Walk21 Québec Montréal 4-8 OCT 2027

Chaque pas compte
Every Step Matters

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The 27th International Walk21 Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities

4-8 October 2027
Centre Mont-Royal · Montréal (Canada)

The 27th International Walk21 Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities will be hosted by Piétons Québec, in close partnership with the Walk21 Foundation and in collaboration with the Interuniversity Research Centre on Enterprise Networks, Logistics and Transportation (CIRRELT).

Reuniting experts from around the globe, this bilingual event (French and English) will share insights and expertise on how to develop and implement walking policies and programmes that deliver walkable communities and safer streets, as well as broaden community participation and enhance the value of walking.

Every step matters. Every person who walks, every journey, every project and every decision can help shape safer, more accessible, inclusive and vibrant places. From everyday actions to transformative projects, what steps can we take today to create places where walking is an integral part of how we live, connect and move, tomorrow and for the years to come?

You are invited to engage with us on how community needs, planning decisions and infrastructure investments are:

- Transforming the mobility paradigm;
- Impacting the quality of people's walking experiences;
- Helping deliver on safety, equity and climate goals; and
- Attracting urban development that encourages people to walk.

If you are working to advance walking, whether you are a **decision-maker, academic, civil society representative or practitioner in urbanism, civil engineering, public health, research and education, environment, culture, economic development, urban planning, traffic management, public security, road safety, cities or government,** join us in sharing the ideas, experiences and actions that showcases the steps that matter.

The Call for Contributions closes on Friday, February 19th 2027.

SUBMIT HERE

PIÉTONS QUÉBEC · WALK21 · CIRRELT

HOST CITY Montréal · MAIN PARTNER Québec

SUPPORTED BY Tourisme Montréal

Introduction

When it comes to walkability and human-scale cities, Québec, the French-speaking province of Canada, occupies a distinctive place in North America.

Québec, with its many historic villages, small towns and neighbourhoods built around vibrant cores and walkable distances, has a strong foundation for walkability. And while car-oriented planning and urban sprawl has shaped much of its development since the 1960s, there has been a growing will and multiple actions over the past decades to build on the province's urban heritage and reimagine our streets, neighbourhoods and town centres as more walkable, vibrant and people-friendly places.

The proactive steps the province of Québec has taken towards promoting active mobility offers a compelling narrative. What began in the early 2000s, spurred in part by public health's efforts to promote active mobility, particularly among children walking to school, and to encourage environments that support active mobility, evolved over the following two decades into a broader movement. For the following decades, municipalities, non-governmental organisations and researchers across Québec have been implementing innovative design and road safety practices tailored to the province's North American context. It has also led to the creation of *Piétons Québec* in 2015. This province-wide non-profit organization, with a team of 10 full-time employees advocating in favour of pedestrians, has contributed to accelerating the actions towards walkable communities in the last decade. This sustained momentum fostered a unique ecosystem dedicated to building knowledge, capacity and action around walkability.

Québec's unique climate adds a dimension to this story. The intense summer heatwaves, extreme winter cold and heavy snowfalls have been challenging Quebecers to think differently about how streets and public spaces are designed, operated and maintained to ensure people can walk safely and comfortably year-round.

Walk21 Québec will be an opportunity to showcase this growing body of expertise to an international audience, while exploring the opportunities, challenges and knowledge shared by cities and communities worldwide.

As a bilingual French and English conference, we hope it will provide an additional opportunity to further include French-speaking communities in the conversation.

The conference will be hosted in Montréal, Canada's second-largest city, and a compelling backdrop for the event. With its many human-scale neighbourhoods, pedestrian streets and public spaces, extensive network of parks, green spaces and green alleys, and various waterfront areas accessible on foot, delegates will enjoy a city with much to discover. The city's decades of urban innovations provide a rich setting to explore and experiment that will stimulate discussions.

Join us in October 2027 in Montréal for Walk21 Québec, where people passionate about walking, our urban future and the quality of our daily life, will come together to share expertise, learn from one another and shape the next steps towards communities that make walking better for everyone.

In the journey towards better walking, **Every Step Matters**.

Themes

You are invited to submit a proposal under the conference themes and formats to be part of the programme and discussions that will take place at Walk21 Québec.

