District Council Guidebook

Best Practices for Hosting ULI National Study Visits for the 10-Minute Walk Campaign

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10-Minute Walk Campaign National Study Visits

The Guidebook

This guidebook includes examples and recommendations to help District Councils plan, organize, and execute 10-Minute Walk National Study Visits. The guidebook is intended to help the National Study Visits flow as smoothly as possible, to provide the maximum value to local communities, and to help ensure a positive experience for ULI members and partners participating in the programs.

The 10-Minute Walk Campaign

Parks are essential to the physical, social, environmental, and economic health of people and communities. Parks help expand the economy by attracting homebuyers, tourists, and highly talented workers. They protect the environment, support resilience, provide space for the enjoyment of arts and nature, and make people healthier, happier, and more connected.

Unfortunately, despite these known benefits, research shows that one in three Americans—more than 100 million people—do not have a high-quality park within a ten-minute walk of their home. That’s why the Urban Land Institute (ULI) is partnering with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) on the 10-Minute Walk Campaign, a nationwide movement to ensure that there is a great park within a ten-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across the United States. Success in this work will require the expertise, creativity, and close collaboration of public and private sector leaders.

As part of the Campaign, NRPA is leading year-long engagements with park and recreation departments from cities across the United States. NRPA is providing financial assistance to select cities, referred to as “10-Minute Walk grantees,” to help them develop 10-Minute Walk Commitments in which they pledge to advance equitable access to high-quality parks and work to develop action plans that lead to the incorporation of their 10-Minute Walk goals as a key and sustained planning and funding priority. Through this engagement, grantees will work to:

- Establish and analyze baseline metrics for 10-minute walk park access and park quality, ensuring that data and analysis includes under-represented populations
- Identify priority areas and actions based on findings from the assessment
- Create equitable citywide policies that support achievement of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign plan
- Incorporate 10-Minute Walk Campaign goals into citywide planning documents
- Identify funding to sustain continued investment in parks, operations, programming, and connections

These activities will help grantees to ensure the equitable activation, enhancement, creation, and accessibility of parks.
National Study Visits

To set the stage for action, ULI is providing technical assistance to 10-Minute Walk grantees. Using the power of its members, networks, and partnerships, ULI is offering a series of National Study Visits. Over the course of 2.5 days, ULI member experts will meet with local stakeholders and community members to develop recommendations on how to advance and deepen grantees’ 10-Minute Walk commitments.

The goals of the National Study Visits are to:

- Help advance the incorporation of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign as a key and sustained planning and funding priority at the local level
- Support the provision of technical assistance, via NRPA, to 10-Minute Walk grantees working to advance their park access and park quality goals
- Engage ULI members and partners at the local and national levels

National Study Visits are similar in format and approach to ULI’s Technical Assistance Panels and Advisory Services Panels. National Study Visits are intensive technical assistance opportunities that typically span 2.5 days. Activities can include briefings, tours, stakeholder interviews, working sessions, and a public presentation. The public presentation serves as the transmission of the recommendations and ULI National will draft a briefing paper after the Visit, as a final summary. More information on a potential agenda and examples from previous National Study Visits are available on page 8.
Note: National Study Visits are being offered in cities which are “10-Minute Walk grantees,” which also have a strong District Council presence with interest in hosting the visits.

Roles and Responsibilities

National Study Visits require the collaboration and coordination of several parties, including ULI National and District Council staff, the 10-Minute Walk grantee (grantee), a Local Planning Group (LPG), Campaign partner organizations, and ULI members. The roles of the key parties are described below.

ULI District Council Staff

District Council staff will:
- Facilitate development of key study questions by the Local Planning Group, with support from the 10-Minute Walk grantee and ULI National
- Prepare briefing materials for National experts
- Lead logistics for National Study Visit
- Coordinate meetings/calls of the Local Planning Group
- Help facilitate operations, introductions, and discussions during the Study Visit
- Work closely with the 10-Minute Walk Grantee, Local Planning Group (LPG) and LPG Chair to plan the Study Visit

Local Planning Group (LPG)

District Councils, in partnership with the 10-Minute Walk grantee, will identify local partners to participate in a Local Planning Group (LPG) to help plan and execute the study visit.

