Direct Observation Training

Street Design

Created by,
Transtria LLC

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Introductions

- Evaluation Officer
- Evaluation Coordinator for local data collection
- Data collectors and experience with data collection

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Training Purpose and Desired Outcome

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Direct Observation

- Observations are made before and after the implementation of a physical change or new policy in a community (e.g., addition of sidewalks to school, completion of a community trail).
- Researchers document the number of students, as well as their age, gender, and activity level, at a particular location for a specific duration.
- Results from these observations are compared to determine if an increase in physical activity has occurred as determined by the number of individuals or the intensity of activity in which individuals are engaged.

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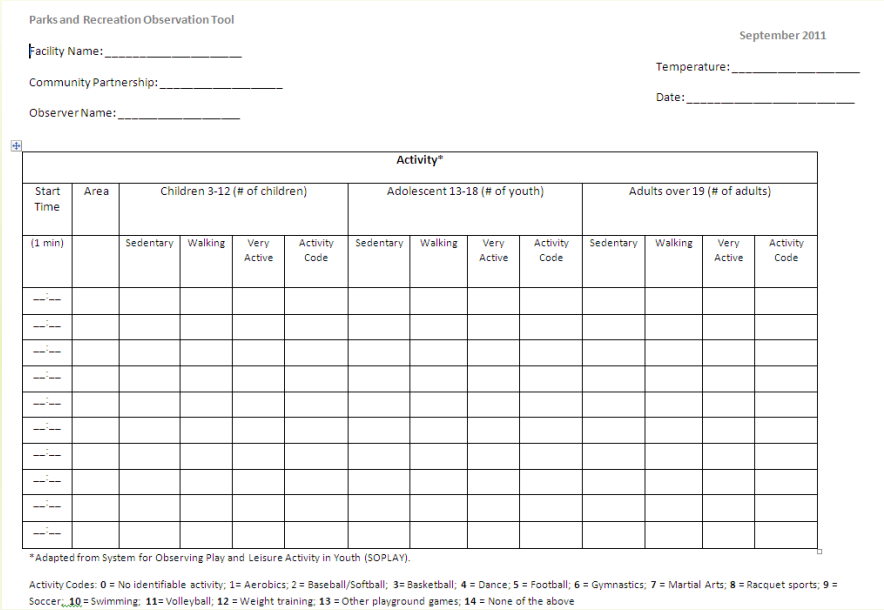
Direct Observation

Benefits & Challenges

Strengths: Allows for pre/post comparison; Evaluates the impact of physical changes or improvements on behavior

Limitations: Influenced by external circumstances (e.g., weather, special events); Limited generalizability due to infrequency of observations



Parks and Recreation Observation Tool

September 2011

Facility Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____

Observer Name: _____

Temperature: _____

Date: _____

		Activity*											
Start Time	Area	Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescent 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults over 19 (# of adults)			
(1 min)		Sedentary	Walking	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Walking	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Walking	Very Active	Activity Code
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*Adapted from System for Observing Play and Leisure Activity in Youth (SOPLAY).

Activity Codes: **0** = No identifiable activity; **1**= Aerobics; **2** = Baseball/Softball; **3**= Basketball; **4** = Dance; **5** = Football; **6** = Gymnastics; **7** = Martial Arts; **8** = Racquet sports; **9** = Soccer; **10** = Swimming; **11**= Volleyball; **12** = Weight training; **13** = Other playground games; **14** = None of the above

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Direct Observation

- Timing of the observations before/ after project completion (consider the following):
  - ✓ Weekday periods of greater/ lesser use – morning/ evening rush hour trips (adults), before/ after school (youth), lunch trips (adults), following afterschool programs (youth)
  - ✓ Weekend periods of greater/lesser use – faith-based services, sports games/ leagues
  - ✓ Special events – holidays (e.g., Halloween), concerts, parades
  - ✓ Seasonality – extreme heat/ cold, other unfavorable conditions (e.g., rain, ice)

