

# Lincoln Heights District Center

## *Walkability Audit Report*

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May, 2014

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b><u>Page #</u></b>
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 History and Context	4
2.0 Methodology	
2.1 Steps to Defining the Audit Area	
2.2 Walking Audit Maps	5
2.3 Survey Design	6
2.4 Team Leader Training	
2.5 Invitees	
2.6 Walk Day Organization	7
2.6.1 Location	
2.6.2 Food	
2.6.3 Audit Packets	
3.0 Results	8
3.1 How Answers Were Tabulated	
3.2 Results for Each Area	9
3.2.1 Area 1	
3.2.2 Area 2	11
3.2.3 Area 3	13
3.2.4 Area 4	15
3.2.5 Area 5	17
3.2.6 Area 6	19
4.0 Appendix	20

# Lincoln Heights District Center

## *Walkability Audit Report*

### 1.0 Introduction

In January of 2014, the City of Spokane's Planning and Development Services Department desired to conduct a walkability study of an area of Spokane known as Lincoln Heights. The Lincoln Heights District Center encompasses the main business center.



[Image source: Google Earth]

In this report you will find: 1) a discussion of the history and context of the Lincoln Heights District Center (hereinafter known as LHDC); 2) the methods by which the study was designed and implemented; 3) the results of the walking audit, and lastly, 4) a discussion of those results and the conclusion of this report.

### 1.1 History and Context

Lincoln Heights is located in the southeast of the City of Spokane. On November 20, 2013 the City of Spokane Planning and Development Services held a community workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to begin to develop a vision for this key activity area, which is currently zoned for commercial and higher density residential use (Workshop Survey Results, 2013). Approximately 30 interested community members attended, and through an analysis of the various survey tools employed, it became evident that a majority of the citizens felt that the LHDC is not pedestrian friendly.

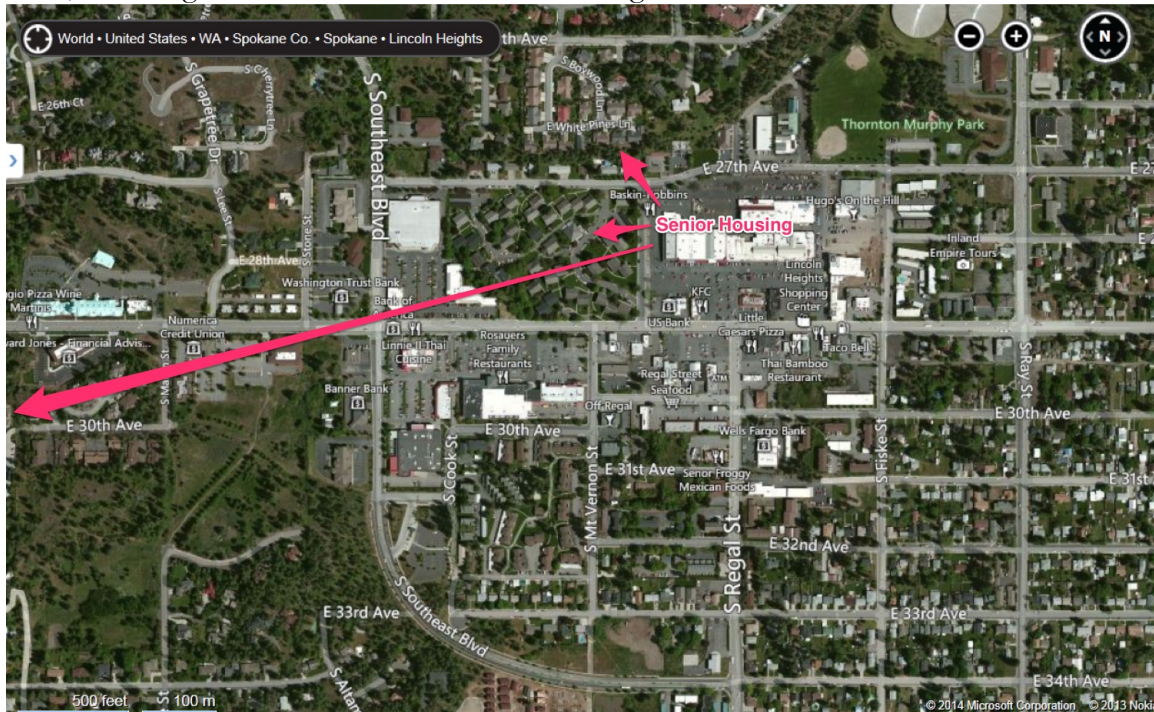
Currently, the overarching vision for the LHDC is one of mixed-use with street level retail, and a mix of office space and high density residential above. Current zoning allows for a wide variety of uses and building heights up to 5 stories or 55 feet. Nationally it is well recognized that redevelopment efforts that focus on people's ability and desire to walk between destinations is a key factor in urban redevelopment success. A walkability audit is one tool used to gather data, which enables a community and its planners to address this issue. Next, the methods employed and the process for designing a walkability audit will be discussed.

## 2.0 Methodology

There are many ways in which a walkability audit can be conducted. The feedback received from the November 20, 2013 workshop revealed that community members do not feel safe when they walk in the LHDC. The vast majority of respondents felt the need to drive between destinations whose distances measure less than ½ mile. The interaction between motorized traffic and pedestrians, the availability of sidewalks and their condition, and the general visual aesthetic of the area needed to be measured. In this section, you will find: 1) defining the audit area; 2) walking audit maps; 3) how the survey was designed; 4) who was invited to participate; and 5) walking day organization.

### 2.1 Steps to Defining the Audit Area

Because the purpose of this audit is to assess the next steps needed for the implementation of redevelopment projects, this walkability audit focused primarily on the main retail centers as destinations. Within and surrounding the immediate area are high-density residential areas, including units which house some of the neighborhood's senior citizens.



