



## Town of Strathmore Community Report

# WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



## **For more information:**

Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator  
Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention  
Alberta Health Services  
10101 Southport Road SW  
Calgary, AB T2W 3N2

Phone: (403)943-6781 Fax: (403)943-2211

Email: [graham.matsalla@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:graham.matsalla@albertahealthservices.ca)

Web: [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

# INTRODUCTION



## Acknowledgements

**Alberta Health Services would like to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions in preparation to the Alberta Walkability Roadshow in Strathmore:**

- Lisa Sader; HEAL Our Future Coalition Member
- Dori Lee; RN – Chronic Disease Management
- Teree Hokanson; AHS – On behalf of HEAL Our Future Coalition
- Doug Clarke; Town of Strathmore - Parks Supervisor

**Alberta Health Services would like to thank that following groups and organizations for providing representatives to participate in the Alberta Walkability Roadshow in Strathmore:**

- Town Council member: Bob Sobol
- HEAL coalition representatives
- Town of Strathmore: Parks Supervisor, Planning and Development, Engineering and Operations
- Teachers (junior high school and elementary)
- Junior High school students
- Community Members: Walking enthusiasts
- Bridging the Gap (older adult and family programs)
- Alberta Health Services: Public Health Nurse, community development advisor, nurses, healthy eating representative, Family Physicians

**The expert team facilitating walkability workshops for the Alberta Walkability Roadshow (biographies can be found in the appendix):**

- Bronwen Thornton, Walk21, UK
- Rodney Tolley, Walk21, Honorary Research Fellow, Staffordshire University
- Jacky Kennedy, Canada Walks, Green Communities Canada
- Andrea Baker, Project Coordinator, Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services
- Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services

**Alberta Health Services would like to thank the Health Promotion Disease & Injury Prevention team for their support of this initiative. Specifically:**

Bretta Maloff, Executive Director, Health Promotion Disease & Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services. Dr. Sandra Delon, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Oral Health, Alberta Health Services. Monique Assi, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention, Alberta Health Services. Andrea Baker, Project Coordinator, Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services. Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator, Alberta Health Services

**Alberta Health Services would like to thank its funding partner:**

This one-year grant funded initiative is supported by a grant from Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW), through the The Alberta Cancer Legacy Fund (ACPLF). AHS would like to acknowledge ACPLF for their support and pursuit in the prevention of cancer and chronic conditions. Their belief in health promotion activities supporting the communities was instrumental.

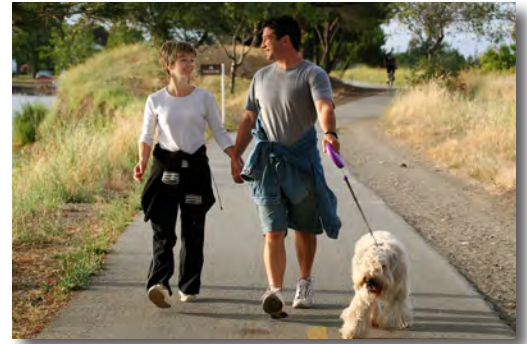


# INTRODUCTION

## Walking is critical for Health

The Alberta Walkability Roadshow was undertaken to support change that improves walkability and encourages citizens to choose to walk. Walking has long been the most inclusive and popular form of physical activity. Not only is walking associated with improved health but the more opportunities you have for quality walking experiences the more likely you are to choose to walk.

The Alberta Health Services Strategic Direction 2009 – 2012 states that Alberta Health Services is “dedicated to improve the health of communities through strengthening prevention, preparation and response to public health risks”. Alberta Health Services is committed to promoting social and physical environments that enhance wellness and promote healthier behaviours as well as better access to programs that prevent disease and injury. The Walkability Roadshow was a perfect fit with Alberta Health Services strategic direction.



Physical activity has declined between 2009 (58.5%)<sup>1</sup> and 2011 (54.3%)<sup>2</sup>. Encouraging more Albertans to walk for short, local trips and to walk more often has the potential to reverse this downward trend. Being more physically active also helps the provincial economy as obesity is currently costing Alberta \$1.4 billion annually<sup>3</sup>.

Research has shown that 61% of Canadian adults and 26% of children are overweight or obese. In Alberta, it is estimated that 218,500 children and 1,732,000 adults are overweight or obese. No other chronic disease can begin to match obesity's prevalence or far-reaching health consequences to society. From 2000 – 2007 only 62.4% of Albertans were sufficiently physically active<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Alberta Centre for Active Living. 2011 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity: A Concise Report.

<sup>2</sup>Alberta Centre for Active Living. 2009 Alberta Survey on Physical Activity: A Concise Report.

<sup>3</sup>Alberta Health Services: Provincial Obesity Business Plan 2011 - 2016. Reducing the Burden of Chronic Disease in Alberta: Prevention and Management of Overweight and Obesity

<sup>4</sup>Alberta Health Services: Provincial Obesity Business Plan 2011 - 2016. Reducing the Burden of Chronic Disease in Alberta: Prevention and Management of Overweight and Obesity

# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



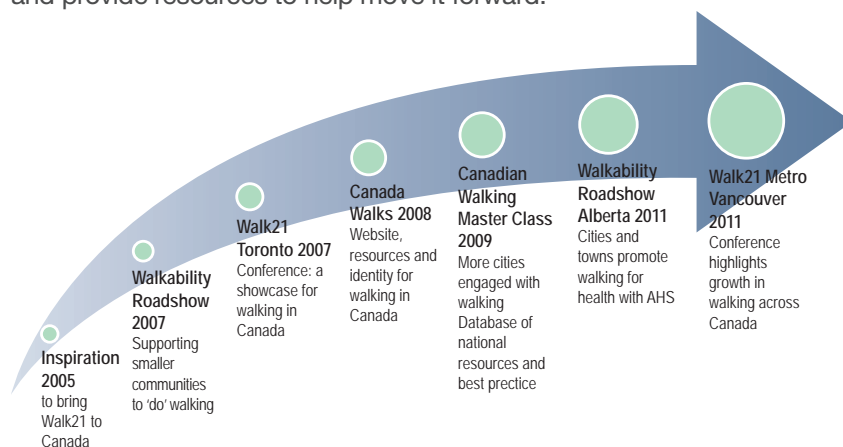
It is becoming well-accepted that walkable communities are both desirable and necessary. Residents focused on enhancing the walkability of their community may have participated in Sustainable Transportation workshops or maybe created municipal Active Transportation plans but there appears to be a gap between creating the plan and implementing the plan. The Walkability Roadshow aims to help fill this gap.

