

Report to/Rapport au :

Ottawa Board of Health
Conseil de santé d'Ottawa

and Council / et au Conseil

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Submitted by/Soumis par :

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CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE

ACS2012-OPH-HPDP-0012

SUBJECT: PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

OBJET : SÉCURITÉ DES PIÉTONS

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit:
 - a) Receive this report and the attached report from the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario entitled "Pedestrian Death Review" for information;
 - b) Approve that the Chair of the Board of Health write a letter to the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care endorsing the recommendations in the Coroner's report;
2. That the Board of Health for the City of Ottawa Health Unit recommend that City Council:
 - a) Receive this report, including the report from the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario entitled "Pedestrian Death Review" for information; and
 - b) Refer the report to the Transportation Committee for their information with a request to review the Coroner's recommendations to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as they relate to City of Ottawa processes and guidelines.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

1. Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa :

- a) prenne connaissance du présent rapport ainsi que de celui du Bureau du coroner en chef de l'Ontario intitulé « Examen des décès de piétons » qui lui est joint;
 - b) consente à ce que la présidente du Conseil de santé écrive une lettre au ministère des Transports et au ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, dans laquelle elle appuie les recommandations formulées dans le rapport du coroner.
2. Que le Conseil de santé de la circonscription sanitaire de la ville d'Ottawa adresse les recommandations suivantes au Conseil municipal :
- a) prendre connaissance du présent rapport ainsi que de celui du Bureau du coroner en chef de l'Ontario intitulé « Examen des décès de piétons » qui lui est joint;
 - b) envoyer le rapport au Comité des transports à titre informatif et lui demander d'étudier les recommandations du coroner à l'intention de l'Association des municipalités de l'Ontario, de toutes les municipalités de la province ainsi que du ministère des Affaires municipales et du Logement puisqu'elles concernent les processus et les lignes directrices de la Ville d'Ottawa.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The way a community is built and designed impacts the health of its residents. Planning, designing and building safe roads and communities not only prevents pedestrian injuries and deaths, but also facilitates choosing modes of transportation like walking and cycling which, consequently, increase rates of physical activity.

Although relatively high compared to many other urban centres in Canada, only approximately 10 per cent of Ottawa residents report that their primary mode of transportation to and from work is walking or cycling. That 90 per cent of citizens choose other means of transportation may be due, in part, to perceived or real threats to pedestrian safety as lack of infrastructure and safety are commonly cited barriers to active transportation.

People who live in communities supported by infrastructure and services that promote active transportation have reduced risk of obesity and chronic diseases, such as cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and osteoporosis. Good planning and infrastructure can also reduce the economic burden, which, for injuries and deaths of pedestrians and cyclists as a result of traffic collisions, is estimated to exceed 17 million dollars annually in Ottawa alone.

The Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario recently released a report – [Pedestrian Death Review](#) – with recommendations for improved pedestrian safety. These recommendations include planning and designing communities with roads that are well-connected and safe for all users. Further, the report presents specific recommendations to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario, including improved pedestrian crossings, speed reduction, traffic calming strategies and education.

As part of its Healthy Eating, Active Living Strategy, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) continues to participate in a range of activities to promote pedestrian safety and active transportation, which complement the Chief Coroner for Ontario's recommendations.

The report shares the Chief Coroner's key recommendations and provides an overview of the City of Ottawa's initiatives with respect to pedestrian safety – Safer Roads Ottawa, Pedestrian Plans, Cycling plans as well as Community Design Plans – emphasize walking and cycling connectivity within and through the neighbourhoods.

RÉSUMÉ

La manière dont une communauté est conçue et construite a des effets sur la santé des résidents. La planification, la conception et la construction de routes et de communautés sécuritaires non seulement permettent de prévenir les blessures et les décès chez les piétons, mais facilitent également le recours à des modes de transport comme la marche et le vélo, modes qui augmentent par conséquent les taux d'activité physique.

Bien que cette proportion soit relativement élevée au regard de celle pour plusieurs autres centres urbains au Canada, seulement environ 10 % des résidents d'Ottawa affirment que la marche et le vélo constituent leur principal mode de transport pour leurs déplacements entre le travail et la maison. Le fait que 90 % des résidents choisissent un autre moyen de transport pourrait en partie s'expliquer par des menaces réelles ou perçues à la sécurité des piétons puisque le manque d'infrastructure et la sécurité sont souvent cités comme des obstacles au transport actif.

Les personnes qui vivent dans des communautés dotées d'infrastructures et de services qui favorisent le transport actif courent moins de risques d'obésité et de contracter des maladies chroniques, comme le cancer, le diabète de type 2, les maladies du cœur, les accidents vasculaires cérébraux, l'hypertension et l'ostéoporose. Une bonne planification et des infrastructures adéquates peuvent également réduire le fardeau économique, dont la part pour les blessures et décès chez les piétons et les cyclistes attribuables à des collisions routières est estimée à plus de 17 millions de dollars par année à Ottawa seulement.

