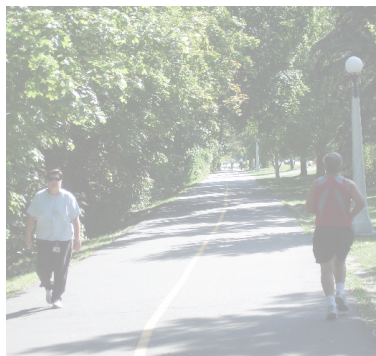


Part One: Building the Case for Walkability in Ottawa



Part One: Building the Case for Walkability in Ottawa

3.0 Study Background

3.1 Supporting Documents and Initiatives

The Ottawa Pedestrian Plan has been prepared in the context of the City of Ottawa's high level strategic plans, including the Ottawa 20/20 Growth Management Strategy, the Ottawa Official Plan and the Ottawa Transportation Master Plan. Together these plans provide a vision, strategic directions, and policies to create a future for Ottawa where walking is a more common and comfortable mode of transportation. **Figure 3.1** illustrates the hierarchy of the upper level planning documents within the City.

Figure 3.1

The hierarchy of growth management strategy documents for the City of Ottawa



Source: http://www.ottawa.ca/city_hall/ottawa2020/official_plan/vol_1/intro/growth_plns_en.html

The following sections provide an overview of the relevant strategies and policies in each of these upper level plans.

3.1.1 Ottawa 20/20 Growth Management Strategy

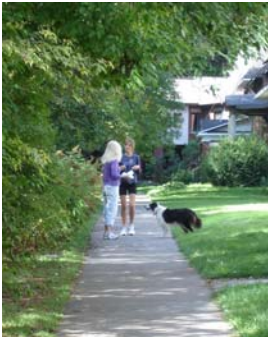
Ottawa 20/20 is a framework for managing growth in the city over a 20 year period (2003-2023). The initiative was launched following amalgamation in January 2001 and established the vision for a more compact, efficient, equitable, affordable and environmentally healthy city. The strategy promotes walking, over the use of the private motor vehicle, as a socially accessible, environmental, healthy and economically feasible mode of transportation. It also promotes livable communities with a wide variety of housing, employment, parks, and services that are accessible by walking.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

Ottawa 20/20 is based on the following seven core guiding principles(6):

1. *A responsible and responsive city.*
2. *A caring and inclusive city.*
3. *A creative city rich in heritage, unique in identity.*
4. *A green and environmentally sensitive city.*
5. *A city of distinct livable communities.*
6. *An innovative city where prosperity is shared among all.*
7. *A healthy and active city.*

Each of the core guiding principles is further supported by a number of sub principles that add further clarity to the vision. Several of the core guiding principles are relevant to the pedestrian environment in the city, and in particular, two core principles and many of their respective sub principles speak directly to the vision established for the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan.



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Core Principle 4: A Green and Environmentally Sensitive City (7):

A Green City - Ottawa preserves natural habitats and has a network of green spaces.

Development in Harmony with the Environment - Using land wisely, development builds within the current urban boundary and avoids outward sprawl.

A Focus on Walking, Cycling and Transit - Ottawa implements policies that favour walking, cycling and public transit over the use of private motor vehicles, thereby facilitating the use of modes of transportation that are socially accessible, environmentally healthy and economically feasible.

Clean Air, Water and Earth - All people work to improve the quality of the natural environment; limit noise and light pollution; and protect natural resources and agricultural lands.

“Incorporate pedestrian oriented design in every community.”

Ottawa Resident

Core Principle 5: A City of Distinct, Livable Communities(8):

A Sense of Community - All communities look right and feel right. They have an identity that defines them and fosters pride and belonging among residents.

Complete Communities - Ottawa's communities have a variety of housing choices, employment, parks and a wide range of services and facilities accessible by walking, cycling and transit.

Easy Mobility - Communities are easy to get around and barrier-free for the disabled. There are wide sidewalks and recreational pathways; there are frequent, accessible transit service.

Beauty - Ottawa's communities are pleasing to the eye.

6 Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy, 2001.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

3.1.2 City of Ottawa Official Plan

The Ottawa 20/20 vision is further articulated in other growth management plans such as the Ottawa Official Plan. The Official Plan establishes policies to ensure that Ottawa grows in a responsible way. The Official Plan (currently under review) responds to the Ottawa 20/20 core principles primarily from a land-use and community design perspective. The following illustrate some of the ways that the Official Plan responds to each core principle (9).

