City of Whitehorse

City of Whitehorse Trail Plan

Amended Edition - 2012

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1. Appendix VI is intended to contain future community-contributed supplements such as completed neighbourhood trail plans, relevant information from key trail user groups, etc and is meant to be amended on a pre-set schedule (bi-yearly, etc) – please see report text for details.

Executive Summary

The Trail Plan is a document that will give guidance to the City of Whitehorse for trail planning, development and programming over the coming decade. It takes an adaptive management and "best practices" approach to trail system management. For staff it sets out Council's operational framework including direction on priorities, expected outcomes, and guidelines necessary to guide day-to-day operations. For trail users and the public, the plan identifies strategies to resolve conflicts and complete a comprehensive network of trails that meet a variety of user needs.

The City of Whitehorse has a surprisingly extensive trail system that has evolved organically over time without the benefit of proper planning and construction. There is already an estimated 150 km of existing trails of City-wide significance and at least 700 km of local and neighbourhood trails used by Whitehorse residents. The trail network is a unique asset but also a liability requiring careful management and regular maintenance. The success of the Millennium Trail demonstrates that good, well-planned trails are well used

The trail network is designed to link neighbourhoods, provide access to the surrounding hinterland and facilitate public movement about the community. An integrated trail system provides a range of recreation and transportation benefits.

However, the present trail system evolved in an ad hoc and unregulated manner. This Trail Plan provides a framework for rationalizing the trail network by establishing a hierarchy and structure for determining which trails are needed and for what purpose. It provides a means by which neighbourhood residents can become directly involved in developing solutions. The "ground up" approach reflects public expectations – the city trail system was the #1 issue in the recently completed Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Public input was very clear – the trail system and access to nature are an integral part of what makes Whitehorse a special place to live. The trail system is part of our identity.

Citizens want to be involved in future trail planning and management. The proposed neighborhood-by-neighborhood task force group approach responds directly to that request. Also, the proposed Trails & Greenways Committee provides an oversight mechanism to ensure

balanced representation of user interests and a means to ensure that local interests do not overwhelm the larger City-wide interest.   Also, the implementation of a Whitehorse Trail Technical Committee made up of land use managers acts as an advisory committee on land ownership issues and concerns.

The guiding principles reflected in the 2007 Trail Plan include the need for diversity, the importance of accessibility and inclusiveness and the reality that a sustainable trail system is not only functional and affordable but also an integral part of protecting the environment and providing an alternative form of transportation.

Whitehorse trails are used year-round. Trail users are a diverse mix of people undertaking a variety of recreational pursuits. In most cases motorized and non-motorized trail users share the same trails and it is not unusual to encounter people walking, running, cycling, horseback riding and exploring on ATV's. Chapter 6 discusses the nature and extent of issues raised during the public consultations including suggestions for solutions to issues identified.

The Trail Plan recognizes that the trail system has 5 inter-related objectives starting with connecting people to places within their own neighbourhoods, linking places serving more than one neighbourhood through interconnecting the City as a whole.

Part of connecting the city as a whole is a desire to encircle all neighbourhoods to the extent possible with a perimeter trail that leads to escape routes to the surrounding hinterland. Motorized and non-motorized trail components are identified.

Standards and definitions are provided for neighbourhood and City-wide trails, special use, hinterland access and trails that should be abandoned. The importance of the Yukon River as a historic water trail is also acknowledged.

The Trail Plan also presents a strategy for addressing user conflicts. This was a major public concern. Chapter 9 beginning on page 29 sets out a strategy for managing multi-use trails. The strategy recognizes that the City of Whitehorse responsibilities lie in 3 areas:

- Maintaining User Safety;

- Protecting Natural Resources; and

- Providing High-Quality User Experiences.

The nature of Whitehorse's trail system, the size of the community, trail culture and the resources available limit management options to address negative impacts on the above responsibilities. The "minimum tool rule" for managing trail conflicts advocates using the least intrusive measures to achieve the desired outcome. Some options appropriate to the Whitehorse context are provided with three levels of suggested response depending on the nature of the conflict. Key components of the incremental Minimum Tool Rule include peer pressure, education, community involvement and training. Adoption of the Tread Lightly operational philosophy developed by a US non-profit organization is recommended as a "best practice" approach to adopt.

The implementation strategy is divided into four areas:

- Rationalizing the present trail system,

- Nurturing a positive trail culture,

- Getting the word out, and

- Building and maintaining a comprehensive trail system.

The implementation strategy sets out the main activities that need to be undertaken. It also recommends the adoption of appropriate performance measures and accountability reporting to ensure the Trail Plan is implemented in a timely and affordable manner using the adaptive management and best practices approach.

Additional resources may be required in the early years to rationalize the present trail network and implement the neighborhood-by-neighborhood task force group trail planning approach. The downstream benefits of this approach are expected to include directly measurable results such as a reduction in user conflicts; more realistic budgets for trail maintenance and indirect benefits such as improved community health through increased use. For example, completion of the Rotary Centennial Bridge across the Yukon River in 2006 resulted in a significant increase in Millennium Trail use in all seasons once the trail loop was completed. Similar increases are also expected on other City-wide trails once all key trail connections are complete.

1.0 Starting Anew

1.1 A Fresh Approach

This, the first major update of the 1997 plan, was begun in late 2004 and expands significantly on the scope of the original. As with the 2007 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the City of Whitehorse has recognized the need to take a longer view in its planning for trails. The Plan is now intended to cover a 10-year, rather than a 5-year, operational timeframe. Accordingly, the primary focus of this Trail Plan is now to set a philosophical and managerial framework for the long-term planning and operations of what is the most extensive municipal trail network in Canada's North.

The new Trail Plan is meant to be a living document, forming an adaptive planning and management resource for City staff, trail users and other stakeholders. For staff, it provides necessary guidance in the areas of rationale, setting priorities for policy/program development and assembling the detail necessary to inform day-to-day operations. For trail users and the public, it brings together information about City trails in a more comprehensive format than has been previously available. Paired with the Trails section of the City of Whitehorse website for updates, it becomes a "one-stop shop" for information on City trails.

To further ensure ongoing responsiveness and adaptability, the full version of the Trail Plan is provided in a binder format to facilitate updating or addition of information during the 10-year life of the Plan. Periodic updates in a digital format will be made available on the City of Whitehorse website. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting the Parks & Recreation Department. Digital supplements, such as GPS files, will also be made available and will build on the foundations laid by the core Trail Plan.

1.2 Learning from the Best

Given the considerable advances in trails practice since 1997, and the vast amount of high-quality information now available, a "best practices" approach was taken too many operational components of this Plan. For this

First Edition of the Plan, this is most evident in the areas of construction, signage and maintenance standards and in recommendations for educational programming. These sections are contained in the document appendices and sources of each are credited accordingly.

This "best practices" approach prevents unnecessary "reinvention of the wheel", allows us to benefit from the experience and greater resources of other jurisdictions and agencies such as the Trans Canada Trail and Grand Concourse Authority, and allows the Plan to remain relevant over its 10-year lifespan.

It is recommended that these sections be reviewed yearly by the staff that most regularly uses them, with updates as deemed appropriate.

1.3   Updating the Plan – Some Surprises

To initiate the project, an inventory of existing trails was undertaken which hoped to provide the fullest picture to date of the state of the City's trail system. For the first time, the vast majority of trails were mapped and the nature of their existing use noted. While it became apparent that it would be difficult to determine accurately the exact extent of the system in terms of distance, an initial estimate suggests more than 150 km of trails of City-wide significance and over 700 km of local or neighbourhood trails. It also became evident that new trails are being created every day, year-round.

Most importantly, this picture showed an extensive system of unplanned and often confusing neighbourhood or local trails. The vast majority of these trails have evolved organically over time without the benefit of proper planning or construction. From the inventory, it became apparent that the total amount of trails in the City far exceeded expectations – heightening awareness of the significant challenges ahead for planning and maintenance of the overall trail system.

