Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Featuring:

- Event Coordinator’s Guide
- Survey Leader’s Guide
- Model Presentation
- Sidewalk and Streets Survey

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Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Introduction

Education and Outreach is providing the Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit to help State Offices conduct workshops and surveys to help improve community walkability. This pilot edition, available exclusively on the InfoNet, is customizable to best meet community needs.

Why conduct a Walkability Workshop?

Walkability Workshops tap into the passion and pride that people have for their communities. Residents come together to survey an area’s walkability—its safety, comfort and appeal—and, in the process, they consider what is important to their quality of life. After all, walkable communities offer tremendous benefits for their residents. They promote health, foster community cohesion, and provide overall connectivity that contributes to well-being at all life stages. They are also associated with higher home sales values!

Walkability workshops and surveys provide a way for State Offices to “tell our story” by holding an event where AARP is actively listening to members, interested in their concerns and needs. State Offices that have organized walkability surveys before tell us they gained devoted volunteers (and developed valuable coalitions) around community improvements that 50+ consumers care deeply about. The materials within the toolkit will also help states that conduct Complete Streets campaigns.

What’s in the toolkit?

The Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit builds upon the Sidewalks and Streets Survey Toolkit originally posted by Create The Good. The new toolkit provides the following modules:

1. Introduction
2. Event Staging Checklist – shows tasks and timeline at a glance
3. Event Coordinator’s Guide – a how-to guide for the State Office staff person who coordinates the workshop and survey event
Appendix

A. Survey Leader’s Guide – a how-to guide for volunteers who lead the surveys
B. Model Presentation (Powerpoint) – shows why walkability is important and what to look for during the survey (including examples with photos)
C. Sidewalks and Streets Survey – revised to help survey teams more easily assess the safety, comfort and appeal of sidewalks and streets in their community
D. Evaluation Form – allows you to directly enter your comments about the toolkit
E. Sample Outreach Materials – includes Key Contacts to Invite and a sample flyer, invitation, media advisory and engagement card
F. Sample Complete Streets Materials – includes outreach, legislative and other items to help states that choose to conduct a Complete Streets advocacy campaign.
G. Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit (PDF) – complete toolkit in PDF format so you can quickly print the entire document for review.

Most of the toolkit pieces are provided on the InfoNet in Word or PowerPoint so that they can be revised as desired.

What else can be done to improve walkability and livability?

This toolkit focuses on making survey observations that require relatively simple solutions to improve walkability. However, improvements toward walkability and livability often entail considerations such as Complete Streets principles, land use, redevelopment and road design.

State Offices can achieve greater impact by linking survey results to efforts seeking passage or implementation of Complete Streets policies and legislation. To assist those states that choose to engage in Complete Streets advocacy, Appendix F contains actual materials used by the New York State Office to conduct their Complete Streets campaign.

We encourage you to adapt the toolkit resources for your own workshop and survey needs. After you stage a workshop and survey event, let us know how it went by submitting the Evaluation Form. We look forward to your comments.

Thank you to the State Offices of Alabama, Arkansas, Hawaii, Indiana, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont for contributing ideas and materials to this toolkit.
## Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

### Event Staging Checklist

The modules in this toolkit will help you (the Event Coordinator) conduct a workshop and survey that successfully engages volunteers in improving walkability in their community.

It is best to start planning about seven weeks before the workshop. The following timeline will help you prepare. Each task is discussed in more detail in the Event Coordinator’s Guide.

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Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Event Coordinator’s Guide

1.0 Getting Started

1.1 Determine walkable areas to survey

Map out some walkable areas that can get community members to and from where they need to go. This could be in residential neighborhoods or near places of worship, a shopping center or a senior center. Have pedestrians been hit by cars in the area? Is sidewalk repair a problem? Are there other factors that reduce the number of walkers in the area? Local partner organizations may be helpful in identifying areas to cover. Asking for their suggestions will help build interest in the workshop as well.

Contact your local partners very early in the process and update them regularly. Draw on their local insight, knowledge, contacts and influence to ensure the success of the workshop. See more about Key Contacts to Invite in section 2.1 below and in Appendix E.

A walkable area could be as small as one intersection, or could include several streets and intersections. Consider starting small with one or two intersections and a connecting street, to make follow-up more manageable.

1.2 Consider level of improvements needed

When choosing which areas to survey, also consider: How extensive are the improvements needed? Will your workshop participants be satisfied to seek the simpler solutions to improve walking safety, comfort, and overall appeal? Are more comprehensive solutions likely to be required?

Section 6.0 presents a range of follow-up activities for your consideration. If this is your first such workshop event, consider pursuing the simpler solutions first. Use the event as a stepping-stone to build your coalition and keep moving forward toward more comprehensive solutions.

1.3 Choose a date and time for the workshop

Consult your local partner organizations for the best date and time for holding the workshop.

1.4 Coordinate facility and logistics

Secure meeting space

The meeting space where the majority of the workshop activities will be held should be large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of attendees and comply with the Americans
with Disabilities Act. A typical location would be a city hall, community center, school or recreation center.

The meeting space should be within a reasonable walking distance of the walking survey area. If this is not possible, you will need to arrange transportation.

Arrange furniture needs

Confirm the location’s seating arrangement for participants (e.g., classroom, theater style or horseshoe). Make sure there is a table for registration, and another table for refreshments.

Arrange AV equipment needs

Arrange for required AV equipment (e.g., LCD projector, laptop computer, screen, extension cords, podium and sound system).

2.0 Invitations and Outreach

2.1 Key contacts to invite

Inviting the right people to your event—neighbors, civic leaders, and key governmental and institutional contacts—will help make the workshop truly interactive. It also helps make follow-up actions easier because the people who can help make improvements will be part of the process all along. See Appendix E for a list of Key Contacts to Invite.

Inviting persons with physical disabilities—or baby strollers in tow—can help the survey teams identify real-world barriers to mobility. You can also provide survey team members with mobility aids such as walkers or crutches, to encourage them to be sensitive to mobility barriers.

2.2 Recruitment of Survey Leaders

Survey Leaders are important to the success of your workshop. They will be responsible for each survey team from the time they leave the meeting location until they return. You will need to recruit one Survey Leader per survey team. See the Survey Leader’s Guide for the leader’s specific duties both before and during the workshop event.

Survey Leaders do not need prior knowledge to lead their teams effectively. They do need to be comfortable guiding others, and to be willing to carry out the activities listed in the Guide.

2.3 Composition of survey teams

Based on anticipated attendance and the number of walkable areas you will cover, estimate the number of survey teams desired at the workshop so that you can recruit one Survey Leader per team. We suggest that each team have a minimum of eight participants—two each to partner on Sections A, B, C and D of the survey. However, in a pinch, you could get by with seven
participants, with the Survey Leader filling in as the eighth. There is no maximum number per survey team.

You may want to spread the participation of your special guests and influencers, such as city officials or business leaders, among all the survey teams. Other special considerations include:

- Which walkable areas would you like certain participants to see most?
- Which participants have interests in particular locations?
- Which participants can best help you re-imagine streetscapes?
- Which participants can best help to solve problems that the survey teams may find?

When you finalize your participant list, write a survey team number on each name tag. This will make it easy to assemble the survey teams in their appropriate meeting spots during the workshop.

2.4 Outreach materials

Appendix E provides a sample invitation, flyer, media advisory and engagement card for you to customize. You can recruit additional participants by posting the Workshop event on the Create The Good Website at www.createthegood.org.

2.5 Social media

To use social media most effectively, organizations need to do more than disseminate information. The real power of social media lies in the ability to generate dialogue and engage people in discussion. If you or your local partners already have active social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, use them to begin a discussion about walkability and to generate interest in the workshop. However, if strong social media platforms don’t already exist, trying to create any in advance of the workshop is unlikely to produce meaningful results.

2.6 Complete Streets campaigns

If your State Office is involved in Complete Streets advocacy, Appendix F has materials you can adapt and integrate into your outreach efforts.

3.0 Getting Ready for the Workshop Event

With your local partner organizations, establish a working group to whom you can delegate many of the support tasks that follow.
3.1 Preparing for the workshop

Registration

Assign volunteers to greet visitors, sign them in, and distribute name tags and surveys.

