

Takhini Neighbourhood Engagement Report

*Conducted from November 2023 through February 2024 by the
Takhini Neighbourhood Association*

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Executive Summary

Priority areas

Two priority areas were identified by the members of the Takhini Neighbourhood Association who participated in the neighbourhood engagement.

1. **Green space**

The preservation and protection of Takhini's unique green space were of paramount importance to participants.

2. **Traffic**

Heavy motor vehicle volume, congestion and extreme speed along Range Road and at Two Mile Hill, coupled with a poor active transportation network, were of significant concern to participants.

Priority issues

Four priority issues were identified that represent concerns within both priority areas.

1. **Establishment of McIntyre Creek Park**

The proposed boundaries fail to fully protect the creek's watershed and may facilitate the establishment of roads through existing green space.

2. **Whitehorse Elementary School's relocation to Takhini**

This will increase traffic on Range Road, may impact green space and may necessitate the establishment of a new road through valuable green space.

3. **Range Road traffic**

Motor vehicle traffic on Range Road poses safety risks to Takhini residents and inhibits adoption of active transportation.

4. **Alaska Highway expansion**

Noise from traffic and safe access to recreational areas need to be considered in the planning process.

Other issues, such as recreational facilities, crime, a highway sound barrier and community events were identified as being significantly less important.

Recommended actions

Based on the above priority areas and issues, it is recommended that the Takhini Neighbourhood Association Board of Directors act in the following manner:

1. Request that the Government of Yukon and City of Whitehorse conduct a comprehensive, up-to-date study of traffic on Range Road prior to any final plans for the re-establishment of Whitehorse Elementary School (WES) in Takhini to establish a baseline understanding of traffic patterns and improve understanding of the impacts of increased school traffic through the neighbourhood.
2. Seek clarity from the Government of Yukon and City of Whitehorse on the impacts that the re-location of WES will have on traffic and green space in Takhini.
3. Seek clarity from the Government of Yukon on the timeline for the expansion of the Alaska Highway where it passes Takhini and seek to be involved in the planning process.
4. Work with the Government of Yukon, City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council to have the final boundaries of MacIntyre Creek Park protect the creek's full watershed and all green space adjacent to Takhini with an assurance that no new roadways will be established within or immediately adjacent to the park.

Green space

Protection of green space was the predominant priority identified by participating members. 34% of survey respondents identified it as the most important community issue and a further 21% identified it as their second choice. Abuse of green space was the second most important issue. 18% of survey respondents identified it as the most important community issue and a further 21% identified it as their second choice.

McIntyre Creek Park was the most important development issue to respondents, with 26% identifying it as their first choice and 18% as their second. The second-most important development issue was the risk of a road through green space. 14% of respondents identified it as their first choice and 26% as their second.

The existing green space in and around Takhini is a defining feature of the neighbourhood. It is well loved, well used and unique in Whitehorse. Participating members voiced concerns about many threats to it, such as prospective roads and the new school. They expressed disappointment in the high occurrence of misuse by motor vehicles and the lack of bylaw enforcement.

Related issues

- The establishment of a McIntyre Creek park is viewed as critical to protecting the greenspace. There was general agreement that the entire watershed should be protected, which would require that lands around the pumphouse road be added to the proposed park.
- Any road through the green space was generally frowned upon by participants, but some felt that a road may reduce traffic along Range Road.

Selected comments

- “I think the most important issue for the community is maintaining the green space around us, protecting the environment and promoting safe active living options.”
- “The protection of the creek and its wildlife habitat is central to many other issues around our neighbourhood.”
- “Projection of green space in and around Whitehorse is a major concern for me - both for wildlife corridors/protection and human enjoyment - trails, open space, managed multi-use”
- “I really don’t want a road through the green space.”
- “The green space around Takhini is easy to access and impressive, and I walk in it every day. I would like to see it protected better; there should not, for example, be snowmobiles or ATVs used in these spaces.”
- “I just really hate when people take vehicles through the green space. Had to jump out of the way of a four wheeler that was going way too fast.”
- “There is nothing more important to the value of this neighbourhood than preserving McIntyre Creek Park.”

Traffic

The third-most important community issue to survey respondents is traffic on Range Road. 25% of respondents identified it as the most important community issue and 15% identified it as their second choice.

