

After reading the Downtown Whitehorse and Marwell Report, June, 2017, and attending the June 6 day-long workshop I wanted to add in a few ideas that there was just no time to bring forward at the workshop.

I'll also append this PDF to http://www.whitehorsewalks.com/_walkingIdeas/DowntownMarwellWalking.html

Six of us have purchased land on Hawkins Street at Third Avenue with the intention of building a small condo there. We are imagining it filled with a community of like-minded individuals interested in aging in place.

I see newly accessible hikes, yoga, music and other cultural events available as a downtown resident. This makes this current round of downtown studies all the more important to me!

Downtown walking is mostly on paved trails, or requires walking on top of the airport escarpment. The closest wilderness greenspace with natural trails is the Hospital – Long Lake trail network via the Robert Campbell Bridge. For many, that means driving to the hospital area to go for a walk.

We should look at the wild success of the Black Street stairs, the Millennium Trail and Rotary Centennial Bridge and build on them.

Thanks to the team, both City and consultants. A special thanks to David for taking the time to come and see my community mapping and to talk with about the pivotal role economic recreational walking can play in the life of Downtown. I would be pleased to meet with team members in any mapping ideas you would like to see.

I was also very pleased to chat with Chris Sorg in the discussions. I think that the support of the business community is critical. Having Chris discussing the economic value in our under-utilized wilderness trail asset of the Hospital-Long Lake Trail system and a Yukon River Trail when thinking of a vision for Downtown, helps me be confident that my ideas on trails are, at heart, sound.

It also helps me in setting goals for whitehorseWalks.com, in particular the idea of choosing a number of good hikes starting and ending at the Visitor Reception Center and trying hard to get a good trail marking system in place for them.

Peter

“The years are flying past and we all waste so much time wondering if we dare to do this or that ... The thing is to leap, to try, to take a chance.”

Leonard Cohen

Downtown pedestrian bridge

- **Main St. – VRC to Hospital and trail network**
 - Putting bridge at north end of town will not help downtown — it will promote the big box end of town.
- **Spend for an iconic design**
 - Allow us to differentiate our downtown from most other places.
 - a strong tourism focus on our prime downtown asset: the wilderness trails right across the river
 - ... for visitors with free time downtown
 - ... for attracting conventions
 - ... the bridge, and trail network, will be a walking destination, bringing downtown businesses an audience for their services
 - ... Beckon downtown residents through Main Street area as they walk to the Hospital – Long Lake trails in the evening, weekends.
 - ... With our winter winds, crossing the bridge into the trails in the forest will be very appreciated.
- **Senior's benefit from Downtown pedestrian bridge**
 - as people retire, some move downtown with appeal of a simpler life, less driving, more walking.
 - ... my strongest regret so far is loss of walking in the forest. I'm thinking this may be a common regret.
 - Some loop trails our ElderActive walking group use can be modified to start from VRC, return to lunch, coffee downtown after hikes.
 - ... Tourism could tell seniors about our walks. Some would jump at the opportunity to connect with locals in that way and explore new terrain
 - ... With the safeguard of the group experience a trail that would have otherwise skipped (and tell other friends/family/tourists about it...)
- **Hospital destination for bridge**
 - Simplify the many hospital visits, currently done by car, for tests, visits with friends in hospital
 - Retirement means more hospital trips as either a patient or visitor.
 - Will offer options to Hospital staff and visitors, and specialists in residence to walk downtown for lunch, or for respite as people spend long days at bedside.

- **Leverages our community trail efforts**

- For example, Youth Achievement group is building a trail along the north end of Grey Mountain. For good walkers, this will be a great hike from downtown.

