

# Canadian Walking Master Class Hamilton

## Workshop Summary Report

### City of Hamilton Canadian Walking Master Class Professional and Public Workshops

November 5, 2009.

Report prepared by: [www.publicspaceworkshop.ca](http://www.publicspaceworkshop.ca)

## Workshop Notes

### City of Hamilton - Canadian Walking Master Class and other Pedestrian Initiatives

#### Afternoon Professional Meeting

##### Date

Thursday, November 5, 2009, 1:00 – 4:00 PM at the Waterfront Banquet and Conference Centre, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, 555 Bay Street N.

##### Workshop facilitation and notes:

Paul Young at Public Space Workshop [www.publicspaceworkshop.ca](http://www.publicspaceworkshop.ca) tel. (416) 461-0351

##### Organizations represented:

Planning and Economic Development, Development and Real Estate; Green Venture; Public Works, Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure; Public Health Services, Healthy Living and Health Protection; Community Services, Culture; Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club; Ministry of Health Promotion; Environment Hamilton; City Manager's Office, Human Resources; McMaster University; Planning and Economic Development, Tourism; Public Works, Operations and Maintenance

#### Part 1. Introductions (1:00 – 1:30)

Jillian Stephen, Acting Director, Public Works welcomed the participants and spoke about the importance of events such as this to look for ways to get more people on their feet and bicycles. Jillian mentioned some of the ongoing efforts including the Commuter Challenge, youth programs and events, the pedestrian bridge over the Q.E.W. and pedestrians in the new transportation master plan. She encouraged participants to look for ways to build on the collaboration and accelerate ideas to reality.

Paul Young, consultant with Public Space Workshop facilitated the meeting. He outlined the following goals for the session:

- To share the Walking Master Class Report recommendations
- To share updates on work underway that supports walking in Hamilton
- To discuss a process for collaboration - to accelerate successes and respond to Master Class recommendations

All the participants introduced themselves and any affiliation.

Paul showed an inspiring film clip from the recent Walk21 conference in New York City – produced by Street Films <http://www.streetfilms.org/walk21-nyc-world-pedestrian-leaders-take-manhattan/> . There were about 550 delegates from around the world. Hamilton was mentioned several times at the conference as a City committed to walking and working towards improvements.

#### Part 2. Hamilton Walking Master Class Report (1:30 – 2:00)

##### History

Sharon Mackinnon, Public Health Nurse, Healthy Living Division, Public Health Services provided a history of the Canadian Walking Master Class (CWMC) and the Hamilton Committee. Below is a brief history.

- Motion brought forward by Councillor Brian McHattie in April 2006 for the establishment of a City of Hamilton Pedestrian Committee
- Councillor Brian McHattie heard about the Canadian Walking Master Class (CWMC) project during a presentation from Jackie Kennedy in early 2008
- Councillor McHattie got the ball rolling for Hamilton to become one of 5 Canadian cities to participate
- Letter of interest sent in March 2008 to participate in the project

- Mayor Fred Eisenberger signed the International Charter for Walking in April 2008
- Hamilton chosen as one of 5 Canadian cities to participate in Jan 2009
- Funding came from Public Health Services and Public Works for CWMC
- Benchmarking survey completed in Feb. 2009
- CWMC committee formed in Feb 2009 (collaboration with PHS, PW and P&ED)
- Site visits May 2009 consisted of:
  - Breakfast with the Mayor, Councillors and key stakeholders
  - Workshop for professionals
  - Walkabouts and debriefs in Ancaster, James St. N. and Bayfront Park
  - Community Meeting
  - Debriefing with decision makers
- Report (draft) from consultants received in Fall 2009
- Follow-up meetings with professionals, community partners and public in Nov. 2009

### Visiting team recommendations

In the spring of 2009, City of Hamilton staff worked with an international team of experts; Jacky Kennedy, Rodney Tolley, Bronwen Thornton, Jody Rosenblatt – Nediri and Paul Young. The team conducted surveys, walking tours and workshops with staff, stakeholders and the public. They then drafted a report (Fall 2009) outlining their recommendations.

