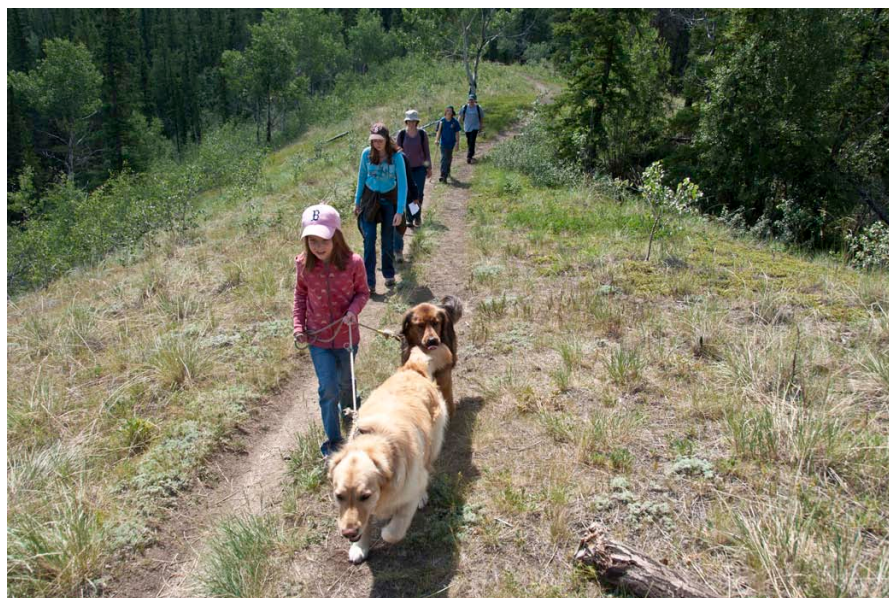




Whitehorse, the wilderness city

a collection of walking ideas



The majority of over 65s don't cost the health-care system very much. As long as we keep ourselves in good health and many people try very hard to do that, then it will work.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/health-care-high-cost-users-1.3398628>

Individuals have to make the decision to walk. However, the decision can be made easier by improvements to community walkability and by programs and policies that provide opportunities and encouragement for walking. In addition to encouraging walking, these changes can help communities by improving safety, social cohesion, and local economies and by reducing air pollution.

The walkability of a city, says Cornett, impacts not just physical health, but economic health as well. "Business leaders buy in to the importance of having a healthy, vibrant community. It's not just a matter of health care costs. How do you recruit the top talent if you can't offer them the lifestyle they're looking for?"

2015: Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities

Canada is at a stage in its developed economy where it needs to be innovative, to create new value and opportunities with the talent and resources we have.

Doug Watt, Conference Board of Canada

Organizations should diversify their offerings and create new products that appeal to new demographics and meet the needs of travellers from a range of cultural and geographic backgrounds.

Canada's federal tourism strategy

More walkers means more tourism, and more tourism means more people making connections to both the sea and the land. It means more healthy people, and more of those healthy people falling in love with the countryside. There really isn't anything which sorts you out more quickly than a good walk. There's something about setting out to follow the line between water and earth that blows everything the right side out again.

Hurrah for our growing coastal path – ideal for celebrating the joys of walking, Bella Bathurst

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/27/full-english-coastal-path-rory-stewart>

If it's difficult for you to maintain your motivation by yourself, joining a walking group may be the answer. Walking with a group gives you an opportunity to socialize. Having people around you who enjoy walking can also inspire you and hold you accountable to your own walking goals.

http://www.yukonwellness.ca/pdf/bcrpa_walking_handbook.pdf



Blue Moon hiking friends along the Hawk Ridge trail



Yukon River Trail, view looking past Lorne Mountain on the left to Carcross and Montana Mountain

Contents

Page

WALKS BY AREA

1	Overview
4	whitehorseWalks.com
5	Loop walking trails
6	Improving our community's walking
10	Here's how you can be part of this project



Grey Mountain Ridge Trail is a family friendly hike with a challenging road access.

WhitehorseWalks.com is not an organization, it's my project to create buzz about walking, to focus attention on walking. This aspect of my project has two parts: first is a look at how walking — a major health activity — can lead to a stronger, more prosperous society, and as a bonus, enhance tourism; part two is ideas for a walking network, currently over 75 circular walks. That's almost 600 km of walks to tempt both tourists and locals.

I started this concept of circular walking trails partly because a hike on the Isle of Man showed that a loop walk was more fun than an out and back hike. I liked how their need for economic development turned a variety of trails into a 95 mile long Coastal Path.

As I search for loop walks, my goal is to find good hikes. I look for walks in each part of the city so that people living there can have the joy of good walks without driving. I seek variety — long, short, easy, hard, those with views and ones in different environments. I want walks between areas.

So who would be interested in this collection of walks? I think those who want to improve their health would use the list as an incentive to get out walking, checking off hikes as they advance. Others? People wanting a 'back to the land' activity; people who take weekly walks with friends; individuals who walk a lot and often look for new walks; visitors who want a good walk; locals wanting something to do, a new weekend activity, or a long summer evening activity; people with family or friends visiting for a couple of days. Perhaps it could be the basis for a walking festival.

I am pleased to walk with a wide group of walking friends and I hear their thoughts and also get to watch their capabilities. I see people blossom from barely keeping up to being very comfortable with our group hikes. I've become aware of situations — a slippery piece of trail for instance — where someone is apprehensive, or a bit fearful.

Aging bones can be more fragile. A Harvard Health Publication on walking says, "*Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of both nonfatal and fatal injuries. One out of five people who suffer a hip fracture from a fall dies within a year. While the statistics are frightening, they are not a reason to hunker down on the sofa to avoid a fall. Staying active...*"

Let's look at a small historical perspective. In 1979 Whitehorse had ~12,000 people; YG stats for June, 2015 show 28,872 residents. If we double our population again, a not implausible situation, then we should grow with a walking vision.

We have a very strong sports community. Governments are appreciative and listen. Sports are how many keep healthy, and Yukoners succeeding on national and international stages does us all proud. There's an obvious willingness of society to support sport.