- **Volkssport Association**

- An international walking organization
- their current Yukon Permanent Trail is
 - ... <http://www.walks.ca/Prairie%20walks/PT283%20Whitehorse%2010K%20instructions%20and%20map.pdf>
- A permanent trail is > 10 km. We need to make them very well waymarked to international standards of some sort. i.e., works for multilingual walkers; people who might decide to just follow a trail on the spur of the moment.
- I'm developing a list of > 10 km loop trails, starting from the VRC, that could meet their needs once waymarked. This will be an obvious tourism asset, as well as a community asset. Many would be enhanced if we build a pedestrian bridge near VRC.
 - ... DRAFT doc: http://www.whitehorsewalks.com/_docs/2017/DT-walks%3E10k.pdf

Traditional territories

- **FN's must feel part of this area**

- are natural land, trail stewards
 - ... Could FN trail crews be part of stewardship?
 - ... Can a mentoring program be set up with city trail positions?
 - ... Work through college to build capacity.
- KDFN, 2003, part of land claim celebrations
 - ... [http://www.kwanlindun.com/images/uploads/Back%20to%20the%20River%20\(small\).pdf](http://www.kwanlindun.com/images/uploads/Back%20to%20the%20River%20(small).pdf)
- Marwell tarpit is an extension of Ta'an stewardship of old McIntyre Creek dump. Can we not ensure adequate funding.

What walking can bring to table

• *Tourism: Yukon Government*

- a lot about businesses, driving around communities, museums, outfitting/adventure; less about experiencing natural surroundings in your own free time
- Whitehorse portrayed as gateway to the Yukon... get in your car and leave!

• *Tourism: City of Whitehorse*

- Reality is many will not pay a lot of money for an afternoon walk. They are looking for free!
- walking is free, can be done any time of day, all season
- Whitehorse needs to focus on keeping visitors here. Think 'stay another day'
- Many tourists would happily spend days here walking trails, getting the odd ride to trailheads by taxi or bus. Think "Walkers are welcome"
- Think also of healthy vacation-seeking tourists
- Made in the Yukon also applies to trails, natural surroundings
- so many opportunities to get out of the city and into nature but then loop back for all the amenities on offer i.e., the core.

• *WhitehorseWalks.com*

- Yukon Walking Strategy
... http://www.whitehorsewalks.com/_docs/YukonWalkingStrategyOct2014.pdf
- Fostering Walking Tourism
... <http://www.whitehorsewalks.com/lookAtWalkingTourism.html>

• *Health (city has no health representative)*

- look at Walk Richmond
... <http://www.richmond.ca/parksrec/sports/walkrichmond.htm>
- people should want others to be healthy, work towards lower societal medical costs!
- walking is mostly noncompetitive. Most sports are competitive, challenges
- Paved trails hard on feet; need a towpath alongside.
- encouraging more walking, social engineering, changing behaviors
... ability and desire for longer walks
... more family walks, mixed groups, less screen time or at least control it
... Develop walkers by encouraging recreational walking to destinations, interesting walks
... getting people out of their cars, using buses, bikes,....

• *Education*

- develop local interpretation material, delivery vehicles like websites, apps, printed material, theatrical, musical,...
- Yukon College could offer a suite of trail-focussed courses: trail building, interpretation events, stewardship,

• *community opportunities*

- YCS-style group walks
- KDFN group walks to, at Marwell wetlands
- having a weekly walk as some communities in Greece, especially when we build pedestrian bridge
- A Whitehorse walking passport made of walks doable from downtown, walks at McIntyre Creek, Wolf Creek, ski trail area, ...
... reward: health, draw, charitable donation, school function, Old Fire Hall event pass....
- walking festival, based out of downtown

What's needed?

• *Waymarking*

– confidence marking; cold weather, bad eyes, map-reading challenged people, all need signs on trees

• *Adequate financing for trails.*

– city trail crew only 3 people so maintenance difficult; relies on clubs, patience.

– Walkers have no organization, no clout, no walking position in city processes

• *Yukon River Trail*

– use name as iconic

– push to stay as close to river as possible in short-term, moving past challenges over time (such as in Marwell)

... look at example of Yukon Energy who was a mover in the Millennium Trail and Rotary Centennial Bridge, donating time, money and even a section of waterfront land.

• *Airport Perimeter Trail*

– a Rogers Street staircase is too close to Black Street Stairs.

... While not bad to have them there, stairs are expensive, we're a small community and if only one can be built then look for better placement.

... South end of airport descends to give easy access to Rotary Centennial Bridge. Great for visitors and residents. It could easily be made more formal. Creates a very nice longer loop of Airport escarpment and Centennial Trail.

