Walkability Checklist

Everyone benefits from walking. 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 safe place to walk. If you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

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, circle an overall rating for each question.

### 1. Did you have enough room to walk safely?

**Rating 1 2 3 4 5 6**

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

### 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

**Rating 1 2 3 4 5 6**

- Yes
- Some Problems:
  - Road was too wide
  - Traffic signal made us wait too long or didn’t give us enough time to cross.
  - Needed crosswalk striped or a traffic signal
  - Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
  - Needed curb ramps, or ramps needed repair
  - Something else?

### 3. Did drivers behave well?

**Rating 1 2 3 4 5 6**

- Yes
- Some problems

Drivers . . .

- Backed out of driveways without looking
- Did not yield to people crossing the street
- Turned into people crossing streets
- Drove too fast
- Ran red lights or sped up to make the yellow light
- Something else?

### 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?
- Stop and look left, right, and left again before crossing streets?
- Walk on sidewalks, or shoulders (if no sidewalks,) facing traffic?
- Cross with the light?

### 5. Was your walk pleasant?

**Rating 1 2 3 4 5 6**

- Yes
- Some unpleasant things:
  - Needs more grass, flowers or trees
  - Scary dogs
  - Suspicious activity
  - Not well lit
  - Dirty, lots of litter or trash
  - Something else?

How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings

**Rating Scale**

1 = awful
2 = many problems
3 = some problems
4 = good
5 = very good
6 = excellent

How did your neighborhood rate?

26 - 30 You have a great neighborhood for walking!

21 - 25 Your neighborhood is pretty good.

16 - 20 Okay, but needs work.

11 - 15 Needs a lot of work! You deserve better.

5 - 10 What a disaster area! Get on the phone!

Making your neighborhood more walkable.

You have collected valuable information about
walking in your neighborhood. Listed below are some ideas for making changes in your area. Your local traffic engineer may be the key person to contact about things you would like to change.

Before you make that call, here are some ideas that other neighborhoods and communities are trying. A new concept called “traffic calming” is transforming neighborhood streets from roads that encourage speeding to places that invite people to walk.

1. **Was there room to walk?**

   Sidewalks stopped and started, were broken and/or cracked, they were blocked, not handicapped accessible, or there was too much traffic.

   ☰ Tell local transportation engineers about specific problems. Provide them with a copy of your checklist. Be clear about what neighborhood you live in.
   ✷ Speak up at council and commission meetings.
   ◆ Write or petition the city or county for improvements that are needed. Gather resident signatures.
   ◆ Make the media aware of your problem.

2. **Was it easy to cross the street?**

   The roads were too wide, the traffic signal made you wait too long, or didn’t give you enough time to cross. Marked crosswalks are needed, or school signs, etc. Your view of traffic was blocked by trees, bushes or parked cars.

   ☰ Tell local transportation engineers about specific problems. Provide them with a copy of your checklist. Be clear about what neighborhood you live in.
   ✷ Speak up at council and commission meetings.
   ◆ Write or petition the city or county for improvements that are needed. Gather resident signatures.
   ◆ Make the media aware of your problem.

3. **Did drivers behave well?**

   Drivers backed up without looking, did not yield to you, turned into walkers, drove too fast, ran red lights, etc.

   ☰ Set an example: slow down and yield to walkers.
   Encourage your neighbors to do the same.
   ☰ Report unsafe driving to the police.
   Organize a neighborhood “Speed Watch” program.
   ◆ Petition elected officials for more enforcement.
   ◆ Ask city planners for traffic calming ideas.
   ◆ Make sure there are crossing guards where needed.

4. **Could you follow safety rules?**

   Did you cross at crosswalks or intersections? Were you sure you were seen by the driver? Did you always look left, right, and left again before you stepped off the curb? Did you walk facing traffic? Always cross with the light?

   ☰ Educate yourself about safe walking and teach your child.
   ✷ Participate with other parents in a “Walking Bus” relay to school program to get neighborhood children to school safely.
   ◆ Encourage teachers to emphasize pedestrian safety.
   ◆ Make media aware of any plans.

5. **Was your walk pleasant?**

   Were there scary dogs, suspicious activity or streets that were too dark? Would you feel comfortable knowing your child walks here alone?

   ☰ Report suspicious activity to police, and lighting needs to the city or county.
   ✷ Ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced.
   ◆ Plant flowers in your yard and encourage others to do the same.
   ◆ Start a crime-watch program in your neighborhood, get increased “eyes” on the street.
   ◆ Organize a “block-party” to get to know everyone.

**Don’t forget the health benefits of walking**

Even if you couldn’t walk as far or as fast as you would have liked, keep it up! There are great health benefits to walking, and you will be surprised at how quickly you get into shape. Start with shorter walks, and build up until you are walking 30 minutes most every day. Make sure to take your kids with you, they need the exercise too! Replace some driving trips with walking trips, your body and the air we breath will all thank you!