WALK TO WORK HANDBOOK
A How-To Guide for Creating an Employer Walking Program
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INTRODUCTION

SEATTLE COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION (CTR) PROGRAM

The City of Seattle’s CTR Program is a partnership connecting large employers to resources and tools to support the use of travel options that keep businesses and the economy thriving. For more than 20 years, this partnership has helped over 250 employers city-wide provide transportation benefits for more than 147,432 daily commuters whose travel choices make significant contributions to reducing air pollution, traffic congestion and energy consumption. As part of the city’s CTR Program the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) works with local and regional service providers, such as Feet First, to deliver direct services to employers and their employees to help them achieve their trip reduction and business goals.

ABOUT FEET FIRST

Since 2001, Feet First has worked to ensure all communities in Washington are walkable by inspiring, motivating, and challenging individuals, organizations, schools, and government leaders to create safe and inviting places for people to walk. Feet First helps people take steps that create better places to live, learn, shop, work and play—a world that cares about health, community and design.

Since 2012, Feet First has trained more than 60 Neighborhood Walking Ambassadors, who have led over 280 walks, attracting more than 3,200 participants. Our Neighborhood Walking Ambassador Program supports our vision to get more people walking every day for health, transportation, environment, community, and pleasure. The program is intended to identify and empower community leaders to mobilize people to take action to promote walkable communities, as well as energize and inform the community about walkability issues through educational, interesting, and interactive means. Building on this successful program, Feet First has created the Washington Walks to Work program.

WASHINGTON WALKS TO WORK PROGRAM

Washington Walks to Work is a program designed to make it easy to encourage more people walk to work and during the workday. The City of Seattle is the first to partner with Feet First, piloting the program for employers located in the Fremont, First Hill, and Green Lake CTR network areas. This new program provides information and best practices regarding employer-based walking programs, and information about neighborhood specific walking routes that employers can use to increase walking at their workplace.

Employers find that supporting walking provides a benefit to their employees. Walking provides flexibility and control over one’s schedule. More people walking promotes security by putting more activity on the street, supports first and last mile connections to transit, and provides overall individual well-being. And, improved well being correlates to being more productive at work. Thanks for taking a leadership role and supporting a walking program at your company.
In Seattle, nearly 7% of daily commuters walk. Walking is one of the fastest growing commuting methods, with a 10% increase since 2012. 

Source: 2014 Commute Seattle Center City Mode Split Survey.

DID YOU KNOW that in heavy traffic, the air quality is worse inside the car than out? People who drive regularly may be exposed to ten times more pollution than outdoors along the roadside.

Source: The International Center for Technology Assessment (ICTA)
START ON A SMALL SCALE

There are many options for a walking program. Your program could provide walking information in your building’s lunchrooms, common areas, and in new employee orientation materials. Depending on the resources available to you, it is best to start small and build your program based on participation and enthusiasm. The Washington Walks to Work Program will provide you with the tools to design walks to help you inspire a walking culture at your company.

SET S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

**SPECIFIC:** Think about a specific goal you want accomplished. Think about the who, what, where, when, which, and why. For example, “Get employees to start walking more by starting two walk to work buses 2 miles away and adopting walking meetings in your CTR plan.”

**MEASURABLE:** Make sure you know if you are achieving your goals by having a way of measuring your progress. This will help you keep your walking program moving forward. Make sure your goal is quantifiable. You might ask yourself questions like, “How many more employees are walking? How many departments are conducting walking meetings?”

**ATTAINABLE:** When you plan wisely, and you are creating goals aligned with your employer’s values and you are more likely to achieve your goals. Be sure to set a time frame that you are able to achieve.

**REALISTIC:** Be sure you set your sights high on what you want to achieve and that it represents progress. You should select what you are willing and what you are able to accomplish.

**TIMELY:** Anchor your goal on a set time frame. For example, “By June 1st, I want to have 10 employees walking to work to support our company’s CTR goal, employee health and reduce parking demands.” For more information about the SMART approach, visit: www.wikihow.com/Set-SMART-Goals.

