

Livable, Walkable Communities

ASSESSMENT SCORECARD

LWC ASSESSMENT SCORECARD

The *Assessment Scorecard* is a tool that will help your community identify priority areas for:

1. Improving conditions to encourage walking, biking, and other recreational activities.
2. Increasing access to opportunities such as public open space or parks for engaging in physical activity.

Though all interested community members are encouraged to participate in establishing priorities, some questions in the Scorecard require the experience and knowledge of members of local government, including but not limited to: Planning Boards, Boards of Selectmen, Conservation Commissions, Historical Societies, Recreation Directors/Commissions and other community groups familiar with existing plans for addressing community maintenance and development. Therefore, the LWC Program encourages a collaborative effort to ensure the Scorecard is completed with the best possible accuracy.

In order to consider the concerns and suggestions of all community members when establishing your community's action plan, it is suggested that the Scorecard be used in conjunction with the *Mapping Trails and Linkages* component of the toolkit.

STEPS:

The Scorecard can be completed individually or through group dialogue.

Step 1

1. **Identify** how the Scorecard will be completed (by which committee, in groups/individually, etc.)
2. **Read and respond** to questions in each category by evaluating existing conditions..... p. 3-14
3. **Circle** the appropriate score for each question in the column to the right of the question

Step 2

4. **Determine** your community's score area for each category and record in the space
 Provided p. 3-14

Example of Step 4

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
14-10	9-7	6-0

5. **Record** total scores for each category on the scoring sheet at the end of the Scorecard.. ...p. 15

Step 3

7. **Discuss** the results of each category (regrouping if necessary)
8. **Identify** priority areas the group feels your community should address first
9. **Record** the top 3 recommended priority areas with a brief description in the space providedp. 16

Assessing Your Community's: **HEALTH**

- 1. Does your community encourage walking and bicycling by providing a network of well-maintained sidewalks and paths, bike paths, shoulders, trails, etc.?**
 - Yes, we have a network of well-maintained sidewalks and paths, bike paths, shoulders, trails, and/or a track to encourage physical activity..... 3
 - Opportunities including sidewalks and paths, bike paths, shoulders, trails, and/or a track exist but are not maintained 2
 - Opportunities including sidewalks and paths, bike paths, shoulders, trails, and/or a track are disconnected with no clear pattern for biking and walking to destinations..... 1
 - Our community has no sidewalks, marked trails, or track, or shoulders are narrow 0

- 2. Does your community's master plan include information on being a livable, walkable community including provisions for bike paths, trails, alternatives to auto transport, etc.?**
 - Yes, the master plan includes this information, and there are programs in place to support it 3
 - The master plan includes information on being a livable, walkable community, but does not directly define the vision for accomplishing that goal 2
 - Our master plan is in need of being updated to include this information..... 1
 - We do not yet have a master plan 0

- 3. Does your community have programs that encourage walking (Walk Your Child to School, a Wellness Team for the community or school, Historic Trails, etc.)?**
 - Yes, we have walking programs for people of all ages and abilities 2
 - We have some walking programs, but they do not include all needs/abilities..... 1
 - We have no walking programs 0

- 4. Does your community have a public recreation department or a committee that promotes recreational use of trails and parks?**
 - We have a recreation department/other committee that actively promotes trail, park, and open space use to encourage physical activity 2
 - Our recreation department/committee focuses on maintenance rather than promotion of use 1
 - We have no recreation department/committee 0

- 5. Has your community ensured that sidewalks comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards?**
 - All sidewalks meet the needs of people with disabilities 2
 - We have a plan for ensuring sidewalks meet ADA standards, but the plan has not yet been implemented..... 1
 - We do not yet have a plan to ensure our sidewalks meet ADA standards..... 0

- 6. Are roads within the vicinity of schools designed to encourage children within a mile to walk or bike to school?**
 - All roads within 1 mile of the school are designed for safely walking to school 2
 - Road design around some of our schools encourages walking, but other routes to school are not designed for walking or biking..... 1
 - Road design does not allow for walking and biking to school, therefore most or all children are bussed or driven 0

HEALTH, cont.

7. Does your community provide secure bicycle parking for cyclists?

- Yes, we have bicycle racks in appropriate locations throughout the community2
- Bicycle parking is limited 1
- Our community has no bicycle parking0

8. Does your community have a public recreational facility with opportunities for physical activity that is affordable to all community members?

