



Klondike
National Historic Sites

Level of Service What We Heard Report

October 2023



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada

Canada

Introduction

The Klondike Gold Rush caused an explosive migration of people from across the globe into the Traditional Territory of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in what is now central Yukon. This temporary inflation of newcomers into the territory peaked between 1898-1910.

Parks Canada manages many buildings from this time within the historical downtown of Dawson City. As part of a larger goal to build a sustainable path forward for the assets in its care in the region, Parks Canada is working on a project to create future use strategies for 15 properties in Dawson City. The aim is to see them protected and used in a way that contributes to a healthy and vibrant community. In developing future use options, Parks Canada is considering the property's heritage value and preservation requirements as well as the community needs of Dawson City and surrounding areas.

On June 14, 2023, Parks Canada hosted an open house event inviting members of the public to learn more about the project and provide feedback on the properties and community needs. From June 14 to July 10, an online survey was also made available to those were unable to attend in person.

Over 250 individuals provided feedback and recommendations for the future use of the 15 properties presented. The feedback from both the open house and the survey has been compiled, and a final document presenting options that balance heritage preservation and community interests will be completed by March 31, 2024. This What We Heard report provides a summary of the feedback received from the public.



Presentation of the buildings by John Meek, Parks Canada Senior Planner.

What We Heard

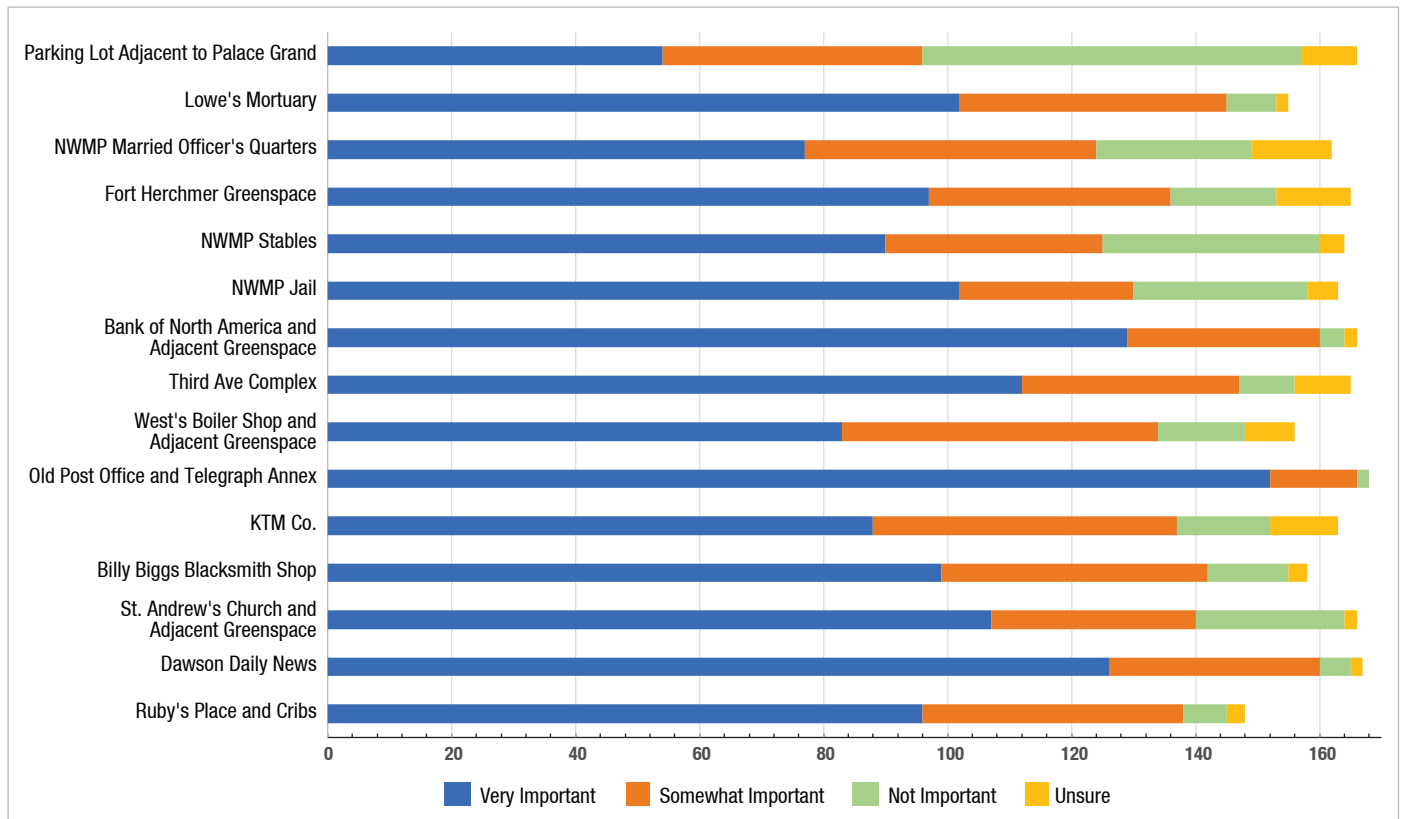
The 15 properties included in this consultation were: Ruby's Place and Cribs, **Dawson Daily News**, St. Andrew's Church and Greenspace, **Billy Biggs Blacksmith Shop**, KTM Co., **Old Post Office and Telegraph Annex**, West's Boiler Shop and Greenspace, **Third Avenue Complex**, Bank of British North America and Greenspace, **North West Mounted Police Jail**, North West Mounted Police Stables, **Fort Herchmer Greenspace**, North West Mounted Police Married Officer's Quarters, **Lowe's Mortuary**, and the Parking Lot adjacent to the Palace Grand Theatre.

