

Response to Draft #2 of the Whitehorse OCP



To: OCP Team

Following an OCP revision is a complex process. Our committee feels that the purpose of the OCP is to guide much of what the City does, so the plan must meet the needs of City residents. It should fairly represent all the competing interests and needs of its residents. We live in a pretty neat city and as residents, just want to help make it better!

Overview

In general, there needs to be a parallel tone in the OCP between the land use needs for "development" and "trails and greenspaces." The Plan is heavily weighted as a development document.

Green spaces and development designations are new for this OCP. The OCP discusses them. Parks are also new, yet there seems little consideration to what they are about, both new major Parks and older Parks as per the Trail Plan maps.

The Plan works hand in hand with maps. However the maps in Part 3 of the OCP are too vague to work with carefully. Programs like Google Earth can put a large degree of sophistication into a presentation, and people's ability to work with maps. Starting with a map that has all major active transportation trails and all multi-use (motor vehicle) trails, would make a good starting point. Adding in greenspaces and looking at connectivity for wildlife and people would be the next step.

The role of citizens having a distinct say in our City seems lost. Previous City planning has had court cases, petitions and plebiscites to try to make citizens feel they are heard. The OCP should look at neighbourhood Community Associations as a good thing and we should be often and regularly consulted.

The tendency in governments is to make do with less funding. We're a very active population, even as governments are realizing that we need to be even more active. We already care strongly, even passionately, about the land and use it constantly. The City cannot keep up with organized recreation and its associated facilities as well as trail and greenspace needs. Witness that Parks and Recreation has hired a consultant to do actual hands-on trail work.

Some of these points could be partly addressed by having a strong city "Trails and Greenspaces" stewardship concept. We have a role to play and it should be welcomed by the City.

Part 1: A vision to a Plan

P. 6: The tone of the Introduction mainly implies the OCP is about development in the sense of infrastructure.

However, the Purpose discusses "use of land," "adapt to new trends within society" and "respond to changing circumstances. public interest." Whitehorse residents have a strong interest — a sense of stewardship — in the quality of our lands: greenspaces, parks, trails.

The introduction must reflect this by adding "??? The OCP guides development by keen awareness of the sense of stewardship for greenspaces"

P. 7: Vision: "better quality of life that is reflected in its vibrant economy and social life." Physical lifestyles — wellness, active living and a strong Citizen-based stewardship should also be part of the vision.

P. 7, 8: Values. #7. The concept of "world class recreational facilities" does not acknowledge the many people trying to provide leadership in stewardship of our world class greenspaces.

P. 10: referencing the tree on page 9:

#1 the driving role of CITIZEN stewardship in a greenspace plan is missing;

#2 does not address greenspaces as a valid land use, nor does it reflect the importance of an ACTIVE transportation network;

#3 doesn't address the importance of tourism and the role our in-town trails play in hospitality for visitors;

#4 doesn't address strengthening a city-wide trail network;

#5 doesn't address the fiscal imbalance between organized recreation and other such as activities in greenspaces.

#6 doesn't reflect a communications plan and better information sharing of COW data, nor does it deal with how to protect in-town trails and greenspaces from motor vehicle degradation.

P. 19-28: Implementing the Vision. The weakness in the OCP towards trails and greenspaces is especially evident in this section. There's a brief mention in the P. 19 introductory paragraph but, unlike sections 6.1–6.6 which go into some detail showing the city's ideas, there's no section setting out a vision for greenspaces, Parks, trails, active living.

P. 24-26: Table 8. This would be much better in some meaningful order such as: greenspace lands, residential, industrial/resource extraction, public service/utilities. Note: the OCP has introduced a formal Park designation; this needs a formal land use PARK designation so certainty can also apply to these lands.

P. 26-28: Future studies, regulations and Bylaws. After talking about the importance of the OCP in setting city priorities for programs and funding, this section goes on to list no focus on trails and greenspaces. Park plans, motor vehicle problems on trails, Trails and Greenspaces workshops are a few ideas.

Part 2: Principles, Objectives and Policies

P. 31: Table 9 is too complicated; there's a problem with headings. It should just be a series of paragraphs that define the terms.

