



# Walking Audit: State of Practice Research

publicspaceworkshop  
engagement + urban design



Ontario Traffic Council

# Why Walking?

- Number one activity used by Canadians to stay physically fit
- Policy Alignment - Official Plans, Climate Change Strategies, Transportation Plans, School Travel Plans, Vision Zero, Healthy Communities, Public Health and Economic Development

## Prevention Power of Walking



- Decreased risk of death from all causes by 22 %  
(29 minutes/day \* 7 days/week)
- Decreased risk of diabetes by 30 %  
(2.5 hours/week)

# What is an audit?

“an unbiased examination/evaluation of the walking environment to . . . identify concerns for pedestrians related to the safety, access, comfort, and convenience of the environment.”

*Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center*

# Why Audits?

- Inform Planning and Design
  - EA's, Corridor Studies, Vision Zero, Transit Station Area Plans, School Travel Planning, others.
- Evaluation of walking environments that is objective, structured & evidence-based



Thornhill Community Centre

# Why Audits?

- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Meet! Understand roles. Build partnerships.
- Enable a coordinated community/municipal response
- Raise Awareness (e.g. crash data, walking conditions)
- Build political support
- Showcase successes
- Other?



# Numerous Audit Tools

- Microscale Audit of Pedestrian Streetscapes (M.A.P.S.) Tool - [http://sallis.ucsd.edu/measure\\_maps.html](http://sallis.ucsd.edu/measure_maps.html)
- Built environment & Active Transportation Neighbourhood Assessment (B.E.A.T.) <http://www.walkinginfo.org/cps/checklist.cfm>
- Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt Lists [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/tools\\_solve/docs/fhwas20042.pdf](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/docs/fhwas20042.pdf)
- <http://canadawalks.ca/resources/>
- <https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/>
- <https://ontario-traffic-council.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2017/09/OTC-Creating-Safe-Routes-for-AST-Final-A.pdf>
- [https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/walk\\_audit\\_toolkit\\_2018.pdf](https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/walk_audit_toolkit_2018.pdf)
- <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/info-2014/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit.html>
- <https://americawalks.org/how-to-conduct-a-walk-audit-in-your-community-quick-guide-for-assessing-your-neighborhood-walkability/>
- <http://ww4.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability?opendocument>
- [http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/activetransport/AT\\_WALK\\_P\\_Walkability\\_Audit\\_Tool.pdf](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/activetransport/AT_WALK_P_Walkability_Audit_Tool.pdf)
- <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/AHVZ-walk-audit-checklist-web-english.pdf>
- <https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/walkingchecklist.pdf>
- <https://activelivingresearch.org/rural-active-living-assessment-rala-tools>



Skilled facilitation is key.

# Study Objectives

- Determine current awareness and application of Walking Audits in Ontario
- Understand - challenges, opportunities and merits for the application of Walking Audits to support transportation network planning and design
- Assess need and interest in professional development opportunities for Walking Audit training



# Methods

<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>	Twenty-two (22)
<b>Selection of Interviewees</b>	<u>Purposive sampling</u> identified contacts according to their previous experience with OTC committees; and involvement with active transportation planning and design at either - municipal, consulting, public health and NGO's in Ontario.
	<u>Snowball sampling</u> participants were asked to suggest other potential contacts with Walking Audit experience

# Methods

<b>Twenty (20) organizations</b>	Regional Government – 3 Municipal Government – 7 Consultants – 5 NGO – 3 Public Health – 1 Student Transportation - 1
<b>Professions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traffic Engineer</li><li>• Landscape Architect</li><li>• Health Promoter</li><li>• Planner</li><li>• Accessibility Specialist</li><li>• Road Safety Specialist</li><li>• Multi-modal Transportation Planner</li></ul>

## Interview Questions

1. Are you familiar with the use and application of 'walking audits'?
2. What types of projects have 'walking audits' been used on?
3. What Walking Audit - method/tool/guideline are you using?
4. Was the Walking Audit used for stakeholder/public engagement?
5. Were the design recommendations - as an outcome of the Walking Audit - implemented? In whole or in part?
6. Would you be interested in learning more about the use of 'walking audits' to support your public consultation and design work?

# Key Findings

<b>1. Familiarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most somewhat familiar</li><li>• Often informal – site visits with staff and stakeholders</li><li>• Public health and NGO's often leading use</li><li>• Community groups use for advocacy</li><li>• Student transportation – walking hazard assessment</li></ul>
<b>2. Project Types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental Assessments</li><li>• School Travel Planning</li><li>• Road Safety Audit – In-service review</li><li>• Active Transportation Plans</li><li>• Gap Analysis</li><li>• Streetscape and Corridor studies</li><li>• Vision Zero projects</li><li>• Complete Streets studies</li><li>• Safety Assessments</li><li>• Public Life Studies</li><li>• Commuter Studies</li><li>• Transit Route and Stop Planning</li><li>• Special Events – Walk21 – Walkability Roadshow</li></ul>

# Key Findings

## 3. Guidelines and Tools Used

- Road safety in service reviews – may include 'pedestrian zones'
- Road Safety Audit – TAC Guideline
- Sidewalk condition assessments
- APBP Guidelines
- Friendly Streets toolkit
- School Travel Planning – Green Communities
- Custom audit methods – some include cycling
- FHA - Pedestrian and Bicyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) Guide and Prompt Lists
- Public Life Studies
- Active Transportation Quotient
- Microscale Audit of Pedestrian Streetscapes (MAPS)

# Key Findings

## 4. Public Engagement

- Specific to identified stakeholders
- Considering for Vision Zero – Senior Safety Zones assessments
- Occasionally as part of a PIC – where circumstances permit
- Controversial projects that require stakeholder and community support
- School bussing requirements
- Facilitation as or more important than 'tool' used
- Mostly staff led in a cross-discipline approach
- Through Accessibility and Active Transportation Committees
- Experiential engagement for accessibility planning and design

## 5. Design Implementation

- Low use of formal audit methods
- Informs the approach and sets the course for the project
- Public feedback received used to validate design criteria
- Some projects still incomplete
- Needed repairs identified
- Mid-block crossing (PxO) location identified
- Design changes identified
- School Zone Safety enhancements – traffic control signs, stop bars, parking management, crossing guards

# Key Findings

## 6. Interest in Learning More

- General support for more information and training
- Key staff training on 'audit methods'
- When are tools such as 'walking audits' useful?
- Support for 15-20 minute community initiatives
- Consider expanding scope to 'complete streets', vulnerable road users
- Merit and value of an accepted method and practice
- Successful use with School Travel Planning – apply to other projects
- Screening tool to determine when a 'walking audit' is required
- Traffic engineering to lead Walking Audits
- How to incorporate into – RFP
- Transit stop placement
- Experiential learning methods

# Next Steps

- Finalize and present draft report - OTC Committees
- Develop and review recommendations



# Questions/Comments?

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