

MARTIN:

2020 WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT



POWERED BY Wellmark 

FOREWORD

Thank you to all the participants who took part in the walking audit workshop. Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark was invited by the Martin Wellness Coalition to assist in identifying opportunities for enhancing walkability and bikeability.

Healthy Hometown is a way to make your community an even better place to live, work and play by using proven tools and techniques that help make the healthy choice the easy choice. Healthy Hometown provides evidence-based built environment and behavioral economics principles that result in desired action along with policy modifications to help communities make sustainable changes that will improve the overall well-being of residents. Implementing ways to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists is one primary way to achieve sustainable change.

The virtual walkability workshop that was completed in Martin was designed to help community members identify and visualize ways to provide a better environment to walk and bike. The walkability workshop was also designed to stimulate conversation within the community regarding actions that can be taken.

What follows is an identification of community members who participated in the walkability workshop and recommendations based on their observations. Some recommendations are low cost and could be easy to implement, while others may be large expenses that could take years of planning and work. We hope these recommendations will provide a framework for your community to make Martin more pedestrian- and bike-friendly.

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IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

- Require **sidewalks** with new construction and redevelopment projects
- Construct **infill sidewalks** to connect gaps in the existing sidewalk network
- **Repair** damaged sections of **sidewalk**
- Establish and enforce an annual **sidewalk** inspection and **repair program**
- Establish a plan to install ADA-compliant **curb ramps** at all intersections
- Paint high-visibility, continental-style **crosswalk** markings
- Install **enhanced pedestrian crossings** at: Highway 18 and Avenue C, Highway 18 and 3rd Avenue, and 1st Avenue and Main Street
- Implement a **road diet** on Highway 18
- Make sure all **pedestrian infrastructure** is operable/in good working order
- Install **pedestrian countdown signals** at the intersection of Highway 18 and 1st Avenue



ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

- Construct **bumpouts** in downtown Martin
- Work with local businesses to install **parklets** in downtown Martin
- Inventory existing **bike parking** in Martin
- Install **bike racks** throughout the community
- Design and install branded community **wayfinding** signage

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

July 2020

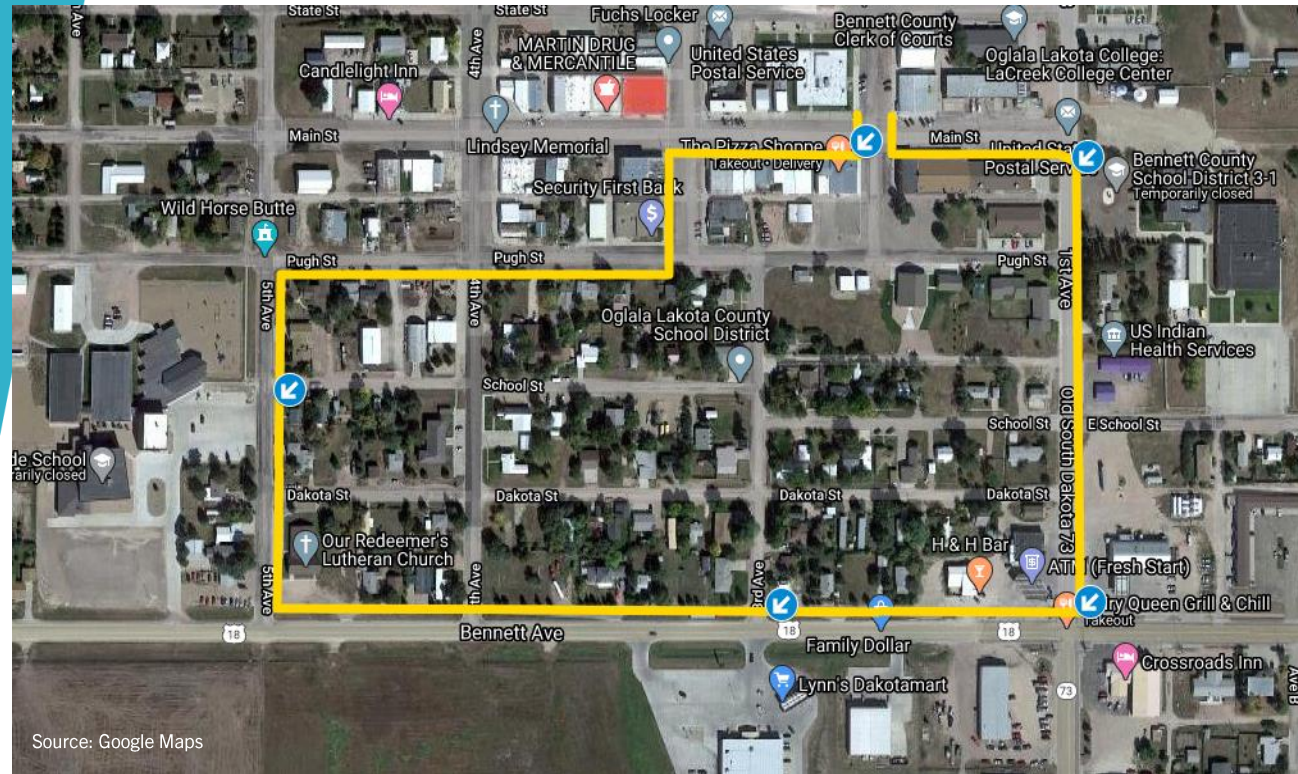
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Your hometown is the place you live, learn, work and play.
Make it a healthier place to live.