Paul Young presented a series of slides outlining the team’s recommendations. These slides will be posted on Healthy Living Hamilton Website – [www.doitwell.ca](http://www.doitwell.ca) and are summarized below.

Based on the surveys and their observations the team has summarized their work into a chart (see below).



The recommendations were prioritized by the visiting team using the categories from International Charter for Walking. In order of the most “work to do”:

1. Supportive spatial planning
2. Reduced road danger
3. Spaces and places for people
4. Less crime and fear of crime
5. Integrated networks
6. Culture of Walking
7. Increased inclusive mobility
8. Supportive Local Authority

Each category includes “key findings” and corresponding “recommendations” as outlined below.

## 1. Supportive spatial planning

### **Key Findings:**

- Downtown development patterns support walking, newer developments support driving

### **Recommendations:**

- Review planning policies to ensure walking is given priority (esp. schools, shopping, residential and new development)
- Reduce sprawl by building, infilling with mixed use (esp. around and connecting to existing centres)
- Retro-fit existing sprawl with sidewalks, safe crossings, priority school streets, mid-block crossings with safe signal phases, refuge islands and safe walking access to big box
- Create pedestrian space with realigned curbs, expanded sidewalks, parkettes, and “open streets” for people, so people can create and enjoy their community

## 2. Reduced road danger

### **Key Findings:**

- Huge safety impacts from the volume, speed and noise of traffic and trucks (i.e. York, Cannon). Infrequent pedestrian crossings (i.e. King and Main)
- One-way streets are like “wide, fast rivers without bridges” = road danger

### **Recommendations:**

- Reduce traffic volumes & speed, especially along shopping streets, near schools and residential areas
- Re-route trucks away from downtown or restrict movement & speed downtown
- Consider returning all one-way streets to two-way. Where it’s demonstrated to be impossible, create centre island for planting and pedestrian refuge
- Coordinate signal timing for slower speeds

## 3. Spaces and places for people

### **Key Findings:**

- Where walking and cycling are addressed, work is fantastic (waterfront, James St. N.) but these are small disconnected pockets. Future work needs to address volume and speed of traffic (i.e. Market on York St.)
- Currently the generous wide streets are dominated by cars and trucks
- Upper city is planned for the car and requires safer pedestrian routes and crossings

### **Recommendations:**

- Identify and prioritize neighbourhood centres for continued improvements (i.e. Ottawa, Locke)
- Re-designate York Street as a priority pedestrian street – re-route through truck traffic away to better support Market
- Retrofit big box for pedestrians (i.e. safe road crossings, routes, protected paths through parking lots)

## 4. Less crime and fear of crime

### **Key Findings:**

- Crime and fear of crime not a substantial issue during visit – rather it was “abandonment of the downtown” and “unsavoury activities” in the existing public spaces

### **Recommendations:**

- Create more opportunities, events for people to spend time in public space
- More people will enhance safety, “eyes on the street”
- Conduct walking audits (day and night) – look at lighting, cleanliness
- Ensure urban design promotes safety (possibly using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles) – no blank facades, hiding places, good lighting, etc.

## 5. Integrated networks

### **Key Findings:**

- There are pleasant walkable pockets that are unfortunately disconnected
- Big opportunity to link the nodes (waterfront, shopping areas, escarpment, etc.) but need to address the high volume / speed of cars and trucks

### **Recommendations:**

- Identify a priority network of safe, pleasant walking routes linking walkable nodes and destinations (waterfront, shopping, etc.)
- Support the network with signage / way-finding, traffic reductions, public space improvements, safe road crossings, benches, etc.
- Include emerging school travel plans in the network
- Prioritize walking over all other modes when designing access to transit hubs
- Include “best routes” to transit hubs in the network

## 6. Culture of Walking

### **Key Findings:**

- Build on existing successes to promote street life (i.e. the James St. North Art Crawl)
- Build on existing neighbourhood identities (Locke St., Westdale, Ancaster)

### **Recommendations**

- Develop walking maps and campaigns
- Develop, install and promote a way-finding system
- Support events in public space, provide space for sidewalk cafes
- Promote local culture and art (installations, plaques, designated historical routes, etc.)

