

# **Rural Active Living Assessment Tools: CODEBOOK**

*For assessing physical features, community programs and policies that promote physical activity in rural communities*

Maine Rural Health Research Center, University of Southern Maine

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Rural Active Living Assessment (RALA) Tools has been designed to help you collect data on physical environment features and amenities, town characteristics, community programs, and policies that could potentially influence levels of physical activity among residents in your community. This tool will allow you to assess the “friendliness” of your community for walking, biking, and playing (especially among youth). It provides a structure for looking at the town as a whole, how it is laid out, where people live, work and go to school, and how they are likely to get from one place to another. It also includes a detailed audit tool to look at specific “segments” of your community and assess key characteristics of those segments. Finally, it also provides a structure for assessing the programs and policies that might help to overcome an “unfriendly” environment, or that might actually make that environment less activity friendly. This audit tool was designed by researchers at the Maine Rural Health Research Center, University of Southern Maine, and was tested and refined by researchers at the University of Southern Maine, Tufts University, University of Alabama, and University of Mississippi.

The complete rural audit consists of three separate assessments, including: 1. The Town-wide Assessment, 2. The individual Segment Assessment, and 3. The Program and Policy Assessment. These three assessment instruments are designed to be used together and provide a tool to conduct a comprehensive active living audit of your rural town.

**\*\*Please note that in many rural towns, the individual Segment Assessment tool may not be applicable due to the town’s dispersed layout and lack of a concentrated town “center” (that is, those towns with very low intersection density). Instructions for determining whether it is appropriate to conduct individual Segment Assessments can be found below on Page 7. If your town does not lend itself to conducting the Segment Assessment, the Town-wide Assessment and Program and Policy Assessment tools will still capture the elements in your town that determine its activity friendliness.**

### **Getting Started:**

This tool is primarily intended for use in rural communities of less than 10,000 population. Larger towns may be assessed more effectively using urban typologies and audit tools (many of these urban-based tools can be found at:

<http://activelivingresearch.org/resourcesearch/toolsandmeasures>

In the physical domain, a rural town may be described in terms of factors within its boundaries, such as road density, types and density of intersections, presence or absence of a town common or town center (or multiple town centers) as well as natural features such as hills and rivers. In addition, the town's geographic proximity to relevant population centers outside its boundaries is also relevant. Thus, limiting a typology to geographic or physical factors requires us to consider at least three dimensions for rural towns:

*1. Location* This will require a map showing at least a 15-mile radius about the town center. A Google Maps, Google Earth or Mapquest map showing location of residences, services and businesses will be helpful. Some extremely rural areas may not have specific town boundaries and will therefore not find maps available online. In this case, it may be necessary to contact the local town office to obtain the most up-to-date map of the area. Also, in these cases, the County Seat may be the most appropriate area to audit if town boundaries do not exist as is the case in some rural areas. The Town-wide assessment includes questions about specific town characteristics and about a number of recreational amenities that may not be within the town boundaries, but are nevertheless accessible to local residents. In this audit tool, such amenities are not considered readily accessible if they are beyond a distance of 15 miles from the town center. In some parts of the US, rural towns are close to each other, and may share many such amenities. Rural town location patterns typically fall into one of the following categories, with shared amenities more common in the first two types:

- integrated (common in New England, where one town seems contiguous with the next)
- intermediate (some development between towns, typically less than 15 miles between town centers)
- remote (more common in Midwest and western states, where large undeveloped areas separate one town from the next)

Understanding your rural town's location pattern may be useful when trying to understand what resources (physical amenities, programs, and commerce) town residents have access to within and beyond their town.

*2. Settlement pattern:* Walkability and connectivity will be determined to a great extent not only by the density of population and intersections, but by the overall pattern in which streets were laid out as the town was originally settled. Most rural towns fall into one of the following patterns:

- dispersed - There may be a town center, but most of the population is spread out and may live several miles from the town center. Such towns can be identified by low population density and will usually have few roads and few intersections.
- elongated – This pattern is best exemplified by very small towns with only one major road passing through and most non-residential development along that road. Intersecting roads may lead to residential areas or schools, but are often not connected to each other, except by retuning to the main thoroughfare.
- clustered – This pattern often results from sub-divisions. A grid pattern or cul-de-sac pattern residential neighborhood may be quite distant from the town center, with only one thoroughfare connecting the neighborhood to the town center. Occasionally, a cluster

will be commercial, rather than residential, as when a Walmart locates on the edge of town, and other retail businesses locate near the Walmart.

- compact – In areas where sprawl has been restricted, either by natural features or by land-use restrictions, both residential and commercial development is likely to have greater density. Grid patterns are more common in such communities. Connectivity is likely to be good, due to greater intersection density. Such communities are inherently more walkable.

These settlement types may be clarified or refined by considering the pattern of highway, thoroughfare and residential roads in a community beginning with radial vs. grid pattern, with possible combinations such as a radial pattern with neighborhoods clustered along arteries having limited local grid patterns.

Understanding your town's settlement pattern/type may help you determine whether you should conduct the Segment Assessment portion of this tool and/or to define the segments that you may choose to audit when assessing activity-friendliness of your town.

