



YELLOWKNIFE HARBOUR PLAN

STAGE 1 - BACKGROUND REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: **VISION & FRAMEWORKS**

FINAL REPORT MAY 2012

The Harbour Plan is carried out with funding assistance of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency



Canadian Northern Economic
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Agence canadienne de développement
économique du Nord

The Planning Partnership

in association with

Avens Associates LTD • W.F. Baird & Associates • Plan B Natural Heritage • Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP

Executive Summary

Yellowknife Bay, extending from the mouth of the Yellowknife River south to the municipal boundary, is an invaluable community resource for Yellowknife area citizens. It provides residents and visitors with year-round opportunities for recreation, tourism, transportation, and economic development, all the while remaining an important cultural and ecologically sensitive area. As the City continues to grow and develop, the impacts on the harbour have increased including more boats, floatplanes, float-homes, motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation, and shoreline development.

While significant planning efforts have been made over the years on shoreline and waterfront issues in the Yellowknife Bay, the need for a holistic Yellowknife Harbour strategy has become increasingly apparent. With the overlapping jurisdictional interests – Federal, Territorial, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and the City – there is no clear vision, framework, or coordinated efforts for regulating activities or development. It is in this context that the City, other levels of government, and community stakeholders, committed to the development of the Yellowknife Harbour Plan (the Plan).

The Plan was initiated in 2009 with funding support from the City and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor). In early 2010, City Council adopted the Plan's Terms of Reference and thereafter appointed the seventeen (17) member Yellowknife Harbour Committee. The purpose of the Committee was to facilitate the interests of the various governmental bodies to assist the City in formulating policies, concepts, and strategies relating to a regulatory framework and vision for the Yellowknife Bay. Later that year, a consulting team consisting of planners, landscape architects, engineers, and ecologists, led by The Planning Partnership was appointed to work with the Committee and Administration to develop the Plan.

Over the past few years, the project team conducted significant field research and public consultation. Public input was received through two workshops in Yellowknife and one workshop in Dettah held in 2010, as well as several open houses and focus group sessions in 2011. An Ipsos Reid telephone survey, consisting of a random sampling of 400 Yellowknife residents, was also conducted in 2011, to measure broader public opinion on a number of key issues. In 2012, the City posted a draft version of the Plan on its website and gathered significant public feedback which resulted in further Plan amendments recommended by the Committee. Primary concerns heard throughout the consultation process include the need for:

- Greater intergovernmental and stakeholder cooperation on the jurisdiction of the Yellowknife Harbour;
- Improved public accessibility to the waterfront, including addressing the private occupation of public lands;
- Increased safety and greater awareness and delineation of potentially conflicting activities including floatplanes, boats, motor vehicles, and non-motorized recreation;
- Moorage areas for float-planes and small boats as well as shallow boat launches/storage areas for canoes and kayak;
- Improvement and maintenance to existing parks and development of new parks and trails;
- Protection of the character and heritage of Old Town;

- A clear and consistent strategy to address informal settlements on land and water which takes into consideration community character, zoning, taxation, servicing housing affordability, safety, and the environment; and
- That all forms of design incorporate Crime Prevention through environmental design principles.

In building on the foundation of background research and public input, the Plan was structured into six guiding frameworks and an implementation strategy resulting in 43 recommendations summarized below. The Harbour Planning Committee has given careful consideration to these recommendations and noted that considerable resources and time are required for implementation.

Natural Heritage

1. Direct high use activities and development to less sensitive areas or disturbed sites with restoration/enhancement potential.
2. Develop and implement policies, site control measures, monitoring and impact contingency measures to protect groundwater and surface water quality.
3. Integrate sustainable stormwater management practices into existing and new development areas.
4. Require erosion/siltation control plans for new developments adjacent to shorelines, wetlands, and watercourses.
5. Develop and implement management plans for ESAs to guide development and recreational activities and protect sensitive areas.
6. Promote through education and enforce regulations to mitigate potential water quality impacts generated by Harbour users.

Parks & Open Space

1. Develop/recognize major green spaces as key destinations/nodes on the waterfront.
2. Identify ice parks for programming of winter activity.
3. Enhance existing/develop new parks along the waterfront.
4. Reinforce the shoreline enhancement zone.
5. Restrict leases for private use of public waterfront land between Tin Can Hill and the ski club.

Trails

1. Develop three primary trails: Mine to Mine, Harbour Trail, and Yellowknife Bay Trail.
2. Develop key connecting trails to link the lakes, the Harbour Trail, and the Mine-to-Mine Trail.
3. Explore opportunities for a small-scale ferry/water taxi service between Old Town and Jolliffe Island.
4. Develop a strategy to clearly mark and promote awareness of the ice roads/winter connections on Yellowknife Bay.
5. Develop a comprehensive trail wayfinding/signage strategy.
6. Establish an operating budget to ensure trails are well maintained.

