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WALK TALL

A Citizen's Guide to Walkable Communities

RODALE PRESS

PEDESTRIAN FEDERATION OF AMERICA

Walk Tall: A Citizen's Guide to Walkable Communities
Version 1.0
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Development of *Walk Tall* has been made possible in part by grants from the Energy Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation and Surdna Foundation. Printing of *Walk Tall* has been made possible by Rodale Press.

COVER:
Anne Lusk, the force behind the Stowe (Vt.) Recreation Path, walks tall along this award-winning facility. Photo: Jeff Turnau

WALK TALL:

A Citizen's Guide to Walkable Communities

Welcome to *Walk Tall: A Citizen's Guide to Walkable Communities.* We hope the stories, ideas, suggestions and resources in this guide will help you make your community more walkable.

The old adage that "all politics is local" is especially true in the case of walking. While transportation debates rage at the national and state levels about traffic congestion, or expanding and maintaining the interstate highway system, it gets harder every day just to walk across the street or to visit friends on foot. Walking has been overlooked and undervalued for too long and we are all suffering for it.

While the solutions may differ from one community to the next, one thing will remain constant: conditions for walking will improve only when people like you organize and make it happen. The good examples of walkable places in this guide exist because people got involved. The only way these places will stay pedestrian-friendly is if people stay involved and continue to care about their community.

> ***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."***
> ***–Margaret Mead***

Our research shows that more people than ever are walking, and they want to walk more. And our experience tells us there has never been a better time for you to get involved and make a difference. People want to live in communities with sidewalks, greenways and trails, and they want their public agencies to provide and maintain good pedestrian facilities as a matter of course. There's plenty of money being spent on transportation and a fair share should go to walking!

So, we invite you to *Walk Tall* and help make your community pedestrian-friendly. Rodale Press and the Pedestrian Federation of America want to help you make walking safer, easier and more fun. Please join us. Together we can get the nation back on its feet again, step by step, community by community.

Cordially,

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P.S. Keep in touch. Send us news of your success and suggestions for effective action we can share with others.

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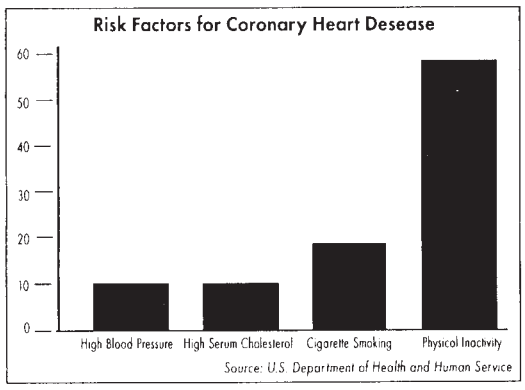
Health and fitness

Mark Bricklin, Editor, Prevention

You don't need to be told that walking is great for you and your health. You and 131 million other Americans (or three-quarters of our adult population) already walk for exercise. Humans were born to walk. Our stable feet, straight legs, broad pelvis, and generous buttocks are naturally built for walking. Is it any wonder we develop all sorts of problems when we accept a lifestyle that doesn't include a regular walk?

Just in the last few years, the Centers for Disease Control have completed two critical health studies. One concluded that a lack of exercise is roughly equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. The other found not getting enough exercise is the biggest contributor to heart disease in this country — more than high blood pressure, cholesterol, and smoking, as more people have these medical problems than exercise regularly.

What's more, health researchers believe that walking is the best solution to this critical



problem. Regular walking can significantly reduce the incidence of heart disease. At the same time, it is the easiest, least expensive, safest and most convenient kind of exercise.

Scores of other studies show walking can perform "magic" healing acts. Brisk walking—not racing, not huffing or puffing—has essentially all the benefits of running without the drenching sweat, pounding heart or the all-too-common "body bash" that can come with it.

Scientists have discovered that regular walking

- Burns away excess weight
- Lowers blood pressure
- Improves the cholesterol profile
- Improves blood sugar and insulin dynamics
- Helps prevent bone-thinning osteoporosis
- Helps alleviate chronic low back pain
- Improves immune system function
- Improves mood and mental performance.

Better personal health isn't the only good thing about walking. Regular walking also has great benefits in the workplace. People who are more fit are more productive, are absent less often, have fewer injuries and are more satisfied with their jobs. ■

Livable communities

Megan Maguire, Pedestrian Federation of America

A walkable community can make your life and the lives of your neighbors better in unintended ways. For instance, studies show that the lighter the flow of automobile traffic on a neighborhood street, the greater the number of friends and acquaintances people will have. On streets with 2,000 vehicles traveling on them per day, a single person will average three friends and six acquaintances. In contrast, on streets with a much higher traffic volume (16,000 vehicles per day), the number of friends a person has is likely to drop to less than one and the number of acquaintances to three.

Befriending your neighbors can provide many social benefits: someone to housesit when you travel, a babysitter for your children and a friend without having to travel to see him or her. Such friendships can also play a major role in reducing crime since crimes are less likely to take place in areas with lots of people out walking. In areas where people get out and know one another, the chances are much greater that a stranger will be noticed and reported.

Safe and convenient walking paths provide adults with an easy way to exercise, spend time with their children and enjoy their surroundings. For children, the same paths offer independence. Kids can visit friends, travel to and from school and attend afterschool activities without having to rely on Mom, Dad or a carpool.

Walking has no age limits, requires no special equipment and it's free! By walking a short distance instead of using a car, you can save money, reduce stress, stay fit and still get somewhere. At the same time, that walk will help reduce air pollution, lessen automobile traffic and increase the feeling of community. ■

What are the Benefits of Walking?

How do Americans get exercise?

- ***93 percent of adult Americans walked outside in the past year***
- ***Walkers took an average of 15 walks in the last mild weather month***
- ***80 percent walk to enjoy nature and their surroundings***
- ***75 percent of walkers walk specifically for exercise***

Source: Pathways for People

Resources

- *Walking, The Pleasure Exercise: A 60-Day Walking Program for Fitness and Health.* Mort Malkin. Rodale Press, 33 East Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098.
- *Prevention's Practical Encyclopedia of Walking for Health.* Mark Bricklin and Maggie Spilner. Rodale Press.
- *National Bicycling and Walking Study Reports: Case Study 14. Benefits of Bicycling and Walking to Health. Case study 15. The Environmental Benefits of Bicycling and Walking.* National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse, (800) 760-6272.

What is a Walkable Community?

Do people want to walk more?

•61 percent of adults would walk more if they had safe, secure paths
•35 percent of adults who do not exercise would start walking if they had paths
•57 percent of runners would run more if they had paths

Source: Pathways for People

Introduction

Maggie Spilner, Walking Editor, Prevention

For years, urban and especially suburban development has proceeded in large part as if the pedestrian did not exist. Subdivisions are built without sidewalks and are separated one from the other by highways carrying non-stop traffic. Millions of Americans cannot walk to shops, friends' houses, libraries, schools, churches or work even though they may be only minutes away. As more and more corporate parks and shopping malls are built off busy highways with no sidewalks or walkable shoulders, we are increasingly dependent on the automobile for survival.

Even as the additional benefits of moderate exercise are identified, our environment becomes increasingly hostile to people on foot. This translates into increases in health care costs for society and unnecessary illness for individuals. An opportunity to save millions of dollars and prevent much disability is not only being lost but actually blocked.

ABOVE RIGHT: San Antonio's River Walk is the centerpiece in the redevelopment of one of the nation's biggest cities.
Photo: San Antonio Convention and Visitor's Bureau

What makes a community walkable?

Linda Tracy, Pedestrian Federation of America

Fortunately, there are many communities where walking is popular and has been actively encouraged. These walkable communities provide an example and inspiration to everyone working to improve a neighborhood, town or city.

Many qualities make a place great to walk. Think about your own favorites. The list probably includes attractive places to walk that conveniently and easily take you where you want to go, where you don't have to contend with traffic. The qualities that make a community walkable are hard to define. You just know when they're there and quickly miss them when they are not. In the examples that follow you'll see how walkable areas contribute to personal health, liveability, pleasure and economic vitality.

San Antonio River Walk, Texas

Linda Tracy, Pedestrian Federation of America

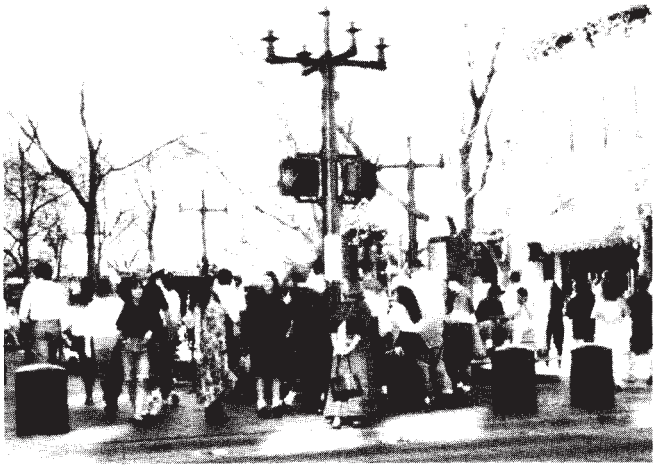
As the San Antonio River winds through downtown San Antonio,Texas, so too does one of the country's finest walking paths, the River Walk, or Paseo del Rio. Set below the noise and fast pace of street level, the 2.5-mile River Walk invites residents and visitors alike to stroll along the river bank and simply enjoy the lush tropical gardens beneath a canopy of tall cypress trees. The River Walk's stone paths and arched foot bridges were originally built in the 1930s as a WPA (Works Progress Administration) project, but the area did not become one of Texas's top attractions until commercial development was added for the 1968 HemisFair. Now, walkers explore art galleries, gift shops, and sidewalk cafes by day. Lively nightclubs and restaurants transform the River Walk as the sun goes down. Every month the River Walk hosts a festival that draws people to the river to enjoy such activities as traditional music during the Fiesta Mariachi Festival or a parade of colorful, floating, decorated barges with music and lights during the Texas Cavaliers River Parade. The River Walk offers those on foot a beautifully landscaped park with lots of things to do, places to go, and people to see—all protected from traffic.

