

Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets



Introduction

Government policy seeks the transition to more sustainable forms of transport. To facilitate this, we need to check that our neighbourhoods and streets are places where people of all ages and abilities can walk safely, conveniently and independently.

A Universal Design approach, which caters for the broadest range of users, can result in streets and neighbourhoods that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. Increased walking activity contributes to a wide range of societal and health benefits including improved levels of fitness, cleaner air, safer environments and better social inclusion.

The Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool was developed as a collaboration between the National Transport Authority, Age Friendly Ireland, Green-Schools and the National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. This Audit will be used to capture the existing conditions of a specified walking route in relation to its walkability. Walkability is the extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people walking, living, shopping, visiting, engaging or spending time in an area. The Audit is intended to be carried out by a wide range of people of various ages and abilities including disability and older people's organisations, advocacy organisations, school travel planners, members of the public and Local Authority officers.

The Audit process will enable the identification of a priority list of recommendations for the route. The recommendations from the audit will be taken into account when local authorities are planning improvements to roads and streets in the future.

Undertaking the Audit

To reflect a Universal Design approach, it is desirable to have participants with a diverse range of ages and abilities undertaking the Audit. This includes for example: parents with buggies, children, wheelchair users, older people and people with impaired vision. Participants with local knowledge, who use the route regularly, will enrich the Audit process.

Audits will typically be carried out by a group of participants, working with a trained coordinator, such as those engaged with the Age Friendly Ireland or the Green-Schools Travel programmes. However, Audits can also be carried out independently by individuals.

Typically, the Audit should cover a walking trip and route of up to an approximate 20-30 minute walking distance. Allowing for stops and short discussion, the Audit itself should take around 45 minutes but can be longer or shorter depending on the group.

Additional time either side of the Audit itself, should be catered for to provide an information briefing (prior to the commencement of the Audit) and a discussion to inform the final report at the end of the Audit.

The following items are generally required to inform your audit;

- A map of the route
- A pen or pencil to complete responses
- A measuring tape or trundle wheel
- A recording device such as a camera or mobile phone
- A pedometer and
- A stopwatch.

Role of the Coordinator

In most cases, the coordinator is likely to be tasked with;

- Consulting local participants to identify the route(s) to be audited
- Explaining the audit process
- Co-ordinating maps and photographs
- Assisting participants to complete the audit tool, if required
- Facilitating a discussion with participants after the audit is complete
- Analysing the completed audit tools and compiling an audit report, complete with maps and photographs of the route.

Prior to the Audit, coordinators should consider walking the route to familiarise themselves with the surroundings, to identify rest areas and anticipate safety issues. A suitable location for the briefing session should also be identified.

The coordinator may wish to delegate specific tasks to individuals within the group, for example having a dedicated photographer or time-keeper.

After the audit, the coordinator should facilitate the discussion and seek to gain an understanding of the key issues identified by the participants under the different headings in the audit tool.

There should be a broad consensus of the key recommendations and suggestions that are required to improve the route. After the group discussion, the coordinator should allow additional time to analyse the feedback from participants and write the audit report.













Photographs

Space has been provided at the end of the Audit Tool to allow for additional comments and useful information including supporting photographs, maps and text. Please ensure that all personal data collected, including photographs, is compliant with data protection requirements.

Final Report

The completed audit report will include analysis of the feedback received from participants and a series of recommendations to improve the route. This audit report will be submitted to the relevant local authority for its consideration.

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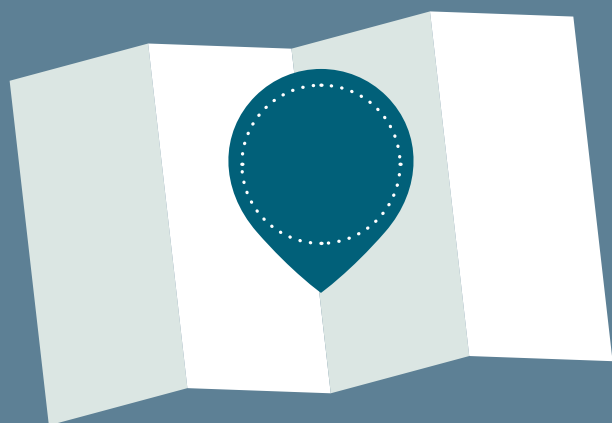
Please Indicate the Number of Participants in the following Categories:

Age	Number of Participants	Sex	Number of Participants
Up to 4		Female	
5-12		Male	
13-18			
19-25			
26-64			
65-79			
80+			

Participants and Ability Range

Ability	No. of Participants
A person who is using a wheelchair	
A person who has reduced mobility	
A person who is blind or with low vision	
A person who is Deaf or has a hearing loss	
A person who has cognitive difficulties	
A person with a buggy or stroller	
A person with a young child	
A carer	
None of the above	
Other, please specify	

Details of the Route



Please include a map of the route in the space provided at the end of the Audit

Town / City
County
Distance of Route
Date of Audit
Start Time
End Time
Weather
Conditions



Footpaths

What are the main problems with footpaths?

There are no real problems

There is no footpath

They are not always continuous
(they stop and start in places)

They are not wide enough for everyone to use

People need to step off the footpath and onto the road at busy times

There is a footpath on one side of the street only

Surface Condition

Are there any problems with the condition of footpaths?

There are no real problems

Ponding or flooding on the footpath

Splashes from the road due to poor drainage

Cracks on the footpath

Evidence of poor repair work

Damage caused by tree roots

Litter

Dog poo

Uneven surfaces (e.g. entrances, driveways)

Slippery surfaces in wet conditions

Steps that cause difficulty

Obstacles on the Footpath

Are there any problems with obstacles on the footpath?

There are no real problems

The footpaths are generally clear of obstacles

Advertising boards/ shop signage

Outdoor tables and chairs from businesses

Permanent litter bins

Domestic / commercial bins on bin collection days

Bicycles

Lighting columns/ poles

Guardrail / bollards

Vehicles either fully or partially parked on the footpath

Overgrown hedging / trees

Street furniture (seating, bins, poles) that is hard to see (no colour contrast)

Edge of footpath is hard to see (no colour contrast)

Overall Score for Footpaths

Please identify any problem areas

Poor

Ok

Good



Access to Local Shops and Services

On this route, it is too far to walk to the following services:

- There are no real problems
- Shops and cafés
- Childcare facilities / crèches
- Community facilities such as post offices, community centres and ATMs
- Doctor surgeries, medical centres or chemists
- Places of worship
- Sports facilities and clubs

Public Seating and Rest Areas

Are there any problems with resting and seating facilities?

- There are no real problems
- There are not enough places to stop and rest
- There is no seating
- The seating is not suitable for some people (e.g. does not provide back/arm support)
- The seating is not in areas that provide shade and shelter
- The seating is located too near heavy traffic
- The seating faces the wrong way
- Surface materials are too hot or cold

Public Bins

Are there any problems with public bin facilities?

- There are not enough bins
- Bins are full and over-flowing

Public Toilets

Are there any problems with public toilet facilities?

- There are no problems with the availability of toilets
- Toilets are not suitable for wheelchairs or those with mobility impairments
- Toilets lack suitable baby changing areas
- Toilets are poorly maintained
- Toilets cannot be used by the general public
- There are no toilets available on this route
- Sports facilities and clubs

Parks and Playgrounds

Are there any problems with parks and playgrounds?

- There are no parks and / or playground facilities
- Seating areas do not enable supervision of children by parents or guardians
- Facilities are not well-maintained
- No opportunities for informal play (e.g. ball games, running)
- Dogs are not under control by their owners

Parking Issues

Are there any problems with parking facilities?

- There is not enough cycle parking
- There is no designated car parking for older people or persons with disabilities
- Paying for parking is difficult
- There are no safe, designated loading and delivery facilities for larger vehicles

Overall Score for Facilities

Please identify any problem areas



Formal Pedestrian Crossing Areas (Traffic Lights)

The main problems at pedestrian crossings with signals (for example, a green man signal) are:

There are no real problems

There are not enough pedestrian crossings

Crossings do not offer direct connection to where I need to go

It takes too long to wait for the green man to appear

There are no pedestrian crossings near the bus stop

Pedestrian signals do not give me enough time to cross the road

Pedestrian guard railings restrict movement of buggies, wheelchairs etc.

