

RIVERWEST BISTRO
RESTAURANT
& COFFEE BAR

The City of Dawson

Downtown Revitalization Plan



December, 2013

URBAN
systems



URBAN
systems

Suite 15-1114 Front Street
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 1A3

T: 867-393-2356
W: urbansystems.ca

December 2013

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Context for the Downtown Revitalization Plan.....	1
1.2 Issues	2
1.3 Purpose	2
1.4 The Planning Process	4
2. Downtown Dawson Today	5
2.1 Downtown - What People Value	5
2.2 Downtown Dawson - Current Issues	6
2.3 Heritage Management	8
3. Downtown Revitalization Strategies	11
3.1 Access and Connectivity.....	15
3.2 Image and Aesthetics	21
3.3 Residential Development	26
3.4 Working Together	29
3.5 Downtown Investment	31
4. Financial Incentives	32
5. Implementation	37
5.2 Cost Estimates	39
6. Case Studies	40

List of Figures

Figure 1. Downtown Revitalization Study Area
Figure 2. Existing Conditions and Characteristics
Figure 3. Schematic Land use and Connections
Figure 4. Revitalization Plan
Figure 5. Gateway Feature
Figure 6. Wayfinding Signs
Figure 7. Streetscape and Banner
Figure 8. Sidewalk Capacity
Figure 9. Streetscapes and Widened Boardwalks
Figure 10. Parking Lot Edges
Figure 11. Lighting
Figure 12. Street Furniture

1. Introduction

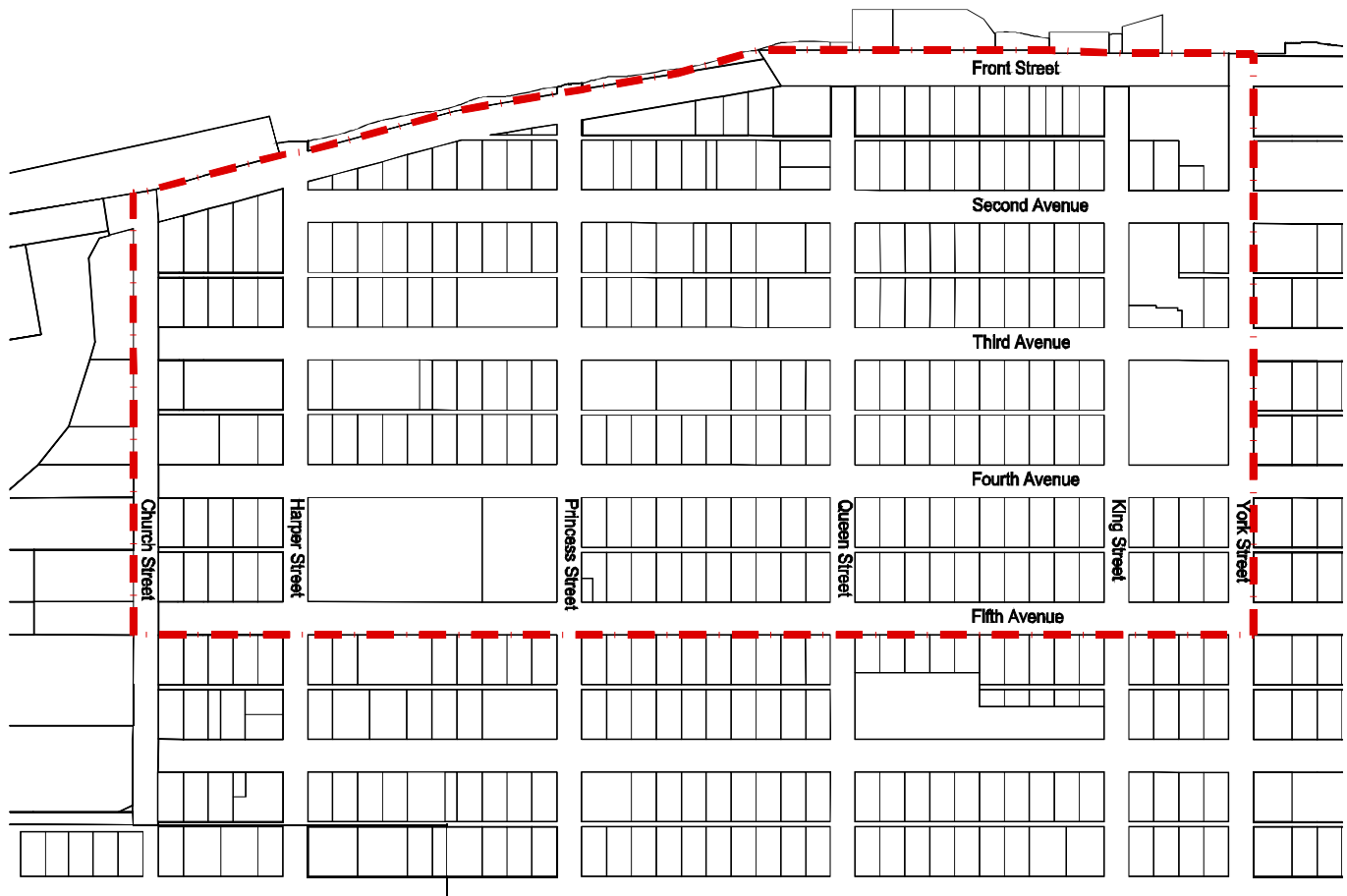
1.1 Context for the Downtown Revitalization Plan

Dawson City, located in the centre of the Yukon, is home to approximately 2,000 people. It is well known as the heart of the Klondike Gold Rush and in 1898, was a thriving city of 30,000. Dawson City lies within the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. The gold rush history, First Nations culture, and wild natural landscapes draw 60,000 visitors to the area each year. Today, Dawson City's main employers are the tourism industry, mining (both cyclical hard-rock mining exploration and small-scale placer mining), and the governments.

Downtown Dawson is the heart of the town and is an important destination for both residents and visitors. It is home to most of the community's restaurants and stores, the school, the Yukon College Dawson Campus Tr'ondëk Hätr'unohtän Zho, the Yukon School of Visual Art, the Dänojä Zho Cultural Center, the Palace Grand Theatre, most community services and government offices, the recreation center, many of the community's famous heritage buildings, and the visitor information centre.

Figure 1 shows the Downtown Revitalization Study Area. The area highlighted was the focus of our plan, but influences and activities outside the area were considered.

Figure 1. Downtown Revitalization Study Area



1.2 Issues

As part of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final agreement, a regional economic development plan has been completed. This Plan identified 31 strategic initiatives and the Downtown Revitalization Plan is one of nine community based projects being implemented in 2013-2014. It is being undertaken as a partnership between the City of Dawson and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

Although Downtown Dawson is thriving in many respects, there are a number of challenges facing the core area. In undertaking this project, the City of Dawson identified five downtown issues that the revitalization plan would tackle.

- There are a significant number of vacant properties and buildings in Downtown Dawson, giving a feeling of neglect and economic decline;
- Several required off-street parking lots add to the vacant feel of the area;
- Downtown Dawson's boardwalks and unpaved streets are identifying characteristics but pose a challenge for people with mobility issues and for maintenance;
- The 2009 waterfront beautification project was a success, and there is an appetite to see aesthetic improvements throughout Downtown; and
- Year-round customers and activity is needed to support and attract businesses.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this Downtown Revitalization Plan is to strengthen the vitality of the core commercial district of Dawson City. The Plan sets out realistic and implementable steps that will encourage and guide development and infrastructure investments in the Downtown Core.

History of Downtown Dawson City

Dawson City's commercial downtown officially began in 1897 when Joseph Ladue staked the moose pasture for a town site. By the spring of 1897, fifteen hundred people lived in Dawson City. In the six months that followed, the downtown area emerged in the form of tents and small log buildings involved in a variety of commercial endeavors which included stores, saloons, and dentist offices.

By the spring of 1898, 30,000 people lived in Dawson City. Banks, theatres, newspapers, churches, and a new telephone line were established. New wooden buildings replaced the tents and the muddy streets were lined with boardwalks. Lots on Front Street were selling for several thousand dollars per foot of frontage.

During the Gold Rush the core of the city was constantly changing. Fires destroyed numerous wood buildings but were quickly replaced by newer, more complex buildings. Impressive facades were built over top crude log buildings creating an illusion of urban sophistication.



Dawson City, Y.T. c. 1898, photo: Dawson City Museum and Historical Society

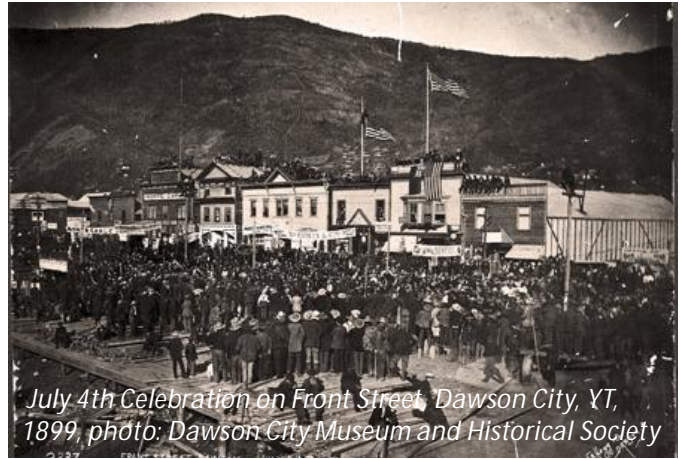
From King Street south to Princess Street, and from the waterfront east to Fourth Avenue provided young, generally male gold seekers with necessary services such as accommodation, dining, banking, laundry, repair, grocery, hardware, and dry goods facilities in addition to the less necessary services provided by saloons, dance halls, gambling halls, theatres and brothels.

Photographic evidence from this period of King and Queen Streets and Front, Second, and Third Avenues show large crowds, parades and celebrations, animals, vehicles, poles and wires, banners, and a variety of street and shop signage. High rental rates meant maximum use of sites and the elimination of most small cabins and residences.

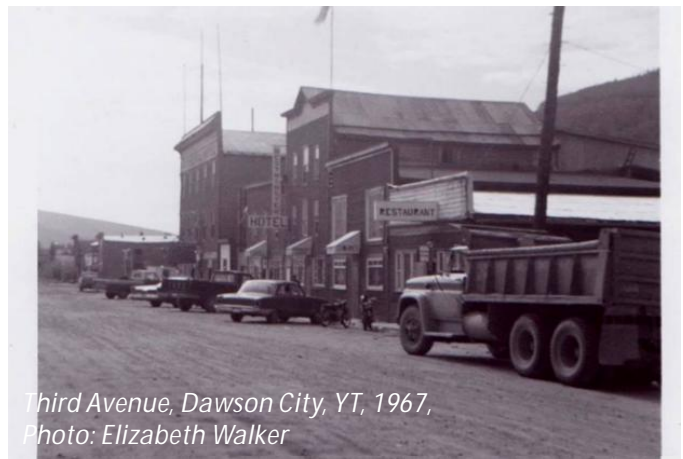
By 1899 the Gold Rush was beginning to decline and the town's population fell to 8,000. Many left to follow subsequent gold rushes in other areas, however some stayed and sent for their wives and children. The presence of women and children in the town changed the downtown core's composition to a certain degree. Brothels and dancehalls were driven out of town through various campaigns and replaced with more sophisticated entertainment. A more permanent architecture was developed by both government and private land and business owners. This resulted in the movement of businessmen from their sleeping quarters above their stores to the residential areas of Dawson City.

The population of Dawson City continued to dwindle during the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (YCGC) era (1923-1966) as the mechanization of mining required fewer men for operation. Many Gold Rush era buildings became derelict until the early 1950's when the Klondike Visitors' Association (KVA) was formed to encourage the emerging tourism industry. The Government of Canada also took an interest in the town, and in 1959 Prime Minister John Diefenbaker visited Dawson City and suggested it be developed as a historic tourist attraction. This was slow in coming and Dawson City's population languished around the 600-900 mark through the 1960's and 1970's. In 1967 Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended the acquisition of a number of buildings and the protection of others. Municipal heritage regulations were developed and the Federal Government began a major intervention in Dawson City. By the 1970's tourism was a key player in the area's economy.

