WALKABILITY
in the University Area Community

How walkable is your neighborhood?

Survey Findings Analysis
in partnership with:

University Area
Community Development Corporation, Inc.
"Working to improve the community"

Hillsborough MPO
Metropolitan Planning
for Transportation

Hillsborough County
City-County
Planning Commission

Florida
HEALTH
Hillsborough County

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Credits

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Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
Hillsborough County Social Services

Sources

1. Florida Department of Health – Hillsborough County. 2015. Walkability Tampa Bay, part of the May/June Community Wellness Newsletter. Retrieved April 27, 2016 from http://hillsborough.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health-planning-statistics/community-wellness-newsletter/_documents/may-jun-2015-newsletter.pdf

2. Healthy by Design. 2008. Walkability Survey – How Walkable is Your Neighborhood? Retrieved April 27, 2016 from http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/documents/WalkabilitySurvey_HbD.pdf

3. Governing – The States and Localities. 2014. Public Safety & Justice, Pedestrians dying at Disproportionate Rates in America's Poorer Neighborhoods. Retrieved September 29, 2016 from http://www.governing.com/topics/public-justice-safety/gov-pedestrian-deaths-analysis.html

Summary

A walkable neighborhood - one in which all people can safely and easily move about on foot and in which locations, goods and services can accessed by walking - has many benefits. Walkability also enhances other activities such as biking, skating and jogging. Residents in walkable neighborhoods tend to be more active; businesses benefit from local customers; property values increase faster; and connectivity and increased sense of safety improve interaction among neighbors.

Reviewing neighborhood walkability elevates awareness about these benefits and the conditions. Neighborhood strengths and assets, challenges and concerns, and solutions and improvements can be identified.

Where does the information go?

Community input is intended to be used by the University Area Community Development Corporation (UACDC), the Florida Department of Health-Hillsborough, the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, Metropolitan Planning Organization, and others working in the university area to identify road and sidewalk needs, help with future community planning and grant applications.

Neighborhood resident opinion is extremely valuable! This survey was a great opportunity to share thoughts about neighborhood and community walkability.

Background

When policy, program, planning, and project decisions are made by our local government agencies, health is not always considered in the decision-making process. The Florida Department of Health-Hillsborough County (DOH-Hillsborough), the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission (the Planning Commission), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) have been working together since Spring 2015 to identify ways in which these agencies can work together to consider health in the built environment, health in land use, and Health in All Policies (HiAP).

These organizations were interested in learning more about how accessible food was based on how easy and safe it was to walk from home. UACDC staff and volunteers walked the community with residents to collect survey information. Although the grant was not funded, these organizations engaged the University Area Community Development Corporation in their partnership, and met together to explore other project opportunities.

In collectively reviewing a Summer 2015 Needs Assessment that the UACDC conducted with neighborhood residents, walkability (how easy and safe it is to walk from one place to another) along certain neighborhood segments came out as a key community concern. In Spring 2016, the UACDC, DOH-Hillsborough and the Planning Commission decided to study this concern further, identify detailed community needs, and collective recommendations for policy, planning, services, and other possible solutions.

University Area Neighborhood Boundaries

4
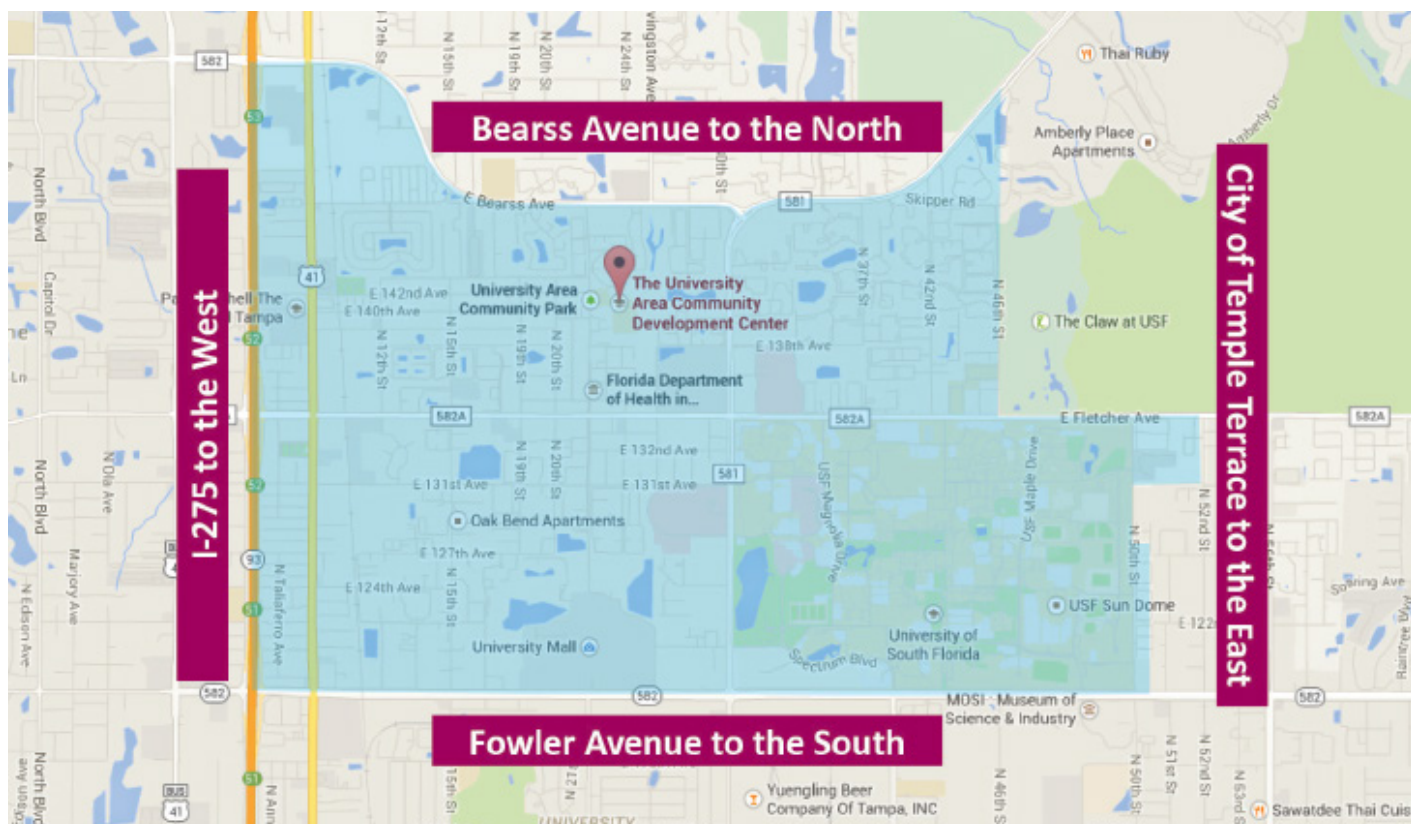
How Walkable is your Neighborhood?

