Are you and your neighbors concerned about the safety and maintenance of your neighborhood? Consider organizing a neighborhood walk to bring your community and the City together to talk about these concerns. A neighborhood walk can help bring neighbors together to identify needs, discuss issues, and bring those directly to City representatives. Below is a step-by-step guide on how to organize a neighborhood walk in your community.

# Step 1: Talk to Your Neighbors

Host a neighborhood meeting to talk about your community’s needs, goals, and potential next steps. Identifying specific concerns and their workable solutions is the first step in getting these concerns resolved. Reach out to various parts of the community to have these conversations; more involvement means that a greater breadth of neighborhood concerns can be addressed. Host the community meeting in a space that is easily accessible and feels welcome for everyone, like the library or a local community center.

**Organizations to reach out to:**

* Schools
* Local Businesses
* Community centers
* Sports teams
* Church groups
* Community groups
* Community councils

**Outreach Strategies:**

* Social media
* Flyers
* Advertise at community events
* Advertise in community hubs (coffee shops, grocery stores, etc.)
* Post on community blogs/calendars

**Questions to Answer:**

* What do you and your neighbors want to see in your neighborhood?
* Why is this a priority?
* Are there safety and maintenance concerns that you feel need to be addressed?
* What would resolve these issues?

# Step 2: Map It Out

Now that you’ve identified what your concerns are, mark them on a map of the neighborhood. Are they centralized in one area, or scattered? What do they have in common? Create a route in the neighborhood for you and your neighbors to walk through and talk about these issues. Keep the route under 1 mile and ensure that it is accessible for those with disabilities– avoid steep hills or streets without sidewalks. If there are concern locations that cannot be physically visited because they are too far from the main route or don’t meet the disability criteria, don’t worry– you can still discuss them on the walk.

# Step 3: Make a Schedule

Decide what the walk schedule will look like. What community members will speak and what topics will be addressed? Where will they speak, and is there enough room for a crowd to stop and listen at that location? Which streets and crosswalks are safest for a large group of people to use?

When putting together a schedule and speeches, clearly identify what your primary concerns are and how you want them to be addressed. Identifying a problem and offering a practical solution helps you and your neighbors work toward real results both with each other and with the City.

Aim to have the event last less than two hours, including an opening refreshment period before the walk begins. Having an event that goes on too long or takes place during an inconvenient time will decrease attendance and make your walk less effective.

# Step 4: Talk to Your Neighbors (again!)

Having strong support from the broader community is key to a successful neighborhood walk. Some of your neighbors may not have been able to attend your first planning meeting; create the space for them to contribute to the conversation. This is the time to take another look at your walk route, schedule, and speakers. What can be added? What can be removed? A clear set of goals will make the most out of your neighborhood walk.

# **Step 5:** Recruit Volunteers & Delegate

Now that you’ve met with your neighbors a few times, you should have a stronger understanding of who is able to volunteer their time. Consider if anyone has particular skills that can be used, and how much time and energy individuals have to dedicate to the event. Make a timeline and clearly identify roles and responsibilities. If possible, provide volunteers with deadlines for their tasks. Check in with the volunteers every week or two to keep communication active and open.

**Volunteer Roles:**

* Making flyers, signs, and banners to advertise and have at the walk
* Advertising the event (handing out flyers, using social media, calling businesses and community groups)
* Creating a walk map for attendees
* Creating a walk schedule for attendees
* Contacting City representatives
* Reaching out to local businesses for donations
* Speaking at the event
* Setting up/taking down the event

# Step 6: Identify Supplies and Create a Budget

Consider what you would like to have at your event. Do you want to have a refreshment period beforehand, or a barbeque after? Will you need speakers and a microphone to ensure the crowd can hear you? Do you need tables, chairs, or a tent?

Identify any supplies that can be rented, borrowed, or donated by local businesses and create a budget. Consider if you and your neighbors can pool resources, or if you will need to seek outside materials or funding to accomplish your goals.

# **Step 7:** Conduct Outreach and Gather Supplies

Reach out to your community to ensure that the event is well advertised. Conduct outreach with community organizations, businesses, and your neighbors to bolster event attendance. Purchase your supplies and reach out to local businesses for donations in exchange for advertising. Don’t be shy– now is the time to talk to your neighbors to help you make the most of this event. Revisit the tips in Step 1 for conducting community outreach.

# **Step 8:** Invite City Representatives

Inviting City representatives to your neighborhood walk opens a dialogue between your community and your local government. City council members, community policing teams, and other City representatives are all useful resources to help you and your neighbors work toward solutions.

Contact your City Council Member:

[https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council](https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council%20)

Contact your local community policing team by visiting the contacts page for your local precinct:

<https://www.seattle.gov/police/about-us/police-locations>

Talk to officers that work in your area:

<https://www.seattle.gov/police/community-policing/living-room-conversations>

Contact a Community Engagement Coordinator for information on City resources and contacts:

<https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/community-engagement-coordinators>

# **Step 9:** Hold a Trial Walk

Now that you’ve finished organizing the event, it’s time to hold a trial walk. Walk along the identified route and have all speakers deliver what they would like to say. Pay attention to any part of the schedule or map that doesn’t work well or is difficult to understand. This is your last chance to make any improvements before you host the event.

# **Step 10:** Conduct the Walk

Congratulations! You’ve reached the day of the event. By this time, you should have your supplies gathered, your outreach finished, and your route and schedule finalized. Be sure to take photos!

Checklist for the day-of:

* Walk route hand-outs
* Walk schedule hand-outs
* Printed speeches for speakers
* Signs and banners
* Advertisements for participating businesses
* Sign-in sheets and pens
* Nametags
* Charged portable speakers and microphone with extra batteries
* Tables and chairs
* Food or refreshments
* Plates, napkins, cutlery
* Trash bags and clean-up supplies

# **Step 11:** Follow Up

One to two weeks after the event, reach out to the City representatives that attended to follow up on concerns expressed at the walk. Ask what they have identified as potential solutions, and possible next steps. What City departments will be involved? Will this require additional funding? How will this funding need be met? What City grants or programs can be utilized to meet these needs? It is important to get a clear path forward from your representatives, and to keep your neighbors updated as you work toward these solutions.

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