Alberta Health Services

2012

Walkable ALBERTA




Grande Prairie Community Report

GRANDE prairie CANADA

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Introduction

Acknowledgements

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- Joe Johnson, City of Grande Prairie, Planner II
- Michelle Gairdner, City of Grande Prairie, Manager of Environmental Stewardship
- Lucy Ramirez, City of Grande Prairie, Education Coordinator
- Garett Richardson, AHS, Health Promotion Facilitator, Health Promotion Program

Alberta Health Services would like to thank the following groups and organizations for participating in the Alberta Walkability Roadshow in Grande Prairie:

- Mayor Bill Given
- City of Grande Prairie Councillors
- Senior management of the City of Grande Prairie
- Health
- Transport planning/engineering
- Urban planning

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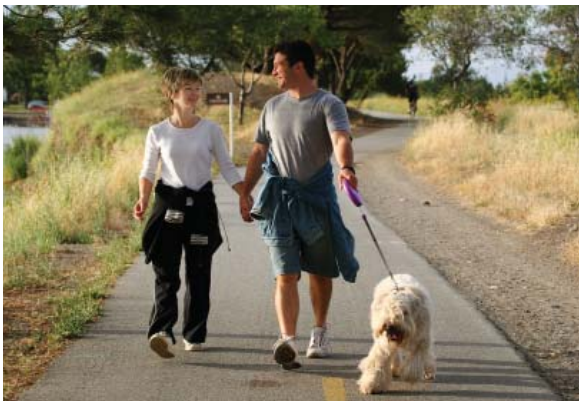
Stantec

Introduction

Walking is critical for health

It has been well established that regular physical activity, including walking, is important to health and well-being (Warburton et al., 2006; Blair and Morris, 2009).



Despite the numerous benefits of physical activity, however, we have not seen an improvement in physical activity participation in Alberta. In fact, physical activity levels have decreased among Albertans in recent years, from 58.5% in 2009 to 54.3% in 2011 (Loitz, et al., 2011). In Canada, it has been estimated that the total (direct and indirect) health care costs due to physical inactivity in 2009 were $6.8 billion, or approximately 3.7% of the country's total health care costs (Janssen, 2012).

Unfortunately, physical activity is often viewed as an individual's choice and responsibility and, as such, should be addressed through education and lifestyle management. This is a short-sighted view of how physical activity promotion needs to be addressed.

Similar to many other health issues, physical activity has several big-picture factors that need to be considered. In fact, there is growing evidence that addressing walking through active transportation and the built environment may be the best method to increasing physical activity participation (Nagel et al., 2008; King, 2008; Frank et al., 2005; Aytur et al., 2007).

Walkable neighbourhoods are healthy neighbourhoods. There is a strong link between cardiovascular fitness and body mass index, and how walkable a neighborhood is (Mobley et al., 2006; Hoehner et al., 2011).

Walkable neighbourhoods and access to green space, trails and parks have many economic benefits to neighbourhoods and communities (Shoup et al., 2010). This is an important message for decision makers and policy makers, as well as community members who wish to make changes in their community.

Alberta Health Services is committed to promoting social and physical environments that enhance wellness and promote healthier behaviours. Walkable Alberta wants to support change in your community by improving walkability and encouraging citizens to walk more often.

Overview of Walkable Alberta

Walkable Alberta improves walkability and encourages citizens to walk more often by working with Alberta Health Services zone representatives, who are working hard to prevent chronic disease, including obesity, by promoting healthy active lifestyles in their communities. These representatives helped make contact with the community representatives who applied to participate in Walkable Alberta.

Walkable Alberta continues the success of the Alberta Walkability Roadshow, which was the first step of the pilot carried out in the fall of 2011, with support from Green Communities Canada and Walk21. These organizations demonstrated a concise process that enables municipalities to create communities where people choose to walk. Alberta Health Services uses a similar process, wherein an interactive community workshop creates an action plan to improve walkability within communities by working through the International Charter for Walking.

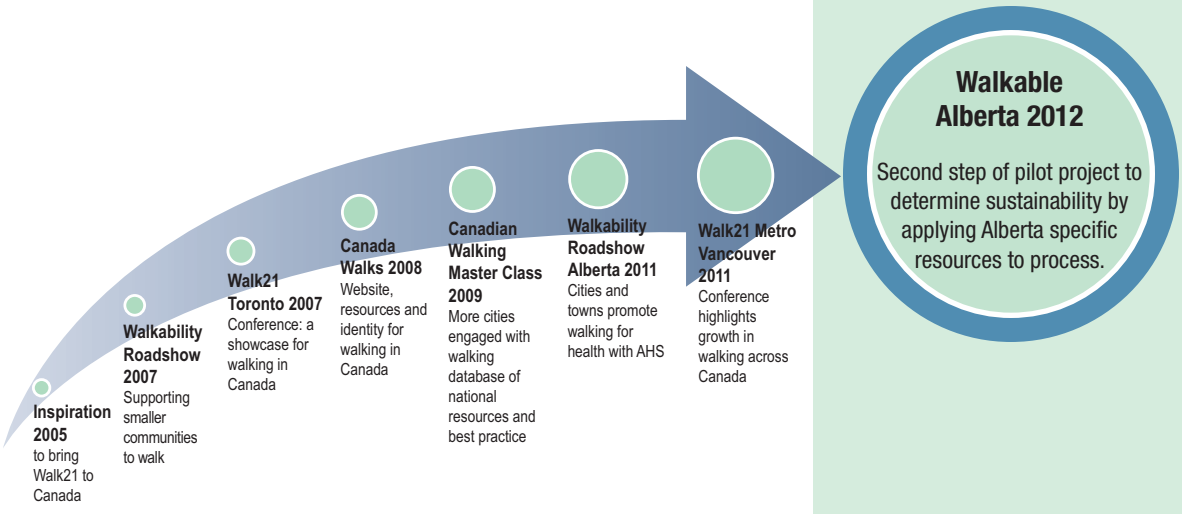
The International Charter for Walking provides both the strategic direction and detailed descriptive actions for creating walkable communities around the world. Walkable Alberta uses this charter to create walking benchmarks within communities and identify achievements, opportunities and challenges as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

Walkable Alberta brings a team of AHS staff and provincial and community stakeholders together to build a framework of local strategies, plans and actions to help create walkable communities. The goal of Walkable Alberta is to complement the great work already being done in the community, and to help move that work forward.

Why has Alberta Health Services decided on this process?

Walk21 uses a facilitated process based on their International Charter for Walking. In Canada, Walk21 works with Green Communities Canada—Canada Walks to use their process across the country. This facilitated process was then adapted to form the pilot project Walkable Alberta, which uses Alberta-specific resources to create an interactive, facilitated community workshop that develops an action plan created by communities, for communities, that will improve walkability.

AHS felt it was important to support communities in being part of a national and international initiative that promotes active living by improving the walkability of local communities. This initiative is a way for communities to improve the health of their community members by reducing chronic disease, creating opportunities for active living and making physical activity the easy choice.



The Walkable Alberta Process

The process followed for this pilot project consisted of the following steps:

Engage Alberta Health Services zone directors who were engaged to inform as well as refer to a local zone contact.

Contact Alberta Health Services zone representatives who were directly involved in preparation of the Walkable Alberta event and/or referred the Walkable Alberta team to a community contact.

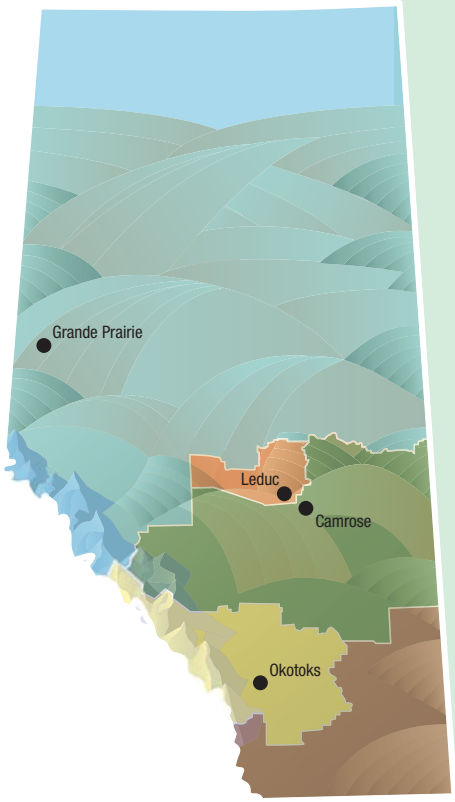
Create a benchmark questionnaire to identify the current activities and plans for walking, and map opportunities and challenges within each community.

Preparation work to develop the agenda for each community and prepare material for the roadshow visits.

Create walkable activities in each community, including keynote presentations, professional workshops, walkabouts, community meetings and feedback sessions.

Prepare community reports for each community available on the Alberta Health Services website.

The Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention and Oral Health, Walkable Alberta team worked with zone directors, zone contacts and community contacts to have communities fill out an application form, followed by the benchmark questionnaire. There were four community visits: to the City of Grande Prairie, the City of Leduc, the City of Camrose and the Town of Okotoks.



What is the International Charter for Walking?

The International Charter for Walking was developed by a team of international experts as part of the Walk21 conference series and was formally launched at the 2006 Walk21 conference in Melbourne. Since that time it has been translated into several languages, and communities and individuals around the have signed the charter, including many from Canada. To view and sign the charter, visit www.walk21.com.

Background information provided by the City of Grande Prairie

Grande Prairie has a large community park (Muskoseepi Park) that runs north-south through the entire city. It has many public trails that are designated for mixed use, including walking, running and cycling. The community has a number of grassed public utility lots, which are essentially grassed alleyways with restricted vehicle access, throughout residential neighbourhoods.

The demographics of Grande Prairie skew relatively young. Many young people and young families move there to enter its job market.

When it comes to roadways, Grande Prairie has consistent arterial road spacing that provides straight north-south and east-west opportunities for connectivity. Most of these roadways have a trail, often only on one side. The community, through city council, has increased its focus on walking and biking in recent years. The City of Grande Prairie has a "Safe Routes to School" committee. So far, six schools have created action plans that identify the safest routes to get there, as well as any necessary improvements to city infrastructure to remedy unsafe situations.

City administration has also been dedicated to walkability issues. The city's Engineering department has a position that focuses on sidewalks and trails, identifying opportunities for new construction (including retrofits) and repairing dilapidated infrastructure.

Some limitations to the walkability of Grande Prairie include the fact that it is a winter city, with snow on the ground for 5–6 months of the year. This requires regular trail and sidewalk maintenance and/or snow clearing. The freeze-thaw cycles create frost heaves, and cracking can create some nuisances and maintenance requirements.

Development within the city continues to be a priority. An ongoing challenge is working with developers to ensure that costs are minimized with walkability infrastructure. Accommodation of vehicle traffic is essential to the needs of community members. A balance between large vehicle use and a pleasant walking environment will always be a challenge. Grande Prairie is often characterized as a "truck town." This can create an unpleasant and sometimes intimidating roadside environment for walkers.

Grande Prairie assembled a cross-departmental team consisting of seven city employees. As a group, they assumed the responsibility of community champions for Walkable Alberta. The group contained employees from Planning, Engineering, Sustainable Initiatives, Community Recreation and Transportation. Walkable Alberta has the potential to raise awareness of walkability issues and the importance of providing the option of walking. It identifies a number of opportunities to improve walkability that will support the work already started by the city administration and/or identify new directions the city

About AHS and HPDIP

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

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

can take to improve its walkability. Some of these recommendations could be implemented in future budgets. Walkable Alberta also has the potential to support any future provincial or federal grant applications made by the city.

Benchmark questionnaire

The benchmark questionnaire provided the background information needed to start preparing for the visit to Grande Prairie.

Highlights

Respondents to the questionnaire were members of the City of Grande Prairie administration team: Joe Johnson, Michelle Gardiner, Lucy Ramirez, Kirsten Maher, Jill McCord, Robert Carroll and Norman Kyle.

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

Over the last five years, the City of Grande Prairie has acknowledged the importance of alternative transportation options. The city's accomplishments to date include:

- reviewing its engineering development standards, including road cross-section review: adding sidewalks to cross-sections where there previously weren't any, provisions for trails, etc.
- identifying missing links in our existing infrastructure: building a number of sidewalks and trails that filled gaps in our network
- designing and constructing a segment of a major roadway into roadway that incorporates a number of "Complete Street" elements: crosswalks, landscaping, bike lanes, reduced vehicle lanes (from four to two), separate sidewalks and traffic calming
- increasing its focus on snow clearing on our trails network—the trails are now sometimes cleared before the roads get plowed
- participating in activities like Commuter Challenge, Walk a Block, etc.

