

Walkability Audit

Greenfield Tool Box

DESIGN

✓ PROCESS..... Evaluation Metric

IMPLEMENTATION



Credit | O2 Planning + Design Inc.



Credit | Walkable and Liveable Communities Institute



TOOL DESCRIPTION

Walkability is a measure of the conditions of an area that promote walking. A walkable community offers a safe and pleasant pedestrian experience, with accessible destinations and desirable amenities. There are distinct health, environmental, community, social, and economic benefits associated with more walkable communities over settlements with more limited opportunities for walking.

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A walkability audit examines and evaluates the walking (and in many cases, cycling) environment in a neighbourhood. Several different types of audit methods can be used, some of which can be found online. These methods can help identify the concerns of pedestrians about the safety, access, comfort, and convenience of the walking environment, such as the width of sidewalks or location of crosswalks. Some audit tools assess the amenities and services within a certain radius of a location to provide a walkability score for a neighbourhood.

An audit can also be used to identify potential alternatives or solutions to promote walking within a neighbourhood. This can include policy changes, education and enforcement measures, and site engineering treatments.

Walkability Checklist

One of the most common walkability audit tools is a checklist that can be used to assess different routes within a community. It can also be used when creating or revising plans for a proposed development to determine how successful the development will be in promoting walking and cycling.

A checklist used for evaluating a the walkability of a development plan might ask:

- › Is there room to walk?
- › Are there crossing aids for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the street safely?
- › Are there other street design characteristics to reduce volume or speed (e.g., roundabouts)?

Tool Intent

To identify potential concerns for pedestrians related to the access, comfort, convenience, destination and safety of the walking environment, and provide alternatives or solutions to improve pedestrian activity in a neighbourhood.

Informal walkability audits can be performed by any individual or local interest groups, but more formal audits should be performed by a multidisciplinary team composed of designers, planners, engineers and transportation specialists.

USERS

Municipal Officials

✓ **Municipal Planning Staff**

✓ **Planning + Design Professionals**

Engineers

Land Developers

Landowners

Community Members

Walk Score
57
 Out of 100
Somewhat Walkable
 50 1st Ave NE Black Diamond

Restaurants
 Grillo's Pizzeria L 0.11km

Coffee
 Stop Coffee House L 3.41km

Groceries
 Canada Safeway Lim 29.18km

Shopping
 Pharmasave 0.15km

Schools
 Education Plus 0.13km

Parks
 None found [Add place](#)

Books
 Sheep River Communi 0.29km

Pubs
 In Cahoots Bar & Gr 17.9km

Entertainment
 Okotoks Cinemas 19.71km

Banking
 RBC Royal Bank of C 3.68km

Public Transportation
 Why isn't public transit showing? [About transit data](#)

Compare Your Score

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--|
| Top 10% of scores: | 92 | 42% of Walk Score users have a higher Score. |
| Your score: | 57 | |
| Average score: | 49 | |

[Get your Credit Score for free before you apply for a home loan](#)

Source | <http://www.walkscore.com/>

Online Walkability Audit Tool - Walk Score

Another auditing approach is to evaluate what amenities and services pedestrians can access from their location. Walk Score is a website that demonstrates this approach by automatically calculating walkability at an address. To do this, it locates all stores, restaurants, schools, and parks accessible from the location. It provides a score from 0-100, with 90 or above denoting a location strongly oriented to walking. Scores below 25 identify sites that are strongly car-dependent, where travelling to any destination requires a car. While this is typically used to evaluate existing developments, the Walk Score approach can also compare the scores of communities that can provide the basis for the design of Greenfield development.

WHEN IN THE PROCESS IT IS USED?

Most walkability audit tools are designed for reviewing existing environments. However, an audit can also be performed at different stages of the development of an area, including planning, design, and construction, to ensure that the spaces promote pedestrian activity.

POLICY SUPPORT

Calgary Municipal Development Plan

2.4.3 Enhancing the public realm - Policies

- Design streets and sidewalks to encourage pedestrian comfort, safety and linkages between neighbourhoods, open spaces and adjacent land uses.
- Safe pedestrian connections, transit shelters, bicycle parking, benches and clear wayfinding signage should be provided to facilitate all travel modes.
- Provide sufficient and uniform sidewalk width to allow for comfortable and safe pedestrian

CASE STUDIES | BEST PRACTICES

Walkable Edmonton



The City of Edmonton developed an initiative in 2008 to provide expertise and resources supporting walkable design and advocacy for walkability. The City created a committee composed of a number of City Departments and external stakeholders, including the Edmonton Transit System, Alberta Motor Association, Alberta Centre for Active Living, Sustainable Transportation Department, Parks & Public Works, Edmonton Police Service, and Alberta Health Services. One of the key needs identified by the Committee was the development of an overall strategy to quantify walkability in the City and identify the actions required to reach a vision. Under this initiative, two documents were developed: the *Proposed Walkability Strategy for Edmonton* and *Walkable Edmonton Toolkit*.

Source | *Walkable Edmonton*:

http://edmonton.ca/transportation/cycling_walking/walkable-edmonton.aspx

<http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/WalkabilityStrategy200909.pdf>

<http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/CommPeople/WalkableEdmontonToolkit.pdf>

Most people are comfortable walking 400 metres (5 min) to a given destination, and depending on the circumstance or the walking environment, will walk up to 1,200 metres.

Walkability Audit

traffic, the planting of trees and additional landscaping and wayfinding elements. Sidewalks should enhance the visual character of streets, with landscaping and buffer planting used to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic.

d. Promote a higher degree of attention to the architectural design and detailing of building edges in areas of interface with heavy pedestrian traffic, notably commercial streets such as Urban and Neighbourhood Boulevards (see CTP Section 3.7 – Complete streets).

e. Consider seasonal factors when designing the public realm.

f. The design of buildings, open spaces, pathways and parking areas should adhere to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

g. Transit stations should be designed as vibrant, mixed use areas incorporating public gathering areas and public art.

Town of High River Town Plan People and Housing Policies

2.4.3.3 Increase transportation choices to and from, and walkability within, the town.

2.4.4.3 Require community and building design that promotes walkability and interaction between neighbours.

2.4.4.6 Pedestrian sidewalks and pathways must be extended to each new community and employment area to ensure that a contiguous system is maintained.

68 Mobility Policies

2.5.2.2 Provide safe pedestrian pathways and sidewalks that facilitate access to parks, natural features, employment zones and provide connectivity between neighbourhoods.

2.5.2.3 Provide for the use and storage/parking of bikes, motorcycles, scooters, motorized wheelchairs, and other alternatives to the automobile in all new commercial, industrial and institutional developments.

RELATED TOOLS

[Bikeability Audit](#)

[Walkability Catchment](#)

[Complete Streets](#)

[Block and Lot Standards](#)

[Traffic Calming](#)



Credit | Creative Commons | LUMIN8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Walkinginfo.org (<http://www.walkinginfo.org/problems/audits.cfm>)

Alberta Centre for Active Living (<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/>)

Walkability Checklist (http://katana.hsrc.unc.edu/cms/downloads/walkability_checklist.pdf)

Tolley, Rodney, Sustainable transport – Planning for walking and cycling in urban environments, Woodhead Publishing Ltd, 2003.