



SHOWCASE

Jan 2013 - Mar 2015





WALK Friendly Communities Showcase: Jan 2013 - Mar 2015
 © March 2015 by Canada Walks Division of Green Communities Canada

Acknowledgements

Canada Walks would like to thank:

Funding Partners



Community Partners



Application Review Team

The following professionals volunteered their time and expertise in evaluating WALK Friendly Applications:

- Paul Young, OALA, CSLA, Consultant – Public Space Workshop
- Jennifer Lay, School Travel Advisor – Metrolinx
- Jennifer McGowan, School Travel Advisor – Metrolinx
- Nancy Smith Lea, Director – Toronto Centre for Active Transportation
- Sandy James, ASLA International, LEED AP, CCPI, MCIP (ret)
- Norma Moores, P.Eng. – IBI Group
- Mandy Johnson, Active Transportation Consultant – Active By Nature
- Ryan Martinson, P.Eng. – Stantec
- Kim Bergeron, Ph.D., Health Promotion Consultant – Public Health Ontario
- Jacky Kennedy, Director – Canada Walks, Green Communities Canada

For More Information, Contact:

Kate Hall, Program Manager, WALK Friendly Communities Program
 khall@greencommunitiescanada.org ♦ 1-877-533-4098 x411 ♦ www.walkfriendly.ca

Table of Contents

1	Program Manager's Message
2	About WALK Friendly Communities
3	WALK Friendly Communities Map
	Community Profiles
5	• Hamilton
7	• Kitchener
9	• Mississauga
11	• Ottawa
13	• London
15	• Minto
17	• Pelham
19	• Richmond Hill
21	• Smiths Falls
23	• Wasaga Beach
25	Canada Walks Workshops & Consulting Services



Kate Hall, MSc. PI
Program Manager
WALK Friendly Communities

Dear Friends,

Imagine yourself walking safely and conveniently from your home to work, shopping and entertainment. En route to these destinations on any given day you may meet neighbours walking their children to school, stop for a coffee at your favourite shop and visit with the owner, rest on a bench overlooking a garden with flowers blooming, and enjoy the public art along the way. You not only arrive relaxed, you take pleasure in the journey.

Walking is the most natural form of transportation—we were built to walk—and walk friendly communities enable us to be independently mobile. Walkers are the indicator species of a vibrant and healthy community. At Canada Walks, we like to think that driving, cycling and public transit are just the middle leg of your walking journey each day—first and foremost, we are walkers. It stands to reason then that walking should be considered the top priority in any planned integrated mobility solution.

Creating walk friendly communities and encouraging people to walk more often can improve health outcomes, revitalize local economies, foster social connections, and contribute to safer and more sustainable cities and towns. One of the best things about walking is that you don't need any fancy or high-priced equipment to do it. You just put on a comfortable pair of shoes, open your door and enjoy the trip.

The WALK Friendly Communities program recognizes community efforts to create great places to walk. Since the program was launched in 2013, ten communities in the province have been designated as WALK Friendly. The application is a great conversation starter. We encourage communities to invite all stakeholders with an interest in walking and walkability to participate in completing the application. This creates a solid foundation from which to continue your work together to reach Platinum.

We congratulate our WALK Friendly Communities in Ontario represented here in this Showcase. The efforts that they are making to support walking and walkability are outstanding and we hope that those communities that have yet to apply will find inspiration in these pages.

How walk friendly is your community?

Kate Hall

What is WALK Friendly Communities?

WALK Friendly Communities is a recognition program that encourages municipalities to create and improve the conditions for walking by awarding Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum designations as well as Honourable Mentions. Using our comprehensive framework of indicators for walkability, municipalities benchmark their current status and measure progress over time.

The application assesses progress on the following aspects of a community's walk friendliness:

- planning and policies
- engineering and community design
- education and encouragement
- enforcement
- evaluation

The program gives walking a prominent profile in community planning and design, and encourages municipal governments to set targets for ongoing improvements. As communities strive to achieve higher designations, the built environment is transformed to support sustainable and independent mobility.



THE PROCESS

1. Application

Municipalities complete an online assessment that collects information about key walk friendly measures such as the extent and condition of the sidewalk network, availability of attractive public spaces, number and variety of walking events, training municipal staff, creating policies that support walking, community engagement and much, much more.



2. Review

A committee of walkability experts reviews and scores each application, then decides which communities will receive awards at the various levels. Each community receives feedback from the review panel in a report.



3. Designation

Municipal representatives attend a presentation ceremony to receive their award and winners are announced in a media release.

WALK Friendly Communities

Locations



What if my community isn't walk friendly enough for designation?

We sometimes hear communities say that they don't think they deserve a WALK Friendly Communities designation yet because they feel they aren't doing enough to improve walking in their community. However, there are still good reasons to apply.

The process of completing an application provides structure for taking stock of a community's walking assets and identifying gaps; that process alone helps a community on its way to becoming more walk friendly by establishing benchmarks on all the key metrics. An added value is the feedback report each community gets, sharing the insights of the expert review panel. This feedback helps communities become aware of innovative things to try, and to identify what actions should be top priorities.

We encourage communities of all shapes and sizes, in all stages of walk friendliness, to apply. There is so much to gain from getting started!

Profiles

In the pages that follow, we celebrate the ten communities that have achieved a designation to date by sharing some highlights of their most innovative walkability efforts. More detailed profiles can be found online at: <http://walkfriendly.ca/communities/>.



HAMILTON



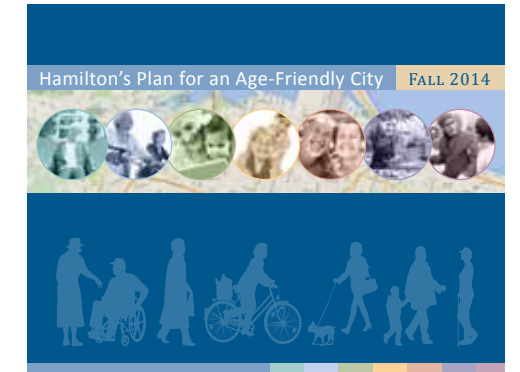
Hamilton is located in the centre of a densely populated and industrialized region at the western end of Lake Ontario, known as the Golden Horseshoe. The Niagara Escarpment runs through the middle of the city, bisecting it into “upper” and “lower” parts. Hamilton benefits from having many natural features that make it a pleasant place to walk, including 126 waterfalls and cascades that can be discovered on its many hiking trails. It also has vast amounts of green space, with about 4,500 hectares of land owned, leased or managed by the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

Hamilton has done much to further enhance walking across the city, helping it to earn a Silver WALK Friendly Communities designation. This profile shares a few highlights of Hamilton’s progressive approach to walkability.

Population	519,949
Area	1,117 km ²
Population Density	466 persons per km ²

Comprehensive Planning

Hamilton’s commitment to walking is demonstrated through its various plans, policies and guidelines such as the Transportation Master Plan, Recreational Trails Master Plan and Transit Oriented Design Guidelines. (A Complete Streets Strategy is being developed to include in the upcoming review of the Transportation Master Plan.) Worthy of particular note is their Pedestrian Mobility Plan that establishes a 20-year framework for improving the pedestrian environment through routine accommodation. In addition, by creating Hamilton’s Plan for an Age-Friendly City in 2014, the City has also been an early pioneer in the age-friendly movement, which includes a focus on transportation options that are suitable for any age, young and old, such as walking.



Cutting-Edge Technology

Hamilton is using innovative technology in two notable ways:

1. to assist residents with getting where they need to go via sustainable modes of transportation through its TravelWise app; and
2. to collect data through its Active Transportation Benchmarking Program that uses different devices to automate the counting of pedestrians and cyclists along both recreational and commuter trail corridors.

Diverse Engineering & Creative Funding Sources

Hamilton has invested in diverse engineering measures to support improved walk friendliness including:

- a strategy to implement ladder-style marked crosswalks;
- traffic calming measures; and
- wayfinding signage.

Hamilton is creative about funding some of these road safety improvements through the Hamilton Strategic Road Safety Program, using funds from the red light camera program.



Walk Friendly Celebrations

Open Streets events, that provide opportunities for car free celebrations in the streets, have been held in Hamilton since 2010. These events have proven to be very popular, with between 10,000 and 15,000 people participating in each one. The events have taken place on two different streets and have included the closure of two to four kilometres of road.



KITCHENER



Kitchener is a city in Southern Ontario, located approximately 100 km west of Toronto. Kitchener's economy was historically heavily reliant on manufacturing but has diversified greatly in recent years to include finance, insurance, digital media and health science clusters. Read on to learn about some of Kitchener's innovative actions and investments to get its citizen walking more, helping it earn a Silver WALK Friendly Communities designation in 2015.

Population	219,153
Area	137 km ²
Population Density	1,600 persons per km ²

"We are so pleased to receive a WALK Friendly silver designation. Since being one of the first Canadian Municipalities to adopt the Pedestrian Charter in 2005, we've taken a number of steps to improve walkability in our community. These types of active transportation initiatives are key to promoting neighbourhood connections and supporting a healthy lifestyle."

Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, City of Kitchener

Pedestrian Walking Charter & Committee

The City of Kitchener has been a long-time supporter of walkability. One of its early actions was signing the Pedestrian Charter in 2005; Kitchener was the second municipality in Canada to sign. The Charter served to mobilize community members to create the Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee, a regional citizens group that encourages, monitors and advocates for the implementation of the Charter.



