

**Bristol Walking Alliance**

campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment

# 50 Ways to Better Walking

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*“Walking to be safe, pleasant, accessible and the first choice for local journeys and combined with public transport for longer journeys.” Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019*

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**Bristol Walking Alliance**

**October 2021**

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of walking for transport and well-being. Now is the time to commit to investing in specific measures that will enable and encourage walking in Bristol.

To join BWA and receive regular updates on our activities, please visit our website:  
<https://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk/>

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<https://www.bristolhealthpartners.org.uk/>

**Bristol Health  
Partners** **SHINE**  
Supporting Healthy Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments

## Who are we?

Bristol Walking Alliance is a consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve the walking environment. We want to create an environment for pedestrians that is welcoming, safe, and convenient for all. When we use the term 'walking' we include those who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters or other aids.

## Why do we propose a plan for walking?

Walking is an important mode of travel that promotes health and wellbeing. Enabling walking for short journeys can reduce our carbon footprint and help address the climate and ecological emergencies.

## Who needs to act?

BWA proposes measures that require policy commitments and funding from central, regional and local government. They also need support from businesses, the voluntary sector and communities.

## What needs to be done?

The measures we propose provide more detail for the walking-related actions outlined in the Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019:

- 1. Identify and enhance walking routes**
- 2. Adopt design standards that are inclusive**
- 3. Develop walkable communities**
- 4. Connect walking to public transport**
- 5. Count, monitor, and share information about walking**
- 6. Reduce obstructions to walking and implement enforcement measures**
- 7. Make walking safe**
- 8. Make walking pleasant and comfortable**
- 9. Provide walking information**
- 10. Support walking through travel planning and enabling behaviour change**

# 1. Identify and improve walking routes

Walking routes in urban areas may seem to be everywhere. However, they are often alongside busy roads, repeatedly interrupted by road junctions, or simply not adequate for the number of people using them. Pedestrians are often held up at light-controlled pedestrian crossings where priority is given to motor vehicles. To increase the proportion of journeys made on foot, pedestrian routes need to be direct and uninterrupted.

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*“Identify and enhance the network of walking routes across the city.”*  
Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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*“Easy to cross.”* Healthy Streets Indicators, 2017

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In Bristol, there are walking ‘pinch-points’ e.g. when accessing the city centre from south Bristol. There is a good case for at least one new pedestrian bridge over the River Avon New Cut.

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*“Investigate opportunities for new river crossing points.”* Walking Strategy for Bristol, 2011

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## Ways to better walking

- Identify and sign key walking routes into the city centre and between neighbourhoods
- Incorporate continuous pavements as part of road improvements, including bus corridor schemes
- Provide adequate pedestrian crossing points along key routes and at least every 400m along main roads
- Audit and upgrade pedestrian routes across the Feeder Canal, River Avon New Cut, and Floating Harbour

## 2. Adopt design standards that are inclusive

The walking environment must allow for all ages and abilities. Footways must be wide enough for those who need to walk side-by-side, push a buggy, use a wheelchair or mobility scooter, use a cane or walk with a guide dog. Narrow pavements, steps, steep ramps, works diversions and other barriers can make it impossible for some people to access their neighbourhoods, public spaces and services to which they are entitled. The lack of clean, accessible public toilets can be a barrier to going out for some people.

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*“Local authorities are responsible for the design of their streets. It is for them to ensure any pedestrian environment scheme, including a shared space, is inclusive and that they meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.”* The Inclusive Transport Strategy: Achieving Equal Access for Disabled People, Department for Transport, 2018

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### **Ways to better walking:**

- Adopt and publicise clear design standards for the pedestrian environment
- Ensure all footways are wide enough for wheelchairs, double buggies and mobility scooters to pass each other comfortably
- Provide dropped kerbs where they are missing
- Work with visually impaired people to review and audit pedestrian crossings and ensure compliance with national guidance for audible beeps, rotating cones and tactile paving
- Work with equalities groups when developing schemes and making changes, including temporary changes, that impact on the pedestrian environment
- Ensure all transport interchanges are fully accessible
- Ensure clean, fully accessible public and/or commercial toilets are available during the day and in the evenings, at main transport interchanges and areas of high pedestrian footfall

## 3. Develop walkable communities

Liveable Neighbourhood schemes aim to reduce motorised through-traffic and car dependency. They may be based on the 10 indicators of the Healthy Streets approach: everyone feels welcome; easy to cross; shade and shelter; places to stop and rest; not too noisy; people choose to walk and cycle; people feel safe; things to see and do; people feel relaxed; clean air.

