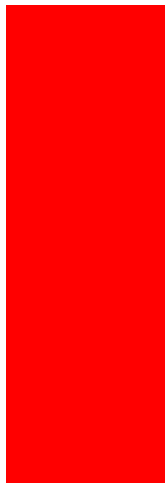# A Recipe for Successful Walkable Cities

In 11 Easy Steps

URBAN DESIGN

Introduction

Walkability

It's the buzzword of our time. Cities plan for it, developers try to serve build it and people say they want it. But what is it that people are really wanting? After all, don't we all walk at least a little?

Fundamentally, what the market is craving are relaxed, public places for socializing. Our social animal is hungry and not being fed properly. And, it just so happens that the thing walkable neighborhoods do better than suburban-style development is deliver sociability.

This recipe, in **11 steps**, is a simple process for cities to follow to best position themselves for today's desires. It has the spin-off benefit that the techniques are timeless enough to benefit cities and people for generations to come. Follow these steps and people will in fact walk more. Your streets and public spaces will grow with life. Put simply, if you want to succeed, start here.

Since prioritizing is critical to success, **four** of the eleven steps are highlighted throughout the document in RED These are absolute must-do's, and just accomplishing them can get you 70% of the way down the path to success. Now: get started!
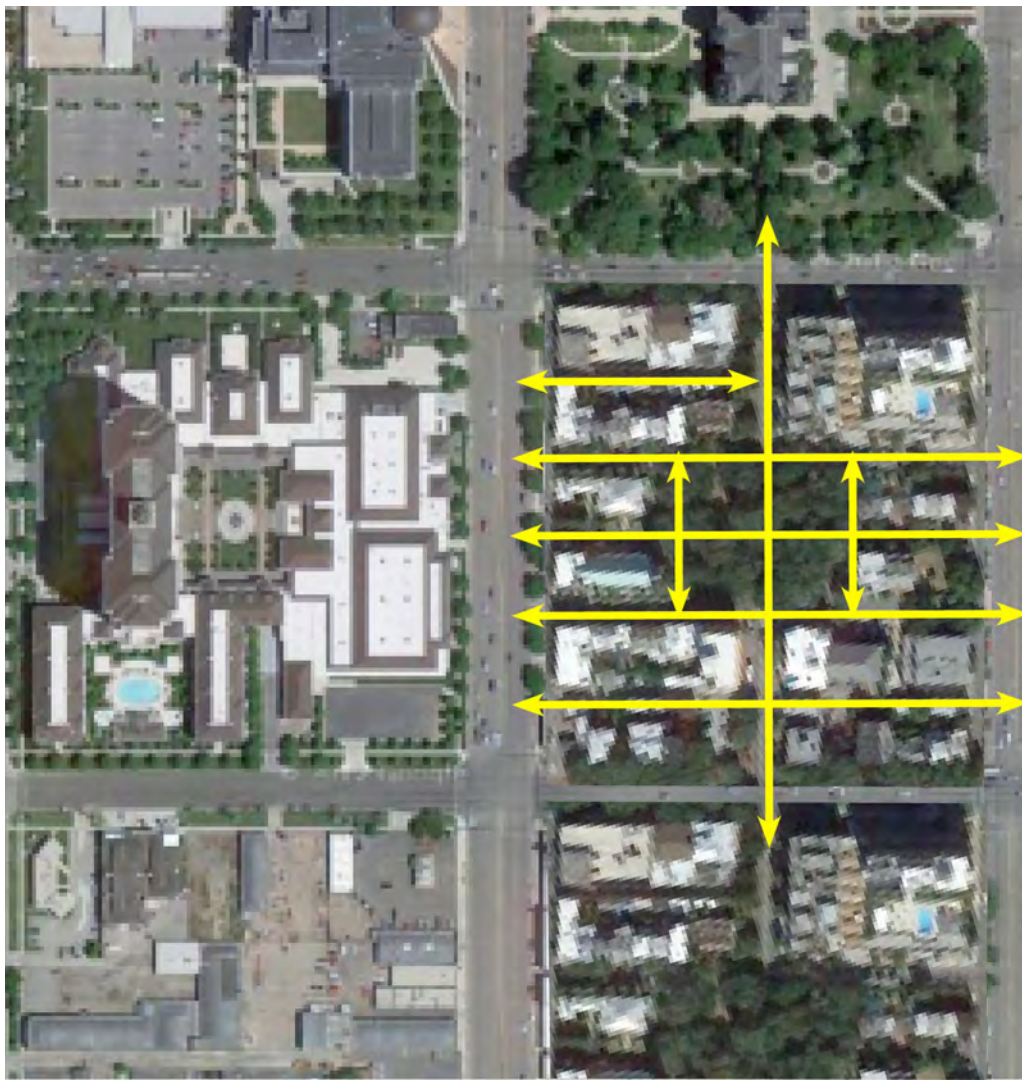
Make no large blocks

They have no magic to stir people's desires, and probably will repel human activity. A highly-connected street network is the foundation a good city rests on. It can take many forms and designs, but it must not be boring. What is boring? Experiment for yourself, but generally if you have to walk farther than 400 or 500 feet without an opportunity for another route you will find yourself losing interest. The best places for walking have many frequent streets, alleys and pathways. If your blocks are bigger than four or five acres, subdivide them and/or create more paths.