The top three priorities for encouraging walking in Grande Prairie:

- Filling in gaps in our pedestrian/cycling network.
- Trail maintenance and snow clearing.
- Providing the necessary infrastructure in new neighbourhoods (e.g., sidewalks and trails) as well as commercial/industrial areas.

The top three barriers to encouraging walking in Grande Prairie:

- Winter lasts 6–7 months of the year. We get quite a bit of snow, it is dark in the mornings and evenings and it is also windy at times. The freeze-thaw cycles also create ice hazards.
- Gaps in existing infrastructure.
- Inadequate infrastructure (e.g., narrow sidewalks immediately adjacent to busy roadways).

Preparation work

There were several tasks that needed to be accomplished before the Walkable Alberta team visited the community.

Alberta Health Services

AHS facilitated the preparation work by providing suggestions and/or templates for:

- defining roles and responsibilities
- discussing the content and the structure of Walkable Alberta in their community
- the invitation information (content and participant recommendations)
- the draft agenda outline
- media releases
- listed invitations
- the mayor signing the International Charter for Walking as a show of support
- invitations to provincial organizations that promote walking/walkability
- keynote invitations
- interactive community workshops, community meetings, walkabouts
- collecting information, and writing and publishing community reports

The community

- the application and benchmark questionnaire (see above)
- any documentation in support of walkability, including
  - Municipal Development Plan
  - Feasibility Study
  - Municipal Development Plan—Policy Framework Discussion Paper
  - Municipal Sustainability Plan (http://www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=1090)
  - Transportation Master Plan (http://www.cityofgp.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=2317)
- booking facilities to host the interactive community workshop and community meeting
- hiring caterers
- preparing the walkabout route
- booking a bus to transport participants during the walkabout
- invitation distribution and the collection of any responses
- agendas
- media releases
- providing community support at the interactive community workshop and community meeting in order to highlight work being done within the community and future work surrounding walkability.

Walkable Alberta activities

Starting in October 2012, the Walkable Alberta team visited five Alberta communities. Each visit included activities and expectations based on the size and needs of that community. For the cities of Grande Prairie and Medicine Hat, Walkable Alberta visited for three days; for the cities of Leduc and Camrose and the town of Okotoks it was a two-day visit.

Each visit gave the municipality an opportunity to inspire its politicians and senior decision makers, to train and develop professional staff and consultants and to engage the public. There was a variety of roadshow activities, including:

- **a keynote presentation** about the importance of a walkable community
- **facilitated workshop** discussions and group work to brainstorm ideas and issues for walkability
- **community meetings** to gather input from local walkers
- **walkabouts** of selected streets and neighbourhoods to experience walking conditions firsthand and provide on-street learning for visiting and local experts
- **feedback and wrap-up sessions** to review the experience and identify concrete steps to turn ideas into a community plan.

Background

Community profile

Grande Prairie is a city in northwest Alberta. It is located on the southern edge of the Peace River Country. It lies approximately 460 km northwest of Edmonton and is the seventh-largest city in Alberta. The city has a number of parks, including Muskoseepi Park, which Bear Creek runs through.

Based on the 2011 Statistics Canada community profile, 55,032 people call Grande Prairie home. This is a 16.8% increase since 2006, making Grande Prairie one of Alberta's fastest-growing cities.

This rapid growth has placed increased transportation demands on the city's infrastructure. In response, the City of Grande Prairie has created a Transportation Master Plan, in which the city highlights the importance of alternative modes of transportation and emphasizes transit, cycling and walking as transportation options.

City of Grande Prairie

Walkable Alberta activities

Day one

Decision makers breakfast

AHS Facilitator Graham Matsalla set the stage, followed by a welcome to the 15 attendees by Mayor Bill Given. A keynote overview was then presented by Dr. J. C. Spence from the University of Alberta on the importance of walking and walkability.

The attendees for the day represented city council, city administration, health care, landscaping organizations, engineering, schools and the business community.

Professional workshop

This workshop developed ideas and action plans for walking, and was attended by 40 professional staff and community members.

Community meeting

Forty-three citizens provided input on how they felt walkability could be improved within the community. Participants were split into five groups, answered a series of questions ("What motivates you to walk?", "What do you like about walking in the community?", and "What are your great ideas to improving walking in the community?"), then voted on what factors were most important to them.

Day two

Walkabouts and debriefs

The walkabout moved through the community, discussing how the concepts from the previous day's professional workshop could be applied. There were 19 attendees, including city administrators, Alberta Health Services staff and community representatives.

Day three

Feedback presentation and wrap-up

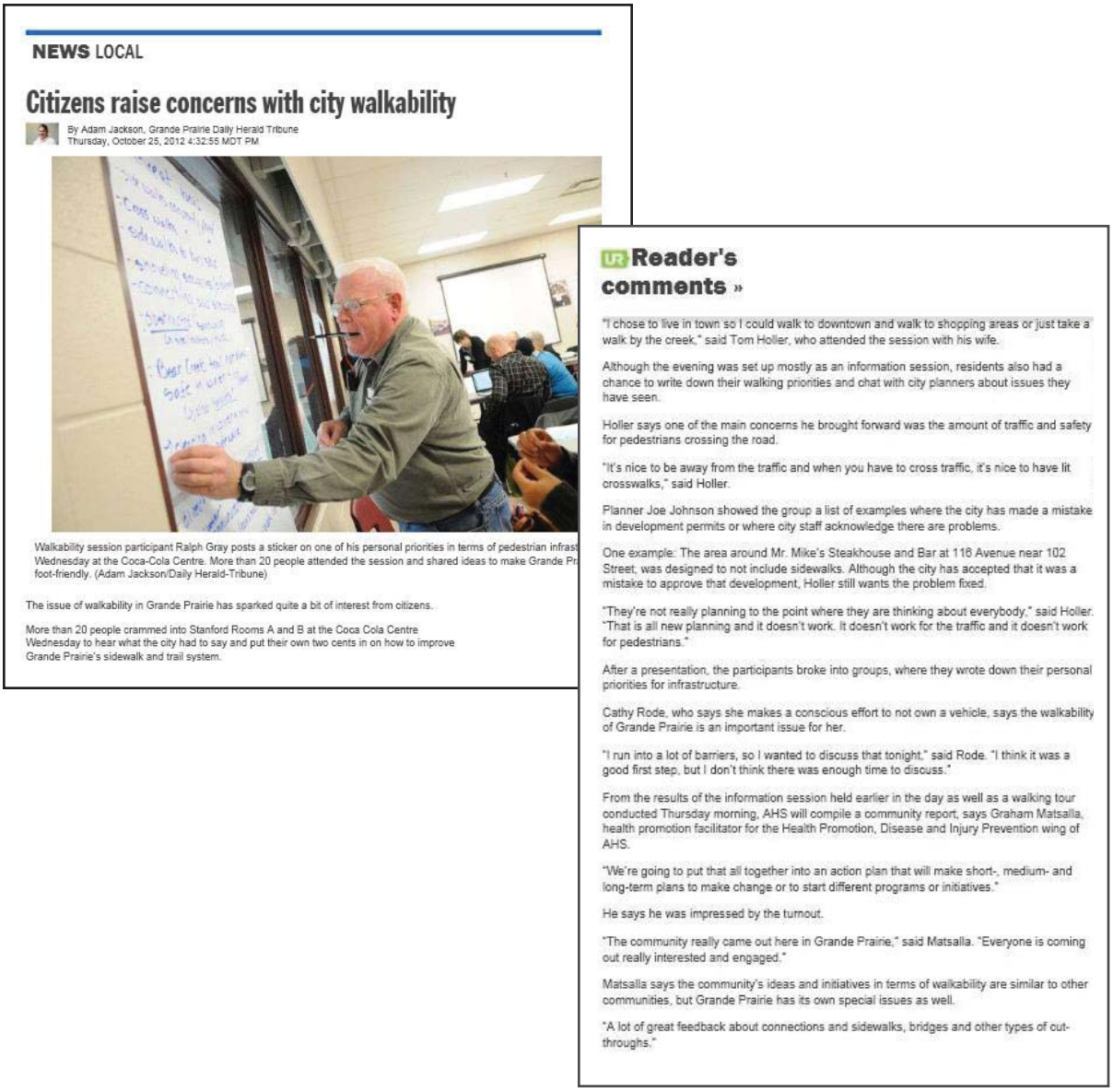
At this session, participants provided ideas from the visiting team to the city, focusing on how to take them forward. The session had 14 attendees, including city councillors and staff.

Participants

- Mayor
- City councillors
- City administrators
- Health (Thrive for Wellness representative)
- Private business
- Landscaping
- Engineering firm
- School representative
- Alberta Health Services health professional

Media coverage

- City of Grande Prairie promotion (e.g., on the city's website, Facebook page, community events websites and throughout city facilities)
- Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune
  - October 22, 2012: http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2012/10/22/city-and-ahs-looking-for-feedback-on-gps-walkability
  - October 23, 2012: http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2012/10/23/walkability-discussion-a-chance-to-make-a-change
  - October 25, 2012: http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2012/10/25/citizens-raise-concerns-with-city-walkability
- HQ Grande Prairie (October 22, 2012): http://hqgrandeprairie.com/news/local/news/Local/2012/10/22/Making-Grande-Prairie-More-walkable
- Radio interviews with Q99 and Free FM (December 5 and 6, 2012)



NEWS LOCAL

Citizens raise concerns with city walkability

By Adam Jackson, Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune
Thursday, October 25, 2012 4:32:55 MDT PM

Walkability session participant Ralph Gray posts a sticker on one of his personal priorities in terms of pedestrian infrast
Wednesday at the Coca-Cola Centre. More than 20 people attended the session and shared ideas to make Grande Pr
foot-friendly. (Adam Jackson/Daily Herald-Tribune)

The issue of walkability in Grande Prairie has sparked quite a bit of interest from citizens.

More than 20 people crammed into Stanford Rooms A and B at the Coca Cola Centre Wednesday to hear what the city had to say and put their own two cents in on how to improve Grande Prairie's sidewalk and trail system.

Reader's comments »

"I chose to live in town so I could walk to downtown and walk to shopping areas or just take a walk by the creek," said Tom Holler, who attended the session with his wife.

Although the evening was set up mostly as an information session, residents also had a chance to write down their walking priorities and chat with city planners about issues they have seen.

Holler says one of the main concerns he brought forward was the amount of traffic and safety for pedestrians crossing the road.

"It's nice to be away from the traffic and when you have to cross traffic, it's nice to have lit crosswalks," said Holler.

Planner Joe Johnson showed the group a list of examples where the city has made a mistake in development permits or where city staff acknowledge there are problems.

One example: The area around Mr. Mike's Steakhouse and Bar at 116 Avenue near 102 Street, was designed to not include sidewalks. Although the city has accepted that it was a mistake to approve that development, Holler still wants the problem fixed.

"They're not really planning to the point where they are thinking about everybody," said Holler. "That is all new planning and it doesn't work. It doesn't work for the traffic and it doesn't work for pedestrians."

After a presentation, the participants broke into groups, where they wrote down their personal priorities for infrastructure.

Cathy Rode, who says she makes a conscious effort to not own a vehicle, says the walkability of Grande Prairie is an important issue for her.

"I run into a lot of barriers, so I wanted to discuss that tonight," said Rode. "I think it was a good first step, but I don't think there was enough time to discuss."

From the results of the information session held earlier in the day as well as a walking tour conducted Thursday morning, AHS will compile a community report, says Graham Matsalla, health promotion facilitator for the Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention wing of AHS.

"We're going to put that all together into an action plan that will make short-, medium- and long-term plans to make change or to start different programs or initiatives."

He says he was impressed by the turnout.

"The community really came out here in Grande Prairie," said Matsalla. "Everyone is coming out really interested and engaged."

Matsalla says the community's ideas and initiatives in terms of walkability are similar to other communities, but Grande Prairie has its own special issues as well.

"A lot of great feedback about connections and sidewalks, bridges and other types of cut-throughs."

Day one

Professional workshop

The day started with presentations about international, national and provincial walking initiatives, as well as the International Charter for Walking. Participants were then split up into smaller groups to generate ideas using the eight principles of the charter. For each principle, participants were asked to identify what the community has now, what could be done better, and what are some ideas to improve walkability. The groups reviewed one another's ideas, adding new ones and ranking the existing ones according to their priority.

