Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit
A Community Walkability Program

Humboldt
Iowa
Fall 2015

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach
Community and Economic Development

IDPH
Iowa Department of Public Health

i-walk
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Introduction

In the past three decades, the number of obese and overweight individuals in Iowa and across the nation has skyrocketed. With obesity comes the greater risk of health complications and life expectancy reduction. As a result, there is a new and growing threat to the overall quality of life. In Iowa alone, 64.8% of adults are identified as either overweight or obese.*

Given the prevalence of obese and overweight individuals, it is important to promote healthy behaviors for all Iowans. Engaging in physical activity is a key component of advocating for healthy behaviors. A vision for healthy Iowa communities must regard and value safe and accessibly walking routes in all locales.

The Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit (I-WALK) program aims to provide community coalitions with relevant local information to assist them in continuously updating, implementing, and evaluating the walkability of their community. The I-WALK program is a project administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUEO) and implemented by communities across Iowa.

I-WALK utilizes web mapping technologies and global positioning system (GPS) units to accurately map routes that community residents use to walk or bicycle in their locale and identify safety barriers and solutions. Creating environments that encourage community residents to walk or bicycle safely will improve health outcomes by providing additional opportunities to reach the recommended weekly 150 minutes of physical activity, as well as normalize walking as a healthy lifestyle habit.

U.S. Biking and Walking Levels**
- 12% of all trips are by bicycle (1.0%) or foot (10.5%).
- From 2000 to 2009, the number of commuters who biked to work increased by 57%.
- In 2009, 40% of trips in the U.S. were shorter than 2 miles, yet Americans use their cars for 87% of trips 1 to 2 miles.
- Residents of the largest U.S. cities are 1.7 times more likely to walk or bicycle to work than the national average.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety
- 14% of all U.S. traffic fatalities are bicyclists (1.8%) or pedestrians (11.7%).
- In the 51 largest U.S. cities, 12.7% of trips are by foot and 1.1% are by bicycle, yet 26.9% of traffic fatalities are pedestrians and 3.1% are bicyclists.
- Seniors are the most vulnerable bicyclists and pedestrians. Adults over 65 make up 10% of walking trips, yet comprise 19% of pedestrian fatalities and 6% of bicycling trips, yet account for 10% of bicyclist fatalities.

Public Health Benefits
- Bicycling and walking levels fell 66% between 1960 and 2009, while obesity levels increased by 156%.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- In general, states with the highest levels of bicycling and walking have the lowest levels of obesity, hypertension (high blood pressure), and diabetes and have the greatest percentage of adults who meet the recommended 30 minutes per day of physical activity.

Economic Benefits
- Bicycling and walking projects create 11-14 jobs per $1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per $1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to $11.80 in benefits can be gained for every $1 invested in bicycling and walking.

*IDPH 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
Introduction

The program history of I-WALK starts with a pilot program funded by an Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) non-infrastructure grant, launched in September 2010 in 12 Iowa schools. Focusing on Safe Routes to School planning and transportation infrastructure data collection the goal of I-WALK is to provide community coalitions with relevant local information to help them continuously update, implement, and evaluate their community walking plans.

Including the success of the initial program I-WALK has been implemented in 31 schools through funding from a variety of sources including Iowans Fit for Life, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Transportation, Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

In July 2012, I-WALK piloted its first project specifically focusing on the aging adult population across Iowa.

During the spring of 2014, two additional school projects were added in Bloomfield and Perry as well as four adult projects in Carroll, Dyersville, Greenfield, and Knoxville.

The project team includes:
- Sarah Taylor Watts, IDPH Project Coordinator
- Catherine Lillehoj, Ph.D., IDPH Chief Epidemiologist and Program Evaluator
- Christopher J. Seeger, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Landscape Architect and Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture.
- Bailey A Hanson, GIS Analyst, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

The I-WALK project consisted of three components: 1) Survey, 2) GPS Walkability Workshops and 3) Community Coalitions.
Methodology

GPS Walkability Workshops
ISU Extension and Outreach trained citizens to use iPhones equipped with Spatial Network’s Fulcrum application to conduct an inventory of their community. Following the 45 minute training, the volunteers then took to the streets to collect data.

Workshop participants mapped information from three categories: intersections, midblock sidewalks, and additional features that impede pedestrians and cyclists.

At intersections, volunteers indicated whether or not there were painted crosswalks and curb cuts and what type of control system, if any, was in place (e.g., stop signs, stoplight, flashing light).

Volunteers evaluated sidewalks at midblock, indicating whether or not there were sidewalks, and if so, whether or not they were in good condition and wide enough for two people to walk side by side.

