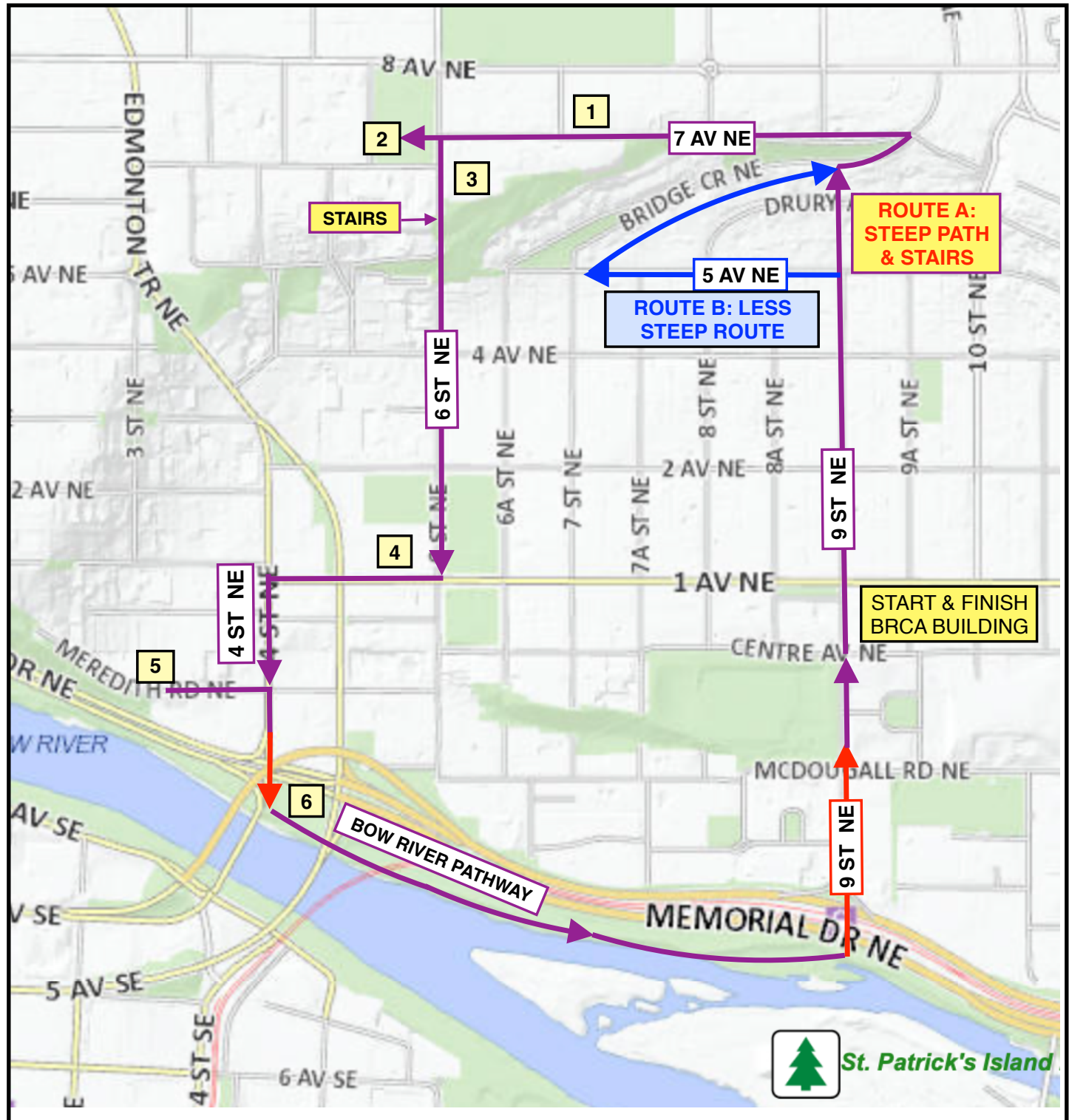


Bridgeland Walks 2020

Self Guided #5

In the Footsteps of the Ukrainians

HIGH TRAFFIC LOCATIONS & CONSTRUCTION INDICATED BY RED LINES



Bridgeland Walks 2020 – Self Guided #5 In the Footsteps of the Ukrainians

Ukrainian immigrants were some of the earliest settlers in Bridgeland – Riverside and while many have moved to other neighbourhoods, their presence is still felt here today. 2016 was the 125th anniversary of the beginning of Ukrainian immigration to Canada and the 25th anniversary of the independence of Ukraine from the USSR. 2016 was also declared the year of Ukrainian Canadians by our provincial government.

