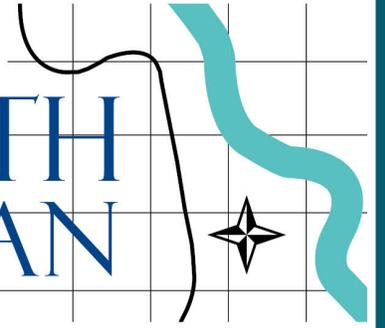


RANGE ROAD NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Conceptual rendering of Range Road improvements and linear park



JULY 2014



Introduction



Planning area. From top: former landfill site aka the “Point”; Mountain Air Estates; and Takhini Mobile Home Park.

Overview

Special attention is needed to make the Range Road North area a complete and successful neighbourhood within Whitehorse.

The area includes the Takhini and Northland Mobile Home Parks, Mountain View Place, Mountain Air Estates, Stone Ridge, two Kwanlin Dün First Nation parcels, and surrounding greenspace (over 50 hectares of vacant Commissioner’s Land). This is home to over 1,100 people with the potential for more residents.

The City of Whitehorse 2010 **Official Community Plan** identified the need for a neighbourhood level planning study for this area, with a focus on specific improvements to trails, recreation, housing, transportation, and amenities.

With this direction in hand, the Planning and Building Services Department initiated a neighbourhood planning process for the area in September 2013, which involved public and stakeholder interviews, a neighbourhood walk, and a 2-day professional design workshop that included two public events.

A common theme expressed during the process is that the area feels disconnected from the rest of the city and that it lacks neighbourhood identity. This Plan represents the hard work of residents and design professionals. It provides recommendations for numerous improvements that, together, will create a better, more-connected neighbourhood.

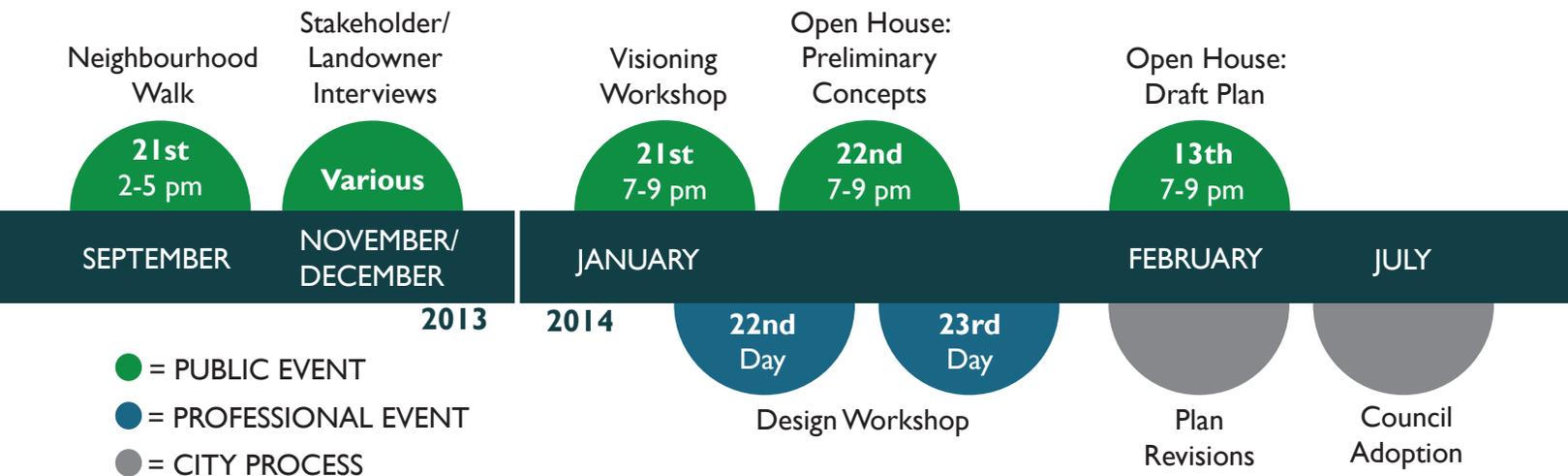
First Nation Involvement

The planning area was historically used by both the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) citizens. The area is located within both traditional territories.

The KDFN is the largest private landowner in the area, with two significant parcels: Lot C-15B located adjacent to Range Road at the northern end of the planning area and Lot 226, located at the southern end of the planning area, which includes the Crow Street area as well as the Marwell Wetlands (to the south and outside the planning area). KDFN staff were significantly involved in this process and they were represented at the Design Workshop.