The Local Planning Group should include, but not be limited to, representatives from the 10-Minute Walk grantee, ULI members, The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, community based organizations, and others. The ULI District Council may consider identifying a chair of the planning group to lead the group in planning and coordination. ULI National can review and assist in the formation of the planning group and offer recommendations.

The Local Planning Group will:
- Guide development of the National Study Visit
  - Review the scope of the National Study Visit
  - With the 10-Minute Walk grantee, craft and finalize scope and study questions
  - Identify key areas of national expertise needed
  - Identify and submit content for a briefing booklet
  - Develop tour of key park sites
  - Plan and coordinate logistics of the study visit
  - Recommend and invite interviewees
- Support execution of National Study Visit
  - Help orient National Experts to project area
  - Conduct outreach for local event attendees, such as a welcome reception
  - Serve as advisors to the study visit National Experts
- Coordinate with the National Experts, ULI Staff, and ULI District Council Staff
  - The LPG Chair could lead coordination between the LPG and National Experts
National Experts
National Experts, also referred to as “the panelists,” will be a cross-sector and multi-disciplinary group of 6-8 ULI members, recruited based on industry expertise to advise on the 10-Minute Walk grantees’ local challenge. The National Expert group may have a chair. The National Experts/Panelists will:

- Volunteer to spend 2.5 days on-site to provide technical assistance in their field of expertise
- Participate in a tour, interview local stakeholders, develop recommendations, and present findings to a public audience
- The National Expert Chair will manage working sessions and introduce presentation during National Study Visit

ULI National Staff
ULI National staff will:

- Provide overall guidance to District Councils and LPG
- Recruit national team of experts based on study questions; introduce National Experts to project
- Help facilitate operations during National Study Visit
- Review and advise on study questions, scope, interviewees
- Synthesize and compile final presentation
- Prepare summary white paper after the National Study Visit

Local Stakeholders/Interviewees
The panelists will interview individuals, local officials, and key stakeholders selected by the Local Planning Group. Interviewees will include local perspectives on key assets and opportunities to achieve 10-minute walk goals. This group should represent diverse perspectives and include current and intended users of the local parks, trails, and open spaces under consideration.

Budget

District Councils
District Councils can receive up to $10,000 total for costs associated with the National Study Visit. $7,000 is available to cover direct costs including transportation, supplies, food, meeting space, etc., and up to $3,000 for is available for labor.

- District Councils will be responsible for arranging and paying for the following: Meeting facility space – for orientation/briefing, interviews, work sessions, final presentation
- Materials: flip charts, markers, post its, name badges, maps, printed materials/reports
- Tour: vehicle rental (if applicable)
- Food: reception or dinner for experts and ULI staff (Day 1), coffee, lunch/dinner, snacks if possible for experts and ULI staff (Day 2), coffee/refreshments during final presentation (Day 3)

ULI National
ULI National will organize and pay for the following:

- ULI National staff travel (approximately 2 staff) – plane/train, hotel, food during travel time
- Expert panel staff travel (lodging, transport, meals outside above, baggage fees, etc.)
- Travel for a staff person TPL, NRPA, or JPB Foundation staff person (lodging, transportation, baggage fees, meals, etc.)

Note: ULI National will explain reimbursement protocols to the National Experts during the group orientation call and will follow up with instructions following the study visit. Experts will be instructed to
save all receipts (for meals/purchases above $25) and submit to ULI National with a reimbursement form after the study visit.

**Timeline of Major Milestones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Follow Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 weeks out</td>
<td>Kick Off Call</td>
<td>ULI National</td>
<td>Begin recruiting LPG members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 weeks out</td>
<td>LPG Members Confirmed</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Organize initial LPG meeting/call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 weeks out</td>
<td>Draft National Study Visit Scope</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>LPG continues to meet to refine scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 weeks out</td>
<td>Recruit &amp; Confirm National Experts</td>
<td>ULI National</td>
<td>Confirm experts and a chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 weeks out</td>
<td>Finalize Scope &amp; Study Questions</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Share final scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks out</td>
<td>Draft List of Interviewees &amp; Tour Guides</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks out</td>
<td>Send Interviewee Invitations</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Finalize interviewees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks out</td>
<td>Draft Briefing Booklet with Agenda &amp; Potential Tour</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks out</td>
<td>Finalize Briefing Booklet with Agenda &amp; Potential Tour</td>
<td>District Council</td>
<td>Share with team of National Experts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**National Study Visit Held**

| 1 week afterwards | NSV Media                                    | ULI National with District Council | Post presentation on ULI media platforms |