1. Oil the pot
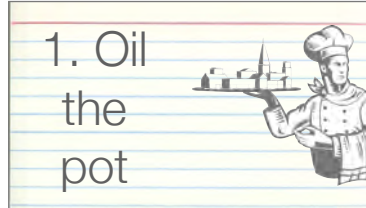
Walkable Street grids (and some that aren't)
In Allan Jacobs' book, *Great Streets*, he utilizes one square mile black-and-white drawings of cities to illustrate the kinds of "bones" a city needs to succeed.

MISSISSAUGA BARCELONA COPENHAGEN

LONDON NEW YORK PARIS

ROME SAN FRANCISCO TORONTO
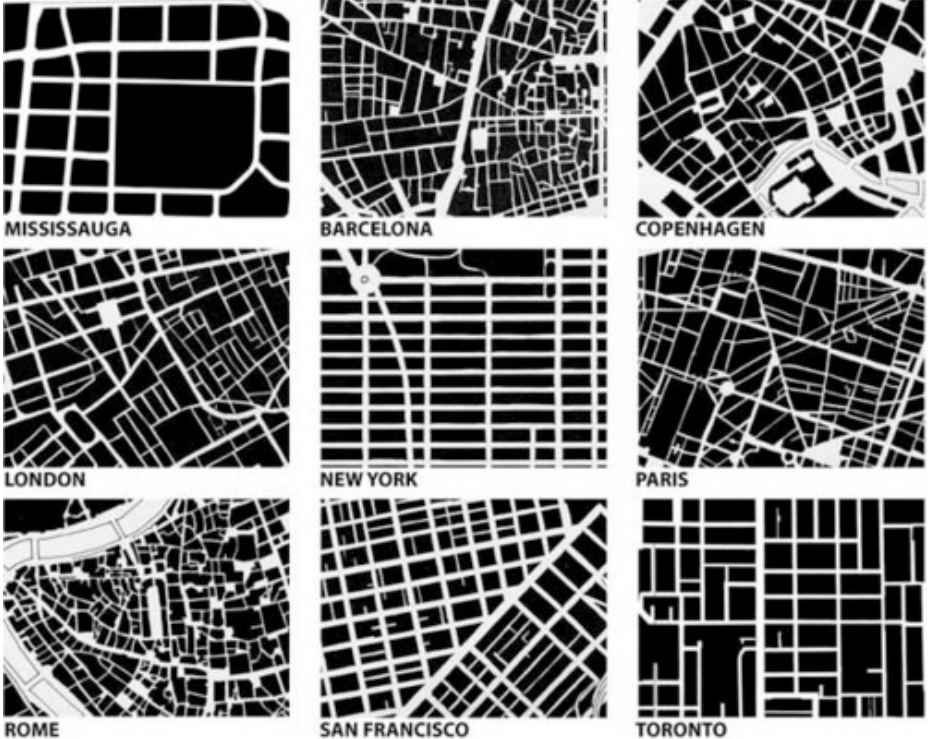
Attractive buildings and improved streets simply aren't enough. People need enjoyable, relaxing places to socialize. Call them parks, squares, plazas or whatever your like. Just make sure to create and nurture them. But (there's always a but) you can't just locate them anywhere there's space.

Humans want places to hang out away from the noise and smell of vehicles, but they also want to see and be seen. We want to enjoy that adult beverage, show off a wedding dress or just linger and people watch. Having quality public space in and of itself is good, but the secret sauce is making sure it's also in the right location.

Appeal to the social animal

2. Prepare the stock

Four Types of Cyclists
By Proportion of Population

	Interested But Concerned - 60%	No Way No How 33%

Strong & Fearless <1% Enthused & Confident 7%

Source - Portland, OR DOT

Biking so easy your mom will ride

3. Season the stock

Biking isn't a superfluous method of getting around for sociable, walkable places. It's an essential ingredient. The problem is that we've treated bicycles as a nuisance instead of as a legitimate form of transportation. The results: our streets are hostile to bikes and most people don't ride.

Want people to walk more in your city or town? Make it easy for them to bike as well. Very easy. Encourage and provide real, modern bicycle infrastructure. And remember, if it's not safe enough for your mom to ride then you've missed the point.