The key to the success of a workplace walking program is management support, including ongoing promotion and alignment with company goals. For example, success might be challenging if you implement a lunchtime walking program and your organization’s culture supports working through lunch. Understanding your workplace norms and making sure your program is aligned with acceptable workplace activities and expectations is important in gaining management support. Management at all levels should participate in and encourage employees to take part.

SUPPORT YOUR PROGRAM

PLAN YOUR PROGRAM

Create a team with a designated coordinator to organize and plan the program. This group is responsible for planning, executing, and evaluating the program.

- Include a member of management and a representative from each department/area, if possible.
- Identify potential financial resources available including partnering with existing complementary workplace programs with similar goals.
- Set a regular meeting schedule to discuss program needs and planning activities.
- Conduct a short online survey to determine your employees’ interests.

Based on what you learn from above, plan the type of walking program to be implemented, such as:

**A TIME LIMITED PROGRAM**

- Create a contest based on the number of steps/miles over a specific time period.
- Develop walking routes and place map information around the workplace.

**AN ONGOING PROGRAM**

- Include walk route/map information around the work.
- Form lunchtime walking clubs or walk to work groups.
- Encourage walking meetings.
- Submit monthly or quarterly trip log results for contest or incentives.
MEASURE AND EVALUATE YOUR PROGRAM
Keeping track of the impact of your program motivates employees and provides you with documentation to maintain and build management support at your workplace. Key metrics to measure the success of your program include the number of:

- Routes Completed
- Money Saved
- Participants
- Steps

Be sure to publicize the results of your program to keep employees interested and engaged. The more recognition your program receives the easier it will be to demonstrate its value when making budget requests to management for support. Make sure to evaluate your results and plan improvements or changes based on what you learn from the evaluation. This ensures your program stays relevant to your employees.

OFFER INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYEES
Incentives are a good way to encourage participation. Consider prizes at the halfway point of a specific challenge, monthly prizes, or recognition for the person who walks the highest number of miles or steps. Consider all types of incentives, from recognition and celebrations for participation, to cash or time off. Consider giving incentives directly related to walking such as pedometers or water bottles, and connecting incentives to a specific type of walking activity, like coffee gift cards for morning walks or food gift cards for lunchtime walks.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH PARTICIPANTS
Assign a leader who will be responsible for orienting new walking participants, keeping employees motivated, and following up with participants to gather feedback about the program.

WORKPLACE WALKING LEADERS
An important resource for your workplace walking program will be the recruitment of Walking Leaders. Walking Leaders are trained volunteers who champion walking to and at your worksite by leading walks that inspire, connect, and inform people about the benefits of walking. Walking Leaders help organize and lead walks at your workplace that will help your program be successful. Walking Leaders motivate and encourage your employees to walk more by building awareness of pedestrian facilities and projects that are part of the City’s transportation system, and by providing information about specific walking routes around your workplace and the benefits of your walking program.

The more Walking Leaders you are able to recruit the easier it will be to promote your program. However, you want to make sure that you have the right person for this role. Here are key attributes of successful Walking Leaders:

- Good communication and ability to interact face-to-face
- Enthusiasm about sharing the benefits of walking with others
- Sensitive, non-judgmental and understanding of different peoples’ abilities, cultures, paces, and perspectives

In addition to possessing these attributes, Walking Leaders need to be able to help you plan and promote walks at your workplace, and be able to honor their commitments to organize walks. They will be expected to distribute walking maps and information about your program, and also be a source of information about the health, environmental, and social benefits of walking.
HOW TO GET STARTED

Whether you are leading a walk to work, a walking meeting, or getting someone at your company started, use the information on pages 20 & 21 to create your walk. Practice your walk with a friend or co-worker to give you feedback. You should time yourself, assess the walk’s difficulty, and take into consideration the diverse audience that might be walking with you.

