

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO:	Planning Committee
FROM:	Administration
DATE:	February 16 th , 2009
RE:	Final Whistle Bend Master Plan Concept

ISSUE

Presentation of the Whistle Bend Master Plan Concept.

REFERENCE

Final Whistle Bend Master Plan Concept
Official Community Plan (2002)

2006 Charrette Concept
Zoning Bylaw 2006-01

HISTORY

The Porter Creek Bench development area is approximately 700 hectares in size, with the majority of the land being owned by the Yukon Government. Other landowners on the Bench include the Heiland Family, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) and Ta'an Kwächän Council (TKC), and NavCanada. The developable area on the Bench is designated as Residential – Urban in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and is zoned as FD – Future Development in Zoning Bylaw 2006-01. Whistle Bend is expected to supply the City with urban residential housing lots over the next 20 years.

The City, working with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Yukon Government, hosted a planning and design charrette in November 2006. The charrette was a multi-day collaborative planning event that combined the talents and energies of expert technical resources, local stakeholders, First Nations, and members of the public in a 5 day workshop. The outcome of the charrette was the “Whistle Bend Community Concept Plan” that has received support from the community at large. This concept was used as the basis for the next phases of the planning process.

A Request for Proposals for the Porter Creek Bench Preliminary Planning and Engineering Pre-Design was issued in February 2008. Deliverables for this project were a Master Plan concept, phasing, zoning, subdivision, and engineering pre-design. The City received one proposal from AECOM (formerly UMA Engineering Ltd.) in association with Gartner Lee Ltd., Quest Engineering Group, Kobayashi and Zedda Architects Ltd., Vector Research, JW Consulting Ltd., Matrix Research Ltd., and EBA Engineering. The contract was awarded in May 2008.

The City, in cooperation with AECOM, created Technical and Community Working Groups to assist in the development of the Master Plan concept. These groups were consulted on different sustainability indicators and visions from the 2006 charrette. From this discussion AECOM created 3 Master Plan options.

On October 29th, 2008, the City of Whitehorse held an Open House and Community Café at the Old Fire Hall. Over 30 members of the public visited the Open House to review and comment on the concepts developed by AECOM. An additional 33 individuals were in attendance at the Café to discuss aspects of the Master Plan

options. The participants were able to give their input on different topics throughout the evening including land use, design and layout, infrastructure, parks and greenspace.

From the comments received at these events, as well as comments from Council, the technical and community working groups, the TKC, the KDFN and the Heiland Family, AECOM combined the three Master Plan concepts into a draft amalgamated concept. This concept was presented to the public at an Open House on January 20th, 2009. Administration has integrated public comments and has made several recommendations to AECOM following direction from Council. The final Master Plan concept has now been completed.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan Concept

2006 Charrette Concept Vision

A set of guiding principles was developed to ensure that the vision set out for Whistle Bend was achieved through the rest of the planning process. The Master Plan concept developed by AECOM very closely resembles the 2006 charrette concept, and great care has been taken to ensure that the guiding principles have been met.

1) Guiding Principle: Neighbourhood

The Master Plan concept is designed around a strong central town square that serves as a gathering space and heart to the community. This core allows residents to live work, learn, and play in Whistle Bend, including higher density housing, mixed use development, active recreation areas, an elementary school, and community use space.

The Housing Mixes proposed for Whistle Bend promote the mix of housing types and densities proposed at the charrette, where people of all backgrounds can live amongst one another. The proposed densities also allow for retention of green space that can be used for pedestrian corridors and recreation.

2) Guiding Principle: Land Use

Wide green corridors have been integrated into the built areas to increase connectivity as well as provide a “green” setting and passive recreation opportunities. The Corridors are designed to act as circulatory routes, as well as to other trail networks on the Bench and throughout the City.

Schools have been centrally located to minimize car use and promote alternate forms of transportation such as walking, cycling and transit.

3) Guiding Principle: Alternative Transportation

The Master Plan concept has been designed so that all proposed development could be within a 5 minute walk to a transit stop and the proposed densities will allow for frequent, viable transit service. Trail corridors have been designed which circle the entire neighbourhood, and connect through the “green fingers”. Additionally, smaller pedestrian corridors have been incorporated as part of the fused grid design.

Green Space Plan

While the proposed Master Plan concept differs in appearance from the green space map approved by plebiscite in 2007, the intent of that map remains. Due to the shape

of the development area, the surrounding green space has changed slightly in shape and size, but still meets the goals of the 2006 charrette. Major features, including the “green fingers”, trail preservation in the outlying green space, the perimeter trail, on-site storm water management, and the Eagle Bay Park area have been included in the Master Plan concept.

Land Use

1) **Overall Design Concept and Road Layout**

This final concept is based on a traditional grid pattern that can be adapted to take advantage of CMHC’s “fused grid” design. This design breaks up long road ways, replacing them with pedestrian corridors, slowing traffic on local roads and promoting walking and cycling. The overall design is centred on a town square that is envisioned as both an urban space and recreation area.

An arterial loop road serves as the main access for the area. This arterial loop provides a convenient transit route as well as access to the commercial and mixed use areas, elementary and high schools, and the community use areas. High density development is located adjacent to the arterial loop, promoting better bus ridership and providing a buffer for lower density development.

“Green fingers” run through the development creating trail linkages to different areas of the neighbourhood. The “green fingers” connect the perimeter loop trail to the town square and provide on-site storm water management.

