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# Smart Growth Focus Groups Facilitation Final Report



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Smart Growth process is fundamentally about collective defining, understanding and choosing priorities with respect to the future of the City of Yellowknife – the City that represents the triad of what is: technically and physically necessary and possible; environmentally and economically sustainable; and ultimately supported by City Council as an expression of all the people it serves and is accountable to.

The essence of responsible decision making is recognition of competing and, at times, conflicting needs and priorities. Responsible decision making respecting the future direction and development of the city entails the challenges of making choices. Not prioritizing does not mean that the issues are avoided. In fact, failure to prioritize de facto means we still make choices; they are just not as clearly articulated. The key messages from the City’s Smart Growth initiative share a common foundation, that of making wise decisions in the face of inevitable incomplete and imperfect information.

Northern city governance, of which planning and development is an important but singular dimension, is inherently challenged by the absence of consensus on a coherent framework for decision making. The Smart Growth process reflects a commitment to work towards such a framework and which has, and continues to engage, an unprecedented cross-section of the people and interests both within the city proper and the essential regional co-existence considerations. The cross-section of participants for the Smart Growth focus groups included those from the business community, all three levels of government, school boards, professional associations, community groups, seniors, high school students.

Key drivers of Smart Growth are growing environmental and energy conservation, demographic changes, healthy communities, strong neighbourhoods, financial management (i.e., “doing more with less”) and economic vitality. The city’s proactive embracing of Smart Growth was recently recognized by *Corporate Knights* in their 2008 Investment Issue Special Report – Second Annual Ranking of Canada’s Most Sustainable Cities<sup>1</sup> where Yellowknife was ranked first in the small city category. The first place ranking was attributed to:

- Most community garden space of all small cities evaluated;
- Two kilometre median commuting distance and only 67% of population being dependent on cars;
- 23.6 kilometres of bike paths; and
- Dedicated spending in support of Smart Growth including an energy plan, geothermal feasibility study, conservation initiatives, and smart growth planning initiatives<sup>2</sup>.

Such initiatives likely contribute to the quality of life residents experience in their community. In the 2007 Citizen Survey, 96% rated the quality of life in Yellowknife positively<sup>3</sup>.

A component of the public consultation process associated with the City of Yellowknife’s Smart Growth planning (noted above) is the facilitation of themed focus groups aimed at obtaining more detailed views and a variety of stakeholder perspectives related to Smart Growth for Yellowknife. In support of this consultation project, the City of Yellowknife retained the services of a local consulting firm to facilitate and report on approximately 20 focus group sessions held in November and December 2007. The outcomes from the Smart Growth focus group sessions are intended to support the City on other consultation activities related to the development of a Smart Growth Plan (hereafter referred to as the *Plan*) for Yellowknife.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.corporateknights.ca/content/page.asp?name=cities\\_2008\\_top\\_3](http://www.corporateknights.ca/content/page.asp?name=cities_2008_top_3)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> 2007 Citizen Survey Final Report, prepared by Ipsos Reid

City Administration provided the following theme areas to guide the discussion emerging out of the focus groups: Land Use and Urban Design; Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic; Economic Development; Housing; Social Activities/Culture and Heritage; and Energy and the Environment.

The consultation team researched, listened and identified observations from the Smart Growth initiative and focus groups outcomes. From a professional planning and municipal management perspective, the following conclusions and direction ideas are offered for consideration by the City Administration and Council for Smart Growth Redevelopment by each of the six theme areas. Further details and observation are presented in Section 3. The following key observations are offered and should be used by the Planning and Development Department as well as a Design Consultant through the development of the *Plan* to identify strategic parcels for assembly, preliminary concept development and the design of programs policies to facilitate an implementation strategy.

### **Land Use and Urban Design**

- Creating a consistent theme throughout Downtown informed by Northern landscapes and winterscapes. This would also include design standards that protect viewscales and the natural environment;
- Redesigning the Downtown core to function as a gathering place for residents and tourists. A key contributor to the Downtown being a gathering place could include a library, conference centre, or a broader use multiplex geared toward all interests in the community. Such a facility should include several mixed uses including recreation (indoor and outdoor), some retail, commercial, residential, etc.;
- Downtown revitalization efforts should reflect the culture of people indigenous to the land and the history/heritage of Yellowknife (i.e., mining);
- Undertake efforts to increase safety within the Downtown core using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); and
- Pursuing waterfront development in Old Town.

### **Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic**

- Consider increasing the quantity of arterials and/or other modes of safer transportation connecting the study area;
- Encourage transit use buy-in through increasing the number of transit routes; increasing the frequency of buses; installation of maps/schedules at every transit stop; and consider implementing a local businesses subsidy for bus passes; and
- Design the city to be more walkable (e.g., more sidewalks, walking trails, etc.). To ensure the sidewalks and trails are used by residents, adequate levels safety and security are required.

### **Economic Development**

- Yellowknife should consider branding itself beyond its existing “diamond capital” slogan to include linkages to the natural physical beauty of the North and function as a gateway city to the North;
- Increase the ease and access to the waterfront for tourism and recreation related activities;
- Initiatives should be undertaken to link tourists to key observation locations or points of interest locations along the highway (e.g., Territorial Visitors Centres, initiatives to promote travel along highway route, etc.);
- Strategies should be undertaken to attract more investors to Yellowknife (i.e., Yellowknife should be a cost effective choice for potential investors);
- Strategies should be undertaken to increase the affordability of housing as this may be key to attracting potential investors and individuals;
- Zone an industrial park within the city; and
- Undertake strategies to reclaim abandoned gold mines.

### **Housing**

- Work with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) to develop city specific initiatives aimed at increasing the affordability and types of housing available in Yellowknife and develop services, programs, and tax breaks to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing stock within the study area; and
- Pursue mixed-use housing developments by offering incentives to developers to construct such projects.

### **Social Activities/Culture and Heritage**

- Designation or acquisition of a location within the study area to conduct social activities that celebrate Northern culture and heritage. Such a venue could include Northern and Aboriginal influenced public art; café; etc. If large enough, the space could be capable of hosting sizable events in both the summer and winter;
- Provide incentives to culturally based businesses which are linked to tourism;
- Encourage festivals and activities which exhibit and celebrate cultural diversity;
- The library needs to become a cultural hub with multipurpose functions;
- There is a need to create of a ‘hang out’/‘drop-in’ centre specifically geared to youth which is accessible, safe, and alcohol-free; and
- The City can recognize Aboriginal culture through the re-naming of city streets in the Downtown core.