PRE-ROUTE PLANNING

Remember to time your walk to get an idea of how long your walk will take. Be sure to note short cuts and turn around points for those unable to walk the entire route. Pay attention to potential dangers (e.g. uneven sidewalks, exposed tree roots, overhanging bushes, trees, heavy traffic, and other obstacles) and either change your route or inform participants before the walk.

CREATE A WALK SCHEDULE

Having a regularly scheduled time and day creates a following of people who will join your walk. For instance, consider designing your walk on a certain day and time of the week calling themMoving Mondays, Walking Wednesdays, or Fast Feet Fridays. This makes it easy for people to remember and take part in your walks. Don’t be discouraged if your first walk only has a few people; as you walk more often, with a regular schedule, people will learn about your walks and will join you.

BE AWARE OF TIME AND DISTANCE

If you are leading a Walk to Work you will want to take no more than 1.5 hours and walk no more than 4 miles. The length will vary depending on the pace of the walk, the number and physical abilities of the people on your walk. Larger groups tend to take more time because people spread out while walking and have to catch up to come together. A Walking Meeting (described on page 15) should be no more than 30 minutes while break and lunchtime walks might take up to an hour.

WALK SAFELY

Although walking is a vehicle-less form of transportation, obey traffic laws while walking. Observe traffic signals and be on the alert for vehicles and bicycles. Be visible and predictable. Avoid crossing the street between parked vehicles and use the cross walk or walk at the corner. Be sure to catch the eye of the driver when crossing. If you listen to music using your headphones when you walk, make sure you can still hear honking cars, fire engines, and police sirens. And, don’t be the distracted person walking; texting and walking don’t mix.

WALK WITH A FRIEND

A co-worker or neighbor who walks in the same direction can be a welcome companion to keep you motivated to walk on a regular basis. While walking observe whether or not the route you are taking can accommodate a larger group.

PREPARE FOR BAD WEATHER

We live in the Northwest—be prepared. Collapsible umbrellas and foldable raincoats are easy to pack into the corner of your backpack or briefcase during the rainy season.

FIND GOOD SHOES

Sturdy, comfortable shoes—either athletic shoes or specially designed walking shoes—are recommended. If you buy new shoes, break them in by walking around your neighborhood before you walk all the way to work. Some people store dress shoes in their office, while others carry a change of shoes.

BACKPACKS AND BRIEFCASES ARE HANDY

Daypacks and briefcases with adjustable shoulder straps are useful for carrying footwear, office gear, and other essentials.

VARY YOUR ROUTE AND ENJOY THE SCENERY

Walking puts you on an intimate level with your surroundings and helps you discover unexpected nooks and crannies of your environment. Take advantage of this freedom to explore, and vary your route to work. You’ll soon notice public art, new bookstores, cafes, and other places to shop and browse on your way home from work or on your days off. The more interesting the walk is, the more you will want to walk.

LEARN FROM THE BEST

If you have never attended a Feet First walk, we strongly encourage you to do so before leading your first walk. This is a great opportunity to learn from others who have been perfecting their walks over time. We encourage you to volunteer to be the last person on the walk to keep the group together. You’ll get important hands-on information from experienced walk leaders that you can apply to your walk. Join the Feet First Walks Meetup group by visiting: www.meetup.com/Feet-First-Walks/Participants
TYPES OF WALKS

Identify the best walking routes to work

STEP 1 Learn where your employees live to determine the walking route to work that makes the most sense. Check with your human resources department or your company’s most recent Commute Trip Reduction survey to get a list of where employees live by zip code.

STEP 2 Use the employee zip code information to look for a group of employees who live within a 4 mile radius of your workplace.

STEP 3 Now that you have identified the group of employees, take a look at the Seattle Walking Map and plan a route that will take you through neighborhoods that have well lit areas (think about walking at night), wide sidewalks, easy access for people in wheelchairs, and inviting places to explore.

STEP 4 Lace up a pair of walking shoes and test the route on your way home from work, or on a weekend. Make it fun; enlist the help of one of your Walking Leaders to help you with the route planning. Pay close attention to the route including any hills and length of route.