A Caring and Inclusive City

A better-balanced transportation system puts more emphasis on transit, cycling and pedestrian facilities and improves access for all citizens including those who choose not to, or cannot afford to own a private automobile.

A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity

The Community Design Plan process helps to create complete communities and provides the opportunity to respect the unique aspects of different parts of the city, as opposed to a “one size fits all” approach. In addition, the concepts of “context” and “fit” are considered important in the move towards compact mixed use development.

A design-oriented strategy places greater emphasis upon quality design, emphasizing how all the pieces fit together from buildings to streets to open spaces.

A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City

Emphasis is placed on improving air quality through encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation and reducing reliance on travel by private automobile.

A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities

Liveability is addressed by accommodating new growth and development in a more sustainable way through the concepts of compact, mixed-use development. A mix of land uses, housing types, compact and inclusive development, clustering of neighbourhood facilities and services and excellent pedestrian connections will help to make communities more walkable and more complete. Proactive urban design guidelines that extend into the public realm reinforce the important relationships among land use, built form, and the landscape.

An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All

The transportation system is keyed to land use, such as high-quality transit to employment nodes.

A Responsible and Responsive City

Responsibility is articulated through growth and development which is accommodated in a more sustainable manner, utilizing compact mixed-use urban form in appropriate locations, and strengthening the link between development and public transit. The Community Design Plan process and collaborative planning empower the community and achieve the objectives of the Official Plan as well as provide the opportunity to respond to the unique aspects of different communities at the local level.

“I want to live in a people city, not a car city”

Ottawa Resident



Ottawa

9 Ottawa Official Plan, 2003.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

A Healthy and Active City

Human and ecosystem health issues are addressed by reducing the reliance on the private automobile and the provision of parklands, multi-use pathways and facilities to foster a healthy active lifestyle.

3.1.2.1 Official Plan Policies

The implementation of the core principles is further articulated through policies in various sections of the Official Plan. The following excerpts from Sections 2 and 4 of the Official Plan give clear and strong direction to the inclusion and improvement of the pedestrian environment across the city. Readers of the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan are encouraged to refer to the full version of the Official Plan for further details; some relevant sections are as follows:

Section 2 – Strategic Directions

Transportation is addressed in Section 2.3.1 Transportation, which states that:

“A transportation system should emphasize both mobility and accessibility” (10)

To achieve this, some of the following are to be considered:

- Increase the range of transportation options, and extend those options to all areas of the city.
- Encourage land-use patterns that reduce the need to travel great distances across the city and those that encourage alternatives to car travel through the creation of more compact and mixed-use development with more emphasis on the creation of strong urban centres.
- Protect the natural environment through a reduction of land used for new transportation facilities, and in turn decrease emissions through reduced private automobile usage.
- Increase the use of public transit and reduced dependence upon automobile use during peak hours.

Specific targets are set out in the Official Plan to increase the peak-hour modal share for walking for all person-trips from 9.6% in 2001 to 10% in 2021. As walking trips are in some cases connected to trips using public transit, the Official Plan also seeks to increase the peak-hour modal share for public transit use from 17% of total motorized trips in 2001 to 30% in 2021.

The following are specific policies found in Section 2 of the Official Plan that speak to the inclusion and improvement of the pedestrian environment:

A. Transportation Demand Management (11)

2. ***“The City will implement a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program as part of its efforts to reduce automobile dependency.”***
3. ***“To demonstrate its commitment to leadership, the City will act as a role model by implementing measures that enhance its employees’ options for commuting and business travel.”***



Ottawa

10 Ottawa Official Plan, 2003.

11 Ibid.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

4. *"The City will minimize the effect of excessive traffic speed and volumes on residential neighbourhoods by researching and implementing measures and programs as part of its TDM program to enforce speed limits, discourage speeding, cut through traffic and reckless driving, and **encourage walking, cycling and transit as preferred methods for trips in or through neighbourhoods.**"*

