



**Golden Horn  
Minimum Residential  
Lot Size  
What We Heard**

**November 2023**



# Introduction

On October 12, 2022, a petition was presented in the legislative assembly by the Golden Horn local advisory council, requesting a reduction of the minimum lot size in Golden Horn from three hectares to two hectares.

In April 2022, we asked residents to provide feedback on this potential change through a mailed questionnaire. This report summarizes the results of the questionnaire and provides further detail on the Golden Horn Development Area.

If you have any questions or concerns about the report, please feel free to reach out to Tomoko Hagio, Land and Resource Planner at the Land Planning Branch. Email [tomoko.hagio@yukon.ca](mailto:tomoko.hagio@yukon.ca) or phone 867-334-5425.

# Background

The Golden Horn Development Area currently contains 116 privately-owned residential lots. Early development of the area created lots, many of which are less than one hectare, on the south side of the Alaska highway. Subsequent development in the 1980s designed six hectare lots in a subdivision on the north side of the highway. As demand for land has increased, many development areas within commuting distance of Whitehorse reduced their minimum lot sizes to either two or three hectares. Golden Horn's minimum lot size was reduced to three hectares in 2011. Lot size ranges are shown on the attached maps.



# Engagement

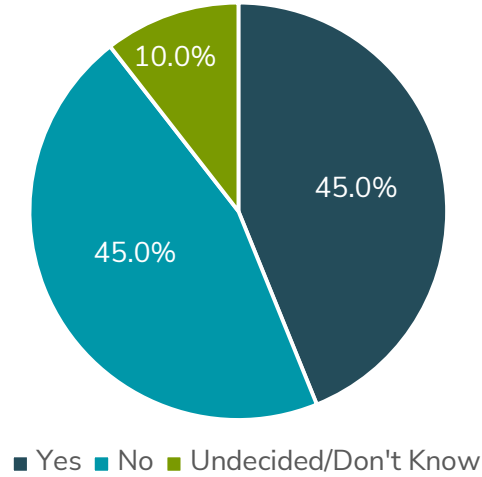
In spring 2023, the Government of Yukon asked Golden Horn residents to complete a questionnaire on whether they support changing the minimum lot size from three hectares (7.4 acres) to two hectares (5 acres). Three additional questions were asked of residents, about related zoning regulations. The questionnaire was mailed to 158 Golden Horn property owners in late April 2023 and received responses until June 4, 2023. We received a total of 60 responses.

The Land Planning Branch held an open house in the community on May 16, 2023, to provide an overview of the issue, answer questions and encourage feedback through the questionnaire.

## What we heard

**The nature of the questionnaire distribution permitted respondents to select more than one option per question or to skip questions. As a result, total responses for question 3 is higher than the total number of respondents.**

**Question 1: Do you support reducing the minimum lot size in the Rural Residential (RR-1 and RR-2) zones from three hectares to two hectares?**



There were 27 (45.0%) who responded yes, while 27 (45.0%) respondents said no to a decrease in minimum lot size to two hectares.

Of the six (10.0%) respondents who said undecided/don't know, two responses supported a smaller lot minimum (one- or 1.5-hectare minimum lot).

The questionnaire also included an opportunity for general input, with the following submissions received:

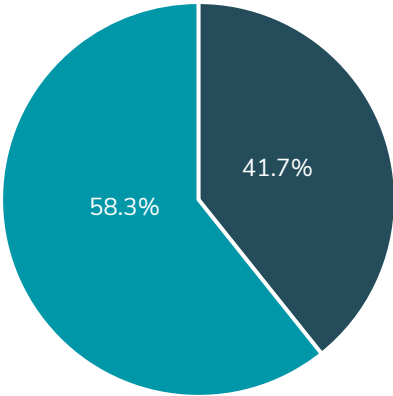
- No to any change.
- Ground water is a problem here. My well went dry.
- It is unwise to increase the density any further.
- Privacy is important – the more space between homes the better.
- Concerns about off-leash pets if population increases.
- Can the school handle additional students?
- A question on the validity and intent of the zoning committee.

**Question 2: If the minimum residential lot size was reduced to two hectares, do you think that regulations regarding additional dwelling units should be modified?**

All residential lots in Golden Horn may build one additional dwelling unit as a guest cabin. The regulation states that guest cabins are for short-term usage only and cannot be rented out long-term. Typically, zoning for residential lots in comparable areas of the Yukon allow one or more additional dwelling units to be built, with no restrictions on long-term tenancy. These units go by many names, but the two basic types are:

- living suites (located within or attached to the principal residence), and
- guest cabins (self-contained buildings located separate from the principal residence).

**Question 2a: Short-term tenancy restrictions**

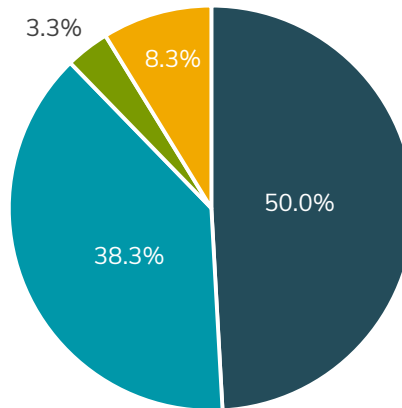


■ Keep restrictions   ■ Allow long-term



Thirty-five (58.3%) respondents support changing the regulation to allow long-term usage of additional dwelling units, while 25 (41.7%) respondents want the restrictions to remain unchanged. Some raised concerns that there are “guest cabins” that are occupied full time despite the regulation restricting this use.

