

I'm Peter Long with whitehorseWalks, and I live Downtown. As a Board member for the Downtown Residents Association, I'd like to show how the Capitol Budget could help downtown liveability and vibrancy by better addressing walking in the greater downtown area—our greenspace includes the airport escarpment, Riverdale and behind the hospital.

In our rapidly growing city we need to respect that we're a small city with a big footprint; realistically we want a strong Downtown core.

We also need a mix of people living Downtown, in part as staff for the service industry. Some may not be able to afford a vehicle. Some just like living Downtown, walking for daily needs, social connections and to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In short, it should be desirable to live Downtown!

To have a liveable and vibrant Downtown requires less driving. As well as general safe walkability, downtown needs access to nature without having to drive. Simple fairness, transportation equity, says we must spend money on sidewalks, street crossings and especially for downtown's trail needs.

The 2025 Capital Budget spends big on building-based recreation: \$17,650,000 is going to the Mt. MacIntyre ski club building and the CGC is getting almost \$10,000,000. We're lucky to have them but sadly they require large amounts of money for operations and maintenance. In a spirit of fairness, could the City have a policy to designate a percentage of such large projects as a fund for non organized 'soft' recreation infrastructure — trails, walking bridges, trail plans...

Downtown has never had a turn at creating a Trail Plan so our complex trail needs are mostly not included in City trail planning, nor the City Budget.

For example: The City and the Airport need to reopen our walking perimeter trail around the Airport; they need to move the fence. This has long been a favourite Downtown signature trail, but it's not in the Trail Plan nor the Budget. For simplicity, put a second fence at trouble spots and reroute the Airport's perimeter road. Keeping the old perimeter road and fence will minimize further disturbance at the escarpment edge. If it's safe for the Airport to have vehicles like firetrucks and other heavy equipment driving this perimeter road, people walking there are certainly safe. The City freely transferred land to the Yukon Government for the Airport's runway expansion. YG folk, many of whom live in Whitehorse, some even downtown, should be able to arrange a quid pro quo land transfer to the City for these simple perimeter trail fence improvements.

Another example: There are fantastic trails in the forest behind the Hospital. Trail marking and trail maintenance are under the Trail Plan. A footbridge to the Hospital would allow Downtown access to these Chadburn Lake Park trails without having to drive. With a First Nation-themed bridge to the Hospital, we'd have a centrepiece for Reconciliation, a focus for tourism and business. This footbridge would join the Hospital community to the Downtown core. Again, recreation and active transportation needs are blocked by a lack of trail planning and lack of Budget items. Allocating a significant sum of money for a footbridge would provide a base for community fundraising.

Transportation equity says that there's more to getting around than roads and paved bike paths. But with no Downtown trail plan, it's not always easy to think outside the box. The brand new Operations Building is getting almost \$12,000,000, \$1,385,000 of which is for a parking lot.

What if the city consulted with both Downtown residents and staff working in the Operations Building and made shortcut trail connections to Downtown, to the Waterfront trail and Chilkoot Way businesses? Then staff could live downtown and walk to work. Downtown residents could walk to meetings there.

Another instance: Instead of spending \$665,000 for a parking lot for the newly refurbished Robert Service Campground, the City could make a wheelchair accessible crushed gravel trail around Bert Law Island on the Millennium Trail. Again, no Trail Plan, no Budget.

We would benefit from a long-distance hiking trail along the Yukon River, connecting the City's north and south riverside subdivisions to Downtown.

Downtown needs a Trail Plan backed by Budget money to plan more effectively as befits the heart of our Wilderness City.

Thanks for the chance to give input here.

PS. With all the night-time building lights in Downtown, I'd like to suggest that the city purchase a light meter so we get some of the overly bright ones dialled down.