- We have a public recreational facility affordable to all community members2
- We have a public recreational facility, but it only serves a specific population (i.e. seniors, youth)..... 1
- Our community/neighborhood has no public recreational facility0

Point Total:

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
18-14	13-9	8-0

Assessing Your Community's: **SAFETY**

1. **What is the overall condition of sidewalks in your community?**
 - Sidewalks are well maintained throughout the year2
 - Some sidewalks could use improvements 1
 - Sidewalks are generally in poor condition0

2. **What is the condition of sidewalks in your community in the winter?**
 - Sidewalks are well maintained and plowed throughout the winter 1
 - Some sidewalks are in need of better winter maintenance0

3. **Does your community maintain its trails and paths?**
 - Trails and paths are well maintained year-round2
 - Trails and paths are somewhat maintained 1
 - N/A – Our community has no trails and paths.....0

4. **Does your community have requirements or regulations for creating sidewalks along new roads?**
 - Our community requires sidewalks along all new roads2
 - Requirements for sidewalks are limited to specific zones 1
 - We have no sidewalk requirements for new or existing roads0

5. **Does your community have requirements for lighting along sidewalks, pathways, and/or trails?**
 - We have requirements for lighting, and all sidewalks, pathways, and trails are well lit.....2
 - We have requirements, but lighting has not yet been installed 1
 - We have no lighting requirements.....0

6. **Are roads throughout the community designed to ensure safety of walkers, bicyclists, and others?**
 - We have implemented road designs that ensure safe travel for walkers, bicyclists, and others have been implemented2
 - We have begun to identify road design changes and techniques necessary to ensure rider/pedestrian safety..... 1
 - The community has not yet considered road designs necessary to ensure safety of walkers, bicyclists and others.....0

7. **Does your community have programs to educate drivers about pedestrian safety?**
 - We have programs to educate drivers about pedestrian safety targeted toward all ages and driving abilities in the community2
 - Our driver safety programs are targeted only for a specific audience(youth, seniors, etc.) 1
 - Our community has no driver education programs0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
13-10	9-8	7-0

Assessing Your Community's: **DESTINATIONS & LINKAGES**

1. **Are there destination centers within your community to which people can walk or bike (businesses, post office, shopping, schools, recreation areas)?**
 - Yes, destinations are located mostly within the center/downtown or a neighborhood village2
 - Destinations are scattered throughout the community 1
 - Destinations are located primarily outside of the community and its center, or in another community 0

2. **Has your community identified and mapped its trail and path network?**
 - Yes, our community has mapped its trail system2
 - We have not yet identified or mapped our trail and path network 1
 - N/A - Our community has no public trails and paths0

3. **Does the community have paths and trails that connect residents with destination centers and recreation areas?**
 - Yes, we have a well developed trail system throughout the community2
 - Trails and paths do not necessarily link with destination centers..... 1
 - Our community has no trails and paths.....0

4. **Does your community offer public transportation (bus service or other for reaching primary destinations)?**
 - Our public transportation system serves all neighborhoods and centers.....2
 - Our public transportation system is limited..... 1
 - We have no public transportation.....0
 -

5. **Does your community have any programs or groups focused on non-vehicular transportation (trails alliance, safe routes to school, etc.)?**
 - We have one or more program/group to support and promote non-vehicular transportation2
 - We have one or more program/group, but they are currently not active 1
 - We have no program/groups addressing non-vehicular transportation.....0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
10-8	7-6	5-0

Assessing Your Community's: OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

1. **Does each neighborhood or district within your community have at least one park or playground?**
 - Neighborhoods/districts each have at least one park2
 - Some neighborhoods/districts have parks 1
 - Most neighborhoods/districts do not have their own park0

2. **Are parks, playgrounds, and other open spaces suited for outdoor recreation accessible by walking and/or biking?**
 - Residents can bike and/or walk to most parks, playgrounds, and open spaces2
 - Some parks, playgrounds, and open spaces are accessible by walking or biking..... 1
 - Most parks, playgrounds and open spaces are difficult to access via walking/biking0

3. **Do publicly- and privately-owned open spaces with public access within your community provide recreational opportunities (hunting, fishing, hiking, nature observation, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, etc.)?**
 - Open space parcels with public access provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.....2
 - Open space parcels provide a few types of recreational opportunities..... 1
 - Our community has no open space parcels (public or private) that provide recreational opportunities.....0

4. **Does the community have a plan for acquiring and linking conservation lands?**
 - The community has a plan that identifies the best process for acquiring and linking conservation lands2
 - We have a plan for acquiring land, but parcels will not necessarily connect..... 1
 - Our community does not have a plan for acquiring and linking conservation lands.....0

5. **Has your community established a minimum goal for the percentage of public land to be place in permanent protection?**
 - We have established a plan that identifies the minimum acreage of public land to be permanently protected2
 - We have a plan, but it does not define a minimum percentage of land to be protected..... 1
 - We have not yet established a plan for permanent protection of public land0

6. **Does your community promote voluntary conservation of privately-owned land?**
 - Our community provides information about options for voluntary land conservation2
 - Only limited information about private land conservation is available 1
 - We are unaware of options for private land conservation0

7. **Has your community adopted regulations to require publicly accessible open space in new developments?**
 - The community has adopted regulations for publicly accessible open spaces in new developments.....2
 - Publicly accessible open space regulations have been adopetd, but are not enforced..... 1
 - We have not yet adopted any open space regulations for new developments0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
14-11	10-8	7-0

Assessing Your Community's: ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

1. **Does your community have a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)?**
 - Yes, our NRI is complete and current 2
 - Our NRI is either not complete or needs to be updated 1
 - We have not yet conducted a NRI 0

2. **Does your community have an active conservation commission, land acquisition or other municipal committee to address natural resource protection issues?**
 - We have one or more committee to address natural resource protection..... 2
 - We have at least one committee, but collaboration among local committees regarding conservation issues is limited..... 1
 - Our community has no committee to address natural resource protection..... 0

3. **Does your community have a plan for balancing natural resource/habitat protection with recreational opportunities in protected undeveloped lands?**
 - Our community has a plan for ensuring a balance is created between resource/habitat protection and recreational opportunities in protected undeveloped lands 2
 - Our community has a plan for ensuring this balance, but the plan is not enforced..... 1
 - Our community has no plan for ensuring a balance between resource/habitat protection and recreational opportunities 0

4. **Has your community zoned residential and commercial areas to limit development on existing lands and/or areas with high resource value (e.g., prime farmland soils; rare, endangered or exemplary habitats; scenic views; other areas targeted for conservation)?**
 - Current zoning limits development to protect lands/areas with high resource value..... 2
 - The importance of direct development away from land with high resource value has been discussed, but zoning does not yet limit development in these lands/areas 1
 - We have not yet identified lands/areas of high resource value in our community..... 0

5. **Has your community developed an audio tape or brochure for a walking tour that familiarizes residents with local natural resources and/or wildlife?**
 - We have audio tapes and/or brochures to inform residents of our community's natural resources and/or wildlife 2
 - We have tapes or a brochure, but it is not well promoted 1
 - Our community has no audio tapes or brochures of its natural resources/wildlife 0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
10-9	8-6	5-0

Assessing Your Community's: **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

1. **Has your community conducted a Historic Resources Inventory (HRI)?**
 - Our HRI is complete and current.....2
 - Our HRI is either not complete or needs to be updated.....1
 - We do not yet have a HRI0

2. **Does your community have an active historical society, historic preservation or other municipal committee to address historic preservation?**
 - We have at least one committee to address historic preservation issues.....2
 - We have a historic preservation committee, but collaboration among local committees regarding historic preservation is limited.....1
 - Our community does not have a historic preservation committee0

3. **Has your community taken any steps to protect historic resources?**
 - Our community has established provisions for protecting historic resources.....2
 - We have discussed the necessary steps but have not developed a plan for protecting historic resources1
 - Our community has no plan for protecting historic resources0

4. **What is the condition of your historic buildings?**
 - All are in good condition.....3
 - Most are in fair condition2
 - Most are in poor condition1
 - We have no historic buildings0

5. **Has your community taken any steps to intensify use of vacant space in order to limit new development in historic districts?**
 - Current regulations encourage development in vacant space first2
 - The need for regulations pertaining to vacant space has been discussed, but regulations have not been adopted1
 - No steps have been taken to intensify use of vacant spaces.....0

6. **Has your community adopted any performance standards to ensure that new development in historical areas supports historic patterns (specific to lot size, setbacks, parking standards, etc.)?**
 - We have adopted historic district performance standards2
 - Performance standards have been adopted, but they are not enforced1
 - We have no performance standards for historic district(s)0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
13-10	9-7	6-0

Assessing Your Community's: VIBRANT ECONOMY

- 1. Does your community have an economic development plan, included in or separate from the Master Plan?**
 - We have a complete and updated economic development plan.....2
 - Our economic development plan is outdated or incomplete 1
 - We do not have an economic development plan0

- 2. Does your community have an economic development committee/organization (Chamber of Commerce, other)?**
 - Yes, we have an economic development committee/organization.....2
 - We have an economic development committee/organization, but collaboration among local committees regarding economic development is limited 1
 - Our community does not have a historic preservation committee0

- 3. Have community members and local merchants been encouraged to participate on the economic development committee and/or in the creation of the economic development plan?**
 - Community members and merchants have been encouraged to participate and/or provide feedback to our economic development committee2
 - Residents/merchants have been encouraged to participate on a limited basis 1
 - We have no provisions for encouraging participation and/or gathering feedback.....0
 - N/A – We have no economic development committee or plan..... 1

- 4. Does your community's master plan encourage mixed-use development where appropriate?**
 - Yes, mixed use development is encouraged and is occurring where appropriate2
 - Yes, but current development does not follow a mixed-use plan 1
 - Mixed-use development is not included in the master plan0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
8-7	6-5	4-0

Assessing Your Community's: **HOUSING**

1. **Does your community have a mix of housing types that support the needs of the community (including affordable/workforce, multi-family, single-family, apartments, and/or senior housing)?**
 - Yes, a balance of housing types supports the needs of the community 2
 - Housing is mixed, with limited availability of some types listed above 1
 - Housing types support only some needs of the community 0

2. **Does your community work with any affordable/workforce housing organizations to ensure needs are being met?**
 - We work with affordable/workforce housing organizations to ensure needs are being met.... 2
 - We work with affordable/workforce housing organizations on a limited basis..... 1
 - We are either not aware of any local affordable/workforce housing organizations or are not yet working with them..... 0

3. **Has your community adopted any regulations regarding mixed-housing types in new developments?**
 - We have regulations that require mixed-housing in new developments 3
 - We have adopted mixed-housing type regulations, but they not enforced..... 2
 - Our community has not adopted mixed-housing regulations 1
 - Current regulations prohibit mixed-housing in new developments..... 0

4. **Does your community have a plan to address future housing needs, included in or separate from the Master Plan?**
 - We have a future housing needs plan..... 2
 - We have a housing plan, but current zoning does not support the plan 1
 - We do not have a plan to address future housing needs 0

5. **Where is the majority of residential development occurring?**
 - Within the town center 2
 - Bordering the town center 1
 - Primarily in outlying areas 0

6. **Has your community adopted any regulations requiring a functional walking system within and between new sites or subdivision developments and other developments or public/downtown locations (to ensure compliance with broader town-wide walking/biking path networks that develop over time)?**
 - Yes, regulations require walking systems in and between new developments and abutting locations 2
 - We have adopted regulations, but the regulations are not enforced..... 1
 - We have not yet adopted walking system regulations for new developments 0

7. **Is senior housing located within walking distance of necessary services (grocery, post office, etc.)?**
 - Senior housing is located within walking distance of necessary services 2
 - Senior housing is located within walking distance of some necessary services 1
 - Senior housing is located in outlying areas and services are not within walking distance 0
 - N/A – we have no senior housing 1

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
15-12	11-9	7-0

Assessing Your Community's: VILLAGE CENTER or DOWNTOWN

1. **Does current zoning define one or more compact village or neighborhood center?**
 - Yes, zoning does designate village or neighborhood centers and allows higher density and mixed-use developments in these areas or neighborhood center(s) 2
 - Yes, zoning does designate village or neighborhood centers, but does not allow higher density and mixed use in these areas 1
 - Compact village or neighborhood centers are not defined by current zoning 0

2. **Are necessary services located in the village/neighborhood center(s) or downtown including post office, grocery, pharmacy, retail/shopping, hardware, bank, library, town/city hall, others)?**
 - Services are located in the village/neighborhood center(s) or downtown 3
 - Some services are located in the center/downtown 2
 - Most services are located outside of the center/downtown 1
 - None of the necessary services are located in center or downtown 0

3. **Do mixed-use provisions allow for residential uses in the upper stories of commercial/retail buildings?**
 - Yes, mixed-use provisions allow for residential uses in upper stories of commercial/retail buildings 2
 - No, mixed-use provisions do not include provisions for residential 1
 - N/A – Mixed-use development is not included in our Master Plan 1

4. **Where is the majority of new or planned commercial/retail development occurring?**
 - Within the village center/downtown 3
 - Bordering and within walking distance of the village center/downtown 2
 - Primarily in areas outside of the village center/downtown boundary (generally clustered or grouped rather than strip style) 1
 - Primarily on strip corridors (long stretches of road lined with commercial/retail) 1
 - 1

5. **How do current lot size requirements compare to existing lot sizes in the center/downtown?**
 - Lot requirements are designed for comparable or smaller lots 2
 - No lot size requirements are in place 1
 - Minimum lot size has increased 0

