

Metrics Guide

WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION



Gehl

Project-specific goals can be measured in different ways. The pages that follow demonstrate potential metrics (and associated methods) for common goals within each principle.

These goals can be measured at a site before construction, or once construction is completed

1 Principle and goals your project might set out to achieve

STRENGTHENS PUBLIC LIFE — ACCESSIBLE & HUMAN SCALE

Is the site easy to get to, and is it connected to the nearby area?

Accessibility comes in many forms. One project might focus on creating a place that is inviting to people walking or biking, and another on linking to a regional trail network. These metrics capture this diversity.

	Metrics	Tool
PRIMARY	# of people moving through or by site on foot or bike	
	% who feel site is accessible	
	% who got to site by foot / bike / personal car / transit / taxi or rideshare	
SECONDARY	Frequency of visits to space	
	Facade quality around site	
	Sidewalk quality around site	
	Open-ended [e.g., How was the experience of arriving here today?]	

Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you're using.

GAUGE PERCEPTION	OBSERVE ACTIVITY	MAP CONDITIONS	COLLECT INTERNAL DATA
Survey (on-site)	Moving Count	Seating Study	Grantee Data
Survey (off-site)	Stationary Activity	Facade Study	
Focus Group		Sidewalk Study	
		Shading Study	

2 Key metrics that can help you measure progress (priority metrics are at top)

3 Methods for collecting data, by observing, gauging perception, mapping, and collecting internal data

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SECONDARY	Sidewalk quality around site	
	Open-ended (e.g., How was the experience of arriving here today?)	  





Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you’re using.

GAUGE PERCEPTION

-  Survey (on-site)
-  Survey (off-site)
-  Focus Group

OBSERVE ACTIVITY

-  Moving Count
-  Stationary Activity

MAP CONDITIONS

-  Seating Study
-  Facade Study
-  Sidewalk Study
-  Shading Study

COLLECT INTERNAL DATA

-  Grantee Data

Does the site foster social connection, welcome all, and bridge differences?

At their best, public spaces don't just offer a place to relax alone — they also spur interactions with others. Measuring levels of social connection and diversity can keep projects accountable to this ambition.

	Metrics	Tool
PRIMARY	Age and gender of people staying	
	Self-reported demographics of people using the place	
	% who feel welcome at site (and why)	
	# of people who have socialized during visit, or plan to (and with whom)	
SECONDARY	Age and gender of people moving by / through site	
	% who feel site is 'their place'	



Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you're using.

GAUGE PERCEPTION

Survey (on-site)

Survey (off-site)

Focus Group

OBSERVE ACTIVITY

Moving Count

Stationary Activity

MAP CONDITIONS

Seating Study

Facade Study

Sidewalk Study

Shading Study

COLLECT INTERNAL DATA

Grantee Data

Does the site invite people to spend time and enjoy themselves?

For people to spend time in a place, they need to feel protected from harm, comfortable staying, and delighted by their experience. These metrics gauge how successful the site is inviting people in.

	Metrics	Tool
PRIMARY	# of people staying	
	Types of staying activity	
	Posture of people staying	
	Open-ended reaction (e.g., What do you enjoy about the site?)	
SECONDARY	Reasons for visiting site	
	% who feel comfortable at site	
	Length of time respondents plan to stay	
	# and type of seats available on site	
	Shade and shading trees, as well as lighting features	



Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you’re using.

GAUGE PERCEPTION

- Survey (on-site)
- Survey (off-site)
- Focus Group

OBSERVE ACTIVITY

- Moving Count
- Stationary Activity

MAP CONDITIONS

- Seating Study
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COLLECT INTERNAL DATA

- Grantee Data

Is the site environmentally, financially, and operationally efficient?





These metrics capture various dimensions of a site’s sustainability — from whether energy-efficient materials and systems are in place, to performance against project budget, to ease of site maintenance.

PRIMARY

Metrics	Tool
Interview with operational staff to understand site operations	
Grantee documentation on environmental performance (e.g., use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency, LEED certification)	
Grantee documentation on financial performance (e.g., budget saved, on-time / on-budget performance)	
Grantee documentation on operational performance (e.g., maintenance budget, # of staff hours dedicated to maintenance per month)	



Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you’re using.

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		 Shading Study	

Does the site resonate with locals and foster a sense of ownership?

It can be challenging to measure whether people think of a place as ‘their own.’ These metrics give a pulse of how successful a site is in reflecting the NWA identity and in becoming a go-to place in the area.