## 7. Increased inclusive mobility

### **Key Findings:**

- Currently Hamilton’s transportation network is dominated by motor vehicles which restrict the movement of seniors, children, youth, people with disabilities and those without access to a car
- In contrast, the “Urban Braille” system could be expanded elsewhere in Hamilton

### **Recommendations**

- Identify priority areas for improvements by identifying concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities, children and corresponding key routes to routine destinations (shopping, school). Map these demographics and crash statistics to highlight key priority areas.
- Continue improvements for those with disabilities, especially with transit

## 8. Supportive Local Authority

### **Key Findings:**

- Mayor has committed to the International Charter for Walking – now need policy and budgets to follow through
- Staff are committed to participating but are experiencing some barriers
- Good cross-departmental links (i.e. planning, health and transportation)
- Staff need support to explore and develop cost effective best practices
- Better data collection is needed – City wide stats. on walking, crashes, etc.

### **Recommendations:**

- Consolidate different projects under a Pedestrian Master Plan
- Create a staff network on walking (e-lists, training sessions, meeting opportunities)
- Establish a more direct link to community (action group, consultation forums, etc.) possibly provide staff support
- Provide training opportunities - best practices, etc.
- Collect data on walking City-wide (qualitative and quantitative)

### Comments/Questions on the Recommendations

- Was the Urban Hamilton Official Plan looked at? Maybe the number one recommendation wouldn't be such a high priority.
- "Supportive local authority" – not necessarily the elected officials. They support it at a high level but not necessarily in the follow through at the details stage
- These are fairly new issues in a Canadian context (walkability, active transportation)
- Counting – data collection – how do we do that?
- Reducing Road. Danger – the City has lots of data, esp. regarding vulnerable road users. Discussion on perception of danger vs. quantifiable danger. Issue of real danger vs. perceived danger. Perception vs. reality. Both are important.
- Data – what are the methods for qualitative collection?
- Regarding number 2 - crashes are not the only factor. There is noise, perception of danger is important – people avoid perceived danger.

### Part 3. Updates on other work underway in Hamilton (2:00 – 2:30)

There is a list of projects underway in Hamilton to promote walking. Three initiatives from the list were reviewed.

- **Smart Commute/TMA** – Al Kirkpatrick, Acting Manager, Strategic Planning, Public Works provided an overview of this project - designed to help commuters choose alternatives to the private, single occupancy car.
- **Public Art Walk** - Ken Coit, Art in Public Places Coordinator, Community Services, Culture reviewed the process by which the Art Walk and other art initiatives are organized and promoted. He reviewed the Art Walk, MacNab Street Pedestrian Underpass Mural, James Street North Public Art Project, Locke Street Public Art Project and the East Kiwanis Place Public Art Project. Ken concluded that Public art helps strengthen our city's visual identity, stimulates the economy, enhances tourism and builds an even greater sense of community pride
- **Transportation Master Plan Implementation/Monitoring Study** – Al Kirkpatrick, Acting Manager, Strategic Planning, Public Works reviewed the master plan and the T.M.P. implementation monitoring project. Goals are set out in the master plan to guide implementation. Outcomes are monitored to ensure compliance with goals.

#### Discussion:

- Having a list of all the initiatives is helpful.
- Regarding art – what kind of media was used to communicate? Hamilton media has not been very supportive generally speaking. Public art initiatives used e-mail which the public then forwarded on to others ("viral"). They had good community buy-in at the grass-roots level.
- Question / challenge: how does information get out to the staff and public?
- Comment: Art is a destination.

### Part 4. Working with neighbourhoods - developing a toolkit (2:40 – 3:05)

There have been a series of walking/walkability audits over the last few years. There is a need to standardize the methods and to keep track of the audits as they emerge. There is also a need to systematize the implementation of improvements to walking infrastructure.

**Ainsle Woods Westdale process** – Sharon Mackinnon reviewed the A.W.W. process (see report for details). It is important to engage the community at the grass roots. This process was helpful in engaging community and stakeholders and identifying priorities. One of the "next steps" identified was to develop a standardized? tool kit for future initiatives like this.

