

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

<b>TO:</b> Planning Committee
<b>FROM:</b> Administration
<b>DATE:</b> October 19, 2020
<b>RE:</b> Official Community Plan Amendments – Whistle Bend, Future Area “C”

### **ISSUE**

Amendments to the 2010 Official Community Plan (OCP) to allow the Whistle Bend Future Area “C” to proceed for zoning and subdivision approvals.

### **REFERENCE**

- *Municipal Act*
- Official Community Plan (2002)
- Official Community Plan (2010)
- Whistle Bend Subdivision Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Report (AECOM, 2009)
- Whistle Bend Master Plan (2009)
- Planning & Preliminary Engineering Design Report for Whistle Bend Future Areas & Town Square (WSP, 2020)
- Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act – Decision Document (2020)
- Planning Study Bylaw (2006-11)

### **HISTORY**

Planning for the Whistle Bend neighbourhood began in 2006 and included an extensive public engagement process. This process included the creation of a planning study and greenspace map as required under Planning Study Bylaw 2006-11. In accordance with the bylaw, the greenspace map was submitted to a plebiscite and approved. The approximate boundary of greenspace to development area was later included in the 2010 Official Community Plan (OCP).

Some of the land identified in the greenspace map includes the area known as “Area C”. It was shown as an outdoor recreation space as it was intended to be reserved for the Yukon Horse and Rider Association. The Association and City determined that a dense, urban neighbourhood was not the best fit for its purposes and the Association dropped its interest in this land. The subject land now provides an opportunity for neighbourhood development.

In 2018, the City hired WSP, in association with Associated Engineering, Tetra Tech and John Glynn-Morris, to undertake planning and preliminary engineering work for new residential areas in Whistle Bend. The contents of the resulting Planning and Preliminary Engineering Design Report for Whistle Bend Future Areas and Town Square (WSP

Report) are summarized in Appendix A (attached). This report is available on the City website at <https://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=14243>.

The report addresses three future areas for the neighbourhood (i.e., Areas A, B, and C). Future Areas A and B were included as development areas in the original charrette concept and master planning processes undertaken in 2006, and are designated as Urban Residential in the OCP. For development to occur in Area C amendments to the OCP are required.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Support the proposed OCP amendments and bring them forward through the bylaw amendment process.
2. Refer the report back to Administration for additional information.
3. Do not proceed with the amendments.

## **ANALYSIS**

### ***Planning and Preliminary Engineering Design Report***

The WSP Report shows Area C as the next development area after the completion of the previously planned phases of Whistle Bend (phase 1-7). Priority was given to this area over areas A and B for many reasons, including infrastructure cost and cost recovery potential, complexity of the project and impacts to the neighbourhood.

### ***Timing of Amendments***

Government of Yukon (YG) is the primary land owner and developer in Whistle Bend. YG has confirmed that it wishes to proceed with detailed engineering for Future Area C in early 2021 to ensure there is a continuous supply of available building lots in the coming years. Per Council's 2020 Housing strategic priority, the City has committed to continue to work with YG to help residents attain housing. Whistle Bend remains the City's main growth area. These amendments are proposed in advance of the completion of the OCP review to ensure a yearly lot supply within the City.

### ***OCP Amendments***

Area C is generally flat and consists of 56.3 hectares of gross land area which could be re-purposed for residential uses. The proposed amendment to *Map 1 – Green Space Network Plan* would change the area defined as Area C from areas identified as "Recreation Areas" and "Green 'Connections' Areas" to a "Designated Development Area". Portions of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas along the Yukon River and adjacent to Porter Creek would be maintained.

The proposed amendment to *Map 2 – Area Land Use Designations* would amend the OCP designation of Area C from "Greenspace" to "Residential – Urban" to facilitate the development of Area C as part of the next phase of development for Whistle Bend. A portion of the area within Area C currently designated as "Public Utility" would remain. The "Residential-Urban" designation is consistent with the existing Whistle Bend area.

The proposed amendment to *Map 5 – Urban Residential Growth Plan* would expand the boundary of "Undeveloped Public Land" to include Area C.

The proposed amendments maintain green space along the perimeter of the development area to address environmentally sensitive areas and preserve some of the protected greenspace identified in the 2007 Green Space Map. A 2009 report by AECOM for an environmental and socio-economic analysis of the original Whistle Bend Master Plan area identified areas along the Yukon River and along the slope leading to the Porter Creek area as having areas of High Environmental Sensitivity.

Policy 1.2 of the OCP relating to steep slopes requires a minimum setback of 15-metre for development near steep slopes. The current plan includes a 30-metre setback to address the steep slope at the western edge of the planning area. The planning of Area C, with setbacks along the western slope and a greenspace separation from the Yukon River shoreline, is intended to protect areas of environmental sensitivity.