*3. Physical features:* There are several natural and some man-made physical features that may create unique barriers in rural communities when trying to choose segments to audit. You may find these same features to be supports or barriers to physical activity among residents in your town. Physical features can include:

- Topography (especially in combination with road pattern)
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Limited access highways or active railroad tracks

Having a general understanding of the location patterns, settlement patterns and physical features of your town before you begin your audit will aid in the selection of your segments and identification of important factors that may aid or thwart physical activity in your community.

### **Conducting the Audit:**

#### ***Before you begin: Selecting the “Town Central Point”***

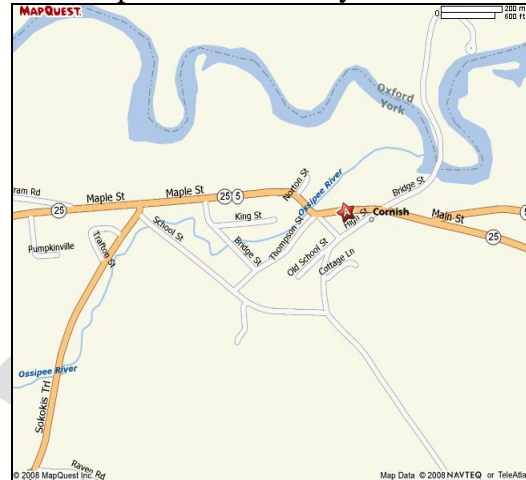
Many of the questions in the assessment tools make reference to the “Town Center” or town “central point.” This is a reference point that should be determined by you at the onset of conducting the assessments. A good way to determine the central point for the town is by locating the town library, the town hall, or the town green – a point that you feel best represents what residents would most likely consider to be the center of the town. You will eventually be constructing a circle (with a one mile radius) around that central point to help you select your segments when you reach the Segment Assessment (see pg. 11).

Examples of potential “Town Central Point”:

Town Library



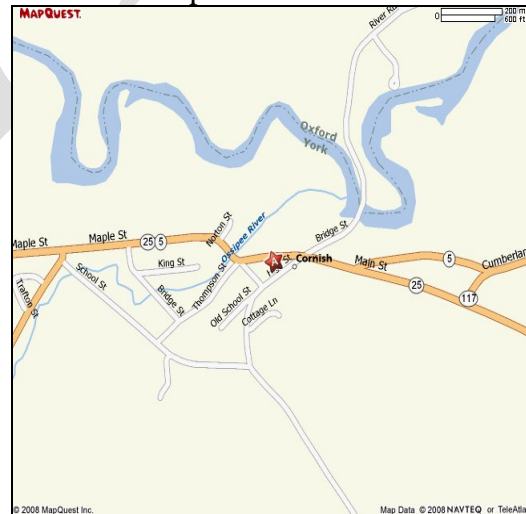
Map of Town Library Location



Town Green



Map of Town Green



## **SECTION 1: The Town-wide Assessment**

You will be observing your town on a both a broad-scale (macro) and a detailed (micro) level. The broad-scale, Town-Wide Assessment will look at characteristics of your town as a whole. The more detailed Segment Assessment (see Section 2) will involve identifying specific physical attributes of each segment of the community that you choose to audit, in order to further assess the activity-friendliness of your community.

Before conducting the Town-Wide Assessment, be sure to read the introductory section above regarding location, settlement pattern and physical features, and think about where your town falls in those typologies. To complete this section, it may be helpful to refer to your town map and you also may need to contact your local town officials to answer some of the questions.

\*\*\*Please note that in areas where there are no specific town boundaries, it may be appropriate to use the County Seat when conducting the Town-wide assessment. If you choose to do this, substitute the word “county” for the word “town” throughout the assessment.

Questions in this section include information about:

- Town population
- Total town area and population density
- County population
- Total county area population density
- General town topography (hills, mountains, flat, etc)
- Town center
- Town street pattern
- Public school location
- Town recreational amenities and location

If needed, you can find question-by-question details for the Town-wide Assessment here:

### ***Question by Question Details for Completing the Town-wide Assessment***

#### **I. TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS/CHARACTERISTICS:**

Q1. Town Name:

Fill in the name of the town that is being assessed.

Q2. County Name:

Fill in the name of the county in which the town being assessed is located.

Q3. Town Population:



Enter the total number of residents residing in the town being assessed. This can be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q4. Total Town Area:

Enter the total area, in square miles, of the town that is being assessed. This can be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q5. Town Population Density:

Enter the town population density. This can be calculated by dividing the total town population by the total town area to get the number of persons per square mile. Population density can also be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q6. County Population:

Enter the total number of residents residing in the county in which the town being assessed is located. This can be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q7. Total County Area:

Enter the total area, in square miles, of the county in which the town being assessed is located. This can be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q8. County Population Density:

Enter the county population density. This can be calculated by dividing the total county population by the total county area to get the number of persons per square mile. Population density can also be collected from the local town office or online at: [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

Q9. General Town Topography:

Check the option that best describes the natural topography of the town as a whole. Choose from the following options:

*Flat* – the town is generally flat with very few hills and no mountains.

*Hilly* – the town is generally has rolling hills throughout.

*Mountainous* – the town is located within a mountain range or has significant mountainous peaks located within its boundaries.