This is the question that the UACDC, DOH-Hillsborough and the Planning Commission set out to answer. Since locals are the experts when it comes to their neighborhoods, we reached out for their help. The UACDC developed an outreach plan to engage neighborhood residents and visitors to the UACDC who attended classes and programs. A brief questionnaire was distributed to residents in the University Area, asking them to share their thoughts about the walkability of their community. Asked to rate the conditions they experienced, as well as their observations and thoughts during a single walk, 288 residents responded.

The survey was developed in April 2016, adapting content from the DOH-Hillsborough Walkability Tampa Bay assessment [1] and the Health by Design "Walkability Survey – How Walkable is Your Neighborhood" tool [2]. The survey was piloted in May 2016 at a UACDC community outreach event, and revised further for community capability. The survey was made available on the UACDC website and by hard copy from July through August 2016. To incentivize participation, two raffles for bicycles were offered for individuals who completed the survey. In addition, UACDC staff worked with partners in the University Area to make surveys available for clients and visitors to other agencies.

This report provides a basic breakdown of trends that were identified from analyzing responses. The input received from residents is extremely useful towards identifying road and sidewalk needs, and it provides an invaluable resource towards future community planning efforts.

Drainage ditch next to a road with no sidewalk

Respondents information

The most important part of our questionnaire was to gain insights on the walkability barriers that the residents in the University Area of Hillsborough County face in their daily life. To better understand these difficulties, we familiarized ourselves with the residents by learning about their walkability needs, daily routines, and how that affects their mobility around the University Area boundaries. The general health of different individuals is important since it can impact their ability to walk. Providing the right conditions in the streets that will enable both healthy and unhealthy individuals to walk without problems is one of the goals for this study.

Please note: where responses are less than 282, the number of responses is indicated with "(n=)".

How is your general health? (n=278)

- 58% Good
- 37% Fair
- 5% Poor
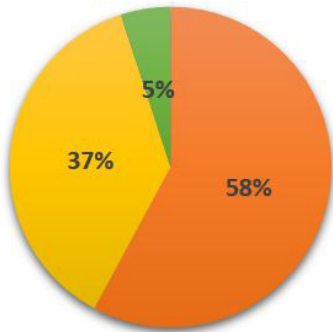
Good | Fair | Poor

Does anything affect your ability to walk? (n=260)

- 37% Yes
- 63% No
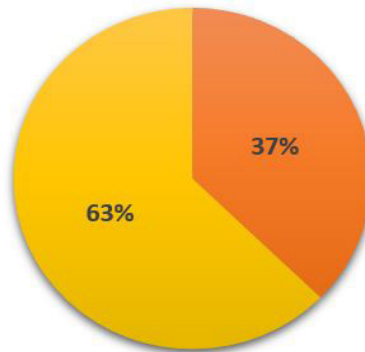
Yes | No

Do you rent or own your home? (n=269)

