



City of Flagstaff – Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization Fourth Street Corridor Walkability Audit

2 October 2009

Introduction

A walkability audit is a community-based exercise intended to highlight opportunities, identify obstacles, and evaluate how easy it is to get around a neighborhood on foot. On October 2, 2009, a walkability audit was conducted along the Fourth Street corridor on the eastern edge of the Sunnyside neighborhood, from Seventh Avenue to Cedar Avenue (see attached map).

The walkability audit was part of Flagstaff's fifth annual Pedestrian Awareness Week, a series of events held each October that celebrate Flagstaff's walkable character and raise awareness of pedestrian issues. The audit was also done in conjunction with the City of Flagstaff's Fourth Street corridor study. The event was organized by the City of Flagstaff's Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Coconino County Injury Prevention and Safe Kids Program.



The event began with a short workshop on how to conduct a walkability audit. Following the workshop, participants were sent on a "walkabout" tour through the neighborhood. During the walkabout, each participant was asked to rate the neighborhood using the Walkability Checklist (attached), which is adapted from the checklist form developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. At the conclusion of the tour, participants re-assembled as a group to compare scores, share comments and observations, and discuss the corridor's walkability issues.

A total of seven completed Walkability Checklists were returned and are tabulated and summarized in the next section. The percentage shown in front of each issue under "some problems" indicates the number of times it was checked on the returned forms. The last section includes a general summary of comments and observations made either on completed Walkability Checklists or during the wrap-up discussion following the walkabout tour.

Checklist results

1 Did you have room to walk?

Average score: **2.3** out of 6

0% Yes

Some problems:

- 100% Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- 86% Too close to traffic – no buffer between street and sidewalk
- 71% Sidewalks were broken or cracked
- 71% Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, parked cars, etc.
- 57% Sidewalks not wide enough
- 43% No place to walk – no sidewalks, paths, or shoulders

Other problems:

- Too many driveways and curb ramps

What was good?

- Lot of pedestrians
- Continuous bike lanes
- Lots of activity
- Making it more pedestrian friendly would have a positive impact
- Big lots is a popular destination
- Lots of walkers
- Desire for adequate facilities is high
- Lots of walkers

2 Was it easy to cross streets?

Average score: **1.3** out of 6

0% Yes

Some problems:

- 86% Few places to cross - needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
- 71% Road was too wide
- 71% Too much traffic
- 71% No curb ramps, or ramps needed repair

Other problems:

- Distance between signals made marked crosswalks few and far between
- Conflicts between crossing pedestrians and traffic
- Pedestrian crossings resemble "frogger" video game
- Lots of "dart and dash" pedestrian crossings
- Lots of crossings near North Country Health Center

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- No mid-block crossings provided
 - Ramps generally not ADA-compliant
 - Crosswalks not close to bus stops
 - Too many jaywalkers

What was good?

3 Did drivers behave well?

Average score: **2.9** out of 6

14% Yes

Some problems:

- 100% Drove too fast
- 43% Did not yield to people crossing the street

Other problems:

- Mid-block crossings create problems for drivers and pedestrians
- Seems like to-work/from-work traffic

What was good?

- Many drivers seem ready to stop for pedestrians
- Cars did slow a little for jaywalkers
- Cars seemed used to jaywalkers; slowed as people ran across

4 Was your walk pleasant?

Average score: **2.3** out of 6

14% Yes

Some problems:

- 100% Needs more grass, flowers, or trees
- 71% Area not well maintained
- 57% Too much exposure to traffic

Other problems:

- Traffic too fast
- Cinders; snow in winter
- Lots of pedestrian generators, including a number of schools along the corridor; but few crossings
- Cinders, weeds

What was good?

- Large ponderosas all along corridor
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- Great potential
- Potential to be great street
- Lots of activity; many businesses
- Lots of walkers; vibrant pedestrian community

Total score

8.7 out of 24

- 21-24 Celebrate! Your neighborhood is great for walking
 17-20 Pretty good – celebrate a little
 13-16 OK, but needs some work
 9-12 Needs a lot of work
 4-8 It's a disaster for walking

Comments and observations

The following comments and observations are taken from the completed Walkability Checklists and/or were brought up during the wrap-up discussion following the walkabout tour.

- The average walkability score for the Fourth Street corridor is 8.7 out of a possible 24 points. This score places it between “Needs a lot of work” and “It’s a disaster for walking” on the rating system.
- There are a significant number of pedestrian generators along or near the corridor, including a number of schools, two health care facilities, a church, a campus of Coconino Community College, a public library, as well as numerous businesses. This results in a lot of pedestrian activity in the area.
- At the same time, there are very few formal pedestrian crossings along the street. Marked crossings and pedestrian signals are provided at the traffic signals at Route 66, Seventh Street and Cedar Avenue, which are spaced almost one-half mile apart, but there are no formal pedestrian crossings in between. As a result, many pedestrians cross at undefined mid-block locations.