Le Bureau du coroner en chef pour l'Ontario a récemment publié un rapport, [Examen des décès de piétons](#), où figurent des recommandations pour améliorer la sécurité des piétons. La planification et la conception de communautés dotées de voies de communication adéquatement reliées et sécuritaires pour tous les usagers figurent parmi ces recommandations. De plus, le rapport propose des recommandations à l'intention de l'Association des municipalités de l'Ontario et de toutes les municipalités ontariennes. Ces recommandations touchent l'amélioration des passages pour piétons, la réduction de la vitesse, les mesures de modération de la circulation et la sensibilisation.

Dans le cadre de sa Stratégie pour la promotion de la saine alimentation et de la vie active, Santé publique Ottawa (SPO) continue de participer à un large éventail d'activités promouvant la sécurité des piétons et le transport actif qui s'ajoutent aux recommandations du coroner en chef pour l'Ontario.

Le rapport fait part des principales recommandations du coroner en chef et offre un aperçu des initiatives de la Ville d'Ottawa en ce qui a trait à la sécurité des piétons, comme Sécurité des routes Ottawa, le Plan de la circulation piétonnière et le Plan sur le cyclisme et les plans de conception communautaire, qui mettent l'accent sur les voies pour piétons et cyclistes dans les quartiers.

BACKGROUND

The way a community is built and designed – land use, road safety, access to pathways and transit – impacts the health of its residents. Planning, designing and building safe roads and communities prevents pedestrian injuries and deaths, and facilitates adoption of active transportation rates. Higher speeds of traffic reduce pedestrians' comfort levels and act as a deterrent to active transportation (1). Currently in Ottawa, only 10 per cent of residents reported that their primary mode of transportation to and from work was walking or cycling. This is of public health significance because studies demonstrate that people who live in communities supported by infrastructure that promotes active transportation have reduced risk of obesity and chronic diseases, such as cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and osteoporosis (2).

In response to a cluster of pedestrian deaths in Toronto in 2010, the Chief Coroner for Ontario invited the public to provide recommendations to enhance pedestrian safety. In September 2012, the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario released a report entitled [Pedestrian Death Review](#) (Document 1), which describes specific recommendations for improved pedestrian safety.

Health Benefits of improving pedestrian safety

According to the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, "Walking is the oldest method of transportation. It confers many benefits to participants including better health with less obesity, reduced costs for transportation, diminished traffic congestion, and improved air quality. In essence, it promotes health in an individual and in a society." Improving pedestrian safety may contribute to increasing active transportation (1, 2) and active living is important for increasing quality of life and overall physical functioning.

Economic impacts and benefits of improving pedestrian safety

From 2004 to 2008, the estimated societal economic impact due to pedestrian collisions was \$700 million (4-6). On the other hand, the median economic benefit of active transportation initiatives is 5:1 (7). That is, for every dollar spent on interventions to change transportation infrastructure or policy, five dollars are saved in health-related impacts, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Based on estimates of the direct costs of care and the indirect costs related to injuries and deaths of pedestrians and cyclists as a result of traffic collisions, OPH estimates that the total costs of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists in Ottawa exceeds 17 million dollars annually. Indirect costs include the cost of total or partial permanent disability and morbidity for hospitalizations (8). A recent analysis in Toronto showed that savings in direct health care costs arising from current levels of residents staying active by walking or cycling and averting chronic illness are estimated to result in reduced health care spending of \$110 to \$160 million, with the total economic benefits from \$130 to \$478 million (9). A European study estimated the benefit in personal health costs to a person switching from driving to an active form of transportation for a one-way 5km commute to be approximately \$1,600 annually, with additional savings due to decreased air pollution (10). This is an important consideration given that the straight line average distance for trips originating in downtown Ottawa is 5.9km (11).

Pedestrian Injuries in Ottawa

In Ottawa, between 2007 and 2011, there were 1,830 reported collisions involving pedestrians (5). In 2011 alone, there were 339 pedestrian injuries and seven fatalities related to road traffic collisions.

The number of pedestrian injuries and deaths in Ottawa, coupled with the fact that the majority of Ottawa residents do not meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for moderate to vigorous physical activity per week and that half (52%) of Ottawa adults (aged ≥18 years) are overweight or obese indicates that improving pedestrian safety could increase physical activity rates and reduce obesity as well as pedestrian injuries.

Overview of the recommendations from the Chief Coroner

The recommendations from the Chief Coroner include implementing a “complete streets” approach to planning and designing communities. This involves designing roads that are well-connected and safe for all users. Complete streets contribute to creating healthy, walkable and vibrant communities.

