

May 12, 2026

MEMO TO: David Raatz, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Keone Hurdle, Legislative Analyst *KOH*
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst *EM*
Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney *cmn*

SUBJECT: **WEBINAR: MORE THAN A SIDEWALK: HOW GREAT PLACES ENCOURAGE WALKING** (PAF 25-010(26))

This report summarizes the one-hour webinar, entitled “More Than a Sidewalk: How Great Places Encourage Walking,” on April 21, 2026, cohosted by America Walks and the Urban Land Institute. The presenters, Ethan Kent of PlacemakingX and placemaking expert Carol Coletta, focused on strategies to transform ordinary streets into dynamic places. The moderator was former Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn.

Mr. Kent said walkability starts with places to go where people can make eye contact, linger, and create human connection. Walkability includes shaping public spaces for diverse groups to build community.

The speakers noted that if you plan for cars, you will get more cars and traffic. Planning for walkability and bicycles has no extra cost; it is a different goal. The presentation highlighted “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” projects all over the world as successful, low-cost interventions.

PlacemakingX extols the “Power of 10” framework for thinking about places. It is a flexible concept that encourages planners to achieve critical mass with a series of destinations where residents and tourists can become immersed in a place with a variety of activities that create a lively community or collection of communities.

An important component is bringing the indoors outside with sidewalk cafes and markets, including fun, outdoor features with art, fountains, and places to sit and play, while telling the story of the place. Ms. Coletta noted that riverfronts, oceanfronts, parks, and places that inspire awe make great destinations. Small communities can build on their identity and creativity to foster social connection.

PlacemakingX’s website includes many photos illustrating the appeal of walkable places.

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Thank you for the opportunity to attend this webinar. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Keone at ext. 7659, Ellen at ext. 7661, or Carla at ext. 5519.

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