

Response, draft OCP, June 12, 2022

“It’s simple: people will walk if we create places and spaces where they want to walk. Unlike standalone promotional campaigns, improved walkability generates lasting increases in walking rates. It transforms behaviour.”

Draft 2016 Canadian National Action Strategy for Walking

This is a walker’s perspective of downtown Whitehorse as a walkable northern wilderness city. I was looking at downtown when the very-short-timeline draft OCP came out. It’s important that the vision of the OCP reflects the fundamental importance of downtown walkability.

Mostly I’m going to focus on downtown as that is the part of the city where big things need to happen. We know that for health, social, environmental and economic reasons, we must have both a denser downtown with walkable, residential neighbourhoods and a vibrant business core.

At any time, there’s usually an active city plan involving downtown; most view walkers as pedestrians. As WhitehorseWalks, I often participate in these plans, usually representing a broader viewpoint of walkers, not just as pedestrians.

As a non-bureaucrat, I’m easily fuzzy on the various formal aspects of an OCP — vision, goal, principles, policy, steps — and my ability to make my submission conform is limited by other project timing.

My ideas are fundamental and pervasive but they particularly should be referenced in OCP sections on Community Well-being, Protection of the Environment, and Transportation and Mobility. Walkability suggestions fit with several of the stated goals and policies and these should be more explicit and embedded, not just as an implementation idea down the road.

Peter Long, June 12, 2022, Whitehorsewalks.com,
Yukon Director, National Hiking Trail of Canada

PS: I reference walking as it’s the most common mode of transportation; often we share the same space with bicyclists, however there’s many bike groups to promote their views.

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Draft OCP: I read the draft OCP and see many ideas that promote a sustainable modern downtown. Here's a few...

- Accessibility: Giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility holds a broad meaning and refers to how each person's characteristics, abilities, and preferences are considered.
- ...livable, attractive, and healthy place
- The community's ongoing connection to the Yukon River and the land is acknowledged and supported.
- Development that enhances opportunities to enjoy Whitehorse's natural areas, including trails or other infrastructure, will be encouraged.
- ...will explore opportunities to enhance winter experiences
- Year-round active transportation
- Neighbourhoods are designed to support the use of active transportation and transit, and provide basic needs for residents, minimizing the need for personal vehicles.
- World-class access, sustainable city
- ...leveraging natural and cultural resources as strategic assets, and attracting visitors and residents by promoting Whitehorse as the best place to live, work and play.
- Reduce urban sprawl
- Initiatives that reduce anticipated harms to the community caused by the impacts of climate change will be pursued.
- ...thoughtfully consider how new growth can contribute positively to the community with minimal impacts to established neighbourhoods, the Downtown, and the environment
- The Downtown is a thriving area, recognized as the heart of the community.
- ...increase the number of people in the Downtown year-round
- The Downtown will be designed as a welcoming and comfortable area for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities with public space improvements reflecting its role as the heart of the community
- Intensification Development is located on vacant or underutilized sites within existing development areas or neighbourhoods.
- ...increase demand on local facilities which may require upgrades or expansions to accommodate new residents.

A true downtown: With the new Mixed Use: Downtown Core, this draft OCP lost the difference between a downtown with different neighbourhoods, such as an industrial north end and a core area of Main and surrounding streets, losing the ability to focus on a vibrant downtown, a strong downtown business core.

Denser by building high: I strongly disagree. Let's live with present limits. The OCP should instead pursue densifying downtown by encouraging intensification development, pursuing investment on underutilized downtown properties, so we can build a downtown with character. What levers can be used on property owners? Taxes? Maintenance? Safety?

Dark skies, light pollution: Downtown south shows how dark skies can be lost.

YG parking lots, FH Collins sports field, unshielded City traffic lights, rooftop advertising — generally there can be no stars visible in parts of downtown! The OCP should be more useful in having a bylaw or some means residents can use to stop new light polluters and get older situations fixed.

Walkability

Walking is a basic need. It's free and part of a healthy lifestyle.

The word walkability encompasses accessibility, being an equitable age-friendly community. It implies nearby places to walk to, enticing surroundings, community feel, people centered, friendly, small shops, a vibrant business scene, music, arts, entertainment, a sense of opportunity, of more things to do.

Walkability looks at downtown pedestrian concepts of needing better, safer street crossings, and missing sidewalks, and icy, snow-covered sidewalks, and winter use of paved paths. Empty storefronts, abandoned-feeling rundown buildings, fenced off empty lots do not signal walkability.

