

October 2020

20^{years strong} AMERICA WALKS

Pedestrian Safety Month Missed the Mark

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) declared October to be Pedestrian Safety Month – which was a laudable first for them. But the “Pedestrian Safety Playbook” they put out to support local public education efforts badly missed the mark.

Put simply, NHTSA focused on behavior change, and particularly pedestrian behavior, rather than on the systemic changes needed to save lives. During the last 10 years we have seen pedestrian deaths climb about 50 percent. And the death and injury toll falls most heavily on the vulnerable and marginalized — older, Black, Native, Hispanic/Latino, low-income, and disabled people. With the Pedestrian Playbook, NHTSA was putting the blame on the victims – and avoiding their own responsibility to ensure safe streets and safer vehicles.

America Walks immediately wrote to NHTSA pointing out where they went wrong. We've recapped and expanded on our recommendations in the full blog below, where you can also read our letter to NHTSA and a graphical rebuttal to some of their Playbook elements.

drivers:

increase your
awareness



Pedestrians are everywhere. Slow down and be on the lookout for them, particularly during low-light situations, near intersections, and in high pedestrian-traffic zones, including commercial districts, near schools and in neighborhoods.

Always stop for pedestrians at crosswalks, even unmarked ones. Remember your car can be lethal.

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distraction



Distraction is a two-way street, but drivers carry an extra burden and responsibility for keeping our streets safe in light of the massively disproportionate impact they have in any pedestrian-vehicle crash.

Expect people to act erratically. Slow down. Pay attention. Stop at crosswalks. Put your phone down.

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[Read the Full Blog and Letter](#)

Did You Miss Our Last Webinar?

On October 14th we had a deeply engaging conversation with Professor and Author Lawrence T. Brown on his new book: *The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America*, moderated by Veronica O. Davis, DC Transportation Guru and co-owner of Nspiregreen. Mandatory viewing for urban planners, walkable community advocates, public health professionals – and all humans.



It is difficult for Black people in redlined communities to walk when they can't breathe, whether due to polluted air or police violence. Black residents in redlined urban spaces find it difficult to walk when living in communities impacted by neighborhood violence or built environments characterized by green apartheid.

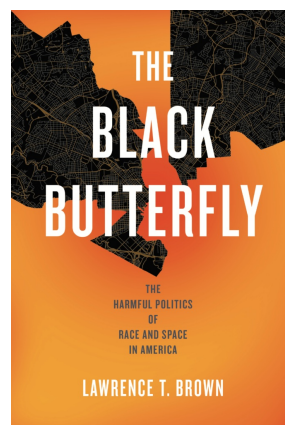
LAWRENCE T. BROWN

@AMERICAWALKS



Watch the Webinar
Recording

Read an Excerpt from the
Book



For the Sake of All Things Safe Walking and Moving – Let's Vote



VOTE LIKE YOUR SAFE, CONNECTED,
WALKABLE COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON IT.

Because it does.

@AMERICAWALKS



What does voting have to do with walking and moving and feeling safe in our communities?

Read the Blog

Recaps from Salud America's Twitter Chat, *How to Address Transportation Equity for Latino Communities*

Here are 4 points that are worth repeating:

1. At the most basic level, planning, hiring and industry norms that lack intentional inclusion of Latinos – and ones that default to a white-centered or ethnocentric approach – will always fail Latino communities.
2. Auto-centric practices and policies deepen inequities of Latino communities that often rely on transit and active transportation more heavily than white counterparts. And quick-build or spot-location projects will not undo decades of systemic racial injustices.
3. Planners, decision-makers, scholars, and advocates need to interrogate the system. Meet people in their communities. Not everyone has the availability and resources to attend meetings. Study and eradicate barriers to Latino community members becoming more involved in/leading policies and projects in their own communities.
4. Automobile supremacy is rooted in white supremacy – perpetuated from systemically racist past (and present) planning standards. When working for walkable Latino communities, budget for the full understanding of how this history has draped the community in inequity.

Read the Full Recap and Access Additional Resources



How To Conduct a Walk Audit

A walk audit is an assessment of the pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area. Anyone can conduct and organize a walk audit.

