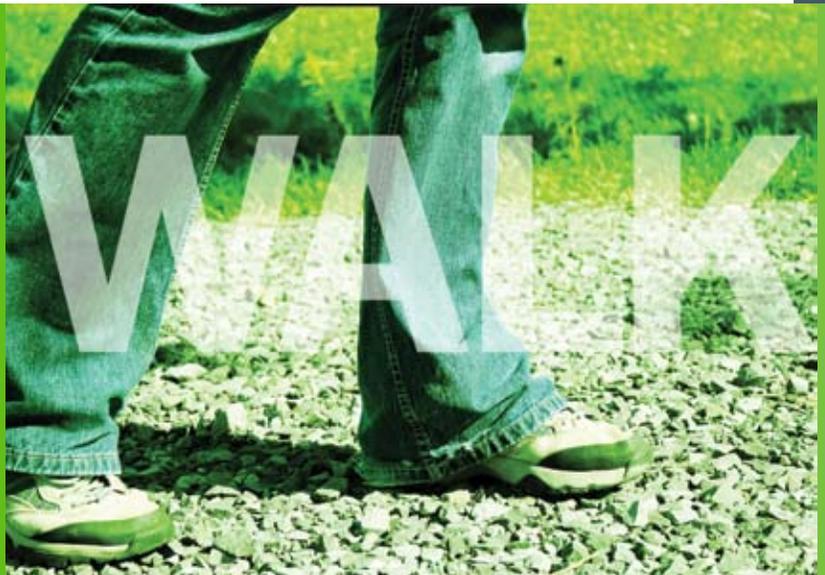


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Walkable Edmonton Toolkit



Welcome to the Walkable Edmonton Toolkit.

Consider this your portal to a wealth of tips, strategies and other information on making life in Edmonton, Alberta more walkable — for you, your family, friends and neighbours.

Here you'll find a menu of advocacy ideas, design concepts and walkability tools, each with links to numerous other resources. You'll discover interesting destinations and group efforts that make walking in Edmonton interesting and fun. You'll learn about civic initiatives that may dovetail with your interests. You'll read success stories that prove you and your community can make a difference.

But first, a note about terms. In this toolkit, the word *walk* means *self-propelled transportation*. So if you propel yourself on foot or by bike, wheelchair, inline skates or skis, this toolkit is for you. Also, if your walkability depends on a guide dog, a white cane, a walker or a stroller, this is for you.

A Walkable Edmonton is a lively and robust place with interesting linkages between attractive places and safe walkways, integrating the built form, land use patterns, public open spaces and streets.

~ Integrated Service Strategy, City of Edmonton
Community Services

Why make Edmonton more walkable?

Walkability adds strength and joy to the very fabric of community life. Out walking, we meet neighbours, get exercise, visit local shops, enjoy nearby public spaces — and discover reasons to want more of each. Out and about in a community we care about, we become a critical mass of “eyes on the street,” enhancing safety and reducing crime. Choosing to walk and bike to work or play or school or church or the store, we help tip the balance away from the polluting, noisy, crash-prone transportation that now dominates our streets. Out walking, we vote with our feet for human-scale, visually pleasing, pedestrian friendly design that, in the end, benefits far more than it costs. In sum, the rewards of walkability reinforce each other in a way that almost miraculously improves quality of life.

Benefits of active transportation

- Least-cost approach to all trips that do not involve carrying large or heavy loads.
- Minimally impacts other travelers.
- Imposes no environmental costs, such as air pollution or depletion of resources.
- Improves health and fitness.
- Increases social interaction and enhances community well being.
- Sparks the community vitality needed to attract business and tourism.
- Improves overall quality of life.

Investment in physical activity is “today’s best buy in public health.

~ Professor Jeremy Morris, leading UK researcher

Design for walkability

What is it about a place that encourages us to walk, bike, skate and use other non-motorized ways of getting around? Experience in Europe and more recently in North America tells us the following design characteristics are key to streets that work not only for motorized vehicles but for pedestrians, cyclists (see Biking Edmonton) and others who choose active transportation. As a bonus, these same characteristics reap big benefits in quality of life. Find out more by exploring the following sections:

- Key ingredients in walkable design
 - o Direct routes
 - o Connectivity
 - o Calm traffic
 - o Safe street crossings
 - o Mixed-use and density
 - o Visual interest, amenities & destinations
 - o Transit links
 - o Accessibility
 - o Personal security
- Successes in walkable design
- Resources for walkable design

Until we build truly walkable places, we cannot begin to succeed with transit, ride sharing, van pooling and other transportation alternatives.

~ Integrated Service Strategy, City of Edmonton
Community Services

Advocating for a more walkable city

Urban design in the motorized age has put low priority on pedestrian needs. Yet we’re all pedestrians, for every trip begins and ends on foot — and the more self-propelled we make the steps in between, the healthier we’ll be. Key to walkability in 21st century Edmonton will be opening eyes to our common status as pedestrians whose lives would all be improved by planning that gives walking due respect. Find out more about civic initiatives in this section:

- Ten steps to walkability
- Edmonton success stories
- Advice from advocates
- Advocacy resources

A Walkable Edmonton is a vibrant, safe and healthy community where citizens of all ages can enjoy walking in safety in their neighbourhoods, parks, trails and business districts.

~ Walkable Edmonton



Civic support for walkability

Hearing strong community desire for walkability, City Council has endorsed particular focus on this aspect of urban life. Recently launched initiatives such as Walkable Edmonton, Smart Choices, the Planning Academy and Community Traffic Management Plans are helping to put that intent into action. Staff involved may be able to offer advice and assistance as you act on your own concerns. Find out more about civic initiatives in this section.

- Walkable Edmonton
- Smart Choices
- Planning Academy
- Community Transportation Planning
- Community Traffic Management Plans
- Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee
- Multi-use Trail Corridor Network
- Intersection Safety Initiatives
- Urban Parks Management Plan
- Crime Prevention Safety Audits
- Safedmonton

The initiatives that will arise from the Smart Choices recommendations are designed to sustain Edmontonians' quality of life and ultimately change Edmonton's urban landscape.

~ Smart Choices www.edmonton.ca/SmartChoices



Cycling Edmonton

Biking, inline skating and other means of wheeled self-propulsion are energizing, healthful, low-cost and good for the environment. Discover what's available for cyclists in Edmonton, Alberta's capital city.

We walk/run/bike/take the bus so that we don't have to drive, to avoid frustration and additional expense. And we live close to where we work and play, so we can do that. It is a certain way of looking at the world; I find it more relaxing.

~ Kirsten Ketilson, Edmonton resident

Destinations

Destinations give us reasons to walk. We hope the following short list of Edmonton destinations will inspire you to build an even richer storehouse of purposeful, rejuvenating walks.

- Art walks
- Heritage walks
- Guided tours & events
- Walking, running, cycling trails
- Scenic walks beyond Edmonton

Group ventures

Walking in a group offers companionship, motivation and the security of numbers. Longer term, walking groups add to the glue that helps communities weather the tough times and celebrate the good.

- Finding buddies
- Forming a walking club
- Existing groups in Edmonton
- Events for walkers
- Workplace walking
- Group ventures around the world

Let's Walk to School!

Walking to school: once the norm, now it's the exception. Yet experts point out that reviving the walk or bike to school offers many benefits, including improved health — for those who do it and for the environment. Find out how schools, parents, advocacy groups, police officers and civic staff are banding together to create safe and active routes to school.

Why do I walk? I feel healthier, physically; it loosens up my muscles. And emotionally, it reduces my stress.

Spending time outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine is a nice change of scenery.

As well, it makes me feel refreshed and more energetic.

~ Krystyna Cebula, Edmonton, an avid walker

Health through walking

A crisis of obesity and sedentary living, coupled with the reality that more than three-quarters of deaths result from diseases related to those risks, recently prompted Canada's health ministers to double our nation's healthy living targets. As a nation, we are now seeking a 20 per cent increase by 2015 in the proportion of citizens who are physically active, eat healthy and are at healthy body weights. For adults, that means accumulating at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week; for children, at least an hour most days. Walking, biking and other self-propelled transportation are excellent ways to get active — and cheaper by far than either driving or getting sick.

Resource portals for active living:

- **Active Edmonton** is a great place to turn for all sorts of resources, contests and other incentives for upping your activity quotient. Its aim? To make Edmonton Canada's most active city. www.activeedmonton.com, (780) 448-4555.
- **Alberta Centre for Active Living** supports active living efforts with an excellent searchable website, library and links to many resources about walking and walkability. www.centre4activeliving.ca, (780) 427-6949
- **Canadian Health Network** provides excellent, accurate, web-based health information thanks to a dynamic and comprehensive network that includes the Public Health Agency of Canada as well as nonprofits, universities, hospitals, libraries and community organizations. The Alberta Centre for Active Living is the network's active living affiliate. www.canadian-health-network.ca
- **Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy** sets the dramatic goal of 20 per cent improvement in activity levels. Approved by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Health October 2005, available at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hl-vs-strat.

Adults spend more than 10 hours a week traveling, more than ever before... small shifts in travel modes noticeably alter energy expenditure.

~ Roland Sturm, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, February 2005





Design for Walkability

What makes a city walkable?
What is it about a place that encourages us to walk, bike, skate and use other self-propelled ways of getting around?

Traffic engineers have precise formulas to compute the Level of Service (LOS) provided by a street and roadway system, but those formulas focus on cars, not people. Fortunately, a new formula is evolving that puts pedestrians back in the picture. Although the experts are still debating the specifics of this Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS), planners in Europe and more recently in North America tell us that paying attention to pedestrians and cyclists (see Biking Edmonton) can reap big benefits in quality of life. Key design ingredients that make a place walkable:

- Direct routes
- Connectivity
- Calm traffic
- Safe street crossings
- Mixed-use and density
- Visual interest, amenities & destinations
- Transit links
- Accessibility
- Personal safety

Excellent urban design will do wonders to get people to walk the streets. Think 104 Street downtown. I know several people who go out of their way to walk down that street when going home.

~ Shafraaz Kaba, Manasc Isaac Architects





Key Ingredients In Walkable Design

Direct routes

We're much more likely to walk if we can find a route that takes us directly where we want to go. A circuitous route that adds length and time, by contrast, tempts us to hop in the car and drive. The grid street pattern found in our oldest neighbourhoods is ideal for providing directness, while the curvilinear and cul de sac designs of newer neighbourhoods often result in circuitous, disorienting routes. To determine directness, compare actual direct distances and walking distances to and between key destinations such as transit stops, schools, parks, commercial areas or activity areas. Pedshed mapping is a useful tool for this comparison.

Tony Hiss's book *The Experience of Place* explores how people look ahead to orient themselves: "We let the layout of a place give us an advance reading on such things as whether we can linger there or need to keep on moving" — if your visual signals are blocked you won't proceed.

~ www.pps.org

Connectivity

Gaps in the sidewalk network discourage walking, particularly when those missing sidewalks force us to walk unsafely in the street. All streets should have sidewalks and bikeways that link users with likely destinations, both for recreation and for school or work. Wherever a sidewalk line is interrupted, even by something as inviting as a park, adding a connecting segment encourages increased use. Connectivity with the transit network is also very important, since transit users become pedestrians at both ends of every trip.

To assess connectivity, follow each likely pedestrian route and identify any gaps. Check whether sidewalks exist along one or both sides of the street and whether the network is visually connected, so pedestrians can see where paths continue ahead of them. Note whether sidewalks continue all the way to business doors. Be sure that routes to transit stops are reasonably direct, and that transit itself provides the connections needed to encourage walking. Community Transportation Planning can provide plan sheets showing where sidewalks exist, a useful tool for this assessment.

Think of a pedestrian or bicycle trip as a chain of many small but essential links: sidewalks, curb ramps, driveway, parking lot and street crossings. To encourage active transportation, each link needs to be in place and functional.

Road accidents represent the most underestimated risk that people are exposed to in everyday life.

~ Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario, 2005



Calm traffic

As streets get wider and carry more traffic at higher speeds, people avoid walking nearby, feeling distracted by the noise, dwarfed and unsafe. Yet pedestrians add the lively bustle that makes a city great and knits a neighbourhood together. *Traffic calming* balances vehicular and pedestrian uses, improving safety for both pedestrians and drivers by compelling those at the wheel to drive slowly and carefully. Developed in Europe and used successfully in hundreds of North American cities, traffic calming combines design strategies such as the following to change how people drive:

- **Road diet.** Shrink the width and/or number of lanes and use the freed space for left-hand turners, cyclists, bus pull-outs, broader sidewalks and landscaping. When a road is reduced to two lanes, traffic slows to the pace set by prudent drivers, enhancing safety. Putting a road on a diet can add rather than subtract from carrying capacity by allowing cars to travel closer together, separating out uses and allowing pedestrians to cross faster.
- **Enhanced sidewalks.** All sidewalks should be a comfortable width for two people to walk beside or pass each other — even wider in high-use areas. Use tree boulevards or other buffers to separate walkers from traffic. Extend the sidewalk into the street to deflect through traffic, shorten the crossing distance, add safe crossing spots, define parking bays and make laneways more visible. Various called bulbs, chokers and neckdowns, sidewalk extensions also provide space for amenities such as kiosks, trees and lighting.
- **Sharper corners.** A sharper corner radius shortens a pedestrian's crossing distance and slows turning cars. Tighter turns also improve the sight distance between approaching motorists and pedestrians, increase the waiting area available to pedestrians and simplify curb ramp design.
- **Crossing island.** Raised spots in the middle of the street slow cars and give pedestrians a safe haven while crossing. Ideally, islands are angled so that pedestrians look squarely into the eyes of oncoming motorists. Landscaped, they also add beauty to the street.
- **Roundabout.** Traffic circles funnel traffic through intersections without the somewhat arbitrary stop and go required by traffic lights and stop signs.
- **Mini circle.** This smaller version of the roundabout, ideally landscaped for beauty and visibility, slows traffic on residential streets.
- **Roadway surface treatment.** Road humps, speed tables, cushions and other roadway surface treatments slow drivers down at intersections, near schools and in other critical spots.
- **Angled and chicane parking.** Shifting parking from one side of the street to the other and/or alternating parallel with angled parking forces traffic to slow. Angled parking also can benefit nearby businesses by increasing parking capacity.
- **Two-way streets.** Eliminating one-way streets can reduce confusion, provide more direct access to destinations, cut down unnecessary turns and lower overall speed. One way streets can also be used as a traffic calming tool depending on the situation.

Calmed traffic encourages people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play, shop and even work alongside cars, without being dominated by them. Such streets are also safer for drivers, while barely increasing vehicular travel time. Ideally, traffic calming projects involve citizens and include a complete design and landscaping package that improves both aesthetics and livability. Numerous websites offer more detail about traffic calming, including www.pps.org and www.walkable.org. See Design Resources for more.

Traffic calming can yield some significant safety benefits. Curb extensions in Vancouver reduced crashes by 75 per cent and narrowing streets reduced crashes by 74 per cent.

~ Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design, www.bikewalk.org

It is far easier to get people to act differently by redesigning their environment rather than by persuading them with exhortation and even penalties.

~ David Sucher, City Comforts, www.citycomforts.com

Safe street crossings

The Achilles heels of pedestrian networks are the places where pedestrians need to cross streets. Collisions pitting pedestrians and vehicles are frequent and potentially deadly, particularly when cars are going fast. The traffic calming strategies noted above can significantly enhance crossing safety. Enforcement and education, including such habits as “point, pause, proceed,” are also important. In addition, some intersections may benefit from crosswalk markings, electronic signals, more lighting or cleared sightlines (e.g., by eliminating bushes and parking near intersections). Community Transportation Planning works with neighbourhoods each year to determine whether changes are needed to enhance pedestrian safety.

The most dramatic impact on traffic of all is the zoned separation of activities. Many people can no longer live, play, work and shop at walkable distances.

~ Dan Burden, Building Communities with Transportation, www.walkable.org



Mixed-use and density

In the last half century, we’ve segregated land uses across a sprawled city, separating where we live from where we work, shop and go to school. Activities that once sent us to the corner store, such as finding a tool or getting groceries or playing hockey, now take us farther afield — by car. Shops, businesses and recreation facilities have evolved to serve motorists while increased traffic makes those places harder for pedestrians (and even cars) to reach. Compact “urban villages,” by contrast, encourage walking by putting likely destinations in close proximity. High-demand uses are concentrated around a core that has the residential density needed for those businesses to thrive. Buildings hug the street and open to the street rather than turning their backs on the street or sitting behind asphalt parking lots. Basic park and recreation facilities and sports are available in every neighbourhood, and other facilities are easily accessible by transit. In such inviting, mixed use areas, people can — and do — take self-propelled routes to work, schools, playgrounds and shopping. Reduced parking demand opens more space for greenery, trees, benches, sidewalk cafes and other inviting amenities. With more eyes on the street people feel safer, which in turn encourages walking for both business and pleasure.

People are very rapidly learning the health message. Unfortunately our city has been built in opposition to this principle. Every opportunity to consolidate and tighten the city and enhance alternatives to the car must be seized.

~ David J. Parker, Edmonton

Visual interest, amenities and destinations

The quality of our environment strongly influences whether we choose to walk. Routes that are pleasing, offer activities along the way and/or lead to interesting destinations receive much more use than stark, uninviting, aimless routes. Sidewalks that are well maintained and include seating, rest rooms, trash receptacles, drinking fountains and bicycle parking invite use, in contrast to sidewalks that are cracked, heaving, ice-covered and/or featureless. Destinations that invite walking include local stores, parks, libraries, coffee shops, sports, artistic and other events and public gathering spots. Project for Public Spaces defines these “good places” as safe, clean, attractive and easy to access spots that offer a range of things to do and, most importantly, invite people to connect. For tips on creating good places that help to knit neighbourhoods together, see www.pps.org.

Books offering thoughtful design ideas for creating “good spaces”:

- City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village, by planner/developer David Sucher
- People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Spaces, Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis, ed.
- City: Rediscovering the Centre, urbanologist William Whyte

Good details can tantalize — they signal that someone took the time and energy to design amenities that welcome, intrigue, or help.

~ Project for Public Spaces, www.pps.org

Land uses pedestrians like:

- Storefronts
- Porches
- Walls with windows
- Landscaped yards

Land uses pedestrians don't like:

- Garage doors
- Blank walls
- Open parking lots
- Unbuffered parking structures
- Too many driveways
- Open service areas

Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design, www.bikewalk.org/PubHealth.htm



Transit links

Transit and walking (or biking) can combine to offer an efficient, economical, less polluting alternative to the automobile. To attract use, transit must be frequent and take people where they want to go. Users need conveniently located transit stops, easy to find and accessible via pleasant, direct routes that avoid unsafe street crossings. Ideally, those stops add synergy to already lively spots, offering shelter and other attractive amenities. Dedicated lanes that help transit move faster than other traffic and sidewalk extensions that provide safe pickup bays also encourage transit use.

There are many, many towns and cities in Europe and Asia where essentially, the car is a purely inconvenient form of transportation. Walkability has been part of many European/Asian cities for centuries!

