

# Mobility monitor

## Transportation Data

Monitoring today,  
for tomorrow.

## This issue

Pedestrians,  
Facilities and  
Access

July 2008  
Issue #27

### KEY FINDING

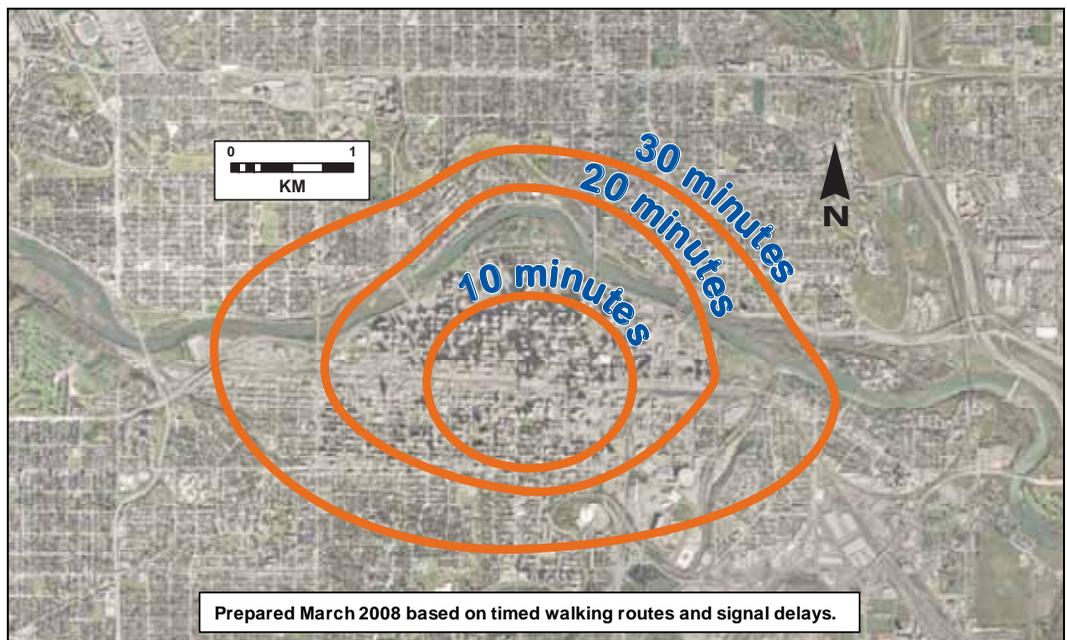
*The pedestrian travel time contour map (below) shows that most of the inner city is within reasonable walking time of the downtown making walking to work good option.*

The Calgary Transportation Plan states that The City will encourage the use of alternative modes, such as walking. The 2006 to 2008 Council Priority 2.1 reinforces this direction.

The travel time contours represent the time it takes to walk to Stephen Avenue and Barclay Street SW.

The times were based on calculated walking times and estimated traffic signal delays on selected routes, which were then verified by field surveys.

The communities of Hillhurst, Sunnyside, Crescent Heights, Inglewood, Ramsay, Mission, Cliff Bungalow, Connaught and Lower Mount Royal are within a 30 minute walk of the Downtown.



## KEY FINDING

**The number of pedestrian overpasses (pedestrian bridges over roads) per capita in Calgary went down between 1981 and 2006.**

In 1981 there were 46 pedestrian overpasses, which increased to 60 in 2006. The average over this period was about one new bridge every other year.