THE FIVE WALK21 QUÉBEC THEMES ARE:

1. **The Power to Act**
   Mobilising people, partnerships and leadership to create changes for walking.
2. **Enabling Year-Round Walking**
   Adapting our communities to make walking possible and enjoyable in all seasons and in a changing climate.
3. **Designing Places for People**
   Design and placemaking that fosters enhanced experience, connection, well-being and quality of life for all.
4. **Measuring, Demonstrating and Communicating**
   Understanding walking better and making the value and impacts of walking more visible and useful to inform action.
5. **Making Walking Central to Planning**
   Consider walking from the outset in the decisions that shape our cities and communities.

We welcome all creative ideas and opportunities to explore these themes to find innovative and constructive ways that thread an understanding of the evidence base into policies and actions with a showcase of delivered projects that have realised beneficial change.

1. The Power to Act

Who can make change happen and how to mobilise people, partnerships and leadership to create change for walking?

This theme explores different forms of agency and power, both top-down and bottom-up, and how they can reinforce one another to spark and deliver change for walking. It also looks at collaboration, breaking down silos between areas of expertise, and engaging stakeholders.

The theme seeks to highlight the responsibility of people in decision-making positions to act, as well as the levers available to them to encourage walking and build support for change. It explores the

Themes (continued)

leadership, commitment and courage needed to seize opportunities to transform practices, policies, projects and ways of working. It also considers how the backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of people who hold positions of influence can shape the ways we think about and transform our cities.

This theme also shines a light on citizen-led initiatives, local mobilisations and collective action, which can spark social transformation and build momentum around a project.

Contributions showcasing initiatives that demonstrate creativity, bring different strengths together and build alliances to turn ideas into concrete action are particularly encouraged.

2. Enabling Year-Round Walking

How can we adapt our communities to make walking possible and enjoyable in all seasons and in a changing climate?

Persistent heatwaves, increasingly frequent freeze-thaw cycles, heavy rain and snowfall: climate change is intensifying extreme weather events that pose significant challenges for walking and the quality of our living environments. This theme explores strategies for making pedestrian environments more resilient, comfortable and accessible across all seasons and climates, as well as how walking can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It looks in particular at nature-based solutions (tree canopy, green and blue infrastructure, and other approaches), as well as best practices in design that support effective year-round maintenance, innovative maintenance strategies, and asset management as a lever for adapting and improving our communities.

Contributions showcasing initiatives that combine climate adaptation with improvements to pedestrian comfort are particularly encouraged.

3. Designing Places for People

How can we design places that foster enhanced experience, connection, well-being and quality of life for all?

This theme puts people at the heart of public-space design and invites us to rethink environments that are welcoming to all, vibrant and conducive to social connection. It explores the links between walking, equity, health, local economies and people's quality of life, as well as approaches that better respond to the diversity of people's needs and experiences. It looks at ways street design, traffic planning and road safety projects can go beyond managing traffic flows and making walking safer, more secure and convenient, to rethink streets as public assets that enhance the experience of walking itself, well-being, and support the daily mobility of all.

Contributors are invited to share projects, practices and initiatives that put people at the centre of the design of streets and public spaces of our communities and contribute to greater territorial, social, economic and environmental equity.

Themes (continued)

4. Measuring, Demonstrating and Communicating

How can we better understand walking and capture its value and impacts to inform action?

This theme explores ways to document walking patterns, understand the needs of people who walk and study life in public spaces. It looks at how to measure the impacts of walking and demonstrate its benefits for health, security, transport efficiency, climate action, communities and local vitality. It also explores

tools and methods for collecting data, analysing them, as well as approaches to communicating, sharing and translating knowledge.

Contributions that help us better understand walking, demonstrate the importance of taking action to support it, and turn data into levers for action are particularly encouraged.

5. Making Walking Central to Planning

How can we ensure that walking is considered from the outset in the decisions that shape our cities and communities?

