

Walk-Friendly Community Assessment

FOR
TEENS

How walkable is your community?

Take a walk decide for yourselves.

Everyone walks and there are lots of benefits, like improved fitness, cleaner air, less risk of certain health problems, and a greater sense of community.

Walking needs to be safe and easy. Using this tool, take a walk with friends or family and decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. If you find problems, see how **you** can get active to help make things better.

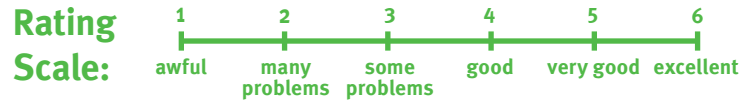
Get Started:

First, pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go. Second, read over this tool 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 "Improve Your Community's Score..." on the third page.



How walkable is your community?

If you find problems, write the specific location(s) on the form.



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, bushes/trees, dumpsters, etc.
 - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
 - Too much traffic
 - Something else _____

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 _____

3. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes Some problems: Drivers...
- Backed out of driveways without looking
 - Did not yield to people crossing the street
 - Turned when people were 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 _____

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules? Could you:

- 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 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 _____

How does your neighborhood stack up?

Add up your ratings and decide.

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

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

Improve your community's score

	What you and friends or family can do immediately	What you and your community can do with more time
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pick another route for now• write and send a letter or e-mail to the local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• start a youth leadership task force
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pick another route for now• ask your parents and drivers you know to set an example by driving safely and respectfully around all road users.• be a "roll" model and set an example: slow down and be considerate of others• encourage your neighbors to do the same• report unsafe driving to the police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 to increase your safety as a pedestrian
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• educate yourself and your family and friends about safe walking• organize friends in your neighborhood to walk together to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• discuss with friends and family areas to avoid when walking; 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• clean up the trash along your walking route or adopt a road to help keep it free of trash and debris• select alternative route with less traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles Sun was beating down on us It was hot and hazy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days• invite a friend, parent, or sibling 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking• call parks and recreation department about community walks• encourage school or youth walking programs• plant shade trees along routes• have a sun safety seminar for 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

<http://www.pedbikeinfo.org>

<http://www.walkinginfo.org>

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Chapel Hill, NC

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>

For More Information about Who Can Help Address Community Problems

<http://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

<http://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

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Pedestrians>

SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

U.S. Access Board

Washington, DC

Phone: (800) 872-2253;

(800) 993-2822 (TTY)

<http://www.access-board.gov>

ADVOCACY

Alliance for Biking and Walking

<http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org>

National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW)

<http://www.bikewalk.org>



U.S. Department of Transportation
**National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration**



www.nhtsa.gov

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