### **Environment and Energy**

- Establish a pesticide use by-law;
- Weekly limits for waste generation and expansion of recycling program and the number of receptacles;
- Designate better garbage haul routes and staging areas;
- Strategies should be undertaken to preserve what undeveloped land remains within the city;
- Energy efficient standards should be incorporated into building standards and market energy efficient practices as a means of encouraging existing businesses and related infrastructure are brought up to code;
- Offer incentives to developers incorporating energy efficiency into their projects. Similarly, incentives can be provided to consumers who make energy efficient choices; and
- Continue to support the examination of the feasibility of geothermal energy.

Each of the six aforementioned Smart Growth themes are linked and interconnected to one another. As such, in order to ensure success, the City’s *Plan* needs to reflect all facets of the themes in its future consultation initiatives in so far as they are linked to the *Plan*’s development within the upcoming months. Smart Growth planning is grounded in process regimes that are collaborative in nature (i.e., all levels of government, local agencies, motivated politicians, stakeholders, and well informed residents working together as appropriate). Smart Growth principles are based on long term planning horizons, whereby actions are required in the shorter term with tangible results realized in the future. Through this planning and development initiative, the City’s convention of actions will begin to shape a healthier and more sustainable future for the people of Yellowknife.

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# 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE SMART GROWTH FOCUS GROUP FACILITATION PROJECT

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## 1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

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The City of Yellowknife continues to face many unique challenges and realities in designing and delivering programs and services. This includes designing and facilitating the creation of a city that meets the needs of its residents without compromising its wealth of natural, built, human, and cultural resources. Over the last several years, the 2004 General Plan has operated as an umbrella document to guide planning and development work including examinations and feasibility studies related to residential development, commercial locations and growth, industrial expansion policies, land reclamation, and environmental stewardship. In addition to the General Plan, Yellowknife is guided in its pursuit of sustainability infused undertakings through a range of its plans and studies including, but not limited to, the Old Town Secondary Development Scheme; the Urban Design Guidelines; Capital Area Development Scheme; the Waterfront Management Plan; the Downtown Plan and Development Scheme; the Residential Growth Study; and the Ecological Resources Inventory.

Yellowknife is expected to remain a significant service, finance, economic, and transportation centre for the Northwest Territories (NWT). As such, the city and its immediate region require a planning and development vision to sustain the long term viability of the community within the realities of its geophysical boundaries. Further, the future “look, feel, and use” of the city should be consistent with the desires of stakeholders and interests across the community.

Given this need, the City of Yellowknife’s Planning and Development Department has proactively engaged in a Smart Growth process of planning, research, visioning, design, and public consultation. Key drivers of Smart Growth are growing environmental and energy conservation, demographic changes, and financial management (i.e., “doing more with less”). Generally speaking, Smart Growth planning invests time, attention, and resources in restoring community and vitality to city centres and older suburbs. However, new Smart Growth is more city-centred; transit and pedestrian oriented; and focuses on greater mixing of housing, commercial, and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities.

A component of the public consultation process associated with the City of Yellowknife’s Smart Growth planning is the facilitation of themed focus groups aimed at obtaining more detailed views and a variety of stakeholder perspectives related to Smart Growth for Yellowknife. In support of this project, the City of Yellowknife retained the services of a local consulting firm to facilitate and report on approximately 20 focus group sessions held in November and December 2007. The outcomes from the Smart Growth focus group sessions are intended to support the City on further consultation activities related to the development of a Smart Growth Plan (hereafter referred to as the *Plan*) for Yellowknife.

## 1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

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This report has been structured into the following sections:

- Section 1 – Overview of the Project;
- Section 2 – Study Approach and Methodology;
- Section 3 – Summarizing the Recommendations Emerging From Focus Groups; and
- Section 4 – Summary

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## 2 – STUDY APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

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The objective of this assignment included validation and expansion upon the initial observations from the Smart Growth Plan City-Wide Questionnaire (hereafter referred to as the *Questionnaire*). The focus groups also served to solicit more detailed input on redevelopment strategies relating to housing, urban design, commercial development, recreation, environmental protection, energy conservation and building standards. The focus groups, as a form of public participation, aimed to garner opinions and ideas from local residents, businesses, and stakeholder groups to ensure any redevelopment plan is sustainable and representative of the broader public interest. The output from the focus groups and the *Questionnaire* will be used by the City of Yellowknife Planning and Development Department as well as a design consultant to identify strategic land parcels for assembly, preliminary concept development, and the design of programs and policies to facilitate the implementation strategy.

### 2.1 APPROACH

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The consultation strategy for this assignment was grounded in the design, execution, and completion of a series of focus groups related to Smart Growth for the City of Yellowknife. The purpose of the assignment was to collect information on Smart Growth and use it as a vehicle for future planning and consultation activities including, but not limited to, the *Plan*. In preparing for the facilitation of the focus groups, the consulting team and City staff were guided by the following understanding of the benefits and barriers associated with this form of social research.

#### 2.1.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups are a small group of people brought together for a free flowing discussion around topics which have been defined (i.e., Smart Growth themes). Participants were asked to explore an issue, sometimes loosely, sometimes thoroughly, by responding to more focussed questions. Focus groups have been a very popular social research tool since the 1980s and are normally an adjunct to survey research. In the case of this assignment, stakeholders from across the city were brought together and assembled into small groups. Through questions defined by City staff, the groups were led by facilitators into discussions related to the topic of Smart Growth for the Yellowknife. Also, the City had recently completed the *Questionnaire* which surveyed residents and businesses in Yellowknife to determine their opinions on a range of criteria including, but not limited to, land use, housing, and revitalization. The Yellowknife Smart Growth focus groups were designed to support and expand upon the *Questionnaire*.

Care was taken by City Planning and Development staff to ensure all major interests were represented at the table. Appropriate levels of government, residents, NGOs, school boards, community groups, businesses, and other related interests were invited to participate.

