

Hosting a Walkability Workshop

Purpose

To evaluate and discuss neighborhood walkability as a community.

Overview

During a walkability workshop, residents assess pedestrian access in their community and prioritize ways to improve it. Workshops are usually divided into three parts:

1. Introduction: introduction of participants, background and purpose of the workshop, and overview of logistics
2. Assessment/Audit: participants break into groups to evaluate pre-designated areas using a map and assessment form
3. Discussion: groups share their findings with each other and decide on a few projects that they would like to focus on



Evaluators in Taos, NM walk along a route to assess walkability.



Pat Walsh, Regional Interpretive Ranger for the New Mexico State Parks, talks about the walkability concerns in Raton, NM.

Materials Needed

- Invite list
 - Should be primarily individuals that live, work, or play in the community. Individuals from outside agencies can provide valuable assistance and insight, but once they leave, it will be the people who spend their time here that will bear the burden responsibility of driving change.
 - Include decision makers such as elected officials and representatives from city and county planning, engineering, parks and recreation, and public works departments
 - Local representatives from the Departments of Transportation and Health
 - Staff from nearby land agencies (e.g. NM State Parks, US Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management)
 - Individuals who will have unique perspectives on walkability, such as business leaders, senior citizens, youth, or individuals with disabilities
- Meeting space
- Assessment forms and maps. The Prevention Research Center can assist with creating these. Many examples are available online as well.
- Large (~3'x4') maps that the group can use to identify trouble areas and priorities during the discussion. These are often available at low or no cost from county assessors' offices.
- Cameras to document specific locations during the assessment
- Tape measures to measure sidewalk width
- Safety vests
- Flip chart
- Clipboards
- Pens/Pencils
- Sign-in sheets



A large printed map used for a walkability workshop in Taos.

Steps

Before the workshop:

The workshop itself is the tip of the iceberg. Most of the work is done before it starts and after it ends. The most important part is getting as many of the right people in the room as possible.

- Identify areas to assess. These should be places where pedestrian access and safety are essential (e.g. areas near libraries, parks, central business districts, schools, or senior centers), and/or areas identified as problematic (sites with frequent crashes or “close-calls”).
- Identify individuals who will lead each assessment group. These should be individuals with a particular knowledge of or stake in an area. For example, if assessing the area near a school, invite one of the school’s teachers or administrators to lead that group.
- Invite other key participants
- Invite the general public using a press release, flyers, social media postings, word-of-mouth, etc.
- Create maps and assessment forms to guide groups through their evaluation.
- Secure a meeting space
- Identify an organization that might be able to donate snacks and/or drinks

Join us for a
WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

Monday, May 14th 3-6:30 pm
Civic Plaza Drive with an optional group dinner afterwards

In collaboration with Strong at Heart and the UNM Prevention Research Center, Taos Land Trust is coordinating a Walkability Workshop to evaluate six sites around town for bike and walkability.

Come join a group to see how hot spots in town add up in terms of safe separation for pedestrians and bicyclists from traffic and connectivity around town.

The six sites will be:

- Group 1- Enos Garcia Elementary School
- Group 2- Valverde St./Camino de la Placita to Ranchitos Rd. intersection
- Group 3- Ranchitos Rd. to Salazar intersection and to Camino del Medio intersection
- Group 4- La Posta Rd. to Taos High School
- Group 5- Siler Rd. to Los Pinos Intersection
- Group 6- Paseo del Pueblo Norte at Quesnel to Kit Carson Rd. intersection

Contact the Taos Land Trust for more information or RSVP at 575-751-3138

Logos: NMA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, TAOS LAND TRUST, STRONG AT HEART

Flyer advertising Walkability Workshop in Taos.

Ramblin' Round Raton invites you to assist with a
WALKABILITY WORKSHOP

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16TH
3-6:30 PM
CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
130 PARK AVE. IN RATON, NM

Join members of the Ramblin' Round Raton coalition and other volunteers to assess various walking routes in downtown Raton to enhance and promote walking for health and transportation. All are welcome - volunteers do not need any specific skills. Please dress appropriately to be outdoors, including comfortable walking shoes.

