

Canada Walks Walkolution News



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Canada Walks: *from Vision to Reality*

Imagine... a Canada where we can easily and safely walk to school, work, play, and transit. Green Communities Canada is working to make that vision a reality with Canada Walks.

Canada Walks is a new initiative with a mission to change the current social paradigm so that walkable communities are the cultural and social norm across Canada. The Canada Walks web site will be an integral part of the creation of a centre of excellence for walkability and active transportation. It will provide the latest in resources and information, with links to a wealth of information, making it *the* place to go for information on walkability and active transportation.



As well as the <http://www.canadawalks.ca> centre of excellence web site, Green Communities is launching new projects this year: Ontario Communities walkON, in partnership with Walk and Bike for Life and walkON; and the Canadian Walkability Master Class. See below for details of these and other exciting Canada Walks projects.

Announcing the Launch of Ontario Communities walkON

With the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation¹, Green Communities Canada, in collaboration with Walk and Bike for Life and walkON are launching **Ontario Communities walkON**, a program that will, over the next three years, help make 24 Ontario cities and towns more walkable.

Ontario Communities walkON is based on the success of walkON, six community partnerships of the Ontario Heart Health Program who collaborate to engage and support their communities to create environments that support walking (www.walkon.ca).

walkON works in partnership with politicians, planners, engineers, and citizens from 17 community groups, using comprehensive, easy-to-use resources



Brantford's Mayor Hancock and Harry Sawchuck, Canada Walks consultant.

and tools designed to educate, empower and inspire community members.

Continued page 2

1. **Ontario Communities walkON** is generously supported by a three-year, \$248,500 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (website: <http://www.trilliumfoundation.org>). The Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario and works to help build healthy and vibrant communities by strengthening the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives.



Launch of Ontario Communities walkON (cont'd)



A wildly exciting walkON planning meeting was held in November

Brantford is one of the communities currently involved in walkON. Brantford's Mayor Hancock states: "I am in complete support of the Ontario Communities walkON program. A walkable community is more sociable, less polluted, more relaxed, a healthier and more

pleasant place to live. Building a walkable community will encourage more people to make their lives richer through walking."

Jacky Kennedy, Director of Walking Programs for Green Communities Canada, believes **Ontario Communities walkON** will be the catalyst for a much-needed shift in transportation thinking across the province. "When given priority in community plans, walking can play a significant role in meeting local transportation demand management goals by shifting motorized trips to active travel trips. The implications for reducing traffic congestion are huge and bring with it the associated benefits of boosting local economic development, improving human health through daily physical activity, as well as reduced greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants."

CANADIAN WALKABILITY MASTER CLASS

Another exciting initiative being undertaken by Green Communities Canada and Walk21 under the umbrella of Canada Walks is the Canadian Walkability Master Class, a follow on to the 2007 Walkability Roadshow.

The Master Class will work with four Canadian cities: Hamilton, Ontario; Kelowna, British Columbia; Metro Vancouver, British Columbia; and Whitehorse, Yukon to share and evolve

best practice and implement key initiatives to help deliver communities where people choose to walk.

Funding for the Walkability Master Class is provided by Transport Canada's Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST) initiative (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/mediaroom/releases/nat/2008/08-h246e.htm>).

World Record Walk: we're still TOPS!

The Australian attempt on Sept. 1st, 2008, to beat Canada's Guinness World Record for the largest simultaneous 1km walk was unsuccessful. Their total was 195,030, far below our total of 231,635.



The next attempt on our record may come from Walk England: <http://www.walkengland.org.uk/About.aspx>. The Operations Director for Walk England, Veronica Reynolds, was



inspired by our presentation at Walk21 Barcelona 2008 (www.walk21.com) and is gathering support for a massive assault on our record, perhaps in May of 2010, boasting of being able to rally 1 million walkers! Although England's

population is roughly double Canada's, we are confident we can defend our title. Green Communities Canada is considering leading a May 2010 event if sufficient funding can be located.



Ontarians Walking Now

As announced in our September 2008 *Walkolution* News, Ontarians Walking Now (OWN) will see a series of regional workshops held throughout Ontario this spring.

The two year Communities in Action Fund project, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, will provide communities with exciting walking programs and resources while also bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to engage in the important work of planning and creating more walkable communities.

