



PROMOTING LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR WALKING: STRATEGY ACTIONS

→ AN ACCOUNTABLE TEAM

- 1.1: Establish the Public Realm Section within the Transportation Services Division as the lead staff group to coordinate and monitor implementation of the Walking Strategy.
- 1.2: Establish an inter-divisional and inter-agency Walking Strategy Team chaired by the Director of the Public Realm Section to ensure city-wide coordination of Strategy projects. The Walking Strategy Team will include representatives from: Transportation Services, City Planning, Public Health, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Economic Development, Municipal Licensing and Standards, City Managers Office (Diversity Management and Community Engagement), the Toronto Transit Commission, the Toronto Environment Office, the Toronto Parking Authority, the Toronto Conservation Authority, Toronto Police Services and Toronto Hydro.
- 1.3: Maintain ongoing consultation with the Toronto Pedestrian Committee and community partners to ensure a collaborative approach in the delivery of the Walking Strategy.
- 1.4: Produce annual Walking Strategy progress reports which will record achievements and identify future priorities and resources.
- 1.5: Organize an annual Walking / Public Realm Forum, beginning in the Fall 2009, to engage City staff and Council, external stakeholders and Toronto residents in an ongoing dialogue about actions to make Toronto a great walking city.

→ DEVELOP TOOLS TO GUIDE DECISION-MAKING

- 1.6: Initiate a comprehensive data collection and analysis program to inform investment decisions and to monitor the progress of the Walking Strategy.
- 1.7: Maintain and build partnerships with international leaders in pedestrian policy, design, planning and programming and seek out opportunities to participate and contribute to research on innovative pedestrian initiatives.
- 1.8: Create a “walkability audit” tool that enables site-specific assessments of pedestrian needs and assists in determining investment priorities and evaluating the design of new developments, streetscapes and public spaces.
- 1.9: Initiate a “walkability study” to assess neighbourhood walking conditions in order to inform community revitalization studies, transportation plans, secondary plan studies, environmental assessments and other initiatives.
- 1.10: Conduct an audit of City-owned buildings and properties with a view to improving the pedestrian environment and initiating walking programs to promote a culture of walking among City staff.



WALKABILITY IN ACTION

TORONTO PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE

Established in 1998, the 18-member Toronto Pedestrian Committee is an advisor to Toronto City Council on any and all pedestrian matters. Its mandate includes:

- Promotion of walking in Toronto.
- Promotion of the Toronto Pedestrian Charter's implementation in the City's decision-making process.
- Working for improved pedestrian safety and access to public transit, schools, workplaces, shops, libraries, community centers, and parks, as well as roads and other public spaces.
- Providing pedestrian-oriented input regarding the planning, design, and use of public spaces.
- Providing recommendations on guidelines and general design principles for the public realm, including roads and standards for street and sidewalk lighting.
- Providing recommendations on capital and operating budgets.
- Providing an accessible forum for public consultation on pedestrian health, safety, convenience, and comfort.



Yonge Street Mall, 1973

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF WALKING

EVERYONE IS A PEDESTRIAN

Walking is a part of everyday life and people in all corners of Toronto enjoy this ancient and universal form of travel. Promoting a culture of walking is one of the eight strategic principles of the International Charter for Walking, but it's not just a matter of principle. Persuading more people to walk more often will make our daily lives in the city healthier and more enjoyable.

Urban sprawl has made many of us increasingly dependent on automobiles for everyday travel. As a result many people pay little attention to the importance of walking in their lives and do not identify themselves as pedestrians. Yet, as Toronto's own Pedestrian Charter states, "every personal trip involves walking, alone or in combination with taking public transit, driving, or cycling." Although walking is a practical and healthy way of travelling to nearby community services and other destinations, almost one-third of automobile trips in Toronto are two kilometers or less. By fostering a robust culture of walking, these short trips will increasingly be made on foot.

It's also important to celebrate walking in Toronto. Each time we celebrate we are reminded of how much a part of our lives walking is and how beneficial it is to the health of the city. To strengthen our walking culture the City of Toronto is committed to providing up-to-date, high-quality and accessible information about walking in everyday life both as a mode of travel and as a form of recreation.

We're already walking — indeed, everyone is a pedestrian — but we need to remind ourselves of this fact and build upon it.

A culture of walking helps us to experience the city we live in. We see more, interact with neighbours and participate in Toronto's public life as we walk. Local businesses thrive and streets are made safer when people are out walking. Pedestrians are the key ingredient in making Toronto's streets and the whole city a vibrant place.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- *Everyone is a pedestrian*
- *Celebrating walking creates a positive image of walking*
- *High-quality pedestrian areas become part of Toronto's culture and heritage*



PROMOTING A CULTURE OF WALKING: STRATEGY ACTIONS

→ PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE WALKING

- 2.1: Organize an annual, city-wide Walking Festival in partnership with City divisions, external agencies and community walking groups.
- 2.2: Create and maintain a Walking Website that provides access to information on all City walking policies, programs and services and encourages Toronto residents and visitors to walk more often.
- 2.3: Recognize and reward projects that achieve significant improvements to Toronto's walking environment by incorporating pedestrian-related criteria into existing award programs including the Urban Design Awards and the Green Toronto Awards.

→ ENCOURAGE WALKING TO WORK, SCHOOL AND EVERYWHERE

- 2.4: Launch a high profile communications and engagement strategy to support the City's public realm initiatives and to encourage all Torontonians to safely walk as part of everyday life.
- 2.5: Promote and expand the community-based Walk Into Health program which includes: promotional campaigns in Toronto's neighbourhoods and parks, a pedometer lending program and organized neighbourhood walking groups.
- 2.6: Promote and expand the Active and Safe Routes to School program and other school-focused walking programs including school travel planning.
- 2.7: Create a toolkit for employers to support the design and delivery of walking programs in the workplace.
- 2.8: Administer a program through Live Green Toronto to assist individuals, resident groups and community organizations who wish to initiate walkability projects in their neighbourhoods.

2008 TORONTO WALKING SURVEY Average walking time (min.) to local services, by district

DESTINATION	CITY AVG.	TORONTO-EAST YORK	ETOBICOKE-YORK	SCARBOROUGH	NORTH YORK
Convenience store	6 min	3.8 min	6.2 min	7.4 min	7.1 min
Restaurant	10.5 min	6.1 min	14 min	13.8 min	10.4 min
Toronto park or trail	11.8 min	8 min	13.2 min	16.4 min	11.3 min
Supermarket or grocer	12.4 min	9.5 min	14 min	15 min	12.5 min
Library	15 min	10 min	16.3 min	18.2 min	17.4 min
Community centre	16.6 min	12 min	18.9 min	20.1 min	17 min



WALKABILITY IN ACTION

ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

An often-heard cliché goes something like this: “When I was a kid we used to walk 10 miles to school.” There is an element of truth to this cliché; Canadian children walked to school in the past much more than they do now. Returning to that tradition by encouraging more children and parents to walk to school is an important step in strengthening the culture of walking in Toronto.

Through the Active and Safe Routes to School program, schools work collaboratively with families and the wider community to increase active transportation among students traveling to and from school. Led by Toronto Public Health in partnership with Transportation and Toronto Police Services, district school boards and Green Communities Canada the program also includes activities that promote walking during school hours.



Humber River pedestrian bridge

PHOTO BY BOUKE SALVERDA

INTEGRATING NETWORKS FOR WALKING

MAKING CONNECTIONS

When we walk, we move around the city in a different way than we do if we are taking public transit, riding a bicycle or driving a car. While sidewalks may be the most common way to get around, pedestrians can also use many other kinds of networks. Hundreds of kilometres of paths and trails in parks, ravines, along the waterfront and in other natural areas provide beautiful and inspiring routes. The underground PATH network connects downtown office buildings, retail and subway stations in an indoor, climate controlled environment. Laneways, mid-block crossings and walkways through private development sites give pedestrians the freedom to get to their destinations by the most direct and convenient path. There is a versatility to walking that is not enjoyed by other travel modes.