Key ideas generated

Increased mobility

- Although painted or signed crosswalks are installed according to federal and provincial standards, participants felt that focus should be placed on building more sidewalks and widening existing ones.
- Participants said that filling gaps and addressing disconnects between and within walkways/pathways should continue to be a priority for city administration.
- Some crossing points have crosswalks on only one side of the street. Adding crosswalks on all sides of the street was discussed, as was adding crosswalks at intersections where there are none currently.

Well-designed and -managed spaces and places

- Participants felt there was a need for a pedestrian walkway over Highway 40.
- Participants also noted the need for mixed development so that there are commercial areas (e.g., stores and coffee shops) people can walk to within their neighbourhoods, rather than keeping this development at the edges of the community.
- Participants identified the need to increase the resources for sidewalk clearance. This would take into account human resources, snow-clearing machines for walkways and pathways, and the frequency of snow clearing.

Improved integration of networks

- Participants felt that tools like pedestrian counts should be used to address missing links within Grande Prairie's walking network, and that signage including distances and times should be placed throughout pedestrian paths, including parks and trails, and specifically downtown (Kiosk) and throughout Muskoseepi Park.
- Connectivity of sidewalks and pathways are of a high importance of administration through the parks master plan. This includes connection of neighbourhoods to pathways/walkways by the identification, prioritization, and implementation of connections to these 'gaps'. These connections can be facilitated to Pedestrian overpass/underpass on bypass. Using Public Utility Lots as a way to connect walking routes was identified as a possible idea to improve connectivity. Creation of pathways and other pedestrian facilities within industrial and commercial areas with a high priority to connect to transit was another idea to improve connectivity.
- Participants also identified that service agreements and design standards could be reviewed, revised where necessary and enforced.

Supportive land use and spatial planning

- Participants felt that specific programs promoting walking could help increase walking within Grande Prairie. Certain programs (e.g., Safe Routes to School) could be part of a larger action plan to increase walking.
- A walkable Grande Prairie master plan could contain many aspects of land-use and spatial planning that promote walking within the community. This plan would be open-ended and could evolve with the needs of the community, and would be formed from other plans surrounding the walkability of Grande Prairie.
- The participants felt that crossings for pedestrians need to be added along 108 Street, specifically for Grande Prairie Regional College across 108 Street.

Reduce road danger

- Participants felt that the development of new neighbourhoods should focus on walkability by adjusting existing urban design requirements, such as ensuring that the sidewalk is at a greater distance from the road.
- Participants felt that snow should be removed completely to a designated area, rather than being moved from the road onto the sidewalk. Enforcing this was identified as a possible challenge, as was the potential costs.
- Improving crosswalk signage was identified as a key issue. Both the implementation and explanation of pedestrian signalling is required at crossings. Specific examples included usage of a blinking hand, solid hand and countdown signals within high pedestrian and high traffic volume areas.

Reduced crime and fear of crime

- Participants suggested that increasing the number of people using walking paths and walkways would reduce crime rates. More eyes on the street/walkways would reduce the opportunities for crime.
- Encourage park use, trail use and park safety through a social media campaign.
- As neighbourhood associations increase, opportunities exist to engage these groups to help promote walking opportunities and encourage people to take advantage of walking opportunities and bring more people onto walkways.

More supportive authorities

- Media awareness (specifically through social media) was identified as a way to increase support from authorities.
- Assisting in the establishment of more neighbourhood associations was identified by participants as a way to increase community involvement and walkability.
- Improving communication between departments and agencies, schools and businesses can help coordinate future walkablity plans. This could also be a way to explain walkability plans and the implementation process to staff, residents and developers.

A culture of walking

- A supportive walking environment can be accomplished through consistent maintenance of walkways.
- Parking restrictions in specific areas, at specific times and places, can also be used to support walking.
- Encouraging existing events that support walking and creating new ones (e.g., Special Events Road Closure, Family Walk Night).

Translating ideas into actions

Workshop participants identified ideas that were of the most importance to them. Their top two ideas were recorded. Individuals then voted on what they thought were good ideas, but could not vote for their own idea. The ideas that received the most votes were as follows:

Increased mobility

- Identifying and addressing gaps within the existing walkway/pathway system would increase inclusive mobility

Well-designed and -managed spaces and places

- Separation between vehicles and pedestrians on high-volume roads
- Increased connectivity to various destination points
- Mixed land use within each subdivision/area (creating a small-town feel)

Improved integration of networks

- Identify, prioritize and construct missing links

Supportive land use and spatial planning

- A walkability master plan would bring all initiatives together
- Create a grid system, with more exits from each neighbourhood

Reduced road danger

- Speed bumps at high pedestrian traffic areas (e.g., school zones)

Reduced crime and fear of crime

- Promote neighbourhood associations
- Promote groups to be out walking (safety in numbers)

More supportive authorities

- Support from neighbourhood associations and city council

A culture of walking

- SRTS: make it safe and easy to get to school

These ideas, as well as those generated in the community meeting and walkabout, created the themes used on the last day of the community workshop.

Summary of community meeting

The community meeting was intended to give community members who could not make it to the community workshop an opportunity to voice their opinion about the walkability of their community. Over 40 individuals attended the community workshop. The facilitator presented an overview of community activities involving walkability and examples of how other communities have applied the International Charter for Walking. The facilitator then asked participants what motivates them to

walk, what they like most about walking in the community and for ideas to improve the walkability of the community. The group was then given three votes to cast for the ideas that they support most. The following are the ideas that received the most votes:

1. Connected walking trails/paths, specifically through “desire pathways,” including:
   - the east side of Highway 40 from 68 Avenue to Tim Hortons
   - sidewalks outside No Frills, Royal Bank, Second Cup and McDonald’s
   - 68 Avenue at 116 Street to 110 Avenue (Costco)
2. Snow removal along designated walking trails, and the enforcement of sidewalk clearing
3. Providing adequate scenery to make walking visually appealing

Day two

Walkabout

The walkabout started at City Hall, with a short loop around the downtown area. A bus then transported the group to various locations around town. Breaking up the route and use of a bus was due to inclement weather and the distances between stops. There were seven routes visited (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Public access

Despite building codes, not every building in Grande Prairie is completely accessible. Neither is the environment around the buildings. Full public access would mean comfortable access for all pedestrians.

The walkabout began at City Hall, where direct vehicle access in front of the building shows a priority for vehicle traffic. Pedestrian facilities, rather than a parking area, would demonstrate that walking is a priority for the community (see Fig. 3a).

Other destinations could also look at a focus on pedestrian traffic. Although the Crystal Centre has a nice façade surrounding it, its street design is also focused on vehicle traffic (see Fig. 3b).

The group looked at where and how people have to walk to access public buildings to ensure that there is appropriate access for pedestrians: no obstructions along walkways, no hidden crossings and appropriate lighting to make walkers feel safe. An example is at Prairie Mall, where hidden crossings and obstacles along walkways inhibit foot traffic directly into the building (see Fig. 3c). The limited lighting needs to be assessed by those who use the mall's parking structure at night (see Fig. 3d).

Ensuring that policy and building codes include not only ramps but also rails ensures safe access to public buildings and services. The building on 100 Street and 101 Avenue (see Fig. 3e) is an example of an older structure that will have trouble addressing its accessibility issues. The building on 101 Avenue is a good example of how a renovation can effectively address accessibility (see Fig. 3f).

Curb cut outs (accessibility ramps) are not uniform throughout all walkways (no ramp in Fig. 3g). Current development standards include this as a rule, and when repairs occur to these walkways, they will be updated accordingly.

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

Fig. 3c

Fig. 3d

Fig. 3e

Fig. 3f

Fig. 3g

Fig. 3h

A recent snowfall showed where foot traffic occurred as well as how efficient sidewalk maintenance is in regards to snow removal. In certain areas of downtown, snow removal is efficient. In residential areas, the community struggles to engage citizens in removing snow from their sidewalks. Figure 3h shows that there can be some discrepancy in the efficiency of neighbourhood snow removal.

Shopping centres

Local shopping centres provide important community hubs and can be key destinations for walking within neighbourhoods. Like in many North American cities, the centres in Grande Prairie have been designed according to vehicle access needs. This model tends to exclude pedestrians, or severely compromises their movement, and inhibits movement within these centres. The priority for vehicles can be felt immediately as you walk through the area.

Fig. 4a

Fig. 4b

Fig. 4c

Fig. 4d

Walking along 100 Street, obstructions from advertising signs (see Fig. 4a), store products and vehicles from parking areas or car dealerships (see Fig. 4b) create difficulty for pedestrians. Some pedestrians even choose to walk on the road. Moving along 121 Avenue demonstrates the difficulty that pedestrians have in navigating the area (see Fig. 4c). A link is noticeably absent between the local bus station and public transportation (see Fig. 4d). The nearest link to public transportation is a bus stop directly across the street, and the crosswalk to reach it is half a block away. The bus stop is also not linked as well as it could be to the Prairie Mall in that area.

Awnings can have a great look, but can also provide a safety concern in winter from freeze-thaw cycles that can leave ice on walkways and ice/snow that can fall on pedestrians (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

An opportunity to promote walking and support current walkers is to link shopping centres to the customers they are trying to attract. Crossing points for pedestrians across the busy 100 Street are noticeably absent (see Fig. 6). Access to Prairie Mall currently supports vehicles, but support is limited to non-existent for foot traffic. This design seems to be the standard for many shopping centres. A parking lot right next to the door focuses on vehicle access to the mall (see Fig. 7a). Once a vehicle is parked, the pedestrian is left to determine his or her own route to access the building, with no pedestrian supports to bring the potential customer to the door.

A cleared snow walkway surrounded the Prairie Mall shopping centre, even though there was not always a sidewalk or crosswalk present. There are many opportunities to link the mall to the outside community to allow pedestrian access, but very few links are present currently. Along the front of the mall (see Fig. 7b), the sidewalk runs along the parking lot. A link into the lot, with clear access for pedestrians to the mall, would make it more welcoming. People have created their own access points (see Fig. 7c), so the accessibility of the mall is in demand.

Fig. 7a

Fig. 7b

Fig. 7c

Desire-line pathways created by people living directly behind the mall show that they would like better access (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 8

Connecting public transportation to walkways gives pedestrians direct access to destinations like shopping centres. This need was identified at Prairie Mall. A concrete separation barrier provides protection from vehicle traffic (see Fig. 9a). Some bus stops were not connected to the pathway. Providing easy access to public transportation stops via walkways promotes walking and public transportation usage (see Fig. 9b). Pedestrians with mobility issues would be able to identify other obstacles within the community, as well as provide information about the accessibility of walkways, public transportation and destinations.

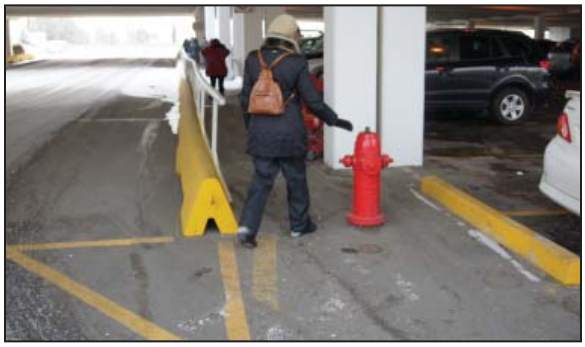
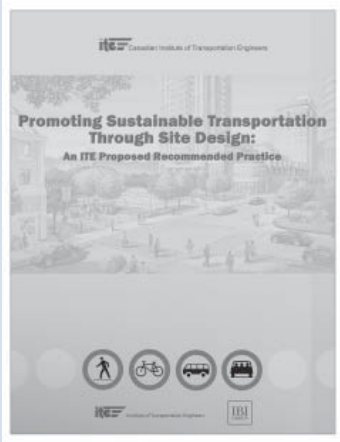


Fig. 9a

Fig. 9b



The Institute of Transportation Engineers has a proposed recommended practice titled Promoting Sustainable Transportation Through Site Design that provides guidance on how to accommodate walking, cycling, transit, and carpooling modes of transportation in the design of a site. In addition to site design characteristics recommendations, a range of supporting policies and actions are provided.

Four primary categories of design elements are presented in this document: site organization, site layout, site infrastructure, and site amenity. Of particular relevance to the walkable workshop are the design elements focusing on pedestrian and cyclist routes, vehicle parking layout, internal roads, pedestrian facilities, and street furniture and landscaping.