Executive Summary

Arts, Heritage, Tourism & Culture

1. Designate Old Town as an Arts and Culture District.
2. Develop Jolliffe Island as a Heritage park.
3. Undertake a Public Art Strategy.
4. Enhance the programming of festivals and events year-round.
5. Incorporate environmental and heritage interpretive information on the three main trails.
6. Enhance the identity of the cultural centres and reinforce the links among the centres.
7. Support/develop interpretive information at Giant Mine and Con Mine.
8. Establish an award program to celebrate and recognize local excellence in the arts, culture and architecture.

Harbour Uses

1. Undertake a market analysis to evaluate whether a marina could be supported.
2. Optimize docking in Old Town.
3. Develop a docking area along the public lands adjacent to Morrison Drive.
4. Implement a moratorium on all new float homes. Define a float home zone. Adapt safety and building standards for float homes. Explore long-term development of a marina-based float home community.
5. Provide deep draft boat launches. Provide boat launches for shallow draft boats. Remove the current boat launches in Old Town.
6. Provide canoe and kayak storage.
7. Enhance the management of the Harbour.
8. Develop a mechanism to improve education and safety of harbour users and awareness of and cooperation with others.
9. Work with commercial and private plane operators to more clearly delineate the aerodrome and its limits.

Neighbourhoods & Districts

1. Develop a planning framework, supported by character area-specific design guidelines, to shape change in neighbourhoods and districts according to the three categories on the Guiding Frameworks plan.
2. Prepare comprehensive plans for large scale areas for redevelopment.
3. Prepare urban design guidelines for Old Town.
4. Enhance the streetscapes in Old Town.
5. Prepare a strategy for the evolution of informal settlements on public land in Old town, including development concepts, tenure options, and planning/development controls.

Implementation

1. Assign senior City administrator to head up City led Harbour Agency and oversee coordination of the Plan's phased implementation.
2. Establish interdepartmental harbour Agency and initiate formation of intergovernmental Harbour advisory groups.
3. Initiate consultation with Federal, GNWT, and YKDFN on the terms of the MOU(s).

4. Undertake periodic review (every 5 years) of the Harbour Plan and its implementation.

With regards to implementation, it is worth highlighting that central to the Plan's success is the resolution of jurisdictional complexities around the regulation of uses and activities within the Harbour. In this regard, a variety of harbour management models – based on national and international case studies – were examined, each varying in terms of controlling authority, governance structures, mandates, and administration. From these management models, and consultation with various levels of government and stakeholder representatives, a municipal-led harbour management approach is recommended for Yellowknife. This approach recognizes the City's inherent understanding of the harbour issues and its established capacity to oversee implementation of many of the land use and development-related components of the Plan. Key elements of this approach include:

1. Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and various levels of government, including YKDFN, Territorial and Federal counterparts regarding the regulation of the Yellowknife Harbour;
2. Creating a specialized municipal-led agency, facilitated by City Administration, and a Harbour Advisory Committee to advise the Harbour Agency, as it implements the Plan through the development of new regulations and negotiations with upper levels of government on jurisdiction; and
3. Establishing a clear mandate focused on implementing the objectives and recommendations of the Plan.

Significant public input was received at all stages of the Harbour Plan's development and the Harbour Planning Committee spent considerable time reviewing public input and revising the report to optimize public expectations. Given the scope of the Plan it is evident that implementation will need to occur over an extended period of time (i.e. 20 years) and that ongoing prioritization of tasks will occur. As a result of public input and resources the Committee recommended five priority tasks for immediate implementation:

1. Pursue the feasibility of a Giant Mine Marina Site concurrently with exploring Mosher Island as an alternate marina site;
2. Establish a memorandum of understanding, seek jurisdiction over the Yellowknife Harbour (lake bed Great Slave Lake within the municipal boundaries);
3. Pursue a Float Plane/small Boat Marina at the proposed Back Bay site on Latham Island;
4. Seek municipal tenure to the DFO property (the government dock: Lot 10, Block A, Plan 3801) and clean it up; and
5. Maintain and upgrade the existing parks (upgrades to include amenities and appropriate lighting). The City should focus its efforts on the following sites in the short-term: Pilot's Monument, Wiley Road parcel, Otto Drive Park, and the Rotary Park

These five recommendations were adopted by Council and will allow Administration to pursue a number of initiatives over the next 12-18 months while the balance of the Harbour Plan is considered for implementation.

