

## DRAFT VISION, GOALS & ACTIONS September 2017

The Downtown Planning Team has engaged with an estimated 750 people about the current status of and desired future of Downtown Whitehorse since launching the project in April 2017. Through the April Future Forum, two intergovernmental sessions, the June Plan-a-Thon and numerous public installations, and social media conversations, the Team has continually worked to refine its understanding of the priority issues and potential solutions.

The Team has prepared a draft Vision, Goals, and Actions for the Downtown for public and partner input in September 2017. This document is not the draft Downtown Plan, but rather an interim document that will be used to “test” the key elements that may ultimately be included in the draft Plan (due January 2018).



### Part 1. Draft Vision

*Downtown is the social, commercial, and cultural centre of Whitehorse - the walkable heart of this unique, northern “Wilderness City”. It is socially and economically inclusive, diverse, safe and accessible for all modes of travel, and grounded in rich cultural heritage. Downtown offers a wide range of housing options within easy reach of a variety of employment, shopping, entertainment, and service amenities. An impressive array of parks and trails provides opportunities for recreation and gathering, as well as easy access to the surrounding wilderness.*

## Part 2. Draft Goals and Actions (By Theme/Topic)

### HOW WE LIVE

**Goal: Provide a wider range of affordable market and social housing options.**

*Actions*

- Expand existing policy incentives to achieve better integration of affordable and social housing units with market housing types for new multi-family and mixed-use development.
- Continue discussions with the Government of Yukon on the potential for affordable market and social housing developments on properties within and beyond the Downtown South area to achieve a more even distribution throughout the Downtown.
- Encourage a mix of residential types in Downtown South.

**Goal: Preserve and enhance the unique and distinct character of the Old Town area while allowing for continued redevelopment over time.**

*Actions*

- Maintain the Residential Downtown (RD) zone for the Old Town area as a means of supporting existing and future residential-only building forms.
- Review allowable floor area and building setback requirements to ensure that new development complements the neighbourhood character.
- Consider base design guidelines (e.g. site/urban design, building form and character, building materials) for Old Town and incorporate into the RD zoning.

**Goal: Throughout Downtown's mixed-use (CM1, CM2, CMW) areas, ensure that new development provides quality public realm improvements.**

*Actions*

- Review lot setback requirements for Downtown core commercial zones to improve pedestrian experience and aesthetics.
- Consider revising building setback requirements in the area between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave and Jarvis and Ray Streets to create less imposing and "tower-like" multi-storey buildings.
- Consider integrating some base design requirements relating to public realm improvements (e.g. site and urban design) into the Zoning Bylaw for the CM1 and CM2 zones.

**Goal:** Encourage the inclusion of residential uses into high priority future redevelopment sites such as 5<sup>th</sup> & Rogers and the current City of Whitehorse Municipal Operations Building at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ogilvie Street.

*Actions*

- Work with government and community partners to prioritize development of the 5<sup>th</sup> and Rogers site in Downtown South, with a focus on high-density, blended social and market housing.
- Prioritize the sale and redevelopment of the Municipal Services Building at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Ogilvie Street, following the relocation of staff and services.



## HOW WE WORK & SHOP

**Goal: Optimize parking for local employees, Downtown residents, shoppers, tourists, and visitors.**

### *Actions*

As part of the Parking Management Plan update, explore the following:

- Potential for a new mixed-use parkade/transit hub, ideally near Main Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.
- Review of parking requirements associated with new residential/commercial development.
- Balancing the needs of short-stay (e.g. customer) vs. all-day (e.g. employee) parking vs. evening and weekends (e.g. residents).
- Allowing temporary spillover parking on vacant City-owned lots.
- Reducing employee parking demand by making alternative transportation attractive, functional, and safe.
- Priority parking spaces for carpool and micro vehicles.

**Goal: Enhance Main Street as the centre of Downtown Whitehorse's vibrant core commercial area.**

### *Actions*

- Work with local businesses (e.g. restaurants) and community arts groups to develop a "pop-up patio program" for Main Street during the summer and immediate shoulder seasons.
- Explore increased arts, culture, culinary, and recreation programming for the core commercial area, supported by temporary road closures to create safe pedestrian-only environments during scheduled events.
- Explore, as a pilot project, activation of the alley immediately west of Horwood's Mall, the Edgewater Hotel and Closeleigh Manor, starting with the segment from Steele to Main Street. "Activation" of the alleyway can be achieved through a variety of means, including:
  - Creating a name for the alley that honours a strong historical figure or event.
  - Permanent and temporary art by local artists.
  - Creative lighting developed in collaboration with local artisans.
  - Casual seating/pop-up patios.
  - Exploring options for waste collection to enhance enjoyment of the alley improvements.