For Whitehorse, walkability in a northern-wilderness-city-sense also means easy access to our natural spaces, forests, rivers and so on. Recreational trail walking in nature will result in city residents who would more likely think of active transportation, resulting in less vehicle dependency.

As a wilderness city, Whitehorse combines abundant nature, clean air, with both urban street walking and wilderness/greenspace/trail walking, and a creative cultural society.

The OCP vision and plan principles should reference walkability and/or have specific reference to walkability in goals and to the recommended actions in policies.

A vision should be of having a downtown as an even more desirable place to live, where one doesn't need to drive a vehicle for recreational adventures! A walkable downtown can offer residents a strong work-life balance, and will also appeal to visitors. A vibrant downtown benefits businesses, the arts; a strong downtown benefits all city residents.

Downtown walking as a pedestrian

The OCP talks of 'Snow and ice hazards are addressed so the community can enjoy reasonable mobility under normal winter weather conditions.' What about a parent with a stroller and a toddler, a senior with a cane, a person in a wheelchair? They should just stay home for the months of non-normal winter?

As a pedestrian there's a lot to understand and to deal with. A few groups are coming together to try to address winter sidewalk clearing. There are broad city-wide aspects to this problem but it is a very acute issue downtown.

This is complicated when the OCP says "The City is committed to **effective** winter maintenance operations of the roadway network **including snow and ice control.**" There needs to be a fair distribution of city resources, better than the present vehicle-focussed situation.

Pedestrian plan or walking plan: There's an OCP focus on pedestrians and on recreational spaces, facilities. It talks about trails but doesn't follow through on easy access to them for recreational walking. The draft OCP refers to a Pedestrian Plan (purposeful, active transportation); it should be looking at a broader walking plan (including access to recreational trails).

Sidewalks: Walkability would have walking as a convenient, appealing choice—four season walking for all. There needs to be a plan to move forward on this.

- How many kilometres of sidewalks does downtown have and what proportion are in good, fair, or poor condition?
- How many downtown blocks have no sidewalks, or only one? What is the plan to upgrade to having more sidewalks, at least on major downtown streets?
- How many tickets did Bylaw Enforcement issue for uncleared sidewalks in the downtown last winter?
- Bylaw enforcement is a complaint-driven process. Must we turn neighbours into tattletales? We need a real plan to get homes, businesses, governments to clear their sidewalks. Or, would it be better if this was a City service like clearing roads?

A downtown pedestrian plan would deal with:

- vehicles running lights, aggressive crosswalk behaviour, speed
- road crossings, crosswalks, traffic lights
- very slippery crosswalk paint used by the City
- berms that result from sidewalk or road clearing that block handicap parking, bus stops, sidewalk access at intersections
- crosswalks can be on one corner, sometimes both corners
- part of 2nd with no crosswalks make crossing at an unmarked corner feel illegal (Hawkins to Lowe and Black to Ogilvie)
- where to walk if no sidewalk, but parked cars, or there's angle parking with no sidewalk
- steep driveway and lane letdowns — sudden and icy in winter
- cracks, crevices and steep edges on paved trails
- snow thaws making long-lasting, large icy puddles where bad drainage
- street signs on sidewalks with signs at head height mean inadvertently walking into sharp metal edges
- tendency that major trails be paved. Pavement is hard on feet for some walkers who end up walking on the grassy edge if it exists. Also pavement gets very icy at times. We've not used crushed gravel paths. We should try a section and see if crushed gravel gives better all-season results.
- paved paths, that while designated shared use, non-motorized, sometimes feel like bike expressways. It will get worse as eBikes and eScooters become more popular. The draft OCP suggests using the railway for trails but better for Millennium and Waterfront walkability would using railway as the bike expressway downtown.

Downtown walking for recreation

The OCP talks of the expansion of our trail network and that certainly is true. There's many walking destinations from downtown: Chadburn Lake Park, Airport Perimeter Trail, Yukon River Trail, the Hospital area.

Trails are our entry into nature. The goal is we should be able to walk to use them! Downtown needs much better access to these trails, to nature. This means more than a view across the river or trees on a cliff, it also means a trail network that allows walking in these destinations!

Many, locals and visitors alike, are somewhat fearful about wilderness — in particular, wildlife (bears!) and getting lost. Having well built, well signed, well mapped, attractive trails will encourage more people to be more active.