The report also recommends that the Province of Ontario develop a *Walking Strategy* that encourages municipalities to develop policies, practices, and plans that promote pedestrian safety including road safety, recreation and health. Further the report presents specific recommendations to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario. These recommendations (page 39-40 of the report) include introducing speed reduction, street calming and collision prevention strategies, installing leading pedestrian signal intervals as well as other pedestrian safety tactics specific for seniors.

DISCUSSION

Initiatives to Promote Pedestrian Safety and Active Transportation

Ontario

In May 2012, Toronto Public Health released a report entitled [Road to Health](#), which outlined the risks faced by cyclists and pedestrians in Toronto, and made recommendations for improving safety, such as reduced speeds, traffic calming and safer intersections. Peel Public Health has been working extensively with their local and regional planning departments to develop strategies for making communities more pedestrian friendly, and identify opportunities to facilitate active transportation. Peel Public Health has produced evidence-based tools to encourage development that supports active living in a safe, complete community environment. In addition, the Region of Kitchener Waterloo implemented Canada's first ever "Complete Street".

Ottawa

OPH is involved in a range of activities to promote pedestrian safety and active transportation. Prior to the release of the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario's Pedestrian Death Review, the Medical Officer of Health submitted recommendations for considerations by the review panel (Document 2). As part of on-going work, OPH continues to be a strong advocate for pedestrian safety.

OPH also works with a number of City departments to promote pedestrian safety. As part of the [Healthy Eating, Active Living Strategy](#), OPH is working with Planning and Growth Management to further enhance the health perspective in City planning. Specifically, OPH staff are contributing to the Official Plan review, as well as the Pedestrian Plan and Cycling Plan reviews, which are supporting documents of the Transportation Master Plan. This includes promoting recognition of how the built environment impacts on population health, as well as identifying community design strategies that promote overall health. OPH is also a partner in the interdepartmental Safer Roads Ottawa program. This initiative examines ways to prevent or eliminate road-related deaths and serious injuries through culture change, community engagement and the development of a sustainable safe transportation environment. Since 2003, Safer Roads Ottawa has released an annual report on the safety of Ottawa's roadways.

Through its current involvement in the Pedestrian and Cycling Plan reviews, and the Safer Roads Ottawa Strategic Road Safety Action Plan, OPH is providing a health perspective by encouraging the development of complete streets that promote safe travel, active transportation, and the reduction of injuries. OPH will continue to collaborate with staff from the City of Ottawa's Planning and Growth Management Department and the Public Works Department to identify municipal opportunities to act on the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario's recommendations, including improved pedestrian crossings, speed reduction, traffic calming strategies and education.

Additionally, OPH is reinforcing the Coroner's recommendation to ensure that the needs of vulnerable populations, such as seniors, are considered. OPH is also providing information on the health benefits associated with well-designed streets and communities, as well as the negative health impacts of built environments that do not support safe and effective active transportation networks.

Many of the Coroner's recommendations are included in the various City of Ottawa programs that promote walking, cycling and safety. Pedestrian countdown signals, auditory signals, traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps, bulb-outs, chicanes), lighting, street-scaping and improved winter maintenance are examples of solutions being implemented. Current Community Design Plans also emphasize walking and cycling connectivity within and throughout neighbourhoods. The Ottawa Pedestrian Plan and Ottawa Cycling Plan include policies, targets and a planned network of connecting sidewalks, multi-use pathways and cycling facilities across Ottawa.

These sidewalks, pathways and cycling lanes are being implemented as part of new developments, new roadway projects, roadway reconstructions, and as stand-alone projects for missing links. Furthermore, the construction of a light rail transit tunnel through the downtown presents an opportunity to re-design street surfaces to enhance the walking environment and improve the level of service for pedestrians and cyclists. Those options are being examined as part of the current Downtown Moves study.

As many of the Chief Coroner of Ontario's recommendations are included in various City programs, OPH staff will continue to work with City of Ottawa departments in the implementation of these recommendations to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and all Municipalities in Ontario and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as they relate to City of Ottawa processes and guidelines.

CONSULTATION

OPH continues to work with community and municipal partners, including Planning and Growth Management and Public Works to identify and address pedestrian safety through municipal plans, programs and policies.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the report recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

BOARD OF HEALTH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the Board of Health Strategic Priorities: B4 Increase active transportation as well as leisure physical activity; C3 Improve road safety for all users.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations in this report support the 2010-2014 Term of Council Priorities under "Healthy and Caring Communities".

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[Document 1 – Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario’s Pedestrian Death Review](#)

[Document 2 – Medical Officer of Health’s submission to the review panel regarding the Pedestrian Death Review](#)

DISPOSITION

Ottawa Public Health staff will carry out the activities stated in this report, specifically working with Planning and Growth Management Department and the Public Works Department to jointly examine specific approaches to enhance pedestrian safety in Ottawa as part of the City of Ottawa’s Pedestrian Plan Review and Cycling Plan Review, and the Safer Roads Ottawa Strategic Road Safety Action Plan.

REFERENCES

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