

Become a NorWALKer:



Bike/Walk Norwalk

Creating a Sustainable Walking Movement in Norwalk, Connecticut

Kaitlin Latham and Theresa Argondezzi, MPH, CHES, CPH • City of Norwalk Department of Health

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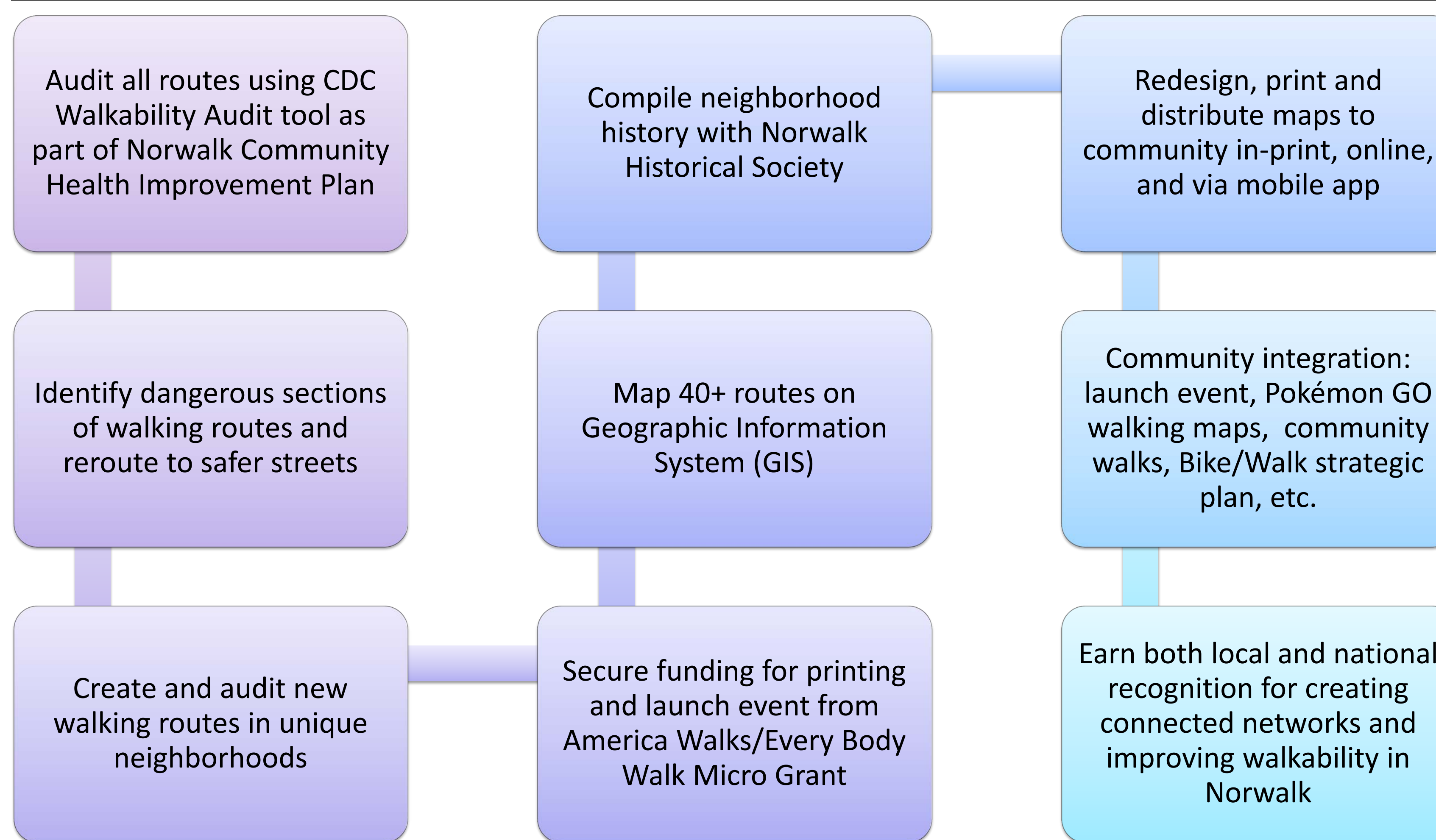
NorWALKer Routes Program

NorWALKer routes are safe, accessible walking routes located in 17 unique Norwalk neighborhoods. Routes were identified in the early 2000s and maps were designed and printed in the years following. Route maps are available in-print throughout Norwalk, as well as on the City's website. In the early 2010s, Health Department staff and community partners audited all 40+ walking routes using the CDC's Walkability Audit, assessing for safety, accessibility, and aesthetics. Redesigning the maps helped create a sustainable walking movement that empowers residents to be physically active and to explore the City on foot.

