

Appendix H: Walking Workshop Summaries

OVERVIEW

In November and December 2015 the project team facilitated walking workshops in seven communities throughout Minnesota. The workshops were conducted in Grand Marais, Saint Cloud, Frazee, Thief River Falls, Hutchinson, Madison Lake, and Winona. An eighth and final workshop was held in the metro area but did not include the walking audit component. Workshops were attended by local and regional practitioners, including engineers, planners, public health officials, regional development agency representatives, and transit agency representatives. The purpose of the workshops was to engage with practitioners from around the state, provide participants with information on the Minnesota Pedestrian System Plan (Plan) and early engagement findings, and discuss ideas for creating better walking environments throughout Minnesota.

Image 1: Workshop participants in Grand Marais make observations about the street and sidewalk.



The workshops started with brief presentations about the Plan and important principles to creating walkable environments and were followed by a short walking audit in the community. After the walking audit, participants reconvened to discuss observations from the walk, and engaged in small group activities aimed at generating and prioritizing ideas for improving walking in Minnesota. The workshop concluded with a discussion on how to address the barriers to creating great walking environments. The following pages include a general summary of results from all eight workshops and individual summaries from the walking workshops.

General Summary of Results

Over 130 people participated in the eight walking workshops held throughout the state. Each of the workshops focused on how to improve walking environments in communities throughout the state, and many had unique results and priorities for their communities. However, there were many issues and priorities that continued to resurface at

workshops around the state. One priority that was expressed at nearly every workshop was the importance of designing roadways with universal design principles and ensuring accessibility for all people. Workshop participants stressed the importance of complying with ADA guidelines and designing and providing safe roadway crossings. Additional top priorities were providing a buffer zone between sidewalks and motorists, providing adequate sidewalk widths, and creating better connectivity of pedestrian systems. .

Grand Marais

The Grand Marais walking workshop was held on November 16th, 2015 and at Cook County Higher Education. Ten people participated in the workshop, including a variety of planners, public health employees, and other transportation practitioners from Grand Marais, Cook County, Carlton County, St Louis County, and MnDOT. The number one priority identified during the workshop was making a commitment to universal design – an approach that emphasized designing environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Other top priorities identified during the workshop discussion were the inclusion of buffer zones between sidewalks and roadways, high quality marked crosswalks, good sightlines, and driveway design that emphasizes pedestrian crossing over vehicles. After the prioritization activity, participants began to discuss policy and process barriers, such as the requirement of pedestrian design considerations on projects. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Image 2: Workshop participants in Grand Marais walking down a sidewalk.



Votes	Priority Description
10	Commitment to universal design
5	Buffer zones along sidewalks to separate vehicular traffic from foot traffic and to create a safer feeling for people walking
3	High quality marked crosswalks
3	Good sightlines and physical space from plantings
3	Driveway design and frequency
2	Reduce crossing width however we can
2	Crossing islands where there are many lanes
2	Intersection geometrics
2	Sight triangles
2	Right-sized roads
1	Interesting and diverse streetscapes
1	Incorporate 4 zones of consideration
1	Addition of sidewalks where people are walking from necessity
1	Rural/suburban non-intersection crossings
1	Reduce of parking lots
1	Prioritizing populations identified in Minnesota Walks
0	Clarity and predictability of walkways (visually and physically)
0	Vertical clearance policy
0	High visibility crosswalks - speed, lanes, AADT
0	Guidance on when to separate bike/ped facilities
0	Communicate right speeds

Figure 1: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Grand Marais.

Saint Cloud

The Saint Cloud walking workshop was held on November 17th, 2015 at the Country Inn and Suites hotel. Sixteen people attended the workshop, including public health employees, planners, and engineers from Stearns County, MnDOT, Sherburne County, Benton County, the City of Sartell, and a local business representatives from Saint Cloud. The number one priority identified during the workshop was increasing connectivity between destinations. Additional priorities identified by participants included being more comprehensive in planning (land use and transportation integration), community engagement for planning and design, aesthetics and built environment, and buffer zone between roads and sidewalk.

Image 3: A project team member presents to participants at a workshop in Saint Cloud.