This walk is either **4.3 kilometers for Route A, a steep route**, or **5.2 kilometers for Route B, a less steep route**. Both routes are a “good trek” up to the top of the escarpment and along the boundary with Renfrew community. The views are worth it! A long set of wooden stairs (6 St NE) takes you back down to the bowl of Bridgeland.

Start from the Community Centre at 917 Centre Av NE. Walk North on 9 St till you reach 5th Av.

Route A - *A steep walk takes you straight up a lane, across Drury Rd, up stairs and then another lane till you reach Bridge Crescent. Turn right and walk along the sidewalk to the top of the escarpment at 7 Av. where you make a sharp right.*

Route B- *Less steep and on sidewalks all the way. Turn left on 5 Av and go to 7 St and turn right onto Bridge Crescent. Follow the side walk up to the top of the escarpment where you will reach 7 Av NE and take a sharp left turn West.*

Stop#1. 802 7 Av NE. This brick building was formerly the residence for the nuns who worked at the nearby Ukrainian Catholic church. The nunnery was closed in 2016. Sister Laura Prokop was the last nun to lived here and moved to the convent in Mundare, a pioneer Ukrainian town 70 kms East of Edmonton. This building is now a private addictions treatment centre.

Continue walking West on 7th Av till you reach 6 St and walk straight ahead into the park. You'll see a short brick cairn.

Stop #2. If you check “Google Maps” you’ll notice that this large park is called Bridgeland Park as it was originally part of our community. (Also note: Stanley Jones School on the corner of 8 Av & 6 St NE was originally called Bridgeland School.)

A memorial cairn was erected and dedicated to those Ukrainian pioneers who arrived after 1891. These hardy people came to Canada in response to the invitation by the Canadian government for farmers to settle lands on the open prairies. Some moved to Calgary and found work with the CPR.

Walk South and East to the nearby church

Stop #3. A large mosaic graces the front of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church. The congregation built this church in late 1950's after outgrowing their earlier location at 1 Av & 6 St NE in Bridgeland. The church has a dominant setting on the escarpment and its classic copper domes can be seen for many miles around. If you ever have a chance to visit the inside of the church at the annual and very popular Perogy dinner each November you will see a traditional setting with many religiously significant paintings on the walls and ceiling of the dome. Near the entrance to the church there is an oval shaped plaque - one of the hundred plaques that were unveiled across Canada in August 2014 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the people, 5000 of whom were Ukrainians, interned during the first world war because they were considered 'enemy aliens'. A memorial at the Cave and Basin in Banff more fully describes the hardships faced by these men in the faraway work camps and their family members who were left to cope on their own. Take a moment to pause at the top of the escarpment, sit at the park benches and enjoy the view of the downtown and our Bridgeland community!

Walk South and down the 6 St. Stairs. Continue till you reach 1 Av.

Stop #4. The historic building on the corner houses the Buddhist congregation. But from 1926 till 1957 this building was the home of St. Stephen's Ukrainian Catholic church. This building was moved here from its original location in the community of Tuxedo in 1926. This building has "good bones"!

Turn right on 1 Av and head West as far as 4 St. Cross at the lights to the West side of 4 St and turn left – South and walk as far as Meredith Rd. Turn right and walk up the hill till you reach the church

Stop #5. On the South-Western border of the lower escarpment, **St Vladimir's Ukrainian Orthodox Church** has looked over Reconciliation Bridge and our changing downtown for many years. This current, very traditional building with its iconic onion-shaped domes was completed in the 1970's. Stories from the scriptures are painted on the walls and ceiling and other features of the Orthodox faith are beautifully represented in the church. The site is also home to the **Ukrainian Cultural Centre** with its extensive library, and museum with traditional clothing and handiwork and of course examples of pysanky, the intricately decorated eggs. Scheduled tours are provided to school groups and others who are interested. Also found here is **Sadochok**, the Ukrainian bilingual preschool. More information can be found by calling 403-264-3437.

Head back down Meredith Rd and right onto 4 Street, head South and cross both 4 St and Memorial Drive.

Stop #6 In the centre of the park area between Langevin Bridge and Edmonton Trail you'll see a black cairn. This cairn memorializes the Holodomor – the death of several million Ukrainians by starvation at the hands of the Soviet regime between 1932-33. This was genocide. How many times have we walked by this area and not been aware of the very sad event in the history of the Ukrainian people?

From there, continue along the Bow River pathway till you reach the Bridgeland-Memorial CTrain overpass. Cross and proceed North on 9 St till you reach the Community Centre.

It's certainly clear from our neighbourhood walking tour that those of Ukrainian descent are resilient people who have overcome great adversity and suffering over the years. Their cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs, which are so evident in our Bridgeland - Riverside neighbourhood, continue to sustain them and to enrich our surroundings.