WALKING AUDIT ROUTE

Participants completed a walking audit along a 1-mile route beginning and ending in downtown Martin.

This audit began with observations of walking conditions on Main Street. Participants then continued along 1st Avenue, Highway 18, and 5th Avenue before returning downtown via Pugh Street.



The map above depicts the route participants observed in Martin.

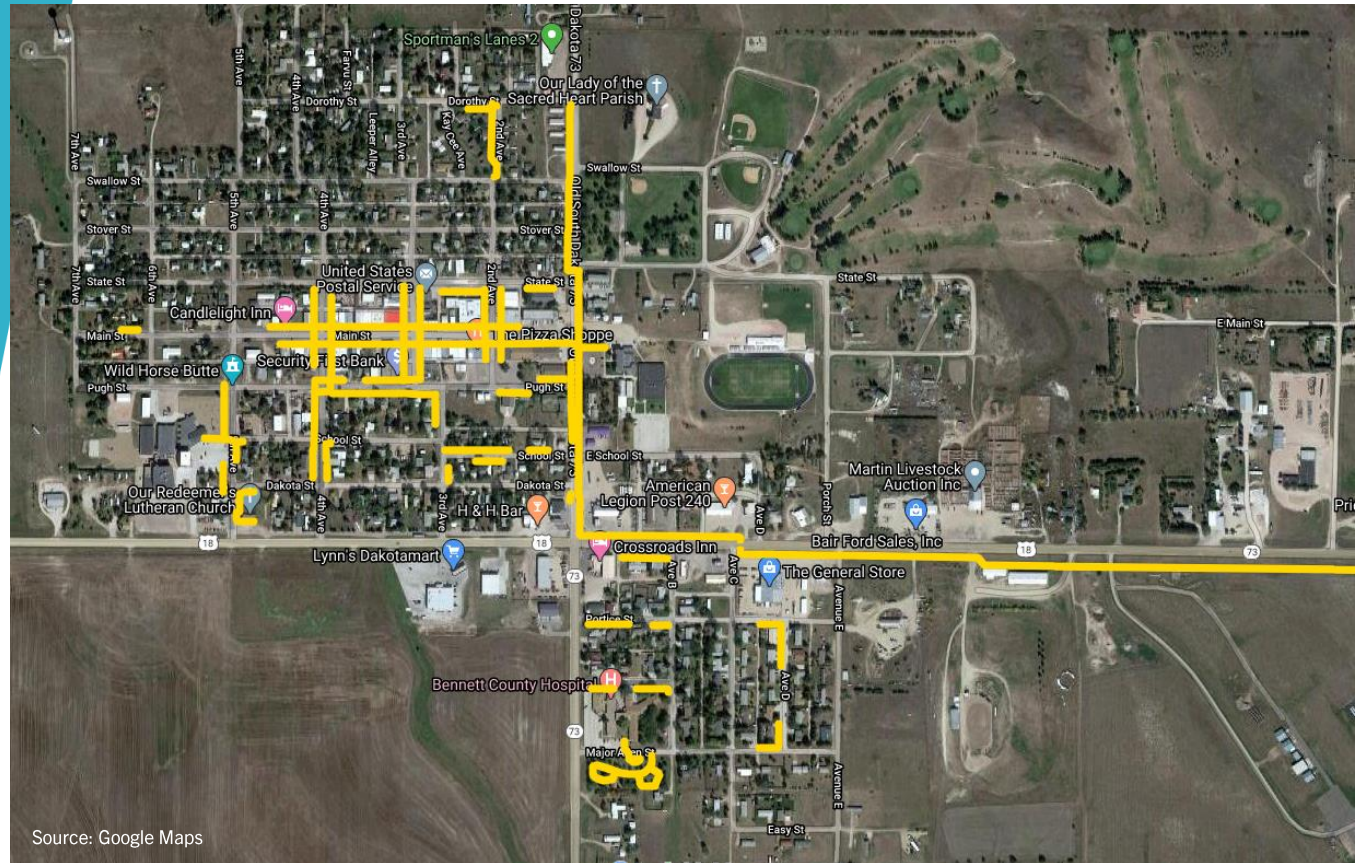
IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Connecting people to the places they want to go is an important part of your community's transportation network. It also enhances an individual's ability to incorporate walking and biking in their everyday life. This section of the report will outline some recommendations for improving those connections.