*Other* – the town has some other topography.

Q10. Presence of “Town Center”:

Check the option that best describes whether there is one or several “town centers” located in your town. Choose from the following options:

*Yes – one distinct town center* – The town has one established town center where all or most of the town municipalities are located, such as the town offices, library, police/fire departments, post office, and other commercial services.

*Yes – multiple town centers* – The town has more than one area that is considered to be the town center. Municipal and commercial services can be found in both/all of these “centers.”

*No town center* – There is no established/distinguishable town center where municipal/commercial services are clustered. These services are either spread out across the town or are not available.

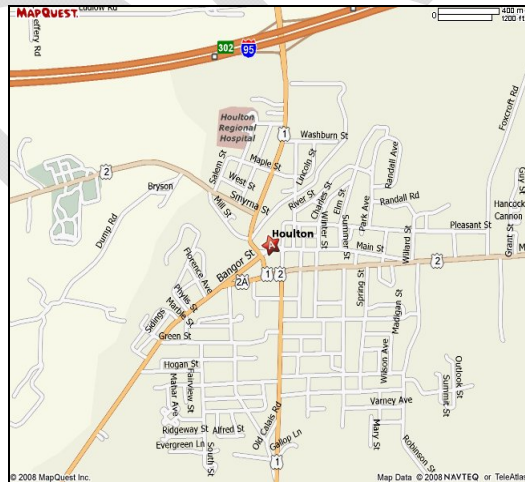
*Other* – the town has some other arrangement of municipal and commercial services (please specify).

#### Q11. General Town Street Pattern:

Check the option that best describes the overall street pattern when looking at the town as a whole. It may help to look at a town map to determine the street pattern. Choose from the following options:

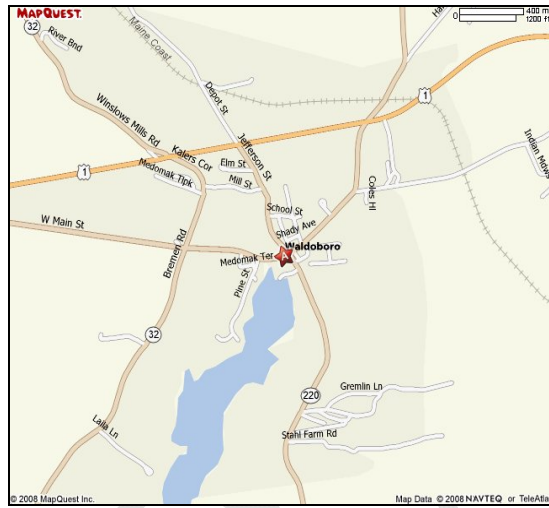
*Grid* – The roads have an obvious and distinguishable grid pattern in one or several sections of the town. Grid patterns are similar to those found in urban areas with distinct city blocks.

#### Example:



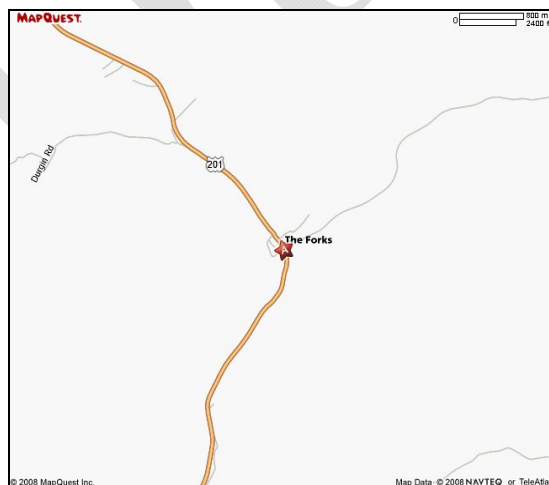
*Radial* – The roads follow a pattern where the primary roads generally intersect and come together at a central point, but do not follow a distinguishable grid pattern. This pattern may resemble the spokes of a tire.

Example:



*No distinguishable pattern* – The roads do not follow a grid, radial, or other pattern.

Example:





*Other* – The roads follow a distinguishable pattern other than grid or radial (please specify pattern)

## Q12 – Q18. Location of Public Schools:

Check the option that best describes the location of the town’s public high school, middle school, elementary school, or additional schools. Choose from the following options:

*Within 1 mile of town center* – The school falls within one-mile of town’s designated central point.

*Between 1 and 5 miles from town center* – The school is located more than one-mile but less than five miles from town’s designated central-point.

*More than 5 miles from town center* – The school is located more than five or more miles from the town’s designated central-point.

## II. TOWN RECREATIONAL AMENITIES:

This section is designed to collect information about recreational amenities available in your town. For each amenity, please check off its distance from your central town point, the condition of the amenity, and whether it has the specific access features listed. If there are any comments related to a specific amenity, please write it in the space provided.

Each amenity is listed in the **first column**. In the **second column**, check off the *distance* of that amenity from the designated town central-point. If the amenity is located outside of the town’s boundaries, but is still considered to be accessible to town residents, please note it in the “Comments” box for that particular amenity. Choose from the following options:

*Yes – within 1 mile of town center* – The amenity is located within one mile of the town’s designated central point.