**Goal: Enhance Front Street as a pedestrian-oriented social, commercial and cultural hub.**

*Actions*

- Work with local businesses (e.g. restaurants, mobile food vendors) and community arts groups to coordinate a “pop-up patio program” for the riverfront wharf and park area, ideally in conjunction with related Main Street events.
- Explore increased arts, culture, and recreation programming for Front Street, supported by temporary road closures to create safe pedestrian-only environments during scheduled events.
  - Work to coordinate a Front/Main Street event schedule that can be circulated to local businesses for promotional purposes.
- Explore opportunities with the Government of Yukon to optimize public access to and enjoyment of riverfront heritage buildings. With respect to these assets:
  - Initiate discussions to explore potential artist/artisan/cultural tenants that could occupy above-grade spaces for private studio use and at-grade spaces for public galleries.
  - Explore the potential to convert a portion of at-grade floor area for commercial restaurant food & beverage use.
  - Investigate potential relocation of some existing tenants to alternative locations in the Downtown core.

- Explore mixed-use commercial potential of the City-owned space located between the Yukon Visitor Information Centre and the riverfront. This site could contribute to a more active riverfront by integrating at-grade restaurant food & beverage uses with outdoor patio spaces and upper level decks. Winter-city design principles should be applied to ensure year-round use.

**Goal: Continue to support mixed residential-commercial development in key areas of Downtown through zoning.**

*Actions*

- Maintain the current extent of Downtown coverage for existing Mixed Use Commercial (CM1), Mixed Use Commercial 2 (CM2) and Mixed Use Waterfront (CMW) zones, which allow for significant mixed-use development.

**Goal: Focus higher quality hotel development in Downtown Whitehorse, ideally in areas with views of the Yukon River and surrounding landscape.**

*Actions*

- Limit hotels (excluding motels and bed and breakfasts) from locating outside of Downtown.

**Goal: Foster entrepreneurship and the growth of the local knowledge economy by exploring the potential for improvements to:**

- The network of publicly accessible Wi-Fi.
- Broadband communications network.
- Policy and/or regulatory mechanisms impacting the establishment and growth of co-working/shared office spaces and business incubators.

**Goal: Showcase and promote local “Made in Yukon” businesses situated Downtown to a broader audience.**

*Actions*

- Collaborate with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and Government of Yukon to explore the demand for increased online presence for Downtown business and service providers.
- Initiate discussions with the Yukon Department of Tourism & Culture and local arts, culture and business groups to explore potential for “Made in Yukon” webpage/web portal and related e-commerce opportunities.

**Goal: Support initiatives to broaden the appeal and income-accessibility of Downtown as a retail and service hub.**

*Actions*

- Support efforts by local businesses and organizations to launch new thrift/reuse stores for Downtown.

## HOW WE MOVE

**Goal: Calm vehicle traffic and provide a safe and high-quality experience along 2nd Avenue for all users.**

### *Actions*

- Undertake a 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Corridor Study and Safety Audit that investigates and addresses the following elements:
  - Creating a higher quality pedestrian environment (e.g. landscaping, lighting, seating, etc.).
  - Optimizing and emphasizing pedestrian and transit facilities.
  - Design and regulatory interventions to reduce vehicle traffic speeds.
  - Improving safety for all modes of travel, with particular emphasis on pedestrian and cyclist crossings.

**Goal: Provide a safe and connected Downtown pedestrian and cycling network.**

### *Actions*

- Construct an on-street separated bike lane along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to complement the riverfront and lower escarpment trails as a key north-south artery.
  - Focus initial 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue cycling infrastructure improvements on the segment between the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues and Black Street.
- Construct separated bike lanes through the northern part of Downtown (Chilkoot Way, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and Quartz Road).
- Construct a new paved multi-use trail connection between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the riverfront north of Shipyards Park and south of Waterfront Station.
- Develop All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling and pedestrian infrastructure along key east-west routes linking the escarpment to the riverfront, including:
  - Ogilvie Street
  - Black Street
  - Wood Street
  - Hanson Street
  - Hoge Street
- Explore the feasibility of an iconic pedestrian/cycling bridge across the Yukon River in the vicinity of Hanson Street/Yukon Visitor Information Centre as a means of diversifying active transportation options to and from Hospital Road, Riverdale, and Downtown.

- Evaluate the design option to allow ambulances to cross the bridge directly to the hospital.
- Explore further improvements to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue from Strickland to Ogilvie Streets to enhance this corridor's function as a north-south neighbourhood greenway (e.g., traffic calmed shared roadway, a new pedestrian connection from Black Street to Ogilvie Street behind Qwanlin Mall).
- Extend the lower escarpment paved trail south of Hanson Street and connect to the Millennium Trail.
- Extend the lower escarpment paved trail north from Black Street to Ogilvie Street and investigate options to extend the trail further north of Ogilvie Street towards Two Mile Hill.
- Establish a second escarpment staircase in the Downtown South area (as outlined in the 2011 Downtown South Master Plan).
- Optimize secure bicycle storage infrastructure and rider amenities at key locations throughout the Downtown (e.g. the proposed transit hub/parkade).
- Consider expanding the public realm requirements for Commercial Service (CS) zoning (e.g. Real Canadian Superstore to Walmart area) to improve pedestrian safety, connectivity, and aesthetics in future development.