## The Alberta Walkability Roadshow

The Alberta Walkability Roadshow builds on the groundswell of interest in walking in Canada and follows in the footsteps of the successful Canadian Walking Master Class 2009 and the Walkability Roadshow 2007. These two initiatives, from Green Communities Canada and Walk21, have proven that a concise and concentrated process can enable municipalities to deliver communities where people choose to walk. These specific activities are supported by the development of Canada Walks and the Walk21 International Conference series and the growth in expertise and best practice examples across Canada which are resources this project continues to draw on.

The International Charter for Walking provides both the strategic direction and detailed descriptive actions for creating walkable communities around the world. The Roadshow uses the Charter to benchmark walking within the communities, to identify achievements, opportunities and challenges as the foundation for generating ideas, initiatives, inspiration and action for building more walkable communities in Alberta.

The Walkability Roadshow brings together a team of local and international experts to build a model framework of local strategies, plans, and actions to help create walkable communities. The Roadshow aims to complement the great work already being done in the community and provide resources to help move it forward.



### ***What is Walk21?***

Walk21 exists to champion the development of healthy sustainable and efficient communities where people choose to walk. This goal is accomplished through the Walk21 Conference series, consultancy services and the International Charter for Walking. Walk21 have a vision to create a world where people choose and are able to walk as a way to travel, to be healthy and to relax. Find out more about Walk21 at [www.walk21.com](http://www.walk21.com)

### ***What is Green Communities Canada?***

Green Communities Canada is an organization that is dedicated to:

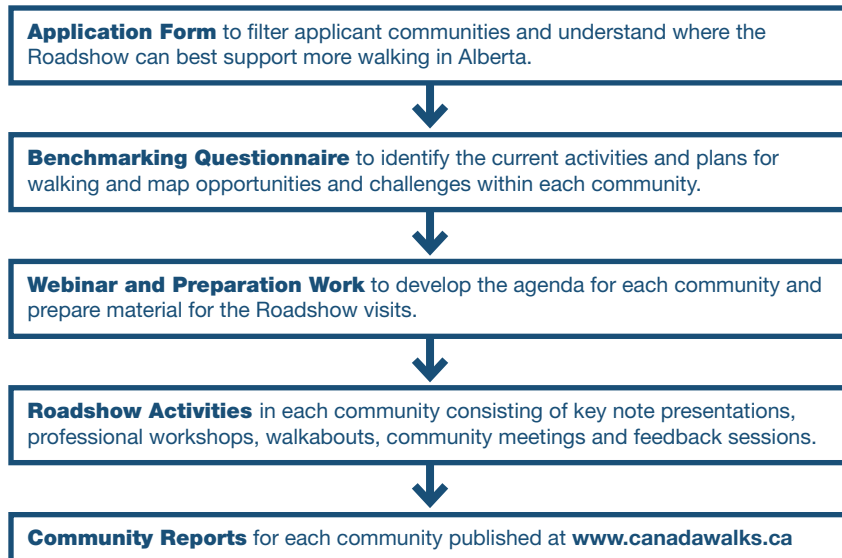
- Support sharing of program information and resources through: the weekly Green Communities News, conferences, meetings, the Green Room (a private online forum for members)
- Facilitate delivery of joint programs common to a number of our members (e.g., Active and Safe Routes to School, Home Energy Efficiency).
- Build capacity through the development of skills and the organizational capacity of Green Communities Canada members (governance, financial management, human resources, policies)
- Build the visibility of the organization through building of the reputation of our members, Green Communities Canada, and programs.

# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW

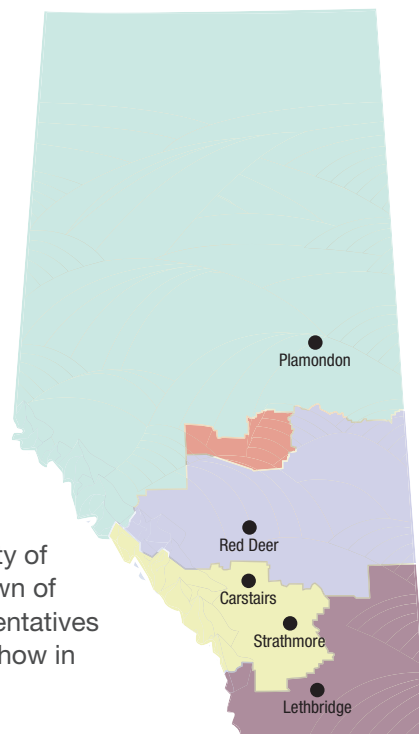


## The Process

The project consisted of the following steps:



Alberta Health Services identified 17 communities as potential candidates for the Walkability Roadshow. Nine of these communities indicated interest in participating and completed an Application form. From this process, six were short listed to do the benchmarking questionnaire. Due to the high quality of responses and the variety of communities, the project team revised the Roadshow schedule to include 4 Roadshow visits and accommodate five communities. These were: City of Lethbridge, City of Red Deer, Town of Strathmore, Town of Carstairs and Plamondon. Representatives from Plamondon joined the Roadshow in Carstairs.



## *What is Canada Walks?*

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

1. Supporting the creation of more walkable communities, i.e. changing the built environment to make walking a safe and inviting choice
2. Changing Canadians' walking attitudes and habits so that they choose to walk.

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

The International Charter for Waling 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 have signed the Charter including many from Canada. To view and sign the Charter visit [www.walk21.com](http://www.walk21.com).

# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



## Application Form

How can this project enhance or improve what your community is already doing to promote Walkability?

The Alberta Walkability Roadshow could enhance the Town of Strathmore's promotion of walking. The coalition collected survey data on healthy eating and active living in the community, including the barriers that prevent healthy behaviours. They developed a walkability assessment and used it to assess some neighbourhoods in the town. They distance mapped all of the pathways in the community, resulting in a distance walking map that is available on the town's website. The coalition developed walking challenges and started utilizing an online walking website for distance tracking and participant communication.

HEAL Our Future Coalition aims to advocate to the Town of Strathmore for improvement in the pathways and for enforcing snow removal from residential sidewalks in order to encourage walking in the winter. Additionally, the coalition would like to see enhancements of the existing pathway system from the Town of Strathmore to nearby Eagle Lake. The pathway is currently not easily or safely accessible by walking, necessitating the need for a parking lot at the start of the pathway. Signage and a pathway awareness campaign would also likely increase usage.

Strathmore believes that participating in the Alberta Walkability Roadshow will give them enhanced credibility and influence to move their advocacy work forward. Additionally, the benchmarking questionnaire, expert analysis and site visit would allow Strathmore to focus activities more clearly on actions that would result in sustainable, community wide change in walking behaviours.