But what about walking? It's not a sport. So, while it's often clear where something could make walking better, how to make it happen is less clear. Casual outdoor exercise should be seen as equivalent to organized programs. People who walk are so varied: dog walkers, commuters, people with strollers, hikers, shoppers, people out for an evening stroll or going out to lunch... really, most people are walkers. Since there's no organized walking advocacy group, administrators should be aware of where they can add guidance, add a walking voice to on-going processes. Is there a role for a loose collective of walkers? For now, it's individuals talking to others, creating buzz!

This loop walks project is just a start. There are many more good walks and with a bit of work, walking opportunities can only get better.

On the next two pages is a to-do list, a summary of walking ideas covered in this report.

To do list of walking ideas.

Think of this as a shopping list for walking. Remember when we looked for ideas for a Whitehorse Signature Initiative that would celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. Could we have chosen a pedestrian bridge at Main Street if there was an existing list to be creative with?

With this to do list,

- An individual or group wanting to do something for the community could choose a project, or
- A committee such as a Community Association could see where it might focus its energy,
- A business or service organization wanting a special community project might see an opportunity.
- We can file ideas that are good but not possible yet.

This publication has a lot of ideas, but remember:

- We're a large city in area. As a wilderness city we have many trails and getting lost shouldn't be the first option, at least for our visitors.
- As a modern, sustainable city we should aspire to be a walkable city.
- Walking is good for health, both physical and social, it's good for all ages and physical conditions. It's something we want our children to be comfortable doing.
- Many of these are minimal cost, rather requiring a focus by some department or group or individual.

Peter

P.S. This report is a follow-up on my last year's *Yukon Walking Strategy*.

Social

- ☐ Develop trail walking events for City's *Active Living Guide*
- ☐ Develop/copy a municipal program such as <http://www.richmond.ca/parksrec/sports/walkrichmond.htm>
 - Develop a program of Walk leader volunteer training
 - Solve liability concerns for walking groups; allow carpooling to get to trailhead.
- ☐ Expand these ideas for a Walking festival.
- ☐ Create a *Whitehorse Walking Passport* based on our loop walking trails
- ☐ Publicize a set of well used winter trails. More use helps keep trails well packed for walkers, and snowbikers.
- ☐ Focus on city goal of doubling walking to 15% active transportation

Tourism

- ☐ We can offer much more walking than the Millennium Trail and Canyon City. Infrastructure for locals makes this easy.
- ☐ Tourism initiatives need a *stay-another-day-and-walk* focus.
- ☐ Display *We welcome walkers* signs.

Why a list of possible loop walks?

- ☐ Those wanting to improve their health could use list as an incentive to walk, checking off hikes as they advance.
- ☐ People wanting a 'back to the land' or nature activity.
- ☐ People who take weekly walks with friends.
- ☐ Individuals who walk a lot and often look for new walks.
- ☐ Visitors who want a good walk.
- ☐ Locals wanting something to do, a new weekend activity, or a long summer evening activity.
- ☐ People with family or friends visiting for a couple of days.
- ☐ Conferences wanting to show off Whitehorse's treasures.
- ☐ Snowbikers looking for trails that might be more travelled.

Safety

- ☐ Trail surfacing such as wood chips when often muddy, slippery, rooty, especially for close-in neighbourhood trails.
- ☐ Build switchbacks where slopes are steep, or where users on bikes might be going fast and there's limited visibility.
- ☐ Address likely wildlife conflicts as trail use grows; more education on handling wildlife interactions.
- ☐ Routes often cross major roads well away from intersections; safety islands and pedestrian crossing signs are solutions.

Trail marking, signage, mapping

- ☐ Install warning signs at spots where downhill users and uphill ones meet in low visibility situations.
- ☐ Public right-of-ways need clear signage at street and interior greenbelt ends; keep trail entrances clear in winter.
- ☐ Neighbourhood/district maps need to show greenbelt connectors and right-of-ways through neighbourhoods.
- ☐ Trail signage need small inset maps showing area overview.
- ☐ Trail maps need to show all trails, not just bigger ones.
- ☐ Maps on current square posts are often complicated to understand. Orientate to facing forward views.
- ☐ Need strong waymarking so trails can be followed in winter.
- ☐ Use creative themes for waymark signage.
- ☐ Pick best hikes in list of loop walks and write up as a tourist attractions.
- ☐ Promote area trails such as Long Lake-Hospital-Magnusson.

Support

- ☐ Walking needs to be seen as just as important as sports.
- ☐ Develop ways for walkers as individuals to initiate projects.
- ☐ Walking is the most common activity. We need to identify walking champions: in the city, territorial and federal governments; in Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an first nations; in major service organizations; in major local businesses.

Yukon River Trail

- ☐ Make this a goal in OCP, City Trail Plan, Zoning Bylaw,...
- ☐ Yukon River east side
 - Ensure that, at a minimum, the UCB North Prefeasability Study looks at protection of possible trail route.
 - Explore getting to Lake Laberge in the north, Lewes River bridge in the south.
 - Small bridge along Millennium Trail at inlet near Selkirk and Nisutlin.
- ☐ Yukon River west side:
 - Takhini River bridge to Whistle Bend crosses a few creeks; little bridges are needed.
 - Whistle Bend along the river offers great views but fragile environment. Work with golf course to ensure long term scenic use of river edges.
 - Bridge crossing McIntyre Creek between Range Point and Whistle Bend
 - Ensure Range Road trail stays in the woods passing commercial, residential areas.
 - Range Point from Takhini Trailer Court to Downtown
 - Cross Marwell Creek at confluence of Yukon River
 - Connect Waterfront trail from Spook Creek Station, through Marwell, and across Marwell wetlands
 - New trail connecting current Schwatka Lake trail to road opposite new LNG plant, through the woods, avoiding walking along Miles Canyon Road.
 - Identify route from South Access to Miles Canyon, and on to Wolf Creek, and beyond.