The Master Plan concept shows development along the MountainView Golf Course. At this time, the exact location, access, and design, for this area are unknown. As such, this area has been shown as a “potential future housing development” that will be subject to discussions between the City, the Yukon Government, and the Golf Course.

2) **Housing Mix**

Two housing mix categories are proposed. Housing Mix A would be primarily single family lots ranging in size from approximately 300 m² to 700 m² (lot widths ranging from 10 to 20 m), resulting in a density of 10 to 22 units/ha. To provide the mix of housing types that was envisioned in the 2006 charrette, Housing Mix A would also include duplex, triplex, fourplex, and townhouse development at a density of 30 to 50 units/ha.

Housing Mix B would be predominantly a mix of multiple family housing including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and apartments (up to four storeys). The maximum density for apartments would be 100 units/ha. Housing Mix B would also include a limited amount of smaller single family lots.

The wide range of housing types proposed in Housing Mixes A and B provide a range of price points and dwelling types that are both affordable and marketable for homeowners and developers. This proposed mix of lots will provide for a modest number of larger single family lots while attaining the sustainability and density goals set out for Whistle Bend. Additionally, the overlap in housing types between Mix A and B provide for transition zones between higher and lower density areas. Some higher density land uses have been located near the “jet power” sewer line to take advantage of possible waste heat collection that is currently being investigated by EBA Engineering.

Overall, the housing shown on the concept has been designed to have maximum flexibility for housing types. Depending on the subdivision design, the number of units and population accommodated can be increased or decreased. In addition, lot depths have been designed to accommodate each of the aforementioned housing types so that future market demand can be met in the subsequent phases of the Whistle Bend development.

3) **Commercial Uses**

A conventional vehicle-oriented commercial area is located closer to Range Road to service both the Porter Creek Neighbourhood and Whistle Bend. This area would likely support a stand-alone grocery store and a business park. The business park is would be a mix of office, technology, and low impact manufacturing development. The town square would be lined with mixed-use commercial land for local businesses such as coffee shops, offices, and retail, with residential units above.

4) **Community Uses, Trails, and Institutional Uses**

The community use areas shown on the concept may take a variety of forms depending on the needs of the Whistle Bend neighbourhood. These areas could be used for the development of community centres, daycares, community gardens, parks and playgrounds, or libraries, for example. The intent of the community uses is to provide the “neighbourhood nodes” that were shown on the charrette concept.

The trail system shown on the concept plan retains existing trails where possible and provides green connections throughout the neighbourhood. The proposed 10.3 kilometre paved trail system will loop around the neighbourhood (6.5 km), as well as through the “green fingers” (3.8 km), providing for transportation routes to the town square and connections to other trail systems in the City. Included in this trail system will be “out and away trails” for ATV and snowmobile traffic.

An elementary school and community use area are also located within the community core to serve as an anchor to the heart of the community. A secondary neighbourhood hub is located further to the north to serve the outlying residential lots. This hub includes another community use area adjacent to the elementary school, as well as a mixed use commercial area on the TKC land. These land uses will be re-examined prior to development of this phase.

5) **Land Use Calculations**

The break down for land use in the final concept is as follows:

Land Use	Area (ha)	Density (units/ha)	Units	Population
Housing Mix A	67.51	18	1215	3160
Housing Mix B	40.41	40	1620	4200
Mixed Use	4.84	35	170	440
Commercial	5.57			
Schools	8.47			
Community Use	5.57			
Roads	49.53			
Parks and Trails	70.33			
Total	253.73 ha	12 u/ha	3000 units	7800 persons

Access

The connection from Whistle Bend to Mountainview, as shown on the latest concept plans, was developed at the 2006 Porter Creek Bench Charrette. It was identified on the Whistle Bend Greenspace Plan, which received approval through a City wide plebiscite in 2007. Prior to the Community Café AECOM produced a discussion booklet that showed this road configuration. This booklet was available at the Planning Department, on the City website, and was distributed at the Community Café. While the road did not show up on the concept maps, which were focused on Whistle Bend area, it was clearly depicted under the transportation section of the booklet, and was on display at the Café.

AECOM and the City have proposed that this will be the main entrance to the subdivision, and will be constructed as part of the initial phase of Whistle Bend. This has been supported by the Yukon Government and confirmed with recent engineering work completed by AECOM.

OCP

The current OCP designation for Whistle Bend is Residential – Urban. This designation does not consider the range of uses proposed by either the 2006 Charrette or Master Plan concepts. The intention is to appropriately re-designate areas within Whistle Bend through the current OCP review process to reflect the Final Master Plan. All public consultation completed as part of the Whistle Bend planning process will be included in the ongoing OCP review process.

Next Steps

Once Council approves the Master Plan concept, AECOM will complete the overall neighbourhood phasing, as well as subdivision and infrastructure planning for the first two phases of Whistle Bend.

Proposed Schedule:

Master Plan Concept Approval	February 23 2009
Zoning Approval (Phases 1 and 2)	March – April 2009
Subdivision Approval (Phases 1 and 2)	April 2009
Detailed Off-Site Engineering	Winter 2009
Detailed On-Site Engineering	Winter 2010
Construction	March 2010 – August 2012
Phase 1 Lots Available	Fall 2012
Phase 2 Lots Available	Fall 2013