



Walkability Audit

Introduction

What is walkability?

Walkability is more than being able to walk. It's about being able to access your community. It means that everyone, regardless of their physical ability or life stage are able to move in their own community, and between other communities. Walkability is strongly impacted by the built environment and promotes physical activity and has other health benefits.

Some aspects of walkability are that streets, roads and footpaths are:



Safe: from cars, falling or tripping, rubbish, and crime.



Attractive: with plants, art, fountains and other features that are well maintained.



Comfortable: footpaths are easy to walk on and regular seating, shade and water fountains provide rest stops.



Connected: footpaths continually connect different parts of the community with appropriate transitions from footpath to road at crossings, and there are clear signs for nearby facilities.

Walkability is also important when travelling by car, bike, taxi or public transport — and how easy it is to get from these to your destination once you're parked or dropped off. It's no use being able to park in a car park nearby but then unable to walk to and get into a building.

Tasmania's natural environment can make walkability difficult some times. Hills, in particular, can be a huge barrier to walkability for people with reduced mobility. There isn't much we can do to remove hills from our neighbourhoods, but people should be able to safely access alternative routes to get to where they want to go. In some cases, it may be appropriate to have bus stops along hilly streets so locals can catch them to the bottom and back up.

COVID-19 saw many people taking to the streets and walking to break up their day and exercise. For some people, it may be the first time that they've really explored their local area, learning to appreciate the importance of walkability — even if they don't know what it is yet!

Why is it important?

When streets, roads, footpaths and neighbourhoods feel safe, attractive, comfortable and are connected, people are much more likely to walk or ride in them rather than travelling by vehicle.

This increase people's physical activity and health, but also their interactions with community members and nature, both of which are good for mental health. It also encourages people to shop locally rather than travelling to other areas.

What are some of the problems?

Many of our communities are built for cars. Roads can be busy and people can face some of the following barriers to walking:



Footpaths are incomplete (end suddenly) or damaged.



Trees or bushes block footpaths.



Rubbish is a trip hazard.



Pedestrian crossings are limited, and/or short crossing times at lights, and/or poor transitions from footpath to road e.g. No ramp.



Poor lighting.



No seating or shade provided.



Community areas are accessible only by stairs.

What are some of the solutions?

The first way to solve barriers to walkability is to go for a walk! This will help identify areas that need adapting and areas that are very accessible and serve as good examples to follow. Once you have identified these, you can contact your local council and political members, and work with other community members to improve walkability.

What is the walkability audit?

This walkability audit prepares people to assess areas of walkability in their community. It provides tips on what to consider when assessing walkability, checklists to use, and what steps to take next.

This audit is based on the AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit (<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2014/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit.html>) and includes:

- *Getting Started*
- *Crossing Streets and Intersections*
- *Footpaths*
- *Driver Behaviour*
- *Safety*
- *Comfort and Appeal*
- *Route Rating, Observations, Suggestions and Photos*
- *Possible Solutions*
- *Taking Action*

Getting Started

Before you start walking, you need to prepare to make sure you get the best information.

1. Invite people to get involved

Share the idea of a walkability audit with your friends and family. Invite someone else along with you.

Are you part of a local walking or exercise group? Perhaps you could plan in a walkability audit of your usual walking route?

Having someone else join you not only makes things more fun, but means more things will be identified. It can be particularly useful to walk with someone who has mobility issues, an injury, young children and/or a pram, wheelchair, walker or walking stick, low vision, low hearing, or live with another disability to understand where they face barriers and what works well for them.

Having other people on board can also help when you start presenting your ideas to council.

2. Identify your route and map it out

Use a map either on your phone or in hard copy to work out your route. Don't make the route too big but maybe start with a walk you're familiar with that connects two areas. For instance, from your home to a nearby walking track or shopping area. Start small – maybe just a couple of intersections and the connecting street, and make you walk longer as you get more experience. The smaller your walk area, the easier it is to follow up and get results.

Keep the map with you as you walk so you can mark specifically where things work or where there are barriers.