6. **Does your community have a plan for maintaining and improving the village center or downtown to encourage and support local businesses?**
 - We have a plan for maintaining and improving the center/downtown 2
 - We have a plan for maintaining/improving the center/downtown, but it has not yet been implemented 1
 - We do not have a maintenance/improvements plan for the center/downtown 0

7. **Does your community have any annual events designed to bring people into the village center or downtown?**
 - The community has annual events that bring people into the downtown 2
 - We have some events in the center/downtown, but could use more 1
 - We have no events designed to bring people into the center/downtown 0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
16-12	11-8	7-0

Assessing Your Community's: **AESTHETICS**

1. **What is the condition of municipally maintained landscaping and natural areas within the community?**
 - Landscaping and natural areas are kept in the best possible condition.....2
 - Some of the landscaping/natural areas could use improvements..... 1
 - Landscaping/natural areas throughout the community are generally in poor condition 0

2. **Does your community have any initiatives that promote attractive landscaping?**
 - We have an initiative to promote attractive landscaping among residents/businesses.....2
 - We have an initiative, but its efforts are limited to particular areas or neighborhoods 1
 - We have no initiative to promote attractive landscaping0

3. **Assess the overall appearance of your community:**
 - Overall appearance is adequate throughout the community.....2
 - Appearance is inadequate in some areas of the community 1
 - Appearance is poor throughout our community0

4. **What proportion of your community's landscaped areas have benches or other opportunities for sitting or gathering (parks, pocket parks, etc.)?**
 - All of our landscaped areas include places to sit or gather2
 - Some landscaped areas have seating/gathering places..... 1
 - Landscaped areas do not provide sufficient seating0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
8-7	5-6	4-0

Assessing Your Community's: **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

1. **Does your community have a civic leadership or other committee that works to promote interaction among residents?**
 - We have a committee that brings residents together in various capacities.....2
 - We have a civic leadership/other committee, but collaboration among local committees regarding social interaction is limited1
 - Our community does not have a civic leadership/other committee0

2. **Does your community host annual events or celebrations intended to bring residents together?**
 - Our community hosts one or more events every year with high resident turnout2
 - Our community hosts annual events, but they are poorly attended1
 - We have no annual event/celebration intended to bring residents together0

3. **Does your community have volunteer support for planning and implementing community-wide events or meetings (celebrations, voting sites, etc.)?**
 - Events and meetings are well supported by volunteers2
 - Some events are well supported by community volunteers, but others could use more volunteer support1
 - Community-wide events and meetings receive little or no volunteer support0

4. **Does your community have public meeting places where residents can informally gather with neighbors, family, or friends (coffee shops, parks, etc.)?**
 - We have sufficient places where community members informally gather2
 - Public spaces for gathering are limited1
 - Our community has no public places for informally gathering0

5. **Does your community have formal public places where residents can host or gather for organized meetings and events (town/city offices, library, other)?**
 - Our community has sufficient places where community members can host or gather for organized meetings and events2
 - Public space for organized meetings or events is limited.....1
 - Our community has no public meeting places for organized meetings or events0

6. **Does your community have a newsletter/newspaper, website, listserv, public access television station, or other medium for sharing information and announcing events?**
 - Our community has at least one community-wide resource for sharing information and announcing events2
 - We have at least once resource for sharing information/announcing events, but access is limited1
 - We have no community-wide resource for sharing information/announcing events0

Point Total: _____

Livable Walkable	Needs Work	High Priority
12-10	9-7	6-0

Is Your Community A *LIVABLE, WALKABLE* COMMUNITY?

For each category, place an X on the line that identifies where your community rates according to the totals at the end of each category (pages 2-14):

Scoring Your Assessment:

Livable	Needs	High
Walkable	Work	Priority

HEALTH..... _____

SAFETY _____

DESTINATIONS/LINKAGES _____

OPEN SPACE/RECREATION _____

ENVIRONMENT/NATURAL RESOURCES..... _____

HISTORIC PRESERVATION..... _____

HOUSING _____

VIBRANT ECONOMY _____

VILLAGE CENTER/DOWNTOWN..... _____

AESTHETICS _____

SOCIAL CONNECTS..... _____

Priority Recommendations

After completing the scorecard, the group/committee conducting the assessment should use the space provided below to record its top three recommendations for improving your community's livable, walkable status:

Recommendation 1:

LWC Category(s) addressed: _____

Summary of Needed Improvements: _____

Recommendation 2:

LWC Category(s) addressed: _____

Summary of Needed Improvements: _____

Recommendation 3:

LWC Category(s) addressed: _____

Summary of Needed Improvements: _____
