

Creating a Walking Strategy
City of Toronto Staff Workshop
Thursday, April 26, 2007
St. Lawrence Hall, Great Hall

Over 70 City staff attended the “Creating a Walking Strategy” workshop representing Transportation Services, City Planning, Toronto Public Health, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Technical Services, Economic Development, City Manager’s Office, Toronto Environment Office, TTC, and Toronto Police Services.

In the morning, the session included a look at what was happening with walking around the world. Both Rodney Tolley and Gil Penalosa presented an overview of the benefits of walking and the need to prioritize pedestrian planning within cities. They showed examples from Bogotá, Denmark and Australia where innovative walking initiatives and pedestrian infrastructure projects took precedence. They introduced concepts such as “shared” and “naked” streets and raised awareness of the potential for these projects within the City of Toronto.

A coordinated staff presentation highlighted several pedestrian related activities from various departments within the City in the “Where We Are Now” segment of the workshop. Commenting on the institutional framework for street construction within the City of Toronto, Beth Milroy and Paul Hess presented their paper “Making Toronto Streets”. This presentation highlighted that the opportunities for changing streets are plentiful, modest in scale and widely spread throughout City functions. An interdepartmental team, clear policy direction and designated funding were highlighted by Milroy and Hess as key elements to change. In a facilitated session staff reported back on the priorities for “Making Toronto Streets”.

Summary of Priorities for “Making Toronto Streets”

1. Bold initiatives, test/pilot projects, design trials, suburban projects (pedestrian priority streets, shared streets, create destinations);
2. Public education, exposure, consultation, change in mindset/perceptions, community leadership;
3. Civic engagement, more cross-divisional coordination, change in divisional priorities to put more emphasis on pedestrians’ needs, change in mindset, coordinated processes;
4. Pedestrian auditing tools, pedestrian survey/studies, evaluation of case studies and providing feedback; and
5. Strong policies, enforcement, legislation, putting policies and guidelines into practice, positive messaging, language and action (walk the walk) (**full summary see Appendix A**)

In the afternoon, Jim Walker presented on the Walking Plan for London. Its potential included a Mayor who was committed to making London “the most walking friendly city by 2015”, a sound policy framework with six key objectives, and a mapping exercise which highlighted need areas and tangible projects in each borough to be acted on. He also listed thirteen lessons learned through the development of the London Plan which included:

1. Commit to a people focused process
2. Work WITH people not for them
3. Be visionary and bold
4. Engage top down political support
5. Build local partnerships with practitioners
6. Make people accountable for delivery
7. Set up a professional advisory panel

8. Learn from other successful modal models
9. Justify the benefits of investment
10. Plan for Capital/Revenue expenditure
11. Only ask for what can be spent and then spend it!
12. Collect and publish quantitative and qualitative data
13. Celebrate success

Bronwen Thorton’s presentation on the International Charter for Walking discussed the eight principles of the Charter and how these are translated into pedestrian planning actions within cities. The group was then led in a facilitated discussion of the issues, actions and major hurdles for Toronto in relation to the eight principles of the Charter. An overview of this facilitated session is included below.

April 26 – Group Facilitation
International Charter

1. Increased inclusive mobility

“People in communities have the right to accessible streets, squares, buildings and public transport systems regardless of their age, ability, gender, income level, language, ethnic, cultural or religious background, strengthening the freedom and autonomy of all people, and contributing to social inclusion, solidarity and democracy.”

Toronto Issues

- Barriers for disabled persons
 - Subway access
 - Expressway crossing at major roads
- Barriers to comfortable pedestrian ways/sidewalks
 - Planters, street furniture, publishing boxes, clutter
 - Garbage collection (bags, containers, etc.)
- Funding for implementation of pedestrian features (e.g. Audible pedestrian signals, isn’t meeting current demand)
- Streetcar Loading – not accessible (low floor)
- Accessibility to buildings & roadways – many still need to be retrofitted with ramps.
- Inadequate enforcement of by-laws (e.g. A-Frames, postering/advertising panels)
- Language barriers for some (e.g. Wayfinding)

Action Items	Timelines
Enforcement of By-laws	Now
Ongoing improvement/compliance of accessibility guidelines for buildings	Now
Co-ordination/Organization of street furniture	Oct. 2007
Pedestrian crossing priority at intersections (e.g. left turns often get priority now)	Oct. 2008
Re-allocating existing operating/capital budget to promote pedestrian improvements over auto-related improvements	Oct 2008-2012
Try more pilot projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactile strips at intersections 	Now – Oct. 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing treatments/controls (scramble phase) 	
Guidelines for accessible pedestrian signals	Oct. 2007

Major Hurdles

- Political will/buy-in
- Community education/support
- Staff co-ordination
- Budget priorities

2. Well designed and managed spaces and places for people

Communities have the right to live in a healthy, convenient and attractive environment tailored to their needs, and to freely enjoy the amenities of public areas in comfort and safety away from intrusive noise and pollution.