Agenda

Develop the agenda and insert as slide #1 of the PowerPoint presentation. Keep this slide visible until the meeting is ready to begin. See the Model Presentation for a sample agenda.

Plan for approximately three hours to stage the entire event from Welcome through Debriefing. A key time variable will be the survey. It will take about 30-45 minutes to complete the full survey. Add time as appropriate for travel to and from the survey area.

Refreshments

Assign volunteers to assist with setting up refreshments (to be served after the walkability survey), restocking and clean-up. Also, have plenty of water bottles on hand, and have volunteers offer them to participants as they head out to do the survey.

3.2 Preparing for the presentation

Customize Model Presentation

The Model Presentation includes a script in the Notes pages to accompany the slides. Most of the slides have photos to help participants envision what to look for during the survey. If you have time, take photos of your own walkable area, then replace or supplement some of the presentation’s photos with your own. Showing familiar locations can help participants relate even better to the walkability survey to come.

Other local information you may wish to add includes:

- Data on pedestrian and motor vehicle fatalities and more; see State Specific Fact Sheets on Older Driver/Pedestrian Safety and Complete Streets for your state at http://infonet/SocialImpact/AdvocDept/Issue_Transportation.htm.
- State walking and bicycling data; see State Fact Sheets from the Alliance for Bicycling and Walking at http://www.peoplerowedmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/alliance_2010_benchmarking_report_information_findings/#statefactsheets.
- History of your walkable area and any street construction or area redevelopment plans.

Be sure to revise the first slide (agenda) with specific times for your workshop, and the last slide with your contact information.

Practice presentation
Practice your customized presentation as needed.
3.3 Preparing for the survey

Order/gather materials

Order the following items as needed and gather for use during the walkability survey:

*For All Survey Participants*

- Street maps of the walkable area to be surveyed. You can print out a map from Google Earth or other online mapping site, and highlight the streets to cover.
- Surveys
- Clipboards, notepaper, pens
- Reflective vests (optional)

*For Survey Leaders Only*

- Digital camera
- Stopwatch to time traffic signals
- Mobility aids such as walkers, crutches and canes (optional).

The Survey Leader’s Guide instructs Survey Leaders to return all items to you. It also tells them how each item is used. Note that the street maps only need to be returned if the survey participants note locations on them where changes are needed.

Send items to Survey Leaders

The Survey Leader’s Guide provides Survey Leaders with instructions on how to prepare for the survey, and how to lead their survey team. Send the guide, survey document, and map of the walkable area to each Survey Leader and review with them at a pre-workshop meeting.

Be sure to complete the two text boxes in the guide where indicated. Also, if your workshop will not utilize all of the survey materials listed, delete references to those materials from the guide.

Meet with Survey Leaders

We suggest that you meet or talk with Survey Leaders a week before the workshop to review duties with them and answer any questions.

3.4 Preparing for the debriefing (Walkscore)

Did you know your community probably has a Walkscore? A Walkscore is a rating of walkability based on availability of nearby amenities such as schools, stores, parks and restaurants. Workshop participants will find it interesting to compare their own survey ratings to Walkscore’s during the debriefing.
Calculate your Walkscores by entering survey area addresses at [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com). Note your Walkscore ratings and their descriptions, which may range from:

- **90–100 Walker's Paradise** — Daily errands do not require a car.
- **70–89 Very Walkable** — Most errands can be accomplished on foot.
- **50–69 Somewhat Walkable** — Some amenities within walking distance.
- **25–49 Car-Dependent** — A few amenities within walking distance.
- **0–24 Car-Dependent** — Almost all errands require a car.

### 4.0 The Workshop

#### 4.1 Opening

Once your preparations are complete and participants have registered, you can proceed with your agenda. The Walkability Workshop is ready to begin!

Welcome the audience, and thank your facility hosts and organizers. Introduce any special guests and explain their roles. It may be appropriate to have them say a few words as well.

You may wish to have the audience do self-introductions, stating their name, any agency affiliations, and why they were interested in coming today. You may also conduct a brief ice-breaker exercise if you like.

#### 4.2 Presentation

Review the agenda that is projected on the screen with the participants. Proceed with the presentation, using the Notes pages of the Model Presentation.

#### 4.3 Survey

The presentation slides and Notes pages include instructions for the participants on how to conduct the survey and how to assemble into survey teams. After the presentation, it is time to let the Survey Leaders take over. You may wish to accompany a survey team, or to remain available at the workshop facility. See the Survey Leader’s Guide to become familiar with their activities both before leaving the workshop, and during the survey.

Set up snacks for participants to take as they settle back in after the survey.
5.0 Debriefing

5.1 Discuss findings

Ask participants to sit with their survey teams. Ask some overall questions of the groups, such as:

- What kind of road users did you see? (e.g. ages, levels of mobility, and ways of getting around, such as wheelchairs, walkers, bicycles, skateboards, and baby strollers)
- What did you see that works well?
- What did you see that needs improvement?
- Any stories to tell about particular perils for pedestrians?

Give the survey teams about 20 minutes to huddle and:

- Rate the walkability of each section of their survey in Survey Sections A-D
- Rate the overall walkability of their survey area in Survey Section E
- Note the ten biggest priority areas for improvement. Note some things (like broken pavement on a sidewalk) are easier to fix than others (like moving a telephone pole obstruction from a sidewalk).

Ask participants to hand their survey forms to their Survey Leader. Ask the Survey Leader to report on:

- The location of the area surveyed
- The overall walkability ratings
- The top five desired improvements (limit to five in the interest of time).

Now that participants have determined their survey area ratings, tell them how Walkscore rated them, and discuss. Do participants agree or disagree, and why? After discussion, note that Walkscore is based on nearby amenities such as schools, stores, parks and restaurants—and does not account for factors such as street and community design, safety from crime and crashes, topography (such as hills) and weather.

5.2 Consider and discuss next steps

Early in your workshop planning, consider what general actions you may want to take to improve walkability. Review Section 6.0 below to see just some of the many options available. Once you finish discussing findings, talk with your workshop participants, guests, and larger coalition to discuss next steps.

Staff from transportation and planning agencies should be especially helpful in shaping productive ideas to address issues found during the survey. Publicly ask the decision-makers present to follow through with improvements, and commend them for their offers of assistance.

The Arkansas State Office handled discussion of findings and next steps by facilitating a 90-minute debriefing. In small groups, participants identified specific projects and then gathered projects into clusters on a blue sticky wall.* By the time the debriefing concluded, the group had
reached consensus about its goals and priorities. The State Office then worked with its coalition partners to prepare a Pathway Improvement Plan for community review and incorporation into the community’s master street plan.

* The blue sticky wall is a facilitation tool developed for use in Community Impact Workshops. See http://www.ica-usa.org/store/products.htm.

5.3 Adjourn workshop

Thank your participants, hosts and special guests for their participation and support, and encourage their continued participation.

6.0 Begin Follow-up Activities

This section provides many options for follow-up activities to mix and match to improve walkability. Which activities should you choose? Consider:

- The extent of changes needed
- The amount of support you have to seek changes
- The amount of support you have to implement changes
- The finances required to make changes
- The timeframe for making changes
- The level of effort you and your supporters are prepared to invest.

Given these considerations, use these activities as a starting point to determine which course of action may work best for your community and circumstances:

- For simpler problems such as broken sidewalks or streetlights, graffiti, or potholes, try SeeClickFix at www.seeclickfix.com. Enter the nature and location of the problem. More and more government agencies are responding to reported issues.

- Follow up with city officials and others who offered their assistance at the workshop or sent staff to cover the event.

- Hold a follow-up meeting with transportation or planning officials to consider how best to make improvements, and whether plans for road design or development should be created or modified.

- Compile data, maps and photos from the surveys into a final report to present to the appropriate body that can take action, e.g. the city council or agency boards.

- Work with local leaders to push for needed changes, articulate desires, and draft and adopt a plan for community improvements such as sidewalks or bike lanes.
Seek to develop new (or strengthen existing) Complete Streets policies for decision makers and agencies to consider so that all road users will be accommodated in future plans. See Appendix F for materials facilitating a state-wide advocacy campaign. In addition, the National Complete Streets Coalition offers workshops on how to more effectively balance the needs of all users and routinely create and maintain complete streets. See [www.completestreets.org/changing-policy/workshops](http://www.completestreets.org/changing-policy/workshops) for more information.

