

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**TO:** Planning Committee  
**FROM:** Administration  
**DATE:** March 18, 2024  
**RE:** Public Input Report – Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan

### ISSUE

Public Input Report on the Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan (the Plan), a document providing guidance and a framework for the future development of Yukon Government (YG) Lots 519 and 518 (Copper Ridge Place) and City of Whitehorse (City) Lot 520.

### REFERENCES

- [2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw 2012-20](#)
- [Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan Draft \(January 2024\)](#)
- Location Map (Attachment 1)
- Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan Amendments (Attachment 2)

### HISTORY

The City developed a plan for future residential development of City and YG properties in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood. The YG lot 519 was originally planned as a school site. YG has since determined the lot is no longer required for this purpose. The remainder of the area consists of a 2 ha City parcel (lot 520) and a portion of the Copper Ridge Place lot.

The Plan was introduced at the Regular Council meeting of January 29, 2024. At this Regular Council meeting, Council directed Administration to schedule a Public Input Session on the proposed Plan. Notices were published in the Whitehorse Star and Yukon News on February 2 and February 9, 2024. Two notice signs were placed on the subject site along Falcon Drive and Diamond Way and property owners within 500 m of the Plan area were notified by mail. The YG Land Management Branch, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Copper Ridge Place, and the Copper Ridge Neighbourhood Association were notified by email.

A Public Input Session was held on February 26, 2024. Eighteen (18) written submissions and five (5) verbal submissions were received from a total of 22 members of the public.

### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Plan as amended; or
2. Refer the matter back to Administration.

## **ANALYSIS**

The following topics were raised in the submissions:

- General support;
- General opposition and loss of greenspace;
- Traffic, parking, and safety concerns;
- Residential density, form, and use concerns;
- Lack of commercial services and community gathering spaces; and
- Land disposition concerns.

### **General Support**

General support for the Plan and residential development in the area was expressed by some members of the public due to the need to increase housing stock and to densify existing neighbourhoods within the city.

Support was also provided as it relates to the accessibility of the proposed paths in the Plan area, particularly for Copper Ridge Place residents, whilst caution was voiced towards locations within the Plan area that may present a challenge to providing a universally accessible designed path as proposed.

### **General opposition and loss of greenspace**

Some submissions expressed opposition to any development of the Plan area, citing negative impacts on existing residents' well-being and property values. Other more specific examples of negative impacts are also given, such as the loss of greenspace and trails, construction and traffic noise, and changes to the neighbourhood character. Concerns were also raised that previous public engagement was ignored and that the majority of those previously engaged did not want to see the area developed at all. It was queried why the Plan area was being considered for development when other development opportunities exist within the City, particularly in the Downtown and Valleyview South areas.

To ensure negative impacts to existing residents are minimized, the Plan area envisions a greenspace area wrapping around its northern, western, and southern edges. This greenspace area will create a buffer for properties directly adjoining the Plan area and/or facing onto the medium density area. The greenbelt area is envisioned to be generally left in a natural state and used primarily for paths and unorganized passive recreation. While the open space area will include paths, outdoor gathering infrastructure, and a manicured landscape.

With regards to previous public engagement, Administration balanced the desire for the area to remain as it is with the need for the City to accommodate growth and meet the demand for housing. To meet this demand, the City and its development partners are considering various residential opportunities throughout the city in line with the residential growth strategy outlined in the Official Community Plan. This strategy seeks to accommodate 1,100 new dwelling units, such as Copper Ridge, within neighbourhoods outside of the Urban Core (Downtown and Valleyview South) and Greenfield Neighbourhoods by 2040. This development, in addition to other developments across the community, will help the City achieve this goal.

Finally, it is noted that the two YG-owned properties are currently zoned PS – Public Service, and the City-owned lot is zoned PR – Parks and Recreation. The City-owned lot is approximately 2 ha and the greenspace area in the Plan is envisioned to be of a similar size, although in a different configuration. The amount of existing parks and recreation zoned land is therefore proposed to remain the same.

### **Traffic, Parking, and Safety**

Concerns were raised about increased traffic on Falcon Drive and Hamilton Boulevard, and the potential to worsen existing pedestrian safety and congestion issues on these roads. Residents highlighted existing issues such as vehicles speeding on Falcon Drive and problematic intersections on Falcon Drive and Hamilton Boulevard. Some called for specific traffic calming measures, such as traffic circles and reduced speed limits, or to have a traffic impact study completed prior to plan approval. A member of the public also expressed concern about the lack of detail regarding off-street parking and the potential for on-street parking overflow.

Traffic calming measures, such as curb extensions, are currently envisioned in the Plan area to ensure pedestrian safety. Off-site intersections are also envisioned to be thoughtfully redesigned based on findings of a future Transportation Impact Study (TIS), to improve traffic flow and safety, and also to reduce conflicts between road-users. Possible measures coming out of a TIS could be a traffic circle at North Star Drive and Falcon Drive, median refuges, or a signalized intersection.