- As observed numerous times by the group, pedestrians typically cross the first two lanes of traffic, then pause in the center two-way left turn lane, then cross the remaining lanes when clear. Most pedestrians hurried across or were running. While the center turn lane allows pedestrians to break the crossing into two phases, there is also a risk of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles using the center lane for left turns.
- Participants observed a number of issues that negatively affect walkability along Fourth Street: there is a lot of traffic, traffic tends to move fast, and the street is fairly wide. All of these factors make it difficult for pedestrians to cross from one side of the street to the other, and it creates a barrier in the neighborhood.
- Public sidewalks are missing in several places on the east side of Fourth Street. In all of these locations there is a well-defined pathway in the gravel adjacent to the road, indicating pedestrian use even in the absence of sidewalks.

- The absence of a parkway strip along the entire corridor places pedestrians uncomfortably close to traffic, although the presence of bike lanes provides some buffer between the sidewalk and lanes of traffic.
- Adding landscaping and pedestrian amenities where there are opportunities along the street would considerably improve the pedestrian environment.
- The number and frequency of driveways creates problems for disabled persons and those with mobility limitations. Every place a driveway crosses the public sidewalk, the sidewalk is tilted at a steep angle towards the street to form a driveway pan. The slope of the driveway pan generally exceeds the 2 percent cross-slope for accessible routes. Newer driveways route the sidewalk around the back of the driveway pan, which allows the sidewalk to maintain a cross-slope of less than 2 percent.
- Many segments of existing sidewalks along Fourth Street are broken and need repair. In



- addition, overgrown weeds and debris obstructed sidewalks on some side streets, in particular along King Street near Seventh Avenue.
- There is good Mountain Line transit access and two bus stops along the corridor. However, in this section of Fourth Street, Mountain Line's Route 7 travels one-way south-bound, so bus stops are located on the west side of the street and are difficult to reach from the east side. In addition, neither bus stop includes a shelter, and one does not have a bench for riders.
 - The audit acknowledged a need and an opportunity to provide a public walkway connection between the east side of Fourth Street and the Coconino County Health Department. The connection could be made if an easement were obtained from one property between the street and the Health Department site. According to employees, this connection is already used informally by both employees and visitors.
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- A formal connection would greatly enhance transit access to the Health Department. The walking route from the nearest bus stop to the front door of the Health Department is more than one-half mile (2,850 feet) in length and requires significant out-of-direction travel - south on Fourth Street, east on Seventh Avenue, and north on King Street. A mid-block walkway connection would reduce that trip length by about 2,000 feet, to less than one-sixth of a mile.
 - Several local businesses along the route, which were informally interviewed by participants as part of the audit, said that a significant percentage of their clients and customers arrive on foot or by transit. Those interviewed were generally supportive of improvements to the street for pedestrians.
 - Participants in the audit recognized that the corridor has lots of potential to become more walkable, and the existing level of pedestrian activity provides a good starting point. Much improvement could be made with some minor fixes, including completion of missing sidewalks, repair and clean-up of existing sidewalks, installation of landscaping and other pedestrian amenities, and provision of formal pedestrian crossings at several points along the street.

For further information

Martin Ince

Multi-Modal Transportation Planner
City of Flagstaff/FMPO
211 West Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

928-226-4850
mince@flagstaffaz.gov

Kimberly Sharp

Neighborhood Planner
City of Flagstaff
211 West Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

928-779-7685 x7217
ksharp@flagstaffaz.gov

Karl Eberhard

Community Design and Redevelopment Manager
City of Flagstaff
211 West Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