Work with local and regional committees that can help to promote implementation of identified improvements. Examples of committees include local or regional transportation, aging and disabilities commissions and citizens advisory committees to the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) or local government.

Form a committee to determine a comprehensive approach to improving walkability, including considerations about land use and redevelopment.

AARP and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute have developed a module for an active living workshop that engages communities in making their streets and neighborhoods more walkable and livable. The focus is on building healthy communities by applying the principles of active transportation, Smart Growth and Complete Streets. For more detailed information and to schedule a workshop for your community please contact Jeanne Anthony at [janthony@aarp.org](mailto:janthony@aarp.org).

Keep in touch with workshop participants to include them in your activities and keep the momentum moving forward. Use the workshop sign-in sheet and invitation list to keep supporters engaged, and to keep them connected to other State Office local and state activities as well.

Also continue outreach efforts to the rest of the community, using the contacts and traditional and social media discussed in Section 2.0, Invitations and Outreach.
Survey Leader’s Guide

Your Walkability Workshop Event Coordinator is:

Name ________________________________
Contact Information ____________________

Your Survey Team Number is ____

Thank you for volunteering as a Survey Leader for the upcoming Walkability Workshop. Your participation will help everyone on your survey team have a great experience as you work toward the goal of enhancing community walkability.

This guide explains your duties as a Survey Leader. Some details may change, so when in doubt, check with your Event Coordinator. You can review this Guide with your Event Coordinator at a meeting that will be held:

Date ________________________________
Time ________________________________
Location ________________________________

What are my responsibilities?

At the Walkability Workshop, one or more survey teams will be formed to conduct walkability surveys. As a Survey Leader, you are responsible for one survey team from the time they leave the meeting location until they return. You will lead the team as they jointly make observations about features that work well and features that can be improved.

How should I prepare?

Your Event Coordinator will provide you with a map of the walkable survey area and a copy of the survey document. Your team may not be familiar with the survey area. They almost certainly will not be familiar with the survey document, so please review it well.
Walk the mapped area ahead of time and consider any features you may want to point out to your survey team. The survey document will help you steer the team toward the types of observations that will be helpful. You may need to voice some initial observations to help participants “get their feet wet” before they start making observations on their own. A presentation will be given at the Workshop that will further explain what to look for and how to fill out the survey.

How are survey teams formed?

Each participant will have a number on their name tag that corresponds to a survey team. For example, if you are leading team #2, after the workshop presentation, the Event Coordinator will ask participants with #2 on their tag to join you in a designated spot in the meeting room.

Each team will have a minimum of eight participants. You will assign at least two participants to partner on each of the four sections of the survey (Sections A-D). However, in a pinch, you could get by with seven participants, with yourself filling in as the eighth. There is no maximum number per survey team.

What materials are needed?

The Event Coordinator will provide you with several items to distribute and use during the walkability survey. Note that you need to return all items to the Event Coordinator.

For All Survey Participants

- Street maps of the walkable area to be surveyed
- Surveys
- Clipboards, notepaper, pens
- Reflective vests (optional)

For Survey Leaders Only

- Digital camera
- Stopwatch to time traffic signals
- Mobility aids such as walkers, crutches and canes (optional).

What instructions do I give the survey team?

- With at least eight people on your team, assign at least two participants to be partners on sections A-D of the survey. If you only have seven participants, you can help out on the section lacking a partner.
- Give a clipboard, paper and pen (total of four each) to at least one partner assigned to each section to make filling in the survey easier.
- If your survey area covers an intersection with a traffic signal or crosswalk signal, give the stopwatch to someone assigned to Section A (Crossing the Street) to time the signals and record on the survey.
- Assign someone to take photos with the digital camera.
• Let team members know that everyone can have a “job.” For example, all participants can observe and contribute to the survey, and suggest things to photograph.
• Take a moment to ask if there are any questions about the survey.
• Guide volunteers to walkable area.
• Monitor time and get volunteers back by that time.

How can I help my team conduct a successful survey?

• Walk the team through the survey, answer questions, point out problems, and suggest photos.
• Initially point out features that work well and those that need improvement until participants “get their feet wet” and start making their own observations.
• Encourage input from all participants.
• Encourage participants to try out mobility aids, if available.
• Take photos (or assign someone to do it) of:
  o Good and not-so-good features
  o Survey team in action for social media, reports or other follow-up uses
• Remind participants to be safe! Ask them to look out for themselves while they are looking around.
• Make sure that participants return to the workshop on time.

What happens when we return to the workshop?

Your Event Coordinator will lead a debriefing session to help determine next steps for the findings the survey teams have made. During this session, your survey team will huddle to rate your survey area. You will be asked to report on the team’s findings.

Thank you for your help! Be sure to contact your Event Coordinator with any questions you may have.
Complete Streets Workshop

1:00 pm  Welcome
1:15 pm  Presentation: Complete Streets and Survey
2:00 pm  Conduct Walkability Survey
3:00 pm  Debriefing and Refreshments
4:00 pm  Adjourn
Welcome!

Today’s Objectives

• Learn how to make your community safer and more enjoyable for walking

• Conduct a walkability survey

• Be part of the solution to make things better
Why do walkable communities matter?

- Connected
- Friendly
- Safe
- Healthy
Why else do walkable communities matter?

• Encourage use of public transportation

• Reduce traffic congestion and pollution

• Increase property values

• Improve quality of life
What is a Complete Street?

Safe access for road users of all ages and abilities
Walkers…
Public transportation users...
Bicycle riders...
And drivers, too.
What a Complete Streets policy would do (and NOT do)

• Guide transportation planners and engineers
• Require plans when roads newly built or redone
• Require explanation if can’t accommodate all users
• Allow some exemptions
• May not require any additional funds
Complete Streets and walkability go hand in hand
What does a walkable community look like?
A. Crossing the Street
In many communities, it’s all about the car.
Crosswalks and median islands
Curb cuts
Tactile strips
B. Sidewalks
No sidewalks
No more of this!
Obstacles, anyone?
C. Driving Behavior and Environment
Photo by: Ed Stollof
Bikes versus cars
Bike lanes can be as cheap as paint!
D. Security, Comfort and Appeal
Photo by: New York City Department of Transportation
Does congestion interfere with a pleasant walk?
Would you want to wait at this bus stop?
Aspiring to What Can Be

Photo by: Dan Burden
PBIC Image Library
“Getting There From Here”

Before

- No bike lane
- No sidewalks
- Poor lighting
- No marked crossings
- No signage

Photo by Dan Burden, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
“Getting There From Here”

- Bike lanes
- Sidewalks
- Street lighting
- Street crossings
- Bus stop shelter
- Street signage

After

Photo by Dan Burden, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute
Be open to solutions
Team Assignments

• Section A: Crossing the Street (Intersections or mid-block crossings)
• Section B: Sidewalks
• Section C: Driver Behavior and Environment
• Section D: Security, Comfort and Appeal
DIRECTIONS:

For each observation, check all columns that apply:

• **True**  This statement describes what I saw (or, “I saw this”)

• **False**  This statement does not describe what I saw (or, “I didn’t see this”)

• **!!!**  Needs urgent attention, fixing or change (explain under Notes)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you see that helps pedestrians cross</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the street safely?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Long blocks have marked mid-block crossings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:*
Section B
What do you see that helps pedestrians walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This area has sidewalks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If no sidewalks, mark False and go Section C.

Notes:
Things to observe and try

• Diversity of road users: ages, mobility, ways of getting around

• What works well and what needs improvement

• Photo opportunities

• Put yourself in others’ shoes
Contact Information

Name
Title
Cell Phone
Email
Appendix C

Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Thank you for participating in the AARP Sidewalks and Streets Survey, designed to help make walking in your community safe, comfortable and enjoyable for all. The survey contains the following sections to guide and record your observations about your survey area:

Section A: Crossing the Street (Intersections or Mid-block Crossings)
Section B: Sidewalks
Section C: Driver Behavior and Environment
Section D: Security, Comfort and Appeal
Section E: Overall Walkability Ratings and Observations

Each section asks you to rate your streets or intersections as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. Here’s what each rating means:

- □ Excellent: Area is very walk-friendly and safe
- □ Good: Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe
- □ Fair: Area is minimally walk-friendly and safe
- □ Poor: Area is not walk-friendly and safe.

