

Discussion Paper #1 – Community Services and Sustainability

Current Conditions:

- Compared to the Yukon overall, Tagish is home to a higher proportion of retirement-age people and a smaller proportion of children.
- As of the end of 2014, 37% of Tagish residents were over 60, while only 17% of all Yukoners were over 60. At the same time, 13% of Tagish residents were under 20, compared to 22% of all Yukoners.
- Tagish has a community centre and associated facilities, privately owned marina, cemetery, water treatment facility, waste transfer station, and volunteer fire department and ambulance service. Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN) operates a campground, a sewage pump-out truck, a community well, and a water delivery truck.

What We Heard:

- Residents want the community to be sustainable and provide as broad a range of community services as possible.
- Partnerships between the community, Yukon government, and C/TFN are key to maximizing community resources.
- Community gardens/greenhouse kitchen, services for seniors and elders, a grocery store or co-op and public transit to nearby services are viewed as key strategies for making Tagish more self-sufficient.
- Some residents believe that more programming and activities for kids and youth, such as a dirt jump park or skateboard park, are needed to attract young families to the area.
- Lack of services (medical, housing, groceries) and scheduled transportation to Whitehorse are barriers to aging in place.
- The ability to age in place is important to people and a multi-unit senior residence with support services would be desirable.
- There is an interest in having a store and gas station, although these businesses have struggled to operate here in the past.
- Residents would like to see a more direct access route that connects the community centre with Tagish Estates.

Discussion Paper #2 – Recreation

Current Conditions:

- The Tagish Community Centre is the only indoor recreation facility and hosts a wide range of community events and indoor activities such as exercise classes and programs for kids. The grounds also feature a skating rink, playground, ball field, and horseshoe pitch.
- Boating and fishing are very popular in Tagish. There are four boat launches: one at the C/TFN campground, one at the Yukon Government day use area on the west side of the bridge, and two in the Taku Subdivision.
- There is an extensive network of local trails, some new and some following traditional First Nation trading routes. The network evolved informally and trails are unsurfaced, unmaintained, and unsigned. At this time, trail maps are not available. Many locals use off-road vehicles such as dirt bikes, snow machines, and quads to get around Tagish.
- C/TFN operates the campground near the east side of the bridge and, according to the C/TFN Final Agreement this must continue until 2023. After that, the First Nation can use the space for a different purpose if so desired.

What We Heard:

- Currently the trail network is shared, with relatively few conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users.
- Residents are concerned that use of off-road vehicles along the shores of lakes and rivers in spring and early summer is harming wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- Dog mushing on local trails can disturb local caribou and moose populations.
- The Yukon Government day use area on the west end of the bridge gets very crowded on busy days, blocking access to local houses and posing a risk to public safety. This boat launch is also a back-up water supply service for fire suppression.
- Public accesses to waterfront areas (especially California Beach) are unmarked and in some cases, encroached upon by adjacent property owners, and it is hard for both residents and tourists to connect to these areas.
- The Community Hall could be improved to diversify uses and users.
- The boat launch in the campground is in need of repair and is only usable later in the boating season once the water level has come up.
- Trails should be mapped, signed, designated for specific uses, and their use encouraged.
- The natural beauty, wilderness, and access to boating and fishing opportunities that attracts residents to Tagish is also what draws tourists to the area.
- There is some confusion about what type of trail uses are allowed on various types of C/TFN land.

Discussion Paper #3 – Land Use Designations

Current Conditions:

- There are currently no area development (zoning) regulations for Tagish.
- Once the Local Area Plan is complete, Yukon Government and C/TFN will develop zoning regulations as part of the Plan's implementation.
- The final Tagish Local Area Plan will include a Land Use Designation map which will lay the foundation for the area development regulations.
- Development regulations generally regulate land use activities.

What We Heard:

- Many residents value their independence and do not want too many rules and regulations imposed in Tagish.
- In some areas there have been problems related to industrial uses, equipment storage, and large numbers of dogs on residential lots.
- Home-based businesses are located throughout Tagish neighbourhoods with very few problems.
- The noise associated with the large dog kennel located in Tagish Estates has been problematic for several neighbours.

Key Planning Terms

Accessory Uses

These are the uses allowed on the lot provided that there is an existing permitted use.

Commercial Uses

This includes stores, gas stations, and tourist-oriented businesses.

Community Uses

This includes uses such as a community centre, fire hall, or community greenhouse.

Discretionary Uses

Uses that are permitted at the discretion of the Development Officer following public consultation.

Home-Based Businesses

These are small businesses that operate out of the business owner's home. Home-based businesses should not change the principal character of the lot, create undue noise or other disturbance, or be unsightly.

Non-Conforming Uses

These are uses that do not conform to the area development regulations. Non-conforming uses that existed prior to the adoption of the area development regulations are allowed to continue, but cannot be expanded.

Multi-family Residential

Any housing with more than two units. This could include condos, apartments, or seniors'/Elders' housing.

Permitted Uses

These are the principal uses allowed on the lot.