B. Walking (12)

6. *"When undertaking comprehensive land-use planning studies, especially community design plans ... the City will **emphasize the creation of pedestrian-friendly environments.**"*
7. *"The City will require, **where feasible, that all new development or redevelopment provide walking facilities** in accordance with the policies of Section 4.3. This includes, for example, providing **safe, direct and attractive pedestrian access between public sidewalks and building entrances.**"*
8. *"In the **construction or reconstruction of transportation facilities**, such as roadways, bridges, and transit stations, and public buildings, such as community centres and libraries, the **City will ensure the provision of facilities to address the needs of pedestrians where feasible.**"*
9. *"The City will **ensure that pedestrian safety is a high priority** in the selection and configuration of traffic control device." (OMB Decision # 1582, June 2005)*
10. *"The City will **support walking through promotion and education initiatives** that address issues such as personal security; safe behaviour by vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians; and an appreciation of the health and environmental benefits of walking and costs of the private and public travel choices" ...*
11. *"The City will **prepare a Pedestrian Plan** by the end of 2004, which will outline guidelines and standards for pedestrian facilities and circulation, identify discontinuities in the pedestrian network, and develop a network implementation strategy. The plan will guide the City in the development and implementation of new programs and facilities to encourage people to walk and to reduce their dependence on the automobile."*



Ottawa

Section 4: Review of Development Applications

Section 4 of the Official Plan deals with the review of development applications and also provides a number of policies to support the inclusion and improvement of the pedestrian environment. In particular, Section 4.3 addresses walking, cycling, transit, roads and parking lots, as indicated in the following policy excerpts(13).

12 Ottawa Official Plan, 2003.

13 Ottawa Official Plan, 2003.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

1. “The **road network** in new plans of subdivision will **provide the opportunity** for direct transit routes through the community and **for all buildings to be within 400 metres walking distance of a transit stop** (OMB decision #2649, September 21, 2006).”

3. “To promote increased transit usage, private and/or public proponents of **any development or redevelopment within 600 metres of a transit station or major transit stop** along the primary transit network shown on Schedule D will:
 - a. Ensure that **convenient and direct access between the proposed development and the transit station** is provided or maintained; rapid-transit stations and where possible, transit stops are integrated into the development; and that in such cases, extended hours of **public access through the buildings and quality linkages from stations and building entrances to sidewalks** on nearby streets are provided;
 - b. Locate any proposed high-density employment and residential development close to transit stations;
 - c. **Provide a pedestrian-friendly, weather-protected (where possible) environment** between the access point(s) of the rapid-transit station or major transit stop and the principal entrances to adjacent buildings;
 - d. **Minimize walking distances** from buildings to stations/major transit stops;”

5. “The City will require a **transportation impact study to be submitted** ... The scope of the study will vary depending on the nature of the development... The transportation impact study will, in general:
 - a. **For the lands to be developed and the surrounding community, identify the required road, parking, transit, pedestrian, and cycling facilities necessary to support the proposed development;**”

9. **“On new, and reconstructed roads where possible, the City will require the provision of sidewalks as follows:**
 - a. On both sides of arterial and collector roads in the urban area and Villages;
 - b. A sidewalk or multi-use pathway on at least one side of all arterial roads passing through the Greenbelt;
 - c. A sidewalk or multi-use pathway on at least one side of all roads in the urban area that serve transit.”

10. “The City will **ensure that sidewalks and crosswalks are made of smooth, well-drained walking surfaces...**”

11. “The City will **ensure that new developments are linked to the existing or planned network of public sidewalks, recreational pathwaysWhere public sidewalks and recreational pathways intersect with roads, consideration will be given to providing traffic control devices to give priority to cyclists and pedestrians.**”



Ottawa

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

12. ***“At main entrances to buildings the City will require safe, direct and attractive pedestrian access from public sidewalks through such measures as:***

a. Reduction of distances between public sidewalks and major building entrances;

b. Provision of pedestrian walkways from public streets to major building entrances;

c. Within individual sites, on-site pedestrian walkways along the front of adjoining buildings, between adjacent buildings, and connecting areas where people may congregate, such as courtyards and transit stops;

d. Wherever possible, protection from the weather is provided through canopies, colonnades, and other design elements.”