Dedicated Human Resources

In 2011, the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan for the City of Kitchener was adopted; it is a key resource for getting people to shift from single occupancy vehicle trips to active modes of travel, including transit. The TDM Plan is a key component of the Transportation Master Plan. Many of the TDM initiatives are positively influenced by parking policy, pricing and availability and will benefit from the interrelationship between traffic, parking, walking, cycling, transit and the broader transportation network.

Having a dedicated TDM Coordinator working for the City has been critical to the success of Kitchener's TDM Plan. In addition, the TDM Coordinator has the support of a co-op student to help accelerate progress.

Numerous Street Festivals

Kitchener knows how to celebrate in the streets! The City hosts many street festivals, including "2 Weeks of K-W Awesome" when King Street is closed to motor vehicles for two weeks to accommodate daily events designed to get people walking and bicycling. Many other events throughout the year encourage walking including Cruising on King, the Blues Festival, Ribfest & Craft Beer Show, and Canada Day celebrations.



Award-Winning King Street Reconstruction

Kitchener includes walkability as its #1 goal when it comes to community design. Their impressive King Street reconstruction project is a prime example of how to create a walk friendly streetscape. It features contemporary pedestrian-scale street and accent lighting, new granite-clad planter beds that also serve as comfortable seating, and removable posts to create on-street parking or cafés. Kitchener's King Street reconstruction project has won many awards including: the Gold Award for Urban Design in 2011, Making Cities Livable Conference International Community Places Award in 2010 and Tree Canada Green Streets Canada Award in 2008/09.

This project has been the City's most significant investment in walking to date and it has set a precedent for walkability within the City. The new design is being used as a way of showcasing all the benefits of walkability to the public and building support for future walk friendly projects.





MISSISSAUGA



Mississauga is a fast-growing multicultural city in the Regional Municipality of Peel. It lies on the shores of Lake Ontario and is Canada's sixth-most populous municipality. Ranking fourth among large Canadian cities for walkability and seventh across Canada, according to WalkScore, it's not surprising that Canada Walks found Mississauga deserving of a Silver WALK Friendly Communities designation. This profile outlines some of Mississauga's many plans and actions in support of walking.

"The Silver WALK Friendly Community Designation shows the steps we have taken as a City to become more walkable. Our Official Plan leads to a more pedestrian friendly environment with more transit and active transportation opportunities. We will continue this work that helps the environment and quality of life in our City."

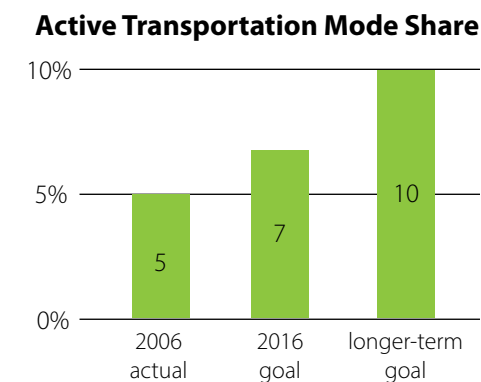
Mayor Bonnie Crombie,
City of Mississauga

Population	713,443
Area	292 km ²
Population Density	2,443 persons per km ²

Walking Integrated in all Planning Documents

Several plans have been enacted in Mississauga in recent years that emphasize the design of walk friendly neighbourhoods.

- The recently updated Official Plan shifts policies away from suburban built form to a denser, walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented urban form.
- The City's Strategic Plan includes a goal to "develop walkable, connected neighbourhoods" and commits to "evaluating all development and infrastructure projects against a test of 'pedestrian first.'"
- The Downtown 21 Master Plan is a plan for an urban, walkable place in the heart of the City.
- The Peel Region Active Transportation Plan (published Nov 2011) mapped all existing sidewalks and identified gaps. It also set hard targets for active transportation mode share—see graph to the right.



Significant Investment in Pedestrian Infrastructure

Here are just a few examples of Mississauga's walk friendly investments:

- spent \$4.5 million in 2013 for new sidewalks and multi-use trails
- spent \$5.4 million between 2011 and 2013 to install 1,200 LED lights along pathways
- began a traffic calming pilot test in 2014 involving raised intersections (like the one in photo on opposite page)
- used public art crosswalk markings in place of traditional markings in two locations (like in photo to the left)



Education & Awareness Initiatives

The City has implemented a few notable education and awareness initiatives in recent years such as: Walking School Routes programs at 20 area schools; a Pedestrian Safety Campaign using the messages "I am not a target" and "Expect the unexpected"; and a Road Safety Handbook that includes a chapter on pedestrian safety.

One particularly innovative initiative—Walk Mississauga, Cycle Mississauga - Cooksville Project—included a focus on outreach to newcomers. The outreach involved the production of walking handbooks in five languages that were distributed to over 9,000 residents.