Boulder's Pedestrian Mall, Colorado

Sharon Alexander, Bicycle-Pedestrian Program Manager, GO Boulder

In the late 1960s, a group of Boulder, Colo., citizens recognized the importance of the downtown area to the economic health and well-being of the whole community. A committee of city officials, downtown property owners, school district representatives, and city and county residents was created to plan the revitaization. The first phase generated support for the project, and the second phase identified four components of the plan: development of a pedestrian mall, improved traffic circulation in the area, new off-street parking structures and an improved civic center area.

Initially, some property owners opposed the plan. The streetscape in front of their businesses would be dramatically altered and they faced contruction costs of $1.8 million. However, once the project was complete, even those originally opposing the mall became supporters. What was once a street for cars is now a playground for children, a place that naturally draws people to the heart of Boulder's community life.



While the Pearl Street Mall appears successful, there are no hard numbers to back this up. A survey is underway to determine how the mall has affected the accessibility, livability and prosperity of the downtown.

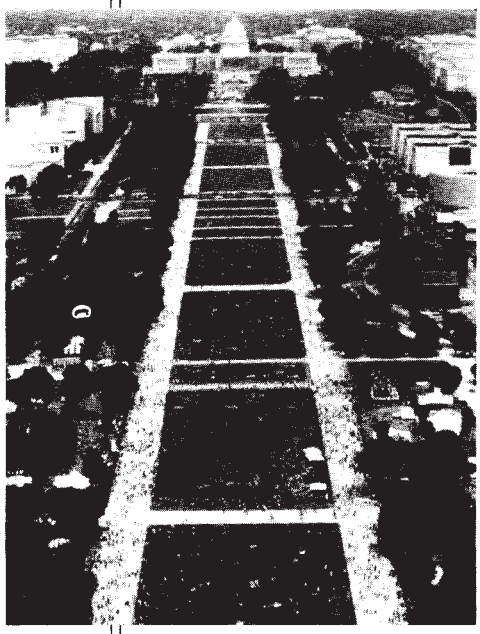
Washington, D. C'.s National Mall

Megan Maguire, Pedestrian Federation of America

The development of Washington, D.C.'s monumental core began in 1791 at the request of George Washington and continues today with the same vision —"to vividly proclaim Washington's stature, through time, as the heart of a great democracy and as a leader in the world."

A major part of this plan is the National Mall; a 2-mile, tree-lined oasis from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial. Many of our nation's most famous museums, monuments and public offices are within easy walking distance of each other, making this area the number one destination for millions of tourists who come to the Washington, D.C., area every year.

In addition to these great treasures, the National Mall boasts an array of formal and informal paths for walking, jogging and bicycling with limited motor vehicle access. There are lush green fields for picnicking, sun bathing and even softball games between rival congressional offices. Visitors also enjoy the carousel, ice rink and gardens or can just relax on one of the many well-placed benches.



ABOVE:
The National Mall is the number one tourist destination in Washington, D.C.
Photo: National Park Service

LEFT:
Pearl Street Mall is a social, cultural and retail center for downtown Boulder, Colo.
Photo: GO Boulder

Downtown Portland, Oregon

Matt Brown, Project Manager, Portland Pedestrian Program.

Downtown Portland, Ore., is often recognized as one of the most walkable places in the United States. Many elements contribute to this distinction; some were fortunate accidents, while others were deliberately planned.

One key element is the size of the blocks in the downtown core. Measuring just 200 feet on a side, Portland blocks were laid out by city founders to provide more corner parcels for merchants. The unintentional result is more public street space in downtown, much of which has been allocated to people on foot.

This did not automatically ensure a good walking environment. Years of careful planning have gone into the downtown Portland of today, and success stems from a number of elements working together, including public transportation, parking regulations, the design of public space and regional land use planning.

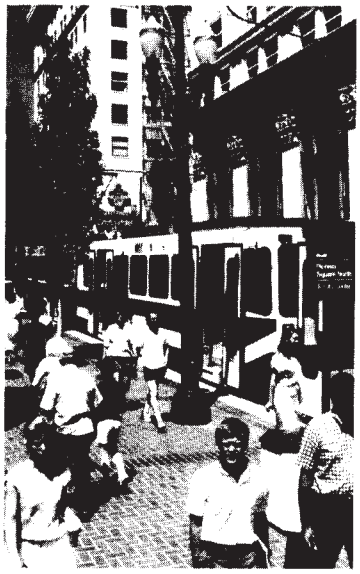
Do people want more pathways?

•70 percent want local plans to provide for safe, nonmotorized paths

•56 percent support more funding for local pathways

Source: Pathways for People

More than 40 percent of downtown workers arrive on bus or light rail. This ridership is supported by a downtown transit mall that opened in 1977, one of the first of its kind in the United States. At the same time, transit was supported by parking restrictions in the central city core. A "parking lid" prohibited the total number of parking spaces downtown from exceeding 43,900.



The net result of these and other policies is a lively walking environment downtown that encourages foot traffic and further increases the economic success of the core area. Since the 1970s, more than 30,000 new jobs have been located in the downtown area, and the share of regional retail sales has risen from less than 10 percent to 30 percent.

RIGHT: Walkable streets and a light rail system have kept people and jobs in downtown Portland, Ore.

Photo: Portland Office of Transportation

BELOW: The summer Floral Festival brings Market Street to life in Corning, N.Y.

Photo: Market Street Restoration Agency

Downtown Corning, New York

Linda Tracy, Pedestrian Federation of America

Corning, New York, home to 12,000 people and the Corning Glass corporate headquarters, is one of the most people-friendly places in the country.

Intown, a 330-acre district spanning the Chemung River, is built around Centerway Square. The square is designed as a friendly place for people to gather, balancing a mix of offices, retail, housing and restaurants around open spaces, a bandstand, tables and a clock tower. The design permits motorized traffic, but special brick pavers throughout clearly show the whole area is the walkers' domain.

In the 1970s, a group of local business people recognized their town's health relied on a vital downtown core and the tax revenue it provided. They identified several million dollars of public and private improvements for the Intown area, where more than 5,000 people work.

The first success was the restoration of a historic arched bridge over the river for the exclusive use of foot and bus traffic. More recently, a second phase has identified more than $109 million in additional improvements, 80 percent of which will be provided by the private sector. One project is the conversion of nearly three acres of urban parking space for cars to a major new park for people.

The streets of Boston, Massachusetts

Karla Karash, President, Walk Boston

Boston's rich history is preserved in its "walker-friendly" neighborhoods. In some, more than 50 percent of the residents walk to work, and in downtown Boston as a whole, 48 percent of all trips are made on foot.

Because much of Boston was developed before the automobile, many downtown streets are narrow and winding, slowing traffic to a crawl and offering few parking spaces. The joke in Boston is to ask, "Should we walk, or do we have time to take a cab?" However, Boston has not escaped the influence of the automobile, and traffic engineering projects have resulted in wide streets and intersections, narrower sidewalks, and many free right-turn lanes. At 80 percent of the traffic signals, pedestrians must push a button to get a WALK signal, which then lasts for only seven seconds.

Nevertheless, neighborhood pressure in combination with visionary leadership has preserved and improved many "walker-friendly" areas. The Downtown Crossing retail district and Faneuil Hall Marketplace are car-free. In neighborhoods such as Beacon Hill, the South End, and Charlestown, streets that formerly carried heavy traffic have been calmed by

narrowing traffic lanes, widening sidewalks, narrowing intersections and implementing one-way street networks to discourage through traffic. These and many other neighborhoods entice pedestrians with historic architecture, interesting shops, and delightful places to eat.

Boston is one of the great walking cities of the United States, and the battle to keep it so continues.

Stowe Recreation Path, Vermont

Megan Maguire, Pedestrian Federation of America

The Stowe Recreation Path winds its way through the small resort town of Stowe, Vt. With little more than an idea and a sense of need, the townspeople of Stowe united to make the project a reality, donating land and raising money for design and construction of the 5.3-mile trail.

The Stowe Recreation Path, completed in 1989, is a great source of civic pride. Children and adults can travel across town without competing with automobile traffic. The path shows off the splendor of one of our nation's most beautiful valleys, whether one is commuting to school or taking an after-dinner stroll or brisk fitness walk.

The path increased summer hotel room revenues by 24 percent, while the remainder of the state saw only 5 percent growth. Local residents credit the path with drawing visitors to Stowe for walking, running, bicycling, and cross country skiing—and also for encouraging them to stay longer.

European cities and suburbs

Andy Clarke, Pedestrian Federation of America

The great cities of Europe are famous for their busy shopping streets and sidewalk cafes and for being great places to walk. None of this happened by accident—for the past 30 years they have all had to resist destructive highway projects, massive parking garages and growing automobile ownership.

Gothenburg, Sweden, and Groningen, The Netherlands, cut traffic levels in half in the 1970s—and their downtowns now thrive. The cultural centers of Italy—Rome, Florence, Milan and Bologna—closed their historic centers to cars in the 1980s to create a more livable atmosphere and protect buildings from pollution damage. Within the last five years, citizens in both Paris and Amsterdam have voted to turn thousands of parking spaces into better places to walk.