The flood of 1979 resulted in two new features in the downtown core's vernacular; the addition of the dike that runs along the banks of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers



July 4th Celebration on Front Street, Dawson City, YT, 1899, photo: Dawson City Museum and Historical Society



Third Avenue, Dawson City, YT, 1967, Photo: Elizabeth Walker



Flood of 1979, Dawson City, YT, Photo: Peter Gould

1.4 The Planning Process

and a series of new developments whose foundations elevate the main floor well above street level. This is most commonly seen on commercial structures along Second Avenue. The addition of stairs and barrier free access/wheel chair ramps has resulted in accordance with the National Building Code of Canada requirements.

Today, Dawson City's downtown core is occupied by various businesses and services which include government and private offices, a bank, schools, an art gallery, grocery, hardware, jewelry, clothing, and drug stores. Hotels, restaurants, a casino, theatre, and numerous saloons also operate on full time and seasonal (summer) schedules. The abundance of parking lots add to the vacant feel that the downtown core may exude, however the numerous vacant and occupied historic structures that dot the area continue to contribute to the area's well established and ongoing tourism industry.

In July 2013, the City of Dawson hired Urban Systems to prepare a Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Planning team spent August 26 to 29th in Dawson City. The purpose of this visit was to raise excitement about downtown planning, understand the current conditions, assess existing infrastructure, identify potential improvements, and begin development of the draft plan. A series of meetings and events were held to get meaningful input from a wide range of community members. The following specific events were held:

- Kick-off meeting with project manager;
- Stakeholder meeting;
- Meeting with City Council;
- Downtown walk (15 people);
- Meeting with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in;
- Meeting with City Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff;
- Open design studio (5 people);
- Open House (16 people); and
- Wrap-up meeting with project manager.

An online engagement platform was developed to allow community members to view maps, respond to a survey, and view and add comments. Participation in the survey was low, and the responses echoed those received from the public at the Downtown walk, open design studio and the Open House.

Through what we heard during the Downtown walk, public survey and the meetings with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, stakeholders and City Council, a list of Downtown Issues was developed. In response to this, a series of possible solutions were generated. The issues, possible solutions and a series of illustrations were presented for feedback at the Open House.

Through September and October these possible solutions and the accompanying illustrations were refined into a Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan was presented to City Council, the public, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on October 28 and 29, 2013. Edits were made to the draft to reflect the comments received and the final version of the draft was presented once again to the public and City Council on December 16.



Community walk, August 2013

2. Downtown Dawson Today

2.1 Downtown Dawson – What People Value

Downtown Dawson is a special place. In the summer its boardwalks and buildings bustle with visitors, stores are busy, there is boat traffic on the river, and kids on bikes zip past at all hours. The days are long, hot and dusty, and there is a festival, parade or party nearly every weekend. In the winter, the pace slows, snow crunches underfoot, and residents learn to recognize each other by their parkas. Movies, dances, plays, art shows, and dog sled races keep people entertained.

Both visitors and residents love Dawson's historic look and feel, boardwalks, and both the buildings that have been carefully restored and the buildings that are derelict and sitting vacant. Many residents feel that preserving the heritage resources is vital to drawing tourists to the town.

People recognize Downtown Dawson as the centre for business and tourism and enjoy the resulting hustle and bustle. At the same time, people like that the area can feel quiet, peaceful, and close to nature. Many residents value the locally owned and operated businesses.

Visitors and locals love the newly developed riverfront park. People also love the gritty side of Dawson; the back alleys, the dirt roads, the greenery growing up in vacant lots and along the edges of boardwalks, and that lived-in feeling you get in a real town.

"I love that it is lived in, and doesn't ever feel vacant or empty."



Corner of Queen Street and Second Avenue



2.2 Downtown Dawson – Current Issues

Through input gathered during the Downtown walk, public survey, open house, and the meetings with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, stakeholders and City Council, the following list of Downtown issues was developed.

Business Attractiveness and Retention

- Public washrooms are needed in the Downtown;
- Branding and marketing;
- Stores close too early in the summer;
- Businesses have moved from Second Avenue to Front Street (and some have closed);
- High utility fees make it difficult for businesses; and
- Planning and spending should be focussed on economic opportunities and addressing seasonality of local economy.

Parking and Traffic Flow

- Lack of connection between Front Street and Second Avenue and the rest of Downtown;
- Parking lots add to the vacant feel;
- Not enough bike racks;
- Car traffic is prioritized over pedestrian and bike traffic; and
- Heading south on Front Street (past Harper Street) the boardwalk ends and it is not clear to visitors that there are attractions to the south.

Vacant Lots and Buildings

- Enforcement of Heritage Management Bylaw isn't always consistent;
- More multi-family residential needed in Downtown Dawson;
- There is concern about the loss of heritage buildings on streets and in alleys;
- Current policies do not discourage holding on to vacant lots;
- There are misconceptions and misunderstanding about the Heritage Management Plan that may discourage redevelopment;
- Space is needed for Downtown non-alcoholic winter social space , gardens, public art, convention centre;
- Some buildings that are designated heritage buildings detract from the aesthetics of Downtown;
- There are no incentives to maintain and restore heritage buildings; and
- The commercial/retail market in Dawson is saturated.

Accessibility

- Maintenance of boardwalks;
- Road elevations makes a big step up to the boardwalk in some areas;
- Boardwalks may be too narrow to accommodate street furniture and pedestrian traffic;
- No cross country ski access to/through Downtown; and
- Storm drains are very low at some crosswalks.

“Dawson’s Downtown should be the core of the vibrancy and energy in our town.”



Vacant Lot on Third Avenue

Sprucing up Downtown (Beautification)

- Garbage cans not compatible with the heritage streetscape;
- Downtown garbage collection needs to be improved especially on Mondays after busy weekends and in winter;
- Don't want to lose the back alley experience;
- Need for more benches and places to sit;
- Street lights not compatible with heritage and are not the right scale for the streetscape;
- Space is needed for permanent and temporary public art;
- Dark winter could be improved by adding more decorative lights to buildings and streets;
- Need more wild greenspaces;
- Currently only green space is on vacant lots and along boardwalks;
- Light pollution is making it difficult to see stars and northern lights;
- More formal greenspaces are needed in the Downtown for shade and sitting; and
- Concern that development will threaten authentic heritage.



Inaccessible Boardwalk at the corner of Princess Street and Second Avenue

2.3 Heritage Management

The value of Downtown Dawson's heritage resources is widely recognized. Many gold rush era buildings and landscape features are still intact. There are several plans and bylaws in place to help manage and preserve Dawson's heritage assets.

The City of Dawson completed a Heritage Management Plan in 2008. Sections of this Plan have been incorporated into the City's Zoning Bylaw. Buildings and structures more than 40 years old will be demolished only in exceptional circumstances as determined by City Council. This Downtown Revitalization Plan does not recommend changes to existing heritage plans. The other heritage plans are summarized below.

Dawson City Heritage Management Plan (Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited, 2008)

The purpose of the Dawson City Heritage Management Plan is to preserve and strengthen the visual character and design intent of a nationally and internationally significant cultural landscape. Dawson's plan divides the town into eight character areas, and defines the principal character-defining features of each area, and sets out specific management guidelines for each area.

In the Plan, all buildings and structures in the downtown area, including derelict structures are protected. The Plan calls for incentives such as grants, loans, and



Collection of Downtown Images

planning relaxations to help offset the costs of heritage conservation. Infill buildings should replicate the external design of the building that stood on that site during the gold rush era. Conservation work should follow Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines.

Below is a summary of the Character Defining Features of the Downtown Core as listed in the City Heritage Management Plan.

Topography

- Front Street is situated at a higher elevation (about one metre), as it was the original dike.
- The land rises sharply at the present dike, which was built in the early 1980's.
- Park-like setting of the landscape along the dike, which provides a walkway along the river.

Views

- Good views of the Bowl, including the mountains to the east (the ridge that leads to the Dome), the north (including the Slide) and the west (Top of the World).
- North-south streets have views to the Slide, a natural landmark that provides orientation.
- East-west streets have views to the Dome.
- Important views from the principal streets to certain public buildings that are landmarks.

Buildings and Structures

- Downtown contains most of Dawson's Gold Rush-era commercial buildings.
- Typically built close to the side lot lines and the street line.
- Commercial buildings typically have false fronts, with elaborate and well-defined cornices, masking gabled roofs whose ridges are perpendicular to the street.
- Mixture of 1- and 2-storey buildings, with a few 3-storey buildings, with heights changing from property to property.
- Older buildings tend to be sited close to ground level. Many newer buildings have been raised as high as 1.5 metres above grade to create a crawl space.
- Generally wood frame or log construction.
- Predominantly wood cladding,

with some metal cladding.

- Many corrugated metal roofs and wood windows and doors.
- Inset entrances.

Landscape Features

- Gridiron street pattern.
- Small lots (many are fragments of original lots) with historic buildings often over lot lines.
- Mid-block lanes running north-south, parallel to the numbered avenues.
- No setbacks.
- Gravel roads and wooden boardwalks.
- Informal pedestrian ways between avenues.
- Clear views of skyline and night sky.
- Treatments of ground and upper floors are distinct, with fascia signage and other details often providing a transition zone between the two.
- Street-level glazing with large windows and panes.
- Fire escapes generally on the sides or rear of buildings.

Design Guidelines for Historic Dawson (Parks Canada, no date)

The purpose of the Design Guidelines for Historic Dawson is to provide information:

- i. to the City of Dawson Heritage Advisory Committee;
- ii. to residents and developers who wish to make renovations, additions and build new structures; and
- iii. to Parks Canada for their projects of restoration renovation, or rehabilitation.



Historic Streetscape Third Avenue

The Design Guidelines are intended to provide information that will aid in the re-creation of the historic atmosphere of early Dawson City. The document provides information, drawings and examples of building size, massing, historic streetscapes, façades, roof styles, windows, doors, architectural details, lighting, fences, and signage.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Canada's Historic Places, Second Edition, 2010)

The purpose of the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada is to provide sound, practical guidance to achieve good conservation practice. The document establishes a consistent, pan-Canadian set of conservation principles and guidelines that will be useful to anyone with an interest in conserving Canada's historic places. It also provides guidance to those interested in applying for financial incentives for the conservation of historic places.



Raised Boardwalk on Second Avenue



Historic Architectural Detail at Klondike Kates

3. Downtown Revitalization Strategies

Through the meetings and discussions held during the Downtown Design Session in late August a Plan Mission and Guiding Principles were developed and a list of the challenges facing Dawson's Downtown were compiled. From this, our team has developed a series of strategies aimed at implementing the Downtown mission statement and goals.

Overall Community Vision

“Honouring the Past, Sharing the Present, Embracing the Future”

This vision was identified in Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and was reinforced in the 2012 Official Community Plan.

Downtown Revitalization Plan Mission

To strengthen the economic vitality of Downtown Dawson by encouraging and guiding development and infrastructure investments.

Five Goals for Downtown Dawson

- Goal 1. Improve connectivity and flow through the Downtown to facilitate meandering and to draw people from Front Street to the rest of Downtown.
- Goal 2. Develop a vibrant, welcoming, and historic Downtown for all seasons.
- Goal 3. Encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant lots with a focus on increasing residential uses.
- Goal 4. Continue to build on the spirit of cooperation and collaboration to improve the Downtown business climate.
- Goal 5. Leverage limited resources for new Downtown infrastructure to greatest effect.



King Street in Front of the Palace Grand

Figure 2, the Map of Existing Conditions and Characteristics shows the current status of the Downtown area. This includes the location of civic facilities, Parks Canada heritage buildings, parking lots, and vacant lots.

in the various sections of Downtown and illustrates the potential connection between them. Figure 4, the Revitalization Plan, is an illustration of many of the recommended strategies found in this section.

