the Small Town Center’s Walk Audit Toolkit
How walkable is your neighborhood and community?
Take a walk around your neighborhood by yourself or with your family and see for yourselves how walkable it is.

Why conduct a neighborhood audit?
Often city staff do not have the time to inspect every inch of sidewalks and streets for issues. Cities rely on the community to let them know where maintenance issues exist. Neighborhood walk and bicycling audits conducted by you can help your city officials:
1. Identify areas in need of maintenance or upkeep
2. Identify areas where new infrastructure is needed
3. Better plan for the future needs of the community

Who should conduct a neighborhood audit?
You can do a walk audit by yourself, but it is also a fun activity to do with your family. It is helpful to assess the walkability of your neighborhood's streets from the perspectives of all ages— from families with strollers or wagons, to the elderly neighbors, or people walking their dog. We encourage people of all ages and abilities to conduct an audit of their neighborhood if they can do so safely.

Getting Started
To get started, review the walk audit documents and checklists before you head out on your walk.

As you walk, make note of the locations of streets, sidewalks, and any problems you would like to see solved.

Take photographs of any issues or barriers to walkability, as well as good features that you would like to see more often.

STEP 1: Identify your route
Map out a walkable area that you can get to and from by walking from your home. This will be the “study area” for your walk audit. Using page 3 of this Toolkit, draw a map of the streets you will walk during this audit (be sure to label them). If you have access to a printer, you can also print out the google map for your area and highlight the streets you will include in this walk audit.

STEP 2: Gather your Materials
- map of your area
- clipboard or notebook
- pen or pencil
- a digital camera or smartphone
- a measuring tape (optional)
- comfortable walking shoes
- walk audit checklists (pages 4 - 8 of this Toolkit)

STEP 3: Choose a date and time for your audit

STEP 4: Conduct your walk audit

STEP 5: Submit your results and observations
Please include your City and County in the header and email scanned copies and photos from your audit to: STCwalkaudit@gmail.com

You can also mail your completed walk audits to our center at:
Small Town Center
140 Giles Hall, 899 Collegeview Street
Mississippi State, MS 39692
Determining the audit area:
Your walkable area can be as small as one intersection or it could include several streets and intersections within your neighborhood.

1. Location Information:
   County:____________________________   City:____________________________   Zip Code:__________________

2. Draw a simple map of your walk audit area in the space below. Please label the streets.

   Draw a compass indicating North, South, East, and West to show which directions the streets are oriented.
Walk Audit 1: Sidewalks

For each street within your audit area, indicate with an X any items that are a problem for pedestrians. Please note any items you see that might especially be problematic for a child, older adult, or person with a disability.

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**List each street within your audit area here:**

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1. **Indicate with an X any of the following items you encountered:**

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- There are no sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- The sidewalks are not contiguous, segments or gaps are missing, or sidewalks and paths start and stop
- The sidewalk is not wide enough for two people to walk together side-by-side or the width of the sidewalk is less than 5-feet
- The sidewalk is broken or cracked
- There is no buffer between traffic and the sidewalk
- The sidewalk is interrupted by driveways
- There are no ramps or curb cuts
- The curb cuts are not textured or marked for people with visual impairments
- The sidewalk is blocked or interrupted by poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, low-hanging trees, etc.
- Cars, trucks, or other vendors are blocking the sidewalk

2. **Is the sidewalk present on both sides of the street?**  
   - Y / N  
   - Y / N  
   - Y / N  
   - Y / N  
   - Y / N  

3. **How wide is the sidewalk along this street?**
For each intersection within your audit area, indicate with an X any items that are a problem for pedestrians. Please note any items you see that might especially be problematic for a child, older adult, or person with a disability.

