

# WALK AUDIT REPORT – SOUTH LINDEN

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## INTRODUCTION

### **About Healthy Places**

The mission of the Healthy Places program is to enhance healthy and active living. We do this through the policies and practices that impact how we build the places we live, work and play. These "Healthy Places" make it easier to be more active as part of everyday life.

The Healthy Places program works to create a built environment that encourages walkability, bikeability and physical activity through community design processes such as land use and transportation planning. The built environment includes the physical elements added to the natural environment to create our community, like our buildings, road systems, parks, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and schools.

### **About Walk Audits**

A Walk Audit (also called a walk study or walkability assessment) looks at the streets, sidewalks, and physical activity spaces in your neighborhood to find the best walking route. Things like where you feel safest walking and where people like walking the most help plan the route. This information is then used to create a walking map of the area for residents and visitors.

Walk Audits are conducted with residents of the neighborhood or employees of a local business interested in improving the walkability of their community. The Walking Programs Manager from Columbus Public Health leads the Walk Audit, which can take between 1-2 hours to complete.

Walk Audits are also an important way to share community concerns about neighborhood conditions with City of Columbus, area leaders, and other community members.

### **How Walk Audits Are Used**

The Healthy Places Program uses a Walk Audit Tool and Survey to assess the design of Columbus neighborhoods for walking and being active. Walk Audit Reports are posted online and shared with staff from the City of Columbus Departments of Development, Recreation & Parks, Public Safety, and Public Service.

Neighborhood residents can use the contents of these reports, as well as the guidance contained in the Resident's Guide to Neighborhood Traffic Issues (found online at <https://columbus.gov/publichealth/programs/Safe-Communities/CAPS-Resident-s-Guide-to-Neighborhood-Traffic-Issues/>) to advocate for improvements to the built environment in their area. While some issues like sidewalk condition are often the responsibility of local property owners, there are many things that the City of Columbus can assist with in improving walkability in our communities, but active and engaged residents are critical to ensuring that the most important issues are brought to the attention of the appropriate departments and properly addressed.



## WALK AUDIT RESULTS

Walk Score ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com))



### South Linden is Somewhat Walkable

Some errands can be accomplished on foot.

The online tool Walk Score provides ratings of walkability that are based on closeness to nearby destinations. The system calculates walking routes to various destinations, giving maximum points to destinations that can be reached within 5 minutes, decreasing scores for destinations further away, and giving no points for destinations outside of a 30 minute walk. Factors such as population density, block length, and intersection density are also included to provide a rating of pedestrian friendliness.

South Linden receives a Walk Score rating of 57 on a scale of 0 to 100, meaning that it is somewhat walkable. Because this rating is calculated based on proximity to destinations, it does not actually reflect the “comfortability” of walking in the neighborhood, only what resources residents can access by walking. The walkability of the neighborhood for recreation is addressed more specifically in the walk audit.

#### Walking Assets – Summary

- Community gardens at Cleveland Ave and Kenmore near the library
- New sidewalks around Linden McKinley High School
- Raised intersections promote traffic calming along Duxberry Ave near Linden McKinley
- Many homes are well-kept with beautiful gardens
- Many destinations along commercial corridors of Hudson and Cleveland, including churches, library, shops, and child care
- Many old trees provide shade on some residential streets, but not all

#### Walking Challenges – Summary

- Many sidewalks are broken or crumbling, especially on side streets like Maynard Ave
- Many sidewalk gaps on North-South streets – only Hamilton provides complete sidewalk
- Lack of curb ramps at many intersections create barriers for wheelchairs and strollers
- Lack of sidewalks along East-West streets, particularly Clinton and Maynard
- Lack of crosswalks throughout neighborhood, but in particular on Cleveland Ave and Hudson Street, high traffic corridors with many destinations for pedestrians
- No separation between sidewalk and street on Cleveland Ave, making walking uncomfortable and unsafe
- Street trees on Cleveland Ave are mostly missing and grates over planters are broken
- Litter is a problem on Cleveland Ave and Hudson St and near the high school – need more public trash cans to reduce litter
- Linden McKinley athletic facilities are separated by barbed wire fence, making them uninviting
- Some vacant houses or unkempt yards that negatively impact the feeling of safety and comfort while walking
- Lack of shade on main streets (Hudson and Cleveland)
- Grass and shrubbery overgrown on many sidewalks