The day long workshops will feature an international keynote speaker, an introduction to a variety of walkability resources and toolkits, a chance to hear the success stories from last year's Walkability Roadshow, and the chance to work together, sharing expertise and knowledge while engaged in action planning.



Urban poling will be demonstrated at OWN workshops

Experts will follow up with OWN participants at the three, six, and nine month marks to support the completion and implementation of community action plans.



The schedule of confirmed regional workshops to launch the two-year OWN project is listed below.

OWN Regional Workshops

April 2nd : Markham (hosted by the City of Markham)

April 6th : Sarnia (hosted by the County of Lambton Community Health Services Department)

April 7th: Six Nations of the Grand River (hosted by Six Nations Parks & Recreation Department)

April 23rd: Ottawa (hosted by Partners in Healthy Living Ottawa, in partnership with Ottawa Public Health)

May 14th: Blind River (hosted by the Municipality of Blind River)

All workshops will run from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.

Registration forms and details are available online at www.canadawalks.ca or by emailing mjohnson@greencommunitiescanada.org.

A two-part webinar will be held **May 20** and **May 27** from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. There is no charge for the webinars but participants from northern Ontario communities will be given first priority over those from other regions of the province.



Coca-Cola and ParticipACTION Present Sogo Active

Visit <http://www.sogoactive.com/> to learn about Sogo Active, a program presented by Coca-Cola Canada in collaboration with ParticipACTION. Sogo Active encourages Canadian youth (13 - 19) to spark inspiration in each other to get active and have fun.



Participants can track their progress and share information with each other about challenges and successes. Coca-Cola will award over 1,000 torchbearer spots in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch relay to teenagers who join the program and demonstrate a commitment to adopting an active lifestyle.



2007 Walkability Roadshow Participants Continue their Progress

Two recent developments from Haliburton County that can be viewed online are the Minden Active Transportation Plan (http://www.mindenhills.ca/whats_new.html) and the Haliburton County Cycling Master Plan (<http://www.cyclehaliburton.ca/about.htm>).

Please feel free to forward the links to anyone else who may be interested. Minden Hills council has used the plan already, as part of a strategic planning session for the downtown core. Needless to say, Sue Shikaze, Health Promoter with Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge Health Unit was very excited when council called to request more copies for their session! The County has already been using the Cycling Master Plan to support a funding application for road rehabilitation to include paved shoulders.

In order to encourage active transportation, the Town of Minto has issued Sustainable Community Guidelines for Development and Developers. It outlines recommendations and requirements under the headings of density, street connectivity, street design, streetscape, mixed land use, and parklands and trails.

The City of Brantford, Ontario was ranked the Number 1 "Best Walking City in Ontario" and Number 4 in Canada in 2008 by the Canadian Federation of Podiatric Medicine. Brantford has launched a Walkability Task Force with the slogan "Less Talk more Walk," and the completion on June 20, 2008, of a pedestrian bridge over a major highway (403) that splits the community (<http://www.healthylivingbrant.com/node/186>).

Having heard all of this, Brandon, Manitoba's *In Motion* program challenged Brantford's Walkability Task Force for the title of "Best Walking City in Canada".



Brantford's Pedestrian Blue Bridge

In early October, the two communities went "foot-to-foot" in a friendly challenge for the largest number of walkers participating in a thirty minute walk. Brantford was hoping to get a leg up on the challenge by coordinating the walk-off with International Walk to School Day. But, in the end, Brandon was able to draw 7,310 walkers. In Brantford, where it rained that day, 4,161 walkers participated. Green Communities Canada reviewed the results and declared Brandon the winner.



Brandon walkers walk towards victory.

As part of the challenge between the two communities, Brantford's Mayor Mike Hancock raised the flag of the City of Brandon over Brantford City Hall, saying, "wait 'til next year!".



Visit the Earth Hour web site at <http://www.earthhour.org> to register for the 2009 event. Help to beat last year's record of 50 million participants in 370 cities and town in 35 countries!

And while the lights are off why not go for a walk in your community!

Saturday 28 March 2009 / 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm

NEW ACTIVITY

Winter Walk Day - February 11, 2009



Winter Walk Ski Tag

Green Communities Canada's Ontario Active & Safe Routes to School program will celebrate our first Winter Walk Day on Wednesday, February 11, 2009.