Due to the high-level nature of the Plan, a TIS would best be undertaken prior to rezoning when the specific number of potential dwelling units and uses are further refined. It is noted that the Plan is not anticipated to result in traffic over and above what was originally envisioned for the neighbourhood, which included the Kwanlin Dün First Nation's C-112B settlement lands and the YG school site. The TIS is therefore expected to provide recommendations to minimize impacts from the proposed Plan rather than the entire neighbourhood. Possible measures coming out of the TIS will likely be similar to those that would have been required if lot 519 had been developed as a school.

Finally, the Plan does not address off-street parking as this is managed through the Zoning Bylaw, which currently requires a minimum of one off-street parking space per dwelling unit throughout the City.

### **Residential Density, Form, and Use**

Concerns were raised about the proposed medium density area as it relates to its proximity to single-detached houses, its potential housing forms and tenures, and its potential inclusion of lower-income households. Some members of the public noted that low residential density uses such as single-detached and duplex housing would be preferred as it aligns with the surrounding neighbourhood. Some members of the public also queried if the Plan area would support supportive housing and accessible housing.

The Plan envisions a variety of housing types, sizes, and tenures will be provided in the Plan area to meet the needs of various segments of the housing spectrum, such as in the form of medium density housing and affordable, supportive, accessible, and rental housing. The Plan does not however specify a minimum amount of each housing type. Due to the high-level nature of the Plan, it is considered the appropriate number and type of housing would be better assessed as part of the rezoning process once potential

dwelling units and uses are further refined. If necessary, special zone modifications or development agreements can be used to ensure a range of housing types, sizes, and tenures are provided.

To mitigate conflicts between medium density uses and the existing residential neighbourhood, land uses are carefully distributed within the Plan area, and future built form considered, to minimize impacts on adjacent residential areas. For example, medium density uses are centrally located or surrounded by a vegetated buffer. Smaller medium-density uses, in the form of cottage cluster housing are also envisioned nearest the edges of the Plan area, while larger medium-density uses are envisioned within the central Plan area block.

In addition, the Zoning Bylaw currently does not regulate housing tenure. As such, both rental and ownership housing tenures will be permitted within the Plan area, as they are outside of the Plan area as well.

Finally, to ensure Administration has sufficient information to assess the suitable provision of a variety of housing types, sizes, and tenures, including affordable, accessible, and sustainable housing, Administration is recommending adding a policy to section 4.1 of the Plan to require a detailed housing pro-forma study is undertaken prior to any zoning amendment relating to the Plan area being adopted to determine the feasibility of including affordable, supportive, accessible, and/or sustainable housing types, sizes, and tenures within the Plan area.

### **Commercial Services and Community Gathering Spaces**

One member of the public expressed concern about the lack of commercial services and/or community gathering space in the Plan area, which is perceived to be inconsistent with community development values of neighbourhoods that are pedestrian-oriented rather than being dependent on cars to access services. It was suggested that a community garden, café, or business area is included in the development.

The area identified as open space in the Plan is intended to be a public area that fosters community gathering. Green space amenities planned for this area may include an outdoor gathering space, a multi-generational space, or a community garden.

During the master planning process, it was determined that commercial development was not a viable option for inclusion in the Plan area due to location, the potential service population, and competing businesses (e.g. Bigway Foods, Ridge Pub). Home-based businesses are however permitted as secondary uses in many of the recommended zones in the Plan.

### **Land Disposition**

Concerns were also raised about the land disposition process, particularly as it relates to implementing controls to ensure houses are sustainable, accessible, and affordable and the disposition of City-owned land to the private sector.

The Plan supports the adoption of green building practices for all new buildings and the provision of affordable housing. The Plan does not however specify any specific green building practices or minimum affordable units to achieve. Due to the high-level nature of the Plan, it is considered the appropriate green building practices and amount of

affordable and accessible units would be better assessed as part of the rezoning process once potential dwelling units and uses are further refined and a housing pro-forma study has been undertaken. If necessary, special zone modifications or development agreements can be used to ensure suitable green building practices and affordable unit amounts are realized.

Administration is also recommending amendments to allow for YG to develop the land instead of releasing to the private sector. This involves changes to section 5 of the Plan to remove reference to implementation by the private sector and the transfer of Lot 520 to YG as shown on page 40 of Attachment 2. Joint development of lots 519 and 520 is still envisioned in conjunction with a new lot created from the subdivision of part of lot 518.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council approve the amended Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan, a document providing guidance and a framework for the future development of YG Lots 518 and 519 and City of Whitehorse Lot 520.