

Healthy Places Walkability Study Marion Franklin/Southfield Community Block Watch

The goals of the walkability study are to increase neighborhood residents walking in their neighborhood and to identify destination places that are within walking distance. This will be done by walking with neighborhood residents to 1) identify positive places to walk in their neighborhood; 2) inventory barriers to pedestrians and bikers; and 3) identify neighborhood destinations.

Synopsis

Date	May 16, 2011
Community Participation	2 adults, 3 city staff, 3 kids
Distance Walked	1.78 miles
Weather	Rainy and overcast, low 50's

Neighborhood Findings

Recreation

- The Watkins Elementary School, at Watkins Road and Fairwood Avenue) park and playground (which belongs to the school, not Rec and Parks) serves the neighborhood. Children on the walk study expressed some fear in using the playground due to a recent fire that was set on its equipment.
- The Clairfield School (at Groveport Road and Clairfield Avenue) used to maintain a park and playground (also school owned) that served the neighborhood. Now that the school is closed, play equipment has been removed, the open space is not regularly mowed, and the area is unsafe for children due to the buildings repurposed use for Columbus Fire Department trainings.

Neighborhood Streets

- Streets and sidewalks throughout the Southfield Neighborhood are mostly well maintained. However, residents expressed that they did not like to walk on Fairwood Avenue due to the speed of traffic and lack of sidewalks. 4 foot wide sidewalks make it difficult for two people to walk side by side throughout the neighborhood.
- It is the southwestern portion of the Southfield Neighborhood that mostly lacks sidewalks. Most of the commercial areas lack sidewalk as well.

Safety

- Residents were concerned about safety along some western portions of Grovewood Drive. Concerns were due to the larger portion of abandoned, rental, absentee owner housing in this area and some suspected drug activity. Of all locations in the neighborhood, this area had the most unkempt properties – and is in very close proximity to Watkins Elementary School.
- Residents had a lot of safety concerns about dogs in the area – and where possible – they try to avoid walking near streets where they have observed dogs loose in unfenced yards. Several dogs were seen off lease in the neighborhood during the walk study.
- Residents report that there is a lot of speeding in their neighborhood and that speed bumps on streets like Augmont do little to slow drivers.

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Housing

- Residents said one of their favorite things about the neighborhood is that it is mostly quiet and they know many people in the neighborhood. However, throughout the walk loud noise from nearby industrial uses could be heard.
- We walked by many properties that were unkempt or in disrepair – most streets had at least one unmaintained home, usually a rental or abandoned property.

Commercial & Community Gathering:

- Residents could not identify a main community gathering places in the neighborhood, apart from the church on Augmont and Fairwood.
- A small strip mall at Watkins and Groveport Road and small stores east of Watkins Elementary School on Watkins are the commercial uses serving the neighborhood. Though in walkable distances, there are no sidewalks around the strip mall and the corner store on east Watkins has been the site of some suspicious activity.

This report will be used to create walking maps through the neighborhood. The mile-marked maps will highlight neighborhood features, safe paths and destinations. The report will also be forwarded to City of Columbus departments that can assist neighborhoods in addressing their needs.

The mission of the Healthy Places program is to enhance healthy and active living by establishing development policies and practices to reduce negative health impacts and by creating places that foster physical activity as a part of everyday life. For more information, please contact Betsy A. Pandora, Healthy Places Coordinator at 645-5318 or EAPandora@Columbus.gov.

Addendum

Site Specific Comments

Routes

All Pictures

Pictures (Explanation of pictures below)



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Picture Explanation

Picture Number	Explanation
1	No sidewalks augmont and moundview
2	Speeding in the neighborhood – tire tracks on moundview
3	Minimal graffiti in the neighborhood
4	Varying sidewalk widths
5	Children play in the street due to lack of open space or recreation facility in the area
6	Lots of dogs in the neighborhood – off leash and in yards without fences
7	Old entrance to closed Clairfield school, off of Southfield. Now used as path to cut through the neighborhood.
8	Clairfield school playground no longer has play equipment (hoops removed from basket ball court) or lighting. Building now used as a training facility for Columbus fire.
9	Great COTA connections throughout the neighborhood
10	One of the only crosswalks within the neighborhood on Grovewood Drive
11	Overgrown hedge blocks sidewalks
12	Several homes with overgrown lawns – on Grovewood Drive
13	Dogs chased after walkers on Bakerhill Drive
14	Nearest Walkable commercial at Groveport Road and Watkins Road. No sidewalk connections to it from adjacent residential or educational uses.
15	Residents concerned about unkempt condition of rental homes on Grovewood Drive
16	New sidewalks installed along Watkins Avenue, but they do not extend down to commercial in image 14.
17	Lack of a buffer between road and sidewalk on Watkins makes residents feel unsafe walking.
18	Code violation posted on home along Blue Ridge Drive
19	Some internal neighborhood sidewalks are deteriorating