Figure 3 shows the Schematic Land Use and Connections. This shows the major current land uses

Figure 2. Existing Conditions and Characteristics



Figure 3. Schematic Land Use and Connections

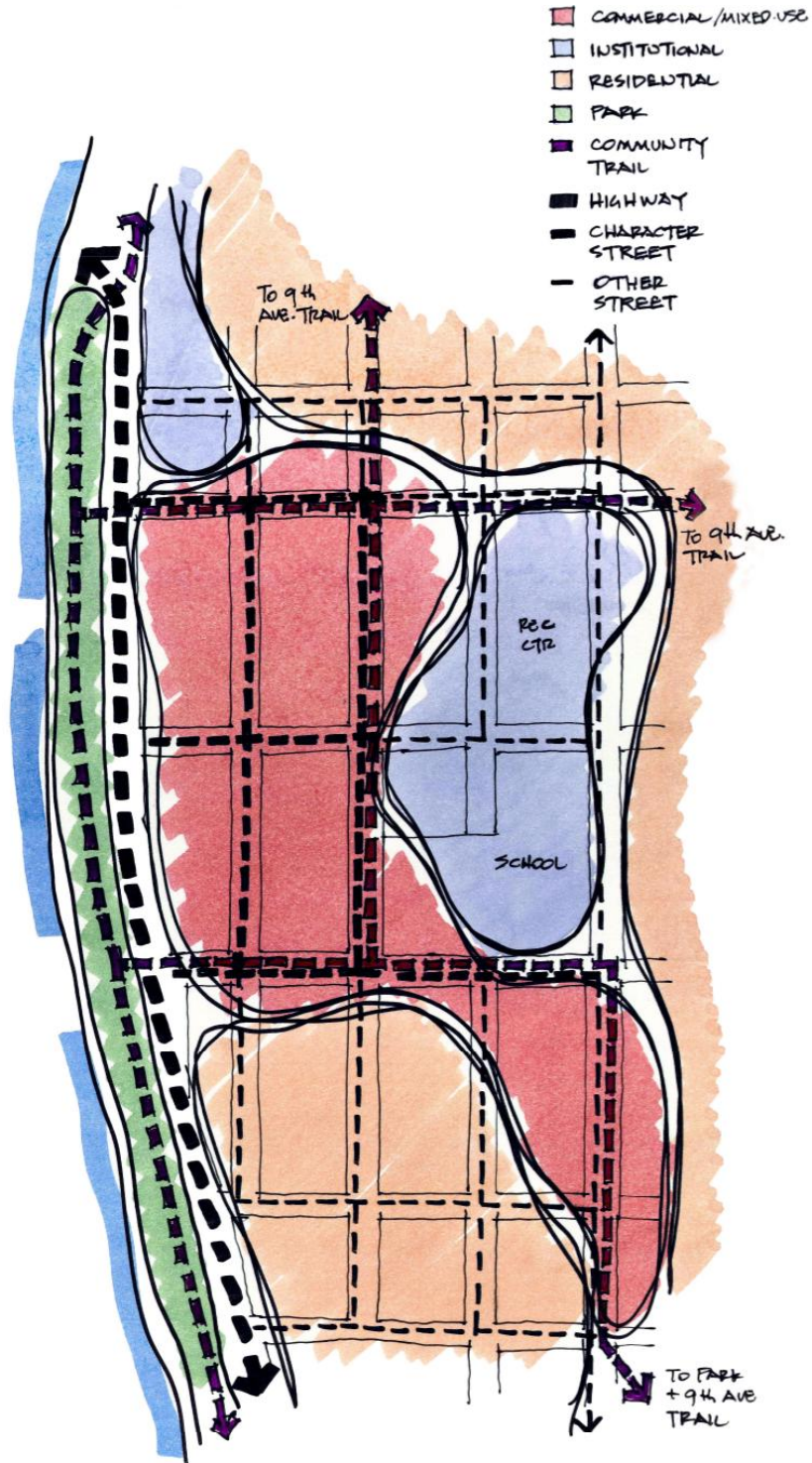
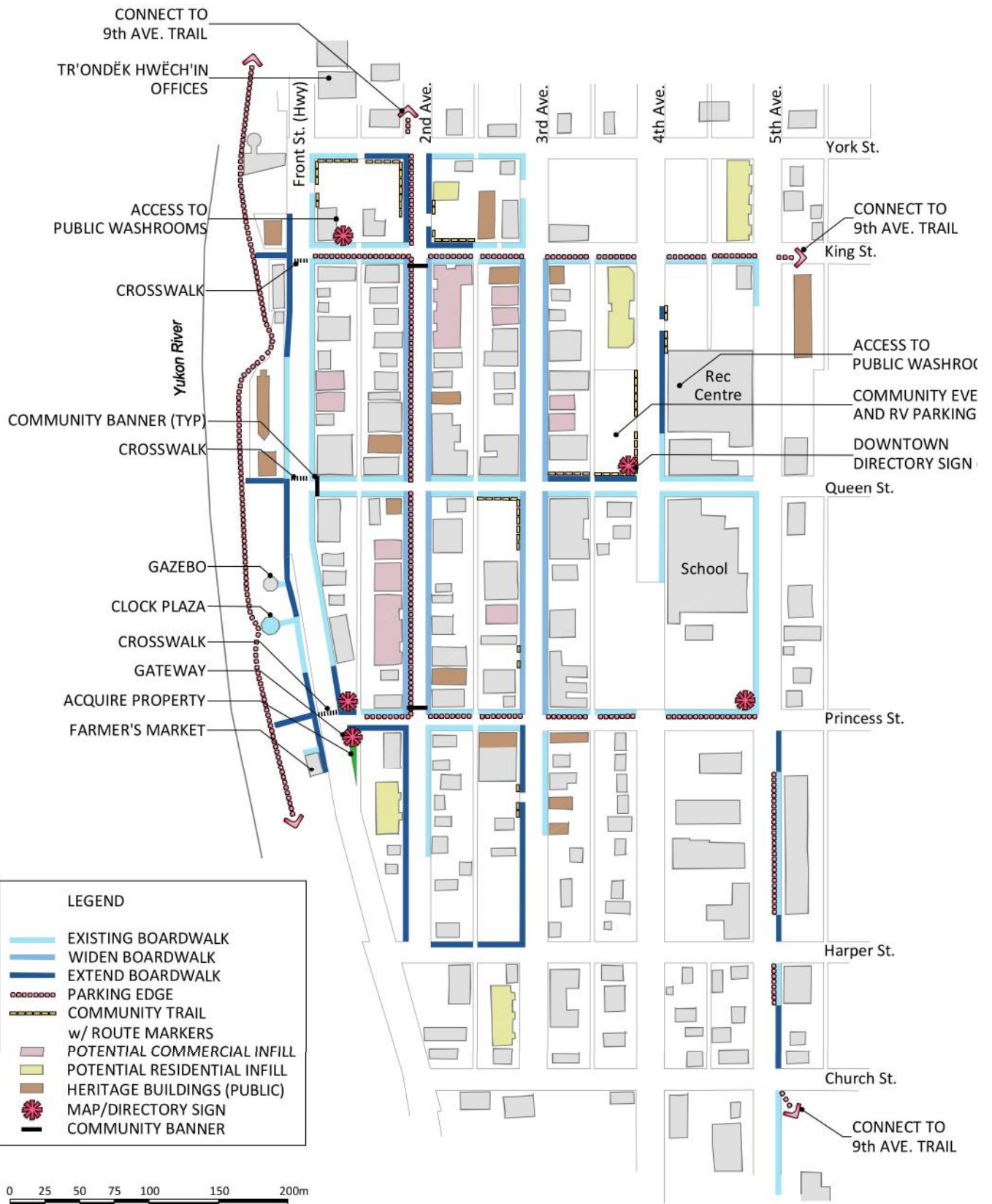


Figure 4. Revitalization Plan



3.1 Access and Connectivity

Communities depend on roads, sidewalks and pathways to connect people to services, amenities, and to each other. In successful downtowns, travelling on foot, bicycle, or wheelchair is as easy, or easier, as travelling by car. Dawson benefits from a Downtown that is fairly compact and is home to many important community destinations. Improving access and connectivity will make it easier for residents to get around and will encourage visitors to move throughout the Downtown. Most blocks in the Downtown Core have boardwalks instead of sidewalks. Both residents and visitors love this unique and defining feature of Downtown. In this section we focus on pedestrians and bicycles because vehicles can move throughout the Downtown relatively easily.

Goal: Improve connectivity and flow through the Downtown to facilitate meandering and to draw people from Front Street to the rest of Downtown.

Existing Conditions:

- The boardwalk network is a much-loved Downtown asset;
- Boardwalk maintenance is an issue;
- The boardwalk network is not completed throughout the Downtown;
- In some sections the step up to boardwalk is too high;
- There is a lack of wayfinding signage;
- Some parking lots add to the vacant feel of the Downtown;
- Deep catch basins at street corners make crossings difficult;
- People regularly use the alleys to get around; and
- There is a lack of connection between Front Street and the rest of Downtown.



Pedestrians on the Front Street Boardwalk

SIGNAGE AND BANNERS

1. Announce arrival in Downtown using gateway signage and landscaping features.

Choose a visible location on Front Street near Princess Street. Sign should follow heritage guidelines, be lit, and be visible all year round. Figure 5 shows one option of what the gateway feature could look like.

2. Provide maps and directional signs that point to specific businesses and attractions.

Have permanent outdoor maps at key visitor locations showing visitors the location of interesting Downtown features, trails, stores, and heritage buildings. Potential locations for these are in the Gertie's Parking lot (if this is advertised as a public RV parking lot), the Visitor Information Centre, and on Front Street between Princess Street and Queen Street. This would be in addition to the existing map between Queen and Princess on the riverfront. Also add directional signs that point to specific attractions and business. Figure 6 shows what these signs could look like. Signs must comply with heritage guidelines and should be designed to be visible in the winter and withstand cold temperatures.

3. Community banner program.

Establish one or more sites that will be available for banners for community events, announcements, and advertising.

The City of Dawson could contribute by identifying and preparing banner locations and hanging the banners. The Klondike Visitors Association could coordinate the production of the banners, and local organizations and businesses would contribute to the cost of getting their banner made.

The City recently had five hand painted double-sided canvas banners made at a cost of \$2,500 each. It may be possible to find a local supplier and an alternate material that meets the heritage regulations to bring down the cost of the banners. Figure 7 shows a sketch of how the banners look on a typical street cross-section. If banners are to be used in winter, they should be designed to withstand winter conditions.

4. Establish and maintain boardwalk standards.

Many of Dawson's Downtown streets have boardwalks. Existing boardwalks are shown in Figure 2. Making these boardwalks as accessible as possible is very important for the aging population, visitors with mobility issues, and parents pushing strollers. This will involve providing gently sloping ramps up to the boardwalk wherever possible.

To improve the condition and make the boardwalks more accessible, the City of Dawson should implement a boardwalk maintenance and improvement program. Regular maintenance will ensure adequate safety, accessibility, and serviceability of constructed boardwalks.

Figure 5. Gateway Feature



BOARDWALKS

The maintenance program should include:

- Regular scheduled inspection;
 - Improving hazardous conditions such as “trip and slip”, jagged edges, projecting nails, missing boards;
 - Re-securing loose boards;
 - Replacing weakened, broken and otherwise damaged and structural unsound boards;
 - Define a standard step height to access boardwalks and work to implement this standard throughout; and
 - Refining street grading and snow plowing operations to reduce impacts to condition and serviceability of boardwalk.
5. Make the capital improvements necessary to improve the level of service and standards for the boardwalks.

As funding permits, complete the boardwalk system throughout the Downtown core.

The capital improvement program would include:

- Confirming or establishing a boardwalk construction standard;
- Replacing or renewing entire sections of boardwalk on a cycle that reflects typical service life; for example, renew 2 to 3 blocks, representing about 10% of boardwalk, each year on a 10-year cycle;
- Incorporating adopted universal access standards, widening of existing boardwalks and other improvements with replacement;
- As required, annually or with new development, construct new boardwalk to extend the network; and
- Explore potential funding such as off-site improvement levies and increased development cost charge for new development and partnership programs with businesses or community groups.