CONNECT MODES You might not have a lot of employees who live within walking distance of your worksite. No problem. Consider designing a route that combines walking and taking the bus or train. Use the regional transit trip planner to search for transit stops within walking distance of your worksite. Then, invite people to get off the bus a couple stops early and walk into work.

GROUP WALKS

THE WALK TO WORK BUS

Get more people walking to work by creating a Walk to Work Bus. First you’ll want to identify a group of employees who would be interested in participating in this walk. You can find people by creating a “Walkers Wanted” bulletin that can be placed in common areas or distributed via email to all employees. Next pick a central area such as a coffee shop, library, or community center to meet the participants joining your walk.

Provide simple bus and walking directions to the starting location. The meeting location should be specific enough so that attendees do not have a difficult time identifying you as the Walking Leader. Using a small, but specific site marking (“the mailbox in front of Grand Central Bakery” or “the northeast corner of N 45th St and Corliss Ave N”) can be helpful to avoid confusion.

LUNCH AND BREAK WALKS

If the walk is for a walking meeting or during a work break, we recommend that the walk route be a loop; the starting and ending location for the walk should be the same, or very nearby. This is helpful for people who start at the same or a close by worksite. If your walk is not a loop, include this information in the walk description so that participants can plan accordingly.

For both individual and group walks to work, go through a similar process to design a walk. More about this is provided in Section 6 under How to Get Started.

WALKING MEETINGS

For people unable to walk to work, because they live too far away, there are opportunities to support a walking work culture. A simple way is to take inside meetings outside.

CLOCK YOUR WALK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.25 MILE</td>
<td>6-8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.50 MILE</td>
<td>10-15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.75 MILE</td>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 MILE</td>
<td>20-25 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WALKING MEETINGS?

- More physical activity that fits into the day
- Energized and more alert participants
- Different environments to inspire new ideas
- Time outdoors, in nature, and with fresh air and light
- Improved physical and mental well-being
- Walking and talking side by side cuts through hierarchical and status distinctions and sets people at ease
- Process is as helpful as product
- Utilitarian purposes can be added, such as fitting in errands
- Educate about things in the environment while experiencing and demonstrating them. Different experts can speak at different locations
- Problem solving can be enhanced by the physical activity of walking ("thinking on your feet")
- Creativity is enhanced when people are physically active, and stimulated by variety in events and visual, auditory, and other senses
- Walks can help resolve conflicts for pairs and small groups. For larger groups the walk can improve team interactions and help generate solutions

WHAT TYPE OF MEETING IS IT?

One on One Meetings
Meeting as a pair tends to be easy. Walking breaks down the barrier of a desk and chair, and lets people communicate more equally. This type of meeting works well when meeting with supervisors or coworkers to discuss specific issues.

Small Group Meetings of 3-5
This size group is flexible, as discussion can occur while walking, or if desired the group can stop along the walk. This is type of meeting is useful for project meetings that require problem solving and generating creative ideas. Keep in mind that with a larger group, your route should be able to accommodate more people. Be sure to pick a route that includes wider sidewalks and is free of any potential obstructions such as overgrown plants or sandwich board signs.

Medium Group Meetings of 6-15
Meetings with larger groups tend to result in more than one conversation while walking. If the whole group is to be involved, make time to stop and gather for group discussions. Medium size group meetings are also useful for project meetings, however they might require additional management to be sure that everyone is able to participate. Identifying a meeting place and destination where the group can talk will help with the organization of this type of walk. Communicating with the group what needs to be accomplished during the meeting ahead of time along with reviewing at the end of the walk is a good way to make sure the walking meeting is successful.

Large Group Meetings of 16 or More
These tend to require more planning, with a strong leader and potentially a few assistants. There will be conversations while walking, then planned stops for presentations. Large group meetings work best when there are multiple topics that need to be discussed and debated. Before you begin your walk be sure to communicate where each planned stop will be, along with what topic will be discussed and who will be presenting. This will allow for smaller group discussions to take place between each stop to maximize the group’s engagement in the topics.