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1. Indicate with an X any of the following issues you encountered:
   - Striped crosswalks or traffic signals are needed
   - View of traffic is obstructed (e.g., parked cars, overgrown shrubbery)
   - The road is too wide to safely cross
   - Traffic signals did not give us enough time to cross
   - Traffic signals made us wait too long
   - This location needs a traffic signal or crosswalk
   - There are no medians on a street with four or more lanes

2. Check off any items this intersection has
   - Striped or marked crosswalk
   - Curb cuts or curb ramps
   - Traffic signs or signals
   - Pedestrian crossing signal or audible signal
   - Push to walk signal button
   - Curb extension or ‘pedestrian bulb out’
   - Median island

3. Was it easy to cross the street?  
   Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N

4. How long did it take you to cross the street? (in seconds)
1. Indicate with an X any of the following issues you encountered regarding driver behavior:

- Drivers did not yield to people crossing the street
- Car speeds are too fast
- There is too much traffic
- Drivers are distracted (e.g., using their cellphones)
- Drivers do not look when leaving or backing out of driveways
- Drivers are not obeying traffic signs
- Driver drove through stop signs or sped up to make it through traffic lights
- Drivers do not stop behind crosswalk or bike box

2. Indicate with an X any of the following issues you encountered regarding environmental safety:

- Unleashed dogs
- The signage or directions for pedestrians are confusing
- Lighting is needed
- No sidewalks, shoulders, or safe places to walk exist

3. Was it easy to follow safety rules?  
   Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N  Y / N

4. How many lanes does this street have?
## Walk Audit 4: Comfort + Appeal

For each street within your audit area, indicate with an X any items that are a problem for pedestrians. Please note any items you see that might especially be problematic for a child, older adult, or person with a disability.

### List each street within your audit area here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Was your walk pleasant?</th>
<th>Y / N</th>
<th>Y / N</th>
<th>Y / N</th>
<th>Y / N</th>
<th>Y / N</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Are there a variety of destinations accessible from this route?</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
<td>Y / N</td>
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<td>3. Check off any of the following you encountered:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scary dogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scary people</td>
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<td>Lots of litter or trash</td>
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<td>Dirty air due to automobile exhaust</td>
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<td>People or activity in surrounding buildings</td>
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<td>4. Check off any amenities you encountered:</td>
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<td>Shaded spots (from trees, awnings, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Places to sit (benches, low walls, etc)</td>
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<td>Lighting</td>
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<td>Greenery - landscaped or natural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayfinding signage</td>
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<td>Public art</td>
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<td>Bike parking or bike share stations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks, plazas, or other public spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit stops with seating and shelter</td>
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### Date + Day of week: _____/_____/_______

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### Start Time: _______________ AM | PM

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For each street within your audit area, indicate with an X any items that are a problem for pedestrians. Please note any items you see that might especially be problematic for a child, older adult, or person with a disability.
Walk Audit 5: Bicycling your Neighborhood

For each street within your audit area, indicate with an X any items that are a problem for pedestrians. Please note any items you see that might especially be problematic for a child, older adult, or person with a disability.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List each street within your audit area here:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Is there any bike infrastructure on this road?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Did any intersections you encountered have bike infrastructure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Indicate which type of bicyclist you most identify with:</td>
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<td>4. Would you feel comfortable bicycling on this road?</td>
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<td>5. Check off any of the following you encountered:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike lanes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separated bike path or multi-use path</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharrows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paved shoulders for bicycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike Box</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Share the Road” signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>“3 Feet to Pass” signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Bike Route” signage or bicycle specific wayfinding signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike racks or bike parking</td>
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<td>Bike share station</td>
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The Anatomy of a Sidewalk
We walk on sidewalks almost every day, but most of us have never thought twice about the components that make up this surface that takes you to and from your destinations.

1. Curb Cut - The curb cut is the where the curb or gutter is cut into to create a slight ramp providing access from the sidewalk to the street.

2. Textured for Visual Impairments - This is the bumpy piece of plastic you see at curb cuts. It provides an indicator for visually impaired people that a street crossing is there.

3. Buffer - The buffer is the strip of grass or landscaping between the sidewalk and the road. It can be narrow or wide, and provides additional protection for pedestrians by further separating them from traffic.