Priority blocks and segments for extending the boardwalk network are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 6. Directional Signs

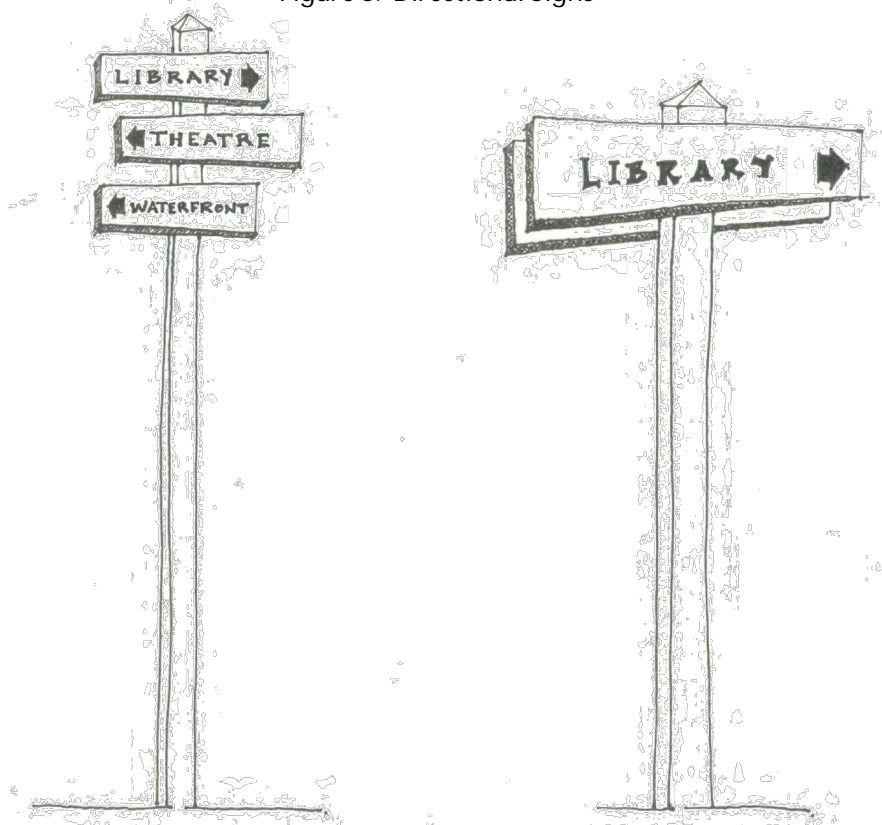
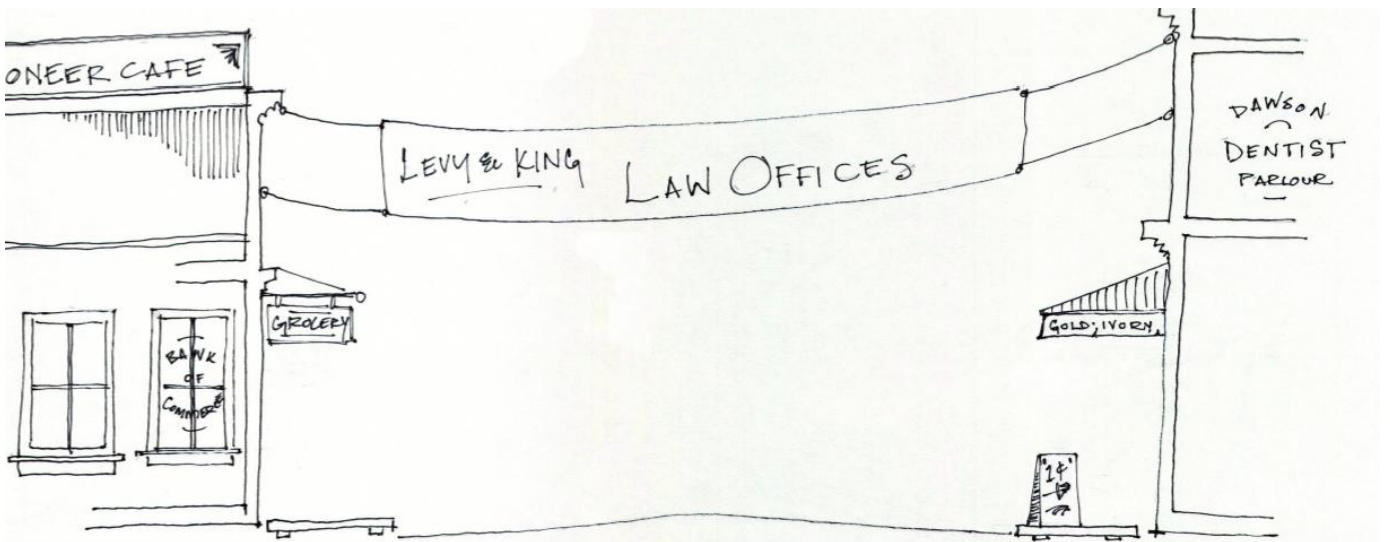


Figure 7. Banners and Streetscapes



6. Widen boardwalks on core commercial blocks.

On the busiest blocks of Second and Third Avenues, wider sidewalks would allow more space for benches, bike racks, and planter boxes and would work to draw shoppers and walkers to these blocks. Wider boardwalks could be added during routine replacement of worn boardwalks. This may impact on street parking in some locations. Figure 8 shows the capacity of current sidewalks and Figure 9 shows a sketch of what a wider sidewalk would look like. Locations where the wider boardwalk would work well are shown in Figure 4. Start by testing a wider sidewalk in one area, for example on south side Second Avenue between King Street and Queen Street.

PARKING

7. Encourage vehicle access to buildings and parking lots via alleys.

Every time that a lot is accessed from the street, there is a break in connectivity in the boardwalk. The Zoning Bylaw Schedule F Section 4.3 states that access to parking and loading spaces be from the rear lane. When reviewing new development, ensure that this directive is followed. The alleys should be maintained to provide access to the lots without forcing breaks in the boardwalk network.

8. Identify a Downtown facility for RV parking.

Using signage on the way in to town, direct RV's to a designated parking daytime area. This will result in fewer RV's blocking traffic and visibility on Front Street and will encourage visitors to walk through Downtown to get to the visitor information centre. A good location would be in Gertie's parking lot. The downtown portion of the community trail (see #9 below) and wayfinding maps will direct visitors to key points of interest.

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

9. Connect riverfront, Downtown, and Ninth Avenue trail.

Determine a network and develop pathways, signage, and maps to establish a community trail through

Downtown that will connect to the Dike and Ninth Avenue Trails, and to the broader community trail network. Highlight and develop Queen Street as a connection between these two trails through Downtown and provide options for interconnected loops. These trails should be usable year-round. Work with the Klondike Active Transport & Trails Society and City of Dawson Public Works staff to determine appropriate and practical winter maintenance.

10. Make crosswalks safer

Work to make crosswalks safer by levelling the gravel to make the street surface at corners as even as possible. If future repairs are done to the storm drainage systems, consider moving the catch basins away from the corners where they interfere with safe street crossings.

Figure 8. Sidewalk Capacity

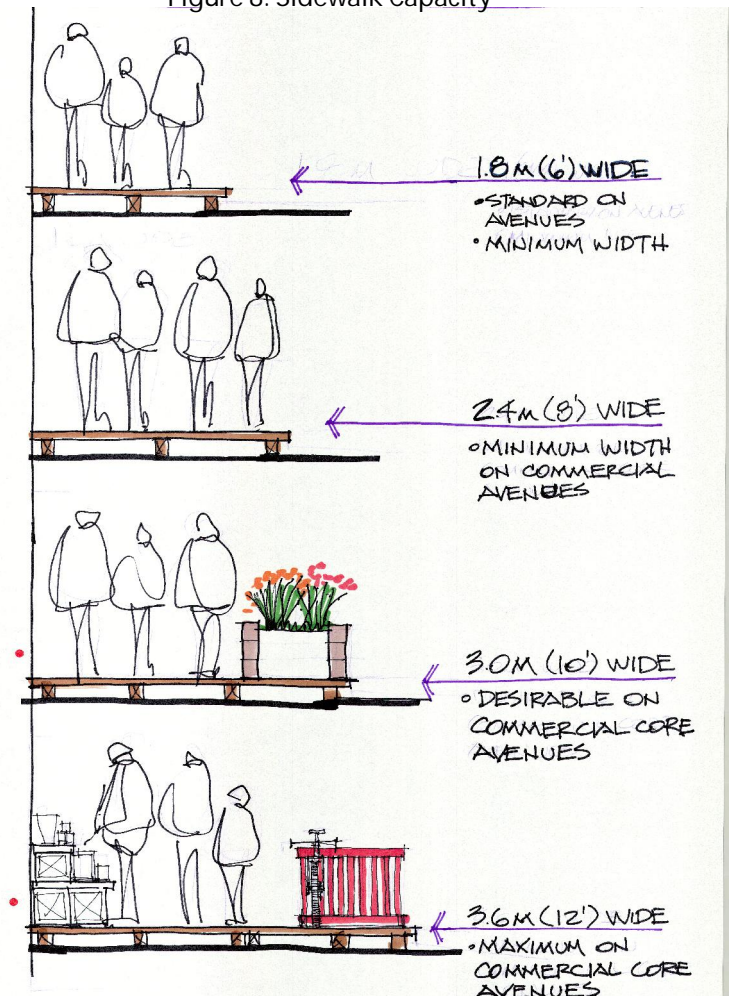
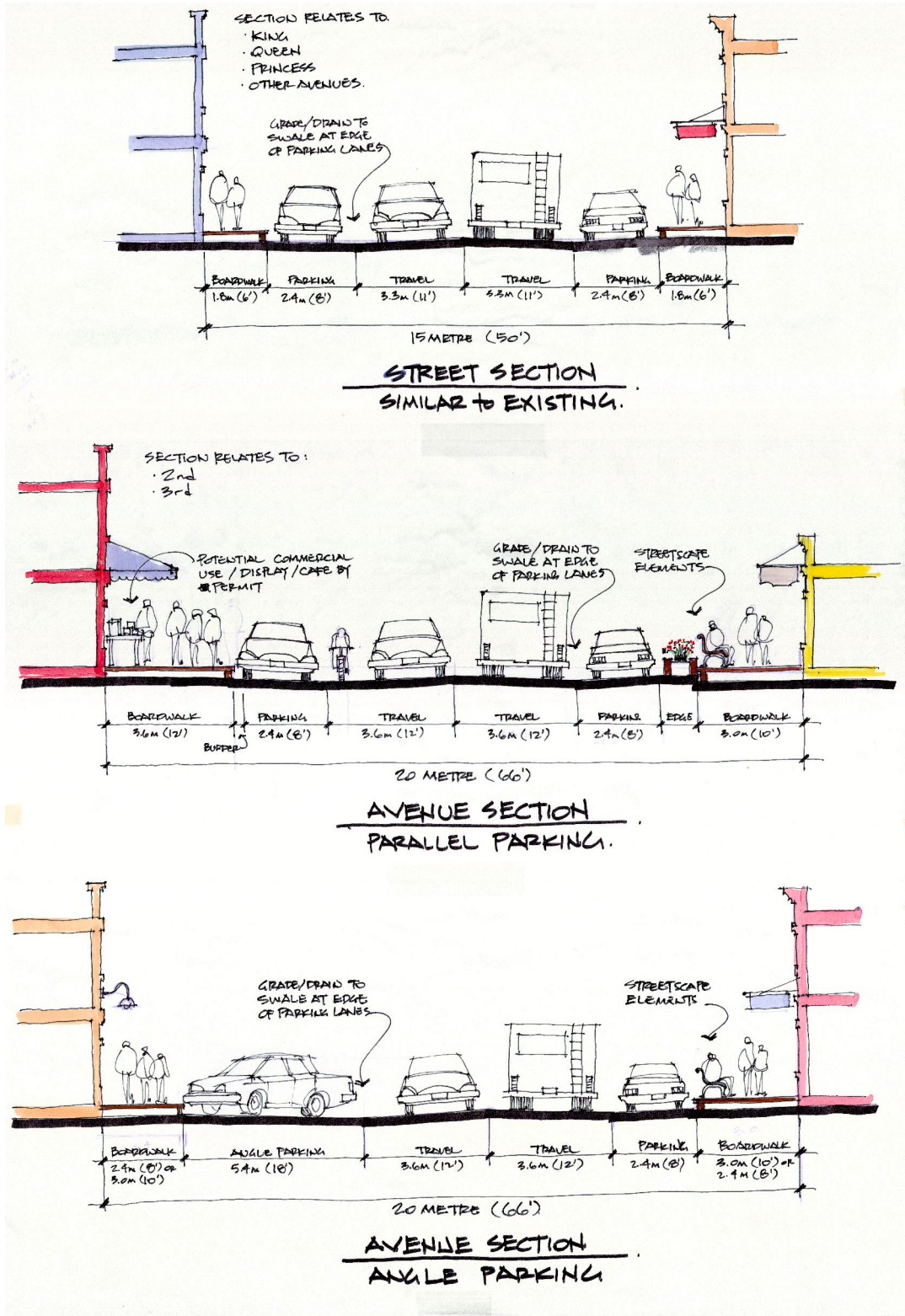


Figure 9. Wider Boardwalk and Existing Street Sections



3.2 Image and Aesthetics

Both visitors and residents are drawn to the authentic and unique experience offered on the streets of Downtown Dawson. Well maintained facades, colourful flower boxes, good lighting, nice looking benches, and tidy properties will draw people and will encourage private investment. Although it is clear that maintenance is important, and that a consistent look and feel is desirable, beautification programs should not sanitize or “Disney-fy” Downtown Dawson. Improvements should be carefully designed to reinforce historical themes.