In preparation for the Smart Growth focus groups in Yellowknife, the consulting team undertook discussions with City staff and a review of key documents including the *Questionnaire*. Through this approach, City Administration determined that focus group discussions would address the following Smart Growth theme areas:

- A. Land Use and Urban Design;
- B. Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic;
- C. Economic Development;
- D. Housing;
- E. Social Activities/Culture and Heritage; and
- F. Energy and the Environment.



The focus group facilitators then developed generic prompt or guiding questions related to each theme area to assist focus groups in identifying Smart Growth initiatives for the City of Yellowknife to consider in its planning activities. A sampling of these generic prompts or guiding questions<sup>4</sup>, separated by theme area, are listed below.

A) Land Use and Urban Design

- General impressions of the city;
- Strategies to improve the attractiveness and comfort of the city;
- City architecture and its role in informing land use design in Yellowknife; and
- Infill development.

B) Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic

- Impressions of the appropriateness of transportation, accessibility, and safety within Yellowknife; and
- General impressions of the appropriateness of existing parking infrastructure.

C) Economic Development

- Strategies to promote infill and development within the city; and
- Opinions on potential funding sources to assist with redevelopment and revitalization of Yellowknife.

D) Housing

- Impressions of housing issues and needs in Yellowknife; and
- Strategies to encourage rehabilitation and infill of the existing housing stock in Yellowknife.

E) Social Activities/Culture and Heritage

- Impressions of the relationship between the built environment, culture, and natural heritage in Yellowknife;
- Opportunities for using the built environment to support cultural and heritage events in Yellowknife; and
- Strategies for addressing multiculturalism in Yellowknife.

F) Energy and the Environment

- Key concerns related to environmental and sustainability issues affecting Yellowknife;
- Suggestions on energy conservation tools that could be of potential interest and use throughout Yellowknife;
- Strategies the City of Yellowknife could undertake to facilitate sustainable development; and
- Identification of building standards that incorporate environmental and energy conservation.

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<sup>4</sup> The generic prompts or guiding questions were used to stimulate discussion. It is important to note that once prompted, the emerging discussion and suggestions did not necessarily answer the prompt or guiding question nor were they limited to a particular topic.

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## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

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As a follow up to the *Questionnaire*, invitations were distributed by the City’s Planning and Development Department staff to a variety of interest groups requesting their participation in a focus group scheduled for the week of November 5, 2007. In total, 21 two-hour forty-five minute sessions were held between the hours of 8:30am to 9:45pm. Each session represented a broad range of interests (for scalability and flexibility purposes) including<sup>5</sup>:

- Tourism and industry;
- Business;
- City Council;
- Community groups;
- Education (School Boards);
- City Department Directors;
- City Program Managers;
- Territorial Government;
- Federal Government;
- Consultants;
- Developers;
- Professional associations;
- Financial and insurance industries;
- RCMP;
- MLAs;
- High school students; and
- Seniors.

With the exception of City Council, City Department Directors, City Program Managers, MLAs, high school students, and seniors, all focus groups were held at the Yellowknife Inn. With respect to the exceptional cases, focus groups were conducted at the following locations:

- City Hall – Council members, Department Directors, and Program Managers;
- Legislative Assembly - MLAs;
- St. Patrick’s High School – Student Council representatives; and
- The Baker Centre – Seniors.

The objective of the focus groups was to facilitate a more detailed discussion in up to six themed areas:

- 1) Land Use and Urban Design;
- 2) Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic;
- 3) Economic Development;
- 4) Housing;
- 5) Social Activities/Culture and Heritage; and
- 6) Energy and the Environment.

In support of the assignment, the City of Yellowknife provided resources for the following:

- The invitation and scheduling of participants;
- The provision of a list of participants for each session;
- Confirmation of attendance for each session;

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<sup>5</sup> Several attempts were made by City of Yellowknife staff to contact, schedule, and facilitate sessions with local First Nations Organizations.

- The development of communication materials and information for each session (graphics, letters, posters, etc.);
- Development and/or provision of direction for focus group questions;
- General session logistics (e.g., booking venue and any applicable catering/refreshments, projectors, screens, etc.); and
- The recording of focus group minutes and discussion.

In support to the City, the consulting team undertook the following:

- Preparation for workshop (i.e., the review of background materials including the raw data received from the *Questionnaire*);
- The preparation of the agenda and facilitation techniques;
- Facilitation of the focus groups;
- Notation of discussion points on flip charts in order to supplement the focus group minutes of each session; and
- The preparation of a report that summarizes the recommendations related to each of the six themed areas and outlines consultation recommendations for the City of Yellowknife's consideration as the *Plan* moves forward.

At the start of each focus group the facilitator asked participants to do a roundtable of introductions identifying:

- (a) Who they were (i.e., name);
- (b) Organization they represented; and
- (c) Indicate why they agreed to be involved in the session.

Following the introductions, the facilitator provided the ground rules for the session and defined the roles of the facilitator and the City of Yellowknife recorder in the process.

Following the introduction, the facilitator provided an overview of:

- (a) The *Plan*;
- (b) Where the City was in the process of pursuing the components of the *Plan*;
- (c) How the focus groups fit into the process; and
- (d) How the results from the sessions will inform future steps.

To provide further context for the focus group discussions, City staff erected a series of posters, maps, and picture boards at the focus group venue (i.e., Yellowknife Inn) regarding the various components of Smart Growth. The facilitator defined the discussion boundaries for the focus group – i.e., focus on Old Town, Downtown, and Old Airport Road areas, and noted that a key guiding principle for Smart Growth is to first focus on intensification and then shift emphasis to external growth factors<sup>6</sup>.

Next, the facilitator introduced the six themed areas for discussion to focus group participants. For each themed area, a working definition was provided to participants (e.g., for land use and urban design – includes the “look and feel” of the community, where and how various developments will occur, etc.). The facilitator also presented some initial observations from the *Questionnaire* as a means of stimulating dialogue. Participants were asked to discuss each theme area as a means of informing the City of Yellowknife's approach to the development of the *Plan*.

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that the *Plan* is a city-wide undertaking that will include the built-up areas around the core as well as the outlying areas (i.e. the underdeveloped greenfield areas and beyond) in later stages. The purpose of this focus is because it is most closely tied to the principles of Smart Growth.

