STEPS TO A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

REPORT FROM WALK21

International Conference on Walking
Toronto
October 1 to 4, 2007

submitted to
White Rock City Council
by Councillor Matt Todd
December 10, 2007

INTRODUCTION

The 8th Annual Walk21 International Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities, titled *Putting Pedestrians First*, took place in downtown Toronto, October 1 to 4, 2007.

The conference was a series of plenaries and breakout sessions featuring presentations from elected representatives, engineers or scientists from around the world.

Sessions studied goals and benefits of walkable communities, best practices for policy, design and measuring results.

The first session I attended was a full day pre-conference workshop sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The *FCM Walkability and Placemaking Training Seminar* was presented by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS).

This report is a compilation of notes made during those sessions. The main text body is essentially a collection of statements, facts or quotes I heard or read as part of the workshops and presentations.

The text boxes in the left margin contain quotes from online resources and links to websites (underlined text are active url links when reading this from a pdf). Text boxes also offer context or incidental facts regarding the presenters, and relevant information found after the conference from sources recommended or referenced by the presenters.

To illustrate the common themes running through the conference, the notes that make up this report have been combined and organized into 5 themed sections.

The agenda seemed to be dominated by common topics. Generally, the main underlying threads that tied together all workshops and presentations were Happiness and Public Engagement Process. Specifically, they focused on the wide range of benefits of walking and walkable communities, the role of walking as a transportation choice, how cities can better accommodate and encourage walking, public processes leading to increased walking, and how to design spaces that more people will want to walk in.

Walk21 "exists to champion the development of healthy sustainable and efficient communities where people choose to walk."

Through the Walk21 Conference series and the International Charter, 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.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

FCM Walkability and Placemaking training seminar

PPS is an organization from New York "dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build communities"

CONTENT DIRECTORY

WALKABLE BENEFITS

Happiness

A walkable city is a happy city.[1] Parks and public spaces are essential to a city's happiness.[2] Happiness is the ultimate goal.

Research had focused on the negative – mental illness, but they are now looking at the positive – subjective well-being. [3]

Happiness is an indicator of health and longevity. People who are happy seek out and act on health information.

It is now known that happiness can be taught.

Relationships are critical to happiness. It involves a feeling of engagement. [4] The enemy is the absence of civic communion. A city's reason for being is closeness. The enemy is the zeitgeist of withdrawal. Anonymity is as toxic to the heart as hydrocarbons are to the environment.[5]

Advertisers have picked up on happiness research. They use it to market their products. They suggest that buying a certain car will make you happy. However, new research also shows that happy people tend to be less materialistic and more environmentally conscious. [6]

Increased happiness is not necessarily created with increased material wealth. In fact, the research shows that, after a certain point where survival is no longer a question, the opposite can be true.[7]

"Sustainable happiness is the pursuit of happiness that does not exploit the happiness of other people." [8]

We need "positive transportation." StatsCan found that cyclists and walkers are more likely to enjoy their commute.

"Champions of healthy, sustainable, efficient communities… walkers are the indicators of quality of life." [9] Pedestrians are the primary indicator of quality of life and vibrancy in a city.[10]

"God made us walking animals — pedestrians. As a fish needs to swim, a bird to fly, a deer to run, we need to walk, not in order to survive, but to be happy."
– Enrique Peñalosa
quoted on the PPS website

subjective well-being = happiness

What's Wrong With Happiness?
By Michael Rustin

Countries where average per capita income is between $20,000 and $35,000 have satisfaction rates only a few percentage points above a whole range of countries where income is below $10,000

"Leave a footprint of delight; good things start with smiles." [5]

Health

For obesity and diabetes, the best medicine is to walk.[11]

Research also shows that the number of markets within a certain distance is related to that local population's consumption of fruit and vegetables.[12]

There are numerous benefits of walkable streets, including community cohesion, and money stays in the neighbourhood. Also, health and less need for parking. Traffic deaths go down in smart-growth communities – they are safer. [13]

Growth is bringing bigger development, but it needs to be asked, is it getting better? Is the community getting better for it?

Our culture treats everything as a marketable commodity, even health, safety and security, but not everything is a commodity.

How can we squeeze more happiness out of each unit of consumption?

Statistics on the odds of dying from...

same stats illustrated graphically

Making the health effects of walking and cycling part of transport policy decision-making.
by Francesca Racioppi y Carlo Dora, WHO

Sedentary life-styles double the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity and substantially increase the risk of colon cancer, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, depression and anxiety.

Estimated proportion of sedentary adults ranges from 60% to 85%.

Physical inactivity is the 2nd most important risk factor for poor health, after tobacco smoking, in industrialized countries.