– Stairs are hard on knees; existing small switchback trail near Black Street should be supported, as much nicer than stairs

– Airport Perimeter trail is too fragile in places.

• *Long-Lake Hospital Trails 'ownership'*

– Stewardship by downtown residents can promote more use

... Riverdale can be focussed on Hidden Lakes and beyond

... Both Riverdale and Downtown can share Magnusson trails.

• *Connect library to waterfront*

– and fix their terrible parking lot

• *East - West connection using Spook Creek*

... this creates a green link allowing a long loop using waterfront trail and lower escarpment trail.

... allows advertising to Walmart campers that a nice experience lies a simple walk away.

... allows more eyes on businesses here, could easily be stewards of this little section of parkade.

• *Zoning downtown should address residential*

... CM1-, CM2-zoned areas need rules around overnight garbage pickup. Night after night pickup at different condos, businesses at different time is not suggestive of a nice place to live.

– work towards a neat place to live, work

– some aspect of encouraging better use of unused lands.

• *3rd Ave as gateway into back of Mall.*

– Open mall entrance to downtown

• *help fund Vimy senior housing land purchase*

... Then work to ensure they build a role model community-focused space. Back near escarpment?

• *vicious cycle: could be broken using incentives...*

... Land expensive; age in place needs elevator; requires more units; implies building a higher building; cheaper to use above-ground parking. Make it easier to build underground parking?

– Green building requires starting research from scratch for things like geothermal.

• *Rooftop development downtown optimistic because of wind.*

• *Parking*

– Land at south end of the airport could be set aside for parking. A small frequent shuttle bus could service it.

– Likewise at north end of downtown

- ***New city operations building***
 - trail access to encourage connection to downtown and Marwell without driving.
 - ... target both staff and visitor/residents
- ***Why the wealthy have been returning to city centers***
 - <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2015/11/why-the-wealthy-have-been-returning-to-the-city-center/416397/>
 - ... There's no single reason, of course, but a hatred of long commutes might be a big one.
 - Why do many of us live here? We love the outdoors. A focus on Downtown's wilderness and the pedestrian bridge to access it, will be a much more sustainable solution for growth than...
 - ... focussing on how can we get cars and their single drivers downtown faster, to have more time to look for free parking.

Process

- ***Disproportionate focus on built environment: roads, complete roads, parkades, ...***
 - ... and less on social engineering: drive less, walk more, take a bus, leave work at different time, get out with your kids, less screen time
- ***planning by area ignores edges/transitions***
 - Don't think of the western escarpment as a wall and the river as an impenetrable moat.
 - ... Looking at geography, it is apparent that we must treat the escarpments above the river as the lines around these studies. The tops of the escarpments, the slopes, the wetlands, the river are all part of Downtown and Marwell's reality.
 - ... misses looking for specific connections such as operations building, college, CGC, airport, rock Gardens — think desire lines.

- ***needs a separate chapter/section on wilderness trails as a major economic driver.***
 - danger is this can be easily removed if it is decided that recreational trails and/or areas outside downtown/Marwell are outside scope of project!
 - ... We would not move sidewalks or roads into a separate chapter. They are integrated.
 - ... likewise Hospital-Long Lake-Magnusson trails are residents' recreation, our health, our Whitehorse identity. This is more than a Wilderness City theme.
- ***Discussion base maps need to show both trails and roads.***
 - starting with just roads, and then talking traffic, speed, needs of business, means trying to fit walking into leftovers.
- ***did river walkers get interviewed?***
 - Their role in a successful downtown and waterfront can't be understated.

Walkers needs to be in bicycling discussions

- ***Cycles thought to be only way for distance***
 - walkers walk more than given credit for, certainly way more than 60 minutes.
- ***Biking and walking — shared trail etiquette.***
 - Paved trail interactions can be annoying.
 - ... Pass on left. Bell no good for hard of hearing!
 - ... Trail interactions at speed could be dangerous.
 - different in distance, motivation, speed, time to cover distance
 - ... Walkers start, stop, chat, look at surrounding;
 - ... bikers want flow, speed, it's you and your skill..., getting to work