Walkability Audit
City of Daytona Beach, Florida
Next Steps Memorandum
July 2012
1. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the City of Daytona Beach and the Volusia County Health Department for Sustainable Communities Building Blocks technical assistance associated with improving safety, public health, and economic development in the community by increasing walking and connecting destinations. A centerpiece of this technical assistance involved educating community stakeholders on the key principles and benefits of walkability, conducting a walkability audit and brainstorming on next steps to address walkability concerns throughout the community.

This memorandum describes the walkability workshop held on May 2, 2012, and focuses on the outcomes of the audit and next steps that the community may undertake as a result of this technical assistance. EPA Contractor Katharine Ange, AICP, of Renaissance Planning Group led the walkability workshop in partnership with staff from the Volusia County Health Department, Volusia Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and Anne Keller of EPA’s Region 4.

2. WORKSHOP EVENTS

The technical assistance centered around a day-long workshop held at the Dickerson Center Activity Building in Daytona Beach and included a walkability audit of the surrounding neighborhood with a focus on Keech Street and Orange Avenue (see Figure 1 Walkability Audit Walking Tour Map). The workshop began with a summary presentation on the key principles and benefits of walkability and an orientation of the walking route and walking audit survey tool. This tool provided the walkability audit participants the opportunity to focus their observations and document existing conditions relative to how well the built environment supported walkability. Throughout the day, there were approximately 40 local community participants engaged in the activities.

After the morning walking tour, the contractor provided a second presentation demonstrating effective treatments for the built environment to encourage walkability. Participants then broke into small working groups to review their notes and observations captured during the audit and identify the top priorities for potential improvements, action steps for addressing those needs and long term strategies for improving walkability communitywide. On the day after the workshop, the contractor and EPA staff met with a smaller group of city, health department and TPO staff at the Volusia County Health Department to review key issues raised during the workshop and identify specific next steps and actions the community could take for documentation in this memorandum.

3. KEY ISSUES + STRATEGIES

The walking audit and workshop centered on the historic midtown area of Daytona Beach which is a predominantly African American, lower income community. The area has several key community assets and focal points that include the Dickerson Community Center, Turie T. Small Elementary School, Campbell Middle School, the Keech Street Library, Children’s Medical Services Clinic, several nearby parks and commercial businesses along Orange Avenue and portions of Martin Luther King Boulevard. The existing grid pattern of slower speed two and three lane streets with sidewalks creates “good bones” for walking. During the site visit and walking tour, participants observed several walkers and bikers in the area. Residents of this area also have a handful of restaurants, convenience stores and other businesses within walking distance and many
of the streets also have good tree canopies, providing partial shade throughout the neighborhood. In and around both the elementary and middle schools, crosswalks and signage are present and temporary signs encouraging drivers to watch for walkers were posted along the roadways at the time of the tour. Volusia County’s public transportation system, Votran, provides fixed route bus service in the neighborhood with regular daytime service running at 30-minute intervals and bus stops located on Orange Avenue and Keech Street.

Despite the many positive aspects of the existing built environment, the walking tour participants identified several areas in need of improvement to create even stronger, more comfortable and safer conditions for walking and biking throughout the area. In particular, much of the discussion focused on the need to address maintenance issues associated with the existing sidewalks, landscaping, signage, crosswalks, and placement of utilities, along with better coordination of infrastructure improvements between the city and the county to ensure consistent design and implementation of key features. Participants also noted that some of the residential streets were oversized and could benefit from strategies such as road diets to slow down traffic. Another issue noted was the large parcel of publically-owned vacant, undeveloped land behind both schools that creates a significant break in pedestrian connectivity between the neighborhoods located west of Martin Luther King Boulevard and west of Keech Street. Participants stated a desire for walkability and street connectivity design features to be incorporated into any new development plans for this area. The following provides more specific details of issues noted along each street/corridor.