30 minutes of daily moderate activity (such as brisk walking or cycling) even if taken in two or three bouts of 10 or 15 minutes each provide physical health benefits and promote overall psychological well-being.

More than 30% of trips made in cars in Europe cover distances of less than 3 km and 50% less than 5 km. These distances can be covered within 15–20 minutes by bicycle or within 30–50 minutes by brisk walking, providing the recommended amount of daily physical activity.

Greater Sudbury issued a walking challenge to its citizens and distributed pedometers.

Economy

Creating pedestrian zones has no detrimental effect on property values. But a mix of housing types is needed to ensure there is no negative impact. [14]

The benefits of designing attractive and inviting places is reflected property values. Research considered the strip mall: Shopping centres with a varied roofline have higher improvement values for property assessment. [15]

It is said that we build it (auto-centric retail centres like strip malls and big box outlet parks) because that's what people want, well, "that's complete rubbish" [16]

With pedestrians, a street gets a greater presence of people. With vehicles, people are just passing through.

	presence	**flow**
vehicles	17	27
pedestrians	36	13

What would happen if we allocated resources and money based on time spent? That is, in relation to how much time we actually spent driving? [17]

A walkable city is welcoming to both visitors and residents – it's good for tourism. Toronto sees walking as a key piece of their climate change strategy. It's also healthy, creates vitality, and is good for the economy. [18]

The argument against doing something about climate change is always that it would be too expensive and would harm the economy. But, what is the cost of not doing anything? [19]

Economics is a set of values posed as science. It considers the environment an "externality". But nature doesn't care about the costs. "Economics is of no relevance to the issue of the biosphere."

"Sustainability is about replacing an ethic of entitlement with an ethic of sufficiency." [20]

The hidden benefits of walking: is speed stealing our time and money?
by Paul J. Tranter and Murray May

Some sources on the economics of traffic congestion:

- working papers from Richard Arnott
- working papers from Kenneth Small
- webpage titled *Economics of Congestion*
- research paper titled *The Economics of Traffic Congestion*

The Octopus card in Hong Kong is a transit payment card that can also be used to purchase newspapers and coffee. The convenience of multiple uses encourages public transit use.

Environment

Human beings have become so powerful, we've been undermining the very things that keep us alive. This is the defining moment of humans as a species. Foresight is the great ability of humans.

Imagine a test tube full of a growth medium. A single bacteria is dropped in. After one minute, the cell divides – there are now two bacteria. This happens each minute – the population doubles each minute. There is 60 minutes worth of medium in the test tube.

At the 59th minute, the test tube is only 50% full of bacteria. At the 58th minute, it was 25% full; with only 3 minutes left, the tube was just 12.5% full.

Imagine, with only 3 minutes before the bacteria completely exhausted the resources that sustains their life, one of them figures this out and tells the others. The response might have been laughter. They could have dismissed the warning: "Look at all this space and food we have around us."

But what if they recognized the danger and they are so smart that they figure out a way to create new worlds for them to live in – 3 new test tubes, so they now have four test tubes in which to stretch and live. At the 61st minute, two tubes would be full. And after only one more minute, all four test tubes would be full with no food remaining.

In Dr. Suzuki's lifetime, the Earth's population has grown from 2 billion to 6 billion. If humans were the bacteria and the test tube is the Earth, we are now at 59 and a half minutes. "We are in the 59th minute."

With the way we're living now, the pace at which we're using and losing our natural resources, the volumes of pollution we're creating, with the consequences we're already experiencing, could the Earth accommodate twice as many of us and still provide the quality of life we expect? [21]

Currently, there is a lot of talk about cars from a pollution and energy source perspective, but if we all drove electric cars, we would not solve our transportation problems.

Sustainable planning is to planning is like preventative medicine is to medicine. [22]

PEOPLE PLACES

People in the community create a sense of place. How do you facilitate it? [23] Create a public forum for encounter. If people take delight in each other, they will leave a footprint of delight.[24]

Good public spaces need intrigue, uncertainty and humour. [25] "Iconically designed public spaces that no one wants to use" are a problem. Success is a sense of neighbourliness.[26]

Fred Kent says he enjoys working with librarians. They seem to have a great interest in creating great public spaces. Libraries are sources of knowledge and gathering places.

"Over the past 80 years we have been building cities for cars much more than for people. If only children had as much public space as cars, most cities in the world would become marvellous." – Enrique Peñalosa quoted on the PPS website

Likewise, parks are not just open spaces, they are gathering places – active gathering places.

What would happen if we had a full time librarian but no library?