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*“There are many benefits associated with the reduction of through traffic and the giving back of space to pedestrians. These benefits include better air quality, more social connection, more exercise, better health outcomes, reduced car usage and increased pedestrian safety.”* How do we recover from COVID-19 and create a better future for all in Bristol? Bristol’s Citizens’ Assembly, June 2021.

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### Ways to better walking

- Adopt the Healthy Streets approach in relevant transport and planning schemes
- Make high streets welcoming and accessible by reducing through traffic and widening footways
- Reduce rat-running by creating Liveable Neighbourhood schemes in consultation with local people
- Introduce School Street measures to restrict cars during school drop-off and pick-up times
- Adjust the timing of light-controlled crossings to minimise pedestrian delays
- Install 'green person authority' on appropriate crossings (to show a continuous 'green person' signal until traffic approaches)
- Require walkability assessments in the planning process for new developments and where changes are being implemented in existing neighbourhoods

## 4. Connect walking to public transport

Walking has been described as the 'glue' that holds the other modes of transport together. Most journeys begin and end with an element of walking.

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*"Everyone in the city is able to access a transport link within a 10-minute walk of their home."* Bristol One City Plan, 2021

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For people making longer journeys, and for those who are unable to walk more than a short distance, it is important that walking can be combined with frequent, integrated and easily accessible public transport.

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*"Improve public transport interchanges."* Walking Strategy for Bristol, 2011

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*"Improve walking links to rail stations and bus stops."* Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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### Ways to better walking

- Ensure everyone is within a 10-minute walk of a frequent public transport service
- Ensure bus stops are in appropriate locations, are well lit, have seating and shelters wherever practicable, and provide accurate real-time bus information
- Provide walking information at public transport interchanges
- Include clear information about walking routes and distances from public transport hubs on the Travelwest website
- Require developers to provide information about walking distances and times to public transport stops as a precondition for planning approval

## 5. Count, monitor and share information about walking

Walking is often subsumed in the terms ‘sustainable transport’, ‘active travel’ or ‘walking and cycling’. But walking is a distinct and important mode of transport for people of all ages, genders and ethnicities. It is the most common mode of active travel and studies show that investments in walking can deliver high returns. It is important to collect good quality data about walking to assess accurately where funds should be targeted.

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*“Publish a clear and concise breakdown of how the transport budget is formed and what organisations contribute to it and how it is spent.”* How do we recover from COVID-19 and create a better future for all in Bristol? Bristol’s Citizens’ Assembly, June 2021

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Monitoring pedestrian use of footways, crossings, bridges and public spaces can help in developing schemes for walking routes, high street improvements and the public realm more generally. Walking investments should be separately assessed and funded.

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*“Count, monitor, and share information about walking, exploring the use of new technologies.”* Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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### Ways to better walking

- Monitor pedestrian movements with the aim of improving the provision, standard and safety of pedestrian routes
- Set ambitious targets to increase walking with allocated funding
- Include questions about people’s walking needs and wants in travel surveys and quality of life questionnaires
- Designate and monitor separate budgets for walking
- Identify walking as a separate mode of transport in travel reports, policy documents and transport planning

## 6. Reduce obstructions to walking and implement enforcement measures

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*“Enhance enforcement measures for issues that make walking difficult or unpleasant. These include bins on footpaths, parking on footpaths and access points, overhanging vegetation, street clutter, litter and dog fouling.”* Bristol Transport Strategy 2019

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Some barriers to walking may not be permanent but they can reduce a pavement that usually has adequate width, to one that does not. These barriers include bins, overhanging vegetation, scaffolding, temporary works, A-boards and fly-tipping. Street furniture, such as benches and lampposts, need to be positioned to maximise the useable footway width. Redundant street furniture should be removed. Good practice should be adopted e.g. placing electrical vehicle (EV) chargers on the road and not the footway. Badly parked vehicles are a major source of obstruction that make some pavements unusable, and block access points and dropped kerbs.