Potential sites will include:

- Longfellow School
- Raton Intermediate School
- 2nd Street from Ripley Park to Sugarite Ave.
- Apache Ave. from 2nd Street to the entrance of Climax Canyon Park
- From the east end of Rio Grande Ave. across the railroad to the Raton Regional Aquatic Center
- Roundhouse Memorial Park/access to Dog Park, etc.

Snacks and drinks will be provided by the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center.

Logos: Walkability Workshop, www.connects.org

Flyer advertising Walkability Workshop in Raton.

LET'S GO FOR A WALK

JOIN US FOR A WALKABILITY AUDIT

Identify pedestrian & bike safety concerns
Assist in prioritizing future projects
Help us find ways to keep Española beautiful!

JUNE 27 @ 2PM
MEET @ BEATRICE MARTINEZ SENIOR CENTER
735 VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL HWY.

Questions? Call Alison @ City of Española: 747-6082

Brought to you by

Logos: Walkability Workshop, Northern New Mexico College, NEW MEXICO HEALTH

Flyer advertising Walkability Workshop in Española.



During the workshop:

Workshops usually last about 3½ hours. Hold it in a large room where everyone can gather around tables.

- Have all the participants sign in so that you are able to follow up with individuals after the workshop
- Have participants introduce themselves
- Define the purpose and goals of the workshop
- Break the group into assessment teams. Make sure each team has:
 - Assessment maps and forms
 - Camera
 - Tape Measure
 - Clipboard
 - Safety Vests
 - Pens/pencils
- Teams walk their pre-defined route, responding to prompts on the assessment form, taking notes on the map, and photographing important problems or features.
- Teams reconvene to discuss their findings
- Teams present their findings to the group
- Facilitate a discussion on goals, priorities, and challenges. Out of all the information gathered, come up with 3 to 5 attainable goals and assign specific people to lead them.



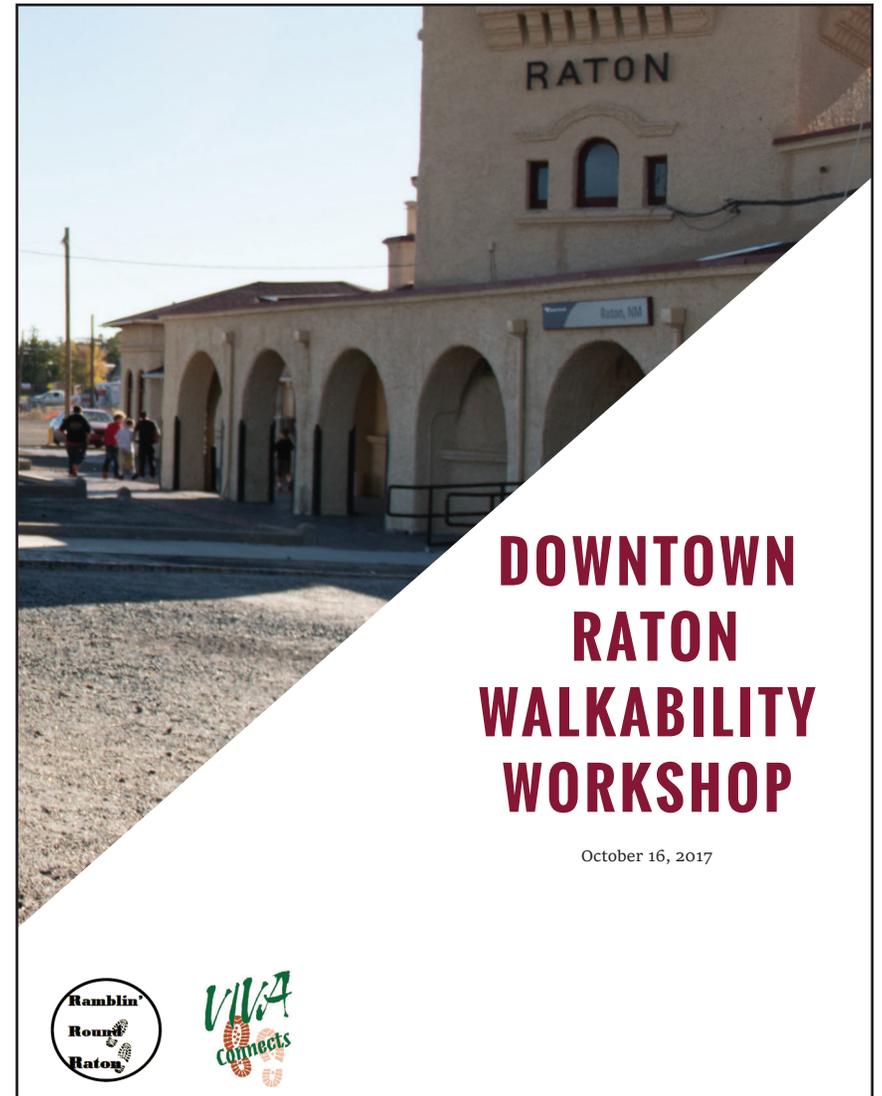
Rachel Wexler of the Department of Health introduces the benefits of providing physical activity opportunities during Española's Walkability Workshop.