Facilitate more events. They foster the idea of walking and a sense of neighbourliness and community spirit. [27]

Use parks and recreation programming to get people back into the streets, but government should not be running events. Parks events should have funding streams that goes on and on – stable funding and management – not subject to political whims or shifting funding priorities. [28]

Successful streets are streets with people. Streets do not have to be handsomely designed to attract people. Good architecture by itself does not attract people. A poor mix of uses means activity will be limited to a particular time of day.[29]

What would happen if a city had 10 places, each with 10 things to do? "Amenities to make a place are critical." [30]

A participant asked whether parked cars might have as detrimental an effect on the level of inclusion and number of contacts on a street as passing cars. Sauter agreed that there may be, but when I asked him about it later, he said that no research has been done yet to determine if this is true. [31]

Mr. Pharaoh talked about the need for "context sensitive design." [32]

The most important consideration is CONTEXT!! Consider the culture of the local community and area layout – urban grid and connectivity, and competing locations. [33]

These were offered as common traits of walkable communities.

1. Sufficient population (residents or visitors)
2. Street network makes it possible to walk – connected, facilities grouped together
3. Streets designed for people to walk in
   a. Connected
   b. Convenient
   c. Comfortable
   d. Conspicuous – clear to see where you're going
   e. Convivial, friendly

   The street is primary – don't believe otherwise … but discourage car-dominated streets. Use tighter turning circles, low speed design, and design buildings with front doors on the street.
4. People present
   a. Mixed use
   b. Work where they shop
5. People not being in vehicles – get them out of their cars

Bruce Appleyard presented research from *Livable Streets* that illustrates the impact of vehicle traffic on the social interaction of neighbours on the street. He explained that with increased traffic, there were fewer interactions between neighbours.

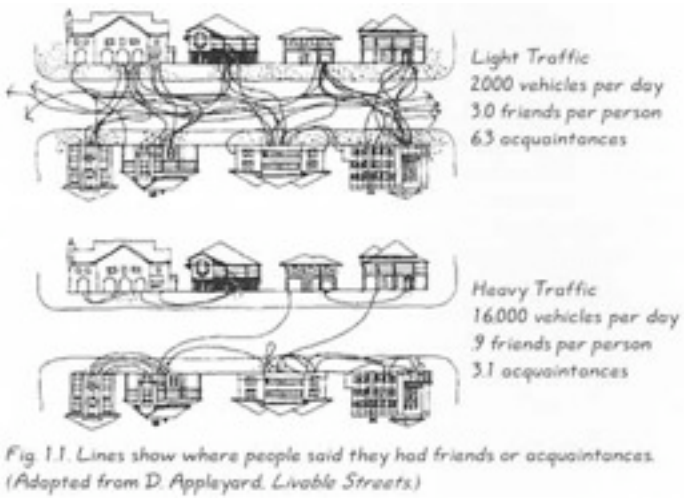


Fig. 1.1. Lines show where people said they had friends or acquaintances. (Adapted from D. Appleyard, Livable Streets.)

Image from Livable Streets by Donald Appleyard, obtained from the livablestreets.com website.

Walkable Communities, Inc website has a complete list of desired traits of walkable communities.

"Walkability Checklist" from San Diego

Urban Sprawl as a Risk Factor in Motor Vehicle Occupant and Pedestrian Fatalities by Reid Ewing, PhD, Richard A. Schieber, MD, MPH and Charles V. Zegeer, MS

"Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people." – Enrique Peñalosa quoted on a wikipedia page

The Mayor Who Wowed the World Urban Forum; Bogota's Enrique Peñalosa's happy 'war on cars.' By Charles Montgomery on the Tyee online magazine

Bruce Appleyard's father, Donald Appleyard wrote a classic public realm planning book titled *Livable Streets*. He continues the legacy by promoting his father's research and ideas.

Traffic's Human Toll reports research conducted in 2005, inspired by Applelyard's 1981 book.

Planners and public officials are burdened with creating 'paradise' – the idea that it is a distant place that you go to – you need lots of highways to get there and parking when you get there, which is a contradiction of paradise.[34]

Accessibility

Jim Walker talked about his experience making the Jubilee Walk in London more accessible. The route was established by the Queen to commemorate her silver jubilee. It connects major cultural and heritage institutions in London.

One challenge was to create interpretative panels to describe and explain the view from different spots. Many different materials, layouts and textures were tested to find out what would work best for people with disabilities in locomotion, sight, hearing, reaching, stretching, dexterity, or learning; e.g. brail, engraved or embossed images, etc.

