

**WalkABLE
ALBERTA**



Lacombe 2016 Walkability Workshop



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Introduction

WalkABLE Alberta

WalkABLE Alberta, provided by Alberta Health Services (AHS), is an initiative that aims to improve walkability, create supportive walkable communities, and encourage citizens in communities to walk more often. The principles of the International Charter for Walking (Appendix A) are used as a guide to promote key actions that would improve walkability in communities. This charter helps identify things that are already being done to support walkable communities, as well as determine current challenges and future opportunities for promoting walkability.

Communities ChooseWell

Communities ChooseWell is a provincial initiative funded by Alberta Health and managed by Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA). Communities ChooseWell fosters healthy communities through education, community capacity building and partnerships that support healthy eating and active living. ChooseWell offers seed grants, education resources, networking opportunities and more to enable and enhance a community's ability to create supportive healthy environments. In 2016 alone, over 205 Alberta communities, including hamlets, villages, towns, municipal districts, cities, urban neighbourhoods, schools, organizations, and First Nations and Metis communities, have registered with Communities ChooseWell.



The Lacombe Walkability Workshop

On December 6, 2016 WalkABLE Alberta, along with Communities ChooseWell, met with stakeholders from the City of Lacombe to engage in a discussion about community walkability. The purpose of the meeting was to bring stakeholders together to identify and discuss the current walkability conditions within their community and establish a list of action items they would like to see addressed.

This one-day workshop was held at the Lacombe Memorial Centre. An agenda was developed prior to the workshop and is available in Appendix B.

The workshop attendees included:

Steve Christie – Mayor, City of Lacombe

Marie Peron – Lacombe & District Historical Society and Lacombe Regional Tourism

Diane Foster – Trail Society

Thalia Hibbs – School Trustee, Chair of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Louise Pickett – Local resident

Jennifer Kirchner – City of Lacombe

Amanda Legros – City of Lacombe

Jordan Thompson – City of Lacombe

Lyla Peter – City of Lacombe

The session began with Chantel Churcher providing a brief introduction of Communities ChooseWell and their partnership with WalkABLE Alberta. Communities ChooseWell will be providing the City of Lacombe with a Walkability Grant following the walkability planning session, pending submission of a project proposal. Following this, Graham Matsalla, Health Promotion Facilitator with Alberta Health Services provided an introduction of WalkABLE Alberta and presented on the benefits of a walkable community, drawing on the principles outlined in the International Charter for Walking. From here, Graham took the group on a virtual walkabout, using photos he had taken of the community the previous day.

Attendees were then asked to think about three questions as they related to each of the charter principles. These questions were:

- 1) What do we have now?
- 2) What can we do better with what we have now?
- 3) What can we add (big ideas)?

The discussion was recorded using flip chart paper and the transcribed notes can be found in Appendix C.

To wrap up the session, Graham had participants identify short, medium, and long term goals to help address the priority action items. The priority items can be found in the next section.

Top Priority Items: Short, Medium and Long-Term Actions

Action plans based on selected priorities

1. Supportive Walkability Environment

Short Term:

- Identify areas of concern
- Pilot projects – solar lights
- Create priority list/figure out how to create a priority list (e.g. survey)
- Engage Fortis (lights) in discussion and the downtown business owners



Medium Term:

- Connect existing trails
- Able to safely cross HWY 12
- Update older subdivisions (implement sidewalks)
- Eliminate dead-end trails/pathways



Long Term:

- Connected system (trails/paths) within Lacombe and surrounding community
- Connected/consistent lighting throughout the city
- Be able to safely cross HWY 2A into County
- Ensure that dead-end trails/paths don't occur in the future

2. Wayfinding

Short Term:

- Identify (signage for) public parking lots and nearby businesses
- Determine trail map
- Identify how to safely navigate alleyway (educational material/signs, permanent landmarks, etc.)