3. Read the walkability audit

It's good to read through the walkability audit as you plan for your walk. This will help you consider things to keep in mind when you're walking, what supplies you may need, and what parts of the audit you will need. For example, a route may involve crossing three streets without traffic lights but not intersections with traffic lights, so you will need three copies of the Crossing Streets sheet but don't need the Intersection sheet.



4. Get your supplies ready

Things you'll need on your walk:

- A map of the walkability route
- The walkability audit and clipboard or similar
- Pens (consider different colours for what works well, barriers, and general observations)
- A digital or smartphone camera
- Comfortable walking shoes and clothes
- A hat and sunscreen
- A bottle of water
- Notebook or paper for additional notes
- A backpack to carry everything

Make sure each person on the walk has their own set of supplies. Have a read of the audit before you head out so you have a good idea of what to look out for.

5. Choose a date and time

Plan with your walking buddy when you'll start and from where. Allow plenty of time to explore the area and time for taking notes.

6. Go for a walk!

Get going! Use the audit documents below to collect information, take photos, or even film your walk and experience. And remember to enjoy your walk as you collect the information!

Explanations

You may come across some things in the audit that you're not sure why they are important to note. Below are some explanations of these.

- **Safe ramps connecting footpaths to the road:** People getting around using wheels (e.g. cyclists, wheelchairs, walkers, prams) need footpaths and roads to connect safely using ramps. These ramps should:
 - Be a safe slope — not too steep
 - At useful places, like road crossings, near bus stops, or at parks and buildings.
- **Sidewalk/warning bumps (tactile paving):** Tactile paving provides a textured or marked area near road crossings and traffic lights that warn people with visual impairments of the approaching crossing.
- **Accessible footpaths:** Footpaths should allow a person and wheelchair to pass each other comfortably. This means that the footpath should be built wide enough (about 1.7m to 2m) but also that they are built around poles, signs or plants with the same clearance.
- **Road diets or traffic calming measures:** Narrowing roads or installing traffic calming measures like road bumps or islands result in drivers driving slower and have been shown to reduce road crashes and pedestrian injury. They also make it easier for people to cross streets safely and make them feel safer even when walking along footpaths.

Walkability Audit

Read the audit fully before you go walking so you have an idea of what to look out for. As you walk, make notes, take photos or videos, and mark on your map examples of:

- Things that work well
- Barriers
- Things that need improving
- General observations (if necessary)

You could use different colours for each criterion to make it easier to identify what is what.

The audit includes sections for:

- Crossing Streets (without traffic lights or allocated pedestrian crossing)
- Intersections (with traffic lights or allocated pedestrian crossing)
- Footpaths
- Driver Behaviour
- Safety
- Comfort and Appeal
- Route Rating, Observations, Suggestions and Photos

Each feature in each section is recorded as Yes or No, except for Driver Behaviour.

- Yes = 1 point
- No = 0 points

Points are counted for each section to give an overall score. This score contributes to the overall rating of the section, which is determined by you, taking into account additional observations and comments.



Walkability route

Date:

Time:

Suburb:

Postcode:

MAP:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin orange border, intended for drawing the walking route. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the document.

Either draw or attach the walking route, including street names, direction of North/East/South/West, and the direction you walked.



Crossing streets (without traffic lights or allocated pedestrian crossings)



Mark where this crossing is on your map.
Record the features and the ease of crossing the street.

NAME OF STREET AND LOCATION:

-
1. Pedestrian islands or barriers are present and provide protection from cars Yes No
 2. There is a safe ramp connecting the footpath to the road Yes No
 3. The distance to cross before reaching a pedestrian island or the other side of the road is less than 10m Yes No
 4. No parked cars, trees, poles or other objects block the pedestrian view of traffic Yes No
 5. Does this crossing feel safe? Yes No

SCORE:

(yes = 1 point, no = 0 points)

Score	Walkability
0-1	Not walkable
2-3	Not easily walkable
4	Somewhat walkable
5	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

This is a common spot where people cross the road

Yes No

How many people might use it in half an hour?

.....

Who of the following uses this street crossing?

