

Orange Places Project

Hibbing Walkability Project Engagement Report

Methodology

Engagement processes for the Hibbing Walkability Project began with a question: “Who do we need to engage?” With direction from the Advisory Committee to engage Hibbing residents of all ages and abilities, Essentia Health’s Community Health Department staff pursued multiple Engagement efforts to learn how the community at large uses Hibbing’s walking network and where improvements are desired.

The City of Hibbing and Essentia Health administered a community input survey from February 22, 2024, to March 31, 2024, to gather information about residents' walking experiences. To maximize participation, the survey was widely publicized and designed to minimize barriers to access.

The survey invited residents to share their experiences through an online form or via paper survey at the Hibbing Public Library (one of three permanent public transit stops). To encourage input from populations more likely to rely on pedestrian travel as a mode of transportation, the project team also mailed postcards to neighborhoods with lower median incomes.

Additional outreach included conducting focus groups with participants across the lifespan and completing a walk audit with members of the Hibbing Walkability Project Advisory Committee. Additional details about this methodology are available in the Appendices, and results of these processes are presented on the next page.



Figure 1. Image of postcard sent to invite community input

Orange Places Project

Input Results

Engagement efforts netted 350 survey responses, opinions conveyed by 57 focus group attendees, and participation of 12 community members in a walk audit. Social media comments were also pulled from shared posts.

The following list highlights principal results from each of these engagement exercises. Results for each engagement method are available in the Appendices.

- Respondents to the Hibbing Walkability Survey revealed they walk regularly for recreation, usually in the late afternoon-early evening, and more often in the warmer months. The biggest factors affecting resident decisions to walk in Hibbing are the condition, accessibility, and overall availability of sidewalks or pathways.
- Survey submissions included locations that residents most wanted to regularly access by walking and where they faced barriers to walking. The downtown Hibbing/Howard Street area, school facilities, outdoor recreation spaces, Hibbing Public Library, and grocery stores topped the list of desired locations. Barriers to walking were largely reported as general issues with sidewalk or trail conditions and dangerous intersections, particularly along Highway 169.
- Focus group discussions identified healthy usage of sidewalks and trails when available and in good condition. Additionally, focus groups revealed a community desire for an indoor walking area open during the daytime (especially during the winter months).
- Walk audit participants shared what infrastructure generally supports or hinders walkability. Observations included wide, paved sidewalks around the Memorial Arena Building, but more obstacles and inconsistency in accessibility within neighborhoods.
- Social media comments focus on inaccessible sidewalks, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and requests for alley and road repairs.

Appendix A: Methodology Overview

Hibbing Walkability Survey:

The City of Hibbing and Essentia Health administered a community input survey from February 22, 2024, to March 31, 2024, to gather information about residents' walking experiences. To maximize participation, the survey was widely publicized and designed to minimize barriers to access.

Press Publicity: News releases were posted on the City of Hibbing's website and distributed to local publications. The story was carried by the Mesabi Tribune, Northern News Now (CBS affiliate), and KAXE (NPR affiliate). Social media platforms were utilized to spread the message and invite participation. Email invitations were sent to key stakeholders, including influential community leaders, Advisory Committee members, elected officials, and more.

Prioritizing Outreach: Input from populations more likely to rely on pedestrian travel as their main mode of transportation was prioritized. 2,470 postcards were mailed to targeted households with lower median annual incomes. Multiple organizations and agencies amplified the message through their communication platforms, including Independent School District 701 sharing with students and caregivers, local apartment buildings emailing residents, and the Hibbing Chamber of Commerce featuring survey information in their newsletter.

Efficient and Impactful: The Hibbing Walkability Survey consisted of 14 questions, with an average completion time of five minutes. All questions were optional and individual responses remained confidential. Respondents primarily used checkboxes to share demographic information and walking habits, with two short answer questions available to note specific locations desired as destinations or in need of improvement.

Multiple Survey Submission Options: Community members were encouraged to scan a QR code or enter a link to share their input via an online form. Alternately, folks could complete a paper survey and post it to the lockbox available at the Hibbing Public Library, one of the three permanent stops on the public transit system. Most residents relayed their thoughts through the online form, comprising 335 of the 350 total surveys received.

Completion Incentivized: Respondents could opt into entering a drawing to receive a monetary incentive. Upon survey close on March 31, 2024, 10 respondents who

Orange Places Project

elected to enter a prize drawing were selected to receive a \$15 Super One gift card. By employing this methodology, the Hibbing Walkability Project engaged a diverse range of residents and stakeholders, gathered comprehensive input, and ensured that Execution suggestions for future development of Hibbing's walkability aligns with the desires and needs of the community.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Hibbing Walkability Survey

The City of Hibbing and Essentia Health are partnering to assess the walking environment in Hibbing. The desire of this project is to continue building and maintaining a quality transportation network throughout the community. Findings from the project may also help secure grant funding to address identified issues for pedestrians.