### **About: AHS - Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP)**

The mission of AHS is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans. AHS has a vision to become the Best Performing Publicly Funded Health System in Canada. Through the values of: respect, accountability, transparency, engagement, safety, learning and performance AHS formed a strategic direction that provides the foundation for all activity within AHS. The Strategic Direction is organization-wide and is a critical foundation for our planning, operations and accountability. The plan includes 3 goals, 8 areas of focus, 20 strategic priorities and 4 values. It defines the focus of all the departments with AHS including the Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP) department.

The Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP) department's intent is to enhance the health of the population and support Albertans to increase control over their health. HPDIP's focus on health promotion includes: fostering social, economic and material conditions (determinants of health) that promote health and reduce health disparities. HPDIP strategies both reduce and delay entry into the healthcare system and improve quality of life and societal productivity. This is accomplished through three broad objectives: increase protective factors within the population; reduce risk factors within the population; increase early detection and minimize downstream intervention in populations. HPDIP has five priority areas of action: social and physical environments, healthy development, cancer and chronic disease prevention, injury prevention, and addiction and mental health. Each area has a direct correlation to the strategic focus areas of Alberta Health Services (AHS), specifically the goals of quality, access and sustainability.

# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



## Benchmarking Questionnaire

The Benchmarking Questionnaire, subsequent Webinar discussion and document review provided the background information needed to start preparing for the visit to Strathmore.

### Highlights from the Benchmarking Questionnaire:

#### What are you most proud of having achieved for people walking in your community?

- HEAL Project: Establishment of “Locomotion”, an ongoing walking initiative consisting of walking challenges and the promotion of Winter Walk Day.
- The Pedometer Program in March 2010 to promote walking as a daily activity to improve overall health & well being.
- Creation of the Strathmore walkability checklist, allowing residents to self-assess the walkability of their neighbourhood.
- Creation of the pathways distance map, outlining walking distances between designated points.

#### The top 3 priorities for increasing walking in Strathmore, identified in the questionnaire, are:

- The improvement of pathways and trails systems identified as the number one outdoor priority in the 2010 Quality of Life Master Plan for Strathmore.
- Improve individual physical, mental, and emotional health of the residents in the community.
- Improve the culture of walking in Strathmore which would lead to a greater sense of community.

#### The top 3 barriers to more walking in Strathmore, identified in the questionnaire, are:

- Winter weather is the largest barrier to walking in the community. There are no indoor facilities available seven days per week year round that are open to the community for recreational use. Pathways and sidewalks are not well maintained in the winter.
- The lack of connected paths and trails is a barrier for extended walking distances and to local destinations.
- There is a walking group in the community that operates without structure. Some community members require structure and/or guidance so the Chronic Disease Management group is considering having a fitness instructor lead a walking group for those that require structure and consistency.



# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



## Webinar and Preparation Work

**AHS facilitated and attended the community webinars that were hosted by Green Communities Canada – Canada Walks and lead by Walk21. The goal of the webinar was for the team to:**

**Provide a summary of the results from the benchmark questionnaire with the community with regards to:**

- Any documentation that the community provided that supported walkability in their community.
- Any data that the community provided that supported walkability in their community.
- Any community engagement on walkability programs/initiatives that are occurring or have occurred in the past.
- The level of promotion of walking or support for walking culture and/or facilities.

**Review ideas and recommendations for the roadshow activities that were inspired by the response to the benchmark questionnaire.**

- Review any planning/policies around walkability and discuss if they are being implemented. Try to highlight walking from any planning/policies provided to ensure that the Alberta Walkability Roadshow takes cohesive approach in their community.
- Identify opportunities quick wins that can bring momentum to implementation.
- Determine if there is communication of a vision for walkability from the Mayor.
- Discuss the potential for promoting walking and supporting walking culture.

**Discuss the content and the structure of the Alberta Walkability Roadshow in their community.**

- Discuss a draft of the roadshow activities.

**During the webinar the preparation work that the community needed to complete before the Alberta Walkability Roadshow activities began was discussed:**

**Discuss the Invitations and preparation:**

- Who should be invited to the roadshow activities and how individuals should be invited (sample invite was provided).
- Media and community engagement (template of media release was provided).
- Suggest that the Mayor be invited to sign Charter as part of Roadshow.
- Provide key documents to the team (e.g. strategic plans, current project/proposals, weblinks or pdf's).
- Prepare a walking route for walkabout. Determine if maps and/or transportation to locations would be required.
- Determine a venue and catering for Feedback Lunch.
- Determine a time for a pre-event phone conference to finalize any details and answer any questions that have come up before the team arrives to the community for the Alberta Walkability Roadshow.

# OVERVIEW OF WALKABILITY ROADSHOW



## Roadshow Activities

In September 2011, the Walkability Roadshow team visited each community. Each visit was unique, with activities and expectations being responsive to the size and needs of that community. For the cities of Lethbridge and Red Deer, the Roadshow was three days, for the town of Strathmore, it was two days and for Carstairs (including Plamondon) it was one intensive day.

Every visit was an opportunity for the Municipality to inspire their politicians and senior decision makers, to train and develop professional staff and consultants and to engage members of the public. There was a variety of roadshow activities including:

- **Keynote presentations** about the importance of walking and walking initiatives from around the world and across Canada.
- **Facilitated workshop** discussions and groupwork to brainstorm ideas and issues for walkability in the local community.
- **Walkabouts of selected streets** and neighbourhoods to experience firsthand walking conditions and to provide on-street learning for both the visiting and local experts.
- **Feedback and wrap up sessions** to review the experience and identify concrete steps to take ideas forwards.

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE BACKGROUND



## Community Profile

The Town of Strathmore is one of Alberta's largest towns eligible for City status. According to Alberta's Municipal Government Act, a town is eligible for city status when it reaches 10,000 residents. The population according to the 2010 Canadian Census is 12,139. Strathmore is located along the Trans-Canada Highway 40 kilometres east of the Calgary. The Trans-Canada Highway runs through the community east/west and a secondary highway (817) runs north/south. The surrounding area is largely agricultural and a major canal through the centre of town separates the east side of town from the west.

The close proximity to Calgary has encouraged many individuals who work in Calgary to re-locate to Strathmore. This has resulted in a growing commuter population that may not embrace active transportation as readily as other communities. It was found that 41% of residents commute to Calgary to work but after some discussion it was felt that the number was more like 60% or greater. Many students are bussed to local schools from rural areas or from the more distant new developments within the community.