Sidewalks

Installing sidewalks in key areas where there are gaps can help improve the connectivity of your community's pedestrian network and promote physical activity. Future gaps can be prevented by adopting policies that require new development projects to install sidewalks as part of their construction plans.

- Require sidewalks with new construction and redevelopment projects
- Construct infill sidewalks to connect gaps in the existing sidewalk network



Source: Google Maps

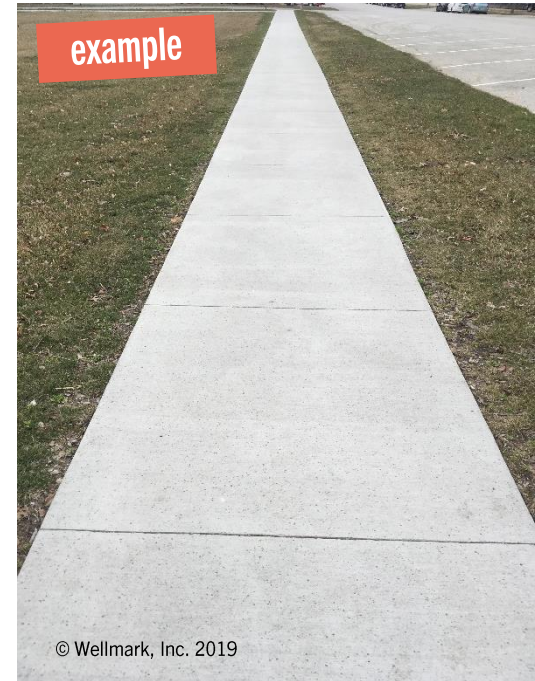
The map above depicts the existing trail and sidewalk network (yellow) in Martin. Gaps in the network could be targeted for infill sidewalk. Participants indicated that gaps near the schools and along the west side of 1st Avenue could be good starting points for installing new sidewalks.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Sidewalks (cont.)

As sidewalks age, it's important they are adequately maintained. Establishing a program that offers property owners a small financial incentive to voluntarily replace sections of sidewalk in need of repair is one way to boost repair efforts. In order to keep all sidewalks within the city well maintained, the city may also want to take a more proactive approach to replacement efforts by inspecting all sidewalks and notifying property owners who have sidewalks that are out of compliance.

- Repair damaged sections of sidewalk
- Establish and enforce an annual sidewalk inspection and repair program



Many sections of sidewalk throughout Martin need to be repaired or replaced. Participants noted that some sections of sidewalk on Main Street were patchy, uneven, and had lots of cracks.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Curb Ramps

In addition to sidewalks, missing and outdated curb ramps also represent impediments to those navigating your community. These situations can be remedied by updating curb ramps to ensure they are ADA-compliant. At locations that do not have updated curb ramps, sidewalks can be difficult to navigate and pose significant challenges for parents pushing strollers and people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Establishing a plan to update a select number of curb ramps every year will remove these barriers over time.

- Establish a plan to install ADA-compliant curb ramps at all intersections



A few intersections in Martin have updated curb ramps, but in many areas, participants noted that curbs are not very pedestrian friendly. An example of an updated ADA-compliant curb ramp is pictured above.

