



Map of Walking – a learning platform
Seeking a key strategic and financial partner
To move to beta on-line version

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1. Introduction

We are seeking support to develop an innovative learning platform, with which to help professionals across a number of sectors, to improve the conditions and environment for people on foot.

The simple aim behind the **Map of Walking** is to provide a directory of information regarding built and social interventions that enable or encourage walking and map these on a Google map. Making this map available to the widest possible audience of professionals and students working to improve the built environment, public health and to promote more walking.

We don't wish to replicate the work that is already being undertaken by your organisation (or that of others) merely provide a convenient platform from which to signpost good practice and effective interventions.

The learning platform will eventually be made up of layers of information pertinent to specific professions or practices, for example, identifying junction interventions in the public realm, social marketing in public health, open space or safety strategies or conservation and heritage initiatives that have each in turn encouraged or promoted journeys on foot.

We are seeking strategic partners to finance the set up of the on-line resource and with whom to collate information regarding effective interventions, as well as to test out how best to disseminate or syndicate the map.

The need for such a map has come through a series of discussions hosted by Rethinking Cities through its *Talk the Walk* series of networking events for professionals promoting walking. It is clear, that even within some authorities / organisations, there is a lack of a holistic knowledge of the many interventions that the authority / organisation itself is undertaking.

We have sought quotations on design and build of the on-line resource and these are below €25,000 and we envisage that the start up costs will be low as we will trade on our goodwill with organisations with whom we have been delivering *Talk the Walk* events.

2. Project Objectives

Key objectives

- Devise an on-line learning platform that signposts interventions that promote walking
- Provide a first stop resource that brings clarity to the built environment
- Provide a showcase and platform for good practice to be shared
- Provide a means by which individual professionals, organizations, practices and authorities can share information regarding interventions that promote walking resulting in cost efficiencies
- Form a strategic partnership to support the development and financial sustainability of the Map of Walking

Other objectives

- Complement initiatives developed by others.

3. What will the Map of Walking provide?

The Map of Walking is a gateway, signposting visitors to interventions, providing brief explanations and pertinent links to where more comprehensive information has been published by third parties. Through discussions with professionals in the built environment, play, public health and transport, the details we envisaged that would be useful to include fall into the following categories:

<p>Google map reference Category Before photo After photo What has changed? Why was this done? What has it achieved? Unintended consequences Who did it? How much did it cost? Client Contractor(s) Awards Best practice Contact for further learning Link to original citation Users' comment</p>	
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These categories not only provide the opportunity for some critique of the intervention but also offer avenues for seeking sponsorship and licensed revenue.

4. Business planning

Key elements

Market research – is there a genuine need for such an e-learning platform and is such a platform already being offered by another organization? We have canvassed more than 300 participants at *Talk the Walks* and it is clear that there is a desire amongst them to have access to such a resource. In discussion with possible strategic partners, we also learnt that what we are proposing is at a substantial discount to any other initiative.

Strategic partners – we see the role of the Strategic partners to underwrite the set up and running costs of the Map of Walking over the first 18 months. We want a partnership approach to strengthen the cross-professional nature of the project, and so that we can draw on the partners expertise and existing staffing resources.

Cost of build – we have sought quotations from three different developers. The build will in parts use open source code and social media. We have also sought quotations from web designers. Build and design is less than €25,000.

Adding information – during the start up period this will be critical, as we need the site to have sufficient information for it to attract users. To begin with, we would add information around published case studies over the last three to five years, and that this would immediately provide a valuable learning resource, and help us to identify other revenue avenues.

Keeping it up to date - in part, this will be the responsibility of the member organizations that we attract.

Site Maintenance and hosting – we use secure and stable off-site servers

Developing a license – We envisage the most financially stable business plan will be a combination of licenses, sponsorship and funding. There will be costs involved in managing any business plan, but we must include legal costs for drawing up license agreements. We envisage that we could propose to subscribers a three year license, with a possible upfront or staged payment, with a fee charged to cover on-line capacity and web traffic. This is something with which we are familiar as this is similar to the licensing of the Young TransNet website that Andrew Stuck managed between 2000 and 2005.

Sales and marketing – e.g. a subscription service for local authorities (possible as part of existing subscription to UDG or other strategic partnership etc.)

Advertising or sponsorship revenue – it is unlikely that we will generate sufficient traffic for all but the most specialist to wish to advertise, but we can offer exposure to subscribers.

What is the preferred form of the management organization?

It may be appropriate that we seek to become a not for profit entity, or be hosted and managed by one of our strategic partners. However, we are keen not to set up a new organization with a separate identity but to provide support to local authorities.

Timetable

We believe this is an opportune moment to forge partnerships and to begin to develop the Map of Walking platform before the end of FY 2010/11. We would wish to find five strategic partners before the end of the financial year to share the start up and running costs for the first 18 months. The Map of Walking may not require full time management during the start up phase, but we recommend that we seek partners who can commit €25,000 - €30,000 over the initial period.

We recognize that there may be issues for partners to make a commitment that extends over the end of a financial year.

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