



CAPITAL

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Downtown Walk and Run Map puts Victoria on its feet

Capital Bike and Walk (CBWS) and the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) have partnered to produce a new Downtown Victoria Walk and Run Map now available for distribution through businesses and other info sources serving the city's residents and visitors. The project recruited a number of other key sponsors who are also helping to reshape Victoria's landscape to support pedestrian travel and active lifestyles, says John Luton, CBWS Executive Director.

Luton said, "We're excited to launch the new map and get people back on their feet. Promoting walking as a transportation choice and a new way of connecting to the heart of the city is good for the health of our community, our environment and our downtown economy. It reflects our appreciation that residents and visitors alike enjoy the city because it supports their active lifestyle choices."

New running routes have been added to the map CBWS introduced at the 2004 Pro Walk – Pro Bike conference. 600 walking and cycling experts visited Victoria for the Pro Walk – Pro Bike conference and delegates were provided maps to explore the "walkability" of Victoria.

The run routes are the brainchild of local entrepreneur and running icon Rob Reid. The new edition also adds a walk through downtown neighbourhoods anchored by eclectic antique stores of Fort St. and up to the Lieutenant Governor's Mansion, the Art Gallery and Craigdarroch Castle. Other features include:

- Highlights the recently branded "Design District" north of downtown
- Pinpoints restrooms and drinking fountain locations
- Identifies "village" centres where refreshments can be found
- Distance markers to help users better plan their outings
- Harbour ferry links for those who want to extend routes or make connections between downtown destinations and nearby neighbourhoods
- Preparation tips for runners, especially helpful for those visiting the city
- Off-leash dog areas for those who want some four-legged company on their jaunts

The DVBA's Chair, Darlene Holstein says:

"People drop by the DVBA office in Downtown's Centennial Square on almost a daily basis looking for the maps; they've proven to be a huge hit with locals and tourists alike. Traversing Victoria on foot allows for a totally different perspective, and many locals are rediscovering the city they've called home for years. The beauty of the maps, for tourists, is that they not only take the guess-work out of finding a picturesque place to take a stroll, but they also provide enough anecdotal information to make anyone feel like a bit of an insider!"

The DVBA represents downtown's business community and is keen to promote the core to people who are willing to explore at a slower pace. With so much to enjoy within a compact downtown, Victoria is the ideal walking city and businesses are happy to see visitors and residents alike who have time to linger.

Sponsors who have joined to the project include:

- The Provincial Capital Commission
- The Ralmax Group of Companies including Ellice Recycling and Point Hope Maritime
- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
- Dockside Green/Windmill Developments and Vancity Savings Credit Union
- Victoria Harbour Ferries
- Frontrunners/New Balance

Dockside Green's location along the Galloping Goose and proximity to the downtown core is already attracting people looking for more walkable and sustainable places to live.

The new look Point Hope Shipyard is rapidly becoming a destination for walkers and other visitors who can watch an ever changing flotilla of small ships, big tugs and sleek yachts in drydock for repairs or maintenance.

Victoria has also been busy enhancing the walking environment around downtown, adding more mid-block crossings and curb extensions to make walking safer and more appealing. The Harbour authority has recently completed expansion of public spaces at Fisherman's Wharf and has improved their links to the harbour pathway system that will provide a continuous walking corridor along the city's waterfront.

New sponsor Reid is lately working with the Terry Fox organization to retrace Terry's inspiring Marathon of Hope almost 30 years ago. The marathon's original support van will arrive in Victoria in mid-September with Reid and Terry's brother Darrell Fox.

Also joining as sponsors are Victoria Harbour Ferries. More and more Victoria's harbour ferry routes are connecting people to downtown neighbourhoods and destinations, extending the reach of their walking journeys or jog around the city's harbourfront.

More Background

CBWS Executive Director John Luton notes Canada's census confirms that Victoria still leads the country in counting more people who walk for transportation than in any other city and continues to have the healthiest population. More than 10% of journey to work trips in the capital are on foot.