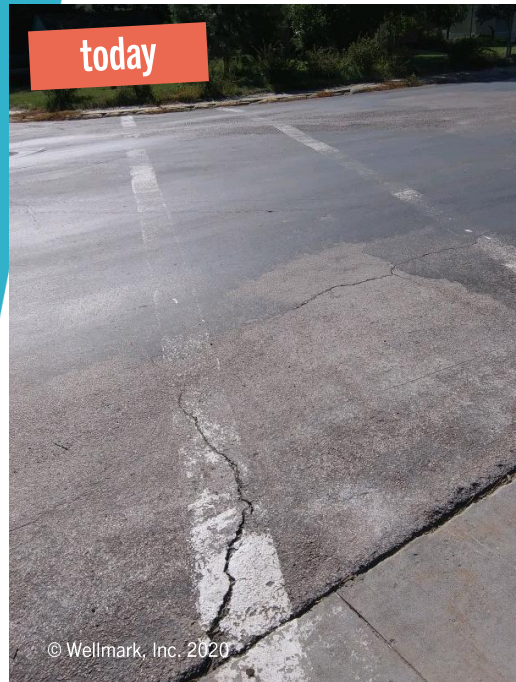
IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Crosswalks

Installing safer crossing points for people walking and riding bikes is a key component of making Martin a more walkable and accessible community. Marked crosswalks are one component of improving the safety for people crossing streets.

Today, Martin has only a few intersections with marked crosswalks. Participants noted that many crosswalks in town were the single stripe style and much less noticeable due to faded paint. One participant stated that “we need the more visible blocks of stripes for all the painted crosswalks.” Repainting these crosswalks with high-visibility, continental-style striping on a routine basis and expanding the number of intersections with marked crosswalks will improve pedestrian safety.

- Paint high-visibility, continental-style crosswalk markings



Many crosswalks have faded and need repainting. Using continental-style striping (see example above) helps improve the visibility of painted crosswalks.



Example of a continental-style crosswalk recently painted in Dell Rapids, South Dakota.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Enhanced Pedestrian Crossings

In addition to well-marked crosswalks, the use of illuminated devices activated by a push button would improve safety for people crossing the street. These devices are known as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), and they are designed to increase visibility and compliance by motorists.

Participants indicated that the trail crossing Highway 18 would benefit from the use of enhanced pedestrian crossings. Other locations in Martin on Highway 18 may also benefit from enhanced pedestrian crossings.

- Install enhanced pedestrian crossings at:
 - Highway 18 and Avenue C
 - Highway 18 and 3rd Avenue
 - 1st Avenue and Main Street



The trail crossing on Highway 18 could benefit from the addition of an enhanced pedestrian crossing with RRFBs like this example from Deadwood, South Dakota.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Road Diet

Highway 18 currently has four lanes of through traffic in areas where daily traffic doesn't warrant four lanes. This makes the street a candidate for something known as a "road diet." A road diet involves reducing the number of lanes for cars and using the extra space for a different purpose.¹ Most communities use the opportunity to provide wider shoulders or add bike lanes.

Converting streets from four-lane highways to three-lane streets will encourage lower vehicle speeds, which reduce crash rates and are more conducive to a vibrant community atmosphere. Three-lane streets provide a single travel lane for thru-traffic in each direction along with a center turning lane for making left turns.

- Implement a road diet on Highway 18



Safety on Highway 18 could be improved by implementing a road diet.



Example of a road diet implemented on a state highway in Waukon, Iowa.

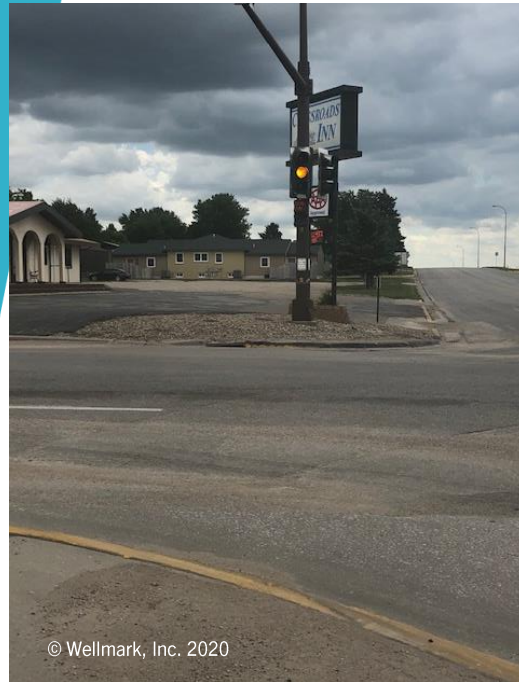
¹ <https://iowadot.gov/traffic/4-to-3-Lane-Conversion/3-Lane-Roads>

IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian Infrastructure

The intersection at 1st Avenue and Highway 18 has traffic signals equipped with pedestrian push buttons and signals. However, participants noted that the buttons appeared to be broken, some signals were pointed the wrong way, and that the signals never changed despite waiting a long time. Some pedestrian push buttons were also inaccessible by sidewalk, making them particularly difficult to reach. Repairing and updating these components will improve pedestrian safety at this intersection. Continuing to monitor these signals so that any needed repairs can be made routinely will be important going forward.

- Make sure all pedestrian infrastructure is operable/in good working order



At the intersection of Highway 18 and 1st Avenue, pedestrian push buttons are not accessible because the intersection does not have sidewalk connections or curb ramps.



IMPROVING SAFETY AND CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian Countdown Signals

The use of countdown signals for pedestrians at intersections can eliminate a significant source of confusion. Countdown signals are beneficial because they inform pedestrians of the time they have remaining to cross the street once the hand signal starts flashing. Without that context, many people will begin running across the street as soon as the “walking man” signal disappears and the “stop hand” begins flashing. Sudden erratic movements can increase the chances of a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle.

- Install pedestrian countdown signals at the intersection of Highway 18 and 1st Avenue



Older pedestrian signals and push buttons are present, but some participants noted that they are not functioning properly. Updating these push buttons to include signage and countdown signals for pedestrians will help eliminate confusion at the intersection.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Martin has some unique opportunities to implement strategic placemaking concepts that would create more places for residents to connect socially and enhance community pride. This section of the report will identify some of those concepts that could be applied in Martin.

Bumpouts

Bumpouts are extensions of the sidewalk that take up road space not needed for vehicular traffic. Bumpouts that include various landscaping elements help create an inviting and comfortable walking environment. They also shorten crossing distances for pedestrians at intersections, decrease turning vehicle speeds, and provide opportunities for street beautification.

- Construct bumpouts in downtown Martin



Example of a bumpout that includes street trees from Mitchell, South Dakota.



Downtown intersections in Martin could be enhanced by constructing bumpouts like this example from Yankton, South Dakota.

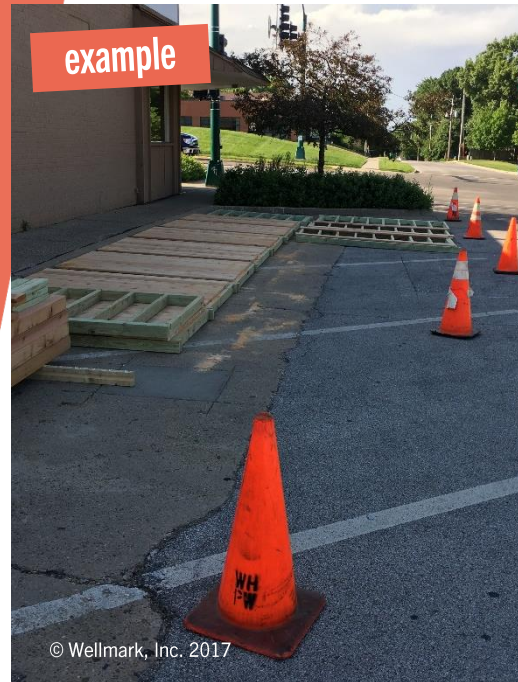
ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Parklets