Bridges

- ☐ Pedestrian bridge across Yukon River between Main Street Old Fire Hall area and Hospital
- ☐ Recreation bridge across Yukon River from Whistle Bend to east side of river.
- ☐ Fixing bridge at Miles Canyon is extremely important.

Switchbacks, staircases

- ☐ Switchback or stairs from escarpment above ball diamonds across from Yukon Energy/Robert Service Campground.
- ☐ Switchback down to Riverdale from the saddle on Chadburn Lake Road between Heartbreak Hill and the Dam Hill.
- ☐ A switchback from Baxter's Flat to Spook Creek and Two Mile Hill would increase walkability for Downtown and Marwell.
- ☐ We need a switchback at Magnussun trailhead accessing Upper Bugaloo, Bugaloo Heights.
- ☐ Integrate a switchback accessing the Hospital Ridge Trail from the back hospital parking as part of hospital upgrade.
- ☐ Peewee Hill gets very slippery at times. How to fix?

Boardwalks, small bridges

- ☐ Cross wetlands from Ingram to Harvey's Hut so residents of McIntyre, Ingram, Arkell and Logan have walking options.
- ☐ Boardwalk to get to Copper Haul road from Hawk Ridge Trail.
- ☐ Crossing of McIntyre Creek at Mordor, near quarries on McLean Lake Road.

Better use of city trails in WCCSC/McIntyre Creek area

- ☐ Make all of Porcupine Ridge Trail all-season use.
- ☐ Build an all-season trail from Bouncing Bunny to Calypso Canyon.
- ☐ Build an all-season trail from Reimer Reason past Sarah Steele Hut to connect with Lichen It.
- ☐ Make trail crossings so above can be all-season use.

Codes of conduct

- ☐ Create some codes of conduct.
- ☐ User groups to convince their members to follow these.

New trail pieces

- ☐ Connect Grey Mountain Ridge Trail to Upper Mother T
- ☐ Connect Haeckel Hill to Crestview
- ☐ Connect Lower Escarpment Trail to Waterfront Trail through Spook Creek.
- ☐ Connect from Hawk Ridge to ridge of Mount McIntyre
- ☐ Golden Horn needs a hiking trail.
- ☐ Trail access to new city operations building from Baxter's Gulch – highway.
- ☐ Trails at Rock Gardens area, especially down to pond, and loop to Ice Lake.

Stewardship

- ☐ Neighbourhood trail task forces should work on stewardship
- ☐ How do we report trail issues, knowing they will be addressed.
- ☐ Involve schools in stewardship by adopting 'school' trails.
- ☐ Develop Neighbourhood abilities for trail stewardship.

Loop walking trails needed in some areas

- ☐ Hidden Lake, Porter Creek
- ☐ Crestview/Haeckel Hill
- ☐ Whitehorse Copper, Mount McIntyre
- ☐ Mount Lorne
- ☐ Whitehorse south
- ☐ Takhini
- ☐ McLean Lake

Road access to alpine hiking

- ☐ Grey Mountain Road
- ☐ Mount McIntyre Road
- ☐ Haeckel Hill Road

Interpretation

- ☐ Identify spots on trails that could be interpreted
- ☐ Create some topical destination walks: geology, botany, bird, wetland

WP & YR and trails

- ☐ Great economic development, active living, recreation opportunities could happen by working with White Pass and their route from downtown.



Grey Mountain Ridge Trail; Yukon River, Marsh Lake, Lorne Mountain, Gray Ridge are visible in the background

WHITEHORSEWALKS.COM

I like photographing our wildflowers and our countryside. I like to walk, and going out into the woods, by rivers and lakes, and especially, in the alpine, is part of my love of the Yukon. Thus, my interest in our trails and desire to help make them even better.

As a person who travels internationally I get to go on walking holidays, and I see how walking tourism could benefit both Whitehorse and the Yukon. My business card says I'm a walking innovator — I look for ways walking could be better. What I've found is that walking has no formal representation in governments, nor is there any organized group or non-profit with a mandate for better walking. This was surprising since as a group, walkers are by far the largest group of people who practice 'active living' in the city.

So in 2012, I started *whitehorseWalks.com*, to engage people in walking, to provoke a public discussion on walking, to develop a walking culture. Think of this as citizen stewardship. See *Yukon Walking Strategy* on my website for my broader look at walking.

We read "The Paris Climate Deal Can't Succeed Without Cities" and "the real action will be taking place in cities." Health Canada says "since 2003, the proportion of Canadians who were obese has increased 17.5%."

In today's fast-paced society, vehicle use has attained an almost essential quality. YG says that transportation accounts for more than half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the territory. The last census shows that most Yukoners drive to work with no passengers.

I realize we've a small population and can't afford to do everything. Yet we seem to be able to spend millions on some public projects (Think of the \$200 million Alaska Highway expansion through Whitehorse).

YG says it's *Helping make Yukon the best place to live, work, play and raise a family*. Could a focus on walking, a seemingly "non-health" investment,

lead to a healthier society? Is more walking, less driving part of the answer? Walking works on individual and societal levels.

Whitehorse the 'wilderness city,' sits in a boreal forest with wetlands, animals and hundreds of plant species. It's situated on the bottom of an old glacial lake, in a beautiful river valley nestled in mountains. But Whitehorse is very spread out and isn't what one would call walkable.

"We want to reduce congestion and reduce parking demand and encourage alternative modes of transportation," said Shannon Clohosey, Whitehorse's manager of environmental sustainability.

