

WALKABILITY is a measure of how inviting or un-inviting an area is to pedestrians. Places that promote walking to stores, work, school and amenities are better places to live, they promote healthier lifestyles, and they even have higher real estate values.

When you think of an area where you like to walk, it probably has well-maintained

routes, and interesting buildings and stores. Or it might have shady green spaces, quieter routes, or places where strollers, dogs and scooters are welcome.

The images in this exhibit are from the high-rise neighbourhoods that ring central Toronto. These are places that mostly do not have good walking

many, many people walk in these areas.

These areas were planned in the 1960s and 1970s when it was thought most people would be able to drive to the places they needed to go. But today the apartment neighbourhoods often house people with limited incomes, people with children and complicated travel needs, and people who sidewalks, benches, good lighting, direct conditions. Despite this low walkability, have limited or no access to a car. In other walk to carry out their daily lives.

words, neighbourhoods that were designed around cars now house people who must rely on transit and walking.

Walkability is a basic quality of good cities. Everywhere you go, walkability makes places more welcoming, livable and safe. Everyone should have good walking conditions, especially people who need to

SIDEWALKS FOR ALL SEASONS

Wind, rain and snow make walking conditions unpleasant and uninviting. Poor snow clearance, pooling water, mud and ice are significant impediments to walking.

"There's a sewer grate that overflows with water because it's blocked, especially during the winter and spring."

— WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

SNOW REMOVAL

Uncleared snow and ice cause trouble for walkers. Seniors and people with mobility impairments are at even greater risk of slipping and injuring themselves.

"Not many people use the sidewalk in winter because they don't clear the snow. Most people just walk down the road."



THE BEST OFFENCE IS A GOOD DE-FENCE

Walking routes are often unnecessarily blocked with fences, barriers and gates. Removing obstacles makes popular shortcuts easier and safer to use.

"The fence acts as a social divider. It makes it harder to blend and walk between the sides, so it makes that divide more real."

— WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

SPACE ON SIDEVALKS

Walkers need enough room to walk safely without being forced into the street by the volume of walkers.

"The sidewalk is too narrow. You often bump into the people coming towards you. Sometimes you have to walk in the road."



WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WALK

Fences interrupt the flow and connectedness of direct walking routes. People often cut holes in fences or go under them, creating unsafe passageways and snags. Shortcuts should be made safer with pathways and good lighting.

"Most kids take the shortcut and go through the fence. It's lonely and scary." — WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

BLOCKED SIDEWALKS

Light and sign posts, electrical boxes, and other objects should not block sidewalks and walkways. Walkers should have a clear path free of obstructions.

"There's a big post in the sidewalk there and I can't get the stroller by. And my father, he's in a wheelchair. That sidewalk is not accessible." – WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



WALKING ON THE BEATEN PATH

Shortcuts help people walk directly to their destinations. Adding lighting, sidewalks and signage would make these paths safer and more comfortable.

"The shortcut path gets icy. It's unpaved and not level. So we hold onto the fence line as we walk down."

— WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

BROKEN AND UNEVEN PAVEMENT

It is discouraging to walk along a street or through a neighbourhood with uneven, broken pavement and potholes.

"The street is nice, but there are some big holes in the sidewalks. You can fall and break your ankle. I fell there once, and then I got up and thought 'fine, I'll be alright,' and then I fell again."



CLEAR PATHWAYS MAKE WALKING PLEASURABLE

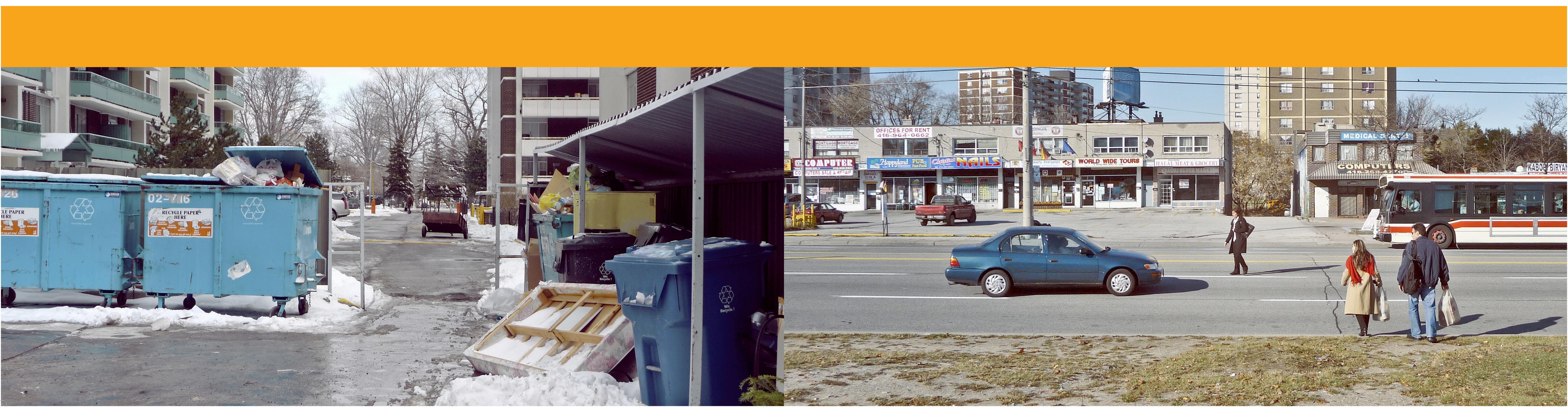
Light and sign posts, electrical boxes and other objects should not block sidewalks and walkways. Walkers should have a clear path free of obstructions.