To share your thoughts, please complete the survey below on behalf of your household. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. All questions are optional, and individual responses will remain confidential. This survey will close on March 31, 2024.

For more information about this project, visit www.orangeplacesproject.com/hibbing.

What is your street address? (Example: 123 Main Street) (Optional)

What is your age? (Optional)

- 0-15 years old
- 16-30 years old
- 31-45 years old
- 46-60 years old
- 61-75 years old
- 76+ years old

What is your gender identity? (Optional)

- Cisgender Male (Born and identify as male)
- Cisgender Female (Born and identify as female)
- Transgender Male
- Transgender Female
- Non-binary
- Gender Fluid
- Two-Spirit
- Other: _____

Do you need an assistive device (wheelchair, walker, cane) when walking? (Optional)

- No, I don't use an assistive device.
- No, but I have used an assistive device in the past.
- Yes, and I currently use an assistive device that meets my needs.
- Yes, but I don't currently have an assistive device that meets my needs.
- Sometimes, depending on factors like weather conditions or how I feel that day.

Orange Places Project

How often do you walk in the community?

- o Every day
- o At least once a week
- o At least once a month
- o At least once a year
- o Never

Why do you usually walk in the community? *(Select all that apply)*

- To get to and from school or work
- To go shopping or run errands
- To get exercise, walk the dog, or enjoy the outdoors
- Other

What time(s) of day do you usually walk in the community? *(Select all that apply)*

- Early Morning (5am-8am)
- Late Morning (8am-11am)
- Midday (11am-1pm)
- Early Afternoon (1pm-3pm)
- Late Afternoon (3pm-5pm)
- Early Evening (5pm-7pm)
- Late Evening (7pm-9pm)
- Early Night (9pm-1am)
- Late Night (1am-5am)

In the following list, select the top three issues that most affect your decisions about walking in Hibbing.

- Amount of traffic along walking route
- Accessibility along walking route (sidewalk condition, curb ramps at intersections)
- Availability of sidewalks or pathways along walking route
- Availability of vehicle parking at destination
- Condition of sidewalks or pathways along walking route
- Convenience of driving
- Distance to destination
- Harassment, violence, or crime
- Having another person to walk with
- Lighting along walking route
- Maintenance of sidewalks or trails during warm months (pavement/vegetation upkeep)
- Maintenance of sidewalks or trails during cold months (snow/ice clearance)
- Presence of crossing guards
- Safety of intersections and crossings

Orange Places Project

- Speed of traffic along walking route
- Time of day
- Time needed to walk
- Weather or climate

What destinations in Hibbing do you most want to access on a regular basis by walking?

Where do you face barriers to walking in Hibbing? Please provide specific details about location of issues, including street names.

Have you communicated with a road manager (e.g., City of Hibbing, St. Louis County, or Minnesota Department of Transportation) in the past about the barriers you listed?

- Yes, but the issues have not yet been resolved.
- No, I have not had an opportunity to reach out.
- No, I don't know who to contact or how to contact them.
- No, I don't think it is something that would be fixed.

Are you interested in receiving email updates about this project?

- Yes
- No

Are you interested in being entered into a drawing for a \$15 gift card to Super One? (10 winners will be selected.)

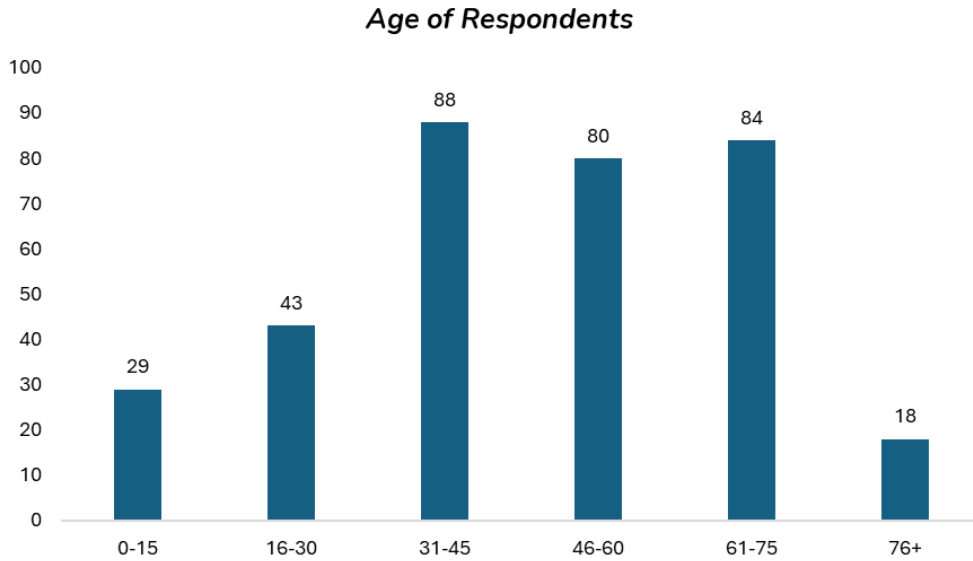
- Yes
- No

If you answered "Yes" to receiving email updates and/or being entered into a gift card prize drawing, please provide your email address below.