Walky Talky is a program to be implemented this year that allows pedestrians to phone a special number that describes the space, tells stories or provides background information about the site or view. [35]

Some references suggested by Jim Walker:
Dogrose-trust.org.uk
tfl.gov.uk/walking
jubileewalkway.com
theaccesscompany.com

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY

"Traffic is a social problem, not a design problem." [36] Over the past 30 years, the radius of children's play area has shrunk – this is the "antithesis of progress".[37]

Transportation systems are the strongest influence on public spaces.[38] Research shows that, on interaction between neighbours, the influence of street structure is more important than social structure of the neighbourhood (profile of ages, incomes, race, etc.).[39] Road hierarchies should be scrapped; use social function terminology instead.[40]

If you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic.[41] People make 3 trips per day on average. The challenge is to increase dual or multiple modality. [42] "Promoting walkability is no more anti-car than a healthy diet is anti-food."[43]

Drivers are more careful in streets with diverse uses. As streets became wider, they became less safe. The incidence of fatality goes up 8 times from an increase in vehicle speed from 20m/h to 30m/h on a street. "Encounter zones" or "wonerfs" are streets with 20km/h maximum speed and priority for pedestrians and children's play.[44]

Reorganize sidewalks so pedestrians get priority.[45] Build sidewalks. People are much less likely to walk in areas without connecting sidewalks.[46]

Details are important.[47] Traffic engineer Hans Monderman says, "you can't have anything less than excellence." [48] Even if there's only one small thing wrong, people won't use the route. It might not be a conscious decision, but people will choose to not use the route. [49]

Modest incremental improvement makes a big difference. For example, wheeled luggage is the greatest transportation breakthrough. [50] It allows older people or people with mobility challenges to travel more freely without requiring assistance.

Recent statistics suggest that the novelty of auto use is starting to wear off. The past was about quantity, but the future is about quality of transportation. The past is not the future.

Mental Speedbumps is a book recommended by PPS. It talks about ways of slowing traffic without signs, lines, speedbumps or lights.

Creating Walkable Communities: A Guide for Local Governments

Active Living By Design

Look to Curitiba, Brazil and Bogota, Colombia to learn more about urban planning focused on pedestrian, bicycle, and bus networks:

- Notes on Bogotá vs Curitiba, urban planning research blog entry by Randall Crane, UCLA
- Putting Cars Behind, an article by Enrique Peñalosa on the Gotham Gazette website
- Curitiba's Urban Experiment by Tim Gnatek, PBS Frontline/World Fellow
- Car Free Bogotá: the response to the transportation challenge by Oscar Edmundo Díaz on the New Colonist website

For tips on creating school walking routes, look up bikewalk.org – the National Center for Bicycling and Walking website

Look up Manual for Streets, a book of standards for the UK. Also, the UK Department for Transport page for "sustainable travel", and the UK Department for Transport's advice to local authorities for encouraging walking

Traditional Neighbourhoods

WBC = Walkable Bikeable Communities

Safe and Walkable Communities by Design
Prof. Anne Vernez Moudon, UW

More walking will help
- to improve personal health (incl. mental health)
- to reduce some of the resource consumption (and traffic congestion)
- to mitigate climate change

Latent demand for non-motorized travel (NPTS 1990)
- 27% of auto trips < 1 mile (20 min. walk)
- 40% of auto trips < 2 miles (40 min. walk)

In a usual week:
- 46% to the grocery store,
- 23% to non-fast food restaurants,
- 19% to drug stores.

Research was done to compare the walkability of historic and modern neighbourhoods in Korea and North America.[51]

Higher density, more mixed uses and more connectivity creates a more walkable environment which results in more walking. This is true of neo-traditional neighbourhoods in North America [Ms. Park called them "traditional", but the pictures showed new, modern high-density, podium and tower neighbourhoods].

How does this compare to the historic Seoul neighbourhood? Bukchon is the study example. They used 17 measurable "walkability indicators."

Researchers were very surprised to find the historic neighbourhood less walkable than modern highrise neighbourhoods. Though the modern neighbourhood actually measured more walkable, there is a strong preference for historic streetscapes. The main influences on rates of walking were topography and density of intersections.

Among their conclusions, they found that more serious consideration for seniors is needed and mothers of children walk more in the traditional neighbourhoods. Where do they go? It's different by age: grocery, bus stops, local commercial street.

Land Use

Correlates of Walking for Transportation or Recreation Purposes
Chanam Lee and Anne Vernez Moudon

The closer respondents were to a grocery store, a restaurant, a post office, or a bank, the more likely they were to walk for transportation purposes. This means that these destinations are associated with walking-supportive environments, not that people actually walked to them. Higher parcel-level density was positively associated with the odds of walking frequently for transportation, relative to not walking.

