



# Canada Walks Master Class

Case Study

Hamilton 2009



Transport Canada

Transports Canada

# Canada Walks Master Class Case Study

by Canada Walks, in partnership with Walk21

Canada Walks is an initiative of Green Communities Canada

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# Acknowledgements

Green Communities Canada extends our thanks to the following people and organizations without whom the Canada Walks Master Class would not have taken place. First the cities that agreed to participate and be benchmarked against the International Charter for Walking. Although Metro Vancouver was not a full participant of the Canada Walks Master Class we were fortunate enough to deliver a professional workshop and a public lecture at Simon Fraser University so we have recognized those people here as well:

- ◆ Hamilton, Ontario
- ◆ Sharon Mackinnon, Public Health Nurse, Hamilton Public Health Services and the entire Hamilton team
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Our appreciation go to our expert team, who gave their time and ideas to create an inspiring atmosphere for participants to dream of what their Cities could be:

- ◆ Bronwen Thornton, Walk21, UK
- ◆ Rodney Tolley, Walk21, Honorary Research Fellow, Staffordshire University
- ◆ Jim Walker, Chief Executive Walk England
- ◆ Jacky Kennedy, Canada Walks, Green Communities Canada
- ◆ Jody Rosenblatt Naderi, University of Texas AM, U.S.A.
- ◆ Paul Young, Public Space Workshop, Toronto, Canada
- ◆ Catherine O'Brien, Cape Breton University, Canada
- ◆ Adrian Bell, Applied Information Group, Vancouver, Canada
- ◆ Gordon Price, Program Director, Simon Fraser University Lecture Series

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- ◆ Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST), Transport Canada
- ◆ Each city who contributed cash and in-kind to make this project possible

# Overview

## ► Introduction

### *What is the International Charter for Walking?*

The International Charter for Walking was developed by a team of international experts as part of the Walk21 conference series and was formally launched at the 2006 Walk21 conference in Melbourne. Since that time it has been translated into several languages, and communities and individuals around the world have signed the Charter including many from Canada. To view and sign the Charter visit [www.walk21.com](http://www.walk21.com).

### *What is Walk21?*

Walk21 is an organization that exists to champion the development of healthy, sustainable and efficient communities where people can and do choose to walk. Each year, Walk21 hosts an international conference that brings together visionary and influential planners, practitioners, politicians and advocates to discuss the development of walkable communities. For more information about Walk21, visit [www.walk21.com](http://www.walk21.com).

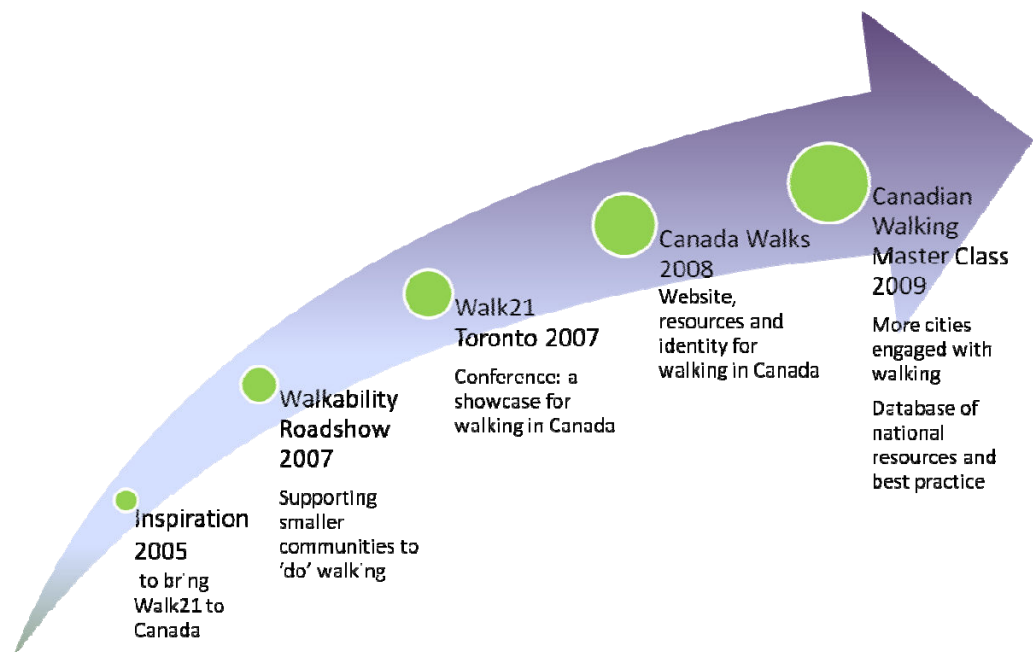
The Canadian Walking Master Class project was initiated to support the implementation of active and sustainable transportation policies and plans in communities across Canada.

Through a step-by-step process that includes inspiring political and senior decision makers, training professionals, engaging the public and providing international expertise and ideas to specific walkability issues and opportunities, the project aims to support local action to deliver enhanced walking environments and enable people to walk more.

The Walking Master Class builds on the success of the Canadian Walkability Roadshow 2007, to bring this proven process to more communities across Canada and enable them to deliver communities where people choose to walk.

Many communities across Canada have conducted Active Transportation (AT) or Sustainable Transportation (ST) workshops and have completed AT/ ST community plans. However, often in these communities there are missing links between creating a plan and implementing that plan.

The International Charter for Walking provides both the strategic direction and detailed actions for creating walkable communities around the world. The Master Class uses the International Charter for Walking in a Canadian context to benchmark walking within communities and as the foundation for building more walkable communities through ideas, initiatives, inspiration and action.



