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# THE CITY OF RIDGEFIELD

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## Carty Road Subarea Plan Planning Commission Staff Report

### BACKGROUND

The Carty Road subarea consists of approximately 266 acres of land located directly east of the intersection of NW Hillhurst Road and S Royle Road in the Ridgefield Urban Growth Area (UGA). In 2019, several property owners within the subarea petitioned the Ridgefield City Council to consider annexation of the area adjacent to Carty Road, while other property owners and residents in the area have expressed concerns over the city's rapid growth and the loss of rural lands within and surrounding Ridgefield.

To develop a plan governing any future, owner-initiated development in the area, City Council initiated the subarea planning process in 2019. A subarea plan is a high-level plan focused on visioning, guiding principles, and recommendations for code language. It allows a neighborhood to work together to establish unique guidance for potential future development, rather than defaulting to the basic development standards that would apply anywhere else in the City. It asks, "What happens if my neighbor or I decide to annex and develop?" The intent of the Carty Road subarea plan is to establish future land uses, identify the appropriate intensity of future development, and identify required transportation and utility infrastructure improvements based on community outreach and planning analysis.

The development and adoption of a subarea plan is a different process from annexation. In the case of the requested annexations within the Carty Road area, City Council decided to delay further consideration until a subarea plan is adopted. Upon adoption, City Council may resume discussion of annexation.

### DISCUSSION

#### Planning Process

The planning process began in Fall 2019 as the city engaged a consulting team with the background necessary to develop a subarea plan. Staff and the consulting team (from WSP) collaborated on project planning and community outreach. Property owners in the subarea received a survey in Fall 2019; survey responses provided initial information on resident values and desires for the future of the area. Following the survey, the project team conducted interviews with eleven property owners and stakeholders in the area in order to get a more in-depth understanding of assets and constraints. To build on the framework established through the survey and stakeholder interviews, a project advisory committee (PAC) was convened. The PAC met on January 30, 2020 and on March 4, 2020. During the first PAC meeting, the group created a vision and guiding principles for the Carty Road subarea. The vision and guiding principles were refined during the second PAC and with input from the community at an open house (March 4, 2020).

#### *Vision Statement*

"Stakeholders and residents of the Carty Road area understand that Ridgefield is growing, but even as the city evolves, the Carty Road area is unique and stands as a good example of Ridgefield's rural

and agricultural heritage. The rural character is reflected in residential development and transportation options that respect privacy, property, and safety. Development in this community protects both the natural areas along Gee Creek and the citizens that live and work in the community, now and in the future.”

### *Guiding Principles*

Future development in the Carty Road subarea will:

- Respect the rural and agricultural heritage of the area by protecting existing land uses and conserving open space.
- Create quality design through design standards and landscaping requirements.
- Respect existing development patterns in the Carty Road area.
- Protect natural areas and buffers along the Gee Creek corridor.
- Provide transportation options that promote the safety of all users (motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians) and improve emergency vehicle access and evacuation options.
- Provide a range of development option for landowners that allow flexibility to retain existing uses and meet development regulations and state land use laws.

During the 2020 PAC meetings and community open house, stakeholders also provided feedback on two conceptual land use plans for the subarea that were created based on the vision and guiding principles. Both concept plans showed potential City zoning schemes that would be implemented following any property owners’ decision to annex. Concept A had two low-density residential zones (RLD-4 and RLD-6) along with a community/civic zone; heritage and community supported agriculture zoning overlays; trail connectivity through existing critical areas with a multiuse path on Carty Road; and transportation improvements on Carty Road and NW 24th Avenue. Concept B was similar to Concept A, with a third residential zone (RLD-8) to allow for greater density on the edge of the subarea, and fewer proposed changes to NW 24th Avenue. Based on comments received during the 2020 outreach process, and a desire to best reflect the vision and guiding principles, a preferred concept plan was developed in 2020 including one low density residential zone (RLD-4); an open space preservation area; heritage and community supported agriculture zoning overlays; trail corridors along critical areas and a separated multi-use path along Carty Road; and street and intersection improvements along Carty Road and NW 24th Avenue.

