



Home & Community

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Walkable America Checklist: How Walkable Is Your Community?

Take a walk with a child and decide for yourselves.

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Print out this checklist, take a walk with your child, and use it 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

Pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go. 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 an overall rating to each question. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk.

Rating scale

1 = awful
2 = quite a few problems
3 = some problems
4 = good
5 = very good
6 = excellent

Location of Your Walk:

From

To

1. Did you have room to walk?

Yes | Some problems (see below)

Sidewalks 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: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Locations of problems:

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Yes | Some problems (see below)

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: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Locations of problems:

3. Did drivers behave well?

Good | Some problems. Drivers ... (see below)

Backed out of driveways without looking

Did not yield to people crossing the street

Turned into people crossing the street

Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through red lights

Something else?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Locations of problems:

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Could you and your child ...

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? Yes No

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Locations of problems:

5. Was your walk pleasant?

Nice | Some unpleasant things (see below)

Needed more grass, flowers or trees

Scary dogs

Scary people

Not well lighted

Dirty, lots of litter or trash

Something else?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Locations of problems:

How does your neighborhood stack up?

Add up your ratings and decide

Question (1) _____ + (2) _____ + (3) _____ + (4) _____ + (5) _____

TOTAL _____

Scoring

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: Call out the National Guard before you walk. It's a disaster area.

Found something that needs changing? Continue through the checklist below to learn how you can begin making neighborhoods better places for walking that match up with the problems you identified.

During your walk, how did you feel physically? Walking is a great form of exercise. But if you could not go as far or as fast as you wanted because you were short of breath, tired, or had sore feet or muscles, there are suggestions for dealing with that, too.

Improving Your Community's Score

	What you and your child can do IMMEDIATELY	What you and your community can do with more time:
<p>1. Did you have room to walk?</p> <p>...Sidewalks or paths started and stopped</p> <p>...Sidewalks broken or cracked</p> <p>...Sidewalks blocked</p> <p>...No sidewalks, paths or shoulders</p> <p>...Too much traffic</p>	<p>...pick another route for now</p> <p>...tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist</p>	<p>...speak up at board/development meetings</p> <p>...write or petition city for walkways</p> <p>...gather neighborhood signatures</p> <p>...make media aware of problem</p>
<p>2. Was it easy to cross streets?</p> <p>...Road too wide</p> <p>...Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross</p> <p>...Crosswalks/traffic signals needed</p> <p>...View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants</p> <p>...Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair</p>	<p>...pick another route for now</p> <p>...share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department</p> <p>...trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same</p> <p>...leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there</p>	<p>...push for crosswalks/signals/parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings</p> <p>...report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards</p> <p>...report illegally parked cars to the police</p> <p>...request that the public works department trim trees or plants</p> <p>...make media aware of problem</p>

<p>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</p>	<p>...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 police</p>	<p>...petition for more enforcement ...ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas ...request protected turns ...ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations ...organize a neighborhood speed watch program</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>...educate yourself and your child about safe walking ...organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school</p>	<p>...encourage schools to teach walking safety ...help schools start safe walking programs ...encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school</p>
<p>5. Was your walk pleasant? ...Needs grass, flowers, trees ...Scary dogs ...Scary people ...Not well lit ...Dirty, litter</p>	<p>...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 ...take a walk with a trash bag ...plant trees, flowers and bushes in your yard</p>	<p>...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</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>...start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days ...invite a friend or child along ...replace some driving trips with walking trips</p>	<p>...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</p>

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