Medium Term:

- Place/install signs

3. Policy to support walkability

Short term:

- Pilot project for consistent speed limits in downtown
- Pilot project for curb bump-out in school zone

Medium term:

- Change speed downtown to 30 km/hr
- Engage administration of the hospital and community spaces
- Reach out to seniors to see if there are any areas of concern for them
 - Look to other stakeholders for feedback



Long term:

- Ensuring future policies (consistency)
- Future development – promote/encourage walkability
- Donor paving stones/benches



4. Link groups/issues

Short term:

- Ensuring Tourism maps are handed out at community events
- Include community calendar on the Tourism website
 - Ensure everyone uses them
- Ensure walkability addressed at community events (e.g. Community and farmers markets, festivals)
- Identify groups that can/should collaborate

Medium term:

- Map/brochure identifying key locations and distances between them
- Create stakeholder group



Long term:

- Create communication strategy of the different organizations and their role in the community

Recommendations

Formation of a committee or use of existing committee to discuss walkability issues/improvements that can be made throughout the community

- This group would promote educational material, maps of trails/lookout points, how to start, advertise the groups.
- Maps at the start of trail with details (lengths, materials, etc.) including points of interest. These maps should use walking time instead of distance which relates more to pedestrian use.

Community engagement

- Expand reach by engaging more groups, organizations, and individuals as advocates/stakeholders in promoting a walkable community.
- Work with community organizations to promote tourism maps that can be distributed at community events.
- Encourage organizations to include their events on calendar of events on the Tourism website.
- Use donor recognition for pedestrian facility contributions. Recognize individuals and/or business who contribute to benches, furniture, paving stones, or other facilities that support pedestrians.

Improve the environment to increase walkability

- Ensure future change, improvements, and events include walkability considerations.
- Assess connectivity priorities for walking network throughout the community.
 - Determine areas of need to create a continuous walking network through the community.
- Ensure wayfinding needs are met:
 - Determine placement and create signage that link public parking lots to nearby businesses.
 - Trail map development and online promotion.
- Lighting assessment pilot light improvements downtown – investigate lighting alternatives.
 - Engage Fortis with this discussion.
- Create and implement a lighting assessment to determine the lighting required to increase pedestrian perceived safety.

Create a community position that identifies a walkability issue focus

- Ensures walkability is represented for new or redevelopment of infrastructure.
- This position should ensure that walkability improvements are acknowledged and measured in community reports (i.e. Year in Review, Updates on Development Activities in the City, Strategic Plan, and represented in citizen/business surveys).

Assess potential speed reduction options

- Pilots to determine ways in which to reduce speeds without impeding traffic.
 - Speed bumps – speed humps in school zones.
- Lower speed limit to 30 km/hr in downtown area.
 - Pilot speed reduction strategies (narrowing road) to lower vehicle speed while maintaining traffic flow.
 - Change school zones to playground zones to maintain consistent speed reduction areas throughout the community.



Appendix A: International Charter for Walking



International Charter for Walking

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

I/We, the undersigned recognise 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. *Improved integration of networks*
4. *Supportive land-use and spatial planning*
5. *Reduced road danger*
6. *Less crime and fear of crime*
7. *More supportive authorities*
8. *A culture of walking*

Signed 

Name STEVE CHRISTIE

Position MAYOR.

Date DECEMBER 6, 2016

www.walk21.com

Appendix B: Agenda

WalkABLE Alberta One-Day Workshop Agenda – Lacombe

City of Lacombe

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Lacombe Memorial Centre, 8:00am – 4:30pm

1. Meet & Greet
2. Introduction from Alberta Health Services
3. Signing of the International Charter for Walking
4. Interactive Workshop
5. Lunch
6. Town Walkabout (virtual walkabout – depending on time)
7. Moving Forward
 - Review and Goal Setting
 - Initiative Sharing & Wrap Up

Appendix C: Brainstorming Notes

Flip Chart Notes on the International Charter for Walking

1) Increased Inclusive Mobility

What do we have now?

- Detailed trail map
- Row subdivisions, many have sidewalks
 - Sidewalks are required in all new developments and are being included as links to trail system
- No paths to parks, making them hard to access
- Sidewalks don't always connect to trails or other sidewalks
- Issues with existing infrastructure – cut outs/pavement depth

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Paved trails for people with accessibility concerns
- Woodchip/paved pathways are too hard on body
- Mobility on different trail ways (ie. Strollers, bikes, scooters, wheelchairs)
- Conversations not always had at the same tables
 - How to bring big partners to the discussion?