~ Shafraaz Kaba

Accessibility

The City of Edmonton dedicates money each year to adding ramped curbs and audible signals. Ramped curbs are essential for wheelchairs and other wheeled vehicles while making sidewalks easier to navigate for children, seniors and everyone else. Audible signals help those who cannot see by signaling when to cross the street. New audible signals typically follow routes used by nearby residents who depend on such signals. The CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) helps to orient users to the signals. Curb ramps are required in all new areas, following standards developed with ongoing input from the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities. Older neighbourhoods gain ramps during larger rehabilitation projects, to accommodate low floor buses and/or in response to requests.

Inquiries: Community Transportation Planning, (780) 496-1795, email transplanning@edmonton.ca

Personal security

Pedestrians require a sense that their surroundings are safe. Key security considerations include lines of sight that allow walkers to see and be seen, separation from vehicles, calm traffic and well-lighted pathways. People hesitate to walk through a park that is hidden from the street, poorly lit or across a dangerous street. Parents hesitate to let their children bike to school, walk to the store or play outside if they sense a neighbourhood is unsafe. Communities can play a significant role in improving safety. Made-in-Edmonton audit guides are available that use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to help identify and address specific safety concerns such as poor sightlines due to overgrown shrubbery or low lighting.

Contact: (780) 496-4999, email safedmonton@edmonton.ca

Resolution of safety is paramount to people walking, particularly alone.

~ Karen Lee, Community Services, City of Edmonton





Successes In Walkable Design

Part of what we've done is to engineer an epidemic of obesity. I would hope we could engineer ourselves out of this as well."

~ Katrina Hedberg, State of Oregon Health Division

Downtown Edmonton: Walk-through community garden

Edmonton's downtown residents created a community garden at Bellamy Hill and 98 Avenue. Rather than fencing the gardens, as often occurs, they maintained the natural walking path through the garden, inviting non-gardeners to explore the space.

Contact: (780) 423-2285 ext 134, email beverlyzubot@operamail.com

This community garden is truly a people friendly space, day and night, summer and winter.

~ Beverly Zubot, City of Edmonton

Edmonton Railtown: Ribbon of Steel

A former CP Rail line running north from Edmonton's High Level Bridge opened in 2003 as Ribbon of Steel, a multi-use trail with landscaping, lighting, rest areas and interpretive features. This new linear park connects two busy areas of the city, the University of Alberta and the downtown core. It also connects with the Edmonton Radial Railway Society's summer streetcar service to busy Old Strathcona.

Contact: (780) 496-1795, email transplanning@edmonton.ca

This route was possible in the past, but never so pleasing or safe as it feels today. It has my vote.

~ Greg Macintyre, Edmonton, about the Ribbon of Steel

Strathcona County: Centre in the Park

This pedestrian friendly, environmentally sustainable, mixed use community brings a traditional main street atmosphere to Sherwood Park just east of Edmonton. The development mixes retail shops and professional offices with homes for young professionals, active adults, life lease and assisted living. Located at Festival Way and Sherwood Drive, Centre in the Park gives this bedroom community a focal point.

Contact: www.cdllhomes.com, (780) 410-0004

City of Vancouver: Avoiding new bridges

Vancouver's new Downtown Transportation Plan, approved in 2002, moves toward a more balanced transportation system that increases choice (particularly for transit users, cyclists and pedestrians) without increasing the number of lanes over bridges leading downtown. Recommended pedestrian enhancements on high-use streets include these:

- wider sidewalks and street furniture;
- corner bulges and some mid-block crossings;
- improved pedestrian lighting;
- enhanced weather protection;
- curb ramps;
- fewer pedestrian holds (advance right-turns for cars);
- improved crosswalk design and/or width.

Contact: (604) 873-7788, email downtown_transportation@city.vancouver.bc.ca, www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/dtp

Community retrofits across Canada

Go for Green [www.goforgreen.ca] lists the following success stories in *Retrofitting Communities for Sustainable and Healthy Active Transportation*, one of its many excellent resources.

- **Suburban Saanich** on Vancouver Island uses dedicated bridges and exclusive rights of way to link the community. It also redesigned a new road from a typical four-lane to a two-lane with bike lanes.
- **Ottawa/Hull** gives pedestrians and cyclists special access along its network of recreational pathways, exempting them from no-turn and no-entry signs at many points.
- **City of Toronto** has calmed traffic by raising and narrowing the road at strategic points. Speeds have dropped as much as 15 kilometres an hour, yet drivers take only eight seconds more to traverse four blocks.
- **University of Ottawa** will eliminate parking stalls, make the campus more pedestrian/cycle friendly and “green vertically” with ivy and tree-lined walks. Pedway and transit connections are essential to the plan.
- **Downtown Moncton** is gaining Urban Village vitality with a refurbished main street that sports wider sidewalks, trees, furniture, granite curbs, fewer traffic lanes street closures and more.
- **Oakridge Centre in Vancouver** is undergoing a rebirth from 1960s shopping mall to a community centre offering public meeting rooms, a library, senior apartments, a condominium and offices as well as shops.

Kansas City, Missouri: Walkability becomes the norm

Kansas City, Missouri adopted a comprehensive Walkability Plan in 2003 that requires a pedestrian impact analysis of every development review involving a traffic study. Resulting shifts in building placement, prior to construction, are improving the connectivity of the sidewalk network. Citizen surveys, coupled with a citywide analysis, have helped planners prioritize improvements in existing neighbourhoods by highlighting the destinations pedestrians most want to reach. Neighbourhoods conducting surveys have gained an advantage in competing for public improvement funds generated by a quarter percent sales tax.

Walkability Plan and Neighborhood Walking Survey: www.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability

Portland, Oregon is another great example. It even has free transit in its downtown core, as well as preferred “car-pool/hybrid car” parking!

~ Shafraaz Kaba, Manasc Isaac Architects



Resources For Walkable Design

Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming

613-736-1350, ext 236,
publications@tac-atc.ca

Strategies for calming traffic, produced by Transportation Association of Canada.

Community Design Fact Sheets for Safe Streets and Healthy Communities

www.lgc.org

Produced by Local Government Commission, respected non-profit centre promoting livable cities.

Direct URL: lgc.org/freepub/land_use/factsheets/safety_and_health.html

Fitting Places: How the Built Environment Affects Active Living and Active Transportation

www.goforgreen.ca/at/Eng/resources/Fitting_Places.aro

Discussion paper intended as a bridge between policy makers and citizens.

“How Can I Find and Help Build a Walkable Community”

www.walkable.org/article1.htm

Dan Burden essay and other resources in his excellent website, www.walkable.org

Implementing Pedestrian Improvements at the Local Level

www.bikewalk.org/pedestrian_guide.htm

Solutions to typical problems confronting pedestrians and governments working to improve conditions for walking.

Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design

www.bikewalk.org/PubHealth.htm, Available at Alberta Centre for Active Living, ID#825

Strategies for envisioning and working toward Active Community Environments: community audits, sidewalk standards, crossing improvements, bicycle friendly streets, trails, traffic calming, safe routes to school and more.

LEED-ND: LEED standards for Neighborhood Development

www.usgbc.org

Expansion of LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design), a respected international standard, to encompass neighbourhood developments. Setting expectations for such aspects as compact design, proximity to transit, mixed use and pedestrian friendly design, LEED-ND has potential to become a tangible incentive for creating more walkable neighbourhoods.

Direct URL: [www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148&"\]](http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148&)

Planning and Designing the Physically Active Community Resource List

www.planning.org/physicallyactive/pdf/ReferenceList.pdf

Excellent roundup of resources compiled by the American Planning Organization as part of a larger project to encourage changes to the built environment that will promote physical activity as a means of improving health.

Promoting Sustainable Transportation Through Site Design

www.cite7.org/Technical_Projects/sitedesignreview.htm

Guide produced by Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers to help policy-makers and professionals preparing and reviewing development proposals incorporate features that make sites more accessible to travel modes other than the single-occupant vehicle. The guide also identifies a range of supporting policies and actions agencies can introduce to foster sustainable transportation.

Retrofitting communities for sustainable and healthy active transportation

Available at Alberta Centre for Active Living, ID#807, or order from www.goforgreen.ca

Concrete suggestions for retrofitting communities for walking, cycling and other non-motorized travelers. Includes useful diagrams and examples of traffic calming, improved street crossings, safe sidewalks, pedestrian continuity, less invasive parking, bikeways, community planning, retrofitting strip malls, integrating transit, serving populations less apt to drive and enhancing security.

Many Canadians want to do something for the environment, want to walk or cycle more, and want to use their cars less. But most of the communities we have been building for the past 40 years do not provide these opportunities because they are dependent on one mode of transportation — the automobile.

~ Retrofitting communities for sustainable and healthy active transportation, www.goforgreen.ca.

What should change?

Go for Green advocates community planning scaled to humans rather than machines, guided by the following principles:

- Streets belong to all the people and shall not be usurped for the passage and storage of motor vehicles.
- People have the right to walk and cycle in safety; that means ample provision for bikeways and sidewalks.
- People shall be free from the heavy burden of daily travel by having the opportunity to live near their places of work.
- People shall have the right to breathe clean air as they walk, cycle, wheel.
- People shall have the right to experience trees and plants for shade, buffer and visual interest.

Retrofitting communities for sustainable and healthy active transportation, www.goforgreen.ca

Typical strip malls stand far back from the street, fronted by parking. Turn the mall into a walkable main street by building storefronts up to the sidewalk and ensuring access by foot and bicycle.

Street Design

www.lgc.org/transportation/street.html

Numerous useful resources posted by the Local Government Commission to help governments, community leaders and citizens take a fresh look at planning with the aim of more livable and resource-efficient land-use patterns. See especially two guides written by walkability expert Dan Burden: *Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhood and Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: The Citizen's Guide to Traffic Calming*.

Traffic calming... for communities.

www.ite.org/traffic/tcstate.htm

A portion of the Institute of Transportation Engineers website devoted to traffic calming. Includes downloadable documents such as *Traffic Calming: State of the Practice* plus links to communities that have initiated traffic calming projects.

Why People Don't Walk and What City Planners Can Do About It

www.lgc.org/freepub/land_use/factsheets/plan_to_walk.html

Contrasting photographs show ways to remove common barriers to walking to create more livable communities.

We need to adopt systems thinking and changes to undo the damage our built environment has already done. But the underlying idea is, in fact, a simple one, one that we all learned in kindergarten — we humans work and live better when we have the opportunity to play, run around, have fun, and be outdoors with people we like.

~ Richard Jackson, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, February 2005



Advocating for Walkability

So you want to make your block, or your neighbourhood, or your city more walkable — friendlier for walking, biking, strollers, wheelchairs and any other people-powered movement you can envision. You want inviting places to roam and explore, places made safe by design and by the sheer number of people out and about. You want nearby shops, services and other destinations that make it easy to leave the car at home when shopping. How can you turn that vision into reality?

Seeing much that needs to be done, you may feel overwhelmed. But you don't need to tackle the entire city at once. Small, local improvements are often much easier to implement than changes to an entire network. What's more, the City of Edmonton is already showing civic support for walkability through numerous initiatives. Perhaps your most difficult decision will be where to plug in and whether to serve as catalyst, organizer, leader, trench worker or a combination of all.

Recognize from the outset that you can't work in isolation. Making change requires many people and groups representing diverse disciplines. Champions for walkability need passion and a cohesive vision, plus the patience to consult with neighbours and other stakeholders at each step of the way. This route may feel circuitous sometimes, but it's the best way to make lasting change. The more we listen to each other, respect divergent viewpoints, seek consensus and work together, the more we can accomplish.

Think of each small change as part of a time-release treatment that eventually will provide people with widespread opportunities to be more physically active. And realize that it's unlikely to happen without you.

~ Increasing Physical Activity through community Design, www.bikewalk.org/PubHealth.htm

Ten steps to walkability

1. Organize for advocacy. Find like-minded citizens who share your passion and commit to working together, perhaps through your community league or other active neighbourhood group. Advocating as an organized group increases your credibility, energy and staying power. It also clarifies the communication lines with City Hall.

Case in point: Communities seeking a Community Traffic Management Plan to address traffic volumes, short-cutting and other such issues are more apt to be selected if they have formed a community transportation committee.

2. Invite widespread participation. Build community ownership for a walkable neighbourhood by inviting all who live and work there to participate in evaluating current conditions and envisioning what could be. Some Edmonton neighbourhoods have done this through design charrettes, hands-on workshops complete with community walkabouts (see step 3) and opportunities for citizens to plot out specific improvements using maps and photos supplied by City staff. Such events also provide excellent opportunities to augment and solidify the advocacy team.

Useful tools: A rich resource for planning charrettes is the website of Dan Burden, a U.S.-based walkability expert who has led several charrettes with Edmonton neighbourhoods. www.walkable.org

3. Do a community walkabout. Several Edmonton neighbourhoods have discovered the value of walking purposefully through the community, auditing its walkability. Invite councillors, civic staff, neighbourhood leaders, business owners and citizens of all ages and abilities to join the walkabout, making sure to include some wheelchairs and/or strollers. End the walkabout with opportunity to reflect on findings and discuss next steps.

Useful tools: Walkabout Audit, Pedshed Mapping, Walkable Edmonton
www.edmonton.ca/walkableedmonton

4. Shop for the best strategies. Listen to advocates with frontline experience, check what's already happening in Edmonton and browse a few of the web resources posted by consultants, organizations and cities that have taken significant steps toward walkability. What approaches worked for them? What didn't work? What tools and strategies did they develop and/or use?



5. Develop a vision & doable plan. Create a shared vision of the walkable neighbourhood you'd all like to live in, then itemize the changes needed to make that future come true. Perhaps you'll focus on certain concerns, such as the need for ramped sidewalks or safer crossings or reduced traffic impact. Perhaps you want to oppose a development that runs counter to walkability principles. Perhaps you envision numerous improvements all throughout the community. Perhaps you see a need for changes to civic codes and bylaws. Prioritize your goals, map out a timetable and determine who will take the lead in pushing the plan forward.

Many people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility.

To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility. When there are no safe, accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog or ride a bike that is a community responsibility.

~ David Satcher, Surgeon General, Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001

6. Look for allies. What other groups might share your specific walkability concerns and willingly work with you? Possibilities include area schools, senior centres, local shops, community leagues, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, revitalization zones, environmental and other advocacy groups, universities, design professionals, other Alberta cities. The media also can be important allies or at least conduits, helping to communicate or champion key concerns.

7. Work with city staff. Get to know the staff with appropriate expertise and ask for a specific outline of the steps needed to make the changes you'd like to see. What are the opportunities? For example, could your request be incorporated into work already planned for your neighbourhood? What are the barriers? Wherever feasible, tap civic expertise as your team plans its next steps. Staff may already have crucial traffic, safety or social data regarding your neighbourhood, for example, or may have the ability to help you collect that information.

Places to start:

- Contact Walkable Edmonton and Smart Choices for the latest news about civic support for walkability
- You'll find planners whose work affects walkability in Transportation Planning [(780) 496-1795 or transplanning@edmonton.ca], Asset Management – Parks [(780) 496-4999], and Planning & Development [(780) 496-6063 or smartchoices@edmonton.ca.]
- Community Recreation Coordinators can connect you to lead players within the City system as well as in your own neighbourhood. Call (780) 496-4999 and ask who serves your area.
- The Citizen Action Centre, (780) 496-8200, email cacentre@edmonton.ca, the City's central information line, can also help find the people you need.

Resource: *Community Consultation in the Planning and Development Process: A Guide For Edmonton* has excellent tips, contacts and strategies for being involved in planning and developing our city. An initiative of the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, online at www.efcl.org/resources_for_leagues/consultation_handbook.asp

8. Seek funding. Attach cost estimates to your priority projects and look for funding and/or people willing to donate time and expertise. Recognize that funds are limited, competition can be fierce and projects are often planned years in advance. Look for opportunities to piggyback on existing plans, for example by incorporating a bike lane into a street repaving or by ensuring that a new subdivision is thoroughly walkable from the start.

The projects that have long-term champions are the ones that get implemented.

~ Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design, www.bikewalk.org

9. Involve City Councillors. Your elected representatives can serve as valuable allies, opening doors to civic staff and beyond. Besides contacting your ward councillors, ask who holds the portfolio focused on walkability and connect with that person.

Useful contacts: www.edmonton.ca
(click on “meet City Council”)

Walkability is key to both revitalizing our original neighbourhoods and preventing urban sprawl. I envision an Edmonton where all citizens can walk to the store for milk, bread, books and other necessities of life — meeting people they know along the way.

~ Councillor Janice Melnychuk, Neighbourhood Revitalization Portfolio

10. Be persistent. Through such initiatives as Smart Choices and Walkable Edmonton, the City of Edmonton is publicly committed to walkability as a key design goal. Although budget constraints often limit what can be done, prudent persistence from communities can help accelerate the paradigm shift to pedestrian friendly design. Even when progress seems slow, stick with it! If your project is not selected the first time around, don't despair; plans do change. When your project is approved and funded, keep in touch with the project manager and visit the site to ensure that decisions made in the field are consistent with original goals.

11. Celebrate success. When your community becomes more walkable, be generous in your thanks and vocal in your praise. Celebrate and publicize what you've accomplished! Salute the staff and take care of the volunteers involved. Use this success as a springboard to an even more walkable community, and take pride in joining the worldwide movement toward a saner, healthier pace of life.



Edmonton Success Stories

Safe Streets Strathearn

The Strathearn Traffic Safety Committee tapped a grant from the Alberta Traffic Safety Foundation to involve neighbours in addressing traffic issues. Their aim? To develop a vision for safer, more attractive and livable streets that entice people to walk, cycle and use transit. Results included a newsletter and two workshops, one with walkability expert Dan Burden. The initiative helped convince the City of Edmonton Transportation Department to conduct a community traffic management plan in Strathearn, a project that continued into 2006.

Contact: Erik Backstrom,
erikbackstrom@yahoo.ca

Resource: Safe Streets Strathearn newsletter

Persistence pays in Highlands

Highlands residents made frequent forays to city offices through the years, seeking a solution to the traffic cutting through the community via 112 Avenue. The fact that 112 Avenue is an arterial road limits traditional options for addressing those concerns. Prime candidate for a fresh perspective, Highlands became the first community in Edmonton to host a walkability charrette with international expert Dan Burden. A community-led committee is working to enact plans made during the charrette despite budget constraints.

Contact: Highlands Community League,
www.highlands-community.ab.ca

Resource: Highlands Charrette reports,
www.walkableedmonton.ca



My family and I participated in the charrette in Edmonton Highlands. My youngest daughter Cara led the junior high planning team! The imagery created and the facilitator's references to built work were outstanding.

~ Brian C. Oakley, architect, Edmonton Highlands resident

Advice From Advocates

I would recommend formation of a community Traffic Committee as an essential first step in advocating for walkability. Also, it's important to have the support of the local community league executive. The next step is to decide on specific community walkability goals and identify the problems and issues that must be overcome. This is where the City of Edmonton professionals come in. A locally controlled steering committee is necessary to keep the community in charge of the process.

