Communities can make walking safer by teaching small groups to take simple “walkability” surveys and to take recommended actions for community improvements. Your involvement will make a difference to people you care about.

INCLUDED IN THIS KIT:

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2  The Basic Steps
4  Sidewalks and Streets Survey
14 Take Action: How to Improve Your Community Rating
16  Further Steps to Improve Your Community’s Rating
18  Resources

July 15, 2010
OVERVIEW

The problem

Too many communities in the United States are designed for automobile travel, with very little consideration given to the needs of walkers. Lack of sidewalks, construction of sidewalks too close to roads and lack of maintenance are all factors that discourage people from walking regularly.

The solution

You can help make walking safer by teaching small groups to take simple “walkability” surveys. Once people rate an area and identify concerns, the group can take action to improve walkability. This toolkit will help you do that.

Time commitment

About an hour to complete a walkability survey. More time to follow up and pursue the needed improvements; this will depend on the extent of improvements and community cooperation to get the work done.

Special considerations

None

Who can do this?

Everyone.

Great reasons to do this project

- Increase exercise opportunities for your community.
- Boost social interaction among neighbors by creating a walking-friendly environment.
- Helping reduce traffic congestion and pollution by leaving the car at home.
- Increase property values: Walkable communities are associated with higher home values!

After driving, walking is the most popular means of travel in the United States. It’s easy, cheap and gentle on the body and environment.
The Basic Steps

STEP 1: Get Ready

You’ll want to map out a walkable area that can get you and your neighbors to and from where you need to go. This could be your own neighborhood or one surrounding your local faith-based group or senior center. You’ll also want to gather a few materials, such as street maps, a digital camera, comfortable walking shoes, a hat and sunscreen.

STEP 2: Recruit People To Do A Survey

Start with friends and neighbors. It’s helpful to include someone with a physical challenge (e.g., someone using a walker, wheelchair or cane, or even someone who pushes a baby stroller). That will help you get a true sense of an area’s walkability.

STEP 3: Review the Survey and Identify Your Route

- See the walkability survey below.
- Map out a logical walking route in your community, ideally one that would take you and your neighbors to and from where you need to go.
- Gather the following materials:
  - Street maps
  - Clipboards, notepaper, pens and disposable or digital cameras (all important for documenting what needs to be improved)
  - Comfortable walking shoes and, if needed, a hat and sunscreen.

STEP 4: Choose a Date and Time for the Survey
STEP 5: Conduct the Survey and Rate Your Route

Print out and bring surveys and materials for each member of your group. Conduct the survey and see how your community stacks up.

STEP 6: Take Action to Make Your Community More Walkable

After you’ve rated your walk and identified problem areas, review “Take Action: How to Improve Your Community’s Rating from the Sidewalks and Streets Survey” (see below), and work with your group to take action.

STEP 7: Inspire Others on CreateTheGood.org!

TELL US WHAT YOU DID!

We want to hear stories about how you helped give back to your community. www.createthegood.org/stories
You just might inspire others to do the same.

SHARE FEEDBACK

We are always looking for feedback on our materials, so please let us know how this guide was helpful or what additional information you wish we could have included. Share lessons learned and other tips for others who are using walkability surveys: www.aarp.org/community/groups/CreateTheGood.

KEEP UP THE GOOD!

Remember: Whether you’ve got five minutes, five hours or five days, you can make a positive impact in your community. And if you have more time, consider organizing another service activity, finding local opportunities and posting your events at www.CreateTheGood.org/post-opportunity.

4,378 pedestrians were killed by motor vehicles in 2008 in the U.S., according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Review the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things that you’d like to change. Take photos of problem areas and things you like and would like to see more of. Suggestions for photos to take include:

- Crossing signals
- Overhead traffic lights
- Turning lanes
- Curb cuts
- Sidewalks
- Crosswalk lines and vehicle stop lines
- Important signage

The survey contains the following sections to help guide and record your observations:

- Section A: Mapping Out Your Walk Survey Area
- Section B: Crossing the Street (Intersections)
- Section C: Sidewalks
- Section D: Driver Behavior
- Section E: Safety
- Section F: Comfort and Appeal
- Section G: Overall Ratings and Observations

Each section asks you to rate your streets or intersections as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. Here’s what each rating means:

- ☑ Excellent: Area is very walk-friendly and safe
- ☑ Good: Area is moderately walk-friendly and safe
- ☑ Fair: Area is somewhat walk-friendly and safe
- ☑ Poor: Area is not walk-friendly or safe

Finally, explore how to improve your community’s rating by reviewing the ideas in “Take Action: How to Improve Your Community’s Rating From the Sidewalks and Streets Survey” (on page 14).

