



Livable Community Checklist

About the Checklist

This checklist is intended to serve as a resource for communities in Tennessee in order to assess characteristics of the built environment related to health and livability. Some of the items in this checklist may not be applicable to all communities. Some items are more relevant for looking at entire communities, while others are more useful for smaller spaces or projects. The checklist items can be selected or modified to suit each individual community's needs. Assessing these types of characteristics is an important first step in determining how communities can promote livability and health through changes to their built environment, and for tracking progress in livability over time.

Place Being Assessed

- City or County Development
- Neighborhood
- Downtown District
- Small Area, Public Space, or
- Transportation Facility
- Other: _____

Place Characteristics

Number of residents (or users if assessing a public space) _____

Types of uses present

- Residential
- Retail/Commercial
- Office
- Other: _____
- Industrial
- Civic (School, University, Government, etc.)
- Recreational

A | Parks and Nature

What percentage of residents lives **within ½ mile of a park**? _____%

Potential data source: Planning or Parks Department

How many **acres of parkland** do you have? (per 1,000 population) _____

Potential data source: Planning or Parks Department

How many miles of **greenways, walking/biking trails** do you have? _____

Potential data source: Planning or Parks Department

If so, do the greenways and/or trails connect to destinations? Destinations include schools, retail, and business centers. Yes _____ No _____

What percentage of your sidewalk length has **street trees** present? _____

Potential data source: Planning or Public Works Department

How many **playgrounds or playspaces** for children do you have? _____

Potential data source: Parks Department

If playgrounds or playspaces are present, rate based on condition, safety, number of different types of activities that can occur (playground equipment, sports fields, seating, water fountains, family gatherings, etc.)

1=poor _____ 2=fair _____ 3=acceptable _____ 4=good _____ 5=excellent _____

B | Healthy Food

Are there **food desert** areas without a full-service grocery store, produce market, or other retailer who sells healthy and fresh foods? Yes _____ No _____

Potential data source: USDA Food Access Research Atlas

How many **full-service grocery stores** do you have? _____

*(per 1,000 population for large area, number present for smaller area)

Potential data source: USDA Food Environment Atlas

How many **other healthy/fresh food retail stores** do you have? _____

*(per 1,000 population for large area, number present for smaller area)

Potential data source: USDA Food Environment Atlas

How many **community gardens** do you have? _____

*(per 1,000 population for large area, number present for smaller area)

Potential data source: [USDA Food Environment Atlas](#) or [local community garden organization](#)

How many **farmers markets** do you have? _____

*(per 1,000 population for large area, number present for smaller area)

Potential data source: [USDA Food Environment Atlas](#) or [local farmers market organization](#)

If farmers market(s) present, rate based on cost of food, hours/months of the year open, whether it accepts SNAP benefits, and walking distance (1/4 mile) to nearby residents and workers.

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

C | Transportation

Do you have **bikeways**? Bikeways are designated spaces in the roadway for bike use only. They can be separated bike lanes, protected bike lanes, or bike symbols painted in roadways shared with cars. Yes _____ No _____

If so, how many miles? _____

If so, what is the ratio of bikeway miles to roadway miles? _____ : _____

Potential data source: [Planning or Public Works Department](#)

If so, how safe are they? Rate on what percentage are shared (less safe) vs. protected (barrier present between bike and car traffic) or separated (painted lanes with no barrier).

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

Do you have **sidewalks**? Yes _____ No _____

If so, how many miles? _____

If so, what is the ratio of sidewalk miles to roadway miles? _____ : _____

Potential data source: [Planning or Public Works Department](#)

If so, what is the **quality of your sidewalks?**

- Condition (cracks, holes)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

- Width (wide enough for people to pass, wheelchairs)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

- Barriers (telephone poles, overgrown landscape, mailboxes)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

- Interruptions (curb cuts, missing sections)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

- Connectivity (connects residents and workers to destinations)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

What percentage of workers **bike to work?** _____%

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

What percentage of workers **walks to work?** _____%

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

What percentage of workers **takes public transportation to work?** _____%

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

What percentage of people lives within **walking distance (1/4 mile) of a transit stop?** _____%

Potential data source: Planning Department or local public transportation authority

What percentage of **transit stops** provide:

- Seating _____%
- Shade _____%
- Trash cans _____%

Potential data source: Planning Department or local public transportation authority

Do you have **bike racks**? Yes _____ No _____

If so, how many? _____

Potential data source: Planning or Public Works Department

Are the following **active transportation features required** for new developments or projects in the area being assessed?

