

Self-Guided Walk Audit

Choose an area that about ½-2 miles – roughly 30-90 minutes to walk

Should include a mix of supportive and challenging (good & bad, below) settings for healthy eating and active living, with safe (out of traffic) places for you to stop and score.

- Good e.g.: Park, trail, walk- & bike-friendly facilities & downtown, traffic calming (curb extensions, islands, raised crossings), community garden, farmer’s market, etc.
- Bad e.g.: Wide roads, no crosswalks, speeding traffic; malls & sprawling low-density subdivisions, giant parking lots, no bike racks, fast food strip development, etc.
- Surprises: Goat trails, bikes parked at trees or parking meters (or other evidence of user demand), overlooked gems (small neighborhood park or green grocer).

Start the walk by first thinking about what leads to healthier behaviors:

- o A varied mix of land uses (live, work, shop, play, learn, pray in close proximity).
- o Good connections for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use (sidewalks, trails, etc.)
- o Functional, inviting site designs (buildings at the sidewalks, trees, benches, etc.)
- o Safety and access for users of all ages, abilities, incomes (ramps, traffic calming)
- o Accessible, appealing, and affordable healthy food options.

Use a 0 to 10 scoring system for considering the environment, 10 being the most health supporting, 0 the least. At occasional stops, score the area you’ve just walked and jot down why it is what it is (“too much traffic, only a 4;” or “great trees & benches & lots of people, 8”). No right or wrong answers, just a device to help you observe and eventually share.

Discussion/planning. Immediately following a walk is an ideal time to develop specific conceptual plans, project details, and ordinance recommendations so make sure you write down your scores and why so we can discuss.

Videos on leading walk audits:

How to Lead a Walk Audit w/ Mark Fenton – Prevention Speaks; 4:00 minutes

<http://preventionspeaks.org/stories/view/walkable-neighborhoods>

Walk Audit with interview in Oak Park, IL; 8:00 minutes

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRsBPbXoZew>

Walk Audit in Dyersburg, TN, glimpse of a workshop in a small community; <4:00 mins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gczf26eGo9Y>

Select resources.

Active Living by Design program; www.activelivingbydesign.org,

www.activelivingresearch.org. *Model programs & extensive on-line bibliography.*

AmericaWalks; www.americawalks.org

The nation's leading pedestrian advocacy and education organization.

Better Block initiative: www.betterblock.org. *Detailed instructions on tactical*

urbanism – low cost, short term road and lot redesigns for walk- & bikeability.

Complete Streets initiative; www.completestreets.org. *National campaign to have all roads accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, & transit as well as cars.*

Environmental Protection Agency smart growth initiative, Washington, DC;

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth. *Excellent summaries of implementation principles, and the economic benefits of healthy design to developers and communities.*

League of American Bicyclists, Washington, DC; www.bikeleague.org.

National advocacy group advancing the Bike Friendly Communities program.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, Chapel Hill, NC.; www.pedbikeinfo.org. *A*

comprehensive resource and technical support site for communities; walk- & bike-ability checklists, facility design guides, and image library.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Washington, DC.; www.railtrails.org. *Great help for trails*

advocates, including research supporting trails' benefits.

Safe Routes to School programs; www.saferoutesinfo.org; saferoutespartnership.org.

Information on organizing events & national registry, and launching programs.

The Walkable & Livable Communities Institute, www.walklive.org. *Education and technical assistance focused on “building leaders and professionals to rebuild the world’s communities.”*