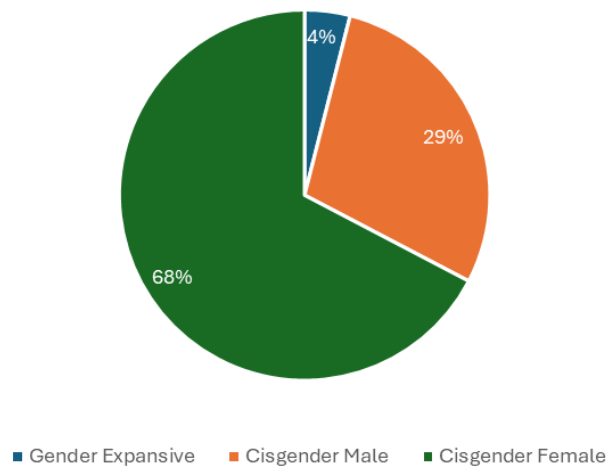
Orange Places Project

Appendix C: Survey Results

The City of Hibbing and Essentia Health administered a community input survey from February 22, 2024, to March 31, 2024, to gather information about residents' walking experiences. 350 responses were submitted: 335 submissions to an online form and 15 through a paper survey submitted to a drop box at the Hibbing Public Library.



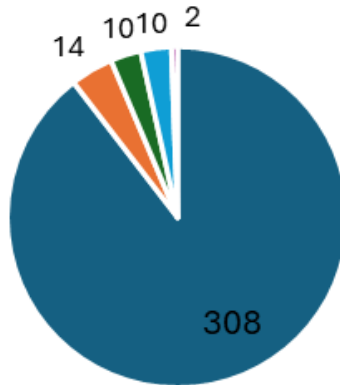
Reported Gender Identity



Note: The “Gender Expansive” label encompasses individuals who identified as a transgender male, transgender female, nonbinary, Two Spirit, or bi-gender.