TKC does not have any settlement parcels in area, but their main interest lies in the former landfill site, where a traditional fishing camp called Damawtan was located near the confluence of the Yukon River and McIntyre Creek. TKC has significant interest in ensuring that the heritage integrity of the site is maintained and that the former landfill is cleaned up and utilized for community use. TKC has already led significant cleanup of the landfill area.

The neighbourhood planning process.



Neighbourhood planning events. From left: neighbourhood walk; public kick-off meeting; and professional design workshop.

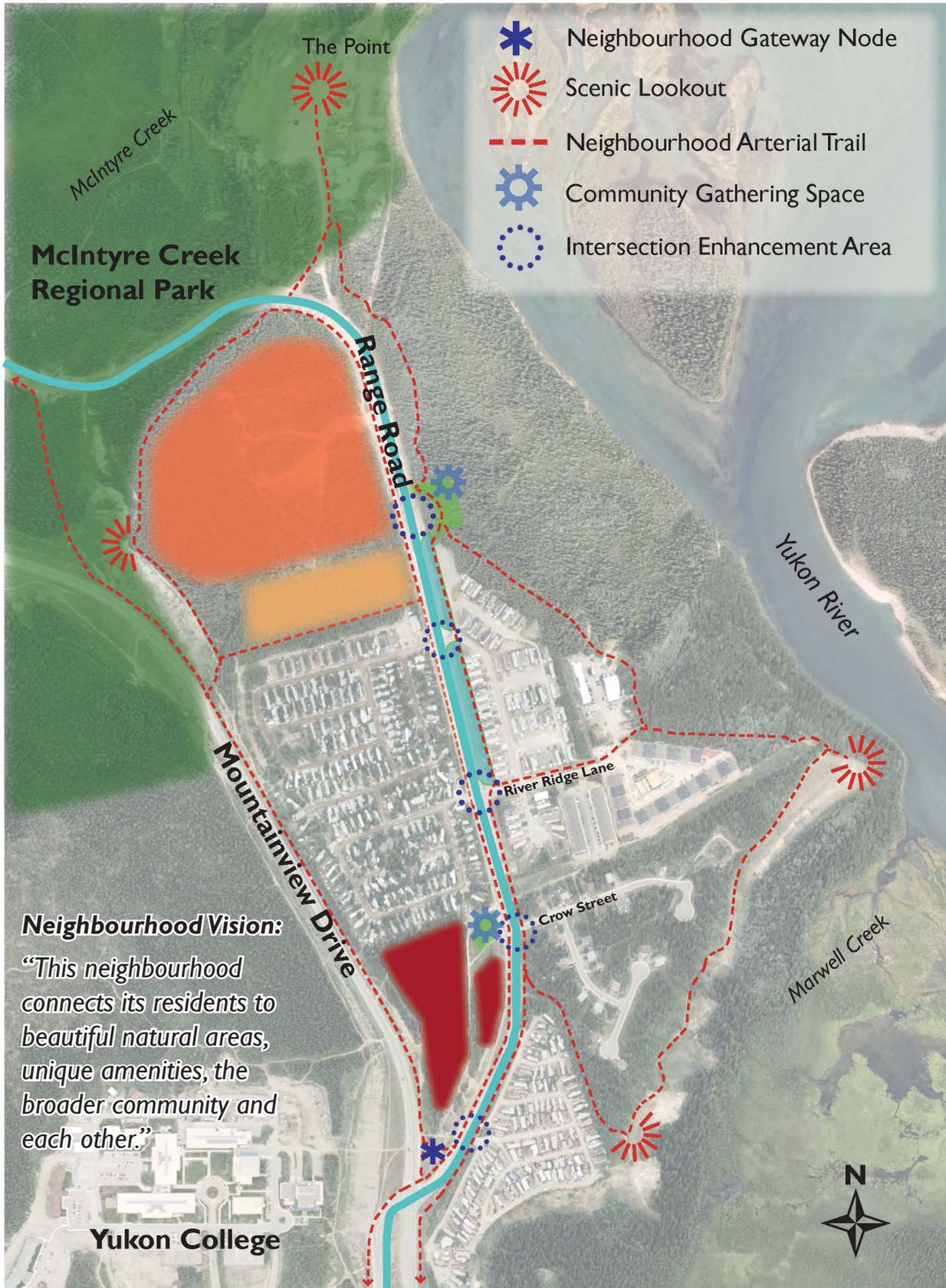


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The Plan is organized by **Concept Areas** and **Planning Goals** that were identified during the planning process. Each area is indicated on the concept map (next page.)