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### 3 – SUMMARIZING THE DIRECTIONS EMERGING FROM FOCUS GROUPS

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The concept of Smart Growth is a collection of land use and development principles that aim to enhance our quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. These principles ensure that growth is fiscally, environmentally and socially responsible and recognizes the connections between development and quality of life. Smart Growth enhances and completes communities by placing priority on infill, redevelopment, and densification strategies.<sup>7</sup>

Generally speaking, some principles guiding Smart Growth development in communities include:

1. ‘Mix[ing] land uses. Each neighbourhood has a mixture of homes, retail, business, and recreational opportunities;
2. Build[ing] well-designed compact neighbourhoods. Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity. People can easily access daily activities, transit is viable, and local businesses are supported;
3. Provid[ing] a variety of transportation choices. Neighbourhoods are attractive and have safe infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit, in addition to driving;
4. Creat[ing] diverse housing opportunities. People in different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice;
5. Encourag[ing] growth in existing communities. Investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) are used efficiently, and developments do not take up new land;
6. Preserv[ing] open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas. Development respects natural landscape features and has higher aesthetic, environmental, and financial value;
7. Utiliz[ing] smarter, and cheaper infrastructure and green buildings. Green buildings and other systems can save both money and the environment in the long run;
8. Foster[ing] a unique neighbourhood identity. Each community is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive; and
9. Nurtur[ing] engaged citizens. Places belong to those who live, work, and play there. Engaged citizens participate in community life and decision-making’<sup>8</sup>.

In order to ensure the focus groups provided insight supportive of principles 1 – 9 from the above list, City Administration grouped the relevant principles into the following theme areas which were used to elicit input from focus group participants:

- 1) Land Use and Urban Design;
- 2) Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic;
- 3) Economic Development;
- 4) Housing;
- 5) Social Activities/Culture and Heritage; and
- 6) Energy and the Environment.

This section of the report outlines the recommendations emerging from the focus groups that address Smart Growth interests and the City of Yellowknife’s *Plan*.

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<sup>7</sup> SmartGrowthBC. (n.d.). 10 Smart Growth Principles. [Online]. Available: <http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/AboutUs/SGPrinciples/tabid/133/Default.aspx>. Viewed: February 2008

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

The following sub-sections, organized by theme area, provide a synthesis of the key observations, comments, and discussions that emerged from the focus group sessions.

### 3.1 LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

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Smart Growth strives to build better places to live in existing suburbs, cities, and new communities. It also aims to protect existing investments and quality of life in areas where people, communities, and governments have already made a commitment. Smart Growth leverages new growth to improve a community and finds ways to meet economic, environmental, and quality-of-life goals.

With the above goal in mind and recognizing its connection to the issue of land use and urban design, facilitators asked focus group participants to comment and provide any observations and recommendations they had related to the issue of land use and urban design considerations for Yellowknife which should be regarded as part of the City’s Smart Growth planning initiative. A number of observations were provided related to the desired “look and feel of the city” and how/where various types of developments should occur within the study area (i.e., Downtown, Old Town and Old Airport Road).

Within the land use and urban design theme area, several sub-theme discussions were observed. These included:

- Downtown Development;
- Residential Development;
- Old Town;
- Recreational Development;
- Litter; and
- Old Airport Road.

Outlined below are the observations/recommendations, according to sub-theme, which the consulting team heard from the Smart Growth focus groups participants in relation to land use and urban design.

#### **Comments & Directions on Downtown Development:**

Participants had the following to say regarding Downtown Development:

- Several participants indicated City Administration should cross reference the outcomes and recommendations noted in previous Downtown studies.
- Create a consistent theme throughout Downtown. This is to be done in terms of:
  - Ensuring buildings and architecture are more unified and have a consistent look (i.e., no more siding on buildings, set “Northern inspired” design standards). There is a desire to see the City to lead by example in terms of “look, feel, environmental and energy conservation”; and
  - Providing more art, sculptures and benches. This would make the Downtown more attractive, brighter, and friendlier to local residents and tourists. It would also celebrate local and Northern cultures.
- Downtown revitalization efforts should reflect the culture of people indigenous to the land;
- There should be information plaques around the city demarking historical locations. However, it was noted that substantial reclamation to heritage properties is required prior to assigning buildings and sites with historical plaques;
- The city’s link to mining should also be reflected in the design of the Downtown core;
- Land use and urban design should emphasize the land’s intrinsic value;
- There should be focussed planning on winterscape rather than summerscape. Summer represents a small percentage of the year: Yellowknife should be celebrated as a “Northern town” and “winter town” through its “look and feel”;

- There is a need for a common area Downtown as a central gathering place. Currently, such a location does not exist but was identified as desired by participants. Several suggestions were provided including a library, conference centre, or a broader use multiplex. All participants noted such a location should include several mixed uses including recreation (indoor and outdoor), some retail, commercial, residential, etc;
- There is a need for more activities and amenities Downtown in order to attract people back to the core as a place to “live, work, and play”;
- The importance of protecting viewscales with strict development standards in order to encourage people to stay and come Downtown (for more than just work – during regular business hours) was noted;
- The creation of a pedestrian walkway Downtown (e.g., Franklin Avenue which would be closed to vehicular traffic) was suggested;
- The City of Yellowknife could include design considerations for Downtown to make it a safer location. The suggestions mentioned included:
  - Increasing lighting;
  - Moving the liquor store out of the Downtown area;
  - Building a treatment centre to support residents with addictions – look to examples such as Whitehorse, Yukon and Anchorage, Alaska; and
  - Addressing issues related to crime (or the perception thereof) in the Downtown core (via greater enforcement and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – CPTED).
- There should be increased density considerations – currently there is not a lot of medium density housing in the Downtown core. People may be amenable to small condominium developments; however, examples need to be provided in order to illustrate this option. Potential examples identified included:
  - Offering financial incentives for people choosing to live in medium/high density neighbourhoods;
  - Illustrating/marketing the fact that high density denotes affordability and a feeling of neighbourhood safety; and
  - Increasing density in turn increases the places available for greenspace.

### **Comments & Directions on Residential Development:**

Participants had the following to say regarding Residential Development:

- Establish buffer zones in residential development areas in order to maintain some greenspace, trees, and rocks (i.e., natural heritage); and
- Appropriate residential developments could be accomplished through a revision to the zoning by-law and strict by-law compliance.

