

# Walk Audits Manual

Walk audits bring together diverse groups of people to observe and discuss sidewalk and road designs that affect walking conditions. Participants walk together along a specified route, take note of the positive and negative aspects of their surroundings, and then meet to discuss their observations. Brief summaries are compiled with specific short- and long-term recommendations and policy suggestions. We conduct walk audits around schools and senior centers, in downtown districts, in suburban or rural town centers, or in any setting where walking improvements are needed.

A walk audit is a great way to assess the walkability of your neighborhood. It can help you identify potential hazards, make recommendations for improvements, and advocate for changes that will make your neighborhood more walkable for everyone.

## Here are the steps on how to conduct a walk audit:

1. **Choose a route.** Walk audits can be conducted on any route, but it's best to choose a route that you or someone you know walks regularly. This will help you identify specific issues that are relevant to your community.
2. **Assemble a team.** Walk audits are more fun and productive when conducted with a group of people. Invite your friends, family, neighbors, or anyone else who is interested in making your neighborhood more walkable.
3. **Gather supplies.** You'll need a few supplies for your walk audit, including:
  - A map of the route
  - A clipboard and pen
  - A checklist of items to look for (see below)
  - A camera (optional)
4. **Walk the route.** As you walk, pay attention to the following:
  - The width of the sidewalks
  - The condition of the sidewalks
  - The presence of sidewalks
  - The presence of crosswalks
  - The condition of the crosswalks
  - The presence of traffic lights
  - The condition/timing of the traffic lights
  - The presence of street trees/shade
  - The presence of of benching/seating
  - The presence of litter/waste bin
  - The presence of lighting
  - The presence of other hazards, such as potholes, or uneven pavement

5. **Document your findings.** As you walk, make notes on your observations. You can use the checklist provided below, or you can create your own.
6. **Analyze your findings.** Once you've completed your walk audit, take some time to analyze your findings. Look for patterns and trends. What are the most common problems? What are the most important issues?
7. **Make recommendations.** Based on your findings, make recommendations for improvements. These recommendations can be specific, such as "install a crosswalk here," or they can be more general, such as "improve the condition of the sidewalks."
8. **Advocate for change.** Once you've made your recommendations, share them with your community. Talk to your neighbors, your city council members/selectboard, and anyone else who can help make your recommendations a reality.

**Here is a checklist of items to look for during your walk audit:**

- Width of sidewalks
- Condition of sidewalks
- Presence of sidewalks
- Presence of crosswalks
- Condition of crosswalks
- Presence of traffic lights
- Condition of traffic lights
- Presence of street trees
- Presence of litter
- Presence of graffiti
- Presence of other hazards

By following these steps, you can conduct a walk audit that will help you make your neighborhood more walkable for everyone.

**Here are some additional tips for conducting a successful walk audit:**

- **Walk at a comfortable pace.** You don't want to rush, but you also don't want to linger for too long on one issue. Make sure to keep the group engaged and moving along.
- **Be observant and safe.** Pay attention to your surroundings and take note of anything that could be a hazard to pedestrians. Make sure to also take care of yourself and other participants be careful with oncoming traffic.
- **Be inclusive.** Invite people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to participate in your walk audit. Our pedestrian infrastructure is used by everyone and some of us rely on it more than others.
- **Be positive.** Walk audits are a great way to get people talking about the walkability of their community. Use this opportunity to build excitement and momentum for change.

- **Engage local decision makers.** invite individuals who are key to make local built environment changes like members of the Department of Public Works, elected officials, municipal engineers, key local institutional stakeholders, commute based organizations, business owners.