# Overview

## What is Canada Walks?

Canada Walks is an initiative of Green Communities Canada that aims to become *the* national body to go to for information and action about walkable communities and active transportation across Canada. The mission of Canada Walks is to change the current social paradigm so that walkable communities are the cultural and social norm in Canada.

The main goal of Canada Walks is to increase the number of Canadians walking, both for pleasure and for transportation. To achieve this goal, Canada Walks focuses on:

- supporting the creation of more walkable communities, i.e. changing the built environment to make walking a safe and inviting choice;
- and changing Canadians' walking attitudes and habits so that they *choose* to walk.



The Master Class team worked with four Canadian communities:

- ◆ Hamilton, Ontario, with representation from Halton Region, Region of Peel, Region of Waterloo and the Town of Milton
- ◆ Moncton, New Brunswick
- ◆ Kelowna and West Kelowna, British Columbia
- ◆ Whitehorse, Yukon Territory
- ◆ plus an extra workshop in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Whitehorse,  
Yukon

Kelowna and  
West Kelowna,  
British Columbia

Metro Vancouver  
British Columbia



Hamilton, Ontario

Moncton,  
New Brunswick

The Master Class was supported by local experts and facilitated by Green Communities Canada.

The team were:

- ◆ Jacky Kennedy, Green Communities Canada
- ◆ Bronwen Thornton, Walk21, United Kingdom
- ◆ Rodney Tolley, Walk21, United Kingdom
- ◆ Jody Rosenblatt Naderi, University of Texas AM, U.S.A.
- ◆ Paul Young, Public Space Workshop, Canada
- ◆ Dr. Catherine O'Brien, Cape Breton University, Canada
- ◆ Jim Walker, Walk England, United Kingdom
- ◆ Adrian Bell, Applied Information Group, Canada
- ◆ Gordon Price, Simon Fraser University Lecture Series, Canada

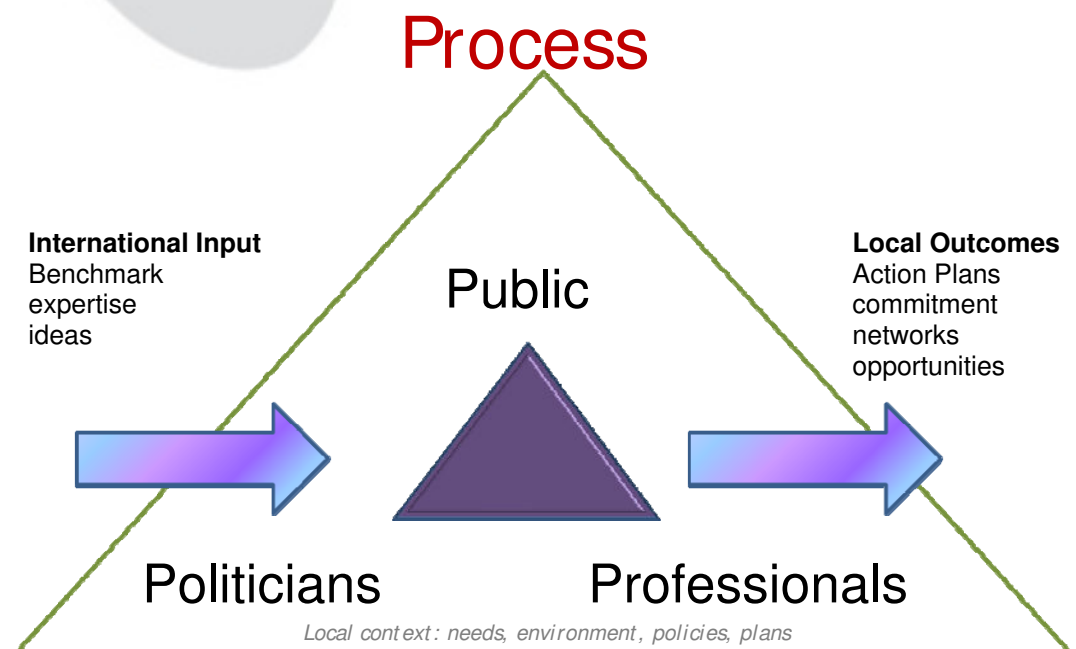
# Overview

## ► Objectives

1. To promote walking as an indicator of sustainable, healthy places and demonstrate the benefits of walkable communities to reducing the impacts of climate change.
2. To encourage and educate transportation professionals, municipal decision-makers, local NGOs and ENGOs, and members of the public to commit and invest in practical actions which build sustainable, liveable places where people choose to walk.
3. To research, publish and share Canadian best practice as part of the continuing process of ensuring the International Charter for Walking is a practical delivery framework for local action.
4. To build and support a national network of skilled professionals across Canada to share and evolve best practice and deliver walkable communities.
5. To showcase the positive outcomes for each city and to follow their progress for one year following completion of the project.

## ► Outcomes

1. A national political understanding, appreciation and commitment to sustainable, healthy communities where people choose to walk.
2. A national community of connected professionals skilled with the tools and knowledge of how to deliver more Canadian walkable communities.
3. Engaged communities demanding infrastructure and services that give residents the chance to choose to walk as an everyday activity.
4. Projects planned with detailed timelines for completion, including infrastructure upgrades and programs to track the increases in the number of people walking.



# Overview

## ► Program

The project consisted of the following steps:

Questionnaire to benchmark against International Charter for Walking and to identify opportunities and challenges within each Municipality and community



Analysis and Homework to develop Agenda for each community and prepare for the Master Class community visits



Webinar with each community to share issues, ideas and initiatives



Master Class in each community –consisting of three days of activities encompassing the following:

- ◆ Breakfast Presentations to inspire councillors and senior staff
- ◆ Workshops to support and skill professionals
- ◆ Walkabouts to identify opportunities and issues
- ◆ Community Meetings to engage the public
- ◆ Best Practice Notes to share ideas
- ◆ Wrap up Presentations to feedback and motivate senior managers.