[Image source: City of Spokane GIS]

Based upon the feedback from the November 20, 2013 workshop, community members identified key destinations and the intersections and routes they have walked in order to

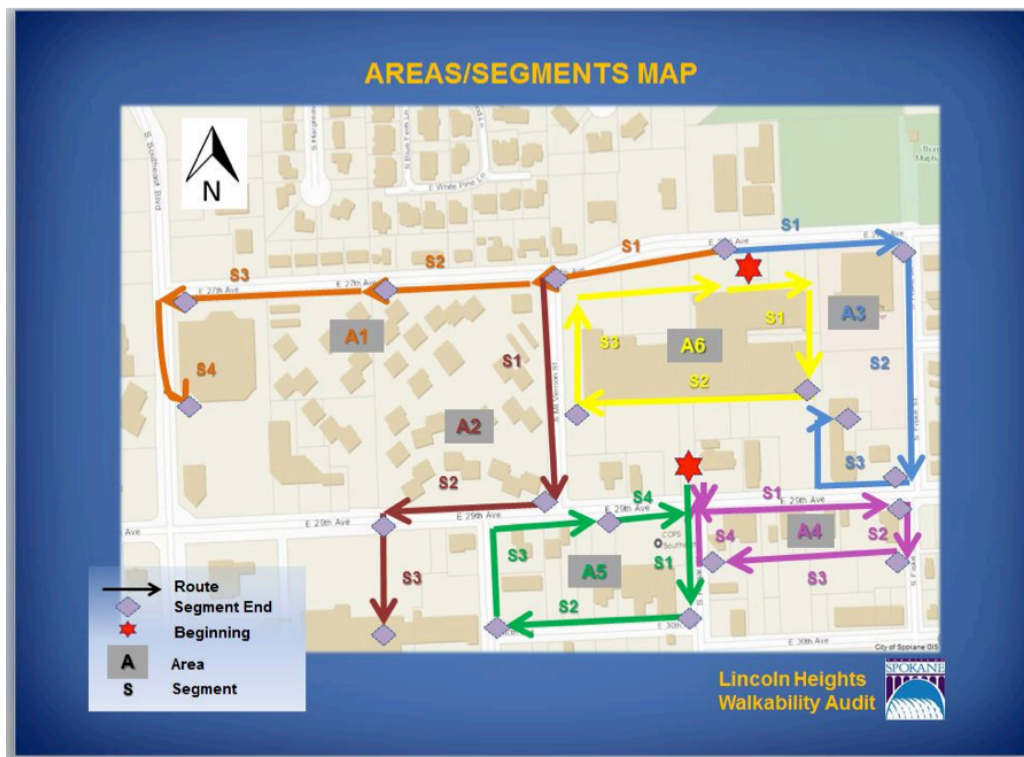


reach those destinations. The majority of these were used to define the audit area. Some of the identified routes lie just outside of the key retail area, and although they are important to the larger South Hill Coalition's Connectivity and Livability Plan, for the purposes of this study, just the identified key retail destinations and their interior routes were used.

## 2.2 Walking Audit Maps

After having identified key destinations and the varying routes between them, we divided the entire audit location into 6 areas (see Figure 2.2). Within each area, segments were designated. Segments were determined by natural, topographical features, such as corners at intersections and driveways (see Figure 2.2). At the end of each segment, auditors stop to answer survey questions pertaining to just that segment. It is important to note that the majority of the audit area routes have distances totaling no more than 1 mile with participants auditing in detail only ½ mile of each route. For the return walk, there was space provided for general comments. The ½ mile auditing distance was used because this allows for a completion of the audit within 2 hours (including instructional discussion at the beginning, as well as a debrief session at the conclusion). For Americans, “70 percent will walk 500 feet for daily errands, 40 percent will walk ¼ mile; only 10 percent will walk ½ mile (Untermann, 1990). In the LHDC, most destinations are ½ mile from residential areas.

Figure 2.2 Audit Area Map with All Segments



[Image source: Erin Ross]

## 2.3 Survey Design

The purpose of this survey was to obtain primarily qualitative data, or data that is more subjective in nature. The reason behind this is that in quantitative (objective) walking audits, the primary purpose is to count such items as the number of street trees, the number of

potholes, and/or the number of street lamps. While that kind of information is important, that data can be obtained through various mapping tools, which are readily available to most city planners. When inviting members of the community to give their important perceptions of an area, more qualitative survey questions are used such as: “Did drivers behave well,” which addresses the issue of pedestrian safety among other questions requiring answers more subjective in nature. From an engineering standpoint, pedestrian infrastructure, or the lack of pedestrian infrastructure may make perfect sense, if it is feasible, from a cost/benefit analysis. However, if a pedestrian’s perception is that an area is not safe for walking (such as from a lack of sidewalks or lighting), or is not pleasant (maybe from dumpsters which are in view, or a lack of flora and fauna), then they will not choose to get out of their cars and walk between destinations.

Our survey (see Appendix “A”) borrowed heavily from a walkability audit conducted by the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD). The SRHD conducts walkability audits as a way to contribute to an overall measurement of how the region is or is not contributing to improvements in public health. These questions address issues identified by the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood as important factors in deciding whether to walk between destinations.

## **2.4 Team Leader Training**

After having designated audit areas, creating the maps, designing the surveys and recruiting team leaders, it is necessary to have team leader training. This is an opportunity to explain the purpose and goals of the audit, to provide instructions for the use of maps and the corresponding surveys, and to also receive feedback regarding any of the survey questions which may be confusing to one who has read them for the first time.

For our audit, the team leaders were comprised of city employees from the various departments related to planning services. The presentation consisted of explanations through visual media, including a PowerPoint presentation, physical maps, and physical survey forms, as well as verbal instructions.

## **2.5 Invitees**

When conducting a walkability audit, the results of which will influence a planning department’s goals and efforts for future improvements in the quality of life for a community, the importance of including both city planning employees and members of the community cannot be stressed enough. The City of Spokane’s Planning and Development Services Department recognized this need and was able to bring together not only city employees, such as transportation engineers, but also a member of the regional health district (SRHD) as well as citizen leaders who have been working tirelessly in this area as members of the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council and the South Hill Planning Coalition.

Therefore, the opportunity to assign city planning employees as team leaders, and then having citizens join each team created valuable connections. The citizens received rare and valuable individual attention from city employees to express their opinions and desires. The city employees had an opportunity to connect with the people they have dedicated their careers to serving. It was observed afterwards that the participants returned from the audit with smiles on their faces and were glad they had engaged in the study (see Appendix “B”).

## **2.6 Walk Day Organization**

### **2.6.1 Location**

Because this audit was conducted in March, and our community typically experiences colder temperatures along with the high probability of rain, we needed to meet in a place that provided ample room (for over 20 participants), restrooms, shelter, and was located within the audit area. The Southside Christian Church generously provided their lobby (located in the Lincoln Heights Shopping Center) to the City and it was perfect for our needs.

### **2.6.2 Food**

When conducting any kind of citizen participation event, it is important to provide snacks and something to drink. We provided coffee donated by the local coffee shop Forza, bottled water, protein bars, cookies, and trail mix. The participants appreciated the fuel and also the warm coffee when they returned from their walks. Providing the coffee also created a situation in which many people gathered and discussed their walks and their impressions. Conversations were overheard that entailed the exchange of contact information and discussion of other planning projects happening in the area. Once again the goal of providing opportunities for citizens and their planning representatives to connect was achieved.

### **2.6.3 Audit Packets**

Each team leader received a large manila envelope containing the following:

- Audit area maps (see Appendices “C”, “D”, “E”)
  - For the entire audit area
  - For the team’s assigned area
  - Comments Map (for general thoughts and impressions)
- Survey questionnaires (one set of questions per audit area and its corresponding segments – each set given to each auditor) (see Appendix “A”)
- Instructional sheet with contact information for the audit organizer (see Appendix “F”)
- Introduction Questions (for demographic purposes) (see Appendix “G”)
- Feedback questions (see Appendix “H”)

## **3.0 Results**

In reference to the survey (see Appendix “A”), the questions required auditors to give both a rating of their overall experience or perception, an answer to each question in a “yes or no” format, and also asked that auditors write down any comments they wanted to share. This section discusses how the answers were tabulated (see section 3.1), and then will discuss the results corresponding to each audit area (see section 3.2). Lastly, the results from the both the Introduction Questions (see Appendix “G”), and the Feedback Questions (see Appendix “H”) will be provided.

### **3.1 How Answers Were Tabulated**

Twenty auditors participated in this walk. However, it is important to note that not every auditor answered every question. Since each area and its corresponding segments were

evaluated, the answers were calculated based upon how many answers were given. For example, one particular auditor may have chosen to answer every question for that area/segment except for one. When calculating the results for that area/segment, the sample size only included the number of times that question was answered, in other words, if there were 4 auditors for that area/segment, but only 3 of them answered that particular question, then the calculations were based on a sample size of 3. These answers were entered into Excel spreadsheets. For the comments related to each area, Word Clouds were created. The more times a noun and adjective are written, the larger those words appear in the image.

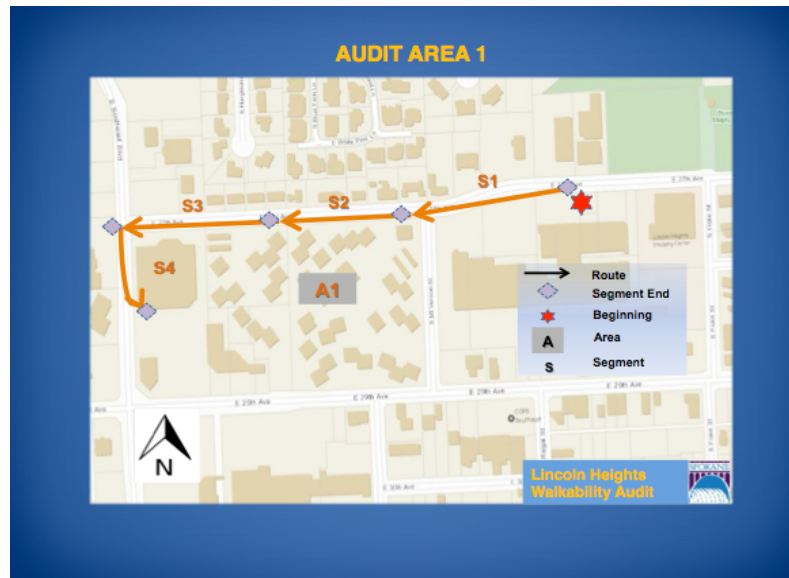
The rating scale appeared as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent



## 3.2 Results for Each Area

### 3.2.1 AREA 1



[Image source: Erin Ross]