**Developing a "Made in Hamilton tool kit"** - Sharon and Alison outlined a "Pilot" framework for addressing the walking audit recommendations. They presented the Hamilton Neighbourhood

Assessment Recommendations document which is a chart of all the audits and initiatives that point to needed infrastructure improvements. It includes walkabouts, Dan Burden's work, and audits – all framed under the International Charter for Walking principles. It identifies long & short term projects, potential leads and work in progress.

**New Developments on process & collaborations** - Al Kirkpatrick reviewed what has happened so far. Emphasis on walking is starting to come to the surface. Public Works is committed to a pedestrian master plan including connectivity, maintenance, etc. They also need a tool kit for community (to empower them) and it needs to be standardized and consistent so they can follow-through with the recommendations. Then they need resources for next steps. It is important to get the community involved.

#### **Discussion regarding the chart and potential Toolkit**

- Comment: The chart needs to get to the department that can resolve the item – the work needs to get to us so we can plan and budget for it.
- Need to involve key stakeholders and advocates
- Not always equitable when priority projects come from the councillor
- Really need a framework for improvements – a more rational approach to determining priorities.
- The International Charter for Walking needs to be in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan in order to be operationalized. Currently the strategic principles from the Charter are in the terms of reference for consultants hired by Public Works.
- Challenge: the average person doesn't understand walking issues.
- Agreed, the audit tool is helpful - people in the neighbourhoods are the experts and know what is needed.
- As a staff person we don't have a lot of extra time to do walking audits – tool is helpful in that regard.
- For the public, expectations need to be realistic.
- Question: The audit, where does it go? It goes onto the list. But then giving it to the councillor can create inequities. One area receives improvements but may not be the area of highest need (i.e. seniors, children, low-income)
- The report is going to council – it will summarize the recommendations, this and the public workshop and will be put forward. It may recommend incorporating into the Official Plan. It will recommend consideration of a Walking Master Plan for 2010.

### **Part 5. Facilitated “Strategy Café” (3:05 – 3:50)**

The larger group broke into five smaller Groups of 5 – 7. They were asked the question: ***“How can we best collaborate to accelerate our successes and respond to Master Class recommendations?”***

After 15 minutes the groups split up again so that ideas could be shared and discussed. One person, the table host stayed to welcome others and record ideas. Then a change-up after 15 more minutes. Finally, participants returned to their home table to synthesize their discoveries and record on 5 x 7 Post-Its for discussion.

#### **Discussion in Group 1**

- Need refinement of the City process to deal with walking issues (both internally and externally)
- Process needs to be centralized so issues can come in and be dealt with – call centre model (i.e. develop a list)
- Research: Explore what other similar sized cities are doing to collaborate on walking

#### **Discussion in Group 2**

- To collaborate we all need to agree on the issues
- Collaboration needs regular meetings with City and Community
- Need a map of the key players in the city – who is making decisions
- Need an inter-departmental structure to transcend the “silos”
- Switch-board idea or web-site, e-mail addresses.

- Need to understand the day-to-day issues (minor and major) and who are the decision makers (i.e. staff and elected officials)
- Need funding
- Need a process to collaborate
- Need to know what other regions are doing to collaborate on walking

### **Discussion in Group 3**

- Need GIS mapping of all programs (related to walking)
- The public should see the City as a “machine that works” – how do we (or can we) work better
- Need to educate the public (on walking issues)
- SMT trying to address to address the silos
- Shared work program
- Need cross-departmental working committees – connected to a master List on the S-drive
- Need a City list of projects – i.e. capital projects (parks, streetscaping)
- Need budgets for 5 years
- Need citizen input – local intelligence

### **Discussion in Group 4**

1. Need Access
  - Staff connected by e-net
  - Link to site – walking problems
  - Getting comments from staff, N.G.O.s, residents
2. Neighbourhood Audit Model
  - Comprehensive collaborative study – transportation and planning – part 2 plans
3. School Anchor for community
  - Support schools staying in neighbourhoods
4. Person in charge – a go-to person for walking
5. Food access