Additional features included barriers such as vegetation growth across the sidewalk, places where water frequently pools on the sidewalk, sidewalks that suddenly end and barking dogs.

Citizens collect data with iPhone application “Fulcrum”
**Methodology**

**Community Coalitions**
Inviting and involving key partners to be a part of the community coalition is essential to having a successful I-WALK program. The community was charged with identifying key organizations and individuals ready to be involved in the discussions surrounding a safe and healthy environment for residents to walk or bicycle to and from various locations. A community coalition should be a well-rounded group that represents a wide range of interests and expertise related to walking and biking. Local public health representatives accessed online resources, developed specifically for I-WALK, to engage and lead the coalition members.

LPH led an effort to create a coalition in the community to help address issues identified by the assessment. The communities used resources from the I-WALK website to guide their invitations to local stakeholders that could be involved. Coalitions were asked to invite all of these people to be involved in the effort. After the coalitions were created, the communities started assembling funding for future projects.

The following report includes the data compiled while evaluating the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Agency on Aging</th>
<th>Local Public Health</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Representative/Citizen (local business; neighborhood &amp; community association representatives; pedestrian, bicycle, &amp; safety advocates)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Adult</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Law Enforcement/Public Safety/School Resource Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Representative/City Mayor</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Planner/City Engineer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISU Extension and Outreach</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNR (Department of Natural Resources) Representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service or Volunteer Organization Representative</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A questionnaire consisting of 25 questions was used as the survey instrument. Questions addressed topics related to identifying the most frequented locations and distance to those locations, transport to and from frequented locations, barriers and assets of most frequented locations, walkability and bikeability of frequented locations, and neighborhood barriers and assets. Survey questions also requested demographic information such as age group, gender, and employment status.

Residents were invited to participate in the survey through a campaign that included flyers and individualized letters. A random sample of Greenfield residents were identified. Each resident was sent an invitation letter to participate in the survey. The letter included instructions on how to participate in the survey. Completed surveys were mailed to IDPH in the provided stamped envelope. Surveys were then transcribed into a digital format to be analyzed.

Many sidewalks are in need of maintenance, making pedestrian traffic nearly impossible.
The purpose of the survey was to better understand how each respondent travels to and from community locales and what concerns, if any, they have about walking or biking to and from those identified locations.

There were four parts to this survey:
- Multiple choice survey questions
- Distance mapping between home and frequented locations
- Route mapping
- Barrier/opportunity mapping

23 surveys were completed and returned. The following graphs represent data collected from the survey completed by community residents. All survey responses were collected by the I-WALK program.

**How important do you consider walking/biking as a form of transportation?**

- Very important: 17.4%
- Not at all important: 8.7%

**How important do you consider walking/biking as a form of physical activity/exercise?**

- Very important: 60.9%
- Not at all important: 4.3%

**Check the statement that best describes your walking and biking habits.**

- I walk/bike for exercise/leisure purposes: 82.6%
- I walk/bike as a mode of transportation: 17.4%
- I don't walk or bike: 17.4%
Community Survey

What type of community locations do you currently walk/bike to?

- Library: 55.6%
- Grocery Store: 55.6%
- Retail Location or Mall: 33.3%
- Congregate Meal Site: 11.1%
- Community Center: 11.1%
- Convenience Store: 33.3%
- Place of Worship/Church: 11.1%
- Post Office: 66.7%
- Park: 33.3%
- Bank: 44.4%
- Recreation Center: 11.1%
- Work: 22.2%
- Other: 33.3%

Why do you walk or bike to these locations?

- Exercise: 89.5%
- Health (Dr.'s orders): 10.5%
- Social activity: 84.2%
- Personal enjoyment: 26.3%
- No public transportation: 5.3%
- Save gas/Money: 15.8%
- I don't have a driver's license: 5.3%
- I don't own a vehicle: 5.3%
- Environmentally friendly: 15.8%
- Other: 5.3%
On days you walk/bike, how much time do you spend doing so?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Duration</th>
<th>Percent (n=21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 minutes</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 minutes</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20 minutes</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 minutes</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know/not sure</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On days you walk/bike, how far do you go?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Percent (n=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1/2 mile</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 mile to 1 mile</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 miles</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 miles</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 miles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a typical week during each season, how many DAYS PER WEEK do you walk or bike?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Walk</th>
<th>Bike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate the condition on your most used walking/biking route:

### Condition of Sidewalks

- **Good**: 20.8%
- **Fair**: 12.5%
- **Poor**: 8.3%
- **Non existent**: 58.3%

### Street crossings/accessibility

- **Good**: 29.2%
- **Fair**: 37.5%
- **Poor**: 8.3%
- **Non existent**: 25.0%
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**Traffic and driver behavior**