As you make your observations and ratings:

Consider what might especially be helpful for a child, senior or person with disabilities. Features that help them will also make the sidewalks and streets safer and better for all.

When you return to the workshop, survey teams will rate their walkable areas, discuss findings, and consider next steps for improving your community’s walkability.
TO BE COMPLETED BY SURVEY LEADER:

Name______________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________________________________

Email_________________________________________________________________

Phone_________________________________________________________________

Number of participants on survey team: ______

Walk survey area:

County ___________________________ City/ Town __________________________

State _______ Zipcode _____________
Section A: Crossing the Street (Intersections or Mid-block Crossings)

Please complete one Section A page for each intersection you observe within your walkable area. We suggest allowing 20-30 minutes per intersection.

Intersection observed:
Location at ___________________________ and ______________________________

Street Name 1                  Street Name 2

Day of week:  _________________________         Time observations began: _____
 a.m.   p.m.

Date:               _________________________         Time observations ended: _____
 a.m.   p.m.

DIRECTIONS:

For each observation, check all columns that apply:

• True – This statement describes what I saw (or, “I saw this”)
• False – This statement does not describe what I saw (or, “I didn’t see this”)
• !!! – Needs urgent attention, fixing or change (explain under Notes)

A note about Notes:

• If statement is not exactly True or False – mark the closest answer and explain under Notes.
• Be sure to explain any !!! items under Notes
• Also use Notes or your map to record exact location of your observation, including a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west).
## Section A (cont.)
What do you see that helps walkers cross the street safely?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|1. The crossing has a traffic signal.  
*If no crossing signal, mark False and go to 2.* | | | |
|   | | | |
|   | Note time allowed at signal to cross street (minutes: seconds) _____: _____.  
*and complete the following:* | | | |
|   | a. Walkers don’t have to wait too long before crossing. | | | |
|   | b. The signal gives people walking at average speed sufficient time to cross. | | | |
|   | c. The signal gives people walking more slowly sufficient time to cross. | | | |
|   | d. The crossing also has a pedestrian signal, e.g. Walk/Don’t Walk or a countdown timer. | | | |
|Notes:| | | |

|2. The road has a median.  
*If True, can walkers wait safely there?* ☐ Yes ☐ No | | | |
|Notes:| | | |

|3. The road is narrow enough for walkers to cross safely. | | | |
|Notes:| | | |

<p>|4. Crossing provides a marked crosswalk, flashing light or other means to cross safely. | | | |
|Notes:| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A (cont.)</th>
<th>What do you see that helps walkers cross the street safely?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Crossing is free of obstacles blocking view of traffic, such as parked cars, trees or other obstructions.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Long blocks have marked mid-block crossings.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Safety features exist and work as intended. For example:</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If no safety features, mark False and go to 8.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Push–to-walk signal works properly.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Crosswalks are marked in a way that drivers will clearly see them.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Curb cuts are provided.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If no curb cuts, mark False and go to 9.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Curb cuts are in good repair.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Curb cuts are textured or grooved to alert people with visual impairments that they are about to enter the street.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Curb cuts are aligned with the crosswalk, so visually impaired people are properly directed to the crosswalk.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Curb cuts provide a gentle, gradual incline.</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section A (cont.)
What do you see that helps walkers cross the street safely?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. Bottom of curb cuts touch the road (no ledge or drop-off between curb cut and street).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Curb cuts are wide enough to accommodate larger wheelchairs, suitcases, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

9. Other observations and ideas for improvement

---

**Section A: Overall rating of street crossings in walk survey area**

- **Excellent**
  - Area is very walk-friendly and safe

- **Good**
  - Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe

- **Fair**
  - Area is minimally walk-friendly and safe

- **Poor**
  - Area is not walk-friendly and safe
**Section B: Sidewalks**

Please complete one Section B page for each street where you observe sidewalks within your walkable area.

Intersection observed: 
Location at ___________________________ and ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name 1</th>
<th>Street Name 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day of week: ___________________________  Time observations began: _____ a.m.  _____ p.m.  
Date: ___________________________  Time observations ended: _____ a.m.  _____ p.m.

**DIRECTIONS:**

For each observation, **check all columns that apply**:

- **True** – This statement describes what I saw (or, “I saw this”)  
- **False** – This statement does not describe what I saw (or, “I didn’t see this”)  
- **!!!** – Needs urgent attention, fixing or change (explain under Notes)

A note about **Notes**:

- If statement is not exactly **True** or **False** – mark the closest answer and explain under Notes.  
- Be sure to explain any !!! items under Notes.  
- Also use Notes or your map to record exact location of your observation, including a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Section B</strong></th>
<th><strong>What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?</strong></th>
<th><strong>True</strong></th>
<th><strong>False</strong></th>
<th><strong>!!!</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?</strong></td>
<td><strong>True</strong></td>
<td><strong>False</strong></td>
<td><strong>!!!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. This area has sidewalks  
  If no sidewalks, mark False and go Section C. | | | | |
| **Notes:** | | | | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Section B</strong></th>
<th><strong>What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?</strong></th>
<th><strong>True</strong></th>
<th><strong>False</strong></th>
<th><strong>!!!</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?</strong></td>
<td><strong>True</strong></td>
<td><strong>False</strong></td>
<td><strong>!!!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The sidewalks are continuous, with no gaps or missing segments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section B (cont.)</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>!!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The sidewalks are free of obstacles that make walking difficult, such as poles, signs, shrubs, dumpsters, low hanging trees, cars, trucks, or vendors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The sidewalks are wide enough for two people to walk together side by side.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The sidewalks are in good repair (smooth, even, and not broken or cracked).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The sidewalks have a buffer (space) between traffic and sidewalk e.g. grass or trees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The sidewalks are free of busy driveways where drivers may run into walkers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B (cont.)
What do you see that helps walkers walk safely and comfortably on the sidewalks?

8. Other observations and ideas for improvement

Section B: Overall rating of sidewalks in walk survey area

- [ ] Excellent
  - Area is very walk-friendly and safe

- [ ] Good
  - Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe

- [ ] Fair
  - Area is minimally walk-friendly and safe

- [ ] Poor
  - Area is not walk-friendly and safe
### Section C: Driver Behavior and Environment

Please complete one page for the entire walkable area on your survey map.

Day of week: _________________________         Time observations began:   □ a.m. □ p.m.
Date:                     _________________________         Time observations ended: □ a.m. □ p.m.

**DIRECTIONS:**

For each observation, **check all columns that apply**:
- **True** – This statement describes what I saw (or, “I saw this”)
- **False** – This statement does not describe what I saw (or, “I didn’t see this”)
- **!!!** – Needs urgent attention, fixing or change (explain under **Notes**)

A note about **Notes**:
- If statement is not exactly **True** or **False** – mark the closest answer and explain under **Notes**.
- Be sure to explain any **!!!** items under **Notes**.
- Also use **Notes** or your map to record exact location of your observation, including a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section C</th>
<th>What do you see that helps drivers drive safely near walkers?</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Drivers stop at stop signs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Drivers obey traffic signals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Drivers drive at posted speed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Drivers yield to walkers, especially at right turns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section C (cont.)</td>
<td>What do you see that helps drivers drive safely near walkers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Drivers stay clear of crosswalk while waiting at a red light.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Drivers look for walkers and cars when leaving or backing out of driveways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Drivers refrain from making unexpected turns or maneuvers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Drivers focus on driving (for example, not using cell phones or otherwise driving distracted).</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Signs for drivers or walkers are easy to understand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Area is free of traffic congestion that would interfere with safe walking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Roads have designated lanes for bicyclists.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If True, do the lanes help bicyclists and cars safely share the road? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Notes:
### Section C (cont.)
What do you see that helps drivers drive safely near walkers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Other observations and ideas for improvement

**Section C: Overall rating of driver behavior and environment in walk survey area**

- **Excellent**: Area is very walk-friendly and safe
- **Good**: Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe
- **Fair**: Area is minimally walk-friendly and safe
- **Poor**: Area is not walk-friendly and safe
Section D: Security, Comfort and Appeal

Please complete one page for the entire walkable area on your survey map.

Day of week: _________________________         Time observations began: _____  a.m.  _____  p.m.
Date:               _________________________         Time observations ended: _____  a.m.  _____  p.m.