### **Discussion in Group 5**

- Develop a technical team from different departments – team is committed to a project
- Technical team members need to solve problems as experts (what needs to change to make it happen)
- Combined open houses across departments
- Need a staff lead on walkability / technical team
- ? Committee for walkability
- TAC approach – opportunity for collaboration
- Brown bag info sessions
- “Switchboard” - who to talk to in what department
- Website – can have input on new projects / communications
- E-net City
- Some “body” needs to take charge
- Break up list by neighbourhood – people could check on progress
- (Need to know) how to contact the city
- City web site not “friendly”
- (Need) staff leads form different departments for better customer service
- Community coordinator / lead to broker information out
- Networking
- Invite developers, business community to these types of meetings

### **Overlapping ideas / areas in common**

- Technical team with a designate from all relevant departments
- Need a list of stakeholders from the public – to connect with
- Need funds committed to walking and pedestrian issues (Master Plan to identify priorities)
- Need one staff lead on pedestrian /walkability issues
- Need “One stop” for G.I.S., a go-to person, access to information (neighbourhood issues, list of walking issues)
- Need a “customer service” approach with better, centralized information – starts at the switch board when people call in they are directed to the walking division / staff
- Zoning or by-law amendments need to go through a walkability filter (staff person)
- Need a neighbourhood association hub (in each ward) – use the community centres. They would conduct audits, do citizen engagement and list community assets (i.e. schools, trails, stores)
- Yes to public involvement (i.e. advisories, before / after surveys, publicity, consultation) Hamilton media has not been very supportive, need to use e-mail too, community centres and other “hubs”
- Yes to a generic audit tool and process.
- Need to ensure public expectations are realistic.
- Briefly discussed equity – how you determine where the improvements get done first.
- Need a more formalized structure

### **6. Next Steps**

- The workshop will be engaging the public at an evening session later in the day
- Reports to Board of Health – Sharon Mackinnon. Information Report went to Board Of Health in October; Recommendations Report will be going forward following November 5 sessions.

END OF NOTES FOR PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP

## Evening Public Workshop - Making Hamilton More Walkable (Follow up to: Hamilton's Canadian Walking Master Class )

Thursday, November 5, 2009, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M. at the Waterfront Banquet and Conference Centre, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, 555 Bay Street N.

Facilitator, Paul Young, Public Space Workshop

**Attending: 35 residents**

### Part 1. Introductions and meeting overview

Bill Jansen, Acting Director, Planning and Economic Development welcomed every one to the workshop.

Paul Young reviewed the agenda and purposes of the meeting, to:

1. Report back on the findings of the Walking Master Class project
2. Provide a brief overview of work underway and a process for collecting walking audits
3. Discuss ideas for a community advisory or advocacy group for Hamilton

Everyone introduced themselves and any affiliations.

There was a short discussion about good and not-so good places to walk in Hamilton and a request to fill out a questionnaire. It will be available on [www.doitwell.ca](http://www.doitwell.ca) once information is compiled

Then Paul asked, "***What can the public do to make Hamilton better for Walking?***"

Short discussion regarding what the public can do:

- Snow removal - especially commercial streets
- Small things to improve comfort and appearance (benches, plants)
- Comments:
  - snow removal equipment is too big for smaller streets
  - Sidewalk cafes won't work everywhere – i.e. drinking alcohol.
- Get organized and involved

### Part 2. Presentations (see Part 2. from afternoon workshop as noted above)

- a. The Hamilton Walking Master Class Report Recommendations – Paul Young
- b. Work underway
- c. An overview of a possible toolkit and City implementation plan – Sharon Mackinnon
- d. Questions - "How do neighbourhoods get on the Walking Audit list?"

### Part 3. Interactive Workshop (small groups)

At the last public meeting there was a priority recommendation made to: "*Establish a community group to advise or advocate for better facilities and programs to support walking.*"

The smaller groups were asked: "**What** would the group do, **who** should participate, **how** it might come to be?" They discussed these questions for 20 minutes and reported back to the larger group.

#### Group 1

What to do?

- Question: Advisory (lacks authority) vs. Advocacy (lacks respect and credibility with politicians)

- Could review development plans
- Identify needs in “a community”
- Physical needs – very specific
- Educate the public
- Advise all levels of government
- Mouthpiece vs. work piece
- Integrate transit

Who should be on?