- Resources needed to conduct the observations (consider the following):
  - ✓ Observers and training – number of people available to conduct observations (e.g., staff, students, volunteers), space and equipment to provide training
  - ✓ Security – monitoring observer safety when necessary (particularly at night)
  - ✓ Data collection – devices vs. pen/ paper, timer or watch

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Direct Observation

- Recommended timeframe for observations
  - Scan one segment for 15-30 minutes
  - Scans should last for 30 seconds to 1 minute (depending on the foot traffic in the area)
  - Scans should be one minute observing/counting and one minute rest
- Schedule observations at different times of the day (2-3 times per day recommended)
  - Morning (7:30AM)
  - Noon (11:30AM)
  - Afternoon (3:30PM)
  - Evening (6:30PM)
- Schedule observations for multiple times a week (2-3 days recommended)
  - Two weekdays (Monday through Friday) and one weekend day (Saturday and Sunday)
  - Example: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

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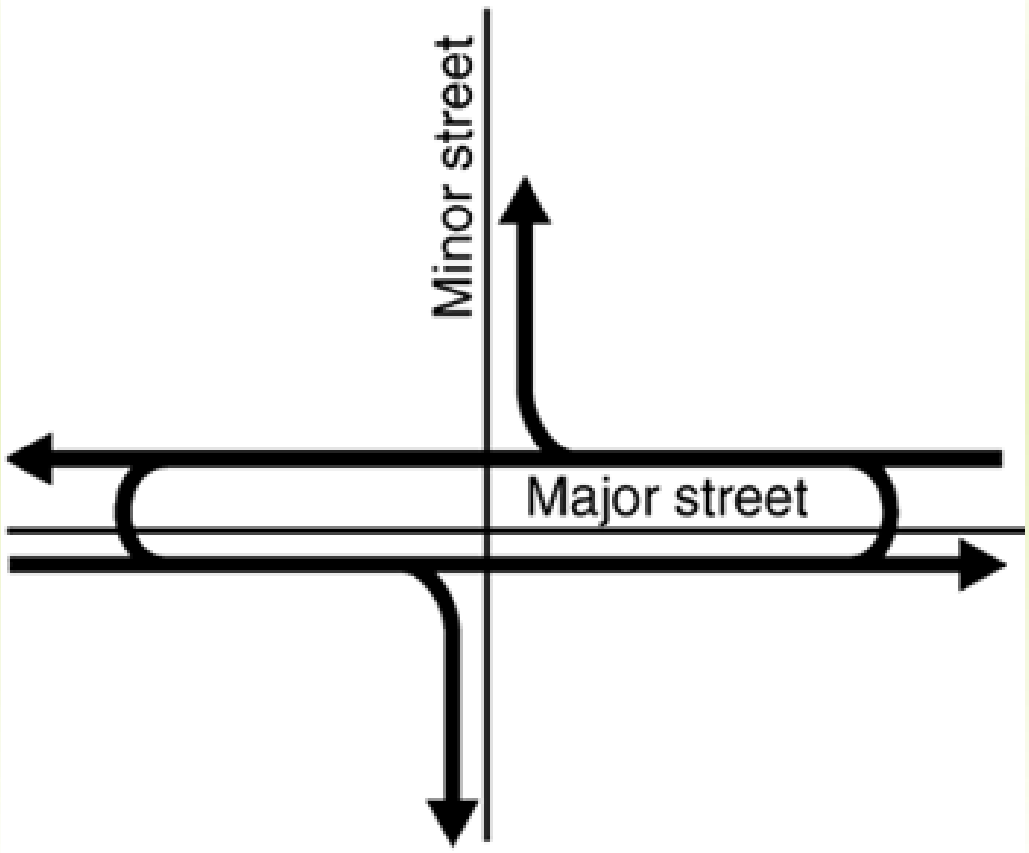
Enhanced Evaluation Design

- **Before and After** – Collecting data before and after an environmental change occurs (e.g., assessing the use of the environment before and after a renovation occurs)

- **Comparison** – Collecting data on different locations to assess differences in the locations (e.g., assessing the use of street segments that are located in very different areas of town)