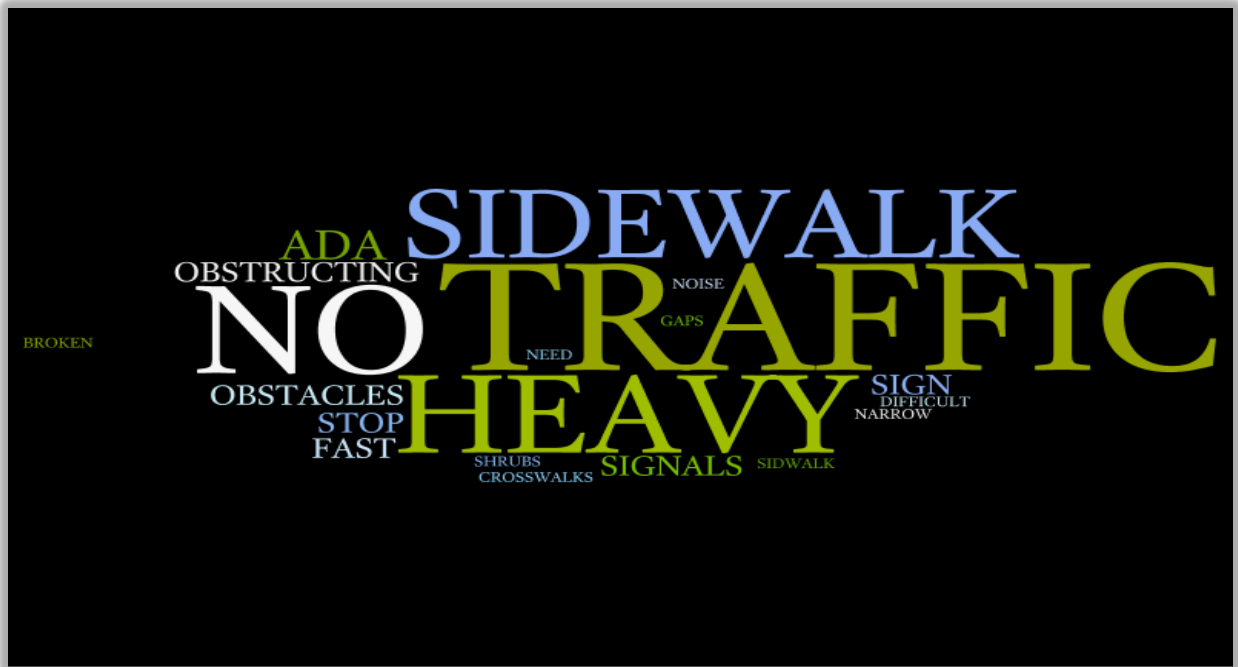
MODE (Most frequently occurring rating)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

## SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have room to walk?	YES
Was it easy to cross streets?	YES
Did drivers behave well?	YES
Was your walk pleasant?	NO

## COMMENTS FOR AREA 1



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



[Image source: City of Spokane]

### 3.2.2 AREA 2



[Image source: Erin Ross]

MODE (Most frequently occurring rating)

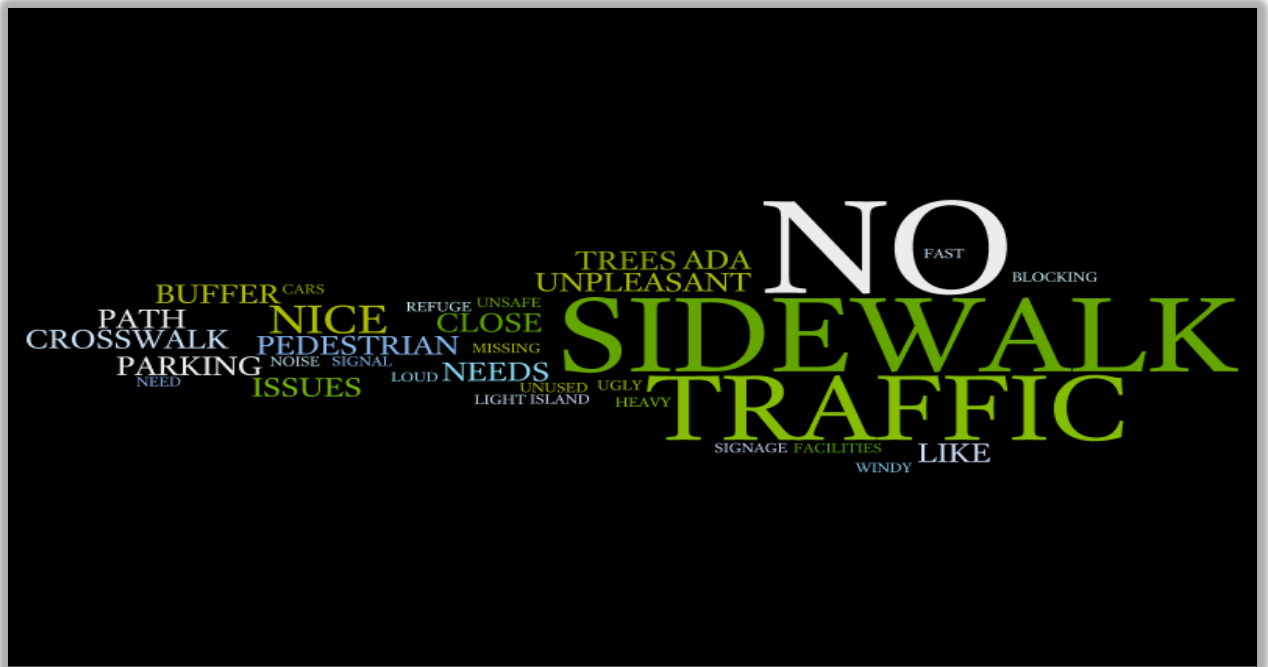
1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

### SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have room to walk?	YES
Was it easy to cross streets?	YES
Did drivers behave well?	YES
Was your walk pleasant?	YES

[Highlight indicates near 50/50 result]

## COMMENTS FOR AREA 2



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



### 3.2.3 AREA 3



[Image source: Erin Ross]