The other big surprise? From the public consultations for both the Trail Plan and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, it became apparent that more than any other single feature, most respondents saw the trail system and the access to nature that it provides as key to our community identity. Trail issues and their offshoots - including everything from specific user needs to the Official Community Plan and its role in guiding overall development – were by far the issues that generated the most input and discussion.
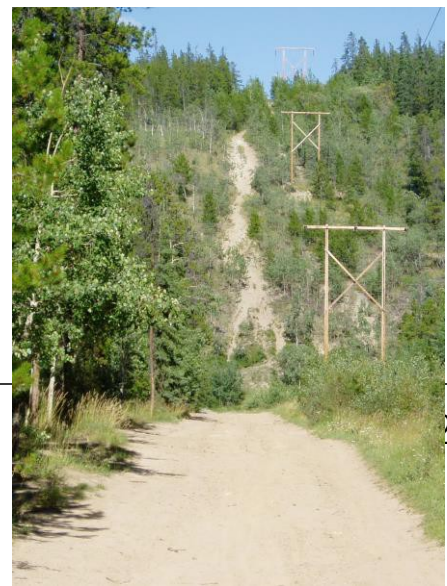
1.4 From the Ground Up

These surprises meant a big change in approach was needed. Where the previous 1997 Trail Plan was fairly straight-forward and jumped right into the nuts and bolts of a trail system, it quickly became apparent that, this time around, it would be necessary to back up a step and review the Trail Plan in the context of service delivery at the departmental level as well as in the context of an overall, strategic and integrated approach to community planning at the City level.

From the departmental viewpoint, this Plan looks at the founding philosophies and principles behind the delivery of parks and recreation services, including trails – detailing what is known as the benefits-based approach. This Plan then sets the framework working up through the philosophy, goals, service objectives, development guidelines, and hands-on tools to re-imagine the entire system from the ground up.

From the City-wide viewpoint, key recommendations of this Plan and indeed the very format of the written document put the emphasis on grass-roots involvement of individuals and groups of all ages.

Central to this is the recommendation that neighbourhood trails in particular need to be planned in detail at the neighbourhood level with the direct involvement of the residents. Building on the favourable public reception of the recent Porter Creek Bench Charette for the new Whistle Bend neighbourhood, it is recommended that the City undertake similar neighbourhood-level trail planning exercises for all areas of the City. Active representation from and coordination with other City departments such as Planning Services will be vital to ensure integration with the City's long-range development plans, and to ensure that trail issues are addressed and opportunities maximized from the outset.

Another grass-roots approach to ensuring fuller citizen participation in decision-making around trails issues is through the establishment of a Trails & Greenways Committee. This was mentioned by several trail users as a desirable option. While such a committee would be advisory in capacity, it is one tool to ensure that the needs and perspectives of users are communicated to the highest level. An important caveat with such a committee is balanced representation. Particular attention would need to be paid to making sure no one "type" of user – such as motorized vs. non-motorized – dominated, and that polarization of issues along such lines (as is often the case now) is prevented.

In addition to the "best practices" sections for operational areas, the appendices of the updated Trail Plan include a section entitled Community Trails Supplements. The intention of this section is to provide a way to

communicate the results of the individual neighbourhood trail planning exercises, as well as provide additional information from community champions and specific key user groups that may be of interest to users. This is one more way to allow the document itself to respond to changing community interests and concerns in an organized, ongoing manner over the 10-year life of the Plan.

2.0   Existing City Trail Resources

2.1   Trails & Trail-related Facilities

Key existing trails and networks include:

"City trails" (> 150 km) – this broad classification covers those trails of interest in the City-wide context, and include major multi-use trails, bicycle paths, etc. Most of the specific trails and facilities listed below fall into this category.

"Neighbourhood trails" (> 700 km) – this broad classification covers those trails primarily of interest to residents of adjacent neighbourhoods. The vast majority of these trails have simply evolved over the years through individual and group use, and many date from the early years of the City's growth beyond downtown.

Trans Canada Trail (TCT) – constructed and managed by the TCT territorial partner, the Klondike Snowmobile Association, the TCT-Yukon sections within the City boundaries form a designated motorized multi-use trail. The TCT "main line" is the old Whitehorse Copper haul road on the western edge of the City. There are numerous connectors to the broader trail system, and improvements to these connections are ongoing.

Millennium Trail – the first trail in the Yukon constructed to be accessible to all, the Millennium Trail is situated in downtown and Riverdale, connecting across the Yukon River with a pedestrian bridge. The trail connects a number of important recreational resources, including the skatepark, Parks Canada's SS Klondike National Historical Site, Robert Service Campground as well as important whitewater paddling resources such as "the intake".

Hamilton Boulevard Multi-use Trail – increased development in the Copper Ridge neighbourhood and the desire for an alternative transportation network lead to the development of a paved multi-use trail alongside this major arterial.

2-Mile Hill Bicycle Paths (north and south sides) – likewise, this trail helps connect trails such as the one above to downtown, providing safer choices for bicyclists travelling downtown.

Airport perimeter trail – long a favourite of walkers, the airport perimeter trail also provides connections between the neighbourhoods of Hillcrest and Lobird to downtown and beyond.

Puckett's Gulch trail/stairway – this trail connects the Airport trail to downtown Whitehorse, facilitating access down the steep "clay cliffs". The stairway includes a running rail to make carrying bicycles up and down the stairs easier. This project was funded as part of the national Transportation Showcase initiative which focuses on projects that create or enhance opportunities for alternative transportation.

Cross-country ski trails (Mount McIntyre, Chadburn Lake) – cross-country skiing is a very popular activity in the Yukon, and the City of Whitehorse boasts two purpose-built ski networks. The first network at Mount McIntyre is owned and managed by a community-based user group, and the second is on City-owned land but maintained primarily by volunteers.

Details on a number of other "named" trails within this system are included in publications such as the Yukon Conservation Society's *Whitehorse Area Hikes and Bikes* (see below).

Key trail-related parks and facilities include:

Rotary Peace Park – this is the City's major family-oriented park and includes facilities such as a pavilion, playground, splashpark and sand volleyball courts, with the skatepark located just over the bridge. Rotary Peace Park provides something for all ages, and is accessed by the paved Riverfront Trail.

Shipyards Park –this is the City's new festival park, and is also accessed by the paved Riverfront Trail. The Park hosts events such as a weekly Farmer's Market, as well as larger gatherings such as the Storyteller's Festival and Canada Day celebrations.

Robert Service Campground – operated by a private contractor on behalf of the City, the campground is situated on the Millennium Trail. The proximity of the trail is a major benefit to visitors, and the campground operator also provides services to everyday trail users, such as a coffee shop.

Trans Canada Trail Pavilions – the pavilions provide information about the Trans Canada Trail, the various TCT segments within and around the City and recognize local donors.

2.1   Staff Resources

The Parks & Recreation Department have recently undergone a review of staff roles and responsibilities in conjunction with the commissioning of the Canada Games Centre. Under the present structure, the staff that bears direct responsibility for trails and trail-related planning, operations and management includes the following:

Projects & Community Development Coordinator – reporting directly to the Parks & Recreation Manager, the Coordinator is responsible for capital projects such as trail construction and for liaison with community groups and partners such as the KSA. In addition to these tasks, it is recommended that the Coordinator play the key departmental role in the proposed neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood trail planning processes.

Parks Supervisor, Grounds Crew Leader, Parks Maintenance Person(s) – these staff members form the core of the operational and maintenance side of the trails system equation. Currently, trails are managed under the same umbrella as parks and streetscapes. As the value attached by residents to their trails – and their service expectations - increases, it may become necessary to form a dedicated "trails team" within this branch, made up of staff with specialized knowledge and experience.

Leisure Services Supervisor, Leisure Programmers, Instructors, Special Events – this group under the Leisure Services banner would become responsible for the planning and implementation of educational programs and special events for trails. They would also become responsible for the web-based aspects of these programs, as well as coordinating the periodic public updates associated with the living Trail Plan document.

Other departments within the City such as Planning Services, Engineering & Environmental Services, Public Works and Bylaw Services are also involved in aspects of trail planning, operations and management. Their input lends a breadth of viewpoints and resources to complement those of the Parks & Recreation department.