Design and maintenance of the downtown trail network is a problem without a voice for walkers.

Downtown trail planning: There's been both ATV and motorized task forces, a Bike Network Plan, a continually updated Transportation Plan and even a Parking Plan.

Through area-wide trail task forces, the City developed Official Trail Maps for Yukon River South, Yukon River East, Porter Creek/Takhini/Whistle Bend/Range Point, Crestview, Yukon River North and Above-the-airport areas.

I believe downtown wasn't an official member of any of these stakeholder committees, so wasn't able to bring a downtown perspective on its recreational walking needs. Nor were most of these task forces very interested in trails closer to downtown. Downtown needs a downtown Trail Task Force with scope of responsibility that covers the areas that downtown recreational walkers use.

Walking tourism

Many people travel to places where they can walk. There are international long distance trail organizations with members who would love to come here and do longer hikes.

Whitehorse is a major Yukon destination, and as downtown is where most tourists will visit and maybe stay, we need to look at what they want to do. Studies say they want nature-based experiences and want to have First Nation experiences. This should hold some weight as we plan for what we want a walkable northern wilderness downtown to look like.

Trails such as Grey Mountain's Dream Trail encourage locals to spend time in this nature-based gym. As a stay-another-day visitor concept, trails can make us a walking destination. Many trails are even usable in winter with fat tire bike trail packing making almost sidewalk conditions through the forest.

The draft OCP says 'Whitehorse has become an eco-adventure destination renowned for its access to wilderness'. Our trails should have a focus on shared sustainable use.

Transportation

Continually we hear that we need bigger roads to downtown, 4 lanes, and more, better parking.

The scary thing planners should be thinking of is the persistent streams of often single occupancy vehicles coming downtown, some wanting to get through and out (with 4th and 2nd as highways), while others are wanting cheap/free parking preferably very close to their destinations.

The OCP should have the Transportation Plan look at how to NOT make all roads coming downtown four lane.

We need better bus service. A Park 'n Ride concept should be considered. Downtown needs a free electric bus, possibly on an active transportation loop using 3rd and 5th.

Community empowerment

The draft OCP talks about this concept in terms of climate change. Improving walkability, improving trail walking are very much addressing climate change.

Essentially, how do walkers get things done? As showed in the above *Downtown walking as pedestrians* section, snow and ice clearing for other than vehicles is a example of walkers having no clout.

Voice for walkers

There's no walking group with a broad political mandate. There isn't actually an obvious walking group — we're shoppers, family out for a walk in the park, walking around the block to a friend's house, going for a hike, kids walking to school, walking to work, pushing a stroller, a meandering walker, someone in their wheelchair, walking a toddler, bird watching, wandering around the neighbourhood, going from the car into a store, going for a medical appointment — the only constraint is our imagination.

Community trail work is presently only allowed by the Contagious Mountain Bike Group or the Klondike Snowmobile Association. There's no adopt-a-trail or adopt-an-area focus at this time. The City has lots of trails and few trail workers. Even getting small bits of trail work done can seem insurmountable.

- How do we get sections of trails repaired such as the Lower Canyon City trail at Miles Canyon?
- How do we get connector trails, or easier bypass trails built on trails like El Camino or at Magnusson parking area?

The problem is without a walking voice, opportunities and problems are left unaddressed. The next part of this document *Recreational walking opportunities* will look at some trail opportunities that require leadership, varying degrees of funding, of general guidance.

Concepts like a park-like environment with inviting connector trails and accessible trails and a healing forest at the hospital are an opportunity for the broader community, be it a service group or a sports group, to get involved. Likewise a pedestrian bridge from the downtown to the hospital will need funding beyond the City's ability. A Riverdale walkable corridor could be sponsored by the Riverdale Community Association. A museum could sponsor Hepburn Tramway repairs. A senior's group could help a school maintain a trail. The list is long.

Some areas of trails are the responsibility of Parks and Recreation, others are Engineering. Sports and Recreation gets a big share of City monies. Since walking is not a sport there's not obvious support there for walking needs. And within recreation, big budget items are facilities such as the Canada Games Centre, arenas, CGC programming, and playgrounds and parks. Paving trails also consumes a large amount of possible walking monies.

Considering the large number of trails and trail users, the OCP should look not only at empowering walking but also how to facilitate better funding initiatives, better technical support for walking, and for walking needs on trails.