	Trails and Community Gathering Spaces..... Page 6 Improve the trail network by establishing a trail hierarchy, fixing connections, and adding amenities. Provide two key community gathering spaces to encourage active recreation and community identity.
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CONCEPT AREAS:



Neighbourhood Vision:

“This neighbourhood connects its residents to beautiful natural areas, unique amenities, the broader community and each other.”

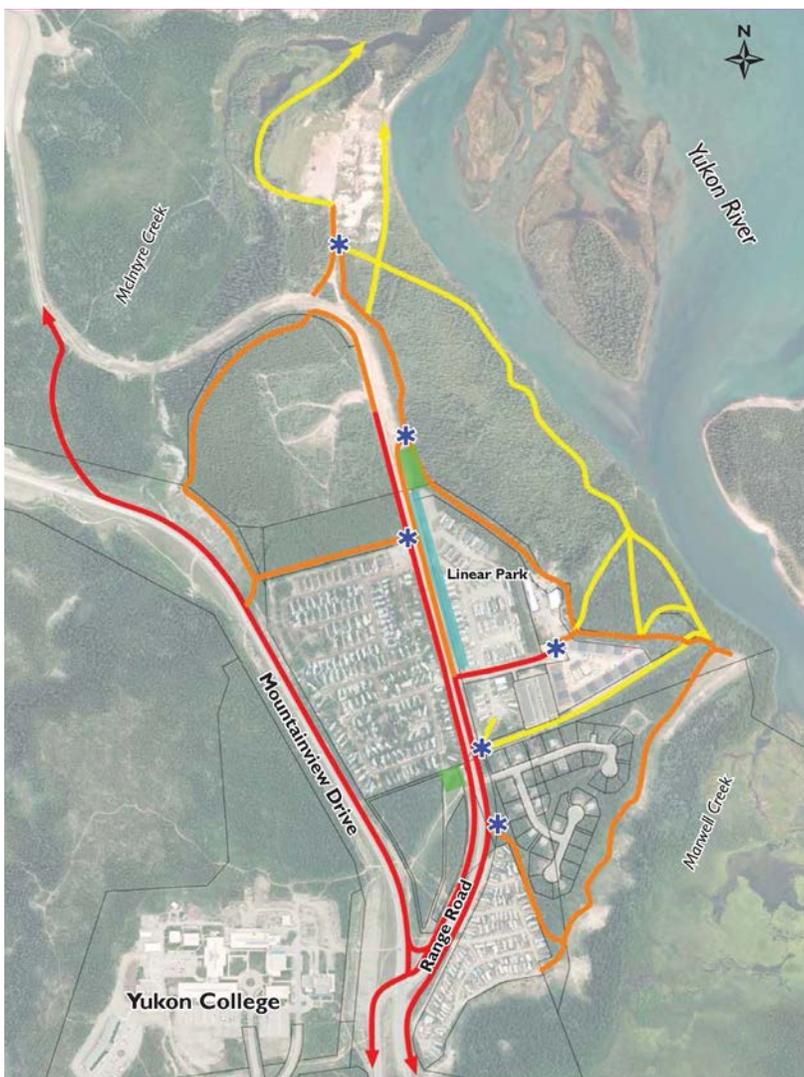
Trails and Community Gathering Spaces

The Range Road North area has some of the most spectacular natural surroundings in Whitehorse. This includes a well utilized trail network, beautiful viewpoints, and natural features such as the Yukon River, McIntyre Creek, and the Marwell Wetlands. Residents use these amenities extensively.

The trails and **community gathering spaces concept** (below) identifies and prioritizes those trail systems that are found in the area to better connect residents to their natural surroundings and the rest of the city. These facilities would help to encourage a broader awareness of the natural amenities found in this area.

Key actions to ensure that the neighbourhood is integrated into the rest of the city include:

- Construct a paved arterial trail along Mountainview Drive down to Marwell and Downtown;
- Construct a paved arterial trail connection to Whistle Bend along Mountainview Drive and Range Road;
- Undertake pedestrian improvements (i.e. sidewalks) along Range Road to Takhini Elementary School, ballfields, and beyond; and
- Examine future pedestrian connections to the Yukon College.