DIRECTIONS:

For each observation, check all columns that apply:

- **True** – This statement describes what I saw (or, “I saw this”)
- **False** – This statement does not describe what I saw (or, “I didn’t see this”)
- **!!!** – Needs urgent attention, fixing or change (explain under Notes)

A note about Notes:

- If statement is not exactly True or False – mark the closest answer and explain under Notes.
- Be sure to explain any !!! items under Notes.
- Also use Notes or your map to record exact location of your observation, including a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section D</th>
<th>What do you see that makes the community feel secure, comfortable and more visually appealing?</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People are outdoors walking, socializing, relaxing, and otherwise enjoying the area so that walkers feel secure, comfortable, and welcome as they walk through.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Dogs were observed on street.

   If True, are dogs on leash?  □ Yes  □ No

**Notes:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Street is clean and free of graffiti, litter and trash.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Street was observed after dark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If True, was street well lit?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Traffic noise is low enough, and congestion is light enough, to allow pleasant walking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Street has shade trees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Street has landscaping, such as grass or flowers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Street has benches and places to rest.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Section D (cont.)
**What do you see that makes the community feel secure, comfortable and more visually appealing?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. Street has a bus/train stop.

If True, does the stop also have:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A shelter?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A bench?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. A litter can?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Shade?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:

10. Other observations and ideas for improvement

---

### Section D: Overall rating of security, comfort and appeal in walk survey area

- **Excellent**
  - Area is walk-friendly and safe

- **Good**
  - Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe

- **Fair**
  - Area is minimally walk-friendly and safe

- **Poor**
  - Area is not walk-friendly and safe
Section E: Overall Walkability Rating and Observations

Once you return to the workshop, tally your scores from each observation section. Place a √ below next to each rating from the previous sections.

Section Rating

A: Crossing the Street
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

B: Sidewalks
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

C: Driver Behavior and Environment
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

D: Safety, Comfort and Appeal
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Overall rating

Your Overall Rating will be more than just your checkmark total. Think about your observations as a whole. Were some areas much better or worse than others? For example, the sidewalks might be Good for walking, but intersections might be Poor for crossing the street. This might justify adjusting the Overall Rating of your walk survey area. With this in mind:

Overall Rating of the entire walk survey area:
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Additional comments on what works well and what needs improvement:

Notes:

Thank you for participating and making your community more livable for everyone.

AARP would like to thank the Institute of Transportation Engineers for providing the original content for this survey.
Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Evaluation Form

Please type comments directly onto the form and forward to:

Jeanne Anthony
Education and Outreach, Livable Communities
janthony@aarp.org

1. Please rate each of the following Workshop modules. Use the Comments section to note any particular likes or dislikes about that module.

   - Event Staging Checklist
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:

   - Event Coordinator’s Guide
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:

   - Survey Leader’s Guide
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:

   - Model Presentation (PowerPoint)
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:

   - Sidewalks and Streets Survey
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:

   - Sample Outreach Materials
     □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
     Comments:
2. When you conducted your Walkability Workshop event, did you do some things differently than suggested in order meet your community’s needs?
   □ Yes □ No
   If yes, what did you change?

3. What suggestions do you have on how the materials could be improved?
   • Event Staging Checklist:
   • Event Coordinator’s Guide:
   • Survey Leader’s Guide:
   • Model Presentation (PowerPoint):
   • Sidewalks and Streets Survey:
   • Sample Outreach Materials:
   • Sample Complete Streets Materials:
4. Are there additional materials you think should be included in the Toolkit?
   □ Yes  □ No

   If yes, what materials do you suggest?

5. Please note any other suggestions or comments you have about the Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit.

   Comments:

   Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey
Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Key Contacts to Invite

Here is a list of organizations, people and common job titles that can help make your Walkability Workshop a success, and whose ideas and cooperation can make implementation easier after the workshop ends.

Citizens/Citizen Groups

- Neighbors of all walking ability levels
- AARP Chapters
- Advocacy or Volunteer Organizations such as environmental and health groups
- Disability Rights/Advocacy Organizations
- Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization
- Environmental Groups
- Walking Clubs
- Bicycling Clubs
- College student-service organizations
- Faith Organizations
- Other Citizen Action Groups
Local Business

Business representatives (such as the local Chamber of Commerce, the president of the largest private employer in the region, or chairperson of the tourism council)

Members from a Main Street group, Downtown Development Authority, or Business Development Districts

Local (and some Regional and State) Government

Local Engineering/Public Works/Transportation Department, such as:
- Director
- Traffic engineer
- Transportation planner
- Other key staff members
- Pedestrian coordinator (could be state level)
- Bicycle coordinator (could be state level)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator (could be state level)
- Local or State Safe Routes to School (SRTS) coordinator

Local Planning Department (director, city/town/urban planners, key staff members)

Members of a Metropolitan Planning Organization

Parking Management/Parking Enforcement

Transit Administration/Transit Services

Local Department of Aging

Health Department (educators)

Parks and Recreation

City Manager and Mayor

City/County Councilperson

Law Enforcement (chief of police, head of traffic section, and police traffic safety enforcement officer)

Other Safety Organizations
Media

Newspaper

Television

Radio

Social Media
Help make **Town Name** a safer, easier place to walk

Join AARP **State Name** for a Walkability Workshop and survey of sidewalks & streets

To be held:
- **Date and Time**
- **Place Name**
- **Place Address**

Wear comfortable clothes and prepare to learn and enjoy. We will walk only a short distance.

*Refreshments will be served*

Call AARP at your phone no. or email **name@aarp.org** to get involved.
Dear [Addressee]:

A walkable community is a healthy, thriving place—one that helps people of all ages and abilities get where they need and want to go. AARP [State Name] is holding a Walkability Workshop, to be held on [Date] from [Start-End Time] at [Place Name and Address]. We would be delighted or honored to have you and your staff (if an official) participate.

The purpose of the workshop is to make [Town Name] a safer, more enjoyable place to walk. As part of the workshop, we will form survey teams to rate nearby sidewalks and streets and answer questions such as:

- Can I safely and easily walk on my sidewalks?
- Do I have enough time to get across the street?
- Is this a secure, comfortable and appealing place to walk?

We will only walk a short distance. Please wear comfortable clothes and be prepared for changeable weather (umbrella, sunglasses etc.). After the survey, we will serve refreshments and discuss the survey findings.

**Ending for residents:**

We hope you will join us and work together to make [Town Name] a more walkable community. For more information about the workshop or to volunteer, contact [Contact Name] at [Phone No.] or e-mail [name@aarp.org].

Please join us on [Date] and be prepared to learn, enjoy, and make a difference!
**Ending for officials/special guests:**

Your participation or knowledge, assistance etc. would greatly add to the success of the event. We hope you will join us and work together to make Town Name a more walkable community. Please let me know as soon as possible if you can attend. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have at Phone No. or e-mail name@aarp.org.

**Ending for all:**

Sincerely,

Sender’s Name
Title

SN:tnv
AARP State Name Holding Workshop to Make Town Name More Walkable

AARP State Name is holding a Walkability Workshop to make Town Name a safer, more enjoyable place to walk. Residents, local leaders, transportation officials and others will come together to survey and rate nearby sidewalks and streets, discuss findings, and follow through to help people of all ages in Town Name get where they need and want to go.

WHAT:

AARP State Name is channeling the pride that people take in their communities into improving the walkability of their sidewalks and streets. Workshop participants will visit several locations or name one location, if only one to evaluate and rate walkability, using a survey developed by AARP. Among the questions they will answer:

- Can I safely and easily walk on my sidewalks?
- Do I have enough time to get across the street?
- Is this a secure, comfortable and appealing place to walk?

Results of the surveys will be shared with policymakers, engineers, and others concerned with making Town Name a safer, more comfortable, and more appealing place to be.

