City of Ottawa

Level of designation: **Silver**

**Background**

- **Population:** 935,050
- **Area:** 2,790.22 square km
- **Density:** 335.1 persons per square km

**Ottawa Pedestrian Plan**

The City of Ottawa is designated a Silver-level WALK Friendly community for updating the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan with some progressive tools and actions, conducting pre- and post-evaluations of road projects and traffic-calming initiatives, and community initiatives that engage people in active transportation.

Some highlights from the City of Ottawa’s application include:

- The **Ottawa Pedestrian Plan** (OPP), a comprehensive pedestrian-specific planning document initially approved in 2009 and recently updated, allows the City to include detailed direction on how to create a walkable Ottawa through proposed enhancements to: the pedestrian network, planning and design, safety and promotion, and maintenance and rehabilitation. In addition, pedestrian-focused policies and priorities drive the construction of new facilities, and are top of mind when new programs are established. Some programs included in the OPP are: the Pedestrian Facilities Program, the Intersection Accessibility Program, the Development Sidewalk Program, the Sidewalk Rehabilitation Program, the Audible Signals Program, and the Countdown Signals Program, among others.

- The OPP includes **measurable targets for increased levels of pedestrian activity** looking to 2021. Ottawa has set the target mode share city-wide at 10% (9.5% in 2001), 46% in the inner area, 12% in the inner suburbs and 11% in the outer suburbs. The City will be able to monitor their progress through their extensive traffic count program, which includes pedestrian data in the general counts and pedestrian specific counts as needed.

- The City's Official Plan is **supportive of infill and intensification** projects, particularly within the Greenbelt region. Intensification units represented 41.1% (between 2008-2012) with much of the
recent development focused along transit and main street corridors. At least 76% of residents live within ½ km of a bus stop and the OPP supports transit objectives of achieving a 30% modal split by 2021.

- The city of Ottawa has a complete and detailed mapping of the pedestrian network for the entire city. Of note, sidewalk construction and maintenance are prioritized based on a number of elements including a neighbourhood analysis that considers the needs of more vulnerable populations such as children and seniors.

- Ottawa is taking impressive steps towards traffic calming. The City implements road diets -- where there is a reduction of the number of motor vehicle lanes in the right-of-way, lane diets -- which reduce the lane width, as well as traffic circles and speed bumps. Ottawa also has a plan to conduct traffic calming studies to determine traffic calming needs for designated neighbourhoods.

- Ottawa currently has five bridges solely dedicated to active transportation that enable walkers and cyclists to cross barriers in the physical environment and provide access to destinations; there are another five in planning, design, or construction phases. As well, over the past few years, the City has constructed several new pathways, including two major rural pathways which saw the conversion of over 70kms of rail corridor. The City of Ottawa currently has 618.5 km of multiuse pathways.

- The City recently approved a Complete Street redesign for a major commuting avenue, Main Street. This renovation includes a wider sidewalk, cycle tracks, and a reduction of motor vehicle lanes resulting in a slight vehicle delay but better overall use of the roadway for all modes of travel, with additional benefits to local businesses anticipated.

- In a precedent-setting move for Ontario, the Ottawa-Carleton District and Ottawa Catholic school boards joined with the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) to sign a School Active Transportation Charter in October 2013. This represents the first step towards the creation of a new School Active Transportation Support Network that will see the boards and OSTA strengthen their collaboration with the City and Green Communities Canada in support of active travel initiatives including School Travel Planning (see http://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/resources/safe-routes for more information).

- The city has seen a decrease of about 7% in the number of collisions, injuries, and fatalities between walkers and motor vehicles, and the OPP includes a Pedestrian Safety evaluation tool. Police are out on bikes during the cycling season in Ottawa, and all are CANBIKE II certified. The City has also recently introduced a new foot patrol program in the downtown area.