The project and results were presented at the Walk21 International Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities in New York City in October 2009 and all Master Class case studies will be published on [www.canadawalks.ca](http://www.canadawalks.ca).

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Background

## ► Background

Hamilton is located at the head of Lake Ontario between Toronto and Niagara Falls with a population over 500,000. The city is surrounded by natural gems –the Niagara Escarpment, Lake Ontario, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Bruce Trail, and the many conservation areas. It has many unique and vibrant districts such as Westdale, Locke Street, Ancaster, Ottawa Street, Stoney Creek, Dundas, Concession Street, the Waterfront trails in the east and west ends, and many others.

There are also a variety of opportunities for shopping, dining and cultural experiences in Hamilton. James Street North, in downtown Hamilton is a thriving artistic community and Hess Village, just west of downtown with cobbled streets offers many outdoor cafes and night club experiences. Both are examples of vibrant pedestrian friendly districts.



Preparing for the Master Class

## ► Preparing for the Master Class

In preparation for the Master Class, staff from the city were asked to clarify why they became involved and identify what their hopes and expectations were. The responses from Hamilton were as follows.

Why do you want to be involved?

We would like to develop a Walking Action Plan to consolidate the different initiatives that are underway to support walking, to start implementing the International Charter for Walking and to place walking on an equal footing to cycling and other modes within the City.

How can the Master Class help you?

Mayor Fred Eisenburger has signed the International Charter for Walking, demonstrating commitment and accountability to the principles. City employees are interested in getting commitment to actions into budget lines for 2010. Health professionals are increasingly involved in providing input to transportation planning projects and ensuring active travel is well considered

We want to bring the commitment to The Charter to life and secure follow up from decision makers to enhance walking in Hamilton and to make it a genuine choice for people.

What do you want to achieve for your community short term/long term?

We would like to consider a Cyclovia type event to promote walking and to secure a budget committed to walking in 2010.





# Case Study: HAMILTON

## Questionnaire

### ► Questionnaire

The Benchmarking Questionnaire, subsequent Webinar discussion and document review provided the required background information as preparation for the visit to Hamilton.

The responses to the questionnaire from Hamilton were particularly comprehensive with input from several professionals from a diversity of disciplines and levels of engagement on walking issues as well as public interest groups.

Highlights from the Questionnaire:

Respondents were consistently proud of their Waterfront Trails along Lake Ontario and the Ainslie Wood Westdale Walkability assessment in 2007 was also noted as being a successful initiative.

The nominated top 3 priorities for increasing walking in Hamilton:

1. Safe infrastructure, especially for older people, from traffic and crime
2. Promoting walking –health benefits, everyday habit in local communities
3. Improved public transit to link with walking trails, good planning and political will were also identified as important areas to focus.

The nominated top 3 barriers to more walking in Hamilton:

1. Habits and laziness
2. Urban form, poor layout of streets and detailed street design
3. Topography and weather

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Master Class  
Events



## ► Master Class events in the City of Hamilton

- ◆ Pre-visit Benchmarking Questionnaire –with input from across the municipality including Police, Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, Public Health, Sports & Recreation and Interest Groups.
- ◆ Familiarization Tour –from the waterfront to the mountain
- ◆ Breakfast Presentation –with 25 attendees including the Mayor, Councillors and Senior Managers
- ◆ Workshop –with 60 professional staff from the city and community partners
- ◆ Walkabouts and debriefs –around Ancaster, Meadowlands and downtown with a small group of city staff and community partners
- ◆ Community Meeting –with 40 people from BIAs, Neighbourhood Associations, Seniors Advisory Council and Individuals
- ◆ Wrap up presentation - to Councillors and Senior Managers

# Case Study: HAMILTON

## Professional Workshop

### ► Professional Workshop

The group of professionals at the workshop worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas and opportunities for supporting walking in Hamilton against the International Charter for Walking. Small groups worked on each of the eight principles of the Charter, and then regrouped against a different principle to review the ideas proposed, expand on them and contribute new ones.

Finally participants selected the 'best' idea to report to the larger group and then reviewed this list for what could be done within six months and/ or at low cost and what was for the longer term.

1. Look for a community and Business Improvement Area that would be interested in pursuing a monthly event such as the art crawl, but which could be foods; antiques on Ottawa St or other seed ideas in other communities. The key will be the community champions.

### ► Participants

- ◆ Five professionals came from regions surrounding Hamilton: two from Halton Region, one from Region of Peel, two from Region of Waterloo, two from Town of Milton
- ◆ Hamilton Public Health Services
- ◆ Planning and Economic Development
- ◆ Tourism
- ◆ Engineering
- ◆ Public Works
- ◆ Community Development
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Community Services
- ◆ McMaster University
- ◆ Culture and Recreation

### ► Key Points

*Ideas that can be done within 6 months now and/or at low cost:*

- ◆ Fill in open spaces in city with parks/ parkettes, even if the city doesn't own the property. Parkettes are established in the official plan parks hierarchy. It is recognized that there are maintenance costs to be considered. The standard Hamilton park is about 2 hectares, but this size doesn't really work at the pedestrian scale. If some smaller parks were created they could connect to the larger parks creating linear parks across the city; for example the City of Vancouver's greenways project.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Professional  
Workshop