Look up the Victoria Transport Institute's website – vtpi.org

Integrate networks and connect diverse activity nodes. Often the reason for low rates of walking is there is "nowhere to go." Clustering uses in a walkable environment makes using public transit to, from or between those nodes a reasonable option.[52]

The grocery store is the top destination for people walking. Some people will sometimes walk for the sake of walking, but to get more people walking more often, they need to have somewhere to walk to. [53]

Use integrated land use planning. The impacts development plans could have on transportation systems and walkability must be fully thought out and incorporated into the plans.[54]

Cities should find ways to increase the fineness of the network grain.[55] The goal should be mobility – movement accessibility – being able to get services, goods and activities.[56]

Figure 1

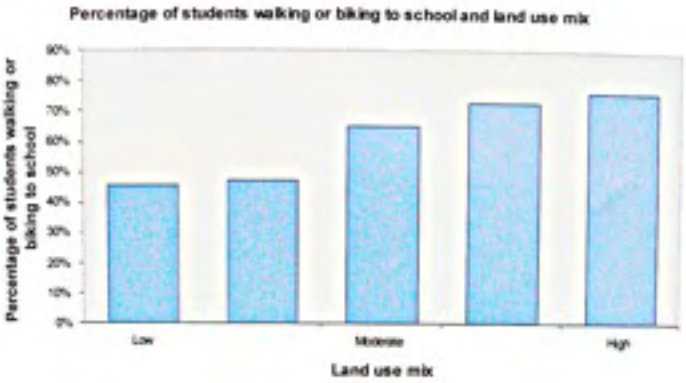
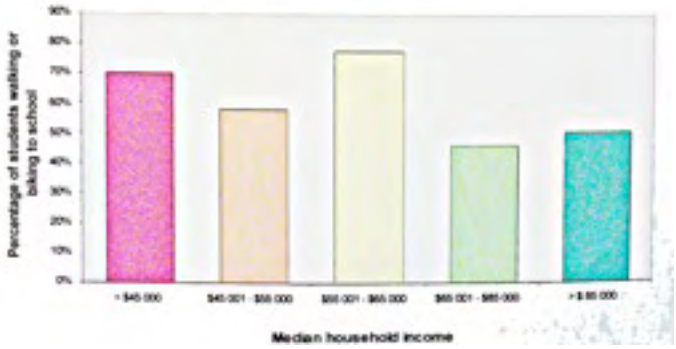


Figure 2



The images on this page are photos from a poster presentation by Jason Gilliland; *These Streets are Made for Walking? Examining the Influence of the Built Environment on the Child's Journey to School*

Analysis suggests that the following variables were significantly correlated with walking or biking: distance from home to school, residential density, land use mix, dwelling density, area household income, lone parenthood, and extent of sidewalks (Table 1). However, results of the logistic regression analysis (Table 2) indicated that gender was the only socio-demographic variable that influenced choice of travel mode; boys were 1.6 times more likely to walk or bike to school than girls. Land use mix was the only significant built environment variable; as mix increased, so did the corresponding odds ratio and probability of walking or biking. As expected, distance between home and school was most important for determining whether a child walks or bikes to school.

This study adds to our understanding of how neighbourhood characteristics influence a child's journey to school. The findings have implications for decisions around the siting of schools, as the mix of land use around school and the distance between home and school are the most important modifiable determinants of active transportation. Furthermore, new strategies to increase physical activity through active transport should consider empowering and targeting girls and their parents.

Look up website for Spatial Metro

Technical University of Delft's website on Spatial Metro

and a powerpoint presentation on a Spatial Metro project

Look up urbanism.nl
– Technical University of Delft's website on Urbanism

It is more important to improve the quality of the current walking experience instead of just quantity – improve the experience for the people already walking. [57]

At the conclusion of the conference, the City of Toronto's poet laureate, Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, noted that he had heard rallying cries to close roads allowing pedestrians to overtake the space. He observed that these words created a negative sentiment and didn't reflect the optimism, community spirit, and constructive intent. He suggested, "don't close the roads, open the streets." [58] Rather than demand that a road be closed to vehicles, ask that the street be opened to pedestrians.

Street Design

A participant and Fred Kent commented on how frustrating it is to be spending lots of money on traffic calming trying to get people to slow down in their own neighbourhood, to not tear through their own neighbourhood.

Typical street design "allows us to be oppressive and the oppression of others increases aggression" The street design should signal to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian priority area – that the use is changing – through signage, bike lanes, sidewalk changes, etc. It will result in changes in driver behaviour.

Report on the Seattle WBC Survey
Philip M. Hurvitz, University of Washington

The three D's of walking – Destination, Distance, and Density – emerge to be the major drivers of walking within one's household neighborhood. Enough specific destinations (most notably a grocery store or market), within a reasonable walking distance (hence density) appear to act as stimulators for walking. Route characteristics, such as the size of street-blocks, and length of sidewalks, are important, but to a lesser degree. Proximity to trails emerges as the strongest single environmental driver for cycling.