Smart Commute

As home to the global or Canadian head offices of more than 60 Fortune 500 companies, Mississauga recognized the potential to have a big influence on transportation choices by targeting people where they work. The City is a founding member of Smart Commute, a Metrolinx program that works with employers to improve options for employees to walk, bike, take transit or carpool to work. In 2014, Mississauga received the Regional Employer of the Year Award from Metrolinx for its involvement in, and support of, the Smart Commute program.





OTTAWA



The capital city of Canada, Ottawa, has demonstrated leadership in walkability, earning a Silver WALK Friendly Community designation in 2013. Ottawa is the fourth-largest city in the country and a world-class tourism destination, so the local population as well as vast numbers of visitors are positively impacted by the City's progressive policies, programs and infrastructure in support of walkability. This profile highlights just a few of Ottawa's walk friendly innovations.

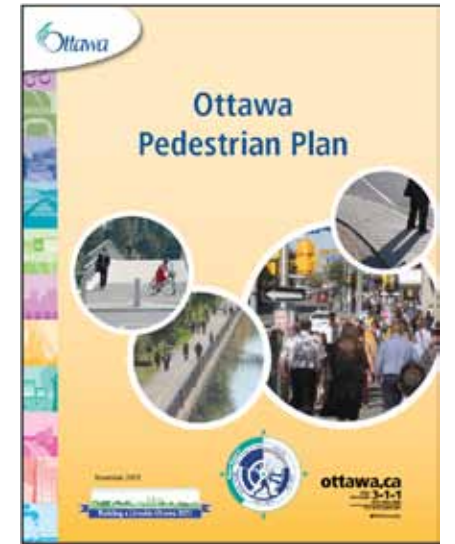
"The City of Ottawa and my Council colleagues are proud and honoured to receive this distinction. We are continuously working to provide residents and visitors to Ottawa with better options to get around the city, including new street designs and multi-use pathways that are safer, more convenient and more comfortable for our pedestrians."

Mayor Jim Watson, City of Ottawa

Population	935,050
Area	2,790 km ²
Population Density	335 persons per km ²

Planning for Pedestrians

Walk friendly communities evolve over time, but only when pedestrians' needs are made a top priority. That begins with planning, and the City of Ottawa has done that with its Ottawa Pedestrian Plan, a comprehensive planning document that was initially approved in 2009. Ottawa is one of only a few municipalities in North America that has a pedestrian-specific major planning document. This plan formalizes programs and budgets related to walking. Recently, the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan was updated in conjunction with the Official Plan and the Transportation Master Plan, which resulted in stronger integration of walking between all three planning documents. This integrated approach has helped "planning for pedestrians" to become ingrained into the way the city operates.



Innovative Engineering

The City of Ottawa is planning and implementing walk friendly infrastructure at a rapid pace. For example, Ottawa has:

- taken impressive steps toward traffic calming;
- invested in over 600 km of multi-use pathways so far (like example in the photo on opposite page);
- built bridges dedicated solely to active transportation (5 so far, with 5 more on the way); and
- begun the re-design of three streets based on the "Complete Streets" policy that is outlined in the Transportation Master Plan, with priority given to active modes of transportation.



Emphasis on Active School Travel

The City of Ottawa has a long history of working with schools to get more children walking and biking for the school journey. In a precedent-setting move within the province, the Ottawa-Carleton District and Ottawa Catholic school boards joined with the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority to sign a School Active Transportation Charter in October 2013. The City of Ottawa's commitment to active school travel has been further demonstrated through the recent Walking School bus project with 10 schools, as well as ongoing School Travel Planning Program work throughout the city.

Measurable Progress

By 2031, Ottawa aims to achieve a goal of 10% walking mode share city-wide, and 46% in the core area—progress will be monitored through an extensive Origin/Destination Survey that includes pedestrian data collection.

Ottawa has experienced a 7% decrease in the number of collisions, injuries and fatalities between walkers and motor vehicles over a five-year period between 2008 and 2012. The Ottawa Pedestrian Plan includes a Pedestrian Safety evaluation tool for ongoing measurement of progress in this important area.



GOAL:
46% walking mode share in core by 2031



LONDON



London is located in southwestern Ontario, approximately halfway between Toronto and Detroit, Michigan. It is home to two post-secondary institutions, Western University and Fanshawe College, as well as several hospitals. The Thames River is a prominent feature of London's geography; the north and south branches of the river meet at the centre of the city at a location commonly referred to as "The Forks."

In this profile, you will read about how London has developed pathways for active transportation alongside the river, providing routes around the City that take full advantage of the scenic views. You will also read about a few of London's other innovative efforts to improve walkability that helped it earn a Bronze WALK Friendly Communities designation.

