

~ Monday, April 20, 2015

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Walking as part of Whitehorse's Economic development strategy

I was disappointed that walking didn't make the cut in the recent draft economic development strategy. Walking as an economic driver is a visionary concept, but where better to acknowledge a vision than in an economic development strategy?

It's important to acknowledge that existing city programs already create economic activity.

We could have an economic development goal of making walking an integral part of our city. From the city's draft Sustainability Plan

- ~ "sustainability is when all development supports a healthy environment and a good quality of life for everyone over the long term."
- ~ Our Vision: "Whitehorse will be a well planned, self-sustaining, innovative community that leads in management and conservation of wilderness, energy and resources for the future. Whitehorse will strive for quality of life for all, a stable economy, and a socially diverse community."

Below are a number of ideas around walking that fit aspects of economic development. They all have aspects of money: saving city by not having city pay for things; having another level of government pay for items benefiting the city; having visitors spend money here; teaching residents skills that enable them to start a business, get a job; making a city with infrastructure that creates desire to live here for physical fitness reason...

Healthy living

- ~ work with RPAY to develop weekly health walks
- ~ develop a series for challenged walkers, as well as longer more challenging walks
- ~ develop trail leader programs
- ~ ensure advertised walks are insurable under an umbrella city insurance policy
- ~ start a walking passport around various main trails
- ~ walking is an inclusive activity. It's very easy to target groups not interested in sports, either because of cost, age, physical conditions or lack of a competitive interest.
- ~ www.richmond.ca/parksrec/sports/walkrichmond.htm

Environmental Sustainability

Ensure that every neighbourhood/area has a selection of quality walks, varied in difficulty and length and accessible without driving, encouraging more people to use walking trails, and to take longer walks.

Addressing barriers to walking — highways and major roads, wetlands, rivers, large land users such as golf courses or ski trails — by ensuring walkable crossings at places appropriate for walkers, can reflect a community's walking health.

- ~ Whitehorse corridor project can block a walkable city. Fight for pedestrian crossings at each intersection.

Parks and Rec

Work with Yukon College to have them offer courses on

- ~ neighbourhood stewardship
- ~ reconciliation of competing values
- ~ interpretation of local resources

Continue to develop trail construction standards

- ~ specifically around waymarking, trail surfacing, boardwalks and small bridges

Coordinate with senior government programs

- ~ Y2C2 to bring in their trail expertise and labour; show how can neighbourhoods access their services
- ~ Programs such as CDF continues to be a source of funding.
- ~ Building community capacity for trail projects would be more important than spending a lot of money outside the community

Trails and Greenways Committee

Verify that each of these existing walking trails is well signed, waymarked and rated, and that it's an easily understood loop trail. As a trail is 'done' we can also promote it as part of walking tourism.

- ~ Millennium Trail
- ~ Hospital's Long Lake Trail
- ~ Airport Perimeter Trail
- ~ Waterfront/Clay Cliff Trail
- ~ Schwatka/Miles Canyon Trail
- ~ River beyond Canyon City
- ~ Hidden Lakes Trail
- ~ Grey Mountain Ridge
- ~ 4 Chadburn Lake Ski Trails
- ~ Wolf Creek campground Trail
- ~ Paddy's Pond/Ice Lake Trail
- ~ Hawk Ridge Trail
- ~ Porcupine Ridge Trail
- ~ 4 Middle McIntyre Ck loops
- ~ College's Boreal Worlds Trail
- ~ Range Point Ridge Trail
- ~ Whistle Bend Loop
- ~ Crestview Trail

Work to develop trails on our scenic alpine areas such as Haeckel Hill, Mount McIntyre, Golden Horn.

Work to have more variety in accessible trails. Viewscapes, riverine, alpine, as well as inter-neighbourhood active-transportation paved trails.

Highlight trails that work well in winter as well as the shoulder spring season of icy, slippery mud trails: Airport, Canyon City, Long Lake, Marsh Lake Bridge, Bonnevill Lakes,

Create neighbourhood stewardship for their greenspaces/trails

As well as the current system of having trail groups look after their kinds of trails, we need to have neighbourhood or area groups to look after trails and greenspaces surrounding them.

- ~ integrate as offshoot of City's area trail task forces
- ~ ensure neighbourhood trails are properly waymarked
- ~ ensure common city trail standards are met
- ~ create neighbourhood walking enticement maps
- ~ develop walking materials such as a neighbourhood tree walk
- ~ develop small brochures, web pages to interpret walks
- ~ monitor trail use and report or fix trail damage

Mixing a sense of excellence with some competitive spirit can result in interesting walking trails where both locals and visitors

feel at home and safe.

Using schools as hubs for community stewardship of the walking trails would create opportunities for youth–adult relationships

Tourism

Walking tourism will attract people who would travel at a slower, more thoughtful pace.

- ~ *Work towards a stay-another-day strategy*
- ~ *walking trails are always open, and free*
- ~ *many good walking/hiking trails throughout the city*
- ~ *promote walking passport, weekly health walks*
- ~ *we are a walking destination*
- ~ *ensure Walking Whitehorse becomes part of Tourism Yukon's materials*
- ~ *Use Tourism's Product Development Partnership Program to develop a new niche market*
- ~ *ensure visitor center, convention bureau, and other groups promote our fitness-based lifestyles.*

Business

- ~ *develop and post 'we love walkers' signs*
- ~ *ensure B&Bs, hotels, camping/RV places, coffee shops, sports shops have free walking maps*
- ~ *sponsor stewardship groups such as by neighbourhood or by trail.*
- ~ *ensure a vibrant downtown.*

Arts

develop walking-themed events

- ~ *YCS's Arts in the Canyon*
- ~ *develop a art-viewing walk*
- ~ *offer art-related events such as illustrate this trail: photography, sketches, writings, paintings, apps, and other means.*

Events

Whitehorse is a busy place with almost too much to do.

- ~ *ensure that nature-focussed events put on by organizations such as wildlife viewing and the bird club are promoted on a central walking website*
- ~ *encourage organizations such as the geological survey to offer more geology/geology walks and talks.*
- ~ *Walks on the theme of safety would be popular: fire safety, wildlife safety, not getting lost, weather*

Schools

Community communications

Establish monthly community walks with the Mayor and council.

- ~ *A regular walk to talk trail and greenspace ideas*

Establish a walking seat on the new Community Economic Development Strategy Implementation Committee.

- ~ *a person with a walking vision with a mandate of thinking how walking generates business*

~ *Ensure that the term 'walking culture' is used in materials such as this economic development strategy, the sustainability plan, and other city policies, plans and strategies.*

~ *Walking is a base-level activity. Its different than most trail group's needs.*

Organizing a yearly walking trail summit will build community strength. Neighbourhoods and groups would work together to ensure a degree of uniqueness to walking trail offerings, interpretation and events. They could discuss successes and failures in walking tourism.

Planning

Ensure that public right-of-ways are clearly visible on zoning maps. Clearly marked public right-ofways will encourage neighbourhood walking.