**Orange Avenue:** Orange Avenue is a three-lane commercial street with a variety of industrial, retail, medical, office and other businesses located on both sides. The building setbacks vary along the street, with some historic building frontages located close to the street and sidewalk edge, and others that are located further back with parking lots in front. This is a low speed, but high volume street with two lanes of traffic, a center turn lane and traffic lights at the major intersections. In general, the pedestrian infrastructure is adequate, but in very poor condition and could benefit from basic maintenance to larger scale improvements that could enhance walkability. The following highlights some of the specific concerns raised by participants:

- Sidewalks are present along both sides of the street, however there are some locations where the sidewalks are uneven with broken areas of concrete and deteriorating curbs.
- Sidewalk widths vary, and appear to be the minimum of 4’ along most of the street, making the area constrained for larger volumes of pedestrian traffic.
- Some locations have overgrown grass or landscaping that limits the sidewalk clearance and in some cases sends pedestrians into the street to pass by.
- Many of the commercial businesses have oversized driveway access with no clear markings as to where the sidewalk or pedestrian space begins and ends.
- Wooden utility poles are located in the middle of the sidewalk right of way on both sides of the street.
- The intersections of Orange and MLK Boulevard, and Orange and Keech Street lack marked crossings on all four streets, and pedestrian signals on all four corners. Both intersections appear to have high levels of pedestrian activity, but have very limited sidewalk room at each corner to stand and wait for signals.
- Truncated dome pads, which alert people with vision impairments to the presence of a street crossing, are present at some but not all corners of intersections.
Keech Street: Keech Street is a predominantly residential road to the west, with several community facilities located on the east side including Campbell Middle School, the library and the Medical Services Clinic. The street right of way measured approximately 34’ to 36’ wide, seemingly oversized for the level of traffic observed mid-day. Most of the community buildings are set back far from the street with parking in front. Single family and duplex style residences are both located on the street and contain driveways, but on street parking was also present. Local participants noted that cars often speed on this street. The specific walkability issues noted include:

- For the most part sidewalks are in good condition on this street, with some constrained locations closer to Orange Avenue relative to utility pole obstructions. Concerns were raised about some missing curb cuts for ADA compliance at intersections and inconsistent presence of crosswalks.
- As noted, the street is very wide and could benefit from street calming measures to slow down traffic.
- The bus stop in front of the library has a shelter, but it needs a trash can.
- The existing duplexes located on this street are owned by the housing authority. Currently there are rules prohibiting furniture on the front porches of these residential units, yet participants thought that encouraging front porch activity would be positive for this neighborhood and help encourage “eyes on the street” making it safer and more inviting for pedestrians.
- This street could use more shade, as most of the landscaping is set back from the road and very little tree canopy exists.
- The new affordable housing authority property (funded in part through HUD) currently in the master planning phase would benefit from a walkability audit relative to the placement of buildings, street connectivity and other pedestrian considerations. Participants mentioned concerns about the current plans lacking some of these key features.
- The existing vacant properties behind the school and the parking lot south of the library are publically owned and should be better utilized for community purposes. Particularly the parking lot, which is currently used only for overflow parking at the schools.
- Both Cedar Street and Loomis Avenue dead end off of Keech Street. Participants noted that these roads should be reconnected through the vacant property when the area is redeveloped, or new pedestrian paths or trails could be added as well.

During the breakout discussions, several residents suggested that many of the landscaping maintenance issues could be immediately dealt with by community volunteers through organized clean up events and stronger code enforcement by the city. Additionally, low cost maintenance projects such as repainting fading crosswalks or other short term fixes dubbed ‘clean and green’ could be initiated immediately and help bring greater attention to walkability issues. The overflow parking lot on Keech Street was also identified as a major focal point in terms of creating a multiuse space that could be used for a farmer’s market, interactive water fountain, basketball court and overflow parking. Finally, in addition to the physical infrastructure issues, most participants identified the need to conduct more education and outreach within the neighborhood to heighten awareness of the benefits, key principles and strategies to improve walkability throughout the area.

4. ACTIONS/ TIMEFRAMES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

The key to an effective walkability audit and EPA’s Building Blocks program is to cultivate champions who will carry the knowledge gained from the technical assistance forward to address the community’s health and accessibility needs on a comprehensive and consistent basis. Toward that end, the City of Daytona Beach
Walkability Workshop involved several key community representatives who pledged to apply the knowledge gained during the workshop to address issues in this part of the community as well as other parts of the City to further generate interest and involvement from residents and other stakeholders. During the workshop and post-audit workshop discussions, participants identified several priorities and next step action items as described in the following table. These actions reflect ideas generated from the workshop process. The pursuit of these actions is fully at the discretion of the local participants and the communities they represent and serve.

