



Walkability Assessment on Saipan 2021 Results Snapshot

What was the purpose of this project?

To assess the prevalence of community and street-scale design features that promote walking among streets on Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marian Islands (CNMI).

Why is this project important?

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a major public health concern in the CNMI. Risk factors for NCDs are prevalent in the CNMI, including physical inactivity. According to the 2016 CNMI Non-Communicable Diseases and Risk Factor Hybrid Surveillance Report, 33% of CNMI adults reported not having participated in any physical activity or exercise in the past month. Physical activity and more active lifestyles can be encouraged through built environment infrastructure that promote walking.

How was this project done?

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) NCD Bureau partnered with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) and the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA) to conduct an observational audit of street segments to measure street-level supports and barriers to physical activity. Seventeen volunteers from the NCD Bureau and the community were trained on the audit method. A total of 206 segments and 51 crossings were audited.

Key Results

Street Safety

- 17.5% have no street lights
- 24.3% had stray dogs present
- 72.3% had no sidewalks

Crossing Safety

- 60.0% had no walk signal
- 54.0% had no pedestrian signs
- 80.0% had no marked crosswalk
- 67.4% of marked crosswalks were worn or faded to the point they are difficult to see

Physical Disorder

- 41.8% of sidewalks had major trip hazards
- 46.8% of streets had abandoned buildings or overgrown vacant lots
- 18.9% of streets were considered to have some or a lot of litter

Functional Design

- 12.6% of streets had access to a park
- 24.3% of streets had public transit access
- 18.0% of streets had places to sit
- 1.5% of streets had adequate sun coverage
- 1.0% of streets had a designated bike lane





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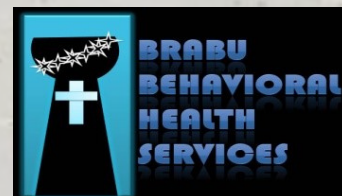
Potential Action Steps

- 1. Make walking an island-wide priority to improve the economy, the environment, and public health.**
 - Share the results of this assessment with stakeholders to form partnerships.
 - Work in collaboration with key built environment partners from various sectors. This can be done through the current efforts of the CNMI NCD Task Force and the CNMI Planning and Development Advisory Council, specifically under the leadership of the Built Environment Task Force.
- 2. Design communities that make it safe and easy to walk.**
 - Updates to zoning and design guidelines to encourage the development of compact, walkable village centers with essential needs and services.
 - Providing funding and incentives to create more walkable streets by completing sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, especially to key destinations.
 - Collaborating with public and private partners to add features such as shade trees, lighting, benches, and bus stop shelters.
- 3. Promote programs and policies to support walking.**
 - Promoting community-based walking and walk-to-school programs.
 - Increasing access to community locations for walking such as trails, parks, etc.
 - Working with government and residents to develop policies and programs to reduce or control stray dogs. Stray dogs can be a barrier to walking motivation.
- 4. Provide information to encourage walking and improve walkability.**
 - Share data gathered in this assessment widely to raise awareness on the walkability challenges on Saipan.
- 5. Collect more data on how much and where people walk and bike, and how to encourage more.**
 - Routinely conduct walkability assessments for surveillance to monitor progress of walkability on Saipan.
 - Collect more comprehensive data, such as qualitative data, to explore the barriers and incentives to walking on Saipan.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
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