### **Comments & Directions on Old Town Development:**

Participants had the following to say regarding Old Town:

- The City needs to define an area in Old Town for waterfront development;
- New buildings should be incorporated into the terrain (i.e., existing look, feel, and physical environment);
- The charm and attractiveness must be retained regardless of the development;
- The creation of a boardwalk;
- Old Town is a cultural hub and should remain that way. However, participants provided suggestions on strategies for enhancing Old Town. These suggestions included:
  - The creation of more sidewalk cafes and other types of commercial developments/businesses that “fit” the existing “look and feel” of Old Town; or, do not significantly impede it;
  - Development of more activities and amenities in Old Town to attract local residents and tourists; and

- Undertakings that are more accommodating to pedestrians;
  - Participants inquired into why the study area does not have a marina. It was noted that Cold Lake, Alberta is a great example of waterfront land use.

### **Comments & Directions on Recreational Development:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Recreational Development:

- There needs to be more facilities for youth which allow them to “hang out” and participate in positive constructive activities. It was noted that:
  - Such facilities would help to prevent isolation and create a more positive environment which could improve social skills; and
  - Schools and their facilities could be potential opportunities and should be treated as focal points.
- Indoor facilities should be made available for the use of preschool children and parents;
- Benefit may be tied to linking community businesses to key indoor gathering places (i.e., Library); and
- The creation of more trails (e.g., from Niven Lake to Giant Mine) – participants noted that this would allow for greater interconnectivity and pedestrian movement to and from residential areas and Downtown. This would also protect public access to nature, trails, and water. Particular points of interest highlighted by participants included:
  - A walking trail from Con Mine all the way to Giant Mine;
  - Monitoring of development in Tin Can Hill – as a means of ensuring developers do not build right to the edge of the lake thus preventing the creation of appropriate walking trails (e.g., Niven Lake ordeal); and
  - The City also needs to address crime and vagrancy on trails and paths. It was noted that safety begins with more users.

### **Comments & Directions on Litter:**

Participants made the following suggestions in relation to Litter:

- Establish and enforce a by-law that ensures that businesses/bars are responsible for doing clean-up within a one block radius of their location;
- There is a need for a more expanded/accessible recycling program. It is believed that this would increase waste diversion;
- Make it easier for people to dispose of their litter – i.e., more garbage and recycling receptacles should be made available. Many participants felt the lack of receptacles was encouraging litter in several locations across the study area. It was believed that litter may give people (i.e., locals and tourists) the perception that Yellowknife is a “dirty city”; and
- City should explore the idea of creating a proper salvage area at the dump.

### **Comments & Directions on Old Airport Road Development:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Old Airport Road:

- The growing mix of land uses in the Old Airport Road area should be reconsidered. The area’s historical “industrial” focus is not complementary with its growing retail and tertiary services focus. The majority of participants agreed that a new industrial park be zoned, whereby the light industrial businesses could be relocated out of Old Airport Road. Following this, Old Airport Road could direct future growth in the area in a more consistent manner (i.e., tertiary services, retail);
- The City could include building and landscape design standards, for big box retail stores, which reflect aspects of the North;
- Zoning by-laws should be adjusted to include the protection of viewscales in the Old Airport Road area. Participants provided examples of current structures that have impacted the viewscape

- (i.e., the new Staples building which has obstructed the viewsapes and natural beauty). Participants noted that viewsapes should be protected and celebrated through the *Plan*;
- There are safety and accessibility issues associated with the Old Airport Road area which need to be considered as part of the *Plan*. These include:
    - More sidewalks – residents are currently cycling and walking on the side of the road in an area of the city with significant traffic flow;
    - There should be an examination and adjustment of traffic patterns – there are several turning junctions that pose a higher safety risk than others given the level of traffic in the area. As such, it may be necessary to consider another access road; and
    - Old Airport Road is a shopping and service destination for residents and tourists – the volume of larger trucks and vehicles related to the area’s industrial history pose a threat to shoppers, residents, and tourists. This threat is manifested both in terms of a traffic safety issue as well as vehicular emissions issue. As a means of addressing this issue, participants made the comment of relocating light industry to a new industrial park area.

### **3.2 ACCESSIBILITY AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC**

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In addition to focussing on making better use and design of land, Smart Growth planning tends to orient towards being more town-centred and transit/pedestrian friendly and has a greater mix of housing, commercial, and retail uses.

To initiate the discussion and generation of Smart Growth recommendations related to accessibility and pedestrian traffic, facilitators introduced some preliminary observations from the *Questionnaire* including the availability of parking (Downtown and Old Town); the need to maintain/retain walking trails/walkways; the need for sidewalks in Old Airport Road and Old Town; and safety for cycling across the study area.

Within the accessibility and pedestrian traffic theme area, several sub-themes were observed. These included:

- Vehicle Traffic Flow Management;
- Alternative Transportation; and
- Tourism Related Initiatives.

Outlined below are the observations and directions, according to sub-theme, emerging out of the focus groups.

#### **Comments & Directions Regarding Vehicular Traffic Flow Management:**

Participants had the following to say with regard to Vehicular Traffic Flow Management:

- There is a need for better synchronization of traffic lights. By undertaking this, there would likely be improved traffic flow and prevention of congestion along with addressing concentrated vehicle emission releases;
- Currently there is only one main artery connecting three locations of study area. This can cause safety issues (i.e., bottlenecking the flow of traffic). Any future Smart Growth planning should consider additional arterials and/or other modes of safer transportation;
- There may be a need to redesign the flow of traffic by implementing ‘one-way streets’;
- Consideration should be given to a new parking system in order to maximize efficient use of space. Potential ideas of addressing parking concerns included:
  - Angled parking;
  - Regulated parkades; and
  - Private paid parking options.



- There should be consideration of having “No Parking” on Franklin Avenue during specified times of the day. This will assist in reducing congestion as well as encouraging alternative modes of transportation since people would not have parking options.