After the prioritization activity, participants discussed barriers for the priorities. Some of the barriers to increasing connectivity mentioned at the workshop were winter maintenance, a history of planning oriented toward automobile transportation, lack of political will, and budget constraints. Barriers identified for achieving comprehensive planning were the inability to get the public to participate, varying public opinions and desires, and inter-agency communication. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Votes	Priority Description
12	Connectivity between destinations
10	Be comprehensive in planning (land use, transportation etc.)
10	Community engagement for planning and design
9	Aesthetics and built environment
9	Buffer zone between roads and sidewalk
8	High visibility pedestrian features (marked crosswalks, signs etc.)
7	Ensure we have right of way available to implement pedestrian infrastructure
7	ADA enforcement
6	Speed management
5	Take responsibility for creating safe crossings
4	Understand the purpose of the sidewalk/Be context sensitive
3	Enforcement of existing codes
2	Design standard for pedestrian crossing
2	Access management with different buildings
2	Appropriate lighting
2	Design phase should focus on accessibility for all
2	Connectivity between sidewalks and buildings
0	Adequate sidewalk widths (5'-6')

Figure 2: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Saint Cloud.

Frazee

A walking workshop was held in Frazee on November 18th, 2015 and was hosted at the Frazee City Fire Hall. The workshop had 20 attendees, including participants from MnDOT, City of Detroit Lakes, City of Frazee, City of Perham, Mahnomen, Horizon Public Health, Becker County, the State Non-motorized Transportation Advisory Committee, West Central Initiative, Polk County, Stevens County, and Clay County. The top two priorities identified during the workshop were compliance with existing ADA guidelines and quality urban design, which includes building placement, orientation, and landscaping. Additional priorities identified included pedestrian accommodation in rural roadway settings, buffers between roadway and sidewalk, roadway narrowing, and safe, well-marked crossings at intersections.

Image 4: Walking workshop participants in Frazee walking across a gas station parking lot adjacent to the street.



The group spent a significant amount of time discussing barriers to the top prioritized idea, ADA compliance. One barrier mentioned is that ADA compliance is often only achieved when there is a new project or full road reconstruction. People also mentioned contractors' knowledge of ADA guidelines varies. Some contractors are

inexperienced with ADA or the work is subcontracted and the requirement of the projects can be lost. The group also identified many barriers to achieving quality urban design and safety considerations in design. Among the barriers participants mentioned were a lack of understanding of urban design, improper building placement in relationship to the street, parking minimum requirements, wide roadways, accommodating all transportation modes, and a lack of political will. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Votes	Priority Description
13	ADA compliance
13	Proper urban design - building placement, landscaping
8	Accommodations of pedestrians where there is rural roadway design (no curb and gutter)
7	Buffers from moving vehicles
7	Safety considerations in design
7	Build narrower streets - road diet
6	Safe, well marked crossings at intersections
4	Proper maintenance - especially snow and ice
4	Best use of funds
3	Review ordinances to look at snow removal and maintenance policies
3	Make driving lanes narrower - lane diet
3	Allow for less than 30 mph streets
2	Adequate lighting
2	Access management
2	Sidewalks on both sides of the street (urban setting)
2	Midblock crosswalks at reasonable spacing (long blocks)
2	Amenity zones on sidewalks are important
1	Connectivity to public transit
1	All towns should have short garbage cans in furniture zone
0	Option of striping a walking area

Figure 3: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Frazee.

Thief River Falls

The Thief River Falls walking workshop was held on November 19th, 2015 at the Thief River Falls City Hall. Fifteen people attended the workshop, including participants from MnDOT, Red Lake County, Polk County, Crookston Trails, City of Crookston, Explore MN Tourism, Thief River Falls, and the East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Image 5: A project team member facilitates a discussion outside at a walking workshop in Thief River Falls.



The top priority identified by the group was the need to develop a pedestrian needs assessment – the process of identifying and prioritizing the immediate needs for pedestrians in their communities. Barriers to developing a pedestrian needs assessment include time, funding, differing opinions of pedestrian priorities and needs, and a lack of understanding of basic principles of pedestrian-scale design.