So…got your cameras, street maps and other gear? Then get ready, set, go!
Section A: Mapping Out Your Walk Survey Area

This survey will tell you what to look for on sidewalks and streets within the walkable area that you choose. Your walkable area could be as small as one intersection or could include several streets and intersections. Consider starting small, with one or two intersections and a connecting street.

Remember, the smaller your walk survey area, the easier it is to follow up and get results.

Please record the following for your walk survey area:

County ___________________________ City/Town ___________________________
State ___________________________ Zip code ___________________________

Next draw a simple map of your walk survey area and label the streets. Here is an example:

Survey Map

Now draw your own walk survey area. Be sure to write in N, E, S and W (North, East, South and West) next to the arrows to show which direction the streets are facing.

Your map will help you organize fellow walkers and review the area you have surveyed. Make a copy for each fellow walker to make notes on. For example, they can note the spot where a telephone pole blocks the sidewalk or where a curb cut is needed and then take photos of what they find. If you are creating a final report, include a clean copy of your map along with the photos taken.
Section B: Crossing the Street (Intersections)

Please complete one Section B page for each intersection you observe within your walkable area. We suggest allowing 20-30 minutes per intersection.

Intersection observed: location at ________________________ and ________________________

Day of week: ____________________ Time observations began: ___________ □ a.m. □ p.m.

Date: ________________________ Time observations ended: ___________ □ a.m. □ p.m.

DIRECTIONS: Place a √ below next to any items that are a problem for walkers and note:

• What might especially be a problem for a child, senior or person with disabilities?

• What is the exact location(s) of each problem? Record a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west) on the blank line to the right of each item you check.

Problems for walkers

☐ Crossing doesn’t have a pedestrian signal or audible signal

☐ Pedestrian signal doesn’t give people walking at average speed enough time to cross (WALK+DON’T WALK)

Time allowed on signal (minutes:seconds) ________:_______

☐ Pedestrian signal doesn’t give people who walk more slowly enough time to cross

☐ Traffic signal makes pedestrians wait too long before crossing

☐ Need a traffic signal or crosswalk

☐ Push–to-walk signal is not available/operating

☐ Crosswalk is not marked or poorly marked

☐ Have to walk too far (>300 ft.) for a safe place to cross the street

☐ Road is too wide to cross safely

☐ No median on streets with 2+ lanes
Sidewalks and Streets Survey

- Parked cars on the street or utility poles are blocking the view of traffic

- Other issues and observations *(please specify)*

Who is using the crosswalk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is using the crosswalk</th>
<th>Make hatch marks to indicate number of people/things observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People walking at average speed</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People using assistive devices (canes, wheelchairs, walkers)</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with young children or strollers</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People crossing against signal</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarders</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scooters</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>total #:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall rating of street crossings in walk survey area:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Visit CreateTheGood.org for more opportunities, tools and ideas to help improve your community.
Section C: Sidewalks

Please complete one Section C page for each street where you observe sidewalks within your walkable area.

Street observed: ___________________ between ___________________ and ___________________

Day of week: _______________ Time observations began: ____________ □ a.m. □ p.m.

Date: _______________ Time observations ended: ____________ □ a.m. □ p.m.

**DIRECTIONS:** Place a √ below next to any items that are a problem for walkers and note:

- What might especially be a problem for a child, senior or person with disabilities?
- What is the exact location(s) of each problem? Record a landmark or side of street (north, south, east or west) on the blank line to the right of each item you check.

### Problems for walkers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ There are no sidewalks, paths or shoulders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ There are sidewalks, but they are not continuous (segments are missing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Sidewalk is not wide enough for two people to walk together side-by-side (5 ft.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Sidewalk is broken or cracked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ There is no buffer between traffic and the sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Sidewalks are interrupted by driveways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ No/misplaced ramps (curb cuts) for wheelchairs, strollers and wagons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Curb cuts are not textured or marked for those with visual impairments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Sidewalk is blocked with poles, signs, shrubs, dumpsters, low hanging trees, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Cars, trucks, vendors are blocking the sidewalk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other issues and observations <strong>(please specify)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall rating of sidewalks in walk survey area: □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor

Visit [CreateTheGood.org](http://CreateTheGood.org) for more opportunities, tools and ideas to help improve your community.
Section D: Driver Behavior

Please complete one page for the entire walkable area on your survey map.