Similarly, mandates of other governments such as the Government of Yukon, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council occasionally

overlap with City trails issues, particularly in the areas of land development, wildfire protection, wood cutting and traditional use. Coordination of these interdepartmental and inter-agency resources has historically been a challenge, one that the Parks and Recreation Department hopes to be able to offset somewhat through the role of the Projects and Community Development Coordinator and their counterparts in other departments and agencies as well through the formation of a Whitehorse Trail Technical Committee made up of government land use managers.

As mentioned previously, the involvement of all interested parties is vital to the success of the detailed trail planning processes – the Whistle Bend exercise demonstrated the importance of involving government representatives along with the members of the public to ensure a more responsive and cohesive product.

2.2   Policies & Regulations
Currently, trails are managed under the broader umbrella of "parks" and do not constitute their own operational section of the department. Accordingly, trails more usually come under the jurisdiction of a number of more general policies, such as the parks maintenance policy.

Once the neighbourhood trail planning processes get underway, it is likely that there will be more work required in this area. The greater clarity regarding specific trails issues that may emerge from the detailed processes may reveal a need for dedicated policies.

2.3   Publications
There are currently a few major pieces of information available about trails within the City boundaries:

> ***Whitehorse Trail Map: Explore the Wilderness City*** – published in June 1999 by the City of Whitehorse with the help of the Government of Yukon Department of Renewable Resources, this map details the major trails of City-wide significance, as well as the major neighbourhood trails. Viewpoints and other points of interest are included, along with basic information about safety, etc. This piece is attractive and successful, but a lot has happened since 1999 and a version of this map is slated for updating in 2007.

> ***Bicycle Route Map*** – in 2006, as part of the Transportation Showcase, the Engineering & Environmental Services department produced a map of bicycle routes. These routes utilize trails and roadways to

Enjoying Whitehorse Trails – published in 2000 by Yukon Energy, this booklet is available in multiple languages and is a key piece in Yukon Energy's public relations arsenal. The publication includes information on natural and cultural history, and focuses on the trails surrounding the Whitehorse Rapids Dam, the associated Fishway, adjacent portions of the Yukon River and man-made Schwatka Lake.

Whitehorse Area Hikes & Bikes (Revised Edition) – updated in 2005, this book is published by the Yukon Conservation Society and is often recommended to visitors (and residents!) who wish to explore the City and its surroundings on foot and bicycle. The Society has also offered free guided walks on selected trails within the City for many years. Along with the KSA, YCS represents another valuable resource for detailed trail planning.

3.0 Vision & Guiding Principles

A draft version of the following vision statement and guiding principles were developed by Department staff at the beginning of the Trail Plan update process. They were subsequently "road tested" at public meetings, and received a high degree of support.

The vision statement built on ideas expressed in the 2004-2006 Council Strategic Plan and the 2002 Official Community Plan. The vision statement and the guiding principles – and their extension into the service goals and objectives defined in Section 4 - now form the philosophical yardstick against which all planning and operational decisions regarding trails will be measured.

3.1 Vision Statement

"The citizens of Whitehorse will enjoy year-round access to a network of interconnected non-motorized and motorized trails, greenway corridors and cycling routes that will

support the City's commitment to creating a liveable, safe, attractive, healthy and sustainable Winter City community. Residents and visitors alike will find exciting year-round opportunities for recreation, reflection and transportation alternatives that will link people to each other, to their community and to our unique natural and cultural heritage."

3.2   Guiding Principles

Diversity – The City of Whitehorse Trail Plan recognizes the wide variety of trail users and activities, including both non-motorized and motorized uses, and is committed to accommodating a diversity of activities in a healthy, safe and respectful manner.

Accessibility – The City of Whitehorse Trail Plan recognizes a need to ensure access to the trail system for users of all abilities, and is committed to increasing opportunities for its citizens to enjoy the benefits that the trail system has to offer.

Sustainability – The City of Whitehorse Trail Plan recognizes the importance of a functional, well connected trail system to the liveability and sustainability of the City in a number of spheres – environmental protection, community building, alternative transportation, active living/wellness, fiscal responsibility, etc.

Inclusiveness – The City of Whitehorse Trail Plan recognizes the importance of the trail system to residents and visitors alike and is committed to including the public in determining guidelines for trail system development, use, preservation and maintenance.

4.0   Service Philosophy, Goals & Objectives

The following section is adapted from the 2007 City of Whitehorse Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This document sets the stage for the delivery of recreational/leisure services in the City of Whitehorse, of which trails and trail-related facilities form an integral part.

This section is included to introduce the concept of a benefits-based approach to the planning, operations and management of the City's trail system. A benefits-based approach takes into consideration the needs of and benefits (both direct and indirect) to all residents, not only particular trail users or groups. This distinction from a more familiar demand-based model is an important one, particularly when considering the management of sensitive issues such as trail user conflicts - the response to which may have significant ramifications for residents other than those directly involved in conflicts.

Building upon the vision statement and guiding principles of the Trail Plan (the "emotional" part of the rationale) there must follow a practical, defensible framework consisting of the service philosophy, goals and objectives. Goals and objectives in particular are often confused with one another, and the following simple definitions may aid in understanding:

Philosophy – this is what we believe

Goal – this is what we want to achieve (long term)

Objective – this is how we want to achieve the goal (short term, measurable)

Program – this is the mechanism by which we deliver the benefit to the public

4.1 Philosophy - The Benefits-Based Approach

Traditionally, communities have used a demand-based model to govern their investment in parks and recreation facilities and programs, including trails. Recreation interests and needs were fairly basic and predictable and usually activity driven. If there were sufficient interest in a new activity, the Council of the day would build a facility to accommodate the demand. Over the past 20 years, a number of trends have emerged that suggest this approach is unsustainable.

First, public recreation interests are changing rapidly. People have broader interests and want more choices available. Of interest in the trails context is the rise in demand for unstructured or individual recreation opportunities that fit more easily within today's busy lifestyles.

There are also more structural population changes occurring with more diversity in the cultural ethnicity of communities and changes in traditional family structure. Communities are also recognizing that they can no longer afford numerous single purpose facilities (including single-use dedicated trails) or effectively meet all resident recreation needs with the limited monies available. The demand-based model is also a reactive approach with an inherent bias towards numbers of participants rather than the quality of the experience.

The benefits-based approach to the provision of parks, recreation and leisure services evolved from the recognition that the demand-based approach was not sustainable. It also evolved from the concept that recreation is an integral part of personal and community wellness. The benefits-based approach takes a more holistic approach premised on the concept that through the provision of recreation and leisure services, there are both direct and indirect benefits that accrue to the community as a whole as well as to the users of the services themselves. A well-maintained road system for example, benefits both the individuals using the road and the community as a whole by providing access to goods, markets, etc that ensure a healthy economy. The provision of municipal recreational services can be justified in the same way because there are individual health and community wellness benefits that are consistent with the fundamental goals of municipal governance.

The benefits-based approach is by nature broader, more inclusive and adaptable to change. It is still responsive to community driven and personal recreation needs, but places more focus on deriving long-term health and wellness outcomes that flow from a more holistic approach.

4.2   Growth Goals and Service Objectives

In the model *A Rationale for the Delivery of Municipal Leisure Services*, two broad areas of benefit or "growth goals" are suggested as appropriate starting points for a typical municipality rationalizing its delivery of leisure services:

1. Use the delivery of public leisure services to further the growth and development of the community; and

2. Use the delivery of public leisure services to further the growth and development of the individual.

The fulfillment of the first goal is described as an evolution, moving along a "growth continuum" that includes first establishing community identity, then developing community spirit, and finally achieving a sense of community culture. In the best and "most evolved" examples, the citizens of a community are drawn together by their participation in positive leisure experiences.

The steps for achieving the second goal are perhaps more immediately understandable – as is the idea that participation in recreational or leisure activities contributes directly to the mental, physical, social, moral and emotional development of each individual resident. Persons involved in such positive experiences are more open to learning and less susceptible to influences detrimental to the self and the community as a whole.