Residential areas in Frankfurt and Berlin, Germany, and Copenhagen, Denmark, have been changed to give priority to people on foot. In Berlin, street activity increased by up to 60 percent after motor vehicles speeds were limited to 30 kilometers per hour (18 mph). Fatal traffic crashes fell by 57 percent, and severe crashes by 45 percent. Crashes involving adult walkers fell by 43 percent, and those involving children by two-thirds.

All across Europe, traffic-calming measures like these are saving lives, improving conditions for walking, reducing pollution and improving the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike. ■

Is walking more than just exercise?

•40 percent of walkers depend on walking to shop and do errands

•17 percent of walkers depend on walking to get to work

Source: Pathways for People

LEFT:
Stowe Recreation Path, Stowe, Vt.
Photo: Anne Lusk

Resources

- *National Bicycling and Walking Study: Case Study 19. Traffic Calming, Auto-restricted Zones and Other Traffic Management Techniques.* National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse. (800) 760-6272
- *Quality Streets: How Traditional Urban Centers Benefit from Traffic Calming.* TEST, 177 Arlington Road, London NW1, England.

Is Walking Dangerous?

6,000 pedestrians are killed, and 110,000 are injured each year. Every single day, 16 people on foot are hit by a motorist and die.

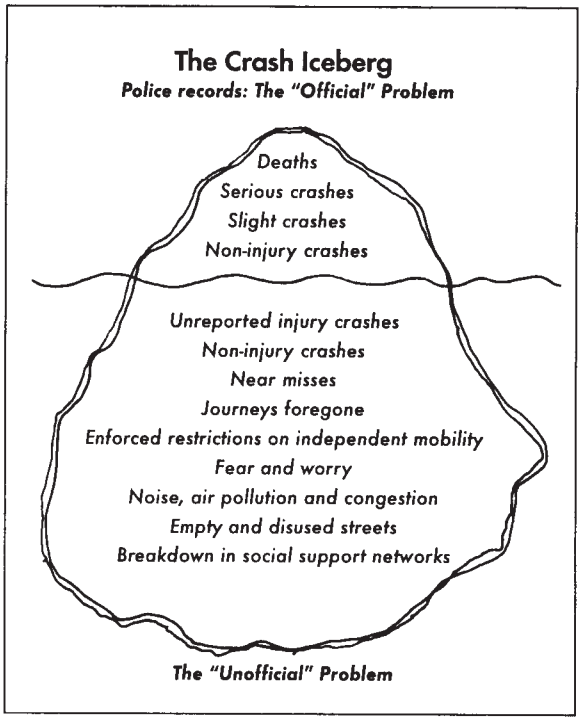
Numbers you should know

Linda Tracy, Pedestrian Federation of America

One of the biggest barriers to people walking more is the fear of traffic. We know that on average 6,000 pedestrians are killed nationally each year in collisions with cars. Another 110,000 are injured. We have no record of the people who do not walk or do not go out because they are afraid of being hit.

Unfortunately, we also have little idea of the true amount of walking in the United States. No reliable national statistics are kept to record how many people walk, how far they walk, and the reasons why they do and don't walk. Consequently, walking is often overlooked and not treated as a real means of transportation. In fact, what little data we do have can be wildly unreliable. In 1991, planners in Boulder, Colo. found three travel surveys for the same area that showed bicycling and walking accounting for as little as 1 percent and as much as 28 percent of all trips.

Walking is almost invisible, except when people are killed and injured. By failing to gather walking data, especially for short trips, we focus all our transportation investments on motorized, and generally longer, trips. Without accurate data, transportation decisions discriminate against those who have concentrated their destinations to create a healthy, environmentally and economically sound lifestyle.



Crashes are no accident

Until recently, we used the word "accident" to describe something bad that happened to us unexpectedly. We thought of accidents as being caused by bad luck. In reality, there is nothing unexpected about a speeding motorist not being able to stop in time to avoid a person in a crosswalk. We can predict what will happen, and someone needs to take responsibility for his or her actions. "Accident" lets the responsible person off the hook; "crash" does not.

The most deadly type of motor vehicle crash involves people on foot. Pedestrians die at a greater rate and suffer more serious injuries than bicyclists or motorists, and the average cost to society of a pedestrian-motorist crash is $312,000 or a total of more than $32 billion each year.

The walkers most likely to be involved in a crash are also the ones who most rely on walking to get around: children and older adults. Young children die on foot as often as they die inside a car. The mid-block dart-out, the most common type of pedestrian-motorist crash, typically involves young children who run into the street in the middle of the block. Most prevention efforts tell children to stop at the edge of the road. Motorists are rarely educated to reduce their speed through residential areas and to look for pedestrians about to enter the street.

Pedestrians over 65 years old are two to four times more likely to die than younger people after being hit by a motorist. Older pedestrians are particularly vulnerable while crossing the street, since they need more time to cross. They are also vulnerable when walking behind a motorist who is backing up.

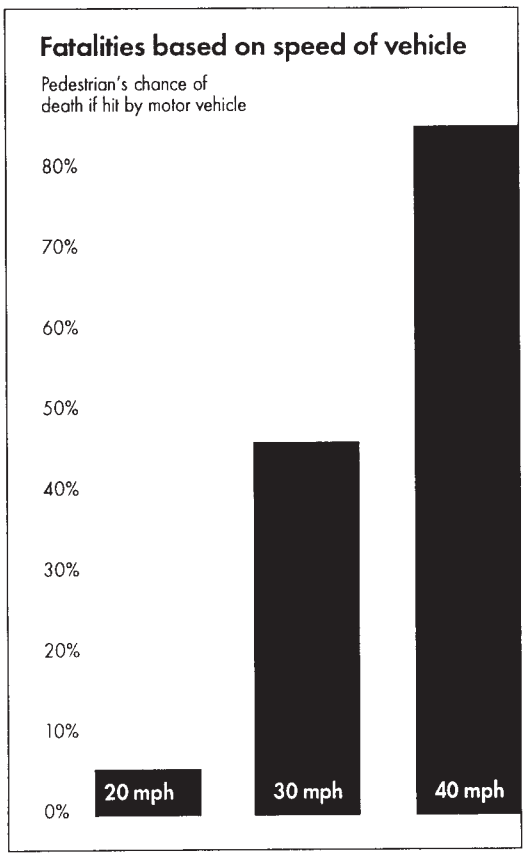
Obeying the law

Motorists and pedestrians must obey traffic laws. The motorist's responsibility is to operate the vehicle in a controlled manner at all times, at speeds appropriate to the conditions.

Resources

- *Fatality Facts.*
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 1005 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22201.
- *Traffic Safety Facts: Pedestrians.*
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Center for Statistics & Analysis, 400 Seventh Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Rather than telling only pedestrians to be more careful, motorists should be held accountable for the consequences of their actions in the same way we no longer excuse drunk drivers from their crashes. Furthermore, we must also change the way we talk about crashes. Saying someone was hit by a car really means that person was hit by a driver or motorist, unless, of course, there really wasn't anyone in the car at the time.



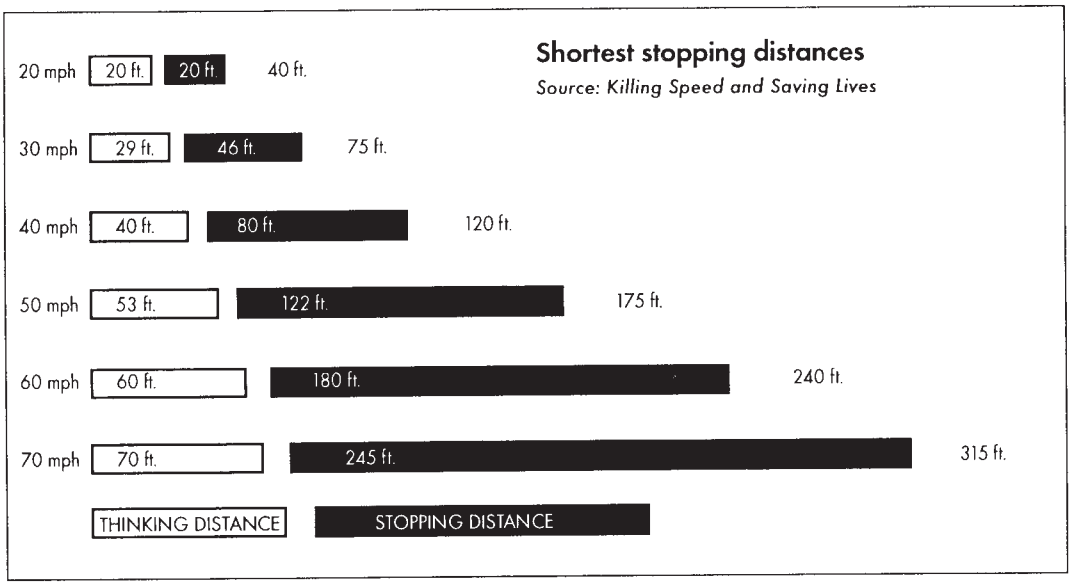
Speed

Much of the threat to walking safely comes from motorists' speed. The faster a motorist drives, the more likely he or she is to be involved in a crash, and the more likely injuries to a person on foot will be serious, if not fatal.

Research shows that when people walking are hit by a car

- at 20 mph, only 5 percent of walkers are killed, most injuries are slight, and 30 percent suffer no injury
- at 30 mph, 45 percent of walkers are killed, and many are seriously injured
- at 40 mph, 85 percent of walkers are killed

Many European cities have already reduced speed limits in residential and downtown areas to 30 kilometers per hour, the equivalent of 18 mph. Most U.S. residential speed limits are still 25 mph — a speed limit whose potential injury to walkers is too serious even if it were strictly observed. How fast are your neighbors driving through your community? ■



Are You Ready For Some Action?