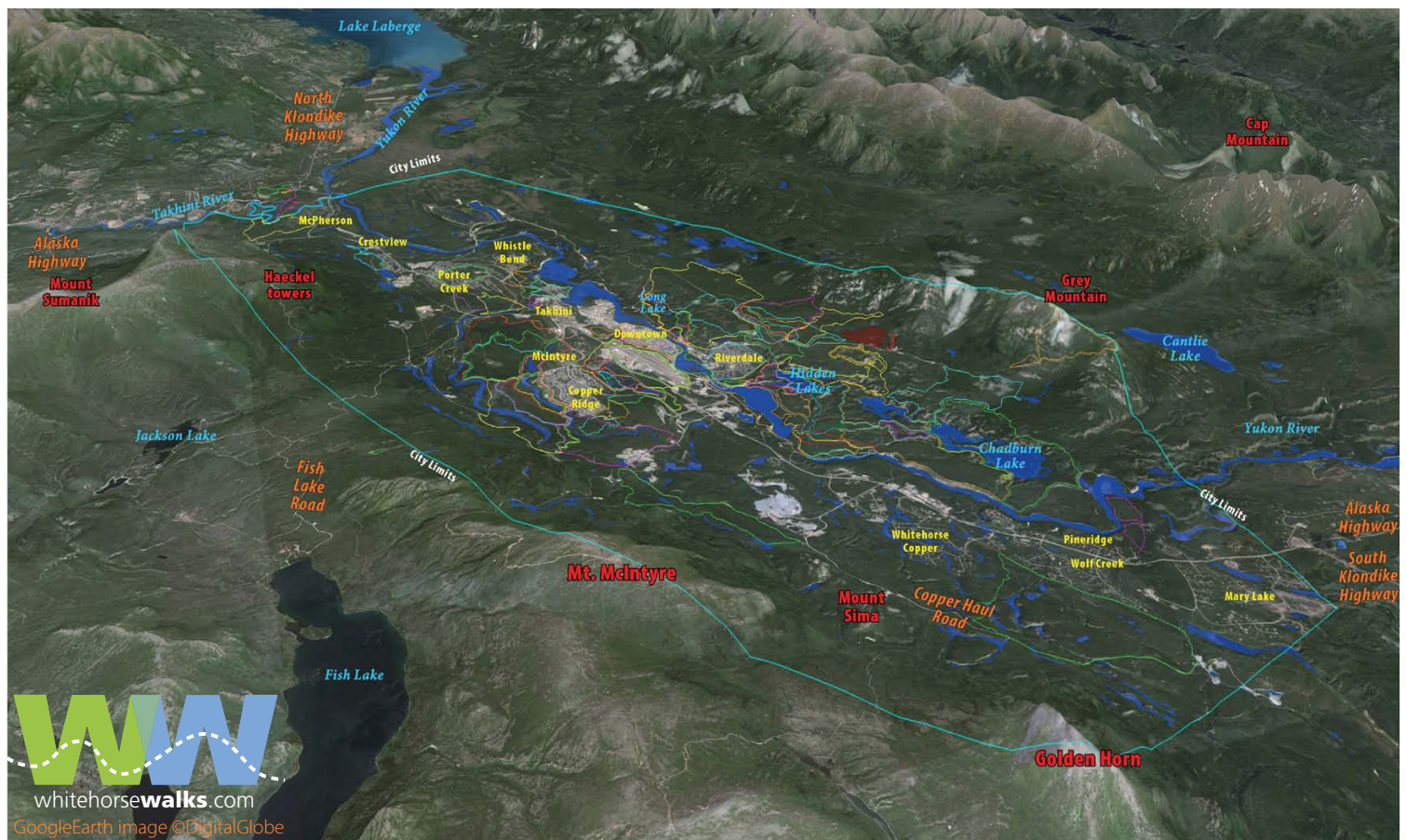
When one looks closely at walking, it's easy to see ways Whitehorse can be better. For instance, the City is looking at a new management plan for Chadburn Lake Park. Will it look at a Yukon River Trail? Will it look at trails in the future development areas past Long Lake which are completely surrounded by the Park? The City has two tenders out for pre-feasibility assessments (Appendix D.) This is exactly when walkability should be being discussed!

My goal is that *whitehorseWalks.com* presents a vision of a great walkable city. I've been choosing and mapping loop walks/hikes; so far I've picked over 75, almost 600 kms of walking!

This publication is a quick overview of *whitehorseWalks.com*. I discuss where making political decisions, fixing a trail, making a connection, creating a new trail can help make walking more attractive and universal. Consider this as my input to a conversation on community wellness, my vision of what Whitehorse could be like.

I use 'walkers' and 'walking trails' in the text to raise awareness about the needs of walking, not to exclude other trail users.

Peter Long, pjl@whitehorseWalks.com



LOOP WALKING TRAILS

Loop walking Trails, January, 2016

This is not meant to be a definitive set of walks; I continue to learn constraints, routings with better views, and even new routes. Think of this as a prototype for an inventory of walks. Identifying loops will make it easier to choose walks, to discuss trails with others!

By highlighting routes with their lengths, people can see on a map trails they have walked, as well as others that might appeal to them, walks that work with their time constraints. They can learn new walks in their own neighbourhood and in other parts of the city. A different walk each week would make a great healthy lifestyle resolution!

To better understand what I'm doing around these loop walking trails look at *Ireland's work on trail development. One of their publications is *Loop Walks Key Criteria*.

The international walking group **Volkssport considers the Millennium Trail as Yukon's only trail! Their trail needs: *minimum for a walking day event is 10 km. A shorter distance (5 to 9 km) and a longer distance up to 50 km can also be offered.*

In picking loops I'm looking for:

- short and long loops: morning- and afternoon-long walk/hikes, and day-long hikes, obvious ones where possible.
- a strong selection of neighbourhood loops — in a wilderness city, one shouldn't have to get in a vehicle and drive to have a good walk.
- a choice of experiences, such as urban sidewalk or paved trail or back country trails, different terrains; longer, diverse walks. In reality, most trails I've chosen are in the woods.
- parts of the city mapped on the *Whitehorse Trails App*, the paper *Whitehorse Trail Guide* and the *Whitehorse Nordic Centre* trail map.
- views, neat forests, creeks, ponds, hillsides, alpine, nice trails.

- trails that see year-round use; trails that work well in winter and in the shoulder season of icy, slippery mud; working with snowbikes to keep a small intimate trail footprint packed down.
- loops that connect areas and neighbourhoods, with a goal of an interconnected Whitehorse walking network.
- walks that both tourists and locals say "wow".