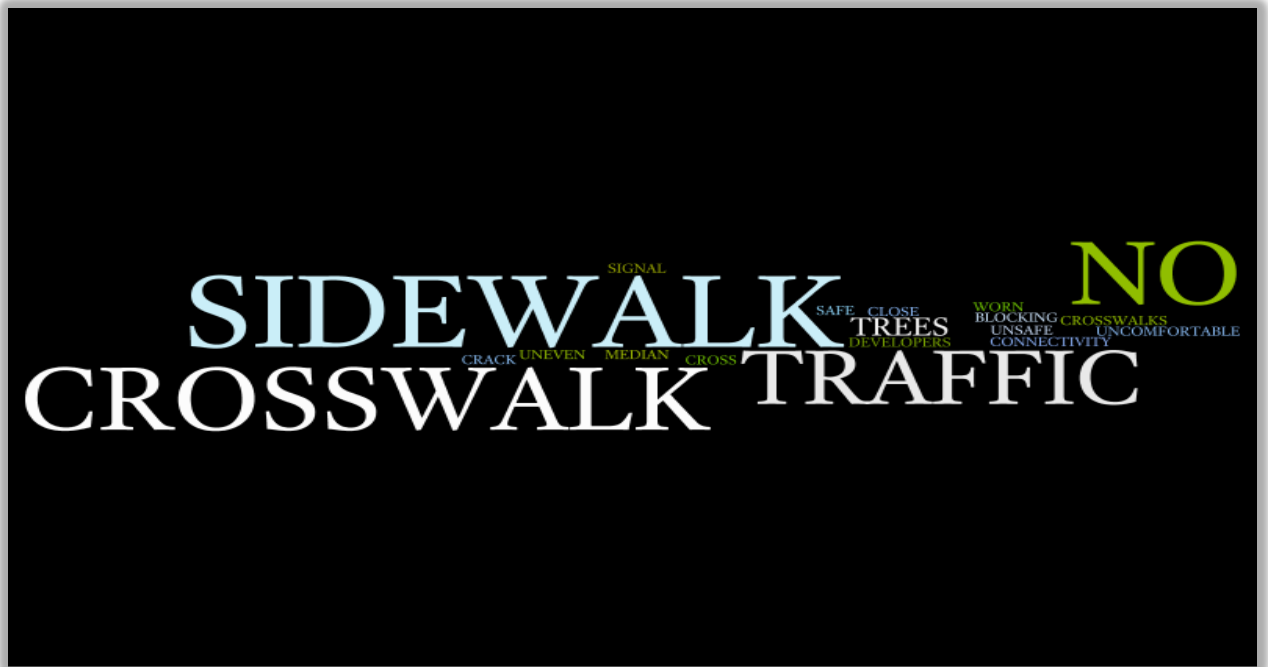
MODE (Most frequently occurring rating)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

## SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have room to walk?	YES
Was it easy to cross streets?	NO
Did drivers behave well?	YES
Was your walk pleasant?	YES

### COMMENTS AREA 3



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



[Image source: City of Spokane]

### 3.2.4 AREA 4



[Image source: Erin Ross]

MODE (Most frequently occurring rating)

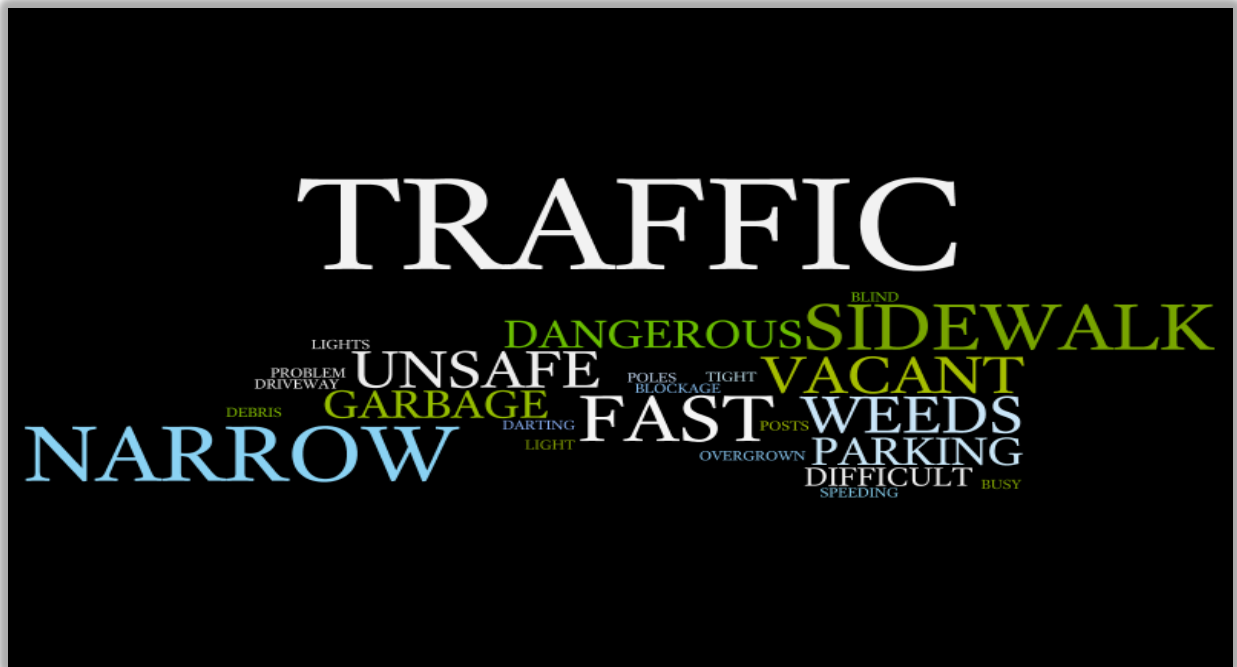
1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

### SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have room to walk?	YES
Was it easy to cross streets?	NO
Did drivers behave well?	YES
Was your walk pleasant?	NO

[Highlight indicates near 50/50 result]

## COMMENTS AREA 4



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



### 3.2.5 AREA 5



[Image source: Erin Ross]

MODE (Most frequently occurring rating)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

### SURVEY RESULTS

Did you have room to walk?	YES
Was it easy to cross streets?	YES
Did drivers behave well?	YES
Was your walk pleasant?	NO

[Highlight indicates near 50/50 result]

## COMMENTS AREA 5



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]



[Image source: City of Spokane]



[Image source: City of Spokane]