Now you've read about some of the best places for walking in the United States and learned about the benefits and hazards of walking, are you ready to take the plunge and change the way your community looks and feels?

The remaining pages of this guide tell you what you can do and how you can get it done. First, there's some technical information and advice on overcoming six of the most common obstacles to walking—everything from missing sidewalks to speeding traffic.

Next, you'll find practical advice on how to get organized, who to contact and how to have an impact in your community.

Finally, there's suggestions on the six most important things to ask for to make sure your traffic planners and engineers start to improve conditions for walking as a matter of routine. You'll also find a lot more resources and places to go for help.

Resources:

- *Killing Speed and Saving Lives.*
UK Department of Transportation, Marsham Street, London, SWI England.

It's Too Far to Walk—I Can't Get There from Here. How Do I Change That?

Meeky Blizzard, Board Member, Sensible Transportation Options for People

In times past, a neighborhood was a place where everyone knew most of their neighbors, where it was easy to walk to a friend's house, to the store for a few essential items, to the bus stop or even around the block for an evening stroll. Sadly, they just don't build 'em like that anymore. Instead of streets that connect to each other, neighborhoods these days are usually built with cul-de-sacs and looping roads to prevent through-traffic (i.e., speeding cars). As a result, neighborhood streets don't seem to actually go anywhere, except eventually out to a wide, traffic-filled highway. This approach has certainly cut down on through-traffic, but it has also greatly reduced foot traffic. In fact, it is almost impossible to walk directly to a friend's house, the store, the bus stop, or the park in today's suburban neighborhood. By eliminating the direct connections between neighbors, shops, and home, these development patterns have also effectively eliminated public life and the very feel of a neighborhood. Maybe that's why people aren't apt to talk about their "neighborhood;" instead, they talk about their "development" or, even worse, their "subdivision."

But if suburban street patterns discourage walking, what kind of street would encourage it? Intrigued by this question, researchers in Oregon set out to determine if they could identify and measure elements that provide a walkable environment.

The resulting LUTRAQ (Land Use Transportation Air Quality) study identified four environmental factors that encouraged walking. The first is topography, or the lay of the land. It may seem rather obvious, but people tend to walk more if the route is flat rather than steeply sloped. Of course, this is not universally true, for there are plenty of walkers in hilly San Francisco. In fact, the steep slopes are part of that city's charm. However, given a choice, most people prefer to walk on a level plane rather than up or even down a hill.

The second factor is—you guessed it—connected streets. Once you set out on a walk, you usually want to end up somewhere else. If the street becomes a dead end, or simply loops back to where you started, it is difficult to get any place at all. Certainly, suburban strets are not closed loops. But the distance from the center of a suburban development (typically laid out in cul-de-sacs and looping streets) to a convenience store located on a neighboring busy street is usually farther than most people will walk. On the other hand, a well-connected network of streets provides a more direct link to any number of destinations. It benefits not only walkers and bicycle riders, but automobile drivers as well—the number of routes to choose from spreads traffic out, reduces congestion, allows shorter trips and shortens travel time.

The third factor that encourages people to walk is continuous sidewalks, and the fourth is safe crosswalks.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WALKING

Photo: Anne Weaver, Sensible Transportation Alternatives for People

Narrow streets with frequent crosswalks and signals encourage pedestrian traffic.

Photo: Keith Bartholomew, 1000 Friends of Oregon

Long distances between crosswalks and signals and wide streets discourage pedestrians.

Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP) is a grassroots educational organization that supports transportation systems that foster livable communities in metropolitan Portland, Ore.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WALKING

Photo: Keith Bartholomew, 1000 Friends of Oregon

A continuous sidewalk newwork provides the basic infrastructure for walking.

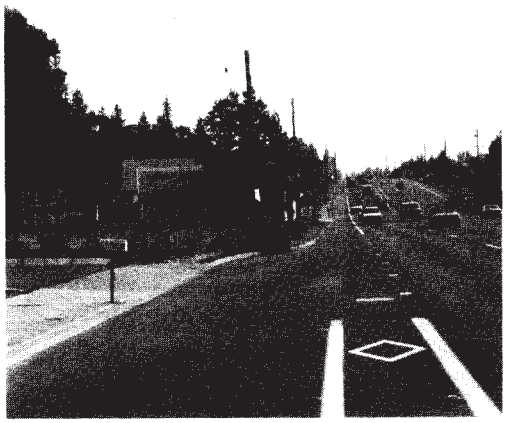


Photo: Keith Bartholomew, 1000 Friends of Oregon

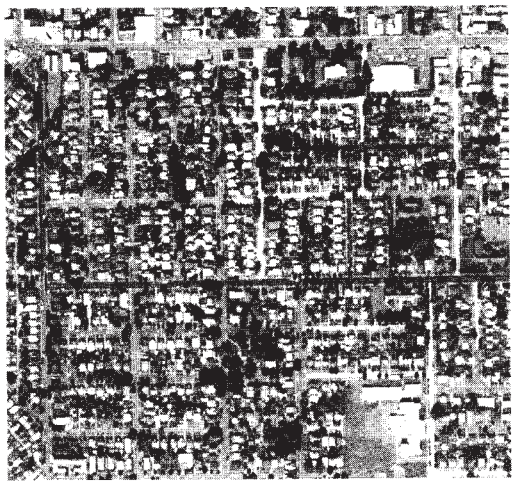
The lack of sidewalk continuity presents a barrier to pedestrians

Do these environmental factors actually affect travel behavior? Absolutely. In fact, the LUTRAQ research showed that people who lived in pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods made nearly four times as many walking and bicycling trips and more than three times as many transit trips as people who lived in neighborhoods with poor pedestrian environments. In addition, these same residents took fewer trips by car and drove fewer miles.

The LUTRAQ study also examined the impact of building location on walking, testing the assumption that buildings set back from the street were less pedestrian-friendly than those located close to the street. Again, the research suggested that walking in areas where buildings were located close to the street was significantly higher than where buildings were set back from the street, especially if the sites have parking lots in front of them.

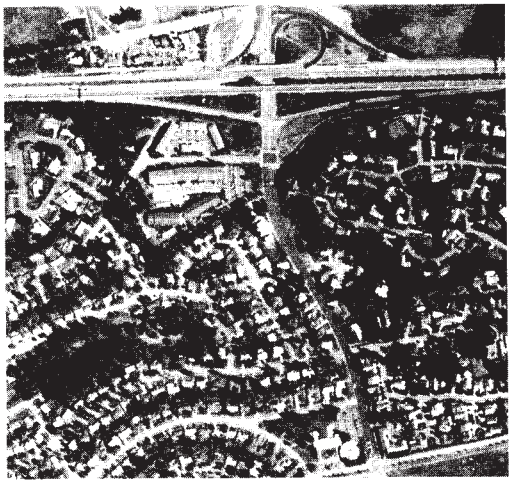
This research demonstrates the value of street design and building location in creating pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and commercial centers. As we continue to build and alter our communities, we must insist that we create communities that are literally built for walking. ■

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WALKING



WAC Corporation, Eugene, Ore.

A continuous sidewalk network like this provides the basic infrastructure for walking.



WAC Corporation, Eugene, Ore.

This area is a classic illustration of a lack of continuity.

Resources

- 1000 Friends of Oregon, LUTRAQ (The Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality Connection).
  1000 Friends of Oregon, 534 SW 3rd Ave, Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204, (503) 497-1000.
- *The Pedestrian Pocket Book: A New Suburban Design Strategy.*
  Doug Kelbaugh. Princeton Architectural Press.

There's No Place to Walk. How Do I Change That?

Peter Lagerwey, Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator, City of Seattle, Wash.

Virginia is in her seventies and likes to get out for exercise every day. She has to follow the same 3-mile route because it's the only continuous route with sidewalks she can find. It took a long time to find 3 miles of continuous sidewalk. Marie who lives across town isn't so lucky. She drives to the mall three mornings a week to walk even in great weather because there's no place nearby to walk.

A walkable community has sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, trails and other basic amenities corner by corner and block by block. Creating an environment where it is safe to walk anywhere, anytime takes time. If you're having trouble finding safe places to walk now, you need to know what to ask for and how to ask for it. Here's where to start.

Chances are that you have gaps in your sidewalk system as well as whole residential areas with few or no sidewalks. Sidewalks should be installed on both sides of all but the most rural streets. Check that sidewalks approaching and crossing bridges are wide enough to comfortably separate walkers from motorists. In those areas without curbs and gutters, asphalt walkways may be a better choice than a more permanent concrete sidewalk. Ideally, sidewalks should be separated from the road by a minimum 4 to 6 foot planting strip or boulevard. This separates walkers from cars and provides a place to plant trees.

Sidewalks should be required in all new housing and commercial developments. Make sure sidewalks aren't forgotten when a road is widened. Call your local planning and engineering departments to find out what the current policies are in your community.

If your hometown has lots of missing or broken sidewalks, find out if there is a plan to complete the system and a way of deciding which places are most important to build first. Make sure places that are used by school children, the elderly or people with disabilities, and locations that provide access to transit are given the priority you think they deserve.

Even when sidewalks are provided along busy streets, walking is still often difficult and dangerous. For example, it is not uncommon at a shopping mall to have to walk through a sea of asphalt and parked cars. This situation is particularly hazardous for children, seniors who walk slowly and people with disabilities. You should be able to get to buildings without being forced to walk through parking lots or landscaping.