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Clearly the recommendations identified in the Plan have implications on the City's capital and operating budgets, and some complex policy and legislation matters will require resolution before certain initiatives can proceed. It is essential that the City strategically identify, scale, and schedule projects in a practical manner. The key trigger for success in implementation of a new framework to guide use on and along the Harbour is first and foremost, political will. The City must champion change and set the precedent for the quality and character of development. The public sector has to lead by showing an obvious commitment to change by investing in high quality public spaces and facilities.

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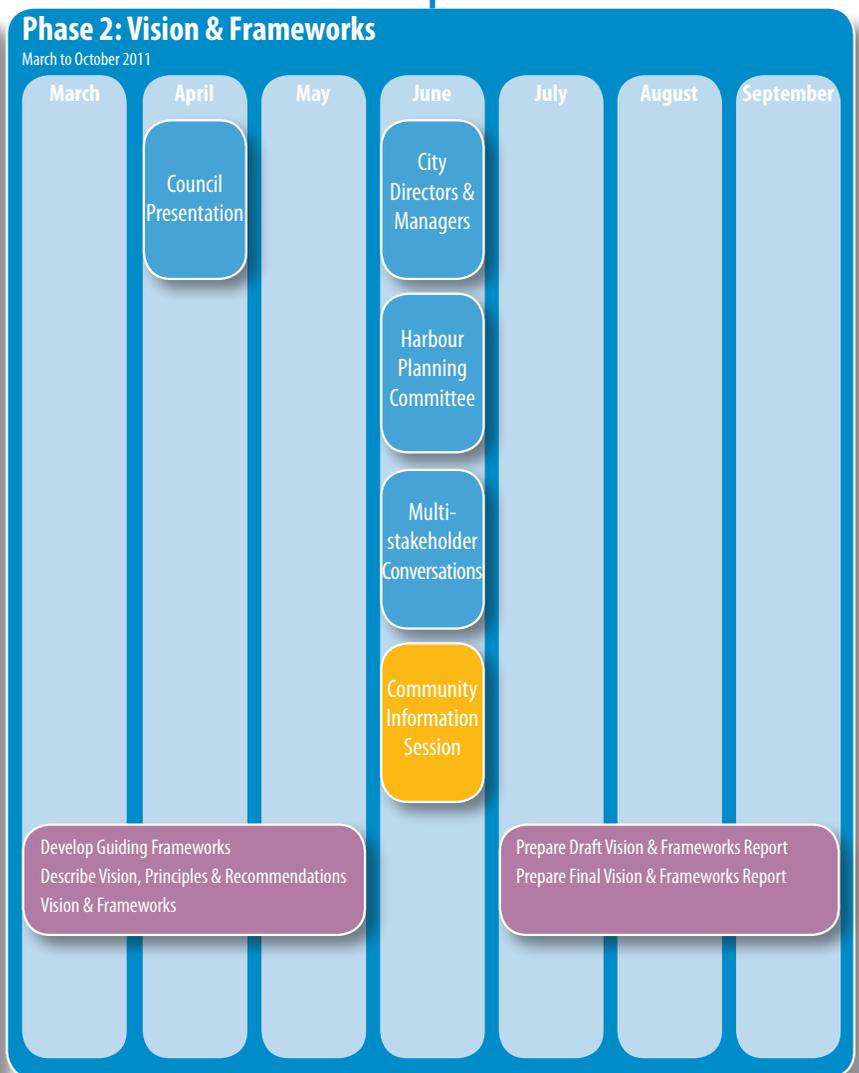
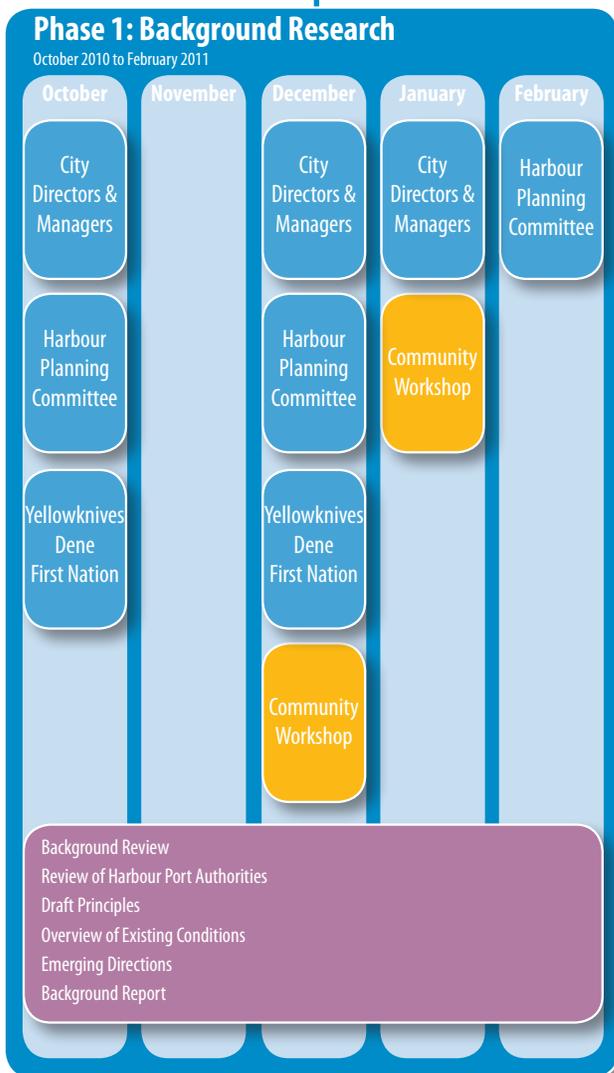
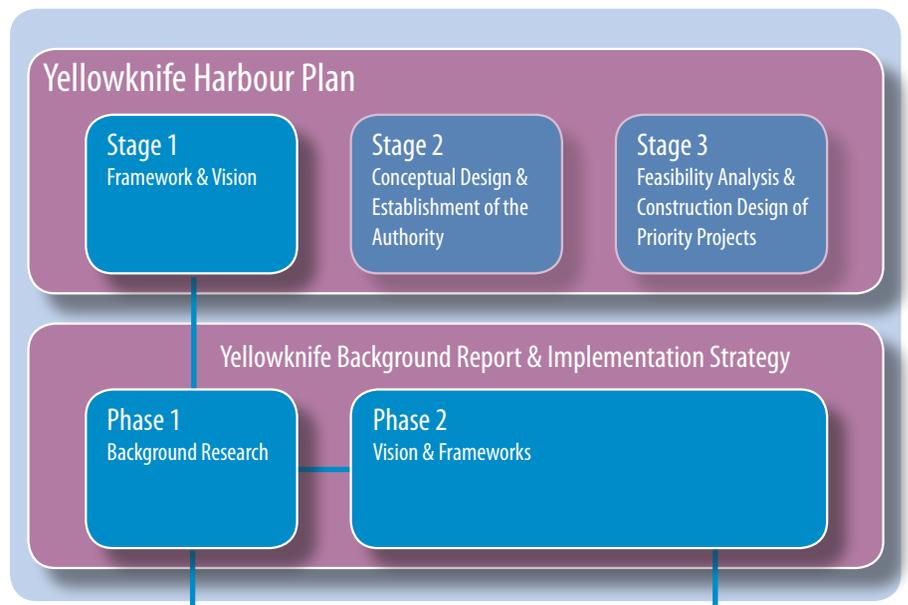
Introduction