The practical application of this model also involves a series of twenty-two (22) leisure service objectives that are intended to help meet the goals, or to support initiatives that do. All departmental activities directed toward achieving the "growth goals" – whether they be in the areas of trail planning, construction, maintenance, or programming – would be categorized under one or more of these service objectives.

These objectives - placed in the trails context and outlining the City's role in realizing each - are discussed in the following pages.

**Fostering a
Sense of Community**

Encourage Special Events and Celebrations: special events contribute to community identity and spirit, connecting people to their community in a positive way; the City's role is to organize some events and participate in those organized by others to foster community identity, spirit pride and culture (e.g. Annual Charity Law Day 6.4 km Run/Walk)

Support Local Groups: local groups, clubs and associations are active in organizing and supporting leisure opportunities, empowering people to create their own opportunities; the City's role is to support these groups through access to facilities, technical advice, inclusion in communications, etc (e.g. Orienteering Club and Yukon Horseman's Association, which use City trails in their activities).

Facilitate Spectator Experiences at Sporting Events: the environment of sporting events can help promote a sense of community identity, spirit and culture, much in the manner of old-style pep rallies; the City's role is to ensure access to opportunities appropriate for all sectors of the community (e.g. start of the Yukon Quest International Dog Sled Race, which uses portions of the Riverfront Trail).

Facilitate Spectator Experiences at Arts Events: similarly, arts events, installations and other endeavours are key contributors to a city's culture, imparting a recognizable flavour to the community; the City's role is to provide opportunities for all citizens to come into contact with such experiences (e.g. woven willow sculptures along the Riverfront Trail in Shipyards Park)

Facilitate Opportunities for Social Interaction: social functions are a key way in which community identity and cohesion are developed in all cultures; the City's role is to ensure citizens are aware of the range of opportunities that exist. This is done by providing accessible meeting places, affordable rates, publishing community service guides and providing support to volunteer organizations either directly or indirectly. (E.g. Essential Guide to Services, which includes trail-related activities/organizations)

Protect Natural and Heritage Resources: the preservation of significant natural areas and historic resources help a community to feel attached to their past, while keeping an eye to the future; the City's role is to help preserve natural features and historic buildings and to promote understanding of their value to the community as a whole (e.g. historic buildings preservation and interpretation alongside the trail in Shipyards Park).

Beautify The Community: the extent to which a community is seen by its residents to be visually pleasing is directly related to people's experience of their environment, pride of place and valuation of both public and

private property; the City's role is to support beautification initiatives in the interest of making the community a more pleasant place to live, work and play on a day-to-day basis (e.g. trail improvements and adjacent landscape and play features, Rotary Peace Park).

Support Family-oriented Trail Opportunities: the family unit – however it is composed – is a basic building block of any community; the City's role is to provide opportunities and support for families to engage in trail-related pursuits as a unit (e.g. paved multiuse trails which allow for family walks with strollers, etc).

Integrate Generations and Sub-groups Within Our Community: a healthy community is one in which people of all ages, genders, races, abilities, and cultures find a common thread which binds them together, while recognizing and celebrating their differences; the City's role is to provide opportunities and support for interaction and exchange (e.g. accessible-to-all Millennium Trail).

Foster and Promote Fitness and Overall Well-being: this objective refers to a holistic wellness of the mental, the emotional and the physical – the whole person; the City's role is to provide for a range of trail-related opportunities that appeal to all residents enabling them to achieve a minimum level of wellness no matter what their financial resources, skill or disability levels are (e.g. multiuse trail system).

Foster and Promote Pre-school Trail Opportunities: pre-school-aged children need to interact with other children to ensure social advancement, develop their motor skills, express creativity and learn basic safety practices and attitudes; the City's role is to ensure that such opportunities exist for every child (e.g. tricycle-safe paved trails connecting neighbourhoods).

Fostering a Sense of Community *(continued)*

Foster and Promote Basic Skill Development in Trail-related Pursuits for School-aged Children: it is during the school years that children learn the attitudes and develop the interests which can form the basis for lifelong participation in leisure pursuits; the City's role is to provide opportunities for all school-aged children to establish this "can do" foundation (e.g. popular mountain bike trails).

Foster and Promote Advanced Skill Development in Trail-related Pursuits for School-aged Children: some school-aged children will begin to show a preference for or display skills in given areas; the City's role is to assist clubs to build the necessary coaching capacity by offering courses, providing access to facilities to allow advanced and specialized training, facilitating skill competitions and promoting the opportunities available. (E.g. Geocaching Scavenger Hunt).

Enabling Growth of the Individual

Foster and Promote Social and Leadership Opportunities for Teens: the adolescent years are a vulnerable, pivotal time in an individual's development where they begin to determine what kind of person they wish to be; the City's role is to provide safe opportunities for exploring alternatives, dealing with pressures and developing positive lifestyle habits and attitudes (e.g. Winter Adventure Seekers).

Foster and Promote Basic Skills in Trail-related Pursuits for Adults: increasingly, active adults are looking for opportunities to engage in new or different leisure activities in pursuit of a healthier, better-rounded lifestyle; the City's role should be to ensure opportunities for adults to explore and to establish competency in a variety of trail-related activities (e.g. Introduction to Winter Running).

Foster and Promote Advanced Skills in Trail-related Pursuits for Adults: whether engaging in a new activity or rediscovering an old interest, some adults will wish to improve their personal skills in their chosen pursuits; the City's role is to assist clubs and organizations to provide opportunities for those who wish to increase their proficiency to challenge their skills and ability by supporting coaching clinics, co-sponsoring events and subsidizing competitions etc. (e.g. National Coaching Certification Program courses)

Foster and Promote Trail-related Leisure Opportunities for Seniors: involvement of senior citizens in physical activities is key to maintaining overall fitness levels, maintaining social contacts and support networks, and providing a continued sense of worth and usefulness; the City's role is to provide opportunities for all seniors to participate in a range of activities (e.g. supporting seniors' walking groups).

Interpret the Environment: day-to-day interaction with and understanding of the natural and built environments – which together form the human habitat – are important to wellness and help foster a deeper appreciation and experience of a person's surroundings; the City's role is to provide opportunities for every resident to learn about, understand and relate to the various aspects of their environment (e.g. interpretive signage programs).

Foster Reflection and Escape from Urban Form: since time immemorial, people have sought solace and solitude – or fellowship – in the natural world to mediate or to heal; the City's role is to provide safe, accessible opportunities for residents to experience the restorative effects of nature (e.g. hinterland trails).

Educate Individuals about Available Trail-related Opportunities and About the Wise Use of Leisure Time: an understanding of how participation in leisure activities builds communities and how it

contributes to the growth and life-long wellness of individuals is key to ensuring meaningful and sustainable participation; the City's role is to communicate these benefits and make clear the positive cumulative impact of individual efforts (e.g. seasonal Active Living Guides).

Foster Adequate Communication about Trail-related Leisure Opportunities: effective and timely communication of opportunities facilitates awareness, encourages participation and ensures sustainability of trails and their programming; the City's role is to establish and maintain a system of notification and information which is accessible, readily available and reliable (e.g. City web page).

Foster Volunteerism: participation in community-based trail-related activities can model and teach appropriate behaviour as well as encourage additional involvement and responsibility; the City's role is to encourage and support volunteerism to the greatest extent possible because the future viability of many opportunities depends upon continual volunteer regeneration (e.g. annual City Volunteer Awards Program).

Source: Yukon Fish & Game Association website (www.yukonfga.ca)

5.1   Trails In Whitehorse – A Snapshot

We know that Whitehorse has a trail system that is many times the size of that of other Northern capitals such as Yellowknife, NT and Juneau, AK, in a municipal area larger than that of Montreal, but with a population of less than 25,000.

We know that Whitehorse residents value their trail system and the access to nature that it provides perhaps above any other leisure facility in the City. We also know that there is a cultural shift

happening in some neighbourhoods - reflecting in part Canada's increasing urban/rural divide - and that the new residents' ideas of what is acceptable often differ from those of established residents.