Goal: Develop a vibrant, welcoming, and historic Downtown for all seasons

Existing Conditions:

- The heritage resources are highly valued by both residents and visitors;
- Residents and visitors love the back alleys and gritty feel of the Downtown;
- Unattractive garbage cans;
- Poorly maintained public and private properties;
- Parking lots with undefined edges;
- Lighting is at a the wrong scale and is not compatible with heritage streetscape; and
- Limited street furniture.

MAINTENANCE

1. Encourage a higher standard of maintenance and upkeep in the Downtown.

There are both existing structure and vacant lots that are in need of clean-up and maintenance. Consider more regular/rigorous enforcement of the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw. It is also important that the City lead by example and do a good job of the maintenance and upkeep of their properties and infrastructure. This includes increased garbage pick-up after busy summer weekends and ongoing pick-up during the winter. Street furniture and boardwalks should be well maintained.

DESIGN

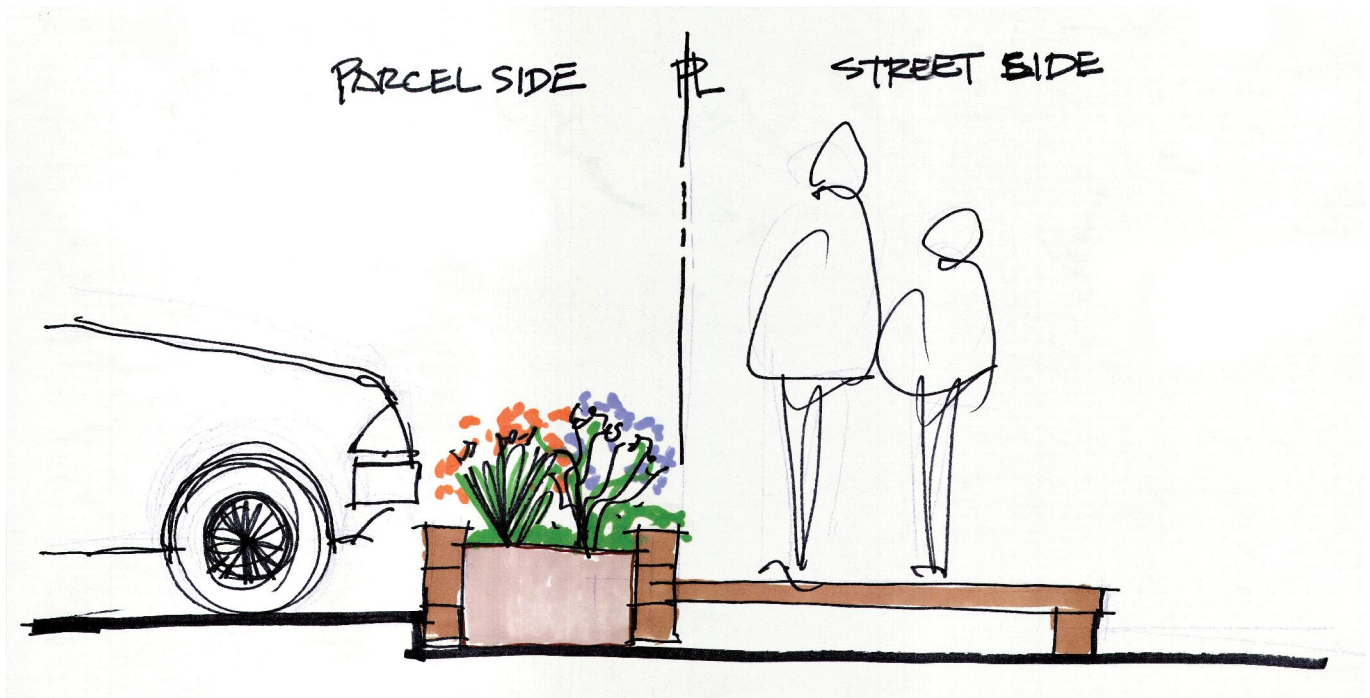
2. Improve edges of parking lots.

Encourage owners of existing parking lots (especially the City of Dawson and Parks Canada) to define the open edges of parking areas by adding boardwalks, planters, information/interpretation signs, and benches. Update the Zoning Bylaw to add design guidelines for new parking lots, including that boardwalks be added along parking lot edges. Larger parking lots should be divided into sections using bollards or planter boxes. See Figure 10, for an example of how the parking lots could be better designed.



Undefined Parking Lot at the Palace Grand

Figure 10. Parking Lot Edges



3. Develop “winter city” qualities.

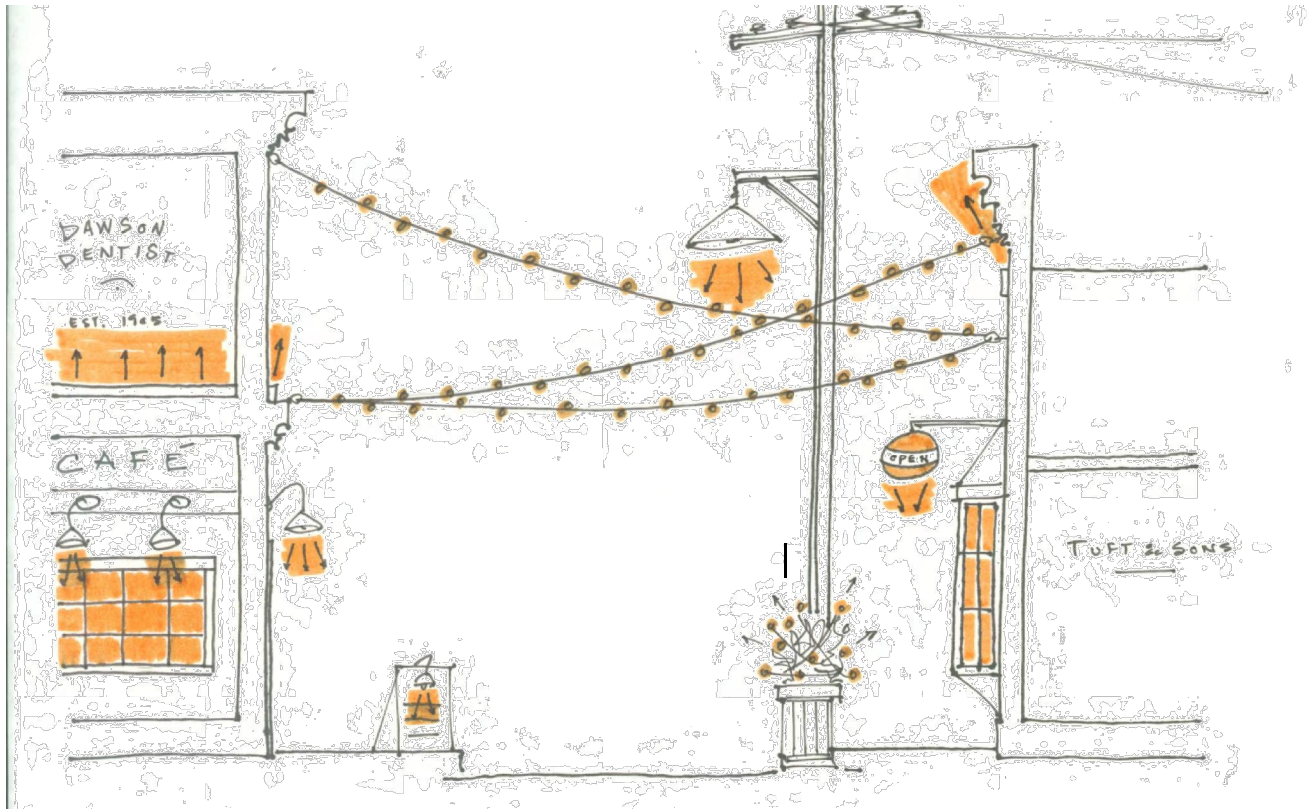
Winter city designs are focussed on using warm colours and lighting to brighten up dark winter days. Encourage use of twinkle lights on buildings and in planter boxes during winter months. Add pedestrian scale lights to buildings. New lighting should be energy efficient and reliable in cold temperatures.

Work to replace the standard cobra head lights on key Downtown blocks. Yukon Energy is doing a pilot project to test LED street lights. If the project is successful, and it is decided that the streetlights should be switched to LED lights, then light fixtures will need to be purchased. It may be possible to work with Yukon Energy to select a light fixture that is more compatible with the heritage look and feel of Downtown Dawson. Figure 11 shows a sample of heritage street lighting.

4. Establish a City of Dawson palette.

Establish a look and feel for Downtown furnishings that helps to reinforce heritage values and to “brand” the City’s contribution to Downtown revitalization. This unified look and feel will be applied to City infrastructure throughout the Downtown. This does not mean that furniture will all be painted the same colour, but more that it will be recognizable as a City addition to the Downtown.

Figure 11. Lighting on Buildings



STREET FURNITURE

5. Design and construct benches, bike racks, and planter boxes.

Downtown streets would benefit from new benches, planter boxes and bike racks. Finalize the design of each of these elements. Consider expanding the commemorative bench program to include planter boxes and bike racks. Benches should be spread out to provide resting spots for those who need them.

A planter box program like the one run by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce might work well here. Under this program, businesses can sponsor a planter box that is delivered and cared for by the Chamber. Figure 12 shows a sketch of the potential design of the street furniture.

HERITAGE

6. Work to Implement the Heritage Management Plan and Enforce the Heritage Bylaw.

Good management of Dawson City's heritage resources is important to both the maintaining the community's sense of place and drawing visitors to the area. Being able to show that heritage management is a City priority will also help to support the community's UNESCO World Heritage Site application.

The Heritage Management Plan was completed in 2008. As many at the City are new, and were not involved in this planning process, it would be useful to schedule a facilitated session with City Council, selected staff, and the heritage advisory committee to identify what has been completed, discuss what is working well and what is not, and set implementation priorities for the coming year.

Provide training and support to all City of Dawson staff to ensure heritage management is understood and implemented into all aspects of the City's works. This includes, Administration, Public Works, Community Development and Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Protective Services.

As required, hire an architectural design consultant who is familiar with the parameters of design in a historic district to:

- assist with the evaluation of development applications;
- provide training to City of Dawson staff and Heritage Advisory Committee; and
- provide those building in the historic zone with design advice and information.

Council should work with staff to set priorities and provide support where needed to ensure the Heritage Bylaw is enforced consistently.

7. Provide facade improvement grants

The City should provide facade improvement grants to property and business owners to renovate, restore, or redesign building facades located in Downtown Dawson. The goal of the program is to encourage owners of buildings to invest in

upgrades that protect heritage resources and create a more interesting and appealing environment, and attracting customers, clients, visitors and businesses to the Downtown. Only buildings that are registered as municipal heritage resources will be eligible for this grant. See Chapter 4 for more detail.

COMMUNITY SPACES

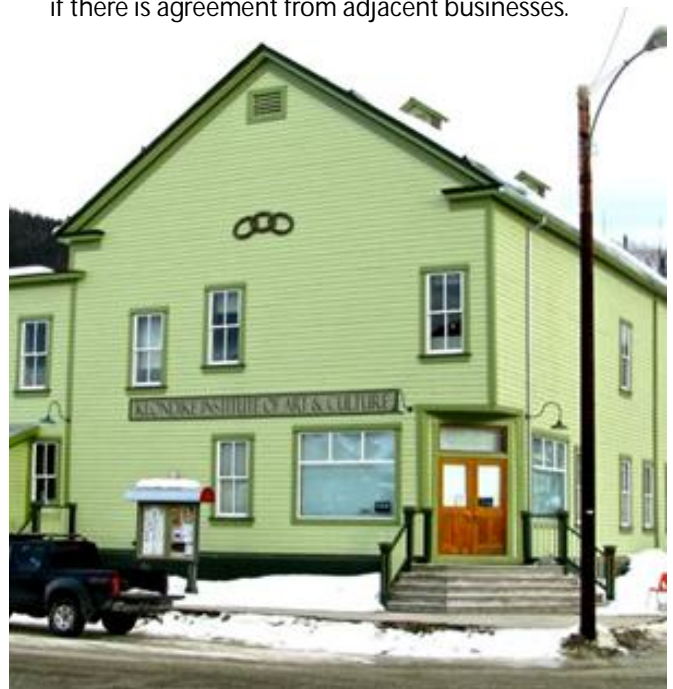
8. Animate the Downtown

Encourage the use of vacant lots for public art, community gardens, food vendors or greenspace. If the property tax rates are raised for vacant lots, a rebate or grant could be given to property owners who clean up their lots and allow the public to enjoy the greenspace, community gardens, or artists to use the space for temporary exhibits. Ensure that community gardens look tidy and well cared for and that community art installations are cleaned up when the project is over.