The intersection of Range Road and Two Mile Hill was identified as the third-most important development issue. 26% of respondents identified it as their top issue and 21% as their second choice.

The relocation of Whitehorse Elementary School was identified as the fourth-most important issue to respondents. Comments through the engagement and survey indicated that concerns with this relocation are primarily associated with potential increases to traffic on Range Road.

Range Road bisects the Takhini neighbourhood, so it is not surprising that it is viewed as a priority issue. The intersection at Two-Mile Hill is likewise a priority to participating members. Both were highlighted as currently posing considerable risks to the health and safety of neighbourhood residents. Speeding throughout the day and night and extreme congestion during morning and evening commutes were the main concerns. Many identified the safety risk to students at Takhini Elementary School.

The poor active transportation network in Takhini was often commented on, particularly considering the risks to pedestrians and cyclists that Range Road and the Two-Mile Hill intersection pose. Many respondents remarked that they choose not to bike or walk on or across Range Road due to a perceived personal safety risk.

Related issues

- The establishment of a second school on Range Road would exacerbate the risks to students at both schools and residents in general with an increase in traffic along Range Road and at the Two-Mile Hill intersection. The need for a study of this matter was highlighted.

Selected comments

- “Traffic management is a big thing for the neighbourhood and our quality of life. I don't want a new school here and we need alternative access routes for the scourge of Whistle Bend traffic that the City completely ignored when they went ahead with that development.”
- “We live very near to the Takhini Elementary, traffic congestion, parking and location of rebuild in regards to ball diamonds and community congestion are components to be addressed for all community members.”
- “The character of Takhini has changed due to increased traffic mainly due to Whistle Bend. There was supposed to be a road from the Mountainview circle to the Alaska Highway but that has been cancelled leading to 24/7 traffic and noise on

Range Road. The signals to turn left onto Two Mile Hill are also inadequate, there needs to be an advance green arrow.”

- “The volume of traffic on Range Rd concerns me. We need more visible crosswalks to facilitate safe crossing by pedestrians, etc.”
- “Traffic & congestion are a priority. Traffic calming is a necessity.”
- “Range road can’t handle the current traffic, another (larger) school would greatly exacerbate the situation. A road connecting the highway would add even more traffic.”
- “I commute by bike, it often feels unsafe on Range road”

Other issues

Many other issues were identified but ranked at a much lower level of priority by participating members. These included:

- There was a split between support and opposition to an underpass under the Alaska Highway to Mount McIntyre
- Sound barrier on Alaska Highway
- Recreational and community facilities
- Crime
- Snow removal
- Community events
- Pet annoyances
- Waste removal

Selected comments

- “The sound barrier is very important to me as I am my family are impacted daily (day and night) as we hear loud traffic both in our yard and inside the house. I consider moving for this reason, but it's not an option currently and I otherwise LOVE my neighbourhood.”
- “The sound on the highway is a constant stressor, and easily fixed.”
- “Sound barrier helps all people in Takhini.”
- “All the students from the school (and from the future WES) DRIVE in a bus up to the CGC and the ski club simply because it is not safe to cross with kids (even at the lights I do not feel safe). My family and other families with young kids also do not cross. I would reduce my car trips by half if I could access the skiing and the CGC safely by foot/bike!!”
- “I use the crossings at the intersection at 2-mile with Alaska Hwy to cross safely to get to CGC, Mt Mac, etc. this is not an issue for me.”
- “...lack of adherence and enforcement of animal bylaws are a safety concern.”
- “The trails are filled with dog poop and a health hazard”
- “There is an increase in violent dogs in the last couple years.”

Communication

The survey asked respondents how they would like to receive information from the association. 97% indicated that email was their first choice. No-one chose Facebook as their first choice; 41% of respondents identified it as a second choice.

About the engagement

There were two parts to the neighbourhood engagement.

- Two in-person engagement sessions in late 2023.
- An online survey based on issues identified during the engagement sessions from December 2023 through January 2024.