- **Good**: 25.0%
- **Fair**: 45.8%
- **Poor**: 4.2%
- **Non existent**: 25.0%

**Public trail access**

- **Good**: 41.7%
- **Fair**: 8.3%
- **Poor**: 8.3%
- **Non existent**: 41.7%

**Public trail condition/ease of use**

- **Good**: 37.5%
- **Fair**: 16.7%
- **Poor**: 4.2%
- **Non existent**: 41.7%

**Safety**

- **Good**: 33.3%
- **Fair**: 37.5%
- **Poor**: 
- **Non existent**: 29.2%

**Visually appealing to walk/bike**

- **Good**: 62.5%
- **Fair**: 8.3%
- **Poor**: 4.2%
- **Non existent**: 25.0%
Community Survey - Most Frequent Routes

Overall rating of walkability/bikeability of your most frequented route

Excellent: 30.0%
Good: 65.0%
Fair: 5.0%
Poor: 0%
Which of the following keep you from walking or biking more often?

- Time: 55.0%
- Inconvenient (easier to drive to location): 5.0%
- Distance: 10.0%
- Speed of traffic along route: 5.0%
- Amount of traffic along route: 5.0%
- Train/railroad tracks: 5.0%
- Sidewalks or pathways (none or inadequate): 40.0%
- Safety of intersections and crossings: 5.0%
- Violence or crime: 5.0%
- Weather or climate: 55.0%
- Safe place of bike storage/parking: 5.0%
- Other: 25.0%

In your opinion, how much does your community encourage walking and/or biking?

- Strongly encourage: 5.0%
- Encourage: 80.0%
- Neither: 35.0%
- Discourage: 5.0%
- Strongly discourage: 5.0%

With whom do you walk most of the time?

- Alone: 41.7%
- Friends: 4.2%
- Neighbors: 8.3%
- Club or class: 5.0%
- Spouse/partner: 54.2%
- Children: 4.2%
- Pets: 4.2%
- Other family/relatives: 12.5%
- Other: 4.2%
- Prefer not to answer: 5.0%
Indicate which of the following best applies to you and your neighborhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are sidewalks on most of the streets in my neighborhood. (n=21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sidewalks in my neighborhood are well maintained. (n=20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are bicycle or walking trails in or near my neighborhood. (n=22)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many attractive natural sites in my neighborhood. (n=22)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a safe amount of traffic in my neighborhood. (n=22)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most drivers drive at safe speeds in my neighborhood. (n=22)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My neighborhood streets are well lit at night. (n=20)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not worried about crime in my neighborhood during the day. (n=22)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not worried about crime in my neighborhood during the night. (n=22)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The streets in my neighborhood are easy to walk (i.e. few hills). (n=22)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The air quality in my neighborhood is good. (n=22)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dogs in my neighborhood are properly confined or restrained. (n=22)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see a lot of people walking and biking in my neighborhood. (n=22)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your gender?

- Female: 54.2%
- Male: 45.8%

What is your age range?

- 86 years and older: 12.5%
- 81-85 years: 8.3%
- 76-80 years: 8.3%
- 71-75 years: 12.5%
- 66-70 years: 8.3%
- 61-65 years: 33.3%
- 55-60 years: 8.3%
- 50-55 years: 8.3%
- under 50 years: 16.7%

How many individuals reside in your home?

- average: 1.67

Number of people under 18 residing in your home

- average: 0.00

Within what range is your total annual household income?

- Less than $10,000: 8.3%
- $10,000 to $14,999: 20.8%
- $15,000 to $24,999: 16.7%
- $25,000 to $34,999: 20.8%
- $35,000 to $49,999: 8.3%
- $50,000 to $74,999: 25.0%
- $75,000 to $99,999: 20.8%
- $100,000 to $149,999: 8.3%
- $150,000 or more: 8.3%

What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

- Eighth grade or less: 8.3%
- Some high school: 20.8%
- High school or GED certificate: 20.8%
- Some technical school: 8.3%
- Some college: 16.7%
- College graduate: 25.0%
- Post grad or professional degree: Prefer not to answer: 8.3%
I would like to participate in a walking assessment of our community.

- Yes: 14.3%
- No: 85.7%
The density map below illustrates (dark blue) the locations identified most often by respondents as locations to which they walk or bike.
The map below illustrates locations that respondents identified as barriers that hinder sidewalk traffic.
Respondents identified locations where they notice traffic issues.
Sidewalk Availability

Using data collected by the volunteers using the iPhone walkability infrastructure tool, the map below identifies the streets that have sidewalks on one side or both sides of the street, incomplete sidewalks or no sidewalks at all.