This report describes the vision and recommendations for Yellowknife Harbour. It is a companion to the Phase 1 Background Report (February 2011). The Phase 2 report develops the key directions described in the Background Report based on the extensive input received through the multi-stakeholder conversations and the community information sessions held in June 2011.

Study Purpose

The purpose of the Yellowknife Harbour Planning Study is to develop a vision and implementation strategy for a well-managed and better-regulated Yellowknife Harbour. The control of development and activity within the Harbour will occur within the context of enhancing the potential for economic development, and the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources.

This is the first of a three-stage project to create an overseeing authority to regulate development. Following completion of the Stage One Background Report and Implementation Strategy, Stage Two will focus on the conceptual design and establishment of the overseeing authority. Stage Three will be the feasibility analysis and preliminary design of priority projects.





Study Area

Study Area

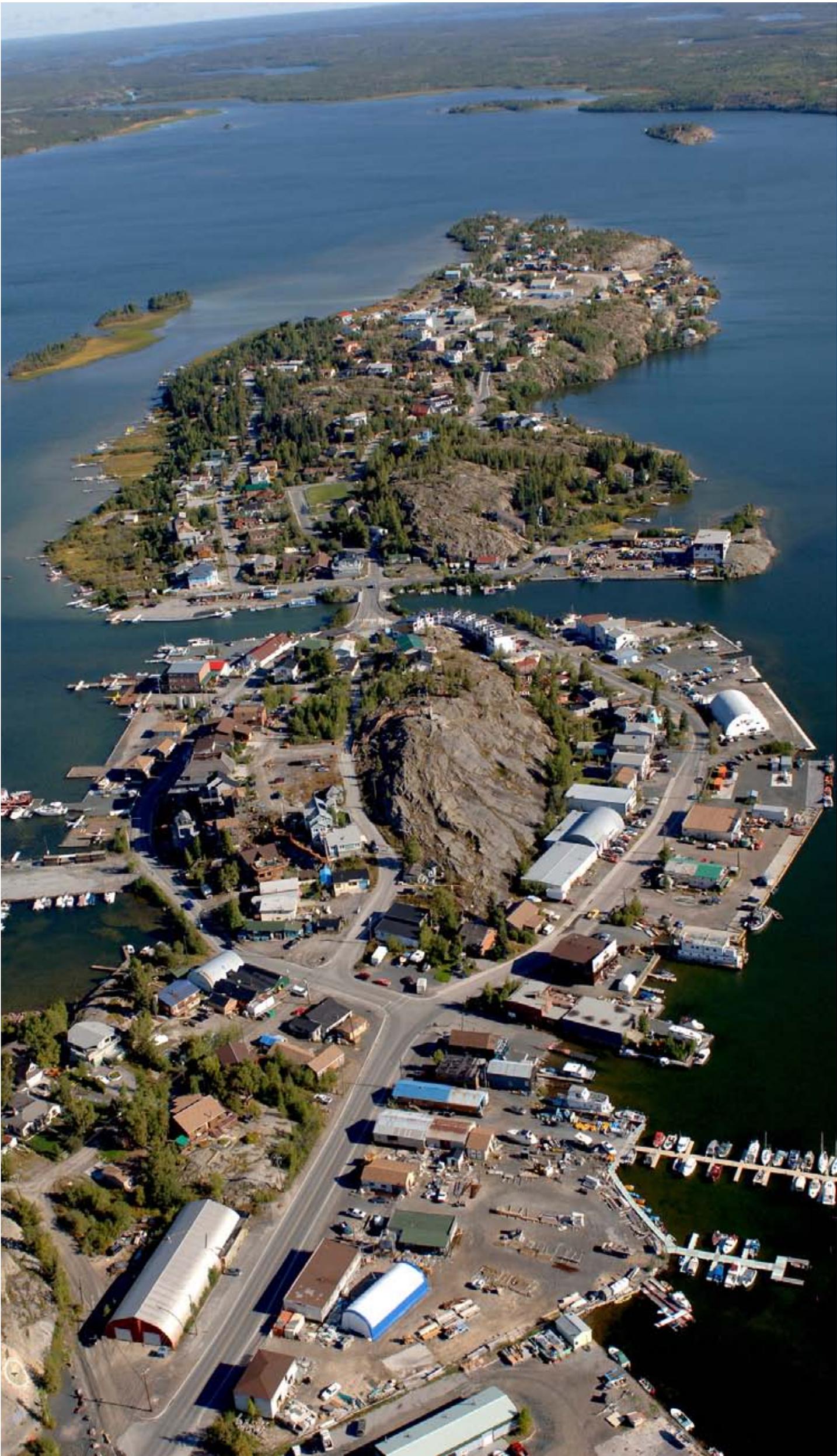
The Study Area is illustrated on the previous page outlined in white. The Study Area extends from the mouth of the Yellowknife River in the north, encompassing the entire shoreline (including Latham Island, Back Bay and Jolliffe Island) to the southernmost boundary of the City of Yellowknife. The Study Area also encompasses Dettah.

The study area encompasses the entirety of the Yellowknife Bay area, but focuses on the following priority areas:

- Yellowknife River*
- Giant Mine Town Site*
- Back Bay*
- Latham Island (incl. Ndilo)*
- Jolliffe Island*
- Old Town Boat Launch*
- Woodyard to Rotary Park*
- Mosher Island*
- Con Mine Town Site*
- Negus Point*
- Dettah*



Old Town



Aerial view over Old Town looking north east

2 Consultation

The Yellowknife Harbour Plan was prepared within the framework of three primary consultation events where all of the stakeholders were invited to collaborate with the team to review the work in progress. During preparation of the Phase 1 - Background Report, the team visited Yellowknife three times, each for several days, to enable focused working sessions on this project. During Phase 2 - Vision & Frameworks, the team visited Yellowknife for meetings with the City Directors and Managers and Harbour Planning Committee. In addition, the team conducted several multi-stakeholder conversations and had two community information sessions.

Summary of Consultation through Phase 1

The team met with City Council and MLAs on October 28, 2010 to introduce the team and describe the scope of work.

Four working sessions were held in Phase 1 with **City Managers and Directors**:

- October 28, 2010 project kick off, confirm scope of the project, discuss opportunities and challenges;
- November 30, 2010 to discuss key assets and challenges, preliminary directions with respect to natural heritage, parks and open space, heritage and culture, boats and planes, neighbourhoods and urban districts, and Harbour management;
- December 2, 2010 to review input received from key stakeholders over the preceding week and to obtain additional input on the preliminary directions; and,
- January 28, 2011 to review the key directions for each of the components of the Harbour Plan.