City walkability representative

The City itself can't do everything but at a minimum, they should always be actively examining walking.

As Whitehorse Walks, I promote walking but hear that I'm only one person, or I should form a society. I counter that it's a City responsibility to look after walking. We don't have a Whitehorse Car Owners group or a Downtown Garbage group, yet roads are top priority and garbage is removed.

The OCP should recommend that a senior city person be assigned walking advocacy, examining all city processes, and be powerful enough to influence when walking can be harmed and when it can be improved.

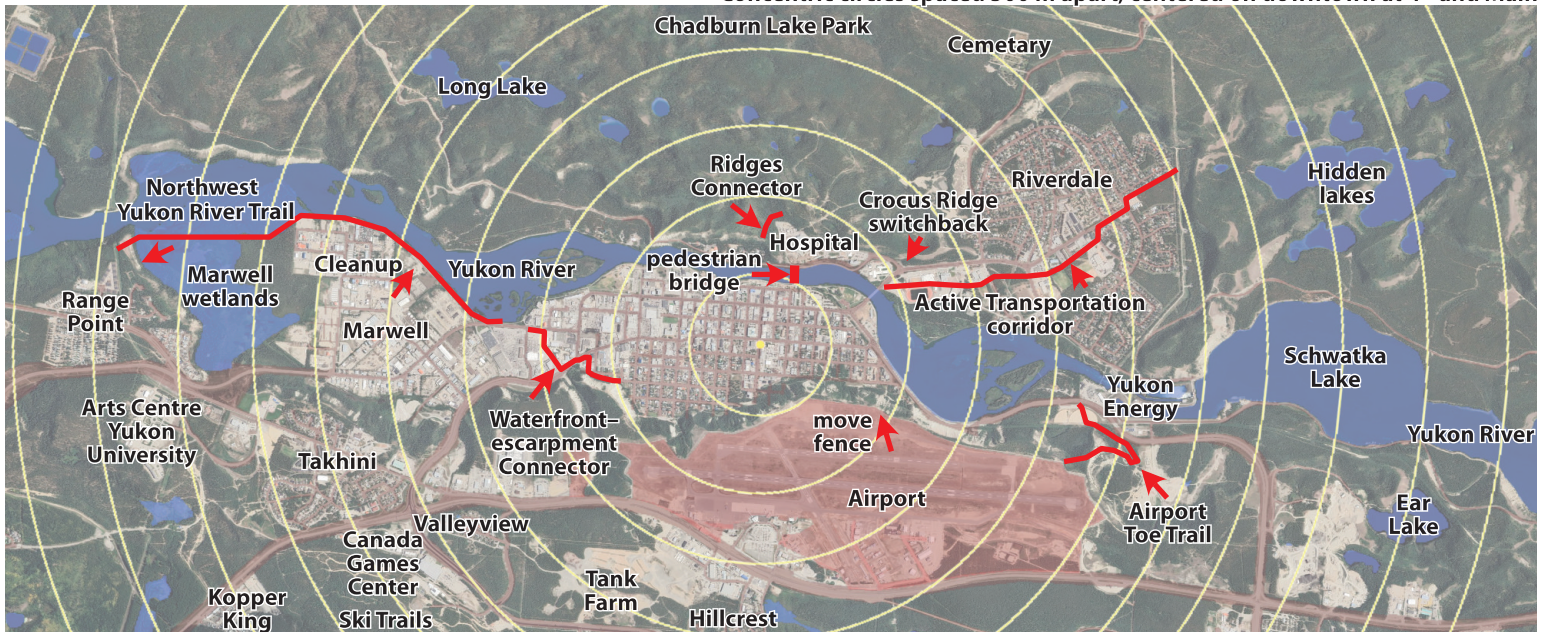
For instance, this person would be looking at Alaska Highway rebuilds and ensuring that the best walkable crossings happen, or that creative rights-of-way happen, or that the neighbourhood recreational walking needs are resolved as best as possible.

This person would work with anyone bringing walking issues forward, ensuring things such as trail problems or trail opportunities are addressed. They would work with downtown residents to address both pedestrian and recreational walking.

This is not uncommon in Canadian cities. For instance, Winnipeg builds on the pedestrian and cycling network in conjunction with road renewal and other construction projects. It dedicates funds annually to improve, upgrade and expand upon the pedestrian and cycling network. The City of Winnipeg's Public Works Department recommends an annual list of projects in the Pedestrian and Cycling Action Plan.