Day of week: ________________________ Time observations began: ____________  □ a.m.  □ p.m.

Date: ________________________ Time observations ended: ____________  □ a.m.  □ p.m.

DIRECTIONS: Place a √ below next to any items that are a problem for walkers and note:

• What might especially be a problem for a child, senior or person with disabilities?

• Note landmarks, streets or sides of streets (north, south, east or west) on the blank line to the right of each item you check.

Problems for walkers

☐ Drivers do not stop at stop signs

☐ Drivers do not obey traffic signals

☐ Drivers seem to be speeding

☐ Drivers do not yield to pedestrians, especially at right turns

☐ Drivers do not stop behind the crosswalk

☐ Drivers don’t look when leaving or backing out of driveways

☐ Drivers make unexpected turns/maneuvers

☐ Other (please specify)

Location

________________________________________________________________________________________

Overall rating of driver behavior in walk survey area:

☐ Excellent  ☐ Good  ☐ Fair  ☐ Poor
Section E: Safety

Please complete one page for the entire walkable area on your survey map.

Day of week: ________________  Time observations began: ____________  □ a.m.  □ p.m.

Date: ________________  Time observations ended: ____________  □ a.m.  □ p.m.

**DIRECTIONS:** Place a √ below next to any items that are a problem for walkers and note:

- What might especially be a problem for a child, senior or person with disabilities?
- Note landmarks, streets or sides of streets (north, south, east or west) on the blank line to the right of each item you check.

**Problems for walkers**

**Don’t feel safe walking here because:**

- □ Car speeds are too fast  ____________________________
- □ Too much traffic  ____________________________
- □ Drivers are distracted (for example, using cell phones)  ____________________________
- □ There is loitering or suspicious/criminal activity  ____________________________
- □ Unleashed dogs  ____________________________
- □ Unclear signs or directions for drivers or pedestrians  ____________________________
- □ Other (please specify)  ____________________________

**Location**  ____________________________________________  ____________________________________________

Overall rating of safety in walk survey area: □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor
Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Section F: Comfort and Appeal

Please complete one page for the entire walkable area on your survey map.

Day of week: ________________  Time observations began: ___________  □ a.m. □ p.m.
Date: ________________  Time observations ended: ___________  □ a.m. □ p.m.

DIRECTIONS: Place a √ below next to any items that are a problem for walkers and note:

• What might especially be a problem for a child, senior or person with disabilities?
• Note landmarks, streets or sides of streets (north, south, east or west) on the blank line to the right of each item you check.

Problems for walkers

Don’t feel safe walking here because:

☐ Need shade trees
☐ Need grass, flowers, landscaping
☐ Need benches and places to rest
☐ Grass/landscaping needs maintenance
☐ Need water fountains and bathrooms
☐ Need sidewalk leading to bus stop
☐ Bus stop doesn’t have shelter
☐ Bus stop doesn’t have adequate lighting
☐ There is graffiti or vacant/run-down buildings
☐ There is trash on the route
☐ Other (please specify)

Location

________________________________________________________________________________________

Overall rating of comfort/appeal in walk survey area:  □ Excellent  □ Good  □ Fair  □ Poor

Visit CreateTheGood.org for more opportunities, tools and ideas to help improve your community.
Section G: Overall Ratings and Observations

Now it’s time to tally your scores from each observation section. Place a √ below next to each rating from the previous sections. If you observed more than one location for Sections B and C, record the average of your observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B: Crossing the Street (Intersections)</td>
<td>□ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Sidewalks</td>
<td>□ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Driver Behavior</td>
<td>□ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Safety</td>
<td>□ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Comfort and Appeal</td>
<td>□ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total checkmarks: _______ _______ _______ _______

Overall rating

Your Overall Rating will be more than just your checkmark total. Think about your observations as a whole. Were some areas much better or worse than others? For example, the sidewalks might be Good for walking, but intersections might be Poor for crossing the street. This might justify reducing the Overall Rating of your walk survey area.

With this in mind:

Overall Rating of the entire walk survey area: □ Excellent □ Good □ Fair □ Poor

Additional comments on what works well and what needs improvement:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Thank you for participating and making the community more livable for everyone.