In Phase 1 the team also met with the **Harbour Planning Committee** twice:

- October 28, 2010 to introduce the team, confirm the scope of work, study area and to discuss opportunities and challenges; and,
- November 30, 2010 to discuss key assets and challenges, preliminary directions with respect to natural heritage, parks and open space, heritage and culture, boats and planes, neighbourhoods and urban districts, and Harbour management.

All of the meetings with the Harbour Planning Committee were open to the public and interested observers.

The team met twice with the **Elders Senate of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation** in Phase 1:

- October 27, 2010 to introduce the team, confirm the scope of work, study area and to listen to stories from the Elders with respect to their concerns regarding use of the Harbour and the adjacent lands; and,
- December 1, 2010 to discuss trails, heritage, culture, and issues/ concerns related to Harbour use.

The team held a public workshop (Drum Dance, Feast and Community Discussion) on January 27, 2011 in Dettah to engage the community in a conversation about preliminary directions of the Harbour Plan.

Two **Community Workshops** were held on December 1 and 2, 2010. The Workshops were advertised and invitations were sent to organized interest groups representing, for example, the arts, heritage, environment and business.

The purpose of the Workshops was to engage the community in a conversation about the Harbour Plan. The Workshops began with a presentation that summarized:

- Key assets to leverage;
- Key challenges to overcome; and,
- Preliminary directions with respect to natural heritage, trails and open space, arts, heritage and culture, boats and planes, neighbourhoods and districts.

Following the presentation, the team invited participants to join one of three table groups for a focused conversation on:

- Trails, Open Space and Natural Features;
- Neighbourhoods and Urban Districts; and,
- Boats and Planes.

Both Workshops were very well attended.





Kite Flying in Yellowknife Harbour

Consultation through Phase 2

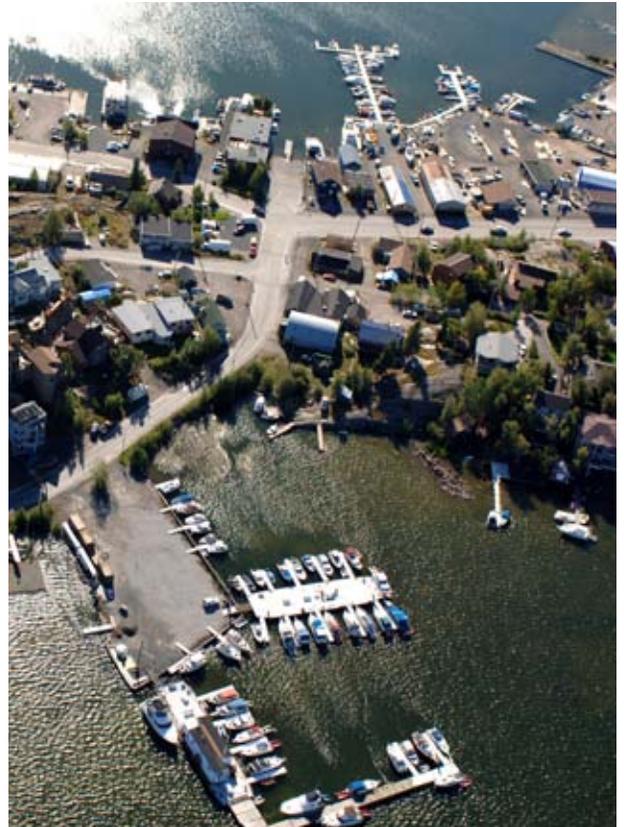
City Directors & Managers

The City Directors and Managers provided a critical point of reference for the team to provide direction with respect to all aspects of city planning and development. The team met with representatives from:

- City Administration;
- Community Services;
- Corporate Services;
- Economic Development;
- Planning and Development;
- Public Safety; and,
- Public Works.

Two working sessions were held with City Directors and Managers:

- June 14, 2011 to review preliminary directions and Harbour management strategies; and,
- June 30, 2011 to review input received from the two community information sessions.



View looking east across Old Town

Harbour Planning Committee

The City of Yellowknife organized a Harbour Planning Committee to engage stakeholders representing a diverse range of interests in the Study process. The Terms of Reference for the Study directs the team to meet with the Committee three times to gain input on the work as it progresses.