**Steps and Best Practices in National Study Visit Preparation**

**Get Started**

Cross-sector partners are crucial to a successful National Study Visit. Convening these stakeholders will result in a shared understanding of the study visit, setting the stage for a meaningful and successful technical assistance engagement. As a first step, ULI National will host a Kick-Off Call with District Council staff and the 10-Minute Walk grantee to go over study visit processes and to identify stakeholders to participate in a Local Planning Group (LPG).

District Council staff, with help from the 10-Minute Walk grantee, will invite and confirm members of a Local Planning Group to guide the development and implementation of the National Study Visits. The District Council should schedule the initial LPG meeting/phone call as soon as LPG members are confirmed. This initial meeting should allow LPG members to meet each other and share their insights on what they believe the purpose, desired outcomes, and process for achieving National Study Visit outcomes might be. These discussions will help finalize the scope of the study visit.
The District Council should schedule regular calls/meetings with the LPG to guide the planning of the National Study Visit, including the preparation of study questions, the briefing booklet, and the study visit agenda. ULI National will participate in these regular calls/meetings.

**Formulate Study Questions**

The goal of the National Study Visit is to provide technical assistance to 10-Minute Walk grantees. To facilitate this work, the Local Planning Group should formulate a short scope of work and study questions that will assist the grantee in meeting their park access and park quality goals. Formulating clear and appropriate study questions is important, as they inform ULI National about the expertise needed to form the National of Experts team. The scope of work and study questions will also inform the National Experts of the grantee’s priorities. Study questions should be focused and tangible to examine the park creation, activation, enhancement, and accessibility challenges and opportunities identified by grantees in their 10-Minute Walk Commitments.

District Council staff, with support from the LPG and the 10-Minute Walk grantee should:

- Aim to develop the final draft of scope and study questions within 9 weeks of local workshop.
  - The goal is 3-5 main study questions or topics of focus. ULI National can provide sample study questions if needed.
- Consider identifying the main topics of focus with overarching issues, and then including sub-questions underneath that speak to the topic
- Ensure that equity is woven into the study visit, and in the study questions

When framing study questions to stakeholders, take the time to set clear expectations for how the study questions will be used and how they will help further the grantees 10-Minute Walk campaign goals. Note that questions will not necessarily be answered specifically or in their entirety, rather the National Experts will speak to these questions while examining their parks challenge. It is possible the team of National Experts may suggest steps that must be taken before asking the question, rephrase the question, or shed light on a new question altogether.

Additionally, these exact questions will not necessarily be used when interviewing local stakeholders. Rather the study questions may be translated into a simplified set of questions, along with bigger picture questions to gauge stakeholders’ overall impressions of the park or parks system. Study questions will help uncover opinions on what needs to be changed to improve access to high-quality parks and will help the National Experts understand context.

**Create an Agenda**

National Study Visit agendas are customizable depending on the goal and needs of the 10-Minute Walk grantee. View a National Study Visit Sample agenda [here](#). A typical National Study Visit agenda is as follows:

**DAY 1**

- Afternoon – National Expert arrive
- Evening – Briefing by 10-Minute Walk grantee and other speakers, National Expert questions and discussion, Welcome Dinner
DAY 2
- Breakfast
- Morning – Tour and interview with local stakeholders
- Noon – Lunch and stakeholder interviews debrief
- Afternoon – Local stakeholder interviews, stakeholder interviews debrief, and National Expert working session on recommendations
- Evening – Working dinner, National Expert working session focused on presentation

DAY 3
- Working Breakfast – National Expert working session, presentation rehearsal
- Mid-Morning – Presentation of recommendations, audience Q&A
- Noon – Departures

Key considerations when developing an agenda include:
- Will National Experts leave with the necessary background context and facts needed to grasp the project vision?
- Have you granted the space and provided the time and mechanisms to allow all sectors to share their voices?
- Have you leveraged key figures or leaders to help optimize engagement at the local level?