*Yes – 1 to 5 miles from town center* – The amenity is located between one and five miles from the town’s designated central point.

*Yes – 5 to 15 miles away from town center* – The amenity is located between five and fifteen miles away from the town’s central point.

*Yes – beyond 15 miles away from town center* – The amenity is located farther than 15 miles from the designated town central-point.

*No – town does not have this amenity* – The amenity is not available for residents of this town.

In the **third column**, check off the most appropriate choice regarding the *condition* of each amenity. Choose from the following options:

*Fair/Poor* – The amenity is not well maintained and is in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*Good/Excellent* - The amenity is well maintained and is in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

In the **fourth column**, check off the most appropriate choice regarding *access* to each amenity. Check of whether the amenity includes any of the following elements:

*Clearly marked signs for amenity* – There is clear and legible signage posted specifically to direct visitors to the amenity.

*Designated parking for amenity* – There are parking spaces (either paved, dirt, gravel or other) that have been designated for the amenity.

*Sidewalks leading to amenity* – There are sidewalks that lead to the amenity and connect visitors to safe walking routes to and from the amenity.

Complete the above steps for each amenity listed. Please note that there are additional spaces at the end of this section for “Other Amenities” in your town that have not been listed on this assessment tool.

\*This completes the instructions for the Town-Wide Assessment portion of the RALA Tools.

## **SECTION 2: The Segment Assessment**

### **General Guidelines:**

- Ideally, two people should conduct the audit together – this will help to test reliability. Preferably, at least one person should be an active and informed local community member, such as a town planner, recreation planner or other town official. This will help to ensure that one of the auditors knows the community well, and can aid in selecting meaningful segments in the town.
- It is recommended that you obtain a map of the community that you are auditing. This can be obtained from your local town offices or by going online to a mapping website such as Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com/maps>) or Mapquest (<http://www.mapquest.com>). These websites allow you to zoom into areas of a specific town and observe street-level and satellite/aerial maps. Starting with a physical map can be useful in planning out your audit route, defining segments, and documenting certain physical features such as lakes, rivers, parks, defining town typology (see below) and other features.
- Be sure to review the Segment Assessment before going out into the field. This will assure better more complete data collection. You will also need to do a preliminary selection of your segments based on a town map before going into the field.
- Be sure to bring a watch to note the time, clipboard, extra pencils, and a digital camera, which may also be helpful to document physical characteristics that may need to be reviewed again at a later date. Also, some have found it helpful to have a GPS device when conducting segment assessments.
- Portions of the audit may be done by foot, while others will most likely need to be done by car.

### **Selecting Segments:**

Defining the segments you would like to study in your community will be one of the most challenging steps during the physical audit process. Because most rural towns are not made up of neat, city-blocks, choosing the boundaries for each segment can be tricky. In our previous research, we have found it helpful to identify/separate zones in the following four categories and then choose segments from within these zones (please see below for more detailed descriptions of each zone):

1. Town Center Zone
2. Thoroughfare Zone
3. Neighborhood Cluster Zone (should have minimal through-traffic and be primarily residential)

#### 4. Isolated School Zone (a school that does not fall into any other segment)

It is up to you how many total zones and segments you would like to audit. For example, a town may have one Town Center zone (although a town could have more than one), several Thoroughfare zones, several Neighborhood clusters, and an Isolated School Zone.

\*\*\* We do NOT recommend auditing the entire town. Start by identifying segments that fall within the Town Center zone: that is, within a ONE- MILE RADIUS of what is considered the primary central point of the town. The segments that you audit should fall within that circle. In cases where the school(s) in the town does not fall within the central circle, a separate zone should be constructed around the school(s) so that the area can be appropriately audited. If you need to draw multiple circles (e.g. one around the town center and one around the school) you may find it necessary to audit any thoroughfare that connects the two circles. If your town is laid out in a clustered settlement pattern (as defined above), you may use this same approach for any additional clusters that are not within a mile of the town center.

Each zone that you identify will fall into the following shape categories: radius, line, or polygon. For example,

- The Town Center Zone will be a RADIUS, since you will be drawing a circle around what you have determined to be the central point of the town. Within the one mile radius that defines the Town Center zone, you should identify preliminary segments using a street map (Google or Mapquest is fine). You will most likely find that some of the preliminary segments you chose will need to be modified based on certain characteristics that you see in the field. In densely settled zones, a segment is identified as both sides of a street from one street intersection to the next (e.g. a city block). However, in rural towns, this approach must be modified to make use of endpoints other than cross streets, drawing on observed natural boundaries that you may see out in the field, such as large unsettled areas, bridges, or significant changes in land use. For example, if an area or a road within a zone makes an obvious change from commercial to residential, that may be an appropriate segment boundary. Your one-mile radius zone may have many such segments. The number of segments that you choose is up to you. It is most likely sufficient to identify 12 segments or less within that Town Center Zone radius from which to choose your final set of segments. Although segment lengths may vary based on obvious boundaries, a distance of approximately ¼ mile may be used as a general guide for segment length.
- A Thoroughfare Zone may be a thoroughfare connecting the town center to a school or residential cluster, or it may be a Main Street or major highway passing through or near the town center. A thoroughfare zone may be separated into segments along the thoroughfare using the same approach as the Town Center zone – that is, using cross streets and other natural or built endpoints. Choose at least two segments from any thoroughfare zone that is one-quarter mile or more in length. For shorter thoroughfare zones, or a thoroughfare zone with no variability in land use, one segment is sufficient.