People walking at an average pace

People walking slowly

People with young children or prams

People crossing without waiting for the pedestrian signal

People using assistive devices eg. Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches

Teenagers

Cyclists

Skateboarders

Other

People use this spot to cross because there are no pedestrian crossings nearby

Yes No

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Intersections (with traffic lights or allocated pedestrian crossing)



Mark where this intersection is on your map.
Record the features and the ease of crossing.

INTERSECTION:

of

and

STREET ONE

STREET TWO

1. Visual pedestrian signal is present with a push button Yes No
2. Audible pedestrian signal is present with a push button Yes No
3. Pedestrian signal gives enough time to cross without feeling rushed Yes No

Time allowed for crossing:

minutes

seconds

4. Pedestrian signal waiting time is appropriate Yes No
5. There is a safe ramp connecting the footpath to the road Yes No
6. Sidewalk/warning bumps (tactile paving) are present at the end of the footpath Yes No
7. No parked cars, trees, poles or other objects block the pedestrian view of traffic Yes No
8. Cars slow down appropriately for the orange and red lights Yes No
9. Does this intersection feel safe to cross at? Yes No

SCORE:

(yes = 1 point, no = 0 points)

Score	Walkability
0-2	Not walkable
3-5	Not easily walkable
6-7	Somewhat walkable
8-9	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

This is a well-used pedestrian crossing

Yes No

How many people might use it in half an hour?

.....

Who of the following uses this crossing?

People walking at an average pace

People walking slowly

People with young children or prams

People crossing without waiting for the pedestrian signal

People using assistive devices eg. Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches

Teenagers

Cyclists

Skateboarders

Other

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Footpaths



Mark where this path is on your map.
Record the features and the ease of use.

STREET:

between

and

CROSS STREET ONE

CROSS STREET TWO

1. Footpaths and/or shoulders are present Yes No
2. Foot paths are continuous (no segments are missing) Yes No
3. Footpath is wide enough for two people to walk side-by-side (about 1.7m) Yes No
4. Footpath is even and whole (not broken) Yes No
5. There is a buffer between traffic and the footpath Yes No
6. Safe ramps connect the footpath to the road at useful places Yes No
7. Footpath/warning bumps (tactile paving) are present at the end of the path Yes No
8. Footpath is free of obstructions or interruptions like trees, bushes, poles, signs Yes No
9. Footpath is free of cars or trucks parking Yes No
10. Does this street feel safe? Yes No

SCORE:

(yes = 1 point, no = 0 points)

Score	Walkability
0-2	Not walkable
3-5	Not easily walkable
6-8	Somewhat walkable
9-10	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This is a well-used street

Yes No

How many people might use it in half an hour?

.....

Who of the following uses this street?

People walking at an average pace

People walking slowly

People with young children or prams

People crossing without waiting for the pedestrian signal

People using assistive devices eg. Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches

Teenagers

Cyclists

Skateboarders

Other

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Driver Behaviour



Mark the exact location/s where you see problems and any additional notes about the incident/s.

For this section, No's are 1 point and Yes' are 0 points.

1. Drivers do not stop at stop signs

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

2. Drivers do not obey traffic signals

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

3. Drivers appear to be speeding

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

4. Drivers don't yield to pedestrians, particularly at left turns

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

5. Drivers don't stop behind the crosswalk or stop line

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

6. Drivers don't look when leaving/reversing out of driveways

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:



7. Drivers make unexpected turns/manoeuvres

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

8. Drivers are aggressive

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

9. Drivers are distracted (e.g. Using mobile phones)

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

10. Drivers make you feel unsafe

Yes No

Location/s:

Notes:

SCORE:

(yes = 0 points, no = 1 point)

Score	Walkability
0-2	Not walkable
3-5	Not easily walkable
6-8	Somewhat walkable
9-10	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

The road along this route is often used by cars

Yes No

How many cars might use it in half an hour?

.....

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Safety

Complete one sheet for the entire walkable area of your route. Some features may not apply/be present for this route—mark these as N/A (not applicable).