### **Ways to better walking:**

- Implement a London-style pavement parking ban
- Monitor and improve enforcement of controls against footway obstructions including bins, A-boards, and overgrown hedges
- Record and monitor complaints from the public, and actions taken, in relation to nuisance parking including on pavements, on double yellow lines, and across dropped kerbs
- Clarify and regularly publicise the processes and responsible organisation for enforcement of removing footway obstructions e.g. Bristol Waste, Avon and Somerset Police, Bristol City Council
- Re-use parking bays to remove pavement obstructions e.g. on-street bin collection points, electric scooter parking hubs

## 7. Make walking safe

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*“Key issues include footpath design and repairs, lighting, safe crossings, reducing conflict with other road users, air and noise pollution.”* Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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A priority for encouraging a wider range of people to walk is to ensure walking is, and feels, safe for people of all ages and abilities. This includes infrastructure maintenance issues such as loose paving slabs, uneven surfaces or faulty lighting, and safe places to cross the road. It requires walking routes to have sufficient visibility and oversight to minimise unwanted encounters. It also means reducing the unsafe impact on health of dirty air. Wider footways, single stage crossings, and buffer zones (such as grass verges) can all reduce pedestrian exposure to traffic-related air pollution.

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*“Publish service standards for pedestrian infrastructure maintenance.”* Walking Strategy for Bristol, 2011

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Many pedestrians feel unsafe when required to share pedestrian space with faster vehicles including cars, bicycles and e-scooters.

### **Ways to better walking**

- Segregate pedestrian spaces from all faster moving vehicles
- Prioritise the provision of pedestrian crossings to neighbourhood facilities (e.g. parks, schools, shops) and across major roads
- Ensure key walking routes have sufficient visibility and oversight, and implement a citywide programme to replace existing pedestrian underpasses with street level crossings.
- Improve the procedures for reporting problems with footways and uneven surfaces, and set targets to improve response times
- Make it easy for pedestrians to report collisions, including those involving bicycles and electric scooters as well as motor vehicles, and produce annual summaries
- Set and enforce tight limits on air pollution across the city

## 8. Make walking pleasant and comfortable

The Healthy Streets approach sets out 10 indicators for streets that are pleasant and welcoming. These include shade and shelter, things to see and do, planting and public art, which should be incorporated in new developments, and included in adaptations to existing streets when possible.

Access to nature and green space is important for physical and mental health. As well as maintaining existing parks and green spaces, these should be linked to each other and to where people live by further greening of pedestrian routes.

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*“Create and maximise green space, greenery and pocket parks in existing neighbourhoods, ensuring that transport infrastructure repairs, maintenance and new transport schemes must improve the amount and quality of green space available where possible by using the Highways Maintenance budget.”* How do we recover from COVID-19 and create a better future for all in Bristol? Bristol’s Citizens’ Assembly, June 2021

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*“People are more likely to use our streets when their journey is interesting and stimulating, with attractive views, buildings, planting and street art.”* Healthy Streets Indicators, 2017

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### Ways to better walking

- Work with communities, developers and businesses to improve streetscapes with attractive and ‘active’ frontages, lighting, interpretation boards, and public art as appropriate
- Protect and plant street trees, and provide and maintain other green infrastructure e.g. parklets
- Provide benches as resting places
- Develop a network of ‘green’ pedestrian routes

## 9. Provide walking information

Visitors to the city, and locals who are unfamiliar with an area, should be able to access and understand walking routes through on-street information, maps and signage with estimated walking times to destination.

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*“Provide walking information including maps and Bristol Legible City wayfinding.”* Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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### Ways to better walking

- Provide information about walking routes through Bristol Legible City
- Supply walking information for residents and visitors to the city at public transport interchanges and through Visit Bristol
- Include walking destinations and timings on road signs, and information panels at key points in the city centre and in neighbourhoods
- Provide online and paper maps of key walking routes in the city centre and in neighbourhoods

## 10. Support walking through travel planning and enabling behaviour change

Although walking is a familiar, inexpensive and healthy mode of transport, it is often neglected in transport planning. Most journeys begin and end with an element of walking. Public sector organisations, businesses, schools and other bodies should include walking distances and approximate times in their travel plans to address an over-reliance on motorised transport.

Travelwest information should also include walking routes, with distances and times, to support and encourage walking for transport.