Are there sidewalks at the midblock?
- Complete on both sides
- Complete on one side & incomplete on the other
- Complete on one side & no sidewalk on the other
- Incomplete on both sides
- Incomplete on one side & no sidewalk on the other
- No sidewalks on either side
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified the condition of the sidewalks using a scale of good, fair or poor.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified sidewalks not wide enough for two adults to walk side-by-side.
Sidewalk Setbacks

Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified sidewalks that were not set back from the street.
Volunteers identified if the particular street was pleasant to walk based on a combination of features.
Volunteers identified whether or not parking was allowed along the street.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified the number of streets intersecting.

What type of intersection is this?
- Green: 3-way
- Yellow: 4-way
- Red: 5 or more way
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified how traffic is controlled at each intersection.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified intersections where they would not feel safe crossing the street.

Do you think an adult would feel safe crossing this street?

- yes
- no
- unsure
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified intersections where the sidewalks did not have curb cuts connecting to the street or curb cuts that need improvement.
Painted Crosswalks

Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified areas that had visible painted crosswalk.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified intersections where the data collector did not consider there to be sufficient time to cross the street safely.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified intersections where items might make it difficult for a motorist to see the pedestrian or for the pedestrian to see motorists.
Using the iPhone devices, volunteers identified various infrastructure challenges (e.g., car blocking a sidewalk) and assets (e.g., presence of a bike rack).
The map below uses Iowa Department of Transportation data from 2009 through early 2014 to identify the locations where accidents with non-motorists occurred. Special consideration should be given to these locations when identifying routes for walking programs.
Community Recommendations

While the neighborhood between Highway 169 and the Des Moines River does not have sidewalks, the area appears to be street walkable. If no improvements are made to this area, enforce that vehicular speeds on the street remain low to avoid potential conflicts.

The intersection of Wildcat Road and Highway 169 was identified as a location that is difficult to cross because of heavy traffic. The intersection has a sidewalk connecting East to West on the south side and appears to have a painted crosswalk. Continue to paint this crosswalk and consider the addition of a blinking light to the stop sign if one is not already present.

With the exception of the downtown area, much of the community is in need of sidewalks. Where there are sidewalks, they tend to be narrow or only partially connected. The creation of a few continuous sidewalk routes through the community connecting the neighborhoods with the downtown and park area is recommended.

The infrastructure assessment identified several streets that had no traffic control in either direction. These areas should be reassessed for the addition of signs along potential long walking club routes.
Additional Resources

Evaluation
Evaluation is used to determine if the aims of the strategies are being met and to assure that resources are directed toward efforts that show the greatest likelihood of success. Also, evaluation can identify needed adjustments to the program while it is underway. This information describes how to conduct a SRTS program evaluation that is tailored to that program’s objectives and strategies.

The I-WALK website offers many useful resources to those looking for more information:
Webinars
Infrastructure
Iowa Safe Routes to School Workshops
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Department of Transportation
...and many more

Walking with a Purpose
This resource will help your school conduct a walkability assessment of its neighborhood. The checklist will help assess what makes the walking environment inviting and safe, as well as identify barriers that exist. After the assessment, school staff can help students become advocates for a more walkable community.

Healthy Community Design Checklist
The Healthy Community Design Initiative’s (HCDI) Healthy Community Design Checklist is a plain-language checklist for community members with little or no knowledge of the public health and built environment connection. It includes healthy community design elements that should be considered while participating in a land-use planning process.

In the new report, the Alliance for Biking & Walking ranks all 50 states and the 51 largest U.S. cities on bicycling and walking levels, safety, funding and other factors. The report is funded by CDC’s Healthy Community Design Initiative.

Federal Highway Administration: Livability Fact Sheets
The fact sheets provide information and examples on how considering livability during the transportation decision-making process can benefit communities. The fact sheet topics include health, housing costs, freight, land use, safety, management and operations, rural communities and the environment.

Complimentary Copies Of The 2012 Minnesota Bike Guide Are Available Now
To encourage more to become, or stay active, this year’s guide has expanded its pages offering information to more than 200 bike related events, many bike-friendly maps of places we all like to ride and helpful tips. Printed courtesy of our many wonderful sponsors, guides come in bundles of 25 and are available by contacting us.

To access these resources and others, visit www.i-walk.org and click on “Resources”.
A PDF version of this report and other supplementary materials is available at wwwI-WALK.org