Name ________________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

Email ______________________________________________________________

Phone ______________________________________________________________

Number of participants in this survey activity _______________________________

AARP would like to thank the Institute of Transportation Engineers for providing the original content for this survey.

Now that you’ve identified the problems, read the next section. It will help you take action to fix the flaws.
# Take Action: How to Improve Your Community’s Rating From the Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Now that you’ve identified the problems, you can find the answers. Check out these ideas on ways to improve your community’s rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Did you have room to walk?</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sidewalks or paths started and stopped</td>
<td>• Identify another (safer) route and share information with friends and neighbors.</td>
<td>• Speak up at board meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sidewalks broken or cracked</td>
<td>• Tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist.</td>
<td>• Write or petition the city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sidewalks blocked</td>
<td>• No sidewalks, paths or shoulders</td>
<td>• Make the local media aware of the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Too much traffic</td>
<td>• Too much traffic</td>
<td>• Work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Was it easy to cross streets?</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Road too wide</td>
<td>• Pick another route for now.</td>
<td>• At city meetings, push for crosswalks, signals, parking changes and curb cuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross</td>
<td>• Tell your local traffic engineering or public works department about the problems and give them a copy of your checklist.</td>
<td>• Report to local traffic engineer the locations of parked cars that pose safety hazards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crosswalks/traffic signals needed</td>
<td>• Trim trees or bushes that block the street and ask neighbors to do the same.</td>
<td>• Request that the public works department trim trees or plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees or plants</td>
<td>• Leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there.</td>
<td>• Make the local media aware of problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curb cuts were missing or in need of repair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Did drivers behave well?</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Backed without looking</td>
<td>• Pick another route for now.</td>
<td>• Petition for better law enforcement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Did not yield</td>
<td>• Set an example by slowing down and being considerate of others; encourage your neighbors to do the same.</td>
<td>• Request protected turns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Turned into walkers’ path</td>
<td>• Report unsafe driving to the police.</td>
<td>• Ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic-calming ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drove too fast</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organize a neighborhood speed-watch program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stopped too close to crosswalk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sidewalks and Streets Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen?</td>
<td>• Educate your community about safe walking.</td>
<td>• Encourage schools to teach walking safety. Help schools start safe-walking programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stop and look left, right, left again, before crossing?</td>
<td>• Encourage corporate support for flextime so parents can walk children to school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cross with the light?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Was your walk pleasant?</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Needs grass, flowers, trees</td>
<td>• Point out areas to avoid; agree on safe routes.</td>
<td>• Request increased police enforcement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dogs off leashes</td>
<td>• Ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced.</td>
<td>• Start a crime-watch program in your neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unsafe people</td>
<td>• Report unleashed dogs to the animal-control department and to your neighborhood association.</td>
<td>• Organize a community cleanup day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not well-lit</td>
<td>• Report unlawful activity to the police.</td>
<td>• Sponsor a neighborhood-beautification day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dirty, litter, pollution</td>
<td>• Report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department.</td>
<td>• Begin an adopt-a-street program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lots of traffic</td>
<td>• Collect trash during your next walk by taking a trash bag along.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No resting places</td>
<td>• Plant trees and flowers in your yard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Select an alternative route with less traffic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A quick health check:</th>
<th>What you can do immediately:</th>
<th>What you and your community can do with more time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Could you not go as far or as fast as you wanted?</td>
<td>• Start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days.</td>
<td>• Get the local media to do a story about the health benefits of walking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Were you tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles?</td>
<td>• Invite a friend along.</td>
<td>• Call the recreation department about community walks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was the sun really hot?</td>
<td>• Walk along shaded routes where possible.</td>
<td>• Encourage corporate support for employee walking programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was it hot and hazy?</td>
<td>• Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher; wear a hat and sunglasses.</td>
<td>• Plant shade trees along routes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AARP would like to thank the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center for providing the original content for improving your community’s walkability rating.

Visit CreateTheGood.org for more opportunities, tools and ideas to help improve your community.
Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Further Steps to Improve Your Community’s Rating

City and county bureaucracies can be a challenge to persuade to make changes. You can get the ball rolling by identifying problem areas and calling them to public attention. In the meanwhile, identify alternative routes that can keep you and your community walking, moving and thriving.