**Goal: Reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips in and out of the Downtown by daytime employees and promote active transportation alternatives.**

*Actions*

- Investigate the potential for park n' ride lots (outside the Downtown) and a corresponding Downtown shuttle service.
- Work with the Government of Yukon and other large employers to encourage alternative forms of transportation for Downtown-based employees.

**Goal: Prioritize public transit.**

*Actions*

- Construct an enclosed transit hub in the Main Street area, potentially in conjunction with a mixed-use commercial parkade structure.
- Explore upgrades (e.g. lighting, seating, wind protection) to high priority transit stops.

**Goal: Upgrade the road network in Old Town.**

*Actions*

- Prioritize road improvements with proposed cycling infrastructure improvement routes in Old Town.

- Prioritize sidewalks on both sides of the street along planned All Ages and Abilities east-west cycling routes in Old Town.
- Complete paving and associated pedestrian and cycling improvements along 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



**Goal: Explore the potential for a network of electric vehicle charging stations Downtown.**

- As part of a larger city-wide review, consider optimal locations for future electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Downtown area, prioritizing key employment, shopping, tourism, and entertainment destinations.

**Goal: Optimize multi-modal travel safety and user-friendliness of roads, paved trails and sidewalks by pursuing the following:**

- Design snow storage into future improvements.
- Increase frequency and effectiveness of snow clearing (particularly along key active transportation routes).
- Increase frequency of line painting for crosswalks and active transportation routes.
- Increase application of alternative pavement marking techniques for crosswalks and other roadway markings (e.g. permanent markings).
- Increase frequency of street and paved pathway sweeping.
- Improve lighting for key pedestrian/cyclist network connections (e.g. underneath the Robert Campbell Bridge).
- Investigate opportunities to improve cleanliness, maintenance, and waste collection within Downtown alleyways.

## HOW WE PLAY

**Goal: Improve the connectivity and accessibility of key recreational trails.**

### *Actions*

- Extend the paved lower escarpment trail south of Hanson Street and connect it to the Millennium Trail (at the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Robert Service Way traffic circle) via the conversion of a Downtown South street to a greenway and/or construction of a new paved pathway along the west side of Robert Service Way.
- Extend the paved lower escarpment trail north from Black Street to Ogilvie Street and consider extending the trail further north of Ogilvie Street if feasible.
- Establish a second escarpment staircase in the Downtown South area.
- Work with Yukon Aviation Branch to secure continued public access to the upper escarpment trail and resolve ongoing erosion issues.
- Explore the feasibility of an iconic pedestrian/cycling bridge across the Yukon River in the vicinity of Hanson Street/Yukon Visitor Information Centre to provide a more direct connection to Chadburn Lake Regional Park.
- Designate a formal network of paved and unpaved City trails in the Downtown and provide information kiosks/maps at key points along the escarpment and the riverfront area highlighting nearby trails and connections to wilderness trails/areas.

**Goal: Provide an optimum environment for outdoor recreation, gathering, and exploration for all ages.**

### *Actions*

- Construct the proposed new Eagle Park playground in Downtown South as recommended in the Downtown South Master Plan and playground redesign process and rename it “Clay Cliffs Park”.
- Construct a playground at Shipyards Park.
- Designate, improve, and sign a small network of natural surface trails in the escarpment area (including the unpaved portion of the airport escarpment).
- Consider and promote opportunities for the creation of smaller, flexible public spaces (e.g. “pocket” parks) into streetscape improvements and new public building projects.
- Optimize four-season and daylong use of outdoor public spaces and corridors.
- Encourage the integration of winter-city design principles into the amenity spaces of development applications.
- Install public washrooms in a highly visible and central location in the commercial core area for the comfort of residents and tourists alike (e.g. the waterfront wharf area).

## HOW WE THRIVE

**Goal:** Help address issues of homelessness and housing insecurity in cooperation with government and community partners.

### *Actions*

- Continue to implement the Yukon Housing Action Plan recommendations with partners.
- Encourage the incorporation of housing insecurity and affordability measures into any mixed commercial-residential development initiatives on government (City, territorial, and First Nation) lands in the Downtown.



**Goal:** Encourage innovation and partnerships to foster community safety, inclusiveness and the engagement of marginalized populations.