928-779-7685 x7268
keberhard@flagstaffaz.gov

Attachments

- Map of the Fourth Street corridor
- Walkability Checklist



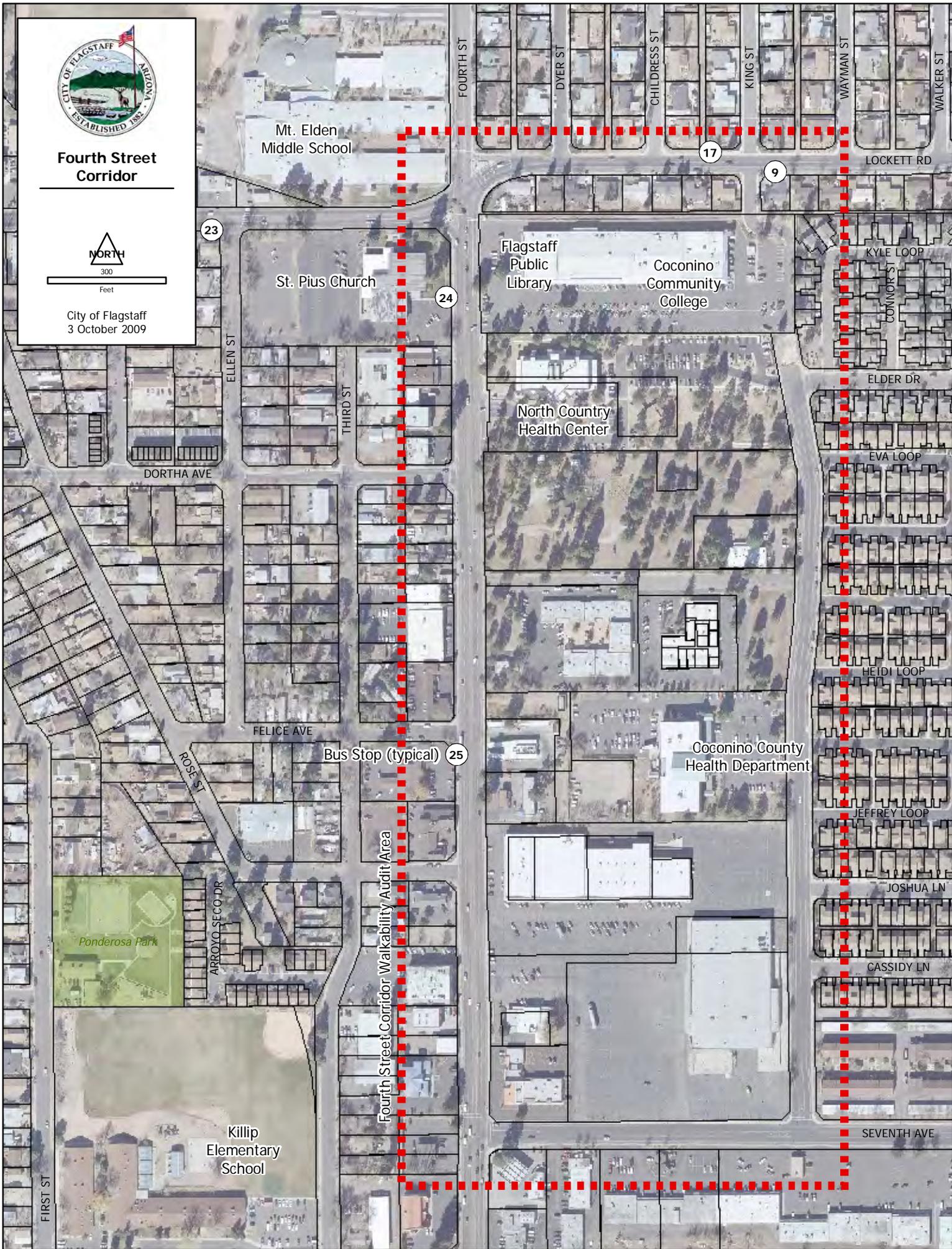
Fourth Street Corridor



300

Feet

City of Flagstaff
3 October 2009





City of Flagstaff
Walkability Checklist

Location of walk:

Date:

Rating scale:

1
awful

2
many
problems

3
some
problems

4
good

5
very good

6
excellent

1 Did you have room to walk?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Yes
- No, some problems:
 - Sidewalks not wide enough
 - Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
 - Sidewalks were broken or cracked
 - Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, parked cars, etc.
 - No place to walk – no sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
 - Too close to traffic – no buffer between street and sidewalk
 - Something else:

Location of problems:

What was good?

2 Was it easy to cross streets?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Yes
- No, some problems:
 - Road was too wide
 - Too much traffic
 - Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
 - Few places to cross - needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
 - Trees, plants, or parked cars blocked our view of traffic
 - No curb ramps, or ramps needed repair
 - Something else:

Location of problems:

What was good?

3 Did drivers behave well?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Yes
- No, some problems, drivers...
 - Backed out of driveways without looking
 - Did not yield to people crossing the street
 - Turned into people crossing the street
 - Drove too fast
 - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights
 - Something else:

Location of problems:

What was good?

4 Was your walk pleasant?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Yes
- No, some problems:
 - Needs more grass, flowers, or trees
 - Too much exposure to traffic
 - Scary dogs
 - Suspicious activity – scary people
 - Not well lighted
 - Dirty, lots of litter and trash
 - Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
 - Area not well maintained
 - Something else:

Location of problems:

What was good?

Total score:

21-24
Celebrate! Your neighborhood is great for walking

17-20
Pretty good – celebrate a little

13-16
OK, but needs some work

9-12
Needs a lot of work

4-8
It's a disaster for walking