Action Items	Timelines
Get rid of boulevard parking bylaw (space for cafes, benches and trees)	2007- Pilot : One per district 2008 – Pilot: Permanent 2012 – 100% complete
Convert on-street parking to bike parking or public space (widen sidewalks) and freeing up space for more social uses	2007 – Pilot: 4 per district 2008 – Arterials : All Districts 2012 – 100% complete
Wayfinding signage system for: parks system and streets – linkages and location	2007 – Repair downtown signs 2008- Promotion/Partnerships 2012- All areas
Street Trees – make them a required public “utility”	2007 – Maintain/Replace dead trees 2008 – New tree pilot plantings 2012 – All trees on all streets.

Major Hurdles

- Political will for pilots and policy
- Public support for pilots
- Borrow funds from all departments

3. Improved integration of networks

Communities have the right to a network of connected, direct and easy to follow walking routes which are safe, comfortable, attractive and well maintained, linking their homes, shops, schools, parks, public transport interchanges, green spaces and other important destinations.

Action Items	Timelines
TTC Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove limits on transfers • Get digital time schedules & correct information at each stop • Advance accessibility for all TTC lines 	Sept 2007 2008 tests 2008, everywhere 2012

Recreation Trail Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take wayfinding beyond downtown for conference • Improve missing links in system, roads, roads, highways • Rescale the recreation trails to the big city. 	2007 1/3 done by 2007, all 2015 Demonstration for 2007, full roll out 2015
Sidewalk Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish missing sidewalks on collectors and arterials (add schools, parks and community centres) 160km @ 10 per year = 16 years not good enough!! Increase budget to \$5 million. 	By 2012

4. Supportive land-use and spatial planning

Communities have the right to expect land-use and spatial planning policies which allow them to walk to the majority of everyday services and facilities, maximizing the opportunities for walking, reducing car-dependency and contributing to community life.

Action Items	Timelines
Site Plan Approval – Require pedestrian and traffic impact study	Oct 07 – Oct. 08 Revise Traffic Impact Study
Define road user hierarchy – clarify Official Plan	
Define responsibility/jurisdiction of pedestrian connections – to allow us to negotiate for them, build and maintain.	
Schools – work with Board to deal with issues before they happen (walking programs, etc)	
Retail (ex. Big box) – develop toolbox to address pedestrian connections	

5. Reduced road danger

Communities have the right for their streets to be designed to prevent accidents and to be enjoyable, safe and convenient for people walking – especially children, the elderly and people with limited abilities

Toronto Issues

- Conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians that have the right-of-way (i.e. aggressive left-turns not paying attention to peds crossing on green)
- Speed of traffic
- Roadway widths
- Conflicts between peds & cyclists

Action Items

- No right turns on red
- “Pedestrian scramble” cycles
- Encourage commercial properties to introduce stop signs/stop bars at drive-ways/street intersections.
- Bike lanes – public education
- Traffic calming
 - Speed humps
 - “pinch points”
 - reducing road cross-sections

Timelines

October 2007

- Choose trial intersections for “pedestrian scramble”
- Initiate public consultation for traffic calming

October 2008

- Introduce physical traffic calming
- Evaluate results of pilot projects

October 2012

- Design/implement a safe walking neighbourhood

Major Hurdles

- Public attitudes
- Funding
- Impact on road levels of service
- Lack of viable alternatives to move people and goods (i.e. transit needs to expand)

6. Less crime and fear of crime

Communities have the right to expect an urban environment designed, maintained and policed to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Toronto Issues

- Closing streets to traffic, City concern that it may be safer to keep streets open
- Security cameras or not – where?
- Transit security
- Bring condo owners to the street level
- Reverse frontage
- Public space safety
- Graffiti
- Bike theft

Action Items	Timelines
Increase safety audits	
Graffiti strategy – education with youth groups, public campaign to villianize	
Improve pedestrian lighting	Now (Next 12 months) – Audit required first

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-yr improvement campaign • direct Toronto hydro as part of upgrade program to include pedestrian scale 	and develop relationship with Toronto Hydro.
More neighbourhood parties – facilitate these events	

Major Hurdles

- prioritizing with everything else (how real is crime problem)
- re-directing young people in positive direction
- changing public perception

7. More supportive authorities

Communities have the right to expect authorities to provide for, support and safeguard their ability and choice to walk.