Another top priority was creating accessibility for all and complying with ADA guidelines. Barriers discussed by the group for accessibility include educating construction inspectors and designers, not settling for minimum standard designs, and the frequent changes and updates to accessibility standards. Other top priorities identified by the group were increasing connectivity and continuity of sidewalks, aesthetics and streetscaping, complete streets (accommodating all users), snow and ice maintenance in winter, and maintenance and repair of existing sidewalks and infrastructure. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Votes	Priority Description
6	Pedestrian needs assessment (identify and prioritize needs)
5	Accessibility - ADA compliance
5	Continuity of sidewalks/increased connectivity
5	Aesthetics/streetscaping (furniture, landscaping, lighting, benches, flowers, etc.)
5	Complete Streets - accommodate all users - education and outreach
5	Snow and ice maintenance
5	Repair existing sidewalks/infrastructure
4	Appropriate traffic signal timing for pedestrians
3	Crosswalk design guidelines
2	Intersection radii
2	Right of way management/street widths
2	Development of regional pedestrian/bike plans
1	Access management - limit access points to reduce conflict points
0	Parking management (rear or side of buildings - buildings define street)

Figure 4: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Thief River Falls.

Hutchinson

On December 1st, 2015 the project team visited Hutchinson and hosted a workshop at the Hutchinson City Center. Approximately 12 people attended the workshop, including MnDOT district employees, City of Hutchinson employees, local public health employees, regional development commission (RDC) employees, and employees from the City of Willmar's Community Education and Recreation department. The top two priorities identified by the group were the provision of high visibility crosswalks where appropriate and the implementation of a sidewalk width minimum standard of 5 feet, with additional space allocated to the sidewalk as available. Other high priorities included prioritizing destinations and ensuring accessibility for all. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Image 6: A large group of workshop participants gather on a sidewalk of an intersection in Hutchinson.



Votes	Priority Description
13	High visibility crosswalks where appropriate
13	5' sidewalks min, or more as appropriate
10	Prioritize destinations
10	Ensure accessibility for all
8	Buffer zone between sidewalk and curb
8	Balance between motor vehicle and pedestrian accommodations
7	Aesthetics - efficient and nice environment
6	Stop bars wherever there is positive traffic
6	Resolution for conflict between walkers and bicyclists
5	Definable four zones to pedestrian realm
4	Any road more than 3 lanes has crossing island at uncontrolled intersections
4	Landscaping clear zone 2.5 - 10 feet
4	Pedestrian functional classification system
4	Designate different walking zone types and how to handle them differently (land use context)
4	Appropriate surfacing of walkways
3	Uniform signage
2	Appropriate crossing times for context
0	New developments include sidewalks and cross through driveways

Figure 5: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Hutchinson.

Madison Lake

The project team visited Madison Lake on December 2nd, 2015 and was hosted at the Madison Lake City Hall. Approximately 16 people attended the workshop, including employees from MnDOT, City of Madison Lake, regional development commissions, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, county health practitioners, Watonwan

County, Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates, and local consultants. The top two priorities identified by the group were designing safe crossings and high visibility crosswalks, and having appropriate buffers between the curb and sidewalk. The following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Image 7: Workshop participants listen to a presentation about walking principles in Madison Lake.



Votes	Priority Description
13	Design safe crossings, ex rapid flashing / in pavement, high vis crosswalks
13	Appropriate buffers between curb and sidewalk
12	Sidewalk width, min 5' and do a pedestrian study to determine appropriate width
12	Appropriate vehicle speed assessment and right interventions to achieve desired speed
11	Aesthetic treatments that contribute to pedestrian realm beyond the minimum
11	Raise MnDOT cost participation for aesthetic treatments and pedestrian related amenities
10	Bump out at major crossings, where appropriate
10	Land use planning to support walking and biking
9	Temporary or seasonal bump outs
9	Streamline grant application process and encourage cross-agency coordination/participation
7	Snow removal policy
7	Develop or expand location criteria for high visibility crosswalks at high ped crossing areas
7	Factor Safe Routes to School and active living into planning
7	Sidewalks required in areas with curb and gutter
7	Building streets to the appropriate width
6	Enhanced street lighting
5	Education and encouragement
3	Pedestrian shelters and benches
3	Focus on urban area facilities
0	Provide transportation choices

Figure 6: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Madison Lake.