~ Dale Darrah, Highlands Community League

As a community developer in Downtown Edmonton, one of the best tools was organizing a walkabout of residents who wanted to make the neighbourhood more "people friendly." The resulting visions and recommendations became the foundation for neighbourhood projects over the next four years.

~ Beverly Zubot, City of Edmonton

Edmonton could really benefit from smart pedestrian advocacy from outside the City administration. Consider how the Edmonton Transit Advisory Board spun off the advocacy group Citizens for Better Transit. What lessons could be learned from that?

~ Erik Backstrom, City of Edmonton Planner

We did a walkabout with residents in Lago Lindo and came back with three or four locations that needed attention: a crosswalk, a four-way stop, a sign to stop jaywalking. So it wasn't a whole community plan, but a list of smaller concerns that we could follow up.

~ Darryl Mullen, Community Transportation Planning, City of Edmonton

Neighbourhoods need to have more opportunities to get together to plan walking and biking spaces. We spend a disproportionate amount of City Transportation and City Planning budget and time on planning for automobile movement, but very few resources go to planning and developing bike and walking paths for commuting. Spending more time planning active transportation when new areas taking shape — opportunities for neighbourhoods to get together to plan walking/biking. So in short — give non-powered transportation as many resources as motorized transportation.

~ Beverly Zubot, City of Edmonton

Lessons learned: promoting physical activity at the community level

In 2005, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation examined 25 projects it had funded to promote walking, biking and other activities under its *Active Living By Design* umbrella. The following 12 lessons emerged. Together, they help answer a question important to advocates for walkability: What makes change happen?

- Building the community's capacity to implement change is important, not only to the initial success of a project but also to sustaining behavioral change.
- Communities value opportunities to learn from other communities.
- A local champion to spearhead an initiative and encourage community investment can be extremely helpful.
- Mayors, in particular, can be key levers of change in a community. They are often able to garner the resources to sustain change.
- Programs to provide social support for physical activity in community settings need staff and are best housed in stable institutions able to support ongoing personnel costs.

- To ensure use, paths, trails and parks need to be promoted and maintained, and that requires community sponsors and long-term partnerships.
- To engage lower-income and minority residents in physical activity, programming should be adapted to their circumstances and needs.
- Making physical activity fun, social and not intimidating is beneficial, especially when trying to reach the least active.
- Over time, a walking program may spur development of broader programming to meet a variety of needs and preferences.
- Pedometers can motivate new walkers but need oversight for optimal use.
- Without significant funding and support, service organizations that sponsor physical activity programs can find it challenging to take on additional activities, such as research and evaluation.
- Messages promoting physical activity must be intense if they are to compete successfully with other messages and influences.

See the entire report: www.rwjf.org/files/publications/LessonsLearned_PhysicalActivity_GRR.pdf

Turning a place around: 11 keys to transforming public spaces into vibrant community places

- I. The community is the expert.
- II. Create a place, not a design.
- III. Look for partners.
- IV. You can see a lot just by observing.
- V. Have a vision.
- VI. Start with the petunias: Experiment, then grow and refine over time.
- VII. Triangulate: group the magnets (e.g., a bench, a wastebasket and a telephone), providing reasons for people to connect.
- VIII. They always say “It can’t be done.”

- IX. Form supports function.
- X. Money is not the issue.
- XI. Community places are never finished.

See the entire report: www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/casesforplaces/11steps

Everywhere communities want... places where walking is more than a planned health routine, and driving is optional; where sidewalks are valued more than roadbeds, and where trees are not removed by traffic engineers who declare them safety hazards. The rules of the day got us to this dysfunctional form in the first place. They are the rules that keep us here. They must be broken.

~ Roberta Brandes Gratz, *Doing It Wrong To Get It Right*
www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/casesforplaces/roberta

Costs of auto-dependency

- Suburbs require an extra \$2,000 per resident in road infrastructure, which in turn adds to snow removal, transit, garbage pick-up, school busing.
- Owning a car costs \$7,000 a year — and most families have more than one.
- The average car is subsidized about \$2,700 a year for roads, free parking, accidents and pollution. (Greater Vancouver Regional District estimate)
- Fuel taxes and licence fees in Canada fell \$5.5 billion short of covering road costs in 1993 (Transport Canada estimate)
- Air pollution from urban auto travel costs at least \$15 billion a year.

Source: Retrofitting communities for sustainable and healthy active transportation, www.goforgreen.ca

Advocacy Resources

Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research

www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr

ACICR's Community Injury Control Fund provides grants to help Alberta communities make themselves safer. ACICR also is secretariat for the Alberta Traffic Safety Foundation, which awards grants up to \$10,000 to assist community based traffic safety and injury prevention projects. These two opportunities and numerous others are included in a list of potential funding sources on the ACICR website.

Community Consultation in the Planning and Development Process: A Guide For Edmonton

Outlines Edmonton's planning process in plain language, discussing roles and expectations for all stakeholders and advocating for the collaborative spirit needed to build "great things." Produced in that spirit by Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, City of Edmonton, Urban Development Institute, Edmonton Real Estate Board, Edmonton Region Home Builders' Association and others.

Copies: (780) 437-2913 or info@efcl.org. Also available online.

Direct URL: www.efcl.org/resources%5Ffor%5Fleagues/consultation_handbook.asp

With proactive consultation, "Not In My Backyard!" (NIMBY) can become "Now I Must Be Involved!" (NIMBI).

~ Community Consultation in the Planning and Development Process: A Guide For Edmonton, www.efcl.org

Healthy People in Healthy Communities: A Community Planning Guide

www.lin.ca/resource/html/ac4147.pdf

Outlines steps involved in forming and running a healthy community coalition. Includes strategies for success, resources, references, and a one page quick aid.

Highlands Bellevue Neighbourhood Design Charrette

www.edmonton.ca/WalkableEdmonton

Report summarizing the 2005 charrette involving neighbouring Edmonton communities. Includes overview of charrette process, recommendations and rationale.

Direct URL: www.edmonton.ca/CityGov/CommServices/WalkableHighlandsDesignCharrette.pdf

Influence & Persuasion: Getting it Right with Politicians

www.vacc.bc.ca/cycling/political.pdf

Advice for finding allies and working with community groups, media, staff and elected officials.

In Praise of Slow

www.inpraiseofslow.com

Carl Honoré, who grew up in Edmonton and now lives in London, has gained international acclaim for his timely book *In Praise of Slow: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed*. Chapter 4, featuring slow cities, illustrates how "living streets" with lots of pedestrian interest and calm traffic draw people out of their houses and cars, to walk and be together.



In my old neighbourhood in Edmonton, Alberta, people think nothing of driving 300 yards to the convenience store. Mainstream suburban design reflects and reinforces the car-first mentality. Some streets do not even have sidewalks, and most houses have a driveway and multi-vehicle garage out front. Suburbia is often a lonely, transient place, where people know the neighbours' cars better than they know the neighbours themselves.

~ Carl Honoré, *In Praise of Slow: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed*

Instead of politely ignoring each other, as Londoners tend to do, the residents of this corner of Ealing now throw street parties, hold rounders and softball tournaments in the nearby park and socialize in the evenings.

~ Carl Honoré, *In Praise of Slow* about Ealing, west London

Urban sprawl: Literature review

www.ocfp.on.ca

Highlights the growing mountain of evidence linking urban sprawl with obesity and other health effects. *Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario: A review of the pertinent literature, 2005*

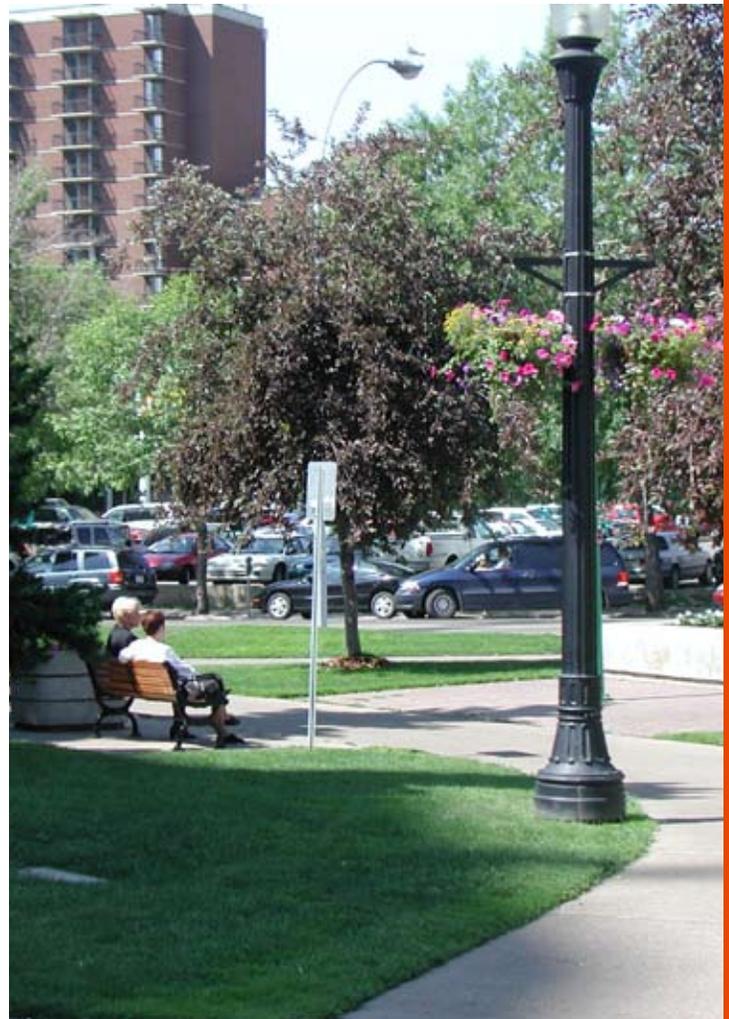
Direct URL: <http://www.ocfp.on.ca/local/files/Communications/Current%20Issues/Urban%20Sprawl-Jan-05.pdf>

Evidence clearly shows that people who live in spread-out, car-dependent neighbourhoods are likely to walk less, weigh more, and suffer from obesity and high blood pressure and consequent diabetes, cardio-vascular and other diseases, as compared to people who live in more efficient, higher density communities.

~ Ontario College of Family Physicians, www.ocfp.on.ca

Walk for Your Life by Marie Demers
www.vitalhealthbooks.com/book/2414947630.html

Subtitled “Restoring Neighbourhood Walkways to Enhance Community Life, Improve Street Safety and Reduce Obesity,” this book calls for walkable environments as a starting point for addressing such pressing issues as urban sprawl, inactivity and obesity. Vital Health Publishing, Ridgefield, CT, 2006



Walkable Communities, Inc.

www.walkable.org

You'll find excellent strategies for advocacy posted by Dan Burden and staff at the non-profit Walkable Communities, which is dedicated to helping communities become more pedestrian friendly.

Every trip begins and ends with walking. Walking remains the cheapest form of transport for all people and the construction of a walkable community provides the most affordable transportation system any community can plan, develop, construct and maintain.

~ Walkable Communities, www.walkable.org





Civic Support for Walkability

Hearing strong community desire for walkability, City Council has endorsed particular focus on this aspect of urban life.

As a result, several initiatives have launched in recent years, adding to the array of supports available for active transportation. The following civic initiatives are worth exploring for advice and assistance.

- Walkable Edmonton
- Smart Choices
- Planning Academy
- Urban Parks Management Plan
- Community Transportation Planning
- Community Traffic Management Studies
- Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee
- Multi-use Trail Corridor Network
- Intersection safety initiatives
- Crime Prevention Safety Audits
- Safedmonton

Walkable Edmonton

Launched in 2003, this civic team raises awareness and promotes action by engaging citizens and businesses in exploring the benefits of a safe, walkable city. Among its initiatives:

- bringing international walkability expert Dan Burden to Edmonton to lead intensive charrettes with communities such as Highlands, Alberta Avenue and Strathearn;
- working with the Highlands traffic committee to seek action on the resulting priorities, including a road diet along 112 Avenue;
- publishing Taking Steps, a newsletter available online or via e-mail;
- producing this walkability toolkit.

Contact: WalkableEdmonton@edmonton.ca

Website: www.edmonton.ca/WalkableEdmonton

“Walkability can only exist if land use planning allows for increased density, mixed land uses and street connectivity.”

~ Josh Marko, Capital Health

Smart Choices

Approved by City Council in 2004, Smart Choices is setting new expectations for how Edmonton will grow and develop, with the goal of building “vibrant communities and a sustainable future.” This planning initiative aims to accommodate growth while minimizing urban sprawl through intensified land development incorporating four fundamentals: options, viability, vitality and access. Developers are now expected to pay attention to “Smart Choices” principles clustered around six focal areas:

- **Transit Oriented Development** — encouraging density close to key transit stations;
- **Walkability** — creating a more walkable city by upgrading and linking sidewalks;
- **Neighbourhood Reinvestment** — renewing public infrastructure in older areas;
- **Residential Infill** — adding density through sensitive use of townhomes and low rise apartments;
- **Urban Design** — setting guidelines to ensure the quality of buildings and public spaces;
- **Commercial Redevelopment** — reviving deteriorated areas, e.g., along major corridors.

Besides being one of the six focal areas, walkability threads through all the others. Checklists used to assess proposed developments will be available through the Smart Choices office.

Contact: smartchoices@edmonton.ca

Website: www.edmonton.ca/SmartChoices

The elements of a “walkable city” are a high building and population density, mixed land use, effective public transport and quality public spaces. Sidewalks by themselves will not induce walking. Other pedestrian friendly features must be present, such as compact street intersections and neighbourhoods that are scaled to people.

~ Smart Choices, City of Edmonton

Planning Academy

The City of Edmonton recently launched a series of courses designed to build understanding of the planning and development process and encourage informed citizen involvement. Among the courses is “Come Plan with Us: Using your Voice.” Any citizen is welcome; those completing three core courses plus one elective earn a certificate of participation.

Contact: planning.academy@edmonton.ca,

Website: www.edmonton.ca/PlanningAcademy

The community, the administration and city councils have had the foresight to create a rich green heritage inside and outside the river valley. The river valley park system alone attracts four million users annually and includes an extensive network of trails and natural spaces.

~ Edmonton’s draft 2006-2016 Urban Parks Management Plan

Urban Parks Management Plan

Work to update the city’s parks strategy resulted in a Urban Parks Management Plan that will guide acquisition, development, maintenance, preservation and use of parkland until 2016. Based on extensive research and public consultation, the plan aims to build on a heritage that has given Edmonton an enviable park system, including a river valley network that is a key source of pride. Among the plan’s thrusts is continued work to link our parks. A more connected system opens new options for walking, biking, running and other forms of active transport.

Website: www.edmonton.ca; click on Home > Parks & River Valley > Parks Planning > Urban Parks Management Plan

Edmonton's total area of parkland and open space is equal to about 73% of the total land area of the City of Red Deer. And that's without our crowning jewel, the North Saskatchewan River Valley Park system. Total park infrastructure value is \$1.6 billion, approximately 6% of the City's total infrastructure value.

~ Edmonton's draft 2006-2016 Urban Parks Management Plan

Community Transportation Planning

Mandated to support walking and other active modes of transportation, this City of Edmonton team works with communities to improve safety and access along neighbourhood streets. For example, it regularly tests new approaches to crosswalk safety and is working toward the goal of providing curb ramps at all intersections. In consultation with communities (and as dollars allow), it plans infrastructure enhancements such as the following:

- expanding and connecting Edmonton's array of multi-use trails and sidewalks;
- upgrading pedestrian safety by testing and installing audible signals, countdown signals, amber flashers and other pedestrian signals;
- developing Community Traffic Management Plans to address short-cutting, speeding and other safety concerns;
- installing curb ramps, particularly in areas highly used by wheelchair users and near transit stops;
- enhancing safety around schools.

Contact: (780) 496-1795,
transplanning@edmonton.ca

Community Traffic Management Plans

Each year, Community Transportation Planning works with at least one neighbourhood to do an in-depth study of traffic volumes, shortcutting and other issues that impact safety and walkability. Neighbourhoods are chosen based on these criteria:

Priority communities:

1. Undergoing an Area Redevelopment Plan or Neighbourhood Infrastructure Program.
2. Scheduled for future roadway rehabilitation projects.
3. Subject to significant land use development proposals.

Other Considerations:

4. The number and date of requests from individuals and community groups.
5. The complexity and severity of transportation concerns. (Isolated, relatively minor operational and/or safety issues may be dealt with directly using other resources.)
6. The availability of information and data to evaluate the need for a traffic management plan.
7. The existence of a Community Transportation Committee of community representatives.
8. The stability of traffic patterns in the area. (Communities affected by temporary conditions, such as adjacent roadway construction, will not be considered a priority for a traffic management plan.)
9. Previous traffic management activities. (Priority is given to communities that have not previously been involved in this process.)
10. City-wide transportation priorities and requirements.

The following criteria are also considered:

- Daily and/or peak hour traffic above expected volume based on adjacent land uses.
- Greater than 40% shortcutting traffic on the most significant shortcut during the highest volume peak hour.
- Average traffic speeds above the posted speed limit, with 85th percentile speeds at least 7 km/hr over the posted speed limit.

Contact: (780) 496-1795,
transplanning@edmonton.ca

Multi-use Trail Corridor Network

In 2002, City Council approved a 10-year plan to develop a multi-use trail corridor network, taking advantage of rail and utility rights-of-way wherever possible. This 62-km network of year-round trail facilities connects all quadrants of Edmonton to Downtown and the North Saskatchewan River Valley. The blue lines on the map shown here represent the principal trail corridors; the red lines are secondary connector routes. [See page 31] About one quarter of the trail corridors were completed by late 2005, with the principal corridors receiving top priority. For more information, go to www.Edmonton.ca/cycling and click on “Current Initiatives.”

Contact: (780) 496-1795,
transplanning@edmonton.ca

Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee

This City of Edmonton consultation group advises civic staff on issues and initiatives related to walking, cycling, skating and other active modes. It can serve as an information network for walkability concerns and initiatives. Surveys and dedicated staff also help the City keep pace with Edmonton’s growing cohort of cyclists, including year-round commuters.

Contact: (780) 496-1795,
transplanning@edmonton.ca

Intersection Safety Initiatives

The City of Edmonton is involved in several initiatives of interest to citizens concerned about intersection safety.

- Controls are upgraded where traffic patterns warrant and funds permit, usually in response to community concerns. Pedestrian and vehicle surveys are completed first, to determine the best solution for each intersection under review. Options include markings on the road, amber flashers or pedestrian signals.
- Audible signals can be installed at intersections frequently used by individuals who are visually impaired. The CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) helps to assess the need and coach the citizen who will use the signals.