- 87% Rent
- 5% Own
- 8% Other

Rent | Own | Other
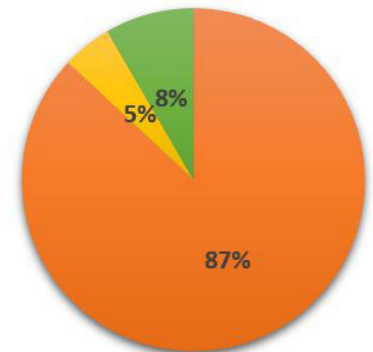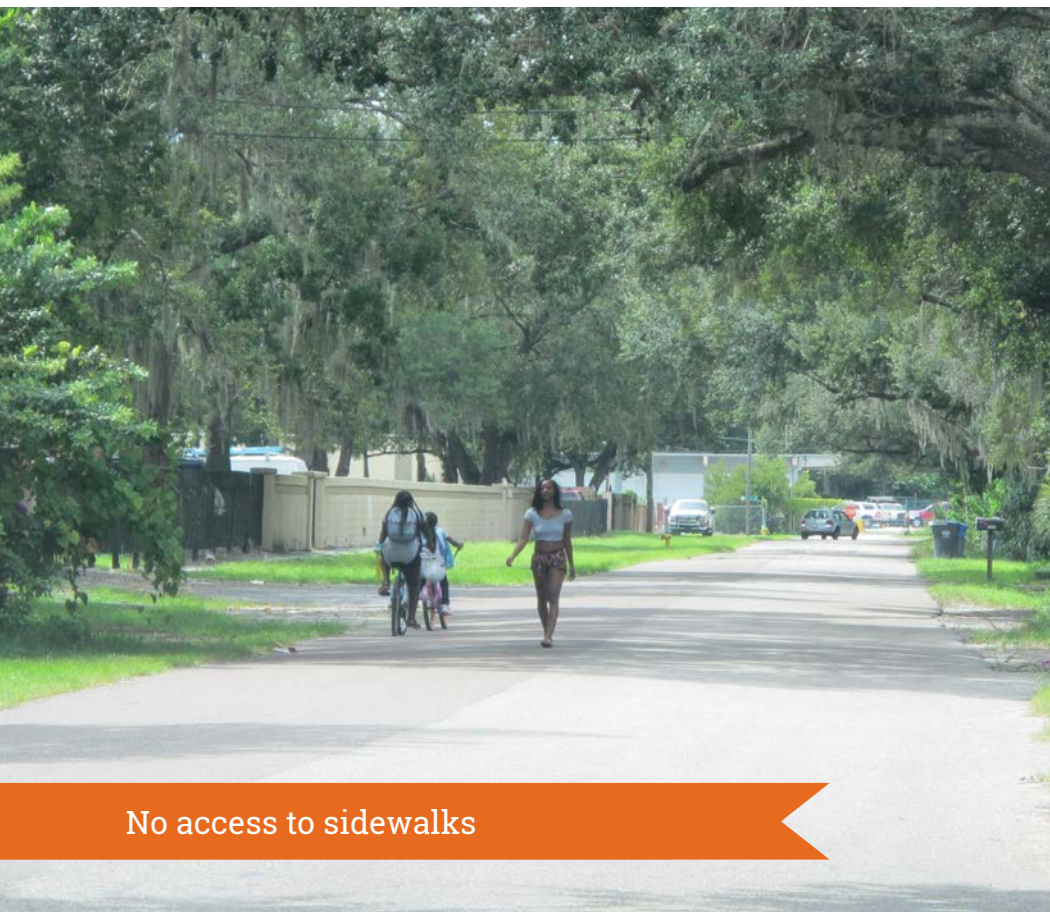
No access to sidewalks

What is your gender? (n=278)

66% Female

34% Male

What does a "walkable neighborhood" mean to you?

"Feel safe without getting hit by a bike or a car"

"I use a walker, so sidewalks are important"

"A neighborhood where families can walk safely"

"Ability to have peace"

"Being able to get to places safely"

"Crosswalks are well lighted at night"

Do you have room to walk?

52% of respondents reported having "mostly" enough room to walk during their route. However, 16% report having "rarely" enough room, suggesting unsafe environments for pedestrians. Additionally, the surveys revealed that many existing sidewalks are of poor quality. It can be very dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers to walk or drive in roads that lack sidewalks since they will have to share the road. Moreover, broken or flooded sidewalks can cause injuries or even prevent people from using them.

16%

52%

32%

(n=262)

■ Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely
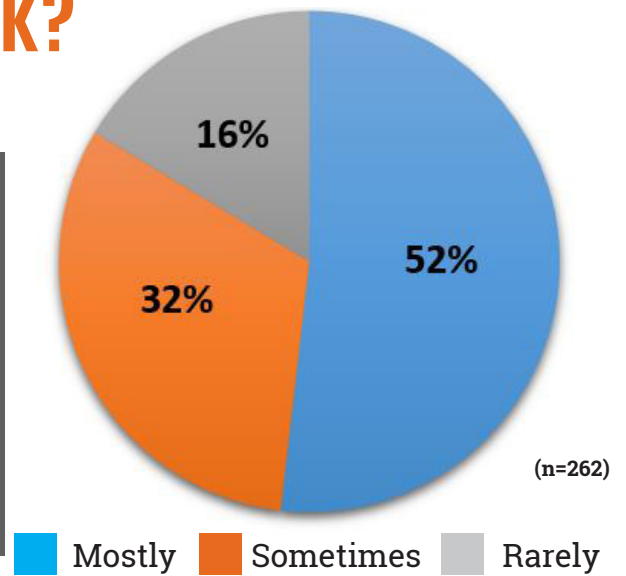
On my walk, sidewalks...