- A Neighborhood Zone or School Cluster Zone may be a RADIUS or a POLYGON since there may or may not be natural or built boundaries that define it. The area of each cluster zone (neighborhood or school) should be no greater than .25 *square-miles*. (e.g. a 0.5 x 0.5 mile square or about a 0.3mile radius) As with the Town Center and Thoroughfare zones, identify segments on your map. Since cluster zones are smaller, you only need to find a maximum of 6 segments in a cluster zone. In some cases, only one segment may be sufficient.

\*\*\* In each zone, you will choose a sample of segments from among those you have identified. There is no absolute minimum number of segments. It is recommended that you start with a segment near the center of your zone, and audit as many segments as you feel necessary to capture the essential characteristics of the zone. When moving on to your next segment, you should continue to an adjacent segment or the next closest segment that you have chosen to audit. Continue this process until all selected segments have been audited. A Town Center zone in a town of 5000 is likely to need at least 4 segments. If the town is compact, the Town Center zone may be the only zone, and you may need at least 6 segments to capture the variety of physical environments in that zone.

Once you have determined how many and which segments you will be auditing, you should make a separate copy of the Segment Assessment tool for each segment to assess the physical and natural features in each section.

The figure below illustrates these zones using map from a town in Maine. The triangle represents the library, which was the town central point. The black dots illustrate where the schools are located.

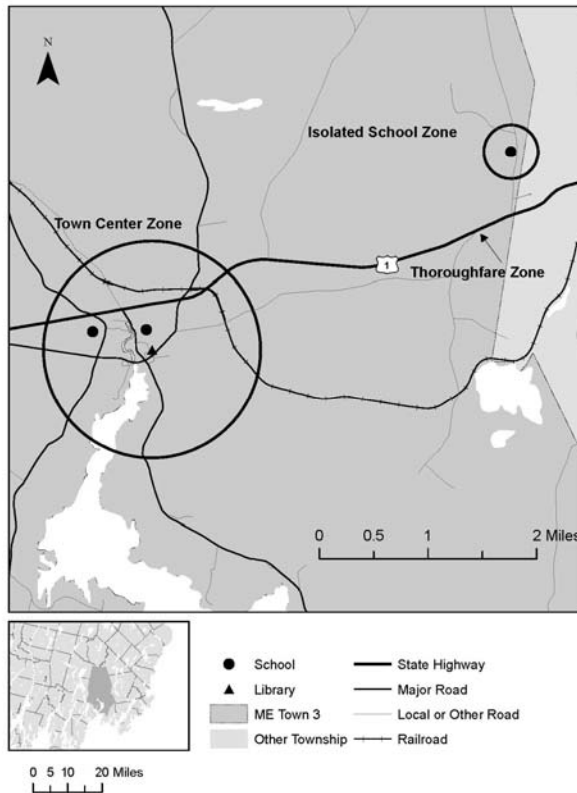
The large circle encompasses the town-center zone, from which several segments were selected to audit. We recommend drawing a circle with a one-mile radius around the central point, and then choosing segments within that circle for the town center zone.

Up in the right-hand corner of the figure is where the high-school is located, over two miles from the town central point. We wanted to audit segments around this school, so we drew a quarter-mile radius around it, creating an Isolated School Zone.

We also identified a Thoroughfare Zone to audit segments that connect the Town Center Zone with the Isolated School Zone. Here we broke the thoroughfare into 1/4 mile parts and selected segments based on land use type. If there was no change in land use type on this road, you could audit just one representative segment.

There was no Neighborhood Cluster Zone in the town, but it would look similar to the School Zone shown here, but it would be primarily a residential area.





### Completing the Detailed Segment Assessment

Make sure you number each segment on your map as well as on the corresponding Audit Assessment tools. A separate audit sheet should be completed for each segment that you choose to assess in your rural community. Please be sure that you only choose one answer (unless instructed otherwise) for each question on the audit. You may choose at which point you would like to begin auditing in each segment, but be sure to audit the entire segment (by foot or by car). You can ensure this by referring to a map of the area/segment and making sure you audit the characteristics, amenities, and features found on every street you see on the map in that segment. Be sure to observe characteristics, amenities, and features found on both sides of the street.

For more detailed instructions on completing each question of the Segment Assessment, please proceed to the next page of the Codebook.

### **Question by Question Details for Completing the Street Segment Assessment**

The following information is provided to help you complete the assessment for each segment:

#### **Street Segment Assessment**

\*\*\* Start by filling out the Segment ID Number (to be selected by you) on each page of the assessment tool. This will eliminate any confusion should pages get separated. This number should correspond with the number you assigned each segment on your town map.

\*\*\* Next fill out the Auditor ID (to be selected by you – you may choose a distinct number or a name) on each page of the assessment tool to keep track of who is filling out the tool.

\*\*\* Now fill in the Town Name.

#### **Q1. Primary streets**

Enter the most significant streets in the segment

#### **Q2. Segment boundaries**

Enter the features (street name, park, river, etc.) you've identified as boundaries for the segment.