- The City continually tests new technologies that hold promise for augmenting intersection safety. Pedestrian countdown devices, which indicate the seconds left until the light will change, proved successful in a pilot test and are being incorporated at high-traffic locations as funds permit.
- Edmonton is an active partner of the Capital Region Intersection Safety Partnership, which launches campaigns each year to raise awareness of the need for pedestrian safety through billboards, media spots and enforcement.

Controls can enhance pedestrian safety, but they do not remove the need for vigilance when crossing the road.

Contact: (780) 496-1795,
transplanning@edmonton.ca

Crime Prevention Safety Audit

If worried about personal security keep you from walking, consider conducting a safety audit. Made-in-Edmonton audit guides are available that use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to help identify and address specific safety concerns such as poor sightlines due to overgrown shrubbery or low lighting. Ideally conducted as a collaborative effort, safety audits can be a first step to making your neighbourhood more walkable. Check with the [safedmonton](http://safedmonton.ca) office for audit guides and further information.

Contact: safedmonton@edmonton.ca
www.edmonton.ca/Safedmonton

Safedmonton

Personal safety, family safety, neighbourhood safety, workplace safety – they’re key to the quality of our lives. Safedmonton (formerly Safer Cities) supports initiatives that encourage citizens to take personal and communal responsibility for safety. Current projects include a video highlighting local safety success stories; crime prevention safety audit guides; and a safety toolkit.

Contact: safedmonton@edmonton.ca
www.edmonton.ca/Safedmonton

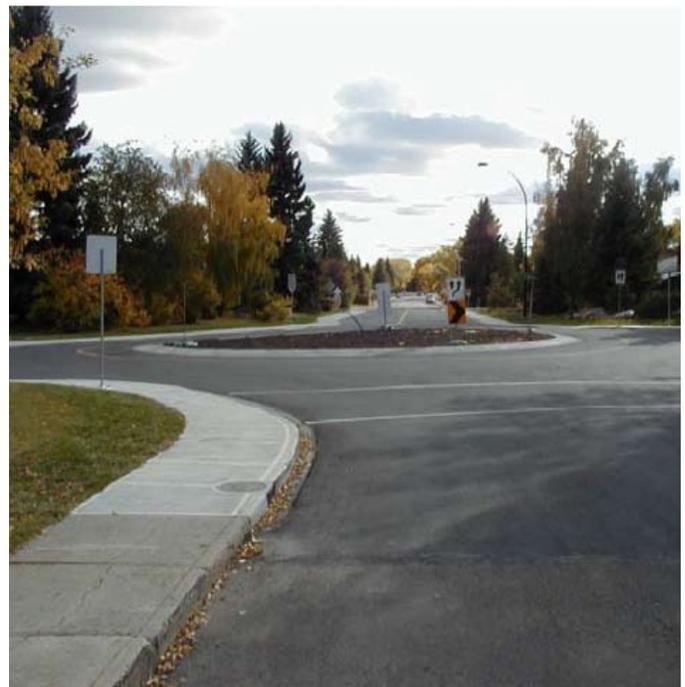


Success Story

Crestwood design changes calm traffic

A Neighbourhood Traffic Planning (NTP) study was initiated in Crestwood in the fall of 1997. As part of the plan, a Traffic Committee of area stakeholders worked with City of Edmonton staff to identify the community's critical transportation issues and develop solutions to address those concerns. The focus of concern in Crestwood included shortcutting traffic volumes, speeding traffic and pedestrian safety along two collector roadways running through the community. Traffic calming measures were tested for a year, beginning in 2000. Based on the positive results of the trial and the support of the Crestwood Community and City Council, permanent construction of the trial measures was completed in 2002.

Contact: Transportation Planning Branch,
496-1795





Cycling Edmonton

Cycling, inline skating and other means of wheeled self-propulsion are energizing, healthful, low-cost and good for the environment.

Besides sharing all those benefits with walking, biking can take you farther, faster. Edmonton cyclists can extend that reach by taking bikes along on the LRT and certain bus routes. Our city also boasts numerous retail stores and cycling groups offering excellent advice, service, support and affordable equipment.

The City of Edmonton's vision is to develop a network of interconnected routes for self-propelled transportation and recreation that encourages a healthy and active lifestyle, for all uses, ages and abilities.

Where to ride

Edmonton's extensive river valley system and growing network of dedicated and shared trails offer excellent routes for both commuting and pleasure. Check the range of routes on the City of Edmonton website (see *Where to Ride and River Valley Parks and Trails*) or pick up the informative *Cycle Edmonton Roadways and River Valley Map*, available free at most libraries, information centres and bike shops.

More information: www.edmonton.ca/cycling, email transplanning@edmonton.ca (780) 496-1795

Bicycles are the most energy efficient means of transportation. A pedestrian uses two and a half times more energy to go as far, while cars use 50 times as much.

Bikes on transit

All low-floor buses serving routes 1, 4 and 9 have easy-to-load bike racks out front. Bikes are also allowed on all LRT trips except during peak hours (7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 4 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday). Bikes ride free!

Details: Bikes on ETS brochures are available on routes 1, 4 and 9 and at such locations as libraries and bike shops. (780) 496-1611, etransit@edmonton.ca

Bikability checklist

The following characteristics are key to a bikable city — and enhance walkability.

- safe riding space (bike lanes, wide curb lanes, trails, paved shoulders in rural areas);
- direct routes to transit;
- secure bicycle parking;
- properly maintained (repaired and cleared) roads.

How does Edmonton measure up? Pick a route that has a purpose — to school, work, shopping, transit, recreation, your favourite hangout. Carry a camera and record things that speed or impede your progress. Keep in mind questions such as the following and make notes along the way. Afterwards, summarize your findings and prioritize the improvements you would recommend.

- Am I able to find a comfortable route to my destination?
- Is there sufficient operating width along the route? (See bikeway width standards on page 34)
- Do busy and fast streets have bike lanes or paved shoulders? Would you recommend adding those at any spots along the way?
- Are alternate, quieter routes to my destinations available — perhaps even a trail totally separated from traffic? Are those routes reasonably direct?
- Is the roadway surface in good repair and cleared of debris, snow, sand?
- Do traffic signals detect my presence?
- Are drivers friendly and tolerant toward bicyclists?
- Is secure bicycle parking available at my destination?
- Is there a place to clean up and change clothes at work or school?
- Did I enjoy my bicycling experience? Why or why not?
- Would I repeat this bicycle trip again? Why or why not?

Adapted from Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design, www.bikewalk.org/PubHealth.htm

Help the City of Edmonton plan and improve cycling facilities by providing your thoughts about cycling in our city

Survey forms: www.edmonton.ca (Home > Transportation > Cycling in Edmonton > Current Initiatives), email transplanning@edmonton.ca.

Bikeway width standards (recommendations change depending on motor vehicle speed and volume)

- Bike lane or paved shoulder: about 1.5 m (4 to 6 ft)
- Wide curb lane (shared by cars and bikes): 4.2 to 4.9 m (14 to 16 ft) downtown, 3.6 m (12 ft) in residential areas

Ribbon of Steel

Completed in 2003, this multi-use trail follows the former CP Rail lines between 109 and 110 streets. With landscaping, lighting, rest areas and interpretive features, it provides a pleasant, safe north-south connection over the High Level Bridge. It also connects to the Edmonton Radial Railway Society streetcar serving Old Strathcona each summer.

Bike commuting in the winter might not be for everyone. But if you dress right and follow a few precautions, cycling in the snow can be like fine wine, to be remembered and treasured long after it's over. Try saying that about a ride home in your car.

~ Will Orobko, *Commuting by Bike*, www.rmbooks.com/books

Bicycle Clubs and Associations

Edmonton has a range of bicycle clubs serving elite racers, everyday commuters and recreational users alike. Racers, commuters, women, masters, tour fans, unicyclists, dirt bikers—all have a home of their own. The City of Edmonton website includes a useful listing of clubs and associations. See also Cycling Resources.

Clubs: www.edmonton.ca/cycling

Cycling Resources

There is some evidence that cyclists fare best when they blend in with motorized traffic on city streets. When rebuilding streets, we make the outside lane wider than standard. But in reality, some cyclists are not comfortable riding on roads.

~ Claire Stock, Community Transportation, City of Edmonton

Edmonton Bicycle Commuters

www.edmontonbicyclecommuters.ca;
780-433-2453 (BIKE)

EBC promotes bicycle commuting and encourages responsible cycling. Among its initiatives:

- **BikeWorks**, a shop where you can learn to repair your bike and stud your tires for winter;
- **Bikeology**, events and activities throughout June;
- **CanBike**, a nationally certified effective cycling course for adults and children;
- **Cyclist's Vehicle**, a newsletter posted online with tips, advice and useful links.

EBC advocacy also helped to spearhead such initiatives as Rails to Trails and Bikes on Buses.

People's Pedal: Bicycle Sharing

www.peoplespedal.org, 780-686-5399

Edmonton bicycle sharing society whose members have access to distinctive red bikes parked at several hubs.

BC Cycling Coalition

www.bccc.bc.ca, (250) 704-2774 — leave a message, email info@bccc.bc.ca

United voice for integrating cycling into the transportation network; offers popular advocacy workshops.

Community Cycling Manual

www.goforgreen.ca/at/Eng/resources/cycling_manual.aro

Comprehensive guide emphasizing integrated planning, engineering, education and enforcement.

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

www.aashto.org

Much-referenced document by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.





The ABCs of Cycling Advocacy

www.vacc.bc.ca, www.vacc.bc.ca/cycling/worksheet.pdf

Advice on advancing the cycling agenda, including an advocacy strategy worksheet.

- Edmonton Bicycle Commuters mechanic Jason Wispinski cycles more than 100 kilometres to work.
- EBC member John Collier confesses to being a “lazy slob” before making himself a fitness promise. “I sold my car and began cycling to work,” he says. That was two decades ago, and he’s still rolling strong.
- Bikeology, a fine June addition to Edmonton’s festival lineup, celebrates bicycles with prizes, music, smoothies, and all things bike related. www.edmontonbicyclecommuters.ca



Destinations

Destinations give us reasons to walk. Most North Americans equate going someplace with hopping in a car — and relegate walking to the dutiful fitness part of life.

But even a car-oriented city such as Edmonton has numerous sites (and sights) that can add enjoyment and purpose to our active transportation. The following list of Edmonton destinations is by no means exhaustive, but we hope it will inspire you to find your own storehouse of purposeful, rejuvenating walks.

- Art walks
- Heritage walks
- Guided tours & events
- Walking, running, cycling trails
- Scenic walks beyond Edmonton

Do you have a favourite Edmonton destination or trail that deserves to be in this list? Email us today!

One of the challenges for Edmonton is to build on what is primarily a recreation mode to make walking a practical transportation alternative for accessing everyday destinations such as workplaces, shopping and community facilities.

~ Smart Choices, Walkable City, City of Edmonton





Art Walks

Art & Design in Public Places Walking Tour

Diverse and publicly funded works of art enliven Edmonton's downtown, thanks to a multi-partner initiative directed by The Works International Visual Arts Society. A walking tour featuring the works makes for a delightful stroll.

Details: Drop in at the Downtown Business Association, 10121 Jasper Ave. (780-424-4085) and ask for the *Guide to Downtown Edmonton*, which includes a description of the walking tour. The Works website also contains a description and location of each work. Go to www.theworks.ab.ca, click on Art & Design in Public Places, then on Walking Tours. Or go directly to www.theworks.ab.ca/placesfolder/tour/tour.html

Gallery Walk

This six-block wander includes numerous galleries on or near pedestrian friendly 124 Street. The Gallery Walk Association hosts "Gallery Walk" weekends each spring, fall and winter, but you create your own walk anytime, browsing other shops and spots as you go.

Details: www.gallery-walk.com

Walking Tour Guide of the Centennial Legacy Mural Project

Enjoy the rich diversity of murals on Old Strathcona utility boxes, painted in 2004 during Edmonton's 100th anniversary as a city.

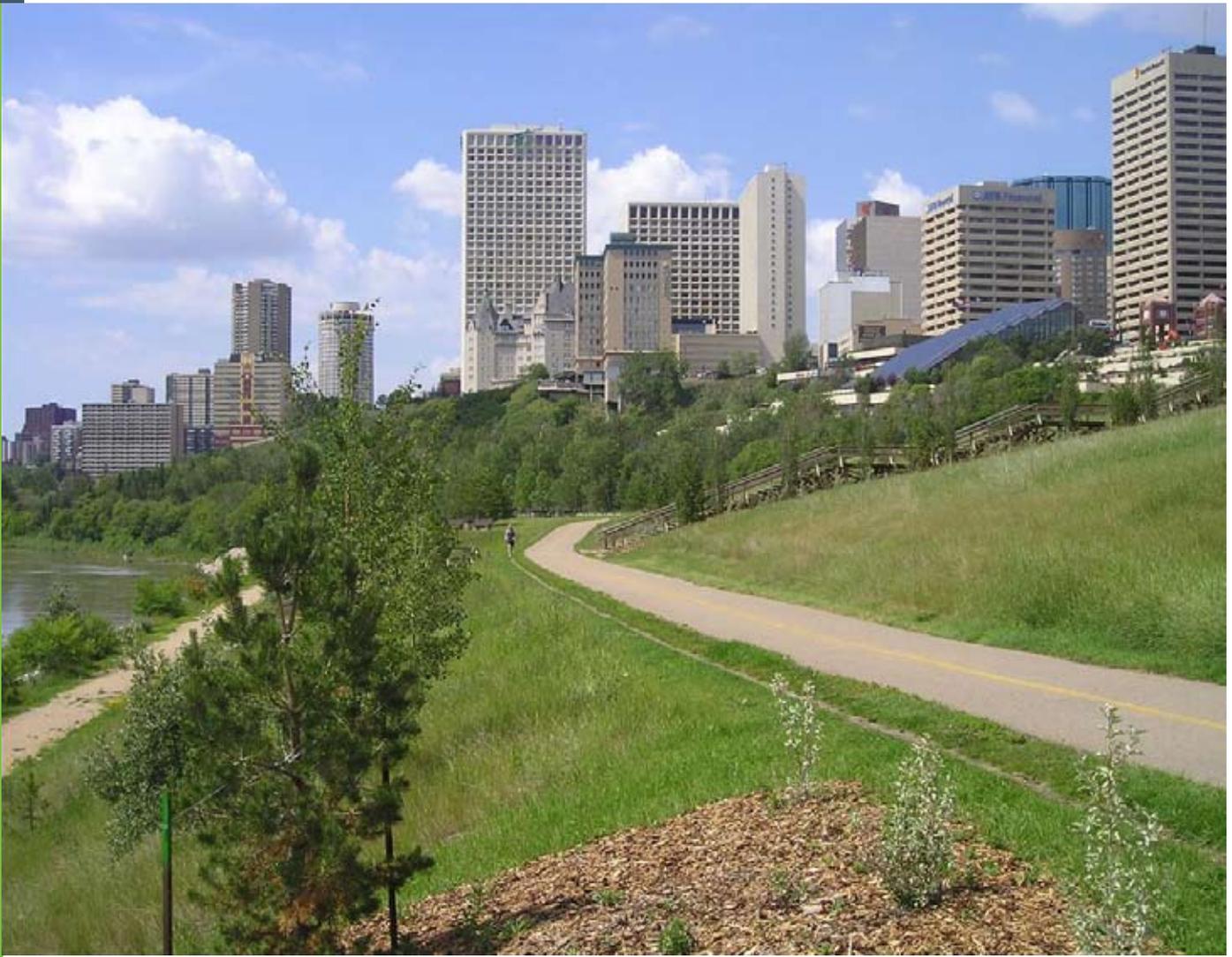
Details: Old Strathcona Business Association, #401, 10324 - 82 Ave. (open Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and on the association's website, (780) 437-4182, www.oldstrathcona.ca

Coming: Greater Edmonton Landmarks Inventory

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation is gathering an inventory of public art, landmarks and other treasures in Greater Edmonton. Subdivided by geographical location and type of art, this inventory will be available on the EEDC website and other tourism outlets by mid-2006, offering a new resource for planning your own purposeful walks.

Details: Check www.edmonton.com or contact Edmonton Tourism at (780) 426-4715





Heritage Walks

Alberta Legislature Health Walk Loop

Enjoy a rain-or-shine walk through the Alberta Legislature pedway system. Start at the Alberta Legislative Assembly Interpretive Centre, where you can pick up a brochure or find the first of the signs that will direct your way. Ten exercise stations designed by the Grant MacEwan College Centre for Sport and Wellness invite you to combine aerobic conditioning with strength and endurance training.

The 57 acres of parkland surrounding Alberta's domed seat of government also make for an excellent walk that can be linked to the Ribbon of Steel trail running north from the High Level Bridge.

You can also book a free guided tour of the legislature that'll entail some marble stair climbing.

Details: Brochures available at Interpretive Centre, Pedway Mall, 10820 98 Ave. Book a free tour or request a brochure by mail at (780) 427-7362, visitorinfo@assembly.ab.ca

Cemeteries

Edmonton's seven municipal cemeteries are walkable places rich in history. A Municipal Cemeteries Ancestral Heritage Project is encouraging greater use of our cemeteries. So don't be afraid to walk, run, ski, cycle and rollerblade in these public resting places.

Details: Find addresses of municipal cemeteries at www.edmonton.ca by following this path: People Services & Programs > People Services > Cemeteries > Cemetery. Or at (780) 496-6983, email cemetery@edmonton.ca

Fort Edmonton Park & John Janzen Nature Centre

Spanning more than 160 acres, Fort Edmonton Park and the adjacent John Janzen Nature Centre offer ample opportunity to walk while exploring our city's heritage and natural setting. Fort Edmonton includes a re-creation of the fur-trading post after which we're named as well as streets recalling Edmonton in 1885, 1905 and 1920. John Janzen Nature Centre offers ways to extend your wander along riverside trails, with or without a guide.

Details: Located at Whitemud Drive (Southwest end of Quesnell Bridge) and Fox Drive. Hours change seasonally. Fort: (780) 496-8787; Nature Centre: (780) 496-8787; attractions@edmonton.ca

Historical Walking Tours of Downtown Edmonton

Excellent self-guiding tour booklet, co-published by the City of Edmonton and Alberta Community Development, adds context to four downtown tours: Heritage Trail; Jasper West & Warehouse District; Downtown & Rice Howard Way; Jasper East.

Details: Tour brochures available at City Hall, #1 Sir Winston Churchill Sq.; the Downtown Business Association, 10121 Jasper Ave; Edmonton Tourism, 9990 Jasper Ave., Planning and Development, 6th Fl 10250 101 St.

Heritage Trail

Retrace pioneer steps beginning at the Alberta Legislature, site of early Fort Edmonton. Follow the red brick trail past Edmonton's first schoolhouse, grand public buildings and fine private homes. Stop along McDougall Drive at the outdoor "interpretive gallery" for a beautiful view of the river valley and a self-guided tour through more of Edmonton's past.

Details: Start at 110 Street and 99 Avenue and go east along the red brick trail to 97 Street.