Winona

The project team visited Winona on December 3rd, 2015 and was hosted at the Parkview Office Building. Approximately 19 people attended the workshop, including representatives from county health departments, MnDOT, Winona County planning, Houston County, City of Northfield planning, Bike Northfield, Southeastern Minnesota Association of Regional Trails, and the City of Rochester. The number one priority for the group was reducing barriers to managing traffic speed. Other high priorities included the provision of sidewalks on both sides of streets, disallowing parking between building fronts and the street, and better connecting public and private space. The

following table includes all the ideas that were generated during the small group activity and the order is based on number of votes received when participants were asked to vote for the ideas they thought were most important.

Image 8: Walking workshop participants crowd around a crosswalk near a wide highway in Winona.



Votes	Priority Description
16	Reduce the barriers to managing traffic speed
14	Sidewalks on both sides of streets
13	No parking lots between buildings and streets
13	Connect public space to private space
12	Allocate more money to pedestrian realm
11	5' min sidewalks, more where appropriate
10	Short crossings wherever possible
9	Sidewalk buffers where possible and appropriate
9	All roads with 4 lanes or more have crossing island
8	Street furniture and places to sit
8	Appropriate number of street crossings along the corridor
7	Pedestrian scale lighting
7	Develop a zone system for pedestrian realm
6	Focus on aesthetics including vegetation
5	Tight radii
4	Signal timing appropriate
4	Use different surface material on driveways
3	1% of construction projects spent on art
0	Use rapid flash beacon at uncontrolled intersections

Figure 7: Top priorities from the walking workshop in Winona.

Twin Cities Metro

The final workshop for the Twin Cities metro was held on Wednesday, December 16th, 2015 at MnDOT's Waters Edge District Headquarters in Roseville. This workshop was different from the previous seven workshops in that the entire project team did not attend, a walking audit was not conducted, and an introductory presentation about the characteristics of walking environments was not conducted. This workshop was for MnDOT Metro district staff and had approximately 23 attendees. The discussion focused especially on prioritization, implementation, and maintenance of pedestrian facilities. Similar to the previous seven workshops, the metro workshop featured a prioritization activity with voting for each of the priorities. The number one priority was determining where investments

for pedestrians should be made. Other top priorities included maintenance – both in terms of ongoing infrastructure repair and replacement, as well as winter maintenance – and pedestrian safety, both real and perceived.

Votes	Priority Description
17	Investment priorities
16	Maintenance - responsibilities; who? what do you do when there is no local support but there is a clear need;
15	Safety - difference between providing connections and what is the safest alternative; wants vs. consideration
15	Data - perceived safety of treatments vs. reality for safety; need better data; free right turns - bad for pedestrians but no data to back it up
14	Winter Maintenance - what are the expectations - are we clearing snow in the winter or other maintenance?
11	Cost effective solutions - what are low cost solutions and treatments; is it based on crashes or something else?
9	Trade offs between modes - vehicular vs. pedestrian - which one takes precedence?
9	Locals identifying local pedestrian priority corridors, opportunities, or network plans
8	High speed vs. low speed roads - what are the considerations and connections?
8	Education for all roadway users - pedestrians and motorists
7	How does MnDOT advance connectivity so it is more organized and consistent
6	Policy vs. local pressure - brings up legal issues; local pressure for a different priority and how do you deal with it
5	State vs. local systems - plan should identify priorities
5	Prioritizing where to place things based on crash rates
5	Rural crossings
4	Modal connections - some locations more important than others; transit
4	Community context - related to modal connections; if people are walking on shoulders then off road facilities make sense
4	Cost participation policy update - what's the expectation there?
4	Urban areas vs. rural areas - focus on difference and recommendation may be different
4	Encouraging city comprehensive plans with good land use
4	MnDOT permitting authority - local plan triggers need for more facilities but not properly accommodated; Development review process
2	Best practices and innovative treatments on maintenance
1	Trip purpose - utilitarian should be prioritized over recreational
0	Encouraging use of walkways if they are built so it's not deserted
0	Right of way

Figure 8: Top priorities from the walking workshop in the Twin Cities metro.