Similar to other Alberta communities near the Rockies, Strathmore can receive heavy snowfall, record setting temperatures and chinooks, often within the same day. The unpredictability of the weather has a constant impact on walking. Sidewalks can be snow covered in the morning and melting by noon, creating a treacherous icy walk by the end of the day. Regular and consistent enforcement of snow clearing on pathways and sidewalks in winter is essential. Additionally, there are no malls or indoor walking tracks in Strathmore. There is some walking time and space available in the Strathmore Civic Centre, but there is limited opportunity for safe, indoor walking in the winter.

## Walking Initiatives

In May 2007, a group of interested community members from Strathmore came together with the goal of working toward healthy eating and active living. The coalition worked diligently to achieve the goals of their action plan by focusing specifically on encouraging walking and skating as low cost, low barrier activities.

Strathmore's HEAL Our Future Coalition is a community development initiative which aims to create a community environment that supports healthy eating and active living in children, youth and families. A key foundational element of HEAL's action plan is a walking initiative called: "Locomotion", playing on the Town's history of being founded by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Years ago, locomotives thundered through Strathmore; now people are "locomoting" the town. The coalition has hosted The Great Skate, Winter Walk Days, Walk to the Olympics walking challenge and 100 Day Centennial Walk challenge in celebration of Strathmore's Centennial in 2011.

The Calgary Rural Primary Care Network's Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Program initiative offered a Pedometer Program (Walk for the Health of It) within Strathmore in March 2010. The goal was to promote walking as a daily activity to improve overall health and well being. The Primary Care Network partnered with a local gym to sell the pedometers and provide a handout to participants.



*The Mayor of Strathmore signed the International Charter for Walking just prior to the Roadshow coming to town.*

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE BACKGROUND



This brochure explained the role of the pedometer, how to get started counting their steps, and encouraged people to gradually try and reach 10,000 steps per day. A personal goal sheet and an area to track steps on a daily basis were offered to participants. Over 1,000 pedometers were sold. All of the local Physician Clinics, as well as front line staff in acute care, home care, long term care and the community, were made aware of the pedometers and promoted it to patients and clients, as well as their family and friends. Advertising was done in local papers, posters, cards and word of mouth to the general public to promote the pedometers. Good results were seen with many patients and individuals increasing their physical activity and gaining the benefits to their health that follow, including weight loss.



*“I think we have some wonderful walkways. It would be great to have more indoor facilities open up for winter walking. Ice is a problem for seniors.”*

*“(I hope to learn how) to make Strathmore a better community for all people to walk and bike.”*



*“I would like to learn ways to get kids walking to school with a group, led by a parent or older students. Paths or walkway maps for kids to follow after school or on the weekends.”*

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE

# ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



## Day 1

- **Decision Makers Breakfast** – A keynote overview of the importance of walking and new initiatives from around the world. 26 attendees including a Town Councilor, Town of Strathmore (Parks Supervisor/Planning and Development), HEAL, SHAPE Alberta, community members, fitness instructor, teachers, medical professionals and junior high school students.
- **Workshop** – to develop ideas and action plans for walking, with 16 participants staying for the day.

## Day 2

- **Walkabouts and debriefs** – to visit key locations around town, with a small group of community members, Town of Strathmore representation, and HEAL representation.

## Participants in the Roadshow

- Alberta Health Services: Public Health Nurse, community development advisor, nurses, healthy eating representative, Family Physicians
- HEAL coalition representatives
- Town of Strathmore: Parks Supervisor, Planning and Development, Engineering and Operations
- Teachers (junior high school and elementary)
- Junior High school students
- Town Council member
- Community Members: Walking enthusiasts
- Bridging the Gap (older adult and family programs)

## Media coverage

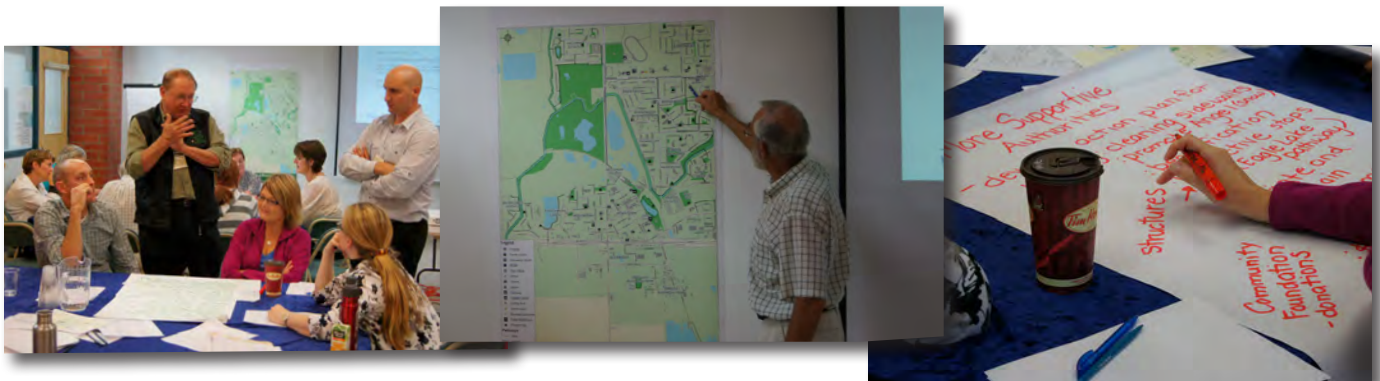
- The Strathmore Times published a story prior to the Walkability Road Show (September 20, 2011).
- A Photographer from Strathmore Standard appeared during the Key Note presentation by Rodney Tolley. This produced a photo published with a line about Alberta Walkability Roadshow in the paper but no story was written.

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



## Professional Workshop

Councillor Bob Sobol welcomed the Roadshow to Strathmore. Following presentations from the experts, participants worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas within the framework of the International Charter for Walking. To enable a more focussed discussion, it was agreed not to discuss two principles in detail, Increased Inclusive Mobility and Less Crime & Fear of Crime, but to ensure the principles underpinned the ideas and debate on all the other issues.



After initial discussion, the groups exchanged the two principles to add more ideas – this occurred twice so each of the three groups had an opportunity to comment on all six principles. Three highlights were identified from the brainstorming of ideas. 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.

## Key Ideas Generated

**This section presents the top three ideas highlighted under each of these 6 principles from the International Charter for Walking:**

1. Well design and managed spaces and places for people
2. Improved integration of networks
3. Supportive land-use and spatial planning
4. Reduced road danger

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE

## ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



5. More supportive authorities
6. A culture of walking

### Well designed and managed spaces and places for people

1. More public washroom facilities; maps with locations; promote local business.
2. Improved signage for public access – time vs. distance – denotes local attractions.
3. Coordination of speed limits for schools, parks, etc. Eliminate school zones and make them play zones (sun-up to sun-down); in residential areas make it 40 km/hr or even within city limits.