#### **Q3. Date**

Enter the date on which the Segment Assessment is being completed.

#### **Q4. Start Time**

Enter the time at which you begin filling out the Segment assessment.

#### **Q5. Land use**

Select the primary land use in the segment: residential, commercial, industrial, public/civic, open space or other. If the segment features a fairly even mix of land uses and a primary use can not be identified, you may check more than one box, as appropriate.

#### **Q6. Terrain**

Select any significant terrain features present: flat, hills, wooded/undeveloped, winding roads, water body or other feature. You may check more than one box if appropriate.

#### **Q7. Segment Zone Type**

Select the option that best describes the type of Zone in which the segment is located (please check only one):

1. Town Center Zone
2. Thoroughfare Zone
3. Neighborhood Zone
4. Isolated School Zone

## Walkability

Sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian and bike-friendly features have an impact on a town's walkability. This section will help to determine whether your segment includes any of these features.

### Q8. Sidewalks

Choose one option that best describes the sidewalks in the segment: sidewalks are found on both sides of the street, one side of the street, intermittent (sidewalks exist along only parts of the roads), footpath only or none. Rate the overall condition of sidewalks using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The sidewalks are generally not well maintained in this segment and are in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Example:



*2-Good/Excellent* - The sidewalks are generally well maintained in this segment and are in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Example:



### Q9. Buffers and Shoulders

Check the appropriate boxes if most sidewalks in the segment have a sidewalk buffer strip separating them from the road and if the roads have a defined shoulder separating the traffic lanes from the edge of the road. If neither of these features exists, check “none.” Rate the overall condition of sidewalks using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The sidewalk buffer or shoulder are generally not well maintained in this segment and are in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration. (e.g., is sand swept from the shoulders to allow for safer biking?)

#### Example: Fair/Poor condition

Shoulder



Sidewalk Buffer



*2-Good/Excellent* - The sidewalk buffer or shoulder are generally well maintained in this segment and are in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Examples: Good/Excellent condition

Shoulder



Sidewalk buffer



Q10. Crosswalks and Signage

Check the appropriate boxes regarding whether the segment includes crosswalks, crossing signals (“walk” and “don’t walk” lights), pedestrian signs, and children at play signs. If none of these features exist check “none.” Rate the overall condition of these features using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The crosswalks, signals and pedestrian signs are generally not well maintained in this segment, are hidden, and/or are in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration (e.g., are the crosswalk lines brightly painted or otherwise made visible to drivers and pedestrians? Are crossing signals in working order? If you answer no to these questions, then the signs/signals are considered to be in poor or fair condition.)

Examples: No photo available

*2-Good/Excellent* - The crosswalks, signals and pedestrian signs are generally well maintained in this segment and are in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.



Examples: Good/Excellent condition

Crosswalk



Pedestrian Sign



Q11. Other Safety Features

Check off any other pedestrian friendly features available in the segment including traffic lights, stop signs, yellow school flashing lights, speed bumps and public lighting. If none of these features exist check “none.” Use the comment box to note other features or places where you might recommend improving safety features.

Q12. Road/Traffic Characteristics

Indicate all road types found in the segment including paved multi-lane roads (three or more lanes), paved single lane roads (one or two lanes) and unpaved roads.

Next indicate the road condition, either Poor/fair (roads are generally not well maintained in this segment. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration) or Good/excellent (roads are generally well maintained in this segment. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration).

Note the posted maximum speed limits found in the segment. Indicate whether there is no speed limit posted.

Indicate what level of traffic volume you witness in the segment:

*High traffic volume:* There is a steady stream of significant traffic traveling through the segment

*Medium traffic volume:* There is noticeable, but not constant traffic traveling through the segment

*Low traffic volume:* There is little or no traffic traveling through the segment

### Q13. Barriers

Indicate any significant barriers to pedestrian and bike traffic in the segment, including a highway, train tracks, posted private property, industrial zone, natural features (e.g., a river, thick woods, steep terrain) or other obstacle. If no barrier or obstacle exists, check “none.”

### Q14. Connectivity

Indicate whether non-vehicular routes such as sidewalks, bikepaths or trails connect this segment with other parts of town/attractions, including attractions such as schools, commercial districts and parks or with other segments or roads. If they are available in this segment, rate the overall condition of these connectors using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The connectors are generally not well maintained in this segment and are in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*2-Good/Excellent* - The connectors are generally well maintained in this segment and are in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

### **Land use**

If there is any residential settlement in the segment, even if it is not the primary land use, please answer the following questions. If there are no homes in the segment, check “none.”

### Q15. Residential

In the first column of question 14, please indicate how densely settled the segment is by checking one of the following options:

**Densely settled** – Residences are located close to one another with little or no open space between each structure. It is possible to see several other structures from each residence.

Example:



Moderately densely settled- Residences are spaced out with moderate open space between each structure. It may be possible to see some other structures from each residence.

Example:



Not densely settled (dispersed) – Residences are located very far distances from one another with vast space between each structure. It is not possible to see other structures from each residence.