- ◆ Signage and linking places through wayfinding could be easily accomplished in a more aggressive timeline than waiting for the rapid transit project to come on line. Wayfinding can connect the downtown to the waterfront to alert visitors that this is a place worth visiting, should be a priority project. There is a plan for improved signage on Ferguson Avenue for cycling so perhaps some additional signage would facilitate walking as well.
- ◆ Create a 'walkability committee' . There was discussion about what it would actually 'be' : a forum, a network, an information exchange group, a listserve or email exchange, part of an existing committee or a lunch and learn group. The focus would be monitoring what's happening around walking in Hamilton and who is involved, setting benchmarks, ensuring projects do get done or the walking component is delivered and determining how the city is doing with meeting the principles of The Charter. A pedestrian committee of council has been suggested, like the cycling committee, but nothing has moved forward on this to date. Currently there are seven professional staff on the Canadian Walking Master Class steering committee who are committed to meet until the end of the year. It was proposed to build on the core team in place along with contacts from the Master Class and create a network of professionals that (at least) talk about walkability. It would be helpful if Councillor McHattie could take a lead on this to start building a culture of understanding and professionalism about walking across Hamilton City Council
- ◆ Build on existing successes to promote street life, (e.g. the James Street North Art Crawl) and get a new one going over the summer. Look for a community and Business Improvement Area that would be interested in pursuing a monthly event such as the art crawl, but which could be foods; antiques on Ottawa St or other seed ideas in other communities. The key will be the community champions.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Professional  
Workshop

*What could Hamilton do if there was a budget for 2010?*

- ◆ Boulevard-ization along Main and King Streets - potential LRT for these streets
- ◆ Open the streets for pedestrians –select one street now and make the change
- ◆ On a smaller scale –at least create a central refuge with trees in the middle lane
- ◆ Add lighting to well used trails and create safer routes by improving the atmosphere of the streets through safety measures and treatments
- ◆ Undertake pilot projects more quickly to enable people to experience the changes without substantial expenditure or complexity. Suggestions: naked street on north portion of Gore Park could add to work already underway on southern portion
- ◆ Westdale has great potential to become a naked street community. If businesses feel imposed upon, have an application process –to improve your public realm and involve the Business Improvement Areas.

Final discussion agreed that the most important actions are:

- ◆ Establish and support an internal network of professionals involved in walking projects and plans
- ◆ Install temporary measures to test ideas and engage the community
- ◆ Support a community advocate to take the art crawl to other communities
- ◆ Link walkable areas so they will start to feel like a network of routes and spaces instead of isolated pockets.



Comments from participants:

- "I really enjoyed Jody's presentation on the spiritual aspect of walking"*
- "Good representation from different disciplines; hands-on pieces"*
- "Generating ideas/ discussing priorities for making change"*

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Walkabouts

## ► Walkabouts

The walkabouts gave the team the opportunity to walk around selected streets in the city and discuss site specific issues, ideas and projects, for locals to 'see' the streets from an outsider's informed perspective and for the outsiders to experience walking in Hamilton directly, to inform this report.

In Hamilton the team visited Ancaster, a traditional village, Meadowlands, big box urban sprawl (still sprawling) and downtown from McMaster University Downtown Centre to the Waterfront and back again (including James St. North).



The following images and notes from the walkabouts capture some of the issues and opportunities in these locations and for walking generally.



Village centres such as Ancaster can support local walking trips but facilities still need to give priority for walkers and manage vehicle traffic. Especially crossing times need to ensure less able walkers can cross roads comfortably.

Big box developments have replaced village centres in urban sprawl, but people still want somewhere to meet and socialize. In Meadowlands, patrons enjoy 'coffee in the parking lot', while others head off through the traffic to find the bare minimum pathway for pedestrians. But locals do walk to these centres and if more walking is to be encouraged around big box developments, it is imperative that pedestrians are given comfortable, safe and attractive access through the wasteland of parking spaces to the shops and services. A continuous walkway directly to the door and along the front of the shops, of at least 2.4m so that two people in wheelchairs or with strollers can pass comfortably. Road crossings also need to provide a responsive cycle for people walking.



# Case Study: HAMILTON

## Walkabouts



Left: At time of construction, new developments must have sidewalks built on both sides of the street. Reducing road widths can provide space for sidewalks and street trees. Right: It is essential to provide sidewalks so people can choose to walk in safety. The research clearly shows that having a sidewalk has a direct influence on increased physical activity and reduced obesity levels in the population.



Downtown: these are good sidewalks with clear movement zones, between the black paving, clutter zones against the curb and easy shop access, attract people and are busy with activity.



Downtown: this two way street with wider sidewalks, bump outs, street trees and seating invite people to spend time and enjoy the shops.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

## Walkabouts



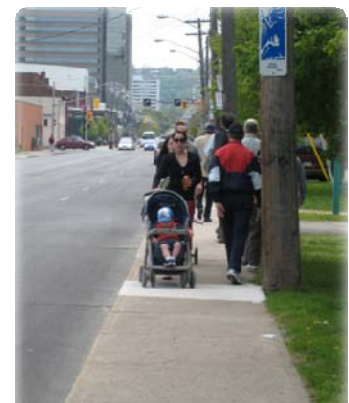
**Left:** The pockets of good public space and attractions like the Farmers Market in the downtown need to be connected to create a continuously pleasant and attractive experience for people walking around downtown and especially to connect to the waterfront. **Right:** Creating these spaces also enables local businesses and communities to own the space, care for it and bring life to the streets.



Streets with tamed traffic are immediately nicer to walk along compared to streets with trucks roaring through.

In contrast to the above, on the majority of streets downtown, pedestrians are squeezed onto narrow sidewalks alongside vast expanses of roadway.

This imbalance needs to be addressed, especially on priority pedestrian routes, such as from the Waterfront to downtown. The opportunity to build beautiful boulevards could be readily realized.





# Case Study: HAMILTON

Walkabouts



Connecting the Waterfront (such a fantastic asset to the rest of Hamilton) with walking and cycling routes that enable all people, including children, to move safely and comfortably around their city should be a priority.



