



# Utilization of Walking Audits for Improving Walkability in Peel:

## An Evidence-Informed Approach

### **Presenters:**

Kayle McMillen, Health Promoter

Natasha Fearing, Health Promoter

**Active Living Team, Peel Public Health, Region of Peel**

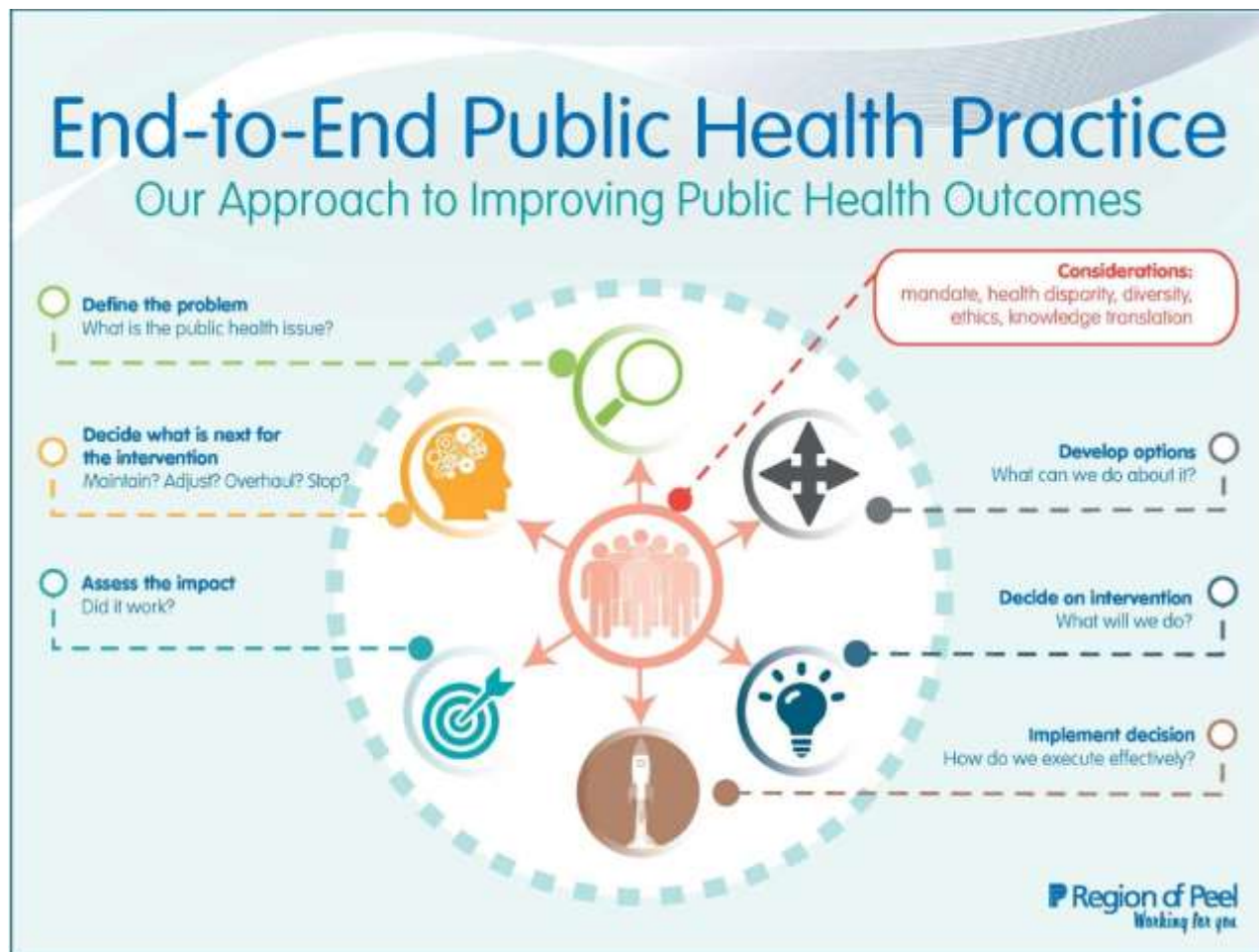


# Presentation Objectives

- To share the evidence-informed approach for developing the Walking Audit Tool
- To share findings and lessons learned from the Walking Audit pilot evaluation
- To share current work and future direction of the Walking Audit Program