In general, there are two ways to accomplish this:

1) buildings can be built directly adjacent to the street with parking on the side or back of the building; or

2) if buildings must be set back, a protected, landscaped sidewalk from the street to the building should be provided. ■

RIGHT: The needs of older walkers need to be considered in planning pedestrian facilities.
Photo: GOBoulder

Resources

- *A Policy on Geometric Design of Streets and Highways*, $62.50 from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, 444 N. Capitol St., #225, Washington, D.C. 2000.
- *Design of Pedestrian Facilities, Report of Recommended Practice*. Institute of Traffic Engineers Committee 5A-5, 525 School St., Suite 410, Washington, DC 20024.

Boulder, Colo., recently completed its Draft Sidewalk Program, which includes an inventory of existing sidewalks, locations without sidewalks, potential attractor, and other factors. Their plan proposes approximately $11 million worth of pedestrian-related improvements during the next five to seven years. Go Boulder, Box 791, Boulder, CO 80306.

Traffic is Too Fast. How Can I Slow It Down?

Andy Clarke, Pedestrian Federation of America

Andy wants to run errands on foot. Everything he needs—from convenience stores to multiscreen cinema—is within walking distance, but there are no sidewalks and traffic always goes much faster than the 40-mph speed limit. Even in his neighborhood, people drive too fast for comfort.

For more than nine out of 10 home-buyers, low traffic and quiet streets are the most important features they want—and yet high-speed traffic dominates our lives. People are scared to cross the street where they live, let alone the six-lane highway separating the bank and the post office. The federal government estimates seven out of 10 drivers regularly exceed posted speed limits, greatly increasing the likelihood and impact of hitting someone on foot.

Putting up speed limit signs doesn't make much of a difference, and the police don't have the resources to stop every speeding driver—so what can we do?

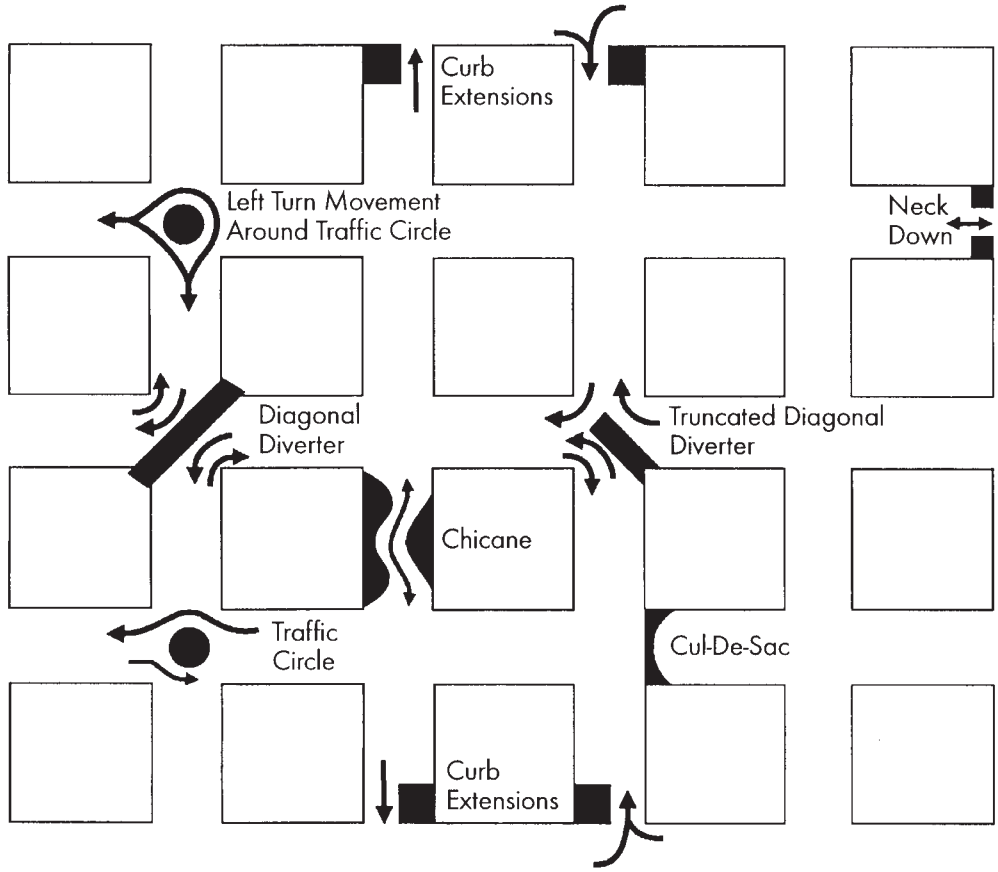
Communities throughout the United States are experimenting with speed humps, traffic circles, wider sidewalks at intersections and other self-enforcing measures that slow traffic down and make walking more inviting and safe.

Speed humps are popular and effective. In Fairfax County, Va., for example, average speeds have slowed from 40 to 25 mph, and traffic has been cut in half on residential streets with speed humps.

Traffic circles reduce the amount of through traffic, lower the speed of remaining cars and help improve the look of the neighborhood. In Seattle, Wash., more than 400 traffic circles have been built at the requests of residents.

Even something as simple as making street corners sharper can effectively slow traffic down. The Florida Department of Transportation designs street corners to be used at speeds below 10 mph for right turns.

Traffic speeds can be controlled on residential and main roads alike so motorists can still get where they want to go—but not at the expense of the community or people who want to be able to set foot outside their own front doors. ■



Resources

- *Walkable Communities: Twelve Steps for an Effective Program.* Florida DOT (904) 487-1200.
- *Municipal Strategies to Increase Pedestrian Travel.* Washington State Energy Office, 925 Plum Street SE, P.O.Box 43165, Olympia, WA 98504.
- *Residential Street Design and Traffic Control.* Institute of Transportation Engineers, 525 School Street SW, Suite 410, Washington, D.C. 20024.
- *Traffic Circles Video.* $20. City of Seattle Engineering Dept., 600 4th Ave., Room 708, Seattle, WA 98104.

LEFT:
Sidewalk extensions, diverters and raised medians can break the straight lines that encourage drivers to go too fast. They also provide greater protection for walkers.

Source: National Bicycling and Walking Study, Case Study #19.

I Can't Cross the Road. How Do I Change That?

Peter Lagerwey, Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator, City of Seattle, Washington

Kit and Paul have just moved to a small Midwestern community and discovered that hometown hospitality doesn't always extend to people trying to cross the street on foot, even in the picturesque, historic downtown known for its antique shops, and bed and breakfast inns.

There are three problems with the way streets are designed that spell trouble for people on foot.

1) Wide streets increase the amount of time you could be hit while crossing a street.

2) Intersections with wide corners or free-flowing right-turn lanes allow motorists to make turns at relatively high speeds.

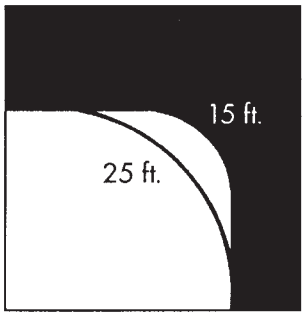
3) Parked cars may make it difficult for walkers to see oncoming cars and for motorists to see people waiting to cross.

One solution is to build "curb bulbs" at intersections by literally extending the sidewalk and curb out into the street. Curb bulbs and smaller curb radii can shorten the crossing distance, slow the speed of turning motorists, make it easier for walkers to see approaching traffic, and give motorists a better view of people waiting to cross.

Another approach is to install raised medians on wide roads. These give walkers a protected half-way point to stand in if they can't make it across the street during one traffic light cycle. However, at signalized intersections, it's important to install "pedestrian push buttons" on the median, so walkers don't get stranded in the middle of the street.

In addition, it may be necessary to remove car parking near intersections and at mid-block crosswalks so walkers and drivers can see each other. This is especially important where young walkers are common; it is very hard for drivers to see youngsters through parked cars.

Other factors to consider in making a specific street safer to cross include the number and types of walkers who are likely to use an intersection. For instance, the amount of time a traffic light gives people to cross the street needs to be longer in an area with many older adults, people with disabilities, and young children. The type, volume, and speed of motorized traffic is another important factor. So is sight distance—the distance from which motorists and walkers can see one another. Crosswalks should not be placed near a blind curve for just this reason.



Safe Routes to School

Andy Clarke, Pedestrian Federation of America

Ferrying children to and from school, soccer practice, music lessons and friends generates a lot of traffic. Our children have no independence, no opportunity to exercise and are constantly told it is just too dangerous for them to step outside their front doors.

One approach to making communities walkable to is focus on the area around schools and bus stops. Ask a group of students to show you on a map how they could walk to school or their bus stop. Have them identify where they don't have a place to walk, can't cross the street without fear, or have to go out of their way unnecessarily.

Using some of the ideas in this guide, draw up a list of possible improvements to the routes the students identify such as slowing cars down outside schools with speed humps. Involve PTA members, teachers, the school district, your traffic engineer, and your police chief.

Take these suggestions to your local city council or school board member—have the children present the ideas—and ask for their support and action. The streets should be safe enough for our children to walk safely to school. ■

RIGHT: Making sidewalks wider at intersections shortens crossing distances.

FAR RIGHT, ABOVE: Motorists can make wide turns (e.g. 25 foot curb radius) much faster than narrow turns (e.g.) 15 foot curb radius). The safety of pedestrians crossing the street has to be balanced with the need to allow trucks and buses to make turns without mounting the sidewalk.

People in Wheelchairs Can't Get Around. How Do I Change That?

Kit Keller, J.D., Public Policy Consultant

A few months ago, Will became a father, and baby Alex doesn't get to sleep too easily. Few of the streets around Will's home have sidewalks, and those that do, don't have curb cuts to let him lower his barely sleeping son from one sidewalk to the next. He is uncomfortable walking on the road in traffic with his precious child.