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Angle of curb cut-outs/sidewalk ramps (not facing centre of road)
- Want to be able to walk to/from trails, not drive to/from
- Bulb-outs are quite costly
- Use landscaping as barriers instead of concrete
- Don't always go with minimum standards, not might not be as inclusive as originally planned
- Adjusting to accommodate for climate
- Inclusivity walk – include those with mobility issues, include them in the design phase

2) Well Designed & Managed Spaces and Places

What do we have now?

- Parks in all subdivisions – walkable distance
 - 1 park provided that is fully accessible (Wheelchair accessible)
- Vandalism of benches
- Map of Lacombe at entrance on West
- Dark in downtown at night
- Public parking not labeled, no street signage in parkades

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Online maps (printable), businesses to include logo, maps given out to local hotels
- Lighting – especially downtown (infrastructure)
- Existing highway lighting, issues with clearance for transport trucks
- Better signage – map for visitors (wayfinding)
- Should direct to street/stores/landmarks
- Murals, painted dumpsters brings people to alleys (walking tour)

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Linking to other community events/businesses
- Improve Way-finding, especially to downtown businesses

3) Integration of Networks

What do we have now?

- Construction issues, bus transit services
- Bolt transit - Connects Burman (Lacombe as a whole) to Blackfalds and Red Deer - Connects to Red Deer's Bus services
 - Diverse group using bus service, 8 trips a day, 20 stops in Lacombe, 8-10 Blackfalds, 1 main stop in Red Deer
- AFSC – info gatherer for employees, just under 2,000 users
- Storefront enhancement program, \$2000 -2500 grant or a low interest loan
- Historical society has transit information, guided and self-guided walking tours (provincial and municipal historical component). Very prominent in community.

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Park n' Ride to promote more spots
- Replacement program for sidewalks, priority system
 - Residents bring up where there are missing links but no official documents
- Chamber connection with local businesses. Officially identify missing links in the community. More collaboration with Chamber on how to improve.
 - Has improved over the years.
 - Buy-in from businesses
 - Get them more involved

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Bus stops located to ensure accessibility/connection to sidewalks/paths/trails
- Full assessment of linkages – green space, trails, etc
- Evaluation of parking spaces for park & ride

4) Land Use & Spatial Planning

What do we have now?

- More tools to discover the area
- Make more friendly - lights, places to “hang out”
- DARP discusses pedestrian safety and recommends ways to make downtown more active
- Hospital isolated in residential area
- Big picture often forgotten due to money
- Private land (Federal at South End) has paths/trails for residents that aren't advertised well

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Proposing more landscape buffers for downtown redevelopment (50 Ave)
- Bring festivals downtown, brings people to the space
- Historical element draws tourism - needs to strengthen and support
- Need more civic presence in downtown and people moving to improve economic development as other commercial areas develop

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Cul de sac's and winding roads vs grid system
 - Seems to be moving away from cul de sac's in new proposed developments
- Lacombe – prefer grid pattern but developer presents layouts
 - City collects security deposits for new developments to ensure landscaping is completed
- Spatial planning policies – revamp of downtown
- More people downtown, more businesses downtown
- Safe places for people to enjoy community
 - i.e. lighting, benches in alleyways for people to enjoy murals

5) Reduced Road Danger

What do we have now?