3.1.3 City of Ottawa Transportation Master Plan

In November 2008 City Council was presented with a draft update to the 2003 Ottawa Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP establishes a vision for a balanced transportation system and includes walking as an attractive mode of travel. The TMP supports the Ottawa 20/20 Growth Management Strategy and the Official Plan through policies to guide the operation of the City's day-to-day transportation programs, while also providing a basis for developing the annual and five-year capital and operating budgets, and to achieve the goal of increasing the walking modal share of all person trips from 9.3% in 2005 to 10% in 2021.

Chapter 4 of the TMP is specific to active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) and identifies the following four key factors that influence the attractiveness of walking and ultimately an individual's choice to include walking in their day-to-day activities:

- A suitable distance between origin and destination.
- Positive individual attitudes towards walking.
- Pleasant, direct routes that offer safety and personal security, minimizing conflicts between and among pedestrians and other road users.
- Adequate maintenance practices for pedestrian network elements, particularly in winter.

Planning, designing, constructing, maintaining and rehabilitating sidewalks and multi-use pathways forms the basis of Ottawa's pedestrian infrastructure. This is supported by a number of other measures the City will take to encourage more people to walk more often. The following policies are from Chapter 4 of the Transportation Master Plan:

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Crossings

The City will (14):

*“The right to have access to every building in the city by private motorcar in an age when everyone possesses such a vehicle is actually the right to destroy the city”
Lewis Mumford*

14 Ottawa 20/20 Transportation Master Plan, 2008.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

1. *“Through approval of the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (under development), adopt an integrated pedestrian network and implementation strategy...”*
2. *“Require the provision of sidewalks on new roads, and reconstructed roads where physical constraints allow, as follows:*
 - a. *On both sides of arterial, major collector and collector roads in the urban area and arterials in Villages. A multi-use pathway in lieu of a sidewalk may be provided on one side for a collector in a Village or on one side of an urban arterial if determined to be appropriate by the City.*
 - b. *A sidewalk or multi-use pathway on at least one side of all arterial roads passing through the Greenbelt, collector roads in villages, and roads other than arterials or collectors in the urban area that serve transit.*
 - c. *Wherever the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan or Community Design Plan has identified discontinuities in the pedestrian network.”*
3. *“Require the additional provision of pedestrian facilities, as follows:*
 - a. *Direct, high-quality pedestrian connections to rapid transit stations, bus stops and other major walking destinations.*
 - b. *Pedestrian crossings to link neighbourhoods that are separated by roads or other physical barriers, where safety considerations permit.”*
4. *“Enhance the New Sidewalk Links program by updating the criteria and weights used to assess candidate links, and establish a parallel program for non-sidewalk pedestrian facilities.”*
5. *“Develop consistent and comprehensive design guidelines for walking facilities, taking into account current City standards and guidelines as well as best practices from elsewhere, with particular focus on accessibility and the needs of vulnerable users including children and elderly persons.”*
6. *“Implement pedestrian countdown signals at all new and rebuilt traffic signals, and at other traffic signals as resources allow.”*
7. *“Conduct snow clearance, street sweeping and plant and tree maintenance in a manner that supports walking while considering physical, operational and financial constraints.”*
8. *“Continue and expand walking support programs including the Snow-Go Program that provides snow-clearance assistance to seniors and persons with disabilities, and the Yellow Grit Program that enables pedestrians to help make walking safer.”*

Multi-use Pathways

In addition to serving cyclists and other wheeled users such as wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards and in-line skaters, multi-use pathways are also an important aspect of the pedestrian system. The ongoing development of the

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

City's pathway system will be coordinated with the National Capital Commission's comprehensive network of multi-use pathways. To achieve this, the City will (15):

1. *"Provide, or require others to provide, multi-use pathways within and between neighbourhoods, where physical constraints allow."*
2. *"Provide multi-use pathways in or adjacent to rapid transit corridors, where physical constraints allow, to be constructed simultaneously."*
3. *"Provide walking and cycling crossings of rapid transit corridors, where physical constraints allow, considering the level of demand and alternative crossing opportunities."*
4. *"Apply design and construction standards that minimize conflicts among all users on all new, widened and reconstructed pathways."*
5. *"Work with other agencies and interest groups to establish alignments and priorities for pathway network extensions beyond City limits."*
6. *"Develop and apply criteria to determine eligibility of pathways for winter maintenance, taking into account the transportation function of pathways such as access to rapid transit stations."*
7. *"Form a working group with representation of relevant City departments, the National Capital Commission and City of Gatineau to provide a forum for regular communication and coordination on pathway network development."*