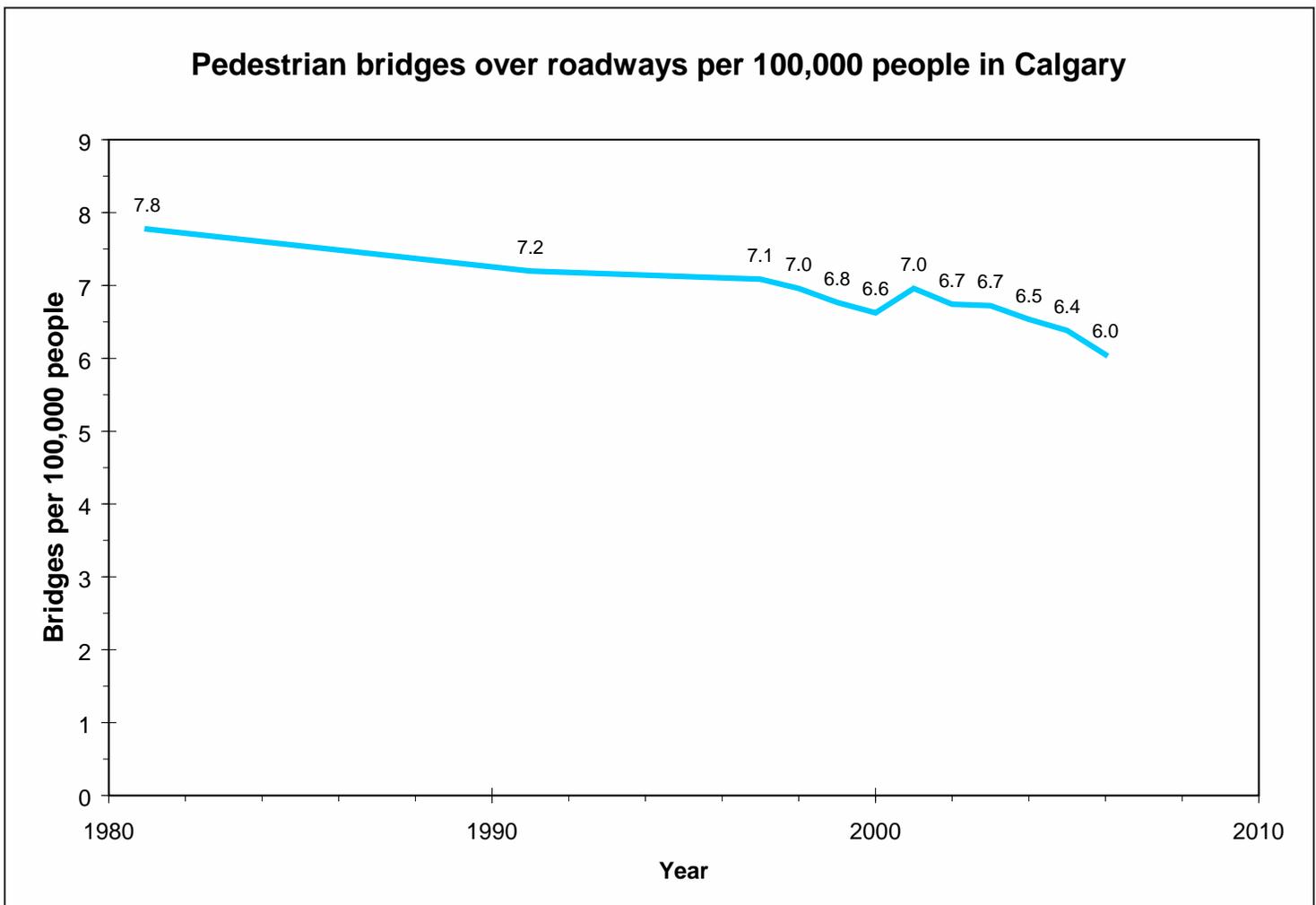
In spite of this growth, the rate per capita has gone down steadily from 7.8 overpasses per 100,000 people in 1981 to 6.0 overpasses per 100,000 people in 2006. The exception was in 2001, when four new overpasses were added.

In recent years the City set a pedestrian overpass construction budget that would allow construction of one new pedestrian overpass per year. In 2006, Council doubled the budget to account for higher construction costs. The budget will also be increased in 2009.

During the six year period 2000 to 2006 Calgary's population grew by 131,000. To maintain the 2000 rate of 6.6 pedestrian overpasses per 100,000 people, nine new overpasses were needed or about one and a half new pedestrian overpasses per year.

## Information Sources

The pedestrian travel time contour map was prepared for the Transportation Solutions division of Transportation Planning. The information on pedestrian overpasses was provided by the Transportation Solutions division of Transportation Planning using information provided by Transportation Infrastructure and Transportation Finance. The population was taken from the Calgary Civic Census.



## KEY FINDING

### *Walking is becoming a more important option for travel in Calgary.*

The chart below shows how the number of pedestrian entering the downtown during the a.m. peak hour has changed over the last 30 years.

Although the number of pedestrians can vary widely from year to year, a definite upward trend is clear.

