



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5, Canada

Item No. 8.1. (ii)
Halifax Regional Council
6 April 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: 31 March 2010

SUBJECT: International Charter of Walking

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This Report originates from the Active Transportation Committee Meeting, 25, March 2010.

BACKGROUND

Regional Council deferred the March 23, 2010 Recommendation Report to the Active Transportation Committee for review and comment prior to Regional Council deliberation of the recommendation.

DISCUSSION

The Active Transportation Committee directed staff to:

1. Clarify that this Charter is not policy superceding previously approved and endorsed Regional Council Policy regarding Active Transportation, Regional Plan, etc.
2. Include wording related to Active Transportation in a minor revision to the Charter.

The Committee approved the recommendation for Council to endorse this Charter.

This Charter is indeed a symbolic demonstration of the work that HRM has completed to date related to Active Transportation, Physical Activity, Community Planning and Environmental Sustainability.

Attached is the Revised Halifax Regional Municipality version of the International Charter for Walking.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications to this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

Revised Halifax version of International Charter for Walking

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Richard MacLellan, Manager, Sustainable Environment Management Office, 490-6056

International Charter for Walking

**Creating healthy, efficient and sustainable communities
where people choose to walk**

I/We, the undersigned recognize the benefits of walking as a key indicator of healthy, efficient, socially inclusive and sustainable communities and acknowledge the universal rights of people to be able to walk safely and to enjoy high quality public spaces anywhere and at anytime. We are committed to reducing the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit walking activity. We will work with others to help create a culture where people choose to walk through our commitment to this charter and its strategic principles:

- 1. Increased inclusive mobility***
- 2. Well designed and managed spaces and places for people***
- 3. Active Transportation Plan Implementation***
- 4. Supportive land-use and spatial planning***
- 5. Reduced road danger***
- 6. Less crime and fear of crime, including developing networks with CPTED Audits***
- 7. More supportive authorities***
- 8. A culture of walking***

Signed _____

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

International Charter for Walking

Walking is the first thing an infant wants to do and the last thing an old person wants to give up. Walking is the exercise that does not need a gym. It is the prescription without medicine, the weight control without diet, and the cosmetic that can't be found in a chemist. It is the tranquillizer without a pill, the therapy without a psychoanalyst, and the holiday that does not cost a penny. What's more, it does not pollute, consumes few natural resources and is highly efficient. Walking is convenient, it needs no special equipment, is self-regulating and inherently safe. Walking is as natural as breathing.

John Butcher, Founder Walk21, 1999

Introduction

We, the people of the world, are facing a series of inter-related, complex problems. We are becoming less healthy, we have inefficient transport systems and our environments are under increasing pressure to accommodate our needs. The quality and amount of walking as an everyday activity, in any given area, is an established and unique primary indicator of the quality of life. Authorities keen to create healthier and more efficient communities and places can make significant advancements by simply encouraging more walking.

Built on extensive discussions with experts throughout the world this Charter shows how to create a culture where people choose to walk. The Charter may be signed by any individual, organization, authority or neighbourhood group who support its vision and strategic principles regardless of their formal position and ability to independently progress their implementation.

Please support this Charter by signing it and encouraging friends, colleagues, government bodies, and national and local organizations to work with you to help create healthy, efficient and sustainable walking communities throughout the world

Background

Commuters scurry; shoppers meander; bush-walkers trek; lovers stroll; tourists promenade... but we all walk. Walking is a fundamental and universal right whatever our ability or motivation and continues to be a major part of our lives, yet in many countries people have been walking less and less. Why walk when you can ride? Walking has stopped being a necessity in many parts of the world and become a luxury. Walking seems too easy, too commonplace, too obvious and indeed too inexpensive an activity to pursue as a way of getting to places and staying healthy. We choose not to walk because we have forgotten how easy, pleasurable and beneficial it is. We are living in some of the most favoured environments man, as a species, has ever known, yet we respond by taking the ability to walk for granted.

As a direct result of our inactivity we are suffering from record levels of obesity, depression, heart disease, road rage, anxiety, and social isolation.

Walking offers health, happiness and an escape. It has the ability to restore and preserve muscular, nervous, and emotional health while at the same time giving a sense of independence and self-confidence. The more a person walks the better they feel, the more relaxed they become, the more they sense and the less mental clutter they accumulate. Walking is good for everyone.

Vision

To create a world where people choose and are able to walk as a way to travel, to be healthy and to relax, a world where authorities, organizations and individuals have:

- recognized the value of walking;***
- made a commitment to healthy, efficient and sustainable communities; and***
- worked together to overcome the physical, social and institutional barriers which often limit people's choice to walk.***

Principles and Actions

This International Charter identifies the needs of people on foot and provides a common framework to help authorities refocus their existing policies, activities and relationships to create a culture where people choose to walk.