Essential Supporting Measures

A number of supportive measures that can increase walking will be delivered through the City's transportation demand management program and land-use planning practices. Specifically the Transportation Master Plan states that the City will (16):

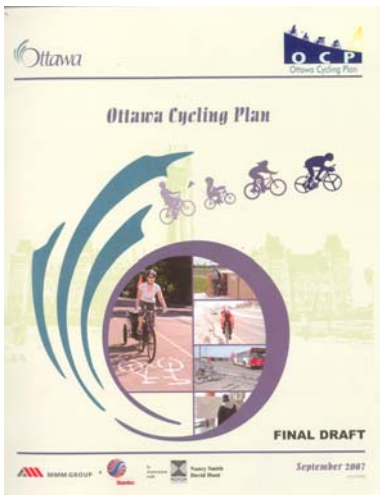
1. *"Adopt a Pedestrian Charter that expresses the City's commitment to enabling, facilitating and promoting pedestrian activity and to developing walkable communities."*
2. *"Promote development practices that improve the walking and cycling environment ..."*
3. *"Incorporate tools to support walkability, such as guidelines and audits, into the Community Design Plan process."*
4. *"Incorporate tools to support walkability, such as guidelines and checklists, into the development approval process at the site and neighbourhood levels."*

15 Ottawa 20/20 Transportation Master Plan, 2008.

16 Ottawa 20/20 Transportation Master Plan, 2008.

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

5. *“Conduct communications initiatives to build public awareness of the environmental, social and economic benefits of walking ...”*
7. *“In partnership with employers and post-secondary institutions, engage potential pedestrians ... at their place of work or education through measures including special events, transportation fairs, ...”*
8. *“In partnership with schools and their stakeholders, identify and implement effective measures to expand walking and cycling by schoolchildren, including but not limited to special events, active and safe routes to school programs ...”*
10. *“Conduct initiatives that promote safe walking with a focus on vulnerable pedestrians including children and seniors.”*
11. *“Provide financial or in-kind support for walking ...-related special events including the Commuter Challenge and those coordinated by charities.”*
12. *“Continue and expand initiatives including the Bruce Timmermans Awards that recognize and reward contributions to active transportation by individuals, businesses and community organizations.”*
20. *“Improve the safety and convenience of walking ... connections to rapid transit stations.”*
21. *“Work with public, non-profit and private-sector partners to improve personal security along walking routes to transit stops and stations.”*



3.2 Where does the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan Fit?

The Ottawa Pedestrian Plan belongs in the tier of planning studies and strategies that are directly below, and support the TMP. Goals and objectives developed for master plans at this level are consistent with the vision established in Ottawa 20/20, the Official Plan and the TMP. These plans discuss in detail the actions required to address the issues through policy, facility and program development, and implementation. Related master plans include:

- The Greenspace Master Plan;
- The Ottawa Cycling Plan (2008).
- National Capital Region Recreational Pathway Plan, and;
- Ottawa Rural Pathways Plan (endorsed).

The strategies outlined in various master plans are in turn supported by more detailed guidelines. The following guidelines address various aspects of the pedestrian environment in Ottawa:

- Urban Design Guidelines for Development along Traditional Mainstreets (May, 2006);
- Urban Design Guidelines for Development along Arterial Mainstreets (May, 2006);
- Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy (March, 2004);
- Transit Oriented Development Guidelines (September, 2007);
- Regional Road Corridor Design Guidelines (2000);

Ottawa Pedestrian Plan (Final Report June 2009)

- Street Design Policy Special Streets (Policy Discussion Paper, April 2007);
- Harmonized Sidewalk Technical Design Guidelines (intended as an interim measure for City sidewalk construction, 2002);
- Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Medium Density Infill Housing (October 2005); *Ottawa*
- Urban Design Guidelines for Large Format Retail (May 2006);
- Outdoor Patio Design Guidelines (January 2006);
- Urban Design Guidelines for Greenfield Neighbourhoods (September 2007);
- Design Guidelines for Urban Collector, Major Collector and Rural Road Corridors (March 2008); and,
- Maintenance Quality Standards for Roads Sidewalks and Pathways (June 2003).