Highlands Historical Walking Tour

Tour booklet and occasional tours invite you to explore the historic homes in Highlands, a scenic neighbourhood overlooking the river valley east of downtown. Can be combined with a walk along the North Saskatchewan River on Ada Blvd. For an even longer stroll, drop down to a riverside trail running between Concordia College (7128 Ada Blvd) and the 50th Street pedestrian bridge.

Details: Purchase informative self-guiding brochures (\$2) at Mandolin Books & Coffee Company, 6419 112 Ave., (780) 479-4050. Watch for guided tours during such times as Historic Edmonton Week.

124 Street: The Original West End

Walk through Edmonton's historic Groat Estates and West Oliver following a map with intriguing insights about buildings and streets along the way. Approximate walking time one hour.

Details: Brochure available at 124 Street & Area Business Association, 201 10706 124 St., (780) 413-6503, www.124StBRZ.com. Also stocked by some area stores.

Strathcona Historical Walking and Driving Tour

Learn the history of key buildings in this bustling south side district while enjoying the ambience of Edmonton's most well preserved historic area. Antique and gift shops, coffee spots, cafes, bookstores and more make good use of buildings that predate Strathcona's 1912 amalgamation with the City of Edmonton.

Brochures: Old Strathcona Foundation Office, #401, 10324 82 Ave. open Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (780) 437-4182, www.oldstrathcona.ca.

TransCanada Trail

The TransCanada trail, an effort to link this country with the world's longest network of multi-use trails, travels three routes through Alberta. Our leg, the northern leg, comes up from Red Deer and points south, passes through Edmonton via the river valley, then heads through Athabasca, Slave lake and Peace River into BC and the Yukon. The red-roofed pavilion just north of the Cloverdale Foot Bridge in Louise McKinney Park is part of the trail.

Details: Progress report and other information at www.tctrail.ca

Downtown residents tried hard to make the 104 Street redevelopment people friendly. Physical changes were made, such as widening the sidewalk, but people wanted a reason to walk down the street. So they got 15 flower planters installed on the most barren section of the street, and they tended the flowers. Now the neighbours have a reason to walk the street: to look at the flowers as well as tend the flowers.

~ Beverly Zubot, Community Services, Downtown Group

Guided Tours & Events

Historic Edmonton Week Festival

Numerous guided tours and other outings last week of July, plus events throughout the year open to the public.

Contact: (780) 439-2797

Edmonton Discovery Tours

Custom-designed sightseeing and hiking tours, complete with picnic lunch, explore the quiet ravines and forested hiking trails in the Edmonton region. Fees vary.

Bookings: (780) 405-7180

Edmonton Ghost Tours

Enjoy a theatrical one-hour wander through Old Strathcona's haunted and historic areas, hearing stories of ghosts, hauntings and the unknown. Offered summers and in October, small fee.

Bookings: www.edmontonghosttours.com, (780) 469-3187

Guided Historical Tours

Three-hour historical, interpretive walks of Downtown, Oliver or Old Strathcona. Available for a minimum of two persons, April to October (weather permitting), spiced with a blend of fact and rumour.

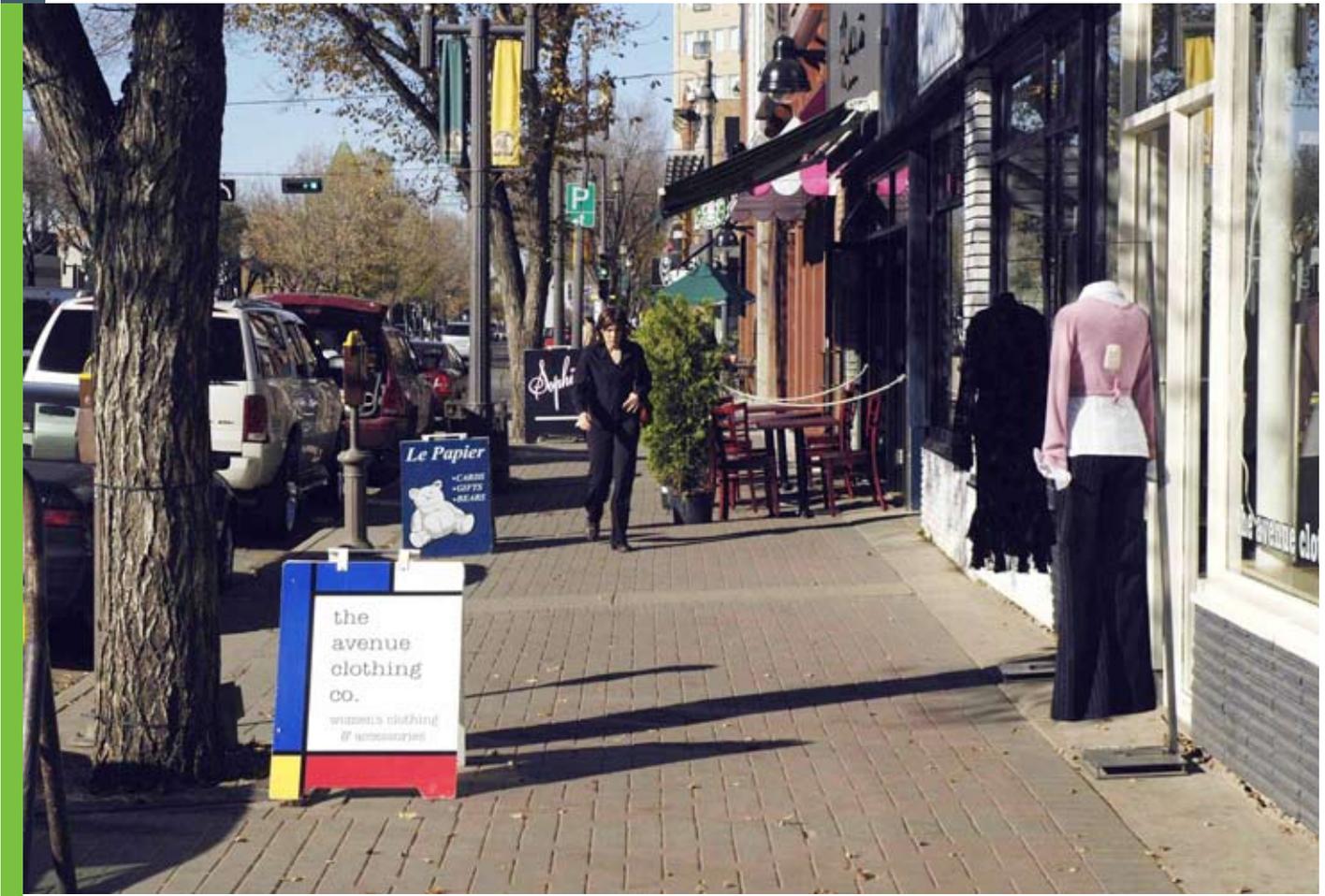
Bookings: (780) 462-0463, 10411 – 84 St. Edmonton AB T6A 3R3, inquire about fees.

Out An' About Tours Travel Adventures

Explore the cultural and heritage sites in the greater Edmonton region with award winning tour guide Cameron Malcolm. City outings include historic walking tours for Old Strathcona as well as the river valley around the Alberta Legislature, the graveyards, the 105 Street bridge area and Walterdale. Special rates for children.

Bookings: (780) 909-8687, email cameron@outanabouttours.com, www.outanabouttours.com





Walking, Running, Cycling Trails

Edmonton parks & trails

Pick up a free Cycle Edmonton Map, Information and Trail Guide and design your own excursion. Published by the City of Edmonton, Cycle Edmonton is an invaluable tool not only for cyclists, but for walkers, inline skaters, cross country skiers, strollers and all sorts of active folk. The map shows river valley and other trails, transit centres, leisure centres, points of interest and more. It also outlines rules for taking bikes on buses and LRT and gives distances between parks in the river valley.

Maps: Available at most tourism centres, libraries, online or by contacting Transportation Planning, (780) 496-2407 or (780) 496-2615, email transplanning@edmonton.ca [large file at www.edmonton.ca/RoadsTraffic/05bike_back2.pdf

Downtown pedway walks

Edmonton's pedway system enables you to walk downtown whatever the weather, sans parka or umbrella. Find your way using a map of downtown pedways and elevated crossings published by the Downtown Business Association. Whether you live, work or only occasionally visit downtown, it's another way to walk the urban landscape.

Details: Pick up a pedway map at the Downtown Business Association (10121 Jasper Ave.) or at any hotel and office with a security desk. Or download from the DBA website. The DBA also is a convenient spot to pick up other walker resources, including ETS schedules and Cycle Edmonton maps. (780) 424-4085, email info@edmontondowntown.com, www.edmontondowntown.com
www.edmontondowntown.com/live/media/dwntwnmap.pdf

I love the outdoors. We have a route in river valley that uses the Low Level Bridge, Muttart/Foot Bridge/ MacDonald Hotel stairways/Louise McKinney Park. In the winter, we walk underground using pathways from 97 Street and 104 Avenue past the Court House, City Hall through Canada Place to the Convention Centre.

~ Krystyna Cebula, an avid lunchtime walker

Kinsmen Sports Centre trails & maps

Explore a treasure trove of nearly two dozen trails surrounding this central river valley location, using maps available free at Kinsmen Sports Centre. Distances range from the 3-K "River Stroll" to the 24-K "Are You Kidding?" Runner's World names the following among the most popular, scenic, and easy to navigate routes:

- Cloverdale Clover, a 7.3-km serpentine that takes the north bank trail, then crosses Cloverdale Bridge and back.
- Rambo, a rugged 12.5-km loop around the University of Alberta and the William Hawrelak Peninsula.
- The Lovely MacKinnon, a 12-km run over a bridge, to the top of beautiful MacKinnon Ravine and back.
- Pigs Only, 16 km for mud-craving oinkers.
- The Mill Creek Monster, 16.7 green kilometres through Queen Elizabeth Park and Mill Creek Ravine to Argyll Park and back.
- Visit the Zoo, a long S-shaped, 20-km all-riverside loop that passes the city's animal park.

Maps: Kinsmen Sports Centre, 9100 Walterdale Hill, (780) 433-5901, kinsmen@runningroom.com

Muttart Conservatory

Edmonton's premier horticultural attraction, nestled in the river valley at 9626 96A St., features more than 700 species of plants in arid, temperate and tropical climates.

Details: (780) 496-8755, email muttartquestions@edmonton.ca, www.edmonton.ca/muttart

Off-leash park sites

Dogs provide excellent reasons to walk, not to mention excellent ways to meet your neighbours. Edmonton has over 40 sites where licenced dogs can run and off-leash. Area maps showing boundaries are posted at each site. Bring your pooper scooper — and have your leash ready for use.

Details: Find off-leash sites at www.edmonton.ca by following this path: Home > Parks & River Valley > Parks > Off-leash Park Sites. Or contact the off-leash areas coordinator at (780) 496-1475. To volunteer for off-leash park patrol or report hazards, contact park rangers at (780) 496-2950, email: parkrangers@edmonton.ca

Running Room routes

All Edmonton area Running Room outlets host running clubs, and some host walking clubs. Check your nearest Running Room or other fitness outlet for existing groups.

Details: To find the Running Room nearest you, go to www.runningroom.com and look under stores.

My favorite run is called the Urban Jungle Run. Start in Hawrelak Park, site of the 2001 World Triathlon Championships, and run west to Fort Edmonton. From there, cross the North Saskatchewan River and traverse the path system that connects to MacKinnon Ravine and takes you back to Hawrelak. The start is only 10 minutes from downtown Edmonton, and the run covers 11 exhilarating miles. We usually come back muddy.

~ Paul Harms, Running Edge proprietor Insider tips from Runner's World

Saskatchewan Drive

Running parallel to Whyte Avenue along the top river valley, the walkway along Saskatchewan Drive offers excellent views, benches and lookout points. Take an evening stroll for an impressive panorama featuring the downtown skyline. Several paths lead down from here to river valley trails.

Shopping mall walks

Some shopping malls, including West Edmonton and Londonderry, have walking routes with calculated distances. Check in at your nearest mall. You may discover a walking club — or build one yourself.

Londonderry Mall boasts Edmonton's largest mall walking program, with 1000 registered members. The walking season runs September to April, with walkers out 7 to 10 a.m. weekdays. Members also party together and receive discounts at participating stores. To find out more, contact Haley Fostvelt, marketing coordinator, Haleyf@londonderrymall.com

I have lost 165 lbs. strictly through diet and walking. I recommend this form of exercise to all shapes, sizes, ages, and genders.

~ Christina Cacho, Londonderry mall walker and personal trainer

West Edmonton Mall invites walkers to walk at their own pace and time along all or part of a 6-kilometre “course.” Level One of the mall is equivalent to 3.3 km; Level Two is equivalent to 2.8 km. The mall is always open, but the best walking time is 7 to 10 a.m. Walker maps are available at the mall’s Guest Services Centre, Visitor Information Centre and Mall administration.

Not only seniors benefit from the mall walkers, but many young mothers are starting to join to help lose weight after childbirth.

~ Haley Fostvelt, Marketing Assistant, Londonderry Mall

Campus Recreation Runaround, Walkaround Guide

Fourteen routes of varying lengths surround the University of Alberta campus, a most inviting part of the city. Compiled by Lou Hetke, Pegasus Health and Wellness, maps are for sale at the Van Vliet Centre. Some routes are also available online.

Details: Purchase at Sales and Registration Office, W-79 Van Vliet Centre, (780) 492-2231, pergold@ualberta.ca. Online at www.onthemove.ualberta.ca/docs/outdoor_trails.pdf or (for shorter indoor loops) www.onthemove.ualberta.ca/docs/indoor_trails.pdf

Valley Zoo

Next door to Laurier Park in Edmonton’s river valley, the Valley Zoo at 13315 Buena Vista Road (87 Ave.) features creatures around every corner. Launched in 1959 as a themed “storyland” park, the zoo increasingly supports education and conservation. Here your wander will lead to wonder at the variety in our world.

Details: (780) 496-8787, email attractions@edmonton.ca, www.edmonton.ca/valleyzoo

Volkssport walks

Walk descriptions posted online by members of Volkssport walking clubs include several Edmonton destinations:

- 10-km walk in West Edmonton Mall starting from the R & R Store;
- two picturesque 11-km routes starting from the Running Room at 8533 109 St.;
- 10-km route highlighting main tourist attractions leaving from the Grant MacEwan Centre for Sport & Wellness, 108 Street and 105 Avenue;
- 10-km trail around Beaumaris Lake and through nearby residential areas leaving from Castle Downs Rd at 153 Avenue.

Details: Find descriptions of these walks and others at www.walks.ca/ab_yres.htm. To inquire about joining a Volkssport club, click on www.albertavolkssport.ca.

Edmonton is a runner’s dream city. The North Saskatchewan River curls through town and both sides are lined with an unbroken, 25-mile-long greenbelt of two dozen connected parks. The whole sprawling, forested wonderland is laced with about 150 kilometers of riverside, ravine, and deep-woods trails. They come in a variety of paved, dirt, packed gravel, and wood-chip surfaces.

~ Doug Rennie, Runner’s World online www.newrunner.com/article/printer_friendly/0,5046,s6-188-193-0-654,00.html



Scenic Walks Beyond Edmonton

Clifford E. Lee Nature Sanctuary

Designated one of Alberta's "Special Places," this sanctuary near Devon is a hidden gem. A wide variety of habitats in a relatively compact area makes it ideal for spotting birds, wildflowers and animals. Augmented by boardwalks and signs, it's accessible for strollers and wheelchairs. Loops range from 1.7 Km to 6 km.

Route: Take Highway 60 13.2 km toward Devon, turn right onto Woodbend Road for 1.6 km; turn south (left) on Range Road 264 and proceed 1.4 km.

Details: Map and information at www.camacdonald.com/birding/caalberta.htm. This site also points to numerous other walkable spots that are rich in birds and other wildlife.

Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area

Located 32 west of Edmonton along the south edge of Elk Island Park, Cooking Lake-Blackfoot offers 85 km of interlaced trails fanning out from four staging areas. Dotted with shelters, the mixed-use trails run through rolling boreal forest rich in wildlife, including two pair of trumpeter swans. In summer, walkers share the trails with mountain bikers and horses. A popular cross country ski destination, this is the site of the annual Canadian Birkebeiner Ski Festival.

Details: Located 24 km east of Sherwood Park, south of Hwy. 16, directly south of Elk Island National Park. For specific staging area locations, see www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying_alberta/parks/planning/gateway/siteinformation.asp?id=23 or call (780) 922-3293

Devonian Botanic Garden

Located just 25 minutes west of Edmonton, this regional centre for collecting and studying living plants and fungi includes an authentic Japanese Garden, attractive floral gardens, native and alpine plants and ecological reserves. Varied gardens and natural areas extending over 190 rolling acres are connected by paths that invite hours of walking in Canada's most northern botanic garden.

Details: map, numerous guided tours, events and entrance fee schedule at www.discoveredmonton.com/devonian

Elk Island Park

Edmonton's nearest national park, Elk Island boasts numerous walking trails amid rolling aspen parkland, bison, moose, beavers, birds and other wildlife. Less than an hour from Edmonton city centre and well worth the trip. Requires valid national parks pass.

Getting there: Take Hwy 16 (Yellowhead) about 80 km east from Edmonton. Greyhound [(780) 421-8899] leaves for Elk Island Park every day at about 8 a.m., drops people off at the gate and picks them up again around 5 p.m.

Details: Park map and other info at www.pc.gc.ca/elkisland, (780) 992-2950, email elk.island@pc.gc.ca

Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park

This park preserves Big Lake, a freshwater wetland ecosystem that is a globally significant Important Bird Area. More than 220 bird species have been observed here. This is one of Alberta's newer parks, designated April 19, 2005 to commemorate the life of Alberta's late Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Lois Hole.

Details: Adjacent to St. Albert and Edmonton. (780) 960-8170; www.cd.gov.ab.ca

Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

In addition to the parks noted here, you can find excellent places to walk at numerous provincial parks. An internet gateway to those parks may help in the planning.

Details: www.cd.gov.ab.ca/enjoying_alberta/parks/planning/gateway/searchparks.aspx

Strathcona Wilderness Centre

A 550-acre park on the shores of Bennett Lake, Strathcona Wilderness Centre offers 12 km of trails for wildlife viewing, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing. Information centre open year-round; some equipment available for rent.

Location: Twenty minutes east of Sherwood Park at Township Road 530 (Baseline Road) and Range Road 212.

Details: Information and trail map at www.strathcona.ab.ca/recreation, (780) 922-9339, email swcinfo@strathcona.ab.ca

Wagner Natural Area

Walk among calcium-rich, spring-fed marl ponds, surrounded by forests of spruce, aspen, birch, tamarack & willow. Sixteen of the 24 orchid species known to occur in Alberta have been found here, including the rare bog adder's-mouth orchid. The area is also home to several unusual carnivorous plants such as the sundew, bladderwort & butterwort.