Klondike Development Organization could do some research into legal/insurance implications and could act as liaison between property owners and community members with ideas for vacant lots. Road closure for specific short term events should be approved, if there is agreement from adjacent businesses.

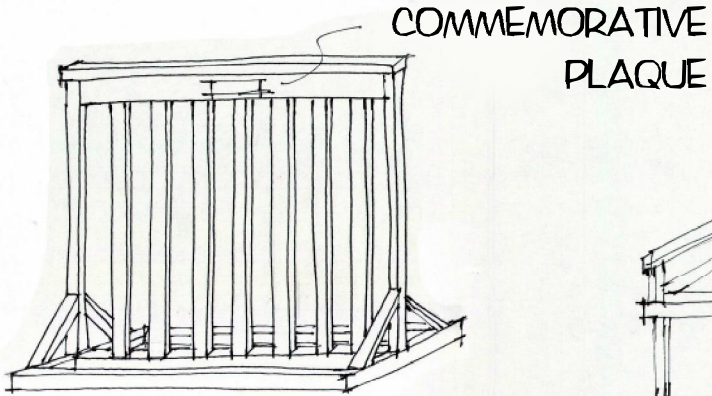


New Benches and Boardwalk on the South Side of Front Street

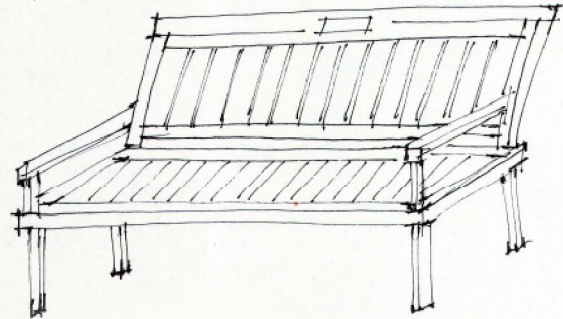


Good Example of Heritage Restoration at the KIAC Building

Figure 12. Street Furniture Design

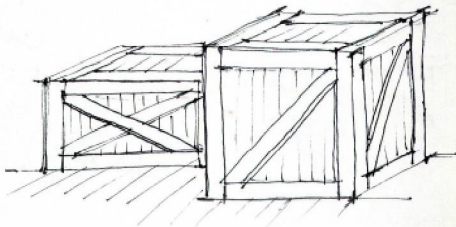


COMMEMORATIVE
PLAQUE

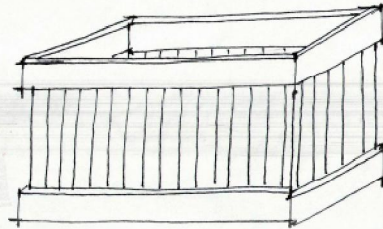


MEMORIAL BENCH

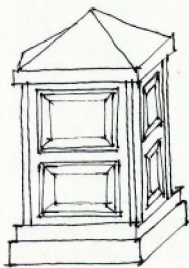
WOOD FRAME BIKE RACK



GROUPING OF CRATES



BEADBOARD PLANTER BOX



DIKE BOLLARD

3.3 Residential Development

Many Downtown revitalization plans involve increasing residential density in the core as more people living downtown will make commercial development more viable and will bring round-the-clock activity to the area. There is currently a housing shortage in Dawson, especially for those who do not need a single detached house including students, single people, small family, and seasonal workers. There is significant capacity for infill downtown and it may be possible to encourage new residential development (rather than commercial uses) with lower cost incentives.

Goal: Encourage infill and redevelopment of vacant lots with a focus on increasing residential uses.

Current Conditions:

- Housing is a challenge for seasonal and year-round residents;
- Dawson has an increasing number of one-person households and a higher proportion of renters than the rest of the Yukon;
- Adequate apartment and condo development will help attract and retain new residents;
- Vacant lots are gaps in the Downtown streetscape; and
- Housing above stores is consistent with the historical use of the Downtown.



Example of Residential Uses Above Retail

Zoning Information

Most of the downtown core is zoned Core Commercial (C1) which allows for a wide range of commercial uses, mixed use buildings, and apartments, and does not allow single family or duplex development, unless they are being operated in conjunction with a commercial use.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

1. Raise the minimum tax rate for vacant lots.

Currently minimum tax rates for vacant properties are very low in Dawson City. One way to encourage property owners with vacant property to sell or develop on their lots, is to raise the tax rate charged on these lots.

Currently the minimum property tax rates for vacant lots Downtown are low. Property owners pay a minimum of \$550 for a residential lot and \$750 for a commercial lot. The tax rate is 1.56% for residential properties and 1.8% for commercial properties.

It is recommended that a specific tax class and rate for vacant lots in the Downtown core be created, with a tax rate of 3.6%. This will mean that the taxes on a vacant lot assessed at \$35,000 will go from a current approximate annual property rate of \$750 to a rate of \$1,260. For more information see Chapter 4.

2. Revitalization tax exemption.

The implementation of a Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption program will help to encourage revitalization of the Downtown Core of Dawson City by provide economic incentives for redevelopment. The program has the two goals; maintaining heritage resources and encouraging investment within the Downtown Core without triggering increased taxation. Under this program, property owners can apply for an exemption for the property tax increase due to redevelopment. For five years, property owners will pay property taxes based on the pre-development property assessment. This program will function as a grant, with the portion of property taxes associated with the improvement being returned to the property owner.

3. Waiving development cost charges and sewer and water hook-up fees.

Develop a policy to waive the development cost charges and sewer and water hook-up fees for new development in the Downtown Core. This will help to make new development projects more feasible.

Increasing the residential population Downtown has the following potential benefits:

- Increasing pedestrian traffic throughout the day and year, making Downtown safer
- Encouraging better upkeep and maintenance of Downtown lots
 - Increasing potential customers for local businesses
 - New residential development can be a catalyst for other private development
 - People living close to where they work can lead to less car dependence

PARKING REQUIREMENTS

4. Reduce parking requirements.

In the Commercial Core zone, waive all parking requirements for new development and changes of use, except for new residential development and hotels.

In Dawson, most of the existing retail businesses and restaurants operate without designated off-street parking. The parking requirements for changes of use and new infill buildings have not been consistently enforced in recent years. Although parking demand goes up significantly in the summer months, there is still a good supply of on-street parking within a couple of blocks of any specific downtown location.

It is recommended that all requirements for parking in the Downtown, except for hotel, motel, and residential uses be removed for the Commercial Core zone. Hotel and residential uses should provide some off-street parking so that people are not parking on the streets overnight and there is access to electrical outlets.

Many municipalities require less than one parking space per unit for downtown apartments because some downtown residents do not own cars. According to the Klondike Development Organization, only 70% of those surveyed who would want to live in a downtown apartment own cars.

	Current Requirement	Proposed Requirement
Townhouses or Apartments	<i>1 per dwelling units</i>	<i>For developments with 5 units or less, provide one space per unit. For developments with 6 or more units provide .65 spaces per unit. Round up when necessary.</i>
Hotel/Hostel	<i>1 per every 4 guestrooms with a bus stall</i>	<i>1 per every 6 guestrooms with a bus stall.</i>
	<i>1 per every 2 guestrooms without a bus stall</i>	<i>1 per every 4 guestrooms without a bus stall.</i>
Motel	<i>1 per guestroom</i>	<i>1 per every 2 guestrooms.</i>
Commercial, Office and Institutional	<i>Various requirements</i>	<i>No parking required.</i>

Downtown Parking Case Studies

St. Johns and Moncton, as well as several other small and mid-sized Canadian cities, have no parking requirements for new development or changes of use in their core downtown areas. In both cases, the exemption was put in place to stimulate development and to protect heritage buildings. Generally, requiring parking for changes of use discourages the re-use of heritage buildings and can even result in the destruction of heritage structures.

Having no minimum parking standards has advantages and disadvantages.

The main advantage is that small developments can be carried out on infill sites in a manner that is consistent with the historic nature of the area while also promoting reduced dependence on car travel. Also, downtown infill lots are small, and requiring off-street parking can reduce the space available for development and can increase construction costs.

The disadvantage is that development constructed without parking can place additional demand on the existing parking spaces (often on-street). If lots of development takes place, the City may be forced to construct additional parking (either in surface lots or in parking structures) and this can be difficult and expensive.

3.4 Working Together

Local residents, business owners, and all levels of government have a stake in improving the business climate in the Downtown. By working together, these organizations can accomplish much more than if working alone. Also, an individual, group of businesses, government, or non-profit group that takes action on Downtown issues can work to inspire others to action.

Goal: Continue to build on the spirit of cooperation and collaboration to improve the Downtown business climate.

Current Conditions:

- The Dawson City Chamber of Commerce works to raise the profile of the local business environment, advocates on behalf of members, and creates education, networking and marketing opportunities.
- Klondike Visitor Association (KVA) does tourism marketing, advertising and branding for Dawson City, organizes community events, and supports local community groups who organize events. The KVA is funded through proceeds from Diamond Tooth Gertie's Gambling Hall.
- The City of Dawson maintains local streets, boardwalks, and other infrastructure, enforces bylaws and provides a list of local businesses.
- Yukon Government Tourism Department staffs the Visitor Information Centre.
- Parks Canada maintains and manages many local heritage buildings, and runs tours for visitors.
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in manages their cultural centre and runs a variety of heritage programs.

COORDINATED MARKETING

1. Coordinate marketing and branding efforts.

The various groups and organizations involved with marketing Dawson City should meet at least once a year to discuss the year's success, upcoming events, marketing strategies, and potential areas for

collaboration. Groups to include are the Klondike Visitors Association, Yukon Government Tourism Department, City of Dawson, Parks Canada, Chamber of Commerce, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and KIAC.

2. Become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Being designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site would give Dawson a new level of focus and a series of common goals in terms of marketing Dawson to potential visitors. Continue working towards this goal. Good ongoing management of the community's heritage resources will be key to support the designation process.

3. Host special Downtown events.

Periodically host special events that draw people downtown. This could be special evenings where stores are open late, gallery walks, tree lighting events, coordinated sales, or any other kind of fun event that will bring shoppers in to Downtown businesses.

When other community events are held (for example Canada Day and Discovery Day) try to group events in one location. Also, consider how events can provide the most positive impact on local businesses.



Bank of Commerce Building

COORDINATE VOLUNTEERS

4. Form a business owners group.

Most successful downtown revitalization plans have the support of a group of local business owners. Local business owners are invested in the Downtown, understand the conditions, and are impacted by policies and develops in the downtown core. The Ladysmith Downtown Business Association and the Whitehorse Main Street Society are good examples of groups of business owners working together to promote and enhances their downtowns.

It is recommended that a group of Downtown Dawson business owners be formed to work together to coordinate special events, implementing this Plan, and advocating for Downtown improvements. This business owners group could be a sub-committee of the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, or could be a separate group. Operating under the Chamber may allow the group to save time on administration. A separate group would operate more independently and may be preferable to business owners.

5. Adopt a heritage building.

Each year, choose a Downtown heritage building or property that is in need of repair, stabilization, painting, or clean-up. Coordinate volunteers to get together on a specific day for a work bee. In fall of 2013, a similar work day was held at the Bank of Commerce and was very successful.

AWARD PROGRAM

6. Annual award program.

Develop programs to encourage and recognize the

IMPLEMENT TOGETHER

contribution of businesses to revitalization. Give an annual award of a banner to a business or organization making the biggest contribution to Downtown Revitalization. Consider using different categories such as best façade improvement, best maintenance, or best new business. The award program could be run by the City and the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce.

7. Set up implementation team

An implementation team should be identified to work on implementing the recommendations set out in this Plan. This team should include representation from the City, the First Nation, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Klondike Development Organization.

Team members should set up a draft schedule and then meet several times a year to discuss priorities, report on successes, and share resources. The City staff person on this committee should be responsible for reporting twice a year to City Council on the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan.



Volunteer Day - Bank of Commerce Building

3.5 Downtown Investment

In Dawson City, as in most communities, there is little public or government funding to construct new buildings, facilities, and infrastructure. It is also often difficult to secure the funds needed to provide the ongoing maintenance of existing assets. It is important to focus new government investment on projects that will have the greatest benefit in terms of increased population, fees, and taxes. Government investments in public infrastructure can encourage property owners to re-invest in their properties and can draw additional visitors and customers making an area more attractive and businesses more viable.

