

ACE Communities Workshop on Walkable and Vibrant Small Towns
Community Walkability Plan Template

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Introduction

The over-arching purpose of today's *ACE Communities Workshop on Walkable and Vibrant Small Towns* is to help community teams to kick-start or re-energize planning processes that will lead more walking and better walkability.

We hope you will leave this workshop inspired and empowered to develop your own Community Walkability Plan, which will serve as a statement of your community's vision, a guiding document for your work over the next few years, and an agreement among your partners about who will do what. Like all plans, it should be flexible - you should review it as a team at least once a year and update/revise it as necessary.

Over the last few months, you have filled in a community survey, described your current walkability initiatives and future goals, and formed a community team by reaching out to partners in multiple sectors. Today, you and your team have come together with other small towns in Alabama to learn about walkability audits and public policy, to brainstorm how to get folks walking in your communities, and to commit to a particular strategy - your Community Walkability Plan.

Feel free to design your Community Walkability Plan in any way that works for you. But, if you are unsure about how to get started, use the following template (overleaf) to help you write an outline or first draft.



Template for your Community Walkability Plan

Part 1: Vision

- A statement about walking and walkability in your community in the future
- We suggest you look ahead 3-5 years and envision what you want things to look like
- The entire team should agree on the vision statement

Part 2: Background

- Description of current conditions in the community that affect walking
- Reasons why these conditions need to be changed, and the benefits that will accrue
- Include data related to your specific goals (see part 4), such as participation in walking programs and current downtown business occupancy
- Other relevant information, such as existing trails and ongoing planning processes

Part 3: Community Partnership

- List the agencies and organizations that are members of your community team
- Provide a summary of the vision, mission, and programs of each partner and discuss what they may be able to contribute
- Identify the "point person" for each organization

Part 4: Team Goals

- Choose 3-5 specific outcomes that will need to happen to achieve the vision
- Here are some examples of possible goals:
 - Expand walking programs in community schools
 - Implement a communication campaign that engages local residents in using existing parks and trails more often
 - Adopt a new comprehensive plan that includes a sidewalk ordinance
 - Adopt a Vision Zero policy and start reducing pedestrian crashes
 - Construct a new trail connection
- Try to include a mix of easier (short-term) and harder (long-term) goals

Part 5: Strategic Plan and Timeline

- Create a step-by-step "recipe" for each goal with completion dates for each step
- Be strategic about the way one step leads to another (eg. ask residents what they like about walking, and then develop messages for a communication campaign)
- Be ambitious but realistic with your timeline for completing steps
- This part of the plan will change the most, when you do an annual update

Part 6: Challenges

- Think through everything that might go wrong with the strategic plan
- Write down ways you might be able to overcome those challenges

Part 7: Evaluation

- For each goal, decide how you are going to measure how successful you were
- Go back and include evaluation activities in the timeline