Details: Five km west of Edmonton. (780) 960-8170; www.cd.gov.ab.ca

Walking Tour of Canada

Schools take a virtual "walking tour of Canada" by logging kilometres walked to and from school, learning about both fitness and Canada as they go.

Details: <http://asrts.goforgreen.ca/english>

Waskahegan Trail

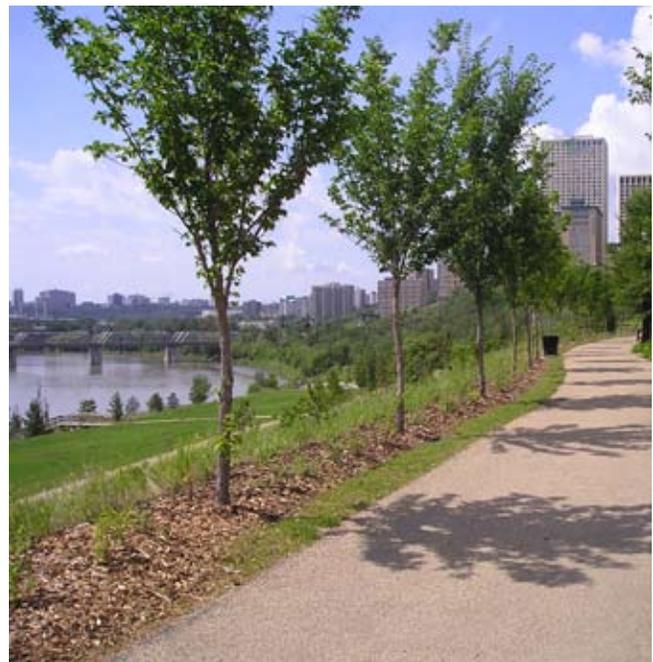
This 235-km, volunteer managed wilderness trail provides excellent day hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing in the Edmonton area. The trail begins in Edmonton and goes south along the Whitemud and Blackmud Creeks, Saunders Lake and Coal Lake to the Wetaskiwin area, then east along the Battle River from Gwynne to Camrose. It continues north from Miquelon Lake Provincial Park through Ministik Lake Bird Sanctuary, Hastings Lake area, and the Cooking Lake — Blackfoot Recreation Area to Elk Island National Park: It then goes west along Ross Creek to Fort Saskatchewan. The trail is available for use year round by the general public.

Details: www.boreal.net/wta, davislm@shaw.ca.

Watchable Wildlife Tours

Go with a guide if you'd like to find out more about the wildlife along your trails. Among Edmonton's excellent guides is Wayne Millar, whose ability to convey his passion and expertise about such areas as Elk Island and Cooking Lake-Blackfoot has earned numerous awards.

Details: (780) 405 4880, www.birdsandbackcountry.com



Other walkable cities

Consider walkability when choosing your holiday destinations. Ottawa comes to mind, with its canal-side trails and accessible parks. The American Podiatric Medical Association includes these cities in a 2006 ranking of most walkable large U.S. destinations:

- Portland, Oregon, home to many volkssport walking clubs and free walking events throughout the year;
- Colorado Springs, Colorado, where you'll find the Garden of the Gods, a tourist favorite;
- Madison, Wisconsin, ranked fourth in number of trails per square miles, and top in bicycle commuters;
- Boise, Idaho, fourth highest in adults who walk for exercise;
- Las Vegas, Nevada, a place to walk and gawk;

- Austin, Texas, high in parks and bikes;
- Virginia Beach, Virginia, with many parks and low crime rate, plus yearly walker-friendly Shamrock Marathon;
- Anchorage, Alaska, with vast parks and trail, where half the residents walk for exercise in a stunning setting.

I live in a fairly compact Seattle neighborhood where it takes longer to find a parking space than it does to walk to the store, wait in line, and walk back. I walk because it's more convenient to do so, and as a result I know my neighbors, I stay slim, and avoid parking headaches. Oh, if we could all live in wonderful neighborhoods like this one, where walking is made easy.

~Leigh Sims, Personal Scorecard: Taking steps toward health, www.northwestwatch.org







Group Ventures

Walking or biking in a group offers many advantages. The security of numbers can reduce personal safety concerns, particularly at night. Buddies also keep each other motivated and accountable, helping us set and stick to goals. What's more, being active together adds an element of companionship that makes the entire experience more fun.

Longer term, walking and biking groups can become a source of support, part of the glue that helps communities weather the tough times and celebrate the good. More details under these headings:

- Finding buddies
- Forming a walking club
- Existing groups in Edmonton
- Events for walkers
- Workplace walking
- Group ventures around the world

I feel it is very important to exercise with a friend/co-worker because you can motivate each other. At the same time, you can support each other and learn new things by sharing ideas.

~ Krystyna Cebula, City of Edmonton, who works downtown



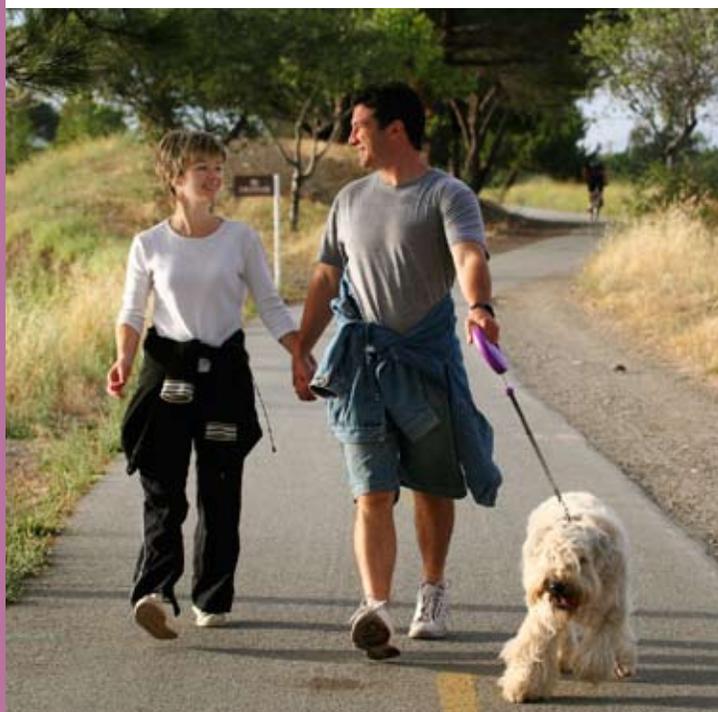
Finding Buddies

The right companionship is key to a successful walking (or biking) group. Look for people who share something about your lifestyle or interests. A few possibilities:

- **Family members.** Amid today's busy schedules, walking is a great way to spend time together.
- **Preschool parents.** Feeling cooped up all too often? Form a stroller brigade. Make a point of walking with other parents while your children are in activities together, and/or to and from those activities.
- **Canine companions.** Dog owners often know the names of the dogs they meet, but what about the person on the other end of the leash? Introduce yourself and pose the idea of regular walks together. Both you and your dog will benefit.

One third of Canadians do not even walk their dogs once a day.

~ 2005 survey by Hill's Pet Nutrition Canada



- **Off-leash sites.** Edmonton has more than 40 off-leash sites where your dog can run and play while you socialize with other dog people. For details, go to www.edmonton.ca and follow these links: Home > Parks & River Valley > Parks > Off-leash Park Site.
- **Safety patrollers.** Concerned about prostitution and drugs in your neighbourhood? Form a patrol brigade to discourage unwanted business by putting more eyes on the street.
- **Colleagues.** Heading the same direction for work or play or church? Consider walking or biking at least part of the way together. Walk together at lunch, or go for a ski after work.
- **Retired folk.** You may have a more flexible schedule than earlier in life, but perhaps you're concerned about falling or being accosted by strangers. Walking together, inside or out, may be just the ticket.
- **School children.** Join other families in walking or biking to school together, perhaps by creating a walking school bus.
- **Walking or biking clubs.** Find a group that is already walking or biking together. Places to look include community leagues, college/university campuses, fitness centres, health clubs, running stores, bike shops, malls. See also existing groups in Edmonton, below.
- **Mall walkers.** Some malls encourage walkers by providing maps and/or hosting walking clubs. Londonderry and West Edmonton Mall both do, and others may as well.
- **Group events.** Participate in local walks and other events that get people active. They're likely places to find kindred walkers.
- **Recruit a partner** Use bulletin boards at local coffee shops, community newsletters and forums such as Meetup to find buddies living and/or working near you.

Use whatever hook is pulling your group together to encourage each other to walk. Lots of parents get together while their kids are preschoolers, for example. Why not get out the strollers and go for a walk? Besides giving you good exercise, it'll add eyes on the street and help you own your community.

~ Rod Keith, Walkable Edmonton team member

I don't have a car, so I walk everywhere I go. It was difficult moving from a smaller city where people responded to and often even initiated salutations to strangers on the street. In Edmonton, there are some people I see up to three times a week when I am walking to school, to whom I have often said "hello," and they have never even acknowledged my presence. Some of them shut themselves up in their own world and pretend there is no one outside of it. So, here is my idea.

How about a visible marking that indicates people wearing it are a part of the Edmonton Walkable Movement. People who wear this marking (I am thinking some type of bright yet fashionable armband) would know that other people wearing it are of the same mindset as them — that they are interested in building community, which means they are willing to engage in the lives of others.

~ Mike Kozlowski, University of Alberta student from Red Deer



Forming A Club

Unable to find a walking or biking group that suits your needs? Does your informal group want to get serious about setting goals, tracking progress and enticing others to join? Consider forming a walking or biking club. Besides getting active together, club members typically keep in touch via email and newsletters, provide coaching, enter/host events and track progress. Some walking clubs function independently; others attach to a community league, store, umbrella organizations or other local group.

- **Tips for starting a club**

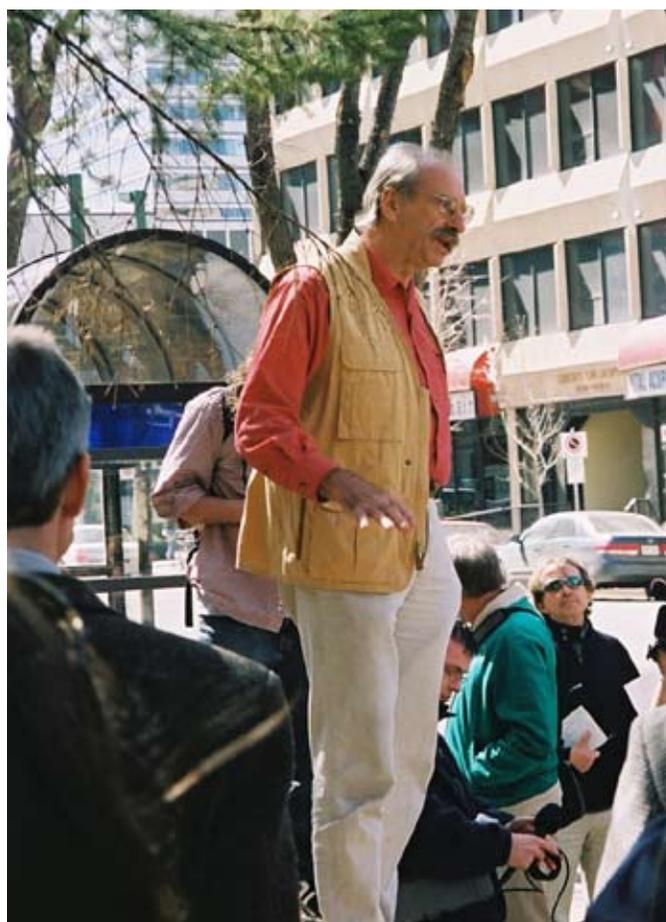
Walking expert Wendy Bumgardner offers advice on starting a walking club at. <http://walking.about.com/cs/clubs/a/startingclub.htm>. Follow links for lots more about walking.

- **Block Party Self Help Book**

The easiest walking groups involve people who live nearby. This City of Edmonton handbook helps you get to know those neighbours as you organize a block party together. That could well be a first step toward walking groups and other joint activities. Go to www.edmonton.ca and follow these links: People Services & Programs/ People Services/People. Click on “block party” on the right.

Walking can be a solo journey, but finding a walking companion or club can keep it interesting and keep you motivated.

~ Wendy Bumgardner, <http://walking.about.com/cs/clubs/a/companions.htm>



Existing Groups In Edmonton

Local walking/biking groups and larger umbrella organizations offer support, motivational tools, networking, events, perhaps also group liability coverage. Depending on the focus of your group, one of the following may be of interest. To suggest an addition to this list of Edmonton groups, just email WalkableEdmonton@edmonton.ca.

Alpine Club of Canada, Edmonton Section

<http://alpineclub-edm.org>

Organizes weekend mountain trips to with an emphasis on climbing and backcountry skiing. Affiliated with the nationwide mountaineering club (www.AlpineClubOfCanada.ca) based in Canmore, which offers outdoor courses and has more than a dozen backcountry huts in the Canadian Rockies.

Canadian Orienteering Federation

www.orienteering.ca

Oversees competitions that test navigation skills while traveling on foot, ski or mountain bike. Edmonton Overlanders Orienteering Club is an affiliate.

City of Edmonton — Kinsmen Sports Centre

www.edmonton.ca/Kinsmen

Offers numerous walking programs for all fitness levels, including race walking and strollersize.

Edmonton Overlanders Orienteering Club

www.orienteer.ab.ca

Canada's largest orienteering club, 400 strong, runs regular events in city parks and in the forest from mid April until September. Orienteering uses a detailed map and compass to find checkpoints hidden along a preset route. It can be enjoyed as a recreational family outing or as a competitive sport.

Geocaching

www.geocaching.com

Geocaching is an entertaining adventure game for GPS (Global Positioning System) users. Individuals and organizations set up caches all over the world and share the locations on the Internet, rated for terrain difficulty. GPS users use the location coordinates to find the caches, which may contain a greeting from the people who created the cache, a finders' log, and some small treasures (although the real reward is finding the cache). If you wish to take something from a cache, leave something behind. You can log your finds on the web and read other people's experiences in locating (or not locating) a cache.

Geocaching is something we do to get out and about, either around home, or to get off the beaten path while on a vacation. We research the sites we want to visit on the internet before heading out. When we are close to the location, we park in the area, put the dog on a leash and follow our GPS directions. We've done some great hikes in areas that we would normally just drive by. Often caches are created by people who want to share their favourite places with others.

~ A. Dafoe, Walkable Edmonton Team

Grant MacEwan Active Living Walking Club

www.MacEwanCentre.ca, 780-497-5371

Led by a medical exercise specialist, the club's one-hour sessions include walking, stretching and strength building activities. Join any time.

Hash House Harriers

www.eh3.org

International network whose runs are based on the old English game of paper chase. One harrier (the hare) lays a trail of flour over a course. The other harriers (the hounds) try to follow that trail to the end, where they're rewarded with camaraderie over munchies and drinks. Edmonton has several harrier groups, listed at www.hash.ca/directory/club_list.php#Edmonton_Alberta.

Park near the stables in Whitemud Park (southwest of downtown near Fort Edmonton) and follow the trail south along Whitemud and Blackmud creeks through forested ravines and meadows. Depending on where you decide to turn back, you can easily cover a 20-K round-trip.

~ Joel Regenstreif, Hash House Harrier Insider tip from Runner's World

Intreadable Walking Hash

www.eh3.org

The Edmonton Hash House Harriers groups are known for running, but this crew concentrates on walking. Events every Thursday evening starting 6:30 p.m. To locate the start of the next walk, call the HHH hotline, (780) 444-3434, and enter 2.

Walking with other people is more fun than walking alone, you see places you'd never think of going alone and you have people to go out to dinner with afterwards.

~ David Checkel, member, Intreadable Walking Hash

Londonderry Mall Walking Club

email Haleyf@londonderrymall.com.
476-1441

Edmonton's largest mall walking program, with 1000 registered members, runs September to April, 7 to 10 a.m. weekdays. Members can register by calling Londonderry Mall Customer Service at 476-1441. Registered mall walkers receive a free T-shirt, lap card, store discounts and incentives. Mall Walkers' Den opening Summer 2006 in Center Court.

One of our mall walkers, Christina Cacho lost 165 pounds in a little over a year thanks to Weight Watchers and the Londonderry Mall Walking Club. She is so popular in our club that the mall walkers asked her to be our Personal Trainer. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning she organizes a 15-20 minute warm-up for the walkers.

~ Haley Fostvelt, Marketing Coordinator, Londonderry Mall

I would like to challenge all those people thinking of getting some exercise to at least give it a try. I assure you, you will enjoy it and feel better in the long run, because staying positive and finding something that works for you will benefit you to a longer, healthier life, as it has done for me.

~ Christina Cacho, Londonderry mall walker and personal trainer

Meetup

www.meetup.com

Meetup.com helps people find others who share their interest or cause and form lasting, influential, local, active community groups. Worldwide, more than two million have joined meetup groups. Edmonton has more than two dozen meetups, drawn together by interests ranging from politics to religion to motherhood and more. Several Edmontonians have registered an interest in launching an Edmonton walking meetup. With a little energy, it could happen.

Meetup Groups have brought communities together, shaken up politics, given people a voice... and had a lot of fun. United we Meetup!

~ www.meetup.com

Running Room clubs

www.runningroom.com — stores

Besides the running clubs for which they're known, a few Edmonton area Running Room outlets host walking clubs. Check your nearest Running Room or other fitness outlet for opportunities and route maps.

SHAPE

www.shapeab.com

Alberta group encouraging walking to school. Website includes a toolkit for promoting walking to school.



U of A on the Move

www.onthemove.ualberta.ca

Modeled after programs such as America on the Move (USA) and 10,000 Steps Rockhampton (Australia), U of A on the Move launched in 2003 to promote physical activity and provide objective feedback to individuals as they become more active. Participants received tools to track progress and motivating email updates. The website includes indoor and outdoor walking trails on and near campus.

If we could increase the level of physical activity by 10% nationally, we could save the health care system 5 billion dollars!

~ In Motion, Saskatchewan website,
www.in-motion.ca/benefits

Volkssport Association of Alberta

www.albertavolkssport.ca

Affiliated with the International Volkssport Association, the largest association of walking clubs in the world. Volkssport clubs hold events for the public as well as club members. Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert and Devon are among Alberta communities with Volkssport walking clubs.

I myself started Volksmarching in Germany. My boss ran marathons so our entire squad ran marathons. In four years in Europe, I did over 200 marathons and nine ultra marathons (100 km non-stop) and two Paris to Brussels runs (71 kilometres a day for four days), just “for the health of it.” Most of my stuff is running, but now I’m getting older, so I’ve taken to walking.

~ Richard Parr, walksalot@shaw.ca, President, Volkssport Association of Alberta

Waskahegan Trail Association

www.boreal.net/wta

Besides serving as stewards of the 235 km Waskahegan Trail east of Edmonton, these volunteers organize several hikes or cross country ski trips each month.

Being physically inactive has the same impact on your health as smoking a pack of cigarettes each day.