An integrated network of walking routes is the backbone of a walkable community. Toronto's different walking networks are managed by several City divisions and agencies and by private landowners, each with their own priorities. From a pedestrian's point of view however, what is most important is that the walking network provides seamless access to community services and a wide range of destinations. A pedestrian way-finding system is a critical component of a seamless network. This pedestrian-scale information system would identify walking routes, direction, distance and time to key destinations. Consistent maintenance through all seasons is also essential to creating a continuous pedestrian network that will facilitate and promote regular walking.

Throughout Toronto, physical barriers such as ravines, highways, rail and hydro corridors often prevent pedestrians from travelling the most direct route and, in some cases, can divide communities. Many of these barriers also present opportunities to create new walking routes and connections that will expand and complete the network. By designing these links to be attractive facilities they can become amenities that will make walking more enjoyable. One inspiring model is the Humber River Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge. This beautiful, dedicated walking and cycling connection at the mouth of the Humber River connects the waterfront trail across the Humber River and offers an attractive alternative to the sidewalk route along the Lake Shore Boulevard Bridge.

New walking routes and improvements to existing routes can also be secured through the development review process and by linking to existing City initiatives such as Toronto's waterfront revitalization. For example, north-south "green corridors" are being developed by the City and Waterfront Toronto to provide better walking and cycling access to Lake Ontario.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- *Integrating walking networks improves access to everyday places and amenities*
- *Understandable way-finding information is essential for making walking trips simple and direct*
- *Universal accessible design principles must apply to the entire walking network*



INTEGRATING NETWORKS FOR WALKING: STRATEGY ACTIONS

→ IMPROVE THE SIDEWALK NETWORK THROUGHOUT TORONTO

- 3.1: Construct new sidewalks - during road reconstruction and resurfacing, or when applicable, through the development review process - on both sides of the street in all areas where they are missing.
- 3.2: Review current practices and policies for constructing new sidewalks where they are missing on existing local streets.
- 3.3: Assess opportunities to narrow pavements, widen sidewalks and enhance landscaping as part of all road reconstruction projects and in such a way that is consistent with the Vibrant Streets Guidelines and the Streetscape Manual.

→ IMPROVE LINKS BETWEEN MAJOR PUBLIC TRANSIT ROUTES AND ADJACENT NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 3.4: Develop criteria for high quality pedestrian environments in and around new public transit stations and stops and identify improvements for existing transit stations and stops.

→ PROVIDE A SIGNAGE AND INFORMATION SYSTEM TO SUPPORT WALKING

- 3.5: Develop a pedestrian way-finding system with pedestrian-scale signage that indicates walking routes and that allows residents and visitors to easily find their way on foot.
- 3.6: Develop neighbourhood walking maps that feature accessible walking routes, connecting streets, public walkways, parks and open spaces, walking links through private property, transit nodes and key local destinations.
- 3.7: Develop and promote featured walking routes throughout the City by building upon the Discovery Walks project.
- 3.8: Encourage and support the development of a computer based pedestrian trip planner to assist residents and visitors to plan their walking routes.

→ DEVELOP A MULTI-YEAR PLAN TO IMPROVE AND IMPLEMENT NEW WALKING ROUTES

- 3.9: Develop a computer database of all public pedestrian walkways, paths, sidewalks and connections on public and private lands in order to map existing routes and to collect information for the development of future connections across barriers such as railway, hydro and highway corridors.
- 3.10: Develop guidelines for pedestrian trail access, including trail-road crossings, and use these guidelines to evaluate and identify improvements to existing walking routes.

→ EXPAND TORONTO'S UNDERGROUND WALKING NETWORK

- 3.11: Produce a master plan for the underground PATH system and continue to expand PATH connections through the development review process and as part of other city-building projects.



