



November 6, 2009

Do Your Own Walk Audit

In the last post the Tussing, Arlington Park, Deshler Park and Clinton Estates neighborhoods were highlighted and their walk studies completed this summer. If your neighborhood is interested in completing their own walk study check out the [Creating Healthier, Safer Neighborhoods brochure](#) for instructions on how to create a neighborhood walking map.

So what do we look at on a walk study? When walking in your neighborhood, do you have a favorite street? Do you have a preferred route to a neighborhood destination? The most common issues brought up in walk studies are sidewalk condition or lack of sidewalks; speeding drivers; dogs and crime either real or perceived. But please note, research has shown crime that is proven by statistics or crime that people think happens still makes people afraid and less willing to walk in their neighborhood¹.

Everyone wishes they had sidewalks. If you don't have sidewalks, choose streets with less traffic and remember to walk near the curb facing traffic for safety.

Some of our residential streets were built wide and lack street trees or have small street trees. This gives drivers a feeling of wide open space and they tend to drive faster. Residential streets that are narrower and have large street trees have a feeling of being closed in and therefore drivers drive slower. Choose streets to walk where drivers drive slow and respect pedestrians. If you don't want to talk to your speeding neighbor, consider getting a [Franklin County Safe Communities Keep Kids Alive Drive 25 sign](#) for your front yard and encourage your neighborhoods to do the same.

Now to the topic of dogs. Dr. Aaron Messer, the Columbus Public Health veterinarian encourages any resident who feels a dog is dangerous to contact his office at 645-6748 or City of Columbus 311 at 645-3111. See Dr. Messer's [program page](#) and this link to the [viscous animal information](#). Or again, avoid the street where any animal makes you feel uncomfortable.

As for crime, this is a big issue. Join a block watch or get out with your neighbors and walk the neighborhood. Start a walking club or walk as a block watch. This way, you get physical activity and you can be present in your neighborhood. People who commit crimes do not want to be seen so the more "eyes on the street" the better! Also, research has shown that when residents see other people walking, they are more likely to walk as well. So start the trend in your neighborhood!

If you don't see your map, check out the [Creating Healthier Safer Neighborhoods brochure](#) and then contact Christine Green at 645-5318.

¹ Sallis JF, Kerr J. "Physical Activity and the Built Environment." President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest, 7(4): 1-8, December 2006.

