**AMERICA WALKS**

***Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018***

*A Plan to Make America a Great Place to Walk!*

ADOPTED - INTERNAL

**Mission Statement**

The mission of America Walks is to make America a great place to walk by promoting safe, convenient and accessible walking conditions for all.

**Vision Statement for a Walkable America**

Every Body Walk! By 2020, walking in everyday life is embraced across America. Streets and neighborhoods are safe and attractive public places that encourage people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and incomes to walk for transportation, exercise, and recreation. Walkable community policies promote health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

**How We Do Our Work**

America Walks is the only national organization devoted exclusively to making America a great place to walk. We do this by providing a voice for walking and walkability through federal government affairs, by providing strategy support, training and technical assistance to regional, statewide and local organizations and individuals, and via the Every Body Walk! Collaborative, a national partnership focused on increasing the visibility of walking and cultivating consumer demand for more walkable places.

**Focus Areas of America Walks’ 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan**

Advance the National Walking Movement – America Walks will change the public dialogue and social culture to make walking embraced as a positive – easy, fun, cool, inexpensive, healthy – activity. As a thought leader in this field, and with the Every Body Walk! Collaborative partners, we build public awareness and change behavior; as an organization we focus on thought leaders, elected and appointed officials, agency representatives, and social change organizations.

Empower State and Local Coalitions to be More Effective – America Walks will support, educate, inform, connect/broker, and organize community-based and non-governmental organizations to advance walkability policies and promote walking at the state and local levels. We will focus campaigns to influence officials and agencies/staff.

Ensure Inclusion of Walking/Walkability in the National Policy Agenda – America Walks will take a lead federal advocacy role to promote and support policies, practices, and public funding for walking and walkability. We will focus our work on targeting federal agencies and aim to impact congressional decisions as an effective coalition partner. America Walks will be a strong partner, able to respond to key opportunities, work with coalitions with similar goals and incorporate diverse perspectives and interests.

Develop Organizational Capacity and Identity – America Walks will be a strong and effective organization with dedicated staff and board of directors. We will have clear operational procedures, financial controls, and a multi-pronged development program.

**Strategic Goal: Advance the National Walking Movement (NWM)**

America Walks will change the public dialogue and social culture to make walking a socially accepted.

1. Build public awareness and change behavior.
	1. Develop a robust communications plan that includes a public narrative to systematically improve public perceptions of walking and walkability (2014)
	2. Maintain and develop definitive tools for organizations and campaigns to promote walking and walkability (2014-16)
	3. Effectively communicate the work of America Walks and our partners, sponsors, and others committed to the walking movement (2014-15)
	4. Engage and Increase the number and visibility of walking champions, especially local elected officials and federal agency representatives (2015-17)
	5. Promote the vision of America Walks with clear and consistent communication, brand, and messaging from staff, board and partners (2014-15)
2. Lead the Every Body Walk! Collaborative (EBWC) in effective action to achieve the desired change in public narrative and make places great for walking
	1. EBWC management and implementation of collective action model; develop a joint America Walks /EBWC work plan to advance common goals (ongoing)
	2. Manage the Workgroups of the collaborative with a focus on coordinating and communicating across a growing partnership (ongoing)
	3. Provide leadership and staff to harness the power of the coalition’s organizational reach and situational awareness to ensure EBWC goals are met (ongoing)
	4. Monitor and evaluate progress towards EBWC goals (ongoing)
3. Solidify America Walks’ stature as a thought leader in the field of walking and walkability.
	1. Promote and amplify the Surgeon General’s Call to Action on Walking (2014-15)
		1. Detailed work plan includes: ensuring broad based organization participation; leading communications and outreach; conducting roll out and follow-up event(s)
	2. Host the National Walking Summit in partnership with EBWC partners and sponsors (2014-15)
	3. Stage high profile events or walking/walkability programs. (2016-18)
	4. Release non-technical reports that increase public understanding of the walking movement and positions us as its leader (2015)
		1. Year 1 examples: Local action survey of the status of walking advocacy; GFK type survey; Pedestrian Safety

**Strategic Goal: Empower State and Local Coalitions to grow and be more effective (SLC)**

America Walks will support, educate, inform, connect and organize community-based and non-governmental organizations to advance walkability policies and promote walking.