P. 32: 1.1.3, 4, 5. This is all fine and good, but doesn't deal with reality. For instance, Paddy's Pond - Ice Lake Park contains wetlands. There used to be pretty low use trails that skirted the wetlands and also crossed them. However motor vehicles have now trashed many of them. Let's differentiate between foot trails and multi purpose. Our foot trails lasted many years before all the motorized traffic. 1.2 should follow City standards re wetlands — see "wetlands in Whitehorse", where it says "choose routes for ATVs snowmobiles, mountain bikes and other vehicles that do not go through wetlands."

1.2.2: 15 metres is too close to the edge. Walk the Ridge trail behind Copper Ridge and see the back yard stuff creeping onto the public trails. As trails get more used in a new development, trees are removed, erosion happens, the people will one day have the trail right at their lot lines. When some of the subdivision was being laid out, marker pegs were on the slope side of the trail.

1.2.3: The land set aside as environmentally sensitive at the south end of the airport is not comprehensive enough to protect trails. The motocross people are wrecking the area that should be environmentally sensitive. This is prime major trail area.

P. 52: 8.3.5e. This should be phrased that access to the quarry property should be gated. The haul road should continue to be a public road. Likewise the road thru the quarry pits that leads to the road ascending Mt. McIntyre.

P. 53: If the current gravel pit is no good for the cement operation, then it too should be listed as now needing remediation. Hopefully this will be a responsibility of the gravel pit user group.

9.1.3,4: The "provision of a perimeter trail". This important trail needs help. Already existing airport infrastructure is using the public space. The fence needs to be moved back and the trail then needs fixing to safely pass some spots. Likewise there needs to be a proper recognition of the trail from the highway along the fence at the south end of the highway. This shouldn't be used as a dumping ground for construction refuse. It's a public trail.

P. 58: 10.7.6: Porter Creeks D access must NOT require roadways that cross McIntyre Creek.

10.7.7: No development should take place without a preliminary trail plan that takes into account the existing trail uses and future trail needs. Beyond Copper Ridge should be named on Map 5.

10.7.8: The tank farm area needs to continue to be a major trail corridor for foot traffic, that is a direct route through the area to the highway at the end of the airport fence.

P. 59: 10.8.4. Active transportation routes deserve stronger language than this if the City truly wants an active health population. These trails will often be primarily used by walkers — that is people looking for the shortest, quietest, nicest route. These trails generally have a long tradition of use and shouldn't lightly be changed.

10.8.5. The 2 Hillcrest area dots are too vague and give no sense of scope. An inset with exact current idea for development needs to be given.

P. 60: 11.1.3: Land with significant recreation or Park values should also be able to be re-designated.

12.1: Once again, if the OCP is to be about other than "development" then it needs to discuss "trails and Greenspaces". A greenspaces map is not enough— Map 3 is interesting but considering how long the City's Trail plan has been around there should be a Map in the OCP showing the City-wide active Transportation Trail Network. Given the tentative nature of some things in the OCP, this map could be called tentative. It should NOT just contain every city trail, and it MUST contain Official Motor Vehicle/Multi Use Trails.

What is "universal design?" Is it multi-use? Mixing motor vehicles and pedestrians does not work well. Think of people pushing strollers, or with groups of young kids.

P. 61: 12.1.4. Not true. The millennium Bridge at the dam is an active transportation bridge, as is the Robert E. Lowe suspension bridge at Miles Canyon.

10.1.6, 7, 8 are likely just about the Map 3 downtown subset of the city active transportation network. Otherwise for instance, 10.1.6 could be read as implying amenities such as lighting would be required for all active transportation trails. This doesn't seem realistic.

P. 62.: 12.3.1, 2 A well-functioning Active Transportation network should be a serious part of our City infrastructure. As such crossings are a reality. Our above-the-airport communities require highway crossing. Thinking that people walking to work will use the South Access or Two-Mile Hill intersections to cross is unrealistic. People walking have as much right to safely cross the Highway where necessary as cars and trucks. This is not well addressed here.