1. This route feels safe to walk Yes No
2. The route is clean and does not have graffiti Yes No
3. There is a safe amount of traffic N/A Yes No
4. Lighting is good (e.g. even, no dark spots) N/A Yes No
5. There is no loitering or criminal/suspicious behaviour Yes No
6. Dogs are leashed Yes No
7. Signage and directions for pedestrians are clear Yes No
8. Signage and directions for drivers are clear N/A Yes No
9. Cyclists alert you before coming up behind you, and are not too fast N/A Yes No
10. Pedestrians are friendly and do not harass or intimidate others Yes No

SCORE:

(yes = 1 point, no = 0 points)

Score	Walkability
0-2	Not walkable
3-5	Not easily walkable
6-8	Somewhat walkable
9-10	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This is a well-used route

Yes No

How many people might use it in half an hour?

.....

Who of the following uses this route?

People walking at an average pace

People walking slowly

People with young children or prams

People crossing without waiting for the pedestrian signal

People using assistive devices eg. Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches

Teenagers

Cyclists

Skateboarders

Other

Could any of the above groups feel less safe using this route than others? Yes No

If yes, which group/s?

.....

.....

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Comfort and Appeal

Complete one sheet for the entire walkable area of your route. Some features may not apply/be present for this route—mark these as N/A (not applicable).

1. Shade is available along the route, particularly during the middle of the day Yes No
2. The route has plenty of grass, plants and landscaping Yes No
3. There are benches and places to rest Yes No
4. Grass and landscaping are well maintained Yes No
5. Water fountains and/or public toilets are available N/A Yes No
6. Bus stops are easily accessible on footpaths N/A Yes No
7. Bus stops have seating, shelter and adequate lighting N/A Yes No
8. Buildings are used and well maintained N/A Yes No
9. There is no litter or trash Yes No
10. The route has public or community art (e.g. murals, sculptures) Yes No

SCORE:

(yes = 1 point, no = 0 points)

Score	Walkability
0-2	Not walkable
3-5	Not easily walkable
6-8	Somewhat walkable
9-10	Is walkable



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

This is an enjoyable route to walk

Yes No

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....

OVERALL RATING:

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Route Rating, Observations and Suggestions



Tick the rating for each section of your walking route.

Crossing Streets	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Intersections	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Footpaths	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Driver Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Comfort and Appeal	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
TOTALS (no. of each rating)	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

.....

ROUTE RATING:

Your overall Route Rating will be more than just the rating total, though this will affect it. Think about your observations as a whole. Did some audit sections score better than others? Were some parts of the route better than others? How do these factors increase or reduce the Route Rating?

Route Rating: Excellent Good Fair Poor

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS:

.....

.....

.....



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Crossing Streets

Intersections

Footpaths

Driver Behaviour

Safety

Comfort and Appeal



Possible solutions

	Issue	Solutions — suggestions for Council
Crossing Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads are too wide to cross • Views of traffic are blocked • Ramps are damaged or missing • Traffic is moving very fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Add a pedestrian crossing • Add a pedestrian island half-way across the road • Add or repair ramps with tactile paving • Apply a 'road diet' by extending footpaths and narrowing roads
Intersections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to cross is too short • Faulty pedestrian signals • Long pedestrian waiting times • Views of traffic are blocked • Ramps are damaged or missing • There is no tactile paving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Extend pedestrian signal crossing time • Repair pedestrian signals • Shorten time from button press to pedestrian signal to cross • Add or repair ramps with tactile paving
Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or incomplete footpaths • Damaged or uneven footpaths • Narrow footpaths • No buffer between footpath and traffic • Ramps are damaged or missing • There is no tactile paving at end of footpath • Obstructions along footpath • Cars/trucks park on and block footpath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Add new footpaths • Replace or extend existing footpaths • Plant trees or bushes along street to buffer pedestrians from cars • Add or repair ramps where appropriate with tactile paving • Remove obstructions or extend footpaths around them • Advise residents not to park on footpaths • Advise residents to maintain overhanging trees or bushes