"When it is ugly all around you and there's nowhere nice to walk it makes you feel bad and unappreciated. We live here and want to make it beautiful." – WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

CROSSING SIGNALS SHOULD BE LOCATED WHERE WE CROSS

Crosswalks are needed where people already cross. Mid-block crossings without signals are common around schools, community centres and malls.

"People walk across to go to the bus. A lot of old people cross, but there's no crosswalk - they just cross in the middle. It's surprising no one has been killed there." - WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



CROSSWALKS SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED

Crosswalks need to be marked with bright road paint. When the paint wears off, it is unclear where walkers should go and where vehicles should be.

"In our neighbourhood we need the wide white stripes to make it more visible." — WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

CROSSWALKS SHOULD BE REASONABLY SPACED

Safe street crossings should be provided at regular, short intervals.

"There's no crossing for the kids or anyone. You have to take a chance and see if there are no cars coming. Or you can walk to the light and then come all the way back again. It's far."



CROSSING TIMES

Crosswalk signals must last long enough to help people across all lanes of traffic.

"When you press the walk button, it takes ages to change.

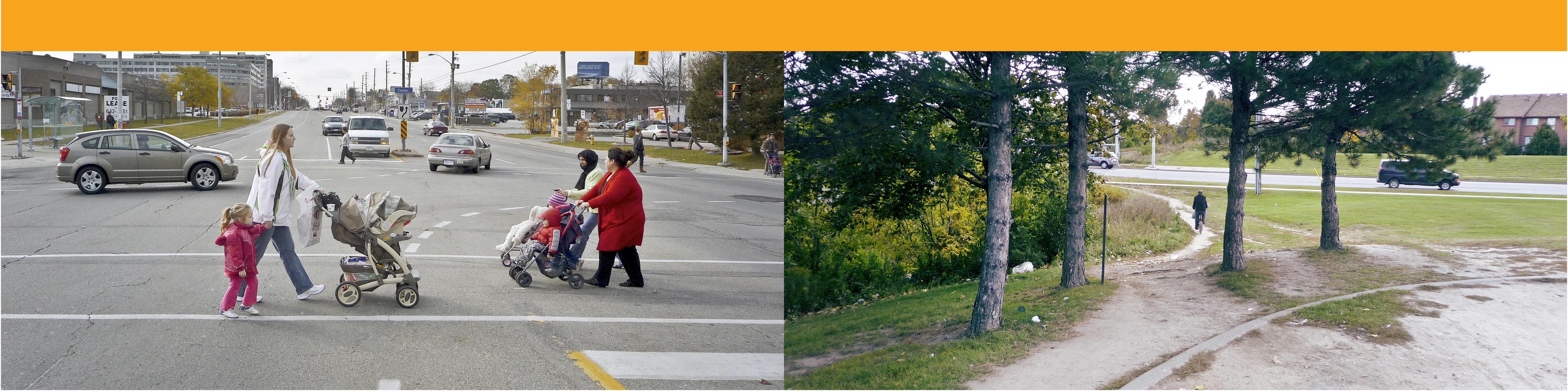
And by the time you get to the middle of the street, it's done.

It's too quick." – WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

BUILD WALKWAYS WHERE PEOPLE WALK

Sidewalks are needed where people walk, and bike lanes are needed where cyclists ride.

"There are sidewalks by the park along the road, but no one uses them. Sometimes the paths are muddy, but they are much more direct." – JANE'S WALK PARTICIPANT



PARKING LOTS SHOULD HAVE WALKING ROUTES

Many pedestrian collisions occur in parking lots.

These accidents could be prevented with clearly marked and protected pedestrian paths.

"There's lots of truck traffic in the back of the mall. There's no set walkway so you have to juggle with the trucks delivering stuff."

— WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

BLIND AND CONFINED SPACES ARE UNPLEASANT

Narrow spaces and blocked views are uncomfortable for walking. They can make people feel claustrophobic and trapped, especially with high fencing.

"When I walk, I like to watch people, look at gardens and houses."



PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Neighbourhood parks and public spaces are important places for socializing and exercising. People tend to prefer spaces that are busy, have playgrounds and have activities in them.

"I love the park the most. It is too small but still, I love to go there. All the mothers are there, like a public square."

— WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

SIT-ABILITY

Benches and tables encourage walking by providing resting places. Street furniture also increases social interaction and makes places safer by providing "eyes on the street."

"You can walk anywhere in the community but you can't sit. If it's too far to go, you have to sit, but there are no benches, so then you don't want to walk." – WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT



BUFFERS BETWEEN SIDEWALKS AND ARTERIAL ROADS

Walking along busy streets like these can be uncomfortable and unsafe. Buffers like trees, green space or bike lanes make sidewalks safer.

"I feel like I'm walking right on the road – the cars go by so fast and they are just a few feet away." — JANE'S WALK PARTICIPANT

ROAD DESIGN FOR CARS AND PEOPLE

Wide roads with fast moving traffic make it very difficult and unsafe to get around on foot. Road design should tell drivers pedestrians are here.

"The main road is very busy, cars averaging well over sixty clicks-per-hour. It is six lanes wide, like a highway, so it is not walkable." — WALKABILITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