Trails and Community Gathering Spaces Concept:

- Arterial paved trail
- Arterial natural trail
- Local trail
- * Trail head
- Community gathering space

Key actions to create an improved **trail network** include:

- Establish three trail classifications with recommended treatment and maintenance standards. The trail classifications are: arterial paved, arterial unpaved, and local trails;
- Build trailheads throughout the area with key amenities, such as trail signage, maps, and kiosks. Trailheads will allow users to walk different trail loops from each trailhead;
- Build new trails to fill in key missing links in the loops; and

- Continue to investigate the potential for a future trail connection down to McIntyre Creek, near the Yukon River confluence. This includes assessing the feasibility of a non-motorized bridge over McIntyre Creek to allow people to walk to Whistle Bend and the trails in that area.

During the planning process concerns were raised from some adjacent property owners to some of the proposed trail connections including loss of privacy and enjoyment of their properties. As such, the future detailed trail planning process that will occur in this area will investigate final options for the trail locations and include public involvement and Council approval.



Conceptual rendering of a trailhead and new trail connection at the east end of River Ridge Lane.

New **community gathering spaces** are sorely needed for the area. With no existing commercial node, the lack of public amenities is even more notable. During consultation, the public frequently noted the lack of a public playground. To provide opportunities for both recreation and community gathering, key actions include:

- Develop two key recreational areas along Range Road, as shown on the map;
- Work with local residents to determine appropriate recreational amenities for these two areas;

- At the south end, install a playground, but give consideration to creating a “natural playground” to help foster a strong connection between children and nature; and
- At the north end, install features that would be complementary to a playground. Examples are an ice rink, community garden, wild edible plant areas, or outdoor fitness park with exercise stations.

Gathering areas and recreational facilities should be designed to minimize wildlife encounters.



The Point

The former landfill site at the north end of Range Road is a significant local and city-wide asset. Public input during consultation showed a clear and strong significance to this location. Residents call this area “The Point” in reference to its prominent location and beautiful views.

The landfill was opened by the US Army during World War II, after which it was used as a public landfill. In recent years, the TKC has led efforts to remove refuse and clean-up the site. On top of spectacular views of the Yukon River and McIntyre Creek, the site also has nearby heritage features, including a former TKC fish camp and the wreckage of the *SS Prospector* sternwheeler. Nearby McIntyre Creek is a culturally significant natural feature to the TKC. Discussions with both TKC and residents reaffirm the benefit of preserving this area as a community space. The area also provides excellent opportunities for viewing wildlife such as waterfowl and other bird species.

Prior to making any improvements to the area, it is recommended that a site feasibility and safety assessment be completed to ensure the area is safe

for community use. In addition, it is recommended that any public improvements be done in close partnership with the TKC and other partners. Finally, the improvements should be done in conjunction with community buy-in and stewardship to reduce potential vandalism. Other recommendations include:

- Consider this site as part of the larger McIntyre Creek Regional Park. In addition, integrate this site as much as possible to Eagle Bay Park located in Whistle Bend on the north side of McIntyre Creek. Eagle Bay Park includes amenities, parking, etc. The Point also has natural features that would logically mean the two areas are complementary to each other.
- Promote the area as a regional park attraction that is used by both residents of the area and the broader city as a whole. Encourage guided tours and walks in the area by local organizations; and
- Construct amenities as described on the facing page. The park should be designed to minimize dangerous and unwanted activities. The park would be developed in phases as funding permits, as described in the Implementation section.

Conceptual rendering of the proposed improvements to The Point.