### Improved integration of networks

1. Signage – maps with distances and times; available on-site and on-line.
2. Complete focus on walking safely, especially for schools; complete streets approach.
3. Getting across the TransCanada Highway – dog park on opposite; foot access to Eagle Lake, shopping and restaurants – there is currently a light in one location with a short time to cross; the crossings at Centre St and Lakeside Drive are 800 metres apart which is a long way for a pedestrian. However, within next 5-6 yrs Hwy 1 will be diverted away from town and the existing roadway will revert to the municipality; at that time opportunity to make this is a complete street that will safely accommodate all modes of transport.

### Supportive land-use and spatial planning

1. Developers need to consider walkability in their plans and the town can enforce this and monitor that the facilities are built; new communities need to be connected to existing walking trails and street networks.
2. Connectivity – Aspen Creek to Ranch and other places; multi-purpose paths, not just for recreation but for everyday walking.
3. Benches/seats – near hospital and around senior's residences.

### Reduced road danger

1. Dangerous route – TransCanada Highway - could be addressed in timing of lights; footpath parallel to TransCanada Highway – make it a complete street.
2. Crossing Wheatland Trail at Westmount School/Hillview neighbourhood: blinking lights unacceptable crossing.
3. Icy intersections and sidewalks – clearing of snow and ice.

### More supportive authorities

1. Develop action plan for walking to include promotion of Snow Angels.
2. Beautification along sidewalks; unsightly places visible – clean them up.
3. Town to assist in applying for community grants, etc., to help with some of these community projects; provide a person with ability to help get funding in place.



# TOWN OF STRATHMORE

# ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



## A culture of walking

1. Peer encouragement and initiatives – HEAL projects for example; Walking School Buses and walking buddies to get to school; Winter Walk Day and other HEAL initiatives.
2. Setting an example through challenges and fun ideas over lunch time – for kids – 10 mins walking.
3. Move the Farmer's market to a more accessible location, i.e. Kinsmen Park or opening up 2nd Avenue to people to encourage active travel and local shopping.

## Key Ideas Refined

From the brainstorming, the ideas could be grouped into four key areas to refine, consolidate and develop them further. The areas are:

1. Spaces for people
2. School travel
3. Safe Crossings, especially TransCanada Highway
4. Signage

The group broke up into two smaller groups to work on two key areas each, and then exchanged work to review and cross-fertilise the other two key areas. The groups discussed concrete actions that could be taken in the near future, and identified who might take the action. Where possible, a specific action by a specific person was discussed, but this is by no means binding on them.

## Spaces

Idea: Benches with advertising boards could be a canvas for artwork.

- Conduct a pilot project: take a bench that's an eye sore, business could buy the bench and an art class paint it. Take before & after shots to promote idea.
- Existing benches first and then new ones after that.
- Put a plaque on the bench to show who sponsored it - so businesses still get buy in.
- Who? Chamber of Commerce, Project HOPE, Art Society
- Champion: Communities in Bloom, Strathmore
- Michelle Bassard- husband's business could start this and her art class can paint it to use as a sales pitch.
- Make sure you have arms on the benches for your seniors. Make sure you add more benches and put them in areas where people walk.
- Recondition what is there and establish something that is consistent going forward.
- Become the town famous for its beautiful benches!



## Schools

- Getting kids walking to school.
- Walk the whole route to school; if too far, create a drop off point and let them walk part way.



# TOWN OF STRATHMORE

## ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



- Decreases the congestion at the school (possible benefit: 4 way stops could be eliminated).
- Walking on Wednesdays (WoW)
- Incentives for parents if they walk their kids to school.
- Pilot it at Brentwood Elementary School; Lisa will volunteer to lead this.
- Leanne will champion one day a week at Wheatland Elementary School.
- Take to parent council.
- When: soon
- Option: School bus drops off at one end of road and all kids get off and walk to their respective schools.
- Option: Pick-up; bus stops at each block (work with buses and figure out stops, lessen them).

### Safe Crossings

- Controlled parking at schools; parents park on both sides of the street which causes kids to dart out in traffic.
- Pathway on one side of the George Freeman trail and decrease speed to 50 (white paint can be used to create the space for the pathway on existing tarmac.
- Traffic calming; decrease speed to 50 km/hr at Wheatland Trail and Hillview walkway.
- Increase length of walk light at TransCanada Highway and Lakeside Boulevard.
- Who? Bob is meeting with AT on Thursday and can ask to lengthen the time.
- New paint on crosswalks and decrease speed to 50 km/hr (more signage).
- Flashing speed sign posted at TransCanada Highway and Lakeside Boulevard and Wheatland Trail and TransCanada Highway to remind vehicles of the speed.
- Pedestrian crossing sign at Wheatland Trail and TransCanada Highway and warning signs.
- Longer welcoming signs warning motorists to slow down entering town.
- Who? Town staff to discuss with Alberta Transportation (TransCanada Highway and 17)



### Signage

- Use town website to post time and distance from key destinations (civic centre, downtown, Aspen and Hillview) include businesses and washrooms.
- Put a circle around a certain point on map that tells you a ten min walk.
- *When?* Nov 2011 for posting on web.
- Add map to Wheatland County, Strathmore & Area Resource Book that comes out in the community.
- April 2012- standardized signs in each entry point of paths (distance of trail and time).

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE

## ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



### Walkabout

On the second morning of the Roadshow, a group set out early to walk around the town to experience and observe the walking environment directly. This included the key locations of the Trans-Canada Highway, downtown, areas around schools and Council Chambers, old and new neighbourhoods, the Wheatland Trail and Lakeside Boulevard.

### Sidewalks and Safe Crossings

Where the Trans-Canada Highway meets the town of Strathmore, there needs to be greater recognition that vehicles are now moving through an area more likely to have people walking. People can be very 'small' in this context and so it is essential to maximize their safety, especially as there is clearly demonstrated pedestrian movement through the intersections. On feeder roads (1) to the new developments, sidewalks and pedestrian shortcuts also need to be provided.



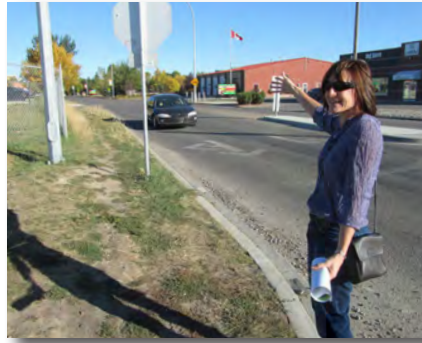
Pedestrian facilities such as crossing points and sidewalks need to suit pedestrians, not just motor vehicle movement.