### Question 2b: Types of additional dwelling units



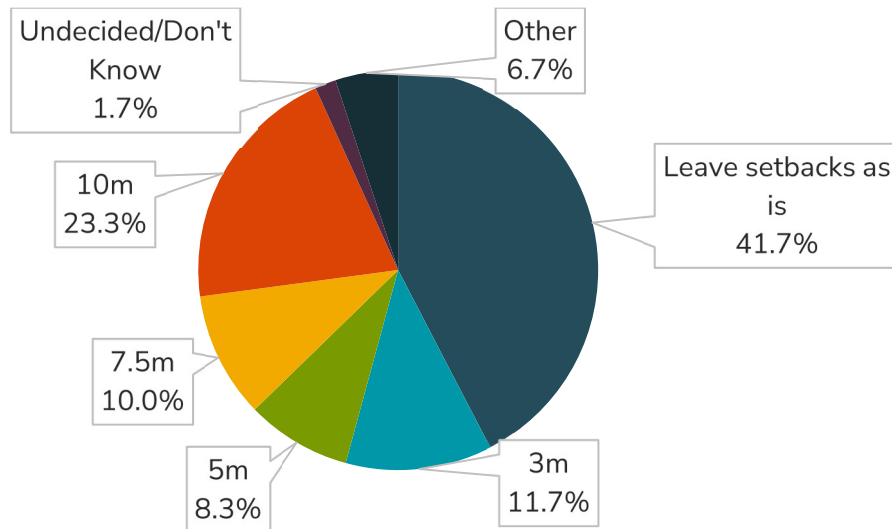
■ Leave regulations as is ■ One cabin or one living suite ■ Undecided/Don't Know ■ Other

Thirty (50.0%) respondents do not want to change the regulation. Twenty three (38.3%) support allowing living suites as an alternative to guest cabins and two (3.3%) answered undecided/don't know. Five (8.3%) respondents selected “other”, and gave additional ideas:

- Let the landowner decide.
- Also allow additional dwelling units on two/three hectare lots.
- Allow two guest cabins on five hectares.
- Allow for seasonal self-contained cabin (for example a tiny home) for recreational use.

**Question 3: If the minimum residential lot size was reduced to two hectares, should minimum setback distance be changed? If yes, what setback distance should be used for both Rural Residential (RR-1 and RR-2) zones?**

In Golden Horn residential zones, buildings can be located no closer than three metres (approximately 10 feet) from property lines for RR-1 lots, and 10 metres (33 feet) for RR-2 lots. When considering an appropriate setback distance, it is important to weigh factors such as privacy as well as development potential (e.g., building envelope, buildable area). Setback distances for residential zones in other comparable areas range from five to 15 metres.



Twenty five (41.7%) respondents said to leave setback distance as is.

Thirty two (53.3%) respondents support changing setback distances for both zones with the following breakdown:

- Seven (11.7%) support a three metre setback distance.
- Five (8.3%) support a five metre setback distance.
- Six (10.0%) support 7.5 metre setback distance.
- Fourteen (23.3%) support a 10 metre setback distance.



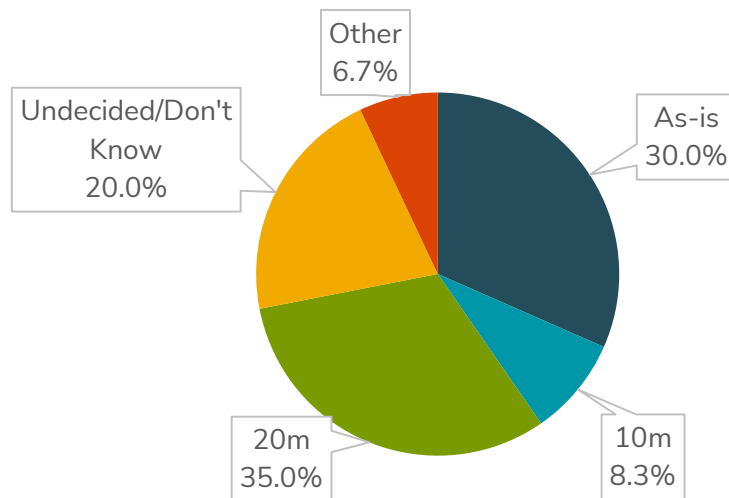
One (1.7%) respondent selected Undecided/Don't Know. Four (6.7%) respondents said "Other", and gave additional ideas:

- As long as there is road access to the lots, I am fine with the minimum requirement.
- One metre setback.
- Twenty metre setbacks.

Note that two respondents gave multiple answers for this question, so the total response for this question is greater than 100%.

**Question 4: If the minimum residential lot size was reduced to 2 hectares, should minimum lot width be...**

Subdivision of existing lots has the potential to produce irregular shaped lots and narrow street frontages. The Golden Horn regulations do not specify a minimum lot width. A 10 to 20 metre minimum lot width is typically applied to new, not serviced development areas, to provide adequate width for driveways (10 metre) and power line easements (20 metre).





Eighteen (30.0%) respondents said to leave minimum lot width as is (no minimum). Five (8.3%) respondents support a 10 metre minimum width. Twenty one (35.0%) respondents support a 20 metre minimum width and 12 (20.0%) respondents selected Undecided/Don't Know.

There were four (6.7%) respondents who selected "Other" and gave additional ideas:

- Three responses said 30 metres.
- The power connection will affect lot width.
- Former RR-2 owners who have subdivided should maintain 10 metre setbacks.

# Next steps

The input received in this engagement will inform the decision of whether or not to proceed with amendments to the Golden Horn Development Area Regulation. If we decide to proceed, a formal zoning amendment process will begin in accordance with the Golden Horn Development Area Regulation. There will be an opportunity for public input as laid out in Sections 23-25. There will also be a technical analysis of the proposed amendment (e.g., servicing, environmental impacts), as well as consultation with affected First Nations.