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*“Support walking through travel planning and enabling behaviour change. Encourage and help make walking the easy transport choice for businesses, schools, communities and local high streets.”* Bristol Transport Strategy, 2019

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### Ways to better walking

- Supply information about key walking routes, distances and times for travel planning on the Travelwest website
- Encourage and support public bodies, businesses, schools and other relevant organisations to include walking routes, distances and times in workplace travel plans
- Promote and support specific walking initiatives in the city including Walk to Work, Walk to School, Bristol WalkFest, and Bristol Walking For Health

# 50 ways to better walking

## **Identify and improve walking routes**

1. Identify and sign key walking routes into the city centre and between neighbourhoods
2. Incorporate continuous pavements as part of road improvements, including bus corridor schemes
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4. Audit and upgrade pedestrian routes across the Feeder Canal, River Avon New Cut and Floating Harbour

## **Adopt design standards that are inclusive**

5. Adopt and publicise clear design standards for the pedestrian environment
6. Ensure all footways are wide enough for wheelchairs, double buggies and mobility scooters to pass each other comfortably
7. Provide dropped kerbs where they are missing
8. Work with visually impaired people to review and audit pedestrian crossings and ensure compliance with national guidance for audible beeps, rotating cones and tactile paving
9. Work with equalities groups when developing schemes and making changes, including temporary changes, that impact on the pedestrian environment
10. Ensure all transport interchanges are fully accessible
11. Ensure clean, fully accessible public and/or commercial toilets are available during the day and in the evenings, at main transport interchanges and areas of high pedestrian footfall

## **Develop walkable communities**

12. Adopt the Healthy Streets approach in relevant transport and planning schemes
13. Make high streets welcoming and accessible by reducing through traffic and widening footways
14. Reduce rat-running by creating Liveable Neighbourhood schemes in consultation with local people

## 50 ways to better walking

15. Introduce School Street measures to restrict cars during school drop-off and pick-up times
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17. Install 'green person authority' on appropriate crossings (to show a continuous 'green person' signal until traffic approaches)
18. Require walkability assessments in the planning process for new developments and where changes are being implemented in existing neighbourhoods

### **Connect walking to public transport**

19. Ensure everyone is within a 10-minute walk of a frequent public transport service
20. Ensure bus stops are in appropriate locations, are well-lit, have seating and shelters wherever practicable, and provide accurate real-time bus information
21. Provide walking information at public transport interchanges
22. Include clear information about walking routes and distances from public transport hubs on the Travelwest website
23. Require developers to provide information about walking distances and times to public transport stops as a precondition for planning approval

### **Count, monitor and share information about walking**

24. Monitor pedestrian movements with the aim of improving the provision, standard and safety of pedestrian routes
25. Set ambitious targets to increase walking with allocated funding
26. Include questions about people's walking needs and wants in travel surveys and quality of life questionnaires
27. Designate and monitor separate budgets for walking
28. Identify walking as a separate mode of transport in travel reports, policy documents and transport planning

### **Reduce obstructions to walking and implement enforcement measures**

29. Implement a London-style pavement parking ban
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32. Clarify and regularly publicise the processes and responsible organisation for enforcement of removing footway obstructions e.g. Bristol Waste, Avon and Somerset Police, Bristol City Council
33. Re-use parking bays to remove pavement obstructions e.g. on-street bin collection points, electric scooter parking hubs

### **Make walking safe**

34. Segregate pedestrian spaces from all faster moving vehicles
35. Prioritise the provision of pedestrian crossings to neighbourhood facilities (e.g. parks, schools, shops) and across major roads
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38. Make it easy for pedestrians to report collisions, including those involving bicycles and electric scooters as well as motor vehicles, and produce annual summaries
39. Set and enforce tight limits on air pollution across the city

### **Make walking pleasant and comfortable**

40. Work with communities, developers and businesses to improve streetscapes with attractive and 'active' frontages, lighting, interpretation boards, and public art as appropriate
41. Protect and plant street trees, and provide and maintain other green infrastructure e.g. parklets

- 42. Provide benches as resting places
- 43. Develop a network of 'green' pedestrian routes

### **Provide walking information**

- 44. Provide information about walking routes through Bristol Legible City
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- 47. Provide online and paper maps of key walking routes in the city centre and in neighbourhoods

### **Support walking through travel planning and enabling behaviour change**

- 48. Supply information about key walking routes, distances and times for travel planning on the Travelwest website
- 49. Encourage and support public bodies, businesses, schools and other relevant organisations to include walking routes, distances and times in workplace travel plans
- 50. Promote and support specific walking initiatives in the city including Walk to Work, Walk to School, Bristol WalkFest, and Bristol Walking For Health

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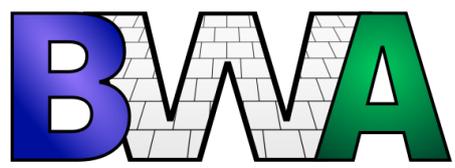
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[bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk](http://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk)