

Downtown Plan – Old Town Pop-Up Event – Walking Tour Notes

September 19, 2017 6:30-8:00pm

Tour leaders: Mike Ellis and Ben Campbell, City of Whitehorse

A walking tour took place with Downtown residents during the September 19 Old Town Pop-Up at the bottom of the Black St stairs. The purpose of the tour was to discuss some of the draft goals and actions in the Downtown Plan related to Old Town.

The following is a summary of the discussions recorded by the City during the tour:

Topic	Recorded Discussion Notes
Lambert Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One resident raised concerns that Lambert St between 4th Ave and 5th Ave is too narrow. Angle parking on both sides of street has resulted in some close calls.
Cyclist and Pedestrian Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyclists and pedestrians Downtown – would like to see signs placed around Downtown. Cyclists and pedestrians should come first on the hierarchy.
Traffic and Safety Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall there appears to be an increase in traffic. Have really noticed it in the roundabout area which has become dangerous. This will be fixed when 6th Avenue is reconstructed.
Light Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light pollution Downtown. Can't see night sky. Advocate for reducing light pollution.
Maintaining Character of Old Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an interest in maintaining the quirky character of Old Town. Happy to see winter city design principles included in the draft actions for Downtown. Should also really encourage public spaces and unique use of underutilized properties for community benefit.
Livability of Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, there is a strong interest in making Downtown more livable for people.
Use of Old Town Boulevards/Access to Parking Stalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of discussion on what to do about boulevards in Old Town. Many people are parking their vehicles on the boulevards in front of their homes. This is even occurring on recently reconstructed streets (e.g. on Black St). The City has had issues enforcing this. Many vehicles are overhanging the sidewalks. The City requires that new developments have their required parking stalls off the rear lanes. However, many people are still parking in front of their homes as it is most convenient. During the walk there was lots of discussion around either requiring parking off the lane or else allowing front yard driveways to access parking. People on the walk had differing views on this – some think City should allow front yard parking, others think it should be from the lane.
East-West Street Connectors (Ogilvie, Black, Wood, Hanson and Hoge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realize that some of the key east-west roads have been reconstructed (Black and Ogilvie) so the City could do some quick fixes on these roads without having to completely reconstruct them again. Could look at doing temporary solutions to test or pilot before they go permanent.

Landscaping in Boulevards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people do not know that the City encourages residents to landscape the boulevards in front of their homes. Can do community gardens, maybe even raised garden beds. • There should be an educational campaign that encourages people to landscape the boulevard. Make it known that it might be removed or impacted during street reconstruction projects, however.
Street Trees Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps the Downtown Plan should recommend a Street Trees program where the City offers free trees to homeowners. The trees are planted in the road allowance in front of properties (e.g. the boulevard) and the homeowner then maintains it. Planting trees in Old Town boulevards would help beautify the area and discourage front yard parking. It might make sense to plant the trees along the avenues in Old Town since the streets are being reconstructed. • Would be great to “green” the boulevard
Design Guidelines for New Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new development fit in better with the neighbourhood may be as simple as requiring more trees or vegetation. • Trees and vegetation seems to be the consistent feature on making these developments more appealing. • Don’t want to have design guidelines that are specific to a particular building design since there is no defining building for Old Town. Old Town is a collection of different building styles so keep it that way. • Should look to increase requirements for façade improvements as it is pretty flexible in the Zoning Bylaw. Often this means that new developments are just getting by with the requirements and are not overly pedestrian-friendly or visually appealing. • The City could look to provide sample designs to developers as a means to promote better design.
Jarvis St	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on how Jarvis St is too wide. It was reconstructed in 1992 to certain standards. The street should be narrowed with parallel parking of either side, which would force cars to go slower.
Future of Old Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people cherish the residential character of Old Town and the lower density (e.g. 4 units per lot) • Some people hope to see higher density in the future.
Viewscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewscapes in Old Town should really be protected. In particular views of the Clay Cliffs, Grey Mountain, etc. • There should be a system where buildings do not compromise views of these features.
Abandoned/Derelict Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should look into other taxation systems to encourage redevelopment of these properties – maybe move towards a land value based taxation model. • Could encourage temporary uses on these properties such as community gardens. However, will have to be careful that they are temporary and must be maintained appropriately.
7th Avenue Greenway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade 7th Avenue to a community street or neighbourhood greenway. 7th acts as the community spine for Old Town as it connects three key recreational spaces: community gardens, the Black St playground, and the Pioneer Cemetery. • Slow to 30 km/hr where pedestrians and cyclists have equal priority to cars. • The street would be accessible to all ages and abilities, while still allowing cars to use the street.

Future Recreational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than new playground locations in Old Town, the focus should really be on the escarpment as the recreational heart of Old Town.
Black Street Stairs Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a public washroom in the parking lot area. The stairs get used a lot – not just for people exercising, but also for people going to/from home. • Could look at a temporary washroom (e.g. porta-potties) in short term, then think of a permanent one with running water later on.