We know that our trail system hosts a wide variety of activities year-round, including walking, running, hiking, dog walking, skiing, snowshoeing, bicycling, rollerblading, ATVing, mountain biking, dirt riding, "wheeling" with 4x4 trucks, horseback riding, orienteering, dog sledding, etc.

We know that most of the time, in most cases and most places, these users is able share the same trails and behave politely toward one another – but in some cases, they are not.

5.2   Trends in Trail Use in Canada

There are some nation-wide trends in trail use in Canada that may prove to be particularly applicable to our situation in Whitehorse. These include:

Decrease in participation in organized activities
- There is an evident decline in some traditional team sports, with more focus on independent activities, like trail use; and
- A greater variety of less structured, flexible and self-guided activities is needed to encourage youth fitness.

Increased participation in "extreme sports"
- Participants are seeking greater thrills, higher risk activities (a problem especially for younger male participants); and
- There has been a sharp increase in homemade mountain bike trials or skills courses – including structures such as ramps, log drops, and teeter-totters – built without authorization on public land.

Increase in motorized recreation
- There has been an increase in the use of ATVs and other motorized vehicles in the urban / rural fringe;
- There has been an increase in the regulation of motorized use, particularly with regard to use of off-road vehicles by children; and
- The higher horsepower and much greater speeds of modern vehicles is a cause for concern.

Increase in insurance rates, decreases in coverage
- There is an increasing conservatism in the insurance industry; and

- Community groups are withdrawing from recreation partnerships, affecting the ability to provide services.

Decrease in volunteerism
- Changing demographics, burnout & personal risk/liability are factors; and
- Fewer volunteers may affect the ways in which programs and events are delivered.

Increase in participation by older adults
- Adult (especially co-ed) activities are on the rise; and
- The Yukon population is aging, which will have a significant bearing on future programs and resources.

Increase in "values clashes"
- This is a big problem where user groups with potentially conflicting activities & differing values use the same resource; and
- There are increasing tensions between user groups.

6.0   Gathering Input – What We Heard

When asked to prioritize, members of the public identified the following themes and issues as being of most concern to them for trails and trail-related issues:

6.1   Priority Issues

Trails-specific

- Designate non-motorized trails near neighbourhoods
- Separate motorized and non-motorized uses, or coexist with respect
- Do not limit motorized use
- Need clearer trail hierarchy and linkages
- Trails are essential links between community facilities and points of interest
- Increasing level of conflict between trail users
- There are seasonal concerns with use, maintenance, etc
- Certain well-used trails should be designated as "core" trails
- Trails maintenance, safety are very important issues; more coordinated effort needed between jurisdictions, departments
- Recognize that resources for development, maintenance are limited for what has proven to be a huge network of trails

Parks & Open Space

- Create designated greenbelts around existing neighbourhoods that are protected from development
- Increase protection of environmentally-sensitive areas
- Greenbelt protection and trails go hand-in-hand
- Fire protection and safe access/egress are increasing concerns

Facilities Development & Operation

- Don't build new parks, facilities and trails until we can maintain the ones we have
- Transit improvements are needed to improve access to recreational resources

Information & Education

- Need better trail signage – clearly designated/non-designated, distances
- Need education for users – trail etiquette, permitted uses, results of damage
- Need trail maps available to public
- Want more interpretation of interesting places and things

Enforcement

- Community groups could help but need support from Bylaw Services
- Need to enforce existing rules, not make new ones
- Need more monitoring of known trouble spots

Accessibility

- Need more trails that are accessible for the elderly and differently-abled
- The Millennium Trail is something we should be proud of, despite some rocky periods
- Need to consider accessibility in all seasons

Children & Youth

- Fewer young children using parks, more using facilities and trails – upgrade trails and connections to facilities
- Youth fitness declining markedly; need to encourage active, healthy, safe lifestyles
- Consult directly with youth – form City-wide Youth Council?

Community Planning

- Permanently designate park space as park space – no infill development
- Show parks, trails, greenbelts and future development areas clearly on subdivision plans and signs
- Walkability is important to the overall quality of life in our community

Public Participation

- Establish neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood task force groups and a Trail & Greenways Committee with members from community associations, etc

- Ensure fair representation from all interested groups

6.2 Additional Thoughts

In addition to the priorities detailed above, it became clear from the public meetings that certain neighbourhoods were experiencing greater issues with user conflicts, particularly between motorized users (reportedly, often youth) and non-motorized users (walkers). What remains unclear is whether these neighbourhoods in fact experience higher-then-average levels of motorized use, leading to conflict, or whether it is a case of the level of goal interference being accentuated by marked differences in values.

In other areas of the City, there has been some notable degradation of sensitive landscapes and habitats such as slopes and wet areas due to inappropriate motorized traffic. The issue of "greenspace protection" came to the fore during this process, and it became clear that there needs to be a greater degree of integration between the various planning processes which fall under the auspices of the different departments.

In the broader view, a consistent theme observed by the project team was a general lack of understanding on the part of the public of the relative roles of the various planning tools employed by a municipality. In particular, there was a feeling of disconnect between "upper level" planning tools such as the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw, and more detailed implementation tools such as subdivision plans and the Trail Plan.

Despite extensive public consultation programs for all such processes, including those mandated by law under the Municipal Act for OCPs, etc, many expressed a lack of knowledge of understanding about the different spheres involved in municipal planning. Others simply felt they "were not consulted enough". Clearly, there is a need for additional education and engagement in municipal planning initiatives, with clear communication of what is "on the table" and what is not with the particular process, so that public expectations do not exceed the limits of that process.

7.0   Connecting the Dots

7.1   The Basic Links

Before getting down to the detail of individual trail designation, it is important to view the entire trail system conceptually as a series of nested connections. The types of connections required in a trail network can be described most simply as a hierarchy of ways of getting people to places they want to go:

First, there is a need to **connect people to places within their neighbourhoods** – such as the young family getting from their house to the tot lot around the corner. Often these routes are on sidewalks or where there are no sidewalks, the shoulders of roads. Sometimes, separate trails within the neighbourhood exist and are used for these sorts of purposes. Together, sideways, shoulders and trails form the most elemental level of a connected trail system, **neighbourhood walkways**.

Second, there is a need to **connect neighbourhoods to each other and to facilities which serve more than one neighbourhood**, such as schools. This is the **inter-neighbourhood connector**, which facilitates a fairly direct line of travel between neighbourhoods and/or to and from a neighbourhood-level destination.

Third, there is a need to **interconnect the various City parts as a whole**. This requires an expanded version of the inter-neighbourhood system, allowing people to move efficiently to and from major destinations such as work or play on a day-to-day basis. This sometimes referred to as "ballistic movement", the simple task of getting from Point A to Point B in an efficient manner. Clear **City-wide connectors** are an essential part of a user-friendly alternative transportation system which, by making such alternatives easy and time effective, further encourages healthy lifestyles. Destinations needing access via City-wide connectors include Yukon College, the Canada Games Centre, etc.

Fourth, again on the City-wide level, there is a need to **encircle all of the neighbourhoods and destinations** with a loop trail. This outer ring trail allows motorized connections between neighbourhoods and applicable destinations at a distance far enough away from neighbourhoods to lessen the chances of user conflict. It also allows the more adventurous non-motorized users a more extensive **perimeter loop trail**, taking them far from their own neighbourhoods.

Lastly, there is a need for **escape routes**, trails which allow residents to leave the limits of the City entirely. These are the "getting the heck out of Dodge" trails which facilitate escape from urban form and connect the City to a broader network of trails and destinations beyond its boundaries. It is particularly important that motorized users have appropriate **urban/rural**

interface routes which allow them the opportunity to recreate at distance from built-up areas.

7.2 Other Things to Think About

Don't Get Lost in the Detail

While this Plan recommends that the most detailed planning of trails, including appropriate naming and designation, take place at the neighbourhood level, it is important to remember those neighbourhoods in the context of the City as a whole, and as part of this interlaced hierarchy of connection types.