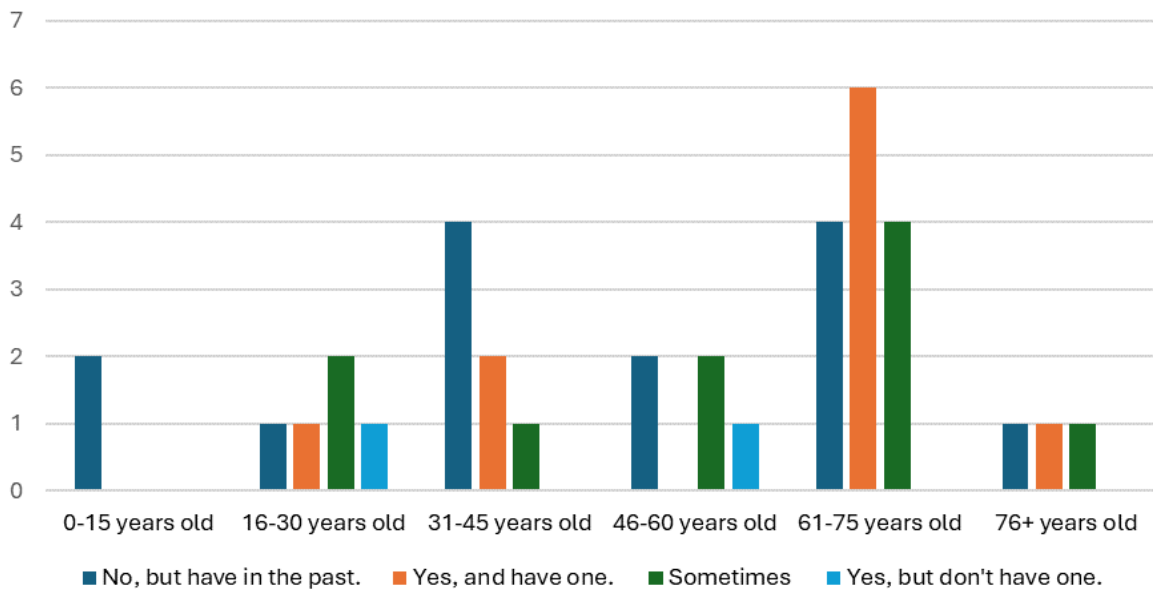
Orange Places Project

Mobility Needs



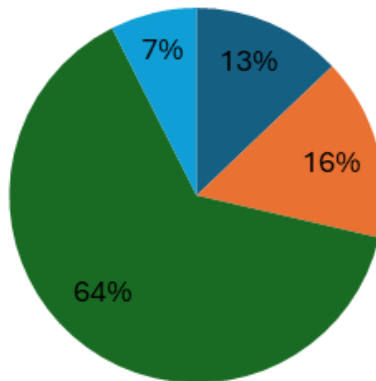
- No, I don't use an assistive device.
- No, but I have used an assistive device in the past.
- Sometimes, depending on factors like weather conditions or how I feel that day.
- Yes, and I currently use an assistive device that meets my needs.
- Yes, but I don't currently have an assistive device that meets my needs.

Current or past mobility aid need



Orange Places Project

Why do you usually walk?

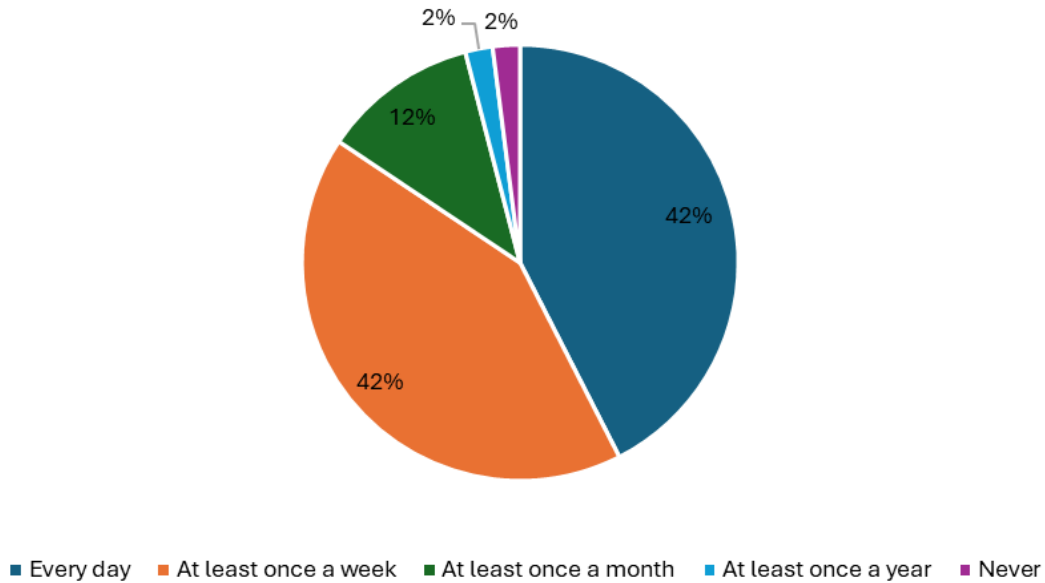


- To get to and from school or work
- To go shopping or run errands
- To get exercise, walk the dog, or enjoy the outdoors
- Other

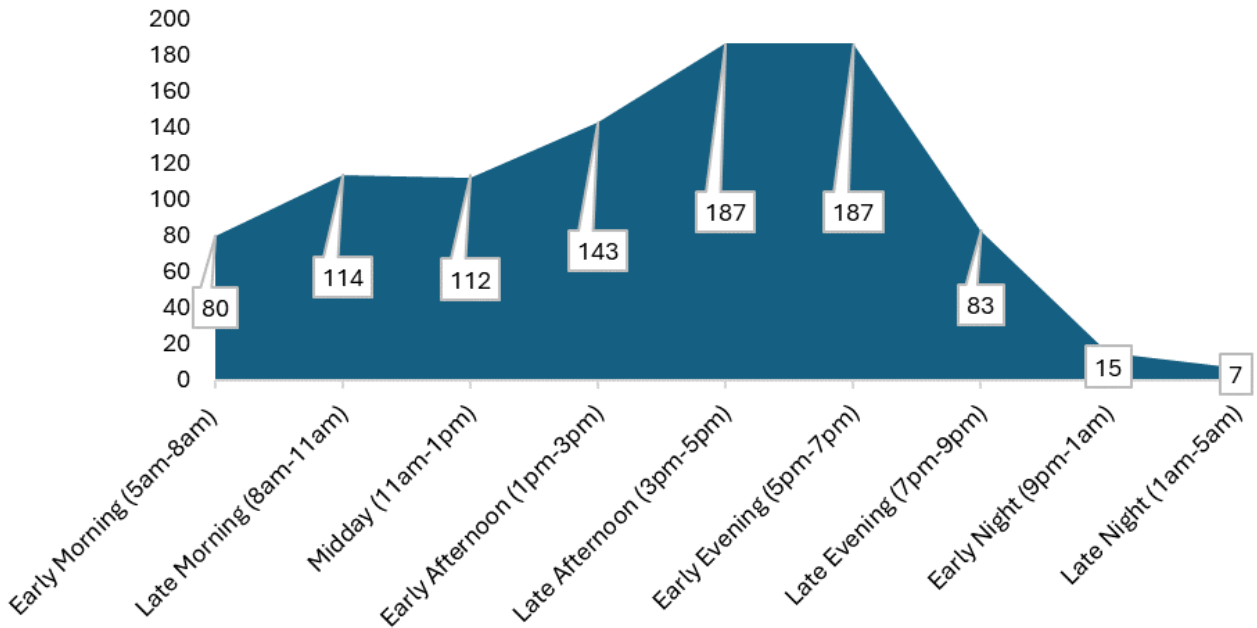
Why do you usually walk?	#
To get exercise, walk the dog, or enjoy the outdoors	317
To go shopping or run errands	78
To get to and from school or work	64
“Other” written submission themes:	#
To get to sports or activities	8
To get to destinations like the library, parks, doctor	7
To visit friends and family	7
Don't/avoid driving	4
Would like a place to walk	2