Schools: get rid of those winter blahs and discover the joys of winter walking – or snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or even skating – to school.

Can't walk to school? Hold a Winter Walk Day during school. Walk to the local skating rink for a skate or hold a Winter carnival in the school yard at lunch.

To learn more and to register schools visit

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/winterwalkday.asp>

It's winter! Don't hibernate – walk to school and celebrate! Make walking fun – even in winter!

Get W.I.T.H. It!- Walking in The Halls

Get W.I.T.H. It! (Walking In The Halls) is a community walking program template that takes advantage of existing community infrastructure to provide a safe, warm place for people of all ages to walk during the cold winter months - free of charge to participants.

Walking routes of varying intensities, muscle toning stations, music and warm-up and cool-down activities ensure the program offers a comprehensive approach to physical activity.

First launched in Deep River, Ontario (a small town of 4,000 with few sidewalks and no malls, indoor tracks, etc.) the program has been successfully adapted by a growing number of communities.

The Deep River *'Get W.I.T.H. It!'* program has recently been certified as a Heart Wise Program by the Ottawa Heart Institute. The template is available free of charge to communities.

For more information please contact Hayley Sears at StepsCount toll free 866-342-2328 or email HSears@StepsCount.com.



Hall walkers

Walking the halls at Fellowes High School

Fellowes High School, near Ottawa, kicked off its second annual *Get With It* walking club in January. Approximately 350 people registered for the program in 2008. Three routes are set out for walkers, from mild to intense paces. Music plays over the PA system to motivate participants. People may sign out pedometers to track their progress. The program runs at the school on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5 pm until 7 pm until March.



School Travel Planning in Canada



As the number of children being driven to and from school skyrockets—and walking and other active forms of transportation plummet—there are serious and growing concerns about the health, environmental and other impacts of these trends. Concerns include congestion and traffic safety, air pollution, and reduced opportunities for students to enjoy the benefits of exercise, fresh air and independence.

Travel Planning, which began in the fall of 2007. This pilot project is testing a process that evolved from research conducted by Green Communities Canada into International Best Practices for School Travel Planning. These research documents can be viewed online at:

www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp.



Over the past decade, not-for-profit organizations across Canada have developed and refined Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) programs that help to make it safe for children to walk, bike, inline-skate and skateboard to and from school.

With the financial support of the Public Health Agency of Canada¹, Green Communities Canada is spearheading this pilot test of School Travel Planning in four provinces, managed by each provincial ASRTS organization: Nova Scotia, Ecology Action Centre (<http://www.saferoutesns.ca>) Ontario, Green Communities Canada; Alberta, SHAPE (Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere - <http://www.shapeab.com>); and British Columbia².



ASRTS programs in Canada are being taken to a new level with a pilot test of School

1. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.
2. Until the end of June 2008, the *Way to Go!* School Program (<http://www.waytogo.icbc.bc.ca>) was the official partner in British Columbia. After this time, when funding from the Autoplan Broker Road Safety Program ended and the program discontinued, work on the School Travel Planning pilot continues through key individuals who were involved with management and coordination of *Way to Go!*

To learn more see our School Travel Planning project newsletters at <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/schooltravel.asp>.

The Canadian Volkssport Federation



Canadian Volkssport Federation Logo

The Canadian Volkssport Federation (CVF), a non-profit organization since 1987, is a member of the International Federation of Popular Sports. CVF's mission is to promote non-competitive participation in walking and other recreational activities. With 51 clubs and members of 2000+ walkers across Canada, they promote "Fun, Fitness & Friendship" through their various events. In 2008, CVF hosted 456 single-day events and offered 277 year-round and seasonal events.

organized CVF activities such as a walk or skate along the Rideau Canal, walking past ice and snow sculptures, and walking in Gatineau's Jacques Cartier Park.

To learn more call their hotline at (613) 788-0691 or visit the Nepean Nomads Walking Club (Ottawa West) website at <http://web.ncf.ca/bj917/nomads.html> or the Ottawa Voyageurs Walking Club (Ottawa East) website at <http://www.ottawavoyageurs.ca>.

