How can we accommodate the residents of a large city who are having all of their communities gentrified because of these accommodations?

Quick thoughts on gentrification. First, we have to be careful not to assume that all increases in the value of real estate due to improvements in walkability are a bad thing. For example, I’ve worked in disenfranchised areas of both big cities and smaller communities (e.g. struggling downtowns) where some amount of economic revitalization can be very beneficial, as it can bring in services and retail (e.g. a full service grocery store) that are sorely needed by residents. A diverse housing market with a range of types and values (including some higher value homes) may necessarily be a part of that revitalization. Further, we cannot let the fear of gentrification keep us from bringing often sorely needed pedestrian facilities and safety improvements to predominantly low-income and minority communities.

That said, widespread gentrification can have the horribly negative effect of pushing out the very residents who might have benefited most from more walkable (and economically vibrant) neighborhoods. Much more work has to be done to explore how to tread the fine line between healthy economic redevelopment and gentrification that displaces businesses and residents, but there are several approaches that are worth including in our efforts:

- Include housing experts and advocates in your working group from the very beginning; don’t wait for gentrification’s negative effects to then reach out and say, “How do we fix this?”
- During project and policy planning do targeted outreach and community engagement that assures the inclusion of residents and business owners from diverse backgrounds, and especially those from at-risk neighborhoods.
- Build zoning ordinances and school siting policies to assure residents’ access to essential needs: neighborhood schools and parks, retail, social services; encourage mixed-use development with housing above retail.
- Utilize zoning and regulatory tools to maintain housing diversity and affordability in new and re-development: require a mix of housing types (rent and own; single and multi-family, row houses, larger and smaller); inclusionary zoning, to require a target percentage of affordable units; allow accessory dwellings (e.g. over-garage and “in-law” apartments), and ease permitting for affordable accessory units as compared to market rate units; add an owner occupancy requirement if absentee landlords and blight are neighborhood issues.
- Engage transit agencies and advocates in planning and implementation. A comparable challenge to equitable housing development is providing sufficient
transportation options to all residents; transit and low-income housing options should be planned and implemented in concert, and with the goal of engaging a wide range of riders, not just those who can’t drive.

Two valuable resources for exploring equity issues in community design:

- PolicyLink: a research & action institute for economic & social equity.  
  [www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org)
- Smart Growth America: Policy & zoning audits, project scorecards, practical diagnostics.  
  [http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/leadership-institute/implementation-tools](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/leadership-institute/implementation-tools)

Have you seen conflict with golf cart users demanding the use of separated bike & ped facilities? Advice on fending that off / working with them?

What are your thoughts on combining bicycle traffic with pedestrian traffic on the same path?

These are two related questions focused on user conflicts and the need to separate users on non-motorized trails and pathways. I find that when facilities are initially created this is often not an issue, as the user rates are generally modest at first. But as a trail or protected pathway becomes more popular and use increases it can become a source of friction. The best approach is to convene representatives of potential user groups as early as possible – before there’s conflict – and develop policy and infrastructure solutions. This includes pedestrians and bicycles (both skinny and fat tire riders), but also possibly equestrians, ski and snowshoe users. Some approaches:

- Design for anticipated capacity. Don’t build a six-foot wide trail when experience shows that at least eight feet, and ten or twelve will best accommodate multiples types of users.
- Paint separate lanes. Some pathways literally stripe separate bicycle and pedestrian lanes (designated with decals and/or signs). See the picture from Minneapolis, at left.
- Create parallel pathways. When traffic volumes are high enough it can be worth actually creating multiple separated pathways, as seen along the river in Minneapolis, with parallel pedestrian and bicycle pathways (below right).
• Create shoulders. Many urban trails are including “soft” surface shoulders, such as a two-foot wide packed dirt or fine gravel path at the side of a paved or concrete trail. This serves users who prefer a softer surface (runners, some pedestrians, even equestrians) and increases trail capacity without increasing impervious surface area that increases storm water run-off. It also reduces conflicts by letting pedestrians step aside for the occasional in-line skater, double width stroller, or other “wide” user.

• Have clear speed limits and yielding policies. Motorized vehicles (golf carts, segways) and bicycles have the potential to move at injurious speeds if they hit a pedestrian. Setting a speed limit is one approach to reducing the chance of collision – usually it is enforced by users and occasional bicycle-mounted police or trail patrols.

• Set a non-motorized use policy. The most common way to avoid conflict is to declare a trail a non-motorized facility. This precludes golf-carts and four-wheelers in the summer and snow machines in the winter, and greatly reduces the chances of dangerous collisions.

