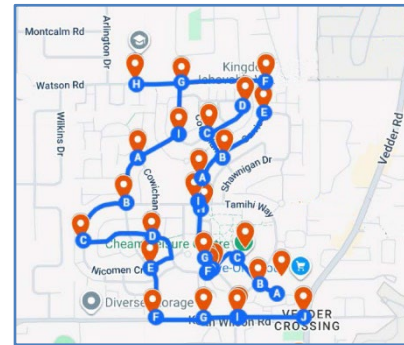


Legacy Walk Opens at Chilliwack

The closure of Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack in the mid-1990s marked the end of an era for the “Home of the Canadian Military Engineers.” The decision, however, set the stage for one of Canada’s most successful military-to-civilian land transformations.

After the base’s closure, the former Department of National Defence lands were transferred to Canada Lands Company (CLC) for redevelopment. The redevelopment of the residential area proved remarkable. The area was reimagined as Garrison Crossing, a 153-acre community blending refurbished military homes with new residences, mature trees, and green spaces that echo the base’s natural beauty.



Retired Military Engineer Al Dempsey, the restoration project manager, ensured that the military legacy was woven into the new neighbourhood. His vision preserved historic street layouts and restored 149 married quarters. It integrated modern urban planning best practices - from back alleyways that reduce vehicle congestion to landscaping that reinforced the towering Douglas firs with native plantings from across Canada.

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Legacy Walk lies at the heart of this transformation. Officially opened on 23 April 2006, this commemorative trail was created through a partnership between CLC and the CFB Chilliwack Historical Society. The trail features 27 plinths and plaques, each one telling a story from the base’s history - from the daily rhythms of military families to engineering achievements that shaped the region.

Some plaques honour the ordinary but deeply meaningful experiences of those who lived in the “MQ Patch.” Other markers highlight the extraordinary, such as the renovated stormwater system connected to the region’s largest aquifer: “a gem holding the best water in the world,” as judged by an international panel in 2025. The former domestic zone has become one of Chilliwack’s most desirable residential areas.

The CFB Chilliwack Historical Society Museum provides a map tour of Legacy Walk at: <https://tinyurl.com/A-Legacy-Walk> and conducts tours upon request. The Legacy Walk is more than a historical tribute; it is an educational and community-building experience. The trail links to the Vedder Rotary Trail and includes significant stops such as All Sappers Memorial Park. The dedication of Sappers Way, named for the 56 years CFB Chilliwack served as the “Home of the Engineers,” further anchors the military story within the modern landscape.

Garrison Crossing stands as a model of thoughtful redevelopment - offering nearly 1,800 homes, a revitalized commercial village, and amenities such as the reconstructed Cheam Recreation Centre. It is a place where families thrive, retirees find peace, and history remains visible in everyday life.

The Legacy Walk ensures that the “shadows of military life in the Patch” endure, inviting residents and visitors alike to walk, reflect, and remember the generations who served, lived, and built community on this storied ground.