He explained that, often, problems were created by transportation engineers by answering a question that is only concerned, or primarily concerned with accommodating vehicle traffic. "You don't solve transportation problems with transportation professionals."

He explained that the time to bring in transportation engineers is after it's known what type of street is desired and have them work as part of a comprehensive design team; define the vision or establish the goals first, then bring in traffic engineers as part of a team to figure out exactly how to implement or achieve it.

Parkway Forest Context Plan for infill and redevelopment of a Don Mills neighbourhood in Toronto

Toronto is working to make 1950s suburbs, such as Don Mills, pedestrian friendly by changing the pattern of network roads and walkways. Definition is often lost in suburbs due to large spaces between buildings. They have reworked the street grid with landowners and ratepayer groups.[59] The result is a neighbourhood plan with a street grid that allows pedestrians easier, shorter routes to transit stops and creates infill opportunities. It is expected to create a greater sense of neighbourhood by making use of large, anonymous tracts of land between

apartment buildings in enhancing its park-like character while also creating new street-facing housing.

Way-Finding

Information must be available at the point of arrival. It should include information about the city, transportation, activities and way-finding. It should use a system of information points and routing orientation. They should be placed at the beginning, along the way, and at the main destination. Maps should be dedicated to each location – facing the direction that the viewer is standing when viewing the map. [60]

Thematic route maps (eg. A folded map for locating businesses) might not be very effective because they don't serve mixed needs and cross purposes. For example, someone might be going shopping but would also be interested in cultural points.

A pedestrian map could indicate the entrances to buildings to help the pedestrian orient themselves or plan their route. A participant noted that the entrance could/ should indicate whether the entrance is accessible to someone using a mobility aid.

PPS presenter Fred Kent has been working with Surrey to improve the public spaces in Whalley. He stayed at the Ocean Promenade on Marine Drive while he was working in Surrey. He was impressed with much of White Rock's waterfront. However, he wondered if there was more further out… more than the waterfront. It wasn't obvious to him that there was an uptown area.

The manager who was responsible for coordinating spectator transportation for the Rolling Stones concert and Pope's visit to Toronto talked about what he learned during the planning and execution of the events.[61]

- People prefer to walk an unencumbered, conflict-free route
- It needs to be obvious where to go
- People would rather walk a long way to a vehicles and leave quickly than sit in a vehicle waiting to get out.

For the concert, all surrounding roads were closed to traffic except transit.

Decision-making was best when decentralized. Task groups were able to respond to issues without working through a remote chain of command.

The spectator's perception of the success of logistics of large events is measured by their egress, not access.

They found that large groups are willing to walk significant distances if routes are clear and direct.

PUBLIC PROCESS

Creating a walkable community is about process. It is NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING!

Throughout the day, PPS repeatedly talked about process – that you can't assume a solution that worked somewhere else will work the same way here, or start with a particular design goal in mind – that the solution depends entirely on the context, the problem and context is best defined by the local businesses or residents or people who use the space, and that the solution should also be found through a process of consultation. They weren't advocating any particular design treatment or method, but rather a public consultation strategy for finding urban design solutions.

Link the goal of walkability with existing programs. Show how being walkable advances or complements other initiatives.[62]

Involve the community upfront to define the problem, define the space.[63]

For example, are you designing *with* people with disabilities or designing *for* them? [64] You can't simulate all these disabilities:

- locomotion,
- seeing,
- hearing,
- reaching, stretching, dexterity, and
- learning.

But even the ones you can, it's just not the same as living with them everyday. Go for a walk with people with disabilities. Ask them to describe their experience as you walk. How are you feeling right now? How could this experience be made better?

A youth design charrette was held while developing the Ontario Growth Plan.[65] Dozens of youth drafted sophisticated growth and revitalization plans for their downtown areas. They demonstrated a keen interest in urban issues and a huge capacity to quickly learn and apply holistic planning principles.

In the City of Greater Sudbury, to plan a more walkable community, 65 people participated in a day-long workshop including councillors, local health agencies, provincial agencies, etc.[66]

One of the methods Leeds University used in a public consultation process was to present hypothetical choices to test stated priorities.[67]

The priority for public process in making a more walkable community should be to

1. involve citizens at each step;
2. place pedestrians at the top of the hierarchy; and
3. narrow the streets, widen the sidewalks [68]

Take the risk of implementing pilot projects and test projects. If there is an idea that sounds like it has potential but doesn't have a precedent, try it. Even if it fails or doesn't work as expected, it can be used as a learning experience. Mr. Egan seemed to suggest that creating change, even if temporary, makes a public space more dynamic; encouraging dialogue and inspiring ideas for its potential, for the possibilities of what a space could become.

