

CHAPTER FIVE

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES FOR WALKABLE RALEIGH



Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh are a series of programs and activities that complement physical and operational changes to the City’s pedestrian network. These Programs and Initiatives can be used to support safety needs, ensure the pedestrian network is well-maintained, and encourage more people to walk. They include new programs to Raleigh, as well as programs that are already underway.

This chapter recommends nearly 20 new Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh for the City and other community members to consider implementing. The chapter begins with a brief description of existing Programs and Initiatives, followed by the recommended Programs and Initiatives. The chapter concludes with information on implementing and managing the Programs and Initiatives, including how they can be used to support an application for Walk Friendly Community designation.

Existing Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh

The City of Raleigh and its citizens are already engaged in several Programs and Initiatives, the most notable being the WalkRaleigh grassroots effort to provide way-finding for pedestrians and a pedestrian safety education campaign called “Watch for Me, NC.”

Resident-initiated sidewalk projects. As described in Chapter 3, residents can petition the City to install a sidewalk by getting the signatures of a majority of the property owners along the street frontage where the sidewalk project would be constructed. In the past, the cost of these sidewalks was borne by the property owner. However, beginning in early 2011, the City assumed all costs for these projects.

WalkRaleigh. In January 2012, a citizens group called Walk Raleigh posted 27 way-finding signs

at three intersections around the City. The signs were not pre-approved by the City and had to be taken down. Nevertheless, the City recognized the value of the signs and reintroduced them as a three-month pilot program during which City staff posted and maintained the signs within the public right-of-way on City-maintained streets. One idea would be to look at expanding this concept in other locations throughout the City.

Watch for Me, NC. The Watch for Me, NC project aims to reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities through educational safety messaging and enforcement. Goals of the project include:

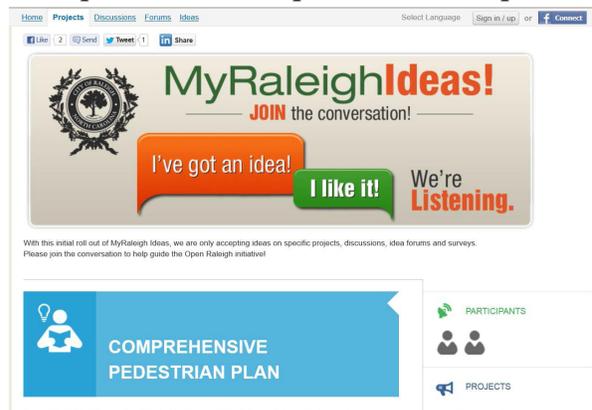


See.Click.Fix. The City of Raleigh uses the SeeClickFix web/mobile application to collect location-specific information from Raleigh residents on a variety of non-emergency physical and infrastructure issues, including issues that impact pedestrian safety, access, and

comfort. Citizens can report problems through the SeeClickFix—Raleigh website [<http://seeclickfix.com/raleigh>], the SeeClickFix map on the Citizens Service Request landing page [<http://www.raleighnc.gov/portal/portal/cor/ext/SeeClickFix>], or the SeeClickFix mobile application. SeeClickFix routes citizen reports to relevant City of Raleigh staff members, who provide notification when the issue is resolved.

Bus Shelter Adoption Program. The Raleigh Transit Authority established a Bus Shelter Adoption program in the summer 2012 that engages individuals and organizations in keeping bus shelters clean for bus riders. Shelters are to be cleaned once a month. Special maintenance needs, damage from vandalism, or concerns about suspicious activity are reported the City's transit staff. In return, those adopting a shelter will be recognized at a Raleigh's Mayor and City Council meeting and with their name on a decal placed on the shelter.

MyRaleigh Ideas. The City of Raleigh has a long history of open, collaborative government by engaging with citizens to provide a high level of customer service. In early 2012, the Raleigh City Council adopted an Open Source Resolution designed to make it easier for citizens to get information and interact with the City. For example, the Draft Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan was available for public review through MyRaleigh Ideas (<https://raleigh.granicusideas.com/projects/comprehensive-pedestrian-plan>).



Recommended Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh

To help understand how the recommended programs and activities can be implemented and managed, they are organized into two categories – Administrative and Participatory – to emphasize that the whole community can contribute to its walkability.

- » *Administrative* programs are managed primarily by the City of Raleigh, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), or another similar organization. An example of this type of activity is the installation of permanent speed feedback signs in areas where motor vehicle speeds routinely exceed the posted speed limit.
- » *Participatory* programs rely on the Raleigh citizens to implement the programs or to remain relevant. The way-finding signs posted at three Raleigh intersections by WalkRaleigh are an example of this type activity. While the City may set up the organizational framework for these groups and provide incentives for participating, community leaders are the real force behind their creation and sustenance.

Nearly 20 programs and activities as Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh are summarized below. More details on each program are provided in Appendix E.

Administrative

Enforce moving and parking violations at crosswalks. Regular and sustained enforcement of motorists' moving and parking violations at crosswalks, coupled with a high-profile public awareness campaign, will affect motorists' behavior with respect to pedestrian space in the public right-of-way. Regular enforcement is also needed for pedestrian violations such as crossing against the traffic light.

Provide and enhance bus operator and police officer pedestrian safety training. Regular and sustained training to increase the awareness of pedestrians in the right-of-way and pedestrian laws can improve the overall safety and comfort of all travelers.



Establish a Raleigh-specific Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. A Raleigh-specific SRTS program can build on the existing awareness about SRTS gained from the City's participation in the County's SRTS program.

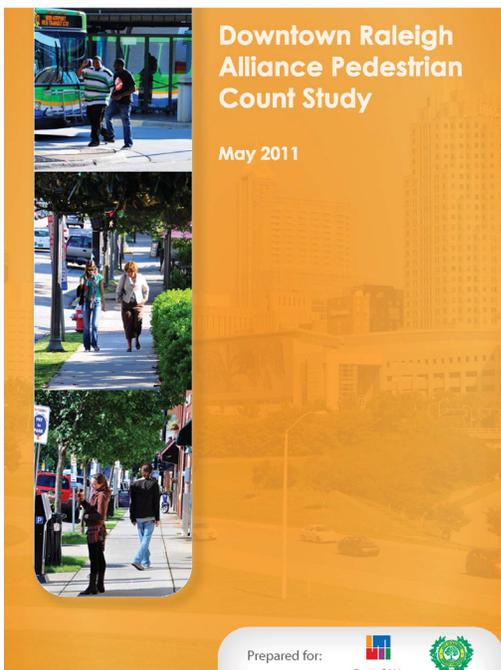


Install speed feedback signs on City-maintained Streets. Installed signs that tell motorists their speed and provide a visual clue if they are traveling over the posted speed limit. Chapter 3 cites portable speed trailers as having a moderate Measure of Effectiveness (MOE).

Include pedestrian walking information on media traffic reports. Traffic reports that include

information on street closures or new connections encourages walking and reminds motorists of the presence of pedestrians. While the City does not provide traffic condition information, its Public Affairs Office can work with media outlets on to include walking information in their reports.

Conduct regular pedestrian counts. Regular pedestrian counts are one way to measure the effect of physical, operational and programmatic changes on walking rates. The counts, which may be part of a Complete Streets implementation strategy, can also be used to help support the City’s investment in pedestrian network improvements.

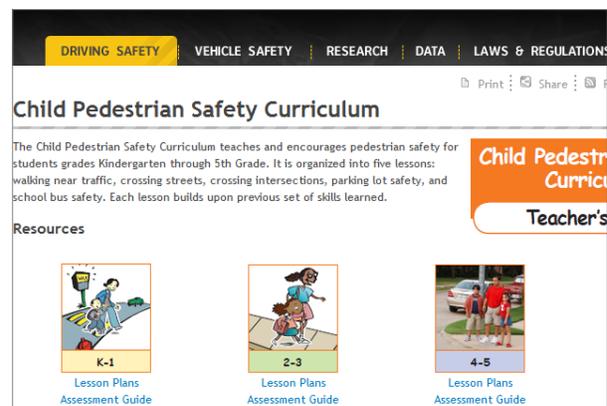


Establish policies and procedures for sidewalk maintenance. Maintaining sidewalks, including asphalt sidewalks and sidepaths, is a way to protect the City’s investment. Policies and procedures for addressing immediate needs and completing preventative maintenance can help the city’s overall walkability.

Update the ADA Transition Plan. The City’s ADA Transition Plan prepared in 1992 focused

on access to public buildings. An updated plan that includes access to transit, schools and other destinations is recommended, especially with an emphasis on Universal Design principles.¹

Revise the school siting policy. School siting policies that encourage schools to be placed along streets that are walkable can increase the number of students that walk to school and reduce traffic congestion around schools. The City’s 2005 “School Design Policy” should be updated to reflect current best practices for school siting and pedestrian-oriented design elements.