Population	366,151
Area	421 km ²
Population Density	870 persons per km ²

Extensive Multi-Use Pathway System

Along the Thames River, London has developed the Thames Valley Parkway, a multi-use pathway system that stretches over 40 km and extends into many neighbourhoods. These pathways are asphalt-surfaced, intended for two-way use with a centre line delineating the two lanes, and are between 2.4 and 4 m wide to allow for a broad range of users including walkers, runners, cyclists and roller bladers. Many secondary pathway systems have been built, or are planned, in order to bring more users to the system. The pathways are designed to meet minimum slope standards for accessibility. Amenities like washrooms, drinking fountains, benches and pathway signage/maps are provided.



Greening Efforts

The presence of trees helps make spaces more inviting for pedestrians by cleaning the air, and providing shade and beauty. Recognizing these benefits, the City of London has collaborated with ReForest London, a corporate partner and residents to participate in the Million Tree Challenge. This initiative is funded annually by the City to leverage funds at 7:1 to plant one million trees over 10 years. Over the last two years, 130,000 trees have been planted through the program. Many of the trees are along sidewalks, especially on private property. Included on the City's website is an active tree inventory which allows residents to identify 120,000 individual trees located on city streets.



Awareness & Encouragement Initiatives

The City is funding an innovative walking awareness initiative called "Walk to Shop." The funding goes to the creation of a neighborhood business directory and walking map. Signs are also installed at key pedestrian points informing people how far they are by foot to the shopping district.

Car Free Days have been happening in London for 5+ years. Event organizer, Our Street London, holds one big annual event in June called the Dundas Street Festival, which offers family-friendly activities along London's historic main street and brings 10,000+ people out to celebrate in the streets. In 2014, they teamed up with the London Fringe Festival to continue the car free event into the evening with Nuit Blanche.



Safety Measures

London uses inter-agency collaboration when considering the safety of its pedestrians. The City's transportation staff and police regularly work together to identify and address traffic safety issues. A multi-stakeholder group is working on the development of a Road Safety Strategy.

In another effort to increase the safety of pedestrians, the London-Middlesex Health Unit has distributed 700 reflective arm bands to low-income residents and seniors to increase their visibility at night.



MINTO



Minto is located on the Maitland River in Wellington County. The Town of Minto was formed in 1999 through the amalgamation of the Township of Minto, the Towns of Harriston and Palmerston, and the Village of Clifford. Its communities feature picturesque historic downtown areas and many scenic trails.

Minto was recognized in 2014 with a Bronze WALK Friendly Communities designation. This profile sheds some light on how Minto earned that honour.

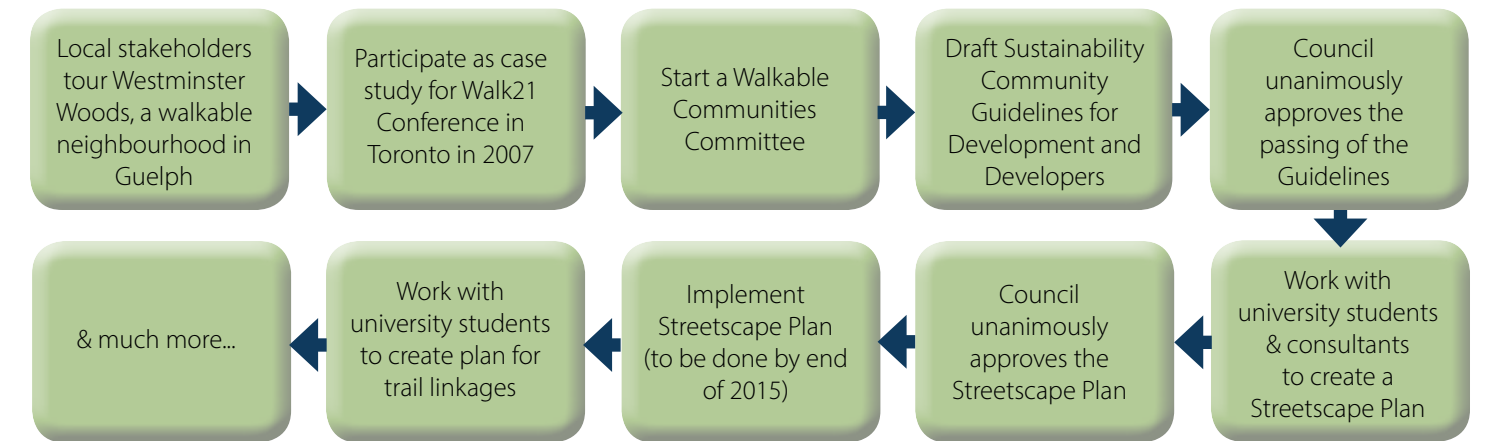
"Being awarded a Bronze WALK Friendly Community designation by Canada Walks is a tremendous honour. As a small municipality, it serves as a testament to the hard work by our various departments, staff, volunteers and community partners to make the Town of Minto a walkable community. The process has also shown us tangible actions to improve current walking conditions moving forward."