WALKABILITY IN ACTION

ESSENTIAL SIDEWALK LINKS PROGRAM

Connected and continuous sidewalks are needed throughout Toronto to ensure a safer and more accessible walking environment. To achieve this goal City policy requires that sidewalks be provided on both sides of arterial and collector roads.

The Essential Sidewalk Links Program ensures that all road reconstruction and resurfacing projects include the construction of new sidewalks where they are currently missing. The program also responds to requests from residents to construct sidewalks on local neighbourhood streets.



Yonge Street south of Queen Street, 1901

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

DESIGNING STREETS FOR PEDESTRIANS

WELCOME TO THE CITY'S LIVINGROOM

Toronto's streets and sidewalks are like the city's living room. They are the places where we interact with each other and where a large part of our lives are lived. Public streets make up almost 25% of Toronto's land area and connect to nearly every destination. With so much of Toronto defined by our streets, special emphasis must be placed on making streets great places for walking, shopping, socializing and exploring for both residents and visitors.

Creating spaces for sustainable and active modes of transportation on city streets is essential if we are to build streets where people want to walk. As a result, Toronto's streets are increasingly being designed as "complete streets" with a priority toward walking, cycling and public transit. Fostering a culture of walking also requires better designed streetscapes that include street trees, attractive landscaping and decorative paving materials. A high quality walking environment also needs to be well-managed. To this end, the Vibrant Streets Guidelines prescribe new rules for placing street furniture and other elements on sidewalks to reduce clutter and ensure clear, accessible pedestrian walkways. Projects such as the pedestrian countdown signals, accessible signals, zebra crosswalks and the Pedestrian Crossover Enhancement Program are improving safety, comfort and convenience for pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

Toronto's streets are defined by the buildings along them. The design of these buildings and the ways in which they connect to the public realm must provide a comfortable, pedestrian-scale environment. Toronto's Official Plan clearly articulates that the future of Toronto neighbourhoods lies in more mixed-use development — policies which are currently being implemented through the City's work along the Avenues. The City's Green Development Standards and Urban Design Guidelines include principles that strive to make streets into destinations as well as travel routes. The implementation of existing City policies, guidelines and standards along with continued education and cooperation between City divisions and agencies and with the development community will ensure that the principles of the Walking Strategy become the reality of Toronto's streets.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- *Walking is the foundation of mobility and is a part of virtually every trip made in Toronto*
- *Streets are destinations as well as travel routes*
- *Street design should create healthy, convenient and attractive environments that accommodate the needs of all pedestrians*



DESIGNING STREETS FOR PEDESTRIANS: STRATEGY ACTIONS

→ TRANSFORM STREETS INTO ATTRACTIVE DESTINATIONS

- 4.1: Implement the Coordinated Street Furniture Program which will place approximately 25,600 pieces of street furniture on Toronto's streets over the next 20 years including 1,300 new benches by 2013.
- 4.2: Transform the look of Toronto streets by aggressively applying the Vibrant Streets Guidelines so that all new street furniture enhances the walking experience.
- 4.3: Document sidewalk zones on city streets, based on the Vibrant Streets Guidelines to guide a multi-year program to reorganize and de-clutter sidewalks and boulevards to achieve optimal pedestrian clearways.
- 4.4: Evaluate current street lighting policies and develop a policy and implementation strategy for pedestrian-scale lighting, especially in suburban neighbourhoods (walkway lighting).
- 4.5: Evaluate innovative streetscape enhancements to support healthier street trees and landscaping, decorative paving materials and high-quality design features
- 4.6: Develop a pilot project to install and evaluate different design options for relocating bicycle parking racks and other barriers from narrow sidewalks/boulevards to alternative locations, and implement 10 locations in 2009 and 2010.