Approximately 20 people attended the in-person sessions. 72 people completed the online survey, representing 45% of the 159 members of the association. As of September 2023, there were approximately 1,115 adult residents in Takhini according to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

Acknowledgements

The Takhini Neighbourhood Association would like to acknowledge the privilege all residents enjoy in living on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

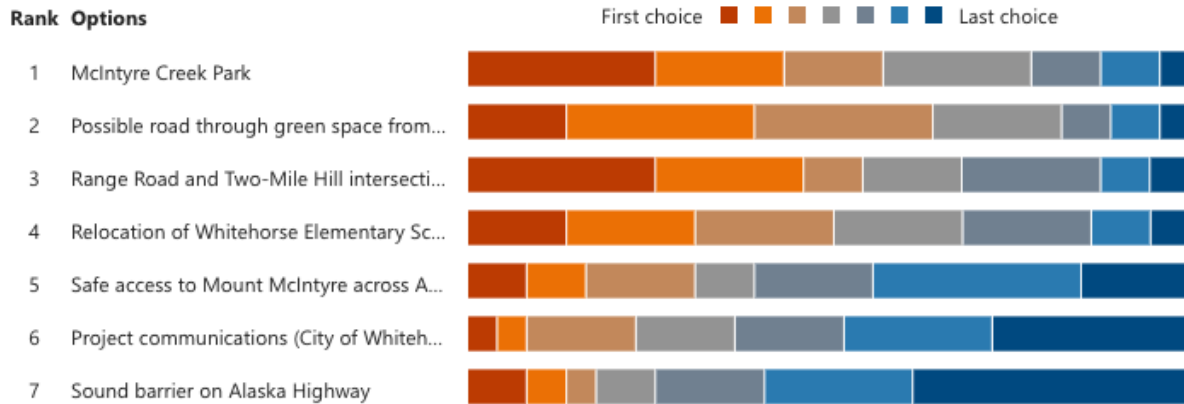
We would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the assistance provided to this study by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics in assessing our neighbourhood demographics.

Finally, thank-you to all Takhini residents who took the time to participate in the engagement sessions and complete the survey.

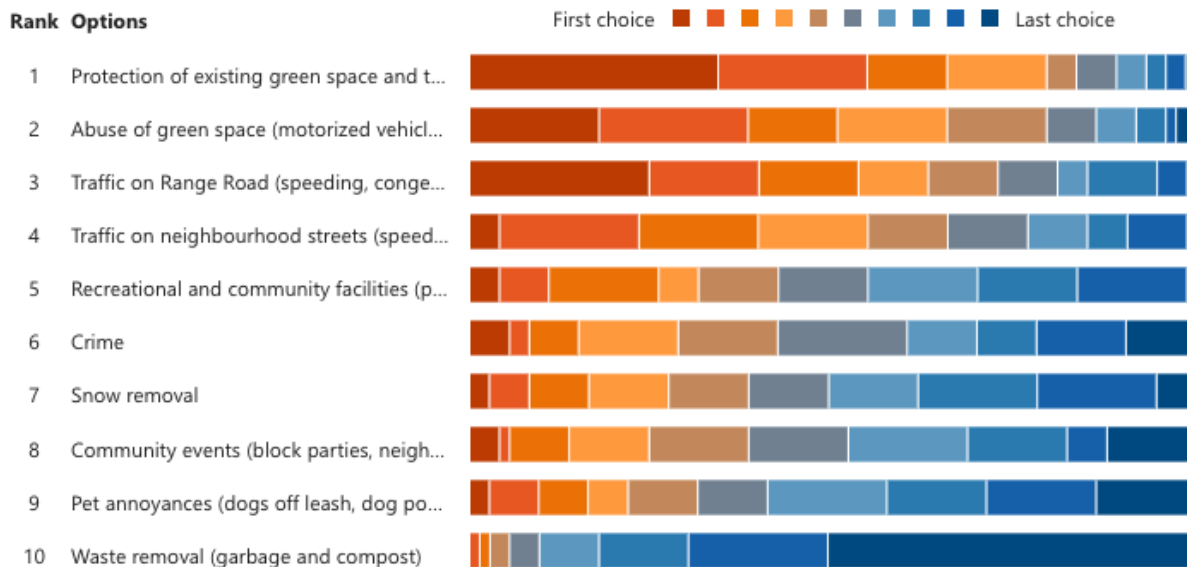
Data tables

The following are data tables produced through the conduct of the survey.

The following is a list of development issues identified by members. Drag items to sort the list into the order of importance to you.



The following is a list of community issues identified by members. Drag items to sort the list into the order of importance to you.



How would you like to receive information from the association? Drag items to sort the list below to indicate your most to least preferred options.

Rank Options

First choice ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Last choice