Some loops and areas will be addressed as I get time or suggestions: Crestview/Haeckel, Takhini, Hidden Lake, Whitehorse Copper, Mount Lorne, connecting more Yukon River Corridor pieces, alpine walks...

I've tried to make up meaningful loop names since they can be made up of 4 or 5 different trails, some named, but many not.

Some loops show an * to signify restrictions. This might be for a ski trail; it can also be a loop walkable only when a wetland is frozen. A restriction could be don't walk on or even don't cross over ski tracks.

Eventually, there could also be a web page for each walk showing all trail names, degree of difficulty, distances for trail segments, photographs, elevation graph... Trails could be listed by most used trails in winter; easiest to hardest; flattest to hilliest; even top 20 hikes.

Neighbourhood trail task forces could result in more mapping, trail enhancements, trail naming, some signing, hopefully, even neighbourhood stewardship...

So, let's have a look at walking in Whitehorse through the eyes of walkers. I'm slowly trying to have trail descriptions.

*http://www.irishtrails.ie/National_Trails_Office/Publications/Trail_Development/

**<http://walkalberta.ca/What-is-Volkssport.php>

IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY'S WALKING

Health and Active Living

The Yukon government has a vision: *"A Yukon that is active, where health, well-being and physical activity are viewed as an investment in the quality of life for every individual, and for vibrant, healthy and sustainable Yukon communities."* Active Living Yukon

- Daily we read about obesity, diabetes, cardiac problems, and that medicine is not the only path to better health. Study after study, website after website says people need to walk more. This isn't new: about 2400 years ago, Hippocrates said, "Walking is man's best medicine."
- Walking is a simple, basic, non-competitive activity. We don't need to buy anything, we don't need to join anything, we don't need to plan anything, we can be rich or poor, young, old, fit and unfit.
- Some of us walk because it's fun, meditative, because we want to stay in shape or possibly because we need to get in shape. Some because of love of being out in nature, in our clean air. Walking is a great 'recovering our traditional ways' activity.
- We have an aging population. Keeping seniors healthy and active makes financial sense. Walking improvements for seniors also benefit families with younger kids. It also benefits tourism, especially as tourists are generally city walkers, many are seniors, some aren't particularly fit,... in reality better walking benefits us all!
- Healthy living calls for daily walks, in almost any weather; think of walking for sanity or for air or peace or nature, and even to walk the dog (dogs like 2-5 walks a day, every day.) Has your doctor prescribed 'a daily walk' for your health?
- Winter walking, for some, means they are less fearful of wildlife.
- Walking is a linking activity between generations.



Walking and making change

A lot of focus for healthy living goes into facilities, organized recreation and sports. While good for participants, not everyone mountain bikes, skis, runs, swims, plays soccer or hockey. Money and effort spent on walking can benefit the many citizens that recreation and health initiatives may not reach.

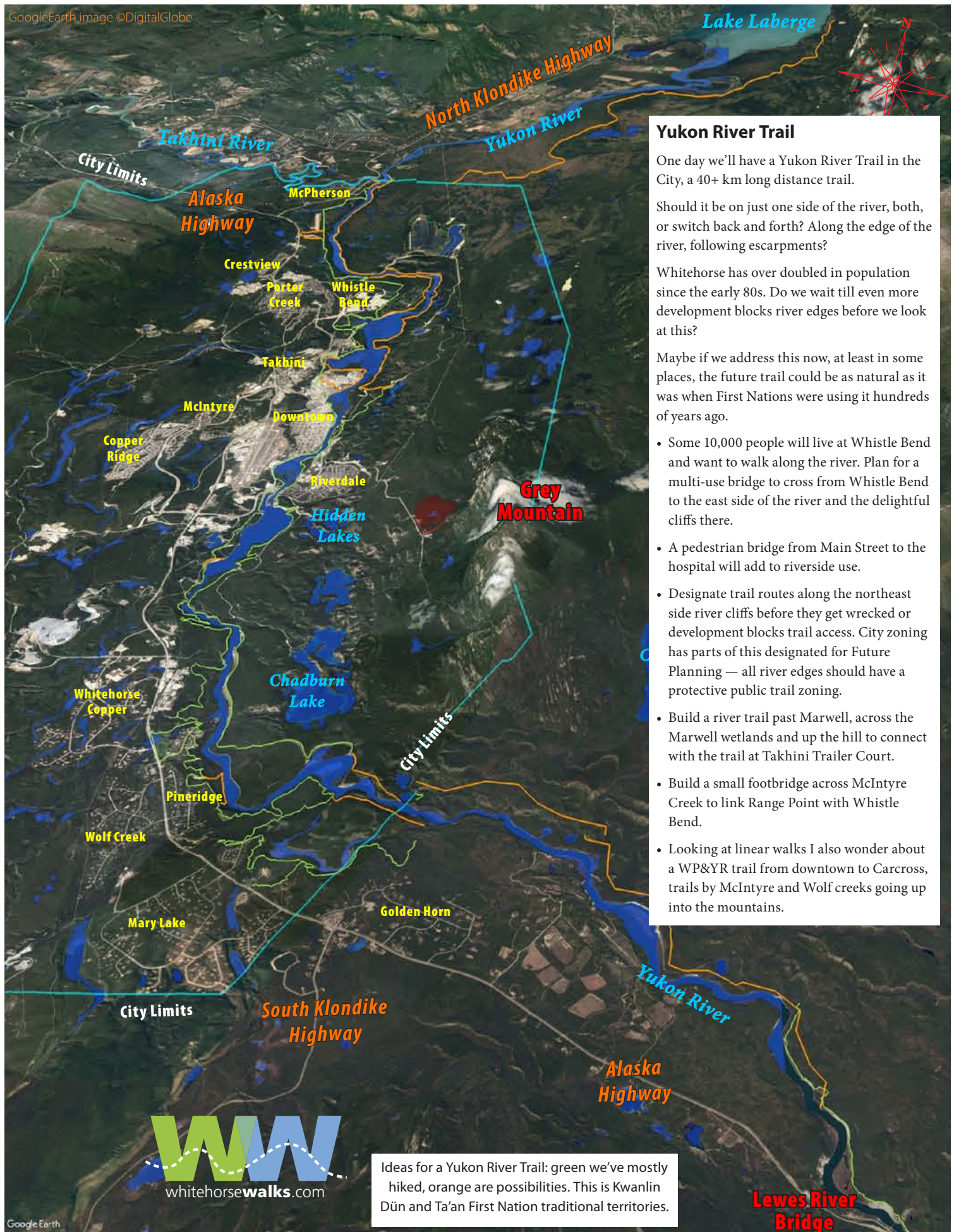
Presently governments look ahead for development, for power, water and roads. If we want a sustainable city with a strong walking culture, we need to look ahead for the growth of walking.