Figure xx. Concept Plan A

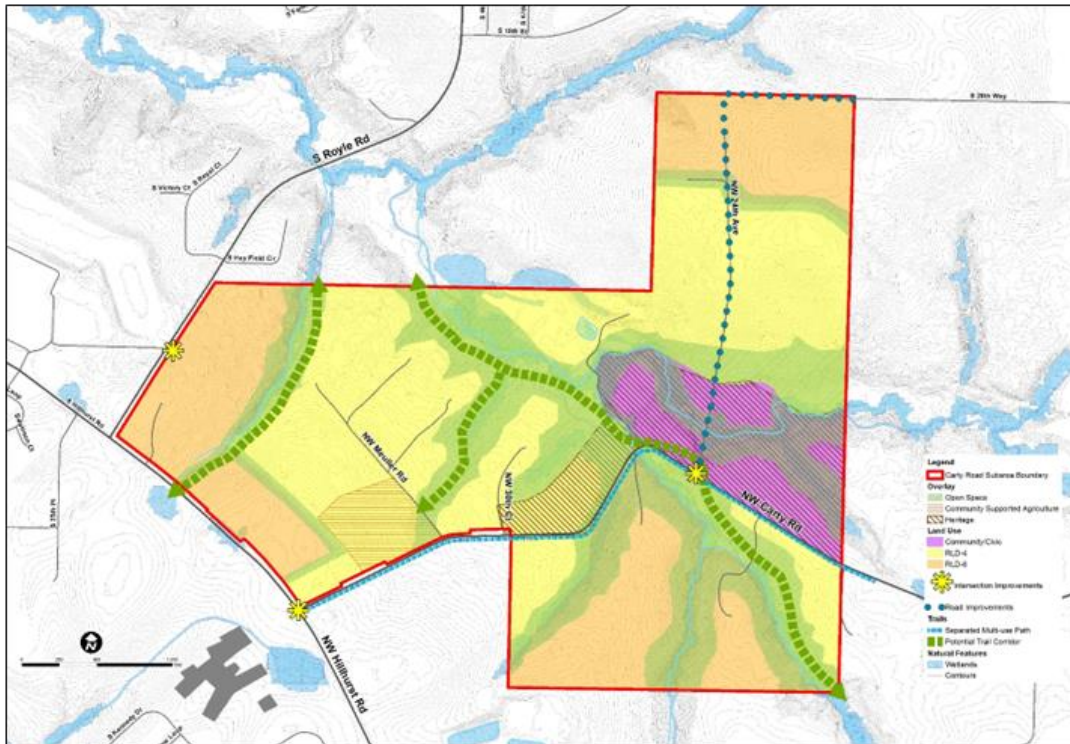


Figure 2. Concept Plan B

