

Meeting The Needs of People Walking

iNUA #8: Walking: Implementing the New Urban Agenda

“We will promote access for all to safe, age- and gender-responsive, affordable, accessible and sustainable urban mobility and land and sea transport systems, enabling meaningful participation in social and economic activities in cities and human settlements, by integrating transport and mobility plans into overall urban and territorial plans and promoting a wide range of transport and mobility options, in particular by supporting:

- (a) A significant increase in accessible, safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable infrastructure for public transport, as well as non-motorised options such as walking and cycling, prioritising them over private motorised transportation”

New Urban Agenda #114 (a)

1. Why meet the Needs of People Walking?

All our journeys begin and end with a walk and many are only walking. Walking is the foundation of how we move and is the essential ingredient in an integrated, multi- and intermodal transportation system, enabling access to local neighbourhood services and to public transport services for destinations further afield.

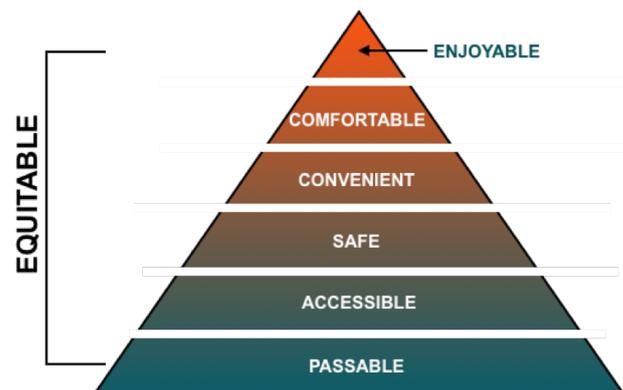
Walkability is the cornerstone of the sustainable city that is space efficient and reduces congestion, air and noise pollution and carbon consumption. It is both a utilitarian mode of travel for trips to work, school, or shopping, and a health and recreational activity. It is a socially equitable mode of transport that is available to the vast majority of the population, across class, gender and age.

Walking is the most accessible and affordable way to get exercise. Walking promotes mental and physical health and is recognised by the WHO as an essential contributor to an individual’s physical activity needs. People who live in walkable neighbourhoods have higher levels of “social capital,” and are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically and be socially engaged.

Yet walking is often not measured, valued or appropriately provided for. In many poorer communities especially, where walking is the main mode people have to access their communities, there are no sidewalks or safe infrastructure. It is the poor, children, and elderly who suffer disproportionately from living in auto-centric

environments, since they are most dependent upon other forms of transport. The lack of safe walking infrastructure results in over 250,000 pedestrian road traffic deaths a year, especially in low-middle income countries.

When the needs of people walking are understood and given adequate policy, investment and priority the efficacy, efficiency and financial viability of the entire transport system, the vibrancy of city life and the health of the population benefits.



The Hierarchy of Walking Needs (Source ITDP Pedestrians First 2018)

2. What is a Walkable City?

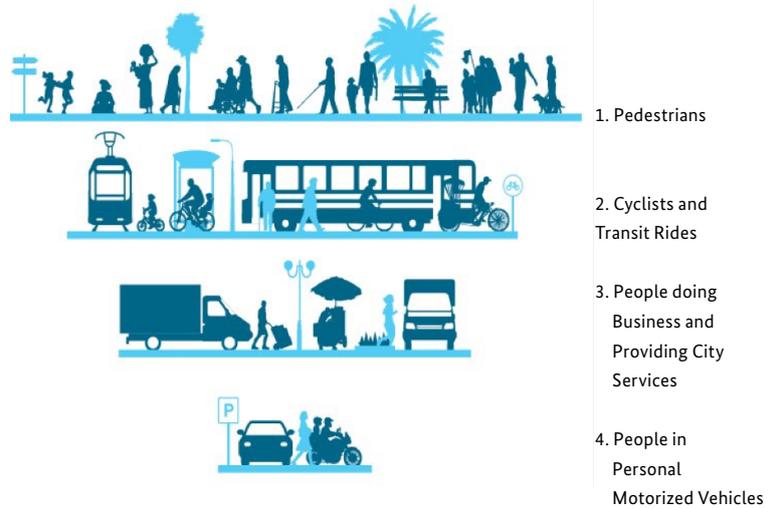
A walkable city is designed or retrofitted to build walkability into the urban fabric and enable walking to be an everyday travel choice. In a walkable community, walking is considered a normal mode choice that connects people with their destinations and other modes of travel. It is also an environment where people walking are given priority over motor vehicle movement.