### *Actions*

- Initiate discussions to establish a collaborative working group of community organizations, businesses, and property owners to develop and experiment with place and program-based initiatives in the following priority areas:

- The riverfront
- Area around 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Qwanlin Mall, École Whitehorse Elementary School, and Salvation Army Centre of Hope
- Main Street

**Goal: Support the efforts of community organizations working to support marginalized populations.**

*Actions*

- Consider and work to mitigate the potential negative impacts of Downtown development on service organizations.

**Goal: Provide increased options to reduce and divert waste in high priority Downtown areas.**

*Actions*

- Initiate pilot program for three-stream (e.g. waste, organics, and recycling) services in high traffic areas including Main Street, Front Street, the lower escarpment trail, Rotary Park, and Shipyards Park.

**Goal: Continue to beautify and “green” the Downtown.**

*Actions*

- Increase landscaping and site edge treatments (e.g. sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, etc.) both on public lands and newly developed private parcels in the northern portion of Downtown (e.g. from Jarvis Street to Walmart).
- Explore the feasibility of an incentives-based program to utilize vacant Downtown lots for community benefit (e.g. gardens, use by community groups, etc.).
- Explore the feasibility of a program to utilize and encourage rooftop spaces for outdoor amenity, green space, and small-scale agricultural uses.
- Continue support and funding for valued beautification initiatives such as the Communities in Bloom and Christmas lights programs.
- Explore the potential for additional community garden spaces along the escarpment.

## HOW WE EXPRESS OUR IDENTITY

**Goal: Foster connections to, and recognition of, local First Nations through collaborative development of interpretation and wayfinding.**

### *Actions*

- Integrate more First Nation themes, language, and names into Downtown places, amenities, and wayfinding infrastructure.
- Continue to support KDFN's work on the Whitehorse Waterfront Heritage Project (e.g. examine collaboration and partnership opportunities during implementation).

**Goal: Preserve the unique, eclectic and aesthetically pleasing character of Main Street and surrounding areas.**

### *Actions*

- Develop Design Guidelines for the Core Commercial (CC) area to guide urban and building design for Main Street and immediate area (note: the CMW zone has Design Guidelines for reference).
- Establish a Design Review Panel to apply the aforementioned Design Guidelines to the review of development and redevelopment proposals in the CC area.

**Goal: Ensure the riverfront and Front Street remain key scenic and cultural corridors.**

### *Actions*

- Establish a Design Review Panel to apply the mixed use waterfront (CMW) Design Guidelines to the review of development and redevelopment proposals in the riverfront area.

**Goal: Support increased and diversified use of the riverfront wharf and park area.**

### *Actions*

- Explore the feasibility of a warehouse-type structure (e.g. "Freight Shed") of sufficient scale to provide wind protection for the wharf and house the following amenities:
  - Public washroom
  - Water fountains
  - Storage for outdoor patio tables and chairs
  - Storage for live performance/event/arts supplies
  - Multi-use space

- In collaboration with the Government of Yukon, explore the potential for at-grade restaurant/café and weather-protected patio space for the northern portion of the White Pass & Yukon Route building.

**Goal: Create a greater sense of arrival into the Downtown.**

*Actions*

- Explore improvements to the north and south entrances to Downtown (e.g. Robert Service Way; Two Mile Hill Road; Quartz Road) through gateway treatments and traffic calming.
  - Work with local arts/artisan groups and First Nations to explore potential gateway designs/features.



**Goal: Continue to support the integration of local arts and culture into place-making initiatives.**

*Actions*

- Consider reallocating some public art expenditures related to the new Municipal Operations building to the Downtown area instead.
- Work with local arts groups and First Nations to develop and implement “tactical urbanism” interventions – focused, temporary and low-cost arts and culture projects/exhibits intended to activate residential, commercial, and public spaces.

- Promote the City's Heritage Fund as a resource to local artists interested in creating public art in Downtown that helps to tell the history of the area (e.g. First Nation heritage, post-Whitehorse town site establishment heritage).

**Goal: Promote resident and visitor appreciation of Downtown Whitehorse's natural setting and context.**

*Actions*

- Encourage the integration of outdoor patio, deck spaces and rooftops overlooking natural amenities (e.g. Yukon River, escarpment, parks, future pedestrian bridge crossing).
- Incorporate wilderness themes into waterfront and escarpment trail interpretive signage.
- Incorporate light pollution mitigation measures when reviewing design proposals and infrastructure projects.

**Goal: Protect, interpret, and celebrate heritage buildings.**

*Actions*

- Consult with property owners on Wood Street (from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8th Avenues) to potentially designate the area as a heritage district to protect the unique representation of different Whitehorse townsite eras.
- Evaluate buildings in Downtown that have potential for inclusion as resources on the City's Heritage Registry to reflect the evolving history of Whitehorse.
- Promote the City's Historic Restoration Incentive Policy to owners of heritage properties to encourage the formal historic designation and maintenance of heritage buildings.

