

**Yukon Climate Action Network**  
**Questions for Whitehorse Mayor and Council Candidates**

October 2024

**Answers from Jean-Sebastien Blais**

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

**Jean-Sebastien Blais, 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?

**The Climate Emergency Declaration proposes a framework that could be integrated into the decision-making process at City Hall. It is highly important to manage and govern the City with a set of principles that will guide our actions to address the risks related to climate changes. Our wellbeing, our safety, and our infrastructures are all impacted by climate changes. We need to be a council aligned with the environmental values of our residents.**

**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?

**I see the City of Whitehorse Council as a municipal government with a duty to work with government partners, agencies and NGOs toward the wellbeing of the residents. Every resident should have a high quality of life. So, I expect the Council to express to Yukon government and the Government of Canada our concerns and expectations for the wellbeing of our residents, including their expectation for food security. As for a food**

policy, I would like to discuss that proposal. I think the issue of food security is more a domain related to the jurisdiction of Yukon government. We could explore the possibility to start a task force with Yukon Government on that topic and see how to go further.

**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? **I see myself as being a champion of a strong and ambitious Climate Action Plan. Therefore, I would be someone who will not be shy to defend the policy goals listed in the plan to various audiences and to require the implementation phase to be adequately funded. Because of my career in policy and evaluations, I will value a Climate Action Plan that is clear, measurable, and comprehensive.**

**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?

**With an increase in population, I am not surprised the emissions have risen. However, I am pleased with the will of the City of Whitehorse to have a Climate Action Plan. Having strong and ambitious targets will support the council in its decision-making process. I am a strong supporter of good planning which includes having Action Plan with goals, targets and timelines. I commit myself to ask the Climate Action Plan to have aggressive greenhouse gas reduction with clear timelines in order to reflect the increasing urgency of the climate crisis.**