Organize Initial Briefing & Welcome Dinner

The initial briefing and welcome dinner should help the National Experts better understand the purpose, desired outcomes, processes, and key considerations for the National Study Visit. Use the initial briefing to formally introduce the Local Planning Group (LPG), the 10-Minute Walk grantee, National Experts, and ULI National to each other. The LPG should brief National Experts on the grantee’s 10-Minute Walk Commitment and parks challenge, while highlighting state of the park(s), key challenges, local assets, community engagement strategies, etc. Select a location where all participants can sit around a table or tables and see each other is best.

To continue discussions, organize a welcome dinner. National Experts, ULI District Council staff and the LPG Chair (and District Council Chair, if desired) should attend dinner and help answer questions pertaining to the community. Select a private dining location. The initial briefing and dinner can be in the same location.

Identify Local Stakeholders to Interview

The District Council and Local Planning Group should identify key local stakeholders to interview, including public employees, elected leaders, local experts, community organization representatives and members, and others.

Community members should be included as interviewees. Consider reaching out to community groups that have programs to activate resident leadership such as tenant or neighborhood associations, citizen advisory commissions, community development corporations, and youth leadership groups. If needed, try to find a separate time slot in the evening with childcare provided (through grant support) if possible.
National Experts and local stakeholders will be matched appropriately for during National Study Visit interviews.

**Organize Site or Park Tours**

Site tours can play an important role in helping the National Experts understand grantees’ challenges in meeting 10-Minute Walk goals, improving park access, and enhancing park quality. They also provide an excellent opportunity to engage local community members and community-based organizations. If appropriate, the LPG should plan a site or park tour of the key areas it wants to highlight. District Council staff will lead the LPG in coordinating and planning the site tour.

Consider:

- Providing visual materials (e.g., a map) or assign a simple task to help engage attendees. Ideas for simple tasks may include a walk assessment or asking participants to take a picture of one key asset, one park access threat they identified, or one key opportunity, and then asking them to send their photos to one person to later have showcased in a presentation.
- Incorporating walking, biking, and public transit into the site tours so that National Experts can experience the lived reality of accessing a park. One option is to drive panelists for a portion of the study area first, then transition to walking for a half mile.

**Invite People to Public Presentation**

To share findings from the National Study Visit, invite the community to the public presentation. Invitations should be extended to all members of the Local Planning Group, participants in the study visit interviews, tour, and briefing sessions, and to public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders identified through the National Study Visit, as having an integral role in achieving 10-Minute Walk Commitments.

To make the presentation available to the broader community, consider inviting local media to attend the presentation. Post the final presentation to ULI newsletters and social media platforms.

**Develop a Briefing Book**

The briefing materials are intended to outline the purpose of the National Study Visit and provide background information on the 10-Minute walk grantee. The Briefing Book will provide the background information data for the technical assistance. While experts are expected to read through the entire booklet prior to the study visit, this briefing book will be referenced throughout the study visit to inform experts while they develop recommendations. View sample National Study Visit briefing books here: [A Healthy Future for Federal Boulevard](#), [Van Nuys Boulevard Healthy Corridor](#), and [Vista Avenue Healthy Corridor](#).

**Briefing materials to include:**

- National Study Visit project scope with study questions
  - Project scope to include background information, project tour, study questions, opportunities/focus area, and desired populations to reach and impact
- Names and bios of ULI Staff, LPG, and National Experts
  - ULI National will compile and send bios for the National Experts
- Agenda with objectives
Background information. May include:
- NRPA TA application
- Recent or current park master plans
- Recent or current development plans in the area
- Housing, market, and demographic profiles and trend analysis
- Economic development and transportation plans
- Community visioning plans
- 10-Minute Walk accessibility and walkability analysis
- Health Impact Assessments
- Park use studies and surveys

Maps and visuals of the study area
- Aerial photos, land use maps, and zoning maps

Please try to keep the page limit to about 50 pages. Digital copies will suffice but plan on printing a few copies to have present during the National Study Visit working sessions. Submit the final briefing book to ULI National (who will send out to National Experts) at least 2 weeks prior to study visit. This allows National Experts sufficient time to read and ask follow-up questions. ULI National will host a group orientation call at least one week prior to the study visit and will provide an overview of the booklet.

Celebrate

You’ve done it! You have provided critical technical assistance and formed powerful new relationships to support and promote the unique parks and green spaces that make your region a great place to live, work, and play.