- How do we move forward on better walking infrastructure? With no organized lobby group, it's easy for walking to not be thought of. Looking at the variety of people who walk, how would a walking lobby work? Many places are geared to groups, to NGOs — CDF, Lotteries, even the City's Trail Committee.
- Walking champions in senior governments positions could ensure equitable walking points of view are integrated into all planning.
- The reality is governments can't do it all, nor can our taxes pay it all. This doesn't mean that things can't get done, rather that sometimes we need other ways of doing things. Perhaps by adopting one of the opportunities listed on these pages, a group could make it happen.
- One way is community service groups, business associations. The Rotary Centennial Bridge, with some 350,000 users a year, was also funded by individuals and families.
- Much gets done through the efforts of volunteers; these can be individuals with skills and not members of organized groups.
- Having neighbourhoods involved in walking improvements is complicated as some have no community associations. Engagement takes more work, but for fairness, must be done.
- Make use of *Monthly business walks with the Mayor of Whitehorse* Community Economic Development Strategy 2015 to 2020 WORK PLAN

<http://www.whitehorse.ca/home/showdocument?id=5198>



This project showed what can happen when the community at large gets together and says that a piece of recreational infrastructure is needed.



Yukon River Trail

One day we'll have a Yukon River Trail in the City, a 40+ km long distance trail.

Should it be on just one side of the river, both, or switch back and forth? Along the edge of the river, following escarpments?

Whitehorse has over doubled in population since the early 80s. Do we wait till even more development blocks river edges before we look at this?

Maybe if we address this now, at least in some places, the future trail could be as natural as it was when First Nations were using it hundreds of years ago.

- Some 10,000 people will live at Whistle Bend and want to walk along the river. Plan for a multi-use bridge to cross from Whistle Bend to the east side of the river and the delightful cliffs there.
- A pedestrian bridge from Main Street to the hospital will add to riverside use.
- Designate trail routes along the northeast side river cliffs before they get wrecked or development blocks trail access. City zoning has parts of this designated for Future Planning — all river edges should have a protective public trail zoning.
- Build a river trail past Marwell, across the Marwell wetlands and up the hill to connect with the trail at Takhini Trailer Court.
- Build a small footbridge across McIntyre Creek to link Range Point with Whistle Bend.
- Looking at linear walks I also wonder about a WP&YR trail from downtown to Carcross, trails by McIntyre and Wolf creeks going up into the mountains.



whitehorsewalks.com

Ideas for a Yukon River Trail: green we've mostly hiked, orange are possibilities. This is Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an First Nation traditional territories.



Wharf on the waterfront with the great scenic viewpoints on the Hospital Ridge Trail on the opposite side of the river.

Tourism and economic development

*“The Volkssport clubs of Alberta have 66 Permanent Trails across the province. This makes a compelling reason for out of town walkers to visit Alberta for a few weeks and experience some terrific walking.”**

We often hear that Whitehorse needs to diversify our economy. What about walking tourism? Many people come through Whitehorse — we don’t need to attract them here, we just need to convince them to stay a bit longer. Walking is a pleasurable activity that takes time. Providing a walking experience could be a new way to approach tourism, especially for those visitors who want active outdoor healthy holidays.

People want to know why we like it here. They want a stronger feel of the land, of nature, than just seeing it through a windshield. They want a sense of what life was like for First Nations before roads, when walking was the normal way to get around.

Our many loop walks will do much for portraying us as a walking destination. Unlike some tourism initiatives, improvements to our walking infrastructure directly benefits locals on a daily basis.

Core walking facilities for residents that tourists would love

A denser downtown population could mean fewer people driving from home to work, means fewer greenhouse gasses. But for many Yukoners who love the outdoors and want to have an active living lifestyle, downtown can be less than great. To make it more walkable we could:

- Promote the Hospital – Long Lake trails as healthy trails. These will be popular with visitors.
- Build a pedestrian bridge from Main Street to the hospital. With this we address the City’s vision of a densely populated downtown and a strong diversified economy. In part, a vibrant downtown comes from a healthy downtown retail climate.

Downtown residents and workers would walk across to the hospital and the Hospital – Long Lake trails. Hospital area workers would walk downtown. Tourists would spend more time downtown, the waterfront, and the lively downtown arts scene, interspersed with walking the trails.

This could be led by a well-organized team including the downtown merchants, the Chambre of Commerce, Tourism, Golden Age, the Riverdale and Downtown community associations...

- Make a neat walking connection from downtown to the new city operations building

[*http://walkalberta.ca/Permanent-Trails.php](http://walkalberta.ca/Permanent-Trails.php)

- Designate the Hepburn Tramway a Historical Walk and fix it up.

- Connect major downtown trail pieces:

Complete the Lower Escarpment Trail at both ends of downtown.

Make a green parkette along the edge of Spook Creek to connect the Lower Escarpment Trail with the Waterfront Trail. Let’s try to get the parking lot campers to walk into town.

Continue the waterfront trail heading north past Marwell.

- Build a staircase or switchback behind the ball diamonds across from Yukon Energy to connect the Airport Perimeter Trail to the Rotary Centennial Bridge and the Millennium and Schwatka Lake trails.

Encourage people to walk the escarpment above downtown.

Staying found: trail signage, maps

Trails should be mapped, signed and rated as to degree of difficulty. Generally, there are few named and marked trails in town. In areas where there’s none, giving directions is almost impossible. Relying on electronic devices, especially in the freezing cold, is not safe.

