



# Walk Friendly Communities

## COMMUNITY REPORT CARD AND FEEDBACK:

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Lee's Summit, Missouri  
August 31, 2011

### Introduction

Thank you for submitting an application to the Walk Friendly Communities program on behalf of Lee's Summit, Missouri! A Walk Friendly Community is a city or town that has shown a commitment to improving walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies.

Each application was evaluated by at least three reviewers to provide a fair assessment of your community and provide technical feedback on how to improve the walkability of your community.

After thorough consideration of your application, we are pleased to designate Lee's Summit as a Bronze Walk Friendly Community. In reviewing your application, there were several areas that we were particularly impressed with, including:

- Lee's Summit does an excellent job of supporting walking through the provision of maps, wayfinding signage, and tours, while the mandatory driver education training with regard to pedestrians ensures that drivers are aware of their role in keeping pedestrians safe.
- The number of community events, including the Summer Concert Series and the Downtown Days, held in Lee's Summit is indicative of the town's desire to create walking events in the community and enhance to opportunity to walk.
- The trail system is diverse, provides excellent opportunities for recreation, and is well integrated into new planning efforts in the community, which indicates the willingness of the town government to consider pedestrians in all new development.
- By evaluating each road project in the town before and after the treatment, Lee's Summit has developed a better understanding of how it has impacted pedestrian safety and walkability and can use positive findings to justify more investment in pedestrian projects.

Lee's Summit has exhibited a desire to become a community that supports active transportation. You have made some excellent progress to support walking through excellent maps, guided tours, and signage; by constructing, maintaining, and enhancing the trail system;

and by evaluating road projects to determine the impacts on the pedestrian mode of transportation.

Despite those positive elements, we have noted several areas in which your community can improve its policies, programs, and standards. Please continue to build upon this foundation to work to improve your Walk Friendly Community designation, as Lee's Summit could advance to the next level by making certain improvements and changes. This report card provides detailed feedback on how your community can take it to the next level; take the time to review the feedback and contact us with any questions.

## Primary Recommendations

This section identifies and provides suggestions for the most vital areas of improving Lee's Summit's overall walkability. Additional details are provided in the following sections. **We recommend that you read these areas thoroughly and develop clear goals, benchmarks, funding sources, and an implementation schedule for reaching these goals.**

- Your community should **develop an ongoing count program** to regularly determine the levels of walking in Lee's Summit. This process will help you determine where people are walking, and where you can focus your improvements. Counts will also play a big part in pre-/post-evaluations of projects, which should be incorporated as well.
- Encouraging walking can often be difficult in places where automobile use is entrenched. One place to start is to **organize car-free days, or ciclovias**, which close the street to automobile traffic and open it to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized users. This type of event can provide an opportunity to be active in the city, while also allowing for positive interaction with other members of the community and creating momentum around transportation other than motor vehicles.
- One good first step would be to develop and adopt a **dedicated pedestrian plan**, including a position for a **full-time pedestrian coordinator**. You have many good programs in your community. A dedicated plan, with clear goals and realistic/measurable outcomes, can coordinate these efforts and bring your programs to the next level.
- Enhance your **enforcement activities** as they related to pedestrian safety. Lee's Summit has a dedicated traffic safety team that could really expand its activities in the form of crosswalk decoy operations and other high-visibility enforcement programs.

## Feedback by Section

This remainder of this report card will provide detailed feedback and suggestions for each section in the community assessment tool. Feedback will include research to support the importance of this question as well as tools, guides, and case studies of successful implementations in other communities.

Each section received an overall score as defined below:

- **Walk Friendly:** The responses in this section indicate that your community is particularly strong in this area with great efforts being made towards improving walkability. Even so,

there are always areas within this section where improvements and growth could be made.

- **On the Right Track:** This score indicates that your community does not exhibit the characteristics to be truly walk friendly in this section, but that there are still good existing programs or new programs that could be expanded. Please review our suggestions on how you could improve the walkability in this area.
- **Needs Attention:** This score indicates that your community does not yet demonstrate strong programs, policies, and results, characteristic of a Walk Friendly Community based on the responses in this section. Please review our suggestions carefully on how you can create positive change in your community with both short- and long-term objectives.

