

## **Walking Action Plan**

### **Project Goals**

To facilitate 2-3 walking audits in neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown Salina, which will help build awareness and educate participants on pedestrian issues in Salina. My long term goal is to work with the city and other organizations to develop a “Streets Alive” event.

### **Background**

My Walking Action Plan is inspired by the redevelopment of Downtown Salina and my own experiences as a pedestrian which includes making walking my main mode of transportation.

In 2018 work began on the redevelopment of Downtown Salina. The redevelopment project includes repaving the entire downtown main avenue, Santa Fe. This project includes a Complete Streets design on Santa Fe with wider sidewalks, narrow lanes to slow traffic, and pedestrian bump outs at intersections. Amenities also include several benches and outdoor seating at cafes and restaurants.

Salina has the potential to be a very walkable community, and after moving here I was looking forward to walking to and from work, the downtown area, and nearby parks and amenities. Walking in residential neighborhoods proved to be more difficult than I anticipated. Many neighborhoods have deteriorating sidewalks, the speed limit is 30MPH, there are few lights or stop signs and safe crossing areas, and traffic seems unaware or unwilling to stop for pedestrians. There would be many benefits to extending the Complete Streets design to neighborhoods outside of downtown, but there is not a lot of data about walking habits in Salina.

The redevelopment project will be finished in 2020; with new businesses opening and existing businesses holding on through construction there is the hope for a renewed interest in downtown, increased pedestrian traffic, and increased profits for downtown businesses. This could also help to initiate other downtown pedestrian projects, including redevelopment of the existing pedestrian alleyways. There is already an interest in creative placemaking initiatives to develop the alleys, collecting more data about walking habits downtown and the real/perceived safety of the alleys would be helpful in securing grant funding for projects.

#### **Demographics:**

The demographics of the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown include higher rates of poverty and unemployment, with the median household income of \$30k-\$40k. These neighborhoods also tend to be higher minority neighborhoods.

Salina also has a very strong car culture. Cars are taken for over 90% of trips and over 95% of work commutes. We are also the home of several classic car shows through the year

Salina has an overall Walk Score of 38, with most errands requiring driving. The AARP Livability Index score is 54.

## **Projects and Goals**

Short term

Walking Audits:

In a recent meeting with city officials I discussed the idea of doing Walking Audits in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. This idea was well received because they didn't have any data gathered on pedestrian issues or wayfinding. Walking Audits would be a vehicle for gathering some data and primary research on walkability in Salina and helping to develop stronger pedestrian policies.

There are several organizations that already exist in Salina that have an interest in developing better pedestrian policies and encouraging more physical activities. Potential partners for Walking Audits include Live Well Saline County and North Salina Community Development. According to the AARP Livability Index Salina has a high obesity rate, high smoking rate, and low access to exercise opportunities. Studies have proven that walkable neighborhoods can have a positive impact on health and happiness.

Outcomes:

- Create a public education campaign based on benefits of walkable communities
- Collect data for the city which can be used to establish better pedestrian policies
  - Improve sidewalks and walkability in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, extend complete streets ideas out from downtown
- Collect data about accessibility issues
- Engage with community members about accessibility and walking in their own neighborhoods
- Create healthier neighborhoods

Long Term

Streets Alive Event:

Salina has a strong arts and culture sector that has been established in the community for decades, including an arm of the local government, Salina Arts and Humanities. This project would be a partnership between the cultural organizations, Salina Downtown Inc, and the downtown merchants, utilizing creative placemaking practices to develop a strong creative culture and economic benefits. I would like to establish an ongoing community event that opens our streets up to pedestrians and celebrates multimodal ways of getting around and encourages people to spend time in Downtown Salina. Walkable communities have been proven to increase property values and are economic engines for small businesses.

#### Outcomes:

- Lay the groundwork for a recurring event that celebrates multimodal transportation
- Establish strong relationships with community partners that reach across different sectors: Arts and culture, government, merchants
- Encourage active citizens
- Establish placemaking downtown
- Create a thriving downtown economy

#### Timeline:

- Fall/winter 2018/19
  - Continue to develop partnerships
    - Identify neighborhoods/routes for walking audits
  - Define roles
  - Identify key partners for Streets Alive
    - What permits/license are needed from city
    - Involve artists and arts organizations in planning
  - Identify funding opportunities for Streets Alive
- Spring 2019
  - Conduct walking audits
  - Identify next steps for Streets Alive event
    - Dates for 2020
    - Prepare/submit grant applications
- Summer 2019
  - Prepare and present Walking Audit data
- Fall/Winter 2019
  - Finalize Streets Alive partners, roles
  - Finalize event activities
  - Start marketing
- Spring/summer 2020
  - Streets Alive Event

#### Community Partners:

- City of Salina and City Planning Commission
- Salina Downtown and Downtown Merchants
- SPARK Artists
- Salina Arts and Humanities
- OCCK
- Live Well Saline County
- North Salina Neighborhood Organization
- Bike Coalition
- My Bike Salina
- Community Services Council