	Issue	Solutions — suggestions for Council
Driver Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore traffic signals and signs • Speeding • Do not yield to pedestrians • Inattentive or distracted • Make unexpected manoeuvres • Are aggressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Report unsafe behaviour to Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000 • Launch a community safety campaign about safe driving behaviours • Install traffic calming measures • Identify hot spots for dangerous manoeuvres and review these
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti is common • Rubbish is common • There is too much traffic • No or uneven lighting • Loitering or criminal behaviour • Dogs are unleashed • Signage and directions are no present or unclear • Cyclists are fast and don't alert you as they approach • Pedestrians are aggressive, abusive or intimidating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Report unsafe behaviour to Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000 • Install cameras where appropriate • Install rubbish bins where appropriate • Launch a community safety campaign about safe behaviours • Install appropriate lighting • Signage reminding people to leash dogs and of appropriate cyclist behaviour • Add or up-date signage
Comfort and Appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or limited shade is available • No, limited or poorly maintained plants and landscaping is present • No benches, water fountains or public toilets are available • Bus stops are not easily accessible and/or do not have seating and shade • Buildings are empty • No community or public art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use safer routes • Plant trees or bushes along street for shade • Properly maintain plants and landscaping • Install benches under shade, water foundations and public toilets where appropriate • Ensure bus stops are easily accessible with ramps nearby, and have seating and shade available • Incentivise businesses or community groups to take up leases in disused buildings • Organise community art projects



Taking Action

It can be hard to get councils and government to make walkability improvements or additions. This can be because of issues around finances, project priorities, political interests, limited resources, or a whole bunch of other things. But you and your community can get the ball rolling by identifying problems, suggesting solutions, and raising awareness of walkability.

What you can do next

Rally community members to raise awareness about walkability broadly and work with council to improve walkability in your community.

Contact local council or local state or federal government representatives to raise awareness of walkability and the issues you have identified. Provide copies of the completed walk audit, photos and videos to show and explain the problems.

Present your solutions to some of the issues you've found. You may want to do some research to find out what has worked in other places (see Possible Solutions for some suggestions).

Organise a Neighbourhood Watch group in your community to prevent crime and promote closer community ties (<https://nhwtas.org.au/>).

Continue to conduct walkability audits with your community to improve safety and access for everyone.

Complications

Some solutions for walkability are easier said than done. Here are some issues you may face:

- Maintaining overhanging trees and bushes, or damaged driveways on the footpath may be the responsibility of property owners, not councils. Council should be able to send the owner a letter asking that they perform maintenance. If the owner does not comply, the council may arrange for a crew to trim the plants and bill the owner.
- Property owners may have a say in whether adjacent footpaths, or footpaths along their street, can be adapted or added. They may have reduced access to their property or find the noise disruption difficult to deal with. There may be delays if residents complain about the works.
- Issues with public transport are likely to be state government rather than council issues. Still make sure to contact the relevant state government department and Minister to raise your concerns and present your audit. It's still a good idea to contact your council and encourage them to raise issues with state government as well, and you can also contact your local federal Minister to voice your concerns. The more noise made, the more likely issues are to be addressed.



- Some communities or neighbourhoods may restrict installation of footpaths or curbs for aesthetic reasons. If action on footpaths is not possible, councils can still make street safer by installing traffic calming measures (see Possible Solutions)
- You may face resistance from drivers, particularly if solutions call for reduced speeds, traffic calming measures, or narrower roads. Don't be disheartened — many walkability projects face opposition at first but once the measures are in place, the majority of the community support the changes (see this article: www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/road-diets-fact-sheet.html).

For more information

COTA Tasmania's Liveable Communities Toolkit has information about how to create liveable communities that support walkability:

www.cotatas.org.au/programs/liveable-communities/toolkit

You can also order shorter **Walkability Audit postcards** from us, call 62 313 265.

The Heart Foundation Tasmania's Healthy by Design document and website:
www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au

AARP has a range of resources about walkability.

Explore their walkability resources here:
www.aarp.org/livable-communities/archives/info-2014/walkability.html

Find out more about liveability here:
www.aarp.org/livable-communities.

Some of the AARP resources that include information, myth-busting and how to get things right include:

- Road Diets: Reducing road width to reduce car speed and crashes
www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Road-Diets-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- Sidewalks: The importance of good sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrians and community www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Sidewalks-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- Street Trees: How street trees can improve communities www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Street-Trees-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- Traffic Calming: Designing roads to reduce car speeds and improve safety www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Traffic-Calming-Fact-Sheet.pdf