

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: City Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: August 5, 2024
RE: Ice Lake Road South Master Plan

ISSUE

Advancing the Ice Lake Road South Master Plan (the Plan) for Council approval on the design concept for a new industrial/commercial subdivision.

REFERENCES

- [Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [2022-2024 Strategic Priorities](#)
- [2020 Commercial Industrial Land Study](#)
- [Ice Lake Road South Master Plan](#)
- Ice Lake Road South Master Plan – Planning area (Attachment 1)
- Ice Lake Road South Master Plan Excerpt – Executive Summary (Attachment 2)

HISTORY

Council's 2022 to 2024 Strategic Priorities seek to create more opportunities for commercial and industrial land development. In 2020, a Commercial and Industrial Land Study was conducted to identify land owned by the City, Government of Yukon (YG), and First Nations that could be considered for this type of development. Subsequent feasibility studies identified Ice Lake Road South (ILRS) as a priority area for further planning. The Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan (OCP) requires that a Master Plan be prepared for this area prior to zoning amendment and/or subdivision, since it is over 1.5 ha.

Master Planning Process

Planning efforts formally began in May 2023 when the City hired a consultant to assist Administration in the development of a master plan for the ILRS area. In collaboration with KDFN and YG, City staff worked through multiple iterations of information gathering, conceptualization, and engagement in developing the Plan.

The Plan was discussed at the Development Review Committee (DRC) on June 5, 2024. DRC comments highlighted the challenging topography, expressed concerns about the water supply, and recommended further hydrogeological studies, including a groundwater assessment, noting that usage in this area may be limited. These comments have been addressed in the Final Master Plan.

Implementation of the Plan is anticipated to start following further studies to better characterize the site and its development feasibility. An assessment under the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, along with further detailed studies, and all regulatory permits and approvals to develop the site, will be the responsibility of the developer.

Public Engagement

In August 2023, the public provided feedback on the preliminary land use concept through an online survey (engagement phase 1), and again in June 2024 with another survey and a webinar on the draft final concept (engagement phase 2). These engagement phases aimed to inform the public about the project and gather their ideas, preferences, and concerns regarding the land use scenario and draft Master Plan.

- The first online survey, hosted on Engage Whitehorse from August 14 to 28, 2023, received 93 responses.
- The second online survey, conducted from May 31 to June 16, 2024, received 86 responses.
- A webinar presenting the draft Master Plan was held on June 11, 2024, with 13 attendees.

City departments and the landowners also provided input on the land use concept. The consultant then incorporated the comments, where appropriate, to develop the land use concept and Plan report (Attachment 2).

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct Administration to schedule a Public Input Session at the Regular Council Meeting of September 9, 2024; or
2. Refer the matter back to Administration.

ANALYSIS

Site Context

The Ice Lake Road South planning area (Attachment 1) is a currently undeveloped forested area located along the west side of the Alaska Highway, about 315 metres north of the South Access (Robert Service Way/Alaska Highway intersection). The southern boundary of the planning area is marked by properties on Metropolit Lane, which include light industrial, commercial, and highway commercial uses.

The planning area covers approximately 32.42 ha and includes vacant Yukon government Commissioner's land, KDFN Settlement Land (C-86B), and surveyed land (weigh station). The Yukon government lands are designated for industrial/commercial use in the OCP, while the KDFN land is designated as First Nation Development Lands.

Plan Overview

The Plan proposes to create a new industrial/commercial subdivision to provide more land for this type of development. The land use concept creates capacity for approximately 21 lots (13.6 ha) for industrial and commercial use. The Ice Lake Road South area will include a mix of employment, greenspace, and public service land uses. Access is provided from the Alaska Highway south of the Weigh Station. The Ice Lake Road South area will connect to the Ice Lake Road North area (master planning anticipated to begin in 2024) which would create one of the primary future employment and commercial goods and services nodes in Whitehorse.

A mix of industrial/commercial uses are focussed in two locations along the primary internal road network: in the Alaska Highway frontage (KDFN C-86B) and upper

industrial/commercial area (YG land). At full build out it is envisioned that approximately 42% of the area will be designated Industrial/Commercial use, 41% will be allocated to greenspace, 5% for Public Service, and 12% for roads.

Greenspace & Trails Plan

The Plan includes approximately 13.3 ha of greenspace covering challenging terrain and bedrock, providing buffers from Ice Lake and supporting recreation, passive drainage, and ecological functions. The greenspaces and trails will accommodate activities such as walking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and foraging, while also protecting ecological connectivity throughout the development.

The Plan suggests rerouting a portion of the Rock Gardens Trail that currently cuts through the planning area. This reroute impacts about one kilometer of the existing trail, to be replaced with a new 400 m section connecting further west to the powerline trail. The new segment will follow similar rolling forested terrain and route direction and, where possible, utilize a historical logging trail.

Servicing

The servicing concept envisions a typical rural level of service, including onsite well and septic or trucked water and wastewater servicing, and overhead power. Power and telecommunications will be provided by ATCO Electric and local telecommunications companies.

Stormwater will be collected and conveyed through overland drainage. The Plan recommends developing an overall subdivision drainage plan during detailed design to ensure runoff from developments will flow to the designated greenspaces, ditch or culvert network. The servicing concept considers potential tie-ins to piped water and sewer when municipal services are extended to the South Growth Area.

Due to the onsite servicing requirement, and shallow bedrock conditions, a hydrogeological study should be completed prior to allowing land uses that require large quantities of water and wastewater storage / pump out or ground discharge (e.g., car washes, laundromats, larger hotels, etc.).

Lot grading will be the responsibility of the lot owner. Existing grades in development areas vary and grading requirements will be contingent on lot conditions and the desired use of landowners.

Transportation

The Plan envisions an internal road network stemming from a 4-way signalized intersection or roundabout on the Alaska Highway south of the existing Weigh Station. The Access point location is based on input received during the design workshop and from the public survey. It increases potential for highway-oriented commercial development and provides the opportunity for synergies with planned grader station development and access across the highway as YG-Highway and Public Works is considering the project.

The internal road network provides access to the Alaska Highway Frontage area and upper development area. Both areas are planned to be serviced by a 2-lane rural industrial road with a common roadway that connects the entire development to the Alaska Highway corridor.

A cul-de-sac at the north end of the road network allows for a future connection to the anticipated development of the Ice Lake Road North area. This connection would provide connectivity between the developments and creates the potential for an alternative access point to the planning area.

Next Steps

If the Plan is approved by Council, the City will work with the landowners to implement the plan through additional detailed studies, assessment, permits, and approvals initiated by the developers.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct Administration to schedule a Public Input Session at the Regular Council Meeting of September 9, 2024, on the proposed Ice Lake Road South Master Plan.