Better Enabling Alternative Transportation

Similarly, the City of Whitehorse is dedicated to providing a workable alternative transportation network for walking, cycling, skiing, etc. At the detail level, it is important to consider the bare-bones basics needed for such activities, such as walkway width. To be an effective inter-neighbourhood or City-wide connector, a walkway or trail needs to allow for people travelling in these ways to flow efficiently past one another, or travel abreast. It may sound simple, but the fact is that many typical municipal sidewalks, commonly 1.2 m – 1.4 m in width, are not wide enough for this purpose.

Another important consideration for trails which serve this function is their placement relative to major arterials. Often, these City-wide connectors are built in association with such roads as they represent the most efficient routes to major destinations. Two-lane roads such as Mountainview Drive should have sufficient room within the road right-of-way to accommodate an on-road bike lane or adjacent walkway. Larger and busier 4-lane roads such as Hamilton Boulevard need to allow for a dedicated alternative pathway with an appropriate separation distance to maintain comfort and safety levels, as is seen in the new paved multiuse trail. The more comfortable people feel with a trail, the more likely they are to use it.

Considerations for New Development

As for existing neighbourhoods, one needs to remember to provide contiguous links at all levels of the hierarchy described in planning for new development. Trails and greenspaces often go hand-in-hand in many people's minds. It is important for planners and residents to take a step back from the detail level of individual trails within a subject area to view all the opportunities for linkages within the hierarchy. This will help to make rational decisions about connecting greenspaces and the trails within them, while allowing for needed development. It may be useful to visualize the new neighbourhood as a mini-version of the diagram above, complete with its own key destinations and linkages.

8.0   Programming Multiple Use Trails

8.1   The Reality of the Multiple Use Trail

> " A multiple-use trail is typically defined as any trail that is used by more than one user group, or for more than one trail activity."
>
> <div align="right">(Moore, 1994)</div>

All trails within the City of Whitehorse, whether formally developed and constructed by the City or others or evolved through neighbourhood use, are multiple-use trails.

The reality of the situation in a small municipality with limited resources is that many recreational facilities – including trails - must accommodate multiple uses, and users. Often, these uses and users are very different in their expectations.

This approach is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the recent construction of the Canada Games Centre, which maximizes the funding partners' return on investment by packing as many opportunities into the footprint as possible.

The flip side of the multiple-use approach is that no facility can be everything to all people. There are sometimes compromises that must be made by those on all sides of an issue to allow a facility – or trail – to make the most of the resources available and offer the highest degree of benefits to the broadest cross-section of residents possible.

8.2   Designations for Multiple Use Trails

The 1997 Trail Plan used a simple 3-level approach for trail classification – Trans Canada Trails, Connector Trails and Local Trails. Each of these types was further divided by motorized or non-motorized use.

This Plan separates the issue of a given trail's role in the overall connection hierarchy from its use, designating it more clearly according to both use and location. The issue of location becomes particularly important when considering the appropriate accommodation of motorized uses in proximity to neighbourhoods.

The broadest categories of multiple use trails in this version of the Plan once again include motorized multiple use and non-motorized multiple use:

Motorized Multiple Use Trails - includes only those trails formally designed and designated by the City of Whitehorse to allow the use of motorized vehicles, including 4-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles.

Non-motorized Multiple Use Trails - designated non-motorized trails and all others by default – officially (but not in practice) includes all trails not officially designated by the City of Whitehorse to allow use of motorized vehicles.

As noted previously, the City of Whitehorse currently has approximately 150 km of designated motorized multiple use trails, and more than 700 km of designated and default non-motorized multiple use trails.

Recommended designations include:

Neighbourhood Trails – majority of trails within a designated distance from established or new neighbourhoods; maximum 500m distance dictated by geography, trail conditions – trails one might use on an evening ½ hour dog walk.

City Trails (**Non-motorized)** – major trails of City-wide importance, key inter-neighbourhood connectors or urban/rural interface trails (trails that lead beyond the City limits).

City Trails (Motorized) – major trails of City-wide importance, key inter-neighbourhood connectors or urban/rural interface trails (trails that lead beyond the City limits); these trails are specifically designed and designated to allow motorized traffic.

Hinterland Trails – trails beyond the designated distance from neighbourhoods, usually non-motorized but may accommodate minor motorized use.

Special Use Trails – any trails designated for dedicated uses or other special characteristics, such as Mt. McIntyre ski trails, Trans Canada Trail, key wildlife viewing trails.

Water Trails – trails taking advantage of water resources for all or part of their route, such as portions of the Yukon River; often traditional or historic uses.

Trails to be Abandoned – trails and trail sections to be decommissioned & reclaimed or rerouted for safety, habitat protection or other reasons.

This system of designation provides sufficient detail to recognize existing and future diversity of uses and address key issues as identified by departmental staff and the public. This system also recognizes and encourages the role of neighbourhoods in determining acceptable use for nearby trails. However, such a detailed system cannot be administered as easily in a top-down situation; simply put, it requires an on-going and meaningful commitment of time, energy and ideas from members of the public.

Due to the nature, genesis and history of the many trails within the City, neighbourhood geography, etc, many trails that are not officially designated as motorized multi-use do in fact receive some motorized traffic. In most cases, this represents a long-standing use that presents few, if any, management problems.

In a few cases, however, significant conflicts have arisen between users and/or significant damage to trail resources has occurred as a result of inappropriate use or behaviour.

8.3   Understanding User Conflict

Why People Behave – or Misbehave
Research on pro-social behaviour seeks to explain why people engage in activities or behaviours that help others as well as themselves.

The application of the theory in parks and recreation is to discover techniques, and to formulate policies and programs, which promote pro-social or community-minded behaviour. This can help us find better ways of dealing with conflicts and problem activities.

The flip side is anti-social or damaging behaviour. In the context of trails, damaging behaviour happens for the following types of reasons:

Unintentional - happens because people are simply unaware of the rules (i.e. do not know that dogs are not allowed off-leash in a given area)

Releasor-cue - happens because there are physical signs that the activity is tolerated (i.e. visible existing trail damage indicates its "okay" to use that trail in less-than-ideal conditions)

Uninformed - happens because people are not aware of the negative consequences of their specific actions (i.e. they do not realize that getting too close to wildlife can actually disturb their feeding)

Responsibility-denial - happens because people think that they do not have a choice (i.e. to chose a less-sensitive area for their given activity, or to chose a less-damaging activity)

Status-confirming - happens because people want to feel part of their group (i.e. "peer pressure")

Willful - happens intentionally, because people actively want to engage in the harmful behaviour for some reason (i.e. vandalism)

The Nature of User Conflict & Coping Mechanisms

In trails literature, conflict is often defined as "goal interference attributed to another's behaviour" (Jacob, 1977).

Conflict in the context of outdoor recreation is further broken down and described by Owens (1985) as:

"**Recreational conflict** – a negative experience occurring when competition for shared resources prevents expected benefits from participation from accruing to an individual or group"; and

"**Social and psychological conflict** – competition for shared resources amongst individuals or groups whose leisure activity is mutually exclusive or has contrary objectives."

Users experiencing conflict try to find ways to eliminate perceived instability and re-establish equilibrium as defined by the normative rules of the individual or group – and this can thereby become the guide for the behaviour of that individual or group.

Kuss et al (1990) grouped common coping strategies into 3 basic types:

1. Users will **change the definition of what they find acceptable**, by accepting and adapting to existing conditions;

2. Users will **change their behaviour to lessen the chances of conflict**, by engaging in the activity less frequently or by using an area during off-peak hours; and/or

3. Users will **avoid conflict all together buy ceasing to engage in the activity** or by no longer using a particular area.

Another "coping" strategy that has been employed by some users in Whitehorse is an attempt to change to behaviour of others, namely the individual(s) or group perceived to be on the "other side" of the conflict.

Since these users may not have the expertise to effectively influence others or initiate constructive discussions, and also lack the authority to institute effective physical measures to modify behaviour, these unilateral efforts have not been successful and in some instances have contributed to the escalation of conflict.

