

- ▶ provide an overview of local municipalities' interest to establish regional support for a Pedestrian Charter
- ▶ seek Council's support for a Pedestrian Charter for Burlington.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Benefits of Walking

An urban community is one 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, as well as supports green tourism. Such an environment creates opportunities for the informal social interaction that is one of the main attributes of a vibrant, liveable urban community.

The benefits of walking are a key indicator of healthy, efficient, socially inclusive and sustainable communities. It is a universal right that people can walk safely and enjoy high quality public spaces anywhere and at anytime.

International Charter for Walking / Pedestrian Charter

Walk 21 was founded by John Butcher in 1999 with the goal of "taking walking forward in the 21st Century." John Butcher stated that "Walking is convenient, it needs no special equipment, is self-regulating and inherently safe. Walking is as natural as breathing".

Walk 21's Vision is 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.

One of the outcomes of Walk 21 is the creation of an International Charter for Walking. The International Charter for Walking's focus is creating healthy, efficient and sustainable communities where people choose to walk. It identifies a set of principles which ensures that walking is a safe, healthy and convenient form of urban travel.

Relationship to Future Focus

The vision, principles and actions of a Pedestrian Charter are consistent with the following goals contained within the City's Strategic Plan, Future Focus VII.

- Goal 2: City and community services, programs, parks and facilities contribute directly to the exceptional quality of life enjoyed by Burlington citizens
 - ▶ Action 2.1 Expand opportunities for residents to experience and enjoy Burlington's many parks and natural areas.

- ▶ Action 2.2 Support and encourage health, wellness and active living by all residents.
- Goal 5: Burlington will be a clean, green and environmentally healthy city.
- ▶ Action 5.2 Work with partners to develop a community based action plan to reduce air and greenhouse emissions community wide.
 - ▶ Action 5.6 Strengthen ties with environmental organization and foster new ones where needed.
- Goal 8: Provide an effective transportation network that moves people and goods efficiently within the city and neighbouring areas.
- ▶ Action 8.1 Build infrastructure to support the city's transportation demands, optimizing traffic flow and encourage alternative modes of transportation.
- Goal 9: Provide a safe, efficient, accessible and responsive transit system that integrates into the overall transportation network.
- ▶ Action 9.2 Optimize road and pedestrian safety.

4.0 DISCUSSION:

The Region of Halton and the area municipalities are working together through Active Halton (formerly the Halton Active Living Network – HALNet), to coordinate physical activity initiatives across the Region. June is Recreation and Parks month and all Halton area municipalities are focusing on various initiatives to promote physical activity. One initiative is the endorsement of respective Pedestrian Charters. (Appendix A). The area municipalities are collaboratively working towards securing their Council's support of individual municipal charters in June, prior to the signing by the Region planned for the fall 2009.

The essence of the Charter, as modeled after the International Charter for Walking, supports basic principles to encourage walking in all parts of the City. It speaks to a vision of a walkable community addressing values related to safety, the environment, land use planning and quality of life. The principles of the Pedestrian Charter also align with the City of Burlington's values and commitment to reduce the physical, social and institutional barriers that limit walking activities.

Staff are recommending that the City of Burlington support the Pedestrian Charter and join other local governments with expressing this support by formally supporting the Charter.

Through supporting this Charter and its strategic principles, the City will work with others to help create a culture wherein people choose to walk.

5.0 COMMUNICATION:

Upon approval, staff will develop a promotional piece to be posted in facilities and open spaces, and used in other communication vehicles (e.g. Recreation Guide, City Talk).

Development of future capital budgets will consider opportunities to support the principles contained in the Pedestrian Charter.

6.0 FINANCE:

Internal resources to develop promotional materials will be accommodated within the 2009 current budget.

7.0 CONCLUSION:

The City of Burlington appreciates and recognizes the value and benefits of working in collaboration with agencies, governments, businesses, groups and individuals to support a pedestrian friendly community.

By endorsing the *Pedestrian Charter*, the City of Burlington joins other municipalities in a regional strategy to increase awareness and opportunities for walking.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

Appendix A – Pedestrian Charter - Burlington
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Special Instructions:

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Pedestrian Charter – City of Burlington

The City of Burlington encourages walking in all parts of our community. This charter explains our vision for a city that values and actively supports walking.

Accessibility

Walking helps to create a richer social life and makes it possible for all of us to take part in the life of our community. The City values easy access to our streets, squares, buildings, and public transit and assists in removing physical and social barriers so that opportunities to walk to these places is available to all.

Well-designed and managed spaces and places for people

We enjoy living in a healthy, convenient, attractive environment that is tailored to our needs. This way, we can enjoy our public areas in comfort and safety, away from noise and pollution.

Better walking routes and networks

A well-connected network of walking routes that are direct and easy to follow encourages walking. The City works to provide safe, comfortable, attractive and well-maintained routes that link all the places we need to go, such as homes, shops, schools, parks and public transit.

Land use and planning that supports walking

Our planning decisions place importance on active transportation and include smart growth principles. Our future community designs will include mixed spaces, increased density and more public green spaces that will reduce our dependency on cars and make walking the preferred choice.

Community Safety

The City values safe routes and infrastructure that prevent accidents. This includes well designed streets that manage traffic, reduced vehicle speeds in residential areas and around schools and lessen the impact on busy roads to create pleasant, safe and convenient walking routes within the city.

A Culture of Walking

Our leaders will do what is needed to promote a culture of walking in our city and actively encourage all members of the community to walk whenever and wherever they can as part of their daily lives.

Communities that promote walking are healthier communities. That's what we want for Burlington!

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