Walkway maintenance

Consistent and timely maintenance of walkways is necessary to provide walkers with a safe and accessible walking environment. Maintenance can include the physical structure of the walkway and the environment that affects its usage (e.g., snow, dirt, grass growth, bushes and tree branches).

Policies and standards related to required walkway cleanings was identified as a priority, and could be seen during the walkabout in residential areas and around businesses. Keeping the sidewalks clear of debris (e.g., trees, grass, snow) provides a safe and accessible walking environment (see Figs. 10a and 10b). The community needs to know who is responsible for what within their community.

Fig. 10a

Fig. 10b

Properly maintained street trees can enhance the comfort of streets and provide safer walking environments.

The walkway along the busy 98 Street had not been cleared of snow (see Fig. 11). The walking path was as far away from traffic as possible, demonstrating pedestrians' fear of traffic. The perceived speed and volume of traffic can be addressed by providing a buffer between the walkway and roadway. This also provides an opportunity for a green space comfort zone (e.g., trees or grass) and a place for snow removal. Traffic-calming pilot projects could be another opportunity for the community to address vehicle speed issues.

Fig. 11

Residential neighbourhoods

The design of walkways and roadways has a direct influence on the walkers and the walking culture of the community—specifically through neighbourhood design, where communities can prevent fast-moving vehicle traffic through wide streets and create a safe and convenient walking environment.

Fig.12

The width of residential roadways creates plenty of space for parking (see Fig. 12). But without these parked vehicles, neighbourhoods are left with a void that allows for vehicles to travel comfortably at high speed. It also creates an environment that increases the distance for people who choose to walk and the roadways are more expensive to maintain in winter, spring cleanups and summer maintenance.

The width of walkways varied throughout the community. Some areas have a walkway that would not allow for two walkers side by side (see Fig. 13a), while other areas provide a huge walkway that is expensive to maintain and not fully used (see Fig. 13b).

Fig. 13a

Fig. 13b

Fig. 14

Signage and way finding

Signage is a highly cost-effective way to encourage and support people to walk more. It is also a great way to promote walking, enable people to understand that they can walk to their destinations (it will be typically closer than they think) and give them the confidence to continue their journey on foot. A signage system for pedestrians needs to be carefully designed, delivered and supported with online information and maps. It must be user-centred and comprehensive.

Linking user-friendly signage to local transit can strengthen the use of public transit (see Fig. 14).

Street crossings

In a city designed primarily for motor vehicles, with many wide high-speed roads, it is imperative that people are provided with safe crossing points. Minimal provision for pedestrians that maximizes vehicle movement cannot be the design principle for a city seeking to encourage more walking.

Fig. 15a

Fig. 15b

Fig. 15c

Fig. 15d

Crosswalk identification is extremely variable throughout the community. 101 Avenue and Resources Road lacks crosswalks in any direction, yet has curb cut-outs for an accessible walkway. The curb cuts are hopefully the first part of a repair and the crosswalks connecting them are soon to follow (see Fig. 15a). The intersection at 101 Avenue and 101 Street is a great example of a well-marked intersection. It has clearly marked stopping lines for vehicles and clearly marked crosswalks for pedestrians. It also has curb cut-outs at three and a half of the corners (see Fig. 15b).

Crossing 100 Street to access the Prairie Mall is a challenge. In fact, the sign in the median discourages anyone from trying (see Fig. 15c). This could potentially be a well-used crossing point if access were provided. Cost-effective alternatives that keep traffic flowing could be explored through pilot projects.

A well-signed and painted crosswalk is present along one side of 99 Street at 108 Avenue. In fact, the painted crosswalk is twice as wide as the sidewalk itself (see Fig. 15d).

Starting at 100 Street and travelling west along 108 Street, many examples of crossings were seen. A great example of a signed and well-painted crosswalk after a roadway was repaired could be seen on the corner of 108 Avenue and 95 Street (see Fig. 16a).

Fig. 16a

Fig. 16b

In front of Hillside Community School on 95 Street, there was a clearly painted and identified crossing that is temporarily identified for the students' arrival and departure from school (see Fig. 16b).

Signal lights

Fig. 17a

Fig. 17b

The length of crossing lights can determine their effectiveness for walkers, including older adults and persons with disabilities. The walk light to cross 100 Street at 101 Avenue was barely long enough for an able-bodied adult to cross (see Fig. 17a).

Some facilities were provided for people to activate crossing lights. There were some push-button crossing activation buttons (see Fig. 17b). An additional opportunity is to look at audio and visual cues to help people cross the street. A concern was raised around using pedestrian walk light countdowns, wondering if this assists people in crossing the street or causes speeding traffic.

Spaces for People

The majority of people will not choose to walk unless it is seen as an attractive, safe and viable option—a space that includes some or all of the following elements: people moving throughout the space; a clearly dedicated pedestrian space to move through; space for resting, relaxing and recreation; seating; water fountains; washrooms; destinations (e.g., places that provide food and drink) and good lighting.

Desire pathways show where people choose to walk. After a fresh snowfall, the priority routes that people choose could be clearly identified in areas such as downtown, along 101 Avenue (see Fig. 18a), or between apartment buildings and the rest of the community along 108 Avenue between 99 and 98 Streets (see Fig. 18b).

Fig. 18a

Fig. 18b

The sidewalk ends at 108 Avenue, where 98 Street changes to 99 Street, but foot traffic clearly continues along this street until it reaches 112 Avenue. Here are curb cut outs for an accessible sidewalk, but no actual sidewalk to access the shopping area (see Fig. 19a).

Additional facilities could be used to provide shelter for walkers from the sun, wind or snow (see Fig. 19b). These shelters could also be an opportunity for local businesses to advertise.

Fig. 19a

Fig. 19b

Obstructions, such as the utility pole in middle of the sidewalk along 101 Avenue, need to be addressed, and future policies/procedures should be drafted with walkers in mind (see Fig. 20)

Fig. 20

There are several great examples of using art to create a more appealing environment (utility box at 100 Avenue and 99 Street in Fig. 21a; top right: mural at 99 Avenue, behind Better Than Fred's in Fig. 21b). Making use of large blank walls and utility boxes not only reduces graffiti, but also provides an opportunity to engage with local artists and add character and beauty to the community.

Fig. 21a

Fig. 21b

There are also several examples of public transportation facilities that are challenging for pedestrians. Providing an inclusive and safe environment for public transportation also supports walkers within the community. This is a great example of an inclusive public transportation design that allows local businesses to support the walking environment while also getting an advertising opportunity (see Fig. 22).

Fig. 22

Parking

Many Alberta communities use parking minimums for new and existing developments. To encourage walking, communities are also investigating the idea of a parking maximum. Downtown Grande Prairie has ample street parking and other parking areas, as well as mid-block crossings with priority given to walkers (see Fig. 23a).

Parking could be improved for persons with disabilities. For example, a private parking area along 100 Avenue has a ramp, but it is not accessible due to its grade and a small step at the base (see Fig. 23b). Disability groups can give a clearer picture of the needs of the community.

Fig. 23a

Fig. 23b

Like many Alberta communities, there are many open spaces in Grande Prairie provided for vehicle parking (see Fig. 24a). These spaces are often not connected to the walking infrastructure (sidewalk or pathways), nor are they linked to the buildings that they serve. After a person parks their vehicle, he or she will most likely have to use some sort of walkway to reach the building. These links are noticeably absent.

Fig. 24a

Fig. 24b

The use of walking support infrastructure (e.g., benches) can serve the dual purpose of controlling traffic and supporting walking. The bench along 101 Avenue is used to prevent traffic from driving across the walkway (see Fig. 24b). It also encourages traffic to use an appropriate access point. This is a great start. If the bench is well maintained, it could include a backrest that could house advertising, armrests and a shelter complete with a walking map of downtown, highlighting specific businesses that provided financial support to the creation of the maps, shelters, etc.

Downtown

Downtown Grande Prairie has many well-designed crossing points, with clear signage and well-painted crossings. The bump outs or squeezing of traffic serve to slow vehicles down. The seating areas and trees along the walkways provide shade and rest areas (see Fig. 25a).

Many downtown businesses share the costs of snow clearing to ensure prompt clearing and safe/accessible walkways. It was snowing as we walked through downtown, and many walkways in front of stores were in the process of being cleared. There is inconsistency as to how often the walkways are cleared, and to what extent. Having a snow removal policy/guideline is a start, but enforcement remains a challenge. Businesses have a vested interest in keeping their walkways clear for customers. Encouraging residents in neighbourhoods to keep their walkways cleared to a specific standard is more difficult, but possible solutions should be explored (see Fig. 25b).

Fig. 25a

Fig. 25b

The downtown walkways in Grande Prairie have nice trees, each of which has a metal grate surrounding the trunk. The trees are removed when they die, but replacing them is costly, since there is a light utility that now runs directly underneath the trees that needs to be replaced by hand whenever a tree is removed. The grates that still exist after the tree has been removed pose a hazard for walkers (see Fig. 26)

Fig. 26

Links

Neighbourhoods need to be connected to their surroundings. Linking neighbourhoods to commercial areas provides opportunities for residents to walk to local businesses and services, schools and public transit.

Some links were seen that provided this kind of access, such as the one on 102 Street and 120 Avenue (see Fig. 27a). Many other links were identified at the community meeting. Assessing where new links can be created would greatly improve walkability and the accessibility of walking destinations.

Pedestrians already tell you where they would like to walk through desire pathways like the one along 100 Street at 112 Avenue (see Fig. 27b). There are several other examples of walkers demonstrating where walking infrastructure is missing. The city is already working to address this issue. A collection of missing links can be created, assessed and prioritized to be addressed in a fiscally responsible manner.

Fig. 27a

Fig. 27b

Near the Crystal Centre is a clear demonstration that railway tracks, signs and fences will not stop pedestrians from trying to reach their destinations (see Fig. 28a). Accommodating the identified need rather than creating “safety” barriers should be the priority. Appropriate, safe and accessible crossings should be created.

Current areas that are either set aside as a park or Public Utility Lot could provide much-needed access for walkers. A good example of this is at the end of 99 Avenue, along 105 Street, where a walkway and unsheltered seating area are present (see Fig. 28b and 28c). This area could be further improved by including facilities for walkers at reasonable costs.

Fig. 28a

Fig. 28b

Fig. 28c

Another example of a desire pathway is along 121 Avenue, travelling west away from 100 Street (see Fig. 29a). This shows the pedestrians' need to link new/existing walkways to each other and to recreational pathway systems. These links can also be missing to/from parking areas, such as the one on 104 Avenue and 98 Street (see Fig. 29b). They are also seen in the sudden ending of walkways/pathways.

Fig. 29a

Fig. 29b

Public Utility Lots, like the one in Royal Oaks along 105 Street, have been identified as a way to create links as well as possible recreation walking opportunities (see Fig. 30a).

A great link for pedestrians is also available from 114 Avenue A to 102 Street, but is not accessible by 115 Avenue, forcing pedestrians to a take the long way around (see Fig. 30b). This is a missed opportunity for walkers to have a clear link to 100 Street. Many of these closed routes could be changed as pilot projects identify the effects on vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Fig. 30a

Fig. 30b

A great opportunity was taken advantage of when there was a utility infrastructure improvement. A few blocks of "complete street" is a great example of a busy neighbourhood street that is accessible to all forms of active transportation, slows traffic to manageable level but does not stop traffic altogether (see Fig. 31a). The transfer can be seen as the street changes at 102 Street and 108 Avenue (see Fig. 31b). Adapting this idea to other neighbourhoods can add a great streetscape that is comfortable to both vehicles and pedestrians.

Fig. 31a

Fig. 31b

Day three

Feedback and recommendations

Themes were identified by the walkable team, based on the first two days of activities. The group was split into three groups. Each group worked on four themes and identified who, when and how the themes could possibly be addressed in the community. The groups, themes and appropriate examples led to short- (quick wins), medium- and long-term suggestions for solutions.