Participants in Taos' Walkability Workshop measure the distance between the road and the walkway.

After the workshop:

This is the most challenging part. Everyone leaves excited and enthusiastic, but without persistent follow-up, it's easy for people to resume their daily routines and slowly lose the initiative to improve the community's built environment. Send thank you notes to all the participants. These can include reminders about projects people said they would work on. Create working groups and schedule meetings. Compile a summary report of the workshop and share it with all the participants. Share the finished report with elected officials and other decision-makers. The report will also be a useful reference when updating comprehensive plans, infrastructure capital improvement plans, or when applying for funding. Be patient, but persistent. Meaningful change takes time and it takes work.



Raton's Walkability Workshop report.



Lessons from the Field

The Prevention Research Center teamed up with Taos Land Trust (a land conservation non-profit) and Strong at Heart (a downtown development project) to conduct a walkability workshop for the Town of Taos. The workshop's organizers chose six locations to assess. They chose these areas because community members had previously identified them as having high numbers of crashes or near crashes.

The thirty participants split into teams to walk their routes – each about a half mile. Routes included the area around Enos Garcia Elementary School and Camino de la Placita. Among other observations, they noted:

- There are no sidewalks or crosswalks at Taos Retirement Village, an assisted living facility half a mile north of Taos Plaza
- Flashing lights at a pedestrian crossing near the elementary school do not work
- Los Pandos Road, which connects a residential area with a large grocery store has very limited sidewalks, none of which would accommodate a person using a wheelchair

Following the assessments, one of the facilitators led a discussion on the deep-seated challenges of pedestrian planning in Taos, with its narrow, winding roads that were not made to accommodate the quantity of traffic that it has today. He also worked with the group to choose 3 goals that they would like to take on. They chose:

- Re-painting all crosswalks in town
- Trimming any brush that encroaches on roads and sidewalks
- Installing flashing crosswalk signs near schools to alert drivers of crossings

These goals, especially trimming brush, are relatively simple and achievable. They are things that community members can organize around as they consider taking on larger, future projects, such as major sidewalk improvements.



Additional Resources

- [Downtown Raton Walkability Workshop Report](#)
- [Taos Walkability Workshop Report](#)
- [Cuba, New Mexico Trails, Park and Walkability Workshop](#)
- [The Rural Activity Living Assessment Tools](#)
- [New Mexico Safe Routes to School Handbook](#)

Questions? Comments?

[Send us a message](#)

email us at prc@salud.unm.edu