# End-to-End Public Health Practice





# Define the Problem

Impact of poorly designed built environments



**Auto-Oriented Built  
Environments**



**Health Effects**



**Congestion &  
Traffic Safety**



**Economic Costs**





# Develop Options

A Third Party Consulting Company was hired to complete;

## 1) Literature Review

- Themes related to walkability;
  - proximity to destinations
  - street layout
  - street experience
  - density
  - natural features

## 2) Environmental Scan

- Reviewed existing walking audit tools to determine;
  - If the evidence from literature review is represented in the tools
  - What approaches could be adapted

## 3) Consultations

- Consultations with community members;
  - Frequency of walking
  - Influential factors
- Consultations with key informants;
  - Community design elements that influence walking

# Decide on Intervention

## Development of Peel's Walking Audit Tool

- NEWS-CFA Tool adapted to the Peel context

### Included sections:

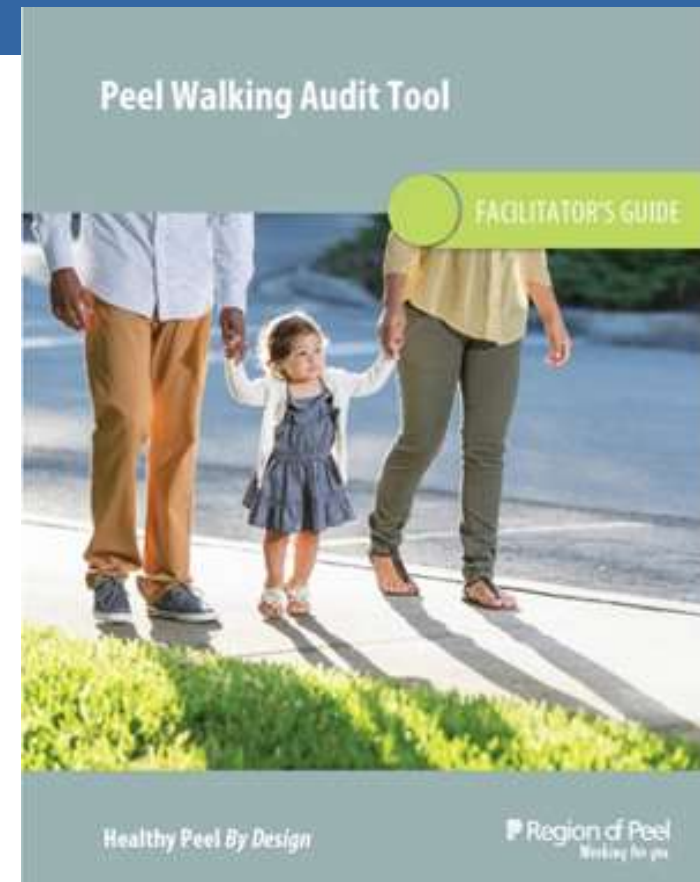
- Destinations
- Mix of Destinations
- Street Layout
- Walking Experience
- Sidewalks
- Nature
- Homes

Questions	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This neighbourhood is a safe place to walk for people of all ages	4	3	2	1
Traffic speed on the streets in this neighbourhood are generally posted at 40km/hour or less	4	3	2	1

# Decide on Intervention

## Develop Process (WAT Facilitator's Guide)

1. Determine the Core Team Members
2. Select the Community
3. Select the Date
4. Identify the Audit Site
5. Create the Workshop Schedule
6. Coordinate Facilities and Logistics
7. Conduct Outreach & Send Invitations
8. Event Set-up
9. Walkabout & Develop Recommendations
10. Audit Evaluation