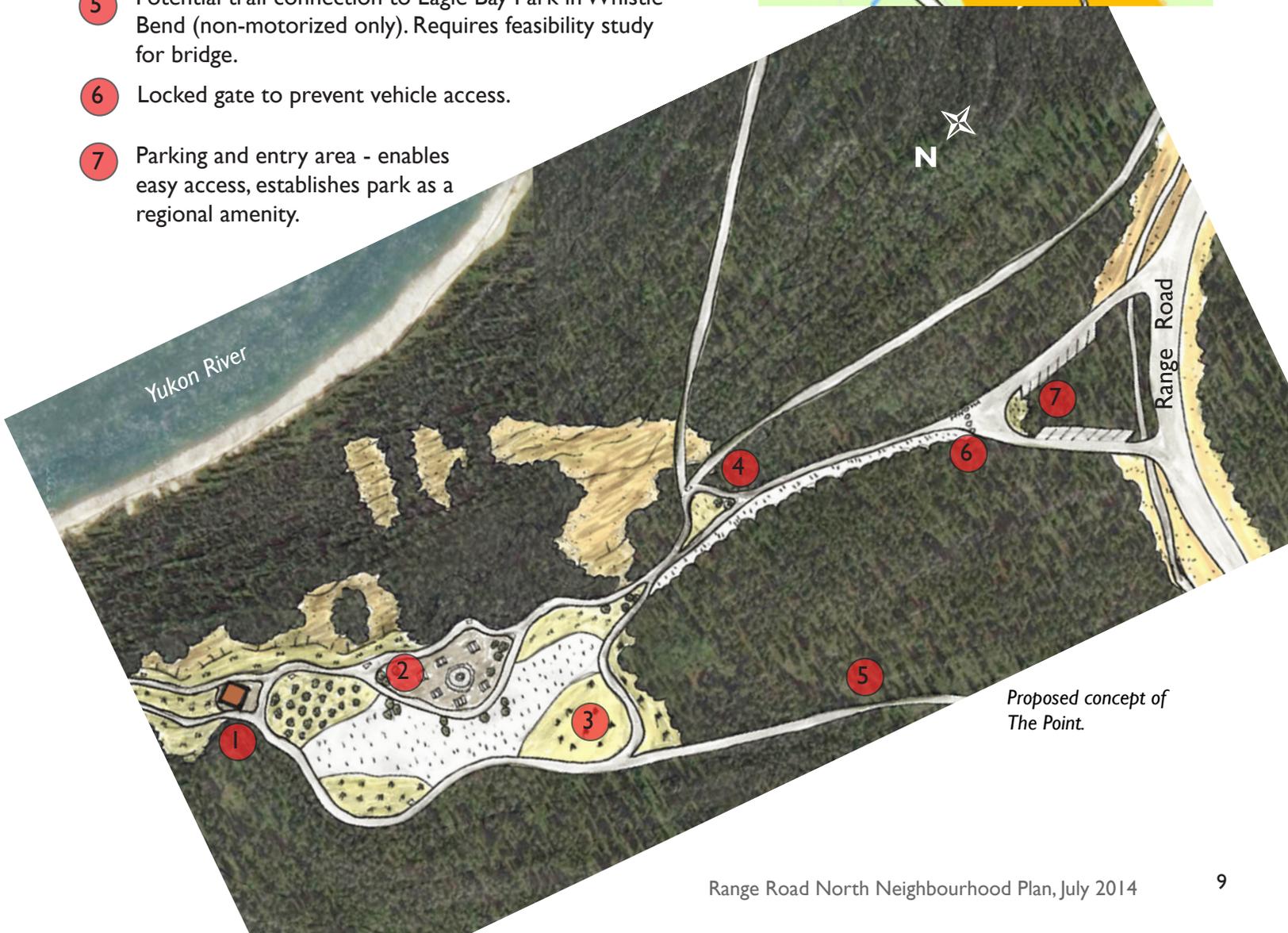


Overview map of the area.



Features of **The Point** include:

- 1 Viewing tower/platform. Consider a large viewing structure or tower at the site to encourage wildlife, northern lights viewing, etc. A platform may be considered as an alternative to a tower if there is a desire for a less intensive structure.
- 2 Main park area. Consider public amenities such as interpretive signage, controlled firepit, seating areas and other structures.
- 3 Landscape-themed area with different nodes. For example, the themes could be different Yukon ecoregions.
- 4 Trailhead hub. Provides linkages to the area, including to paved paths along Range Road. Amenities include trail maps, signage and waste bins.
- 5 Potential trail connection to Eagle Bay Park in Whistle Bend (non-motorized only). Requires feasibility study for bridge.
- 6 Locked gate to prevent vehicle access.
- 7 Parking and entry area - enables easy access, establishes park as a regional amenity.



Proposed concept of The Point.

Range Road Improvements and Linear Park

A unifying feature of the area is Range Road itself, which runs south/north and connects vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists to every development area. Special importance needs to be placed on this road, not only as the area's primary transportation corridor, but also as a community asset.

Increased demand from development along Range Road and future traffic to and from Whistle Bend have caused the need to reconstruct the roadway to modern standards. In 2013/2014, a first phase of reconstruction work occurred from the Mountainview Drive/Range Road intersection to Crow Street.