1. Increase the number, strength and size of community coalitions/groups advocating for walking and walkability
	1. Develop nationwide strategy to recruit and train local/regional action teams to build walkable communities through a state coordination/learning network or community-based workshops
		1. CDC workshops (2014)
		2. National League of Cities prototype workshops (2014-16)
		3. AARP concepts – train walkers to be advocates (2014-16)
	2. Work to increase the number of state grantee projects designed to grow community involvement in developing walkable communities (2015-17)
	3. Manage state grantee projects designed to support communities to implement focused strategies that improve walking and walkability
		1. Manage NJ DOH Community (2014)
2. Improve the effectiveness of existing advocates and coalitions
	1. Deliver training, technical assistance, strategic assistance and resources
		1. Webinars and Discussion Forums (2014)
		2. Link to ‘Advance the National Walking Vision’ #1.b. – communication resources
		3. Electronic forum (2014)
		4. See ‘Empower State and Local Coalitions’ #1
3. Increase the impact of advocacy through coordination and collective action
	1. Develop and promote Walkability Principles and community practitioner guidelines to increase coordination among organizations (2014-15)
		1. Encourage target audiences – elected officials, main streets associations – to adopt Walkability Principles
	2. Build partnerships with specific audiences that can help move these issues locally, work with national affinity organizations when possible:
		1. Local thought leaders and champions that will catalyze community efforts (2015-17)
		2. Elected and appointed officials (2014-17)
		3. Main street and downtown business associations (2015-17)
	3. Utilize EBWC Local Action Committee to achieve a number of goals
		1. Understand and track local walking action (2014-15)
	4. Explore creating a safety pilot project and/or legal advocacy approach designed to demonstrate how communities can change environments to make walking safe, convenient and enjoyable (2014-16)
		1. Widely share lessons learned and progress made from the pilot
4. Cross Cutting; Create and maintain a national network of organizations and individuals that promote and prioritize walking/walkability in programming, policies and funding allocations
	1. Increase to 1,000 the partners who endorse America Walks Vision (define what "endorsement" means) (2014-17)
	2. Increase email contact list by 100% (2014-17)
	3. Support regional summits by speaking, agenda development, strategy development, and networking with other organizations (2014-18)

**Strategic Goal: Ensure Inclusion of Walking/Walkability in the national policy agenda**

America Walks will take a lead federal advocacy role to promote and support policies, practices, and public funding for walking and walkability.

1. Develop a national policy platform and plan to guide education and advocacy efforts and prioritize work to increase walking and improve walkability (2014)

* 1. Annual review of prioritized issues and progress made
	2. Outline specific strategies for achieving policy objectives
	3. Convene key stakeholders in a federal policy work team for strategy
1. Work for the inclusion of walkability and needed infrastructure in federal policies.
	1. Build relationships with key federal agencies to support walking, walkability and walking safety (2014-16)
		1. Work with CDC to infuse more walking/built environment into programming
	2. Develop strategic partnerships to magnify the impact of our efforts.
		1. Work with partners to develop and enact future transportation legislation (2014-15)
		2. Support advocacy efforts of partner organization that promote walking, walkability, and safety (e.g. Partnership for Active Transportation) (2014-16)
2. Assume a national role in working for policy improvements to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries
	1. Develop a campaign to reduce walking fatalities to zero and reduce injuries by 50 percent by 2025 (2014-16)
	2. Produce educational materials to document walking safety issues (2014-15)
		* 1. Model comment letters
			2. Dear Colleague and other sign-on letters
			3. Policy research
			4. Testimony or agency hearing
			5. Op-eds/Media relations
			6. Public education
	3. Build partnerships to share similar goals and develop the persuasive literature and evidence base needed to justify policy improvements to improve pedestrian safety. Include issues such as vehicle speeds (mostly a state/local issue) and enforcement, while incorporating diverse perspectives and interests. (2014-16)

 4. Showcase the grassroots influence of the walking movement to national policy makers.

a. Walk the Hill (lobby) Day (2015)

b. Motivate and activate our national, regional, and local allies to demonstrate the support and interest of advocates (2015-17)

* + 1. Build an engagement platform for lateral and vertical communications.
		2. Serve as a hub for advocacy, fundraising, and education, with social media.
		3. Develop a nationwide program to engage walkers in advocacy.

c. Maintain an updated “power” map of America Walks and EBWC partners (2014)

**Strategic Goal: Develop Organizational Capacity**

America Walks is a strong and effective organization with dedicated staff and Board of Directors that institutes clear operational procedures, financial controls, and a multi-pronged development program.

1. Build an organization that effectively manages sustainable growth
2. Financial Management (2014-15)
	* 1. Institute strong financial management policies and practices
3. Organizational Management (2014-16)
	1. Institute strong organizational internal controls, policies and practices
	2. Develop an employee handbook (work plan)
	3. Ensure all Board documents, policies and controls are strong
4. Board Development (2014-16)
	1. Elect a diverse Board, seeking candidates with specific skills and talents lacking at present to add capacity to the group.
	2. Build strong board committees and recruit non-board members with required skills
5. Establish sustainable funding capacity that increases annual revenue.
	1. Diversify major income streams to provide sustained funding, such as corporations, foundations individual donors, summit sponsors, and earned income such as consultancy fees (2014-16)
	2. Build a development plan with metrics and specific deliverables that can be matched to potential revenue sources (2014)
	3. Investigate opportunities and apply for grant funding support our goals (2014-16)
	4. Seek in-kind contributions of personnel and resources from partners (2015 -16)
	5. Conduct annual strategic planning relative to priority organizational initiatives (ongoing)