→ ADOPT AN APPROACH THAT GIVES GREATER PRIORITY TO PEDESTRIANS

- 4.7: Develop pedestrian priority areas in locations with significant pedestrian activity (such as campuses, transit hubs, major intersections and cultural centres) where investment will focus on pedestrian features like special pavement treatments, pedestrian priority intersection designs and other amenities.
- 4.8: Adopt a best practices approach for intersections and pedestrian crossings with a goal to continuously improve the safety and comfort of road crossings for pedestrians.
- 4.9: Complete a program review of winter maintenance services with the goal of improving pedestrian safety and comfort during winter conditions.
- 4.10: Develop a program to implement "No Right Turn on Red" restrictions at strategic intersections to provide for safer crossing conditions for pedestrians, beginning with 10 intersections in 2010.

→ GIVE PRIORITY TO THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS IN ALL PLANNING DECISIONS

- 4.11: Develop a reference manual of pedestrian-related design standards and guidelines, including the City's Accessibility Design Guidelines, to be consistently applied in appropriate studies and processes including development review, Avenue Studies, Environmental Assessments, Community Improvement Plans, Transit Projects and Transportation Impact Studies.
- 4.12: Revise the Guidelines for Transportation Impact Studies — currently required as part of the development review process for large new developments — to include a more comprehensive study of the impact of proposed developments on pedestrian activity.
- 4.13: Prepare updated Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Guidelines to establish citywide standards for TDM initiatives in new developments. The TDM Guidelines will include provisions for detailed information on pedestrian access to and within the site, pedestrian amenities and enhanced pedestrian connections with the surrounding neighbourhood.



WALKABILITY IN ACTION

COORDINATED STREET FURNITURE AND VIBRANT STREETS

The City is implementing a new system of street furniture. Based on extensive public consultations and research, criteria were developed to harmonize the design, scale, materials and placement of street furniture in Toronto. The criteria called for exceptional design, universal accessibility, safety, quality, maintenance, pedestrian-oriented placement and sustainable components.

The Coordinated Street Furniture Program will re-organize Toronto's sidewalks and boulevards to create a more accessible and user-friendly public realm, based on the Vibrant Streets Guidelines. The result will be a high standard of civic design for all city streets.



Pedestrian Sunday, Kensington Market

PHOTO BY YVONNE BAMBRICK

CREATING SPACES AND PLACES FOR PEOPLE

MORE THAN GETTING FROM A TO B

In Toronto, our streets should encourage people to take a walk without having to be told that it's a good idea. Creating beautiful and functional streetscapes and public spaces will make a significant contribution to Toronto's walking culture. Revitalizing our public spaces may take the form of a small project like converting a boulevard parking spot into a beautifully landscaped green space, or commissioning local artists to paint traffic control signal cabinets. Building a vibrant public space can also be a very large project that acquires and transforms existing spaces as was the case with Yonge-Dundas Square. There are opportunities to create many different types of public spaces and plazas in all of Toronto's neighbourhoods.

Toronto can learn valuable lessons from "pedestrianization" projects undertaken in cities around the world. For example, many great cities have dynamic and prosperous pedestrian-only streets that are sought out by tourists and residents alike. Other examples include occasional pedestrian streets that are closed to automobile traffic on specific days or at certain times of the day. Toronto already has a successful example of occasional pedestrian streets. Pedestrian Sunday, held once a month during the summer in Kensington Market, operates like a traditional market where certain streets within the market are closed to car traffic so that merchants can take up space on the sidewalks and pedestrians are free to stroll on the roadway.

Toronto has many other areas with busy pedestrian traffic, such as two downtown university campuses for example, that would provide good locations to continue to develop a Toronto model for occasional or permanent pedestrian streets.

Creating places for pedestrians does not necessarily require the removal of cars; it can also mean implementing a "shared street" concept which has successfully transformed streets and squares in European cities. On shared streets, safety is improved by mixing vehicle and pedestrian areas rather than separating them. Shared streets become shared public spaces that slow traffic by the way they are designed. This technique has been used on streets with high traffic volumes and on local residential streets to create liveable spaces where people travel, shop and play. Similar innovative designs have transformed other cities and have the potential to work in Toronto as well.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- *Creating places for people fosters a sense of community*
- *High-quality urban design creates more active public spaces and places*
- *Lively streets enhance the local economy and provide safe environments*