

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: April 15, 2024
RE: Supplemental Information Report – Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan

ISSUE

Provision of additional information 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 518 and 519 (Copper Ridge Place) and City of Whitehorse (City) Lot 520.

REFERENCES

- [2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw 2012-20](#)
- [Subdivision Control Bylaw 2012-16](#)
- [Draft Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan – Final Report](#)
- [Copper Ridge Development Area – What We Heard Report](#)
- Location Map (Attachment 1)
- Copper Ridge Development Area Master Plan March 2024 (Attachment 2)

HISTORY

The City has developed a plan for the future residential development of City and YG properties in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood (Attachment 1). 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. A Public Input Session on the Plan was held on February 26, 2024 and a Public Input Session report was presented at the Regular Council meeting of March 25, 2024. An amended Plan responding to concerns raised in the submissions received for the Public Input Session was brought forward at this Regular Council meeting (Attachment 2). Council directed Administration to provide supplemental information on the following items:

- Impacts of Immediate Housing-Related Zoning Amendments; and
- Impacts of revising the concept to include additional greenspace.

ALTERNATIVES

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

ANALYSIS

Immediate Housing-Related Zoning Amendments

Housing-related amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to allow for a wider range of opportunities for residential development were introduced at the Regular Council meeting of February 26, 2024. A decision on the amendments is scheduled for April 22, 2024. The proposed housing-related amendments to be advanced include among others to allow up to four units per lot in all urban 'single detached' zones.

The Plan's concept envisions a mix of land uses with the predominant land use consisting of lower and medium density residential. The northern portion of the site is projected as lower density residential allowing for a mix of single-detached, duplex and triplex housing (i.e. up to three units per lot).

Concerns were raised that the Immediate Housing-Related Zoning Amendments currently before Council would result in a greater permissible density within the Plan area than that currently proposed. It was considered that the public was not appropriately consulted on the potential density of the concept due to these amendments.

The concept is projected to result in a maximum of approximately 102 new housing units with approximately 47 being low-density. A Municipal Servicing Assessment undertaken in 2022 to inform the Plan 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 102 units. Upgrades would be needed to accommodate additional units.

The housing-related amendments to the Zoning Bylaw are considered to have limited impact to allowing more than three units per lot within the Plan area due to these infrastructure constraints. Notwithstanding this, with current services, if additional density was allowed within the lower density areas, this would need to be balanced out with less density within the medium density areas.

In addition, the Plan provides an overarching framework intended to inform subsequent preparation of zoning amendment, subdivision, detailed engineering design, development permit, and other regulatory applications within the planned area, providing the City with a basis for evaluating the level of compliance of these submissions with the City's vision for this area.

Regardless of infrastructure constraints, future regulatory applications within the planned area and their associated approval are expected to align with the Plan, such as density requirements.

As the housing-related amendments would apply city-wide and as a decision has yet to be made, Administration considers examining the need to further restrict density within the Plan area to be better suited as part of the upcoming zoning amendment application(s) related to the Plan. In addition, this density restriction could also be included as a Development Agreement when obtaining subdivision approval. By then a decision on the housing-related amendments will have been made and Administration will be better able to assess their impact on the concept and if a special modification is required to any future zoning amendment relating to the lower density residential areas.

Additional Greenspace

Concerns were raised that the greenspace between the proposed residential land uses and Copper Ridge Place was insufficiently wide to provide an appropriate buffer, noting that the eight meter wide buffer provided around Whistle Bend Place is insufficient for this purpose.

The Plan's concept envisions a linear open space along Copper Ridge Place to provide outdoor amenity spaces and facilitate safe connections to the future development area. A natural greenbelt buffer also spans the entire western edge of the site. The greenspace area between the proposed residential land uses and Copper Ridge Place would range in size from 20 m to more than 90 m towards the western side of Copper Ridge Place.

The proposed lower residential area closest to Copper Ridge Place ranges in depth between 26 m and 34 m. These are considered minimum lot depths required to appropriately accommodate lower density residential uses. Increasing the width of the greenspace buffer would require the lower residential area depth to be reduced resulting in an unfeasible depth for residential development within this area.

To offset the loss of residential units, greater density would need to be accommodated elsewhere within the concept, either resulting in greater densities than anticipated in other locations or requiring amending the concept configuration entirely.

Amending the concept configuration at this stage in the project would require a budget amendment and significant delays to the project to undertake further information gathering, conceptualization, and engagement.

It is noted that the concept envisions approximately 30 percent of the Plan area as greenspace, with the buffer between the proposed residential land uses and Copper Ridge Place being at its narrowest more than double that provided around Whistle Bend Place. In comparison, a minimum 10 percent public use land dedication of no specific width is typically required under the Subdivision Control Bylaw.

In addition, the average amount of PR – Parks and Recreation zoned land per neighbourhood is approximately 4.36 percent, with Copper Ridge being slightly over at 5.50 percent. Copper Ridge is however below the average amount of overall greenspace zoned land (i.e. PR, PE – Environmental Protection, and GB – Greenbelt) with 11.70 percent out of a 31.40 percent average, noting it is however located near two conceptual regional parks (Chasàn Chuà/McIntyre Creek Park and Paddy's Pond/Ice Lake Park).

Considering the amount of PR zoned land is not proposed to be reduced, the concept will not impact the percentage of PR zoned land within the Copper Ridge neighbourhood. The proposed minimum 20 m buffer between the low-density residential area and Copper Ridge Place is also considered wide enough to provide development separation, visual barrier, and noise buffering in this instance.

Amended Plan

To address concerns raised in the submissions received for the Public Input Session, Administration recommended the following amendments to the Plan:

- Add a policy to section 4.1 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; and
- Change wording in section 5 to allow for YG to develop the land instead of releasing to the private sector by removing reference to implementation by the private sector and the transfer of Lot 520 to YG as shown on page 40 of Attachment 2.

No additional amendments are recommended with regards to density and greenspace.

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.