Benefits of Walking

The prevalence of walking for leisure and transportation in the U.S. increased steadily from 2005-2015¹, and studies show that adults prefer walking over other forms of physical activity due to its low risk of injury and minimal cost². Walking can reduce the risk of premature death in older adults by up to 22%³, help manage weight and chronic illness, improve mood, balance, and coordination, and strengthen muscles and bones⁴. Type 2 diabetes and heart disease are leading causes of premature death in Connecticut⁵; increasing and promoting opportunities for walking or other forms of physical activity may improve statewide health outcomes.

The Redesign Process

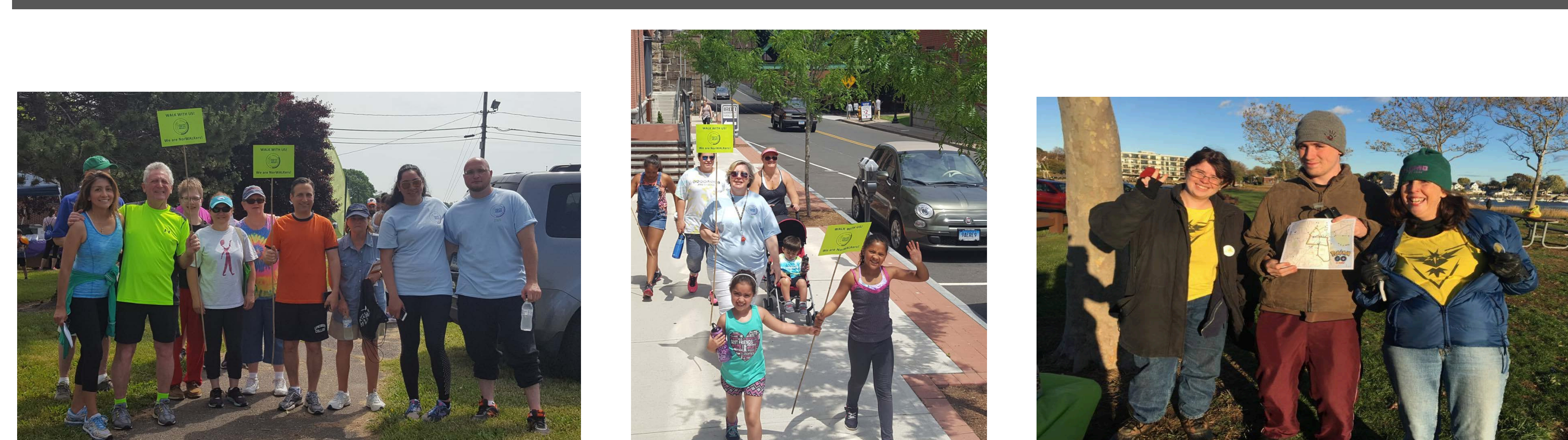


Community Walks

Since the launch of the redesigned walking maps in June 2016, four neighborhoods have established regular walking clubs, meeting weekly or monthly to follow a NorWALKer route in their section of town. All walking groups are completely volunteer-led and self-sustained. In addition to community walks, Norwalk's Mayor Harry Rilling invites the public to walk a NorWALKer route with him each Saturday as part of his Walk With Us program. Mayor Rilling has been instrumental in promoting the NorWALKer program and encouraging physical activity in Norwalk residents.



NorWALKer Launch and Community Events



Left: Mayor Harry Rilling, State Senator Bob Duff, and NorWALKers at the NorWALKer launch event in June 2016.
Center: NorWALKers enjoying a South Norwalk walking route during the NorWALKer launch event in June 2016.
Right: Attendees displaying their custom Pokémon GO NorWALKer map at a Norwalk Health Department and Norwalk Public Library event in October 2016.

Next Steps

- Future plans for NorWALKer include:
- Evaluating program impact
 - Translating all 17 maps into Spanish
 - Launching additional community walking groups in unique Norwalk neighborhoods

References

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