

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: City Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: August 18, 2026
RE: Highland Estates Master Plan

ISSUE

Advancing the Highland Estates Master Plan for Council consideration.

REFERENCES

- [2026 Whitehorse Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- [2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [City of Whitehorse Strategic Priorities 2025-2028](#)
- [Land Use Master Plan Policy](#)
- [Southern Containment Boundary Prefeasibility Study: Final Report](#)
- [Subdivision Control Bylaw 2025-31](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw 2025-37](#)
- [Highland Estates Master Plan](#)
- Location Map (Attachment 1)
- Highland Estates Master Plan Excerpt (Attachment 2)

HISTORY

The owner of Lot 1207 Quad 105D/11 has prepared a land use master plan (the Plan) to develop a portion of the lot as a country residential development to be known as the Highland Estates.

Highland Estates is located west of the existing Lobird Mobile Home Park (Attachment 1). The overall goal of Highland Estates is to provide 16 new 0.5 ha country residential bare land condominium units. The units are proposed to be accessed by a private road and an access easement through Lobird Mobile Home Park. The units are expected to be privately serviced with water cisterns and either septic fields or pump-out tanks.

In late 2023, Administration received an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment application to redesignate a portion of 200 Lobird Road from Residential – Urban to Residential – Country. The application proceeded through the Council process and was adopted by Council through Bylaw 2024-20 on July 11, 2024.

Following the OCP land use redesignation of the subject area to Residential – Country, a master plan for the subject area was required per the Land Use Master Plan Policy. On April 28, 2025, Administration accepted a proposal for a Tier Three Master Plan and the proponent began the master planning work.

A Master Plan Review Group with representatives from the City and the Government of Yukon (YG) Environmental Health Services was assembled to advise on the development of the Highland Estates Master Plan (the Plan). The Review Group worked through multiple iterations of the Plan and provided comments and feedback.

Background Studies

The Plan was informed by other plans and studies including:

- Heritage Resources Overview Assessment (HROA);
- Southern Containment Boundary Prefeasibility Study: Final Report
- Tetra Tech Geotechnical Assessment (November 2, 2023);
- Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Phase 1; and
- Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan.

No heritage resources were identified in the subject area during the HROA or in the Southern Containment Boundary Prefeasibility Study. Therefore, further heritage assessment work was not deemed necessary and confirmed by YG.

The geotechnical investigation found gentle slopes throughout the central and north end of the site and a very steep backslope on the east edge of the site. Near surface bedrock was found throughout the north half of the site which is expected to constrain roadway construction, foundation design, and on-site sewage disposal system design and installation. The potential for water wells to provide adequate supply was tested previously and there is potential for water wells on the subject site. The investigation concluded that the proposed 0.5 ha lot sizes are considered acceptable.

The ESA Phase 1 did not identify any areas of potential environmental concern (APECs) within the development area. It did however identify three APECs on the broader site but outside of the development area. Since no APECs were identified in the development area, no further investigation is recommended.

Engagement

Per the Land Use Master Plan Policy, Tier Three Master Plans require three phases of public engagement: initial engagement, concept engagement, and plan engagement.

Initial engagement on the Plan area was undertaken on May 7, 2025. An open house was held to share information about the proposed development and gather feedback. Four people attended the open house and expressed support of country residential lots and concerns about construction noise, dust, and hours of construction.

The concept engagement was held on May 26, 2026. An open house was held to share the draft development concept and gather feedback. Nine people attended the open house and expressed concerns with trail access, slopes in the area, the future development of the South Growth Area, the condition of the existing road through Lobird Mobile Home Park, and water delivery. There was a suggestion to keep a treed buffer between the proposed development and Lobird Mobile Home Park. There was also support for country residential lots and more housing.

The plan engagement was held on August 6, 2026. An open house was held to share information on the draft Plan and gather feedback. Four people attended the open house and expressed a mix of support and concerns for the development. Concerns related to development constraints in the area due to bedrock.

Additionally, the proponent reached out to Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN), Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC), and the YG Land Development Branch during each of the three engagement phases.

1. KDFN provided general comments on matters the master plan should consider and received a completed version of the Plan on August 10, 2026. KDFN noted requiring thirty days to review the Plan and prepare comment. The proponent requested the Plan be brought to Council for consideration while KDFN reviewed the Plan.
2. TKC noted that they did not have any issues with the proposed development.
3. YG expressed that feasibility work for the South Growth Area (SGA) is underway and provision for future potential roadway connections to areas within the SGA is generally supported. YG also noted the Plan would benefit from the inclusion of dedicated greenspace trail connections to convey mixed-use trail users to and from Adit Lane in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Plan;
2. Refer the matter back to Administration; or
3. Deny the Plan

ANALYSIS

Site Context

The planning area is approximately 14.8 ha consisting of three parts: the development parcel (9.88 ha), the access through Lobird Mobile Home Park (1.02 ha), and the Public Land Use Dedication (3.9 ha). The subject site is located west of Lobird Mobile Home Park.

