Getting Your Community Moving: Opening Eyes with a Walk

NY Dept. of Health

A moist walkabout in New Bedford, MA
Three goals:

• Why use walk audits to experience & explore the environment.

• Specific tips on planning & leading a walkabout.

• Take a walk, experience the process, see if it leads to program, project, & policies ideas.
Three reasons to use walkabouts:

• Powerful educational tool, gets people actually experiencing “activity friendliness” of an area.

• Can be critical inspiration for a community, helping them to explore what is possible.

• Excellent for public input & practical planning.
• Any & all concerned citizens (elderly, parents, children).
• **Professionals**: Public works, police, fire, health, planners, engineers, conservation, parks & recreation, schools, historical preservation.
• Elected officials and staff.
• **Advocates**: Environment, trails, safety, social justice.
• Businesses; chamber of commerce, economic development.
• **Developers**: Builders, land owners, realtors, lenders.
Typical Active Community Workshop elements:

• **Vision/Intros.** Your wish for this area 10 years from now.

• **Listen.** Presentation of the language, tools, possibilities.

• **Walk.** Experience how it’s working here, and what’s possible.

• **Work.** Group thinking about programs, projects, & policies.

• **Plan.** Commitments, next steps.
1. Introductions & visions:

- **Name & one sentence:** My community 10 years from now.
- **Connect the visions.** Connect people & ideas.
- **Crystallize & clarify.** Help focus them on major themes.
- **Write it down.** Reference it all day.
- **Plant the closing challenge early:** *What will you do tomorrow?*
2. During “content” session:

- Offer hope. Make clear that change really is possible!
- Provide images. Relevant pictures are much better than words.
- Don’t necessarily be too specific. It can bring things to a standstill.
- Offer resources. Some will be ready to learn much more.
The health preamble in just three numbers:

30 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by US DHHS.

20% of US adults who meet the DHHS recommendation (thru LTPA).

365,000 Estimated premature deaths annually due to inactivity and poor nutrition (the “obesity” epidemic).
Tools for urban and rural settings.
The Hard News: You must use all three P’s!

- **Programs:** Collect data, educate & promote, encourage behavior.
- **Projects:** Improvements to the built environment for walking, cycling, and transit.
- **Policies:** Rewrite the rules so active settings become the norm!
3. During a Walk Audit:

• Plan teachable moments. Scout for representative challenges & opportunities.
• Experience both good & bad.
• Get all to offer ideas. Use 1-10 scoring system to start discussion.
Human curb extension in Carlisle, PA.
Finding “teachable” moments.

Neighbor informally maintaining an island at 5:30 am.

Discovering pedestrian demand w/ a goat trail.
4. During the group work & discussion:

• **Mix disciplines in the groups.** Don’t let all engineers or advocates or developers sit together.

• **Insist on ideas under all of Ps.** It assures that everyone has a role in implementation.

• **Make sure everyone contributes.** Ideally have big maps & pens for all.
E.g. Carlisle PA workshop feedback.
Require ideas from all three P’s!

• **Programs:** Build awareness, plans, support, skills.

• **Projects:** Improve the settings for walking, cycling.

• **Policies:** Rewrite the rules so it’s done “right.”
5. Force commitments: What will you do tomorrow?

- Be a champion. Talk to others, organize, lead.
- Collect data. Map routes, measure traffic, speeds, mode shares; research $.
- Have an event. Open street, Walk to School/Work week.
- Fix stuff. Paint crosswalks, replace lights, cut brush.
- Try new stuff. Planters, signs, cones, paint.
Are you ready to . . . ?

walk the walk

Ik the Walk
Three rules during our walk audit:

• Be careful. Watch for traffic, each other.

• Think of all possible users; young, old, physical disabilities, all incomes.

• Score the “stickiness.” 0 if no support for physical activity; 10 for very encouraging.
Waverly, near SU
Quality bus stops?

Wolf Rd., Albany workshop
Six folks to take out to lunch:

1. Planner and/or planning commissioner.
2. Transportation or public works engineer.
3. City councilor, county commissioner.
4. School superintendent, board president.
5. Largest employer, chamber president.
6. Private developer, realtor, lender.

Don’t ask them to help you, ask how you can help them meet *common goals*. 
Five web sites to go to:

1. www.saferoutesinfo.org
2. www.completestreets.org
3. www.activelivingresearch.org
4. www.pedbikeinfo.org
5. www.cdc.gov/transportation

www.markfenton.com/resources.html