It was clear from the feedback received through both the survey and the open house that the properties were important to the majority of participants and highly valued for what they contribute to Dawson City.

Open House

The open house on June 14 was attended by 88 community members. Half-hour presentations by the Parks Canada planner occurred at 12 and 6 p.m. Feedback from the public was solicited verbally and by written responses on posters and sticky notes. From the notes and conversations, it was evident that the Third Ave. Complex was the most appreciated building of the 15 on the list. Feedback on alternate uses for the properties included housing, retail and office space, community spaces, gallery spaces and learning spaces.

Please indicate the Importance you feel the following buildings/spaces have within the community of Dawson City.



Online Survey

The online survey was open from June 14 to July 10 and completed by 172 participants.

- The buildings most often ranked as “Very Important” included the Dawson Daily News, BNA Bank, Old Post Office and the Third Ave. Complex.
- Buildings in the Fort Herchmer area, including all NWMP buildings, while still rated as “Very Important” or “Somewhat Important” by the majority of participants, had fewer votes in this section by participants.
- The parking lot adjacent to the Palace Grand had the most mixed results from respondents, with responses more or less equal among “Very Important”, “Somewhat Important”, and “Not Important”.

Participants explained that these buildings were important for a variety of reasons, the most common being the preservation of historic value and their benefits to the tourism industry.