## Community Profile

### Walk Friendly

- For a town of roughly 91,000, it is great to see that you have a half time position for pedestrian and bicycle coordinator. As the community continues to grow, making this person full-time on pedestrian and bicycle issues could have a substantial effect on making the community more pedestrian-friendly and enhancing safety.

## Status of Walking

### On the Right Track

- It is great to see that the walking mode share in Lee's Summit is increasing! This is particularly noteworthy for a city of under 100,000 people. Based on this data, the City of Lee's Summit will have tangible evidence pointing to the fact that people are walking, which will aid in soliciting funding and further improving the pedestrian environment. Conducting pedestrian and bicycle counts will only supplement these numbers and provide more evidence that people are walking.
- Both the average 5 year crash rate as well as the percentage of fatal crashes to all crashes is relatively low for Lee's Summit. Still, the crash rate is significantly higher than desirable, though the fatality rate is quite low. This suggests that a large number of these crashes are occurring at lower speeds and as a result of pedestrian exposure. Your City should employ regular counts to gauge where the volumes are related to crashes. The [National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project](#) could provide more insight on this.
- Lee's Summit seems to have taken some steps to determine what is causing the pedestrian crashes in the city. By continuing to fund and support walking initiatives, volumes will continue to increase. Also, by supporting and implementing countermeasures to decrease vehicle speeds and discourage dangerous driving practices, crash numbers will continue to decrease.

## Planning

### On the Right Track

- Lee's Summit's plan seems quite comprehensive, but is lacking in some areas. A target mode share would provide a specific goal for the city to attain, while a crash reduction

goal can provide extra impetus in implementing crash countermeasures. This [resource](#) can provide some examples, while this [one](#) can help guide the plan development process. In addition, other aspects of walking, including educational and encouragement initiatives as well as additional design considerations, could be included in the pedestrian plan.

- An ADA plan is the basis of any truly walkable community. Planning for all types of pedestrians is the hallmark of a comprehensive approach toward pedestrian mobility and safety. This [checklist](#) could be useful in evaluating sidewalks and intersections, while this [guide](#) can provide information about universal accessibility. One great way to involve citizens in planning for sidewalks and planning for accessibility is to use an accessibility evaluation tool. This [case study](#) demonstrates how this process can be successful.
- Great Complete Streets Plan! By adopting a Complete Streets policy and ensuring that all users of the roadway will be incorporated into its design, Lee's Summit is far ahead of communities of a similar size. A good next step would be to actually create a set of measures for implementation, such as specific design guidance for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and sample street cross sections.
- The Livable Streets Advisory Board is an excellent and unique step towards involving the public in the planning process. However, other avenues of public input should also be included in the planning process. In particular, a Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Board, a Planning Review Board, and a general Transportation Advisory Committee can involve the public in various ways and can provide support to city staff. This [link](#) can help communities with building support for pedestrian issues.
- While including stipulations to ensure that transportation facilities are connected and that block lengths support walking in the Unified Development Ordinance is a good step toward ensuring that development is supportive of walking, having a stand-alone policy would indicate that this is a primary concern in Lee's Summit. This [paper](#) and this [resource](#) can provide more information about the importance of connectivity.
- Excellent trail initiatives! High quality trail networks form the facility network backbone of many walkable communities and can also encourage recreational walking. These types of trails also stimulate economic development and tourism and can raise property values. Considering the provision of incentives to build trails could contribute to a greater network of trails in Lee's Summit, particularly in conjunction with private development.
- A strong public transit system is linked with more walking, as transit riders are also pedestrians at some point during the trip. Lee's Summit, for a smaller city, has done well to integrate their system in with a greater regional system. Also, the percent of ADA compliant measures around bus stops is exceptional. There are a number of resources available about how to improve the integration of public transit and walking. The Washington D.C. metro has some good [information](#), while the FHWA has produced as helpful [guide](#).
- These parking standards, including shared parking allowances and park and ride lots, are representative of Lee's Summit's push for a more walkable downtown. Lee's Summit could consider, however, implementing maximum parking standards, which limit the amount of parking, increase density, and can minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts at driveways; priced public parking, which can increase revenue for the city and encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation; and parking cashout incentives, which encourage residents to give up their parking space in return for a small

sum each month. For more information, the San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Commission has produced a Best Practices [resource](#) that can provide further guidance about this. The EPA's [resource](#) is helpful as well.

