Building a Healthier Community with Inclusive Walk Audits

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Inclusive walk audit team training, Helena.

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What is a walk audit?

• Facilitated group walk of an area to explore its support of physical activity & active transportation.
• Usually combined with a feedback and planning session to develop recommendations for action.
• Effective tool for education, inspiration, & practical planning. An act of shared discovery!
What is inclusion?

• Including people with disabilities as decision-makers in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the walking audit.

• Ideally a team member has training in the Americans with Disabilities Act and related codes & guidelines, to provide technical assistance on healthy community solutions to achieve better outcomes for all.
When?

- During comprehensive & project planning, public input & comment.
- Policy review: zoning, design guidelines, schools.
- Introducing infrastructure; roundabouts, road diets, back-in parking; trails.
- Events: walk & bike to school/work, pop-ups, open streets, cyclovia, festivals.
Agenda, Community Design Workshop:

I. **Intros.** Discuss community aspirations.

II. **Learn.** Presentation of tools language, possibilities.

III. **Walk.** Experience what is working & what is possible.

IV. **Work.** Proposed programs, projects, & policies.

V. **Plan.** Next steps & ideally commitments!
Introductions (typical team).

- Public health.
- Planning, land use.
- Engineering, DPW, infrastructure.
- Disability insight & expertise.
We should be physically active.

But mostly we aren’t.

Creating supportive settings helps.

Why?

Just telling people isn’t enough.

And it leads to . . .

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Surgeon General’s Report 1996
Physical Activity Guidelines 2008
www.health.gov/paguidelines

• 150 min/week; more better.
• Any is better than none.
• Can be broken up.
• 300 min/week for youth.
• Reduced risk for CVD, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, dementia, clinical depression, cancers . . .

This counts!

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Physical Activity, Chronic Disease, & Disability

*11.6% of US adult population, approx. 21.5 million adults
Economic access, freedom, dignity, quality of life . . .
Four elements (three scales) for active design.

- Mix of destinations
- Safety & access
- Ped, bike, & transit network
- Site design
1. Land use.

Live, work, shop, play, learn, pray.

Compact neighborhoods,

. . . shared open space.

Housing above,

retail below.

Schools, shopping, health care . . .
2. Network of facilities:

- Sidewalks, curb cuts, bike lanes, non-motorized pathways.
- Shorter blocks, few cul-de-sacs, more connections.
- Accessible, affordable, frequent transit.
3. Site Design:

- Fully accessible design.
- Buildings at the sidewalk; parking on street or behind.
- Trees, benches, art, lighting, awnings, “human” scale.
- Bike parking!
4. Safety & access.

• Engineering can markedly improve safety.

• Increasing pedestrian and bike trips decreases overall accident & fatality rates.

Honolulu walk audits
So during the walk ask 4 questions:

1. **Land use:** Different types of destinations; live, work, shop, play, learn, pray?

2. **Network of facilities:** Quality accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, trails; transit?

3. **Site design:** Buildings at sidewalk or set back; bike parking; inviting & functional?

4. **Safety & access:** ADA design, crossings, traffic (too much, near, or fast); other dangers or discomfort?
Three rules during the walk:

• Be careful. Watch for traffic, each other.

• Consider all possible users; all disabilities, ages, incomes, races, backgrounds . . .

• Score the “stickiness.” 0 if no support for active transportation; 10 for very encouraging.
Saw this locked fence between housing & school.

Tacoma WA
And saw these young people “navigating” around the barrier.
Low cost options (e.g. LQC, lighter quicker cheaper).

Curb stops & planters

Paint & flexible bollards
Goshen CT - “inexpensive” rural roundabout
Are you ready to . . . ?

walk the walk

Walk the Walk

Open
Now time for your thoughts & ideas:

- **Programs:** Pop-ups, trials, outreach, demonstrations, education.
- **Projects:** Improve infrastructure for walk, bike, & transit.
- **Policies:** Change ordinances, practices, & procedures for active transport.
Goal: Policy change! E.g. . . .