GROUP 1

1. Clean and clear pathways/walkways

Examples:

- » Winter and summer
- » Accessibility due to conditions of walkway/pathway
- » Keeping walkways free of obstructions (e.g., trees, bushes, grass, poles)

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Engage downtown association on snow clearing
- Public works day, edge sidewalks
- Engage who walks in communities daily – ID & enforce
  - » WHO – Canada Post, ATCO

Medium-term goals

- Determine priority walking areas
- Walkability plan and accountability
  - » Walkability team: internal and/or external group responsible
  - » Who could form a priority process
  - » Then prioritize
- Have a conversation with groups regarding long-term solutions

Long-term goals

- Increase enforcement resources or city ownership of issues
  - » WHO – public enforcement officers
  - » HOW – monthly, by complaint

2. Connectivity

Examples:

- » Missing connections (due to change in policy)
- » Connect recreation to utilitarian walkways
- » Safety

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Highlight the work of missing links of trails and sidewalks, fill the gaps
  - » WHO – Already assigned (Jill)
- Increase awareness of walkability in all new areas
  - » WHO – planning, eng. Parks, dev permitting, together coordinate

Medium-term goals

- Missing links database, educate a/b inventory, identify and prioritize
- Create the walkability plan
  - » review and condense information surrounding walkability within existing plans relating to walking

3. Speed

Example:

Appropriate speed in certain areas

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Assess speeds when complaints are brought forward
  - » Perceived speeding or actual speeding within the area
  - » Traffic at correct speed, but walk facilities don't support perception of safety
- Increased communication of outcome of traffic assessments
  - » WHO – engineering, communications
- Better coordination of traffic lights
  - » WHO – engineering ($1.5 million for the Intelligent Transportation System)
- Assess possible reduction of speed zones based on community requests
  - » WHO – neighbourhood associations

Medium-term goals

- If communities notify the city that speeding is taking place in their neighbourhood, an assessment occurs, and if speeding is taking place, traffic enforcement is notified
  - » WHO – neighbourhood associations
- Enforcement
  - » WHO – enforcement services
- Paint on road—pilot this as a traffic-calming measure
  - » WHO – environment, transportation

Long-term goals

- Traffic-calming measures
  - » WHO – engineering (planning to integrate in new design)

4. Safety

Examples:

lighting, sight lines, obstructions (e.g., signs, vegetation)

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Actual information and stats from enforcement services, RCMP, crime prevention
- Identification of safe pathways (community engagement to share information)
- Identify vegetation control standards: standard height, type of vegetation, distance from path/walkways
- Create process to assess vegetation control requirements for walkways/pathways

Medium-term goals

- Assess vegetation control requirements for walkways/pathways
- Prioritize vegetation control requirements
- Determine budget
- Create timeline and begin to address requirements based on priority list
- Graphics on pathways—paint right on path
  - » WHO – parks
- Engage neighbourhood associations
  - » Program events encourage walkability in parks system
  - » WHO – community

Long-term goals

- More scheduled enforcement programs
- Strategic urban design to increase walkability

- Promote walkability of the community, to the community
  - » WHO – group of ambassadors who can disseminate walkability promotional messages

GROUP 2

1. Encourage/increase destination walking opportunities

Example:
Reasons for people to walk

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Map destination routes (show connections) and identify priorities routes for improvement
  - » WHO – GIS, Eng Services
  - » HOW – based off first session feedback
- Educate what traffic counts include—after traffic count, share information (engineering)
  - » Include educational materials when yearly traffic counts are posted online
  - » WHO – eng services, webmaster, communications
  - » HOW – city matters, webpage, social media, media community connections, development newsletter, inside buses
  - » WHEN – 2013

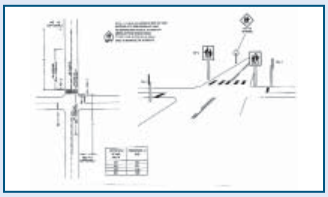
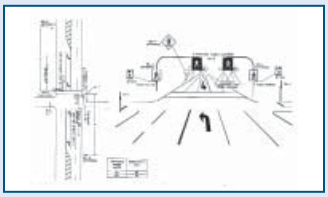
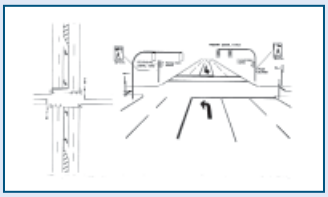
Medium-term goals

- Better snow removal/spring cleaning sidewalks (destination routes)
  - » WHO – transportation, community
  - » HOW – city—funding resources, education, enforcement
  - » WHEN – education can happen now
  - » resources (transportation and enforcement): 2014–2016

Long-term goals

- Pedway across Highway 40 to CKC site or 76 Avenue
  - » WHO – Government of Alberta, city, school boards
  - » HOW – MSI funding, GMF, Greentrip
  - » WHEN – ongoing (start now through 2015 and beyond)

The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) has developed a manual for pedestrian crossing controls. In this manual, a hierarchical system of signing, marking, and signal control is suggested. The hierarchical system includes: signed and marked crossings, special crosswalks, pedestrian activated signals, and grade separation.

A number of factors need to be considered when determining the most appropriate crossing type. Factors include accident history, pedestrian volume, pedestrian age and ability, roadway width, vehicle volume, vehicle speed, visibility conditions, and proximity of adjacent pavement markings and signs or signals. A detailed engineering study taking these and other local context details into consideration should be completed to determine if a crossing treatment is warranted and what the most appropriate crossing treatment would be.

2. Obstructions

Examples: Signs, vegetation

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Enforce existing bylaws
  - » WHO – parks, enforcement, development
  - » HOW – utilize see click fix (educate beyond pot holes)
  - » Educate public on expectations
  - » WHEN – starting now
- Encourage downtown association (DTA) to finalize streets & sidewalk, trees removed, downtown grates
  - » WHO – DTA, planning, SR2S, engineering
  - » HOW – encourage cross functional team to move project ahead (Consensus Building)
  - » WHEN – 2012 – 2015

Medium-term goals

- Educate utility companies on importance of sidewalks as transportation routes
  - » WHO – development, engineering, UDI, franchise utility companies
  - » HOW – standard construction guidelines, changes to LUB, enforcement of approvals, education
  - » WHEN – ongoing

Long-term goals

- Plan relocation during infrastructure upgrades replacement
  - » WHO – engineering, franchise utilities
  - » HOW – capital funding / planning
  - » WHEN – Ongoing (2015 and beyond)
- Education on snow removal
  - » WHO – communication, enforcement, transit
  - » HOW – social media, media, bus signs, web pages
  - » WHEN – ongoing
- Ensure we obtain adequate right of way for future needs
  - » Telus 4”x6’ boxes – if “know” then can plan ahead
  - » WHO – planning, engineering, franchise utilities
  - » HOW – make sure we have process
  - » review in timely manner
  - » make sure everyone in included
  - » education on “why”
  - » WHEN – ongoing

3. Engagement

Examples:

- » Neighbourhood associations other interested groups – community engagement
- » Communication with user about – issues through online sources, communicate about future planning, place for feedback
- » Internal communication – transit

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Communicate, communicate, communicate
  - » HOW – neighbourhood safety teams, connections, city matters, social media, programming such as commuter challenge, proclamations (walking month, random acts of walking), SR2s
  - » WHO – everyone across the organization, run, walk, club, businesses (Ernie’s, walk run more)
  - » WHEN – now and ongoing
- Move SR2s to more schools
  - » HOW – show effectiveness of program as well as benefits
  - » WHO – parks
  - » WHEN – 2013

Medium-term goals

- Expand groups working with (move to neighbourhood association, etc)
  - » HOW – engage the media
  - » WHO – crime prevention, communication, recreation
  - » WHEN – Ongoing education of why, etc.

- » HOW – tell the story (the trail has no lights because it is a recreation path)
- » WHO – Engineer services, communication WHEN – 2013

- Expand partners & support their programs (AHS, WalkRun, Cancer Society, etc.)
  - » HOW – showcase programs (encourage families "tell story") on web pages and in media
  - » WHO – communications, recreation, environment
  - » WHEN – 2013

Long-term goals

- Pedways in several locations (6)
  - » HOW – capital funding
  - » WHO – GOA & council
  - » WHEN – start now > implement in 2014 – 2016
- Consistency in following national & provincial standards
  - » HOW – education and training
  - » WHO – engineering, sign department
  - » WHEN – ongoing (employees & standards change)

4. Crosswalks

Examples:

- » Placed appropriately – to service needs of the walker. Is the location due to user or through policy/procedure
- » More often – making the decision easy
- » Well designed

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Educate drivers & pedestrians on rules of the road
  - » HOW – AMA, signage on corners, advertising, safety audits, web pages, community connections, enforcement
  - » WHO – schools, RCMP/Enforcement, SR2s, council
  - » WHEN – now

Long-term goals

- Pedways in several locations (6)
  - » HOW – capital funding
  - » WHO – GOA & council
  - » WHEN – start now and continue to implement in 2014 – 2016
- Consistency in following national & provincial standards
  - » HOW – education and training
  - » WHO – engineering, sign department
  - » WHEN – ongoing (employees & standards change)

GROUP 3

1. Signage of maps and trails

Example:

Showing destinations and possible walk/run routes.

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Directional signage – downtown
  - » links to Muskoseepi Trails
  - » Circles, time distances
  - » walk/run partnership
  - » Share via electronic means (web site, social media, etc.), lamitated on wood, etc.
  - » Not just one map but many maps specific to areas
  - » Designed for walkers
  - » WHO – GIS
- CKC – signage directing to Eastlink, fill in missing links
  - » Prioritizing
  - » Identifying
  - » QR Code
  - » Way Finding Map
  - » WHO – engineering
- Create map for missing links
  - » Multiple maps
  - » WHO – (Jill) Engineering/GIS
  - » WHEN – Winter 2012 - 2013

Medium-term goals

- Engaging community in graffiti wipe-out
  - » WHO – council
- Explore link to transit maps
- “where are you” signage – distance to next landmark (specifically in Muskoseepi Park)
  - » WHO – Laurie B; Garry
  - » WHEN – Winter 2012 - 2013
  - » Muskoseepi Park - Way funding

2. Long-term Planning

Examples:

Pedestrian plan – walking plan

- Integrated master plan
  - » WHO – council (Alex)
  - » linked to all departments
- Land use by-law review - to encourage walkability (private vs. City responsibilities)
  - » WHO – Alex (council)
  - » Val (Development – Permit)
- Prioritize - review of master plans – integrate (coordination with sustainability plan)
  - » identify over laps
  - » Interpretation
  - » Implementation
  - » WHO – Alex (council)
- Walkability included in all master plans
  - » WHO – all need to coordinate
- Engagement/education with community
- Integration of mixed use in neighbourhoods (creation of walking destinations) – Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)??
  - » WHO – zoning
- County/city coordination with developers - economic development – trails
  - » sharing info/plans
  - » communication

3. Create pleasant walking environment

Examples:
Nice seating, shade, nice trails, scenery in parks, appropriate vegetation (does not inhibit sight lines)

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Addressing broken benches/over grown vegetation, inventory, who is responsible for repair
- Community walking nights – showcase our trails
  - » WHO – AHS
  - » Nikki Community Recreation
- Neighbourhood associations take ownership of trails
  - » School community area – maintaining trail, create ownership of trail
  - » WHO – Neighbourhood coordinator
- More covered utility boxes – (outside the downtown)
- Entrance to College – more of an entrance feature
- Missing links – need resources for trees/ lighting/garbage - motion sensor lights
- Plan for it before – proactive

Medium-term goals

- » City Hall – pedestrian friendly, access by walker (pilot project)

4. Working toward complete street design

Example:
Appropriate bike paths

Short-term goals (quick wins)

- Create consistent rules
- Traffic counts
- Pedestrian counts
  - » Show boundaries
  - » WHO – Jill
  - » Painted pictures of bikes on road
  - » Increase visibility of bikes

  - » Increase awareness
- Identify temporary projects (pilot projects)
  - » Engage stakeholders
  - » Spring/summer pilot projects
  - » temporary bump outs
  - » WHO – Meetings between transportation, parks, and engineering (Norm)

Medium-term goals

- Interpretation/dissemination of info/data to evaluate pedestrian areas to measure volume
  - » High pedestrian areas
  - » Prioritize
  - » Pilot project
  - » WHO – Engineering
- Complete street design - Model 102nd street into other areas
  - » Create a true link to downtown
- 100th Street – between 102nd – 103rd Avenue
- Link Greenway strip – MCC – Muskoseepi
  - » Establish new crosswalks
  - » Temporary bump outs
- 102nd Avenue – bike lane – connect to 102nd Street

Long-term goals

- Design/construction standard
  - » Sidewalks on both sides of the street
  - » Bike lanes
  - » Bump outs

Key Findings and Recommendations

Drawing on all of the above activities, ideas, documents and discussions and the observations of the visiting walkable team, the following findings and recommendations are provided to help focus efforts to improve walkability in the City of Grande Prairie and ensure the viability and liveability of the city for generations to come.

