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ONE WAY



ONE WAY



Photo: SANDAG

# Walkability Guide

*Do You Enjoy Walking  
In Your Community?*

Use this guide to learn more about walkability and how you can make your community safer to walk



Promoting Walkable Communities

**SanDiego**

[walksandiego.org](http://walksandiego.org)



# About This Guide

WalkSanDiego believes every resident of the San Diego region should be able to walk safely in his/her community. Many people would like to make their neighborhood more pedestrian friendly but don't know how. The Walkability Guide was created to help you. Read on to learn about five important ingredients of a walkable community and tips for working with your city to get what you want. Pages 4-7 also outline a Walkability Checklist which you can fill out for your neighborhood and submit to your city.

## Five Important Ingredients To A Walkable Community

What makes a community more walkable? There are 5 basic ingredients to make your neighborhood a place where people of all ages and abilities have safe, enjoyable, and easy access to their community on foot.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Good Sidewalks



Photo: K. Ferrier

**The basic design of a good sidewalk should include:**

- **Pedestrian Zone:** wide, level sidewalks in good condition where pedestrians can walk and wheelchairs can roll
- **Parkway or Buffer Zone:** allows for vegetation and/or street furniture and buffers pedestrians from vehicles
- **Curb Zone:** border between the street and sidewalk with ramps for disabled and others to access sidewalk

### 2. Safe & Easy Street Crossings

**Street crossings should be available every 300 feet (about half the length of a block) and should include:**

- **Painted or Decorative Crosswalk:** makes crosswalk easier to see
- **Stop Bar:** painted line that stops cars before entering the crosswalk
- **Curb Extension/Bulb-out:** reduces pedestrian crossing distance; makes pedestrians more visible to drivers
- **Median/Island:** provides a halfway refuge point that allows pedestrians to cross safely



Photo: SANDAG

1. Bicycle Federation of America. (1998). Campaign to Make America Walkable: Creating Walkable Communities.

### 3. Traffic Calming



Street improvements can slow vehicle speeds, increase pedestrian safety, and allow for smooth traffic flow:

- **Curb Extension/Bulb-out:** slows the speed of turning vehicles
- **Road Diet:** slows traffic by reducing number of lanes and lane widths
- **Other:** roundabout, median, pedestrian island, and diagonal parking

### 4. Safety, Comfort & Beauty

Street enhancements make walking feel safer, more comfortable and more inviting:

- **Pedestrian Lighting**
- **Landscaping & Trees**
- **Clean & Well-maintained Sidewalks**
- **Amenities:** such as drinking fountains, bathrooms, and benches
- **Public Art**



### 5. Great Destinations



A community is more vibrant and desirable if it has great walking destinations, like:

- **Shopping:** stores, markets, restaurants, etc.
- **Services:** clinics, post office, bank, etc.
- **Transportation:** trolley, bus stop, train
- **Recreation:** parks, gardens, etc.

# Pedestrian Safety



Did you know a pedestrian is killed in a traffic collision every 109 minutes in the U.S.? WalkSanDiego wants you to be safe. Here are some tips:

- Obey all traffic signals and signs.
- Walk on the sidewalk. If there isn't one, walk on the left side of the street to face oncoming traffic.
- Use crosswalks if available, or cross at an intersection.
- Before crossing the street, (1) stop, (2) look left, right, and left again, and (3) listen for oncoming vehicles, and (4) make eye contact with drivers to make sure they see you.
- Be alert while crossing. Don't be distracted texting or talking on the phone.
- Be cautious around parked cars and driveways.
- Be predictable, don't run suddenly out into the street.



Be safe. Stay within the crosswalk if available.

# Walkability Checklist

Conduct a walk audit and look for the 5 ingredients to a walkable community. To conduct a successful walk audit, complete the following steps:

- Step 1** Choose your walk route and write the location on the lines below.
- Step 2** Read through all sections of the checklist to know better what you'll be looking for.
- Step 3** Start your walk. Check the box next to the problem(s) you find and write the street location in the space provided. Repeat for each section.
- Step 4** Add the total number of boxes checked in each section and write the correct number in the Neighborhood Walkability Score section on page 7 for a total walk score. Areas with poor walkability will get a higher score and areas with good walkability will get a lower score.