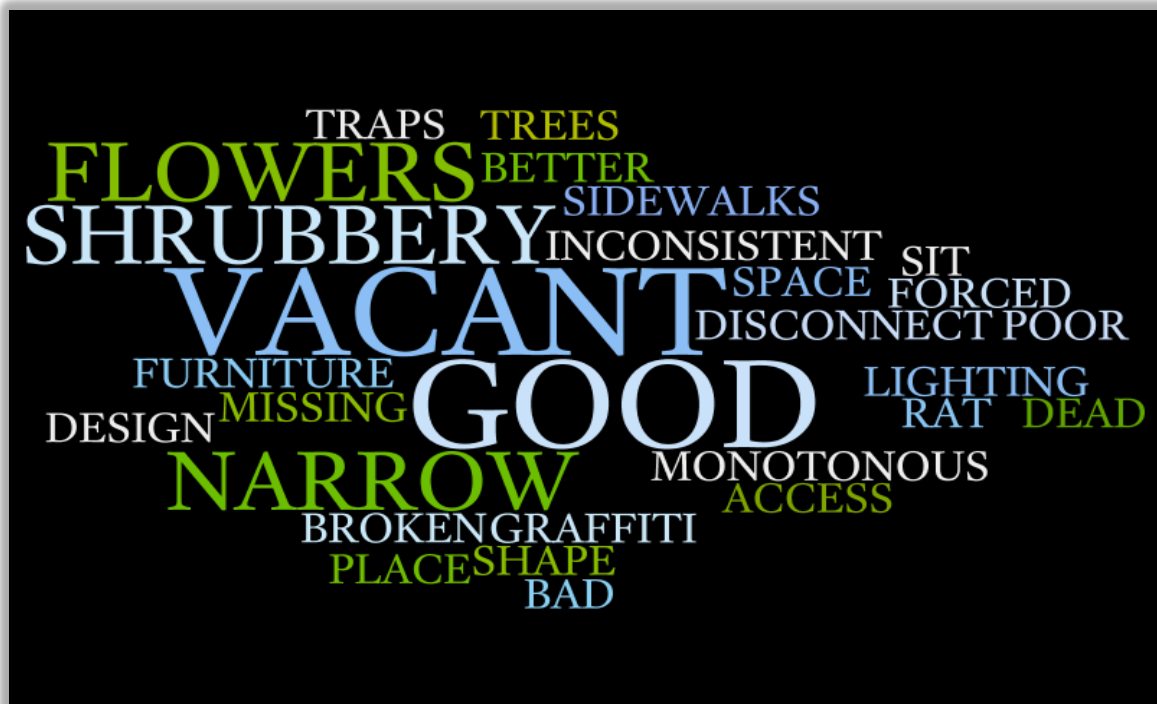
### 3.2.6 AREA 6



[Image source: Erin Ross]

Due to its location, the survey questions did not apply to this Area. The route encompassed the shopping center.

### COMMENTS FOR AREA 6



[Image source: Erin Ross via wordley.com]

## **4.0 APPENDIX**

## **APPENDIX A**

### Lincoln Heights District Center Walkability Audit

Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Segment: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Rating Scale:**

1	2	3	4	5	6
Awful	Many problems	Some problems	Good	Very good	Excellent

#### **1. Did you have room to walk?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Some Problems:

- ☐ Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
- ☐ Sidewalks were broken or cracked
- ☐ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
- ☐ No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- ☐ Too much traffic
- ☐ Something else? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings: (circle one)**

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

#### **2. Was it easy to cross streets?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Some Problems:

- ☐ Road was too wide
- ☐ Traffic signals made us wait too long
- ☐ Did not give us enough time to cross
- ☐ Needed striped crosswalks
- ☐ Needed traffic signals
- ☐ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
- ☐ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
- ☐ Something else? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings: (circle one)**

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

#### **3. Did drivers behave well?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Some Problems:

- ☐ Drivers backed out of driveways without looking
- ☐ Drivers did not yield to people crossing the street



## **APPENDIX A**

- Drivers turned into people crossing the street
- Drivers drove too fast
- Drivers sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
- Something else? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings:** (circle one)

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

**1. Was it easy to follow be safe?**

☐ Yes ☐ No Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?

☐ Yes ☐ No Stop and look left, right, and then left again before crossing streets?

☐ Yes ☐ No Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?

☐ Yes ☐ No Cross with traffic signals?

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings:** (circle one)

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

**2. Was your walk pleasant?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Some unpleasant things:

- Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
- Scary dogs
- Scary people
- Not well lighted
- Dirty, lots of litter or trash
- Something else

Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

**Ratings:** (circle one)

**1 2 3 4 5 6**

**Additional Comments:**

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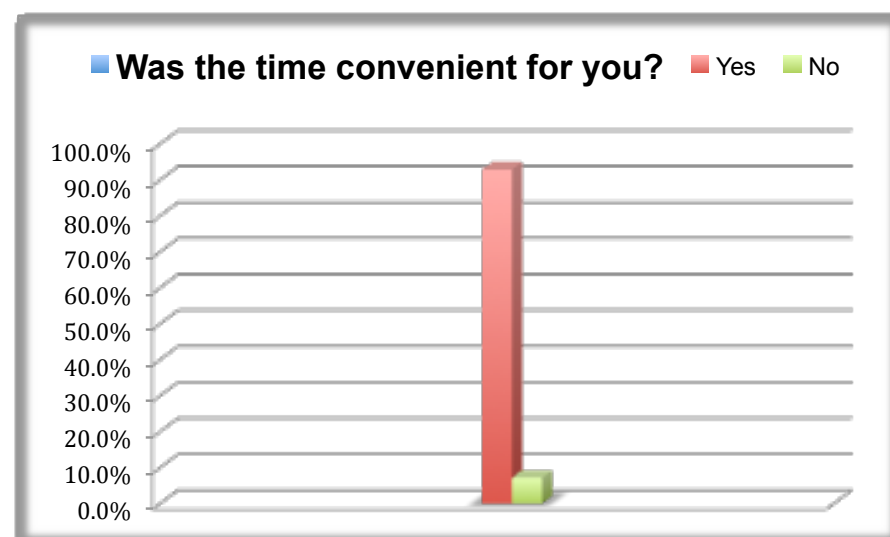
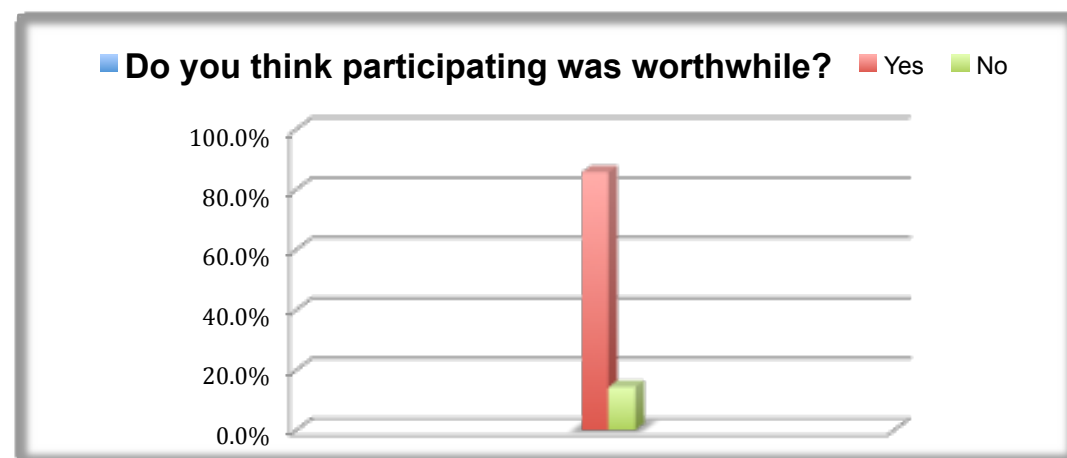
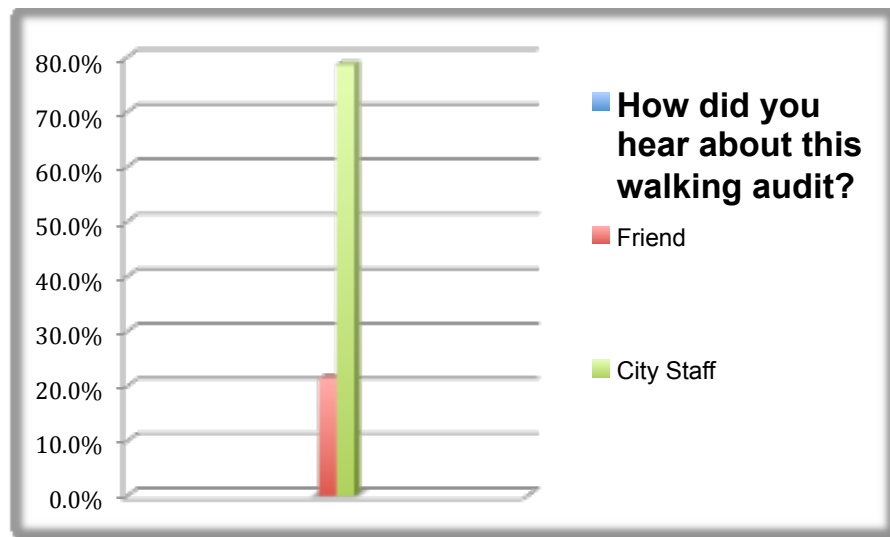
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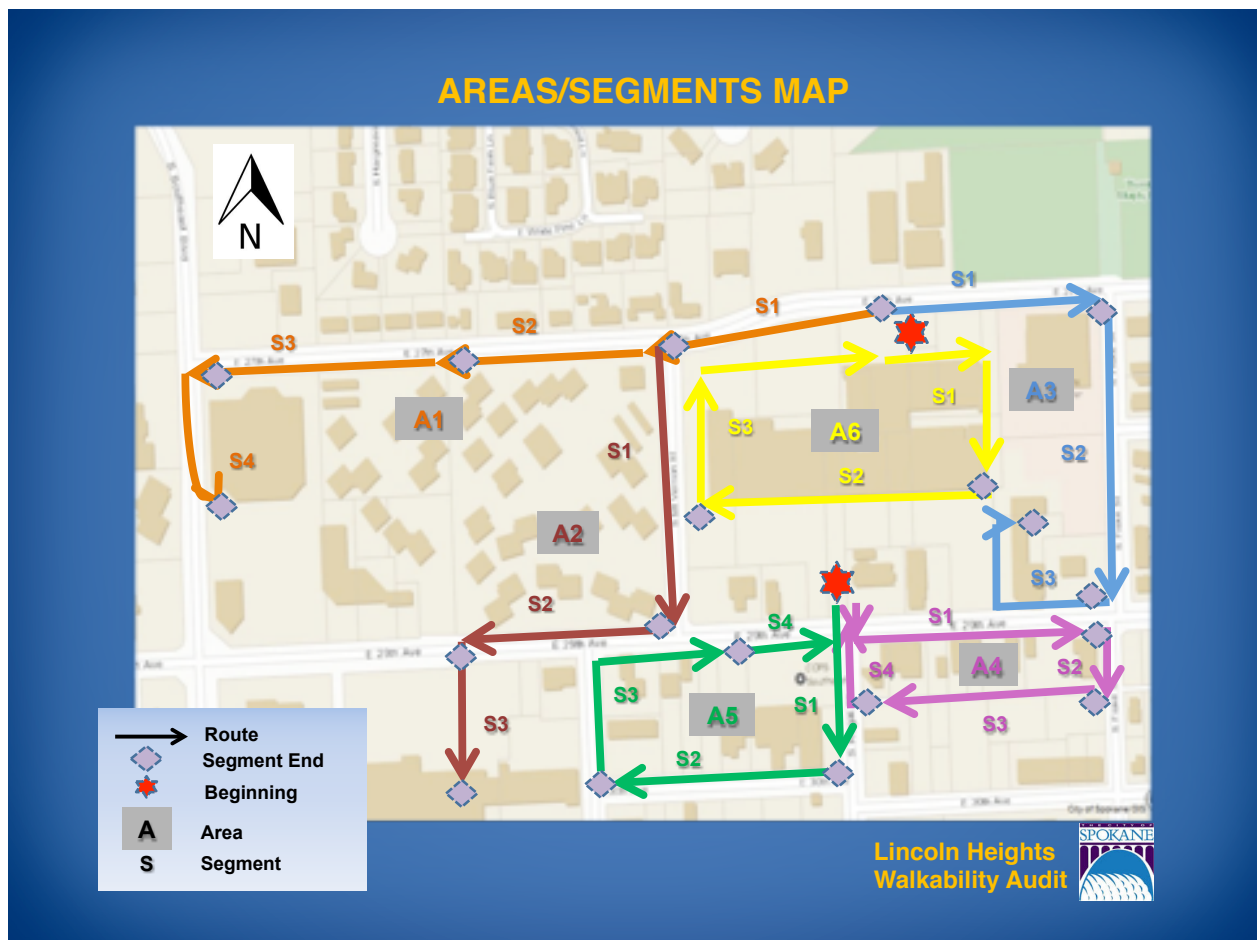
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## **APPENDIX B**