~ Dr. Nick Busing, College of Family Physicians of Canada
www.in-motion.ca/benefits





Organized Events

Organized walking, running and cycling events can be great motivators. They give you a goal to shoot for, whether it's to walk a 5-K, finish a triathlon or set a personal best time. Events organized for a charitable cause provide the added satisfaction of benefiting good works.

Here are some places to look for events:

Impact magazine

www.impactmagazine.ca

Based in Calgary, Canada's fitness magazine features running in its March/April issue, complete with a line-up of races for the year. You'll also find the race line-ups (which often include a walking component) at www.impactmagazine.ca/runningpage.html.

Running Room

www.runningroom.com

Click on www.events.runningroom.com/hm and search for events by location. Or ask to be on the email alert list for upcoming events.

Events online

www.eventsonline.ca

Online race registration service for Canadian sporting events that includes numerous Edmonton opportunities.

Local retail outlets and libraries

Check bulletin boards and front counters of libraries, fitness retailers and other outlets for brochures about upcoming events.

SummerActive & WinterActive

www.summeractive.org,
www.winteractive.org

National initiative issues challenges and suggests ways to involve people of all ages in summer and winter activities. Includes a useful listing of links: www.winteractive.org/en/index.php?section=useful_links#s1

Healthy U Crew

www.healthyalberta.com/default.asp

Alberta Health & Wellness team visits K-Days and other events across Alberta, promoting active living.

SHAPE

www.shapeab.com

Alberta Active Challenge Day, International Walk to School Week and other events intended to kick-start walking and other activities, toward the goal of "Safe, Healthy, Active People Everywhere."

Alberta Active Living Challenge Day occurs annually on the third Thursday in May. Last year Albertans challenged the Guinness World Record for the Most People Walking Simultaneously on Thursday, May 26. Schools, communities and workplaces joined thousands by walking at least one kilometre.

For info or to register:

***www.befitforlife.ca or call 780-492-0758
www.shapeab.com/tools4teachers.asp***



Workplace Walking

Walking (or biking) and work go together more often than we think. Consider your situation. Can you walk or bike to or from work, whether all or part of the way? Can you walk at work, perhaps with a group during lunch hour? Perhaps you could walk rather than sit for some meetings. What would it take to turn your workplace into a walking culture?

Researchers developed an audit tool to assess nine elements of walkability in the workplace: pedestrian facilities, pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, crosswalks, route maintenance, walkway width, roadway buffer, accessibility, aesthetics, and shade... Walkway planners may use these ratings as a way to... create an atmosphere more conducive to walking.

~ Assessing the Walkability of the Workplace: A New Audit Tool. American Journal of Health Promotion 20(1):39-44, 2005

Key ingredients

Here are some suggestions for encouraging yourself and others to combine walking (or other forms of active transport) and work:

- some interesting trails and loops;
- a set meeting time and place;
- showers and bike lock-ups;
- enthusiastic team leaders;
- goals and incentives;
- supportive managers;
- persistent publicity about opportunities, benefits and accomplishments.

Conditions at work (both physical and psychosocial) can have a profound effect on a person's health and emotional well-being. Regular physical activity is essential for a healthy life.

~ The Workplace Wellness Program...Creating Healthy Workplaces in Niagara www.regional.niagara.on.ca/living/health_wellness/workplacewellness

Resources for workplace walking & wellness

Healthy U@Work.

www.healthyalberta.com/work/default.aspen

This Province of Alberta initiative encourages employers to support their employees in making healthy choices. Includes strategies, statistics, incentives, support materials.

Business Case for Active Living at Work

www.activelivingatwork.com

This new internet resource is the third major initiative undertaken by Health Canada since 1997, when federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for physical activity, sport and recreation set a target to reduce inactivity by 10% by 2003 (now raised to 20% by 2015). This workplace resource complements *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy, Active Living (1998)* and *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for older adults (1999)*. Includes a summary of research, what works, how to get started and a template for developing a business case for active living in your organization.

Alberta Centre for Active Living

www.centre4activeliving.ca — click on “settings”

This key resource centre has devoted a segment of its website to active living at work. It also has copies of numerous resources on hand for short-term loan.

Workplace Health Promotion Project

www.thcu.ca/Workplace/Workplace.html

Initiative by the University of Toronto Health Communication Unit Centre for Health Promotion to equip communities and public-health agencies to promote workplace health. Uses a Workplace Physical Activity Framework developed by our own Alberta Centre for Active Living.

Healthy Ottawa @ Work — Physical Activity

www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/environments/workplace/activity

Comprehensive workplace health promotion project, including tips on starting a walking club at work. Users guide available online or at Alberta Centre for Active Living.

Every dollar spent on corporate wellness reaps \$1.95 to \$3.75 in benefits. Those benefits include a turnover rate as significant as 32.4% lower than average for fitness program participants.

~ Canadian Life Assurance Company study

How about holding walking meetings? The ambience of a hiking trail just might prompt the creative breakthrough you’re looking for.

~ Judy Newman, Alberta Centre for Active Living



Group Ventures Around The World

Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery. Group initiatives elsewhere may offer ideas you can borrow to take action here at home.

- **Australia: Just Walk It.** Volunteer organizers form local walking groups. With thousands signed on, people not previously active are tripling their walking time. www.heartfoundation.com.au/index.cfm?page=210
- **Calgary: Commuter Challenge.** www.calgarycommute.ca
- **Manitoba: Get Moving Manitoba.** www.wellnessinstitute.mb.ca/news/getmoving.php
- **Chatham-Kent: Healthy Living Chatham-Kent.** www.chatham-kent.ca/community+services/health/Physical+Activity/Adults+and+Older+Adults/Start+Walking+Program.htm
- **Inverness County on the Move.** www.invernesscounty.ca/tourism/newsletter3_OntheMove.pdf#search='Inverness%20County%20on%20the%20move
- **Lambton County: Walking Programs in Lambton County.** www.lambtonhealth.on.ca/Active/6_2_Walking_%20Programs.asp
- **Medicine Hat: Walking info.** www.mhc.ab.ca/services/fitforlife/docs/discover_walking.htm
- **Mississauga Walks:** Includes printable brochure to help you start your walking program. www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/mississaugawalks
- **Niagara: Healthy Living Niagara.** www.healthylivingniagara.com/index.htm Includes FAQ on walking, water, foods, skin protection, pedometer purchase and other how-tos.
- **Ottawa: Walking info** particularly on pedometer use. http://ottawa.ca/residents/health/environments/workplace/activity/pedometer_en.html
- **Penticton Steps Out.** The City of Penticton provided free pedometers to those who took up the challenge of walking 2000 steps in a successful program aided by strong community partnerships. www.stepsout.com/penticton
- **Virginia: WalkSmart!** Encourages students to set goals, enter their steps and see their position along a route. Technical Assistance Guide also available at Centre for Active Living in Edmonton, Record #1026. www.walksmartvirginia.com





Let's Walk to School!

Walking to school: once the norm, now it's the exception. Yet experts point out that reviving the walk or bike to school offers many benefits, including improved health — for those who do it and for the environment.

For maximum walkability, experts say, schools should be of moderate size, located in the neighbourhoods they serve, connected to homes by safe routes and open to multiple community uses. Those criteria allow children to walk or bike to school and help knit communities by providing central, accessible and inviting gathering places.

Edmonton's open boundaries compound the trend to cars and buses, and it's important for each family to factor that reality into the choice of schools. The trend also reflects a cultural shift to a motorized society that has lost some of its interpersonal glue — and as a result, lives in greater fear. Parents may fear letting their children walk even a short distance to school, ironically increasing the danger of motor vehicle collisions.

Some communities are addressing those concerns and reversing the shift, at least for a subset of families. Schools, parents, advocacy groups, police officers and civic staff are banding together to identify and create safe ways to take an active route to school.

Creating safe routes to school

- Choose or create routes with connected and maintained sidewalks, low traffic speeds/volumes, minimal street crossing, good sight distances and unthreatening surroundings.
- Ensure all crossings have appropriate signals and/or crossing guards.
- Make all school entrances directly accessible by pedestrians.
- Provide bicycle parking in safe, secure, convenient locations.
- Plan school bus routes and pickup points to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.
- Locate staff and parent parking to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists.
- Use traffic-calming techniques and other street redesign to limit motor vehicle speeds and volumes near schools.
- Create and enforce safe drop-off zones.
- Aggressively enforce speeds on school routes.
- Institute walking school buses.

For more detail, see *Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design: A Guide for Public Health Practitioners*, National Centre for Bicycling and Walking, www.bikewalk.org/PubHealth.htm

School Successes & Resources

Alberta's Active and Safe Routes to School

Encourages students to walk, bike, scoot, skate and take other active routes to school. Ask for *Alberta's Active and Safe Routes to School Resource Manual*, an excellent launching pad with practical ideas for kick-off events, planning a Walking School Bus, Walk to School Week (October) and curriculum related learning. An initiative of SHAPE (Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere) in Alberta and Go for Green across the nation.

Contact: info@shapeab.com, 13040 137 Ave., Edmonton, T6V 1G7, (780) 406-8530, www.shapeab.com.

SHAPE (Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere)

Began in 10 Edmonton schools and now a province-wide initiative, SHAPE aims to get children more active, eliminate safety obstacles in and around schools and keep the environment clean by teaching children about active and healthy transportation choices. School staff, parents, students and the community work together to identify concerns and develop solutions, using resources that link child traffic safety to the Alberta Curriculum.

Contact: info@shapeab.com, 13040 137 Ave., Edmonton, T6V 1G7, (780) 406-8530, www.shapeab.com

Walking School Bus

A walking (or cycling) school bus runs on "kidpower." Parents wearing specific clothing, such as traffic safety vests and "drive" the bus by walking a prescribed route at designated times, picking up children at "bus stops" along the way. Drivers are responsible for supervision and safety and to reinforce safe traffic behaviour. Go for Green and SHAPE offer excellent ideas and resources. Community Transportation staff can help by providing detailed neighbourhood layouts and meeting with volunteers to map safe routes.

Contact: www.shapeab.com, www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/home_e.html

Walking Tool-Kit

Created in Calgary, this kit provides a wealth of information, activities and templates for launching a walking program. Primarily for elementary schools, but valuable for other groups as well.

Contact: www.shapeab.com/resources.asp

Why take an active route to school?

A few of the benefits:

- *increased physical activity for children and youth.*
- *A healthier lifestyle for the whole family.*
- *Less traffic congestion around schools.*
- *Safer, calmer streets and neighborhoods.*
- *Improved air quality and a cleaner environment.*



Parent Parking Patrol

City of Edmonton Police and Community Transportation staff work with parents and staff at participating schools to identify and address safety hazards that could keep kids from safely walking and biking to school. Parents and school staff don safety vests and volunteer for safety duty during regular pickup and drop-off times, aided by such devices as traffic safety cones and a Cleo (pedestrian silhouette). The program also reinforces safety habits, including “point, pause, proceed” for crossing a street. A pilot Parent Parking Patrol in five neighbourhoods demonstrated marked improvement in parents’ driving habits and decline in such unsafe actions as jaywalking and running between stopped vehicles.

Contact: Edmonton Police Service, (780) 421-2101 or (780) 421-3556; Transportation (780) 496-1795

Most of the traffic safety issues addressed by a Parent Parking Patrol program are caused by the behaviour of parents and students. These issues include jay-walking, illegal U-turns, parking violations and speeding.

Safety visits to schools

Edmonton Police Service has dedicated two constables to travel through Edmonton’s 250 elementary schools, talking with parents and school administration about traffic safety. Schools can request a visit from the police, who are often accompanied by staff from Community Transportation. Together, the team can help identify particular safety concerns, whether caused by design or by bad habits such as jay-walking, illegal U-turns, parking violations and speeding.

Contact: Edmonton Police Service, (780) 421-2101 or (780) 421-3556; Transportation (780) 496-1795

Recognizing that school drop-off zones can be hazardous, teachers at Crestwood School in west Edmonton worked with Transportation Planning and Edmonton Police Service to address safety around school as part of the curriculum. Students helped put up signs delineating spots for drop-off, bus parking and pedestrian crossing. They also urged parents to take more care and follow all the rules. Other schools have taken similar steps, with positive results.

Our whole theory is that if you start with the kids early, they will take what they learn and later in life it will become natural to them.

~ Darryl Mullen, Community Transportation Planning, City of Edmonton

Programs at some schools encourage children to use “Point, Pause, Proceed” when crossing roads.

Pedestrian silhouettes called Cleos may be placed in the centre of the road at crosswalks around a school to improve the visibility of the crossings and slow traffic.

To deter motorists from parking too close to pedestrian crosswalks around a school, traffic cones may be placed upstream of the crossings.

AMA School Safety Patrol

The Alberta Motor Association equips students in participating schools to help schoolmates safely cross streets near school. More than 550 schools participate in the program, which offers curricular resources, contests and other incentives. In the seven decades since this program began, no one has been killed or seriously injured at its patrolled crosswalks.

Contact: Edmonton Region School Coordinators, (780) 474-8785

Walking Tour of Canada

Schools take a virtual “walking tour of Canada” by logging kilometres walked to and from school. Along the way, they learn about both fitness and Canada.

Register: <http://asrts.goforgreen.ca/english>

Silken Laumann

Silken’s Active Kids Movement aims to inspire, enable and connect everyday champions, tapping their passion, creativity and connections to help our families, schools and neighbourhoods be places where kids are physically active. Website includes success stories.

Contact: (250) 658-5859, email activekids@silkenlaumann.com, www.silkensactivekids.com

Parents, teachers, health professionals, and all levels of government need to work together to normalize physical activity in children’s lives; to teach them that daily physical activity is as important for their health as good nutrition and should be as routine as brushing their teeth and wearing a seat belt.

~ Silken Laumann, Addressing Obesity & Physical Inactivity in Children: National Study Shows it Can Be Done Canada NewsWire, March 3, 2005

Go for Green

www.goforgreen.ca/walktoschool/home_e.html

National non-profit whose website offers a wealth of ideas and information for walking advocates in school settings and elsewhere. Among school-related programs:

- Active & Safe Routes to School
- Walking School Bus
- International Walk to School Week (October)
- Cycling Manual

National Center for Bicycling & Walking

www.bikewalk.org

Two useful U.S. resources for school transportation programs:

- www.bikewalk.org/safe_routes_to_school.htm
- www.bikewalk.org/walk_a_child_to_school.htm

Walking or bicycling to school could contribute to children’s daily physical activity, but physical environment changes are often needed to improve the safety and convenience of walking and cycling routes.

~ American Journal of Preventive Medicine, February 2005





Tools & Resources

A potpourri of tools and resources for making walking a larger part of life in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Ways, that is, to make walking more possible, more enjoyable, more fun.

- Active Edmonton
- Activity logs
- Bicycle survey
- Canada on the Move
- G-map Pedometer
- Maps of Edmonton
- Nordic poles
- Pedometers
- Pedshed Mapping
- Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire
- Preparing for an outing
- Safety Audit
- Walkability Audit
- Walkability Resources

Active Edmonton

With the goal of becoming Canada's most active city, this collaborative community initiative uses contests, champions, special events and other incentives to encourage walking and other physical activity among individuals, families, workplaces and other groups.

Contact: www.activeedmonton.com

Activity Logs

Goals are important motivators, and logging your activity is a good way to track progress. The Alberta Centre for Active Living recommends these two resources for setting and tracking goals:

- **Physical Activity Log.** Includes space to record endurance, strength and flexibility activities. www.centre4activeliving.ca/Education/Resources/Pedometers/PALog.pdf
- **Walk This Way.** Self-help kit for launching and tracking an exercise program, produced by PARC, the Physical Activity Resource Centre of Halton & Hamilton-Wentworth. Printed booklet includes erasable, reusable calendar. Lending copy available at Alberta Centre for Active Living. You'll also find it online at www.ophea.net/parc/walkthisway.cfm, email parc@ophea.net or www.ophea.net/parc

Bicycle survey

Help the City of Edmonton plan and improve cycling facilities by providing your thoughts about cycling in our city

Survey forms: www.edmonton.ca (Home > Transportation > Cycling in Edmonton > Current Initiatives), email transplanning@edmonton.ca.

Canada on the Move

Donate your steps to health research at Canada on the Move, a national research project organized by the Canadian Institutes on Health research. If you have a pedometer, you can also follow your own progress using online tracking tools. You can also register as a group and track group progress.

Log on: www.Canadaonthemove.ca

Gmap-pedometer

Measure and record your walking distance and calories burned using the google map pedometer, an application that makes excellent use of Google's mapping ability.

Find it: www.webwalking.com/googlemap.htm

Maps of Edmonton

Edmontonians on the go often depend on these two resources to map their way:

- **Cycle Edmonton Map, Information and Trail Guide**

Shows river valley and other trails, transit centres, leisure centres, points of interest, distances between river valley parks, rules for taking bikes on transit and much more.

Find it: most tourism centres, libraries, online http://www.edmonton.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_104_0_0_35/http%3B/cmsserver/COEWeb/roads+and+traffic/cycling+in+the+city/where+to+ride/default.htm or by contacting (780) 496-1795, email transplanning@edmonton.ca

- **Edmonton Transit Service Schedules & Maps**

Numerous maps in varying levels of detail, for individual routes and the entire transit system.

Find it: buses, libraries, transit centres. Also online, along with individual trip planner, at www.edmonton.ca (Home > Transit > Route Schedules & Maps), email etransit@edmonton.ca

Numerous other maps are also available to guide you out and about, including heritage and art walks, river valley loops and more. See Destinations.



Nordic poles

The latest sport to catch northern Europe's imagination is Nordic walking, or walking with poles. It's perhaps best described as cross country skiing without skis and snow, an apt analogy given its origin as summer training for skiers. The sport's popularity is due in part to the health benefits involved, which can be 30 per cent greater than the benefits of normal walking. Using poles improves your posture and, by propelling your body forward and thus increasing the length of your stride, helps you walk faster. Because the use of poles reduces the load on the knees and other joints, it can actually be easier on the body than walking without poles. Think you'll look goofy walking along with what looks like ski poles, sans snow? Not for long, experts predict. Be at the front of the wave!

Nordic walking may look dorky, but it feels great. It's only a matter of time before everybody's doing it here.

~ Author & racewalker Mark Fenton, in Edmonton to promote Nordic walking

Pedometers

Pedometers are little devices that count the number of steps you take in a day. To maintain good health, says Health Canada, we need a minimum of 10,000 steps a day. Find out how many steps you take in a day, then set a healthy goal and track your progress. No need to buy an expensive pedometer; a simple, sturdy model that counts steps only, without added bells and whistles, will serve as well. Pedometers are available at most sports stores. Clip one at or near your waist, do a few test walks to calibrate, and go!