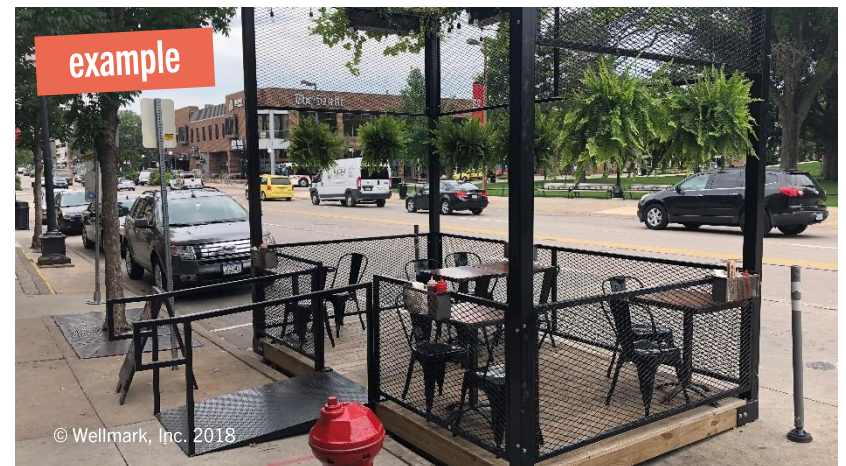
In most communities, streets make up the majority of publically owned land. Taking some of that space away from cars and dedicating it to people can be accomplished through the creation of parklets.

Parklets are temporary or permanent structures built in place of existing parking spaces.² Parklets may serve as social gathering spaces for community members by providing a relaxing space to sit and talk, enjoy a cup of morning coffee, or grab lunch with a friend. They also make a street more enjoyable and interesting to walk along. Parklets can be constructed out of a variety of materials including traditional lumber, pallets, tires, paint, and other unique decorations and furniture.

- Work with local businesses to install parklets in downtown Martin



This parklet is being installed by a restaurant to provide outdoor dining space for customers.



Examples of downtown parklets built for outdoor café dining.

² <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets>

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Bike Parking

Another form of active transportation is riding bicycles. A simple way to encourage more people to ride their bikes is by providing abundant and convenient parking for them. The city could begin assessing the potential need for more bike parking by taking an inventory of existing bike parking that is already available within the community. This inventory could identify areas where more racks may be needed. Participants observed no bike racks in the downtown area and only one was noted near the grade school. Good locations for adding bike racks might include the downtown area, library, grocery and convenience stores, middle and high school, and city parks.

- Inventory existing bike parking in Martin
- Install bike racks throughout the community



Examples of different styles of bike racks from other communities.



Example of a bike corral, installed in a former on-street parking space. This type of bike parking could work well in downtown Martin.

ENHANCING SENSE OF PLACE

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signs can be an important way to help people navigate around your city. Visitors find wayfinding signage and mapping kiosks particularly useful as it helps them become more familiar with the area's attractions.

Community members can be further encouraged to walk around town by using signage that includes information such as walking distances and times to community destinations like shops, restaurants, grocery stores, libraries, and other local landmarks.

- Design and install branded community wayfinding signage



Examples of branded wayfinding signage from various communities.

PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION/NEXT STEPS

Following a virtual meeting and educational presentation, participants completed a walkability worksheet and recorded their observations by taking notes and photos. The information collected from those worksheets formed the basis for the recommendations included in this report. Participants noted several elements that they felt made walking more comfortable, as well as many elements that made getting around more difficult or less safe.

The recommendations included in this report have been assembled to serve as a guide for your community to improve upon some of those elements and prioritize which ones are most important to pursue.

This report can be used as a tool to help build support from community leaders, elected officials, and the community at large to create a plan of action.

Citizen engagement is the best way to address many of the recommendations outlined in this report. All the walking audit participants are encouraged to stay involved with ongoing efforts to improve walkability in Martin.

Working collaboratively will ensure that Martin continues the path of becoming a vibrant, active, and healthy community.



Main Street's Hope Garden is an excellent example of a pocket park.

AFTERWORD

At Wellmark, our vision is to continuously improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We envision a future in which every generation experiences greater quality of health and improved quality of life. Many experts agree where we live is more impactful on our overall health than our own genetics. Our surroundings and environment prompt us to make decisions impacting our health without even realizing it. We created Healthy Hometown to provide evidence-based (proven) solutions that help communities structure their environment to nudge citizens toward healthy behaviors. When we engage in healthy behaviors, we have the opportunity to live our best life – and hopefully avoid serious illnesses. Making the healthy choice the easy choice is the best answer to keeping South Dakotans healthy.

eat well

move more

feel better

Important: This report, and the recommendations contained within, are provided by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Wellmark) as suggestions about how walkability, bikeability and social interactions may be enhanced in your community. These are simply suggestions that your community can choose to implement at its own discretion. Wellmark bears no responsibility for any implemented suggestions and provides no guarantee of any particular results.

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