Establish and maintain a GIS-based sidewalk, curb ramp, and bus stop inventory/assessment. An automated system for storing current information about the pedestrian network can be an important asset management tool for tracking regular maintenance cycles and understanding the overall conditions of the network.

Participatory

Hold an annual festival to promote walking. *Call it Walk today in Raleigh!* This annual festival can be used to celebrate aspects of Raleigh that citizens and visitors love, such as its trails, downtown and neighborhoods.

Publish sponsored Walking Route maps. Walking route maps that are sponsored by

¹ http://www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/about_ud/udprinciples.htm

local organizations and businesses are an encouragement strategy for getting more people walking, especially if the maps are promoted in combined with retail promotions.

Coordinate neighborhood and employee-based walking groups. Informal walking groups are popular ways for people to get exercise and build social networks. This Building Block would provide a coordinating brand, place to get walking resources, or put potential walkers in touch.

Host pedestrian safety education programs and marketing. Learning and practicing safe walking habits provide skills that last a lifetime, regardless of the age of the participant.

Host driver education and awareness campaigns. This Building Block is the complement to moving and parking violation enforcement program, as well as bus operator and police officer training.

Offer a “close call” reporting system. The close call reporting system allows travelers to identify locations and operations that may create a safety risk before an incident occurs. Several communities use this system as a companion to a system such as SeeClickFix.

Managing Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh

The Program Initiatives recommended in this chapter can be implemented successfully with careful planning. This section provides guidance an approach to these programs and activities.



Resources for Implementation

Human and financial resources will be required to implement the Programs and Initiatives. Oversight will be needed to implement the first round of programs and activities, and to initiate subsequent rounds. These may be most effectively handled by the City’s Office of Transportation Planning. This will likely require additional staff time, with associated costs for equipment and materials. For example, the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) may need a full time dedicated position. The City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission may play a role in initiating and managing some of the first round Programs and Initiatives, especially if a committee dedicated to pedestrian issues is established or if the Commission recruits volunteers.

Existing programs and activities may also be a useful resource as they can be expanded, if needed, or used to leveraged resources for new programs through joint promotions. For example, because of the resources needed to create a new festival or concerted outreach campaign, the initial effort can piggy back on existing Citywide festivals, such as SparkCON, Artspllosure, and Hopscotch, etc. A separate festival may evolve overtime, with appropriate organizing and resourcing by non-City agencies and organizations.

Other City departments may provide leadership on some of the Programs and Initiatives. For

example, the Department of Public Affairs manages the City’s public access television network, Raleigh Television Network, which is one potential outlet for information about closures and changes in the pedestrian network. Public Affairs may also build on its working relationship with local media to include pedestrian network information in their traffic reports. Similarly, the City’s Community Development Department offers a number of programs that may be a good fit for an adopt-a-sidewalk program or for creating neighborhood walking groups.

The City can also encourage businesses, local colleges and universities, and other non-profits to serve as stewards of some Programs and Initiatives.

Finally, financial resources will be needed to implement many of the Programs and Initiatives. A table of potential funding sources by Programs and Initiative is included in Appendix H. Some of the recommended programs are eligible for state or federal funding, such as SRTS, while others may be funded through other revenue sources.

Evaluation and Updating

The City should review and update the list of recommended Program Initiatives every two years to make necessary adjustments and capture new programs and activities. Part of this review should include a look at the way the programs are being provided to ensure they work effectively. For example, emerging technologies may offer more effective ways of implementing existing programs and activities, or may make new programs and activities possible. The City should monitor these technologies closely, so that opportunities are identified as they emerge. Examples of emerging technologies the City should follow include quick read (QR) codes for pedestrian way-finding, automated pedestrian count technologies, real time bus

arrival technologies, social media technologies, and mobile applications and devices.

Walk Friendly Community Designation

All of the recommended Programs and Initiatives for Walkable Raleigh can be used to support an application for Walk Friendly Community designation.² A certified Walk Friendly Community is a city or town that has shown a commitment to improving walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies. Individual cities and towns can apply to the program to receive recognition in the form of a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum recognition by the Walk Friendly Community (WFC) organization. A community profile and policies, programs and practices in four areas—education and encouragement; enforcement; evaluation; and engineering—are used to determine recognition. More detailed information on these criteria is found in WFC’s *Community Assessment Tool*. A summary of programs, plans and policies that should be part of a city’s or town’s “way of doing business” is included as Appendix F.

² More information is available at: http://www.walkfriendly.org/get_started.cfm.