## Locations

Beginning Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Street #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Street #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Street #4 \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1: Sidewalks

*Check the box below and write the location in the space provided if you found a problem such as:*

- No sidewalks or paths \_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalks were broken or cracked \_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalks were blocked by poles, signs, plants, vehicles, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalk was not continuous \_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalk interrupted by many sloped driveways making it difficult to proceed ahead smoothly  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalks were not wide enough for two people to walk together side by side (at least 5 feet across)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Sidewalk did not have a parkway (grass or trees) separating it from the street \_\_\_\_\_
- Intersections did not have curb ramps for wheelchairs, strollers, and wagons \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## Section 2: Street Crossings

Check the box below for each problem you find and write the location in the space provided:

- The road was too wide to cross easily \_\_\_\_\_
- Traffic signals made us wait a long time \_\_\_\_\_
- Traffic signals did not give us enough time to cross the street \_\_\_\_\_
- The crosswalk was not marked or was poorly marked \_\_\_\_\_
- I had to walk too far (more than 300 feet) to find a safe, marked crossing \_\_\_\_\_
- There was no median on the street to provide a safe place to cross a wide street \_\_\_\_\_
- The crossing did not have a pedestrian activated button \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

## Section 3: Driver Behavior

Check the box below if drivers did the following things and write the location in the space provided:

- Did not yield to people crossing the street \_\_\_\_\_
- Turned into people crossing the street \_\_\_\_\_
- Were driving too fast to make you feel safe \_\_\_\_\_
- Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights \_\_\_\_\_
- Did not stop at stop signs \_\_\_\_\_
- Stopped inside of the crosswalk \_\_\_\_\_
- Did not look when backing out of driveways \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

## Section 4: Safety

*Check the box below for each problem that made you feel unsafe and write the location in the space provided:*

- People loitering outside of buildings \_\_\_\_\_
- Presence of panhandling and/or homeless \_\_\_\_\_
- Speeding vehicles \_\_\_\_\_
- Insufficient or no lighting \_\_\_\_\_
- Vacant lots or rundown buildings \_\_\_\_\_
- Unleashed and/or noisy dogs \_\_\_\_\_
- Graffiti \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

## Section 5: Comfort and Appeal

*Check the box below for each problem you find and write the location in the space provided:*

- No grass, flowers, or trees \_\_\_\_\_
- Not enough lighting to make you feel safe \_\_\_\_\_
- Bus stop did not have shelter or shade \_\_\_\_\_
- Bus stop did not have a bench \_\_\_\_\_
- Lots of litter or trash and/or cigarette butts \_\_\_\_\_
- Dirty air due to automobile exhaust \_\_\_\_\_
- Bad smells or odors \_\_\_\_\_
- No place to sit and rest along my route \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

## Section 6: Pedestrian Behavior

Check the box below for each problem you find and specify the location(s) where it was difficult to:

- Find a marked crosswalk \_\_\_\_\_
- See drivers and/or be seen by drivers \_\_\_\_\_
- Walk on the sidewalk because of overgrown bushes/plants/trees \_\_\_\_\_
- Make it across the street before the light changed \_\_\_\_\_
- Cross multiple, sloped driveways \_\_\_\_\_
- Locate the pedestrian push button \_\_\_\_\_
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Problems: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Neighborhood Walkability Score

Write your total scores below from the previous sections, and add those numbers to get your total neighborhood walkability score.

+  +  +  +  +  =

*Section 1*   *Section 2*   *Section 3*   *Section 4*   *Section 5*   *Section 6*   *Total Walkability*

0-9	Very walkable	Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking
10-19	Walkable	Good. Some improvements can be made.
20-29	Somewhat walkable	Okay. The neighborhood needs work to improve walkability.
30-39	Not very walkable	It needs a lot of work. Use this guide to help make change.
40-49	Not walkable at all	Start working. Your neighborhood is not safe to walk.

Date

Name

### Read further to see how you can get involved.

*This walkability tool is adapted from the YEAH! Training Manual ([www.ourcommunityourkids.org](http://www.ourcommunityourkids.org)) and was created from the following:*

**The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Walkability Checklist**

By the California Department of Health Services' California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families for the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Project.

**Environmental Assessments** developed by *Samuels & Associates* ([www.samuelsandassocaites.com](http://www.samuelsandassocaites.com)) for the *Healthy Eating, Active Communities Program*.

**The Boyle Heights Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors Project Walk Audit Form** by *Safe & Healthy Communities Consulting*.  
WalkSanDiego input from ongoing community walk audits.

# How Can I Help Make My Neighborhood More Walkable?

## Short Term:

- Call your city and give them a copy of your Walkability Checklist. They rely on community members like you to know where problems are located and are required to respond.
- Have your friends contact them, too, to emphasize the safety concern. Look on the back of this Guide for city contact information.
- For specific problem areas, ask city staff to meet you at the site and assess together.
- Some cities have a committee to discuss these kinds of problems. Find out which cities have these committees at [www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org).
- Stay in touch with the city to find out what solutions are proposed and when they will be put in place.
- Contact your councilperson about your concern.
- Report illegally parked cars, graffiti and unsafe drivers to police.
- Contact WalkSanDiego for more information at [walksandiego.org](http://walksandiego.org) or 619-544-9255.

