

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

Answers from Paolo Gallina

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

Paolo Gallina - Councillor

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?

While I fully support strong climate mitigation efforts and share the urgency of addressing climate change, I am unable to support the Yukon Climate Emergency Declaration in its current form for several reasons: 1. While I agree that urgent action is required, I believe this declaration lacks a clear, collaborative framework that considers the specific realities and challenges faced by different communities in Yukon. 2. The declaration calls for the immediate end of fossil fuel subsidies and a rapid transition to a zero-emission economy. While I agree that transitioning away from fossil fuels is vital, this needs to be done in a way that protects jobs and supports a just transition for workers in affected sectors. 3. The call for binding annual carbon budgets and reporting across all sectors, without considering the unique needs of certain industries or the realities of the northern climate, may be overly rigid. While setting emissions targets is essential, it's important to account for the unique challenges of Yukon, such as our dependence on aviation, long winters that require substantial home heating, and the high costs of transitioning to new technologies in remote areas. 4. While the declaration emphasizes transitioning to renewable energy, local

agriculture, and green jobs, it lacks detailed, actionable plans or a roadmap to achieve these goals in a way that is economically sustainable for Yukon communities.

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, a regional food policy can play a crucial role in addressing the climate crisis by promoting sustainable agriculture, reducing food-related emissions, and enhancing local food security for the following reasons: Sustainable Agriculture - encourage and support local farming through subsidies, incentives, or grants for small-scale, sustainable agriculture. Reducing Food Waste - develop programs aimed at reducing food waste. This could include policies supporting food recovery initiatives, composting programs, and public education campaigns on reducing food waste in households. Support for Local Food Infrastructure and Distribution - Invest in infrastructure such as cold storage, distribution hubs, and farmers' markets to make it easier for local producers to get their products to consumers. Support cooperative ventures that connect farmers to local restaurants, grocers, and schools, reducing the need for long-distance transport and ensuring more Yukoners have access to locally grown food.

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?

As a Whitehorse City Councillor I would work to ensure the success of the Climate Action Plan and would take the following measures: Advocating for climate mitigation policies and adaptation strategies, encouraging public engagement to align the community with the plan's goals. Collaborating with city staff, stakeholders, and experts to ensure the plan addresses local climate risks. Supporting funding and resources for the plan's implementation. Promoting transparency and accountability through regular updates and measurable progress reports.

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?

I believe the Whitehorse Climate Action plan should reflect realistic greenhouse gas reduction goals that are achievable in our northern community that is growing rapidly, which sees increased pressure on our infrastructure. Yes, there should be clear timelines that reflect the urgency of the climate crisis. Thanks for allowing me to participate in this important survey. Paolo Gallina