Mayor George Bridge, Town of Minto

Population	8,334
Area	301 km ²
Population Density	28 persons per km ²

Steady Progress Over Time

The Town of Minto has been working on walkability since 2005 and making steady progress ever since. They are a great example of how a small town with limited resources can stay focused to make improvements over time.



Council "Walks the Talk"

The Town of Minto "walks the talk" and has won all challenges during the Commuter Challenge and "in motion" week, demonstrating that it is the most physically active municipal council in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph.

Widespread Support

One of Minto's keys to walk friendly success is the widespread support of stakeholders across the Town and Region. Walkability in Minto benefits from commitment from Council, a Community Walkability Committee, strong partnership with Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health, as well as support from its citizens.

Emphasis on Trails

In their WALK Friendly Communities application, Minto said that one of its top priorities for better accommodating walkers was to link the Towns of Harriston, Clifford and Palmerston by trail. To move toward that goal, the Town hired two University of Guelph masters-level students to draft a plan and begin to negotiate routes with local land owners. Consultants were hired to formalize the plan that is currently being implemented. The goal is to connect the three communities by 2017. Further evidence of Minto's commitment to trail development is the inclusion of trails in its 2013 strategic plan update.

Minto is part of a more extensive trail network planned in the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan. The Town has supported the development of trail signage and interpretive signage standards that are consistent across Wellington County.





PELHAM

Pelham is a beautiful, primarily rural community in the heart of Niagara. Since Council initiated the Pelham Active Transportation Committee in 2008 and endorsed the International Charter for Walking, there has been a sustained effort to improve local conditions for walking. That effort has been recognized by Canada Walks with a Bronze WALK Friendly Communities designation. Highlights of Pelham's numerous walk friendly actions are described in this profile.

Population	15,598
Area	126 km ²
Population Density	124 persons per km ²

"Council and I are delighted to receive this recognition of our ongoing efforts to make Pelham a more walkable community. Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers and staff that are working to realize the community's vision of a more walkable, cycle-able, and active Town."

Mayor Dave Augustyn, Town of Pelham

Unique Snow Removal By-Law

As of the fall of 2013, snow removal on all Town sidewalks is now the responsibility of the Town of Pelham. This ensures that all sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are cleared throughout the winter. Reports from residents, including parents of school children, seniors, business people and others, indicate that this investment has improved accessibility and walkability in Pelham.



Walk Friendly Events

There are 30 days per year in Pelham where roads are closed to vehicular traffic for special events such as street festivals, parades and the Pelham Farmers Market. One of Pelham's Open Streets events, Pelham Summerfest, takes place over four days. In 2013, it attracted 22,000 visitors!

Pelham also supports walking clubs, urban poling demonstrations and workshops. One of their walking groups meets twice a week. Their Mayor even hosts an annual Mayor's Walk, which took place for the 10th year in 2014.

Numerous Walking Safety & Encouragement Campaigns

Community partners like Niagara Region Public Health have run an impressive number of campaigns to promote walking, including: Sneak it in Week, Slow Down Through Town, Get Active for Life, MTO's annual Road Safety Week and the "Be Seen in Pelham" pedestrian visibility campaign.



Investments in Walk Friendly Infrastructure

Since 2008, Pelham has invested in walkability in many ways including:

- adding new sidewalks or reconstructing existing ones (as of 2014, 80% of their population-dense areas have sidewalks),
- adding new benches, street furniture and walk friendly amenities each year,
- adding new crosswalks with signalization in school zones and high traffic areas, and
- adding signage for public washrooms and to identify the time it takes to walk to various destinations.

Through Pelham's Community Improvement Plan, infrastructure has been improved in downtown areas to feature wide sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, street furniture, improved building facades and overall beautification measures.





RICHMOND HILL



Richmond Hill is a compact town in the southern portion of York Region, extending only 14 km north to south and 7 km east to west. In recent years, this affluent Town has experienced a huge increase in population; growing by 14% between 2006 and 2011, more than double the national and provincial growth rates. The predominant feature of the Town's geography is its elevation, which is much higher than other communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), as its name suggests. One of Richmond Hill's most important geological features is the Oak Ridges Moraine, a further elevated region that is host to a staggering amount of biodiversity and is subject to Ontario's Greenbelt legislation. This profile shares some of the actions Richmond Hill has taken to earn its Bronze WALK Friendly Communities designation.

Population	185,541
Area	101 km ²
Population Density	1,837 persons per km ²

Public Input a Priority

The Town of Richmond Hill established a study team to gather input from residents and stakeholders to inform the creation of their Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. To ensure the Plan's success, Richmond Hill continues to gather broad input via user surveys and public attitude surveys that serve as monitoring tools.

Recent progress on implementation of the Plan has included a focus on multi-use trails.

