

# Evaluating the Walkability of Traditional Main Streets

## A Comparative Analysis of Downtown Brockville, Cornwall and Kingston, Ontario

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### Executive Summary

#### Overview

Downtowns represent the heart and soul of most small and medium sized cities in North America. They often make up the Central Business District of these communities and their streets and streetscapes have evolved to cater to the predominant transportation mode of each generation. Main streets are usually easy to recognize in the CBD by the buildings that line them, making up a street wall of elaborately detailed and distinctive styles that were developed through time. In response, cities have implemented a variety of strategies in order to revitalize their downtowns, which include heritage building preservation and adaptive reuse, waterfront redevelopment and, most notably, pedestrianization. This pedestrianization can be measured by an index of walkability, the focus of my research reported below.

#### Methods

This research used the Maryland Inventory of Urban Design Qualities walkability audit protocol to evaluate the walkability of three traditional main streets in three, Eastern Ontario municipalities: Brockville (King Street), Cornwall (Pitt Street) and Kingston (Princess Street). The results from this audit were then used to inform a series of design interventions recommended for the improvement of the pedestrian realm along the three corridors.

## Findings and Recommendations

### Recommendation 1:

Increase the number of outdoor dining options and other active pedestrian uses.

Design principles Imageability, human scale.

Cities: Brockville, Cornwall.

### Recommendation 2:

Encourage infill along corridor to close gaps in street wall.

Design principles Enclosure, human scale.

Cities: Brockville, Cornwall.

### Recommendation 3:

Encourage variety in the articulation, materials and colours of new infill development.

Design principles Imageability, human scale, complexity.

Cities: Brockville, Cornwall, Kingston.

### Recommendation 4:

Replace mismatched street furniture, plantings and lighting using a consistent, enhanced theme along the corridor.

Design principles Imageability, complexity.

Cities: Cornwall

### Recommendation 5:

storefront vacancies and breaks in the street wall ranked them lower on the scale of the walkability audit. The recommendations provided in this report seek to improve the overall pedestrian environment along these important traditional main streets.