He says that visitors are finding their way on foot too. Within days of taking delivery of the new map, Luton found a visitor from Regina taking time out after a conference to explore Dockside Green using the map, which she picked up from the Tourism Victoria's Visitor Information Centre.

Dockside Green staff said that they give out many of the maps through their downtown sales centre and note that many people buying into the development are looking to live where they can keep the car parked and walk or cycle to more destinations. The map helps them orient themselves to the city and helps them discover the many destinations accessible to them on foot.

Local tourism operators and agencies report steady demand for the maps and many of the city's visiting conferences have included the map in delegate packages. CBWS expects to also provide quantities to city recreation and community centres to encourage local residents to put their feet first when making trip choices that include downtown.

The Vancouver Island Health Authority distributes thousands of the maps through their own distribution channels and at parking garages at local VIHA facilities. CBWS hopes to recruit doctor's offices and other health providers to carry copies of the map to help encourage their patients to embrace healthy lifestyle habits like walking and running.

Distribution:

- The Downtown Walk/Run Map is already being distributed through the DVBA to hotels and downtown businesses and can be found at their Centennial Square office.
- Tourism Victoria's Info Centre has quantities of the map for visitors.
- Tens of thousands of copies are available through CBWS.
- Maps can be found at City Hall in downtown Victoria.
- Frontrunners and New Balance Stores have quantities of the map for distribution.
- Expect to find copies in downtown businesses and other locations where helpful information is distributed (recreation and community centres)
- Businesses or other potential distributors can contact CBWS or the DVBA to arrange delivery of large quantities of maps.

MEDIA NOTE: TOURS OF ROUTES AND FEATURES HIGHLIGHTED ON THE NEW MAP CAN BE SCHEDULED UPON REQUEST.**Background on other major sponsors:****Point Hope Maritime**

One of the oldest shipyards on the West Coast, PHM has recently undergone an extensive modernization and is a hub of industrial activity on the upper harbour north of the Johnson St. Bridge and adjacent to the Dockside Green development. The Shipyard is a big draw for walkers and runners eager to glimpse the ever changing collection of ships up on the marine railway spurlines for repairs. Historical markers and a viewing platform invite visitors to linger and watch the shipyard at work.

Ellice Recycle Ltd.

Ellice Recycle protects and enhances our environment by providing a full range of recycling services to Victoria residents and businesses. From simple plastics and paper to hazardous materials such as paint and pesticides, Ellice Recycle provides convenient, professional and comprehensive services that are key to maintaining Victoria's "clean and green" reputation with citizens and tourists.

Provincial Capital Commission

With a mandate to promote the capital, the Commission has been a supporter of every one of the three editions of the map. What better way to explore the heart of the capital than on foot.

Victoria Harbour Ferries

Exploring downtown and nearby neighbourhoods is supported by the little ferries connecting more and more of downtown Victoria's with destinations around the city's waterfront. Walkers and runners have access to some beautiful shortcuts to get back downtown or to fan out into new neighbourhoods reshaping the city's core.

Dockside Green/Vancity

Winning awards and drawing new residents with an interest in green technology and access to walk and bike friendly routes, the Dockside Green community development is growing the reach of downtown into Victoria West. Financiers Vancity have been enthusiastic supporters of the map showcasing the kind of city they are helping to build.

Greater Victoria Harbour Authority

With so much of Victoria's downtown focused on the water, the Harbour Authority is a key player in managing the city's waterfront and helping to make it a more people friendly destination. Among the upgrades to Fisherman's Wharf, the Harbour Authority has installed a new walkway to connect to the Harbour pathway, one of the many routes profiled on the map.

Map Designer: George Allen, (Design, strategy, research)

George has designed the two previous editions of the map as well as other CBWS publications, his own books, calendars and other works.

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