Tips for using your pedometer are readily available online. Here are three credible sources:

- **Pedometer information sheet**, Alberta Centre for Active Living, (780) 427-6949, email active.living@ualberta.ca www.centre4activeliving.ca/Education/Resources/Pedometers/PedInstructions.pdf
- **Steps to distance conversion chart**, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Chart and tips for accurately converting your step count to actual distance walked. For example, some folks find their count more accurate when the pedometer hangs from the front pocket rather than the waist. www.wellness.lanl.gov/svc/motive/10k/pedtips.htm

- **Step Up and be Counted – Let's get walking with a pedometer**, City of Ottawa

Available at the Alberta Centre for Active Living or online at www.ottawa.ca/residents/health/living/activity/adults/walking/pedometer_en.html

- **Penticton Steps Out**. Useful FAQ list includes advice for calculating distance and calorie burn. www.stepsout.com/penticton

Pedometers are useful tools that let you know where you're at. They're not a magic bullet, but they can help motivate you.

~ Judy Newman, Alberta Centre for Active Living

How many steps per kilometre?

- Approximately 1,250 steps make a kilometre, based on the average stride of 0.8 metres (almost 3 ft).
- 10,000 such steps will take you 8 km.
- At 100 steps/minute, it takes 1 hour, 40 minutes to go the recommended 10,000 daily steps. www.walk4life.com, Alberta Centre for Active Living

Pedshed Mapping

Direct, connected sidewalks enhance a neighbourhood's walkability by enabling pedestrians to reach their destinations without being slowed by dead ends and circuitous routes. Pedshed mapping can help you analyze this aspect of your neighbourhood's design by determining how far you can go in five minutes. Choose a point in your neighbourhood and draw a circle 800 metres in diameter around that point. Now measure how far you could go from that point if you were to walk 400 metres (about five minutes) down every possible route. Shade in the area you could reach in that five minutes. Compare that shaded area or "pedshed" to the two examples shown here. In general, grid patterned streets such as those found in Edmonton's older neighbourhoods result in a larger pedsheds.

Definition: A pedshed encompasses the area a typical pedestrian can reach from one starting point by walking five minutes down each available path.

Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire

Walking is safe for almost everyone. But if you have any concern about how your body will respond to walking, complete the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology PAR-Q or Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire. You may also wish to check with your doctor.

Questionnaire: csep.ca/pdfs/par-q.pdf or call (613) 234-3755.

The Talk Test: *If you can carry a conversation on while walking briskly, you are setting a good pace. If you are breathless and unable to talk while walking, slow down. You are going faster than you need to.*

~ Alberta Centre for Active Living,
www.centre4activeliving.ca

Preparing for an outing

Walking and biking are low-cost, low-impact, low maintenance activities, but a few items deserve attention as you head out.

- exertion – listen to your body and avoid doing too much too fast;
- helmet – when active on wheels, protect your head;
- outerwear – winter or summer, dress for the weather with layers of comfortable clothing that won't restrict movement;
- security – choose safe routes and consider walking in a group;
- shoes – wear shoes that fit, have good cushioning and are not worn out;
- stretch – limber up and cool down with gentle stretches, especially for lower legs and ankles;
- sun protection – use sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat to protect your skin and eyes;
- water – keep well hydrated.

Good, inexpensive running shoes are great for walking. Look for shoes with a wide space for your toes and lots of flexibility under the forefoot (the ball of your foot). Make sure that your shoes feel comfortable — not too wobbly and not too stiff.

~ Alberta Centre for Active Living,
www.centre4activeliving.ca

Walkability Audit

How walkable is your community?

Take a walk through your neighbourhood. Go as a diverse group of all ages and abilities, including wheelchairs and strollers – or keep those needs in mind as you walk.

For each question below, circle the appropriate response, make notes about particular problem areas and assign an overall rating.

1. Are sidewalks available on every street? Yes Not always

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Problem areas _____

2. Are sidewalks and other walkways linked together? If not, where are the breaks?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Are sidewalks and other walkways in good repair? Identify any broken sections.

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Are crossing points safe and convenient?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Are busy streets and intersections appropriately equipped with crosswalks and pedestrian signals?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Can slow-moving pedestrians get across the street in the time allowed by the signals?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

7. Do drivers yield to pedestrians at driveways and crosswalks?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Are there particular danger or blind spots?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. Are the curbs ramped, and if so are the ramps easy to negotiate?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Are the walkways well separated from traffic? RATING:

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Do any utility poles, signs, vending machines, dumpsters, shrubbery or overhead obstacles block the sidewalk? If so, where?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Are there trees along the street to provide shade and separation from traffic?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

13. Does the street provide a pleasant visual environment, with attractive storefronts and landscaping?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. Are there places to walk for daily needs, such as groceries, coffee, baked goods and books?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. Are there scenic places to walk for exercise and relaxation?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

16. Are there enough garbage and recycle bins?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

17. Is the area clear of litter, trash, graffiti and dog droppings?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

18. Are there enough places to sit? Where, if anywhere, would you add seating?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

19. Is transit convenient, well located and regarded as safe?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

20. Is there other pedestrian activity along the way?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

21. Would you feel safe and welcome walking here alone? Why or why not?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

22. Was the walk enjoyable? Why or why not?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

23. Would you repeat this walking trip again? Why or why not?

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6

How does your neighbourhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

76-90 – Celebrate! You have a great neighbourhood for walking.

61-75 – Celebrate a little. Your neighbourhood is pretty good.

46-60 – Okay, but it needs work.

31-45 – Lots of work needed.

16-30 – Your neighbourhood deserves better than that.

0-15 – Call out the army before you walk. It's a disaster area.

Other walkability audits

Several walkability audits are available online, each with a slightly different approach. Here are two that may serve your needs:

- **Neighbourhood Walking Survey**, Kansas City Walkability Plan
www.kcmo.org/planning/walkplan/Bappendix.pdf
- **Walkability Checklist**, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.walkinginfo.org/cps/checklist.htm
- **Walkable Edmonton Walkability Checklist** www.edmonton.ca/walkableedmonton

Interventions that change the built environment may hold the most promise for increasing physical activity. Initiatives that try to motivate and educate individuals and groups reach only a small percent of the population and often taper off soon after the program ends.

~ RWJF Foundation, Lessons learned: promoting physical activity at the community level, 2005 www.rwjf.org/files/publications/LessonsLearned_PhysicalActivity_GRR.pdf

Walkability Resources

In addition to this alphabetized list of central organizations and resources, see resources specific to such topics as advocacy, design, schools and cycling.

Active Healthy Kids Canada

www.activehealthykids.ca

Tips and ideas for encouraging kids to be active, including Active Healthy Kids Day, last Thursday of May.

Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability – Alberta Initiative

www.diversity.arpaonline.ca/ALACD.html

Promotes inclusion and active living among Canadians with a disability by offering opportunities for communication and collaboration.

Alberta Centre for Active Living

www.centre4activeliving.ca

Provides evidence-based information to support practitioners, organizations, and communities that seek to improve health and quality of life by promoting physical activity. Excellent website leads to a wealth of information.

Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities

www.achsc.org

Network committed to fostering healthy school communities through comprehensive approaches that involve schools, parents and communities.

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association

www.arpaonline.ca

Unites advocates of recreation and parks into a proactive force for building healthy Alberta citizens, communities and environments.

Alberta TrailNet Society

www.albertatrailnet.com

Promotes all types of trails in the interest of a broad range of user groups, with a primary focus on active living through recreational trails.

Alberta Transportation Traffic Safety Initiative

www.saferoads.com

Walk the talk, Alberta Transportation's child safety program promotes pedestrian, bus and bicycle safety by providing such resources as curriculum booklets, brochures, stickers and pencils. Its Child Traffic Safety Resource Guide for Educators, Parents and Community is recommended by Alberta Education.

AMA School Safety Patrol

www.ama.ab.ca

This Alberta Motor Association-funded program equips about 17,000 Grade 5 students a year to patrol school crosswalks.

Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation

www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpwf

Provides funding and other support for sport, recreation and active living in Alberta.

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

www.aashto.org

Author of a highly used *Guide to the Development of Bicycle Facilities*.

America WALKs

www.americawalks.org

U.S. coalition of walking advocacy groups dedicated to promoting liveable, walkable communities. Useful “Resource” section includes advocacy toolbox.

American Journal of Preventive Medicine, February 2005 supplement (Available at Alberta Centre for Active Living, ID#1011)

Numerous experts describe advances in active living research, making the case for a more collaborative future that involves public health experts in planning, zoning and building code decisions.

BC Cycling Coalition

www.bccc.bc.ca, (250) 704-2774 (*leave a message*), email info@bccc.bc.ca.

United voice for integrating cycling into the transportation network so that more people will ride more often. Presents popular advocacy workshops.

Be Fit for Life Network

www.befitforlife.ca

This Alberta network of nine regional centres provides services, programs and resources to promote active living and physical activity. Schools, communities and workplaces are welcome to access its services.

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

www.cflri.ca

Enhances the well-being of Canadians through integrative research and by communicating information about physically active lifestyles to the public and private sectors.

Canadian Health Network

www.canadian-health-network.ca

Topics include healthy living and workplace health. Also provides a link to Canada’s health goals, including the Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy.

Canadian Institute of Transportation Engineers

www.cite7.org

Author of *Canadian Guide to Promoting Sustainable Transportation through Site Design* and *Canadian Guide to Neighborhood Traffic Calming*.

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living

www.paguide.com

Activity guidelines for older adults, children and youth, plus supporting information.

Creative Communities International

www.lesstraffic.com

Respected Australia consultancy headed by David Engwicht and Ingrid Burkett, who share a passion for community development through social innovations. David invented the Walking School Bus and other elements now common to the walkability lexicon.

City Comforts

www.citycomforts.com

Paying attention to the small details of cities make the difference in our comfort, says author David Sucher. His book *City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village*, illustrates small things that make urban life pleasant: places where people can meet, methods to tame cars and to make buildings good neighbors, art that infuses personality into locations and makes them into places. Many of these small details are so obvious as to be invisible.

Community Consultation in the Planning and Development Process: A Guide For Edmonton

www.efcl.org, 780-437-2913

Outlines Edmonton's planning process in plain, everyday language, discusses roles and expectations for all stakeholders, advocates for the collaborative spirit needed to build "great things." Produced in that spirit by Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, City of Edmonton, Urban Development Institute, Edmonton Real Estate Board, Edmonton Region Home Builders' Association and others.

Available in hard copy and online.

Direct URL: www.efcl.org/resources%5Ffor%5Fleagues/consultation_handbook.asp

Edmonton Bicycle Commuters

www.edmontonbicyclecommuters.ca

Promotes bicycle commuting and encourages responsible cycling.

Ever Active Schools Program

www.everactive.org

Works with Alberta school communities to foster social and physical environments that support healthy active lifestyles. Membership-paid programs supported by the Alberta Teachers Association recognize and reward schools that focus on physical activity and community well being.

Evergreen

www.evergreen.ca

Bringing nature to our cities through naturalization projects, Evergreen motivates and equips schools, families and communities to create and sustain healthy, natural outdoor spaces. Click on "common grounds" for numerous case studies of community involvement resulting in improved, more liveable environments.

Geocaching

www.geocaching.com

Home base for an adventure game in which participants use GPS (Global Positioning System) to find caches hidden all over the world. Provides cache locations, instructions for playing and player reports.

Go for Green

www.goforgreen.ca

Canadian active living group that encourages Canadians to pursue healthy, outdoor physical activities while being good environmental citizens. Its website offers a wealth of ideas and information for advocates in schools, workplaces, communities and elsewhere. Numerous initiatives include these:

- Active & Safe Routes to School Program
- Active Transportation Business Case
- Active Transportation projects, case studies, workshops, surveys, roundtable, forums
- Blueprint for Action
- Cycling Manual
- Rails to Greenways Initiative
- Retrofitting Communities for Sustainable and Healthy Active Transportation
- Walk & Roll: A Guide to Active Transportation To, From and At the Workplace
- Walk to School Week (October)
- Walking School Bus

Greater Edmonton Landmarks Inventory

www.edmonton.com, 780-426-4715

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation is gathering an inventory of public art, landmarks and other treasures in Greater Edmonton. Subdivided by geographical location and type of art, this inventory will be available on the EEDC website and other tourism outlets by mid-2006.

Healthy Kids Tool Kit

www.healthykidstoolkit.ca/home

Website to help Canadian educators integrate healthy living into the school day and the curriculum.

Highlands Bellevue Neighbourhood Design Charrette

www.edmonton.ca/WalkableEdmonton

Report summarizing the 2005 charrette involving neighbouring Edmonton communities. Includes overview of charrette process, recommendations and rationale.

Impact magazine

www.impactmagazine.ca

Based in Calgary, Canada's fitness magazine features running in its March/April issue, complete with a line-up of races for the year. Many races have events for walkers as well as runners.

In Praise of Slow

www.inpraiseofslow.com

Former Edmontonian Carl Honoré, who now lives in London, struck a nerve with his book *In Praise of Slow: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed*. Includes a chapter on designing "slow cities."

Institute of Transportation Engineers

www.ite.org/traffic/tcstate.htm

See especially *Traffic calming... for communities*, which includes downloadable documents such as *Traffic Calming: State of the Practice* and links to communities that have initiated traffic calming projects.

Kansas City Walkability Plan

www.kcmo.org, email planning@kcmo.org

Significant public interest led Kansas City to adopt a comprehensive walkability plan in 2003. Edmontonians are welcome to borrow from this useful document, crediting the source.

Direct URL: www.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability?opendocument

LEED standards for Neighborhood Development

www.usgbc.org

Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED), a respected international standard for sustainable building, now can be applied to neighbourhood development (ND). LEED-ND sets expectations for such aspects as compact design, proximity to transit, mixed use, mixed housing type and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design. It has potential to serve as a concrete incentive for creating more walkable neighbourhoods.

Direct URL: www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148&

Let's make Scotland more active

Available at Alberta Centre for Active Living, ID#905

Challenges political and administrative leaders to provide leadership, coordination and resources for a strategic approach to physical activity. Recommendations are consistent with World Health Organization policy. Scottish Executive Health Department, Physical Activity Task Force, Edinburgh, 2002.

Lifestyle Information Network

www.lin.ca

Portal to an extensive and well-vetted recreation database that includes walkability topics. Alberta Centre for Active Living is among network members.

Live Outside the Box

www.liveoutsidethebox.ca

Alberta Community Development site offering ideas for kids, parents, teachers and coaches on being active. Includes Live Outside the Box Challenge Week.

Local Government Commission.

www.lgc.org

Non-profit centre promoting livable cities whose award-winning website has much to offer regarding design for walkability.

National Center for Bicycling & Walking (U.S.)

www.bikewalk.org

Information, support, training, consultation and resources to public agencies, non-governmental organizations and advocates. Maintains an Internet support center, organizes conferences and other special meetings.

Natural Resources Canada

www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

Great resources for students, parents and schools on reducing energy use and cutting the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, and save money at home, at work and on the road. Take the One Tonne Challenge today!

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

www.pedbikeinfo.org

U.S. clearinghouse for information about pedestrian and bicycle issues, including health and safety, engineering, advocacy, education, enforcement, access and mobility. Serving anyone interested, including planners, engineers, private citizens, advocates, educators, police and the health community. Runs several websites, including walkinginfo.org, bicyclinginfo.org, saferoutesinfo.org, pedbikeimages.org, walktoschool.org.

People's Pedal: Bicycle Sharing

www.peoplespedal.org, 780-686-5399

Edmonton bicycle sharing society whose members have access to distinctive red bikes parked at several hubs around central Edmonton.

Project for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. Website includes walkability case studies and salutes the champions who lead the way. Website includes great "placemaking tools," such as Cases for Places and its "Traffic Calming 101."

Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario: A review of the pertinent literature

www.ocfp.on.ca

Commissioned by the Ontario College of Family Physicians, this January 2005 review highlights the growing body of research connecting urban sprawl with obesity and other health effects.

Available at Alberta Centre for Active Living, ID#993 or at www.hearthealth.on.ca/Urban%20Sprawl-Jan-05.pdf

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

www.rwjf.org

Funding source and storehouse of knowledge, thanks to strong focus on active living research and frontline projects. Click on childhood obesity for useful storehouse of findings under the umbrella "Active Living by Design."

Safe Kids Canada

www.safekidscanada.ca

Recognizing that injuries are the number one cause of death and disability among Canadian children, Safe Kids Canada provides information on how to prevent injuries.

Schools Come Alive

www.schoolscomealive.org

Workshops, resource development and collaborative partnerships to support schools in offering effective health and physical education programs in Alberta Schools.

SEEDS Foundation

www.greenschools.ca

Encourages schools to choose a “green” activities through the Green School Recognition and Reward Program.

SHAPE (Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere)

www.shapeab.com

Aims to get children more active, eliminate safety obstacles in and around schools and keep the environment clean by teaching children about active and healthy transportation choices through activities linked to the Alberta Curriculum. Programs include Walking School Bus and Tool-Kit.

Silken’s Active Kid Movement

www.silkenactivekids.ca

Aims to inspire, support and connect everyday champions in our communities, to their passion creativity and their connection to help ensure our families, our schools and our neighbourhoods, are places where kids play where kids are physically active.

Smart Growth America

<http://smartgrowthamerica.org>

Includes the results of a Walkable Community Survey aimed at identifying the most walkable cities in America.

Smart Growth Canada Network

www.smartgrowth.ca

Founded in May 2003 to promote the use of smart growth and sustainability principles across the country. Website includes report analyzing progress toward smart growth in six Canadian cities.

There is a large gap between the stated growth management policies found in the planning documents of the six study regions and accomplishments on the ground. While major progress has been made in terms of language and policy goals, performance is lagging behind considerably.

~ Smart Growth in Canada: Implementation of a Planning Concept, www.smartgrowth.ca

Stay Alert Stay Safe

www.sass.ca

Canada’s leading streetproofing program for children ages 7 to 10

Summeractive/Winteractive

www.summeractive.org

Nation-wide, community based physical activity campaigns that challenge Canadians to take their first steps to becoming more active.

Transportation Association of Canada

www.tac-atc.ca

Author of Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming, available at 613-736-1350, ext 236, publications@tac-atc.ca.

Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

www.vacc.bc.ca

Author of The ABCs of Cycling Advocacy, a useful advocacy strategy tool that includes a strategy worksheet.

Walkable Communities

www.walkable.org

Dan Burden's non-profit corporation organized to help communities become more walkable and pedestrian-friendly.

Walkable Edmonton

www.edmonton.ca/WalkableEdmonton

City of Edmonton initiative to encourage walking and walkability. The team behind this toolkit.

Walking Information

www.walkinginfo.org

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center website devoted to walking. Includes The Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System, a tool intended to help determine which traffic calming measures are appropriate to each problem location. Also includes a walkability checklist, pedestrian plans, reports on pedestrian design, and advocacy information.

Walking, Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau's classic take on walking as a boon for the spirit. Available in various spots on the Internet.

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only — when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the PUBLIC road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

~ Walking, Henry David Thoreau

Walking distance = a distance comfortable for most people to walk as an attractive alternative to driving. This distance is best represented as one quarter mile (400 metres)