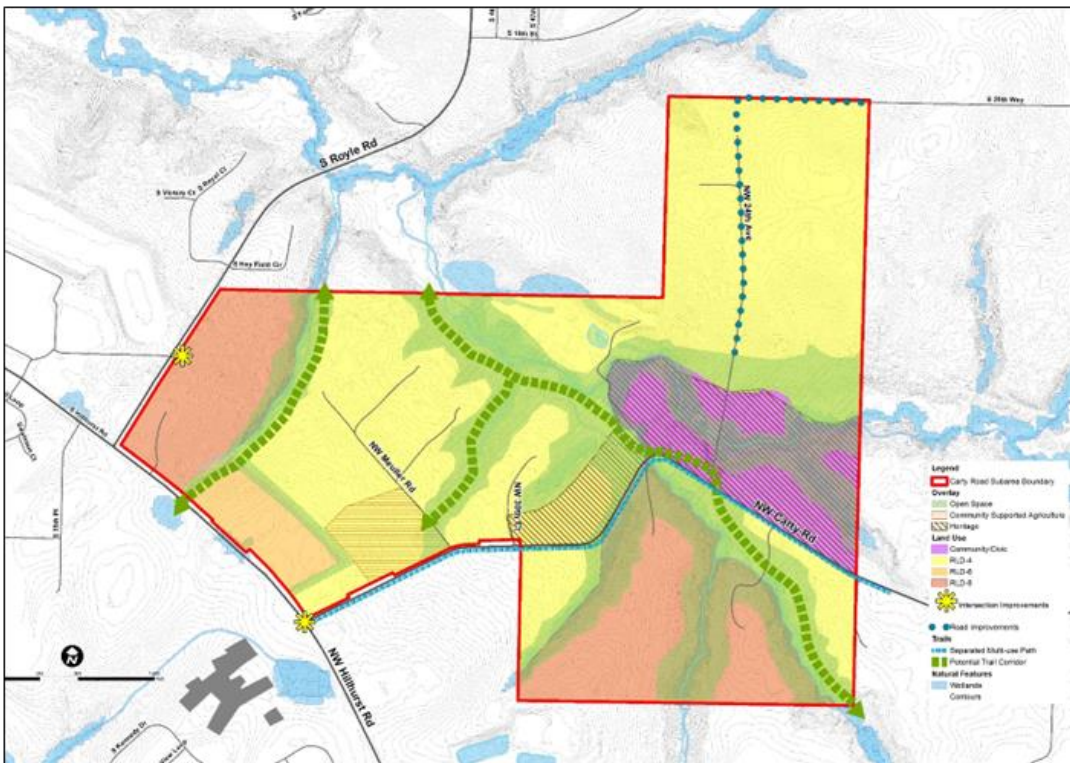
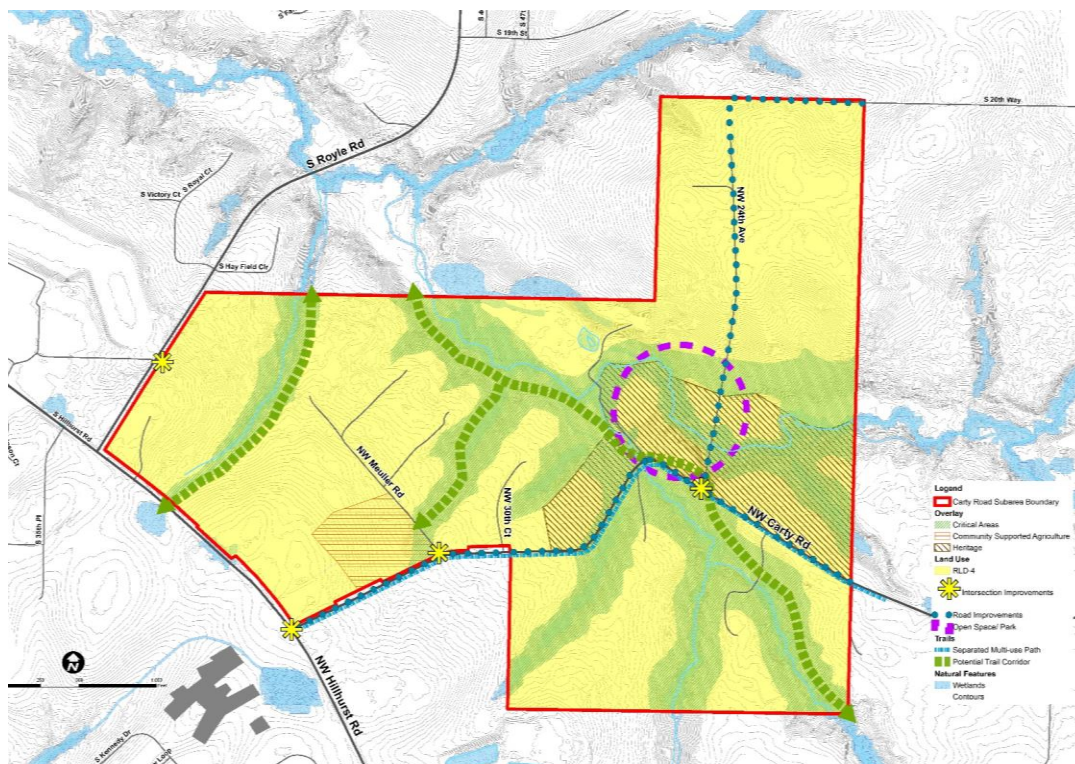