Discussion Paper #4 – Water and Waterfront Issues

Current Conditions:

- The Six Mile River (also known as the Tagish River or the Tagish Narrows) and the adjacent wetlands are important staging areas for many migrating bird species, notably swans and other waterfowl that use the area to feed and rest. The area was identified as a Habitat Protection Area (HPA) in the Carcross/Tagish First Nation Final Agreement and management planning got underway in 2015 under the direction of a steering committee. This management plan will cover the Six Mile River and adjacent wetlands on Marsh Lake up to the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM). The management plan is not new legislation, but will likely be a series of recommendations and strategies to be implemented by various government agencies.
- Many properties have waterfront access either on Marsh Lake, Tagish Lake, or the Six Mile River and many property owners have built private docks for their boats.
- The 30.48 metre strip above the ordinary high water mark is reserved for public water access (public waterfront reserve). In most cases, it is not privately owned and owners of adjacent properties are not supposed to remove vegetation, landscape or build structures in this public area.
- Property owners may obtain a water lot lease giving them permission to construct a private dock. There are both authorized and non-authorized (no lease) docks in the planning area

What We Heard:

- Local fish populations depend on the protection of major waterbodies and their minor tributaries.
- Protection of the water quality in the planning area and throughout the Southern Lakes region is very important to residents.
- Erosion and groundwater issues, especially those related to the Yukon Energy's Southern Lakes Enhanced Storage Concept, are a concern to Tagish residents.
- There are private docks, landscaping, and storage areas within the 30.48 metre public waterfront reserve and in some cases, these are limiting public access along shorelines.
- Residents value waterfront access and those with docks want to be able to continue to use, upgrade and maintain them. Some docks have been built without authorization.
- People are concerned that boats travelling at high speeds on the Six Mile River are causing increased erosion and threatening bird populations.
- Residents are unclear about the current dock permitting process.

Discussion Paper #5 – Future Development

Current Conditions:

- There are currently no vacant lots for sale in Tagish, although at any given time, there are several homes or cabins for sale in the area.
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation (C/TFN) has expressed an interest in identifying areas for future cottage/residential lot lease areas, possibly along the Six Mile River.
- It is expected that population growth in Whitehorse will increase the demand for recreational lots in Tagish.
- Most commercial, tourist, and community uses are located along Tagish Road between the C/TFN campground and the entrance to Tagish Estates.

What We Heard:

- Residents want Tagish to be a self-sufficient community and are, in general, not opposed to identifying areas for new residential lots as part of the Local Area Plan.
- Caribou habitat is very important, and impacts on caribou habitat need to be assessed and avoided/mitigated as part of any new development.
- There is interest in expanding community uses to include a community garden and greenhouse near the Community Centre.
- Residents frequently see caribou crossing Reid Road between the cemetery and the Fire Hall.
- Residents of both Tagish Estates and Taku Subdivision are concerned about the lack of secondary emergency access to/from their properties.

Discussion Paper #6 – Culture and History

Current Conditions:

- Tagish is the ancestral home of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Local First Nation families gathered in Tagish for trading and seasonal celebrations.
- Tagish was home to a busy North West Mounted Police post from 1897 to 1901. The purpose of this post was to control the influx of prospectors. 28,000 people registered at the post as they headed north to the goldfields.
- There are a number of documented heritage sites in the planning area including historic structures, known archaeological sites, heritage routes, areas of archaeological potential, and First Nation Heritage Sites.
- A map of these sites has been produced, but is not included in this report as it contains confidential information.
- There are fourteen heritage structures that still exist in the Tagish area including the Trading Post, the NWMP Tagish Post, and the Johnnie Johns Homestead.
- Development needs to be planned so that it does not impact known heritage resources and archaeological sites in the area.

What We Heard:

- There is an interest in rekindling the First Nation's connection to Tagish and finding opportunities to bring culture back to the community.
- Only limited information about local history and First Nation culture is currently provided to residents and visitors. Finding a way to bring this information to life would be good for tourism and community building.
- A new or expanded community centre could be combined with a cultural centre.

Discussion Paper #7 – Environment and Habitat

Current Conditions:

- According to both local knowledge and wildlife survey data the entire planning area is located within the core winter range of the Carcross woodland caribou herd, which has an estimated population of 800 animals (2008 study).
- The community of Tagish is situated at the cross-roads of the northern and southern parts of the herd's annual range. There are at least two important migration routes in the area: crossing the Tagish Road between Crag Lake and the community of Tagish, and Jubilee Mt. to Judas Creek, Mt Michie, and Squaga.
- Areas to the west of the community of Tagish and along the western shores of Marsh and Tagish lakes contain relatively large patches of high value winter habitat. Patches of high value winter habitat may also exist within the planning area, and further habitat assessments are required to validate habitat quality within the planning area.
- The waterbodies in this area, along with Bennett Lake, are part of the Southern Lakes system and are the headwaters of the Yukon River. The health of the streams, rivers, and lakes in this area is connected to the health of areas located both upstream and downstream.

What We Heard:

- Protecting caribou habitat is important to local residents and to the C/TFN.
- Protection of the shoreline habitat and wildlife is important, especially in areas that abut or feed into the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area and areas that provide fish habitat.
- The area on either side of Reid Road between the cemetery and the Fire Hall is an important local wildlife corridor.