

This Guide is intended to help you use the walkabout tool to assess your community for pedestrian safety. A pedestrian friendly environment gives priority to the pedestrian over the car. It is a community that is convenient for walkers and friendly to parents pushing a stroller or children on roller blades. The Walkabout tool questions describe the characteristics of a pedestrian friendly community.

A pedestrian friendly environment promotes a walkable community. A walkable community encourages safe walking, biking and other active means of transportation, which encourages healthy living and helps reduce obesity. When a community supports a mixture of land uses, including: residential, retail, professional, commercial and even some light industry, more places become accessible by walking rather than driving. In a walkable community residents may have an opportunity to live closer to their place of employment, which creates alternatives to driving, such as walking or cycling.

A safe environment is a key attribute of an environment that is supportive of active transportation. People are less likely to walk in a district that appears dangerous and affected by crime. Safety and security imply both safety from the likelihood of an injury, and security from the possibility of crime. Even if the crime statistics suggest that a district is not prone to violent crime, it is important that the district appears and feels as though it is safe.

Regarding cars, speed and traffic, the concept of a pedestrian friendly neighborhood does not have to be at odds with traffic that moves efficiently, and indeed the two are not counterproductive. Both can be accommodated successfully when road and sidewalk design meets the needs of both walkers and drivers.

## **How to Use the Walkabout Tool:**

- 1.** Gather a group of 5-10 people from diverse parts of the community who are interested in pedestrian safety. We encourage the group to include children, parents, teachers, principals, school staff, school board staff, public health staff, city planners, and politicians.
- 2.** Identify the area you would like to assess. The Walkabout tool is adaptable to various areas, from a single block, to a neighbourhood, to an entire town. However, the most useful area is a neighbourhood.

- 3.** Review the walkabout tool with the group to see the areas you are to identify and review the teaching lessons for the children. The tool is set up with questions to answer, a place to score your answers and discussion and teaching points.
- 4.** As you walk, answer the questions on the walkabout tool. As you walk in your neighbourhood, take this opportunity to talk to your children about pedestrian safety. As part of the tool, there are teaching notes on how to show the children how to choose a safe route to cross, how to cross at an intersection and how to cross between parked cars and other obstacles. Use this time to start the discussion with your child about pedestrian safety.
- 5.** Scoring. Each question is assigned a score based upon the judgment of the evaluators. The scores for each question will range from 0-3. The scoring is as follows: 0 - don't know, 1 - no, 2- sometimes, and 3- yes. The actual evaluation can be completed by group consensus or by averaging individual scores. Total up the numbers at the end.
- 6.** Use the Safe Kids Canada Pedestrian Safety Guide, to make your community more pedestrian friendly. To get a copy of the Guide, go to [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca) and click on “pedestrian” under safety topics.