Orange Places Project

How often do you walk in the community?

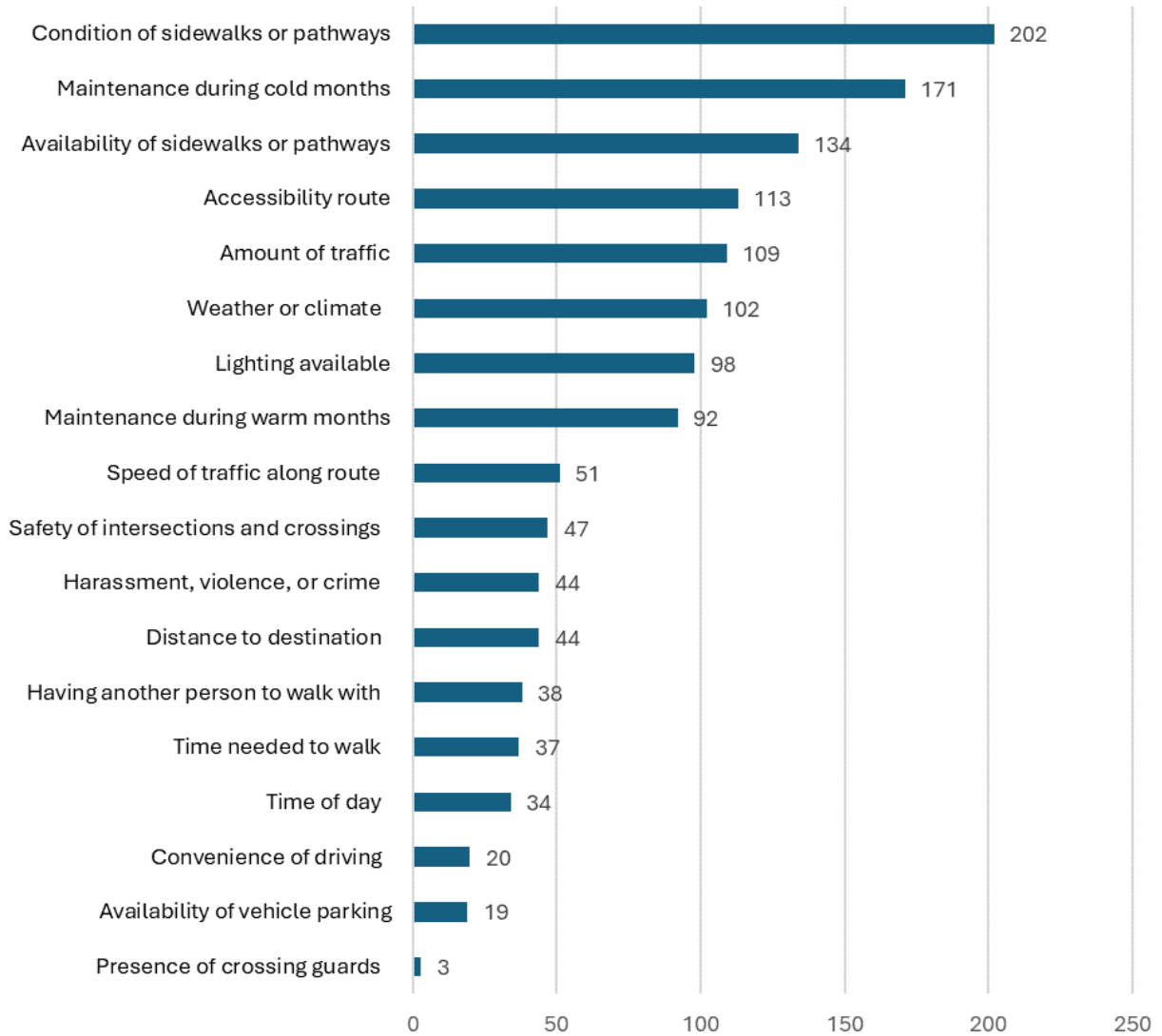


What times of the day do you usually walk?



