



Embargo – 12:00 pm December 3, 2014

WALK Friendly Community designations announced today

(MARKHAM – DECEMBER 3, 2014) – Three Ontario municipalities have been recognized by an expert panel for their progress toward walkability.

WALK Friendly Community designations have been awarded to the City of Mississauga (silver), the Town of Pelham (bronze) and the Town of Minto (bronze).

The awards were given at ACT Canada's Sustainable Mobility and Healthy Communities Summit where more than 200 Transportation Demand Management professionals from across the country gathered to talk about integrated transportation solutions that support healthy communities.

"We're proud to support our partner [Green Communities Canada](#) and the WALK Friendly initiative," said Michael Coteau, Ontario's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. "Congratulations to the City of Mississauga, the Town of Pelham and the Town of Minto for building municipalities that encourage healthy, active living for all residents, young and old."

The WALK Friendly Communities designations encourage communities to take practical steps to make walking safe, convenient and enjoyable. Walk friendly environments are linked to higher rates of everyday walking, helping to create vibrant neighbourhoods, and increased retail sales and transit ridership. Walking is also being recognized as a "wonder drug" that boosts health and fitness, and combats chronic diseases like diabetes.

"We have built walking into our policies, plans and projects to make Mississauga more pedestrian friendly. Our downtown and new transitway show the progress we have made", said Mayor Bonnie Crombie. "We will continue to encourage active transportation and the environment to support it."

Communities applying for designation report their progress on more than 200 key walkability indicators, including sidewalk policies, connectivity, progressive design standards, campaigns and promotions, training, and citizen engagement. Applications are scored by a panel of experts.

The designation is a "tremendous honour," said Minto Mayor George Bridge. "The [application] process has shown us tangible action steps to improve current walking conditions moving forward."

Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn said he is "delighted" by the designation. "Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers and staff that are working to realize the community's vision of a more walkable and active town."

Applications will be accepted for the 2015 intake beginning December 8, 2014. Communities should refer to the Application Guide at www.walkfriendly.ca as they prepare their application.

Thanks to the Government of Ontario and the Metcalf Foundation for their funding support.

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