- **Complete Streets:** All users of all modes, ages, incomes, abilities & disabilities considered in all roadway work (including routine maintenance).  
  [nacto.org](http://nacto.org)

- **Zoning:** Mixed compact development; open space preservation.  
  [smartgrowthamerica.org](http://smartgrowthamerica.org)

- **Development guidelines:** Fully accessible & visitable retail, housing, services, businesses.  
  [ada.gov](http://ada.gov)

- **School siting & design.** All users, include health & transport costs, focus on non-motorized access.  
  [epa.gov/smartgrowth/](http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/)
For work, don’t sit w/ all the same discipline. Mix it up! Develop ideas in all three areas:

- **Programs:** Education, outreach, events, encouragement, demonstrations, trials.
- **Projects:** Physical infrastructure improvements to support active transport.
- **Policies:** Laws, ordinances, practices & procedures to create more active settings.

In each have low hanging, easier “first step” ideas, and longer term, more challenging goals (ideally supportive).
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<th>Short term, low cost</th>
<th>Longer term, more costly</th>
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<td>Host walk &amp; bike to school day events; use checklists.</td>
<td>Identify satellite drop-off &amp; pick-up areas, w/walking groups.</td>
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<td>Projects</td>
<td>Add paint, signs, along routes; add access ramps.</td>
<td>Improve crosswalks, construct missing sidewalk/trail links</td>
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<td>Policies</td>
<td>City, planning, &amp; school boards all sanction, participate in monthly walks . . .</td>
<td>5-minute safety delay on car line at dismissal. Consider universal access in school siting.</td>
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It’s good to draw on maps to identify where you suggest specific P’s; feel free to draw what you propose/imagine . . .

Whole team to share your ideas.
Next steps & commitments

- **Share 3-P ideas**, look for themes, consensus.

- **Early priorities.** Agree on some easier first-step ideas, & commit to taking the lead on *specific actions & target dates*.

- **Teams:** Identify bigger (harder) goals, teams & leaders, & time frames for action.

E.g. Form an accessibility advisory team
The best audits embrace the most perspectives.

< San Jose, checking out a school crosswalk with parents, staff, city officials, students . . .
Tips & supporting materials
Keys to success:

- **Interdisciplinary teams.** E.g. health, planning, disability expertise, park & rec, engineering, economic development, housing, transit . . .

- **Pre-scout routes.** Typical good *and* bad conditions; seek teachable moments.

- **Must be a process of shared discovery** (not experts ‘demonstrating’).

- **Must be a process of shared solutions,** including simple, low-cost options!
For a successful walk audit:

• Plan **teachable moments**. Scout for representative challenges & opportunities.

• Experience both **good & bad**.

• Walk to **real destinations**; local guides or input to select routes.
Interdisciplinary Inclusive Team Walk Audit (IITWA) materials.

1. **Walk audit pre-scouting guide.** What to look at before selecting/finalizing your route. Helps you make points relevant to the whole community, not just walk route.

2. **Walk audit instructions.** Simple overview of process.

3. **Walk route checklist.** Outlines specific things you will want to be sure are mentioned during the walk.

4. **Walk audit map.** Sample map/notes for participants.

5. **Resources.** Be familiar with these before workshop.

6. **Action plan template.** Simple workshop for planning next steps.

7. **Postcard.** Brief evaluation post-workshop.
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<th>Goal (Big idea?)</th>
<th>Lead entity &amp; team (Who?)</th>
<th>Specific outcomes – (What?)</th>
<th>Target dates (When?)</th>
<th>Resources (How?)</th>
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<td>E.g. Add/repair sidewalks where there are currently goat trails, informal paths, and gaps.</td>
<td>Lead: DPW Team: City Council Planning Dept. Schools &amp; AARP &amp; independent living group(s) ADA expert</td>
<td>Will do/contract design &amp; construct Determine budget; bring referendum to community funding Map of sidewalk &amp; goat trail inventory; set priorities. Volunteer field assessment; walk the community &amp; find the gaps, goat trails. Assure fully ADA compliant designs</td>
<td>Summer 2019 Nov. 2018 Sep. 2018 Spring/summer 2018 March 2019</td>
<td>Funding from community referendum (?!?) Develop ¼ cent sales tax surcharge, for public vote As part of on-going Comp. Planning process Volunteer time; students earn community service credits/hours RIIC grant</td>
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