In summary

- The city has much to be proud of, with some good progress and projects underway to enhance public spaces for people walking ('Complete Street' project and downtown).
- Recreational walking/trails network providing great opportunities for recreational walking and some connections to destinations for everyday walking.
- Maintain a clear focus on walking as a priority through attention to the details that have such a significant impact on the pedestrian experience. Future projects and proposals should be reviewed for not only their impact on walking but also their potential to support more walking.
- It will also be necessary to push a few boundaries (such as restricting vehicle movement) and to engage community to create support for the changes. Build upon the current community willingness to engage over walkability issues.
- City administrators are required to open the discussion and bring about the changes that citizens in Grande Prairie would like to see.

In particular

- Put pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy and give them priority in policy, resource allocation, project implementation and promotion.
- Ensure all new developments, neighbourhoods and centres have consistent implementation standards with clear approval criteria and guidelines to deliver walkable communities.
- There is already significant provision of motor vehicle movement that exists. The incorporation and enforcement of pedestrian facilities within new projects is required. This

would include appropriate standards for changes when an area is being repaired and/or changed for other reasons. Prioritizing and then investigate the possibility of linking residential neighbourhoods and local centres, continuing the improvements to downtown and installing key walking infrastructure such as way-finding systems and safe crossing points.

- Invest in the support infrastructure for public transit to make it a first class experience - enhancing bus stops and the access to them, information systems about the service and connections to the local community.
- Celebrate success and maintain a long range vision of what the community could and should be to represent all citizens of Grande Prairie: building a new cultural and physical environment step by step and have fun while doing it!

Recommendations mapped against the International Charter for Walking

The basis for the Key Findings and Recommendations come from the themes that the group worked through on the last day of the workshop. Their recommendations, as well as, Alberta Health Services' – walkable team were reoriented based on the International Charter for Walking:

Principle one: Increased inclusive mobility

People in communities have the right to accessible streets, squares, buildings and public transport systems regardless of their age, ability, gender, income level, language, ethnic, cultural or religious background, strengthening the freedom and autonomy of all people, and contributing to social inclusion, solidarity and democracy.

Key Findings

- Inclusive mobility can be about persons with disability, young children (include those in a stroller), and older adults who do not have access to a motor vehicle. Creating accessible public space to walk that is connected reliable public transit enable full access to everyone in the community.
- In Grande Prairie it was identified that there should be an increase in the number of accessible walkways. This will be addressed as a walkway needs repair, a pedestrian ramp has been added to the sidewalk. Other additions to this network may be entertained before repairs are required. Looking at where and when these may be required is a logical step before deciding when and how to make these improvements.
- Engaging people who have disabilities can provide the expertise required to address barriers to access and safety challenges faced by this group in Grande Prairie.

Recommendations

1.1 Priority list of walking paths assess by mobility impaired users to determine priority list of links to be addressed. Throughout the area, these priority links should include crossing points on all sides of the street.

1.2 Using priority list determine where additional sidewalks are required and where additional wider sidewalks are required (i.e. destination networks for people with disability)

1.3 Determine gaps in crossing points within these priority networks for persons with disability especially adding crossing points at intersections where there are none. A priority list is required based on access required.

1.4 Open dialogue with groups that represent persons with disability required. This includes older adult groups. This dialogue can also be reached through a community engagement strategy that includes discussions with neighbourhood associations and other community stakeholders.

Principle two: Well designed and managed spaces and places for people

Communities have the right to live in a healthy, convenient and attractive environment tailored to their needs, and to freely enjoy the amenities of public areas in comfort and safety away from intrusive noise and pollution.

Key Findings

- The link/connection between urban environments is currently designed to focus on the automobile. Changing the urban environment through increasing pedestrian access and facilities for people to use, will provide an environment required to support walkers.
- Grande Prairie has a positive recreational walking environment. The green spaces in the city provide opportunities for people to enjoy walking for recreation. These walking trails and the many pockets of positive walking environments such as the walkways within the downtown area provide an environment where people feel safe, comfortable and accommodated. Linking both of these and the creation of other walking environments to connect to can increase the available well designed places for people.
- The start of a 'complete street design' is a very positive move toward a more walkable community. Continuing the complete street idea to other areas and including walkable parking lots can help to raise the profile of the walker within the community.
- Public buildings such as schools and leisure centres could look at reducing parking and improving walking infrastructure both within and connecting to walkways. Some of the older residential streets provide a more developed natural environment that supports people on foot, through: street trees and the built environment (such as narrow streets).

Recommendations

2.1 High risk pedestrian crossing areas priority list required. Pilot project(s) to determine best way to address crossing at these areas. Several suggestions were made to create pedestrian walkway over certain high risk crossing points. Currently, if concerns are raised about the safety of an intersection or crossing area, engineering services will undertake a safety audit. Based on the safety audit we may make changes or upgrades. This will contribute to complete plan to address these crossing points.

2.2 Integrate future development to include walking as a priority. Mixed development included within neighbourhoods.

2.3 Assess the possibility of creating parking maximums to reduced the parking to encourage walking to reach destinations

Principle three: Improved integration of networks

Communities have the right to a network of connected, direct and easy to follow walking routes which are safe, comfortable, attractive and well maintained that link their homes, shops, schools, parks, public transport interchanges, green spaces and other important destinations.

Key Findings

- Grande Prairie has a significant trails network but the accessibility can be improved through additional access points throughout the network and the accessibility for persons with disability can also be improved.
- Walkways within the community are already mapped but specific neighbourhoods could promote the walkways within their neighbourhood if specific walkway maps are created that include destination identification. This neighbourhood specific initiative could be promoted by the City of Grande Prairie.
- Linkages to access walkways that lead to easier access to everyday destinations were identified by community members at the community meeting. These ideas for linkages can be explored to make walking to locations easier.
- Current and future linkages between active transportation modes to destinations points as well as linking to the public transportation system so that individuals have a seamless link of transportation methods.

Recommendations

3.1 Connectivity of sidewalks and pathways are of a high importance of administration through the parks master plan. This includes connection of neighbourhoods to pathways/ walkways by the identification, prioritization, and implementation of connections to these 'gaps'.

- engage walking user groups to discuss where linking priorities could be identified.
- create hard data through pedestrian counts to address missing links within Grande Prairie's walking network.
- create priority list

3.2 Way finding signage for pedestrians that include distance and time throughout pedestrian paths including parks and trails specifically downtown (Kiosk) and throughout Muskoseepi Park.

3.3 Identify appropriate crossing options to ensure that connections can be facilitated over bypass. Explore cost predictions for Pedestrian overpass/underpass on bypass with appropriate decision making data to support need for overpass/underpass.

- identify possible Public Utility Lots (PULs) as a way to connect walking routes was identified as a possible idea to improve connectivity. Work with appropriate city department to identify and overcome barriers to ensure that access to (PULs) is still available for usage as required.

Creation of pathways and other pedestrian facilities within industrial and commercial areas with a high priority to connect to transit was another idea to improve connectivity.

3.4 The current Service Agreements and/or Design Standards that ensures developers follow design standards for roadway intersections could expand to include an overall expectation of the walkability of the neighbourhood.

Principle four: Supportive land-use and spatial planning

Communities have the right to expect land-use and spatial planning policies which allow them to walk to the majority of everyday services and facilities, maximizing the opportunities for walking, reducing car-dependency and contributing to community life.

Key Findings

Like many communities within North America, Canada, and Alberta, the city of Grande Prairie has taken advantage of the space around it to expand into it. This expansion of the community directly supports a built environment that surrounds the motor vehicle in urban design. The result is the modern residential design of a 'loop and lollipop' road design for a community that joins to 'collector road' and other arterial road networks serviced by big box shopping centres parking lot. The vehicle is essential to this design and marginalizes walking, cycling and public transit as modes of transport. Assess urban design requirements that create linkages more frequently and/or the use of a grid model to better support walkability.

- Walking programs/initiatives can help assess and improve the walkability of neighbourhoods. These programs/initiatives can demonstrate to walkability of the community so that continued participation can lead to continued enhancements of the walkability of the community as a whole.
- Master plan Short term/Long Term Planning: planning around walkability within the community can be part of current planning documents but requires a department/ individual to take the lead to ensure that changes/adapting the plan can take place.
- Assessing and investigating solutions of possibilities to address safe and accessible crossings for pedestrians can make walking easier and safer for pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Recommendations

4.1 Identify groups/organizations to engage in the creation, support, and implementation of walking programs

- specific programs that promote walking in specific target groups can help increase walking within the Grande Prairie. Programs (e.g. Safe Routes to School) can be part of a larger action plan to increase walking.
- Engage with external organizations that have an interest in promotion walking (e.g. Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, Safe Health People Everywhere (SHAPE - School travel planning).

4.2 Creation of a Master Plan for walking based on existing transportation plan. This plan would contain many aspects of land-use and spatial planning that positively influence walking within the community. This plan would be open-ended and could evolve with the needs of the community.

- Ensure that there is a representative for walkability within the current city administration to ensure that the 'walker' is specifically represented at transportation, neighbourhood design, and/or infrastructure planning meetings that influences the built environment for walkers.

4.3 Identify where major pedestrian crossings along major roadways in Grande Prairie is required. Assess possible solutions and implement pilot projects for reasonable solutions.

- Crossings along 108th street such as supports for a crossing for Grande Prairie Regional College across 108th Street.
- As the street turns into 116th Avenue, the access from residential neighbourhoods to amenities is limited. This neighbourhood supports walkability within it, but lacks the linkages of destinations reach.

Principle five: Reduce road danger

Communities have the right to well designed streets that prevent accidents and are enjoyable, safe and convenient for walking – especially for children, the elderly and people with limited abilities.

Key Findings

To encourage walking current city design standards need to address people's fear of the danger that traffic represents and perception of lack safety that people have due to traffic speed and/or volume. Fear of traffic is a major reason why older adults feel too threatened to walk and why parents fear having their children walk to school. All city roadways (Highway, arterial, collector, residential roadway) need to become multiple user functioning. The prevention through pedestrian barriers does not address road danger. People will find a way to cross. Creation of safe and accessible crossing points will be more effective in addressing safety.

Recommendations

5.1 Review current design standards to ensure that walkability is considered within all future development of residential and commercial neighbourhoods (e.g. sidewalks on both sides of the street, buffer between sidewalk and road to create distance of sidewalk from the road)

- ensure consistency of enforcement of these development standards

5.2 Sidewalk clearing in the summer (of grass and gravel) and snow in the winter is a priority to support walking within the community.

- assessing where there is high community engagement of sidewalk maintenance could help in asking them how to address Grande Prairie as a whole to promote personal engagement in community sidewalk maintenance.
- Creating a standard of what defines a 'debris free sidewalk'
- Creating a sidewalk clearing priority plan
- Review and revise the community enforcement strategy

- engage public health and/or community Peace Officers to provide random enforcement

5.3 Improving crosswalk signage was identified by the group as a key issue. Both the implementation and explanation of pedestrian signalling is required at crossings. Specific examples included usage of a blinking hand, solid hand and countdown signals within high pedestrian and high traffic volume areas.

Principle six: Less crime and fear of crime

Communities have the right to expect an urban environment designed, maintained and policed to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Key Findings

Crime was not identified as a critical issue for walking in Grande Prairie, but there were some concerns about personal safety on the trails network, especially after dark. Another issue discussed was 'tagging' or graffiti which can be prevented through decorating spaces by wall murals/power box painting by local artists to prevent

Recommendations

6.1 Assess actual verses perceived crime/fear of crime issues surrounding transients in park walkways, specifically after dark. Engage the use of Peace Officer complaints and/or their assessment of park ways to collect data on safety.

6.2 Additional people on walkways decreases the opportunities for crime increasing the number of people using walkways through community events/initiatives that exist (include a walking component) and/or the creation of new walking initiatives (e.g. walking to school/work Wednesday).

6.3 Creation of a walking public media campaign through: encouraging/promoting park use, trail use, and park safety through media campaign using social media.

6.4 Engage Neighbourhood Associations to help promote walking opportunities and to encourage people to take advantage of walking opportunities bring more people onto walkways.

6.5 Local artists should be engaged by the city, neighbourhood associations, workplaces, etc. to help prevent graffiti by adding art to walls, utility boxes, benches, and other infrastructure that tends to be vandalized by graffiti to by 'tagging'.

Principle seven: More supportive authorities

Communities have the right to expect authorities will provide for, support and safeguard their ability and choice to walk.