### **Comments & Directions Regarding Alternative Transportation:**

Participants had the following to say with regard to Alternative Transportation:

- In order for public transit to be a viable option, several items need to be considered as part of the *Plan* including:
  - Promotion and awareness campaign with respect to the Public Transit System;
  - Increasing the number of transit routes;
  - Increasing the frequency of buses;
  - Installation of maps/schedules at every transit stop; and
  - Ensuring local businesses subsidize bus passes in order to encourage transit usage.
- Ensure sidewalks are established and connected throughout the city. Participants indicated the need for sidewalks and interconnectivity for safety purposes and as an alternative transportation option in Old Airport Road, Kam Lake and areas of Old Town;
- The *Plan* should encourage people to walk or bike downtown by increasing and improving sidewalks and connectivity of trail infrastructure;
- Smart Growth planning in the City of Yellowknife should consider increasing the number of bike routes and establishment of a formal jogging trail around Old Airport Road;
- There should be increased lighting on trails to ensure pedestrian safety;
  - However, it was noted that pedestrian lighting can impact the viewing of the Northern lights.
- There should be increased security presence on the trails.

### **Comments & Directions Regarding Tourism Related Initiatives:**

With respect to accessibility and its applicability to tourism, focus group participants had the following to say:

- Suggestions made regarding planning around the issue of accessibility and pedestrian traffic included:
  - More signage throughout the town highlighting key locations in order to encourage tourists to take historic/cultural walking tours;
  - Creating a boardwalk in Old Town;
  - Increasing accessibility to key locations and attractions for both residents and tourists;
  - Widening sidewalks and increasing the quantity of benches and trees; and
  - Increasing transit support to and from culturally relevant sites and activities.

## **3.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to the aforementioned, economic development and employment considerations also comprise components of Smart Growth. Effective Smart Growth planning facilitates the creation of employment and business opportunities, improves local tax base, provides neighbourhood services and amenities, and creates economically competitive communities.<sup>9</sup>

Focus group participants discussed a range of topics related to economic development with respect to the city of Yellowknife and its Smart Growth planning initiative. The topics discussed included, but were not limited to, the issue of non-renewable resource use; sustainable business initiatives which are linked to Smart Growth principles; expanding and developing new markets; supporting existing businesses;

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<sup>9</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency. (April 2001). What is Smart Growth? [Online]. Available: <http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/whitissg4v2.pdf>. Viewed: February 2008

identifying potential funding sources to assist with Smart Growth planning initiatives; and developing marketing initiatives to attract new businesses.

Within the economic development theme area, several sub-themes were observed. These included:

- Economic Development Related to Tourism;
- Business Development Considerations; and
- Potential Funding Sources for Economic Development.

Outlined below are the observations and directions, according to sub-theme, emerging out of the focus groups.

### **Comments & Directions on Economic Development Related to Tourism:**

Participants had the following to say regarding the topic of Economic Development Related to Tourism:

- There is tremendous potential related to increasing the tourism economic base in Yellowknife. However, tourism initiatives, if they are to be successful, must be linked to other design considerations under the *Plan* (i.e., it may be advisable to consider some form of a ‘theme’ for the Yellowknife – for example Dawson City). The design considerations Yellowknife undertakes must result in making the city physically more attractive as a tourism destination and must increase linkages to the natural physical beauty of the North;
- The City has done a good job in promoting Yellowknife as a place to visit. However, more planning is necessary to make the city a place to stay for the longer term;
- Yellowknife should brand its self as the Gateway to the North. Comments and potential strategies related to branding Yellowknife included:
  - The “diamond capital” slogan is fine, however, it can and should be much more than that;
  - Selling the image of recreation and natural landscapes;
  - Marketing Yellowknife as a gateway to the wilderness; and
  - The *Plan* needs to continue supporting Northern recreation activities.
- There is a need to increase the ease of access to the waterfront;
- There is a need to consult with First Nations in creating any plans related to City initiatives. It was suggested that:
  - There should be First Nations representatives sitting on any relevant City planning committees; and
  - First Nations opinions need to be actively sought and valued.
- The *Plan* could include considerations of linking tourists to key observations locations or points of interest locations along the highway (e.g., Territorial Visitors Centres, initiatives to promote travel along highway route, etc.);
- There should be strategies to promote particular attractions or points of interest linked to Yellowknife history, mining, bush pilots, public boat launchings, fishing, nature, etc. Potential strategies include:
  - Increasing access to historic mines;
  - Promoting big game hunting and fishing;
  - Promoting camping; and
  - Increasing access to the waterfront.

### **Comments & Directions on Business Development Considerations:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Business Development Considerations:

- A key component for increasing and diversifying economic development involves attracting investors and labour to Yellowknife. The *Plan* needs to include design features which provide for a more attractive lifestyle for people at a cost that is comparative to other city centres;
- The city needs to attract more businesses in order to increase its tax base. However, limitations related to land and a comparative costing labour pool will hinder Yellowknife’s ability to attract

larger business investments. As such, participants expressed concern related to Smart Growth design standards or designated land use areas given that such moves could potential result in making Yellowknife a more expensive option when compared to other communities which, like Yellowknife, are vying to attract businesses looking to establish in the North;

- A need exists for more affordable residential developments. By increasing the quantum of housing stock, it is feasible that Yellowknife will improve its ability to attract more people to the North and, as such, expand its labour pool. Several participants noted that an estimated 35% of the current diamond sector workforce flies in and out of the Territories;
- A new location should be designated as an industrial park and there should be strategies for relocating light industry from Old Airport Road to this new industrial park. Old Airport Road should continue to grow and develop as a retail destination;
- The shorter term component of the *Plan* should focus on the use of non-renewable resources to build a greater economic base which can facilitate economic diversity in the longer term; and
- There should be identification of opportunities related to the reclamation of gold mines.

### **Comments & Directions on Potential Funding Sources and Incentives:**

Participants identified the following Potential Funding Sources to assist with Smart Growth planning initiatives:

- Government of the NWT;
- Federal Government grant;
- Leveraging existing agreements;
- Public-Private partnerships; and
- Financial incentives for infill or underutilized commercial/industrial lands.

## **3.4 HOUSING**

Smart Growth sets out to create strong, vibrant communities and neighbourhoods and, as such, it aims to provide a range of housing options. Smart Growth planning strategies are about building better places to live in existing suburbs, cities, and new communities.

Given this emphasis in Smart Growth planning on building communities and neighbourhoods reflective of the interest of local residents and stakeholders, a housing component theme was explored in the focus group sessions.

During the focus groups, the facilitators reviewed key housing related observations from the *Questionnaire* prior to commencing the discussion on the theme of Housing. These observations included preferences related to housing type (i.e., *Questionnaire* results related to single detached homes, apartments, condos, townhouses); preferences to buying versus renting; preferences related to the location of housing (i.e., Frame Lake, Downtown, and Range Lake); and the quantity of dollars Yellowknife residents were/are willing to pay for housing.