P. 66, 67: 15.3. The intro para and 15.3.1 seem in direct contradiction. As well, this stretch of the Yukon River needs a proper trail system from the Robert E. Lowe Bridge to the Robert Service Campground entrance to the Millennium Trail and to the Airport trail. This should be an important aspect in any future development here. This trail is a major part of the City's Yukon River Trail Loop.

15.3.2. I thought City water was now from wells?

P. 67: 16.1. Many not-so-well-heeled tourists use our trail system when they can find it. This should be a big part of our tourism /economic strategy.

P. 68: 15.1.1: We don't generally have the resources for a separate tourism resource. It seems obvious that trails and greenspace facilities are first for the locals, and if it was good, then the tourists would pick up on it. That said, then neighbourhood, community associations should also be part of the tourism initiative. Likewise Trails and Greenspaces committees.

P. 70: Parks. What about Rock Garden's Park? It's city-owned, not developable for a subdivision and could be a jewel in our City's Park inventory.

Parks seem to get little recognition beyond 18.1.1 "intended to be preserved for all future residents". Does this mean it takes more than a bylaw change to kill a park?

At some point the City should implement the "trails and Greenspaces Committee" the parks/trail plan calls for. The stewardship of these parks would be under the city committee and local/district committees.

This also does not deal with areas that the 2007 Trail Plan call Parks. This is confusing and these inner-neighbourhood parks need acknowledgement and protection.

Paddy's Pond/Ice Lake Park. GLOBAL change be consistent with name

18.1.4 Ear Lake is not in a park?

18.1.5: Is multi use saying that the Park stewards cannot work to be non-motorized, or a controlled situation for motor vehicles? 18.5.3 recognizes that these vehicles are not always appropriate and need controlling in places.

18.2: wasn't the Trail Plan done in 2007? Also, "major collector trails" don't appear in the Trail Plan.

P. 71: 18.2.1: Again, neighbourhood and district associations should be part of planning.

18.2.2: The developer needs to be responsive to the community. The trail network could be given short shrift the way this is worded. Citizens care and should be respected and listened to.

18.3: Intro. The neighbourhood meeting for our area was not a fair meeting to understand Hillcrest.

Table 9 is not clear enough to be the clarifier of the second intro paragraph. Still not clear what is allowed in environmentally significant, or recreational. And what about Parks? For instance, what is allowed in Paddy's Pond – Ice Lake? Section 18.3 is confusing as a result.

18.3.1: Make it seem that the Trail Plan has identified trails as Primary/recommended. It hasn't.

P. 72: 18.4. There needs to be a serious discussion about motor vehicles and their city use, as well as in parks and along the river corridor.

P. 73: 18.4.5: Again, locals should be a primary audience for trails use.

18.5.2: Why is one organization (Klondike Snowmobile Association) getting such special treatment as determining trails. Neighbourhood associations, trails and green space committees should be part of this. What about ATVs who are big destroyers of trails?

18.5.4? Needs to have a statement that other areas may also be designated as no motorized traffic.

P. 81: 22.1.1: Wouldn't it be nice if some of the wording from 15.1.2 could be added. For instance "Building close relationships with neighbourhood Community Associations is a major focus for the City of Whitehorse."

Part 3: Maps

Generally it's almost impossible to carefully talk about what is proposed since the scale and marking are too small. This is not fair.

Map1, 2: The land connecting Ice Lake to the highway at the south end of the airport should be carefully thought out. It needs to connect to the Rock Gardens and McLean Lake.

Land just outside the fence at the south end of the airport needs acknowledgement of being a major trail. The slopes in this area should be environmentally sensitive.

Land between Ice Lake and Hamilton Blvd. designated connector should be environmentally sensitive. It's a downhill slope to the lake.

Land in the Tank Farm area needs recognition that it is a big active transportation route.

McIntyre Creek Park in the college area and where it crosses the highway needs much more discussion with real maps.

Map 5: Why is FN land around Lobird in a purple line, yet land along the highway in our area that the OCP talks about developing, some of which is also FN, not in purple?