Obstacles in the sidewalk such as utility poles and newspaper boxes that make travel difficult or impossible for disabled people are often the same stumbling blocks that make walking unpleasant or unsafe for everyone. A field trip in wheelchairs to visit blocked sidewalks and those without curb ramps can help give staff and City Council a better understanding of the accessibility problems.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a detailed federal law that is still being refined. However, some parts of the law can help make your community more walkable for all everyone.

Making all streets more accessible

ADA was enacted to improve access and increase opportunities for people with disabilities. Specifically, the law requires that government services and facilities—including sidewalks and street crossings—are accessible to everyone.

A person in a wheelchair cannot cross the street if there is no cut in the curb and no ramp to the level of the street. Although ADA does not require cities to build curb ramps at every existing intersection, it does require an accessible route to the services, programs, and activities offered by government. The accessible route must approximate the most direct non-accessible route. ADA regulations also require curb ramps be installed when a new street or sidewalk is built or when an existing street is reconstructed.

How do I get curb ramps on my street?

ADA regulations required local governments to develop a transition plan by 1992 and implement it by January 26, 1995. Many communities are still working on their plans. Find out if yours is one of them.

If you need curb ramps at a particular location, start by asking to meet with the director of public works and/or engineering. Use these questions to guide your discussion:

1) What is our community's policy about installing curb ramps?

2) Does that policy call for a curb ramp at this intersection?

3) If not, does the policy meet ADA requirements?

4) Do we have an ongoing procedure for installing curb ramps on request?

5) Who else might share my concern (disabled groups, senior centers, preschools, PTAs)?

Potential pitfalls

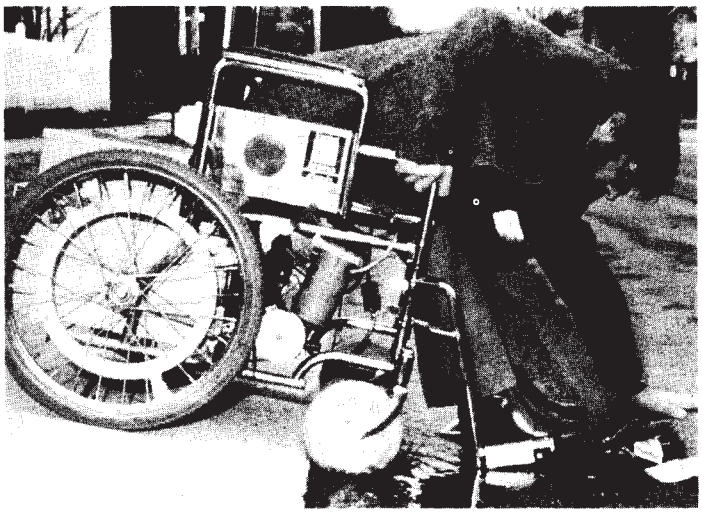
Remember that ADA does not necessarily require that each existing facility, such as a sidewalk, be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. A curb that is inaccessible now can remain so if a change would:

1) Result in undue financial or administrative burdens,

2) Cause fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or activity, or

3) threaten or destroy the historic significance of an historic property.

However, government agencies must still ensure people with disabilities receive the benefits or services of that inaccessible facility. ■



Resources

- The Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, D.C., 20004. (800) 872-2253 (Voice), (800) 993-2822 (TTY), (202) 272-5447 (Fax)
- ADA Information File, including ADA law and regulations. Your local library may have a copy of this comprehensive resource.
- Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 1331 F Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20004

LEFT: Properly designed curb cuts are necessary for people with disabilities .

Photo: The Access Board

What Can I Do?

- Contact your elected leaders
- Inventory local conditions
- Build a pedestrian advocacy group
- Plan a media campaign for $100

You've decided things have got to change in your community, and you are ready to take some action. The first step is to find out who in your local government is responsible for pedestrian issues. For instance, Missoula, Mont., has several people: a bicycle-pedestrian coordinator in the engineering department, two transportation planners in the planning department, another in the local transit agency, an open space planner, a parks planner and a trails coordinator. In addition, the local redevelopment agency, non-motorized transportation plan steering committee and bicycle-pedestrian advisory board also have influence over the walking environment.

Contact your elected leaders

Linda Tracy, Missoula City Council Member

Many people have just never stopped to think about walking and ways we can make conditions better. Your elected leaders are no exception and yet they make many decisions that influence the walking environment.

Contact your City Council member and county commissioner directly to ensure they know your concerns. You can write to your elected leaders following the advice given for writing a letter to the editor, but don't let this be your only contact. These folks, just like anyone else, may respond better to a phone call or a meeting. If you are calling, be brief, rational, reasonable and to the point. Ask for specific actions such as support for a project or policy.

Rather than meeting with your elected leaders in an office, it may be more effective to schedule a brief walking tour to illustrate your points as you talk. Try to schedule your walk during a time when the problems are evident—during rush hour, when school gets out or while there's snow on the ground. Anecdotes and personal experience are powerful persuaders. Be patient and persistent when scheduling a meeting, especially if walking is not high on your representatives' priority list. Listen carefully to their concerns and questions. Follow up promptly on any points discussed in your phone call, meeting or reply to your letter.

Also look for opportunities to talk to your elected leaders at public meetings, special ceremonies and dedications. Invite them to your neighborhood association meeting. At election time, especially, your representatives want opportunities to meet people and discuss issues.

If your views have not been met with an open mind, remain courteous and persistent. You may have to present your views repeatedly for them to take hold. Restate the problem you are trying to solve or prevent, and demonstrate others' support for your point of view. If you are still unsuccessful, consider running for office yourself or campaigning for someone else who supports your perspective. ■

6 points to make with your elected leaders

1) Walking is an excellent indicator of the quality of life in your community.

2) A vital, walkable downtown or neighborhood center with attractive places to walk and shop contributes to the local economy and attracts or keeps businesses in the community.

3) A walkable community also has a sense of place where people know and care about one another.

4) Children, senior citizens and people with disabilities can get around on their own.

5) As new housing developments and renewal projects are designed with walking in mind, as gaps in the sidewalk system are filled, and as street crossings are made safer, more short car trips can and will be made on foot.

6) A shift to more walking reduces air pollution, traffic congestion and parking demands.

RIGHT: Politicians should learn about walking conditions from current and future voters.

Photo: Anne Weaver, Sensible Transportation Options for People

Inventory local conditions

Where should you start improving your community's walking environment? How about in your own neighborhood? Often, we don't notice some of the nearby inhibitors to walking as we walk past on our way to work, shop or school. A neighborhood survey can help you see home ground with new eyes and generate a list of needed improvements to show local officials. Even within a 5-minute walk of your home, you will be surprised at what you find.

In creating your list, document your findings in specific detail. Don't just say sidewalks are missing; say where (for example, between 952 and 990 on the south side of Second St.). Carefully chosen photos and video footage can really help you make your point. Show your documentation to your engineering and planning departments and city council members. Ask them to fix things pronto! Some problems will take years to fix; so the sooner you let officials know about them, the sooner they can get started.

What conditions should you look for? Start with the Walker's Dirty Dozen. ■

LEFT:

Document local walking conditions with photos and maps.

Sidewalks that aren't plowed result in people having to walk in the street.

Not providing spaces for delivery vehicles is an invitation for them to park on the sidewalk.

Photos: Bruce Burgess

The Walker's Dirty Dozen

Physical Barriers:

1) Missing sections of sidewalk, especially on key walking routes (dirt paths may show you where these are).
2) Bad surfaces (uneven or broken concrete, uplifted slabs over tree roots).
3) Misuse (vehicles parked on sidewalk, clusters of newspaper boxes).
4) Bad maintenance (overhanging bushes or trees, unshoveled winter sidewalks).
5) Narrow width (no room for two people to walk side by side, utility poles in the middle of a sidewalk).

Dangerous Crossings:

6) Missing curb ramps, especially at key intersections.
7) Bad major street crossings, especially near schools or shops (no pedestrian signals, extra-wide roads with no refuge in the middle, high-speed right-turn lanes).
8) Motorists not stopping for people in crosswalks.
9) Barriers on potential walking routes (freeways, rivers, railroad yards).

Traffic problems:

10) High traffic levels or high speeds, especially near schools or parks.
11) "Rat runs" that let motorists sneak through neighborhoods to avoid busy arterial streets.
12) Documented history of crashes or near misses (ask around for your neighbors' experiences and get police to look into their records).

"When you advocate, organize."
- Saul Alinsky

Resources:
- *Rules for Radicals,* Saul Alinsky, Vantage Books.
- *Community Organizing.* George Brager, Columbia University Press.
- *Do It! Let's Get Off Our Buts.* John Roger and Peter McWilliams, Prelude Press.
- *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders.* Si Kahn, McGraw-Hill Paperbacks.

Build a pedestrian advocacy organization

Charlie Gandy, Pedestrian Federation of America

You want to be able to get around your community on foot but can't even get across the street let alone 10 minutes from home? Think about organizing—just as senior citizens, lawyers, and neighbors do to promote their interests. Changing policies and getting projects to the top of the priority list is a political process, and organizing political power is a time-honored technique for real change. It is the first, essential step for participating in the political process, and the rewards can be dramatic.

The art of organizing people is messy and full of different personalities, strong egos, opinions and feelings of ownership and turf. Ultimately, however, it is one of the most rewarding challenges you can undertake. You will enrich your own life and those of many others. You'll hone your leadership skills and learn to overcome the challenging obstacles in your way.

The first step in organizing an action group is for you, as an individual, to recognize and accept the premise that, as a group, walkers can do more to improve conditions than you can do alone—no matter how talented you are or how much time you have to give. By focusing your energy and efforts on organizing, you can create a sustainable organization of walkers capable of remaining active and effective for years to come.