The graph below shows what respondents listed as major problems. The two main problems recorded were that sidewalks start and stop or they were broken/cracked. Another big proportion of respondents mentioned that there were no sidewalks at all.
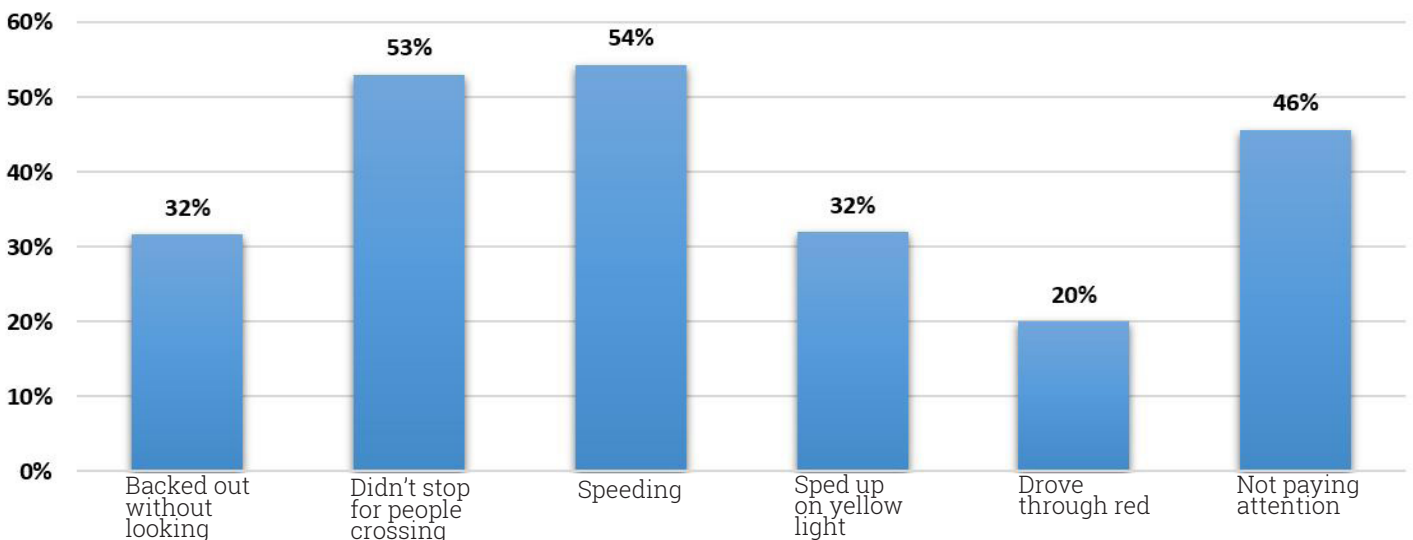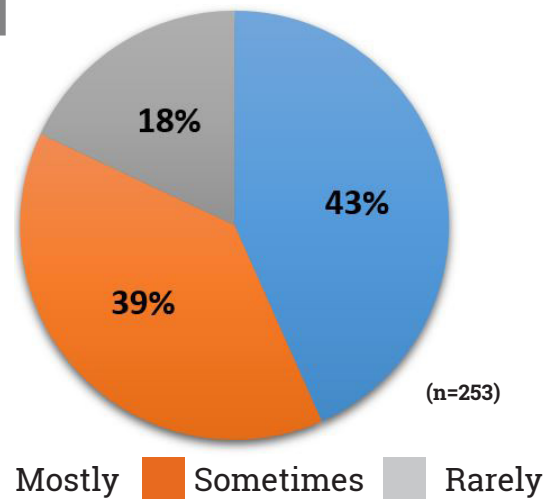
Started and stopped	48%
Were broken or cracked	45%
Were blocked	19%
Were flooded	17%
There were no sidewalks	23%
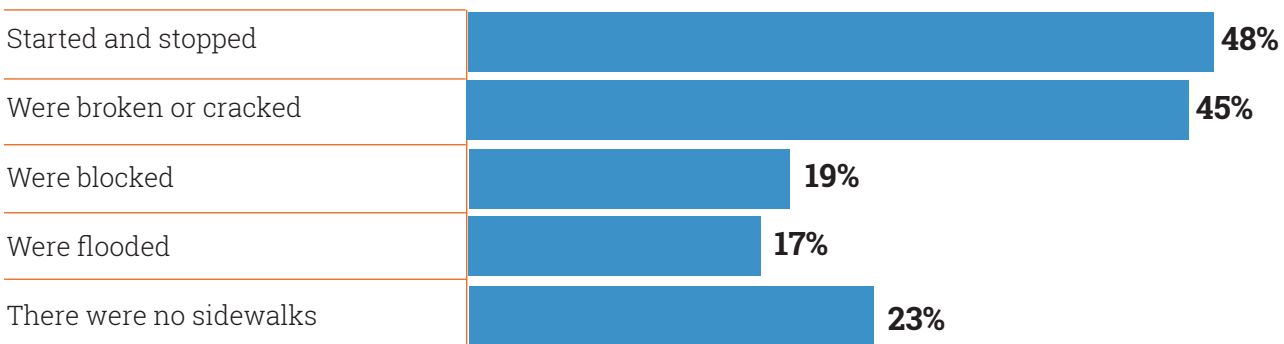
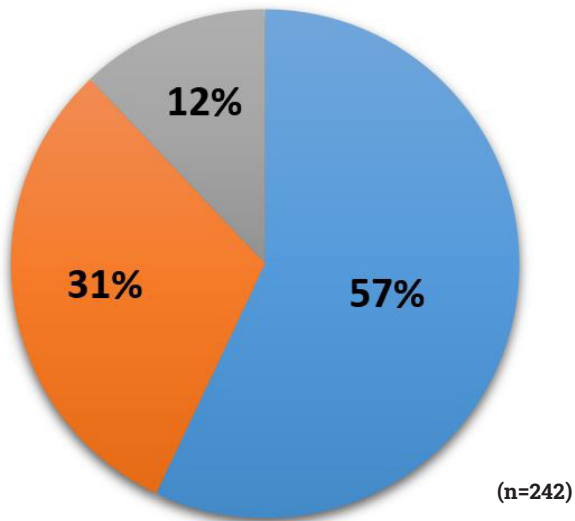Person with walker has no sidewalk to walk

Do drivers behave well and follow traffic laws?