Park(ing) Day, a temporary urban park initiative started by Rebar

Cities should be more open to testing things, being innovative, trying on ideas temporarily.[69] Unfortunately, litigation fears are founded and are a good excuse for not being innovative.[70]

"Reductionist planning" results in one solution that creates more problems. Focusing on one problem only, at the expense of all others, risks simply shifting the problem or making things worse in a different way. [71]

"Comprehensive planning" results in win-win solutions. Look for the ideas that solve multiple problems. Look for the problems that might be created incidentally and mitigate or prevent those within the solution.

PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

TS Eliot – "a study of anatomy will not teach you how to make a hen lay eggs."[72]

"Density without design is disaster."[73] Streets should be viewed as social spaces reflecting local distinctiveness, created using quality materials and plantings.[74]

Most cities have basic urban plans. Finish the urban design guidelines and use those to create standards for engineers. Have the design inform the engineering decisions so they have a model or direction to follow.[75]

A plaza needs active edge uses. "Blank walls are an end in themselves. They declare supremacy of the building over the person" [76] Line the edges of open spaces with active uses. This will bring people, activity, and safety to those spaces. [77]

Community Livability; Helping to Create Attractive, Safe, Cohesive Communities is a webpage on the Victoria Transport Policy Institute's Online TDM Encyclopedia with a collection of research, ideas, and tools.

Focus on the details, the nooks and crannies. "Ignore the parking because parking is a symptom."[78]

The Copenhagen experience; What the Pedestrian Wants by Ekim Tan

Cities can achieve big impact for marginal cost, eg. street trees.[79]

comprehensive bibliography of books and reports on pedestrian oriented planning, by David Pritchard

Public priority has been measured for elements or traits that make them feel comfortable or discouraged from walking.[80]

- Cleanliness (dog evidence)
- Safe
- Lighting
- Cyclists
- Connectivity
- Greenery
- Building facing sidewalk

Some standards for supporting walkability:

1. Recommended 3m sidewalk width without obstacles, minimum 2m
2. Pedestrian crossings as straight and direct as possible
3. Visibility between pedestrians and vehicles
4. Way-finding. [81]

Public toilets and benches are essential for creating a walkable street. It makes it accessible to people of all ages and abilities.[82]

Shared space (pedestrian priority street where pedestrians and cars share space) is good but shared surface (no curb on the sidewalk) is dangerous for people who are sight impaired. Blind people want and need a curb. It provides a safe area that they can use with a consistent sense of safety. Even when creating shared space, don't take away the delineation of vehicle versus pedestrian space – safe zones are still needed. [83]

Physical elements used in public space design are
- pavement,
- landscaping, and
- façade rhythm. [84]

These are some recommendations for making streets more livable. [85]

- Create clear and distinct gateways, celebrate entering a neighbourhood.
- Remove curbs
- Provide parking, but minimal parking
- Ensure clear sightlines
- Create outdoor 'living rooms'
- Provide passing bays to allow for cars to pass one another on narrow residential streets
- Have no more than 100 vehicles per hour during peak play period.

Spatial Metro is a strategy to improve city centres for pedestrians by improving routing, intersections, and signage.[81] Planning considers the range of anticipated activities in the space, its physical condition and way-finding.

Parks need to reach out beyond their boundaries. Public parks could have commercial use – more uses in parks gets parks more use, creates more activity, gives reason to be there and stay. Most parks now seem to have "shallow use". The 'no commercial' ideology is not working.[86]

Destinations

Transit needs destinations – routes that are focused on connecting places or destinations – to help shift transportation away from cars.

Suggestions:
- Layer uses to create synergies
- Connect places to create a district
- A district needs 100-1000 things to do
- Things/events need to happen simultaneously (I think he actually meant to say "consecutively") and over time

Power of 10:

- A downtown needs 10+ major places/destinations
- Each neighbourhood needs 10+ places/destinations
- Each place/destination must have 10+ things to do

When asked about the significance of the number 10, he admitted that it was arbitrary. He picked it simply to provide a benchmark goal.