- Recreational maps should show all trails, including minor ones.
- Put larger-area inset maps on trail signpost maps.

Waymarking signage should make one feel secure about being on the right trail. This is especially true as we promote tourism. Winter darkness can come quickly; taking a wrong turn can be too easy.

- Some say too much signage would interfere with their ‘wilderness’ experience. Getting lost shouldn’t be part of our experience. Getting people active and outside, and keeping them safe on trails should be more important. Let creative design solve ‘too much signage’.
- Waymark signs should be simple, clear and recognizable. Perhaps have FN and artistic designs; or make Long Lake/Hospital trails medical symbols, Chadburn trails as trees or animals, birds...
- Waymarks must use same trail name as on paper maps and apps.
- Waymarks should be cheap and long lasting, easy to put on a tree, rock face or post and visible from a distance. Winter walking offers extra challenges; perhaps using special markers that only indicate you’re on a trail interspersed with full waymark signage.
- Installing waymarking would be a good task for neighbourhood stewardship groups; workshops on best practices could be given.

Safety

Make slopes safer, especially when meeting descending bicyclists.

- Build switchbacks at steep downhills that some might take at speed or where heavy usage has made the trail slippery.
- Put trail warning signs where vehicles travel at speed.
- Build a switchback at the Magnusson trailhead so it's easier connecting to the hiking trails at the top the hill.
- Make Peewee Hill safer during muddy, icy, slippery conditions.

Develop inexpensive trail surfacing–bridging–boardwalks to improve rooted, wet trails and spring icy/muddy trail walking in high traffic locations, especially close-in neighbourhood trails.

Build a switchback down to Riverdale from the saddle between Heartbreak Hill and the Dam Hill on the Chadburn Lake Road.

Wildlife safety needs to be well understood. Walking in groups is a strong safety measure.

Walking in groups

With no organization to promote walks such as weekly health or neighbourhood walks, perhaps this could be a city initiative.

- Do groups of friends going for a walk flirt with liability if a core group continually organizes walks? Could liability for such local walking groups be covered by membership in Sport Yukon?
- A walking festival would attract locals to explore their home city. It would be a very popular tourist attraction. How can this happen?

Public right-of-ways

They should be signed on the street and the greenbelt ends. Zoning maps show where these short-cuts are and I've included them on the maps. Neighbouring lots should not encroach.

- Winter snowplowing should leave entrances clear.

WCCSC and City trail use

Build a boardwalk/switchback across Arkell Wetlands behind Ingram to allow a better variety of walks in the trail network between Arkell Wetlands and McIntyre Creek Wetlands. It also makes winter use of city trails in the Ski Club/McIntyre Creek area easier for residents.

Build pieces of City trail to allow residents, especially from McIntyre, Ingram, Arkell, Logan and Raven's Ridge, to walk City trails in winter.

- Make all of Porcupine Ridge Trail all-season use for walking.
- Build a trail from Bouncing Bunny to Calypso Canyon, and one from Reimer Reason past Sarah Steele Hut to connect with Lichen It.

Alpine hiking — worthy destinations

We have 4 mountains, each a distinct local landmark, that are part of the city's boundaries. Four rough roads access alpine hiking on each. Carcross First Nation worked to improve the condition of the Montana Mountain road to encourage more trail use. Could Whitehorse work on its roads?

- Fix parts of the Mount McIntyre Road to make safer driving. Likewise Grey Mountain Road and Haeckel Hill Road.
- Grey Mountain, a striking aspect of our views, needs a walking trail connecting the Magnusson trails to the Grey Mountain Ridge Trail.
- Build a boardwalk across McIntyre Creek by the old cabins on the Hawk Ridge Trail to give better access to trails on Mt. McIntyre.
- Haeckel Hill access trails from Crestview would be very popular.
- Golden Horn is such a dominant marker on our horizon. Seems worthy of a hiking trail.



Chadburn Lake Road. People walk along this 700-metre stretch of gravelly winding hill with a very blind crest at the top. Vehicles go fast.



McIntyre Creek Wetlands. Presently it's a 9 km return hike for people in Ingram; with a switchback and boardwalk behind Ingram, this would be 4 km. The difference between a quick after supper walk or a planned hike.



Mount McIntyre Road. You can see the towers on Grey Mountain and behind them, the mountains around Cap Mountain. *Except* for a few rough sections, this dirt road is in reasonable shape for many vehicles.

What Next?

We need to ensure the trail data is correct, that the routes are appropriate before people set out onto a particular trail. Let's try to identify walking loops in other parts of the city so others can get out walking. Are there other things we could lobby for to make other walks possible?

Buzz! To make things happen, people have to talk about walking. Pass this document on and get others walking – talking. Politicians and bureaucracy need reassurance that we think walking is a big deal.

I'll keep updating, such as adding the newest 2015 motorized trail routes and new walking routes as they become apparent. The best help for me is to let me know if these ideas fit your walking vision. If you really want to be involved, keep reading and send any changes...

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS PROJECT

My selection of trails is a starting point of an evolving project. As part of ensuring each of the loop walks is a good choice, each loop should be ground truthed (verified). This includes GPS proofing and assessing the trail. Walking each loop more than once, and in each direction, by different walkers would be ideal.

Do you like to write? Make short pieces for the whole trail, or even for spots along the trail. What about you artists? If each loop becomes a web page there's lots of room for fun stuff. Think of the page convincing someone to walk the route, but not over selling it!

As you walk the loops, there's many things to think about. Put yourself in the shoes of a foreign visitor, or pretend you have knee troubles, or have a couple of kids with you. Think of seniors. Does that change your perceptions of the trail?

Loops are made up of parts of many trails, both named and not. I wanted the loop names to be meaningful and distinct.