4. Crosswalk - The crosswalk is the visual indicator to drivers that this is a pedestrian crossing. Most often they are white stripes, like the one in this picture, but can be artistic.

5. Median - A median is a concrete or landscaped divider in a wide road. These are typically found on streets with four lanes, but can also be used on two lane street for traffic calming.

6. Push To Walk Crossing - This traffic signal activates a visual pedestrian crossing signal, an audible signal for the visually impaired, and interrupts the typical traffic light pattern to provide a safe time for pedestrians to cross busy streets.
A Visual Guide to Bike Infrastructure
There are a lot of different types of bike infrastructure out there besides the typical bike lane you probably think of. They all aim to provide a safe place for bicyclists to ride, but are not all suited for the same streets.

1. Bike Lane - Bike lanes are lanes painted on the street designated as space for bicyclists to ride separated from traffic.

2. Separated Bike Path - This type of path can be separated by a curb and grass buffer or by striping and physical objects such as planters and reflectors.

3. Paved Shoulders - In rural areas, shoulders can be paved and separated with rumble strips allowing space for bicyclists to ride in areas that have no safer connecting roads.

4. Sharrows - Derived from “Share the Road Arrows,” sharrows indicate to other users of the road that this is a bike route and are typically placed to indicated how far into the lane bicyclists should be riding.

5. Bike Box - Bike boxes are found at intersections, and allow space for bicyclists (who typically ride on the right) to safely make left turns.

6. Bike Share Station - These are physical stations where you can rent or borrow bikes to ride.
What can I do now?
Congratulations, you’ve already started your journey as an engaged citizen by completing this neighborhood audit. If you want to do more, here are a few ways you can take action:

1. Contact your local public works and transportation departments, or your local representatives, to report unsafe sidewalks and roads.

2. Ask your local officials to create crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, and other traffic-calming measures (such as road-diets that narrow the street) to help control the speed of traffic on neighborhood roads.

3. Advocate for your community to adopt a “Complete Streets” policy which requires that all streets be planned, designed, and maintained to enable a safe, convenient, and comfortable travel and provide access for all users of a road, regardless of their mode of transportation, age, or ability.

4. Organize walk or bike to school events, bike commuter trains, or other bicycling or walking social events within your community to encourage your neighbors to get out and walk or ride more.

5. Go to city council meetings to encourage your elected officials to make safe walking and bicycling a priority within your community.

A few things you should know...

» Sidewalk requests aren’t always straight forward. Although a city’s public works department is in charge of maintaining your community’s infrastructure, sometimes maintenance of sidewalks is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

» In most places, your department of public works or transportation, or engineering department can address any concerns about sidewalks on public property.

» The maintenance of trees and bushes that might grow to obstruct a sidewalk is usually the responsibility of the property owner. However, local governments can send a notice asking the owner to perform maintenance. If they do not do so, a public works crew might be able to trim the overgrowth and bill the city. You can contact your code enforcement officer with these types of issues.

» In some neighborhoods, a homeowner’s association is responsible for the upkeep of the sidewalks.

» In some areas, sidewalks and bike infrastructure are not an option due to a lack of right-of-way space or are prohibited by codes or ordinances. In these areas, ask your city planners and traffic engineers about utilizing traffic calming designs to make the streets a safer place for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to share.
Thank you for participating!

Community planning cannot be successful without the help of you, the community. In order to plan for and create a safe and healthy future for you and your family, cities first must know and understand where they are starting from. Your help in mapping existing conditions and identifying areas that can be improved will assist them in identifying short and long term goals and projects that can be implemented to reach these goals. Your participation also helps show your leaders that walkability and safety is important and is a priority of their city's residents. Thank you for taking the time to conduct this audit, we hope you had fun and learned a little about community planning.

- the Small Town Center

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To learn more about our center and the projects we have worked on across the state of Mississippi visit our website at www.carlsmalltowncenter.org or follow us on social media @smalltowncenter on facebook, instagram, and twitter.