Do You Enjoy Walking In Your Community?

Walkability Guide

Use this guide to learn more about walkability and how you can make your community safer to walk.

CIRCULATE SAN DIEGO
About This Guide

Circulate San Diego believes every resident of the San Diego region should be able to walk safely in his/her community. Many people would like to make their neighborhood more pedestrian friendly but don’t know how. The Walkability Guide was created to help you. Read on to learn about five important ingredients of a walkable community and tips for working with your city to get what you want.

Five Important Ingredients To A Walkable Community

What makes a community more walkable? There are 5 basic ingredients to make your neighborhood a place where people of all ages and abilities have safe, enjoyable, and easy access to their community on foot.  

1. Good Sidewalks

The basic design of a good sidewalk should include:

- **Pedestrian Zone**: wide, level sidewalks in good condition where pedestrians can walk and wheelchairs can roll
- **Parkway or Buffer Zone**: allows for vegetation and/or street furniture and buffers pedestrians from vehicles
- **Curb Zone**: border between the street and sidewalk with ramps for disabled and others to access sidewalk

2. Safe & Easy Street Crossings

Street crossings should be available every 300 feet (about half the length of a block) and should include:

- **Painted or Decorative Crosswalk**: makes crosswalk easier to see
- **Stop Bar**: painted line that stops cars before entering the crosswalk
- **Curb Extension/Bulb-out**: reduces pedestrian crossing distance; makes pedestrians more visible to drivers
- **Median/Island**: provides a halfway refuge point that allows pedestrians to cross safely

3. Traffic Calming

Street improvements can slow vehicle speeds, increase pedestrian safety, and allow for smooth traffic flow:

- **Curb Extension/Bulb-out**: slows the speed of turning vehicles
- **Road Diet**: slows traffic by reducing number of lanes and lane widths
- **Other**: roundabout, median, pedestrian island, and diagonal parking

4. Safety, Comfort & Beauty

Street enhancements make walking feel safer, more comfortable and more inviting:

- **Pedestrian Lighting**
- **Landscaping & Trees**
- **Clean & Well-maintained Sidewalks**
- **Amenities**: such as drinking fountains, bathrooms, and benches
- **Public Art**

5. Great Destinations

A community is more vibrant and desirable if it has great walking destinations, like:

- **Shopping**: stores, markets, restaurants, etc.
- **Services**: clinics, post office, bank, etc.
- **Transportation**: trolley, bus stop, train
- **Recreation**: parks, gardens, etc.

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Pedestrian Safety

Did you know a pedestrian is killed in a traffic collision every 109 minutes in the U.S.? Circulate San Diego wants you to be safe. Here are some tips:

- Obey all traffic signals and signs.
- Walk on the sidewalk. If there isn’t one, walk on the left side of the street to face oncoming traffic.
- Use crosswalks if available, or cross at an intersection.
- Before crossing the street, (1) stop, (2) look left, right, and left again, and (3) listen for oncoming vehicles, and (4) make eye contact with drivers to make sure they see you.
- Be alert while crossing. Don’t be distracted texting or talking on the phone.
- Be cautious around parked cars and driveways.
- Be predictable, don’t run suddenly out into the street.

BestWALK

How walkable is your city?

Conduct a walk audit and look for the 5 ingredients to a walkable community. Download the BestWALK phone app for free and rate your streets. Your input will help score the walkability of your city for Circulate San Diego’s Regional Walk Scorecard.

The BestWALK app is easy to use. Here’s how:

1. Download the app, BestWALK, on your iPhone or Android
2. When the app opens, enter your name, email address, city, and age (optional)
3. A map with red pins appears, select a pin to rate that street or intersection and press the check box
4. Press the “Go” button on the upper right corner
5. Begin rating streets or intersections!

More in depth directions on how to download and run the BestWALK app are available for iPhone and Android. Visit circulatesd.org/bestwalk for more information.

Be safe. Stay within the crosswalk if available.
Benefits of Walkable Communities

Did you know that people who live in walkable neighborhoods make four times as many walking and biking trips, three times as many transit trips, take fewer car trips, and drive fewer miles? In a walkable community, cars and traffic speeds are slower and more controlled making it a safer place for walking. Read on to learn more about the many benefits of walking.

Health

Walkable communities promote physical activity and good health.

- Children who walk are more active and develop a sense of independence contributing to a life-long habit of walking.2
- Walking 30 minutes per day can reduce the risk of obesity, cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, and improve your mood and mental performance.5,6
- Seniors living in a walkable community have greater mobility and independence, which helps reduce falls and gives them more energy for the things they enjoy.5

Community Strength

Walking in your neighborhood builds a sense of community.

- People in walkable neighborhoods have a greater level of pride and sense of ownership.8
- Walking in your neighborhood allows you to interact with neighbors, forming connections and social support.3,8

Environment

Think globally, act locally.

- If there are more people walking, there are fewer cars on the roads and less traffic congestion, less air and noise pollution, and less gas being used, which creates a healthier world for all of us!1,3

References:

Contact your city’s traffic engineer to tell them about your walkability concern. Tips for what to say when working with the city and more detailed information on city contacts can be found on Circulate San Diego’s website, www.circulatesd.org.

City of Carlsbad          760-931-2290
City of Chula Vista       619-397-6000
City of Coronado          619-522-7383
City of Del Mar           858-755-3294
City of El Cajon          619-441-1653
City of Encinitas         760-633-2709
City of Escondido         760-839-4651
City of Imperial Beach    619-423-8311
City of La Mesa           619-667-1450
City of Lemon Grove       619-825-3810
City of National City     619-336-4380
City of Oceanside         760-435-4373
City of Poway             858-668-4668
City of San Diego         619-527-7500
City of Santee            619-258-4100
City of San Marcos        760-744-1050 x 6
City of Solana Beach      858-720-2470
City of Vista             760-639-6177