WHEN:

Date and Time

WHERE:

Place Name and Address

WHY:

AARP has found that 40 percent of adults age 50 and older reported inadequate sidewalks in their neighborhoods. More sobering, nearly 50 percent reported they cannot safely cross main roads close to their home. Half of those who reported such problems said they would walk, bicycle or take the bus more often if these problems were fixed. About one-third of Americans do not drive, so walkable and walk-friendly streets are essential not only for seniors, but for children, people with disabilities, and those who walk to stay healthy.
CONTACT:
Press Contact
Title
Phone (office)
Phone (cell)
Walkability Workshop

Please return this completed form to stay involved AND enter to win a prize! Prize is optional

Name: ___________________________ Address: ___________________________
Phone: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Please check all that apply:

I am:
☐ An AARP member/volunteer
☐ A concerned citizen
☐ I am with a community organization
☐ I am with a business related group
☐ I am with a public/government agency
☐ Other __________________________

Yes, I want to stay involved
☐ I would like to stay informed about future events and activities related to walkability and improving my community
☐ Please keep in touch with me by e-mail about AARP activities, events, and member activities
Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit

Featuring:

- Event Coordinator’s Guide
- Survey Leader’s Guide
- Model Presentation
- Sidewalk and Streets Survey
Act Locally

For Complete Streets
Introduction

Complete Streets Advocacy Materials

The New York State Office developed materials to engage community leaders in helping pass local Complete Streets ordinances during a week-long campaign. Called “Act Locally for Complete Streets,” we are providing these advocacy materials in their original formats to assist other State Offices that are seeking to pass Complete Streets policies or legislation at the local or state level.

How are the “Act Locally for Complete Streets” materials different from the Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act Locally for Complete Streets</th>
<th>Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary purpose is to pass Complete Streets legislation or policy, while also improving local communities and fostering engagement</td>
<td>Primary purpose is to improve local communities and foster engagement, with optional promotion of Complete Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed to conduct multiple surveys across the state in a time-defined campaign (NY campaign was one week)</td>
<td>Designed to conduct multiple surveys in a single community in a single day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many aspects of these two approaches can be mixed and matched to support each other. If you are pursuing, or considering pursuing, Complete Streets policies or legislation, use the Act Locally for Complete Streets materials to help bring your campaign to the next level. They serve as excellent companion tools to the Advanced Sidewalks and Streets Toolkit.

AARP would like to thank the National Complete Streets Coalition for providing the enclosed Fact Sheets called *Create Livable Communities* and *Complete Streets: Improve Mobility for Older Americans.*
Dear Complete Streets Advocate:

Thank you for your interest in having a local Complete Streets ordinance passed in your community. As you know, creating more communities where people can walk safely and comfortably enhances the quality of life for everyone.

Enclosed in this packet you will find many tools to help you and your community pass a local Complete Streets ordinance:

- 5 Steps to A More Walkable Community
- Intersection Survey Form*
- A Model Complete Streets Ordinance
- Sample testimony
- Complete Streets fact sheets
- Complete Streets Benefits background
- A sample quote, media advisory and press release
- Sample letters to the editor

In addition to the enclosed materials, more resources can be found at the National Complete Streets Coalition Website (www.completestreets.org).

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 212-407-3736 or wstoner@aarp.org if you would like additional information or assistance. I look forward to working with you to create a voice for Complete Streets and enhance the walkability of your community.

Sincerely,

William I. Stoner
Associate State Director for Livable Communities
AARP New York

Notes

* This is the original Sidewalks and Streets Survey toolkit
5 Steps to a More Walkable Community

1. Contact town, village or county official(s).

Whether you know a local official already or if this is your first time reaching out, sharing the enclosed fact sheets about Complete Streets can help inform him or her to the benefits of a more walkable community. When you contact an official, ask this person to be the lead on a Complete Streets effort in the community.

2. Share model Complete Streets Ordinance.

AARP and partners have been instrumental in passing several local ordinances on Complete Streets. Using the enclosed model ordinance may help expedite the process in your municipality.

3. Engage neighbors, friends, AARP, and community partners in your efforts.

After you reach out to your local official with the preliminary materials, you may want to schedule a meeting to discuss the materials. Meeting with other town officials can also help get them on board with creating a more walkable community. Use these materials to inform them of the benefits and create a launch pad for letting your passion for safer streets be heard. One way to do this is to give a local example of an inadequate intersection. A good example to use is an intersection that is considered unsafe or in disrepair. Illustrate the issues that need to be fixed and use this as an opportunity to discuss how a Complete Streets ordinance that creates a more walkable community can enhance community planning going forward.

4. Make public comment at hearing of a town, village, or county meeting

Use the enclosed public comment language as a basis for your comments at a town meeting or public hearing. Some town meetings have a public open comment period where any issue can be discussed. In other instances, this language can be used as formal testimony at a hearing set to discuss safer streets, a more walkable community, or aging in place concerns. Be sure to customize it with the local knowledge you have on your community. Some examples could be incorporating a personal story or including up-to-date information on a particular ordinance being considered.

5. If the legislation passes – CELEBRATE and work with your AARP office on pertinent language to send out a press release highlighting the value of your more walkable community.

If it does not pass, do not give up! Repeat the steps above or consult with your AARP office on tactics that can be used to engage others in your community to create a larger voice for Complete Streets in your community.
Complete Streets Testimony

This year the first baby boomer turned 65 setting off what will be an unprecedented growth of the state's older population. By 2025, nearly 20 percent of New York's population will be over the age of 65. Along with the population shift comes a change in the paradigm of retirement. More and more, older people are staying in their homes and communities with the goal of remaining independent and living active, vital lives.

Unfortunately, many of New York's streets and roads create barriers for people who want to age in place and remain active. New York ranks third in the nation for pedestrian fatalities for people over 65. Twenty-two percent of traffic deaths in New York involve pedestrians -- twice the national average. According to a recent AARP report, nationally, most people over age 50 feel their neighborhoods don't have adequate sidewalks and nearly half feel that streets near their homes are not safe to cross on foot.

Despite these disheartening statistics, more than two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers have not begun to consider the needs of older people in street planning.

There is, however, an approach to road design that can help residents of our community get around safely. Complete Streets legislation {insert resolution number before the legislative body if appropriate} will ensure that when the roads of {Insert Community Name Here} are planned, the needs of all users and modes of transportation are taken into consideration.

The ordinance would require pedestrian accommodations, such as crosswalks, lane striping, curb cuts, sidewalks and timed crossing signals, to be considered, where they are appropriate, in the planning of roads.

This legislation would not only benefit older adults. Complete Streets benefit transit users, bicyclists, people with disabilities and pedestrians of all ages -- including youth traveling to school and mothers pushing strollers.

Safe and accessible roadways and sidewalks are a vital link in our transportation system. They help older New Yorkers access essential community services, stay active, and give back to their communities as they age. More importantly, they save lives by creating safer streets for people of all ages. The livability of our communities depends on having safe travel choices.

Respectfully submitted,

Name

Address
Once the local ordinance has passed, your local media may be reporting on it. Below is a suggested quote that you or your media contact can provide to the media.

“AARP is pleased that {Insert Town Name} has joined other communities across the state by passing a Complete Streets resolution,” said {Insert Contact Name, title}. “Accessible roadways and sidewalks are not only a critical link in our transportation system, they are vitally important to helping {Insert Town Name} residents access essential community services, stay active, and give back to their communities,” added {Insert Last Name of Contact}.
RESOLUTION NO. 448 JULY 14, 2010
ADOPTING A SUSTAINABLE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
FOR THE TOWN OF BABYLON

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman McVeety and seconded by Councilman Henry:

WHEREAS, “Complete Streets” are defined as roadways that enable safe and convenient access for all users, including bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors; and

WHEREAS, “Sustainable Complete Streets” are defined as Complete Streets with elements of design, construction and operation that also serve environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, streets that support and invite multiple uses, including safe, active, and ample space for pedestrians, bicycles, and public transportation, are more conducive to the public life and efficient movement of people than streets designed primarily to move automobiles and trucks; and

WHEREAS, promoting pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation travel as an alternative to the automobile reduces negative environmental impacts, promotes healthy living, and is less costly to the commuter; and

WHEREAS, the full integration of all modes of travel in the design of streets and highways will increase the capacity and efficiency of the road network, reduce traffic congestion by improving mobility options, limit greenhouse gas emissions, and improve the general quality of life; and

WHEREAS, many studies show that when roads are better designed for bicycling, walking and transit use, more people do so; and
WHEREAS, the design and construction of new roads and facilities should anticipate future demand for biking, walking, and other alternative transportation facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets are supported by the Institute of Traffic Engineers, the American Planning Association, and many other transportation, planning and public health professionals;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Babylon, that the Town hereby establishes and adopts a Sustainable Complete Streets Policy whereby all street projects, including design, planning, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, or operations, by the Town of Babylon shall be designed and executed in a balanced, responsible and equitable way to accommodate and encourage travel by bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and their passengers, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, in accordance with established Best Practice Design Guidelines for Complete Streets and Sustainable Complete Streets; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town of Babylon shall provide for the needs of drivers, public transportation vehicles and patrons, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, operations, and maintenance activities and products; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town shall view all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers in the Town and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system.