Respondents reported that drivers "rarely" and "sometimes" followed traffic laws 57% of the time. This suggests that not enough drivers take vehicle and pedestrian safety seriously. Additionally, nearly 60% of respondents reported that drivers didn't stop for designated pedestrian crossings. Increased visibility of these crossings for drivers, as well as additional education for drivers and enforcement of traffic rules, could significantly improve pedestrian safety.

18%

43%

39%

(n=253)

■ Mostly　■ Sometimes　■ Rarely

32%	53%	54%	32%	20%	46%
Backed out without looking	Didn't stop for people crossing	Speeding	Sped up on yellow light	Drove through red	Not paying attention

9

Was your walk **pleasant?**
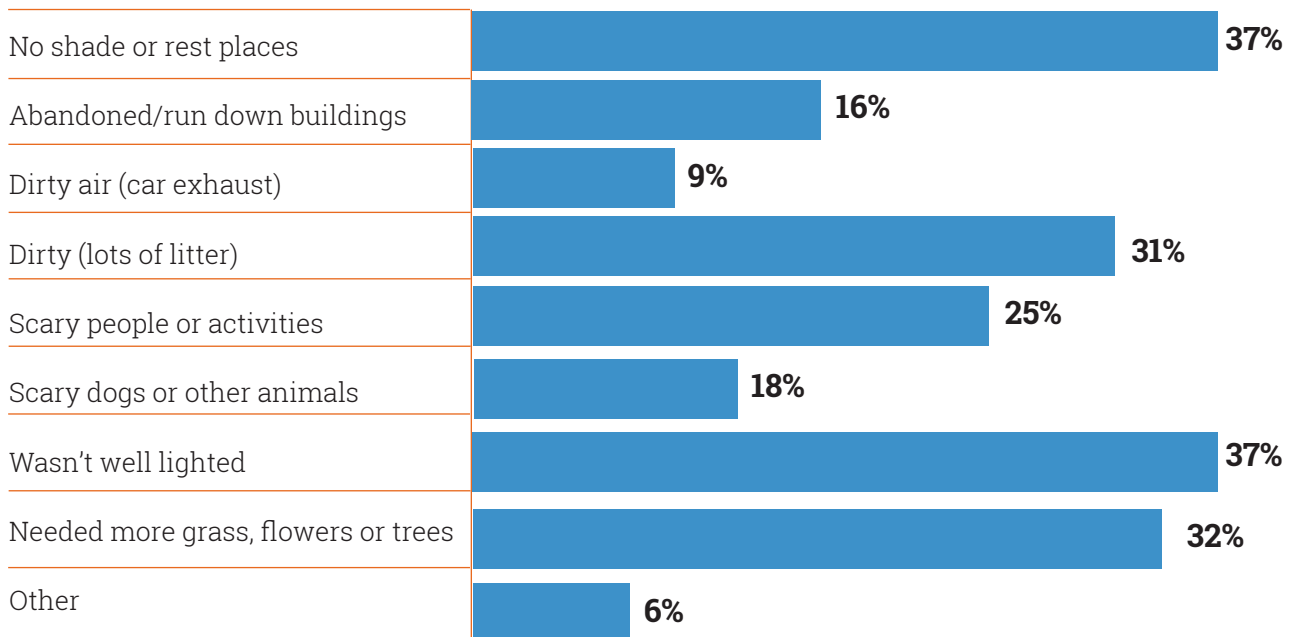

12%

31%

57%

(n=242)

■ Mostly   ■ Sometimes   ■ Rarely

57% of respondents reported having a "mostly" pleasant walk. 43% had a "sometimes" and "rarely" pleasant walk. Increasing positive walking experiences would incentivize residents to walk more than they currently do, and could go a long way towards increasing physical activity levels. 37% of residents report their walking routes not being well lit nor did they have shade or rest palces; investing in streetscaping could remedy this.

Desire path due to lack of sidewalks

During my walk, I noticed the area...

