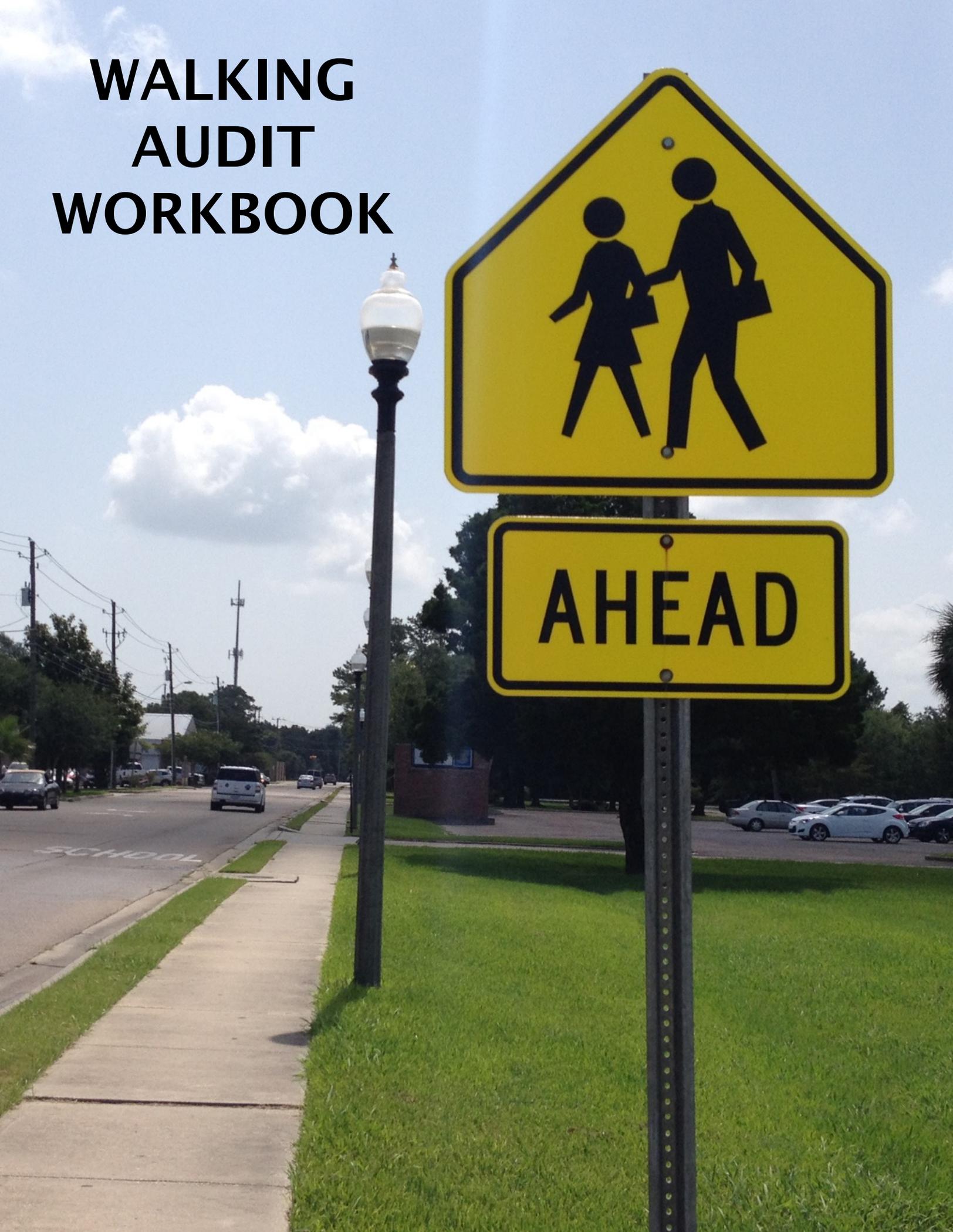


# WALKING AUDIT WORKBOOK





# CONDUCTING A WALKING AUDIT

**One of the most effective first steps to creating Safer Routes to Schools in your community is to conduct a simple (and free!) walking audit!**

**With this workbook, you will be able to conduct a walk audit, gather together important stakeholders, collect vital information about your surroundings, and discuss next steps to improve walkability in your community!**

1. First, you'll want to first **gather a group of important stakeholders together.**

\*Try to find a diverse group that includes those with disabilities or walking challenges as well as different ages and professions. You want to find a team of people willing to collect information and make a plan!