In 2009, Toronto City Council adopted the Toronto Walking Strategy which aims to build a physical and cultural environment that supports and encourages walking — with vibrant streets, parks, public spaces and neighbourhoods where people will choose to walk more often. By envisioning a city where high-quality walking environments are seamlessly integrated with public transit, cycling and other sustainable modes of travel, the strategy sets out a plan that will produce tangible environmental, health and social benefits for residents and visitors to Toronto.

As a small northern wilderness city, Whitehorse's needs are more complex, yet our goals are similar. Since none of the governments here in Whitehorse have a specific walking voice, and their activities align with health, nature and walkability, they should get together and look at how something of community walking value could be jointly created.



Recreational walking opportunities

Here's a selection of walking ideas that a tail plan with a focus on walking would consider. Some of these of such significance, such as a new pedestrian bridge, that they are included in the draft OCP and other recent City plans, (Bike Network Plan and Downtown Plan.)

Pedestrian bridge to hospital setting

Chadburn Lake Regional Park is right across the river from downtown. Most downtown residents accessing the park for recreation use the Robert Campbell Bridge. Many drive and park in hospital or Dept of Ed parking lots, at Long Lake, or spots on the Grey Mountain Road.

Similar in concept to the Rotary Centennial Bridge, this bridge will completely change downtown. It will be a strong incentive for people to walk over to Chadburn Lake Park and its many trails. It will signal that building denser can happen with a recreational focus on wilderness and on nature. Living downtown won't just be mostly recreational walking on streets, paved paths and sidewalks.

A pedestrian bridge near the VRC will draw residents through the Downtown Core. Downtown business will gain from increased vitality such as after-supper hiking, after-hiking suppers, live music. Hospital folk can patronize downtown, while others can walk across to the hospital for visits.

Complementing a bridge, right across the river from downtown, the area around Whitehorse General Hospital is well placed to be a special setting. Starting at the front door, a set of trails could offer recreation and healing for staff and visitors, with scenic well-marked trails, varying from easy to hard, short to long, coffee-break and lunch-use lengths. Some would be accessible, with crushed gravel. A new connector trail right behind the hospital linking Long Lake and Hospital ridges will benefit everyone using this area, allowing easy crossing without descending to the parking lot.

The draft OCP talks of culture, of reconciliation. There is much good that could happen around this new pedestrian bridge. A strong First Nations focus both with the bridge, and particularly, in a landscaped hospital setting, such as a healing forest.

By increasing the use of Chadburn Lake Park, the bridge will offer opportunities for a variety of land-based work — such as in trail maintenance, guiding, and interpretation of glaciation, what it was like as ice sheets melted, the big lakes drained and the first people settled in the newly emerging lands.

Yukon River Trail, traditional First Nations routes

A long linear trail through the city would create many loop trail possibilities. On the west side of the river, the trail goes in and out of development; on the east side, there's Riverdale and the regional Chadburn Lake Park in the south, and in the north, except for a few clusters of residences and infrastructure such as water treatment, powerlines and roads, the land will remain more natural until the City expands here.

Cities built beside rivers have often evolved aspects of their cultural identity around them. Pedestrian bridges and riverside walkways help make walkable cities. Whitehorse has grown over the years from a little town focused on the riverboats going to Dawson, to today's subdivisions strung out along the river.

But long before that, First Nations people used trails on both sides of the river between Laberge and Marsh lakes. Kwanlin Dün published a community booklet *Back to the River*. Still today we walk on pieces of these old routes. Looking to the future, to when the City grows into the north east past Long Lake, the Yukon River Trail should be planned for both sides.

The draft OCP says “*The Yukon River, its Riparian Setback Area, and shoreline park and/ or natural space will be protected and enhanced through the inclusion of interconnected parks, trails, and development setbacks.*” The edge of the Yukon River can be escarpments, wetlands and the vision of the trail would be to stay connected around obstacles.

For the purpose of this overview, I've mostly addressed the south west part of a Yukon River Trail; going north past Marwell,

Range Point and Whistle Bend will be extremely important as these places continue to fill.

Millennium Trail: Sections of the Millennium Trail will be lost as the river continues to erode the banks. The draft OCP should highlight the importance of protecting the banks and its delightful dirt path. These dirt paths, one the Macauley Tramway, show that some people like a more natural soft footing and intimate atmosphere. A small bridge between the Veale and Steele benches would facilitate this and complement the new overflow outfall bridge being built.

