

Walk Audit Tool

A walk audit allows a community group to document specific issues in a neighborhood to advocate for improvements. It assesses the conditions, safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area.

It can be used to familiarize the community with the neighborhood, provide first hand exposure to issues the community faces, and to get them excited to participate in influencing a change.

You can do your own Walk Audit. Here's how!



Preparing

①

Establish the Walk Audit lead person, and any supporting team members. Team leads are responsible for directing the walk audit groups through their different routes and ensuring that your group conducts a thorough review of the community conditions, while also maintaining the safety of the group.

②

Establish the target audience. Walk audits can be most effective when public officials and community members of varying backgrounds, ages and abilities are intentionally invited and welcomed so they can experience and react to the conditions directly.

③

Establish your goals and outcomes for the process. Write these down, and consider what questions you can ask the group to harness information to inform your goals.

④

Decide if you would like participants to fill out a questionnaire/survey as they walk, take photos to share their experiences, or answer questions collectively at the end, or a mixture of all of these.

⑤

Consider what hand-outs you might provide – eg printed maps, or surveys to fill out. Clipboards are handy!

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Preparing

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Consider the time of the day and the weather conditions before planning your walk, and inform participants to dress accordingly- eg bring a sunhat, a water bottle, and comfortable shoes and clothing. You may also want to consider good spots in the shade to have a break/snack.

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Plan your drop-off and pick-up locations and times, whether transportation will be required to get participants to the site, and whether there is parking available if participants will be driving.

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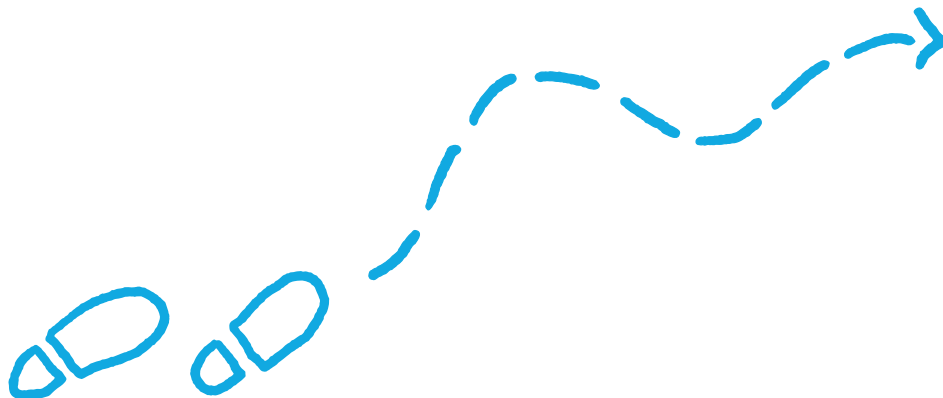
Consider notifying existing businesses or community organizations that you will be undertaking the walk and see if they can offer support.

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Consider the safety of your route, and if additional team support is required to manage the group safely.

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Consider whether participants are able bodied or if any special accommodations are required, and if you are able to accommodate them.



Walking



Prior to kicking off your walk, conduct group introductions so participants can familiarize with each other and know what to expect.

Make sure you know how many people have shown up, and keep count of how many people you're walking with as you go.

Plan ahead suitable locations where you will stop to ask questions.

Encourage the group to slow down and use all of their senses to fully understand and experience the neighborhood. This is a mindfulness exercise in understanding their neighborhoods and challenging assumptions that they may already have.

Encourage the group to take pictures!



Community Engagement Prompt Questions

Talk about participants' experiences, and their impressions of their neighborhood. Try to ask questions that might challenge existing assumptions, or frame challenges that you are aware.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ON NEXT PAGE

What does it feel like walking through this neighborhood?

Do you feel like there are adequate walking provisions? (sidewalks, shade, etc)

What surprised you the most from this walking tour?

What is something important that others should know?

How would you rate healthy food access in your community?

Is there a variety of healthy food options at your local store?

What does it feel like walking through this neighborhood?

Were there many healthy food outlets in the neighborhood? What kind?

Do you use a car as your main mode of transportation?
Do you bike? Walk? Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never?

What might be some of the toughest challenges residents have getting back and forth without a car?

Recording Information

Plan ahead how you plan to record the community feedback, so it can be used to inform your goals. Info can be recorded through various methods including:



Participant photos



Video/Audio recordings



Note taking



Requesting participants undertake a written survey throughout/at the end of the walk



Community Q&A session after the walk – asking questions and having the Walk Audit lead record the answers



Heat Mapping exercises – using colors to describe certain elements geographically – eg to describe the condition of spaces, whether there was high/low food supply in an area, describing the level of safety.



**And that's it! The power is yours.
Let us know how your Walk Audit goes.**