- Bikeways Yes _____ No _____
- Bike Racks Yes _____ No _____
- Sidewalks Yes _____ No _____
- Transit stop with seating and/or shelter Yes _____ No _____

What percentage of the budget (city, project, etc.) is used to **fund active transportation** infrastructure or improvements? _____%

D | Social Life of Spaces

Does the space provide opportunities for **social interaction** and gatherings?

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

What types of **uses, activities, or events** are available in the space?

What percentage of the space's users are **children** (under 12 yrs old)? _____%

What percentage of the space's users are **elders** (over 70 yrs old)? _____%

What types of **connections** are there to and from the place (public transit, bikeways, sidewalks)?

E | Community Partnerships

What **community partners** are engaged? For neighborhoods and small spaces, list all partners who are engaged in the planning, development, use, programming, and maintenance of the space. For city or county assessments, list city agencies or other organizations that have a direct impact on/in the space.

F | Schools

How safely can students **walk to school**?

1=poor___ 2=fair___ 3=acceptable___ 4=good___ 5=excellent___

Potential resource: [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)

How safely can students **bike to school**?

1=poor___ 2=fair___ 3=acceptable___ 4=good___ 5=excellent___

Can **facilities** be used by the community after hours? Yes___ No___ Unsure___

G | Health Equity

Are **disadvantaged populations** at greater risk of health problems?

1=definitely___ 2=likely___ 3=unsure___ 4=not likely___ 5=not at all___

Potential data source: [Local Public Health Department](#)

Are **residents involved** in planning for changes that impact livability and health?

1=never___ 2=not often___ 3=unsure___ 4=sometimes___ 5=always___

Potential data source: [Planning Department](#), [Local Public Health Department](#)

H | Air Quality

How many **stationary sources of pollution** do you have? (EPA permitted sources) _____

Potential data source: U.S. EPA EnviroAtlas, Local Public Health Department

I | Housing

How many **vacant (blighted) homes** do you have? _____

Where are they **located**? Are they **concentrated** in certain areas?

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

What percentage of households **does not have a vehicle**? _____%

Where are they located? Are they concentrated in certain areas?

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

Do you have a mix of **housing types**? (single-family, multi-family, rental and ownership options, affordable housing options) Yes ____ No ____ Unsure ____

How many **homeless people** are there at any given time? (point-in-time) _____

Potential data source: Local Homelessness Commission or local homeless service providers

What percentage of renters is **cost-burdened**? _____%
(households spending >30% of their gross income on rent)

Potential data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

J | Public Safety

How many **pedestrian fatalities** annually are there?
(per 100,000 population) _____

Potential data source: Tennessee Department of Health

How many **crashes** are there annually involving a vehicle
and either a pedestrian or bicyclist annually? _____

Potential data source: Tennessee Department of Health

How **safe** do people feel? (for assessing neighborhoods and small spaces)

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

Describe any potential safety issues: _____

Are **crosswalks and crossing signals** present?

(both visual and audible)

Yes _____ No _____

Is the space **well-lit** at night? (streetlights)

Yes _____ No _____

How many **vacant (empty) lots** do you have? _____

Where are they located? Are they concentrated in certain areas?

Potential data source: Planning Department, Codes Department

K | Accessibility

Is the space **ADA compliant** or designed for all users

regardless of ability? (Universal Design)

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____

In general, how **comfortable** is the space for all users regardless of ability?

Rate based on wheelchair access, ease of use for children and the elderly, lighting, seating, shade, directional signage, visual and audible cues at intersections for those with disabilities.

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

Does the place allow for residents to **continue using** the area comfortably as they grow older (aging-in-place)?

1=poor____ 2=fair____ 3=acceptable____ 4=good____ 5=excellent____

L | Internet Access

How many **Internet providers** serve the area? _____

What percent of the population has **Internet speeds** of at least 25mbps? _____%

Potential data source: National Broadband Map

How much do **Internet services cost** on average? \$_____per month