Orange Places Project

Issues Affecting Respondent Decisions to Walk in Hibbing



Note: Respondents were asked to select the top three issues that affect their decisions about walking in Hibbing. However, they weren't limited to only three, and often respondents selected more than three items that impacted them.

Orange Places Project

What destinations in Hibbing do you most want to access on a regular basis by walking?

We received 272 written responses to this question. The following list categorizes general themes of responses submitted, from most frequent to least frequent.

Frequency of each destination is noted in parentheses.

Streets/sections of Hibbing

- Downtown (44)
- Sidewalks (blocked by resident cars, unusable for strollers, cracked, uneven unavailable, not shoveled in winter) (19)
- Howard St (18)
- Neighborhoods/residential areas/my home (17)
- 1st Ave (11)
- E 25th St crossing 169 (4) + walking bridge (2)
- Highland Park (6)
- Cemetery (6)
- 2nd Ave E & W (4)
- Kelly Lake (3)
- 3rd Ave E & W (3)
- My grandmas (2)
- Southview Dr (2)
- Brooklyn (2)
- 19th Ave (2)

Schools

- Hibbing High School (23)
- Schools (11)
- MN North College – Hibbing (10)
- Memorial Building (8)
- Lincoln (8)
- Greenhaven (5)
- Cheever Field/Track (4)

Outdoor Recreation

- Parks (20)
- Bennett Park (15)
- Hiking/biking trails (12)
- Carey Lake (14) + a paved path (2)

Orange Places Project

- North Hibbing/Disc Golf Course/Dog Park (10)
- Mesabi Trail (6)
- Maple Hill (4)
- Playgrounds (3)
- Paved paths (3)
- Vic Power Park (3)
- Tennis Courts (2)
- Mine View (2)
- Dupont Lake (2)
- Golf Course (2)

Community Destinations

- Hibbing Public Library (14)
- Medical facilities on 31st W (clinics/hospital) (12)
- City Hall (4)
- Post Office (3)
- Indoor walking facilities (2)

Shopping

- Super One/Mesabi Mall (13)
- Convenience stores/gas stations (9)
- Grocery store/supermarket (8)
- Walmart (8)
- Stores (6)
- Shopping centers (4)
- Caribou Coffee (4)
- L&M (3)
- Pharmacy/Walgreen's (3)
- Freeb's/Gym (2)
- Banks (2)
- Irongate Mall (2)
- Lowe's (2)
- Graysher Shopping Center (2)

Orange Places Project

Where do you face barriers to walking in Hibbing? Please provide specific details about location of issues, including street names.

The survey received 280 responses to this question. The following list categorizes general themes of responses submitted, from most frequent to least frequent.

Frequency of each barrier is noted in parentheses.

- Poor sidewalk or trail conditions (uneven, cracked, heaved, tripping hazards, poor maintenance, lack of sand removal, overgrown vegetation, lack of snow removal) (136)
- Dangerous intersections, particularly along Highway 169 (36)
- Traffic safety issues (24), including drivers not stopping for pedestrians (7), speeding vehicles (4)
- No sidewalk/shoulder in an area (28)
- Insufficient amount of streetlights/non-functioning walk lights (22)
- Lack of safe routes for children walking to school or activities (17)
- Unsafe road conditions: potholes (3), broken pavement/sidewalks (5), alleys (8)
- Aggressive/loud/unleashed dogs (14)
- Don't face barriers to walking (14)
- Crosswalks (12)
- Reporting falling due to sidewalk conditions (7)
- Needing to walk in street due to sidewalk conditions (5)
- Distance to and lack of sidewalks around grocery stores/Walmart (5)
- Lack of accessibility for individuals with mobility devices (4)
- Perception of unsafe areas (presence of drugs and alcohol, "rundown" or "blight" homes) (4)
- Request for indoor walking facilities during winter (4)
- Geese (3)

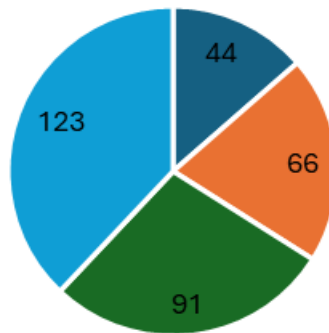
In addition, respondents to this question also provided specific streets/roadways that act as barriers to walking. The following list highlights these references, from most frequent to least frequent. Frequency of each occurrence is noted in parentheses.