Goal: Leverage limited resources for new Downtown infrastructure to greatest effect.

Current Conditions:

- There is limited government funding for new infrastructure projects.
- The new riverfront park is a community asset; people use the trail and greenspace as well as the gazebo and market shelter are being well used.
- The only public washrooms are at the Visitor Information Centre, more are needed.

CITY BUDGET

1. Consolidate Downtown budget expenditures.

Add a heading called “downtown development and maintenance” in the City budget to consolidate funding and better consider the value and effect. The proposed increase in property tax on vacant lots should be funneled into this account to be used to fund items identified in this plan. Even a small amount of annual funding would go a long way in funding banners and furniture.

NEW INVESTMENT

2. Define details for public washroom project.

For projects that have been identified as high priority (such as public bathrooms), identify the justification, potential location, and costs in order to be ready to respond to grant, funding and partnership opportunities. Look for an opportunity to include public bathrooms in another building project.

ANALYZE REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

3. Develop Downtown success indicators.

In order to evaluate how the investments in the Downtown are working, define a series of indicators and begin collecting the information on an annual basis. Good indicators for the Downtown could be number of residential units, property taxes, number of vacant lots, and/or number of business licences or operating businesses.

GOVERNMENT PROPERTIES

4. Government to lead by example.

Between the City of Dawson, Yukon Government and Parks Canada, there are many Downtown properties that are publicly owned. Governments should be investing in their properties to show their commitment to Downtown Dawson. Example project would be improvements to the parking lot at Gertie's and the Palace Grand.

4. Financial Incentives

The goal of the financial incentives is to encourage developers and property owners to invest in Downtown renewal projects. For Dawson, it is hoped that these incentives will encourage new market- and non-market housing, commercial and mixed use development, and facade improvements on heritage buildings.

It is not expected that these incentives themselves will result in new projects, but that together they will help make a project possible.

In Downtown Dawson, there are several blocks with several

vacant lots. Many of these are along Second and Third Avenues and often, there are several vacant lots in a row all under the same ownership. Vacant lots where development would have the biggest impact are identified in Figure 4.

This section provides details about each of the proposed incentives. The table below provides an overview of the recommended financial incentives.

Incentive	Cost	Ease of Implementation	Potential Impacts	Examples of Successful Implementation	Documents Needed
Short Term Incentives					
Revitalization Tax Exemption	Medium	More Difficult	High	Ladysmith, BC Salmon Arm, BC Cranbrook, BC Whitehorse, YT	New Bylaw Program Description
Raise Minimum Tax Rate	No cost	More Difficult	Medium	Watson Lake	Change to Existing Bylaw
Medium Term Incentives					
Facade Improvement Grant	High	Easy	Medium	Duncan, BC Courtnay, BC Red Deer, AB	Application Form Program Description
Waiving Development Cost Charges	Low	Easy	Low	Sooke, BC Ladysmith, BC	Change to Existing Bylaw
Cost Explanation Low = Less than \$2000 per year Medium = \$2,000 to \$5,000 High = More than \$5,000					

Revitalization Tax Exemption

Purpose

The purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption program is to encourage revitalization of the Downtown Core of Dawson City by providing a tax break to property owners who construct or restore buildings.

The Program has two goals; to encourage redevelopment of existing properties so they do not fall into disrepair and to encourage new development on vacant lots in the Downtown. For five years after an eligible project is completed, property owners will continue to pay property taxes based on the pre-development property assessment. This tax break will come in the form of a grant to the property owner after the property taxes have been paid in full.

Eligibility

- Property must be within the Downtown Core (the area bounded by Front Street, Fifth Avenue, York Street, and Church Street).
- Only property owners can apply.
- Projects must be either:
 - A. Upgrades to an existing building with a construction value of at least \$50,000 based on building permit value; or
 - B. New development with a construction value of at least \$200,000 based on building permit value.
- Projects must meet the requirements of the Zoning Bylaws and the Heritage Management Plan.

Term

- The exemption lasts for five years.

Cost to City

Cost to the City is the lost tax revenue for the duration of the exemption.

As an example, the City of Ladysmith implemented a similar program four years ago. Since then, four properties have participated in the program with a total exemption of \$11,700 in 2012. This is approximately \$3,000 per property per year.

Examples

Ladysmith = Construction value at least \$15,000, 10 years
Salmon Arm = Construction value at least \$75,000, 5 years
Cranbrook = Façade improvement minimum \$10,000, construction minimum \$50,000, 5 years

Implementation

The tax incentive would actually be a grant, as the City is not allowed to waive taxes. The annual grant will be refunded to the property owners once the taxes have been paid in full. If a property owner is in arrears on their property taxes, they will no longer be eligible for the grant.

The following documents would need to be developed:

- Incentive policy
- Program description and flyer
- Application form

Raise the Tax Rate for Vacant Lots

Purpose

Currently minimum tax rates for vacant properties are very low in Dawson City. One way to encourage property owners with vacant property to sell or develop on their lots, is to raise the tax rate charged on these lots.

Explanation

Currently, property owners with a vacant lot pay \$550 for a residential lot and \$750 for a commercial lot. The tax rate is 1.56% for residential properties and 1.8% for commercial properties. There are two options for raising the amount of properties taxes that property owners pay on vacant lots. One is to raise the minimum tax rate and the second is to add a tax rate specifically for vacant lots. We are recommending the creation of a specific tax rate just for vacant lots.

Current total property taxes paid on vacant lots Downtown is \$20,250. If the tax rate for vacant lots in the Downtown was set at 3.6% would raise this to \$32,355.

Applicability

This new tax rate would apply to all vacant lots (meaning lots with no improvements) in the Downtown core (the area bounded by Front Street, Fifth Avenue, York Street, and Church Street).

Term

Establish immediately and then ongoing.

Cost to City

This incentive would result in increased property tax revenue for the City.

Examples

- Watson Lake has a minimum tax rate of \$500, but has raised the mill rate for vacant lots to 3.46%. The tax rate for commercial properties with improvements is 1.6%.

Implementation

The City is allowed to set various taxation rates for different land classes under section 55 (3) (c) of the Yukon Assessment and Tax Act.

Update the Taxation Bylaw to:

- Add a definition for Vacant Property
- Add a clause to set a new tax rate for vacant lots

Façade Improvement Grant

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide matching grants to property and business owners to renovate, restore, or redesign building façades and storefronts located in the Downtown core. This program will encourage owners of buildings to invest in upgrades that create a more interesting and appealing environment – attracting customers, clients, visitors and businesses to the Downtown. The program will also help to keep Dawson's heritage resources in good repair.

Explanation

This grant would offset construction costs for projects that improve or restore the visual appearance of the exterior façade, windows, doors and signs, and/or carry out the structural and weather proofing required to maintain the building's integrity. This will be a matching grant, with the City funding up to 50% of costs to a maximum of \$5,000 per lot.

Façade improvement grant programs cover the following items:

- Structural replacement and repair for exterior façade;
- Repair/replacement of windows, doors, storefronts, awnings, canopies, cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features;
- Signs;
- Installation or repair of exterior lighting;
- Cleaning/painting of facades visible from adjacent streets and public walkways;
- Entrance modifications, including the installation of ramps for accessibility purposes;
- Restoration of historic features;
- Design and engineering services integral to the work planned;
- Repair of facades visible from adjacent streets and public walkways;
- Exterior fire safety upgrades to code;
- Water/flood/weather proofing; and
- Structural repairs to walls, floors and foundations.

Eligibility

Matching grants would be available to all property owners within the Downtown core (the area bounded by Front Street, Fifth Avenue, York Street, and Church Street).

Duration

Only available once for each property/building.

Cost to City

Grant amounts would be \$5,000 per property for the City contribution. An annual budget would be set and then applications would be approved until the budget is spent.

Examples

Duncan = Maximum grant \$1,000
Courtenay = Maximum \$5,000 (Run by the Downtown Business Association)
Surrey = Maximum \$3,000
Red Deer = Maximum grant \$5,000, \$10,000 for corner buildings with two street facing facades (Run by the Downtown Business Association)

Implementation

The City would have a set annual budget for façade improvement grants and would have an annual application deadline. Each application would be evaluated and worthy projects would be funded. Projects that met the zoning and heritage guidelines and will have the biggest visual impact on the Downtown should be selected.

The following documents would need to be developed:

- Façade Improvement Incentive policy
- Program description and flyer
- Application form

Waiving Development Cost Charges and Sewer and Water Hook-Up Fees

Purpose

This incentive would waive the development cost charges (DCC's) and sewer and water hook-up fees for new development in the Downtown Core. This will help to make new development projects more feasible.

Eligibility

- To be eligible, property must be within the Downtown Core (the area bounded by Front Street, Fifth Avenue, York Street, and Church Street).
- All development cost charges and sewer and water hook-up fees will be waived for new development projects.
- Can only be applied once for each property.

Duration

One time incentive.

Cost to City

Currently, DCC's for commercial or multi-family development is \$250 per application plus \$0.25 per square foot. Example: The proposed Klondike Development Organization apartment building was estimated at 11,000 square feet, DCC's would be \$3,000. The City collects between \$7,000 and \$9,000 annually in Development Cost Charges, rezoning applications and subdivision applications.

The City charges sewer and water hook up fees for multi-family and commercial properties at a rate of \$400 per outlet (toilet, sink, shower, dishwasher). This would work out to \$2,000 per unit for an average apartment. For a 16 units building, the sewer and water hook-up fees would be approximately \$32,000.

Examples

- Sooke BC reduces the DCC by 30%, 50% or 100% depending on the type of development.
- Ladysmith BC waives all development cost charges for residential and commercial development in the core downtown area.

Implementation

The following documents would need to be developed:

- Bylaw
- Program description and flyer
- Application form

5. Implementation

Implementation Team

As suggested in Section 3.4, an implementation team should be identified to work on implementing the recommendations set out in this Plan.

This team should include representation from:

- City of Dawson
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- Chamber of Commerce
- Klondike Development Organization.

Team members should set up a draft schedule and then meet several times a year to discuss priorities, report on successes, and share resources.

A report should be made twice a year to City Council on progress that has been made by the implementation team.

Planning Priorities

The following table summarizes the Downtown revitalization strategies divided into short, medium, and long term priorities. For each strategy, the party or parties who will be responsible for implementation is suggested.

Short term 1 to 2 Years		
Strategy	Theme	Who
Community banner program	Access	City, KVA, Business Owners
Establish and maintain boardwalk standards	Access	City
Encourage vehicle access to buildings and parking lots via alleys	Access	City
Adopt a higher standard of maintenance and upkeep in the Downtown	Image	City, YG, Parks Canada, Property Owners
Establish a City of Dawson palette	Image	City
Work to consistently enforce the Heritage Bylaw	Image	City and Heritage Advisory Committee
Animate the Downtown	Image	KDO, Property Owners, Community Members
Adopt a heritage building	Working Together	Residents, Business Owners, Governments
Host special Downtown events	Working Together	Business owners, Chamber of Commerce
Set up an implementation team	Working Together	City, KDO, Chamber of Commerce, TH
Reduce parking requirements	Residential	City
Raise minimum tax rate for vacant lots	Residential	City
Provide tax exemption incentive for development	Residential	City
Consolidate Downtown budget expenditures	Investment	City
Define details for public washroom project	Investment	City
Develop indicators of Downtown success	Investment	City
Medium term 3 to 5 Years		
Strategy	Theme	Who
Announce arrival in downtown using gateway features	Access	City, Chamber of Commerce, KVA
Provide maps and directional signs pointing to businesses and attractions	Access	City, Chamber of Commerce, KVA, Business Owners
Make the capital improvements necessary to improve the level of service and standards for the boardwalks	Access	City
Make crosswalks safer	Access	City
Connect the riverfront, Downtown and Ninth Avenue Trail	Access	City, KATTS
Improve edges of parking lots	Image	City, Parks Canada, Property Owners
Develop winter city qualities	Image	City, Yukon Energy, Property Owners
Design and construct benches, bike racks, planter boxes	Image	City
Provide incentives for heritage improvements	Image	City
Coordinate marketing and branding	Working together	KVA, City, Parks Canada, YG, Chamber of Commerce, TH
Become a UNESCO world heritage site	Working together	World Heritage Site Committee, TH, City, Parks Canada
Form a Downtown business association	Working together	Business Owners
Annual award program	Working together	Chamber of Commerce, City, Business Owners
Government to lead by example	Investment	City, Yukon Government, Parks Canada
Long term 6 to 10 Years		
Strategy	Theme	Who
Widen boardwalks on core commercial blocks	Access	City, Property Owners
Identify a Downtown facility for RV parking	Access	City, KVA, YG Tourism
Build Downtown washrooms	Investment	City, YG