### **Comments & Directions Related to Housing:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to the topic of Housing:

- Work with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) to develop city specific initiatives aimed at increasing the affordability and types of housing available in Yellowknife and develop services, programs, and tax breaks to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing stock within the study area;
- Sustainable development/Smart Growth initiatives should maintain the vision that housing be linked to longer term economic diversification;
- The *Plan* should ensure housing development initiatives integrating a mix of housing across the study area but more specifically in the Downtown area;

- There is a need to educate and offer incentives which encourage the curbing of urban sprawl and kick start development based on sustainability/Smart Growth principles and standards across the study area (e.g., tax breaks);
- It is necessary to avoid low density sprawl and focus on reinvesting efforts to renew the Downtown core;
- It is necessary to build housing units in the Downtown area that are more desirable and affordable to youth, families, and seniors; and
- There is a need for streamlining administrative and permitting processes as a means of facilitating a broader range of developments across the study area.

### **3.5 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES / CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

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Smart Growth hinges on the concept of creating vibrant communities, where community refers not only to the built environment but also to a “sense of community”. The metaphysical “sense of community” can be created through the use of planning to:

- Encourage increased social interaction; and
- Generate a sense of belonging among community members.

According to the eighth principle of Smart Growth, this can be accomplished by fostering ‘a unique neighbourhood identity’ through which diversity and inclusivity are reflected. Hence, a social activities, culture, and heritage theme was examined in the focus group sessions.

During the focus groups, the facilitators undertook a preliminary overview of the results of the *Questionnaire* highlighting the importance (related to the *Plan*) of preserving Yellowknife’s past for the new generations to embrace and respect as the community continues to grow and then opened the discussion on topics related to Social Activities/Culture and Heritage.

#### **Comments & Directions Related to Social Activities/Culture and Heritage:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Social Activities/Culture and Heritage:

- The City needs to explore the acquisition of land for outdoor summer activities. This establishment will:
  - Display public art;
  - Support a summer café; and
  - Function as a gathering place.
- There is a need to develop incentives for culturally based businesses which are linked to tourism;
- Encourage festivals and activities which exhibit and celebrate cultural diversity - Aboriginal day is a success, but it is only once a year. The *Plan* should include opportunities in design standards that celebrate and respect Aboriginal culture all year round;
- The library needs to become a cultural hub with multipurpose functions. It could include a public art gallery; a theatre and dance forum; a music room, etc.;
- There is a need to create of a ‘hang out’/‘drop-in’ centre specifically geared to youth. This centre would include a variety of attractions such as:
  - Creative/athletic activities;
  - Retail stores;
  - Food court;
  - Playground;
  - Soccer facility; and
  - Cultural information and activities.
- There is a need to ensure that youth can enjoy socializing in an alcohol-free environment. The alcohol-free socializing establishment developed should be made accessible to lower income

households. The establishment should also be located on bus and/or other alternative transportation corridors;

- The sliding hill behind Northern United Place should be preserved as a recreation feature and as a natural feature;
- In developing the *Plan*, the City should make efforts to recognize the significant communities of individuals from the Philippines and Ukraine. These cultures could be reflected in some design standards or through the establishment of culturally focussed areas within the study area;
- The City can recognize First Nations culture through the re-naming of city streets in the Downtown core;
- Participants noted that Seniors are rarely seen “out and about” due to accessibility issues. As such, the City of Yellowknife should consider creating walking trails and/or a pedestrian way for Seniors that facilitates their mobility and access to City services and amenities;
- There is a need for a large space capable of hosting sizable events in both the summer and winter. This space would:
  - Host festivals that have been combined together;
  - Revitalize existing events (e.g., Raven Mad Days, Caribou Carnival, etc.); and
  - Adopt the lost practice of placing a Christmas Tree in the Downtown area.

### **3.6 ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

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Healthy communities, according to the cornerstones of Smart Growth, are communities which ‘provide families with a clean environment, balanced with development, environmental protection and preservation, water supplies and air quality’<sup>10</sup>.

Recognizing the strong ties between environmental integrity and sources of energy, City Administration determined that a Smart Growth planning discussion on improving environmental quality needed to include a discussion on energy. As such the Energy and Environment theme was developed. This theme included topics of energy conservation; clean energy generation that meets existing demands; protection of environmental features; greenspaces; natural heritage; trails, and the waterfront.

The facilitators initiated the focus group discussion on the topic of Environment and Energy by reviewing the initial observations from the *Questionnaire*. These observations included the strong desire for environmental preservation – in particular within subdivisions, Downtown, and Old Town; preservation and maintenance of trails including increasing interconnectivity; addressing the litter issue in so far as it related to preserving the environment and conserving energy; and the need to promote energy conservation.

Within the energy and environment theme area, several sub-themes were observed. These included:

- Environmental Protection and Environmentally Friendly Initiatives;
- Energy; and
- Recycling and Litter.

#### **Comments & Directions Related to Environmental Protection and Environmentally Friendly Initiatives:**

Participants had the following to say regarding Environmental Protection and Environmentally Friendly Initiatives:

- There is a need to establish a pesticide by-law;

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<sup>10</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency. (April 2001). What is Smart Growth? [Online]. Available: <http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/whtissg4v2.pdf>. Viewed: February 2008

- Weekly limits for waste generation (i.e., number of bags of garbage per housing unit or per small/large business) should be set;
- Designate better haul routes and staging areas. These routes and areas should reduce/minimize human exposure to exhaust fumes from trucks and, as such, reduce possible longer term health impacts. In order to mitigate human exposure to exhaust fumes, the following was suggested:
  - Implement and enforce disincentives for those people idle their vehicles for extended periods of time (with consideration to natural extenuating circumstances such as extreme cold weather)
- Strategies should be undertaken to preserve what undeveloped land remains within the city; and
- There should be a move to maintain greenspace.