Map Project Area



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Mapping Table

Street Design Mapping Table

Street or Intersection Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Segment/ Intersection	Setting	Type	Condition	Intervention
1	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	
2	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	
3	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	
4	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	
5	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	

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Mapping Table 1

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities

Street Design Mapping Table

Street or Intersection Name:_____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

- **Street segment or Intersection Name**: This should be descriptive enough so that someone else can reduplicate your efforts at the same location but at a different time. “Avenue of the Americas” would not be enough; “Avenue of the Americas between 40th and 42nd street” would suffice.
- **Observer Name:** Write your name.
- **Community Partnership:** Write the name of your organization.
- **Weather Condition:** Record the temperature and other weather conditions (e.g., rainy, sunny, windy).
- **Date:** The date of mapping (which should be the same as observation).

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Mapping Table 2

Street Design Mapping Table

Street or Intersection Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Segment/ Intersection	Setting	Type	Condition	Intervention
1	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	

Before observing activities, recorders should have knowledge of the segment or intersection where they are going to conduct observations. A rough sketch should be made of the overall street (and if it has been divided into areas for different observers as necessary). Each segment, intersection, or area should be numbered on the sketch. In addition, all permanent structures and natural and constructed boundaries should be recorded in the sketch.

Street segment or intersection: From the sketched map, place the area number in the first column of the Mapping Table and follow the row across to complete all categories. [Note: The area numbers will also be referenced in the second sheet: "Street Design Direct Observation tool."]

Setting: Record whether the area is a street segment, intersection, or other thoroughfare (specify).

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Mapping Table 3

Street Design Mapping Table

Street or Intersection Name:_____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Segment/ Intersection	Setting	Type	Condition	Intervention
1	☐ Street Segment ☐ Intersection ☐ Other:	☐ Trail/greenway ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Bike lane ☐ Public transit ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Amenities ☐ Other:	

- **Type:** Record the types of facilities to support active transportation or recreation.
  - ✓ Trail/greenway: Designated for active transportation or recreation immediately adjacent to the segment.
  - ✓ Sidewalk: Continuous, designated walking route through the segment.
  - ✓ Bike lane or sharrow: Continuous, designated biking route through the segment.
  - ✓ Public transit: Sign, bench, or covered shelter indicating the availability of public transportation in the segment.
  - ✓ Other: Specify any other type of facility that supports active transportation or recreation not included above.
- **Condition:** This section provides basic descriptive information about the designated segment.
  - ✓ Accessible: Segment is not restricted from public use.
  - ✓ Usable: Segment or intersection is safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users.
  - ✓ Amenities: Segment or intersection has public drinking fountains, restrooms, benches, trash bins, shade trees, or other characteristics to facilitate public use of the segment.
  - ✓ Other: Specify any other descriptive information not included above.
- **Intervention:** Record the specific intervention changes that assist children in walking, biking, or using public transit in this segment or intersection include modifications such as street markings, sidewalk or street improvements, and signage.

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Map Project Area

Area 1

Area 2

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Scanning Tool

Street Design Direct Observation Tool

Street or Intersection Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Observation Tool													
Start Time	**Segment/ Intersection**	**Children 3-12 (# of children)**				**Adolescents 13-18 (# of youth)**				**Adults 19+ (# of adults)**			
(1 min)		Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code
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Activity Codes: **0** = No identifiable activity (i.e., not moving); **1**= Walking; **2** = Speed walking; **3**= Biking; **4** = Roller-blading; **5** = Jogging; **6** = Skate boarding; **7** = Other activity

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Scanning 1

Street Design Direct Observation Tool
Street or Intersection Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Observation Tool													
Start Time	Segment/ Intersection	Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescents 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
(1 min)		Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code
—:—													

- **Street segment or Intersection Name**: This should be descriptive enough so that someone else can reduplicate your efforts at the same location but at a different time. “Avenue of the Americas” would not be enough; “Avenue of the Americas between 40th and 42nd street” would suffice.
- **Observer Name:** Write your name.
- **Community Partnership:** Write the name of your organization.
- **Weather Condition:** Record the temperature and other weather conditions (e.g., rainy, sunny, windy).
- **Date:** The date of mapping (which should be the same as observation).