Winter use requires a balance between gritting and clearing. The draft OCP has not placed high importance on winter use and maintenance. Drainage should be built at places. When snow melts, large icy pools of water form that can last for days, even weeks. Rather than addressing recurring drainage problems, last winter the City closed a whole section of trail in Robert Service Campground; this then caused community loss of the Bert Law Park loop trail. The City needs to rebuild the problematic section of trail or build a boardwalk over the bad sections.

A crushed gravel path around Bert Law Park would provide a delightful riverine outing for people wanting an accessible nature trail. Wolf Creek Campground shows that a crushed gravel trail works. Also, allow the ability to park at Robert Service Campground in winter.

West side of the river, going south from Schwatka Lake: To access Schwatka Lake from Robert Service Campground, people have to walk in the ditch along the edge of Robert Service Way, past the Yukon Energy operations building. This should be made safer and more inviting.

The south end of the Yukon Energy complex could easily have a bypass connector trail through the woods opposite the LNG plant to give access to the trail network going to Miles Canyon, bypassing a large section of road walking.

Alternately, and a route that could be quite popular, would be a Schwatka Lake promenade that would follow the edge of the Miles Canyon Road. It should, of course, be an accessible path, perhaps crushed gravel instead of pavement. The draft OCP should be more encouraging about walking beside the lake.

Where the Miles Canyon Road leaves the lake and goes up the hill beside the old Grant cabin, a better way over this hill (Goat Trail hill) needs to be made. The trail runners have a bypass trail in the woods but it's not great for those who need a flatter route. People are sometimes seen walking on the roadway, dodging motorhomes and busses. Incorporating the existing Hepburn Tramway in the woods would be a good start.

At the top of Goat Trail hill, the Yukon River trail can follow the Hepburn Tramway past Miles Canyon all the way to the American Laundry, with only a few pieces of trail to rebuild.

From the American Laundry, various trails take one to below the escarpment above Macrae Creek. So also as the city was able to make the great Copper Ridge Connector Trail, we need one here. This would essentially connect the Yukon River Trail from downtown past Spruce Hill to the city limits.

Airport Perimeter trail, a well-loved downtown trail

Some of our most accessible, lovely views of downtown, Grey Mountain and the river are just a short climb up the airport escarpment. The perimeter trail is often used by many city residents, accessing it from downtown and both ends of the airport along the highway.

The escarpment trail is a critical recreational trail, a popular, easy walk with incredible views. Most of the 2022 slides should not affect the ability of people to safely continue to use the perimeter trail.

Moving the airport fence inland at necessary spots along the eastern side of the perimeter trail (2021 issue where the city closed the trail above Drury Street) won't bring it appreciably closer to runways than the current situation. Plastic fencing has been used in the past to get around antenna issues.

The draft OCP talks about accommodating airport needs. It should also recommend that the City work with the airport so both can be good corporate neighbours with this long-existing airport trail. Hopefully, dialog happens and residents succeed in getting the airport fence moved.

Airport Toe Trail, southern descent: Getting down from the escarpment is a missing piece that will make walking more attractive for downtown and Riverdale residents. In the past the hill behind the ball diamonds on Robert Service Way has been used to get down, but even better, will be to build a descent trail in the Airport Toe area by the new dirt bike track. A well-thought-out trail can come off the hill, loop back under the powerlines towards the dam, go through the woods behind the ball diamonds and then cross over to the campground, the Millennium Trail and the Rotary Centennial Bridge.

Robert Campbell Bridge — bottleneck or gateway?

The bridge area can host a traffic jam when people access schools or drive downtown at rush hours. At times walking can be very noisy, unappealing, and in winter it can be dangerously icy. This is downtown's gateway to Chadburn Lake Park.

Crocus Ridge switchback: Access to the Crocus Ridge trails in the winter is a badly needed piece of infrastructure for downtown and Riverdale. The present state encourages people to drive to get to the Hospital – Long Lake – Magnusson Trails.

Last summer I was told by City recreation that the switchback opposite the Department of Ed building would be fixed to allow winter use. The problem is the sidehill trail cut into the hill is too narrow and with erosion, the trail fills with snow, making the lower parts unusable. Schools occasionally use the woods above the switchback. As a community service, possibly an outdoor ed program at one of the high schools could take on the job of keeping the switchback usable.