Treat your streets like outdoor rooms

4. Add veggies

We've made great progress in the last couple of decades recognizing that streets are not just for cars. In fact, most of our streets were built well before our cities even had motorized vehicles of any kind. You can use jargon such as Complete Streets, but the simple truth is that streets need to be comfortable and beautiful in order to encourage people to walk. They don't have to be bland or "necessary." If the climate is hot, the streets need shade. If traffic is busy, make sure pedestrians and cyclists are protected. **An easy first step: plant street trees**. Always ask yourself, "Do I feel comfortable jaywalking?" If the answer is yes, you're on the right track.
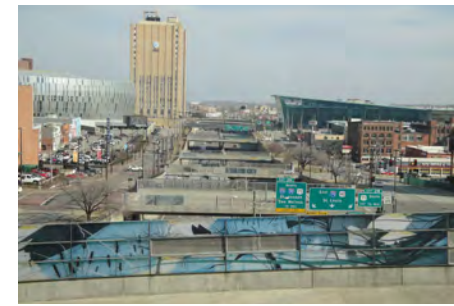
Force all of the cars to slow down

5. Add healthy proteins

Nearly all of our cities were ravaged in at least a small way by the car culture mania of the 20th century. We built freeways through neighborhoods, widened roads to foolishly prioritize fast traffic and sacrificed natural features. These massive arteries clogged with traffic and made walking or biking unbearable. It's long past time to atone for those errors. As the lifespan of these roadways reach their end, it's time to return our cities to their highest and best use: places for people. These changes won't be easy to stomach or cheap. But in a well-functioning city, there's rarely a reason for vehicles to be moving faster than 30 or 35mph.

Taking room away from traffic
This street was formerly two lanes of speeding one-way traffic. The conversion, while not ideal, is a great start in forcing cars to slow down in walkable neighborhoods.

6. Bring to a boil

The business model du jour is the "lean startup." Quickly fading are the days of the mythical five-year business plan. The idea now: experiment. Fail fast and cheap, so the saying goes. Learn from your mistakes (and your successes) and understand what works for real people. Get out of the theoretical world of the "perfect" plan.
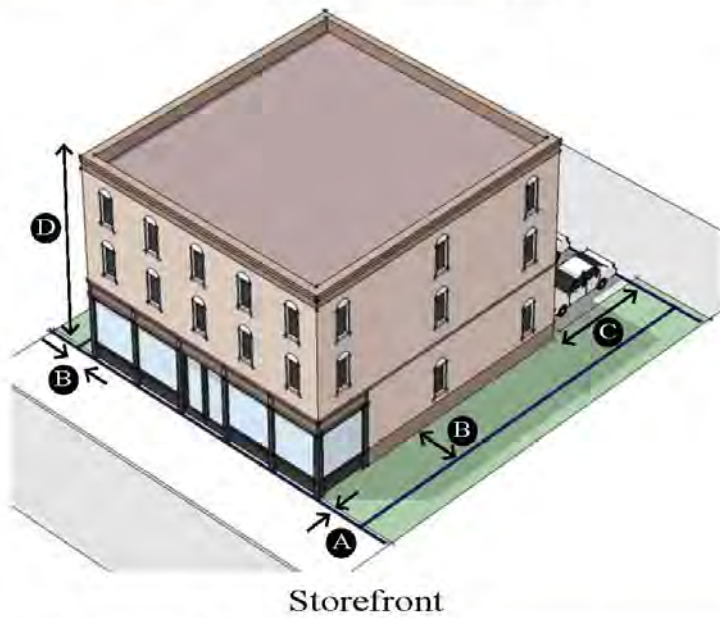
Our cities need to take the same attitude. Long-range plans are exciting and inspiring. They also very rarely happen as intended. Don't delay action today just because you don't are missing a few ingredients.
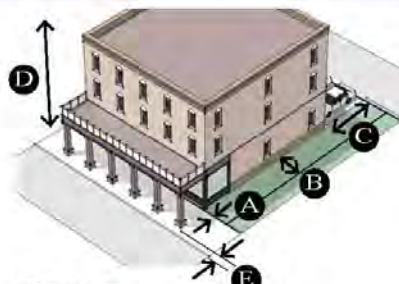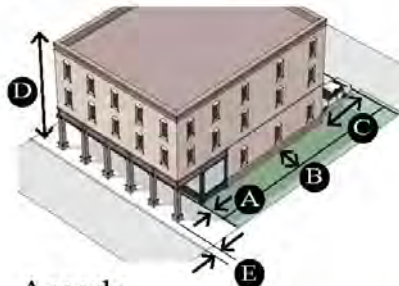
6.1 MIXED-USE BUILDING: GROUP A FRONTAGE TYPES

Allowed Group C Frontage Types

Storefront

Gallery

Arcade

Building Setbacks

or parking, the ground floor (for frontage at street level) may be used for retail or office.