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Scanning 2

Observers: Observers will be split into groups of two to observe different segments, intersections, or parts of segments and intersections (depending on volume of users) at the same time. See the example below that corresponds with the segments and intersections on the Street Design Mapping Table.

Segment 1: Observer 1
Observer 2
Segment 2: Observer 3
Observer 4

Start Time	Segment/ Intersection
(1 min)	
—:—	
—:—	

Start Time: This is the clock time for the beginning of each observation period. Each observation will last the same amount of time (with the length of time dependent on the number of individuals within the observed area) with a one minute break in-between observations to record (see below for an example). In the first column, record the start time for each period of observation.

Period 1: Minute 1 – Observation
Minute 2 – Break/Record
Period 2: Minute 3 – Observation
Minute 4 – Break/Record
Period 3: Minute 5 – Observation
Minute 6 – Break/Record

Map: Before observation begins, the observers will split the street into sections (e.g., segments and intersections) and each observer will be responsible for observing his/her section. The observers should record the appropriate number in the second column of the observation tool.

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Scanning 3

Ages: Each age category has its own count. Please provide the number of individuals represented during the observation period participating in different intensity levels of activity and their specific activity (i.e., activity code).

Children 3-12

Adolescents 13-18

Adults over 19

Observation Tool											
Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescents 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code

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Scanning 4

Observation Tool											
Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescents 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code

Activity Level: During counts of individuals passing through the imaginary plane, all people should be accounted for as either participating in very active, moderate, or sedentary behaviors. Mark a tally for each individual in the proper activity level and age box (i.e., if you see a 14 year old walking, put a tally mark in Moderate under Adolescents).

Sedentary behaviors are defined as activities in which people are not moving (e.g., standing, sitting).

Moderate behaviors require more movement but no strenuous activity (e.g., walking, biking slowly).

Very active behaviors show evidence of increased heart rate and inhalation rate (e.g., running, biking vigorously, playing basketball).

Activity Codes: During counts of individuals passing through the imaginary plane, all people should be accounted for as participating in a specific activity. All codes are labeled at the bottom of the observation tool.

0 = No identifiable activity; **1**= Walking; **2** = Speed walking; **3** = Biking; **4** = Roller-blading; **5** = Jogging; **6** = Skate boarding; **7** = other activity

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Direct Observation

Other Considerations

- People crossing over more than one observer
- People crossing back-and-forth
- Counting people in the correct age category (use best judgment)
  - ✓3-12 years
  - ✓13-18 years
  - ✓19 years or older

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Practical Experience

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Practical Experience Discussion

- Review and discuss each item on the tool

- What was easy to code? Difficult to code?
- Were there items missing from the tool or protocol?
- What else was challenging about applying this tool or protocol?
- Did you need additional instructions during the training?

- What are strengths that you see from this method?
- Do you have any other feedback or reflections on the training?
- Do you have any other suggestions to improve the tool, protocol, or training?

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Data Collection

Timeframe

- Date(s) of data collection?
- Date(s) of environmental change (if applicable)?
- Date that Evaluation Officer will receive the data?

Process for receiving the data

- Send data to Evaluation Officer by scanning and emailing
- Send data to Evaluation Officer by making copies and sending through mail

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Data Analysis

Receiving the data

- Evaluation Officer will send an email stating they have received the data
- Evaluation Officer will contact the Evaluation Coordinator if there are questions about the data

Data entry and cleaning

- Evaluation Officer will work with Transtria staff to entry and check the data in spreadsheet

Data analysis and summary

- Evaluation Officer will analyze the data and prepare a summary
- CPs will receive raw data and a summary

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Evaluation Plan

- How many street segments will you be collecting data for?
- What design are you using?
  - Before/after
  - Comparison
- If comparison design, how do you plan to select your comparison street segment?
- How do you plan to use this data?
- What audience to you intend to share this data with?

Questions?

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