Slip lanes (2) (lanes that don't go through the controlled intersection) are a classic example where pedestrian safety has been compromised to maximize vehicle movement. While an appropriate traffic light signal enables people to cross the highway, there are only white lines on the slip lanes, indicating the shortest route between each side. There are no curb cuts and no warning to motorists that people might be crossing here. Yet people must cross in order to reach the pedestrian crossing provided to cross the highway.

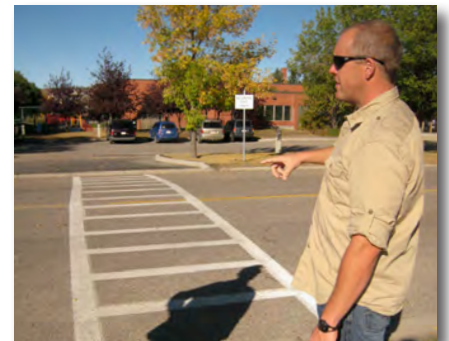
Slip lanes must have pedestrian signals and provide an equally safe crossing environment for people wishing to cross the highway.

Sidewalks that are circuitous result in people choosing the shortest route to the front door, despite, as in this case, it being uphill and across a drive-thru. This is a key walking route for students from a local high school, across the highway to McDonald's and is clearly regularly used. Designing only for vehicle movement or compromising pedestrian facilities to suit vehicles, is not fulfilling the duty of care an authority has for its citizens.

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



Sidewalks are not just about providing a 1.2m strip of concrete beside the roadway. In situations where this is the only choice, due to space, then it is better to provide than have nothing, but design standards should require a green buffer zone between the sidewalk and the curb. In this particular location (1) the camber on the corner is impossible for anyone in a wheelchair and obviously uncomfortable for everyone, as the corner cutting path indicates.



It is good to see new pavements being installed (2) as part of new developments and generally Strathmore has a lot of pavements. It is also critical to ensure, when new works for vehicles are undertaken, that pedestrian movement and facilities are not compromised or forgotten. In this picture (3) the pedestrian crossing now runs between two driveways! It needs to be relocated, not just left.

## **Downtown**

Heritage Times Square provides a sense of what is possible in downtown Strathmore. In fact, the seeds for change and potential for a walking centred public realm and local creativity are scattered around downtown.



# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



Shops with character, planters, seating and the red paving all invite people to spend time on foot in downtown and reward them for doing so.

Sadly, the full potential for downtown has almost been destroyed by the Co-op building and its parking lot. This building has turned its back on these streets and robbed them of any easy potential for revitalisation. The pre-dominance of vehicle parking in front of shops and a lack of connected pavements also detract from the walking experience.



Extending the quality of Kinsmen Park into downtown with intersection treatments at key points, such as the four-way intersection above, at 3rd Avenue and linking through to Heritage Times Square, can start to build a web of walking routes, integrate the Park and downtown into a more cohesive experience and provide safer crossing points for people walking.

Arriving in Strathmore, it is difficult to find ‘the heart of the community’, the centre of town or a sense of place and identity. As Strathmore grows and aspires to be a City, having a strong public realm at its core will enable residents to identify with and feel proud of their home. It also gives them somewhere to walk to, and walk around and spend time in public space with other people from their community.



Kinsmen Park is a gem in the town and rightly celebrated. Land adjacent to Kinsmen Park has been acquired by the Town and there are discussions about the potential for it to become a cultural precinct for the town. It is essential that any plans put people as the priority design standard for the entire precinct, creating high quality access, spaces and facilities for people on foot to enjoy.

The traditional street layouts provide easy examples of good walking environments, with buffer zones between sidewalks and streets, and plenty of street trees. Little pockets of community gardens provide interest and demonstrate the community spirit Strathmore enjoys and can build on.

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



## Youth Facilities

It is disappointing that in an area of town full of schools and facilities for young people that the skate board park and youth centre have been damaged and degraded.



Graffiti is an almost inevitable addition to any skate board park facility, but it doesn't have to be just ugly tagging and an eyesore. Engaging young people in the spaces designed for them, embracing different types of expression and ensuring a comprehensive package of initiatives (rather than rules and restrictions) can turn a place like this into a vibrant opportunity. While it is recognised that this can be challenging for a community, it can also be rewarding, exciting and engaging for everyone, especially young people. This is a high quality facility, with money invested and while it has attracted anti-social behaviour, it can be reclaimed and renewed with spirit and vision.

Invite the young people of Strathmore to decorate their space, both the skate park and the building and to make the rules for spending time there. Case studies from some tough parts of the UK demonstrate that this level of engagement increases ownership of the space, greater respect for it and its users and a stronger sense of community as a result. Below are two images from community art projects that worked with graffiti artists to decorate public space - both supported by the local authority as combining an outreach program and a public space development program.



The image the left is a community project that took place in the Trust Thamesmead, London, UK. It is a graffiti art project done by young artists in a ball court used by young people.

The image on the right is the UK's largest street art project called: 'See No Evil'. It is an art project in Bristol, England, which is claimed to be the UK's largest permanent street art project. The hope is that the graffiti will not be an eye sore but instead become a major tourist attraction.

Follow the links for more information and reaction to these projects.

<http://www.erith.towntalk.co.uk/news/d/15909/graffiti-art-project/>

<http://latesttattooedesigns.blogspot.com/2011/08/uk-largest-street-art-project-no-evil.html>

# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



## ***Residential Neighbourhoods***

Older neighbourhoods with streets, trees and cut throughs set an excellent example for pedestrian connectivity and permeability. Newer neighbourhoods are also providing these opportunities and give the town a great walking network of both sidewalks and trails. By mapping this complete network, Strathmore could provide a comprehensive and cohesive wayfinding system for people to explore their town on foot.



Investment in facilities such as this bridge are applauded as they create essential links between neighbourhoods, shortening distances for people to walk and enabling them to access the impressive trails networks and each other.



In newer neighbourhoods, there are also excellent trail connections and short cuts but they would benefit from signage and lighting. Instead of telling car traffic of an obvious cul-de-sac, perhaps the signage could indicate that it is a through route for walking (and cycling). The examples below could be adapted to a Strathmore style as part of a walker's wayfinding system and replace unsightly and unnecessary road signs.



# TOWN OF STRATHMORE ROADSHOW ACTIVITIES



Critical points in the current system that provide connections to and through future developments, such as on the previous page, on Parklane Drive where you can see the shops (a key destination) across the field, must be recognised and a link required to be part of the development that happens in the space between.

Meandering paths, like many of the existing trails, are attractive and pleasant to walk along but invite a more recreational walk. A broad green boulevard that goes directly to a destination can be equally attractive but more convenient for everyday walking as it provides a shorter, direct route.

