

Here is a sample walking audit that two Walk On Victoria members completed for the segment of Richmond Road between Cedar Hill X-Road and Lansdowne.

Richmond Road between Cedar Hill X-Road and Lansdowne is heavily used by students attending St. Michaels School, Camosun College, the University of Victoria, and by people traveling to Hillside Mall and en route to Royal Jubilee Hospital. It is a route with many amenities located nearby at Shelbourne and Cedar Hill X-Road including grocery stores, restaurants, medical services, a pharmacy, a bakery, several banks, a bike shop, several coffee shops, a liquor store, a dry cleaner, a pet food store and more. Population in the area includes students, seniors and families living in single family homes, suites in homes, apartments and condos. Ideally the mixed demographics and the many nearby amenities should make this a highly walkable neighbourhood, but pedestrian conditions along Richmond Road are extremely poor. Our audit includes photos of some of the many obstacles to safe walking along this route.

Audit starts at the corner of Richmond and Cedar Hill X-Road



The beautiful, smooth, wide sidewalk that runs in front of the Richmond Gate condos at the corner of Poplar and Richmond Road was constructed when the condos were built. This is the only piece of high quality sidewalk with boulevard on the route.



A delux bus stop at the corner of Poplar and Richmond Road by Richmond Gate condos.



At Pear on the West side of Richmond Road, the wide concrete sidewalk ends, and a long stretch of broken, narrow asphalt sidewalk starts. Sidewalk on the West side of Richmond is littered with debris, and weeds. In some places the slope between the road, the asphalt pathway and the residential driveways is so steep that garbage carts roll backward down the driveways, requiring resourceful residents to brake the carts with sticks. Walking on this asphalt would be especially difficult for anyone who does not have good balance, is not sure-footed, or who does not have good vision.



Extremely narrow sidewalk and utility poles on the sidewalk make walking impossible for anyone using a motorized scooter, a walker, or pushing a baby carriage.



The distance along the stretch of Richmond Road between Poplar and Lansdowne is 1.6 km. There is a marked crosswalk at Poplar and a crosswalk with a light at Lansdowne. At the intersection of Richmond and Knight by St. Michaels School is the only other marked crosswalk, which happens to be located exactly halfway between Poplar and Lansdowne. Anyone wanting to cross Richmond to get to a bus stop or other destination will most likely run across the street mid-block. The speed limit on most of this segment of Richmond is 50km/hr, which is an unsafe speed for a road lacking in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. (One small section near Camosun College and Lansdowne has a posted speed limit of 30km/hr where there is a curve in the road.)



On the West side of Richmond, separation of the sidewalk from traffic is either non-existent or marked by an asphalt curb-like mound.



Bus stops on Richmond vary. There are some newer bus shelters with benches and cover from the rain. And there are many bus stops located directly on the side of the road in front of people's homes. Most bus stops are either unlighted or poorly lighted. In the winter months when it's dark and rainy, people wait for the bus in a mud puddle at the side of the road.



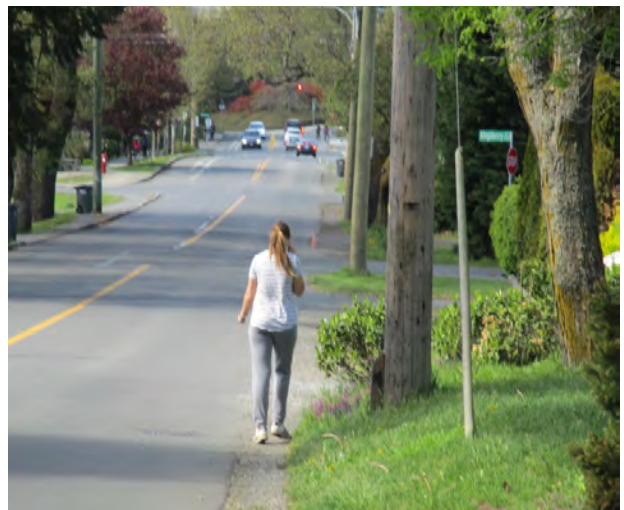
I doubt many people would want a bus stop and a usually overflowing trash barrell at the edge of their front yard.



There is no art work, no historical signage, no traffic calming infrastructure along this segment of Richmond Road. There are no benches where pedestrians can sit to rest... except perhaps on some cast-off furniture.



Walking conditions are worse on the East side of Richmond than on the West side, where the previous photos were taken. On the East side of the street, there is little or no sidewalk. Walking is dangerous, especially when cars are parked adjacent to the road, which forces pedestrians to walk out in the street around them. Because cars frequently park along the unpaved roadside, deep, muddy ruts form and fill up with water. It's hard to believe that this street is a main thoroughfare in an urban environment near a community college, a university, and several shopping centres. The #14 bus, one of the busiest routes in the city, runs along Richmond. Thousands of people live in expensive homes adjacent to this road. Students attending college and university rent suites in this neighbourhood. This well traveled street has been in poor condition for decades.





When transportation infrastructure is constructed in a way that makes travel outside a car dangerous and unpleasant, people with the option to drive often don't consider an alternative. If infrastructure is built to encourage walking and cycling and use of transit, these means of active transportation become healthy, sustainable, desirable alternatives.

Streets like the segment of Richmond Road featured in this walkability assessment exist in many parts of the CRD. Walk On, Victoria invites you to complete a walking audit of your neighbourhood and submit it to be posted on our website. Examples of both walkable environments and environments that discourage walking are welcome. Enjoy your virtual Jane's Walk audit. In 2021, we hope to be back on the street leading community Jane's Walks again.