Winter sidewalk clearing: The sidewalks on the bridge can be very icy while at the same time, the vehicle road surface is bare pavement. Occasionally there's sand spreading, but with sparse coverage. Yet these sidewalks are used by school kids, active transportation, people walking the Millennium Trail — they can get quite slippery.

Lower Escarpment to Waterfront connection

2nd by 4th or Ogilvie are jarring interruptions to existing connection routes. There are many residences on the north end of the waterfront with still more buildings to come. Residents face a very unappealing walk if they want to walk over to the Lower Escarpment Trail.

Connecting the lower Escarpment Trail to the Waterfront Trail is an important and fairly straightforward step in improving downtown recreational walking for this major paved trail loop.

A better route could be to come behind the Downtown Urban Gardens, then follow the alley behind Builder's Supplyland and cross 4th at the crosswalk. The route would also use the crosswalk at Quartz and Chilkoot Way to connect to the Waterfront Trail.

Spook Creek connector: This part is key. A small linear parkette could follow the ditch/creek behind the business properties. This would be an asset to these businesses, complementing existing landscaping.

Active transportation corridor across Riverdale

There's always been a desire to have more active transportation between Riverdale and downtown.

An easy way to accomplish this would be having a major green transportation corridor from the Robert Campbell Bridge to the foot of Peewee Hill. Green spaces already exist for most of this. A crushed gravel trail with low-level lighting and priority crosswalks would go a long way to encouraging more walking, biking, kick sledding. It would add walking options for downtown residents. This pathway would go by every school in Riverdale, an action recommended in the draft OCP.

Alaska Highway 1, walkability 0

"Where can I cross the road?" Highway's answer: "Pedestrian crossings will be provided at signalized intersections."

People from both the above-the-airport and the coming South Growth Area and Tank Farm neighbourhoods will need to come downtown. There will likely be at least 20,000 people in this area one day. Downtown people will want to visit them. They all will need to cross the highway. Either the governments involved here band together to make this attractive for active transportation, or downtown will have all these people driving, many in single occupancy vehicles, and looking for a place to park.

An underpass at the north end of the airport would show a vision of the importance of recreation and active transportation.

City gateways should be much more than landscaped features. They should have very strong active transportation routes to downtown. In particular, the south end of the airport needs a plan that works for recreation and active transportation. It should connect to the Airport Perimeter Trail.

Other OCP considerations

Slope: The OCP should talk about the height of an escarpment, or very steep escarpments. This years landslides show all slopes are not the same. Often the space at the top of the escarpment where a trail can be compromised as edges crumble, or trees fall pulling down edges.

Zoning: As part of choosing to have a walkable community, the OCP should call for zoning to reserve land for trails. Look at the Yukon River Trail, for example. There are lots of spots interfering with a river trail. The OCP should ensure that zoning recognizes future trail needs and community desires and protects room for a trail **all** along the river.

McIntyre Creek: Good news keeping this major park green. However, taking away the Whistle Bend greenspace in return ignores the already greenspace strapped Whistle Bend. The OCP should drop that requirement.

The draft OCP also wants to consider putting a transportation corridor through McIntyre Creek Park. It should not recommend building a new road to the Alaska Highway through the University/McIntyre Creek Park.

Why is this needed? It's a bad idea. Access to the north Alaska Highway could better go via Whistle Bend Way and Wann Road. Access to Alaska Highway South would be for airport, CGC, and the highway south which suggests that Range Road is a better connector. Access to go downtown would be better dealt with by the Mountainview-Marwell route.

North end Long Lake expansion: Yes, let's leave the east side of the river for our grandkids to plan.

Covid: The past two years show us the fragility of our community. Going forward, we need to try hard to ensure we have a vital downtown business community. Structures such as a pedestrian bridge would signal a belief in this vitality.

Also, walking outdoors in nature was one of the few social activities that residents were able to continue to do, even at the height of the pandemic.

Public rights-of-way: Planners are getting better at putting these public passages into early subdivision plans. When not done, neighbourhoods become impermeable — reaching even a close destination means a long walk around on streets and sidewalks. Some earlier Whitehorse subdivisions have situations like this.

Sometimes people decide they don't like the idea of people using a public trail by their property, and through various methods the passage becomes obscured. Over the years, even close neighbours don't know that these rights-of-way exist. In the past, planning has said they'd address this. These public rights-of-ways should have common signage at both ends so this neighbourhood walking network is known. We have an official trails map and a motorized map. We also need an official greenspaces and public-rights-of way map.