The Harbour Planning Committee is to provide advice and input to the City on the formulation of the Plan which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- review the relevant planning documents outlined in the Planning Context of the Terms of Reference as well as other relevant legislation and material relating to the feasibility of establishing a Harbour Plan and Commission;
- review and provide feedback on the Terms of Reference for required consulting services;
- review and provide feedback on policies, programs, concepts, strategies, and policies relating to environmental conservation, transportation, tourism and recreation, commercial development, floating homes, and waterfront access;
- participate and assist in organizing and promoting public participation components open houses, workshops, and media announcements;
- collectively or individually, without breach of committee confidentiality, solicit input from various sectors of the community or the public at large, and take a leadership role in promoting the objectives of the Plan; and,
- make recommendations, reached by the consensus of its membership, to the City of Yellowknife Council and Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

The team met with the Harbour Planning Committee on June 14, 2011 to review preliminary directions and Harbour management strategies.

Members of the Harbour Planning Committee

- Shelagh Montgomery, City Councillor, Chair*
- Mayor Gordon Van Tighem, Vice Chair*
- Ted Tsetta, Chief, Yellowknives Dene First Nation*
- Edward Sangris, Chief, Yellowknives Dene First Nation*
- Cathy Alloo, Old Town Business Owner, Public at large*
- Dallas Babuik, Transport Canada*
- John Carter, CEO, Yellowknives Dene First Nation*
- Luke Coady, (GNWT) Industry, Tourism and Investment*
- Pete Cott, Department of Fisheries and Oceans (alternate)*
- Jan Fullerton, Great Slave Cruising Club*
- Kevin Hodgins, Public at Large*
- Anne Lynagh, Floating Home Representative*
- Gordon Piro, NWT Float Plane Association*
- Doug Ritchie, Ecology North*
- James Sosiak, Great Slave Yacht Club*
- Michelle Swallow, Latham Island Resident*
- Rick Walbourne, Department of Fisheries and Oceans*
- David Wind, City Councillor, (Alternate)*
- Doug Witty, Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce*



Multi-Stakeholder Conversations

The team conducted eleven multi-stakeholder conversations the week of June 27, 2011 with small groups to discuss the preliminary directions, strategies and recommendations for Harbour management. Each conversation had stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of uses/ interests including:

- kayaking;
- canoeing;
- sailing;
- dog sledding;
- float planes;
- cruising ;
- house boating;
- fishing;
- commercial barging;
- neighbourhoods; and,
- business.

Approximately 100 people were invited to join one of 11 small group discussions with two members of the team. Input was received with respect to natural features and trails, development, Harbour management, boats and planes. The following summarizes the input received.

Natural Features/trails

- Aerodrome also used in the winter and may conflict with ice parks.
- Need to balance public use and environmental protection.
- Where possible, needs to be accessible (ie wheelchairs).
- City does not manage Frame Lake Trails.
- Winter trails over ice need to be shown.
- Like the suggestions of new trails.
- Like the idea of a new Ice Road that could link Ndilo with Back Bay to offer an option to using the roads in Old Town in the winter.
- Change the name of Jolliffe Island to Big Spruce Island.
- Is there an opportunity to create a park on Niven Lake in the vacant lot - it would provide a good connection to the waterfront.
- Like the idea of a skating trail.
- Morrison Drive is too buggy - will not be suitable for a boardwalk.
- A public space on the Johnson site should be square, not long and linear.
- Access to Jolliffe Island is needed.
- Need to enforce speed for ski doos using the Ice Road.
- There is no regulation on the Ice Road - it's dangerous.
- Should have a trail along the rock ledge on the east side of the Harbour.
- Skiing and ski doos need different trails.
- Trapping on the trails poses other problems.
- Trails are a marketing opportunity.
- Potential for Ice Road and skating trail side by side.
- Eco-based approach to planning should identify rock outcrops.
- Mine-to-Mine trail should be elevated on the rock where views are great and there are no mosquitoes.
- Jolliffe Island – issues with dog poop, fires, contamination and trash.
- Jolliffe Island – significant bird habitat – marlin, crows, owls and magpies.
- Jolliffe Island – clean up needed but great potential for heritage tours.