The subject site is currently designated as Residential – Country in the OCP and is within the South Growth Area. The South Growth Area is undergoing feasibility studies and is anticipated to be the next large-scale neighbourhood in the city. The subject site is currently zoned Residential – Mobile Home (RMB) with a special modification. The special modification is in regard to a specific mobile home site located outside of the planning area.

Plan Vision and Goals

The vision for the site is to offer 16 new country residential bare land condominium units with private servicing that are 0.5 ha in size, an internal (private) road, an easement through Lobird Mobile Home Park, and open space. The goal is to provide an alternative housing form in the city with potential connections to future developments in the South Growth Area.

The proposed Plan provides the locations and configuration of 16 residential bare land condominium units. The Plan proposes Residential-Country 2 (RC2) zoning with a special modification to enable the proposed bare land condominium approach. Each unit is expected to be serviced via water cisterns and either a private septic system or a pump-out sewage tank.

The condominium lot is proposed to be accessed via an access and maintenance agreement with Lobird Mobile Home Park. The proposed access easement goes through the middle of the Mobile Home Park veering west after the Radar Apartment to the subject area (Attachment 2, Figure 5). A private road through the subject area will be used to access each individual bare land condominium unit. The private road has been designed for potential future connections to the South Growth Area.

Prior to the subdivision of the proposed bare land condominium units, the developer is required to consolidate Lot 1206, QUAD 105D/11 and Lot 1207, QUAD 105D/11. As such a Public Land Use Dedication of 10 per cent of the entirety of these two lots is required which equates to 3.9 ha. Alternatively, a cash-in-lieu of dedication payment can be provided at a rate equivalent to the fair market value of the land. Following consolidation, the planning area will be subdivided off the new consolidated lot and subdivided into bare land condominium units.

The future subdivision and development permit application process will require additional assessments by a relevant designated professional to confirm that each proposed bare land unit parcel, less than 1 ha in size, can provide long-term on-site servicing. If future assessments indicate that the Plan Area is unable to support on-site servicing for a total of 16 units, the overall density and location of bare land condo units may need to be reduced or altered.

Official Community Plan, Strategic Priorities, and Housing Needs Assessment

The Plan aligns with OCP policy 9.1 to encourage the construction of a variety of housing types that reflect the housing continuum. It also generally aligns with the Residential – Country OCP land use designation which is primarily intended to provide single-detached housing on large lots that are privately serviced. The Plan also aligns with the City Strategic Priority to support growth and new land development.

The 2026 Whitehorse Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) estimates that Whitehorse has an existing housing deficit of 2,800 dwelling units. In addition, 6,915 are needed to accommodate growth to 2040, based on the HNA's medium growth scenario, for a total of 9,225 units. The Plan will help address this need by proposing 16 new country residential units.

Plan Deficiencies

There are several aspects of the Plan that Administration does not support. As outlined, there is high uncertainty as to whether the subject site can be developed as proposed in the Plan and concerns with on-going management if developed.

Condominium Approach

The Plan is proposed to be implemented through the application of a RC2x (modified) zoning, to allow 16 units on one lot. Setbacks would be established from other buildings and internal roads since bare land condominiums have not been contemplated in the RC2 zone.

The proposed zoning approach is similar to multiple family zoning, allowing multiple units on one lot, which is not supported in the Country Residential OCP land use

designation. The Country Residential zones, RC1 and RC2, only allow for one principal unit and one secondary suite. There are no examples in the city of a condominium in a Country Residential zone. Approval of this zoning approach could therefore set a precedent.

Section 1.9 (h) of the Zoning Bylaw states that “unless otherwise specified, all development regulations, including but not limited to minimum lot size, setbacks, site coverage, and floor area ratio, apply to the lot as a whole, and not to individual bare land condominium units.” In other words, condominium units are not considered lots for the purpose of applying zoning regulations. There could therefore be challenges in applying the proposed zoning at the subdivision and development permit stages, especially as it relates to ‘lot’ configurations and setbacks.

Additionally, the proposal relies on a bare land condominium structure to own and maintain approximately 500 m of private road and associated common infrastructure. While the condominium corporation would ultimately be responsible for maintaining these assets, consideration should be given to the long-term financial implications of transferring responsibility for a private road, drainage infrastructure, snow clearing, future road reconstruction, and other common assets to a relatively small condominium corporation. These costs will ultimately be borne by the unit owners through condominium fees and reserve fund contributions.

Although the City would not be responsible for maintaining this infrastructure, the Plan should demonstrate that the proposed governance and servicing model is realistic and sustainable over the long-term. The purpose of the subdivision process is not simply to determine who is responsible for future infrastructure, but also whether the proposed development pattern is appropriate for the site and can reasonably function over its expected life.

The proponent recognizes Administration’s concerns and believes the proposed special modification will provide clarity for homeowners and builders and support the creation of a well-functioning neighbourhood.