- People who can influence decision makers
- Representation from various population sub-groups (areas, communities neighbourhoods)
- ?? Staff from various departments (non-voting, supportive of process)
- Local B.I.A.s

How would it come about?

- Allocation of \$, a place to meet, support (staff)
- Support from Council and staff
- Need a champion – influential
- Find groups - who are then represented on the main group
- Elected or appointed?

## **Group 2**

What?

- Civic League (already exists)
- Ward specific advisory committee (15 wards) – neighbours
- Advisory group for neighbourhood associations – with staff and experts
- ESA/EG – (for example) – local expertise with technical advice to staff and council (i.e. Mac researchers)

Who?

- Citizens
- Staff
- Experts

How?

- Change political culture of Hamilton
- Elect receptive politicians

## **Group 3**

What to do?

- Advisors? Questionable value
- Advocate directly about problems
- Find new practices and ideas
- Promote car-free walking events
- Influence funding allocations

Who?

- Walkers
- Community leaders
- City staff and elected officials
- Bruce Trail association

How?

- Provide funds

- Provide opportunities
- Walking events, tours and publicity
- Walkathon for walkers

#### **Group 4**

What does the group do?

- Group needs power and accountability
- Reduce number of departments

Who?

- Staff /administrative support
- Residents – represent all areas – cross section of urban and rural (possibly use wards)
- People could volunteer or be nominated
- Maximum of 12 people

Ideas (how?)

- Look at two-way conversions
- Signals timing should match speed (posted limit)
- Road safety
- Prioritize issues – high risk (populations / areas) first
- Education (for the committee and for the public)
- Alternative (look at)
- Make hard decisions

#### **Group 5**

What?

- Work with the planning department, public health, transportation and development
- Take charter principles and make sure all City plans are in synch with it – coordinate (i.e. why is there a meeting regarding truck routes on the same night as this meeting?)
- Advise on transit proximity to walking routes
- Watchdog for new developments throughout the City

Who?

- Neighbourhood associations invited
- Transit
- Accessibility Groups
- Start with current participants
- City staff

How?

- Need staff (City) participants
- Departments involved meet with interested groups (reps. from groups)
- Place to meet
- Resources to compile and broadcast information to public and councillors

#### **General discussion after ideas were shared:**

- There is a disconnect between councillors and the walkability initiatives / Charter
  - Another disconnect evident in the planning for truck routes (they are planned to go right past the market?)
  - Two old malls were re-developed for cars
  - Need to look at committee of adjustments
- The report will go back to council and will be available on the Healthy Living Hamilton web site - [www.doitwell.ca](http://www.doitwell.ca)

- What happens politically? Staff will make recommendations. Council has passed the Charter and that means something.
- We have a Transit Advisory and a Cycling Advisory – Pedestrian Advisory needs some power
- Participation – take the Charter to meetings (i.e. regarding the truck routes)
- Need to start with pedestrians

## **Overlapping ideas**

After all the groups had shared their ideas there was a short discussion about identifying any overlapping ideas – i.e. areas that were of common interest. They emerged as follows:

- Need to look at who has the power to make decisions about pedestrian issues
- Need more publicity for the issue
- Need resources – for publicity, newsletters
- Need to educate the public, staff and elected representatives about how to support walking
- Need opportunities to support a culture shift to walking (i.e. make the Market as walkable as it can be)
- Political culture is not currently supporting good staff and policies
- Need to tie in economic development, L.R.T.

END OF NOTES FOR PUBLIC WORKSHOP

## **Summary and next steps**

The two workshops outlined above serve as a follow-up to the Canadian Walking Master Class exercise undertaken in Hamilton in May of this year. The two workshops summarized the recommendations of the international team and they summarized some of the work that is currently underway to better support active transportation in Hamilton.

Both the professionals and the public generated some new ideas and commitments to accelerate the work that is going on. Those ideas are documented in the report above.

Regarding next steps, as a follow up to the Information Update that went to the Board of Health in October of this year, a Recommendation Report will be presented with recommendations from this report to the Board of Health in early 2010.

END OF REPORT