



Community Report Card **Lawrence**

On behalf of our reviewers and program staff, we want to thank you for taking the time to prepare and submit your application to be considered for a Walk Friendly Communities designation. We know you invested a great deal of time in this application, and we appreciate your hard work.

Based on our review, we are designating Lawrence as a Silver Walk Friendly Community. Among the many programs and initiatives you shared with us, we were particularly impressed with:

- Inter-agency coordination on Safe Routes to School programs.
- The city's thorough facility inventories and engineering practices including: signal timing, road diets, crosswalk design/maintenance, countdown signals, and Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons.
- Complete Streets policy and land use ordinances that are generally supportive of walking.
- Demonstrated commitment to counting non-motorized modes of transportation.

This report card summarizes some of the comments and feedback from our reviewers within each section of your application. We would encourage you to contact us if you would like to talk more specifically about your initiatives, our findings, and what we see as opportunities to expand your programs.

This remainder of this report card will provide feedback and suggestions for each section in the community assessment tool. Each section received an overall score as defined below:

Walk Friendly

The responses in this section indicate that your community is particularly strong in this area with great efforts being made towards improving walkability. Even so, there are always areas within this section where improvements and growth could be made.

On the Right Track

This score indicates that your community does not exhibit the characteristics to be truly walk friendly in this section, but that there are still good existing programs or new programs that could be expanded. Please review our suggestions on how you could improve the walkability in this area.

Needs Attention

This score indicates that your community does not yet demonstrate strong programs, policies, and results, characteristic of a Walk Friendly Community based on the responses in this section. Please review our suggestions carefully on how you can create positive change in your community with both short- and long-term objectives.

Status of Walking

Walk Friendly

It is encouraging to see that Lawrence has maintained a high walking mode share and that there have been no pedestrian fatalities in the past five years. Participating in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project is a great way to quantify walking trips that take place for all purposes, not just commute trips. It's also great to see that Lawrence has a clear understanding of staff time dedicated to pedestrian issues and an advisory board with a clear role to play.

Planning

Walk Friendly

Your efforts in the planning and policy area were strong. We were particularly impressed with:

- The sidewalk, curb ramp, and network connectivity inventories that were conducted as part of the regional pedestrian plan development. It's great that the planning process included diverse opportunities for public engagement. Updates to the pedestrian plan should include [performance measures](#), a timeline for implementation, and responsible agencies for each recommended action.
- The Complete Streets policy that applies to all phases of street projects. We would have appreciate more information in the application about policy implementation (e.g., has Lawrence developed a project check list? Has the city specified the process for exceptions to the policy?).
- Nice trail system, connectivity policy, and land use ordinances that generally support walking.
- Car parking policies that are tailored to different parts of the city and do not encourage and oversupply of parking spaces.

Areas for improvement include updating the ADA Transition Plan using recent inventory data, instituting a policy about [pedestrian-level lighting](#), and developing guidelines for streetscape design (check out the [Downtown Design Guide](#) from Silver-level Sandpoint, ID).

Education/Encouragement

On the Right Track

We thoroughly enjoyed reading about the SRTS efforts in Lawrence, this was an application high point! The partnership between the school district and health department is a great example for other cities.

A pedestrian wayfinding system would reinforce the culture of walking while helping residents and visitors create a walking route to nearby destinations. To experiment with wayfinding and gain support, check out how you can design and print temporary (and affordable) signs through [Walk \[Your City\]](#). You may also want to consider partnering with a downtown business association or the university.

One major opportunity is for Lawrence to work together with community partners to host an [Open Streets](#) event! These events focus community attention on the importance of active transportation and celebrates walking and biking. There are many other Walk Friendly Communities that can provide inspirations, including [Charlottesville](#), [Seattle](#), [Charlotte](#), [Louisville](#), [Minneapolis](#), and [Evanston](#).

Engineering

Walk Friendly

This was another strong section for Lawrence. Good job prioritizing school crossings and crosswalk maintenance. The city has positive practices when it comes to pedestrian signaling and geometric design – we were particularly impressed with the city’s use of PHBs (plus an accompanying pamphlet!). The city should consider proactively implementing RTOR restrictions and/or LPIs in areas with large pedestrian volumes and high levels of turning traffic.

We enjoyed reading about the lighted path between downtown and the university. It’s great that you conducted a before/after evaluation of pedestrian volume!

It’s good that Lawrence has up-to-date inventories about the presence and condition of pedestrian facilities. Unfortunately it looks like there is a relatively small budget for maintenance and filling gaps. Your application mentioned a prioritizing filling sidewalk gaps on major thoroughfares, but what about near schools, parks, and other community facilities? Rather than requiring individual property owners to fill gaps, you could consider a petition process or match program for high-priority gaps on local streets.

Enforcement

On the Right Track

This section of the application lacked detail, but it sounds like Lawrence is on the right track. It’s good to see that Lawrence has a crossing guard program and that the police department is involved in site review. While it sounds like there is regular communication between law enforcement, traffic engineering, and planners, we recommend formalizing these conversations so that pedestrian safety is always on the agenda. Creating a focus group or quarterly meeting with these divisions can help focus on where the problems are and how to deal with them appropriately. Another way to coordinate would be to include law enforcement in Road Safety Audits.

The Police Department should consider using targeted pedestrian crossing operations. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has a helpful [how-to guide](#) on this important topic. It is typical for enforcement agencies to select locations for speed enforcement based on complaint and historic speeding issues, but hopefully targeted speed enforcement is also conducted at locations with high pedestrian volumes as people walking are some of the most vulnerable road users.

Evaluation

Needs Improvement

It’s positive that counting non-motorized modes has been part of city operations since 2009. If there is interest in expanding to automated counts, consider the information and resources on this [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center webpage](#). After your experience with the 2015 Road Safety Assessment, you are in a good position to re-engage partners for more RSAs using the [Pedestrian Road Safety Audit Guidelines and Prompt Lists](#). For a more informal approach to audits that includes a community engagement element, check out the [Walkable Neighborhood Project](#) from Bronze-level Springfield, MO, which utilized the [active neighborhood checklist](#).