***Planning Study Bylaw***

Since a Greenspace Map was previously submitted for public review through a plebiscite, the requirements of the Planning Study Bylaw 2006-11 are satisfied. There was also extensive public engagement during the development of the WSP Report. Council may proceed with first reading of the proposed OCP amendments and obtain further comments from the public through the amendment process.

***Future Approvals***

Refinement of the land use plan for subdivision and zoning approvals will be subject to policies in the OCP for residential uses. The extension of the Whistle Bend neighbourhood into Area C meets the objectives of the OCP for development that uses existing servicing infrastructure, promotes active transportation and transit use, and includes residential, commercial and institutional uses to create complete communities (Part 2 – Objective 5). Specific to policies for the “Residential-Urban” designation (Section 10.6), Area C will accommodate a variety of residential uses on serviced lots.

***Amendments Timeline***

The projected schedule for these OCP amendments is:

Planning Committee:	October 19, 2020
First Reading:	October 26
Public Hearing	November 23
Report to Committee:	November 30
Second Reading:	December 7
Third Reading (assumes full 45-day Ministerial review):	February 8, 2021

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Bylaw 2020-31, a bylaw to amend the Official Community Plan to allow for the development of the area known as Whistle Bend Future Area “C”, be brought forward for consideration under the bylaw process.

## Appendix A

### Overview of the Planning & Preliminary Engineering Design Report for Whistle Bend Future Areas & Town Square (as it relates to Area C)

This project was funded through a contribution agreement with Government of Yukon (YG) following the Land Development Protocol, and was approved in the 2017 capital budget. In February 2018, the City hired WSP, in association with Associated Engineering, Tetra Tech and John Glynn-Morris, to complete planning and engineering work for the future phases and town square.

The study area for the future phases is comprised of the remaining unplanned areas in Whistle Bend, including the central core area and town square (Future Area A), Ta'an Kwäch'än parcel C-9B and adjacent areas (Future Area B), and the 'fin' (Future Area C).

Additional planning is required for Future Areas B and C-9B.

#### **Community Engagement**

In 2018, the City and WSP held four different public and stakeholder engagement events, as well as an online survey to gather input on the town square and phasing concepts and have now completed the final concepts for submission to YESAB. The engagement events included:

- Ted'ish' Talk – What Makes a Great Town Square (May 16<sup>th</sup>)
- Government Partners Workshop – Planning and Design (May 17<sup>th</sup>)
- World Café – Town Square Planning (May 17<sup>th</sup>)
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Citizen Workshop – C-9B Planning (June 11<sup>th</sup>)
- Pop-Up at the Pond – Evaluating Concepts (July 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>)

Engagement and technical analysis resulted in a land use plan including block and road layouts, housing mix and engineering pre-design work.

#### **Future Area C Concept**

The preliminary design for Area C was established in this report. The preliminary design will be used as a basis by YG for detailed engineering work and by the City for subsequent Zoning Bylaw Amendment requests.

The subject area, Area C, is the largest of the three new development areas identified for development in the WSP Report. The preliminary design for Area C shows that the residential unit potential for this area is approximately 825 units and 2,400 residents. Since Area C is located further from public transit (on Casca Boulevard) than Areas A and B, it is designed as a predominantly low-density area with approximately one-third or 19 hectares of the area identified for low-density housing (single-detached and duplex). Medium-density residential development will make up 6.7 hectares or 11.9 per cent of the land area. Roads and Public Utility make up the 15.1 hectares or 26.7 per cent of the area.

A total of 15.5 hectares or 27.6% of the area will be dedicated to park space or greenbelt. For comparison, the *Municipal Act* requires a minimum of 10% of a subdivision area to be reserved for public use.



**Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB)**

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) has reviewed the proposed future areas including Area C. Subject to conditions requiring a heritage resources impact assessment and requirements to avoid heritage resources present on the site, or establish mitigation options in consultation with the YG Heritage Resources Unit, YESAB has recommended that the project be allowed to proceed (YESAB, Decision Document, May 13, 2020).

**Servicing and Geotechnical Considerations**

The following information gathered from a geotechnical assessment was used to inform land uses, block layout and servicing:

- Area C is generally flat with a steep slope along the western edge of the development area and grade changes close to the Yukon River shoreline.
- Drainage will need to be studied to further understand if ditching is required to direct water away from the area.
- A portion of the land was previously used as a sewage treatment site, the Porter Creek Lagoons. For this reason, documentation that proper decommissioning protocols were followed will be required prior to any development.

- Minimal sand overlays fine-grained soils in the area. Construction of roadways, foundations and buildings will need to include structural fill, perimeter insulation and other measures as required.

***Alaska Highway Connection***

A potential connection between Area C and the Alaska Highway was discussed during workshops and technical meetings with the City and YG. Additional planning and technical analysis are required to understand the feasibility of this connection. This is outside of the scope of these amendments.

***Snow Storage Area***

The City operates an area within Area C as a snow storage area that will need to be relocated prior to the development of residential development. The City is intending to start planning work on new snow storage locations in 2021.