Development

- Back Bay community will object to development in Back Bay – they want it left natural.
- Need some recommendations on west side of Back Bay – abandoned housing (this is outside limits?).
- Need to enhance Pilots Monument area.
- Need a more organic plan.
- More realistic in terms of the grand vision.
- People like Old Town the way it is - voted one of Canada's most liveable neighbourhoods.
- Need smaller projects.
- Nothing wrong with the Woodyard - Yellowknifers like it the way it is.
- People will only be concerned with what's in their back yard.
- Pilot's Monument is a neglected opportunity – lots of tourists and no amenities for them.
- City should not be planning for anything on Jolliffe Island - it will revert back to YKDFN.
- Construct storage building on disturbed areas, not wetlands.
- Too many regulations and taxes in Old Town.
- Rotary looking to create an observation tower and pier.
- Infill more lake on water lots to enlarge the potential development areas.
- Consider using Toronto Island as a precedent for the housing community in Old Town.
- The City's by-laws restrict the opportunity to build affordable housing.
- Let the Woodyard evolve into the next generation of housing - consult, include people - have expectations of them, allow them to be part of the solution.
- Facilitate a strategy to transform the Woodyard - have a conversation about the possibilities.
- Tepiola and Malmo are good case studies for alternative housing.
- Need an action plan for development – aim to secure high quality development first so as to position the area for success.
- City should have an Intent Review Panel - to review development applications.
- Need to let Old Town evolve, keep opportunity for self expression.
- Need to reinvigorate the purpose / the reason to come to Old Town.
- Constraints to development include 95sm minimum unit sizes and requirements for sprinklers where 2 units or more – therefore no mid-rise buildings.
- To enable more affordable housing: relax sprinkling requirements under the City's Building By-law No. 4469; allow for 45sm units; and permit detached secondary units.
- Reinforce amenities and destinations in Old Town.
- Property taxes too high due to land values.
- Sidewalks don't have to be parallel to streets.
- Woodyard – allow to evolve in the same way as Ward Island in Toronto.

Boating/Planes

- Concerned that City will just shut down houseboats over time due to concerns about liability.
- User sharing is key.
- Otto Drive boat access is shallow – canoes only.
- The aerodrome between Old Town and Jolliffe Island is in conflict with boating uses. There are issues with planes exceeding the posted speed limit during takeoff and landing.
- Marina – needs to be a multi-seasonal facility.
- Boat Launch – keep in Old Town but scaled down in use, which may happen with new more functional boat launches anyway and lack of parking. Max 20' boats and more for canoes etc.
- Pilot's Monument – light triggered by planes landing not always utilized and education as to why blinking (1983 death led to the installation of the light).
- Causeway is a key transportation route and cannot be blocked.
- Marina is a great idea.
- Concern with safety of float homes.
- Yellowknife River is shallow draft launch only.
- Opposition to closing boat launch in Old Town.
- Positive feedback on boat house for canoes – many do not have storage and this addresses that. Would also like to see a canoe rack at gov't. dock.
- Rotary Park could also have a canoe boat house. The Rotary Club would be interested in a partnership.
- Need to refine the limits of the aerodrome.
- Float plane docks should not be on wetlands.
- City must re-establish public use of the Government Dock.
- Will need to be compensated to move the float home to the proposed float home zone- currently legally moored as a registered vessel.
- Need to clarify the plans for the fish plant.
- "if I could tie up at a slip with servicing, I'd do it in a minute".
- Morrison Drive will not accommodate enough space for parking for the float plane dock.
- Could the interior lakes be used for float homes - Jackfish Lake, Grace Lake?
- With no marina, still need a pump-out and launch.

Harbour Management

- Do not use the word "collaborative".
- Need someone to take responsibility.
- Need an unbiased authority.
- Concern with the proposed structure of the Harbour entity.
- Concern that based on past experience, the City will not implement the Harbour Plan.
- City needs to obtain jurisdiction to implement the vision.
- Tri-party versus city department will likely be needed.
- Recent waterfront properties sold including Pacific Western Float Base and Brew Pub. City should acquire land when it comes available.
- City needs to enforce – Municipal Enforcement Officers.
- Concern about who will pay for the Harbour Authority.
- Should consider compensation for moving float homes.
- Priorities for dealing with encroachments on public lands need to be identified.
- Integration of City Departments important for success.

Other

- "Done a great job figuring out a complicated mess".
- Must engage First Nations, must reflect their comments and concerns in the Plan.
- Too many studies, not enough action.
- Festivals need some help – they seem to be losing momentum.
- Should have a moratorium on blasting for development, must start to build in a way that maintains the rocky topography.



Community Information Session

Two Community Information sessions were held on June 28 and 29, 2011 to engage the community in a conversation about the preliminary directions, strategies and recommendations for Harbour management. A number of panels were posted and people were invited to discuss any aspect of the vision with a member of the consulting team. The content that was used for the Community Information sessions was subsequently posted on the City's website.



Ipsos Reid Survey

Following the June 2011 community information sessions, Ipsos Reid was asked to conduct a telephone survey to gauge awareness of the Harbour Plan, support for various initiatives being explored and challenges to implementing change. A total of 400 telephone interviews were conducted in August 2011 with a randomly selected representative sample of Yellowknife residents aged 18 years or older. The final data was weighted to ensure that the age and gender distribution reflects that of the actual population in Yellowknife according to 2006 Census data. Overall, results are accurate to within a +/- 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Key findings are included throughout this report.