Toronto Issues

- Competition for space
- Lack of data
- Lack of delivery on pedestrian charter ideas

Actions

- Adopt (publicly!) a hierarchy of road users as city policy – public buy-in is crucial
- Need someone to collect data (have a traffic data centre – need a pedestrian data centre)
- Develop interdepartmental working group
- Promotion and consultation – Pedestrian charter
- Pilot Projects
- Deliver a draft walking strategy/ Oct. 2007 and then the tools and polices.

8. A culture of walking

Communities have a right to up-to-date, good quality, accessible information on where they can walk and the quality of the experience. People should be given opportunities to celebrate and enjoy walking as part of their everyday social, cultural and political life.

Toronto Issues

- Safety
- Too easy for cars
- Too hard to walk
- Climate

Action Items	Timelines
Expand surveys to better understand choices	2008
Calendar of walking events	2007
Legislated car-free day	2012

Appendix A
Group Facilitation – April 26, 2007
Making Toronto Streets

Question: There are number divisions within the City of Toronto working on pedestrian related activities. What are the top three priorities in how we function as an institution to make Toronto streets more walkable?

Summary

1. Bold initiatives, test/pilot projects, design trials, (pedestrian priority streets, shared streets, suburban projects, create destinations);
2. Public education, exposure, consultation, change in mindset/perceptions, community leadership;
3. Civic engagement, more cross-divisional coordination, change in divisional priorities to put more emphasis on pedestrians' needs, change in mindset, coordinated processes;
4. Pedestrian auditing tools, pedestrian survey/studies, evaluation of case studies and providing feedback; and
5. Strong policies, enforcement, legislation, putting policies and guidelines into practice, positive messaging, language and action (walk the walk).

Table 1

1. Pilot /Test Programs
 - Gain exposure
 - Show it can be done
 - Educate
 - Positive messaging
2. Public Consultation
 - Local vs. citywide
 - Voice for citywide issues?
 - Coordinated processes (utilities, construction, application review)
3. Pedestrian Audit
 - Demands
 - Features, barriers, likes/dislikes
 - Data

Table 2

1. EA/RFP Process
2. Pedestrian Priority Streets (banning right turns on red lights)
3. Culture Shift

Table 3

1. Change in attitude vs. priorities in Transportation Division and throughout the organization.
2. Bold initiatives, tested & monitored (pedestrian zones, pavement narrowing, etc.)
3. Undertake pedestrian surveys & studies to better understand public requirements, attitudes and priorities.

Table 4

1. Organizational: siloing of divisions & departments, not about only streets (i.e. parks, people, and services)
2. Changing mindset of city staff, public
3. Put “teeth” behind municipal policies
 - legislation & enforcement
 - cohesion between levels of government re: polices and enforcement
4. Big picture and planning (re: long term vision for Toronto)

Table 5

1. Look at public works and emergency equipment – can they be redesigned to suit our streets?
2. Good public transit is key in creating a good pedestrian environment
3. End road widening & upgrades – together with improving alternatives (transit, bikes, walking)
4. Pilot a suburban community for pedestrian friendly design (e.g. high priority neighbourhood)
5. Create destinations where people live
6. Pilot control-free zone (“naked street”)

Table 6

1. More design trials (e.g. Queens Quay)
 - there isn’t a “correct” design; lots of bad designs work well
2. Focus on gas price/environmental impact
 - anticipate how this will change behaviour in the future but implement the design now
 - that which is not agreeable today will be a necessity in the future
 - Rodney’s example of converting P lots.
3. Changing public perception & encouraging leadership
4. Evaluating cases & providing feedback – hopefully good
 - Longer term evaluation

Table 7

1. Risk Aversion
 - How do we over come it?
 - Have we started?
2. Putting policies and guidelines into practice
 - E.g. roadshow for “vibrant streets”
 - Making tradeoffs among road users for space – consultation
3. Culture Shift
 - Pedestrians into all projects

Table 8

1. Civic Engagement
 - Education
 - Consultation
 - Inclusion
2. Streets as shared public space
 - For all users/uses
 - Connections/destinations
3. Positive language & actions (Walk the Walk)