Factors Contributing to Conflict

There are 4 classes of factors that produce conflict in outdoor recreation (Jacob et al, Watson et al):

1. **Activity Style/Specialization Level:** associated with personal meaning attributed to and personal investment in a given activity; relates to intensity, status, level of experience, etc.

2. **Resource Specificity/Definition of Place:** associated with personal significance of particular resource to the individual recreation experience; feeling of ownership of "special place".

3. **Mode of Experience/Focus of Trip/Expectations:** associated with varying individual expectations of the outdoor experience and ways of achieving it; relative level of focus on various aspects of the experience.

4. **Tolerance for Lifestyle Diversity/Lifestyle Tolerance:** associated with individual tendency to accept or reject lifestyles and uses different from one's own.

User Conflict in the Whitehorse Context

User satisfaction with the City's trail system is typically high and conflicts between trail user groups have been minimal in the overall context. This may be due in part to a comparatively low density of trail users in most areas – many users report rarely encountering other persons during their use of trails.

However, in higher-use areas, in cases where motorized use in particular has increased or changed, or in areas of the City where resident and user demographics may have changed, conflicts between user groups have arisen.

Some contributing factors to feelings of conflict found in Whitehorse include:

- Individual preferences, expectations, attitudes, values, perceptions, levels of expertise;

- Individual interpretations of past, present and future contacts with others;

- Location and type of trail/recreation area;

- Relative size of user groups;

- Cultural differences; and

- Type(s) of encounter(s).

As a result, conflict:

- Does not require actual contact between users;

- May or may not be based on factual information;

- Can cause some users to change or end their use; and

- May not be related to the activity the user is engaged in at the time.

9.0   Management Goals for Multiple Use Trails

Comparison with other jurisdictions shows that the City of Whitehorse has a trail system – including both the formal and informal trails – that is orders of magnitude larger than those found in other similar-sized northern municipalities. Due to difficulties in mapping these many trails – and the ongoing creation of new informal trails - the total number of kilometres of trails within City limits is difficult to determine with complete accuracy. However, for the purposes of this Plan, the Whitehorse trail system is estimated to total over 850 km, minimum.

Consultation with the public and user groups has confirmed that the citizens of Whitehorse attach a great deal of importance to the City's trail network and to their experience of it – and that these experiences are integral to their perception and experience of Whitehorse as a "wilderness city". Service expectations of some user groups and in certain geographic areas have been demonstrated to be high.

In the North, trail issues can be more complex and involve significantly different issues than those typically encountered in other municipalities. In Whitehorse, the total area of the city is approximately 415 square kilometres – much larger than most other communities of similar population. Typical trail use may include a significant portion of use not related to recreation, including access for mining, forestry and subsistence gathering, hunting and trapping activities by First Nations peoples. Safety issues relating to wildlife

(i.e. grizzly and black bears), forest fires and water safety issues (i.e. Yukon River)

In the face of these complex issues and limited resources, those tasked with management of this trail system face significant challenges. Moore (1994) breaks these challenges down into three broad areas of responsibility:

1. Maintaining User Safety

2. Protecting Natural Resources

3. Providing High-Quality User Experiences

9.1   Maintaining User Safety

Trail Infrastructure Management – trail construction/standards; sight distances; universal access; trail inspections/monitoring; trail maintenance; natural hazards; signage; accurate mapping w/ GPS waypoints, tracks; etc

Trail User Management – motorized, non-motorized conflicts; user skill & preparation; trail etiquette; safety education; level of use; reckless and unlawful behaviour; enforcement; use regulations/restrictions; trail closures, etc

Emergency Response Management – wildlife encounters; cliff rescue; water rescue; avalanche; forest fire response; evacuation notification & procedures; missing persons; first responders; extreme weather; personal & property crime.

9.2   Protecting Natural Resources

Trail Infrastructure Management –trail facilities; trail construction/standards; signage; water quality protection measures; new trail routing re: key wildlife habitat, sensitive vegetation/communities, heritage & cultural resources; etc

Trail User Management – key habitat information; no trace education; seasonal trail closure; enforcement; use regulations/restrictions; etc

Protection/Restoration Management – monitoring; trail decommissioning/closure (permanent); timely repair; habitat restoration; etc

9.3   Providing High Quality User Experiences

Trail Infrastructure Management – trail construction/standards; trail maintenance; signage; use separation; etc

Trail User Management – user expectations; resource specificity; activity styles; mode of use; tolerance of other uses; level of use; crowding; conflict management/mediation; user separation;

10.0   Management Tools for Multiple Use Trails

10.1 The Minimum Tool Rule

The nature of Whitehorse's trail system, the size of the community and the resources available limit management options in addressing negative impacts to user safety, the natural environment and user experiences. In addition, the nature of the outdoor recreation experience with its common expectations of solitude and freedom make an intensive or invasive level of interference in user activities inappropriate in many cases.

The "minimum tool rule" (Hendee et al, 1990, Kulla 1994) is a commonly used "hierarchy of options" for managing trail user conflicts, which advocates using the least intrusive measures that will achieve objectives.

Some options applicable to the Whitehorse case are presented below, in order of most to least preferable. For application to the Whitehorse trail system, the tools are further categorized by a level of response that symbolizes the relative effort and impact of the response.

First Degree Responses (Yellow Level)
These strategies are those which can be employed with the least expenditure of capital resources or can be most easily implemented in conjunction with community partners and champions. Many of these sorts of responses are already being employed by the City and trail users/groups, in whole or in part:

Signage - trailhead signage; trail maps; trail name/identification signage; safety signage; interpretive signage; kilometre markers; "you

are here" signage at crossroads, etc; etiquette signage; signage re: regulations/restrictions; signage in different languages in key areas;

Peer Pressure – bring existing individual "champions" and user groups on board and on-message; schools;

Education – low impact use; etiquette; ethics; environmental impacts; common courtesy; inform about what to expect; and

Community Involvement – public meetings; neighborhood-level trail task force group planning; website; Whitehorse Trail & Greenways Committee; volunteer trail wardens.

Second Degree Responses (Orange Level)

Aspects of these kinds of strategies may already be employed by the City or by organized trail user groups. They become appropriate in situations where the safety of specific activities are being called into question, and where increased pressure on specific resources is degrading the experience for all users to an unacceptable degree that cannot be managed by the application of the previous level of tools:

Training – schools; user groups;

Trail Design – specifically to control/moderate use - speed barriers; switchbacks; trail width; trail grade;

Expanding Facilities/Trails – renovate/redevelop trails & facilities; new trails & facilities; and

Use Regulations – code of conduct; use-specific regulations; trail passes; personal identifiers (licensing).

Third Degree Responses (Red Level)

This level symbolizes the most restrictive level of responses, which are suitable only when all consistent application of all previous responses has failed to resolve issues and significant conflicts remain. They are also appropriate in specific circumstances where life safety or particularly sensitive habitats are threatened:

Use Restrictions – temporal or spatial; seasonal or year round; temporary or permanent; specific or all uses; safety or environmental reasons;

Patrols/Enforcement – volunteer or City patrols; increased enforcement of existing rules; enforcement of new rules;

Separate Uses – only when all above have been tried and failed; difficult to police; and

Close Trails/Areas – to all users, when nothing else works; difficult to police.

11.0   Walking the Talk (and Treading Lightly! While We Do It)

Key components of the incremental Minimum Tool Rule include peer pressure, education, community involvement and training. All of these components are found in one neat package in the programs and outreach materials of Tread Lightly.

Tread Lightly! (the proper name includes the exclamation mark) is an American non-profit organization that promotes responsible recreation through its comprehensive educational materials and programs, as well as stewardship initiatives. Its mandate is the protection of access for recreationists to public lands. Closures of public lands to recreationists are commonplace in parts of the United States, so TL! plays an important and highly visible role in helping to preserve access to a broad range of recreational opportunities – most of which are directly trail-related.