Key Findings

Transferring the commitment of city administration to improve walkability to other authorities can be a challenging issue. There are many areas within Grande Prairie to celebrate (downtown, complete street pilot, park trails system) that can continue to be built upon and that can help continue momentum to other walking initiatives within the community. The commitment provided to the international charter can help to instigate commitment by the city to have a department and individuals responsible for improving walkability and addressing walkability issues within the community. This commitment can be expressed through support for resources and for planning. Ensuring that walkability issues are identified and highlighted within current planning documents can ensure that walkability issues are address without the requirement of additional, or new, planning documents.

Recommendations

7.1 Determine appropriate media tools (best tools for message and/or best tools for community exposure) to share information and promote walking issues within the community. Using media celebrations as a way to engage authorities and involve them in community walkability issues.

7.2 Assess willingness of strong Neighbourhood Associations to determine if they would be interested in contributing to establishing and then expanding pilot projects around walkability. They can be the leaders of initiatives that can be recommended to additional community associations to undertake.

7.3 Collaboration between groups and/or city departments is key to move walkability issues forward but these issues can be lost in everyone's day-to-day struggle to keep up to other work demands. This can make these walkability issues fall lower in priority. To discourage this, walkabilty issues needs to fall under a specific department/person. The first step would be to, determine a department that will be responsible for walkability issues and place within a specific person's current responsibilities.

7.3 This individual can then work (in collaboration with other groups/departments) to determine appropriate ways to communicate between departments and agencies, schools, businesses, Grande Prairie Regional College to assist in the coordination of future walkablity plans.

7.4 This individual would be responsibility to assist in the coordination of planning of walkability issues.

7.5 This would also be the individual who would be centralized in knowledge of initiatives and processes so they can be determine a way to share plans between staff, residents, and developers.

Principle eight: A culture of walking

Communities have a right to up-to-date, good quality, accessible information on where they can walk and the quality of the experience. People should be given opportunities to celebrate and enjoy walking as part of their everyday social, cultural and political life.

Key Findings

Walking culture is a challenge within most communities throughout Alberta. The goal improving the culture of walking is to see walking/walkability as a desirable activity rather than just something that you do if/when you do not have your vehicle. Many improvements to the walkability of the community have already happened. Such as: some improvements to downtown walking, strong recreational walking culture within trail system and green spaces, and the beginning of improvements to walking infrastructure when repairs to the street are required. It is important to continue to build on the momentum of these improvements. All of these efforts build upon people's decision to choose to walk for everyday activities.

Recommendations

8.1 - Determine maintenance requirements

- prioritize maintenance required (both priority routes and priority of work required)
- determine resources required to accomplish short-term maintenance/repair
- determine resources required to long-term maintenance
- creation of budget through existing resources and demonstrate work that can be accomplished when greater resources are dedicated; look to council for support.

8.2 Parking restrictions in specific areas and/or at specific times can demonstrate to citizen's the accessibility of their community. Specifically, when a community even occurs walkers should be made a priority and events should have support for those accessing events by foot (e.g. Special Events Road Closure, Family Walk Night, etc.).

- engage groups/organizations to support them in their organization of events to ensure that they include support for walkers.
- engage/support stakeholders in their current walking initiatives (e.g. SHAPE – School Travel Planning, walking buddies, etc.)

APPENDICES

Day 1 - Workshop Notes from Flip Chart Paper

Increased Mobility

What do we have now?

- Some good examples of accessibility for all – more
- Great recreational trails – Muskoseepi Park, Arterial Roads, some lit trails;
- Better non-recreation trails – Crystal lake
- Engineer design standards
  - Wider sidewalks
  - More sidewalks
- Increased awareness within organization & council
- Bike lanes (102 Street)

What can we do better?

- Better "interim"/phased designs i.e. Arterial roads – no trails in early stages
- Missing links – filling gaps. Disconnects – crosswalks
- Location of infrastructure such as light standards & utility boxes

What can we add? Big Ideas?

- Pedway from Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) to Gateway Hospital
- Pedway from High Schools to Royal Oaks area
- Pedway from O'Brien to Eastlink
- Need sidewalks in O'Brien
- Line painting on trails
- More bike racks
- Need pathway over railroad tracks
- Pedestrian bridge on 68th Avenue
- Survey's in subdivision – anyone keeping track
- Countdown on Pedestrian lights
- No trail from tracks to mall
- Crosswalks on all sides of intersections at more intersections
- Need more wheel chair accessibility
- No slopes in between
- Seniors issue's – icy sidewalks
- "sound" for visual impairment

Well Designed & Manage Spaces and Places for People

What do we have now?

- Recreational – Muskoseepi Trails but connects school, college
- Crystal lake
- Downtown – Mackie Park
- Connector pathway's spaced away from traffic (by Costco)
- Resources road
- Residential sidewalks
- CKC site – Leisure Centre

What can we do better?

- Need sidewalk by 109th to the mall
- Bike lanes with main roads
- Wall on west – wind barrier
- Transportation of buses
- Talk to population – seniors, college students
- i.e. new hospital being built – no sidewalk on bi-pass – past co-op heading south to plaza (where hospital is being built)
- Wider sidewalks, both sides of the road, bike trails

What can we add?

- Increase performances of public transportation
- Connecting existing sidewalks with trails
- Pedestrian walkway over highway 40
- lights go longer

- Big signs & maps
- Integrate commercial – mixed development in neighbourhoods vs. periphery
- Coffee shops
- Businesses
- Increase bike trails – integrate bike/walking
- Increase resources for sidewalk clearing (City)

Improved Integration of Networks

What can we do better/what can we add (big ideas)?

- Missing links – priorities, pedestrian counts (see click fix)
- Way finding signage with distance and time - transit system parks / trails
- (Downtown) – Kiosk
- (Muskoseepi Park)
- Separation between vehicles and sidewalks
- Identify "Commuter Walking" Routes
- Connectivity – high importance (parks master plan)
- Can't get out of neighbourhood
- Fill gaps
- Pedestrian overpass/underpass on bypass
- Paving P.U.L.'s
- Pathways within big box centres
- Bus terminal
- Connect to walking paths
- Bus shelters / wind breaks
- Bus node in each neighbourhood
- Benches, places to rest
- No pedestrian or cycling facilities in industrial / commercial areas
- Integrated off leash areas
- Service Agreements - Design Standards

Encourage developers to increase walkability

Higher priority of transit in commercial areas

Supportive Land-use and spatial planning

What do we have now?

- MDP, Sustainable plan, Parks MP, Transit MP, Transportation MP, Openness to Mixed Use, Reducing Parking requirements, moving to Modified Grid
- Safe Routes to School
- Plan to action
- Living Plan – evolve
- Connect with commercial business

What can we do better?

- Improved connectivity within commercial development, looking forward to future Developments, better connectivity to school sites, more work on addressing gaps
- Land use bylaw - Stakeholder engagement - all users

What can we add (Big Ideas)?

- Increase parking costs
- engage stakeholder (Chamber)
- T.O.D. zone in L.U.T.'s
- "Walkable GP" M.P.
- Requirement for grid system
- Trails and paths in developmevt levies (offsite) - neighbourhood design
- Major Crossings on Bypass and 108th and Railroad
- Support crossing for the college

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Reduced Road Danger

What can we do better/what can we add (big ideas)?

- Sidewalk further from road – new subdivision
- Well lit crosswalks and pathways
- Over and under passes
- More flashing countdown pedestrian crossings - make louder
- Snow removal on sidewalks and remove from roads to a designated area as opposed to sidewalk area
- Enforcement
- Cost concern??
- Speed (bumps) in residential/playground/ recreational areas and work if snow is removed
- Better signage for pedestrian crosswalk
- Explain usage of signage
    - i. Blinking hand
    - ii. Solid hand
    - iii. Count down – high pedestrian, high traffic volume
- Make city more walkable so less vehicles

Quick Win: - Swanavon crosswalk light

- one speed bump area
- ash fault sidewalk – wider and further away from road
- speed zone lit signs
- one bike lane

Less Crime and Fear of Crime

What do we have now?

- Lots of “open” space
- Crime Prevention Department
- Neighbourhood Associations on the increase
- Well lit streets
- RCMP bike patrol and “street beat”
- Safe city to go for walks and be out
- Youth council
- Safety City

What can we do better?

- Reduce apathy
- More lighting
- Communications with path users
- Increase # of people “out & about”
- Citizens on Patrol
- More “Authority” on the streets
- Safe Communities / Safe City
- More community neighbourhood involvement

What can we add (Big Ideas)?

- Panic buttons or security telephones
- Problematic with tampering/abuse
- Surveillance
- Promote park use & park safety – social media
- More people in the park after dark
- Events, programming
- Deal with abandoned buildings and derelict properties downtown
- Business/restaurants - open later downtown
- Get rid of boarded up buildings
- Environmental design (CPTED)

More Supportive Authorities

What do we have?

- Keen Mayor and Council
- Provide necessary education
- Energetic City staff
- Fun, smart, collaborative
- Staff, residents, developers need to be aware of all plans - Explain processes
- Plans
- Muni Development Plan

- Parks Master Plan
- Transportation Master Plan – Coordination with County (trail system)
- Transit M.P.
- Media awareness – social media

What can we do better/what can we add (Big Ideas)?

- Prioritize resources
- Sharing information
- Kiss & Go drop off areas
- Work together
- Neighbourhood Associations
- More establish and create as stakeholder
- More communication between departments and agencies, schools, businesses, GPRC
- Coordination of planning
- Staff, residents, developers need to be aware of all plans - Explain processes
- School boards

A Culture of Walking

What do we have now?

- Provide bus passes
- car share - car pool to work
- Special Events Road Closure
- commuter challenge
- SRTS
- hiking/geo-caching
- liquor stores are just a short walk away

What can we do better?

- Pedestrian Routes
- Maintenance Priority
- Walking maps
- City enforcement of priorities
- Family Walk Night
- Bike Rack availability
- Financial savings by walking

What can we add (Big Ideas)?

- Walkability Master Plan or Strategy
- Funding for snow removal
- Education of benefits/paranoid
- Restricted Parking
- Areas/times
- Events support/surround walking
- Make walkways accessible year round

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Day 1 - Translating Ideas into Actions

Full List of individuals top 4 Votes written before summarized

Increased Mobility

- Pedestrians & bikers are accommodated equally with vehicles
- Missing links – filling gaps
- Slopping curbs for strollers / wheelchairs

Well designed and managed spaces and places for people

- Downtown has ENOUGH PARKING
- Integrate mixed development into each subdivision so that each subdivision is more like a small town – provides social and business spaces re: coffee shops, hair dresser/barber
- Walkways – pedestrian friendly more, wider, safer, mapped and signed well with good intersection crossing
- Linkages – trails/sidewalks connecting destination points: schools, shops, businesses, bus stops, bus nodes, recreation centres/playgrounds/parks
- Provide multiple destination points – throughout centre of subdivision and not just at entrance to subdivision or elsewhere
- Make sure design standards enforce and encourage developers to improve walkability! Follow through on S.A. and detailed designs!
- Work with citizens of GP (agencies, recreation groups, neighbourhood groups, etc., to encourage walking as a good NORMAL activity and not the exception
- Increase connectivity
- Wider sidewalks on both sides of local roads
- Increase resources for sidewalk clearing
- Create connectivity across major infrastructures – railroad, bypass
- Decorative elements to enhance community feel i.e. benches, decorative electric box, murals, and maps

Improved Integration of Networks

- Fill in missing links
- Connect walking paths
- Way finding signage
- Commuter waling routes
- Connect transit & walking routes
- Increased resources for sidewalk clearing
- Missing links
- AB Transportation, Tom Wellings – contact for HWY 43
- Signage on pathways indicate “time of walking” to get to areas (i.e. 15 minutes to downtown)
- Create a “walkability Master Plan”
- Pedestrian bridges over major roadways (bypass)
- Restrictive parking – higher meter costs, closed streets for events

More Supportive Authorities

- Long term vision of City & Growth
- Resources $$
- Enforcement – snow clearing, sidewalk maintenance, parking on/over sidewalks
- Resistant to Developers’ pressures
- Neighbourhood association
- Media awareness
- Coordination of planning between various agencies and not for profits
- Stakeholders being aware of all plans
- Education of benefits
- Walkability master strategy
- Commuter challenge
- Walk events (family walk night - parade, etc)

- Expansion of residential pathways and side walks
- Supportive land use and spatial planning
- Requirements for grid system including more exits from neighbourhoods (LUB)
- Support for mixed use districts