	Metrics	Tool
PRIMARY	Self-reported demographics (zip code)	
	% who feel site is ‘their place’ (and why)	
	Open-ended (e.g., How does it contribute to/reflect community?)	
SECONDARY	% who plan to visit site	
	% who thought of site as factor in visit to area	
	% who know about site	



Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you’re using.

GAUGE PERCEPTION

- Survey (on-site)
- Survey (off-site)
- Focus Group

OBSERVE ACTIVITY

- Moving Count
- Stationary Activity

MAP CONDITIONS

- Seating Study
- Facade Study
- Sidewalk Study
- Shading Study

COLLECT INTERNAL DATA

- Grantee Data











Does the site benefit local business and economic development?

Projects located in or near downtowns or commercial areas can be particularly effective in driving investment in the area and visitors to local businesses. These metrics help give a pulse on whether this link exists.

	Metrics	Tool
PRIMARY	% who go to local businesses before or after visit	
	Open-ended reaction (e.g., How does it promote local development?)	  
SECONDARY	% who plan to visit site	
	% who thought of site as factor in visit to area	
	% who know about site	



Legend — Use these tools based on the metric you’re using.

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**Additional metrics — and
associated methods — are included
in the coming pages.**

Metrics Reference Sheet

Walton Family Foundation Design Excellence Program

Note: All metrics will benefit from analysis by respondent demographics

PRINCIPLE AND GOAL	METRIC	METHOD TYPE
Strengthens Public Life		
Accessible	Level of quality and maintenance of pavements and surfaces	Map Conditions
	Visitors have the option to arrive by different modes (sidewalks and bike lanes are connected to a wider-network; bike parking; crosswalks)	Map Conditions
	% of people that walk, bike, or take transit to the place	Gauge Perception
	# of entrances per linear foot of a public space boundary; # of points of access	Map Conditions
	% of people who feel the space is accessible and easy to navigate	Gauge Perception
Socially Diverse	Demographic diversity of visitors	Gauge Perception
	# of physical elements that reflect diverse local cultures, and perceived quality	Map Conditions
	% of visitors who feel included, analyzed by demographic groups	Gauge Perception
Comfortable	# of seating options (formal, informal, shaded, etc.)	Map Conditions
	# of feet of continuous shade	Map Conditions
	% of people who feel comfortable on the site	Gauge Perception
Safe	# of people moving through site	Observe Activity
	# and quality of of human scale lighting elements: lighting structures designed to light sidewalks and pedestrian areas.	Map Conditions
	# of people staying at the site	Observe Activity

Strengthens Public Life		
	% of people who report feeling safe	Gauge Perception
Delightful	# of people playing as part of stationary activity	Observe Activity
	# of children and families present	Observe Activity
	# and quality of playful features on site	Map Conditions
	# of people staying at the site	Observe Activity
Human Scale	Height of facades and entrances are in proportion to pedestrian heights and site-lines	Map Conditions
	Perception that ground floor facades are engaging	Map Conditions
Social	% of people who report connecting with others who are acquaintances or strangers	Gauge Perception
	# of people engaging in social activity in the space	Observe Activity
Elevates Standards of Sustainability and Resilience		
Resource Efficient	Annual energy usage	Collect Internal Data
Financially Efficient	Budget performance	Collect Internal Data
Flexible / Adaptable	# of features / physical elements (e.g., in total square feet) that are flexible or adaptable	Map Conditions
Practical	Annual maintenance budget	Collect Internal Data
Environmental Features	Inclusion of environmentally friendly features (e.g., stormwater drainage, LED lighting)	Collect Internal Data

Celebrates Local Cultures and Place		
Responsive	# of project elements resulting from community engagement	Gauge Perception Collect Internal Data
	% of people who feel the space is "for them" or "their place"	Gauge Perception
Reflective of an understanding of local place	% of people who feel the space reflects regional character	Gauge Perception
Builds Regional Capacity		
Collaborative	# of partnerships in design process	Collect Internal Data
Informative	# of local stakeholders who learn about the design process	Collect Internal Data
Inspirational	% of people who feel the site is "world-class" or "inspiring"	Gauge Perception
Supportive of local economic development	% of people who report visiting local small businesses and/or nearby downtown pre/post visit	Gauge Perception
Supportive of inclusive growth	% of people who see project as good for NWA's growth	Gauge Perception
User appreciation for great design	% who say they value they design of the space	Gauge Perception