## APPENDIX C

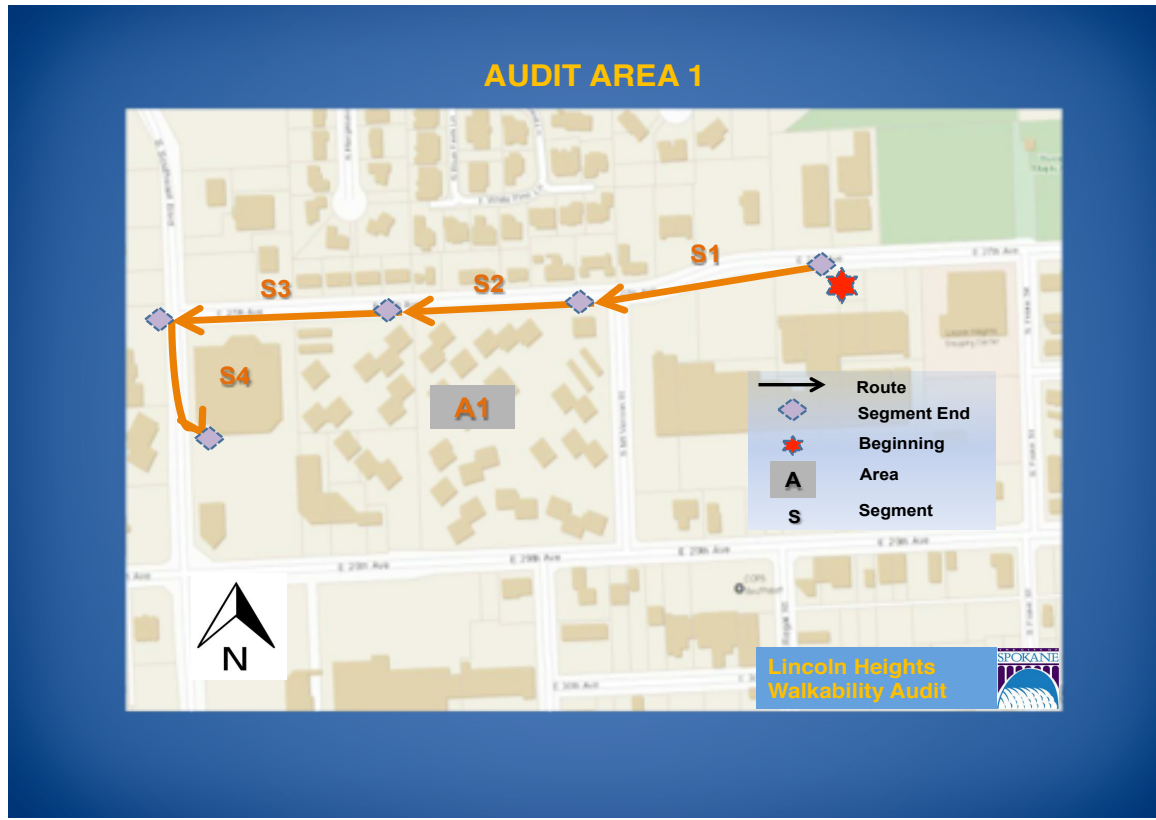
AUDIT AREA MAP (comprehensive)



[Image source: Erin Ross]

## APPENDIX D

### TEAM'S ASSIGNED AREA EXAMPLE



## **APPENDIX E**

## COMMENTS MAP





## **APPENDIX F**

# **INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUDIT**

### **Please:**

**\* Complete the Introduction Questions survey, and then begin your walk by following your assigned areas/segments.**

**\* Complete the Areas/Segments Surveys:  
One for each completed segment**

### **When you finish:**

**\* As a team choose a return route (may be the same one)**

**\*Use the “Comments Map” to draw your return route and to write general comments, either on the map or on the back of that paper. Please mention why you chose your return route.**

### **Team Leaders:**

**\*Please return all papers to the manila envelopes and give them to either Erin (509.710.0222) or Tirrell.**

**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX G

### INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

Please answer the following:

1. Where do you reside?

☐

City of Spokane

☐

Lincoln Heights

☐

City of Spokane Valley

☐

Spokane County

2. Have you ever visited Lincoln Heights before?

☐

This is my first time

☐

Every week

☐

Once a month or so

☐

A couple times per year

☐

I live here

3. Have you ever walked this area (your assigned area) before?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. Gender?

☐

Female

☐

Male

5. Age?

☐

18-25

☐

46-55

☐

26-35

☐

56-65

☐

36-45

☐

65+

## APPENDIX H

## FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

1. How did you hear about this walking audit?
2. Do you think participating was worthwhile?
3. Was the time convenient for you? Would there be a better time?

## **REFERENCES**

Untermann, R. (1990). *Accommodating the pedestrian: Adapting towns and neighborhoods for walking and bicycling*. In Personal Travel in US, Vol. II, A Report of the Findings from 1983-1984 NPTS, Source Control Programs. Washington, DC: United States Department of Transportation. WBN: 9701502098002

The opportunity to conduct this walkability audit was made possible with the cooperation of the City of Spokane's Planning and Development Services Department and with the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council. The information contained in this report is available for future use and reproduction by the City of Spokane only. Reproduction by any other entity, besides the author, requires prior authorization by Erin Ross.