A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A WALKING MAP

Part I - The Planning Process

As walking becomes more popular as a form of exercise, for tourism or as a means of transportation, the development of community walking maps becomes more important and necessary to allow people to fulfill their health, recreation and travel goals more effectively. This guide will propose a process by which different types of walking maps can be developed in a way that best serves the needs of the individual walker and the interests of the community. These needs and interests include tourism, recreation, health benefits, commercial, historical commemoration and as a means of transportation. Although these interests are not mutually exclusive (they are, in fact, mostly complementary) there should be a central purpose for which the map is created.

This guide will propose a plan of action for creating a walking map, list the information critical to each type of map and highlight examples of effective maps of each type. Lastly, the planning process will be applied to an actual mapping situation in a Wisconsin community in order to demonstrate and test the precepts of the guide.

Step One: Determine the Purpose of the Map and the Intended Users

Determining the central purpose of the map is the first step in development, as the purpose will dictate the components, the user type, format and constituency of the map. See Part II for a listing of different walking map types. For this project, walking maps relating to the following subjects will be included:

- Historical or cultural significance
- Health/recreation
- Transportation
- Tourism and commercial interests

This step basically determines scope and patronage of the map and will guide you in the formation of a stakeholder group.

Step Two: Identify Stakeholder Group

Identifying and creating an active stakeholder group could be the most important step in the map-making process. The stakeholder group will:

- Determine and support the rationale for creating the map
- Garner the support of user groups
- Provide accurate and up to date information to be included on the map
- Help to identify financial support for developing and printing the map or creating an electronic version of the map

- Provide the basis of a friends group that will monitor changes in walks and updates needed on the map

The composition of the stakeholder group will be determined by the intended user groups. If the map is intended for a single user group such as a school, the stakeholder group may consist of school staff, students and parents. However, if the map is intended for the use of tourists, the stakeholder group may include a more diverse membership such as the chamber of commerce, the local tourism bureau, and the public works department. In all cases it would be prudent to consult with the local police department, elected officials and other relevant government agencies, and provide opportunities for their involvement or membership in the stakeholder group. All subsequent steps in the map-making process should involve the stakeholder group.

Step Three: Determine the Scale of the Map

The scale of the map determines the geographical area the map will cover and its overall size. For example, tourism maps will be on a smaller scale and show all the streets located within the neighborhood. Regional trail maps, on the other hand, will be of a much larger scale and less detailed – perhaps only depicting important waypoints and significant roads that the trail crosses. For an electronic version of the map, consideration should be given for ease of printing and the ability to reproduce a usable handheld product.

Step Four: Determine the information to be included on the Map

Information included on the map should be relevant to the purpose of the map. If the map is intended for tourists, it should include restroom facilities, hotels and parking locations. Historical informational maps should provide narrative details of historical sites or illustrations of featured buildings. Retail establishments, restaurants, hours of operation and contact information should be included when appropriate.

Regional maps might include details of parks and wildlife areas. For long or strenuous walks, the locations of bus stops or other transportation options may be included as safety measures for walkers who run out of time or energy.

A number of features should be included on every map, regardless of function or user type. These include a scale, orientation arrow, legend and significant geographical features, such as parks and bodies of water. Including a scale allows users to determine the length or distance between waypoints. The orientation arrow provides a point of geographical reference, as does the inclusion of significant geographical features. Legends are imperative to conveying important information such as facility location, walking conditions to be expected, the specific loop or trail itself, parking locations and dangerous crossings or signalized crosswalks. Including these features helps users familiarize themselves with an area. Finally, it is important to indicate the date that a map is completed, since conditions on the ground will change over time.

<u>Step Five</u>: Decide on the Size and Format of the Map and Level of Portability

This step is largely a function of the map's perspective use. Trail maps should be easy to fold and carry in a pocket. Historical heritage maps are more suited to pamphlets that can accommodate lengthy descriptions. The scale of a map will also help to determine the overall size of the document. Large state park walking maps may be 24 x 36 inches, folded in a typical map format. On the other hand, campus walking maps may function quite well at 8.5 x 11 inches.

<u>Step Six</u>: Production of the Map (Cartography)

This step requires some basic knowledge of cartography. If you need help, you can seek the assistance of your community or county planner. In counties or communities that do not have people in these positions, a regional planning commission should be of assistance.

Map making has become both easier and more sophisticated – Web site applications [such as mapmywalk.com, bikely.com, and runstoppable.com] are now available to provide very basic to moderately enhanced maps. On the other end of the spectrum, geographic information systems are a powerful tool that can combine existing databases with a digital geographic element to produce a variety of maps.

The on-line mapping tools referenced above are very easy to access and offer the same street grid and map attributes as Google maps. Additionally, both *mapmywalk* and *runstoppable* offer elevations, which can be helpful for expressing the difficulty of certain walks. The most common application of these sites for walking purposes is the identification of specific routes or courses, done on the map itself by highlighting the preferred route of suggested sidewalks or trails. All of these interactive packages allow the map creator to actually provide on the map cues and notes at desired locations, which are very helpful whenever a change of direction occurs on the map. Maps can be saved on-line and then viewed by others. Virtually no cartographic abilities are required to customize a map, since the base maps are already established. Maps can be printed, but sizing is very limited. The real benefit of these maps is the ability to quickly create a route and share it with others by using the on-line features of these Web sites.

Experienced cartographers use a variety of mapping packages, ranging from simple drafting software packages to geographic information systems (GIS) software. Basic drafting software can produce the simplest of maps, but the product may be lacking in appearance and detail. More sophisticated packages can produce the most attractive maps, but the cartographer needs to be very well

trained or experienced. With GIS, a much more complete set of information and database is available to the mapmaker. Cartographers rarely have to create a base map since "line work" (streets, highways, and census tracts, etc) have already been created by other people. The cartographer can begin work on the more germane aspects of the map – location of sidewalks, recommended walking routes, and physical and cultural features important to pedestrians. Once these additional layers are produced, they can be mapped and shared with other cartographers for use in other maps.

Step Seven: Identify Potential Sponsors or Funding Sources

Maps developed to promote healthy activities may be generated from local and county health departments or medical facilities and are sometimes funded by government agencies or medical groups. Tourism maps may be funded by a chamber of commerce, tourism agencies, local retailers or innkeepers. Recreational maps are often funded by municipalities at the state and local level or by friends groups or non-profit trail advocacy groups. The stakeholders or friends group will be helpful in identifying sponsors and funding sources. With the current widespread use of on-line publishing, it is possible to simply find a Web site to offer the map in electronic form. This will significantly reduce the costs of printing and disseminating the map.

Step Eight: Map Distribution

Distribution of the map will be determined by the map's purpose and intended user. Tourism maps can be dispersed via local chambers of commerce, retailers, and convention and visitors bureaus, and made available on those entities' Web sites. Hotels often offer walking maps to guide their guests to historical sites, tourist attractions, and shopping areas. "Walking for Health" maps can be made available at city and county offices, schools, hospitals and senior centers.