When motorists approach the downtown they need to be informed that they are entering a pedestrian area and therefore need to slow down. The shifting priority of this street can be communicated by reducing road space, widening sidewalks, planting street trees and installing gateway elements such as signs and artwork.



# Case Study: HAMILTON

## Community Workshops

### ► Community Workshops

Following the presentations about the Master Class, International Charter for Walking and what is currently underway locally, the group were asked to brainstorm about two questions:

1. Imagining: In 18 months – 2 years time, what changes have occurred to improve/ increase walking in Hamilton?
2. What role did you play? Identify some actions that helped make it happen?



Key themes to emerge from Question 1 about what changes took place were:

- ◆ Lower speed limits, especially in residential areas
- ◆ Clearing the sidewalks of snow
- ◆ Wider sidewalks
- ◆ Reduced number of traffic lanes
- ◆ Diversion of thru traffic from village centres and downtown
- ◆ Made it more interesting to walk, especially around schools and community centres
- ◆ Calmed traffic

Particular suggestions to create safer, more friendly walking environments were:

- ◆ Safer crossing points with countdown timings for pedestrians
- ◆ Brightly coloured art painted on the road in front of schools
- ◆ Support car sharing clubs to reduce traffic volumes
- ◆ Themed walks in particular areas

The key themes to emerge for Question 2 about how it happened were:

- ◆ Political commitment and leadership
- ◆ Community awareness raising and engagement with benefits to be realized
- ◆ Promotion of successes and demonstration of what's possible through pilot projects
- ◆ Schools and other institutions have recognized their responsibility and taken action
- ◆ Council staff cross pollinated projects and realized gains wherever possible

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Community  
Workshops

## *Agreed Action*

The group agreed that the key issue was to get walking/ walkability on the municipal election agenda –to make it a big issue and find creative ways to address the disparity between the lower city and the mountain.

The group recognized the need for a citizens' group and to get the diversity of interests involved, particularly the business community.

This could happen by creating a walkability coalition to bring together groups, e.g. senior citizens, carsharing clubs, supportive neighbourhoods and the Chamber of Commerce –to build the vision and speak with one voice that can educate the councilors. The group took a vote and enough people were interested in meeting again. A strong core of interested individuals signed up at the end of the meeting.

## ► **Wrap Up Presentation**

On the last morning the Master Class team met with Councillors and Senior Managers from the City of Hamilton to present their findings and ideas from the range of walkabouts and workshops held over the preceding days. This group discussed the critical issues for the City and where the first steps for change might be taken.



Comments from participants

- "Appreciated hearing from experts with so much experience"*
- "Found it very interesting/ encouraging that others care about a walkable community"*
- "Opportunity to discuss issues with others group discussions then presenting ideas to the other groups"*
- "The International Charter for Walking document and learning about local initiatives"*

# Case Study: HAMILTON

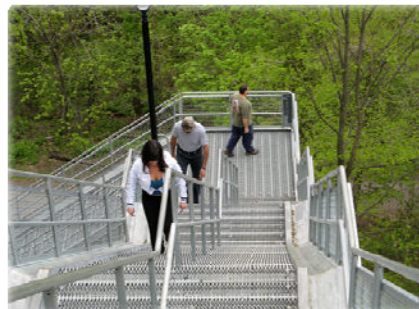
## Key Findings and Recommendations

### ► Key Findings and Recommendations

Hamilton is blessed with some beautiful natural assets: the escarpment, the waterfront, vibrant local parks, attractive historical built environments: downtown, the grid layout and villages such as Ancaster and with community spirit that creates vibrant hubs such as James Street North and Locke Street.

However, like most cities in North America, the urban fabric is designed and managed predominantly for motor traffic and the challenges to improve conditions for more walking are real and substantial. But not impossible! There are many aspects of Hamilton that provide genuine opportunities for making change:

- ◆ The grid layout of the lower city provides an existing legible and connected network for building walking opportunities, identifying parallel walking priority streets (best routes to schools, shops, services, transit) and reducing the impact of traffic on those streets.
- ◆ The extensive amount of road space, can potentially be reallocated for a greater mix of uses and rebalanced for a safer and more attractive streetscape without substantially compromising movement of motor traffic.
- ◆ The space within big box developments and surrounding streets needs to provide attractive and safe pedestrian access to encourage people to walk to their local shops.
- ◆ There are numerous neighbourhood centres and unique shopping districts that provide the nucleus for building local walkable communities, prioritizing streetworks, promotional activities and interventions.
- ◆ The impressive work along the Waterfront sets a high standard that can be translated to other areas.
- ◆ Once the impact of through traffic has been addressed, the downtown has the scale and potential to become a destination again
- ◆ The energy and enthusiasm in the community and among the city staff for walking requires support and the appropriate allocation of resources, personnel and priorities to help them enhance walking experiences, opportunities and environments.
- ◆ There is potential for rapid transit to support mode shift for longer distance trips and more local walking trips. However, don't wait. Transit won't solve everything and will in fact solve nothing if it is not supported by good walking environments, which can exist without transit, so do them anyway and add transit if it happens.