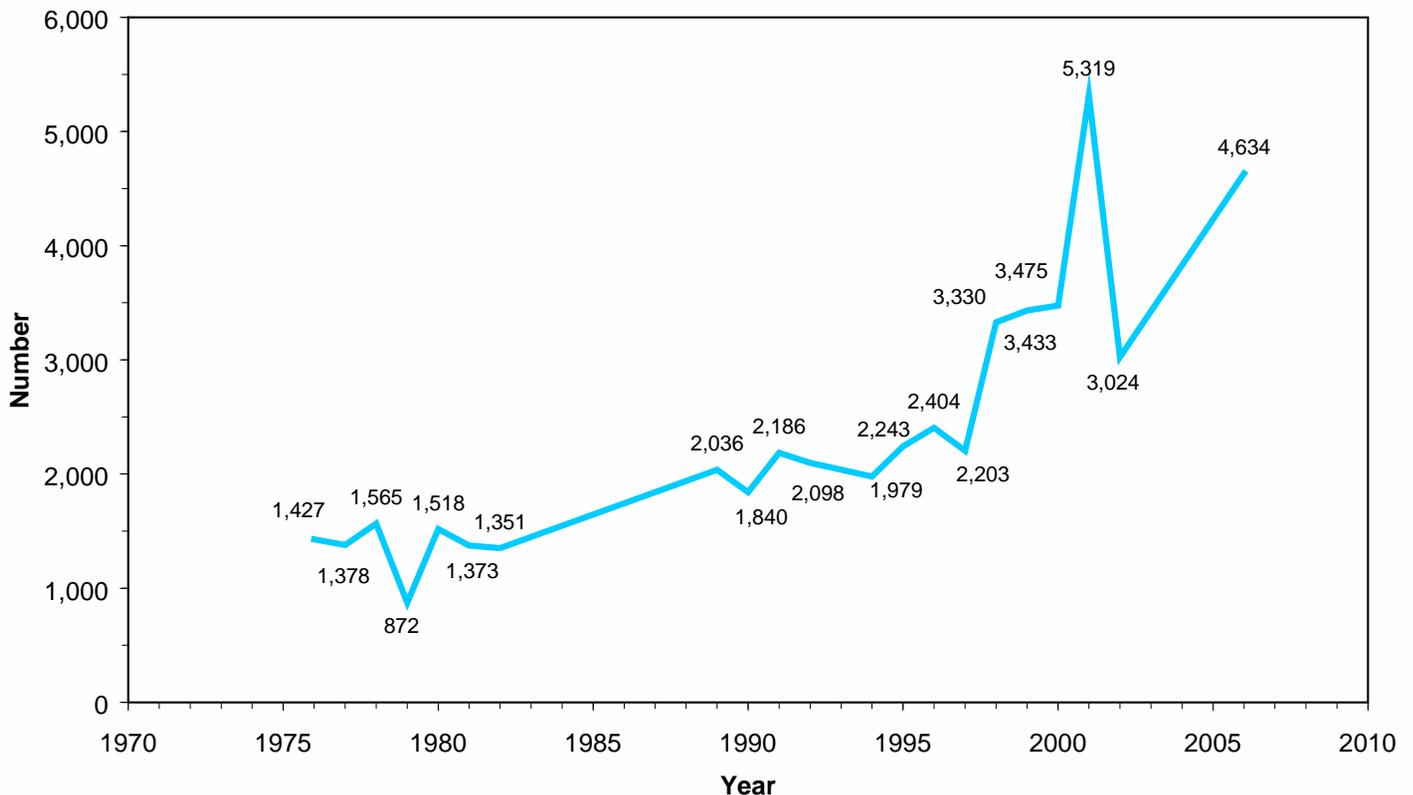
Some of the increase may be due to improvements in how the data is collected. The G. C. King pedestrian bridge, connecting St. Patrick's Island to the downtown, (16 pedestrians in 2006) and the Prince's Island pedestrian bridge (366 pedestrians in 2006) have been added to the count program in recent years.

### **The Downtown Cordon Traffic Count Program**

Data from The City's Downtown Cordon Traffic Count Program were used to track the growth in the number of pedestrians entering the downtown. The count is typically done in May and June of the year.

Counts of the pedestrian traffic entering and leaving the downtown were not done every year. During the period 1983 to 1987 the Downtown Cordon Traffic Count Program was suspended due to budget constraints.

**Number of pedestrians entering the downtown  
in the morning peak hour**



## Implications

The number of people choosing to walk has been increasing in recent years.

The information on pedestrian behaviour and level of service are limited. With the increased demand, more information will be needed.

The Pedestrian Overpass Priority Study (1997, 2001 and 2006) identified and prioritized potential pedestrian overpass locations.

The pedestrian overpass capital budget has been based on building one new pedestrian overpass each year. However, one and a half new overpasses a year are needed to maintain the same number of pedestrian overpasses per 100,000 people.

In 2006 City Council doubled the budget dedicated to construction of pedestrian overpasses to account for increased construction costs. The budget will be increased again in 2009.

Newer urban design approaches may reduce the need for pedestrian overpasses. Creating complete communities and changing road designs to be more pedestrian friendly should reduce the need for pedestrian overpasses.

## Recommendations

Review how funding is allocated to pedestrian facilities in Calgary to determine if changes are needed to ensure adequate funding to expand facilities.

Investigate alternative performance measures for the construction of pedestrian facilities. The measure “pedestrian overpasses per capita” does not cover all pedestrian facilities and does not consider solutions like urban design.

More resources should be considered to support new data collection on pedestrian demand and the development of performance measures.

Consideration should be given to establishing specific targets for provision of pedestrian facilities.

## How accurate and reliable are these data?

How concerned should you be by the potential for error in the data presented in The Mobility Monitor? Traffic on a road can vary by ten per cent or more from one day to the next. The number of pedestrians on a given day can vary even more. To minimize this issue, The City tries to do the counts of pedestrian traffic entering and leaving the downtown on the same day each year.

Even so, a change from one year to the next may be due to some random event, such as the weather, accidents or illness. This is why it is wise to look at trends, since changes that are consistent over a long period of time are more likely to be real, and not just the result of random events.

It must be kept in mind that no one source of information can claim to be infallible. Consideration and appropriate weighting of other sources of information is to be encouraged before making decisions.

## The Mobility Monitor

The Mobility Monitor is part of the Ongoing Monitoring and Implementation Program (OMIP) for the Calgary Transportation Plan (CTP). The purpose of the Mobility Monitor is to report on strategic trends and events that affect the implementation of the CTP, and to recommend future actions. The Mobility Monitor is produced by the Transportation Data division of Transportation Planning.

