



# Let the Good Vibes Flow

Staying Active and Connected Through  
Community Walk & Roll Programs



This guide explores how to create community walk and rolls centered on inclusivity and social connectedness. The method is inspired by [Healthy Savannah](#) who started organizing community walks as a way to stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. What began as casual outings around Chatham County, Georgia turned into regular community walks that are livestreamed to online audiences. The premise is simple: choose a location, invite community members, and go for a walk. The benefits are not only about physical fitness, but are about connecting with one another and exploring the places where we live, work, and play. Healthy Savannah developed a solid method – now it's time to see what a walk and roll program can look like in your community!

## MAKING TIME TO CONNECT

Spending time with friends and family is one the many ways we take care of ourselves. We laugh over weekly potluck dinners, meet up at the local sports bar to cheer on our favorite team, and send inside jokes to group texts. Other times we organize group bike rides, play pick-up soccer in the park, and start impromptu dance parties at the family barbecue. And sometimes, we go for a walk. For some, walking can mean a chance to get fresh air and stretch. For others, it's about connecting with their neighborhood. For those who move around using other modes, like a scooter or a wheelchair, this time might involve more rolling than walking. Whichever way we move, the enjoyment we get spending time together remains the same.



## In this guide you will learn:

- How to get started organizing a community walk and roll
- How to expand your reach through in-person engagement, social media, and livestreaming
- How to build and sustain momentum for your program
- Practical tips from the Healthy Savannah team



## HEALTHY SAVANNAH CONNECTS COMMUNITIES ONE STEP AT A TIME

Healthy Savannah began their Healthy Walks program in March 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was born out of the need to connect with one another during the nationwide lockdown. Healthy Walks gave community members a safe space to gather while enjoying the benefits of outdoor physical activity. Six months into the program, Healthy Savannah added a livestream component to make Healthy Walks more accessible to different audiences.

Spearheaded by Healthy Savannah's Armand Turner and his team of dedicated collaborators, Healthy Walks is part of a larger initiative to get more people active in the Savannah and Chatham County region. Turner attends every walk and is a regular [Facebook livestream](#) host, a role he has grown into over time. His earnest encouragement and willingness to literally "walk the walk," rain or shine, has helped the program amass a regular participant base. In-person participants and online viewers see people in their community being active outdoors and feel like they can do it too.

With the pandemic subsiding, Healthy Walks remains a reminder of how important it is to connect with community. Healthy Savannah recently celebrated the [two-year anniversary](#) of the Healthy Walks program. Turner and his team hope that it is here to stay. "The reaction and feedback that we have gotten from different people and communities who have participated or watched our Healthy Walk livestreams have given our team so much joy," he says. "We are still discovering and visiting new places around our county to walk and we are constantly having new participants join us. I believe the Healthy Walk will exist for many years to come."

## GETTING STARTED

Starting a walking and rolling group in your community involves three basic steps:

1. Choose your location
2. Invite community members
3. Take a walk and roll and see how it goes.

This section breaks down each step to help kick off your program on the right foot.

### Step One: Choose your location.

Walk and rolls are an opportunity to explore different places around your community. When selecting a location, consider who will be able to access that location easily and who might face barriers. One best practice is visiting areas around your region to familiarize yourself with different locations. Then you can offer different locations for each walk and roll in order to expand access to more people. Explore a mix of settings – parks, trails, school campuses, city sidewalks, open spaces. The key is to have enough variety to offer something for everyone.

Naturally some locations might be more convenient for some more than others, especially if your program covers a large area. Let participants know that you will switch up locations for each walk and roll so more people can participate. Healthy Savannah suggests including lesser known locations, maybe a smaller trail or a quieter road, to introduce community members to these spaces. They also try to select routes that are paved or ADA compliant. If certain routes are not ADA compliant, or if you are unsure, make sure to let participants know in advance.



You should also think about distance, timing, and pacing for your walk and roll. Participants will have varying preferences but it's best to choose the option that is most accessible. You can ask the group for feedback and come to consensus before starting. Healthy Savannah's walks last about an hour with participants walking 2 miles at a 25 minute per mile pace. For walk and rolls, you might need to adjust depending on if people are walking, biking, scooting, or using mobility devices. Maybe you switch up the pace periodically throughout the walk, or let people move at their own pace and gather at "pit stops" along the route. Creating a "pit stop" will allow for people to move in a way that feels comfortable to them while still providing that social space to connect with fellow participants.