Benoît Pinsonneault, President of the CVF has issued an invitation to all Ontarians to visit the National Capital Region over the first three weekends in February to join in

For more information about the Canadian Volkssport Federation visit: <http://www.walks.ca>



Walk and Bike for Life

Engaging communities across Ontario



Walk and Bike for Life, a Canadian based not-for-profit organization with an international outlook, and a partner with Green Communities in Ontario Communities walkON, works in countries around the world promoting the development of quality walking and biking infrastructure, as well as great parks and trails, as a means to fostering vibrant cities, healthy communities, great places, and happy people. As mentioned in our September 2008 newsletter, Walk and Bike for Life received two grants from Ontario's Ministry of Health Promotion: Community Action Plans for Life (CAP-for-Life) and Trails for Active Transportation (TFAT). Twenty-two communities across Ontario will be involved in these exciting projects.

Through the CAP-for-Life Project, Walk and Bike for Life is partnering with community members across Hamilton, Halton and Peel regions, with the goal of helping to create

community action groups who will promote active transportation and better public spaces.

Walk and Bike for Life's TFAT project is being piloted in select communities across Ontario with the goal of empowering citizens to promote trails as low-cost, readily available means of transportation and recreation. While the focus of TFAT and CAP-for-life are different, the execution of both is based on the philosophy that community members hold the greatest expertise when it comes to the communities in which they live. Both projects are entirely community driven, with Walk and Bike for Life facilitating workshops and compiling the community's recommendations into a Community Action Plan.

To learn more about these projects and other information about Walk and Bike for Life visit www.walkandbikeforlife.org.

Upcoming Walking/Walkability Events

February 3

Transport Canada Webinar: The Canadian Walkability Roadshow, Green Communities Canada, hosted by: Cullbridge Marketing (www.webinars.cullbridge.com)

March 2 - 3

GETTING ACTIVE on Active & Safe Routes to School - Toronto. This is a two-day training session for Active & Safe Routes to School practitioners and those interested in implementing a program in their province/territory or local community. Contact info@saferoutestoschool.ca for details.

March 3

Transport Canada Webinar: Individualized Marketing: Where Do We Go From Here? (Discussion Panel and Case Study). Hosted by: Cullbridge Marketing (www.webinars.cullbridge.com)

April 1

Encouraging a Culture of Walkable Communities - Green Communities Canada & Urban Poling breakout session at Parks & Recreation Ontario Forum - Niagara Falls, ON (<http://www.prontario.org/pdf/PROforum09FlyerVc2.pdf>)

May 23

Canada Walks presentation by Green Communities Canada & Urban Poling at Canadian Volkssport Annual General Meeting & Conference - North Bay, ON, May 23, 2009 (<http://www.gatewaywalkers.ca>)

October 7 - 9

Walk21 New York City, 2009 conference, More Footprints Less Carbon - New York City, USA, (<http://www.walk21.com/conferences/newyork.asp>)

Active Transportation for America

Active Transportation for America is a great new resource from the American Rails to Trails Conservancy that builds an impressive case for investment in active transportation: http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/atfa/ATFA_20081020.pdf

For the first time, this document quantifies the benefits to America of elevating the priority of walking and biking in the nation's transportation system. The analysis concludes that even a modest increase in cycling and walking could reduce automobile use by 70 billion miles per year in the USA.



Speak up for Spending on Active Transportation Infrastructure NOW

Various levels of government are finalizing economic stimulus/recovery plans that are expected to invest billions in funding into infrastructure improvements for roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and more.

The funding is an attempt to jumpstart the Canadian economy and avoid a deeper recession. Will Active Transportation projects be included? The answer to that question may be related to how loudly we collectively demand it!

It is critically important that advocates ramp up efforts to ensure that pedestrian, cycling, and Safe Routes to School projects are included on lists of "ready-to-go projects" being compiled by

cities and counties, regional governments, the province of Ontario, and the federal government.



Once the various budgets are approved, it appears likely that their will only be a small window of opportunity to submit final project lists.

If a concerted effort does not take place immediately, it is likely that the lion's

share of the billions being invested in transportation will be focused on road and bridge projects, without a fair share for balanced transportation infrastructure including sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths.

Make a difference by taking action this week and calling your local mayor and councillor, your MPP, and MP to make the case for active transportation, providing your ready-to-go projects or nearly-ready-to-go projects.

In this manner, we can ensure laying the foundation to create walkable, bikeable, sustainable communities and safe routes to school.



Green Communities Canada would like to thank
all of our supporting partners:



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www.canadawalks.ca

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