

Walking Audits (Walking Workshops)



Walking Audits are a powerful workshop tool for redesign and visioning. Popularized more than 10 years ago by Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. these 45 to 90 minute teaching events are fun, healthy, democratic and inspirational. The media loves to cover these events. Basics of walking audits include:

1. Select routes that include type of change needed in the neighborhood, town center, school, corridor or waterfront. Generally a distance of 1/2 mile to a mile is enough. Use a bus if a number of distinct sites will be visited. Limit stops if a number of people are in the workshop
2. For a large downtown it is possible to conduct up to four walking audits over two days (one quadrant a day).
3. Groups of 10 to 20 are common, but larger groups work. Use cameras, measuring tapes and wheels and discuss key issues of redevelopment.
4. Stop frequently and discuss things that work or fail to work for the last 200-400 feet. Multi-disciplinary groups come up with the best balance of ideas.



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1. **Role Playing.** Some walking audits include role playing. The police officer is pretending to be 8 years old, while the fire chief is pretending to be 80 years old. At stops role players explain what works or does not work for them.
2. **Stakeholders are the experts.** Although a key facilitator conducts the walk, stakeholders with specific insights on landscaping, conservation, placemaking help teach one another about preservation or development opportunities .
3. **Experts discover new answers.** Many times on walks specialists, such as fire chiefs, discover how a new tool such as a curb extension helps them gain access to roadways.
4. **Wheelchairs** are brought out on some walks so that all participants can learn the challenges of existing street conditions.
5. **Groups stop frequently** each time there are new teaching points on how to repair a corridor, create a crossing or make some other improvement.
6. **Create solutions on the spot.** Workshop members may pause in quiet locations to design a curb extension, mini-circle or other feature.



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