Allowed Frontage Types & Building Location

Allowed Frontage Types — Setbacks & Height

Group A	Storefront	
	Gallery	Page 41
	Arcade	
Group B	No Group B Frontage Types are Allowed	

Allowed Uses by Floor

	Allowed Use
First Floor	Retail or Office
Upper Floor(s)	Office, Residential, Lodging, Storage, or Parking

Intensity of Use

	Allowed Intensity of Use		
Use	T6	T5	T4
Retail	No Applicable Standard		building area available for retail use is limited to the first story of block corner locations
Office	No Applicable Standard		building area available for office use is limited to the first story of block corner locations
Lodging	No Applicable Standard		maximum of 12 bedrooms for lodging allowed on each lot
Residential	maximum of one accessory unit per main structure		
All uses	use limited by the parking standard		

Landscape Plantings

Frontage Type		Required Number of Landscape Plantings*
Group A	Storefront	0
	Gallery	
	Arcade	

*Landscape Plantings shall be located between the Frontage Line and the Building Facade

Parking

	Required Number of Parking Spaces			Location of the Required Parking Spaces
Use	T6	T5	T4	For All Zones:
Residential	No Minimum	1 space / dwelling unit min.		off-street

Saying no is easier said than done. But it's something we all learn to do. Just like all restauranteurs are not created equal, neither are all developers. Some really get it and want to serve your market and long-term interests. Others care nothing about your goals, and actively try to subvert them.

That's why cities need rules. Good rules. Rules designed specifically for walkable places. Today we have a tool designed for this purpose called form-based codes. If you don't have some version of a form-based code for your walkable neighborhoods, you're already working with a flawed recipe. Put a good code in place; make it fair and legible; and make it easy for people to do the right thing.

Say yes to the right developers and no to the wrong ones

7. Reduce heat & simmer
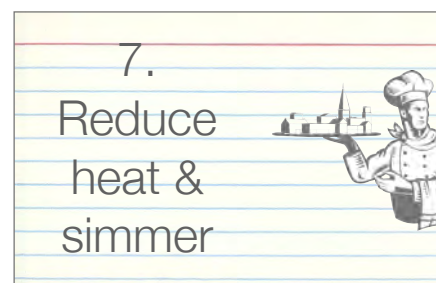
The results of bad codes (or just as likely: no codes)

Encourage people to share

8. Add grains & legumes

Just like Kindergarten, we are all learning to share again. From bikes to cars, rides, kitchens, and even our homes, sharing mania is spreading. In walkable places, it's even more important to share limited resources. Parking lots, for example, create dead space. Dead space can't be used for human activity, which means it also can't be monetized by developers. Sharing resources helps use space more efficiently. Successful cities go beyond allowing for sharing operations; they encourage them. Go back to school and start sharing.

Share

Young people are not the be-all, end-all for urban living but they are important. Young people bring life, creativity and newness. They live outdoors more often than those of us that are older, and they are more open to trying new things. Older people like being around the energy young people bring. The opposite is not necessarily true.

Cities need life to thrive, and young people create life. They bring that extra bit of flavor we love. When you have an opportunity, seize it and actively recruit young people to your city or town.

Recruit young people

9. Add cream

As you work with designers, builders and developers (and create your codes) make sure what you're doing fits the place. Each city has its own unique reason for existing; its own flavor. That flavor comes from a combination of climate, geography, history and culture. Have your buildings speak to that no differently than the ingredients present in the local food. Avoid the tendency to define a "time" and instead focus on your own place. The best places, and the most beautiful, are simple, timeless and local.

Support Everything Local
~ theunchainedtour.org ~
PRINTING BY Jiangshay SAVANNAH, GA

Design and build for local

10.
Season to
taste

With any successful endeavor you can point to someone that is in charge. Someone that's a leader and who has a passion for what they're doing. They might lead quietly, collaboratively or brashly, but they lead.

Hire the right people and put them in charge

11. Serve and enjoy

When it comes to cities, it's no different. Successful cities have leaders that care and work tirelessly. Except that too often cities hire people to design and manage walkable places that don't enjoy them to begin with. It's like the old saying: never trust a skinny chef. Find the people that care; the ones that live, breathe and eat walkability. The passionate urbanites are out there in droves. Find them, hire them and enjoy the results.

1. Make no large blocks
2. Appeal to the social animal
3. Biking so easy your mom will ride
4. Treat your streets like outdoor rooms
5. Make all the cars slow down
6. Have a sense of urgency
7. Say yes to the right developers and no to the wrong ones
8. Encourage people to share
9. Recruit young people
10. Design and build for local
11. Hire the right people and put them in charge

Contact Kevin Klinkenberg for consulting, speaking & gastronomic advice

K2 Urban Design

www.kevinklinkenberg.com

kevinklinkenberg@gmail.com

@kevinklink