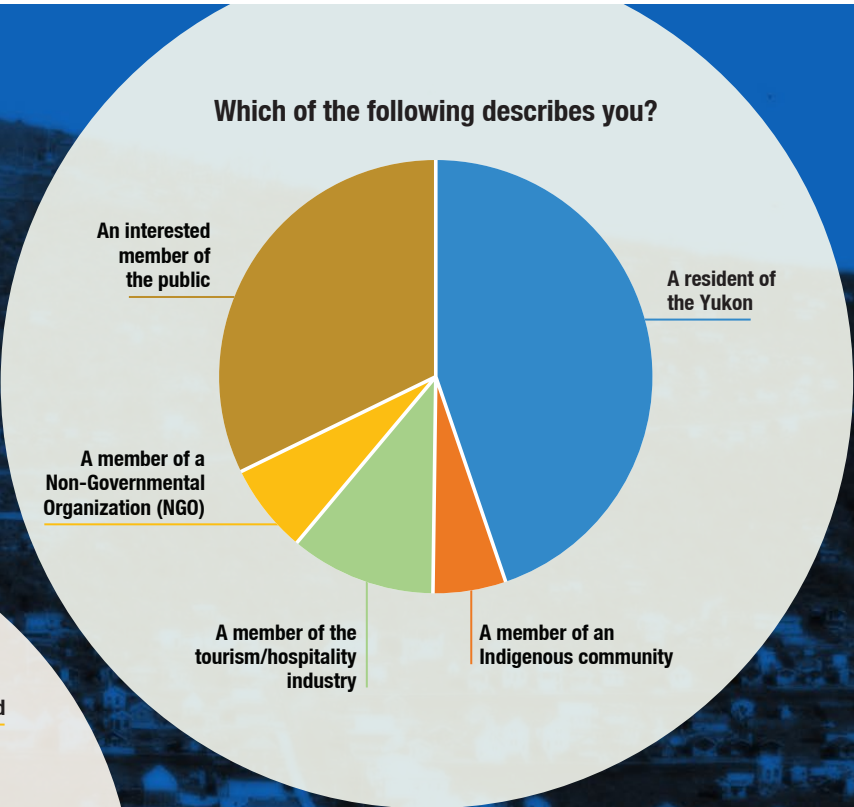
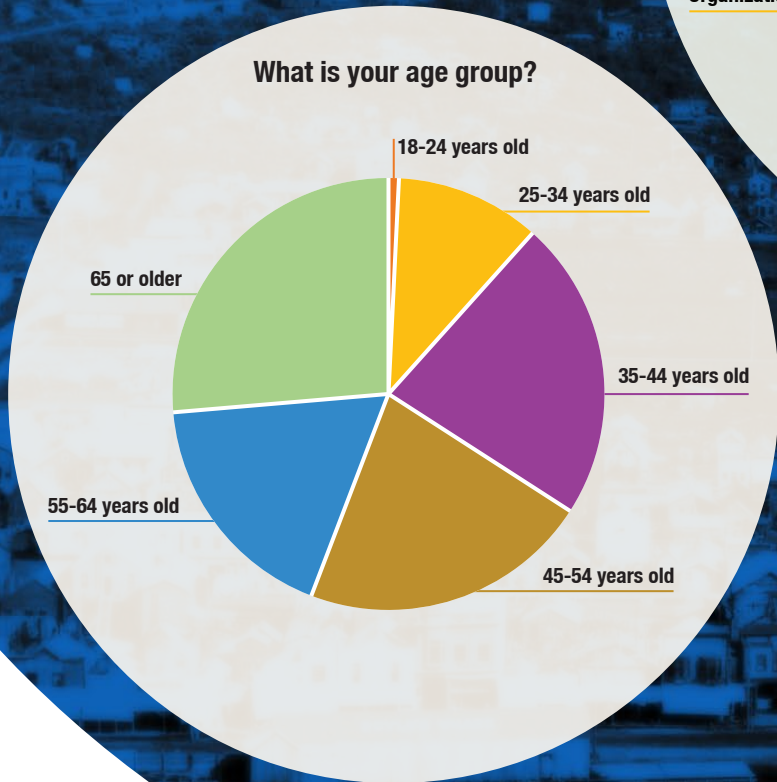
When asked about alternative uses for each of the 15 spaces, many respondents indicated that an alternative use could not be identified. This could be a result of the current use being sufficient in the eyes of the respondent, or the respondent could not identify an alternative use for the building or space.

For those that indicated an alternative use could be identified, several respondents noted “anything” as being an appropriate use, while others were more specific. For the properties, suggested uses largely reflected community needs, with the most frequently repeated suggestion being residential space. Retail and office space rated consistently high as proposed alternative uses. Other responses that appeared repeatedly were various entertainment venues, artist studios/gallery spaces, museum spaces and/or tour options, public community spaces, and restaurants/bars.



Who We Heard From

The majority of open house and survey participants reside in the Yukon, with some interested visitors and tourists and ex-residents also participating. Thirteen survey participants self-identified as members of an Indigenous community. The open house was attended by the Dawson City Mayor and a member of council.



A wide variety of age ranges participated in survey, with the majority aged 45 or older.

Next Steps

Parks Canada has consulted internally with staff from Klondike National Historic Sites as well as heritage specialists from a variety of divisions. These consultations, coupled with the feedback from members of the public, will help to inform the best feasible options for the 15 properties, with a final document to be completed by March 2024. This document will help to shape the future aims and management of the Klondike National Historic Sites spaces under Parks Canada stewardship, allowing us to balance the needs of the

community and use of the buildings within the Dawson townsite with their future preservation and care.

For more information:

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