Under each strategic principle, the actions listed provide a practical list of improvements that can be made in most communities. These may need adding to in response to local need and this is encouraged.

HRM's Charter for Walking

1. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Ensure safe and convenient independent mobility for all by providing access on foot for as many people as possible to as many places as possible particularly to public transport and public buildings
- Integrate the needs of people with limited abilities by building and maintaining high-quality services and facilities that are socially inclusive

2. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Design streets for people and not only for cars, recognizing that streets are a social as well as a transport space and therefore, need a social design as well as engineering measures.
- Provide clean, well-lit streets and paths, free from obstruction, wide enough for their busiest use, and with sufficient opportunities to cross roads safely and directly, without changing levels or diversion
- Ensure seating and toilets are provided in quantities and locations that meet the needs of all users
- Address the impact of climate through appropriate design and facilities
- Design legible streets with clear signing and on-site information to encourage specific journey planning and exploration on foot
- Value, develop and maintain high quality and fully accessible urban green spaces and waterways

3. Active Transportation Plan implemented

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Build and maintain high-quality networks of connected, functional and safe walking routes between homes and local destinations that meet community needs as indicated in the Active Transportation Plan
- Provide an integrated, extensive and well-equipped public transport service with vehicles which are fully accessible to all potential users
- Design public transport stops and interchanges with easy, safe and convenient pedestrian access and supportive information
- Review to determine if there are significant missing links in the network
- Implement an awareness campaign as it relates to the Active Transportation Plan in general and walking in particular

4. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Put people on foot at the heart of urban planning. Give slow transport modes such as walking and cycling priority over fast modes, and local traffic precedence over long-distance travel
- Improve land-use and spatial planning, ensuring that new housing, shops, business parks and public transport stops are located and designed so that people can reach them easily on foot
- Reduce the conditions for car-dependent lifestyles (for example, reduce urban sprawl), re-allocate road space to pedestrians and close the missing links in existing walking routes to create priority networks

5. Reduced road danger

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Reduce the danger that vehicles present to pedestrians by managing traffic rather than segregating pedestrians or restricting their movements
- Encourage a pedestrian-friendly driving culture with targeted campaigns and enforce road traffic laws
- Reduce vehicle speeds in residential districts, shopping streets and around schools
- Reduce the impact of busy roads by installing sufficient safe crossing points, ensuring minimal waiting times and enough time to cross for the slowest pedestrians
- Ensure that facilities designed for cyclists and other non-motorized modes do not compromise pedestrian safety or convenience

6. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Ensure buildings provide views onto and activity at street level to encourage a sense of surveillance and deterrence to crime
- Conduct pedestrian audits by day and after dark to identify concerns for personal security and then target areas for improvements (for example, with brighter lighting and clearer sightlines)
- Provide training and information for transport professionals to increase awareness of the concerns of pedestrians for their personal security and the impact of such concerns on their decisions to walk
- Develop a network based on using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and audits

7. More supportive authorities

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Commit to a clear, concise and comprehensive action plan for walking, to set targets, secure stakeholder support and guide investment and includes the following actions:
- Involve all relevant agencies (especially transport, planning, health, education and police), at all levels, to recognize the importance of supporting and encouraging walking and to encourage complementary policies and actions
- Consult, on a regular basis, local organizations representing people on foot and other relevant groups including young people, the elderly and those with limited ability
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data about walking
- Integrate walking into the training and on-going staff professional development for transport and road safety officers, health practitioners, urban planners and designers
- Provide the necessary ongoing resources to implement the adopted action plan
- Implement pilot-projects to advance best-practice and support research by offering to be a case study and promoting local experience widely
- Measure the success of programs by surveying and comparing data collected before, during and after implementation

8. 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Actively encourage all members of the community to walk whenever and wherever they can as a part of their daily lives by developing regular creative, targeted information, in a way that responds to their personal needs and engages personal support
- Create a positive image of walking by celebrating walking as part of cultural heritage and as a cultural event, for example, in architecture, art-exhibitions, theatres, literature readings, photography and street animation
- Provide coherent and consistent information and signage systems to support exploration and discovery on foot including links to public transport
- Financially reward people who walk more, through local businesses, workplaces and government incentives

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Please write actions for your local needs or circumstances in the space below.

Developed in the framework of the WALK21 international conference series

October 2006

Walk21 are grateful to many people for their assistance with the production of this Charter, and to you for your personal commitment to helping create healthy, efficient and sustainable walking communities throughout the world.

For more information on walking visit www.walk21.com

Or email us at info@walk21.com