Walkability is created when the built environment supports and encourages walking by providing for pedestrian comfort and safety, connecting people with varied destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort. (Southworth M., Journal of Urban Planning and Development, Dec 2005).

Key indicators for a walkable city are residential density, connectivity and destinations (including transit stops) within walking distance. At street level, this translates to high quality (wide, clear, continuous) walkways/sidewalks, safe street crossing points, street furniture and landscaping, slowed motorised traffic and managed parking, prioritised access to public transport services and space for public life and community activity.

A highly walkable environment invites people of any age, gender or degree of mobility to access their city independently and with enjoyment.

While not all urban/suburban forms readily enable walking (low density, single use land patterns, urban highways), it is essential to identify opportunities for enhancing walkability where people walk the most, e.g. shopping streets, to ensure safe walkable access in all neighbourhoods and key destinations, e.g. schools, and to prioritise walking connections to public transport services for longer journeys.



The Global Street Design Guide Transport Hierarchy

3. How to make a City Walkable

Successful approaches will vary by culture, place, and city size. Nevertheless, a few attributes contribute to the quality of walkability in most urban and suburban settings and a comprehensive approach and commitment by the local authority can deliver more walkable communities. This commitment and approach is set out in the International Charter for Walking and is illustrated in the comprehensive walking system diagram below.

Key steps to success include:

1. Increasing inclusive mobility
2. Well designed and managed spaces and places for people
3. Improved integration of networks
4. Supportive land-use and spatial planning
5. Reduced road danger
6. Less crime and fear of crime
7. More supportive authorities
8. A culture of walking.



La Séptima, Bogotá, Colombia - a walkable street



Source: 59.

The Comprehensive Walking System

(WHO's Pedestrian Safety Manual for Decision Makers and Practitioners)

4. What can Mayors do?

To achieve a walkable city, a Mayor needs to communicate a vision for the city that values walking and liveability; commit to the principles of putting pedestrians first; commission research on walking behaviour and current walkability conditions; review policies, standards and regulations; promote public participation in planning and in public life; and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration to deliver the vision.

a. Sign The International Charter for Walking

The International Charter for Walking is a common policy reference with 8 key principles and 34 illustrative actions, developed by experts from more than 35 countries. It has been signed by over 5,000 politicians, academics, experts and community leaders and is a visible commitment to meeting the needs of people walking.

b. Commission an assessment of current walkability

It is important to understand the conditions for every district of the city, and then develop policies and plans for the entire pedestrian environment -Establishing a Pedestrian Potential Index and a Deficiency Index, can be useful to help evaluate each street segment in the city. The indices reveal patterns of potentials and needs which can be used to inform new policies and plans.

c. Review policies, standards and regulations to enable walkability

Street design standards to support walking and the zoning for mixed land use, parking standards, and subdivision standards need to respond to the needs of people on foot and promote walking first in the transport hierarchy. Support transit-oriented development, as it improves walkability by reducing distances and raising the quality of public space.

d. Identify a signature project or key intervention

A key project e.g. creating a pedestrian plaza, can communicate vision and inspire action across the city, raise the value of walking and increase engagement with and understanding of the importance of walkability.

f. Commission research into walking behaviour

Understand existing walking activity using the International Walking Data Standard and the perceptions of people walking using the Make Walking Count tool. By assessing the behaviour of people walking in the city, in varied urban environments and among different social groups, the effectiveness of different design factors in promoting walking can be understood. Walkability criteria can be refined and tested.

g. Bring urban designers and transportation planners together to develop a Walking Strategy

A multi-disciplinary institutional framework for planning and delivering walking that is ambitious and adds new value to current levels of service requires leadership, partnerships, resources, commitment to research and training, and to monitoring and evaluation. Urban designers and transportation planners are best placed to explore a variety of approaches to enhance walkability in creative and experimental ways.

h. Involve the public through participation in the planning process and city activities

Engage local communities to map their needs so that targeted actions can then respond at relevant locations with appropriate measures to benefit those with the greatest need. Involving the public is crucial to success. City events can be organised to focus on the walking experience.

i. Ensure communities are walkable where there is the greatest need

Sidewalks are the essential urban infrastructure that most meets the needs of people walking. Ensure, at the very least, that there are dedicated, safe and unobstructed sidewalks on all of the streets in neighbourhoods where people live and within 1 km of the most walked places including transit hubs, education sites, health care facilities, retail areas, sport and leisure amenities and employment zones.

