



FACILITATION GUIDE: EXPLORATORY WALK

BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO EXPLORE AND DISCUSS NEIGHBOURHOOD PUBLIC SPACES

Activity Type: Understand

Participant Audience: Residents, Organizational Partners, Built Environment Professionals, Decision-Makers

Objectives

An exploratory walk is a field observation method done by a small group. It is designed to identify both positive aspects of the neighbourhood's public spaces and its areas of concern, including gaps in infrastructure and amenities. This is an open-ended tool that brings people to explore and observe public spaces in the neighbourhood. Depending on the materials provided to participants (observation sheets, base maps, safety rating scales, etc.), you can also collect valuable qualitative data about neighbourhood public spaces, streets and sidewalks. Empowering residents to lead these walks is also an excellent way for them to share their lived expertise and to position residents as knowledge holders.



Using the Tool

Materials needed

1. Maps with nodes displayed. To create your own basemaps, refer to 'How to Create a Basemap' guide on participatoryplanning.ca.
2. Clipboards
3. Pens or pencils
4. Organizer with pen and paper to write down participants' comments throughout walk
5. Option: Printed rating table and criteria (see Sample Materials)

Facilitation Process

1. Provide participants with a map of nodes.
2. The organizers will lead the walk with selected stops determined in advance and listed. At each stop have participants consider how safe the node is for walking, biking, groups, children and seniors.
 - If you desire more quantitative information, have participants rate the node on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the most adequate) on criteria including walking or biking infrastructure, safety, streetscape, or accessibility.
3. Use conversation at each node as a way to discuss the principles of good design.
4. Have at least one organizer recording participants observations at each node. Once you have completed your walk, discuss participants' experiences. Ask a few open-ended questions to encourage discussion around additional community improvements (e.g. you can ask participants which node felt the least/most safe and why).
5. Collect all the participants' maps and audit pages, and compile the data.



Tip: Allow residents to take a leadership role, and facilitate walking groups of 6–8 people.



Tip: Invite elected officials and planning professionals to help implementation happen in the future.

Tip: If weather is bad, reduce the number of stops and amount of information to record and plan to hold the discussion periods in a sheltered area.

Tip: Limit the length of the walk to 90 minutes.

Tip: Avoid using more than one walking/observation tool at a time. Juggling multiple activities may result in incomplete or inaccurate information.

Sample Materials

1. Exploratory walk tools (via Sustainable Calgary)

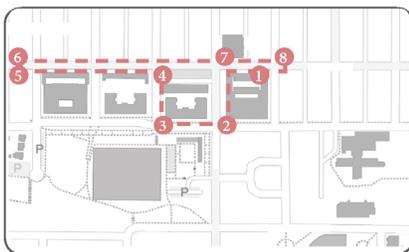


Figure 1.1 Go on a street loop walk audit.

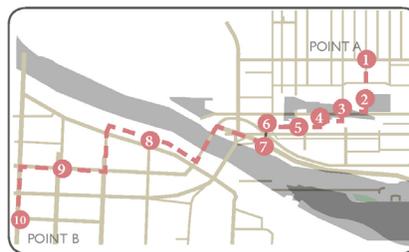


Figure 1.2 Go on a destination walk audit, from A to B.

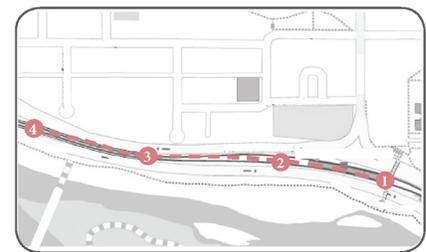


Figure 1.3 Go on a boundary walk audit.

Rating from 0 to 5	Walking	Biking	People	Children	Seniors	Safety	Streetscape
Node 1	2	4	2	2	2	3	2
Node 2	5	2	3	2	3	1	2

Figure 2. Evaluate each node on a scale from 0 to 5 (5 being most adequate for each activity) as shown in the sample above.



Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal



Sustainable Calgary



the centre for active transportation

This resource was made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The ideas expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the Public Health Agency of Canada.