There are no countdown facilities on crossings

There are no pedestrian push buttons to stop motor traffic

Drivers do not give enough time to cross at zebra crossings or flashing ambers

The crossings are not level (i.e. there are kerbs)

There is no tactile paving at crossings

There are no audible cues at crossings

Informal Pedestrian Crossing points (without traffic lights/ signals)

Where there are no pedestrian crossing signals, the main problems with crossing the road are:

There are no real problems

The speed of traffic makes it hard to cross the road

The amount of traffic makes it hard to cross the road (no gaps in traffic)

The road is too wide to cross in one go

There are no step-free crossings for people using wheelchairs and buggies

There is no tactile paving at informal pedestrian crossing points

Obstacles (such as parked cars) block my view of traffic where I need to cross

There is mud or grass at the point where I need to cross

The road surface is uneven/has potholes

Overall Score for Crossing the Road

Please identify any problem areas

Poor

Ok

Good



Driver Behaviour

What are the main problems with driver behaviour?

There are no real problems

Driving too fast

Failing to stop at red lights or stop signs

Failing to yield to pedestrians on zebra crossing or flashing amber lights

Using beeps and car horns regularly

Leaving engines running while waiting outside schools and shops

Using mobile phones while driving or while stationary at red lights

Stopping in traffic to set-down or pick-up passengers

Driving too close to cyclists or pedestrians

Poor Parking Practices

What problems with poor parking practices are there?

There are no real problems

Parking outside of designated car parking areas

Parking on footpaths (either fully or partially blocking them)

Parking in accessible/designated parking spaces without a disabled persons parking permit

Parking on double yellow lines

Parking at junctions obstructing people crossing

Parking across dropped kerbs used by wheelchairs and buggies

Parking across cycle lanes

Blocking driveways

Blocking buses, bus stops or bus lanes

Blocking emergency vehicles

Cycles and Scooters

Are there any issues with cyclist and scooter-user behaviour?

There are no real problems

Failing to stop at red lights or stop signs

Cycling on footpaths

Scooting on footpaths

Travelling dangerously on shared footpaths/greenways

Manoeuvres that put other road users in danger

Parking bikes or scooters in places that block the footpath

Overall Score for Road-user behaviour

Please identify any problem areas

Poor

Ok

Good



Personal safety and Feeling of Safety in Surroundings.

Some of the safety issues with the route include:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| There are no real problems | I feel unsafe at night time |
| A lack of visible Garda presence | A lack of activity and people |
| Area is too isolated | Derelict and unoccupied buildings |
| Poor road user behaviour | Long stretches of blank walls |
| Groups of people making me feel intimidated | High walls and fences along it |
| Anti-social behaviour (e.g. street drinkers, drug use) | Hidden alleyways and blind corners |
| Stray or noisy dogs | Other (please comment below) |

Layout and Clarity

It is not clear and obvious where I need to walk to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| There are no real problems | Street signage is damaged |
| Street is cluttered and confusing | Street signage is overly complicated |
| Street signage is difficult to read (e.g. faded, dirty, small letters) | Street signage is wrong (e.g. pointing wrong way, out of date etc.) |
| Street signage is not needed and could be removed | |

Lighting

What are the problems with street lighting when dark?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| There are no real problems | Street lights are too bright |
| There are no street lights | Street lights only cover the road and not the footpath |
| Street lights are broken | Lack of street lighting in some areas |
| Street lights are not bright enough | Lighting is blocked by trees (especially when in full leaf) |

Overall Score for Safety

Please identify any problem areas

- Poor
- Ok
- Good

Attractive and Pleasant

Some problems with the route include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| There are no real problems | A lack of street trees and planting |
| A lack of things to see and do | Neglected properties (e.g. evidence of dumping) |
| Poorly-maintained building façades and shopfronts | Vacant/ derelict buildings |
| Connections to other streets are poor | Street clutter (e.g. unnecessary signage, bins, utility boxes, poles) |
| Litter | Little evidence of community initiatives (e.g. Tidy Towns) |
| No public places to chat with friends | A lack of places for shade and shelter (e.g. awnings, trees) |
| I don't feel relaxed on the street | |

Clean Air and Air Quality

Are there any issues with air quality on the route?

