

Walkability Checklist

How walkable is your community?

Take a walk with a child and decide for yourselves.

Everyone benefits from walking. These benefits include: improved fitness, cleaner air, reduced risks of certain health problems, and a greater sense of community. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with your child and use this checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. Take heart if you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

Getting started:

First, you'll need to pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go. The second step involves the checklist. Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, give each question a rating. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk overall. After you've rated your walk and identified any problem areas, the next step is to figure out what you can do to improve your community's score. You'll find both immediate answers and long-term solutions under "Improving Your Community's Score..." on the third page.



Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

How walkable is your community?

Location of walk

Rating Scale:



1. Did you have room to walk?

- Yes Some problems:
- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
 - Sidewalks were broken or cracked
 - Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
 - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
 - Too much traffic
 - Something else _____

Rating: (circle one) Locations of problems:
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules? Could you and your child...

- Yes No Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
- Yes No Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?
- Yes No Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?
- Yes No Cross with the light?

Rating: (circle one) Locations of problems:
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

- Yes Some problems:
- Road was too wide
 - Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
 - Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
 - Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
 - Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
 - Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
 - Something else _____

Rating: (circle one) Locations of problems:
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

5. Was your walk pleasant?

- Yes Some problems:
- Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
 - Scary dogs
 - Scary people
 - Not well lighted
 - Dirty, lots of litter or trash
 - Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
 - Something else _____

Rating: (circle one) Locations of problems:
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

3. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes Some problems: Drivers ...
- Backed out of driveways without looking
 - Did not yield to people crossing the street
 - Turned into people crossing the street
 - Drove too fast
 - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
 - Something else _____

Rating: (circle one) Locations of problems:
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

1. _____ **26-30** Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.
2. _____ **21-25** Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.
3. _____ **16-20** Okay, but it needs work.
4. _____ **11-15** It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.
5. _____ **5-10** It's a disaster for walking!
- Total: _____

Now that you've identified the problems,
go to the next page to find out how to fix them.

Now that you know the problems, you can find the answers.

Improving your community's score

1. Did you have room to walk?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
Sidewalks broken or cracked
Sidewalks blocked
No sidewalks, paths or shoulders
Too much traffic

What you and your child can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

What you and your community can do with more time

- speak up at board meetings
- write or petition city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures
- make media aware of problem
- work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

- pick another route for now
- share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department
- trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same
- leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there

- push for crosswalks/signals/ parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings
- report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards
- report illegally parked cars to the police
- request that the public works department trim trees or plants
- make media aware of problem

3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking
Did not yield
Turned into walkers
Drove too fast
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- pick another route for now
- set an example: slow down and be considerate of others
- encourage your neighbors to do the same
- report unsafe driving to the police

- petition for more enforcement
- request protected turns
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations
- organize a neighborhood speed watch program

4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic
Cross with the light

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- encourage schools to teach walking safely
- help schools start safe walking programs
- encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees
Scary dogs
Scary people
Not well lit
Dirty, litter
Lots of traffic

- point out areas to avoid to your child; agree on safe routes
- ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- report scary people to the police
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard
- select alternative route with less traffic

- request increased police enforcement
- start a crime watch program in your neighborhood
- organize a community clean-up day
- sponsor a neighborhood beautification or tree-planting day
- begin an adopt-a-street program
- initiate support to provide routes with less traffic to schools in your community (reduced traffic during am and pm school commute times)

A Quick Health Check

Could not go as far or as fast as we wanted
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles
Was the sun really hot?
Was it hot and hazy?

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child along
- walk along shaded routes where possible
- use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher, wear a hat and sunglasses
- try not to walk during the hottest time of day

- get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking
- call parks and recreation department about community walks
- encourage corporate support for employee walking programs
- plant shade trees along routes
- have a sun safety seminar for kids
- have kids learn about unhealthy ozone days and the Air Quality Index (AQI)

Need some guidance? These resources might help...

Great Resources

WALKING INFORMATION

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)

UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Chapel Hill, NC
www.pedbikeinfo.org
www.walkinginfo.org

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Chapel Hill, NC
www.saferoutesinfo.org

For More Information about Who Can Help Address Community Problems

www.walkinginfo.org/problems/help.cfm

State Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinators

<http://www.walkinginfo.org/assistance/contacts.cfm>

FEDERAL POLICY, GUIDANCE AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR WALKING FACILITIES

Federal Highway Administration

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
Office of Natural and Human Environment
Washington, DC
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Federal Highway Administration

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team
Office Of Safety
Washington, DC
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Traffic Safety Programs
Washington, DC
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/pedSAFE

SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

US Access Board

Washington, DC
Phone: (800) 872-2253;
(800) 993-2822 (TTY)
www.access-board.gov