- According to research, dense development leads to higher levels of walking and transit use and less driving. Some measures to increase density, such as form-based codes and mixed use districts can be very positive for the vitality of a community or city center. The policies in Lee's Summit leave something to be desired. Form-based codes, or overlay districts, should be implemented to create a more walkable structure to the city. An EPA [resource](#) can provide more information about this subject. Also, this [resource](#) provides some detail about how dense development and mixed use can mitigate the problems of climate change.
- Providing guidelines for the placement of amenities in the right of way would be beneficial. While street trees, lighting, buffering, and landscaping can really enhance the pedestrian experience, mandating the provision of public art, traffic calming measures, and street furniture can help create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment in all areas of Lee's Summit. These measures may not amount to much individually, but the combination of pedestrian friendly urban design features can increase walking substantially. Check out this [guide](#) as well as the Seattle Right of Way Improvement [Manual](#) for an example.

## Education & Encouragement

### Walk Friendly

- Safe Routes to School programs are great ways to encourage walking, improve safety, and reduce traffic and pollution. By maintaining the Safe Routes to School participation levels in Lee's Summit, a culture of walking can be fostered in your City. Efforts should be taken to improve the programs across the school system, and increase program/event frequency, particularly with regard to a regular Walking Wednesday program and instituting a Walking School Bus [program](#). Information about school programs can be found at the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#).
- Lee's Summit has made a good start in terms of providing education and encouragement programs in the city, including public health campaigns and driving safety with respect to pedestrians. However, much more can be done. One possibility would be to offer courses to children to learn road safety, while another would be to encourage a corporate walk- or bike-to-work challenge.
- Lee's Summit could consider a Car Free Event, or Ciclovía, during which a selected route will be closed to vehicle traffic and opened up for jogging, walking, and cycling. The event usually occurs on a Sunday morning and focuses community attention on alternative modes, and can provide numerous other benefits. This [case study](#) from Chicago, Illinois as well as this [case study](#) from San Francisco, California can provide more guidance.

## Engineering

### Walk Friendly

- The existing sidewalk network is reasonably extensive with room for improvement. It is good to see that the amount of planned sidewalk construction is increasing. The city

should consider continuing, and even increase, this. Walkways should be part of every new and renovated facility and every effort should be made to retrofit streets that currently do not have sidewalks. Lee's Summit, overall, has done a good job with their sidewalk coverage, but should continue to add sidewalks to both sides of collectors and arterials.

- Creating an implementation schedule for adding sidewalks can be a helpful tool to legitimize and prioritize sidewalk construction. In terms of finding the funds for sidewalk construction, this [website](#) as well as this [website](#) can provide some more guidance. For more innovative funding sources, see this [page](#).
- Bridges provide crucial access points for pedestrians over barriers that can be dangerous to cross on foot (freeways, railroad tracks). It would be encouraging to see bridges with facilities on more than just one side, though the fact that Lee's Summit has included pedestrian accommodations on all of the more recently constructed bridges is heartening. More information about bridges can be found [here](#).
- Pedestrian signalization is an important component of a walkable environment, a fact which is borne out in Lee's Summit. The small share of intersections with audible walk and vibrotactile signals could be improved, while [Accessible Pedestrian Signals](#) could be integrated in to the system as well.
- Lee's Summit should begin moving away from parallel lines in favor of more effective crosswalk patterns. Parallel lines are the least visible and require more maintenance than other patterns. The [policy](#) for Columbia, MO could provide some guidance. Further guidance on crosswalks is available at this [website](#) and at this [one](#). Another improvement that Lee's Summit could consider is the use of advance stop lines. An advance stop/yield line placed 6 to 15 m (20 to 50 ft.) ahead of the crosswalk can greatly reduce the likelihood of a multiple-threat crash, as this encourages drivers to stop back far enough so a pedestrian can see if a second motor vehicle is not stopping and take evasive action.
- These features are very positive, but the curb radius standard is high for a pedestrian friendly environment, especially in downtown areas. Higher curb radii allow vehicles to make turns more quickly and can endanger pedestrians trying to cross. Curb radii can, in fact, be tighter than any modern guide would allow: older and some neo-traditional cities frequently have radii of 10 to 15 feet (3 to 4.6 m) without suffering any detrimental effects. More typically, in new construction, the appropriate turning radius is about 15 feet (4.6 m) for residential streets and about 25 feet (7.6 m) for arterial streets with a substantial volume of turning buses and/or trucks.
- Recently, many innovative pedestrian treatments have become more prevalent across the United States. Leading Pedestrian Intervals, High-intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) beacons, and rectangular rapid flash beacons are some of the treatments that can have huge effects on yielding times. The PBIC has [two resources](#) that provide more guidance.
- Traffic calming can provide substantial safety benefits in terms of pedestrian crashes. More information can be found [here](#). Providing these types of treatments in neighborhoods and along school routes is particularly important for child pedestrian safety. Lee's Summit has done a good job of providing traffic calming, though, and should continue to implement traffic calming measures in the community.