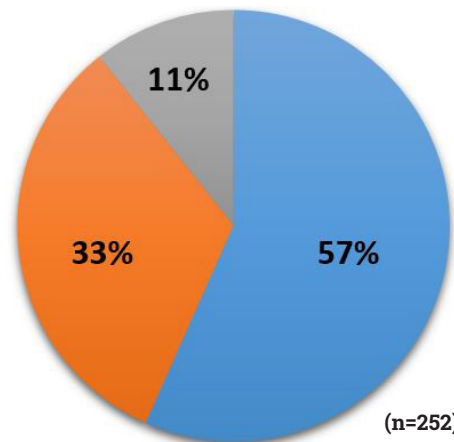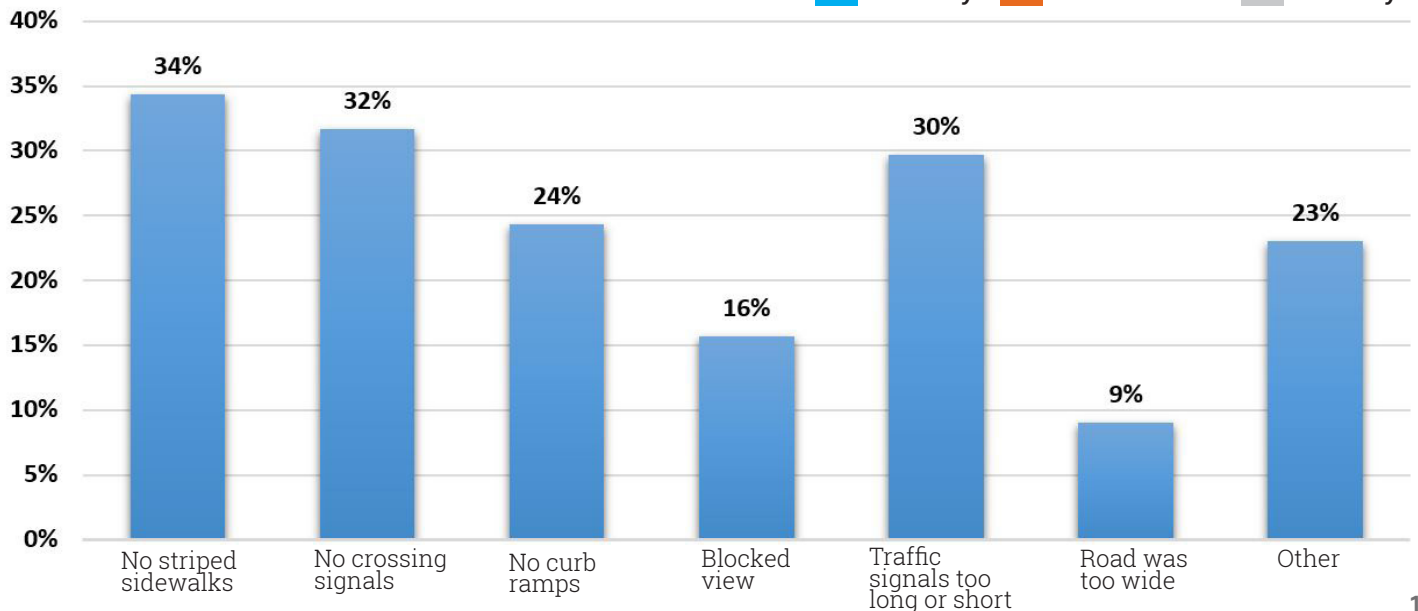| Category	Percent
No shade or rest places	37%
Abandoned/run down buildings	16%
Dirty air (car exhaust)	9%
Dirty (lots of litter)	31%
Scary people or activities	25%
Scary dogs or other animals	18%
Wasn't well lighted	37%
Needed more grass, flowers or trees	32%
Other	6%

Children dangerously crossing the street

Was it easy to
cross the streets?

57% of the Respondents reported that streets are "mostly" easy to cross. The biggest obstacle reported was a lack of striped crosswalks nearly 34% of the time. A lack of crosswalks or signals on streets can result in crashes and near crashes between pedestrians and vehicles.

11% 33% 57%

(n=252)

Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Rarely

No striped sidewalks	34%
No crossing signals	32%
No curb ramps	24%
Blocked view	16%
Traffic signals too long or short	30%
Road was too wide	9%
Other	23%

11

Discussion

Walkable communities support intentional physical activities through walking, biking, using public transportation. Other benefits from physical activities such as weight loss and maintenance, chronic disease management and prevention, improve physical and mental wellbeing. In communities that are walkable, residents often feel more connected to neighbors and community members from increased interaction.

Further, the environment where we work, learn, live, play, and age has a greater impact on our health than our genetics do. How well individuals can access fresh and healthy food, job and educational opportunities, healthcare, recreation, and other needs is often determined by how easily they can get to these places. Individuals who do not have access to a car and rely on walking or biking to get to the grocery store, school, work, medical appointments, etc., have an even greater need for walkable communities. When basic goods and services are only accessible by driving, or take too much time to access on public transit or on transit, residents may have to go without.

Though many people felt they can walk safely to different locations from their homes, significant danger still exists and needs to be addressed. Florida has one of the highest total per capita pedestrian death rates in the nation's metro areas. In Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater, "403 pedestrians died over the five-year period." [3] Neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, crosswalks, and proper signaling are a danger zone for pedestrians. The map illustrated on page 13 shows vehicle crashes from January 2011 through September 2016. There have been 529 crashes that involved fatalities, injuries and other problems in the UACDC boundary. Low—income neighborhoods tend to have more people walking; consequently, the risk of getting hit by a vehicle is much greater.

