

# Acknowledgments

**THERE** were many challenges I faced writing this book. The first was that I am essentially a technical writer—after all, my professional training continually emphasized writing in the third person and using fancy words! So it turns out in the end that my writing style was my greatest obstacle. I did my best to figure out how to say phrases that didn't end up sounding dry and uninteresting. You'll have to be the judge of whether I succeeded in that regard.

I think the hardest part, certainly the part that took the longest, was deciding which photos to use when illustrating the many points that I wanted to explain to readers. I felt that you, the reader, was (and is) the most important and central recipient of the book. It is important to me that the story is told with photos, rather than just with text. I know that you've probably heard that a picture is worth a thousand words—well, I believe it and have put it into practice with this book.

I owe many people a great deal of gratitude for supplying the photos. Indeed, the job of selecting them was very difficult because there were so many that would have been perfect, but the space in the book didn't allow the use of them all.

Most of the photographs show positive settings of special places in communities—however some show negative settings of decayed areas. My goal in writing this book was not to cause embarrassment to any community, but rather to show causes of decay versus the convenience, beauty and vitality that can be found in a walkable community.

In the last chapter of the book, I challenge people to have the courage to make changes in their communities. I too was challenged to have courage when writing this book. Be brave my reviewers and editors said. Therefore I made the decision to show and name the cities where I found these decayed and crumbling conditions. My hope is that I just might inspire those living there to make a difference too.

## Acknowledgments

Like most broad studies, this book also takes the risk of over generalization. Of course, as an author, I worry that people will not accept the viewpoints I've written about in the book as the greatest thing since sliced bread. Imagine that! I know there will be some who'll remain skeptical. Yet research has proven time and time again, that the strategies I've written about really do work when properly built. I know that every person in every community—whether you're a resident, an elected official, a road designer, a community planner, or from any other segment of the population—will benefit from this book.

By reading this book, I hope you get a good understanding of how the community process works so that the playing field is leveled. If everyone is informed of all road building possibilities, then everyone is more likely to reach a common ground much faster. So readers, hold your ground and be bold! Be courageous and be the leader who convinces everyone that change can be a good thing!

Now first and foremost, I want to thank Dan Burden for opening my eyes and changing my life. Dan is the foremost quoted expert, leader, cheerleader and pundit on walkability in America. He heads his own consulting firm, Walkable Communities, Inc., and has traveled all over America promoting walkable communities since 1995. He recently accepted a position with Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart, Inc., a Florida engineering and planning firm. Dan gladly wrote the foreword, submitted many of the photos and reviewed the book. In fact, most of the strategies in this book were first developed and promoted by Dan. With his permission, I have shamelessly made use of his workshop and presentation materials. Dan has become my colleague and partner in a growing national movement that encourages the development of more livable and healthy communities. Dan, has served as my

mentor and over the years has passed on his enthusiasm and knowledge to me so I could write this book. It is a privilege to work with someone who has such passion for his craft and I truly admire his tenacious dedication for improving the livability of communities. Without Dan, there would not have been a walkable communities movement. Without him, there would not have been this book.

Many thanks also to Bekki Wasmuth, a student-photographer. She took many of the photos around the Detroit Metro area as well as Flint, Saginaw, Bay City and Midland. Bekki has been a friend of my daughter, Jamie, since they were both in pre-school. How fortunate that Bekki is taking photography classes at a time when I really needed some expert help. It's so nice to know the right people, at the right time, and in the right place!

Russ Soyering, planning director for the City of Traverse City, also reviewed the book and provided many of the photos from around the Traverse City area. Russ is past-president of the Michigan Association of Planning, a Chapter of the American Planning Association. As a long time friend, the story of walkability would not have been as easy to tell, or as interesting to show if it wasn't for his comments and the wonderful photos that he allowed me to share with you.

Another big thank you goes to Mark Wyckoff, founder and president of the Planning & Zoning Center in Lansing. Mark spent several days reviewing the book and helping me with guidance for publishing—even though he was sick at the time! Mark's comments were invaluable and it was he who gave me encouragement to teach a university course about planning for walkable communities. I started teaching at Eastern Michigan University winter term 2006, and am using this book as one of the required readings.

It's not often that I get to thank my mother in writing—but I owe her a few kudos too. Thanks Mom (by the way her name is Elaine Wetherell) for reviewing the book from the perspective of someone who didn't have a clue about walkability—at least not until she read the book! With great insight she encouraged me to leave the planning jargon out of the book. I couldn't exactly leave it all out, but I did take great pains to simplify the language. I know this is what Moms do, but I can't thank her enough for caring about the project to spend several nights and days reading through the first draft of the book. Thanks to her I have tried to tell the story of walkability in a way that everyone can understand—through pictures.

The following people supplied me with a wide array of photographs from all over Michigan and the U.S: Dan Burden, Russ Soyring, Bekki Wasmuth, Jamie Kettren, Judy Gallo, Brad Barrett, Lee Kettren, Scott Wasmuth and Aeric Ripley. From a

selection of 6,459 photos, I selected 236 to use in the book to demonstrate the many points I wanted to make. My deepest thanks to each of you.

Also, many thanks to Bob Barber and James van Hemertere. I owe them both big time! They both gave me a pep talk that was badly needed when I began to lose my enthusiasm for finishing the final chapters. Their words of encouragement made me realize that this is a story that needed to be told—and the sooner, the better!

Finally, I must mention my family who was forced to develop a great deal of patience over the life of this book. My most heartfelt thanks to Lee, Jamie, Jeff, Stacey, Grace, Jenny, Brian, Tootie and the four amigos—Alley, Molley, Halla and Pistol. Thanks for all your support. I hogged the computer relentlessly—yet you still gave me encouragement to finish. You guys are the greatest family a person could ever have.





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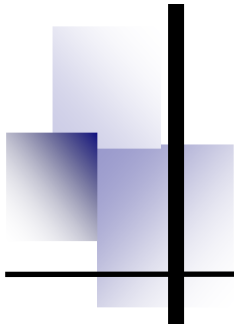
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