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<td><strong>A. Plans and Policies</strong></td>
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<td>Identify other neighborhood hotspots where walking, biking and taking transit are predominant or could be enhanced, and conduct additional walkability assessments as part of the existing Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH) or other health department initiatives.</td>
<td>To identify specific improvements and raise awareness in other parts of the City to build support creating more supportive environments for walking and biking.</td>
<td>Volusia County Health Department</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Continue to implement key elements of Midtown Masterplan giving priority to streetscape projects focused on enhancing the pedestrian network (e.g. Orange Avenue and MLK Boulevard Streetscape improvements).</td>
<td>To prioritize specific improvements as part of CRA Masterplan and eligibility for additional CRA funding.</td>
<td>Midtown Redevelopment Board and City Staff</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>Complete current update of City’s land development code that supports a form-based approach and establish new site plan review processes that better incorporate considerations of pedestrian connectivity, such as the establishment of street connectivity design standards or complete streets principles.</td>
<td>Ensure that new development plans and designs better support design principles of walkability.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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## Sustainable Communities Building Blocks
Walkability Audit for Daytona Beach, Florida
Next Steps

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<tr>
<td>Examine existing design standards for affordable housing to ensure opportunities for incorporation of walkable community design principles in building design, siting and street connectivity considerations. Re-evaluate existing site plan for new HUD affordable housing project on Keech Street to ensure connectivity of street grids and strong walkability features.</td>
<td>Ensure walkability principles are incorporated into the design of new housing projects. Address specific issues associated with new HUD project off of Keech Street.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach Housing Authority and HUD Regional Office</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Examine current codes to see if minimum maintenance ordinance is applicable for this neighborhood or citywide and can be enforced. If not, consider incorporating new minimum maintenance ordinance standards to address issues raised in walking audit.</td>
<td>Provide enforcement mechanism to keep sidewalks clear of vegetation and better upkeep of buildings and building frontages in the neighborhood.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>Engage local businesses to discuss the benefits of walkability as part of larger Midtown Redevelopment and business revitalization plans. Emphasize the economic development benefits of creating walkable business districts.</td>
<td>Build support within the business community for streetscape improvements.</td>
<td>Midtown CRA and City of Daytona Beach</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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### B. Physical Infrastructure

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<td>Elevate the Orange Avenue Corridor as a priority for the City. Re-evaluate the purpose and need of the project to ensure that a broader set of streetscape improvements (sidewalk improvements, utility undergrounding/relocation, streetscaping, drainage, pedestrian signals, etc.) can be incorporated to create a great walkable commercial street.</td>
<td>Prioritize funding for the Orange Avenue reconstruction to accelerate creation of a more walkable corridor and further advance revitalization goals.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach with support from Volusia County and Midtown CRA Board</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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### Next Steps

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<td>Conduct feasibility study to examine implementation of a road diet on Keech Street to slow down traffic and create a stronger pedestrian environment. Coordinate study with key findings and recommendations from the 2007 Volusia TPO Bicycle and Safety School Review Study and continue advancing planning and design of projects already identified.</td>
<td>Create a better walking environment for Keech Street to encourage safer, more comfortable walk access to schools, bus stop and community facilities.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach with support from TPO and School Board</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>Conduct general pruning and landscaping maintenance on Orange Avenue sidewalks neighborhood to ensure areas are free of obstructions.</td>
<td>Immediate clean up and removal of obstacles to make existing areas more comfortable for walking</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach and Midtown CRA</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Establish a long term, comprehensive infrastructure improvement and maintenance plan for streets, signage, drainage and other streetscape features in the neighborhood to better coordinate the implementation of projects. Use plan to clarify responsible parties for implementation between City, County and other agencies and establish joint funding opportunities.</td>
<td>Create regular and effective dialogue between City and County on planning, design and implementation of infrastructure improvements for this neighborhood.</td>
<td>Volusia County and City of Daytona Beach</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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### C. Interagency Coordination and Stakeholder Partnerships

Establish a walkability working group to include members from the Department of Health, TPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, law enforcement, City and County Planning and Public Works, FDOT, School Board, Housing Authority, Midtown CRA and community representatives to address specific needs within the Midtown community area.

