

## **Evaluating Walkway Environment in Guimarães City Center, Portugal**

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Planning pedestrian environments require assumptions about how pedestrians will respond to characteristics of the walking environment. Guimarães city center has a long history from medieval period to encourage walkers in the city center for different purposes. The city center connects well with major attractions of the city along with a very good public open space and variety of shops nearby. Walking is being considered as one of the egress and sustainable mobility modes of urban transportation especially in the city center. But, walkers face several problems considering safety, continuity, landscape, walkway surface and illegal parking and unwanted hindrances. This study focuses the present problems experienced by the walkers in Guimarães city center. Prescribed questionnaires have been surveyed to the walkers in January 2010 to evaluate the pedestrian's impression about different problems while walking in the city center. Observation surveys have been followed to assess the pedestrian flow and volume in the study area. Result shows that most of the pedestrians consider illegal parking on sidewalks and hindrances on walkways as major problems. At the same time, walkers also put better impression on walkway's safety considering the elevated sidewalks and well maintained crossing lights and colors. This paper also tries to explain the walkway's problems in detail so that they can be considered in the transportation and mobility plan of the city in the near future. This is especially relevant due to the expected significant number of tourists in coming years as Guimarães will be European Capital of Culture in 2012.

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