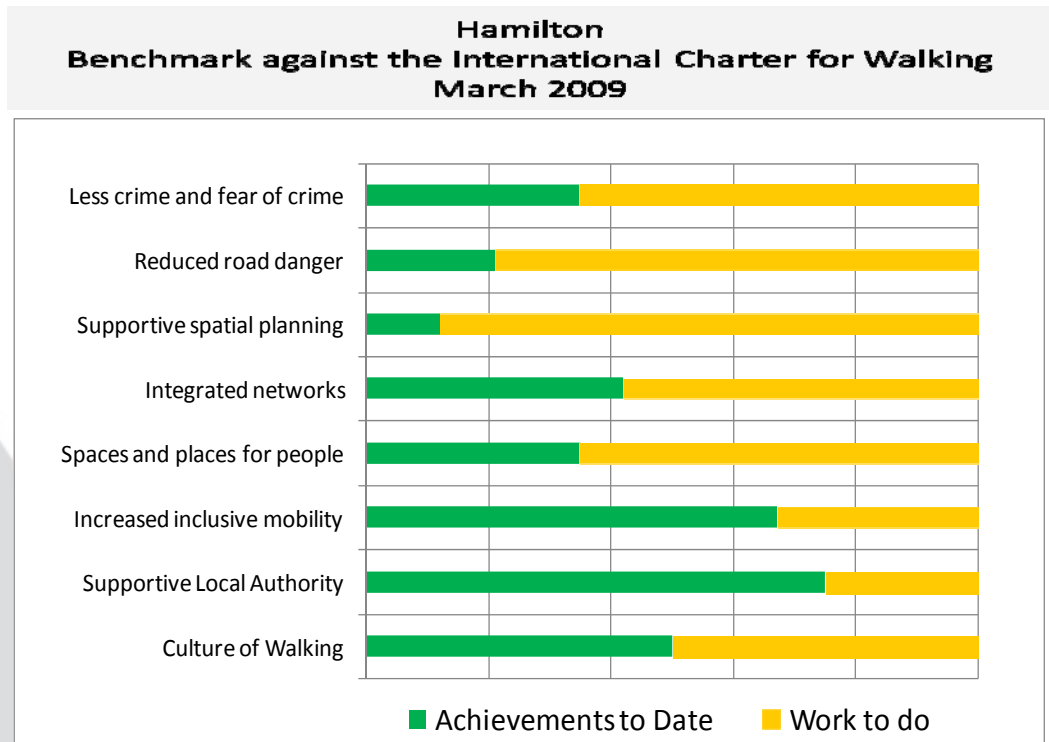


# Case Study: HAMILTON

Summary against the International Charter for Walking

## ▶ Snapshot summary against the International Charter for Walking

The responses in the questionnaire and the observations of the visiting expert team were consolidated into this descriptive graph against the eight principles of the International Charter for Walking. The graph provides a qualitative snapshot to highlight where achievements have already been realized and where there is work to do.



The key factors affecting walking in the city, illustrated in the above graph is the allocation of space and the dominance of motor vehicle traffic. While there is work to be done within all the principles of the Charter, these factors compromise walkability the most. In order to encourage more walking within the city, there is an immediate need to manage the volume, speed and impact of big, busy roads, heavy trucks rumbling through downtown and the continuing sprawl of new suburbs.

Great gains can be realized by managing traffic as much of the existing infrastructure already provides a connected, walkable network, it's just not a comfortable, convenient or always safe and attractive network.

On the following pages are key findings and recommendations framed against the eight principles of the International Charter for Walking. These findings and recommendations provide an overview of the type of initiatives that Hamilton can undertake to start building more walkable communities and ensuring the viability and liveability of the City for generations to come.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Summary  
against the  
International  
Charter for Walking

## 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.*

### Key Findings

The independent mobility of children, young adults, people with a disability and seniors is currently compromised by the dominance of motor vehicle priority in the City. The allocation of space to motor vehicles, distances to destinations, vehicle speeds, insufficient safe crossing points and the impact of noise and air pollution on any comfortable and attractive walking opportunities all deter these groups from choosing to walk.

The City of Hamilton is using an innovative pavement system for supporting the visually impaired to navigate around the downtown. Further application of this system and development of its elements to potentially address the needs of others is encouraged.



All the recommendations outlined in this report, which will build a more walkable city for residents of and visitors to Hamilton, must be premised on ensuring access to local communities for everyone, especially groups with particular needs. An accessible walking environment (linked with public transit) is key to enabling community residents, who do not have their own vehicle, to enjoy their local shops, schools and services.

### Recommendations

1.1 Identify priority areas to develop walking opportunities or improve existing facilities, such as where more seniors or people with disabilities live, around schools, youth facilities and local centres and along key routes into and around downtown or to public buildings. For example, extend crossing times at lights outside a seniors' residential home. Map demographic patterns against road collision statistics to highlight priority areas.

1.2 Continue implementing current systems for supporting people with disabilities, ensure all road crossings provide wheeled access (curb cuts) and identify new opportunities for enhancing access for people with disabilities, especially within any implementation of Rapid Transit systems.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Summary  
against the  
International  
Charter for Walking

## 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.*

### Key Findings

Where work has been undertaken with a focus on walking (and cycling) the results have been fantastic. The Waterfront areas is one such example that has created high quality opportunities to enjoy both the waterfront and a lovely walk/ cycle.

In addition, certain streets and neighbourhoods have benefited from changes that reduce the impact of motor vehicle traffic and provide a more comfortable walking experience (e.g. two way conversion of James Street North). Unfortunately this quality of facility exists only in small pockets throughout the City, (e.g. Dundas downtown and Locke Street) while the opportunities to provide good pedestrian environments are numerous.



Where public space is being prioritized for people walking, such as the extensions to the sidewalk for the Farmers Market on York Blvd., it is imperative that the quality and safety of the environment is not undermined by motor vehicle traffic, be it noise, visual and/ or air pollution. Continuing to maintain York Blvd. as a truck route will be counterproductive to creating a Farmers Market where people will choose to enjoy their surrounds, spend time and spend money!

In the upper city where the big box development continues to be the dominant land-use planning model, it is imperative that facilities are not only designed with walking access in mind but that existing sites are retrofitted with clear, direct and safe walking access. These facilities need to include good road crossings, good signage and links between businesses, so that, at least, local people can choose to walk there.