Remaining reconstruction work, from Crow Street to KDFN Lot C-15B, should be completed in a timely manner, and incorporate five key recommendations.

1. Focus **traffic calming** improvements at key intersections along Range Road including:

- Investigate adding roundabouts at several locations. Priority should be placed on the River Ridge Lane intersection;
- Add crosswalks at each paved arterial trail crossing and at key intersections; and
- Integrate crosswalks into traffic circles and splitter islands. Final locations of the crosswalks will be determined during the detailed design stage.

2. Add **landscaped medians** at certain stretches to help beautify the area and add some interest to this stretch of the road. This includes:

- Medians at the south and north ends of Range Road to act as "bookends" for the area; and
- Low-growing vegetation that is drought-resistant and/or native to the Whitehorse area. Xeriscaping methods such as river rocks, driftwood, and bricks could also be explored for low traffic areas.

Range Road, facing northwest, existing conditions.



3. Add 3 metre wide **paved multi-use paths** along Range Road as a way to connect residents to the broader city and encourage active transportation. Paved paths are shown in red on the Trails and Community Gathering Spaces concept on page 6.

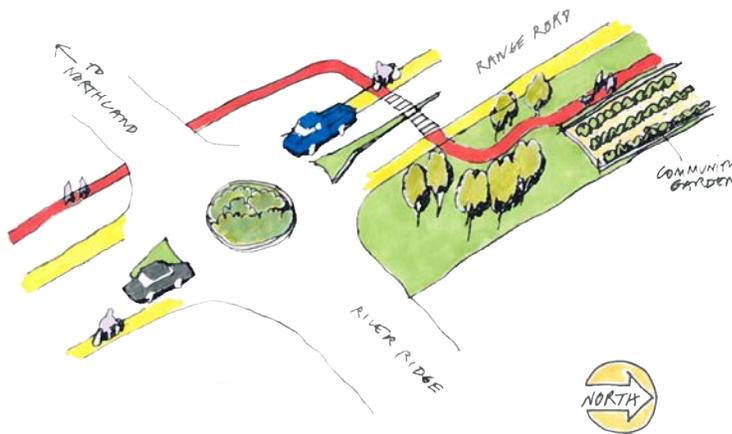
4. Add 2.5 metre wide **bike lanes** on both sides of the road for active transportation and commuting.

5. Create a **linear park** along the east side of Range Road, from River Ridge Lane to the proposed community gathering area north of Mountain View Place. The neighbourhood is notably lacking in public amenity space, so the creation of a linear park is a unique way of creating a location that can be used by all residents, while also beautifying the roadway. To create the linear park

the City should:

- Rebuild the driving lanes where they are, in the west half of the right-of-way, leaving room for a public area on the east half;
- Build a paved arterial trail that weaves through the middle of the linear park to allow residents to connect to each node of the park; and
- Incorporate different amenity areas in the park. These could include a community garden, a fitness area, dog-bag dispensers, and landscaping features.

Improvements to the Mountainview Drive/Range Road intersection will be explored in a future process that will develop a design for Mountainview Drive.



Concept of Range Road reconstruction showing the linear park, roundabout, splitter islands, pedestrian crossing, arterial trails, and bike lanes.



Conceptual rendering of Range Road with linear park, bike lanes, splitter island, and pedestrian crossing.

Development Opportunities

The 2010 *Official Community Plan* identifies a **potential infill site** in the area, located between Northland Mobile Home Park and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) Lot C-15B. The site is currently owned by the Yukon Government. The neighbourhood planning process was used to examine the site and produce a development concept. Public feedback was used as a means to frame the concept elements. The design team worked with KDFN to look at options for the site and to see how it could potentially link in to the KDFN parcel to the north.

The concept represents a “what-if development” scenario – a future decision by City Council is needed to determine whether or not development should proceed.

Potential concept of the proposed infill site.

Key recommendations for the infill site if development does proceed:

- Encourage small and affordable housing units in a variety of one, two and three-unit configurations. Additionally, the City could consider placing a maximum housing unit size of 1000 ft² (93 m²), subject to zoning;
- Encourage a high quality and street friendly housing design by using “comprehensive” zoning;
- Preserve key trail connections in the area;
- Ensure a 10 metre wide greenspace/trail adjacent to Northland Mobile Home Park is kept; and
- Partner with KDFN to investigate an integrated development with Lot C-15B.