Expectations

It's harder to get places built that are good for walking than to not build places not walkable. It's easier for developers to design to the accepted engineering standards because it's faster – less planning time and less risk in the approvals process, but this discourages innovative design. [87]

Develop a checklist for planners and politicians – key components of walkability. This will help make it very clear and easy to assess how well a proposal supports the goal of a great, walkable community.[88]

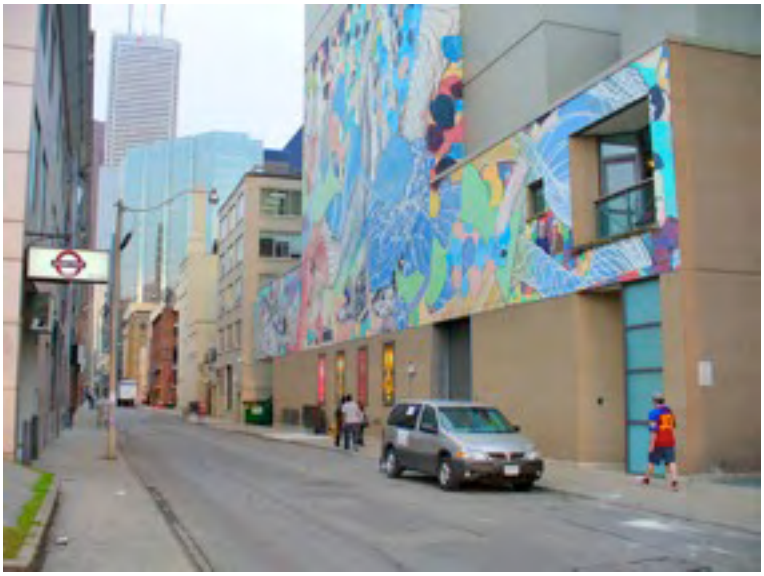
"Developers will do what we ask them to do. But we don't ask them to do enough because we're scared they'll go away."[89]

In response to a question from the audience, Todd Litman replied, "The challenge is to create affordable housing that is not simply discounted because it is so undesirable." A similar challenge exists in encouraging people to choose to walk instead of driving.

Walking Tour Pictures

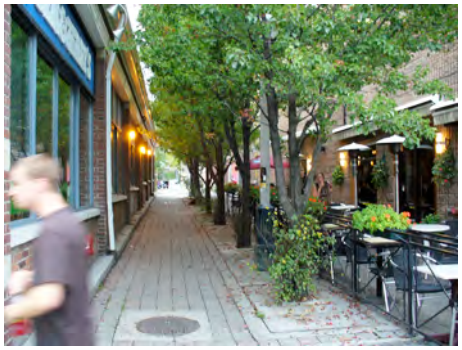
Fred Kent of PPS led a walking tour of several Toronto streets, two parks, and a few lanes. How the spaces were being used, the weaknesses and opportunities of each were discussed. It was very interesting to see how dramatic the difference could be from one block to the next, and especially that the perfect places (meticulously designed and manicured) were actually the more boring streets (and devoid of people).

Note the pedestrian lighting, bike racks, clear walking path. However, the buildings tower over the pedestrian space, the architecture creating an intimidating dominance over the pedestrian experience.



Public art, posters, building entrances draw life into this back lane.

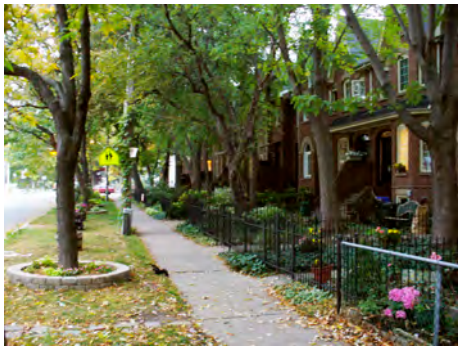
The experience of pedestrians and cyclists does not appear to be a priority at this intersection.



Even a small lane can be a vibrant, useful space. St. Patricks Market and St. Patricks Square are each on either side of a food court building on Queen Street W. They connect a park, restaurants, shops, homes. It is paved with stones, treed, and accommodates restaurant patios.

St. Patricks Market lane from Queen Street W; restaurant to the left, food court to the right, shops down the street on both sides.

intersection of Renfrew Place and St. Patricks Square behind Queen Street W; food court to the left, small park in the middle, homes to right. Huge potential for this small park not realized, possibly as a result of aesthetic design given higher priority than utilitarian reality, and the auto-centric design of many neighbouring residential buildings. It doesn't appear to have been designed with the intention for people to actually use the space.



These two spots are across the street from one another. Neither had any people despite Queen Street W one block away being full of pedestrians. This is a carefully manicured, almost entirely residential street.

Pheobe St at Soho St: very few cars, no pedestrians. Physically very attractive, but too perfect to be comfortable or all that interesting. Also, very few commercial spaces.

Same street as above, just half a block to the east.

Events animate this square at Metro Hall. It is surrounded by offices and two theatres.

A weekly farmer's market draws vendors, people and activity into the space. It's so vast that it feels empty even with a large number of people.

An afternoon walking event brings more people into the square to eat their lunch

The space is dead at night. The occasional people passing through are en route to offices or the two nearby theatres. This space would be much more used with more mixed uses at its edges, i.e. residential and a variety of retail or restaurants.

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