Universal Design
Walkability Audit Tool for Roads and Streets

Version 1 Final

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 familarise 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.

Contents

Participant's Details

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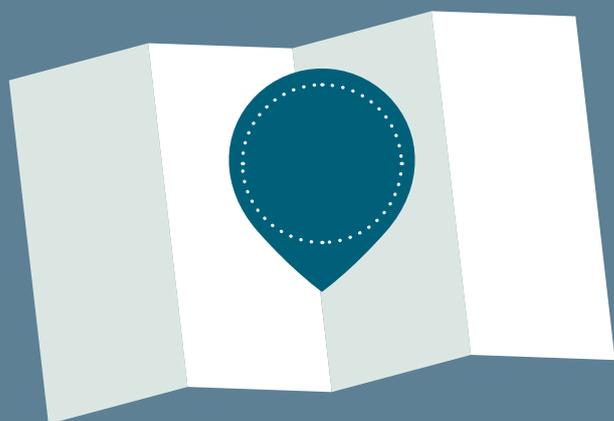
Please include a map of the route in the space provided at the end of the Audit

Town / City

County

Distance of Route

Date of Audit

Start Time

End Time

Weather Conditions

Footpaths

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

Footpaths

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

- ○ Poor
- ○ Ok
- ○ Good

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

Crossing the Road

Road-User Behaviour

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

Road-User Behaviour

Safety

Personal safety and Feeling of Safety in Surroundings.

Some of the safety issues with the route include:

- ◯ There are no real problems
- ◯ A lack of visible Garda presence
- ◯ Area is too isolated
- ◯ Poor road user behaviour
- ◯ Groups of people making me feel intimidated
- ◯ Anti-social behaviour (e.g. street drinkers, drug use)
- ◯ Stray or noisy dogs

- ◯ I feel unsafe at night time
- ◯ A lack of activity and people
- ◯ Derelict and unoccupied buildings
- ◯ Long stretches of blank walls
- ◯ High walls and fences along it
- ◯ Hidden alleyways and blind corners
- ◯ 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 is cluttered and confusing
- ◯ Street signage is difficult to read (e.g. faded, dirty, small letters)
- ◯ Street signage is not needed and could be removed

- ◯ Street signage is damaged
- ◯ Street signage is overly complicated
- ◯ Street signage is wrong (e.g. pointing wrong way, out of date etc.)

Lighting

What are the problems with street lighting when dark?

- ◯ There are no real problems
- ◯ There are no street lights
- ◯ Street lights are broken
- ◯ Street lights are not bright enough

- ◯ Street lights are too bright
- ◯ Street lights only cover the road and not the footpath
- ◯ Lack of street lighting in some areas
- ◯ Lighting is blocked by trees (especially when in full leaf)

Overall Score for Safety

Please identify any problem areas

- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Ok
- ◯ Good

Safety

Attractive and Pleasant

Some problems with the route include:

- ◯ There are no real problems
- ◯ A lack of things to see and do
- ◯ Poorly-maintained building façades and shopfronts
- ◯ Connections to other streets are poor
- ◯ Litter
- ◯ No public places to chat with friends
- ◯ I don't feel relaxed on the street

- ◯ A lack of street trees and planting
- ◯ Neglected properties (e.g. evidence of dumping)
- ◯ Vacant/ derelict buildings
- ◯ Street clutter (e.g. unnecessary signage, bins, utility boxes, poles)
- ◯ Little evidence of community initiatives (e.g. Tidy Towns)
- ◯ A lack of places for shade and shelter (e.g. awnings, trees)

Clean Air and Air Quality

Are there any issues with air quality on the route?

- ◯ There are no real problems
- ◯ Unpleasant smells
- ◯ Chimney smoke
- ◯ Construction dust

- ◯ Fumes from traffic
- ◯ Persistent smoking at certain locations e.g. bus shelters
- ◯ I have breathing difficulties in this location
- ◯ 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
- ◯ Motor traffic
- ◯ Music from nearby shops or cafes
- ◯ Street performers
- ◯ Demolition and/or construction

- ◯ Road works
- ◯ Crowds or gatherings of people
- ◯ Industry
- ◯ Other noises (please comment below)

Overall Score for Look and Feel

Please identify any problem areas

- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Ok
- ◯ Good

Outside the School Gates

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

Outside the School Gates

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?

○————————————○————————————○
Not Enjoyable   Ok   Very Enjoyable

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.

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

Maps

Insert Map

Maps

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.