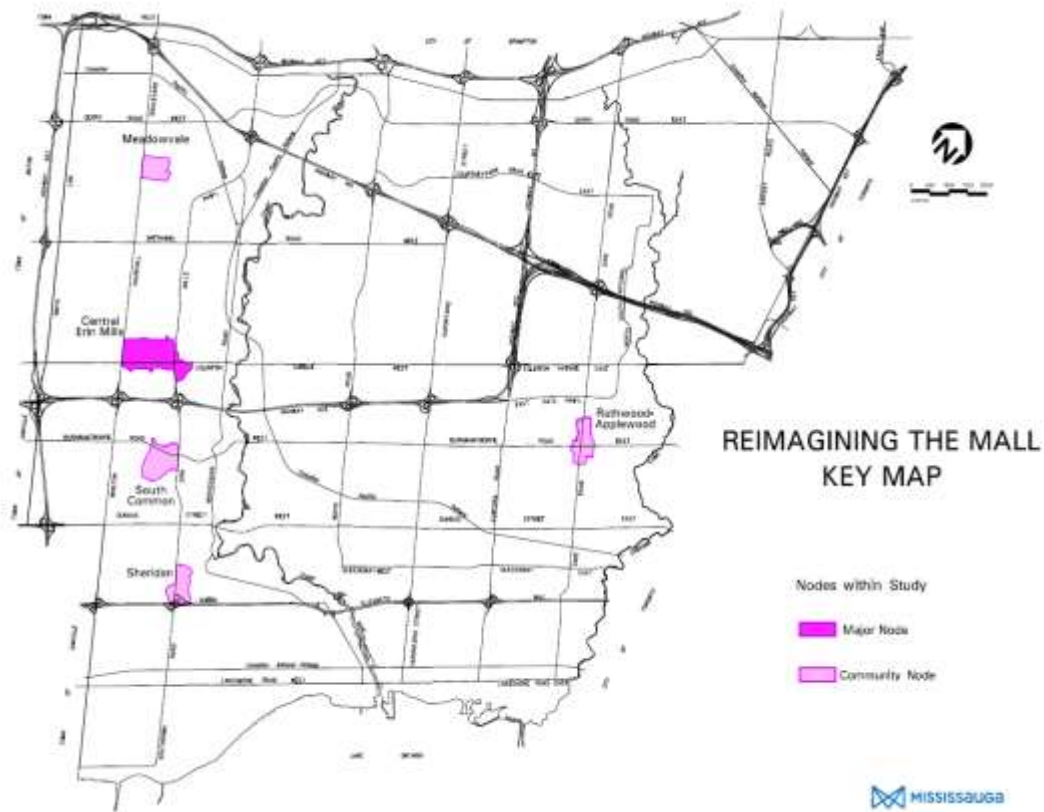


# Implement Decision

- **Piloted with the City of Mississauga**
  - Dundas Connects Project in the Cooksville community, and
  - Lakeshore Connecting Communities Project at the Port Credit and Clarkson communities
- **Region of Peel – Public Health continued its’ partnership with City of Mississauga with the Reimagining the Mall project**
  - Rockwood Mall
  - Sheridan Centre
  - South Common Centre
  - Erin Mills Town Centre
  - Meadowvale Mall



# Case Study: Reimagining the Mall



# Implement Decision

## Components of a Walking Audit

### 1. Walkabout

- Group participated in a facilitated walking route through neighbourhood

### 2. Charrette Active

- Mapping Exercise
- Facilitated Discussion
- Develop Recommendations





# Assess the Impact

## Pilot Evaluation Report : Summary

Evaluation Objective	
Applicability of Walking Audit Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Majority (90%) of recommendations were associated with WAT</li><li>• Other themes; street furniture, health promotion themes, signage/equipment and heritage recognition</li></ul>
Satisfaction of Walking Audit Process	<p>Positive feedback from external stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning process was clear, feedback was valued, charrette allowed for meaningful discussion</li></ul>
Effectiveness of the WAT in informing municipal planning and infrastructure changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recommendation reports from all walking audits were incorporated into 3 City of Mississauga Transportation studies</li><li>• Impact to perceived walkability will be monitored ongoing</li></ul>



# Assess the Impact

## Recommendations

- Develop guidelines for WAT adaptations and application
- Consider including street furniture, health promotion signage and heritage recognition in future (explore inclusion of cycling infrastructure)
- Built capacity among stakeholders to recruit diverse participants
- Explore opportunities to condense time required for Walking Audits and leverage technology to streamline the process
- Explore new and existing opportunities to apply the Walking Audit Tool to inform infrastructure planning and design
- Update tracking tools and evaluation framework



# Decide What Is Next

- Updated materials and tools
- Developed guidelines and scope
- Developed evaluation framework
- Walking Audit implementation

## Future Work

- Integrate walking audit into EA process
- Explore online delivery options





# Thank You

[kayle.mcmillen@peelregion.ca](mailto:kayle.mcmillen@peelregion.ca)  
[natasha.fearing@peelregion.ca](mailto:natasha.fearing@peelregion.ca)