- Highways and rail
- School zones – drop off/pick up parking, visibility of crosswalk
 - Can't always see the little kids behind parked cars
- Bikes on sidewalks – feel safer on sidewalks as opposed to roads
- Lack of signage/speed limits @ certain times

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Knowledge of multi-Use roadways
 - People forget about the other modes of transportation - people focusing on the fastest way to get from A to B
- Cycling - drivers down know how to treat bikes

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Consistency of speed limits (ie. 30 km/hr 24/7)
 - Why only have 30 km/hr Monday-Friday until 6pm in downtown? Should stay the same speed 24/7 for consistency (aka not a guessing game).
- Branding piece “A More Livable Lacombe”. Connecting ideas from all groups
- Public education component
- School zones, arena, 2 schools, park, 54th ave
 - Better signage
 - Paint crosswalks
 - Consistency with speed limit

- Playground build
- Why not change school zone to playground Zone?
 - Not everyone knows when there is a PD day
 - Schools are operated by different school boards (Public, Catholic, Private) and non-student days may not always match
 - School zone times aren't posted at the intersection for people turning on the road
 - Not everyone knows hours (consistency throughout school zones - signs, walkways, etc)

6) Less Crime & Fear of Crime

What do we have now?

- Lack of lighting, all of Lacombe but especially downtown. Affects sense of security.
 - Height, angle of lights
 - Lights are dimmed along residential areas
 - Some kids don't feel safe "trick or treating"
 - Can't always see kids walking to/from school when dark outside

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Training for cycling, etc. - remind people to not wear dark clothes at night

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Trees/shrubs – need ones that promote good line of sight
- Lighting options: LED/Solar Powered, Tree lighting
 - Solar lights – chamber of commerce
 - Businesses - Solar

7) More Supportive Authorities

What do we have now?

- Communication strategies and reporting
- Walk Days

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Walkability to be highlighted more in documents
 - Link to all departments
- As a city - encourage walking during lunch/breaks

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Connect walkability to economic component. Connect activities to economic factors - can help at budget time as it provides a reason for the program, etc.
- All key municipal reports connect to vision of the City to help attract new residents - important to do

8) Culture of Walking

What do we have now?

- Historical society provides walking/biking tours/information pamphlets
- Lacombe has the groups but they are not connected or communicating
- Health challenges in February (winter active challenge, winter walk day). Form groups to “compete” with ‘active’ activities
- Running/walking groups

What can we do better with what we have now?

- Work with all community groups. Pull all community groups together to help promote:
 - Educational Material, how to start, maps of trails/lookout points, advertise the groups
- Trail maps for all levels – include terrain type, time/length, points of interest, posted at start of the trail

What can we add (big ideas)?

- Strategic festival planning - hosting where it would benefit businesses, promote trails/open space, etc.
- Connect with schools to promote at a younger level/age
 - Kids walk tour, identify routes they talk to/from school and have them identify any barriers they encounter along the way
 - Clean up week with the schools

Appendix D: List of Each Attendee's Top Two Choices

List of attendees top choices:

- No paths to parks, hard to access (1 vote)
- Curb cut-off too steep/direct into road (2 votes)
- Sidewalks not always connected to other trails or other sidewalks (1 vote)
- Wayfinding signs (3 votes)
- Public parking signs (1 vote)
- Dark in downtown at night (4 votes)
- Signs in downtown need to be updated and need to indicate parking (2 votes)
- Map of Lacombe at entrance (1 vote)
- Murals in downtown brings people to alleys (1 vote)
- Officially identify missing links in the community. More collaboration with the Chamber. (4 votes)
- Private land has paths/trails for residents that aren't advertised well (1 vote)
- Need more civic presence in downtown and people moving to improve economic development as other commercial areas improve (1 vote)
- Make downtown more friendly, a place to 'hang out' (2 votes)
- More events to bring people to the community (1 vote)
- Speed limit consistency, 30km/hr all the time (4 votes)
- Changing school zones to playground zones, consistency (3 votes)
- Connecting ideas from all groups (1 vote)
- Too dark in downtown at night (4 votes)
- Lighting options, solar powered lights, tree lights (3 votes)
- Connect walkability actions to economic factors, etc. Can help at budget times as it provides a reason for the program, etc. (2 votes)
- Pull all community groups together to help promote education material, maps of trails/lookout points, how to start, advertise group (3 votes)
- Maps at the start of trails with details (lengths, materials, etc.) include points of interest (2 votes)
- Strategically have festivals where it would benefit businesses, promote trails, open space, etc. (2 votes)
- Have to connect with schools to promote (walking) at younger age (1 vote)

Contact

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