

Yukon Climate Action Network
Questions for Whitehorse Mayor and Council Candidates
October 2024

Answers from Daniel Schneider

Question 0: What is your name and what position are you running for in this municipal election?

Daniel Schneider - Councilor

Question 1: Please provide your level of agreement with the following statement:

"Municipalities should consider costs to the climate for all budget items being considered. This would mean inclusion of the following considerations for each budget item: Will it help reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Will it increase greenhouse gas emissions? If yes, efforts must be made to minimize GHG impacts."

Agree

Question 2: The Council of Canadians Yukon Chapter has released a Climate Emergency Declaration, which has been endorsed by a number of businesses, organizations and individual residents. It can be found here: <https://www.cofcyukon.org/declaration> Would you commit to acting in alignment with the Declaration if you are elected?

Absolutely, we need to act promptly when it comes to the climate crisis

Question 3: Is there a role for regional or municipal food policy to play in addressing the climate crisis and if so, what does it look like?

Yes, regional and municipal food policies can play a significant role in addressing the climate crisis. Reducing food waste: Municipalities can implement policies to reduce food waste in households, restaurants, and grocery stores. This can involve composting programs, food donation initiatives, and education campaigns. Promoting local food production: Encouraging local food production can reduce the environmental impact associated with long-distance transportation. This can be done through zoning regulations, farmers' market support, and urban agriculture initiatives. Supporting sustainable farming practices: Municipalities can provide incentives for farmers to adopt sustainable practices, such as organic farming, regenerative agriculture, and agroforestry. These practices can help to improve soil health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect biodiversity.

Question 4: Please provide your level of agreement with the following statement: "As Whitehorse, "The Wilderness City", faces more wildfires, landslides, erosion and flooding, due to climate change, subsequently forcing hungry bears into urban areas, we must act. By becoming a Bear Smart Community, as in 18 other Bear Smart communities in BC and Alberta, which includes adopting better waste management practices and educating residents in affected communities, we can reduce human-bear conflicts, keep residents safe, and prevent the killing of bears drawn to our city center neighborhoods and the city's wilderness edges."

Strongly agree

Question 5: The City of Whitehorse is in the process of developing its Climate Action Plan. What work would you do as part of Whitehorse City Council to ensure its success? What actions related to climate mitigation or adaptation do you think deserve the highest priority?

1. Community Engagement and Education: Inclusive Consultation: Organize town halls, online forums, and community workshops to gather input from residents, businesses, and Indigenous communities. Educational Campaigns: Develop and implement public education campaigns to raise awareness about climate change, its impacts on Whitehorse, and the city's climate goals. Youth Involvement: Prioritize youth engagement through climate-focused programs, internships, and student council representation.

2. Data-Driven Decisions: Baseline Assessment: Conduct a thorough assessment of the city's current greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, and vulnerability to climate change. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish a robust system for tracking progress towards climate goals and making adjustments as needed. Data Sharing: Collaborate with local universities, research institutions, and other municipalities to share data and best practices.

3. Policy Development and Implementation: Comprehensive Policies: Develop and implement policies that support climate mitigation and adaptation, such as building codes, transportation plans, and energy efficiency standards. Incentive Programs: Create financial incentives, such as rebates and grants, to encourage residents and businesses to adopt sustainable practices. Regulatory Framework: Establish a regulatory framework to ensure compliance with climate-related policies and standards.

4. Partnerships and Collaboration: Intergovernmental Cooperation: Work closely with the Yukon government, First Nations, and other municipalities to coordinate climate action efforts. Private Sector Engagement: Foster partnerships with businesses and industry to develop innovative climate solutions.

5. Adaptation and Resilience: Infrastructure Upgrades: Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, including transportation systems, water management facilities, and emergency response capabilities. Natural Hazards Planning: Develop and implement plans to mitigate the risks associated with natural disasters such as wildfires, flooding, and

extreme weather events. **Green Spaces and Urban Forestry:** Prioritize the creation and preservation of green spaces and urban forests to improve air quality, reduce heat island effects, and provide habitat for biodiversity. **High-Priority Actions:** Given Whitehorse's unique geographic location and climate challenges, I believe the following actions deserve the highest priority: **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:** Transitioning to a more sustainable energy mix, including increased reliance on renewable sources like hydropower, solar, and wind power. **Transportation and Mobility:** Promoting active transportation, such as walking and cycling, and investing in public transit to reduce reliance on private vehicles. **Climate Adaptation and Resilience:** Enhancing the city's resilience to climate change impacts. **Indigenous Knowledge and Leadership:** Incorporating traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices into climate action planning and implementation. By prioritizing these actions and fostering a collaborative and inclusive approach, Whitehorse can become a leader in climate action and create a more sustainable and resilient future for its residents.

Question 6: The City's draft climate action plan (see <https://www.engagewhitehorse.ca/climate-action-plan>, page 7) shows that Whitehorse emissions have only kept rising since the City declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Furthermore, the science behind climate change indicates that change is happening faster than previously predicted. Do you believe that the Whitehorse Climate Action plan should commit to aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals with clear timelines that reflect the increasing urgency of the climate crisis?

Here are some reasons why the plan might benefit from setting more aggressive goals: The science of climate change suggests that the situation is more urgent than previously thought, and aggressive action is necessary to avoid the worst effects. Setting ambitious goals can inspire and motivate people to take action. Aggressive goals can help to attract funding and resources for climate action initiatives. On the other hand, there are also some reasons why the plan might take a more cautious approach: Setting goals that are too ambitious could be seen as unrealistic and discourage people from taking action. The plan may need to take into account the economic and social costs of climate action. It may be important to focus on achievable goals in the short term in order to build momentum for more ambitious action in the long term. Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to set more aggressive goals is a complex one that should be made through a process of public consultation and debate.