Figure 3. 2020 Preferred Concept Plan



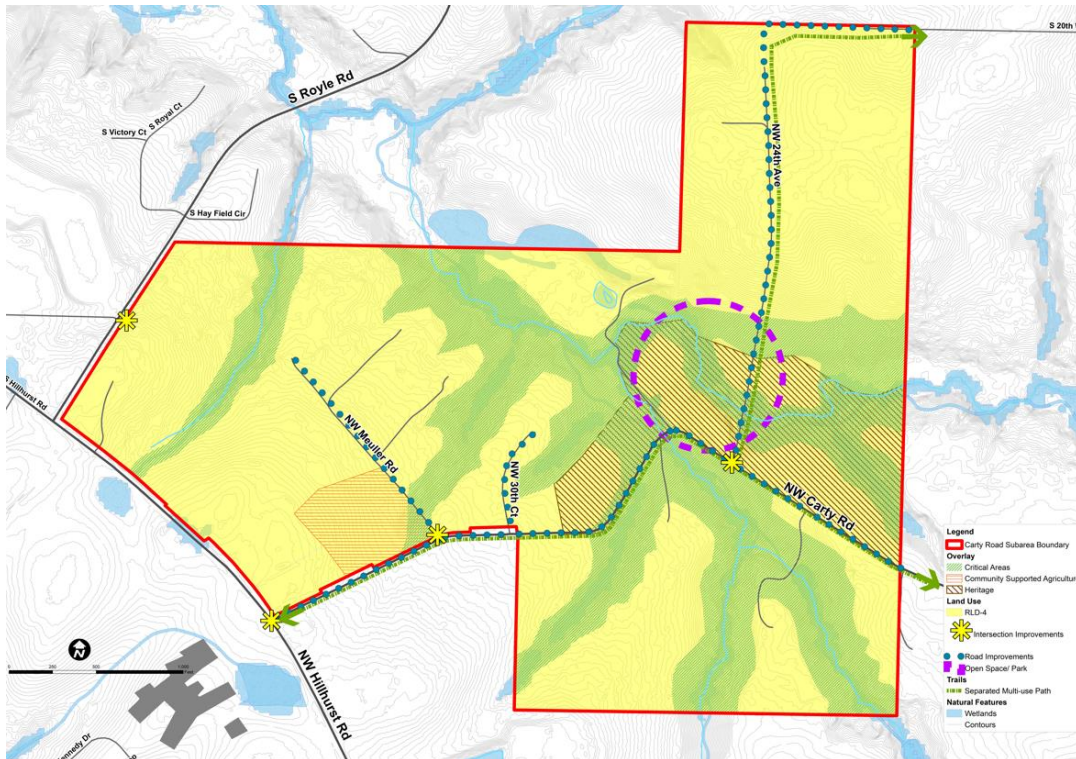
On March 12, 2020, staff presented the outreach findings, existing conditions analysis, and draft recommendations to Council as a project update. Following the two PAC meetings, open house, and Council presentation in 2020, staff and the consultant team built a final subarea plan document around the vision, guiding principles, and preferred concept plan. The subarea plan also included an existing conditions analysis, recommended design guidelines, and an implementation plan. This subarea plan would have gone to Planning Commission for a public hearing and recommendation to City Council in 2020, however, COVID-19 put the planning process on hold. With no option for in-person meetings, a number of stakeholders would not have been able to participate in hearings.

In 2022, staff was able to re-start the subarea planning process upon the easing of COVID restrictions. Staff presented recaps of the work already completed to Planning Commission and City Council, and re-engaged stakeholders for a third PAC meeting. The purpose of the third PAC meeting was to include any property owners who did not participate in 2020 but were interested in getting involved, and to review the 2020 plan to identify any components that needed to be updated after a two-year pause. A summary of the third PAC meeting is included in Appendix A of the attached subarea plan.