5.2 Cost Estimates

CLASS 'C' COST ESTIMATE
City of Dawson Downtown Revitalization Plan
ORDER OF MAGNITUDE - CAPITAL COSTING

	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	EST. QTY.	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1					
	1.8m width	linear metre	1120	\$ 180.00	\$ 201,600
	2.4m width	linear metre	260	\$ 240.00	\$ 62,400
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 264,000
2					
	2.4m width	linear metre	310	\$ 240.00	\$ 74,400
	3.0m width	linear metre	620	\$ 300.00	\$ 186,000
	3.6m width	linear metre	310	\$ 360.00	\$ 111,600
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 372,000
3					
	benches (4 per commercial avenue block and park)	each	36	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 72,000
	bike racks (2 per commercial avenue block & park)	each	20	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 24,000
	trash receptacles (3 per commercial avenue block & park)	each	28	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 49,000
	bollards (3 per commercial avenue block)	each	24	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 43,200
	planter boxes (6 per commercial avenue block)	each	48	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 76,800
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 265,000
4					
	planters	linear meter	300	\$ 400.00	\$ 120,000
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 120,000
5					
	Directional sign posts (2 per downtown intersection)	each	38	\$ 800.00	\$ 30,400
	Gateway features (4 entrance corners of downtown)	each	4	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 8,800
	Map kiosks (1 per commercial avenue block)	each	6	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 39,000
	Banner poles (4 per commercial avenue block)	each	4	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 10,000
	Banner anchors - to existing buildings (1 per commercial avenue block)	each	4	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 5,400
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 93,600
6					
	LED string lights across street (6 per downtown avenue block)	each	24	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 36,000
	LED heritage fixtures (replace existing cobra heads)	each	0	\$ 5,500.00	\$ -
	hydro distribution/connection/outlet (1 per fixture)	each	24	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 24,000
	hydro transformer kiosk (1 per commercial avenue block & park)	each	6	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 45,000
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 105,000
7					
	Public washroom building (prefab tilt-up structure with san. connection)	each	1	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 170,000
	<i>Item Subtotal</i>				\$ 170,000

6. Case Studies

Smithers, BC
Population: 5,600

Description: Smithers is located in the Bulkley Valley of Northwest BC, approximately half way between the cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George. It is a railway town that was founded in 1913. Smithers is set against the backdrop of Hudson Bay Mountain, and residents value the mountain culture and year round recreational pursuits. Currently, Smithers has a thriving Main Street with many historic buildings and an alpine theme.

Downtown Planning Efforts: In 2008, Planning for a Vibrant Downtown Smithers was completed. The regional economy was slow through the 1990's and this planning effort was identified as a need in the community's OCP. A 3-day intense design workshop (called a charrette) was held to engage citizens in the planning process. The Plan includes recommendations about parking management, form and character, gateways and circulation and enhancing greenspaces.

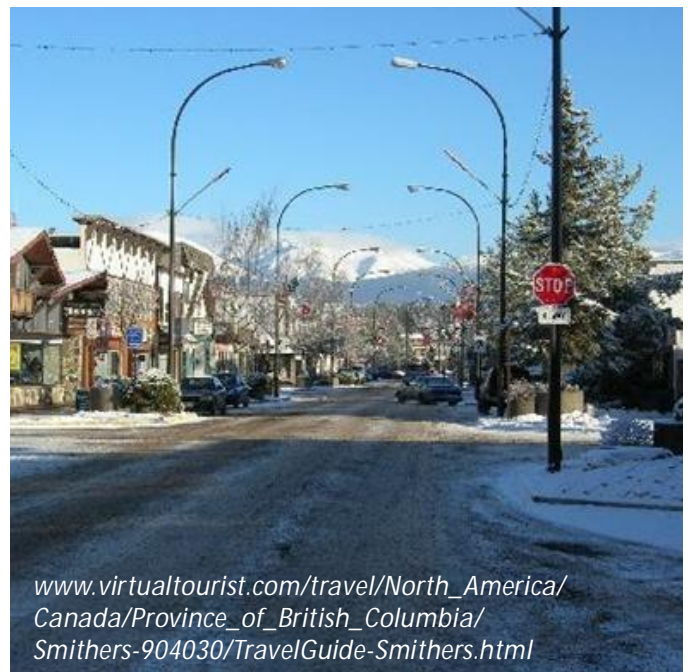
Planning Outcomes: Based on the Plan, the City has made a series of infrastructure improvements including

buying a lot and creating a small downtown park, adding bike parking and bike lanes, and completing some small scale landscaping projects at the entrance to Downtown.

Incentive Programs: The only incentive that Smithers has currently is a façade grant program. This program has a budget of \$20,000 that was funded through a regional economic organization. Property owners can apply for funding to make improvements to the outside of their buildings.

Other Initiatives: Property owners have got together and decided to remain open until 8 pm every Friday. Having the majority of business are open late on the same day has been successful. The City is also currently working on add zoning flexibility in the downtown to add more allowable uses (including residential on the ground floor in some areas). In addition, they are working to add shared parking to the zoning bylaw, meaning that for example a mixed use building and movie theatre can share off street parking.

Link: www.smithers.ca/uploads/Final_Charrette_Report-2.pdf



Terrace Population: 11,000

Description: Terrace is located in the Skeena River Valley, approximately 60 km inland from Prince Rupert. It is regional center and acts as a hub for regional highway, rail and air transportation and has many of the region's retail, medical and government services. Terrace has a growing population, and relatively affordable housing.

Downtown Planning Efforts: In 2003 a Walmart and new Canadian Tire opened on the outskirts of town. Although this was initially seen as a threat to the downtown, but the overall feeling now is that these news stores have helped Terrace become the regional hub which has helped downtown businesses. In 2006, the City began work on a Downtown Plan. This Plan provided guidance on streetscape enhancement, gateway features, improvements to public spaces, and the creation of a downtown Business Improvement District.

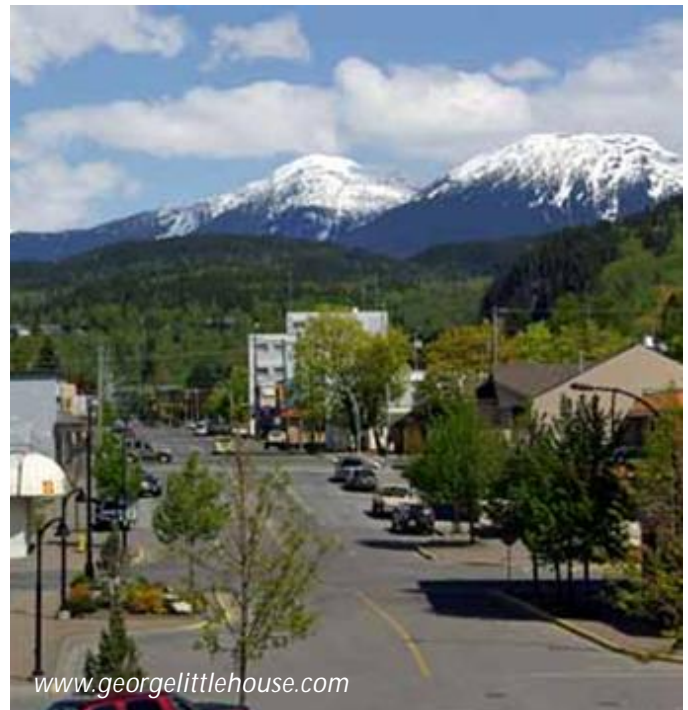
Planning Outcomes: The major public improvement has been the creation of a Downtown event park. This was built on an unused bought that was acquired by the City and is very popular. Very limited streetscape

improvements have been completed because of a lack of funding. A series of Downtown incentives were also put in place as a result of this planning effort.

Incentive Programs: There is a Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption that is available for both new buildings and renovation with a budget of over \$50,000. Property owners pay their pre-improvement property tax rate for 10 years. About 10 property owners have taken advantage of this incentive to date. It has worked very well for the development of new buildings, with some property owners saving up to \$20,000 per year. The renovations project have not fared as well, because due to decreases in property values, the property assessment did not increase after the improvement were completed meaning that taxes remained the same.

Other Initiatives: There is also a Business Improvement Area which levies a tax on each downtown property to a total of \$60,000 per year. This money is managed by a non-profit society and is used to hire a staff person and completed downtown improvement projects.

Link: www.terrace.ca/documents/maps-ocp-zoning/OCP-Appendix-G-Downtown-Plan.pdf



Ladysmith, British Columbia Population: 8,000

Description: Ladysmith is on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island that is 88 km north of Victoria and 23 km south of Nanaimo. For thousands of years the Stz'uminus First Nation have used the Ladysmith Harbour as a fish camp. In the early decades of the 20th century coal mining was the most important industry in the area. After the mines closed in the 1930's, logging and lumbering milling have played an important role in economic development. Over the last half century, the Town's population has doubled and recent projects such as downtown revitalization, the installation of heritage artifact displays and the Town's emphasis on sustainability have been popular with community members. Ladysmith's downtown has many restored heritage buildings and the community values its heritage resources.

Downtown Planning Efforts: There is no specific Downtown Plan in place however the OCP provides support for Downtown revitalization.

Incentive Programs: There are currently three incentive programs. The Development Cost charges are waived for new development in the downtown. There are also

Revitalization Tax Exemptions for improvements to existing commercial and mixed use buildings with a construction value of over \$15,000. The property tax stays at the pre-improvement rate for 10 years. To date, four properties have taken advantage of this incentive, with an average tax savings of between \$1,750 and \$3,000 annually. A new incentive has recently been added for new buildings and renovations worth over \$200,000 in any area of town. This is available for commercial and industrial buildings and is for a maximum of 5 years.

Other Initiatives: The Ladysmith Downtown Business Association is a non-profit organization that has approximately 70 members. The Association's activities are focused on helping businesses develop and thrive in Downtown Ladysmith. Membership is 100\$ a year and the Association hosts a website with a business directory, holds business seminars on a range of topics, organizes annual downtown events and collaborates with the City and Chamber of Commerce on a variety of projects.

Link: www.ladysmith.ca/docs/bylaws/official-community-plan.pdf



Duncan, British Columbia Population: 5,000

Description: Duncan is in the Cowichan Valley, about half-way between Victoria and Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. Duncan has a large First Nations population and there are over 80 totem pole spread throughout the town given it the nickname “City of Totems”. In the early 1900’s, Duncan’s Chinatown was the social centre for the Cowichan Valley’s Chinese population. Chinatown was concentrated in a single block in the southwestern corner of Duncan. At its largest point, Duncan’s Chinatown included six Chinese families and 30 merchants who supplied goods and services to the loggers, millworkers, cannery and mine workers in the area. Currently, the Downtown features a number of heritage and vintage buildings, and a large array of small businesses.

Downtown Planning Efforts: The Downtown Revitalization and Gateways Strategy was completed in 2004. This plan sets out prioritized streetscape improvement programs for downtown streets, recommendations about moving totems into the downtown core, and suggestions to set up a façade program. As a result of this Plan, a Downtown park and civic square was built and a number of streetscape improvements were completed.

Incentive Programs: The Duncan Business Improvement Area runs a façade improvement program. The program

provides grants of up to \$2,000 to property and business owners to renovate, restore or redesign retail and commercial building facades and storefronts located in Downtown Duncan. Between 8 and 12 grants are given out per year. The City of Duncan is in the process of researching a Revitalization Tax Exemption.

Other Initiatives: The Duncan Business Improvement Area (DBIA) levies a tax on Downtown property owners and has an annual budget of \$175,000. The DBIA has a full time staff person and is managed by a non-profit society. The DBIA runs a number of annual events, hosts a website, allocates the façade improvement grants, and is involved in a number of beautification programs include graffiti removal, banners and flower boxes. The DBIA advocates on behalf of the downtown business owners when issues like parking, traffic patterns and other Downtown development. The tax is levied based on square footage, with property owners paying approximately \$350 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

Parking: In the Downtown all development is exempt from the parking requirements set out in the zoning. The City owns two free surface parking lots that are on the outskirts of downtown.

Link: www.duncan.ca/pdf/Final%20Revitalization%20Strategy.pdf



RIVERWEST BISTRO
RESTAURANT
& COFFEE BAR