Reduced Road Danger

- Better accommodation of pedestrian needs at intersections i.e. crosswalks on all sides, no need to push button to get walk sign
- Over/under passes – college/high schools
- Better signage for pedestrian crosswalks – longer walk cycle, lighting, higher visibility signage
- Higher visible speed zone signs – more signs, larger, i.e. 100 Street between 68th & 76th Avenue
- Speed bumps in high traffic areas, school zone crosswalks, residential/playground
- Safe routes to schools incorporated in ASP's and OP's

Groups top 2 ideas synthesised and then voted on:

Increased Inclusive Mobility

- Missing links filled in to address inclusive concerns (3 votes)
- Enlarge sidewalk width for family travel including strollers (1 vote)
- Locate sidewalks in the right location (1 vote)
- Pedestrian only areas like streets or trials (1 vote)

Well Designed and Managed Spaces and Places for People

- Mixed land-use within each subdivision/area (small town feel) (3 votes)
- Increased connectivity to various destination points (5 votes)
- Wider sidewalks on both sides of local roads (2 votes)
- Separation between vehicles and pedestrians on high-volume roads (6 votes)
- Provide social spaces/business places within neighbourhood/subdivision (1 vote)

Improved Integration of Networks

- Identify/prioritize/construct missing links (10 votes)
- Integrate public transport with walkability/ cycling destination focused
- Design/construction standardization of network (1 vote)
- Separation from rods (1 vote)
- Way-finding system (1 vote)

Supportive Land-use and Spatial Planning

- Walkability Master Plan – bring all initiatives together (10 votes)

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- Requirement for grid system, more exits from neighbourhood (4 votes)
- Support for mixed use districts
- Don't make it 'un'walkable
- Commuter pathways not just recreational (1 vote)

Reduced Road Danger

- Add over/under passes
- Better signage at crosswalks, longer cycles for walk, high visibility signage (1 vote)
- Higher visible speed zone signs
- Speed bumps at high pedestrian traffic areas i.e. school zones (2 votes)
- Well lit crosswalks

Less Crime and Fear of Crime

- Educate public to the actual statistics of crime (1 vote)
- Promote neighbourhood associations (2 votes)
- Promote groups to be out walking (safety in numbers) (2 votes)
- Bring community to our neighbourhoods

More Supportive Authorities

- Neighbourhood associations – council support (4 votes)
- Resources (1 vote)
  - Lots of "top shelf" plans
  - Implementation
- More Communication & Coordination (2 votes)
- Council have a long term vision and stick to it (2 votes)
- Resistant to developer's pressures (1 vote)

A Culture of Walking

- Education – promote the benefits of walkability to the public (1 vote)
- Walkability Strategy – work with stakeholders to increase community user-ship (2 votes)
- Commuter Challenge – create an incentive to use alternative forms of transportation
- SRTS – make it safe and easy to get to school (3 votes)
- Special Events – increase community buy in – Neighbourhood Park Walking Tours (1 vote)

Day 1 - Community Meeting Results

Participants Feedback Recorded on Flip Chart Paper

What motivates you to walk?

- Safety: - away from traffic (1 vote)
- lighted crosswalks
- Short distances (2 votes)
- Destination – places you can't drive
- Not alone/social aspect
- Having a dog
- To walk toward something
- For health / mental health / fresh air
- Nice maintained pathways
- Something to look at, plants flowers, trees, ponds, creeks
- Parks for children
- Reduced noise from traffic if walking at night
- Relaxation
- Family time
- Ability to walk dog

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What do you like about walking in Grande Prairie?

- Pathways away from traffic
- Pets – walking animals (more garbage cans) (1 vote)
- Health benefits
- Scenery / Parks (5 votes)
- Quietness/wildlife/nature
- Cleared trails – no snow
- Feels good
- Relaxes you – downtime – fitness benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Relaxation
- Family time / pet time

What would you like to see to improve walkability in Grande Prairie (Great Ideas)?

- Remove signage on blvds and side walks
- Ring roads to remove congestion from central areas
- Close areas so no thru-roads
- Separate bike/hike trails from walking paths - increase bike trails (1 vote)
- Connected walking trails (8 votes)
- east side of highway 40 from 68th Avenue to Tim Horton's)
- Sidewalks in No-Frills, Royal Bank, Second Cup, McDonalds.
- 68th Avenue on 116th street to 110 ave (Costco)
- Clearance of snow and reinforcing it (3 votes)
- Wider sidewalks (1 vote)
- Increase safety around (1 vote)
- E.g. dogs on leashes
- Priority 10k clearance of snow – designated walking trail (5 votes)
- Increase length of time on traffic lights for crossing
- Identify which side is better for crosswalks (3 votes)
- E.g. Pinnacle & Highway 40
- 68 Avenue at Resources Road (heading West) – need shoulder, sign – share road with cyclist (3 votes)
- A proper channel to report concerns
- Sidewalks conveniently placed (1 vote)
- Crosswalks conveniently placed (3 votes)
- Sidewalks to bus stop
- Shovelling sidewalks (enforcement) (8 votes)
- Connecting between sidewalks (1 vote)
- Obstructed sidewalks, trees/bushes/trucks (4 votes)
- Bear Creek trail not always safe in winter and not cleared (1 vote)
- also "transients"
- Clearing in winter with snow placed on sidewalk (3 votes)
- Direct routes to destinations
- Better communication on new developments/construction plans (1 vote)
- Improve drainage – "ice sheets in winter" (2 votes)
- Free walking indoor access (2 votes)
- Accessible sidewalks
- Pedway on Highway 40, at least 2 to 3 needed in city (2 votes)
- Pave Goat Trails (desire pathways) (6 votes)
- Sidewalks through commercial districts (1 vote)
- Connect paths (9 votes)
- Grade trails and improve drainage – trip hazards and icy in winter (1 vote)
- Slow speed limits (1 vote)
- More crosswalks (4 votes)
- Ash fault walking trail to be finished

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- From 92 Avenue to 100 Avenue where it is currently woodchips, on 108th Street there is part ash fault from 84th to 92nd.
- Still on Wapiti road that whole east side along GPRC
- An overpass on bypass – across from Composite High School (North Side)
- Need clarification/Education for motorists stopping at intersections compelling walkers to cross
- Sidewalks that just end
- New subdivisions cut off due to lack of sidewalk connection/development i.e. pinnacle cut off due to no sidewalks past Canfor into downtown area
- No sidewalks over the overpass roads on 84th & 68th over Muskoseepi Trails
- Danger to cross highway 40 at Pinnacle & O'Brien and children (+ adults) are at risk
- Need overpass pedways – my daughter would love to walking to school
- Enhancing downtown for pedestrian traffic
- Industrial areas – particularly Richmond and Brochu, both could use sidewalks
- 102nd Street north of 116 Avenue – sidewalk on only one side of the street, particularly a problem in winter as you have to walk through large banks of snow to get to businesses on the east side
- Sidewalks that are accessible all year and offer ability to walk all around our city
- Exercise stations along walkways – like in Red Deer
- Salt stations to reduce ice (self-serve for walkers)
- Goats path along 116 Avenue toward Casino area from corner of Tony Romas
- No walking bridge over Bear Creek
- Existing bridge over Bear Creek east of Rotary Park is not lit very well – pathway is dark as well
- Barrier or walkway on Highway 40/bypass/ north of the college Westside
- Pedestrian and cycle path instead of the roadway
- Safety through: Proper lighting
- Cleaning, clearing, de-icing
- Proper pedestrian over-passes on Highway 40
- Count downs for crossing signals
- Dividers/Barricades for high traffic roads/ sidewalks
- Crossing at better places i.e. 100 Street between Ernie's and KFC
- Roads and sidewalks are not cleared promptly leaving reduced opportunity to walk due to safety risks from snow
- City sidewalks are overgrown and crack, broken – hazard for falls and inaccessible for individuals with limited abilities

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Evaluations

Respondent Characteristics

Sixteen individuals attended the Grande Prairie workshop and completed the evaluation form. The self described role of workshop attendees is summarized in Table 1. Most attendees identified as municipal employees or an employee of a partnering program.

Table 1. Grande Prairie workshop attendee roles

Role Description	n
Municipal Employee (various departments including Planning, Transportation, Parks, Traffic and Law Enforcement, Community Engagement, Project Management)	8
Involved in a partner program (Safe Routes to School, AMA School Safety, Thrive on Wellness, Commuter Challenge, Neighbourhood Safety Teams)	5
Community member	3
Health Promotion Practitioner	2
Consultant (Engineering, Planning and Design)	2
City Counselor	1
Total	16

Quality and Effectiveness of Workshops

Organization and Productivity of the Workshop

Workshop attendees were asked a series of questions pertaining to the organization and productivity of the workshop. These findings are summarized in Table 2. Findings indicate attendees were pleased with these elements of the workshop.

Table 2. Organization and productivity of Grande Prairie workshop

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Low rating/ disagreement						High rating/ agreement
Clarity of Goals	0	0	0	1	2	10	4
Organization	0	0	0	1	2	7	7
Effective use of time	0	0	0	1	0	9	7
Productive discussions	0	0	0	1	0	7	9
Focused discussions	0	0	0	1	0	8	8
Overall productivity	0	0	0	1	0	9	7

Answers closer to 7 indicate the desired response (e.g., reflects a positive opinion toward this element of the workshop).

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Comments from participants regarding the organization and productivity of the discussions included:

- The discussions seemed rushed, likely due in part to a late start
- Pre-workshop homework would increase productivity of discussions
- Enjoyed the local examples and diverse perspectives
- Appreciated the work centered around the Charter topics

Attendees were also asked about their intentions following the workshop and their overall satisfaction with the workshop. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Perception of the impact of the Grande Prairie workshop

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Low rating/ disagreement					High rating/ agreement	
Received practical ideas	0	0	0	1	5	8	2
Plan to act	0	0	0	0	0	12	4
Confidence the workshop will produce a benefit in community	0	0	0	0	3	6	7
Interest in connecting with other communities	0	0	0	0	2	7	7
Overall satisfaction	0	0	0	0	0	10	6

Answers closer to 7 indicate the desired response (e.g., reflects a positive opinion toward this element of the workshop).

The following were listed as things participants will take away or do differently following attendance at the workshop:

- Be more aware of the concept of walkability
- Have a renewed interest in walkability
- Understand the importance of collaboration with other stakeholders
- Have an understanding of how the city plans to address walkability
- Share information with developers and Community Associations

Participants listed the following as being useful or informative aspects of the workshop:

- Group discussions
- The Charter
- Presentations
- Hearing from the diverse perspectives and experiences of the group
- Networking
- The information about the role of the build environment and health

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Suggestions from participants regarding how to improve the workshop include:

- Provide a list of stakeholders and contact information
- Improve time management of the workshop
- Ensure adequate introductions are done
- Provide information about cost-effectiveness
- Mix up groups to promote further idea sharing
- Provide more information about Best Practices and other evidence
- Provide information about how this community compare to others across the province
- Ensure representation from Land Developers
- Provide a grant to communities to act on these discussions

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Biographies

Dr John C Spence - Professor and Associate Dean (Research) - Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation, University of Alberta:

Dr. John C. Spence spends most of his time in the Sedentary Living Laboratory in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta. He has expertise in the area of behavioural medicine and research methods. His research focuses on both the benefits and determinants of physical activity and how physical inactivity is related to obesity. Dr. Spence has studied the broad social determinants (e.g., SES) and population physical activity patterns. More recently, he has focused on the physical environment and how it may influence physical activity choices and risk for obesity among both children and adults (e.g., urban form, location of food establishments).

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

Graham has been working in health care for over nine years he has worked in the setting of communities and neighbourhoods which includes the promotion of active transportation and the adaptation to the built environment in an inclusive and accessible manor to support active living. Graham participated in the preparation of the team and the communities in the days leading up to the community visits for Walkable Alberta. Graham helped the communities prepare for the community visit, facilitated the interactive community workshop, and leads the development of the comprehensive community report. Graham continues to support Alberta communities that wish to make their communities more walkable.

Angela Torry, Research/Project Coordinator, Disease and Injury Prevention, Alberta Health Services:

Angela has been promoting active living to design makers, communities, workplaces, schools, families and individuals for over 10 years. Her background is in exercise physiology, but for the last five years her work has focused on health promotion. She is strong advocate for changes with urban design and the built environment to better support active transportation, and recreation. Through her work, Angela's goal is to help Alberta communities provide opportunities for their citizens to become and stay more active. Angela assisted Walkable Alberta by attending the workshops to provide support in the delivery. She will also help in the development of the report. Angela hopes to provide ongoing support to the leaders as they explore opportunities to make their communities more walkable.

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