VOTES: 4  YEAS: 4  NAYS: 0

The resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.
The streets of our cities and towns are an important part of the livability of our communities. They ought to be for everyone, whether young or old, motorist or bicyclist, walker or wheelchair user, bus rider or shopkeeper. But too many streets are designed only for speeding cars, or worse, creeping traffic jams. They are unsafe for people on foot or bike — and unpleasant for everybody.

Incomplete streets deny citizens safety, choice

Most of us think of America as the land of choices. Yet, in just about any community built in the last 50 years, there is pretty much one choice for transportation: the car. The more sprawling our communities — low density, scattered development linked by busy, high-speed, multi-lane roadways — the more we are limited to our cars.

Even where daily destinations are close to home, incomplete streets too often make them inaccessible by foot, bicycle, or public transportation. They are cut off by cul-de-sacs that increase walking distance, or by high-speed roads lacking bike lanes, sidewalks, comfortable transit stations, or safe crossings. While some streets do provide a safe pedestrian environment, it may not be a pleasant one — the absence of benches, scarce landscaping, and storefronts set back from the sidewalk do little to encourage walking.

The heavy reliance on driving has an impact far beyond today’s traffic jam. People of color, who are less likely to own cars and more likely to rely on public transportation, are particularly affected by poor development patterns. Working families who own a car are burdened with associated expenses: purchase cost, maintenance, registration fees, fuel, and others.

Streets designed solely for automobile travel also put people at risk. In 2007, there were 4,654 pedestrian deaths and 70,000 reported pedestrian injuries — that’s nearly one every eight minutes. In a poll of people over 50 years old, 47 percent said it was unsafe to cross the street near their home. In neighborhoods where traffic is a nuisance and a threat, residents both young and old are more inclined to stay in their homes. This limits much needed physical activity and social interaction.

Complete streets foster livable communities

Communities are increasingly embracing smart growth to meet their residents’ desire for choices in housing, shopping, recreation, and transportation. Complete streets meet the demand for transportation options, while promoting other community goals. They provide safe and affordable access for everyone, whether traveling to school, work, the doctor, or their favorite restaurant.

More than half of Americans recently surveyed would like to walk more and drive less. Poor community design and lack of pedestrian facilities are the primary reasons people cite for not walking more. An overwhelming number support policies intended to make their communities more livable by reducing traffic speed and creating a safer pedestrian environment.
Complete streets contribute many benefits to the surrounding community:

• Wide, attractive sidewalks and well-defined bike routes, where appropriate to community context, encourage healthy and active lifestyles among residents of all ages.6

• Complete streets can provide children with opportunities to reach nearby destinations a safe and supportive environment.

• A variety of transportation options allow everyone – particularly people with disabilities and older adults – to get out and stay connected to the community.

• Multi-modal transportation networks help communities provide alternatives to sitting in traffic.

• A better integration of land use and transportation through a complete streets process creates an attractive combination of buildings – houses, offices, shops – and street designs.

• Designing a street with pedestrians in mind – sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for travelers with disabilities – may reduce pedestrian risk by as much as 28 percent.7

• A livable community is one that preserves resources for the next generation: complete streets help reduce carbon emissions and are an important part of a climate change strategy.

In San Diego, where a number of complete streets policy are in place, the La Jolla neighborhood saw its namesake boulevard become something more than an uninteresting strip of shops after recent roadwork. Today, the street is vibrant and alive, with pedestrians, bicyclists, and shoppers. Despite the economic meltdown, the street is outperforming on every factor, from numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians to number of smiles. Communities are also investing in complete streets as a way to attract new residents and young professionals.8

Complete streets transform the way transportation serves the American people by creating more choices, shortening travel times, and encouraging less carbon-intensive transportation. A community with a complete streets policy values the health, safety, and comfort of its residents and visitors. These policies provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to contribute to, and benefit from, a livable community.

Footnotes on following page or online at www.completestreets.org/factsheets
Create Livable Communities

Complete Streets
Improve Mobility for Older Americans

An 82-year-old woman was fined more than $100 for crossing against a don’t-walk signal. Mayvis Coyne began carrying her groceries across a Los Angeles road while the WALK signal was still on, but could not cross the wide road before the light changed. One elderly neighbor resorts to calling a cab simply to cross the poorly designed street.

While the street pictured on the left does have crosswalks and signals the distance is intimidating to an older person and makes it hard for the senior to even see the walk signal. The street on the right provides a refuge median to make it much more inviting to slower pedestrians.

Incomplete streets a problem for older Americans

Central to the creation of livable communities is the ability for everyone, regardless of age or ability, to travel safely. Yet, many of our nation’s roads do little to meet the needs of the growing population of older Americans. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2025, nearly one in five Americans will be over the age of 65, totaling 62 million Americans. Many older adults will continue to drive for most of their trips, but some will face physical and cognitive challenges that must be addressed to enable their continued mobility and independence.

A transportation system that prioritizes fast automobile travel has created roads that are difficult to navigate or unsafe to travel by foot, bike, or public transportation. Crossings are long, intersections are expansive, sidewalks are absent, and transit stops offer no place to sit. These roads are especially trying for older adults, even when behind the wheel. Almost 40% of Americans over the age of 50 say their neighborhoods lack adequate sidewalks, 55% report inadequate bike lanes or paths, and 48% have no comfortable place to wait for the bus.

These incomplete streets have deadly results: In 2008, older pedestrians were overrepresented in fatalities; while comprising 13% of the population, they accounted for 18% of the fatalities.

These incomplete streets limit safe mobility and can breed isolation. As people age, some will stop or limit their driving. More than 50% of older Americans who do not drive stay home on a given day because they lack transportation options. Older Americans make just 6% of their trips on foot or bike – far less than in some European countries, where adults over the age of 65 use these active modes for about half of all trips. Non-driving seniors make 65% fewer trips to visit family, friends or go to church; many report they do not like to ask for rides.

www.completestreets.org (over)
The Benefits of Complete Streets
Improve Mobility for Older Americans

Complete Streets Steering Committee Organizations
AARP
Alliance for Biking and Walking
America Bikes
America Walks
American Council of the Blind
American Planning Association
American Public Transportation Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
City of Boulder
HNTB
Institute of Transportation Engineers
League of American Bicyclists
McCann Consulting
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Center for Bicycling and Walking
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Smart Growth America
SvR Design Company

National Complete Streets Coalition
1707 L St NW, Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 207-3355
info@completestreets.org

Complete streets make it much easier for seniors to stay active, particularly when they require assistance in the form of a cane, walker, or wheelchair.

Complete streets help create livable communities

Complete streets policies offer the opportunity to improve travel options of people of all ages. Planning, designing, and building roads with all users in mind will provide older adults a variety of options for getting around, whether walking, taking public transportation, or sharing rides with family and friends.

A majority of people aged 50 or older support complete street policies. More than half (54%) of older adults who reported an inhospitable walking, bicycling, and transit environment outside their homes would walk, bicycle, and take transit more if those problems were fixed. Eight of ten of older Americans surveyed consider that “for many seniors, public transportation is a better alternative to driving alone, particularly at night.” Complete streets also create safe space for older adults to walk or bike as exercise, helping them achieve a healthier lifestyle.

A community with a complete streets policy considers the needs of older residents every time a transportation investment decision is made. Following a complete streets process will balance the sometimes-competing needs of older drivers and older pedestrians by slowing vehicles down where necessary, creating an easily navigated multimodal network of streets, and improving visibility. Proven methods to create complete streets for aging pedestrians include retiming signals to account for slower walking speed, constructing median refuges or sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances, and installing curb ramps, sidewalk seating, and bus shelters with seating. Improved lighting, signage, and pavement markings are among the measures that benefit drivers of any age, particularly older drivers.

