

REGION OF WATERLOO PEDESTRIAN CHARTER

Walking is the most ancient and universal form of travel. It is also an important form of exercise and recreation. Every personal trip involves walking, alone or in combination with taking public transit, driving or cycling. A pedestrian is a person moving from place to place, either by foot or by using an assistive mobility device. Pedestrians include residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. In order to travel safely, conveniently, directly and comfortably, they require an urban environment and infrastructure designed to meet their travel needs.

To ensure walking is a safe, comfortable and convenient mode of urban travel, Region of Waterloo respects the following principles:

Accessibility

Walking is a free and direct means of accessing local goods, services, community amenities and public transit.

Equity

Walking is the only mode of travel that is universally affordable, and allows children and youth, and people with specific medical conditions to travel independently.

Health and Well-Being

Walking is a proven method of promoting personal health and well-being.

Environmental Sustainability

Walking relies on human power and has negligible environmental impact.

Personal and Community Safety

An environment in which people feel safe and comfortable walking increases community safety for all.

Community Cohesion and Vitality

A pedestrian-friendly environment encourages and facilitates social interaction and local economic vitality.

To create an urban environment in all parts of our Region that encourages and supports walking, the Region of Waterloo, with the local municipalities will:

- uphold the right of pedestrians of all ages and abilities to safe, convenient, direct and comfortable walking conditions;
- provide a walking environment within the public right-of-way and in public parks that encourages people to walk for travel, exercise and recreation;
- support and encourage the planning, design and development of a walking environment in public and private spaces (both exterior and interior) that meets the travel needs of pedestrians;
- provide and maintain infrastructure that gives pedestrians safe and convenient passage while walking along and crossing streets;
- ensure that residents' access to basic community amenities and services does not depend on car ownership or public transit use;
- set policies that reduce conflict between pedestrians and other users of the public right-of-way;
- create walkable communities by giving high planning priority to compact, human-scale and mixed land use;
- encourage research and education on the social, economic, environmental and health benefits of walking as a form of travel, exercise and recreation;
- promote laws and regulations that respect pedestrians' particular needs;
- advocate for improving the provincial and federal regulatory and funding frameworks that affect the Region's ability to improve the pedestrian environment; and
- work with individual citizens, community groups and agencies, businesses and other levels of government to achieve these goals.

An urban environment that encourages and facilitates walking supports community health, vitality and safety. It increases use of public transit; decreases car dependence; reduces conflict between vehicles and pedestrians; leads to cleaner air and more green public space; and supports green tourism. Such an environment creates opportunities for the informal social interaction that is one of the main attributes of a vibrant, livable urban community.