## Long Term:

- Get involved with a local community planning group to talk more about safe walking and to work together for change.
- Contact your city's Planning Department and ask for information about existing community groups.
- Keep working with the city to ensure the problem is addressed. Get other neighbors involved to emphasize the safety concern.
- Gather a group of interested neighbors to create a coalition and monitor pedestrian safety issues within your community.

# Benefits of Walkable Communities

Did you know that people who live in walkable neighborhoods make four times as many walking and biking trips, three times as many transit trips, take fewer car trips, and drive fewer miles?<sup>1</sup> In a walkable community, cars and traffic speeds are slower and more controlled making it a safer place for walking.<sup>2</sup> Read on to learn more about the many benefits of walking.

## Health

**Walkable communities promote physical activity and good health.**

- Children who walk are more active and develop a sense of independence contributing to a life-long habit of walking.<sup>2</sup>
- Walking 30 minutes per day can reduce the risk of obesity, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, and improve your mood and mental performance.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Seniors living in a walkable community have greater mobility and independence, which helps reduce falls and gives them more energy for the things they enjoy.<sup>5</sup>



## Economic



**Walkable neighborhoods financially benefit the people who live & work there.**

- People that live in a walkable community can walk to buy groceries, do their laundry, and other errands close to their home which supports local businesses and saves money that would otherwise go towards gas.<sup>4</sup>
- There are fewer cars on the road reducing the need for spending city funds on road improvements.<sup>2</sup>
- Residential property values are more likely to increase in walkable communities.<sup>6</sup>

# Crime Prevention & Safety



## Walking puts more 'eyes on the street'.

- Walking in your neighborhood helps prevent crime because there are more people around looking out for one another.<sup>7</sup>
- A walkable community means a pedestrian is less likely to get hit by a car and injured.<sup>4</sup>

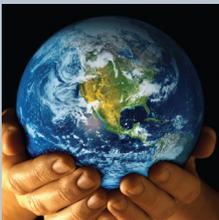
# Community Strength

## Walking in your neighborhood builds a sense of community.

- People in walkable neighborhoods have a greater level of pride and sense of ownership.<sup>8</sup>
- Walking in your neighborhood allows you to interact with neighbors, forming connections and social support.<sup>3,8</sup>



# Environment



## Think globally, act locally.

- If there are more people walking, there are fewer cars on the roads and less traffic congestion, less air and noise pollution, and less gas being used, which creates a healthier world for all of us!<sup>2,3</sup>

### References:

1. **Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade, & Douglas.** (1993). The Pedestrian Environment: Making the Land Use Transportation Air Quality Connection.
2. **Bicycle Federation of America.** (1998). Campaign to Make America Walkable: Creating Walkable Communities.
3. **National Center for Environmental Health.** (2008). Walkable Communities. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. **U.S. Department of Transportation.** (2008). A Resident's Guide for Creating Safe and Walkable Communities.
5. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** (2009). Physical Activity and Health: The Benefits of Physical Activity.
6. **Litman, T.** (1999). Evaluating Traffic Calming Benefits: Costs and Equity Impacts. Victoria Transport Policy Institute.
7. **Envision Utah Partnership.** (2002). Urban Planning Tools for Quality Growth: Making Our Community a Good Place to Walk.
8. **Burden, D.** (2001). Distinguished Lecture Presentation to the Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C.

# Resources



Contact your city's traffic engineer to tell them about your walkability concern. Tips for what to say when working with the city and more detailed information on city contacts can be found on WalkSanDiego's website, [www.walksandiego.org](http://www.walksandiego.org).

City of Carlsbad	760-602-2730
City of Chula Vista	619-691-5026
City of Coronado	619-522-7383
City of Del Mar	858-755-3294
City of El Cajon	619-441-1653
City of Encinitas	760-943-2298
City of Escondido	760-839-4595
City of Imperial Beach	619-423-8311
City of La Mesa	619-667-1144
City of Lemon Grove	619-825-3810
City of National City	619-336-4350
City of Oceanside	760-435-4373
City of Poway	858-668-4668
City of San Diego	619-527-7500
City of Santee	619-258-4100 x 167
City of San Marcos	760-744-1050 x 3229
City of Solana Beach	858-720-2470
City of Vista	760-726-1340 x 1383

*Photo: R. Van Vleck*

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