

# Walkability Checklist

## How walkable is your community?

### Take a walk with a child and decide for yourselves.

Everyone benefits from walking. These benefits include: improved fitness, cleaner air, reduced risks of certain health problems, and a greater sense of community. 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 friendly place to walk. Take heart if you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

### Getting started:

First, you'll need to pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go.

The second step involves the checklist. 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 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 "Improving Your Community's Score..." on the third page.



Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

# How walkable is your community?

Location of walk \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## 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, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
  - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
  - Too much traffic
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 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?
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Was your walk pleasant?

- Yes     Some unpleasant things:
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
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 into people crossing the street
  - Drove too fast
  - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

- |          |              |   |
|----------|--------------|---|
| 1. _____ | <b>26-30</b> | Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking. |
| 2. _____ | <b>21-25</b> | Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good. |
| 3. _____ | <b>16-20</b> | Okay, but it needs work.                              |
| 4. _____ | <b>11-15</b> | It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.  |
| 5. _____ | <b>5-10</b>  | It's a disaster for walking!                          |
- Total \_\_\_\_\_

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.

# Improving your community's score...



## 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

### What you and your child can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

### What you and your community can do with more time

- 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

## 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

- 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

- 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

- 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 the police

- 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

## 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

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- 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



- 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
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard
- select alternative route with less traffic

- 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  
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles  
Was the sun really hot?  
Was it hot and hazy?

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child 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

- 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
- plant shade trees along routes
- have a sun safety seminar for kids
- have 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  
730 Airport Road, Suite 300  
Campus Box 3430  
Chapel Hill, NC  
27599-3430  
Phone: (919) 962-2202  
[www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)  
[www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)

National Center for  
Safe Routes to School  
730 Martin Luther  
King, Jr. Blvd., Suite 200  
Campus Box 3430  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430  
Toll-free 1-866-610-SRTS  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

National Center for Bicycling and Walking  
Campaign to Make America Walkable  
1506 21st Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (800) 760-NBPC  
[www.bikefed.org](http://www.bikefed.org)

## WALK TO SCHOOL DAY WEB SITES

USA event: [www.walktoschool-usa.org](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org)  
International: [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org)

## STREET DESIGN AND TRAFFIC CALMING

Federal Highway Administration  
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Research Program  
HSR - 20  
6300 Georgetown Pike  
McLean, VA 22101  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm)

Institute of Transportation Engineers  
[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

Surface Transportation Policy Project  
[www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

Transportation for Livable Communities  
[www.tlcnetwork.org](http://www.tlcnetwork.org)

## WALKING COALITIONS

America Walks  
P.O. Box 29103  
Portland, Oregon 97210  
Phone: (503) 222-1077  
[www.americawalks.org](http://www.americawalks.org)



## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Traffic Safety Programs  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
Phone: (202) 662-0600  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped)

SAFE KIDS Worldwide  
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: (202) 662-0600  
Fax: (202) 393-2072  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

## WALKING AND HEALTH

US Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection (MC 1107A)  
Washington, DC 20460  
Phone: 202-564-2188  
Fax: 202-564-2733  
[www.epa.gov/children/](http://www.epa.gov/children/)  
[www.epa.gov/airnow/](http://www.epa.gov/airnow/)  
[www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/ozone/what.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/ozone/what.html)  
[www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)  
[www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/comchoic/ccweb.htm](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/comchoic/ccweb.htm)

President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and  
Safety Risks to Children  
[www.childrenshealth.gov](http://www.childrenshealth.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Phone: (888) 232-4674  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysset](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysset)  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm)

Prevention Magazine  
33 East Minor Street  
Emmaus, PA 18098  
[www.itsallaboutprevention.com](http://www.itsallaboutprevention.com)

Shape Up America!  
6707 Democracy Boulevard  
Suite 306  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
[www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)

## ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS

US Access Board  
1331 F Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004-1111  
Phone: (800) 872-2253;  
(800) 993-2822 (TTY)  
[www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