- **Rally** your neighbors to work with the appropriate local traffic and transportation officials and with local government to add new walkways and sidewalks and help improve the safety and accessibility of your community.

- **Contact** your local public works and your county department of transportation or elected community representative to report broken, cluttered or otherwise unsafe sidewalks. Give them copies of your survey report and photos that demonstrate the problems.

- **Ask** city or county officials to install pedestrian and traffic signals to mark crosswalks and to add traffic-calming devices (such as speed bumps and traffic circles) to help control the speed of traffic. Make sure the timing of traffic signals is long enough to accommodate older pedestrians, people with disabilities and other slower-moving pedestrians.

- **Organize** a neighborhood watch group to prevent crime from taking place in your community. More awareness of activity in the neighborhood can reduce crime so your community can have safer streets that everyone can enjoy.

- **Advocate** for raised medians with curb cuts to easily accommodate all pedestrians and wheelchair users.

So Just Who Are the Players Who Can Help You Make a Difference?

**City or County Public Works or Department of Transportation:**

- Your public works agency can address concerns about placement and width of sidewalks and sidewalk maintenance. Responsibility for specific sidewalk issues may vary. For example, even though the city public works department often addresses sidewalk maintenance, the maintenance may actually be the responsibility of property owners. Adding a new walkway may require negotiating with the respective property owners about paying for it. This process is easier if a gap can be filled in, as opposed to installing a completely new walkway that crosses a number of private properties.

Visit [CreateTheGood.org](http://CreateTheGood.org) for more opportunities, tools and ideas to help improve your community.
• Trimming bushes that overhang the sidewalk is the property owners’ responsibility, but the city or county will send an official notice to request that property owners take care of it. If a property owner does not comply, a public works crew may trim the bushes and bill the property owner. In some neighborhoods, the homeowners’ association is responsible for sidewalks.

• Some communities or neighborhoods have ordinances restricting installation of sidewalks or curbs for aesthetic reasons or to make the area appear to be less urban. In these communities, you must present the need for sidewalks to the city or county council, and it can be quite challenging. Consider directing your energies more effectively toward ensuring that neighborhood streets are well-maintained.

• If action on sidewalks is not possible, your group can still help make it safer to walk along the streets by urging that the city install traffic-calming measures such as roundabouts, speed tables or speed humps to reduce cut-through traffic or speeding cars. You can also organize a neighborhood watch group to deal with any criminal activity in your community. More awareness of activity in your neighborhood can reduce crime, which means the streets are safer for everyone to enjoy.

Other Community Partners:

• Contact your local public works department or elected community representative to report broken, cluttered or otherwise unsafe sidewalks. Consider forming an alliance with downtown merchants or others who may be interested in advocating for more effective streetlights, benches and shade trees to improve your community’s appeal. Contact the planning department, which would be involved in improving streetscapes, or the parks department, which might be involved in planting trees. Local parent-teacher associations (PTAs) may also be interested in ensuring safe school routes.

• The traffic manager in the city or county department of transportation is responsible for controlling the speed of traffic through traffic signals. Make sure the timing of traffic signals is long enough to accommodate older pedestrians, people with disabilities and other slow-moving pedestrians.

• Signalized crosswalks with flashing lights or special signals activated by a walk sign are safest because they help reduce the number of pedestrians stranded at crosswalks when the light changes. New types of crosswalks that feature a striped path that lights up when activated by a pedestrian demonstrate the potential of technology to enhance pedestrian safety. Older residents particularly benefit from these types of improvements at major street crossings.
Resources

Pedestrian Mobility and Safety – Audit Guide (http://ite.org/PedAudits)
This guide, written by AARP and the Institute of Transportation Engineers, explains the numerous issues related to pedestrian safety and mobility. It includes photos of what to look for and findings from surveys in four cities.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (http://www.walkinginfo.org)
Information includes walking basics, solutions and resources.

Walk Wise, Drive Smart (http://www.walk-wise.org)
Learn from the experience of Hendersonville, NC, which is building community support to create pedestrian-friendly environments for older adults.

Step Up to Better Health (http://aarp.stepuptobetterhealth.com)
This AARP program offers a fun and easy way to fit walking into your daily routine.

Get Fit on Route 66 (http://aarp.getfitonroute66.com)
Convert your physical activity minutes to miles as you take a virtual journey down this legendary highway.

Staying Motivated (http://www.aarp.org/health/fitness)
Many articles about walking to help you stay the course and keep walking