This theme explores approaches that position walking as a core component of urban and transport planning, land-use planning, climate action and public policy. It looks in particular at human-scale planning approaches, the complementarity and coexistence of different modes of transportation, multimodality and intermodality, with walking as the foundation of the wider transport ecosystem and in traffic planning. Contributors are invited to share strategies and methodologies for planning for walking, as well as regulatory measures, road design guidelines and standards, funding mechanisms and practices that can help bring walking initiatives to scale.

Contributions showcasing policies and planning approaches that go beyond road safety to incorporate a broader understanding of the quality of the walking experience, including comfort, safety, tree canopy, heritage, activity and the walkability of our communities, are particularly encouraged.

Formats

THERE WILL BE A RANGE OF FORMATS FOR PRESENTATIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

- **Topical discussions**
  A group of 15-minute presentations on a similar topic with discussion.
- **Challenge Café**
  Brainstorming and feedback on a critical issue to generate a set of ideas and actions, particularly good for street design or infrastructure challenges.
- **Workshops**
  A collaborative, engaging discussion with colleagues generating a clear output.
- **Learning Labs**
  An interactive session designed to share and explore the reality, challenges and options of walking projects.
- **Walkshops**
  On-street real-world explorations and experiments in walking.
- **Posters**
  Emerging research in poster format.
- **Creative Interactions**
  Exploring walking through out-of-the-box ideas and creative formats.

Topical Discussions

This is a 15-minute oral presentation in a 90-minute moderated session shared with other presenters to illuminate different perspectives and experiences on the same topic. The presentations will provide the framework for the subsequent discussion and will be selected to encourage debate.

Challenge Café

A Challenge Café, like a World Café, brings participants together to explore real-world challenges, questions or ideas related to walking. Participants rotate between three simultaneous discussions, spending 20 minutes at each table before coming together for a final discussion to share key insights and reflections. The format aims to foster open exchange, drawing on the experience and expertise of participants to generate new ideas, perspectives and possible approaches. Each table in the Challenge Café is designed and facilitated by the proposer. You are encouraged to bring a specific challenge, issue or idea to the table and create space for participants to contribute their own experiences and perspectives.
Challenge Cafés are a total of 90 minutes.

Formats (continued)

Workshops

At a workshop, a larger group of people deal with a specific topic or question. A workshop aims at working together with workshop participants targeting a common goal. Workshops are designed and managed by the proposer. Please note that a workshop is usually a more interactive format and presentations should be limited. You can propose a workshop in collaboration with a partner working in the same field and build an agenda with multiple speakers and/or activities.
Workshops can be 90 min or 3 hours.

Learning Labs

A Learning Lab is a 60-minute interactive session designed to share lessons learned from experiments, innovations and initiatives related to walking. The format creates a space for honest and constructive reflection on both successes and failures, with a focus on what others can learn from the experience. Learning Labs are designed and facilitated by the proposer. Proposers are encouraged to share what worked, what did not, what they would do differently, and what they learned along the way.
Learning Labs are 60 minutes.

Walkshops

The street will be your laboratory. A Walkshop is an opportunity to use the public spaces in the city to explore or carry out experiments, pilot programmes and deliver direct interventions. You can facilitate your own urban laboratory and the participants will follow you outside the conference venue to the real urban fabric and discover your experience, ideas and research. Explore the city and its perceptions of public space and experience the impact of your idea.
Walkshops are 90 minutes.

Posters

Perfect for young researchers, a poster session enables you to bring current research work to share with delegates. Posters will be displayed during the event, with a scheduled presentation to attendees. The templates for the posters will be communicated to the accepted candidates.

Creative Interactions

Creative Interactions offer an opportunity to explore walking through creative, audiovisual and participatory formats. Contributions can include audiovisual materials, interactive installations, artistic interventions, citizen showcases or other creative approaches that invite participants to experience, reflect on or engage with walking in a different way. This format is designed to complement traditional presentations and create opportunities for informal exchange and interaction. Contributions should be accessible and engaging, with limited formal presentation time.