The third PAC meeting began with a recap of work already completed with stakeholders in 2020. Then, the consultants and staff guided a conversation about which components of the 2020 plan, if any, stakeholders would change. No changes were suggested for the vision or guiding principles. However, the group expressed concerns about whether and how the vision and guiding principles would be implemented. The key concerns related to the location and safety of trails, whether the City would be taking land to widen Carty Road and build trails, safety on Carty Road, whether the RLD-4 zoning and/or increased setbacks would limit development opportunities, and general questions about the subarea planning and annexation processes.

Based on the concerns about trails, staff updated the preferred concept plan to show multimodal paths alongside streets, and indicate that the trail lines on the plan represent potential corridors providing connectivity through the area, not exact locations. Based on majority support of large lots, staff kept all RLD-4 zoning on the preferred concept plan. Based on the concerns about setbacks, staff revised the design guidelines for setbacks, recommending minimum setbacks greater than typical RLD-4 setbacks rather than specific distances. Analysis will be required during the code writing phase of implementation to determine exact appropriate setbacks.

Figure 4. 2022 Preferred Concept Plan



In addressing process questions during the third PAC meeting, staff and the consultant reiterated that the subarea plan is high-level. It is a guiding document for future development if and when property owners in the area choose to annex into the city and then, at any point after annexation, decide to develop. The subarea plan protects property owners who do not want to see neighboring properties develop under the basic low-density residential standards used elsewhere in the city. If the plan is adopted, staff will be required to write code standards for development in the subarea, in order to implement the vision, guiding principles, and recommended design guidelines in the plan. Development standards, including those for road and trail improvements, do not get applied unless a property develops.

If a property owner does not petition for annexation, the subarea plan does not apply to their property. If a property owner petitions for annexation and is annexed, then the subarea plan will apply to their property and the RLD-4 zoning identified in the subarea plan will be placed on their property upon annexation. If the owner of an annexed property decides to develop or sell to a developer, then the Carty Road Subarea development standards, to be written and codified based on the vision, guiding principles, and recommended design guidelines in the subarea plan following adoption, will apply. Staff will review

development applications with respect to the high-level subarea plan and the detailed Carty Road Subarea development standards.

### **2022 Plan Structure**

The proposed Carty Road subarea plan first analyzes existing environmental, infrastructure, land use, and property valuation conditions in the area.

The main section of the plan is devoted to conceptual planning. It includes the preferred concept plan referenced above, an analysis of land use capacity and vehicle trip generation, and recommended design guidelines.

Subarea-wide guidelines include allowing agricultural uses, providing generous minimum landscape buffers and setbacks, varying lot sizes, and protecting view sheds. Guidelines for natural areas include preserving existing tree cover and limiting critical area buffer width averaging. The community-supported agriculture overlay will have guidelines to encourage limited commercial uses that support agricultural products, and the heritage overlay will have guidelines to preserve historic properties and structures. Right-of-way design guidelines appear in proposed cross-sections for Carty Road and side streets.

The final section of the plan considers implementation. The conceptual planning components are high-level recommendations and must be implemented through development and design standards in the Ridgefield Development Code (RDC) and Ridgefield Engineering Standards. Following subarea plan adoption, staff will be tasked with updating the RDC to have code requirements in place that implement the subarea vision and guiding principles when future development occurs. The implementation section of the plan identifies specific chapters and sections of the RDC to be amended in order to codify the zoning and design guidelines. This portion of the plan also identifies longer term steps in implementation, such as updating the city's zoning map if and when properties in the subarea annex, expanding water and sewer service, completing roadway improvements in conjunction with development proposals, and refining trail alignments in conjunction with future development proposals.

### **MOTION AND NEXT STEPS**

Staff requests the Planning Commission forward a recommendation for the proposed Carty Road Subarea Plan to City Council.

City Council will hold a public hearing on the subarea plan on June 23, 2022, followed by a second reading and vote on adoption on July 14, 2022. Adoption of the subarea plan would adopt the high-level vision, guiding principles, and recommended land use and design guidelines. Staff would then be directed to write development code standards implementing the vision, guiding principles, and recommended guidelines.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A: Carty Road Subarea Plan Final Report and Appendices