Tread Lightly's principles are summarized in The Tread Pledge:

Travel & Recreate with Minimum Impact

Respect the Environment & the Rights of Others

Educate Yourself, Plan Ahead & Prepare Before You Go

Allow for Future Use of the Outdoors; Leave it Better Than You Found It

Discover the Rewards of Responsible Recreation

TL! offers programs for both motorized and non-motorized recreation, for adults and for children. Available resources include a series of brochures entitled *Tips for Responsible Recreation* (included in Appendix IV), as well as a complete series of activity-specific guidebooks which further explore the issues and techniques specific to each sport. For example, the *Tread Lightly! Guide to Responsible ATV Riding* offers specific guidance on minimizing impacts while negotiating difficult terrain, and on "protecting the soundscape" so that adverse impacts to the experience of other types of trail users are minimized. Additional educational resources for children include detailed school curriculum packages for all age groups. TL! also runs a train-the-trainer program for recreation professionals.

It is recommended that the Tread Lightly! programs and materials form the core of a new, comprehensive approach to trail-related communications, education and training. Tread Lightly's practical, straight-forward, highly ethical yet decidedly non-preachy tone makes their approach the perfect companion piece to the Minimum Tool Rule. The early adoption of this program would be a definitive sign for trail users that the City is embarking on a new path in managing and mitigating potential adverse impacts and user conflicts.

12.0   Implementation Strategy

12.1 Setting the Plan in Motion
The following implementation chart sets out the main program recommendations by program area over the 10-year timeframe. Tasks are broken out into the following areas:

Rationalizing the Trail System

Nurturing Positive Trail Culture

Getting the Word Out

Building and Maintaining the Trail System

The implementation chart sets out the activity sequence and level of effort required. Priority is reflected by activity ranking. Task timing is subject to annual budget appropriations. Where activities are within the scope of normal staff operations and no additional costs are anticipated they are shown as hatched on the chart. All other activities require the allocation of additional resources.

Key to the buy-in of the benefits-based approach are the development and refinement of appropriate performance measures, with annual reporting both to Council and to the public at large. The high profile of trails and greenspaces issues in the City ensures a certain degree of scrutiny from concerned residents.

A key feature of this implementation schedule is the completion of 2 neighbourhood-level trail plans in each of the next 5 years, for a total of 10 plans. Moving forward with these neighbourhood processes beginning as soon as possible in 2008 will allow the new approach to get off to a flying start. Completing the rest of the neighbourhoods on a predictable schedule will keep the momentum going, helping to further establish the Trail Plan as a living document that is responsive to the needs of the community.

12.2 Implementation Chart

Task	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rationalizing the Trail System										
Establish task force to oversee neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood planning (w/ input)	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Create planning framework/policy, including establishing neighbourhood boundaries	1									
Update neighbourhood trail inventories in advance of planning (w/ community GPS input)	1	1	1	1	1					
Complete neighbourhood trail plans (approximately 10, dependant on boundaries)		1	1	1	1	1				
Complete minor updates to neighbourhood trail plans prior to consolidation					2					
Nurturing +ve Trail Culture										
Establish interdisciplinary Trails & Greenways Committee (honoraria, expenses - ongoing)	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Create conflict resolution policy & procedures*		1								
Implement conflict resolution/mediation program (ongoing)*		2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Integrate city-wide trails/issues/priorities w/ neighbourhood plans (amend TMP)*							1			
Getting the Word Out										
Create dedicated trails & greenways website*	2									
Monitor/maintain trails & greenways website (ongoing)		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Create integrated mapping products when all neighbourhoods are completed							1			
Distribute updated & consolidated TMP w/ neighbourhood plans							1			
Revise stand alone trails & greenways map (design/production)	2						1			
Create public education/awareness/communication program, web materials*			2		1		1			
Implement public programs with community, schools, etc (internal - ongoing)*			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Contribute to user group education programming (partnership)*			3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Update and implement trail signage strategy in accordance w/ education programs*				2						
Implement enhanced signage strategy (ongoing)				1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Building & Maintaining the										
Implement pilot program, community-based trail construction/maintenance workshops*			1							
Implement ongoing community-based program (partnership)*				2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Complete trail hazard assessments, repairs (internal - ongoing)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Continue trail development/refurbishment/decommissioning as trail plans completed		2		2		2	2	2	2	2
Review and update policies/regulations/standards			3			3			3	
Evaluate and update programs/partnerships				3			3			3

NOTES:

- Trails & Greenways Committee (*) holds primary responsibility for guidance on how these activity tasks will be implemented

- Ranking reflects activities priority and sequence of work required to implement Trail Plan recommendations. Activity timing is subject to annual budget appropriations and cost is not reflected in activity priority

- Hatching indicates activities within the scope of normal staff operations without added cost. All other activities require additional resources and/or volunteer participation

Appendices

Please see 2017 notes updating appendices in this 2007 document

Appendix I:
Trail Construction Standards

Adapted from:

Environment Canada Parks. *Trail and Backcountry Facility Designs.*
Calgary, AB, 1986.

**2017 note – please visit
http://www.imbacanada.com/resources/trail-building**

Also see Parks Canada Trail Manual

Appendix II:
Trail Maintenance Standards

Appendix III:
Trail Signage Standards

Adapted from:

Grand Concourse Authority. *Walkway Maintenance Manual (First Edition).* St. John's, NF, 2004.

International Association of Snowmobile Administrators. *Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement.* Wisconsin, 2000.

Nova Scotia Trails Federation. *Developing Recreation Trails in Nova Scotia – Planning, Design, Construction, Maintenance and Management.* Halifax, NS, 1998.

2017 note – see Trans Canada Trail Signage Manual

Appendix IV:
Trails Safety & Education

Adapted from:

Tread Lightly!. *Tips for Responsible Recreation*. Ogden, UT, 2007. [www.treadlightly.org]

Tread Lightly!. *Guidebooks*. Ogden, UT, 2007. [www.treadlightly.org]

Government of Yukon. *Bear Safety web resources*. Whitehorse, YT, 2007. [www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca]

**2017 note – please visit
http://www.imbacanada.com/resources/trail_rules.html**

Appendix V:
2004 City of Whitehorse Trail Inventory

Adapted from:

Gartner Lee Limited. *City of Whitehorse Trails Inventory (digital data).* Whitehorse, YT, 2004.

2017 note – please visit www.whitehorse.ca/trails - maps section

Appendix VI:
Community Trails Supplements

NOTE: this section to be created from results of neighbourhood trail planning task forces, contributions from key trail user groups, etc.

2017 note – please visit www.whitehorse.ca/trails

Key References/Resources

References Consulted

Environment Canada Parks. *Trail and Backcountry Facility Designs.* Calgary, AB, 1986.

Gartner Lee Limited. *City of Whitehorse Trails Inventory (digital data).* Whitehorse, YT, 2004.

Government of Yukon. *Bear Safety web resources.* Whitehorse, YT, 2007. [www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca]

Grand Concourse Authority. *Walkway Maintenance Manual (First Edition).* St. John's, NF, 2004.

International Association of Snowmobile Administrators. *Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement.* Wisconsin, 2000.

Johnston, Brian. *A Rationale for the Delivery of Municipal Leisure Services.* Surrey, BC, 2006.

Klondike Snowmobile Association. *Trans Canada Trail Signage Guide.* Whitehorse, YT, 2000.

Moore, Roger. *Conflicts on Multiple-use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice.* Raleigh, NC, 2004.

Nova Scotia Trails Federation. *Developing Recreation Trails in Nova Scotia – Planning, Design, Construction, Maintenance and Management.* Halifax, NS, 1998.

Tread Lightly!. *Tips for Responsible Recreation.* Ogden, UT, 2007. [www.treadlightly.org]

Tread Lightly!. *Guidebooks.* Ogden, UT, 2007. [www.treadlightly.org]

Yukon Conservation Society. *Whitehorse and Area Hikes and Bikes (Revised Edition).* Whitehorse, YT, 2005.

Trail Resources on the Web

American Trails – www.americantrails.org

Canadian Parks & Recreation Association – www.cpra.ca

Go For Green – www.goforgreen.ca

International Mountain Bicycling Association – www. imba.org

Trails Canada – www.trailscanada.com

Trans Canada Trail – www.tctrail.ca

Tread Lightly! – www.treadlightly.org