2. When you have your team together, you want **identify your route.** Use your team of stakeholders to decide together on a walkable area within 2 miles of your school or common destinations.

\*One way to do this is to collect **aerial maps of walking routes** - This can be created for free using an online mapping service (like google maps).

3. Determine a **Meeting space** - The school must provide meeting space at various times during both days of the walkability audit assessment. Meeting space is needed for the kick-off meeting and final plan preparation and presentation of the routes and audit results.

4. Decide how long you think your walk will take and schedule a day and time to go walking!

5. **On your walk:**

- Make sure you record your walk! Be sure to bring with your notepads or clipboards, pens, camera (or smartphone camera) and comfortable shoes! Make sure everyone has a copy of your materials.

\*A good way to do this is to assign one person in your group to take photos while others record details.

**Use this workbook as your guide!**

# CONDUCTING A WALKING AUDIT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The purpose of a walking audit is ultimately about bringing a group of people together to access ways to improve walkability within a particular area.

These assessments or “audits” can be held by neighborhood associations or individuals in a neighborhood, or by school personnel or parents to assess the walkability near or around a school.

Walking Audits can take many different forms including Walks that highlight the history and assets of any area.

**Believe it or not,  
Walking Audits  
can even be FUN!**

**In this workbook, we will “walk” you through the steps needed to conduct your own walking audit in your community!**

## **Build your Team:**

Make sure to include parents, teachers, school staff, neighbors and city officials.

## **Evaluate existing conditions:**

Parent and Surveys, Traffic Counts, Speed Checks and Bikeability and Walkability Checklists.

## **Make a Plan:**

Develop a project list and map

- Identify problem areas and barriers
- Set priorities; set short term and long term solutions
- Create a budget for program

## **Taking Action:**

- Conduct Walking Audit
- Plan Walk or Bike to School Day
- Invite City officials and Media
- Get Feedback from Participants



# ASSESSMENT FORM: Community

For each street you walk, take note of any infrastructure failures and any community assets. Take photos and notes on things such as crosswalks, street and sidewalk conditions, signage and street crossings. Also, be sure to keep “livability” at the forefront of your observations; take into account if the street is crowded or has little life on a regular basis. Check for street lights and their condition and note if there is an absence of street lighting. Try to observe through the eyes of different users including children, elderly, bicyclists and wheelchair users. Consider safety as well as the “perception” of safety. Think about connectivity and uses for empty or underused spaces.

Things to record during your walk: (Do this for EACH street you walk)

**Activities: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)**

- Is this street busy with people?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are there activities for the public to participate in?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are there places for shopping, dining, playing or community events?  
1    2    3    4    5

**Safety: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)**

- Are street lights present? Are street lights needed?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Does the area feel safe for pedestrians at night?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Do you feel that the area is safe for children?  
1    2    3    4    5

**Assets: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)**

- Is this area underutilized?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Is the space welcoming?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are there community amenities in use?  
(Community garden, track, churches, schools, trails, walking track, green space, etc.)  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are there benches, green spaces and places for people to hold informal gatherings?  
1    2    3    4    5

# ASSESSMENT FORM: Infrastructure

For each street you walk, take note of any infrastructure failures and any community assets. Take photos and notes on things such as crosswalks, street and sidewalk conditions, signage and street crossings. Also, be sure to keep “livability” at the forefront of your observations; take into account if the street is crowded or has little life on a regular basis. Check for street lights and their condition and note if there is an absence of street lighting. Try to observe through the eyes of different users including children, elderly, bicyclists and wheelchair users. Consider safety as well as the “perception” of safety. Think about connectivity and uses for empty or underused spaces.

