



Neighborhood Walkability Assessment Tool Instructions

The Neighborhood Walkability Assessment Tools are designed to guide residents of a neighborhood as they gather information about walkability and safety in their communities. The Tool assesses both the pros and cons of safe walkability and provides action steps that will help residents address barriers in their neighborhood. It can be used to help guide conversations, develop priorities, and take action. People who use the streets and sidewalks every day will already have a good idea of what's working and what isn't, and this will be the most important piece of doing an assessment. The Tool will help document this information and assist in drawing resources to neighborhood needs.

Two formats are recommended for completing the assessment. Instructions for both are included in this packet:

- OPTION 1 – Conducting a Neighborhood Walkability Assessment
- OPTION 2 – Using a Discussion-Based Approach

At the back of this packet you will find additional resources that are designed to help you address barriers to safe walkability in your neighborhood. These include:

- **Tips for Using the Tool**
- **Things to Consider when Planning an Assessment**
- **Discussion-based Approach Worksheet**
- **City of Chicago 311 and 911 Services**
- **Resources**

Many more resources can be found at www.clocc.net on the “Resources for Partners” partners under the Neighborhood Walkability Assessment link.



OPTION 1 – Conduct a Neighborhood Walkability Assessment

Individuals or groups can use this Neighborhood Walkability Assessment Tool. The Assessment Tool is split into two parts. **Part 1** is used on the assessment walk and **Part 2**, is used afterwards to match up the problems with action steps. You can also find helpful documents for taking action (including graph paper to make a map for the walk and sample letters to the Alderman) on www.clocc.net under. A glossary is also available on the website, which explains words used in the Assessment Tool that might be unfamiliar.

Materials Needed:

Flipchart, chalkboard, or whiteboard; clipboards, pens, markers, tape measure (optional), camera (optional).

Potential Participants: Parents, youth or youth groups, community-based organizations, school staff, Aldermanic staff, business owners crossing guards, Parent Patrol leaders, LSC members.

Sample Agenda for Implementing an Assessment

Implementing Part 1

1. Introductions and agenda review
2. Brief introduction to Assessment Tool
3. Word generation exercise
 - As a group, make a list of words that relate to how people feel about walking in the neighborhood. Write them on a large piece of flip chart paper so everyone can read them.
4. Hand out Part 1 of the Assessment Tool and Glossary
 - Look over each document and answer questions.
 - Stress the importance of filling out the Priorities section on the last page before teams come back together.
5. Choose locations, teams, and timeframe
 - Keep locations nearby and use what people already know about the neighborhood to choose locations. Allow 20-30 minutes per block (one section of street between two corners). Make sure everyone knows what time to gather together as a group.
6. Hand out other materials (clipboards, pens, maps, etc.)
7. If the group is using the graph paper to draw maps, draw the maps before you depart..



OPTION 1 – Conduct a Neighborhood Walkability Assessment - Continued

Implementing Part 2

1. Gather together and have each group report back their top 3 priorities.
2. Pass out Part 2 of the Assessment Tool and have teams match their priorities to the Facts and Rights and Action steps for each priority.
3. Discuss priorities and actions together
 - Participants may need to decide on a smaller set of priorities to start with. Try choosing some smaller (or easier) projects and larger (or more long-term) projects at the same time. *Win a smaller victory first that many people can celebrate.*
4. Develop an action plan.
 - For each priority, choose the strategies the group will use to solve it, identify volunteers that will be responsible for tasks, and a timeline to complete them.
 - Use the resources at the back of this packet for more information and suggestions.
5. Set up a next meeting to check in on progress.



OPTION 2: Discussion-based Approach

If you want to use the Tool more informally, get a group together and choose the area(s) in the neighborhood you want to assess. The difference with Option 2 is that participants will not perform a walking assessment. A worksheet called “Discussion-Based Approach” is included in this packet can be used to help with this discussion activity.

Materials needed:

Copies of worksheet (resource section), copies of Parts 1 and 2 of the Neighborhood Walkability Assessment, pens, flipchart or chalkboard, markers.

Potential Participants:

Parents, youth or youth groups, community-based organizations, school staff, Aldermanic staff, business owners crossing guards, Parent Patrol leaders, LSC members.

1. Ask the group to make a list of words that relate to this question:
What keeps me from walking or allowing my child to walk in this neighborhood?

Remember to think about anything that may affect safe walkability including: drivers, sidewalks, street crossings and intersections, safety, noise, how pleasant the walk is, etc. The facilitator can use a flip chart or chalk board to list the words mentioned during the discussion.

2. With the group, generate a list of three or four problems your group wants to take on. Use a flip chart or chalkboard to list the ideas generated from the discussion.
3. Have the group review Part 1 of the Walkability Assessment Tool and discuss their thoughts related to the issues listed on the flipchart or chalkboard.
4. Using Part 2 of the Assessment Tool, review the actions that can be taken to address the issues.
5. Develop an action plan.
 - For each priority issue, choose the strategies the group will use to solve it, identify volunteers that will be responsible for tasks, and a timeline to complete them.
 - Use the resources at the back of this packet for more information and suggestions.
 - Set up a next meeting to check in on progress.



THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT

- Get familiar with all of the materials in this packet before the Walkability Assessment. Look over the sample letters and the instructions for using the letters, because they draw from information from Parts 1 and 2 of the Tool.
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- The time of day will affect the assessment. If the morning and evening rush times are the most important try to plan the assessment to happen at that time.
- Choose a small location to assess. If there is a group, split into teams and pick a few nearby locations--a good place to start is along the route to school. Talk to students to find out their frequented routes to school, since they might include shortcuts and alleys. Start small, choosing one or two blocks. Use the group's knowledge of the neighborhood to choose locations that are of concern. A larger map of the area can help in choosing locations.
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- As you walk along and assess the area focus on gathering information as it exists, meaning report exactly what you see or experience. If you're in a group talk about what you see and think about what is the most important item to get fixed.
- Maps and Photos: if you plan to approach your elected officials about the problems you find, consider making maps and taking photographs of the area. Pictures will help reinforce your argument. Use the graph paper in this packet to draw your own map, or, if you have access to a computer and printer print a map of the selected location (maps.google.com may be helpful).
- If you end up with a list of problems that seem too large to tackle back up and start smaller. Winning a few smaller victories first – like working with the Alderman to get new hoses to close off the street in front of the school, or getting new signs posted – will encourage others to join. Then move on to larger problems like criminal activity and changes that require a lot of time, organizing, or funding.
- Try many tactics at once – any time you write a letter to the Alderman, write one to the Mayor as well. Attend your local CAPS meeting and encourage other parents to join you. When you send a letter to the Alderman include a copy of the assessment you completed.



Discussion-Based Approach WORKSHEET

Part 1

Ask yourself this question: What keeps me from walking or allowing my child to walk in this neighborhood?

Remember to think about these things: driver behavior, condition of sidewalks, conditions of crossings and intersections, safety, and how pleasant the walk is. Write your thoughts below:

Part 2

Using the list below match your observations with Part 2 of the Neighborhood Walkability Assessment tool. The numbers below correspond with the actions in Part 2 of the tool. Part 2 gives suggestions for your next steps to addressing the concerns in your neighborhood.

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Stop sign running | (20) Missing sidewalks |
| (2) Red light running | (21) Trees missing |
| (3) No pedestrian crossing signals | (22) Abandoned lots |
| (4) Not enough crossing time at traffic light | (23) Abandoned buildings |
| (5) Not enough time to cross between cars | (24) Cars in alleys |
| (6) No painted crosswalks | (25) Graffiti |
| (7) Cars don't yield at crosswalks | (26) Litter |
| (8) Cars don't yield when turning | (27) Blank walls |
| (9) Cars block crosswalks | (28) No nearby destinations |
| (10) No curb cuts and ramps | (29) Not enough parks and open space |
| (13) Speeding traffic | (30) Bad driver behavior |
| (14) Too much traffic | (31) Crime |
| (15) Cracked sidewalks | (32) Harassment |
| (16) Blocked sidewalks | (33) Burnt out street lights |
| (17) Busy driveways | (34) Unleashed dogs |
| (18) Sidewalks too close to moving traffic | (35) No one else walking |
| (19) Sidewalks not shoveled in winter | (36) (Other) |





City of Chicago 311 and 911 Services

When you report an issue to 311, it is entered into a computer tracking system. City departments are held responsible for addressing the issue and the report stays open until it's resolved. Also see Tips for Calling 311, www.cityofchicago.org/311cityserv

311 Calls

Abandoned Vehicle
Alley Light Out
Alley Pot Hole
Alley Sewer Inspection
Animal - Inhumane Treatment
Building Violation
Cable TV Complaint
City Vehicle Sticker Violation
Clean and Green Program
Dead Animal Pick-up
Dead Tree Removal
Fire Safety Inspection
Garbage Cart Additional or New
Garbage Cart Damaged
Graffiti Removal
Hydrant Damaged
Ice and Snow needs removal
Lead Inspection
No Building Permit & Construction Violations
No Heat
Operating without a Business License
Porch Inspection
Pot Hole in Street
Rodent Baiting/ Rat Complaint
Sanitation Code Violation
Senior Information and Assistance
Senior Well Being Check
Sewer Cleaning Inspection
Sidewalk Survey
Stray Animal
Street Light Out
Tree Debris
Tree Planting
Tree Trimming Needed
Vacant Lot Clean-up Needed
Vacant/Abandoned Building
Water in Basement
Water in Street
Wire Trash Basket Request

911 Calls

Violent crimes
Suspicious activity
Chronic car alarms
Excessive noise complaints
Illegally parked cars



Resources

Find your Alderman, Representative, Beat/CAPS meeting, etc.

- www.civicfootprint.org
- call 311
- www.cityofchicago.org/police

Map Resources, for printing or viewing maps of the walking area.

- www.maps.google.com
- City Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): www.fulcir.net or (312) 386-8613

Crash statistics will give you an idea of how Illinois compares to other states.

- Federal fatality data: <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov>
- Illinois Crash Facts:
<http://www.dot.state.il.us/trafficsafety/crashreports.html>

CeaseFire provides resources in addressing violence in Chicago communities:

- www.ceasefirechicago.org or 1-866-TO-CEASE

Mayor Daley's Safe Routes Ambassadors provides free, in-class pedestrian and bicycle safety education to schools.

- www.saferoutesambassadors.org or (312) 744-3019

Mayor Daley's Bicycling Ambassadors provides free bike safety education during the summer.

- <http://www.bicyclingambassadors.org> or (312) 744-8147

Kids Walk to School, a great resource from the Centers for Disease Control.

- <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm>

Healthy Streets Campaign, with resources for Chicago on improving safety

- <http://www.healthystreets.org> or (312) 427-3325, ext. 222

Chicago Crosswalk Enforcement Campaign

- Chicago Tribune article: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-pedestrian-crossing-sting_07jun07,0,3660072.story

Community Gardens

- Green Net Chicago <http://www.greennetchicago.org> or (773) 251-7515
- Neighbor Space www.neighbor-space.org or (312) 431-9406



Chambers of Commerce (Check the Membership Listing for local Chamber of Commerce Chapters)

- <http://www.chicagolandchamber.org> or (312) 494-6700

Community art/mural, landscaping and community-building resources

- Ask your Alderman about local groups to help with a mural project
GreenCorps greencorps@cityofchicago.org or (312) 744-8691