



Memorandum

Date: February 18, 2020

Subject: Carty Road Subarea Plan
Project Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1 – Visioning and
Guiding Principles

From: Sam Rubin and Nicole McDermott

To: Claire Lust, Ridgefield Planner

Route To: Project Advisory Committee, (sign-in sheet attached)

WELCOME AND PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The first meeting of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was held on January 30, 2020 at the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Center. Attendance included PAC members (sign-in sheet is attached) composed of Carty Road project area property owners and stakeholders, consultant team members from WSP, Claire Lust (Planner, City of Ridgefield), and Louisa Garbo (Community Development Director, City of Ridgefield). Claire welcomed the group and noted the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate a collective community vision and gather input for guiding principles to be used in developing the Carty Road subarea plan. After a round of self-introductions, Claire turned it over to Don Hardy, WSP, to provide a project overview.

Don provided an overview of the project's milestones and timeline, noting that the project work began with WSP preparing an existing conditions memorandum and conducting stakeholder interviews in December 2019 and January 2020. A draft plan is expected in April 2020, followed by public hearings, and final adoption of the plan is expected in May 2020. The PAC will meet one more time during the process in order to review the draft concept plans, vision, and guiding principles prior to adoption by the City.

Following an overview of the timeline and project steps, Don introduced Nicole McDermott and Sam Rubin to review the existing conditions of the subarea, initial feedback through stakeholder interviews, and describe the visioning process planned for the remainder of the meeting. The WSP team led a discussion with property owners and stakeholders at the meeting, discussing what made the Carty Road area special and recording initial visions and ideas for the future of Carty Road.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUBAREA VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Nicole shared an overview of the existing conditions of the Carty Road subarea boundaries and reminded attendees that the purpose of the meeting was to get initial ideas for a draft vision and guiding principles for the area. The discussion started with each of the attendees sharing what they thought was unique about the Carty Road area and their experience there. The following sections summarize common themes expressed by the PAC: Overall, the committee members valued the rural character and agricultural history of the area, specifically the abundance of wildlife, trees, and privacy. The committee also expressed the sentiment that property owners should be able to manage their property as they desired while sharing the belief that development should be contextual to the area and its history (agricultural uses and residences on large lots).

The committee sees the Carty Road area as a place that preserves the natural areas and protects designated critical areas to the highest standard in order to maintain the presence of wildlife and connection to the natural landscape. Landscaping requirements and required tree plantings for future development is seen as one tool to ensure the natural aesthetic of the area. The committee strongly focused on having less density and a different style of development than recent nearby residential development. The committee envisions a safer transportation system that provides greater access for emergency vehicles, while also providing for safe options for pedestrians and cyclists.

While discussing the group's vision for the community, Nicole solicited committee feedback on guiding principles for the subarea plan. The discussion is organized into four categories: land use, environmental, transportation, and parks and trails.

Land Use: There was general consensus that the Carty Road area is unique and one of the last places in Ridgefield that continues to have a rural and agricultural feel. The main environmental corridor that bisects the study area should be protected and development density should fan out and increase the further it is removed from that corridor. Low density residential development should be the predominant land use in the area. Discussions included:

- Maintaining large lots (1- to 2.5-acre minimums) through zoning (the Wishing Wells subdivision, adjacent northwest of the project area, was given as a positive example).
- Allowing multiple residences on 5-acre parcels in order to facilitate creating residences for family members
- Creating a community gathering place (communal farmers' market venue).
- Providing reasonable City services as development occurs.
- Retaining agricultural uses and minimizing conflict between other adjacent land uses.
- Creating design standards and landscaping requirements to ensure contextual development and retain privacy.

Environmental: Gee Creek and the surrounding wildlife corridor includes significant critical areas, and future development must protect natural features.

- Protect natural landscapes and regulated buffers in the area.

- Preserve rural feel by preserving trees.
- Use design standards and landscaping requirements to ensure the area maintains the feeling of being rural.
- Promote preservation of trees and wildlife
- Locate lower density development closer to critical areas.
- Minimize the extent to which critical areas can be reduced to accommodate development and limit or prohibit the use of off-site mitigation.

Transportation: Overall, the committee focused on making the existing transportation network safer, but acknowledged that Carty Road traffic has steadily increased as surrounding development has occurred.

- Carty Road has existing limitations on future improvements (right of way, topography, vegetation)
- Need to improve connectivity in the northeast.
- Need safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Potentially separated facilities from Carty Road to make it safer to drive.
- Need to improve access for emergency vehicles and evacuation routes.

Parks and Trails: The City does not have any planned trail or greenway expansions on their six-year capital facilities plan, but the Ridgefield Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan has identified the Gee Creek area as a potential trail corridor. PAC members were interested in preserving the existing park-like qualities of the subarea over designating new locations for parks. Committee members expressed some concern regarding safety with trail expansion into the subarea.

- Design safe trails (location, lighting, and access).
- Locate trails in areas that reduce private property encroachment

Nicole concluded the discussion on guiding principles and stated that the subarea planning process is separate from any future potential annexation process, but the subarea plan would be a guiding document regardless. The subarea planning process will allow the people most impacted as owners to help shape the future of this distinctive neighborhood. Nicole then asked Claire to share the next steps in the process.

NEXT STEPS

WSP will use input from the group to develop a draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, as well as a Subarea Concept Plan. The drafts will be sent to the PAC before the next meeting, and input on the draft vision and guiding principles via email will be requested. WSP will use the vision and principles to develop and present the draft Subarea Concept Plan (showing natural areas, new and improved roads and pathways, and general land use densities) at the next PAC meeting (planned for early March).

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In closing, the group was told they would be contacted regarding the scheduling of the next PAC meeting.

SGR:llt

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