Speakers
For informative meetings, invite speakers. For example, invite company leaders to talk about new programs that support walking (e.g. health and wellness programs, and public safety programs).

Break the mold, enjoy the outdoors, and have some fun - walk your meeting rather than sitting in a conference room.

- Chris Diorio, CEO of Impinj
WHERE TO HAVE THE MEETING?

- Natural settings such as parks or trails
- Urban settings, which are both stimulating and convenient
- Indoors is possible given large enough hallways or spacious areas like convention centers
- Attention to the route is important—avoid noisy roads
- Determine the start location, course, and finish location. Most likely you will begin in front of your building.

WHEN IS THE MEETING?

Season
Winter in some areas can be challenging, but advise people to bring umbrellas and rain or snow gear. You can even meet in a downpour!

Time of Day
Lunchtime and mid-afternoon walks can help revive dwindling energy and provide a much-needed second wind to the work day.

Studies show that with frequent breaks, such as a 10 minute walk, employees are more productive.

PLANNING SUGGESTIONS

Determine the Route
For very small groups, you can be more spontaneous in deciding where to go. Determine whether the walk will return to the start, and if not, how people will be able to get to public transportation. Estimate the time and consider how to adjust the walk to fit the allotted time. Use walking maps to help you select a route.

Roles: Leadership, Recording
A leader/organizer is not needed for smaller groups, however they might be necessary for large groups. Very large groups might even need a leader with several assistants. If there is need to record the discussion or decisions, designate someone to take notes or use a recorder.

Process
Discussion in small groups can occur simply while walking. With larger groups, the gathering time can be used as an opportunity for people to get to know each other, and to preview the goals and course of the walk. Because people will be involved in multiple conversations while walking, plan to have stopping points to gather periodically. This can be a time to focus on something in the environment, or to have a speaker lead a discussion.

Evaluation
Ask for verbal feedback after the walk or use a simple online questionnaire.

DEALING WITH CHALLENGES

Noise
For small group meetings, some ambient noise can actually increase the privacy of the meeting.

Cell Phones
Ask people to turn off cell phones before the meeting, because people often feel even less inhibited taking a call during a meeting held outside.

Narrow Walkways
Think about a route or loop that accommodates the size of your group. Larger groups often will prefer to do most of the conversing at specific points in the walk, which enables the group to gather together.

Diversity of Walking Paces
Split the group into slower and faster smaller groups to address this concern.

Following an Agenda
Include stops to punctuate the meeting, with each stop representing the transition from one topic in the agenda to another.
HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A WALK THAT YOU COULD DESIGN.

Theme of my walk:
Relaxing food discovery

Goal(s) of my walk:
Discover good small shops and restaurants to walk to at lunch.

What neighborhood is my walk taking place in?
Fremont and Wallingford

Walk Route:
Starting at the intersection between Fremont Ave N and N 34th St., heading east on N 34th Street, turn left on Wallingford Ave N, keep going to N 45th St. and turn left, go west on N 45th St., turn left again on Fremont Ave N, go straight to the starting location.

Starting + ending Location. Is this walk a loop?
Start and end at the intersection of Fremont Avenue and N 34th Street. This is a loop walk.

When is my walk (day/time)?
April 1, 2015 from 12pm-1pm

How long will the walk take? How many miles is the walk?
60 minutes, 3 miles

Points of interest on my walk:
QFC, Wallingford playfield, Waiting for the Interurban (statue)

What are some resting points on the walk?
Wallingford playfield, B.F. Day Playground

Where are the public restrooms on the walk?
At the Wallingford playfield.

Are there bus routes to the meeting/ending location? Which one?
Yes. Metro Bus routes 26, 28, 31, 32, and the 40.

NOW, DESIGN YOUR OWN WALK.

Theme of my walk:

Goals of my walk:

What neighborhood is my walk taking place in?