## Things to record during your walk: (Do this for EACH street you walk)

### Sidewalk Condition: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)

- Is the sidewalk in good condition?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are there gaps in the sidewalk? (Places where you walk in grass or in the street?)  
1    2    3    4    5
- Are the sidewalks wide enough?  
1    2    3    4    5

### Street Assessment: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)

- Does the posted speed limit feel safe for this area?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Do you feel safe crossing the street?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Do drivers yield to pedestrians?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Do the streets need to be widened or re-striped, re-structured?  
1    2    3    4    5

### Assessing other users: Rate from 1 - 5 (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)

- Is this street accessible for wheelchair users?  
1    2    3    4    5
- Is this street for bicyclists to ride?  
1    2    3    4    5
- If you didn't know your way around, could you orient yourself from this street?  
1    2    3    4    5

# DISCUSSION FORM

During group discussion, have each individual or group report their findings for each street. Create a map or list at the front of the room and record findings according to street. (Use photos to match up later) and put with final report.

Go through questions for each street. Have each group report findings. Record on Map.

## Discussion Questions:

**What assets did you find? What do you like about the neighborhood? What can be done to use the assets? What changes can make a larger impact going forward?**

Examples:

- Green Space = Community Garden or Public Art
- Empty Parking Lot: Meet-up place for Walks, Community Events or Concerts
- Blank Wall: Community Mural
- School: Community Members and Parents plan tree planting, walk to school or biking events

**What infrastructure issues did you find? What can be done to improve this?**

Examples:

- Where do we want more street lighting?
- Are there small gaps in the sidewalk or safety that can be addressed by the city?
- Are there ways we can improve the perceived safety?
- Are there ways we can paint or otherwise improve the area ourselves?
- What can we do to increase accessibility for all types of users?

**What community events can we hold to improve our neighborhood's walkability?**

Examples:

- Do we need a community watch? Should we set up a walking patrol?
- Should we hold a beautification or "clean-up" day?
- Should we host a community concert or contest for public art?
- Should we host a weekly meet-up for people want to walk?
- What kind of action should we consider taking with our findings?
- What do we want to see changed?
- Should we present these findings to our City Councilperson?



# NEXT STEPS:

Walk to School events or other walking assessments provide a way for local public officials to demonstrate their support for health, environment and safety.

Having the ear of local public officials can speed up the process of getting changes made to improve walking and biking conditions like a new sidewalk or crosswalk.

## Consider asking officials to be involved in the following ways:

- Invite them to lead your walk.
- Present them with the results of walkability checklists\* and ask for their assistance in making identified improvements.
- Ask for an official Walk to School proclamation\* from the mayor.
- Hold a press conference\* at the start of your walk or at the school when walkers arrive. Urge school and public officials to commit to specific steps they'll take to make it easier to walk to school every day.

## Potential Coalition Members

- School safety advocates
- Principal/other administrators
- Area college/university
- Parents and students
- Chamber of Commerce members
- Teachers
- PTA/PTO representative
- Local community foundation
- School nurse
- Local Government
- School district transportation
- Mayor's office/council member
- Transportation/traffic engineer
- Site council member
- Local planner
- Adult school crossing guards
- Public health professional
- Community Public works representative
- Community members
- Law enforcement officer
- Neighborhood association
- State/local pedestrian bicycle
- Local businesses
- City grant writer
- Local pedestrian, bicycle advocates

List of Coalition Partners compiled by the Mississippi Department of Transportation

**For more information on  
conducting Walking Assessments or  
starting Walking Groups, check out  
our online resources at:**

**[www.BikeWalkMississippi.org](http://www.BikeWalkMississippi.org)**

**[bikewalk@bikewalkmississippi.org](mailto:bikewalk@bikewalkmississippi.org)**



PO Box 515 Jackson, MS 39205

**BIKE WALK  
MISSISSIPPI**

NATIONAL "ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR 2013" - Alliance for Biking and Walking

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