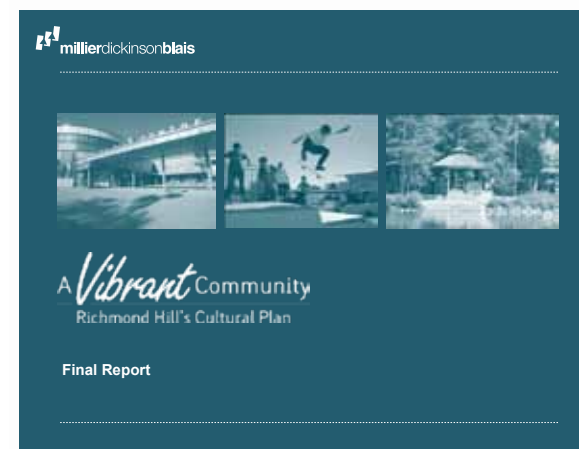


Widespread Use of Pedestrian Countdown Signals

Richmond Hill has undertaken numerous engineering measures to improve walkability, including the Harding Boulevard West Road Diet Project and the Spadina Road Traffic Calming Project. Pedestrian countdown signals are widely used across the Town; over 75% of intersections have this type of signal already, and all new signalized intersections are required to have them installed. A generous walking speed of 1.0 metre/second is used to calculate how long the walk signal will be displayed, accommodating the slower pace of some residents to ensure their safety when crossing.

Consideration of Walking in Cultural Plan

Richmond Hill has demonstrated a deep commitment to walk friendliness by incorporating active transportation into a plan that is not directly related to transportation. Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan is innovative in that it advocates for strengthening cultural districts and corridors through active transportation. The Town recognizes that cultural resources need to be connected to walking infrastructure. In particular, the Cultural Plan calls for attention to urban design and a mix of uses to cater to a diversity of needs, and it calls for strong links to public transit.



Giving TDM Solutions "Teeth"

The Town of Richmond Hill requires that developers submit a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan along with their site plan for development. The Plan may include TDM solutions such as reduced vehicle parking, the installation of bike parking and connecting walkways, and outlines the details for implementation. Requiring a TDM Plan as part of the site plan agreement is one way for municipalities to ensure that sustainable transportation is integrated in community planning and design.

"We are proud to receive this award. The WALK Friendly designation recognizes our efforts to create a walkable community, both by creating stronger connections in our pedestrian and trail networks and by providing healthy and environmentally-friendly transportation options for our residents."

Mayor Dave Barrow,
Town of Richmond Hill



SMITHS FALLS



Smiths Falls is a town in Eastern Ontario, situated on The Rideau Canal, about 75 km southwest of Ottawa. This community has always placed a great emphasis on quality of life and over the last number of years has had a growing focus on healthy living. Recognizing that walking infrastructure will help its residents be more active, Smiths Falls has made a number of investments—highlighted in this profile—that helped it earn a Bronze WALK Friendly designation.

"We are excited and proud to be the recipient of a Bronze level award from WALK Friendly Communities, recognition that further confirms Smiths Falls is an active, healthy living community committed to creating an ever-improving quality of life for its people. We look to the future with plans to enhance our walkability by fulfilling the objectives of the Pedestrian Linkages Study."

Mayor of Smith Falls, Shawn Pankow

Population	8,978
Area	10 km ²
Population Density	898 persons per km ²

Pedestrian Linkages Study

The Town of Smith Falls conducted a Pedestrian Linkages Study, the results of which were published in August 2012. The study includes an inventory of existing trails and detailed recommendations for future pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The study calls for "...a comprehensive pedestrian system linking key points of interest, tourist attractions, heritage and cultural assets, the waterfront and the downtown with existing walking and hiking facilities."



Investing in Waterfront Walking Options

The Town of Smith Falls has reclaimed large tracts of water frontage for the construction of continuous parks and trails. The plan is to reclaim and rehabilitate the rest of the shoreline, creating a walking loop that spans the entire width of the Town and provides connections to the regional Cataraqui Trail and the TransCanada Trail. This network is widely used as an active form of transportation between major destinations in the Town and provides an opportunity for residents to enjoy the spectacular natural setting. Maintained all year, Smith Falls' trails are inviting even in the cold weather months. And, they offer an indoor option too—see Indoor Walking Concourse section below.

Community Partnerships

Smith Falls maintains strong partnerships with community agencies and groups that share a healthy living mandate. Health Promotion staff with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit are dedicated to educating the community about the benefits of walking. Funding through the Healthy Communities Partnership has been used to support multiple community projects such as local workshops on active transit, Nature for Life and regional trail initiatives. The Town also partners with the Rideau Environmental Action League (REAL) to promote active living in nature and walking as a sustainable means of transportation.

Nature for Life!
Nature can make us happier, smarter and feel better. Really, it's that simple!
 There is a strong connection between spending time in nature and overall health and well-being.

Children who spend time in nature are more likely to have healthier social behaviour, improved self-esteem, resilience, ability to learn and concentrate, as well as environmental awareness. Time in nature decreases stress and anxiety, depression, diabetes, hypertension and many other health problems in everyone.