Hamilton is built on a road network that is generous in both space, speed and capacity for motor vehicle traffic, whether it be the grid layout of the lower city or the arterial layout of the upper city and newer suburbs. It is possible to provide a better walking experience in any of these environments with attention paid to the elements which support walking - good crossing points, wide sidewalks setback from the curb and places to rest.

### Recommendations

2.1 Identify local neighbourhood centres and prioritize pedestrian access and amenities in these areas, including downtown, Ottawa Street, Locke Street and Dundas Downtown, Westdale and build on the achievements along the Waterfront and James Street North.

# Case Study: HAMILTON

Summary  
against the  
International  
Charter for Walking

2.2 Re-designate York Blvd. as a pedestrian street and stop trucks travelling this route, to provide a safer, cleaner, quieter, essentially nicer environment for the Farmers Market and surrounding areas.

2.3 Retrofit big box developments and make them more inviting and accessible for pedestrians so at least the residents living closest can choose to walk. The facilities need to include good crossing points at the road, clear walking routes through the parking lots direct to the door and connections between box stores. Longer term plans need to include strategic infilling of parking lots with residential and commercial opportunities.

## 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.*

### Key Findings

There are pockets of pleasant walking environments and streets in Hamilton which, unfortunately, are isolated experiences. A larger network of walking routes and attractive streets and public spaces can link these isolated pockets all together and create coherent and consistent walking opportunities. From the escarpment to the waterfront, in downtown and throughout neighbourhood centres, villages and local parks, opportunities to encourage walking, especially for health and recreation, exist by simply linking these nodes, attractions and environments together.

Hamilton has a consistent provision of sidewalks along the majority of streets and roads. The quantity of sidewalks is impressive and does provide a connected network for walking. However the presence of high speed, high volume traffic on many of these roads, a lack of sufficient crossing points and a lack of amenity along the edges, detracts from the quality of this provision, its comfort, convenience, attractiveness and conspicuousness.

### Recommendations

3.1 Link the excellent facilities along the waterfront into downtown with a clearly marked and physically improved walking route between the two places.

3.2 Identify a comprehensive network of walking routes which are safe, comfortable and attractive that provide access to both local services, city attractions and public transit, as well as longer distance links. Prioritize this network for providing signage, infrastructure improvements, traffic reduction, road space reallocation and other amenities to support walking such as benches, trees, garbage cans and high quality lighting.

3.3 Start connecting disjointed good places/ streets into a continuous network of positive pedestrian environments in the downtown for a continuous, connected experience.



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3.4 Identify best routes to schools through travel planning with schools and prioritize these for comprehensive improvements. Hamilton is participating in the Metrolinx Stepping It Up project, which incorporates school travel planning with a Smart Commute component for school staff. Five schools will participate in the first year of this pilot with an additional five schools in the second year.

3.5 Link trails to the urban fabric by highlighting where they cross streets with clear signage and crossing points, promoting links to local services and recreational opportunities from their front door.

3.6 Prioritize walking over all other modes when designing access to Transit hubs and stops. For example, walking to the door of the station or to the transit stop is given a clear, direct and safe route (maintaining the footway pavement at level even if crossing the road) with disability drop-off zones and cycle parking near the door, kiss and ride drop-off zones and car parking at the greatest distance (if at all!).

3.7 Identify and develop 'best routes' to transit stops and hubs within the commuter catchment area to encourage people to walk.

## 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.*

### Key Findings

Hamilton has developed two distinct land-use planning models: the grid network of the lower city and the arterial/ cul-de-sac network on the mountain and newer suburbs ('sprawl'). While the grid network is a strong foundation for more walkable neighbourhoods, the distances in urban sprawl work against encouraging people to walk. However, in the examples of suburban sprawl we visited, there were people choosing to walk, young teenagers going to the local fastfood outlet, older people, children and moms going to the park and people coming down to their mailboxes.

It is imperative that future developments do not continue to be built with the motor vehicle as the design standard and priority mode of transportation. Existing developments must be reviewed for opportunities to retrofit quality walking opportunities and facilities, so that people are given the choice and freedom to walk.



### Recommendations

4.1 Review planning policies and guidelines to ensure walking is given (at least) equal priority with other modes. In residential neighbourhoods, local shopping streets and around schools walking should be given higher priority, especially for all new developments.

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4.2 Identify opportunities to reduce sprawl by building mixed use developments in existing street networks. Also consolidate housing around town centres and ensure that street layouts are continuous and connected to enable people to choose the shortest, most comfortable route to local centres.

4.3 Mitigate the impacts of existing sprawl by ensuring that sidewalks exist along all residential streets, safe crossing points and priority for children walking to school. Create mid-block crossing opportunities with at least access points and refuge islands between traffic light controlled intersections to provide direct access to centres.

4.4 Insist on proper pedestrian access to big box developments such as wide (space), continuous (no changes in level) and safe (clear crossing points) pedestrian walkways into and between (along) separate businesses. Ensure the pedestrian phasing on traffic controlled intersections leading into these developments provide sufficient safe crossing time and that a full pedestrian phase is provided on each change of the light.

4.5 Provide space for people to create and enjoy their community within the existing streetscape by providing pockets of public space, bump outs, temporary podiums in parking spaces and the opportunity to close streets to motor vehicles and open them to pedestrians on specific days of the year.

## 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*

### Key Findings

The volume, speed and noise of traffic throughout Hamilton is having substantial negative impacts on the places where people can choose to walk (or not). The domination of motor traffic in public space and as a barrier to walking was very evident during the visit and during the community meeting. It is imperative that the speed and volume of motor vehicle traffic, the allocation of space to it and the need for greater consideration of the safety and amenity of pedestrians are the key priority for the City of Hamilton.