Additional recommendations for the infill site include:

- Keep a large green area on the western edge of the site. This will preserve trail connections to the north and the retained vegetation will act as a noise buffer from Mountainview Drive;
- Construct an access road that straddles the infill site and KDFN Lot C-15B in order to maximize the development potential of the infill site and to share road and utility connections with KDFN;
- Rezone at least a portion of the site to RCM3 – Cottage Cluster Homes. This zone allows for numerous smaller units all on the same lot, as either condominium or rental housing; and
- If individual lot ownership is desired, use the RCS2 – Comprehensive Residential Single Family 2 zone.

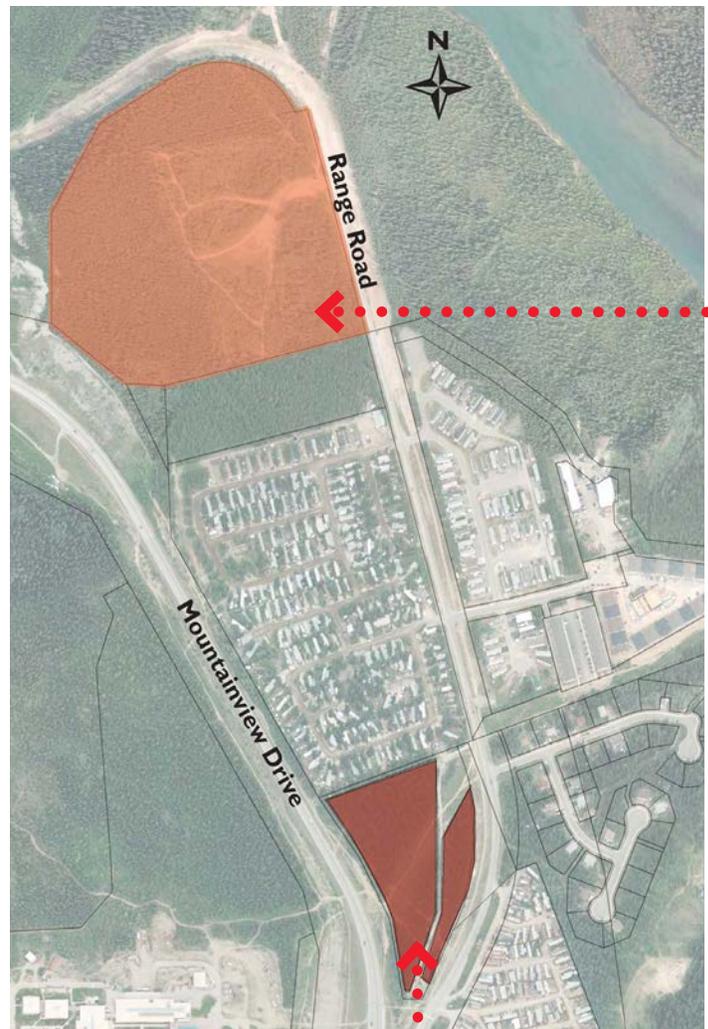
Both the RCM3 and RCS2 zones allow for singles, duplexes and triplex housing. Both require landscaping, porches, screened parking areas, and attractive building facades.

Development potential exists for **privately-owned land parcels** in the area. Notably, the Whitehorse Baptist Church purchased two properties in 2013 at the junction of Range Road and Mountainview Drive. City Council approved the owners' application for the site to be zoned Neighbourhood Commercial. This zone allows a church to be built, but also allows for additional secondary uses including stores, restaurants, or even housing.

Due to the property's exposure to Mountainview Drive and the entrance to the neighbourhood, commercial ventures would likely do well here. The City should work with the owners to determine the business case for uses that would provide valuable community amenities such as a child care centre, grocery/convenience store, and/or a cafe.

The **KDFN C-15B parcel** represents a significant opportunity for KDFN, with development likely to occur gradually and over a length of time. KDFN staff have stated that they will work to create a development pattern that is compatible with the existing neighbourhood. Although housing is primarily envisioned, a local commercial opportunity could be explored here, fronting on to Range Road to maximize exposure to patrons living in the area as well as Whistle Bend.

During the planning process, City and KDFN staff worked together to look at options for integrating the potential infill site with the C-15B parcel. With this initial step accomplished, it is recommended that further discussions continue to explore options for integration and partnership.