- E Howard Street (26)
- 1st Avenue (18)
- E 25th Street (15)
- E 23rd Street (13)
- 7th Avenue E (12)

Orange Places Project

- E 37th Street (10)
- 3rd Avenue E (8)
- E 31st Street (7)
- E 21st Street (6)
- 12th Avenue E (6)
- 16th Avenue E (2)
- 9th Avenue E (1)

Have you communicated with a road manager about the barriers you listed?

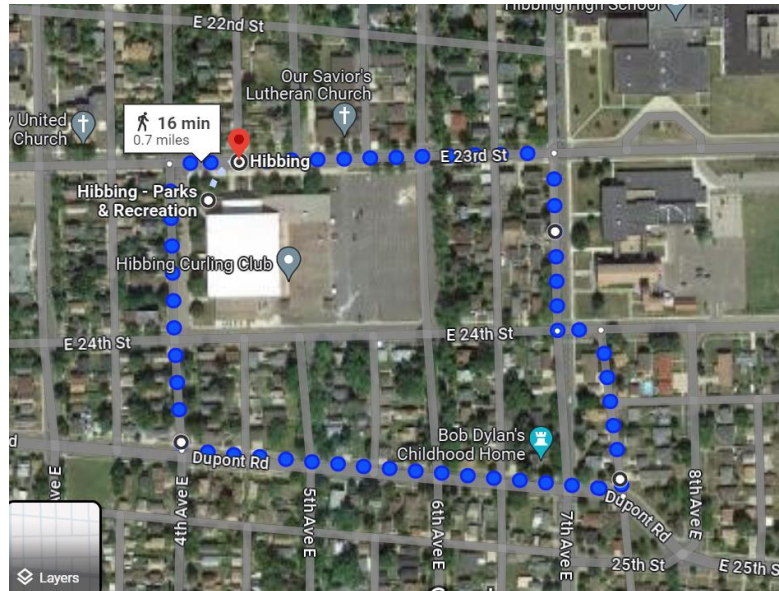


- Yes, but the issues have not yet been resolved.
- No, I have not had an opportunity to reach out.
- No, I don't know who to contact or how to contact them.
- No, I don't think it is something that would be fixed.

Orange Places Project

Appendix D: Walk Audit Summary

The City of Hibbing and Essentia Health held an in-person mobile meeting (walk audit) on February 20, 2024, to provide an opportunity for Advisory Committee members and local leaders to experience Hibbing's walking environment firsthand. This allowed the group to gain insights, share their reflections, and inform future development plans.



Attendees traveled the walk route (above photo) and stopped at three intersections (4th Ave E/Dupont Rd, 7th Ave E/Dupont Rd, 7th Ave E/E 23rd St) before returning to the Memorial Building to debrief the experience.

Please note that while the walk audit was scheduled in anticipation of snow on the ground, the 2023-2024 winter has been one of the warmest in recorded history. Attendees wore light jackets and sneakers instead of winter coats and snow boots.

Over lunch, the group shared what they considered to support or undermine the walking conditions along the walk audit route, their desires for walking in the City of Hibbing, and the importance of tying this work into the new Parks & Trails Master Plan.

Supporting walkability:

- Beautiful weather
- Paved sidewalks
- Wide sidewalks
- Crosswalks/creative crosswalks
- Pedestrian ramps – good for all ages!
- Street lighting
- Drivers yielding

Undermining walkability:

- Driver behavior (“busy trafficky”)

Orange Places Project

- Noise of vehicles
- Walker behavior (looking at phones, ear buds in)
- Obstacles – valves, cracks, trees, gravel, sign, trash cans
- Snowbanks
- Number of dogs
- Transition to driveways/alleys
- ADA inconsistencies
- Nighttime walking/lighting
- Uncontrolled intersections

Desires:

- Public garbage cans
- Walkability around apartment buildings
- Accessible sidewalks
- A designated and well-maintained walkable space (like the Lakewalk in Duluth)
- An indoor space to walk during the winter

Walk Audit Attendees:

- Ann Bussey, Community Member and Aging Advocate
- Ashley Craiglow, Program Specialist, Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
- Bryan Anderson, District 1 Planning Director, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Cheryl Elj, Managed Care Program Lead, St. Louis County's Department of Public Health: Aging & Adult Health
- Diana Ricci, Move to Wellness Coordinator, Hibbing Housing & Redevelopment Authority of Hibbing (HRA)
- Gavin Bukovich, Associate Planner, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)
- Jane Johnson, Physical Therapist, Fairview Range
- Jennifer Hoffman-Saccoman, City Councilor for Ward 3, City of Hibbing
- Laura Koeneman, then Library Manager, Hibbing Public Library
- Lauren Pipkin, Community Advancement Strategist, Fairview Range
- Russell Habermann, Community Health Program Manager, Essentia Health
- Sierra Napoli-Thein, Community Health Specialist, Essentia Health

Orange Places Project

Appendix E: Focus Group Results

Essentia Health attended three community gatherings to conduct focus groups with 57 participants from across the lifespan. The sessions allowed for direct interaction and the collection of more in-depth insights on experiences walking in the City of Hibbing.