To increase collaboration and interagency cooperation to build support, expand awareness and implement projects through education; planning, design and review processes; and the pursuit of project funding for infrastructure improvements.

Volusia County Department of Health and the Volusia TPO | 100 days |
## Sustainable Communities Building Blocks
### Walkability Audit for Daytona Beach, Florida
#### Next Steps

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<td>Identify strategy to expand grant writing capabilities within Volusia Department of Health, the City, the County or the Midtown CRA to better target federal and state resources that support livability, sustainability and walkability. Could involve a new hire, or a better coordinated effort between multiple existing entities.</td>
<td>Identify full range of applicable federal, state and other grant opportunities and better position walkability priorities as part of pursuing these grants.</td>
<td>Volusia County Department of Health and City of Daytona Beach</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Contact and engage representatives from Bethune Cookman University as new partners in addressing specific walkability and community development issues in Midtown neighborhood. Potentially engage college volunteers for ‘clean and green’ activities.</td>
<td>Bring additional resources to addressing neighborhood walkability issues.</td>
<td>Midtown CRA or Volusia County Department of Health</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Work with Votran to explore opportunities for FTA funding such as the Bus Livability discretionary grant and other sources to help enhance bicycling and walking infrastructure near existing bus stop on Keech Street at the library.</td>
<td>Bring additional financial resources to help implement infrastructure improvement projects that support walkability and help encourage transit ridership.</td>
<td>Votran with support from City</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Work with City and County public works and planning departments to examine potential for expansion of existing Orange Avenue resurfacing project associated with bridge replacement to address potential walkability concerns in the Midtown neighborhood.</td>
<td>Identify immediate opportunities for short-term fixes and improvements on Orange Avenue.</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach, Volusia County and TPO</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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<td>Establish a new process to ensure stronger coordination between the City and County planning and public works departments on the implementation of capital projects and outreach in the Midtown neighborhood.</td>
<td>Facilitate more expedient and coordinated implementation of projects that can support walkability</td>
<td>City of Daytona Beach, Volusia County and Midtown CRA</td>
<td>100 days</td>
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Recognizing the limited staff and financial resources available, the above noted next steps represent the long term goals for the neighborhood and city as a whole. Community representatives stated a desire to initiate meetings between the City Department of Public Works and Redevelopment Division to assess these goals and
establish a long range plan for prioritization and implementation. This plan can also be used to engage public agency partners, citizen volunteers and other stakeholders to foster complementary efforts and explore the potential for joint project/funding agreements.
5. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Photos from Walkability Audit
- Figure 1 – City of Daytona Beach Audit Route
- Walkable and Livable Communities Institute: [http://www.walklive.org/](http://www.walklive.org/)
- U.S. EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities: [http://www.epa.gov/dced/buildingblocks.htm](http://www.epa.gov/dced/buildingblocks.htm)
- DOH Summary Presentation

Photos from Walkability Audit

Photos above show images at intersection of MLK Boulevard and Orange Avenue. Crosswalks are in need of repainting and added to all four corners of the street. Existing sidewalk at each corner is partially obstructed by utility poles, limiting the standing space for pedestrians waiting for a signal. The intersection has no pedestrian crossing signals.

Photos above show images from Keech Street and Orange Avenue where landscaping and utilities obstruct sidewalk clearance. Utility pole tie-down on Keech Street appeared broken.
Sustainable Communities Building Blocks
Walkability Audit for Daytona Beach, Florida

Next Steps

Left photo shows oversized driveway access on Orange Avenue. Right photo illustrates oversized width of Keech Street.

Photos above showing workshop breakout groups. Participants identified top areas in need of improvement and potential action strategies for addressing issues.
Figure 1 – Walkability Audit Walking Tour Map