## ***Walking, a way of life***

With ample road provision, easy access and parking for people driving all over Strathmore, it is a challenge to ask people to choose to walk. As a critical first step, the infrastructure must exist for people to walk on. There is a lot of very good walking infrastructure in Strathmore, as illustrated below, and during our visit.



This trail/footpath along Wheatland Trail is an example of essential infrastructure, supported by crossing points along the road. This type of facility needs to be replicated on George Freeman Trail (perhaps now, not with the new development and to be a basic requirement of all road development in the town) at the time of building the road.

Where Strathmore particularly needs to improve pedestrian access is to public buildings. Having brought people along footpaths and trails to these facilities, there also needs to be a high quality, direct pedestrian priority path to the front door, as the children above illustrate. Providing a path here, would not impair vehicle movement but would substantially improve the walking experience by making it safer and more comfortable.

The Civic Centre, schools, in fact all public buildings including the Municipal Office, must invite people to walk by providing, at least, good pedestrian access from sidewalks, trails and footpaths to their own front door.

Key starting points for prioritising high quality, safe and comfortable walking facilities are areas with higher potential for walking, for example between residential neighbourhoods and local schools, in areas with higher densities of older people, local shops and services.

Brent Boulevard is a great place to start, with its collection of schools and public spaces next to residential areas and local shops, services and hospital. Make intersections safer with clearer crossings, build outs, slower traffic and better lighting. Adjusting the scale of the space, with reduced road space and highlighted walking facilities, gives people more equal priority to vehicles.

# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## In Summary

At the conclusion of the walkabout, the entire group gathered for a wrap-up discussion to identify key ideas and opportunities for the walkability of Strathmore. A summary of this discussion and the thoughts of the expert team are provided below:

- Strathmore's rapid growth and forward thinking has included generous provisions for motor vehicle movement in the town. It appears that motor vehicle movement continues to be the design norm for new developments and road planning. In order to make the community more walkable, walking needs a network as well as destinations. The creation of destinations alone will not necessarily increase walking in the community.
- There is a significant amount of potential for the town to support and provide for walking as a way to travel throughout the community. This potential exists particularly for young people and older adults. It will take attention to detail, good planning and a clear vision and commitment to influence not only future development but also current plans and budget allocations.
- To become 'a walking town', Strathmore needs to make the most of its existing opportunities and ensure new developments and future projects maximise the potential for people to choose to walk. Ideas to make the most of what is already in place include:

## Maps

- The distances map is a great starting point for developing a town-wide map that encourages people to walk. Provide the map online and on site.
- A walking map needs to include all sidewalks, trails, cut-throughs and crossing points, so people can make easy connections and decisions to walk.
- On site signage, with area maps and pointers encourage people to explore and have very high cost-benefit ratios for council budgets. Have a bit of fun with markers that can reflect the local area, the destination or the sponsor. For example, around schools mark routes with footprints or insets that can acknowledge the funding organization in some way (for example: a lion's paw print to reflect funding from the Lions Club).
- Providing a sense of walking time as well as distance, make it easier for people to plan their journey and can often surprise them about how quick it can be to walk.
- Identifying key destinations and public facilities on the maps to aid planning.

## Barriers to walking

- Create safe routes to school - begin a [WoW program](#).
- Walking buddies to get to school.
- Continue the Snow Angel program.
- Winter Walk Day and other HEAL initiatives.
- Challenges and fun ideas over lunch time: 10 min walking.
- Move the Farmer's market to a more accessible location or downtown by opening up 2nd Avenue.
- Mayor Walkabout Wednesdays - when one of the schools start a WoW program - invite the Mayor to the kick-off event, with local media and this could be the catalyst for a monthly walkabout with the Mayor.



# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## ***Improve infrastructure***

- Continue improving the connectivity of walking trails to each other and to destinations.
- Increase the provision of benches and seats (specifically around the hospital and older adult housing).
- Increase priority of snow clearing of walkways in winter time.
- Change speed limits for schools/parks/play zones to be from sunrise to sunset.
- Reduce speed limits in residential areas and/or within town limits.
- Spend money on walking and trails before any more road infrastructure projects.
- Shorten walking distances across the streets at crossing points with build outs and increase cross walk light length, especially in areas with older citizens.

## ***Planning***

- Walking needs to be given greater priority in all land use and town plans in Strathmore. Developers are key to delivering more walking routes and the town must ensure they are aware of their obligations from the planning stages.
- Include walking in every urban planning decision and ensure that all planning approvals enhance the walking network by ensuring walking facilities are not only provided but that they link between developments, link to real destinations, not just a recreational loop and provide a short, direct alternative to vehicle travel.
- Building codes must ensure good walking access direct from the sidewalk or trail to the front door.
- Consider the **Complete Streets** approach to provide for all users in the public road space.
- Reduce the scale of residential and arterial roads to reduce the budgets needed to not only build but maintain them. Moncton, New Brunswick, for example, now requires narrower residential streets purely on budget needs.
- It is easiest and cheapest to plan and build walkability right the first time. Wildflower Ranch, while very disconnected from the rest of the urban fabric of Strathmore, is building a local environment with good facilities and pedestrian connections. Building links across water and through to other neighbourhoods that provide shorter routes to schools and shops will give residents the potential for walking out of this community and into the town.





## Media reports - copies of articles

From the Strathmore Times – September 9, 2011 in lead up to the Alberta Walkability Roadshow in Strathmore:

### *Walking takes a big step forward in Strathmore!*

The Walkability Roadshow was created to raise the profile of walkability in Canada. Alberta Health Services is working with Green Communities Canada and Walk21 in order to pilot the Walkability Roadshow in six Alberta communities. The goal of this pilot project is to support change in the communities that improves walkability and encourages their citizens to choose to walk.

From Sept. 12-30, the Walkability Roadshow will be bringing a team of international walkability experts to communities in Alberta including: Red Deer, Lethbridge, High River, Strathmore, Carstairs and Plamondon. The Roadshow will bring international experience and inspiration into these cities and towns to support local expertise and initiatives. The Walkability Roadshow will be in Strathmore on Sept. 26-27. Monday will begin with a Decision Makers Breakfast, where local invited guests will interact with the experts. Keynote speaker, Rodney Tolley, of Walk 21 will speak on “Walking: Getting in step for the future”.

HEAL Our Future Coalition member and Community Champion Lisa Sader hopes that getting key community members together, all with the goal of walking, will spark further development in walking in the Town. “The Walkability Roadshow is a fantastic opportunity to wed local expertise and initiative with international experience and inspiration” Bronwen Thornton, Development Director, Walk21 says, “we are looking forward to working with these communities to support the work they are doing and to build case studies and national best practice notes that will support others across Canada.”

