustainable solutions such as smaller garbage bins, on-street pick-up by the city for smaller developments, and alternative methods for waste servicing.

Participants also expressed concerns with low-density residential development and urged the City to permit 4-6 units 'as-of-right' on every lot, along with the allowance of garden suites, living suites, and temporary housing, as a means to address housing needs and promote affordability.

### **Parking Requirements**

There was a strong opposition to parking minimums, advocating for market-driven solutions and improved on-street parking management. There was a marked emphasis on incorporating transit and bike transportation considerations into urban planning. Support for density bonuses tied to public good enhancements, including affordable housing, active transportation improvements, and green spaces, was also voiced.

### **Level of Details Required at Development Permit Application Stage**

Some participants underscored a concern with the level of engineering details specifications required at the Development Permit (DP) stage, with a call for a more iterative and dialogue-driven process. Recommendations included streamlining zoning amendment timelines, potentially overlapping processes like the Official Community Plan and zoning amendments. Some participants emphasised the importance of empowering planners to allow them to shepherd development projects and make informed decisions aligned with the Official Community Plan.

In summary, the participants underscored the need for a more adaptable, efficient, and innovative approach to urban planning and development in Whitehorse, with a focus on intensifying by removing constraints, addressing housing affordability, streamlining processes, and reducing development constraints. The recommendations collectively suggest a vision for a dynamic and responsive urban environment that meets the needs of the community while promoting sustainability and economic viability.