### **Comments & Directions Related to Energy:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Energy:

- Consider the use of alternative technology – consider the use of old resources for new cost-effective use. Suggestions related to alternative energy generation technology included:
    - Geothermal: It was suggested that the City of Yellowknife study the geothermal potential of Con Mine;
    - Solar power;
    - Wind power;
    - Heat dispersion; and
    - Incineration
  - Energy efficient standards should be incorporated into building standards. Currently, the high price of utilities usually results in people being more energy conscious and efficient;
  - Incentives should be offered for more energy efficient programs (e.g., upgrading lighting, renovations, retrofits, etc.);
  - Energy efficient practices need to be marketed in order to educate both residents and businesses on appropriate practices;
  - Existing buildings need to be brought up to code to match current energy efficiency standards;
  - Businesses should turn off ‘most lights’ outside of regular business hours;
  - All new City buildings, retrofits, and renovations should include LEED design principles; and
  - The City should create standards of construction focussed on the use of energy efficient materials.
- It was noted that:
- The City should provide incentives and reward rebates for energy efficient practices.

### **Comments & Directions Related to Recycling and Litter:**

Participants had the following to say with respect to Recycling and Litter (in so far as it contributed to environmental protection and energy conservation):

- Create a not-for-profit organization, with tax breaks, to haul recycling south to Alberta. It was noted that if practiced properly, a good recycling program will generate money and extend the life of Yellowknife’s landfill via increased waste diversion;
- There should be more recycling bins. However, the City needs to empty recycling bins more regularly. The City needs to work with landlords to assist with setting up more recycling receptacles; and
- There should be incentives for recycling and waste diversion. Incentives identified included:
  - Cleaning and emptying garbage cans regularly and putting them closer to schools;
  - Making it easier to dispose of the garbage; and
  - Pursuing an education and awareness campaign related to litter prevention and the importance of recycling.

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## 4 - SUMMARY

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Each of the six aforementioned Smart Growth themes (see Section 3) are linked and interconnected to one another. As such, in order to ensure success, the City's *Plan* needs to reflect all facets of the themes in its future consultation initiatives in so far as they are linked to the *Plan's* development within the upcoming months. Smart Growth planning is grounded in process regimes that are collaborative in nature (i.e., all levels of government, local agencies, motivated politicians, stakeholders, and well informed residents working together as appropriate). Smart Growth principles are based on long term planning horizons, whereby actions are required in the shorter term with tangible results realized in the future. Through this planning and development initiative, the City's convention of actions will begin to shape a healthier and more sustainable future for the people of Yellowknife.

From a professional planning and municipal management perspective, the following conclusions and key direction ideas are offered for consideration by the City Administration and Council for Smart Growth Redevelopment by each of the six theme areas. If supported, the information should be used by the Planning and Development Department (and its process Design Consultant) for future tasks linked to the development of the *Plan* including the identification of strategic parcels for assembly, preliminary concept development and the design of programs policies to facilitate an implementation strategy. It is important to note the focus groups undertaken form an early component to a multi-faceted public consultation process aimed at obtaining more detailed views from a variety of perspectives across the city related to Smart Growth for Yellowknife.

### **Land Use and Urban Design**

- Creating a consistent theme throughout Downtown informed by Northern landscapes and winterscapes. This would also include design standards that protect viewscales and the natural environment;
- Redesigning the Downtown core to function as a gathering place for residents and tourists. A key contributor to the Downtown being a gathering place could include a library, conference centre, or a broader use multiplex geared toward all interests in the community. Such a facility should include several mixed uses including recreation (indoor and outdoor), some retail, commercial, residential, etc.;
- Downtown revitalization efforts should reflect the culture of people indigenous to the land and the history/heritage of Yellowknife (i.e., mining);
- Undertake efforts to increase safety within the Downtown core using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); and
- Pursuing waterfront development in Old Town.

### **Accessibility and Pedestrian Traffic**

- Consider increasing the quantity of arterials and/or other modes of safer transportation connecting the study area;
- Encourage transit use buy-in through increasing the number of transit routes; increasing the frequency of buses; installation of maps/schedules at every transit stop; and consider implementing a local businesses subsidy for bus passes; and
- Design the city to be more walkable (e.g., more sidewalks, walking trails, etc.). To ensure the sidewalks and trails are used by residents, adequate levels safety and security are required.

### **Economic Development**

- Yellowknife should consider branding itself beyond its existing “diamond capital” slogan to include linkages to the natural physical beauty of the North and function as a gateway city to the North;
- Increase the ease and access to the waterfront for tourism and recreation related activities;
- Initiatives should be undertaken to link tourists to key observation locations or points of interest locations along the highway (e.g., Territorial Visitors Centres, initiatives to promote travel along highway route, etc.);
- Strategies should be undertaken to attract more investors to Yellowknife (i.e., Yellowknife should be a cost effective choice for potential investors);
- Strategies should be undertaken to increase the affordability of housing as this may be key to attracting potential investors and individuals;
- Zone an industrial park within the city; and
- Undertake strategies to reclaim abandoned gold mines.

### **Housing**

- Work with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) to develop city specific initiatives aimed at increasing the affordability and types of housing available in Yellowknife and develop services, programs, and tax breaks to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing stock within the study area; and
- Pursue mixed-use housing developments by offering incentives to developers to construct such projects.

### **Social Activities/Culture and Heritage**

- Designation or acquisition of a location within the study area to conduct social activities that celebrate Northern culture and heritage. Such a venue could include Northern and Aboriginal influenced public art; café; etc. If large enough, the space could be capable of hosting sizable events in both the summer and winter;
- Provide incentives to culturally based businesses which are linked to tourism;
- Encourage festivals and activities which exhibit and celebrate cultural diversity;
- The library needs to become a cultural hub with multipurpose functions;
- There is a need to create of a ‘hang out’/‘drop-in’ centre specifically geared to youth which is accessible, safe, and alcohol-free; and
- The City can recognize Aboriginal culture through the re-naming of city streets in the Downtown core.

### **Environment and Energy**

- Establish a pesticide use by-law;
- Weekly limits for waste generation and expansion of recycling program and the number of receptacles;
- Designate better garbage haul routes and staging areas;
- Strategies should be undertaken to preserve what undeveloped land remains within the city;
- Energy efficient standards should be incorporated into building standards and market energy efficient practices as a means of encouraging existing businesses and related infrastructure are brought up to code;
- Offer incentives to developers incorporating energy efficiency into their projects. Similarly, incentives can be provided to consumers who make energy efficient choices; and
- Continue to support the examination of the feasibility of geothermal energy.