Example:



In the second column, please note the housing types present (single family detached, multi-family/apartments, mobile homes, other types, none) and in the third column select the overall condition of the homes in the segment using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The homes are generally not well maintained in this segment and are in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Example:



*2-Good/Excellent* - The homes are generally well maintained in this segment and are in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Example:



Use the comment box to note other observations on residential patterns that may be relevant to activity-friendliness.

#### Q16. Public/civic

Please check off all of the public or civic buildings/offices/facilities located in the segment including:

Library  
Museum  
Community center  
Post office  
Town offices  
Courthouse

Police station  
Fire station  
Church/religious building  
Hospital/health center  
Athletic fields/courts  
Playground  
Other (please specify)  
None

In the third column, please select the overall condition of each building/office/facility that is present in the segment using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The building/office/facility is generally not well maintained and is in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*2-Good/Excellent* - The building/office/facility is generally well maintained and is in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

Q17. Commercial

Please check off all of the commercial buildings located in the segment including:

Restaurant/café  
Bar  
Food market  
Theater  
Gas station  
Convenience store  
Small retail store  
Big box retail store  
Fitness center  
Private medical office  
Private other office  
Other (please specify)  
None

In the third column, please select the overall condition of each commercial building that is present in the segment using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The commercial building is generally not well maintained and is in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*2-Good/Excellent* - The commercial building is generally well maintained and is in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.



### Q18. Schools

Please indicate whether there are any public, private or other schools located in the segment:

Elementary school (public)  
Middle school (public)  
High school (public)  
Private school  
Other (please specify)  
None

In the third column, please select the overall condition of each school that is present in the segment using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The school is generally not well maintained and is in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*2-Good/Excellent* - The school is generally well maintained and is in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

### Q19. Industrial/agricultural

Please check off if any significant industrial or agricultural areas are present in the segment including:

Light industrial area – small industrial buildings/facilities that cover a limited land area that do not include significant smokestacks or other industrial features (e.g. small salt/granite/sand pits, small trucking/construction business, small electrical power substation, etc.).

Example – Sand pit:



Heavy industrial area – large industrial buildings/facilities or complex that cover a large area of land and include smokestacks or other industrial features (e.g. large chemical or manufacturing plant, large trucking facility, large power plant, etc.).

Example:



Farmland area – any agricultural, livestock, or other farmland area.

Example:



Other (please specify)

None

In the third column, please select the overall condition of each industrial/agricultural area that is present in the segment using the following definitions:

*1-Fair/Poor* – The area is generally not well maintained and is in fair or poor condition. There is apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

*2-Good/Excellent* - The area is generally well maintained and is in good or excellent condition. There is little or no apparent neglect and/or deterioration.

#### Q20. Stop Time

Please indicate at what time you completed the Segment Assessment.

#### **Subjective Assessment**

Questions 21 and 22 are to gather your overall subjective opinion regarding the walkability and aesthetic quality of the segment. These questions should be answered **last**, that is, after the rest of the Segment Assessment tool has been completed in its entirety for the segment. Please check off how strongly you agree with each of the following statements (choose only one answer for each question – Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree):

Q21. How strongly do you agree with the following statement?

*“This segment is walkable.”*

Q22. How strongly do you agree with the following statement?

*“This segment is aesthetically pleasing.”*

For both subjective assessment questions, it may be of use to note any comments about the segment that you feel would be useful in the overall assessment of the segment.

#### **General Conditions**

Questions 23-25 are meant to capture current environmental conditions when you completed the Street Segment Assessment. These conditions may impact some of the objective and subjective observations on this assessment.

Q23. Current weather conditions – please indicate whether it was sunny/clear, partly cloudy, overcast, raining, snowing or some other weather condition when you conducted the segment assessment.

Q24. Season – please check off whether it is currently Winter, Spring, Summer, or Fall

Q25. Day of week – please indicate whether today is a weekday, weekend, or holiday.

\*This completes the Street Segment Assessment portion of the RALA Tools. Please proceed to the next page for guidance on filling out the Program and Policy Assessment.

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### **SECTION 3: Program and Policy Assessment**

Participants from previous studies about physical activity have suggested that the following community programs may help support physical activity among youth. In order to answer the questions on the audit, you may have to contact the specific individuals in your community who are knowledgeable about available programs in the area. These individuals may include:

- Town recreation directors
- School faculty/administration
- Parks directors
- Church directors

These key individuals can help you answer the following questions in the Program and Policy Assessment. Once you have checked off the appropriate boxes for each question, please feel free to use the space provided marked “Comments” to record additional information about each particular question if necessary.

#### **Town Programs and Policies**

*Q1. Does the town have a policy that requires bikeways or pedestrian walkways in new public infrastructure projects?*

*Yes* - As the town considers and builds new infrastructure projects, there is a town requirement or guideline for incorporating lanes and/or walkways for bikes and pedestrians.

*No* – As the town considers and builds new infrastructure projects, there is no town requirement or guideline for incorporating lanes and/or walkways for bikes and pedestrians.

*Don't know*

*N/A – not applicable*

*Q2. Does the town regularly clear snow from sidewalks?*

*Yes* - When there is significant snowfall in your town, sidewalks cleared in a timely manner, creating safe, passable sidewalks.

*No* – When there is significant snowfall in your town, there are some sidewalks that do not get cleared and remain impassable.

