**Windshield and Walking Tours[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Walking and windshield tours are designed to provide an in-depth look into a community’s characteristics on foot or from a moving vehicle. The tours may be used to observe the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age, also known as social determinants of health. Such observations are essential to informing all phases of community care coordination planning, development, and implementation.

**Should you do a walking tour or windshield tour?**

Both tours offer a great way of understanding your community. A windshield tour might be useful when wanting to observe a larger area and the aspects of your interest can be sighted from the road. One should only conduct a windshield tour if riding as a passenger. Public transportation (if applicable) would also serve as a unique opportunity to meet, listen, and learn from community members. Walking tours promote a ‘walk in my shoes or boots on the ground’ feeling. It increases your chances of engaging in intimate conversations and listen to voices of the community.

**How often and when should you conduct a windshield and walking tour?**

One observation does not allow for a comprehensive community tour. It is recommended to conduct tours as often as possible and during different times of the day (morning, afternoon, and evening), week, weekend, and year. This provides you a ‘feel’ for the community and increases your chances of understanding how people use the community and the unique differences between conditions or activities at varying times.

**Where areas should you tour?**

Deciding on areas to tour will shape your perspective of the community. Consider your organization’s service areas, and where its target population and high utilizers dwell and frequent. Also, think about the areas where you are most unfamiliar and how a tour would build your awareness to inform and support community care coordination activities. A map should be used to help guide the tour.

**What should you survey during your tour?**

Multiple facets work together to create a community. Use and/or expand upon the below table[[2]](#footnote-2) to document your observations. Capturing photos are also another way to document sightings.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tourist:**  **Community Name:** | **Date:**  **Tour Mode:** |
| **Observations** | |
| **Boundaries**  Are the boundaries geographical, political, or economic?  Do neighborhoods have names?  Are there sub-communities?  How are these identified? |  |
| **Housing and Zoning**  What is the age of the buildings? Are the residences single family or multifamily dwellings? |  |
| **Signs of Decay**  Is the area well maintained or in disrepair? Is there garbage strewn? Are there trashed/abandoned cars, places for rodents or other wildlife to hide, vacant lots? |  |
| **Parks and Recreational Areas**  Are there play areas for children and adults? Are they safe and maintained? Is there a Community Center? Who uses them? |  |
| **Common Areas**  Where do people collect for social gatherings; where do they “hang out”? Are they for particular groups or are they open to all? Are there signs posted? |  |
| **Stores**  What stores (grocery, retail, drug, dry cleaning, etc.) are in the area? How do residents travel to them? |  |
| **Transportation**  How do most people get around the area? Is there public transportation? If so what kind and does it appear to be used? Who uses it? What is the condition of the streets, roads, highways? |  |
| **Communication**  Is there evidence of local and national newspapers to other media? Are there informational posters on streets, busses, billboards, etc.? |  |
| **Service Centers**  What services are available in the community – health care, social services, schools, employment offices. etc.? |  |
| **People in the Community**  Who is in the area during the day? What evidence is thereof particular “classes” of people – upper, middle, working, lower? |  |
| **Industries**  What are the major industries located in the area? What types of occupations are evident? |  |
| **Protective Services**  Where are fire and police stations located? Is there evidence of police and fire protection in the area? |  |
| **Ethnicity**  What is the predominant ethnic group? Are there residents from a variety of ethnic backgrounds or is the community mostly one group? Which one? Are there stores, restaurants, churches, schools, or languages that indicate a particular ethnic group(s)? |  |
| **Religion**  What churches and church-run schools are in the area (denomination)? How many are there of each denomination? |  |
| **Health and Morbidity**  Is there evidence of any health problems such as drug/alcohol abuse, communicable or chronic diseases, mental illness (etc.)? |  |
| **Politics**  Is there evidence of political activity? Are there any signs that indicate a predominant political party (parties)or concern(s)? |  |

**What should you do following a tour?**

Be prepared to submit and share the observation table to and with Center staff. The following questions will also be facilitated to debrief the tour experience.

***Debrief Questions***

* *What are the community’s outstanding assets?*
* *What seem to be the community’s biggest challenges?*
* *What is the most striking thing about the community?*
* *What is the most unexpected?*

**Should You invite community partners to join you?**

We recommend Community Champions host a tour with community partners in preparation of Step 2: Navigating the River. This will help to create buy-in for and inform community priority action planning.

1. Community Tool Box (2022). *Tools to change our world.* Chapter 3. Assessing Community Needs and Resources, Section 21. Windshield and Walking Surveys, Main Section. Center for Community Health and Development. University of Kansas. Retrieved 29 April 2022, from <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/windshield-walking-surveys/main>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Washtenaw Community College. (2022). *Research Guides: NUR 130: Health Promotion and Risk Reduction: Windshield Survey Document* [pdf]. WCC Library. Retrieved 29 April 2022, from <https://libguides.wccnet.edu/nur130/windshield_survey> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)