Important Deadlines

→ **February 19th 2027**	The call for contributions closes
→ **End of April 2027**	Notification of acceptance
IF YOUR SUBMISSION IS ACCEPTED	
→ **May 21st 2027**	Speaker confirmation of participation
→ **September 14th 2027**	Deadline to submit final presentation (PowerPoint)

Guidelines

- Submissions will only be accepted through the online system Oxford Abstracts.
- Submissions and presentations at the conference can be in English or French.
- If proposing several abstracts, it is essential that each proposal be submitted individually.
- Proposals can be edited/modified up until February 19th 2027, 11:59 pm.
- Proposals submitted after the closing date cannot be considered.
- The Programme Committee will curate submissions to create a dynamic, diverse and interactive conference programme. To foster meaningful exchange, proposals may be combined, adapted or placed in a different format or collaborative session than originally proposed.
- If your proposal is accepted, you must confirm your participation by registering for Walk21 Québec before the deadline of **May 21, 2027**; otherwise, your proposal cannot be included in the conference programme.
- Participation is in-person only, speakers are offered a reduced rate.

General Conditions

Submissions will be assessed by a committee of international experts and reviewed by the conference Programme Committee.

Contributions must meet the following conditions:

- Matching one or more of the themes of Walk21 Québec.
- Have new value, be innovative and stimulating.
- In the case of a research project, the assertions and conclusions must be substantiated and verifiable.
- Work in progress can be considered if it has substantive material or activities to share (usually for poster formats).
- Be written in clear and concise English or French.
- Contain no more than **400** words.

Review process of contributions

- The evaluation criteria include relevance to the conference theme; content quality and professional rigour; current relevance of topic, and innovation and originality.
- Abstracts with inter- and trans- disciplinary (scientific) approaches as well as contributions that involve diverse partnerships (e.g., city administrations, decision-makers, industry, planners, advocacy groups, and artists) are welcome.
- Every abstract will be reviewed by at least three expert reviewers. The reviewing is anonymous.
- The Reviewing Team consists of more than 40 international reviewers and is managed by the Walk21 Québec Programme Committee. Reviewers originate from many different countries and have relevant and unique insight into the different themes. The reviewers provide the foundation for decision-making by the members of the Walk21 Québec Programme Committee.

The Programme Committee is responsible for making the final decisions on acceptance and on the format for delivery.

Travelling to Montréal

Here is practical information about Montréal: https://www.mtl.org/en/what-to-do/business-events

Processing times for Canadian visitor visas (and eTAs) can take several months depending on your country of residence. We strongly advise all potential delegates to begin preparing and assembling their required documentation (such as passport renewals, proof of funds, or background paperwork) prior to abstract approval to maximise quick visa application processing.

If your proposal is accepted and once you have registered for the event, the organisers will provide you with an official confirmation and invitation letter to support your visa application. Walk21 Québec is a registered international event.

Please note:

- Accepted delegates are responsible for covering all of their own travel, accommodation, and entry expenses.
- Please visit the Canadian immigration website for more information.

The major part of the conference will be held at Centre Mont-Royal located in Montréal's downtown. More information about hotels and other useful tidbits will be available soon on the conference website.

Copyright

- By submitting a proposal, authorisation is given to Walk21 Foundation and Piétons Québec to publish and promote any information provided online and in conference materials.
- By submitting your abstract and/or presenting at Walk21 Québec conference, you guarantee that you have the right to present and submit the content of your abstract, of data, pictures and photos. Please make sure to include all necessary sources in your presentation where relevant.
- Copyright in any abstract submitted will be retained by the author(s). If selected for presentation at the conference, it is mandatory that the author will permit the conference organisers (Walk21 Foundation, Piétons Québec, CIRRELT) to use the abstract (whether in whole or in part) as part of the programme outline, promotion and presentation of the conference before, during and after the event.
- Copyright in any digital presentation given at Walk21 Québec will be retained by the author(s), but it is mandatory that Walk21 Québec conference organisers be permitted to share your digital presentation as part of the conference proceedings. The conference proceedings will be published in the Walk21 website's library.

Key information

→ **To submit a proposal,** log on to Oxford Abstracts.
Remember, the deadline is Friday, 19 February 2027

→ **If you have questions about the Call for contributions,** email us: walk21quebec@pietons.quebec

→ **To know more about Walk21 Québec,** visit:

- in English: walk21.com/conference/quebec-2027
- in French: pietons.quebec/walk21qc

Looking forward to reading your proposals and seeing you at Walk21 Québec!