Sidewalk and roadway needs

In addition to the Walkability Assessment, sidewalk and roadway needs were also identified by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation and Research (CUTR) as part of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) application for Mort Elementary, located in the University Area. In August 2016, Hillsborough County Schools was notified by the Florida Department of Transportation that the SRTS project for Mort would receive $682,000 in funding. The needs highlighted in that application are identified on the map below by a green line (approved sidewalks) and approved crosswalks. Road design for these improvements is slated for 2019, and construction will take place in 2020. Based on the two assessments, some of the common areas/needs are:

- **Sidewalk additions & repairs**
- **Improved lighting**
- **Crosswalk additions**
- **Better signals**

- **Safety improvements**
- **Cleaner streets**
- **Children friendly**
- **More shade**

- **Pet control**
- **More security**

UACDC Survey Boundaries & SRTS Approved
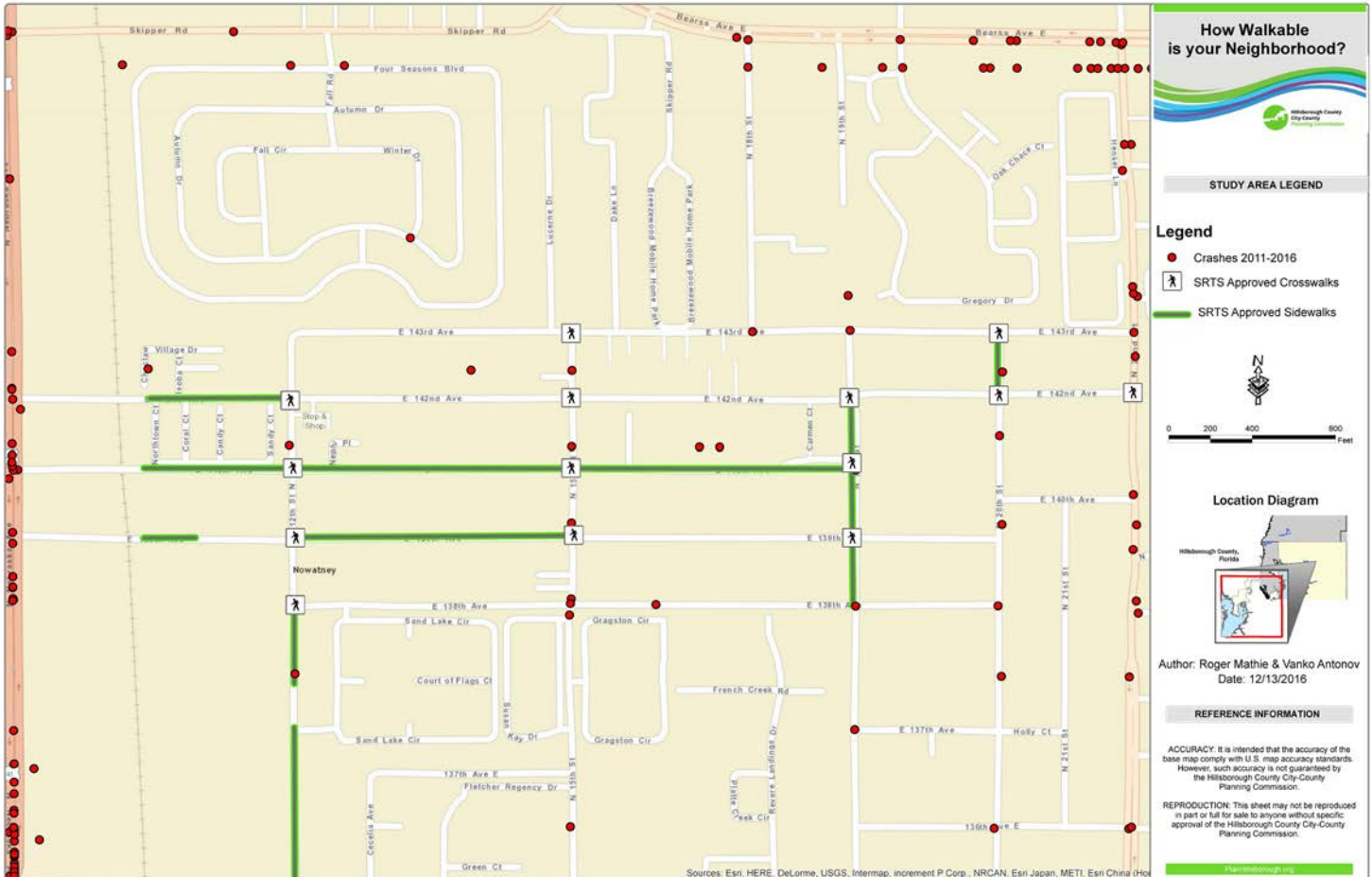
Recommendations

Improvements

- Additional street lights
- More green areas
- Pet control

- Sidewalk expansion & repair
- Increased security
- Enforced traffic laws

- Increased signals
- Cleaner streets
- Increased crosswalk visibility

Existing programs

- Adding sidewalk conditions to current mapping; share this with the school district for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) design and future applications
- Share information on missing sidewalks, curb cuts and ramps with the MPO's Transportation Disadvantaged Board
- Share areas with broken and cracked sidewalks with County Public Works
- Share report findings with the Hillsborough County Commission

Future studies (2017 - 2020)

- Use report findings for developing and implementing future plans and projects in the University Area related to safety, parks, housing, land use, etc.

Appendix A: Walkability Questionnaire 2016

How walkable is your neighborhood?

USE THIS BRIEF QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP US FIND OUT!

What's in it for me?

A walkable neighborhood - one in which all people can safely and easily move about on foot and in which locations, goods and services can be accessed by walking - has many benefits. Walkability also includes other activities such as biking, skating and jogging. Residents in walkable neighborhoods tend to be more active; businesses benefit from local customers; property values increase faster; and there is an enhanced sense of connection and safety due to greater interaction among neighbors.