On Monday, March 11, 2024, 30 members of the Silver Sneakers exercise group for adults 65+ relayed:

- General comments:
 - Usually walk between 9:30am-1pm
 - Love walking outside in the summer, especially through neighborhoods.
 - Appreciation of Bennett Park and that the City plowed the pathways in past winters.
 - Mentioned that Mayor Pete Hyduke had previously attended their group and discussed the potential for an indoor walking track at an expanded Memorial Building. Advised that they hadn't heard of an update and were unsure if the project is or will be moving forward.
 - They'd be willing to attend a City Council meeting if their presence could help improve walking conditions.
- Desires:
 - Indoor walking location available (especially for winter, during daylight hours)
 - Evaluation and repairs to sections of city roads and sidewalks yearly
 - Fully looping path at Bennett Park (currently requires road walking near the bocce ball courts)
 - More lighting along walking routes
 - Additional signage on how to get to the Mesabi Trail in town or across town
 - 33 parks in Hibbing – how to highlight them, increase activity there, connect them via paths
- Concerns:
 - Safety:
 - Crosswalks unmarked
 - Sidewalk conditions
 - Ice/snow not cleared on private and public spaces
 - Sidewalks uneven

Orange Places Project

- Low hanging trees and overgrown vegetation
 - E 39th St – no sidewalks, abundance of gravel, dips, grates, potholes, traffic
 - Walking alone on the Mesabi Trail
- Pet waste not being picked up
- Geese waste on 7th Ave E and E 37th St
- Public parks like Cheever/Owens Field or Vic Powers locked - “Locks aren’t keeping out people looking to cause trouble, only people following the rules.”
- Many participants indicated limitations on their Driver’s License for roadway speed, daylight only, or a certain number of miles from their home
 - Carey Lake and Bennett Park can be too far away
 - Hibbing High School indoor walking time is too late – already dark at that time during winter
- Barriers to walking options through Community Education
 - Necessity to register online
 - Unsure of infrastructure to get to walking locations
 - Available times don’t work for them

On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, seven young residents and four caregivers in attendance at the Hibbing Public Library’s Storytime program shared:

- General comments:
 - Like walking outdoors during warm months at Greenhaven and Bennett Park
 - 6th and 18th Ave are popular walking areas
 - Improvements to the E 21st sidewalk have made them much more usable (and fit the width of double strollers)
- Desires:
 - More indoor walking options
 - More wayfinding signs to the Mesabi Trail in town, advice on where to park to access the trail, knowledge of available parking, accessibility of common loops
- Concerns:
 - Double stroller is too big for most sidewalks in town, they need to walk in the road

Orange Places Project

- Reduced indoor walking area at the Irongate Mall
- Youth walking to schools through unsafe alleyways
- Walking from the Lee Center to the grocery store lacks sidewalks (especially on E 34th St and through parking lots)
- Motor vehicles driving fast and/or running stop signs on E 23rd St

On Thursday, March 28, 2024, 11 youth and five caregivers in attendance at the Library's Wiggles and Giggles Active Storytime program shared:

- General comments:
 - Love to walk, run, bike, roller blade in the summer. Largely unable to do so in the winter because of the weather and sidewalk conditions.
 - It's often easier to walk in the street than on the sidewalks because there are less obstacles and hazards (uneven pavement, cracks, sand/gravel, narrow sidewalk, vegetation in summer, snow/ice in winter)
- Desires:
 - Indoor walking option – HHS Community Ed option is too late to be viable for their families
- Concerns:
 - Distance to walk to get groceries or access the library
 - Often walk in the street because there isn't a sidewalk

Orange Places Project

Appendix F: Social Media Comments Summary

Engagement for the project took place in February 2024 and March 2024, and the public survey was promoted on the City of Hibbing's Facebook page. A summary of the comments left on applicable posts is documented below, presented in order of topic frequency.

- Inaccessible sidewalks (5)
 - Poor quality and upkeep (uneven, cracked, water pipes sticking up) (4)
 - Residents don't walk on sidewalks (2)
 - Resident vehicles park over public sidewalks (1)
 - Inconsistent snow and ice removal (1)
 - Request for indoor walking/running track (1)
- Unsafe pedestrian crossing (2)
 - Clearly marked crosswalks needed (2)
 - Nonfunctioning walk sign at stop lights (1)
- Alley repairs needed (2)
- Road repairs needed (2)
- Request for public benches at Carey Lake bird feeders (1)