Jacky Kennedy, Director, Canada Walks, Green Communities Canada notes “the Walkability Roadshow showcases Canadian best practice in walking and walkability and here in Alberta we will be able to add to this growing body of work, showing that Canadians want to travel on foot for their health and the vitality of local communities.” Through the community visits the Roadshow aims to inspire politicians and senior decision makers, train and develop professionals, engage members of the public and provide ideas and input to specific walkability issues and opportunities.

There will be time for community members, local active transportation groups and other interested parties to discuss and debate ideas for improving walking in our community.

The general public is invited to participate in this event; please contact Lisa Sader to let her know of your interest and to make reservation for meals.

### **Contact Info:**

Lisa Sader, HEAL Our Future Coalition, [www.healourfuture.com](http://www.healourfuture.com), [healourfuture@yahoo.ca](mailto:healourfuture@yahoo.ca), 403-901-8047.



## Evaluations

Participants in the Roadshow completed evaluation sheets to provide feedback about the process. Strathmore Roadshow participants identified many reasons they like to walk in their community:

- To maintain their own personal independence,
- they are advocates and/or work to promote healthy active living,
- community development,
- walking advocate,
- improvement of walking infrastructure,
- political link to recreation and parks,
- walking as a form of active transportation, and
- using walking as a form of recreation and fitness.

Participants felt that the walking paths were adequate but community awareness of the pathways could be improved. Indoor facilities could facilitate walking in the winter and address falling in winter with older adults. Participants felt that they needed to increase interest and awareness of walking in Strathmore. Walking programs could be improved. An example of a walking program listed would be a walking to/from School program led by a peer or parent. This could be supported by walkway maps for kids to follow after school or on the weekends. Participants would like to promote walking as a way to start making a positive healthy active living lifestyle decision. They wanted to improve the community as a whole, make the community a place for all people to walk/ bike, and influence a change in culture toward walkability in Strathmore. Participants would like to share and learn from other community's walkability initiatives. Participants identified that they would like to continue to see shared paths with all forms of active transportation.

The participants found that the presentations and table discussions during the workshop generated ideas. The break out groups highlighted some direction on making Strathmore more walkable. Creation of a broader view of walking that is not just focused on walking as recreation. The International Charter of Walking and facilitators directed the thoughts and provided direction.

The Alberta Walkability Roadshow in Strathmore influenced participants in many ways. Participants identified that they would be more aware of multiuse walkways, roadways, and pathways. They would look at how safety can be improved for walkers at busier intersections. They would like to seek out more avenues of grant funding for programs and initiatives to improve walkability in Strathmore such as distance signage for pathways. This signage should include destination walking for an individual. Walking does not require special equipment, can be used as destination walking, can be used as a break to include physical activity into work day. Communication should continue through individuals who attended the workshop.



## Biographies

### **Bronwen Thornton:**

As Development Director for Walk21, Bronwen is working with communities and professionals around the world to promote walking, develop and deliver innovative projects and provide resources, tools and services to support more walking. Her current projects include advising the European Active Access project, leading the Walkability Roadshow in Alberta, Canada and delivering Making Walking Count and the International Charter for Walking to support local action, to underpin strategic directions and gain political support for walking.

Past projects such as the Walkability Roadshow Ontario, Canada in 2007 and the Canadian Walking Master Class 2009 proved a project model of policy analysis and community engagement that can genuinely support local governments to deliver real results for walking.

Prior to joining Walk21 she was the Consultancy Services Manager for Living Streets in the UK where she was responsible for developing and delivering Community Street Audits, bespoke training for local authorities and practical workshops on active transportation issues. This gives her a very hands-on understanding of walking environments and local challenges.

She is a strategic thinker and writer, expert facilitator and trainer with on-street experience of walking audits, transport design and urban planning. Originally from Australia, Bronwen now lives in the United Kingdom and loves nothing better than a muddy walk in the rain!

### **Dr. Rodney Tolley:**

Dr. Tolley has taught and researched in the sustainable transport field at Staffordshire University for over 30 years. He has authored and edited a number of books, most notably “The Greening of Urban Transport: Planning for Walking and Cycling in Western Cities” and has published many papers over the years. He is Conference Director of Walk21, a global partnership of walking experts, and was a founder member of the Steering Group for Walk21. He provides a consultancy service to many clients in the UK and overseas including Australia and New Zealand. Through these activities he has a unique oversight of best practice in planning for walking in the UK, Europe and across the world.

### **Jacky Kennedy, Director, Canada Walks, Green Communities Canada, [www.canadawalks.ca](http://www.canadawalks.ca):**

Since 1993 Jacky has worked in the non-profit sector to promote and encourage people to walk and she has worked extensively with municipalities to encourage them to create great walking environments. Jacky developed and implemented Ontario’s Active & Safe Routes to School program (in its 15th year) and is the lead on the national dissemination of School Travel Planning. Jacky has been involved in many successful, sustainable community projects: co-hosting Walk21 Toronto 2007 with the City of Toronto, the Canadian Walkability Roadshow, the Walk21 YWALK Global Youth Forum, the 2007 World Record Walk and the 2009 Walking Master Class. Jacky’s background is in project management but her children motivated her to join the environmental movement.

# APPENDICES



**Andrea Baker, Project Coordinator, Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services:**

Andrea led the Alberta Walkability Roadshow project on behalf of Alberta Health Services. She acted as liaison between the team and the communities to facilitate the implementation of the Roadshow in each community. Andrea worked closely with communities to provide them with any support required in preparation for the Roadshow in their community. During the Roadshow Andrea represented AHS within communities and provided support to the Roadshow process. She assisted in the development of the comprehensive reports provided to each participating community. Andrea's passion for population health promotion continues in the workplace setting where she continues to positively influence modifiable risk factors for cancer and chronic disease prevention; specifically physical activity, healthy eating and healthy body weights.

**Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services:**

Graham has been working in health care for over nine years he has worked in the setting of communities and neighbourhoods which includes the promotion of active transportation and the adaptation to the built environment in an inclusive and accessible manor to support active living. Graham participated in the preparation of the team and the communities in the days leading up to the Roadshow. During the Roadshow Graham provided support to the team and to communities during the Roadshow process. He assisted in the development of the comprehensive reports provided to each participating community. Graham continues to support Alberta communities that wish to make their communities more walkable.

### **For more information:**

Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator  
Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention  
Alberta Health Services  
10101 Southport Road SW  
Calgary, AB T2W 3N2

Phone: (403)943-6781 Fax: (403)943-2211

Email: [graham.matsalla@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:graham.matsalla@albertahealthservices.ca)

Web: [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