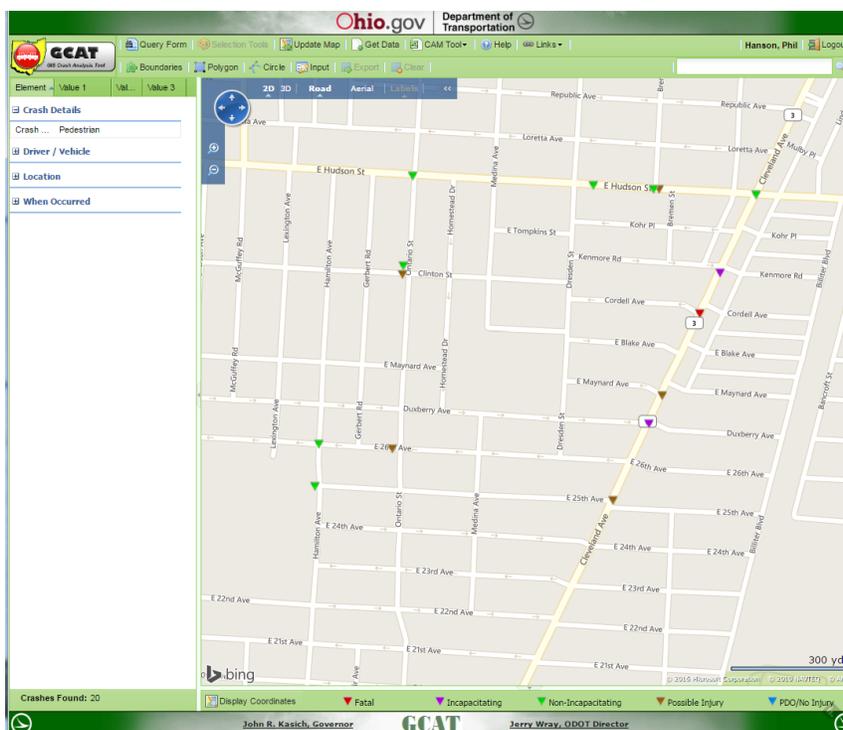
## Sidewalk Inventory – South Linden Neighborhood Pride Area

	Length	Percent of Total
Sidewalk on both sides	4.45 mi	66.7%
Sidewalk on only one side of street	0.78 mi	11.7%
No sidewalk	1.05 mi	15.7%
<b>Total roadway length</b>	<b>6.68 mi</b>	<b>100%</b>

While the South Linden Pride area has just 15% of streets with no sidewalks and 11% with sidewalk on only one side, walking through the neighborhood reveals that the areas without sidewalk and with sidewalk only on one side greatly impede walkability through the neighborhood. Around Linden McKinley High School, only Duxberry Ave has sidewalks among East-West streets, and only on one side. Only Hamilton Road provides a complete North-South walking path, with all other streets interrupted by at least short gaps and at times entire missing blocks. Cleveland Avenue and Hudson Street have complete sidewalks, but feel uncomfortable to walk due to high traffic speeds.

### Pedestrian Crashes 2011-2016

Using the Ohio Department of Transportation GIS Crash Analysis Tool (GCAT) (located at <http://gcat.dot.state.oh.us/CrashWebHome.aspx>), all pedestrian-involved crashes in South Linden were reviewed for available data 2011-2016. Over that time, there were 20 crashes reported, including one fatality and four incapacitating injuries.