Walk Route:

Starting + ending Location. Is this walk a loop?

When is my walk (day/time)?

Points of interest on my walk:

What are some resting points on the walk?

Where are the public restroom on the walk?

Are there bus routes to the meeting/ending location? Which one?
PROMOTE

- Add your walk program to your workplace website that talks about transportation and wellness benefits.
- Create employee testimonials that you can include on your workplace websites and newsletters.
- Publicize your program accomplishments using key metrics like total participants, trips, steps, and cost savings.
- Create a recurring meeting in your email and share with your coworkers.
- Leverage existing promotions and events such as Wheel Options, Earth Day, and National Walk to Work Day.
- Encourage your employees to use social media tools like Twitter or Instagram to share their experiences, discoveries and post photos.

Feet First will increase the number people on your walks who might not be employees at your work place. When you expand your reach, your company will be recognized for its commitment to supporting walking. We make it easy by:

- Giving you flier templates to print and post throughout your worksite
- Emailing neighborhood blogs
- Adding your walk to the events section of the Feet First monthly newsletter
- Posting your walk on our Feet First Walks Meetup group

Please note: Walking Meetings are internal and will not be promoted through Feet First channels.

RESOURCES

Seattle Walking Map
The Seattle Walking Map was designed to help Seattle residents, commuters and visitors choose a walking route that best suits their interests and fitness level. The routes identified in the map come from a variety of sources including Feet First, King County, and the City of Seattle Department of Transportation and include routes that follow sidewalks, shoulders on quiet streets, and park trails. This map is available online at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/walk_map.htm.

Employer Walking Maps
First Hill & Fremont/Green Lake employer walking maps help you plan your walks. They have example loop walks that can be used for walking meetings, easy walks from public transportation and local businesses.

Feet First Walk Library
Feet First has a walk library [www.feetfirst.org/walk-and-maps/walk-library] that contains walk routes and accompanying talking points created by Feet First. These walks are available on the Feet First website. If you would like to add your walk to the library for others to enjoy, please contact the Feet First Volunteer Coordinator for more information by email at: volunteer@feetfirst.org or by phone at 206.652.2310 ext. 5]. We also have many books with different walks in the region that you are welcome to borrow. If you do decide to lead a walk from an outside source, please remember to give full credit to the author.

Seattle’s Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program
Walking is one of many different commute options available to employers in Seattle. Seattle’s CTR program works with employers to connect them to the resources they need to achieve their trip reduction and business goals. To learn more about this program and how it can help you with your work place transportation program visit: www.seattle.gov/waytogo/ctr.htm.

Public Health-Seattle and King County
The organization whose goal is to protect and improve the health and well-being of all people in King County: www.kingcounty.gov/health services/health.aspx.

Metro Transit Trip Planner
Trip planner helps you find information on transit routes and schedules within walking distance of your work place: tripplanner.kingcounty.gov.

Free Online Tools to Track Walking Trips and Miles
MapMyWalk is a great tool for your employees to map their walks, share walks, and track their progress as they traverse the streets of their neighborhood and worksite: www.mapmywalk.com. Endomondo is a useful tool for employers to create employee campaigns. The tool allows employees to create a personal profile, post pictures, challenge others, track trips and miles and post their results to social media: www.endomondo.com.

Seattle Pedestrian Program
The Seattle Department of Transportation’s (SDOT) Pedestrian Program seeks to improve pedestrian safety and to encourage more walking by creating an environment where people can walk safely and comfortably. These efforts have contributed to Seattle’s nationally recognized reputation as a pedestrian-friendly city. www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian.htm.

Feet First
The Feet First website contains links to additional information that can be useful for researching and planning walks. Check to see what is available, and if you find other resources that help you, let us know and we will add them to the list. To learn more about Feet First visit: www.feetfirst.org.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO ENCOURAGING WALKING EVERY DAY FOR HEALTH, TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY, AND PLEASURE!

JUNE 2015