Servicing

Policy 15.15.4 in the OCP states that in order “to ensure adequate lot area for onsite sewage disposal, the minimum size for lots located in Residential – Country areas is 1.0 hectare.” The policy also states that “new residential development may occur with lot sizes below 1.0 hectares to a minimum of 0.5 hectares so long as the applicant is able to adequately demonstrate the site and aquifer area has the capacity to accommodate long-term on-site servicing.” Although the proposed subdivision layout consists of one lot over 1 ha with multiple units, the layout basically equates to 1 unit per 0.5 hectare.

A Tetra Tech report (November 2, 2023) was submitted that states that “the proposed 0.5 ha lot site is considered acceptable” for on-site sewage. However, detailed information has not been provided to confirm feasibility on a site-by-site basis. Administration and YG Environmental Health Services, as part of the Master Plan Review Group, have requested a parcel-by-parcel geotechnical assessment by a relevant designated professional in order to confirm that each proposed bare land unit parcel less than 1 hectare in size can provide long-term on-site servicing.

Each 'lot' needs to accommodate septic field and tank locations, a backup septic field location, building envelope and setbacks, and potential water well locations. Experience elsewhere in the city, including Raven's Ridge, has demonstrated that the location of these items on one property can directly affect neighbouring properties.

Even where Development Agreements are registered, they cannot eliminate the physical limitations created by the land itself. As such, given the topography and bedrock conditions known at this specific site, it may be challenging to provide all of these items on 0.5 hectare lots.

Without a parcel-by-parcel geotechnical assessment confirming the suitability of 0.5 ha 'lots' in this location, Council could be approving a master plan that cannot be developed as shown and may require significant amendments once 'lots' are subdivided and sold, undermining the purpose of a master plan.

The proponent recognizes Administration's concerns and believes they have been addressed through supporting technical information included with the Plan. The Plan commits to providing further level of detail at future stages of the development process.

Road Access

The Plan proposes an access easement through Lobird Mobile Home Park to the subject area. An access and maintenance agreement between Highland Estates and Lobird Mobile Home Park would need to be established.

With this approach, the City has no authority as to the maintenance, building standards, or safety of this road that will be used by all of the Mobile Home residents as well as the 16 country residential condominium owners. The Plan proposes water cisterns for all of the country residential units so water trucks will also be using this road. The number of potential road users makes the proposed access unsupportable.

If the private road were to become damaged or require replacement, it would be a significant cost for the country residential condominium owners, who could potentially lose access to their homes if the road is not repaired or replaced in a timely manner. The City would have no control over the maintenance of the road or repair in the case of damage and it would be irresponsible for the City to approve of a situation where so many people could be impacted.

Additionally, future connections to the South Growth Area would not be possible if the road were to remain private. Connections to the South Growth Area would require easements with Highland Estates condominium corporation as well as Lobird Mobile Home Park which would introduce significant risk to the City or other parties.

Section 16 of the Subdivision Control Bylaw establishes that each lot created through subdivision is to have direct access to a highway satisfactory to the Approving Authority. While Sections 17 and 20 provide discretion to consider access easements or waive this requirement where appropriate, these provisions are intended to address situations where direct highway access is genuinely impractical, rather than being the preferred subdivision design.

The Plan does not clearly demonstrate that alternative subdivision layouts capable of providing direct highway access have been fully investigated and ruled out. There

appear to be other possible design options that could avoid routing traffic through the middle of Lobird Mobile Home Park while still achieving the overall development objectives.

The proponent recognizes Administration's concerns and believes the existing conditions within the site would make a public roadway difficult to achieve. The existing road widths, placement of homes, grades, and construction costs would constrain the ability to create a roadway that meets the City's standard while remaining economically viable.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above Plan deficiencies, Administration recommends that the following studies or modifications to the Plan be undertaken by the proponent prior to Plan approval:

1. Modify the Plan to commit to designing and constructing a road to City standards and transferred to the City.
2. Modify the Plan to propose developing fee simple lots with RC2 zoning. The condominium approach will not be required if the road is transferred to the City.
3. For lots proposed to be less than 1 ha, conduct a parcel-by-parcel geotechnical assessment by a relevant designated professional in order to confirm that each proposed lot less than 1 ha in size can provide long-term on-site servicing. A site design for each proposed lot should illustrate setbacks, septic field/tank location, backup septic field location, building envelope, and potential water well locations.

Next Steps

If the Plan is referred back to Administration, Administration will reiterate to the applicant the list of items that need to be addressed. The applicant would have the opportunity to address the comments and resubmit the Plan for Council consideration.

If the Plan is denied, another proposal for the same or substantially the same master plan cannot be submitted for 12 months.

If the Plan is approved by Council, Administration will work with the applicant on the required rezoning, subdivision, and development and building permit applications, subject to assessment and regulatory approvals, and review them for alignment with the approved Plan and other applicable City plans and policies.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council refer the matter back to Administration and request the items listed under Recommendations be incorporated into the Plan.

Updated 25/08/20, 9:28 AM By: STAFFORD

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NOT TO SCALE

December 10, 2025

Highland Estates

Excerpt Only

Master Plan
v4

Prepared for:
City of Whitehorse

August 3, 2026

Prepared by:
Stantec Consulting

Project/File:
115825012



Disclaimer

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