Learning about neighborhood walkability helps to raise awareness about these benefits and the conditions in your area. Neighborhood strengths and assets can be highlighted, and challenges and concerns can be referred appropriately and improvements can be sought.

Our Goal

Help us get community input. Use the feedback form to tell us about your walk. Answer the questions based on your views and needs of walking in your neighborhood. Where do you go? Is it easy to get there? What would make your walk better?

Where does the information go?

Community input will be evaluated by the University Area CDC, the Florida Department of Health-Hillsborough and the Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization, to identify road and sidewalk needs, help with future community planning, and help us apply for grants.

Because you live in the neighborhood, your opinion is extremely valuable! This is a great opportunity to share your thoughts about the walkability of *your* neighborhood and community.

Walk with us...

& move the University Area forward!

Get others involved!

Encourage all of your neighbors to participate, so that your entire neighborhood can be included! Ask friends, family and co-workers to join in too!

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Florida HEALTH
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Make it Happen!
University Area Community

Let's get started! ⇨ ⇨

Questions?
Email bluckie@uacdc.org

University Area CDC • 14013 North 22nd Street, Tampa FL 33613 • (813) 558-5212 • Visit us online at www.uacdc.org

TELL US ABOUT YOUR WALK!

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LOCATION *(Please use this page to tell us about a route you walk on a regular basis)*:

Zip Code of Walk: _____   Date: _____   Time of Day Walk Was Last Taken: _____ AM/PM

Start Address: _____   End Address: _____

1. Did you have room to walk?
☐ MOSTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY

On my walk, sidewalks...
☐ Started and stopped
☐ Were broken or cracked
☐ Were blocked *(poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.)*
☐ Were flooded
☐ N/A (There were no sidewalks)
☐ Something else: _____

_____

Location of problems: _____

_____

2. Did drivers behave well and follow traffic laws?
☐ MOSTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY

On my walk, drivers...
☐ Backed out without looking
☐ Didn't stop for pedestrian crossing
☐ Were speeding
☐ Sped up on yellow lights
☐ Drove through red lights
☐ Were not paying attention
☐ Something else: _____

_____

Location of problems: _____

_____

3. Was it easy to cross streets?
☐ MOSTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY

The problems I found were...
☐ No striped crosswalks
☐ No crossing signals
☐ No curb ramps (or they needed repair)
☐ Trees or plants blocked view of traffic
☐ Parked cars blocked view of traffic
☐ Traffic signals were too long or too short
☐ Road was too wide
☐ Something else: _____

_____

Location of problems: _____

_____

4. Was your walk pleasant?
☐ MOSTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY

During my walk, I noticed the area...
☐ Needed more grass, flowers or trees
☐ Wasn't well lighted
☐ Had scary dogs or other animals
☐ Had scary people or activities
☐ Was dirty (lots of litter or trash)
☐ Had dirty air (a lot of car exhaust)
☐ Had abandoned/run-down buildings or homes
☐ Didn't have enough shade or places to rest
☐ Something else: _____

_____

Location of problems: _____

_____

What does a "walkable neighborhood" mean to you? _____

_____

What would make your neighborhood more walkable? _____

3

TELL US ABOUT YOUR WALK!

University Area Community Development Corporation. Inc. *Working to improve the community*

Florida HEALTH Hillsborough County

Hillsborough MPO Metropolitan Planning for Transportation

Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

1. Are the following locations safely walkable from your home?

Your Zip Code: _____

DESTINATION	YES	NO	UNSURE
Grocery Store or Supermarket			
Church or Place of Worship			
Community Center			
School or Childcare Facility			
Park/Recreational Facility *(including Basketball Court, Ball Field, Gymnasium, or other Indoor/Outdoor Facility)*			
Restaurant or Other Eating Establishment			
Retail Store or Other Shopping			
Personal Services *(Hair/Nail Salon, Dry Cleaners, Laundromat, etc.)*			
Post Office			
Bank			
Medical Clinic *(Primary Care, Dentist, Optometrist, etc.)*			
Workplaces *(Offices/Businesses)*			
Bus Stop			
Other:			

To which of the above destination do you walk most often? _____

To which of the above destinations would you most like to walk to, but can't? _____

_____

2. Now some questions about you! You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your age? _____

What are the ages of children living with you? _____

Do you rent or own your home? ☐ Rent ☐ Own ☐ Other: _____

How is your general health? ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Does anything affect your ability to walk? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what? _____

When you walk in your neighborhood, what are the reasons you walk? *(Ex: To go to the store, or to walk my dog)*

_____

_____

How often do you walk in your neighborhood? *(For any reason)*

☐ Daily ☐ 2-3 times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ Other ☐ N/A (unable to walk)

Please include your information below to be entered in our **BICYCLE GIVE-AWAY**! There will be two drawings in July & August.

NAME: _____ EMAIL/PHONE: _____

Please return completed questionnaire to the University Area Community Center front desk (14013 North 22nd Street, Tampa FL 33613); OR scan and email to bluckie@uacdc.org; OR mail to UACDC at the address above (Attn: Walkability); OR fax to (813) 558-5218.

4

For more information:

**Hillsborough County
City-County
Planning Commission**

813-272-5940

www.planhillsborough.org

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