## HEALTHY WALK IN THE NEWS

['Healthy Walk' takes pandemic in stride - WTOC](#)

[Healthy Savannah to host weekly walking trips to support community wellbeing – WSAV](#)

[Healthy Savannah leads 'Healthy Walks' virtually and in-person to promote outdoor exercise – Savannah Now](#)

## Step Two: Invite community members.

Once you have selected your location, it's time to gather your group. Healthy Savannah promotes their program as an opportunity for community members to connect with one another. When creating messaging for your walk and roll program, consider using language around social connectedness and spending time together as a family, friend group, work group, or neighborhood group. This kind of messaging will feel more welcoming for people who might be intimidated about fitness programs or "getting in shape." You can also promote your program as a way to meet new people. Not everyone will join with a group so make it clear that individuals are invited to participate too.

Next, spread the word about your walk and roll through flyers, newsletters, social media posts, local TV and radio stations, and in person outreach. You can also let the word spread organically by word of mouth and neighborhood networks. Think about who has influence in the community, whether that be an elected official, a business owner, or an "in the know" neighbor. Local community leaders are the ones who can tap into audiences that you might not usually reach.

Consistent communication is also important. Announce walk and rolls at least a week in advance and provide key details. Along with the time and location, participants also need to know:

- **What to bring** – Comfortable shoes, water, weather accessories
- **Distance of walking/rolling route** – Include a map if that would be helpful to participants.
- **Any specific instructions around arriving at the meeting location** - Parking, exact meeting spot, etc.
- **Guidance around bringing pets** – You can decide in advance if pets will be allowed, or let the group decide.
- **Accessibility features** – Share if the route has ramps, sidewalks, flat surfaces, restrooms, etc.



While it may be tempting to want large participation numbers from the start, remember that it's okay to start small. Your program can have a more casual vibe where the goal is not to bring in the biggest numbers, but to offer an activity where people can connect with one another. If participants have a positive experience, they may be encouraged to bring a friend, family member, colleague, or neighbor on the next walk and roll. Give yourself time to let the program grow and focus on making sure that whoever is participating has a good time.

### TIP: PLAN YOUR WALK AND ROLLS WITH ALL ROAD USERS IN MIND.

Consider how features like unpaved roads, steep inclines, and lack of sidewalks might limit someone's ability to participate. Regularly switch up locations to include places that are accessible to people using mobility devices. Ask community members for suggestions!

### Step Three: Take a walk and see how it goes!

Now comes the fun part – taking your walk and roll! Set the tone by introducing yourself and asking participants to introduce themselves. Even if the group knows each other, you might have new participants who want to get to know people. Periodically check in with the group about distance and pace. You can also stop for water breaks or to observe your surroundings. If your walk and roll location includes any points of interest (historic landmarks, public art, natural resources), you can build in time to explore that spot or have a group conversation. It's best to go with the flow and see where the journey takes you.

Consider having a post-walk and roll reflection, either done internally with staff or with participants. What went well? What might need to change for next time? Where should the next walk location be? Reflection gives you an opportunity to improve your program and build your audience. You can also identify any barriers to participation and brainstorm ways to make your program more accessible.

**TIP:** Offer an extra walk and roll for people who cannot usually attend. You might need to switch up the time, distance of the route, or location depending on what works best for people.



## EXPANDING YOUR REACH

Healthy Savannah has developed a robust social media presence to engage community members in their program. They incorporate livestreams and social media into their program so people in other locations can participate. This section provides tips on creating a social media strategy that will expand your program audience.

### Why Livestream?

Livestreaming offers a chance for people to participate in your program who might not be able to join in person. To get started, choose a livestreaming platform. Consider using a platform where you are already connected with your audience. Healthy Savannah uses Facebook Live because they have an active audience on their Facebook page. Your group might decide to use Instagram, TikTok, or another platform where your audience is already engaged with your work. Make sure you have the proper equipment – phone with internet access or data, a strong network connection, and a selfie stick to keep your camera steady.

