

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: City Planning Committee
FROM: Administration
DATE: September 16, 2024
RE: Public Input Report – Ice Lake Road South Master Plan

ISSUE

Public Input Session Report on the Ice Lake Road South Master Plan (the Plan), a document providing guidance and a framework for the future development of a new industrial/commercial subdivision.

REFERENCES

- [Whitehorse 2040 Official Community Plan](#)
- [2020 Commercial Industrial Land Study](#)
- [Ice Lake South Master Plan](#)
- Ice Lake Road South – Location Map (Attachment 1)
- Ice Lake Road South Master Plan – Excerpt Only (Attachment 2)

HISTORY

The City developed a plan for the future industrial/commercial subdivision in the currently undeveloped forested area located along the west side of the Alaska Highway, about 315 metres north of Robert Service Way. The Plan area includes vacant Yukon government (YG) Commissioner's land, KDFN Settlement land, and surveyed YG land.

The Plan was introduced at the Council Committee meeting of August 5, 2024. Council directed Administration to schedule a Public Input Session on the proposed Plan. Notices were published in the Yukon Star on August 23, 2024 and Yukon News on August 23 and 30, 2024. Two notice signs were placed around the Plan area along the Alaska Highway and Hamilton Boulevard, and property owners and residents within 500 m of the Plan area were notified by mail. The YG Land Management Branch, Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN), and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) were notified by email.

A Public Input Session was held on September 9, 2024. Two written submissions and one verbal submission were received.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt the proposed Ice Lake Road South Master Plan; or
2. Refer the matter back to Administration.

ANALYSIS

The following topics were raised in the submissions:

- Water Quality;
- Compatibility with Surrounding Area;
- Project Feasibility and Location;

- Wildlife Corridor; and
- KDFN's Planning Authority

Water Quality

A concern was raised about the water quality in the area. It was mentioned that alkalinity has reached unsafe levels in nearby wells in the Metropolit Lane area, making the water unfit for drinking, which has forced some businesses and households to purchase water for drinking and cooking due to these high mineral levels. It was also mentioned that several wells in the area have either dried up or significantly decreased in water supply due to earth movement.

The Plan recommends conducting further investigations into servicing options in future design stages, including a detailed hydrogeological analysis to determine groundwater depth and the suitability of onsite septic systems for the subdivision. The Plan stipulates that land uses in the area must be compatible with the capacity for adequate water and sewer servicing on-site. It notes that more water-intensive uses (e.g., secondary caretaker suites) may not be feasible and recommends that a hydrogeological study be completed prior to permitting land uses that require substantial quantities of water and wastewater management, such as car washes, laundromats, and larger hotels.

Compatibility with Surrounding Area

A concern was expressed regarding the compatibility of the proposed uses with the surrounding quiet businesses, particularly with respect to potential noise, dust, odors, and additional water loss.

The Plan does not specify zoning beyond what is already defined for adjacent areas. The entire area in question is designated as Industrial/Commercial in the Official Community Plan. The recommended zones for this planning area are CH – Highway Commercial and CIM – Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial, which are consistent with the zones to the south and are considered compatible with the existing land use.

Project Feasibility and Location

A concern was raised regarding the project's financial feasibility, given that only 41 percent of the area is designated as commercial/industrial space with a limited number of parcels that will be available for sale. There were apprehensions that investing in a project with such a low proportion of usable land may not provide a sufficient return. While a need for industrial/commercial land was acknowledged, the question was raised whether an alternate location would be more suitable.

Based on the pre-design report, further studies, such as a hydrogeological study, Ice Lake Road North Development Feasibility studies, and a detailed geotechnical study (including septic field and well feasibility) are recommended to be completed prior to or in tandem with YESAB, rezoning, and detailed design to determine development opportunity and feasibility. This additional work will be carried out by the developers. The decision regarding the development and sale of future parcels will rest with the landowners.

The Ice Lake Road South area is the first site being considered based on the 2020 Commercial Industrial Land Study, which identified potential locations to meet growing demand for industrial and commercial land. As market needs continue to increase, it is important to have land planned and ready for development.

Wildlife Corridor

A concern was raised regarding the potential impact on a natural wildlife corridor through the planning area. This corridor is said to support a diverse range of wildlife, including moose, mink, grizzly and black bears, and lynx.

While the Plan does not specifically address the wildlife corridor in question, it retains a substantial amount of greenspace, contributing to environmental sustainability and retaining wildlife habitat. This issue will be further explored in future assessments, such as the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) review. The YESAB review is expected to assess the impacts on wildlife and provide recommendations for mitigating impacts on wildlife if necessary.

KDFN's Planning Authority

While no concerns were raised regarding the proposed plan, KDFN clarified their authority in planning and zoning as outlined in their Self-Government Agreement (SGA) and Lands Act. While KDFN views the master plan as a City document, they do not intend to adopt it as a land use plan under their Lands Act. They emphasize that the full range of uses under the SGA designation remains available to them, as they don't have an immediate development proposal for C-86B.

The clarification provided by KDFN regarding their planning and zoning authority under the Self-Government Agreement and the 2020 Lands Act is acknowledged. The intent behind the Plan is to provide guidance and a framework for the future development of this area of a new industrial/commercial subdivision. Ongoing efforts aim to ensure that any future development aligns with both the City's and KDFN's objectives.

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 approve the Ice Lake Road South Master Plan, a document providing guidance and a framework for the future development of the area.