The next step is to talk up the idea of a pedestrian action group wherever you go. Look for other walkers who are ready to work for change and know how to get things done. Don't forget that bicycle riders, joggers and hikers also share many of the same needs. Work together for common goals. Check out the books at your library on community organizing. The same techniques apply whatever the issues. By getting organized, you can begin to make real changes. ■

12 Things Your Pedestrian Group Can Do

Nancy Christie, Board Member, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Advocacy groups are made up of people with many different skills and comfort levels. Pick the actions that will work best for you.

1) As individuals, commit a certain percentage of your energies to pedestrian issues. Do not be overwhelmed. An hour a week, every week, could make a great difference, especially multiplied by each member of your group.

2) Organize educational seminars in your neighborhood for interest groups to discuss pedestrian issues. Ask other organizations to provide you with programs and guidance.

3) Let your local planning and engineering staff and elected officials know that your organization exists and get on their mailing list for transportation-related matters, including meeting announcements and agendas.

4) Write letters to city, county, state and federal officials.

5) Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

6) Write to a television or radio station and request programs about pedestrian issues and alternative transportation in general. Prepare a two-minute statement about being a pedestrian and call it in to a local radio or television talk show.

7) Arrange and/or attend demonstrations for pedestrian rights. Get a large group of people to cross the street repeatedly at a highly visible intersection. Have them carry signs with pedestrian slogans. At least a week before your demonstration, send a press release to the local media describing the event. Invite the television news team to join you.

8) Attend government hearings to express opinions about pedestrian issues and legislation.

9) Become campaign workers for a ballot measure or bill that affects pedestrians. Campaign for a politician who actively supports pedestrian goals.

10) Ask members to become experts on one aspect of being a pedestrian and become a resource for others. Offer your members as speakers to groups.

11) If you have access to electronic mail, join and contribute your comments to PedNet, an Internet mailing list (for information, send a message to pjudd@europa.com). You'll be in touch with pedestrian activists worldwide.

12) Walk whenever you can and get others to walk with you. As you walk, think of more steps you can take toward improving the pedestrian environment for everyone.

Plan a media campaign for $100

Kristin Merriman, magazine editor

Walking only appears in the newspaper when a child darts into the road or a charity sponsors a walk-a-thon to raise money. So where are all the stories about the challenges of walking to get around town? They're articles waiting to happen, and you can ensure they do by providing a reliable source of information and quotes.

Begin by making a list of local newspapers (daily and weekly), magazines and TV and radio stations. Identify editorial page writers, local news broadcasters and reporters who cover transportation, environment, business and community issues. Also add local columnists, talk show and public affairs show hosts to your list.

The next step is to become recognized as a knowledgeable source for facts and comments on walking issues by regularly contacting people on your list. One way to do this is to send clear, concise press releases on a regular basis. Try to keep your release to one double-spaced page with wide margins. If you need to provide more information, attach a fact sheet. Your first paragraph should include what is happening, who is doing it, and, if appropriate, when and where it is happening. Further develop these ideas and include quotes in the paragraphs that follow. Deliver only one message at a time. Use brief anecdotes, if possible, to make your point. Indicate the end of your release by typing "end" at the bottom of the page. If you are writing from an organization, include a one-sentence description of what the group stands for.

Find out which TV and radio stations do their own local news coverage and make sure to include the news directors on your contact list. Ask about becoming a guest on locally produced talk shows and public affairs shows. Create 30-, 20-, or 10-second public service announcements for radio announcers to read on the air. Check out the opportunities on your local cable access channel if you have one.

On the average, you can get a year's worth of media coverage for less than $100. This more than covers the stationery, photocopying and postage costs of sending four press releases a year to each contact on your media list. By sending press releases and public service announcements, calling your contacts regularly, appearing on talk shows and your cable channel, you, and more importantly, everyone else, will begin seeing more of the kind of walking coverage you want. ■

Resources:
Check the reference section of your local library for newspaper, TV and radio station addresses and phone numbers in *Editor and Publisher Yearbook*, and *Broadcasting Yearbook*.

Write a letter to the editor

Kristin Merriman, magazine editor

You're not even finished reading the morning paper and already you're seeing red. How could that front page article be so biased? You want action, revenge even. You want to pound something—how about pounding out a letter to the editor? After all, the letters page is the most-read section in many newspapers. In your first draft, get out all your frustration and then toss at least half of it. Rewrite the remainder into a persuasive letter that leads readers down the logical path to the truth.

Here are some tips to make your letter stand out. First, what's the point? Appear calm, knowledgeable, and reasonable. Second, get to the point. Your letter should be short, between 250 and 500 words, so focus on no more than two or three points of disagreement. Third, keep to the point. An outline can help. In the first paragraph briefly reference the article in question. Be clear from the beginning where you stand on the issue. Cite sources that support your view and show you know your subject. Be concise and specific. Use strong, action-oriented verbs. The fourth tip is to finish strong. Your last sentence leaves your reader with a final impression, so focus on your message. Be sure to include your name, organization (if your letter represents one), your address and phone number. And, finally, make your point today—now! Timeliness is a key factor in whether or not your letter gets printed.

Writing a letter to the editor doesn't take long, and it's a great way to reach thousands of people in your community, get free media coverage for your ideas, influence the political arena, and participate in public debate.

What Should I Ask For? Six P's of Pedestrian Advocacy

- Pedestrian program
- Pedestrian plan
- Professional expertise
- Policies
- Projects
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Resource

• 1995 Seattle Sample Pedestrian Program Workplan; City of Seattle Engineering Dept., 600 4th Ave., Room 708, Seattle, WA 98104.

To make your community walkable, your ultimate objective should be to institutionalize walking at every level of government. What this really means is integrating walking into all routine government operations. If you can work with your elected leaders and government staff to institutionalize walking, the business of making your community more walkable can become almost automatic.

The most effective way you can make walkers' needs routine is to ask for six things:

1) a pedestrian program and full time staff,

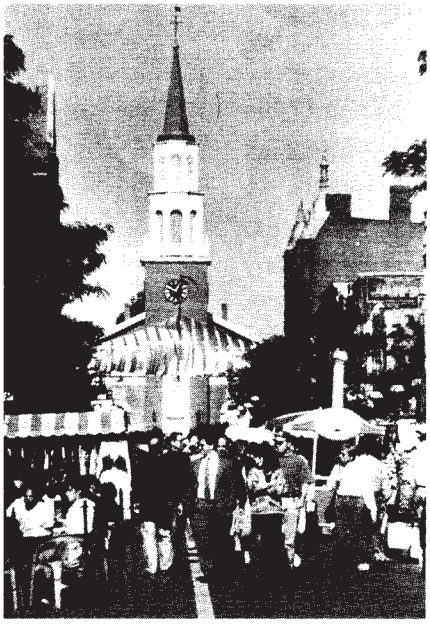
2) a pedestrian plan,

3) transportation planners and traffic engineers trained in pedestrian planning and design,

4) policies and procedures that encourage walking,

5) projects that create more well-designed walking facilities, and

6) a pedestrian advisory committee.



ABOVE: The Church Street Marketplace in Burlington, Vt., is a popular destination for residents and tourists. *Photo: Mark Sasahara*

Pedestrian program

Many of the best communities for walking have an active pedestrian program and a pedestrian program manager on the city or county staff. A pedestrian program focuses attention on walking and develops policies, programs and projects to improve conditions. The program manager's office can be an important place to begin in an otherwise confusing bureaucracy.

The city of Seattle, Wash., has a successful program that reviews and revises city policies, works on state legislation to improve safety, identifies specific projects to improve sidewalks and crosswalks, and coordinates enforcement and education campaigns. The pedestrian program manager works closely with other city agencies to ensure every new building project—ballpark, train station, or highway—plans for people walking.

Without a program and staff, all of this work can easily get lost or overlooked. In an ideal world, this wouldn't be necessary. Until all transportation departments make walking a routine part of their work, this is an important step to make communities walkable.

Pedestrian plan

Federal transportation law requires every state and metropolitan area to have a long-range plan to improve conditions for walking. The plan has to be part of the overall transportation plan and should include

• A set of goals and targets for walking to be met in 20 years

• An inventory of existing conditions and needs

• An action plan to implement necessary changes.

Since walking is such a local activity, every community should have its own plan to improve conditions for walking. Ask your elected officials if and when this is going to happen.

If your community wants to use federal money for any kind of transportation project, that project must be consistent with the long range plan.

Professional expertise

Professional training in pedestrian issues is critical because this field is not typically included in university transportation planning, civil engineering and public administration programs. Therefore, the goal is to educate traffic planners and engineers to automatically incorporate pedestrian-friendly features and requirements into everything they do. In Florida, for example, the Department of Transportation has trained more than 2,000 local engineers. To find out how and why to sponsor a Walkable Communities training workshop for planners and engineers, contact the Pedestrian Federation of America at 202/463-6622.

Policies and procedures

Pedestrian-friendly policies and procedures can automatically prevent barriers that might otherwise be automatically built. The needs of people on foot were never considered when most of the policies and procedures implemented in your community were created. Examples of pedestrian-friendly policies include roadway design standards that require sidewalks to be at least 5 feet wide, ordinances such as requirements to include pedestrian access in new developments maintenance and sweeping of wide paved shoulders in more rural areas.

Projects

The way to improve walking in your commu nity is not just through the building of new facilities but also through repairing unsafe or inaccessible existing ones. Improvements not only become a reality through separate pedestrian projects, but also through the review of much larger transportation projects to determine how walking traffic will be accommodated and how new facilities connect seamlessly with existing ones. Draw up a list of projects and submit it to your local council.