6 Lynott, Jana. (2009).
7 Lynott, Jana. (2009).
Some Benefits of Complete Streets

Complete Streets can offer many benefits in all communities, regardless of size or location.

- Complete Streets make economic sense. A balanced transportation system that includes Complete Streets can bolster economic growth and stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.

- Complete Streets improve safety by reducing crashes through safety improvements. One study found that designing for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduced pedestrian risk by 28%.

- Complete Streets encourage more walking and bicycling. Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic, and Complete Streets can help. One study found that 43% percent of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough.

- Complete Streets can help ease transportation woes. Streets that provide travel choices can give people the option to avoid traffic jams and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network. Several smaller cities have adopted Complete Streets policies as one strategy to increase the overall capacity of their transportation network and reduce congestion.

- Complete Streets help children. Streets that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence. More children walk to school where there are sidewalks, and children who have and use safe walking and bicycling routes have a more positive view of their neighborhood. Safe Routes to School programs, gaining in popularity across the country, will benefit from Complete Streets policies that help turn all routes into safe routes.

- Complete Streets are good for air quality. Poor air quality in our urban areas is linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses. Yet if each resident of an American community of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip just once a month, it would cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 3,764 tons of per year in the community. Complete Streets allow this to happen more easily.

- Complete Streets make fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofits later. Jeff Morales, former Director of Caltrans, said, “by fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including facilities for these travelers are minimized.”
INSERT PDF FACT SHEET: CREATE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

THEN:

INSERT PDF FACT SHEET: IMPROVE MOBILITY FOR OLDER AMERICANS
Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor

You can help spread the word in your community about an issue by writing an op-ed or letter to the editor to your daily or weekly newspapers. Below are some tips that will help you get published.

- Make your Letter to the Editor short and concise. No longer than 150 - 250 words. Most newspapers will not accept letters over 250 words.

- There are two ways to write a Letter to the Editor:
  - Respond to an article in the paper relating to the issue. If you are responding to an article reference the title of the article and when it ran. Skim the newspaper each day to identify articles to which you could respond.
  
  or
  
  - Just write a letter to the paper not responding to any specific article.

- An op-ed is an opinion column that is longer than a Letter to the Editor. It generally runs 300-400 words but check with your local paper for guidelines and submission policies.

### Submitting Your Letter

- A Letter to the Editor can be submitted to your local or daily paper in a variety of ways. These include mail, email or in some cases website.

- Always include your name, address, day-time phone number and signature. The papers will not publish your address or phone number but might contact you prior to publishing the letter to confirm that you wrote it.

- Please also send a copy of the letter to us so we can help track coverage, include the name of the paper you submitted it to.

**After your Op-Ed or Letter is Submitted**

- Keep an eye out for it!

- A daily paper will usually print letter that is submitted within 10 days. A weekly paper could take a few weeks.
Below are a sample op-ed and letters to the editor that you can use to tailor your own message and submit to your local weekly or daily newspaper. If you have a blog, you can also post it there in lieu of sending it to the local media. Please customize with your own voice and include any pertinent information about your area. Below the op-ed is a list of resources you can reference to include local or state statistics. The sample op-ed and letters to the editor contain notes that are italicized and in brackets. These will help guide you through different options in writing your final op-ed or letter to the editor.

Items that you can include to help personalize the letter and encourage your state and local officials to adopt Complete Streets policies include:

1. **Telling Your Story** – state why Complete Streets is important to you personally
2. **Illustrate benefits to the community as a whole** – do you or someone you know need to negotiate the streets of your community to access basic necessities or accomplish common daily activities such as commuting to work or walking to school?
3. **Current condition of streets or roadways** – are there any infrastructure issues on the streets you travel that illustrate why Complete Streets are important? This could include crosswalks or lights that are not properly timed, lack of curb cuts to maneuver wheelchairs or strollers, or crumbling infrastructure.

**Sample Op-Ed**

Pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries seem to be a staple in our news cycle these days. The recent fatality at {insert local info on a recent fatality} only serves to illustrate this point. For the families of loved ones killed or injured, the loss is devastating or life changing and unfortunately, largely preventable. Sharing the road safely needs to be a priority for our community and our state.

Many municipalities across the state are already considering Complete Streets legislation that includes simple accommodations that benefit all users of the roadway such as crosswalks, lane stripping, curb cuts, sidewalks, and timed crossing signals. These simple solutions can mean the difference between life and death or the difference between a health stroll and an injury. They are reasonable accommodations that send a clear message – roadways need to be designed for all users, not just designed for cars to move faster.

Complete streets legislation is a simple solution that can provide more comprehensive, inclusive road design for not just our community but communities across the state. Last year, the New York State Senate passed a Complete Streets bill that would ensure that roadways across New York State would do just that – take into account all users pedestrians, bicyclists and other modes of travel – when a roadway is designed or redesigned. Regrettably, the Assembly failed to put the bill to a vote during session.

Here in our community, {insert local info or your opinion on why complete streets are needed in your community}. 
Complete Streets benefit the whole community – from an aging couple that wants to grow older at home and in their own community to children walking to school. All users of our roadways play a role in safe usage but some simple design measures, taken into consideration when a road is initially designed or has been designated to be redesigned, can make it easier for everyone to do so.

It’s time for Complete Streets legislation to become a reality in {name of community} as well as throughout the state {omit first part of line if your town already has Complete Streets legislation}.

Sample Letters to the Editor

Complete Streets - In response to an article on a fatality or injury – local action

Your {insert date article ran} article "{Insert title of article}" highlights why Complete Streets legislation is so important. The dangers of our roadways are more than a matter of looking both ways before one crosses the street. Whether at a local level or state level, legislation that allows all users to share the road in a manner that is safe and well marked is needed to help people get where they need to go safely.

The goal of this type of legislation is simple. When a road is being put in or when one is being redesigned, include simple accommodations that benefit all users such as crosswalks, lane stripping, curb cuts, sidewalks, and timed crossing signals.

About one-third of Americans do not drive and recent polls found that 55% of Americans would prefer to drive less and walk more. New York ranks third in the nation for pedestrian fatalities for people age 65+. Baby boomers have begun turning age 65, and by 2025 people 65+ will comprise nearly 20 percent of the population. Yet, two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers say they have yet to begin addressing older people in their street planning.

I hope our elected officials at all levels of government take this information seriously and take action on Complete Streets. I want to live in a community that will be able to accommodate me as I age. It’s time our town adopted Complete Streets legislation.

Complete Streets - Local Government Action

This year the first of baby boomer turned 65, setting off an unprecedented growth in the aging population. By 2025, nearly 20 percent of New York's population will be over age 65. Unfortunately, many of our local streets are not designed to accommodate us as we age.

According to a recent report by AARP, most people over age 50 feel that their neighborhoods don’t have adequate sidewalks. Nearly half feel that streets near their homes are unsafe to cross on foot. {Insert local information on streets in your community that you feel are not safe}. What’s more, New York ranks third in the nation for pedestrian fatalities for people over 65
Despite these disheartening statistics, more than two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers have not begun to consider the needs of older people in street planning.

I strongly encourage our town to adopt a Complete Streets ordinance that states that all users and modes of transportation must be taken into consideration when a road is being designed or redesigned. The accommodations are basic and include crosswalks, lane striping, curb cuts, sidewalks and timed crossing signals, where appropriate.

It is important to note that Complete Streets do not only benefit older adults. Complete Streets also benefit public transit users, bicyclists, people with disabilities and pedestrians of all ages – including youth traveling to school and mothers pushing strollers.

The livability of our communities depends on having safe travel choices. This is an opportunity to improve street design and create safer travel choices for everyone that should not be overlooked.

Resources:

**AARP Website** – Search “livable communities”
http://www.aarp.org/ny

http://tiny.cc/79s6y

**Tri-State Transportation Campaign Fact Sheets (Westchester County south to Long Island)**
http://tiny.cc/u6b1y

**Twitter**
Follow AARP NY - aarpny or AARP Livable Communities – aarplivability

**Facebook**
http://www.facebook.com/AARPNY

**Transportation for America – Dangerous By Design Report**
http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign/

**StreetsBlog**
http://www.streetsblog.org/