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 __________________________

1. Did you have room to walk?
   □ Yes  □ No
   □ 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 ___________________
   Locations of problems: ____________________
   Rating: (circle one) __________________________
   1  2  3  4  5  6 __________________________

2. Was it easy to cross streets?
   □ Yes  □ No
   □ 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 ___________________
   Locations of problems: ____________________
   Rating: (circle one) __________________________
   1  2  3  4  5  6 __________________________

3. Did drivers behave well?
   □ Yes  □ No
   □ 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 ___________________
   Locations of problems: ____________________
   Rating: (circle one) __________________________
   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?
   Locations of problems: ____________________
   Rating: (circle one) __________________________
   1  2  3  4  5  6 __________________________

5. Was your walk pleasant?
   □ Yes  □ No
   □ Some unpleasant things:
     □ 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 ___________________
   Locations of problems: ____________________
   Rating: (circle one) __________________________
   1  2  3  4  5  6 __________________________

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

   1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
   Total _____

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

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

   **What you and your child can do immediately**
   - 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

   **What you and your community can do with more time**
   - 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

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

   **What you and your child can do immediately**
   - 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

   **What you and your community can do with more time**
   - 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

   **What you and your child can do immediately**
   - Educate yourself and your child about safe walking
   - Organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

   **What you and your community can do with more time**
   - 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

   **What you and your child can do immediately**
   - 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

   **What you and your community can do with more time**
   - 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
730 Airport Road, Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430
Phone: (919) 962-2202
www.pedbikeinfo.org

National Center for Bicycling and Walking
Campaign to Make America Walkable
1506 21st Street, NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (800) 760-NBPC
www.walkbikereplaces.org

**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Traffic Safety Programs
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590
Phone: (202) 662-0600
www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety#2231

National SAFE KIDS Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 662-0600
Fax: (202) 393-2072
www.safekids.org

**WALK TO SCHOOL DAY WEB SITES**
USA event: www.walkbiketoschool.org/
International: www.iwalktoschool.org

**STREET DESIGN AND TRAFFIC CALMING**
Federal Highway Administration
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Research Program
HSR – 20
6300 Georgetown Pike
McLean, VA 22101
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian

Institute of Transportation Engineers
www.ite.org

Surface Transportation Policy Project
www.transact.org

**WALKING COALITIONS**
America Walks
P.O. Box 29103
Portland, Oregon 97210
Phone: (503) 222-1077
www.americawalks.org

Partnership for a Walkable America
National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
Phone: (603) 285-1121
www.nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics/distracted-walking

**ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS**
US Access Board
1331 F Street, NW Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
Phone: (800) 872-2253; (800) 993-2822 (TTY)
www.access-board.gov