Pedestrian advisory committee

Federal transportation law requires public participation on projects and plans where federal dollars will be spent, and many states and local governments have similar policies. Even so, an informed, organized and active public that advocates for walking improvements and monitors their implementation is essential for success. Pedestrian action groups can not only call for the creation of a pedestrian program and solid pedestrian planning but can also help legitimize walking in the minds of the public and public agencies. Your group's work can help champion walking projects and programs so they receive the priority they deserve. Citizen advocacy and input can also take the form of a task force or an advisory group to a particular project or the overall pedestrian or transportation program. ■

Tired of Waiting? Try a Radical Pedestrian Action

Walkers in Portland decided they had been cut-off, cut-up and intimated by cars just one too many times: they decided to get radical and take back their place on the street. In a series of actions, members of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition asserted their right to cross the road at selected intersections where motorists usually refused to stop—even though they are required to stop by state law.

The first action saw 50 placard wielding demonstrators crossing and recrossing the street. Before motorists approached the intersection they saw a series of short Burma Shave type signs: "As you hurry..." "...home today..." "...give pedestrians..." "...the right of way."

For more information contact the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, Box 2252, Portland, OR 97208.

Photo: Ellen Vanderslice

FEDERAL LAW PROMOTES WALKING

In December 1991, Congress passed transportation legislation that created many opportunities to improve conditions for walking. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)

- Requires every state to have a pedestrian/bicycle coordinator,
- Requires every state and metropolitan area to have a pedestrian and bicycle plan,
- Makes walking improvements eligible for almost all categories of federal transportation money,
- Established a special "transportation enhancements" program to fund a range of activities including trails and sidewalks.

For more information, contact the Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1400 16 th St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036. For a copy of *Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions Under ISTEA*, call the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse at (800) 760-6272.

Resources:

- *National Bicycling and Walking Study Reports:*
Case Study 21. Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Considerations into State and Local Transportation Planning, Design and Operations.
Case Study 22. The Role of State Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinators.
Case Study 23.The Role of Local Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinators.
National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse. (800) 760-6272.

Where Can I Get More Help?

"We have inside ourselves fragments of strength and assets that can be used only when linked with the missing pieces of resources in others."
—Bob Rodale

Pedestrian advocacy is in its infancy in the United States. Although millions of people want to walk and would walk more if conditions were better, they are not typically organized into action groups or a strong constituency. However, there are places you can go for more information and help.

Pedestrian Federation of America

The Pedestrian Federation of America (PFA) is part of the larger Bicycle Federation of America (BFA), a Washington, D.C.- based organization with a mission of making communities more bicycle-friendly and walkable. The BFA has a wide range of publications on bicycle and pedestrian issues and produces a monthly newsletter with news and information about communities that are becoming more walkable.

For more information about the PFA, write to 1506 21st Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20036, and ask for a publications list and a copy of *Pro Bike News.*

Rodale Press

Rodale Press publishes books and magazines such as *Prevention, Bicycling, Runners' World* and *Men's Health* to show people how they can use the power of their bodies and minds to make their lives better.

In addition to covering walking issues in *Prevention* Magazine, Rodale Press offers two other sources of support and information.

Prevention's **Coalition to Make America Walkable** exists to restore walking as the most convenient means of transportation and exercise in all parts of the community. The coalition seeks to raise public and legislative awareness to encourage laws and policies that both protect and encourage travel by foot.

Pathways for People is a Rodale Press campaign to encourage walkers, bicyclists, joggers and hikers to work together at the local level to improve their access to the transportation system. Two national opinion polls have been commissioned by Pathways for People to discover how many people in the United States walk, and how many would if conditions were better. The results of the 1995 survey appear on pages 3,4,6 and 7 of this guide.

For more information about the Coalition to Make America Walkable and/or the Pathways for People campaign write to Rodale Press, 33 East Minor Street, Emmaus, PA 18098.

National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse

The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse (NBPC) makes referrals and distributes U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration documents. These resources include:

- The National Bicycling and Walking Study
- 24 Case Study Reports developed for the National Bicycling and Walking Study
- Pedestrian reports published by the Federal Highway Administration
- List of state pedestrian coordinators.

For more information contact the NBPC at 1506 21st St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036, (800) 760-6272 (toll-free), (202) 463-6625 (Fax), nbpc@access.digex.net (e-mail).

Other Organizations

- Rails-to Trails Conservancy
  1400 16th St. NW, Suite 300
  Washington, DC 20036
- Surface Transportation Policy Project
  1400 16th St. NW, Suite 300
  Washington, DC 20036
- Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
  P.O. Box 2252
  Portland, OR 97208
- Walk Boston
  156 Milk ST.
  Boston, MA 02109
- Walk Austin
  P.O. Box 1568
  Austin, TX 78767
- Walk New York
  299 West 12th St.
  New York, NY 10014
- Sensible Transportation Options for People
  15405 SW 116 Ave., # 202B
  Tigard, OR 97224
- Ottawalk
  Box 52036, 41 York St.
  Ottawa, Ontario CANADA K1N 5S0
- International Federation of Pedestrians
  3500 Race St.
  Philadelphia, PA 19104

PUBLICATIONS

- *Prevention* Magazine, 33 East Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098
- *Walking* Magazine, 9-11 Harcourt St., Boston, MA 02116
- PedNet, an international pedestrian mailing list on Internet. Send message to pjudd@europa.com or call 508/223-1597
- *Reclaiming Our Streets Newsletter,* Portland Office of Transportation, Bureau of Traffic Management, 1120 S.W. Fifth , Room 730, Portland, OR 97204
- *Accommodating the Pedestrian: Adapting Towns and Neighborhoods for Walking and Bicycling.* Richard Unterman. Van Nostrand Reinhold Co.
- *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns: Better Living with Less Traffic.* David Engwicht. New Society Publishers.
- *The Pedestrian Pocketbook: A New Suburban Design Strategy.* Doug Kelbaugh. Princeton Architectural Press.
- *The Solution to Urban Traffic and a New Vision for Neighborhood Livability.* Sensible Transportation Options for People, Tigard, OR.
- *Towns and Town Making Principles.* Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberg. Harvard University.
- *Trails for the 21st Century.* Karen Lee Ryan. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1400 16th St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.
- "Walking to Work Works Wonders," "Easy Walking Workplace," and "Stepping Out Safely." Brochures from Washington State Energy Office, 206/956-2161.
- *Pro Bike/Pro Walk 94 Resource Book.* Bicycle Federation of America, 1506 21st St.NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036.
- *Developing Pedestrian Plans: Pedestrian Coordinators Manual.* Florida Department of Transportation, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program, 605 Suwannee St. MS-82, Tallahassee, FL 32399.
- *Florida Pedestrian Safety Plan.* Florida Department of Transportation, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program, 605 Suwannee St. MS-82, Tallahassee, FL 32399.
- *Model Elder Pedestrian Summary Plan.* Florida Department of Transportation, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program, 605 Suwannee St. MS-82, Tallahassee, FL 32399.
- *Pedestrian Accident Reduction Guide.* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NTS-23, 400 Seventh St. SW, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Pedestrians and Traffic Control Measures.* Charles Zegeer, National Cooperative Highway Research Program Synthesis of Highway Practice: 139, Transportation Research Board, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418.
- *Pedestrian Safety Law Enforcement Strategies Manual.* National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NTS-23, 400 Seventh St. SW, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Planning and Implementing Pedestrian Facilities in Suburban and Developing Rural Areas.* JHK & Associates,National Cooperative Highway Research Program Synthesis of Highway Practice: 294A, Transportation Research Board, 2101 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20418.
- *Walk Alert: National Pedestrian Safety Program Guide.* The National Safety Council and the Federal Highway Administration. National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse. (800) 760-6272.
- *The Pedestrian Agenda.* Pedestrian Federation of America, 1506 21st Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036

"The infrastructure for automobile travel includes not only the street and highway system, but also safe levels of lighting, ubiquitous parking facilities, and a proliferation of signs, signals, and controls aimed at ensuring a safer driving experience. Assuming the need for [pedestrian] travel exists, it is perhaps this type of commitment to a mode that is needed to ensure it acceptability and success."

—Federal Highway Administration, 1981

National Bicycling and Walking Study

On April 22, 1994, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced a new national target: to double the percentage of trips made by foot and bicycle in the United States while reducing the number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists by 10 percent.

These goals were outlined in the National Bicycling and Walking Study, a Congressionally mandated report that looks at the potential to increase bicycling and walking. The study recommends every state and city adopt a five point plan

- Organize a pedestrian/bicycle program.
- Plan and construct needed facilities.
- Promote walking and bicycling.
- Educate pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists.
- Enforce traffic laws on pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists.

Source: Final Report, National Bicycling and Walking Study. National Bicycle and Pedestrian Clearinghouse. (800) 760-6272.

Pedestrian Federation of America
1506 21st Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

What You'll Learn Inside This Guide

In December 1991, Congress passed transportation legislation that created many opportunities to improve conditions for walking.

People want to live in communities with sidewalks, greenways and trails, and they want their public agencies to provide and maintain good pedestrian facilities.

Regular walking also has great benefits in the workplace. People who are more fit are more productive, are absent less often, have fewer injuries and are more satisfied with their jobs.

By focusing your energy and efforts on organizing, you can create a sustainable organization of walkers capable of remaining active and effective for years to come.

The average cost to society of a pedestrian-motorist crash is $312,000 or a total of more than $32 billion each year.

For additional copies of this guide, send $2 per copy to:
Pedestrian Federation of America
1506 21st St., N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036

Not getting enough exercise is the biggest contributor to heart disease in this country —more than high blood pressure, cholesterol, and smoking, as more people have these medical problems than exercise regularly.