Regarding golf carts specifically, this seems to most often come up in retirement and age 50+ communities where users want to use the paths to travel greater than walking distances, but aren’t comfortable bicycling. A partial solution can be to make stable, three-wheeled bikes available; many inexperienced or non-cyclists find these easy to use, yet it’s still much better than having the bulk and speed of a golf cart on a pedestrian path.

Are there guides addressing how streetscape design elements can facilitate greater walkability?

I strongly recommend the National Association of City Traffic Officials (NACTO) design guides. Their content is based on practical experience with designs that have been implemented and improved in real world settings. Three are currently available:

• Urban Street Design Guide
• Urban Bikeway Design Guide
• Transit Street Design Guide
I understand a fourth is under development, a Rural Roadways Design Guide. Note that although you may be thinking about pedestrian-oriented design, the bicycle design guide is relevant because it provides many innovative approaches that reduce pedestrian and bicycle conflicts (not least of all by providing bicycles safe places to ride off of sidewalks). Similarly, transit oriented designs are greatly beneficial to pedestrians. You can find information on all of these at the [www.nacto.org](http://www.nacto.org) website, which has many other resources as well.

**Our community is struggling with paying for repairs to our older neighborhood sidewalks. We require adjacent property owners to pay for sidewalk repair, but do not enforce because the worst sidewalks are adjacent to properties owned by those least able to afford repair. The city does not have the funds to take this on. What can we do?**

This is a very common question and there is no simple answer, but I have seen a wide range of communities successfully address this issue. An excellent resource is the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center’s funding page:

[http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding.cfm](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding.cfm)

Most communities utilize a mix of resources and techniques including the following:

- **Capital improvement plans.** Many communities commit to a certain amount of sidewalk repair or construction each year. Even if it is very modest, the cumulative effect over time can be very profound (1/4 mile of sidewalk each year is two-and-a-half miles of sidewalk in a decade!).
- **Special improvement districts.** A business district or neighborhood can choose to collectively tax themselves over a period of time to underwrite the repair and construction of sidewalks throughout the district. The great advantages include the economies of scale of having one contractor do all of the work at once, the work being done to one standard, and minimizing the disruption over time. Often the city or town can help to bond the costs to spread out the payback period.
- **Public and private grants.** Developing a comprehensive plan for systemic sidewalk improvements usually improves a community’s eligibility for grants from regional, state, and federal agencies, and non-profit foundations. Showing how implementation of the plan can improve community health, economic vibrancy, social equity, and environmental sustainability often greatly improves the likelihood of funding. For example, demonstrating specifically how implementing a plan will increase walking and cycling to school, or access from senior housing to shopping, contributes to grant success.
- **Opportunistic improvements.** One of the most important tools is for the community to embrace a Complete Streets policy that essentially says that any time any road work is done (new construction, repairs, and even routine maintenance) every effort will be made to repair or construct pedestrian facilities. This includes when roads are disturbed, for example, for sewer or other utility work. The stronger the
Complete Streets policy, the more effective this will be. If the city is simply encouraged to “make the effort to accommodate” that can be much less effective than if they are “required to accommodate” pedestrians during all road and utility work.

**How can small communities measure current mode share (establishing baselines) prior to conducting walk audits and engaging in longer-term policy work?**

The American Community Survey collects data on commuting mode split, but this is at the level of census tracts, which may be a larger area than you’re seeking. You should absolutely take a look at the website of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, which has a wealth of resources from measurement to implementation. Of particular note is the Guidebook for Developing Pedestrian and Bicycle Performance Measures.


For very small communities, one of the simplest but most important transportation measures is travel to school. Show-of-hands surveys in the classroom are simple and effective. For example during morning attendance children are asked to raise their hands for each of the following: walk; bike; school bus; came in car alone; came in car with other students (carpool). It’s important not to ask students how they *typically* get to school, but how they got to school today (and/or home last night) over a several day sampling period. This is particularly valuable in communities concerned about school bus transportation costs and automobile congestion at schools, and those embarking on Safe Routes to School initiatives.

Another fairly simple measure would be to survey employees at a handful of major employers (such as city employees, a hospital, and a particularly large employer) about how they get to work each day. This only captures commute trips, but this is one of the most common trips in most households and is worth capturing.

A third measure would be to do intercept surveys at major destinations in the community such as major grocery or hardware store. Patrons are asked as they walk in two or three simple questions, which can be checked off very quickly as they walk by. Gender can be noted, and obviously more detail can be requested of a fraction of the patrons, such as more detailed demographics (age, city/town of residence, etc.).

- “What was your primary mode of travel (walk, bike, car alone, car with others, transit) did you use to get here today?”
- “What distance did you come (how long did it take)?”
- “Is this your typical method of traveling here?”