Meet the needs of people walking where people walk most, linking neighbourhoods to destinations



Source ©Walk21

Case Study: Vienna on Foot

More than a third of people walk every day in Vienna but new data clarified only 18 percent enjoyed it and to walk more 31% wanted less car traffic; 28% more green spaces; 22% slower cars; and 20% more opportunities to sit and linger.

In 2015 Maria Vassilakou, Deputy Mayor of the City of Vienna, and Executive City Councillor for Traffic and Transport signed The International Charter for Walking and declared a “Year of Walking” in response.

A new Mobility Agency was created and charged with promoting walking events and campaigns. In parallel an infrastructure investment programme was set up to meet more of the needs of people walking.

Under the “Wien zu Fuss” (Vienna on Foot) brand, new activities included: a walking route map; a street life festival; online route planner with gamification rewards connected to businesses; and several of the most walked streets were made significantly more connected and walkable.

Vienna’s image as a walkable city improved by 5% and mode share by 1% within a year, giving the authority a mandate to further invest in the transformation of streets into more walkable public spaces and inspiring a National Walking Strategy.



Source © Wien zu Fuss

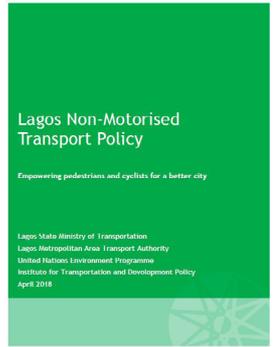


Case Study: Lagos Nigeria

At least 40% of all trips are walked in Lagos, yet walking has traditionally been poorly provided for and perceived to be of little relevance to the city's traffic and mobility challenges.

Engineer Abiodun Dabiri, CEO of Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority, decided it was time to tackle these perceptions and commissioned a new strategy in 2017 to elevate the status and dignity of walking, specifically to meet more of the needs of women, children, the elderly and physically disadvantaged within the transport system.

The inter-disciplinary Strategy, which was consulted on widely with civil society, focuses on improving the convenience, comfort and safety of walking trips targeting investment at transport hubs, along the new BRT corridors and in the central business district. Changes on the street are being realised.



Source © LAMATA

5. Where to learn from?

The Walk21 Foundation manages a global network of professionals involved in the development of effective walking policy and the delivery of walking projects. A resource library, directory of experts and training programme are available, Walk21 has coordinated the annual international conference on Walking and Walkable Cities since the year 2000. Some key resources are listed below. For more information visit www.walk21.com



The International Charter for Walking is a common policy reference signed by more than 5,000 leaders. www.walk21.com/charter



The International Walking Data Standard sets the framework for measuring walking www.measuringwalking.org



The 8 principles of Sidewalks Guide by WRI emphasises how to meet the needs of people walking by investing in the essential sidewalk. www.wribrasil.org.br/en/publication/8-principles-sidewalk



The Pedestrian Quality Needs Project was a multi-disciplinary study, exploring the needs of pedestrians and developing models in context, based on evidence, and with measurable outputs. www.walk21.com/pqn-project



The Global Street Design Guide provides the principles and detail for delivering a people centred city. www.globaldesigningcities.org



The Lancet Series on urban design, transport, and health highlights how science-based city planning and transport can address key health, environmental, and economic burdens. www.thelancet.com/series/urban-design



This tool by ITDP provides a mechanism for tracking, measuring and understanding walkability at city wide, neighbourhood and block level. www.itdp.org/pedestrians-first-walkability-tool/



The Pedestrian Safety Manual is a Good Practice Guide for decision makers and practitioners www.who.int/roadsafety/projects/manuals/pedestrian

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