

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: January 22, 2024
RE: Copper Ridge Master Plan

ISSUE

Advancing the Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan (the Plan) for Council approval on the residential development of Yukon Government (YG) lots 518 (in part), 519, and the City of Whitehorse owned lot 520.

REFERENCES

- [2022-2024 Strategic Priorities](#)
- [Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw 2012-20](#)
- [Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan – Final Report](#)
- Attachment 1 – Location Map

HISTORY

Council's 2022 to 2024 Strategic Priorities seek to ensure a variety of housing is available now and into the future. The Official Community Plan (the OCP) commits the City to collaborating with other governments to address housing needs and to encourage a variety of housing types. The OCP's Residential Growth Strategy seeks to accommodate 1,100 new dwelling units within neighbourhoods outside of the Urban Core and Urban Growth Areas, such as Copper Ridge, to meet projected housing demand, reduce urban sprawl, preserve the natural environment, minimize new infrastructure, and use existing infrastructure efficiently.

To achieve this goal, an area between Copper Ridge Place and Falcon Drive was identified for potential development (Attachment 1). Planning efforts began in 2022 with the completion of multiple background assessments. In 2023, City staff worked through multiple iterations of information gathering, conceptualization, and engagement in developing the Plan.

Implementation of the Plan area is expected to occur over the next few years, ending with the release of lots to the housing market. The timing of development and the release of lots is the responsibility of developers and YG (not the City). If the Plan is approved, the City could transfer lot 520 to YG to allow the entire Plan area to be sold to a private developer. Alternatively, YG could develop the land if no private interest is received.

The Plan reflects a comprehensive planning process and is intended to be a living document whose implementation may include amendments, as needed, over time to respond to emerging needs and changing conditions.

Background Assessments and Further Work

The Plan was informed by various plans, documents and background assessments. Feasibility studies identified the area as suitable for development. The Municipal

Servicing Assessment highlighted limitations in the surrounding water network and fire flow availability for development on the site. Current services would support low-density residential development for approximately 248 people or 103 dwelling units. Upgrades would be needed for higher residential density.

An assessment under the *Yukon Environmental and Socioeconomic Assessment Act*, if required, along with further detailed studies, and all regulatory permits and approvals to develop the site, will be the responsibility of the developer.

Engagement

Initial public engagement on the Plan area was carried out in January and February 2023. The City hosted a virtual webinar, an in-person presentation with Copper Ridge Place residents, city-wide advertisements and targeted stakeholder notifications. Public feedback was generally sought by way of an online survey and 166 responses were received.

Following this, the City facilitated two design workshops in May 2023 with Plan area landowners, Copper Ridge Place residents, technical experts, and designers to develop two land use concept scenarios.

A second round of public engagement was held in May and June 2023. The City hosted two open houses and the land use concept scenarios were posted on the City's engagement platform. Public feedback was again generally sought by way of an online survey and 206 responses were received.

Following the planning charrette engagement, the City facilitated a third design workshop in August 2023, with similar participants to the first two workshops, to arrive at a preferred land use concept. Once the concept was finalized, the Plan (Attachment 2) was developed and presented virtually to the public and in-person to Copper Ridge Place residents in December 2023.

As part of the initial public engagement, the majority of respondents (74%) indicated that they would support greenspace/park uses in any potential future development, while 37% of respondents indicated they would support residential uses. Of those who chose the greenspace/park option, over half (54%) only chose this option. The majority of respondents (58%) also indicated a preference for low-density residential, while a quarter (25%) indicated a support for high-density and 17% for medium-density.

As part of the second round of public engagement, the majority of respondents (74%) indicated being very or somewhat opposed to either concepts. Option 1 elements were preferred for greenspaces, trails and active transport, and road layout. Option 2 elements were preferred when considering residential uses and density. Main opposition to either option related to the overall loss of greenspace, potential traffic impacts, and opposition to development other than the previously planned school in the area.

The following mitigation measures were included to address these concerns:

- Retain a similar road configuration to Option 1 but in a more condensed form to allow an expansion of the greenspace/open space areas along Copper Ridge Place, Tigereye Crescent properties, and the southern section of Falcon; and
- Require a detailed Transportation Impact Study, including all modes of transportation, to be undertaken prior to any zoning amendment relating to the Plan area being adopted.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council direct Administration to schedule a Public Input Session at the Regular Council Meeting of February 26, 2024; or
2. Refer the matter back to Administration.

