

PLANNING FOR PEDESTRIANS

Walking is the earliest form of transportation. People walk for fun, for exercise, and to get from place to place. Because so many people want to walk within the city or town, city planners try to find ways to make walking safe.

Do you have trails, alleys, or sidewalks in your community? Do people who jog or walk for exercise walk in the street?

How can city planners help their community be a safe and comfortable place for people to walk?

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The following steps can encourage people to walk and feel comfortable and safe:

- Build sidewalks where there aren't any.
- Improve existing sidewalks so that wheeled vehicles such as strollers and wheelchairs can also use them.
- Protect walkers from traffic danger by using planting strips and curbing.
- Provide street furniture such as benches and water fountains.
- Install crosswalks with appropriate signage or signals.
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting (lights directed at the sidewalk rather than the street).
- Install medians in the center of the street to provide pedestrian resting places on wide streets.
- Plan "reasonable" walking distances between destinations.
- Remove physical obstacles such as stairs, potholes, and cars blocking sidewalks.
- Plant trees to provide shade and add interest.
- Install awnings to add interest and protection from the weather.
- Use planters, fountains, and street art to add interest.

In your presentation, explain why city planners care about pedestrians. Ask students what problems they have had when walking. Explain some of the things cities and towns can do to make communities safer and more comfortable for pedestrians. Identify some areas in your community that might benefit from some of these ideas.