Other Recommendations

The Plan identifies other initiatives that the City can either directly or indirectly pursue. These initiatives help to further accomplish the neighbourhood vision identified on page 5 by creating a stronger and more identifiable neighbourhood within the city. The additional recommendations include:

- A **neighbourhood name** is needed to help build a sense of community and identity. Working with local residents, organizations, and governments, the process needs significant further consultation. Suggested naming themes include:
 - First Nations name
 - Indigenous plant name
 - Nearby geographic or historic feature

Following Council approval of the neighbourhood name, the City would construct a neighbourhood sign for the gateway node, located at the north-

east corner of the Mountainview Drive and Range Road intersection. The sign and landscaping would announce to people that they are entering the neighbourhood and would bring a sense of identity to the area.

- **Neighbourhood associations** are important as they provide neighbourhood representation on various projects and issues that pertain to their area. They also help to build neighbourhood identity by hosting local events that bring residents together. Ultimately, a neighbourhood association has to be created by its residents; however, the City can encourage and support the creation of such an association.

Conceptual rendering of gateway improvements.



- This Plan calls for high **standards for new housing** developments on the potential infill site and the KDFN C-15 parcel. Numerous condominium-style units have been added to the area in recent years and have provided entry-level housing in generally efficient forms. The majority of the older housing stock consists of mobile homes. The City should pursue options for mobile homes to bring them up to a higher energy efficient standard.
- It is recommended that the City work with **Mountain Air Estates** to look at the potential for creating additional space east of their development. Suggested uses include additional amenity space, additional parking areas, storage areas or a new private park.
- During the planning process, first hand observations of **encroachments** onto public land were noted. To ensure that public land is protected and maintained for general public use, the City should prioritize and enforce cleanup for this area.
- The long-term vision for **transit** in the area includes connecting to the Whistle Bend neighbourhood. In the meantime, the City will investigate different transit re-routing options for the area, including a new bus loop location. Improvements should be prioritized for the two transit stops located on Mountainview Drive. Improvements could include adding bus shelters, benches, and information kiosks with route maps and schedules. The transit stops along Range Road should have basic amenities including schedules.



Existing housing along River Ridge Lane including Mountain Air Estates, Stone Ridge, and Mountain View Place.



Implementation

City Council adopted this Plan in summer 2014 to provide direction on the growth and development of the Range Road North area over the long-term. Work should begin immediately and continue through a phased approach, which is outlined in the table below.

Items that require third-party funding sources are noted in *italics*, which include federally driven initiatives. If third party funding is not available for certain projects, funds from the land sale of the infill site could potentially be used to fund improvements to public amenities.

Item	Phase 1 (within 3 years)	Phase 2 (within 5 years)	Phase 3 (within 10 years)
Trails and Community Gathering Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail planning Repairing broken trail connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trailhead construction Community gathering areas (e.g. playgrounds) construction 	
The Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Additional site cleanup</i> <i>Site feasibility study and detailed design</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parking area construction</i> Trailhead and trail improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Landscaping and public amenity area</i> <i>Viewing structure</i> <i>McIntyre Creek trail and bridge crossing</i>
Range Road Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed road design <i>Range Road reconstruction</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Linear park improvements</i>
Potential Infill Site Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council decision on development Rezoning Detailed infill site design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill site development 	
Gateway Node	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood name selection Neighbourhood sign Gateway improvements 		
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit improvements Enforcing encroachments 		

Thank You!

The City wishes to thank all those involved in the making of this Plan including:

Geoff Cowie, *Kwanlin Dün First Nation*

Jack Kobayashi, *Kobayashi and Zedda Architects Ltd.*

Lauren Holmes, *Kobayashi and Zedda Architects Ltd.*

Jeff Barrett, *Urban Systems*

Gwenda Sulem, *Associated Engineering*

Mike Gau, *City of Whitehorse*

Pat Ross, *City of Whitehorse*

Mike Ellis, *City of Whitehorse*

Ben Campbell, *City of Whitehorse*

Kinden Kosick, *City of Whitehorse*

Erica Beasley, *City of Whitehorse*

Rhiannon Jones, *City of Whitehorse*

Nick Marnik, *City of Whitehorse*

Doug Hnatiuk, *City of Whitehorse*

Marc Boulerice, *City of Whitehorse*

Wayne Tuck, *City of Whitehorse*

Aerial photography by *Alistair Maitland Photography*

The City also extends its thanks to the public, stakeholders, and other levels of government who were involved in this planning process. Their input helped lay the groundwork for the Plan.