## **Enforcement**

### **On the Right Track**

- Excellent staff commitment! Having a dedicated traffic safety officer shows a commitment to enforcing laws to protect pedestrians. It would be helpful to dedicate substantial amounts of time to enforcing pedestrian laws, though this is not possible for many agencies. South Carolina provides an example of [pedestrian safety officer training](#).
- Enforcement efforts can have a large effect on motorist yielding behavior and should be supplemented by education programs to have the most effect. One particularly effective method, particularly at locations with a documented crash problem, is the crosswalk stinging or pedestrian decoy technique. By using this enforcement type, drivers are made aware of what types of behaviors are not allowed. Using this in conjunction with progressive ticketing scheme allows officers to educate drivers rather than penalize them. More information can be found [here](#), or you can check out a similar [program](#) in Montana.
- As in many communities, many more tickets are given out for speeding when compared with failure to yield for a number of reasons. This [resource](#) can provide some more information about the effectiveness of citations, while this [case study](#) provides an example of using photo enforcement effectively.
- It's great to see that the police are engaged with pedestrian safety issues in the community. One aspect that could be improved in Lee's Summit, however, would to provide pedestrian level lighting, especially LED or white lighting, which can greatly improve security and safety for pedestrians. Lighting not only makes for a more enjoyable walking environment, but also acts as a deterrent against crime and highlights pedestrians to drivers at night. Consider evaluating your crash data to determine where nighttime crashes are occurring, and target those locations with lighting improvements. Emergency call boxes could also be considered in the community. This [document](#) can provide more information.
- Adult school crossing guards play an important role in the lives of children who walk or bicycle to school. While the primary role of an adult school crossing guard is to guide children safely across the street, children also remain responsible for their own safety. There are many model crossing guard programs in existence. At minimum, crossing guards should be vetted by the community, trained by certified training programs, provided with class 2 reflective vests and hand held stop paddles. The [Adult School Crossing Guard Guidelines](#) might be a helpful resource.
- Focusing discussions on pedestrian safety can target helpful countermeasures and create a cooperative dialogue between engineering and enforcement departments. Creating a special focus group in these division can help focus on where the problems are and how to deal with them appropriately. By partnering with engineers, planners, and school officials, law enforcement officers can help identify and improve pedestrian safety problems. To better understand a systematic strategy, your community could research and consider training officers in [Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety](#) (DDACTS).
- Excellent comprehensive traffic review process. Lee's Summit could consider reviewing crash sites on a more frequent basis to mitigate crash problems promptly and effectively.

## Evaluation

### On the Right Track



- The peak hour traffic counts for pedestrians are a good start for Lee's Summit, though a regular and dedicated pedestrian count program would be really helpful in the city. This type of program would provide solid baseline data and would inform where engineering measures would enhance the pedestrian environment and mitigate pedestrian crash problems.
- In addition to the Road Safety Audit Program, Lee's Summit should look into conducting road safety audits on a more regular basis, especially in high-crash areas. The [Pedestrian Road Safety Audit Guidelines and Prompt Lists](#) can be very valuable for diverse groups of City staff (engineers, planners, law enforcement) in reviewing the pedestrian environment and developing recommendations. [Walkability checklists](#) are another easy tool for both planners and citizens and can provide helpful data as well as recommendations about which improvements could be considered at a particular intersection or on a particular street.
- Conducting pre- and post-evaluations for your developments and other projects is the only way to know how your efforts have improved pedestrian safety. By evaluating each project, you will develop a better understanding of how it has impacted pedestrian safety and walkability you can use positive findings to justify more investment in pedestrian projects. Good Work!

## More Information

If you have questions or comments regarding this feedback, your community's initiatives and programs, or the application process in general, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact:

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