



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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COMMUNITY WALK DAYS

June 28 | 9:30 a.m.
Forks of the Delaware, Easton

July 13 | 9:30 a.m.
Sand Island, Bethlehem

August 10 | 9:30 a.m.
Fountain Park, Allentown

For more information: LVWalkAudit@UnitedWayGLV.org

Join the Pedestrian Safety Movement

The regionwide project to improve pedestrian safety at some of the Lehigh Valley’s most troublesome intersections is off to a flying start, but now project leaders are asking the community to join the movement.

The partnership of the LVPC, United Way, AARP and D&L Heritage Corridor organized “Community Walk Days,” where people can get all the tools they need to become foot soldiers in the battle against bicycle and pedestrian-involved accidents. The community walk days are designed to enable people to become “walk auditors” capable of visiting, evaluating and scoring dangerous, troublesome and busy areas used by pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users or transit riders. After successful community walk days in Easton and Bethlehem, volunteers get one more chance:

- **August 10 – 9:30 am in Fountain Park in Allentown**

Since the regionwide Walk Audit Kick-off in April, dozens of intersections have been audited, but now the walk audit partners are turning to the community to be part of the movement toward a more accessible region.

“This was always envisioned as a grassroots effort,” said Carmen Bell, Sr. Director of Healthy Aging for the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley. “It’s so important for the community to be invested in this effort.”

Previous events in Easton and Bethlehem included several groups taking on new intersections to audit. People need only show up, where they can get the walk audit scoring sheets, instructions on how to use them, as well as the locations that need audited.

The LVPC has identified more than 60 priority locations based on criteria that includes fatalities, injuries, high use or proximity to a school, church or senior center. The program includes a Geographic Information Systems tool that shows the priority locations, but also invites anyone in the region to audit their own areas of concern so that can be added to the map. Ultimately, the goal is to have hundreds of locations audited. Volunteers are able to use a 10-sheet auditing system devised by AARP. The GIS tool, audit sheets, and instructions can be found at <https://agefriendlylehighvalleyregionalplan.org/walk-audit/>

Anyone who visits the final community walk day in Allentown can find all those tools and instruction onsite.

Information from those audits will be used to devise improvements that can be worked into future LVPC transportation plans funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation or Federal Highway Administration.

Pedestrian and bicycle fatalities have been on the rise across the nation, and public safety officials say that a bump in aggressive driving that began during the COVID-19 Pandemic continues today. Valleywide, from 2017-2021, 35 pedestrians have been killed and another 458 have been injured by vehicles. Over that period, four bicyclists have been killed and another 143 injured by vehicles, but advocates say the injury number for pedestrians and cyclists are almost certainly much higher because many don’t report their accidents to police.