Join us for one or both events:

Public Information Session:
 Monday September 29th
 6:30 pm – 8 pm
 Nature for Life Public Presentation:
 Dr. Cheryl Charles
 Where: Gallipeau Centre at 361 Queen St., Smiths Falls
 Cost: Free
 Request child care here: <https://natureforlife2.eventbrite.com>

All Day Workshop:
 Tuesday September 30th
 8:30 am – 3:30 pm
 Nature for Life Workshop:
 Making It Happen in our Community
 Dr. Cheryl Charles & Dr. Michael Cheng
 Where: Gallipeau Centre 361 Queen St., Smiths Falls
 Cost: \$20 fee (if able)
 Registration Required: <https://natureforlife2.eventbrite.com>

Dr. Cheryl Charles, Ph.D., is co-founder and President Emerita of the Children & Nature Network whose vision is "Together we can create a world where every child can play, learn and grow in nature." Cheryl is an innovator, author, and educator who is among those instrumental in developing the worldwide movement to reconnect children and nature.

Dr. Michael Cheng, a child and family psychiatrist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) is an author, passionate speaker and advocate of attachment to people and nature. www.childrenandnature.org www.drcheng.ca

Indoor Walking Concourse

Smith Falls has made great efforts to ensure that its residents have access to all-season walking infrastructure and programming. When constructing their new Community Centre, Smith Falls included a state-of-the-art walking concourse, complete with Sportflex surface that makes using the track comfortable and safe. The one-fifth km walking track is available free of charge to residents and non-residents seven days a week. With minimal advertising and promotion, the track already attracts more than 35,000 users each year (almost 3,000 each month!).





WASAGA BEACH



The Town of Wasaga Beach is located along the southern end of Georgian Bay. Over 1.3 million people visit Wasaga Beach every summer to enjoy the Town’s freshwater beach, the longest in the world, stretching 14 km. In addition to the beach, the Town has many scenic recreational trails that are used for hiking, cycling and cross-country skiing.

When it comes to active transportation, Wasaga Beach was a bit of a pioneer among towns its size. It was the first municipality in Simcoe County—and one of the first communities of its size in Canada—to create an Active Transportation Plan, in 2008. And, that was only the first of many efforts to improve walkability. Wasaga Beach has been recognized for its efforts with a Bronze WALK Friendly Communities award, and some of its most innovative activities are shared in this profile.

Population	17,537
Area	58 km ²
Population Density	302 persons per km ²

Accessibility Innovation

In 2013, Wasaga Beach became the first municipality in Ontario to install portable roll-out mats on the beach to enhance mobility for pedestrians, wheelchair users and strollers. These “Mobi-Mats” provide a portable walkway across the sand to access the water at Beach Areas 2 and 5. The Town’s Accessibility Committee partnered with the Wasaga Beach Provincial Park on this project to provide greater accessibility to the beach for all users.



Trails Map

A Trails Map is available in print, on the Town’s website, and as a mobile-friendly GPS-enabled application. The map provides information on the local trails system and points of interest throughout Wasaga Beach for walkers, cyclists and other potential users.

Positive “Enforcement”

Police in Wasaga Beach are required to do foot patrol each shift, when weather and calls-for-service permit. “Operation Freeze” is a creative strategy used by patrol officers to encourage good behaviour. The officers give out “Operation Freeze” coupons that entitle the recipient to receive a free freezie at any Mac’s Milk store. The coupons are generally given to youth as a reward for safe walking and biking practices.



Wayfinding Master Plan

The Town of Wasaga Beach is making it easier for residents and visitors to find their way around on foot by implementing a comprehensive Wayfinding Master Plan. The planned wayfinding system will provide orientation and information using standardized signage to identify the main destinations, recreational trails, major parks, as well bicycle and pedestrian routes. So far, the Town has implemented the signage program on several municipal trails, including the Shore Lane Trail which connects the east and west ends of Town with 19 km of pathways.





Workshops & Consulting Services

From convenient webinars, to half and full-day on-site workshops, to four-day intensive community visits, we customize our services to meet your needs.



Canada Walks was launched in 2009 as a division of Green Communities Canada to bring multiple walking projects and activities under one recognizable brand. We envision a Canada where everyone can enjoyably, easily and safely walk to school, work, play, shopping and transit. Our mission is to help communities be more walk friendly by:

- **Raising awareness** of the health, economic, social and environmental benefits,
- **Inspiring and celebrating** success,
- **Sharing resources** and best practice on infrastructure, policy and programs,
- **Bringing partners together** to make walking happen.

Find out how Canada Walks can help you meet your walk friendly goals

CONTACT:

Jacky Kennedy
Director, Canada Walks
416-488-7263
asrts@sympatico.ca

VISIT:

www.canadawalks.ca