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| There are no real problems | Fumes from traffic |
| Unpleasant smells | Persistent smoking at certain locations e.g. bus shelters |
| Chimney smoke | I have breathing difficulties in this location |
| Construction dust | I have coughing problems in this location |

Noise

Are there any sources of excessive noise on the route from the following?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| There are no real problems | Road works |
| Motor traffic | Crowds or gatherings of people |
| Music from nearby shops or cafes | Industry |
| Street performers | Other noises (please comment below) |
| Demolition and/or construction | |

Overall Score for Look and Feel

Please identify any problem areas

- Poor
- Ok
- Good



Walking to School

What are the main problems when walking to school?

- There are no real problems
- There is too much traffic
- Footpaths are lacking at both sides of the road
- There are not enough safe crossings to get to school
- The footpaths are not wide enough to walk with family and friends
- I sometimes need to step onto the road when the footpath is busy
- There is no lollypop person at school times
- There are no 'Walking Buses' or 'Park and Stride' initiatives

Student Safety and Air Quality

What issues are there with Student Safety and Air Quality?

- There are no real problems
- Drivers are driving too fast
- Students get in or out of cars while car is in traffic
- Drivers park on footpaths
- Drivers park in cycle lanes
- Drivers leave the engine running when parked and waiting for pupils
- Drivers park or wait on double yellow lines/at bus stops
- No 'School Street' initiative to improve safety and reduce emissions

Parking and Traffic Arrangements

What problems are there with parking and traffic arrangements?

- There are no real problems
- There are not enough cycle parking spaces within the school
- There is not enough space for buses to safely drop-off pupils
- There are no direct crossings to school from bus stops
- There are no dedicated drop-off/set-down areas for the school
- There are no designated spaces for disabled parking
- Pupils must cross a car park or moving traffic to access the school
- There are no 'No Stopping' signs or double yellow lines around the school gate
- There is not a separate entrance (away from cars) for pedestrians or cyclists
- There are no sheltered waiting areas for parents or guardians

Behavioural Change

If conditions improved, students would:

- Walk more to school with friends and family
- Use the bus or train to go to school
- Use the car less
- Feel safer around the school gates

Overall Score for Outside the School Gates

Please identify any problem areas

- Poor
- Ok
- Good



After the Audit

Scoreboard

Please add up the total score for your walk using the table below.

Each section offers a range from 1 (Poor) 2 (OK) 3 (Good)

Poor

Ok

Good

Footpaths

Facilities

Crossing the Road

Road-User Behaviour

Safety

Look and Feel

Outside the School Gates (if applicable)

Total Score

Walkability Audit

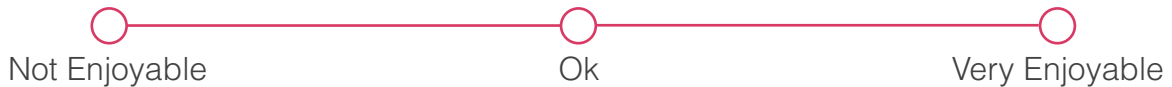
(Total score out of a maximum of 18)

Walkability Audit plus Outside of the School Gates

(Total score out of a maximum of 21)

Further questions

How enjoyable was your walk?



What did you like most about the walk along the route?

Please provide a few examples.

What did you dislike most about the route?

Please provide a few examples.



Recommendations

What improvements could be made to the route?

Please list them in order of priority.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

If these recommendations were implemented, would you consider walking the route more?

No

Maybe

Yes





Insert Map





Insert Photographs



Thank you for completing this Audit.

The responses to this Audit will be compiled and analysed to determine whether improvements should be made to the route. Any suggested improvements will be subject to further analysis and consideration by the relevant Local Authority.