The constant rumbling of trucks through the downtown, especially on York Blvd. and Cannon Street is detracting from the amenity of those streets as well as the streets they intersect, such as James Street North.

On major roads, such as King and Main, the distances between intersections and thus safe crossing points are much greater than an appropriate level of service for people walking. Having to divert so far from the direction of travel will often discourage especially older and less able walkers from believing walking to be a viable means of travel. Frequent and safe crossing points, especially where walking routes or priority streets meet busy streets are necessary to reduce the barrier created by that road.

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The prevalence of one way streets, which encourage higher speed and traffic flows and the sheer expanse of road space creates both physical and psychological barriers (a river without a bridge) that prevent people from choosing to walk. There are many opportunities to address the danger presented by motor traffic and to improve the environment for people walking, without having a substantial or detrimental impact on movement of motor vehicles throughout Hamilton.

## Recommendations

5.1 Reduce traffic volumes and speed throughout Hamilton, and especially through Downtown, along key shopping streets, around schools and in residential areas.

5.2 Remove the high number of trucks travelling through downtown by selecting and signing alternative routes, enforcing their use and reallocating road space on current routes to physically inhibit truck traffic. For trucks with a downtown destination limit travel to the minimum number of streets (with low pedestrian priority) and ensure slow safe travel through these streets with engineering measures.

5.3 Consider returning all one way streets to two way. Where this is demonstrably not possible, consider creating a boulevard on major roads by removing the central traffic lane and installing an island with planting and paved areas where people can choose to cross mid-block, most particularly, on Main and King Streets.

5.4 Reward slower speeds by programming the flow of green lights down these long corridors to change for vehicles travelling at 50kmh.

## 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.*

### Key Findings

Crime and fear of crime was not a substantial issue during the visit to Hamilton, except in particular the 'abandonment' of downtown and the perception (and reality) of 'unsavoury' activities now occupying the public spaces there.



### Recommendations

6.1 Create opportunities and space for people to spend time in the public realm which displaces anti-social activities and intentions. Hold events and activities in the downtown, more than once, celebrate new walking routes, for example to the Waterfront, with 'Hamilton Walking Day!' and enable local community events to prosper by facilitating street closures and other municipal support mechanisms.

6.2 More people in public spaces and walking along our streets puts more eyes on the street, which deters crime. People attract people, so attracting people to walk to local neighbourhood centres, schools and services and around downtown will create a greater sense of ease.

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6.3 Undertake walking audits during the day and after dark to ensure lighting, sightlines, cleanliness etc are providing an environment that is not only safe to walk in, but feels safe to walk in.

6.4 Utilize Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles (CPTED) to ensure new developments support safe streets and public spaces (e.g. no blank facades or hiding places and good lighting)

## 7. More supportive authorities

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

### Key Findings

The Mayor has demonstrated the City's commitment to walking by signing The International Charter for Walking. This commitment now needs to be realised through the range of existing projects and opportunities underway, through additional budget commitments to new projects and a policy review to ensure walking is a priority across Hamilton.



There is a high level of engagement and enthusiasm about walking amongst staff working for the City of Hamilton. There was a rush of ideas and great opportunities shared during the professional workshop. However, once discussions turned to implementation, the barriers, difficulties and a general sense of 'too hard' pervaded the room.

In addition, there seems to be good working relationships between staff from different disciplines building good cross-departmental links to ensure a breadth of input to projects, particularly seeking the input of health professionals on transport projects.

City staff need further commitment and development to enable staff to not only prioritise walking within their projects, but to know how to cost effectively deliver best practice facilities and opportunities for walking in Hamilton.

Data collection about walking seems to be limited to a few project specific surveys or locale audits and collision statistics. While these are important, citywide projects, planning and policies would benefit from a clear and comprehensive dataset about walking and walkability.

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## Recommendations

7.1 Consolidate the different projects underway that support more walking and new initiatives into a Pedestrian or Walkability Strategy or Masterplan. This would provide a clear platform for promoting walking and walkability both within the city and to the community as a whole.

7.2 Support internal relationships between different disciplines through a network of staff working on walking via e-newsletters, lunchtime training sessions and meeting opportunities.

7.3 Establish a more direct relationship with the community through a consultation forum with a community walking/ walkability action group (set up from community meeting) and potentially provide direct support to this group with meeting space and city staff attendance

7.4 Provide ongoing staff training and development opportunities to learn and deliver best practice walking facilities, audit environments to identify and prioritize improvements

7.5 Ensure data about walking is collected on a consistent citywide basis to inform strategic transport planning as well as on a local project specific basis to influence decisions and designs for improvements. Data should be both quantitative and qualitative

## 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.*

### Key Findings

Community initiatives underway, such as the Art Crawl on James Street North are the seeds for growing a culture of walking in Hamilton.

The clear identity of local neighbourhoods (e.g. Locke Street, Westdale, Ancaster) and shopping streets are also the foundations on which to build a culture of walking for Hamilton.

### Recommendations

8.1 Develop local walking maps and campaigns supported by the businesses and other services in local neighbourhoods and shopping streets. Reward people who walk to the local shops and businesses with incentives, discounts and a nice place to sit.

8.2 Design and install a distinctive and effective signage and wayfinding system throughout the Downtown, especially linking the walking oases such as James Street North and the Waterfront.

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8.3 Hold events to invite people into public space and learn how to enjoy it, neighbourhood centres, local schools, churches and parks. Provide space for cafes and stalls to spill onto the street.

8.4 Commission and install public artworks and historical plaques along key walking routes and streets to both promote the route and enhance the experience for people using it. Hold a community treasure hunt to walk the city and identify hidden treasures (that already exist) which either celebrate the city or iconic points in the city.

