

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

Answers from Lenore Morris

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

Lenore Morris - City 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."

Strongly 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?

Yes

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. It is estimated that globally, our food supply is responsible for up to one third of GHG emissions. Food is grown or raised and processed, transported, distributed, prepared and consumed. At each of these steps, there is wastage and disposal. Each of these steps also creates greenhouse gases. In Yukon, we should be encouraging local agricultural and processed food production, to reduce the emissions associated with transportation, as well as increase food security. Whitehorse also has a food wastage problem, in particular by grocery retailers, and I believe governments can play a role in addressing this.

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?

Climate change mitigation is a subject about which I am passionate. I would study the draft CAP released in May 2024, focussing on the specific measures that needing to be taken. I anticipate there being resistance to some of the spending that will be needed to implement the CAP, but I view climate change mitigation as such a critical priority that I will advocate for it to receive adequate resources. Since in Yukon, the largest contributor to GHG emissions is transportation, I believe that we should be focussed on reducing transportation emissions. The City can do that by 1. encouraging use of public transit, 2. encouraging active transportation, 3. encouragement and facilitation of more housing downtown - where residents can walk or bike to work or school, or have very short commutes, 4. discouraging driving by, among other things, requiring drivers to pay for parking and not adding new parking, 5. encouraging car pooling, 6. not expanding our road network. With respect to adaptation, I believe that the biggest and most imminent threat to the city is from wild fires. A fire break on the south of town, already under construction, and smart fire smarting throughout the town, including the gradual replacement of conifers with more fire resistant deciduous trees, is essential. The increasing number of landslides, likely due to changing precipitation patterns, also needs to be addressed quickly and effectively.

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?

The Whitehorse CAP should aim to meet aggressive greenhouse gas reduction goals, with clear timelines, but the City government will not on its own have the ability to meet them.

The City will need to work closely with the territorial government in particular, First Nations governments and the federal government, as well as with its citizens, to meet the targets set.