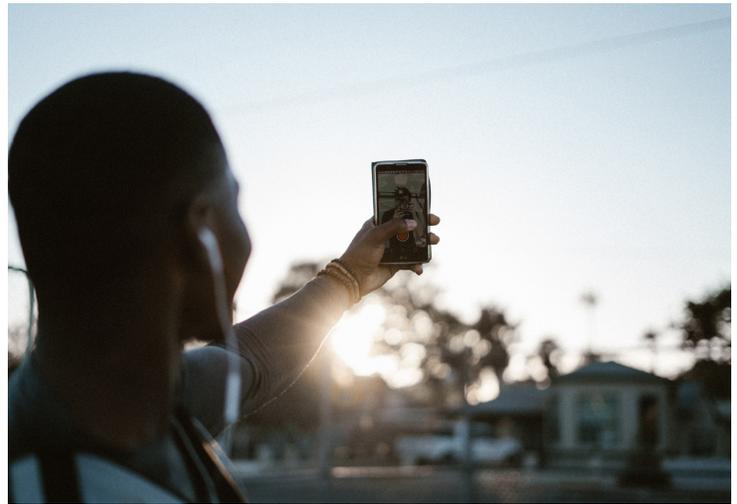
Next up, designate a livestream host. This person will be the on-camera guide for your walk and roll. Select a host who is comfortable being on camera, who can connect with virtual and in-person audiences at the same time, and who can improvise on the fly. You can also rotate hosts so the responsibility does not fall on the same person every time. If you're not used to livestream hosting, it can feel a little awkward at first. That's okay! The more you do it, the more comfortable you will get and you will fall into a flow with your audience. Check out [Healthy Savannah's Facebook page](#) to see how they livestream their walks.

**TIP:** New to using social media? Connect with the Communications or Social Media team at your agency or organization. They can provide helpful tips on using different platforms in your program. You can also ask them to share content, or invite them to go on a walk and roll and post live!

## TALKING POINTS FOR GOING LIVE

What do you talk about when you're hosting a livestream? That's totally up to you! Livestreams can be causal and unscripted, that's part of the charm. Here are a few go-to ideas you can incorporate into any livestream:

- Introduce yourself and the walk and roll participants. Ask participants ahead of time if they would like to be on camera. If they don't want to be on camera, do not include them in your video.
- Describe the kinds of work you do at your agency or organization. Livestreaming can be a great what to build awareness around your organization's projects, programs, and areas of focus.
- Share community announcements and upcoming events.
- Turn the camera around and show/describe the scenery around you.
- Highlight fun facts about the area – landmarks, places of cultural significance, favorite local spots.
- Ask a fun icebreaker question. Favorite local spot? Best part about living in your city or town? Favorite activity to do during a certain season? Keep it light and casual while still giving people a chance to get to know one another.
- Encourage viewers to comment in the chat. Remind commentators to keep it friendly!
- Invite people to join your next walk and roll.



**TIP:** Ask partners to repost your social media content to attract new followers. For livestreams with high engagement, pay for a boosted post to expose your content to more people.

## KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

You will eventually fall into a rhythm where participants know what to expect from your program – but you want to keep the momentum going! The key to building and sustaining momentum is to be consistent with the basics, like communications and program structure, while incorporating new elements that allow your program to evolve. Switching up walk and roll locations brings a sense of novelty to your program. Here are a few other ideas to help keep things fresh:

- **Invite community partners to join or co-lead one of your walk and rolls.** Ask them to invite their own audiences to participate. During the walk and roll, your partner can share about the work they do and how others can get involved.
- **Use your program as a way to build awareness and advocate for infrastructure changes.** Walk and rolls can become informal road safety audits where participants can note areas that need improvement. Invite elected officials or local agency staff - transportation planners, engineers, community advocates - who might be able to implement some of these improvements. Let them hear directly from constituents about what is working and what needs to be changed.
- **Continue sharing your content on social media and invite audiences to interact with your posts.** Consider adding a poll, and icebreaker question, or have participants give feedback on your next walking location. Reach out to your Communications team for more ideas on fun and interactive social media content.
- **Keep your walk and rolls upbeat and positive.** For some participants, this time might be a respite from daily stress or a chance to do something fun with friends. Make this a welcoming and enjoyable space for everyone.

Healthy Savannah combined their community's need for social connectedness with a fun way to be physically active. We encourage you to take this inspiration and design a walk and roll programs in your own community. **For more information about Healthy Savannah and the Healthy Walks program, visit their [Facebook page](#) and [website](#).**