The one fatal crash and four incapacitating injuries occurred along Cleveland Avenue, where the posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour. Sidewalks along Cleveland Avenue are not buffered from the street, and there are very few crosswalks, in part because many of the streets intersecting Cleveland Avenue are offset. The majority of crashes occurred along either Cleveland Ave or Hudson Street, or along Ontario Street or Hamilton Ave, two main North-South streets in the neighborhood.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Requests to 311

The City of Columbus' 311 system allows residents to submit requests for City Services through a single point of contact. The system is available Monday to Friday 7 AM – 6 PM by phone at (614) 645-3111, or online at [311.columbus.gov](http://311.columbus.gov)

A number of the issues with walkability in a neighborhood can be reported to 311 for investigation and response by the City. For the South Linden neighborhood, the particular issues best served by reporting to 311 are below:

- Curb ramps needed at intersections
- Gaps in the sidewalk that need to be filled
- Crosswalks needed at intersections or mid-block
- Clearing of brush and overgrowth along pathways

Reporting of an issue to 311 is not a guarantee it will be addressed in the manner requested, but it will ensure that the issue is reported to the appropriate personnel and reviewed. The resolution of a 311 request can be viewed online after it is reported.

### Requests to Area Commission

For issues not resolved by reports to 311, requests can be made to the local area commission. The area commissions are intended to serve as a liaison between the neighborhood residents and developers or city officials. Commission meetings are held regularly and are open to the public.

Area Commissions serve a role in community planning and allocating funding from the City. The Urban Infrastructure Recovery Fund (UIRF) engages Area Commissions to identify and address capital improvement needs in Columbus' central neighborhoods. Projects are currently planned for the cycle from 2015-2019, but engagement with the Area Commission can impact project prioritization and future planning efforts.

The South Linden Area Commission serves the South Linden neighborhood. Meetings of the commission are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Point of Pride Building located at 1410 Cleveland Avenue. The South Linden Neighborhood Liaison to the City of Columbus is Richard Graham, who can be reached at 614-645-7371.

### Requests to the Transportation and Pedestrian Commission

If an issue related to traffic or pedestrian safety cannot be resolved by reporting it to 311, or by bringing it before the local area commission, it can be brought to the Columbus Transportation and Pedestrian Commission (TPC). The TPC is an official advisory body to the director of public service and Columbus city council. They address matters related to: transportation; bicycle and pedestrian safety; parking and stop-sign, traffic control, and speed-limit policies.

Meetings are open to the public and typically held the second Tuesday of every month at 5:00PM in the Beacon Building, 50 W. Gay Street, Ground Floor, Conference Room B. Meeting agendas and past minutes can be found at <https://www.columbus.gov/TPC/>

# AUDIT PHOTOS

## Sidewalks



Many of the sidewalks in the neighborhood are in poor condition, like the ones pictured above. They are broken, overgrown, and present a major barrier to walkability particularly for those in wheelchairs or pushing strollers. Some sidewalks, like the sidewalk on the north side of Duxberry Ave next to Linden McKinley High School, are new and in good condition, but this is the exception rather than the rule.



## Safety



In areas where the sidewalks were so deteriorated or overgrown that they made walking difficult, it was often easier to walk in the street, in particular for people with wheelchairs or strollers. This presents a significant safety hazard especially for the most vulnerable pedestrians.

Along Duxberry Avenue, there are raised intersections that serve as traffic calming devices, but traffic calming was implemented in very few other locations in the neighborhood. The lack of safe and visible crosswalks is a major concern in the neighborhood, especially along Cleveland Avenue and near the schools.

## Community



South Linden has a growing community garden movement, with one garden currently active and another breaking ground this year. There are many churches in the neighborhood and Linden McKinley High School sits at the heart of the neighborhood. Many neighborhood residents display signs in their yard calling for no more gun violence in the community, sending a strong message that residents care for their community.

## Recreation



Within the South Linden Pride Area, there are no community parks, but the grounds of Linden McKinley High School serve as an area for community gatherings and recreation. Unfortunately, although shared use of the grounds is allowed by Columbus City Schools, a barbed wire fence protects the athletic fields and makes the facility seem uninviting.