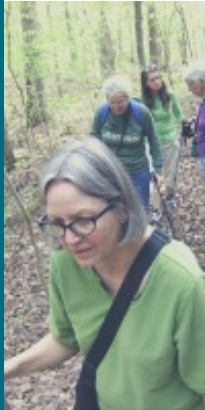
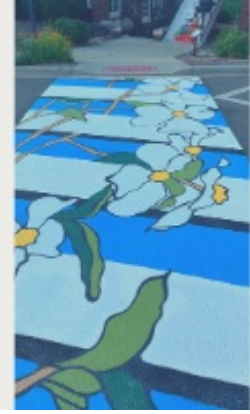
America Walks recently partnered with The Northern Virginia Regional Commission on [some helpful tools](#) for supporting your walk audit.

Check out this short video that helps you determine exactly how to get started. And snag the accompanying graphic below.

Apply for a \$1,500 Community Change Grant By November 9th!

EXAMPLES OF PAST FUNDED PROJECTS

Previous America Walks'
Community Change Grantees



[Learn More and Apply](#)

Mark Those Calendars:

November 3rd: Vote! Think about linking up with a [#walkthevote voting parade in your community](#).

November 5th: [Check out TRB's Conference on Sustainability and Emerging Transportation Technology](#): Decarbonization, Energy, and Emissions and Urban Planning and TDM. Virtual Event.

November 9th: Get your Community Change Grant Application in for a chance to be awarded \$1,500 for your dream walkable community project. [Learn more and apply here](#).

November 20th: Get Healthy Philly (GHP) is seeking community partners to help understand, explore, and address the intersection of walkability and other livability features in Philadelphia's communities. [Learn more and apply here](#) for up to 25K in grant funds.

December 9th: [Register for our next webinar](#), Creating a Safe and Inclusive Built Environment for People with Disabilities in Tribal Communities. This event will feature a new report with recommendations for improving inclusivity and accessibility in Indian Country.

Content of the Month:

- [Crenshaw Walkumentary: The Story of Idyllic Leimert Park Village / Dr. Randal Henry \(America Walks Walking College Fellow\)](#)
- [Plenty of work to do around disabilities and a livable city/ Cornelius Today](#)
- [Driving the 2021 Cadillac Escalade was one of the most stressful experiences of my life/ The Verge](#)
- [Walking Meditation/ Greater Good Science Center University of California Berkeley](#)
- [Tackling America's 'Silent Epidemic' Of Pedestrian Deaths — In St. Louis And Beyond/ St.](#)

- Youth Leading the Way: Inspiring Stories of Youth Creating Safe, Accessible Neighborhoods / *America Walks*
- Study Finds Regional Pact To Reduce Transportation Pollution Could Yield Major Health Benefits / *WBUR*
- PBIC Health and Transportation Webinar Series / *Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center*

10 TIPS FOR PLANNING AND LEADING A SUCCESSFUL WALK AUDIT

CREATED BY AMERICA WALKS AND THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION (NVRC)



1 SET SOME GOALS

Decide what you want to accomplish by conducting a walk audit



2 PICK YOUR PLACE

Choose the route carefully, scout it ahead of time, and make sure everyone will be safe



3 KEEP IT SHORT

Don't make it too long – a one-mile walk audit can easily last an hour with stops for discussion



4 CURATE YOUR CREW

Identify participants from the neighborhood and others whom you want to recruit as advocates



5 BRING IN LOCAL LEADERS

Invite one or two public officials such as planners, engineers or City Council members



6 USE TOOLS

Choose a specific guide such as the AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit and send it to participants in advance



7 GRAB GEAR

Bring along clipboards, printed guides, and pens, as well as a tape measure and a camera

8 BE UNIVERSAL

Before starting, remind everyone to prioritize safety and to imagine a small child or a person with a disability on this walk (a great tool is to bring a stroller to identify mobility)

9 TAKE PAUSE

Stop every few blocks to analyze the conditions, make notes, and take photos

10 CHAT AND ASSESS

At the end, ask everyone to share their “take-aways”



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HELP US INNOVATE, STORYTELL AND
CREATE IN NEW WAYS.**

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