*Don't know*

*N/A – not applicable*



*Q3. Does the town have a public recreation department that offers physical activity programming?*

*Yes* – The town has a municipally funded recreation department offering physical activity programming for community members.

*No* – The does not have a municipally funded recreation department offering physical activity programming for community members.

*Don't know*

*If "Yes:"*

*Q3a. Do they offer physical activity programming for local youth?*

Please indicate whether the public recreation department offers programming specifically geared toward youth (ages 0-18). Please check one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q3b. If "Yes:" What age range is served by these programs?*

Please indicate the ages served by the physical activity programming offered to youth through the town recreation department.

*Q3c. Do they offer physical activity programming for local adults?*

Please indicate whether the public recreation department offers programming specifically geared toward adults (ages 18+). Please check one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q3d. If "Yes:" What age range is served by these programs?*

Please indicate the ages served by the physical activity programming offered to adults through the town recreation department.

*Q3e. Are physical activity resources/facilities available for local resident use outside of programming?*

Are the resources and facilities of the town recreation department available to all local residents even if they do not participate in organized programs held by the department?  
Please choose one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q3f. Does the recreation department provide scholarships or offer a sliding fee scale for lower income residents? Please choose one:*

Does the recreation department offers scholarships and/or sliding fee scales to supplement the cost of membership/programming for lower income residents?

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q4. Does the town have a private organization (such as the YMCA or a religions organization) that offers physical activity programming for local youth?*

*Yes* – The town has a private organization offering physical activity programming for youth.

*No* – The does not have a private organization offering physical activity programming for youth.

*Don't know*

*If "Yes:"*

*Q4a. Do they offer physical activity programming for local youth?*

Please indicate whether the private organization offers programming specifically geared toward youth (ages 0-18). Please check one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q4b. "If Yes:" What age range is served by these programs?*

Please indicate the ages served by the physical activity programming offered to youth through the private organization.

Q4c. *Do they offer physical activity programming for local adults?*

Please indicate whether the private organization offers programming specifically geared toward adults (ages 18+). Please check one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

Q4d. *If "Yes:" What age range is served by these programs?*

Please indicate the ages served by the physical activity programming offered to adults through the private organization.

Q4e. *Are there membership requirements to participate in these programs?*

Do residents have to pay a fee to participate in youth physical activity programming offered by the private organization(s).

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

Q4f. *Are physical activity resources/facilities available for local resident use outside of programming?*

Are the resources and facilities of the private organization available to residents even if they do not participate in organized programs sponsored by the organization? Please choose one:

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

Q4g. *Does the private organization provide scholarships or offer a sliding fee scale for lower income residents? Please choose one:*

Does the private organization offer scholarships and/or sliding fee scales to supplement the cost of membership/programming for lower income residents?

*Yes*

*No*

*Don't know*

*Q5a. Does the town offer any local public transportation options, such as public busses or vans?*

*Yes* – The town has either free or fee-based public transportation regularly available.

*No* – The town does not have any public transportation available to residents.

*Don't know*

*Q5a1. If “Yes”:*

*Please specify* – Please describe what kind of transportation options are available to residents.

*Q5b. Are there any long-distance public transportation options available in your town, such as a train or Greyhound Bus?*

*Yes* – There are long-distance public transportation options available in the town.

*No* – The town does not have any long-distance public transportation options available to residents.

*Don't know*

*Q5b1. If “Yes”:*

*Please specify* – Please describe what kind of long-distance transportation options are available to residents.

### School Programs and Policies

*Q6. Does the town have any “Walk to School” programs or other programs that encourage children to walk or bike to school?*

*Yes* – The town/school has organized “walk to school” or other programs that encourage children/students to walk and/or bike to school.

*No* – The town/school does not have any organized “walk to school” or other program to encourage children/students to walk and/or bike to school.

*Don't know*

*Q7. Does the town participate in the National “Safe Routes to School” program?*

*Yes* – The town/school participates in the “Safe Routes to School” program. Please see <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/> for more information on the program.

*No* – The town/school does not participate in the “Safe Routes to School” program.

*Don’t know*

*Q8. Do the public schools offer other sponsored physical activity initiatives for students?*

*Yes* – The public schools offer other organized/sponsored physical activity initiatives for students.

*No* – The public schools do not offer any other organized/sponsored physical activity initiatives for students.

*Don’t know*

*Q9. Do the public schools in the town allow public access to their recreation facilities after school hours?*

*Yes* – One of more of the public schools in the town allows town residents to use their recreation facilities, such as the school gym, playing fields or courts, and/or pool after school hours or on weekends.

*No* – None of the public schools in the town allows town residents to use their recreation facilities.

*Don’t know*

*Q10. Do the public schools in the town have a late bus option for children that stay after school for sponsored activities?*

*Yes* – The public schools offer late buses for children who stay after school for team sports or other activities.

*No* – The public schools do not offer late buses.

*Don’t know*

*Q11. What percent (%) of public school children live within 1-mile of their school?*



Talk to your local public school administrators to determine what percent of students live within 1 mile of their school to determine what percent of children could potentially walk to school.

\*This concludes the Program and Policy Assessment section of the RALA Tools.

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