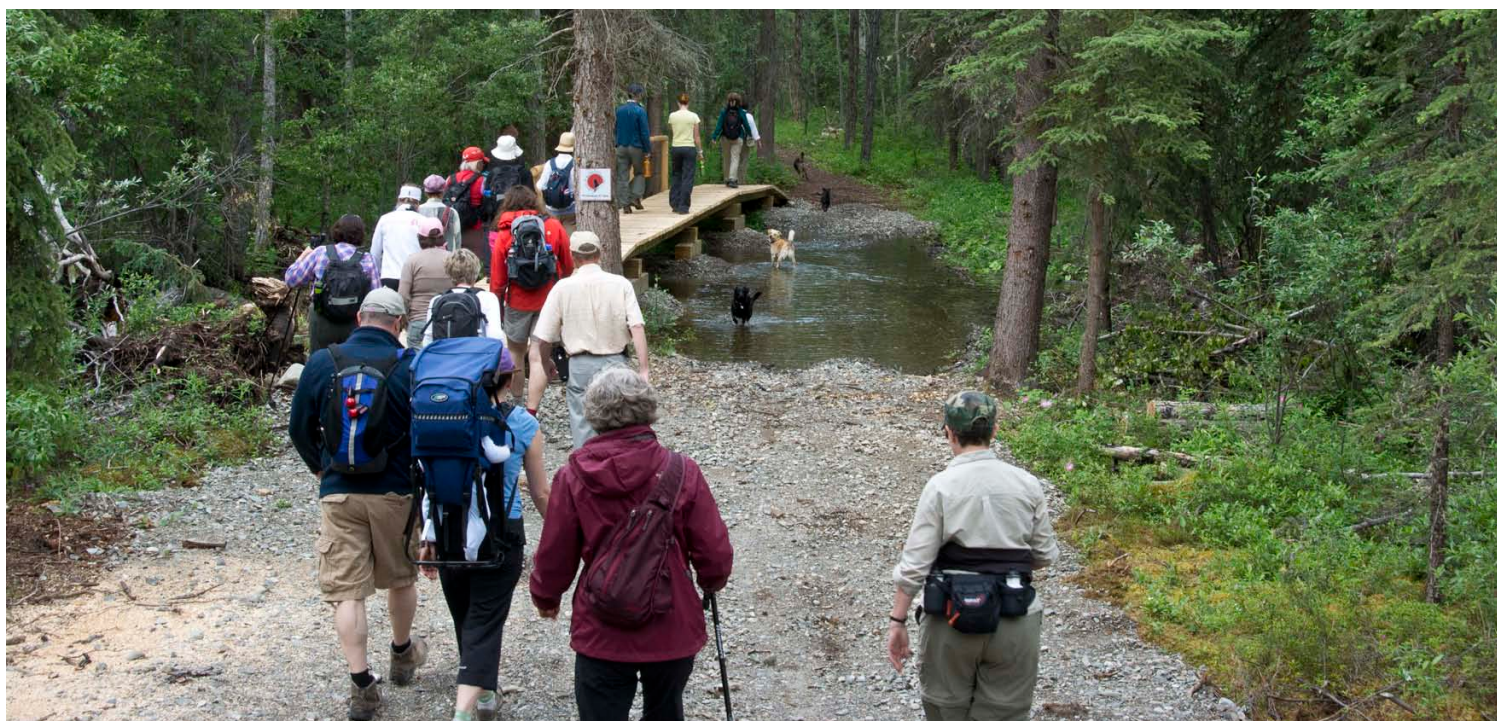
Following are some things to take note of:

- Please GPS your walk, either with a dedicated GPS, or perhaps using the free MapMyWalk app on your phone.
- Was the trail easy to follow? Would you recommend for a visitor? Was it confusing at intersections? What priority would you give for waymaking? Were all intersections shown?
- Was the trail being used in the winter, i.e., generally packed down? Was it often used by snow bikes? Is it worth the effort to publicize and get more winter trail users? Look at the 2 Towers loop as an example.
- Was it family friendly? Stroller friendly? Any places to quit mid hike?
- Were parts of the trail slippery, for instance from clay? tree roots? boggy? Were there spots where a bit of trail work would make the trail more accessible? boardwalk, switchback, bridge...
- Were there dangerous spots which should be signed? Were parts designated one way for mountain bikes? Blind downhill? Could a switchback make a situation safer for other users?

- Were there spots where a different routing would make a more compelling hike?
- Describe the trail. Were there lots of hilly pieces, or maybe just 1 big hill? Did you need to be sure-footed? In the forest, wet, views? Were there any awe-inspiring spots along the trail? Was it a must-do hike, or just a nice outing, or boring? How long did it take you to walk the loop? Would you rate this as easy? Medium? Hard? What is your walking skill level?
- Are there side trails that should be shown, trail names not shown?
- Were there spots where there were interpretation opportunities? I've put a  icon on maps for some viewpoints. Try to name visible landmarks, do a horizon/sketch at some of these points.
- If you walked the whole loop, how long did it take? Think 3-6 km per hour for walking, 2-3 km per hour for snowshoeing. Walking times depend on fitness, footwear (snowshoes or boots), snow depth and how often the trail is being used. Winter walking times can be significantly slower on less-used trails, in fresh soft snow, on wind-drifted ridges, or when vehicles have chewed up a trail.
- Was the trail easily accessible from a road? Was there parking? Could a regular car access it? A motorhome? Is it a rough road? Some such as Grey Mountain upper, Haeckel Hill, Mount McIntyre Road, Coal Lake Road are tricky or almost unusable roads depending on the vehicle or driver.
- Any schools trails suitable for joint neighbourhood stewardship?

And of course, talking up walking. Getting others to see a vision of a strong walking community is always important. Talk especially to friends in high places, politicians, managers, decision makers. Unless they hear about walking from others, they will be hesitant to push walking higher on the agendas!

Higher resolution base maps of the loop walks are linked on my webpage. Send me any GPS, observations for accuracy, improvement, better routing and missed or incorrect features, trails or right-of-ways.



By walking in groups, people feel secure and adventurous and social. Recreation brochures could promote walking passports, regular weekly walking groups, even going as far as providing training for walk leaders. There would need to be some way of handling liability. Often groups of friends hiking rely on a small core group or individual which means these walks can be very irregular. *Blue Moon photo*