ANALYSIS

Site Context

The Plan area is approximately 6.65 ha in size and includes lot 519, a portion of lot 518 (both owned by YG), and City-owned lot 520.

The Plan area is located in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood at the intersection of Falcon Drive and Diamond Way and is currently zoned PS – Public Service, PSx- Public Service (modified), and PR – Parks and Recreation.

The surrounding residential neighbourhood is generally zoned RS – Residential Single Detached or RR – Restricted Residential Detached, which primarily provide low-density single detached dwellings. Other PR, PG – Greenbelt, and RM – Residential Multiple Housing zoned land are also located in close proximity to the Plan area.

The residential land uses recommended in the proposed Plan will complement the surrounding land uses in the area.

Plan Vision and Goals

The Plan sets out a vision, guiding principles and associated policies to guide decisions on land use and development in the Plan area. These reflect city-wide values and goals, Council priorities, and best practices to promote sustainable development and support the long-term interests of the Whitehorse community.

The land use concept envisions a mix of land uses, including residential, recreation, and community uses, as well as a connected network of trails, and open spaces. The predominant land use consist of lower and medium density residential at 51.41% (3.42 ha) of the Plan area. Greenbelt and open spaces account for a combined 30.07% (2.00 ha) and road rights-of way for 18.51% (1.23 ha). Land uses are carefully distributed to minimize impacts on adjacent residential areas.

The northern portion of the site is projected as lower density residential with a mix of single-detached, duplex, and triplex housing, gradually transitioning in scale to a more intensive use in the southern portion of the site. A mix of duplex and triplex housing types are provided midblock and a more intensive medium density (e.g. cottage cluster housing) is proposed to wrap around the southern edge of the site. The internal block also supports additional medium density in the form of four-plex, five-plex, townhomes, and multi-plex housing types.

Lower density residential uses may range from 15 to 30 units / ha and medium residential uses from 25 to 55 units / ha. The concept is projected to result in an average of approximately 102 new housing units, equating to approximately 245 new residents.

A linear open space along Copper Ridge Place will provide outdoor amenity spaces and facilitate safe connections to the future development area. With a mix of hard and soft scape elements, the open space will accommodate a range of formal and informal activities. Amenities planned for this area may include a playground, a multi-generational space, a dog park, a community garden and/or other types of outdoor gathering spaces.

A natural greenspace buffer also spans the entire western edge of the site creating a 20 to 90 m vegetated buffer from existing properties on Tigereye Crescent. The linear greenspace wraps around the southern edge to provide an additional vegetated buffer from properties on Falcon Drive.

Walking, cycling and vehicular movements, among others, will be supported within the Plan area by way of an internal road, with two access points to the external road network, and non-motorized multi-use and universally accessibly designed trails system.

The proposed Plan aligns with Council's 2022 to 2024 Strategic Priorities to advance development of housing and with OCP Policies to provide compact housing options and to reflect a variety of housing types. If approved by Council, the Plan would also be consistent with the OCP Policy to create Master Plans for development areas over 1.5 hectares.

Greenspace

The proposed Plan envisions to maintain the same amount of park and recreation zoned land as currently exist. City-owned lot 520 is currently zoned PR and is approximately 2 hectares. The land use concept envisions a greenspace, consisting of greenbelt and open spaces areas, of approximately 2 hectares as well. Zoning planned for this area may include PG or PR zones.

Infrastructure Capacity

The concept envisions a typical urban level of service, including municipal waste collection, snow removal, and potable water distribution and wastewater collection supplied by the existing municipal water and sanitary sewer systems. A Municipal Servicing Assessment was conducted and highlighted that the water network and fire flow availability are the limiting factors for development on the site.

Infrastructure upgrades will be required to accommodate the proposed residential density and will be based on the findings of further detailed studies, such as a Transportation Impact Study, a Preliminary Engineering assessment, and a Stormwater Management Plan, required to be undertaken prior to any zoning amendment relating to the Plan area being adopted.

Next Steps

If the Plan is approved by Council, the City will work with YG on the land disposition and with the future developer on the required studies and regulatory permits and approvals.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct Administration schedule a Public Input Session at the Regular Council Meeting of February 26, 2024 on the proposed Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan.