

WALKBOSTON'S PLAN 2020, PART TWO

Building on nearly 30 years of advocacy in more than 100 cities and towns across the Commonwealth, WalkBoston has adopted a framework on how to MAKE MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE. This framework is guided by a set of principles that will challenge us to evaluate new technologies, continue to create evidence-based best practices, and address equity and inclusion more specifically in our community engagement.

This newsletter edition is the second in a two-part series designed to share our goals with the larger WalkBoston community and encourage each of you to lace up your shoes and get involved. To read the first newsletter in this series visit walkboston.org.

BY ADI NOCHUR/PROJECT MANAGER, WALKBOSTON

Age-Friendly Walking – better walking for all ages

Age-Friendly Walking is an emerging framework to increase pedestrian safety for children and older adults. WalkBoston has spent many years working with children on Safe Routes to Schools efforts, and over the last two years we have focused on seniors through an Age-Friendly Walking initiative with Boston. In close collaboration with the City's Elderly Commission and many other municipal agencies, community partners, and local residents, we are advancing safe and comfortable walking for Boston seniors – and by extension everyone!

With financial support from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and the Mass Councils on Aging, we are working with three pilot neighborhoods in Boston – the South End, East Boston, and Mattapan Square – to identify key issues and concerns, and to implement street and sidewalk improvements that create safe and pleasant walking conditions for seniors. We are also using the lessons learned from these pilots to create guidelines for a long-term citywide approach to senior walking. Providing benches as places to rest and repairing unfilled and uneven tree pits to eliminate tripping hazards are among the top priorities we have identified (as well as sidewalk snow shoveling, of

course). Thanks to our efforts, improving pedestrian safety is a key recommendation in the City's Age-Friendly Boston Action Plan. We look forward to our continued partnership with city agencies and community partners to make a positive impact on these issues.

As elderly populations continue to grow across the state and country, the need for walkable communities increases. Walkability is key to ensuring that seniors can age in place, access important goods and services, remain socially active, and maintain physical and economic mobility. Working with low-income seniors and seniors of color has helped us incorporate equity into this work. We have learned that Age-Friendly Walking is a powerful frame to bring diverse stakeholders and new partners to the table.

We encourage your community to consider joining the global Age-Friendly Communities movement, with leadership from the World Health Organization and AARP. We also invite you to contact WalkBoston if you're interested in starting an Age-Friendly Walking initiative in your community! For more details on our Age-Friendly work to date, visit: www.walkboston.org/age-friendly.

BY ERIK SCHEIER/PROJECT MANAGER, MBTA

The pedestrian/transit connection – walking to transit



CHALLENGES FOR PASSENGERS: Unprotected and stranded on medians. Forced to travel on sides of roads. Unable to exit or board.

More than 30 percent of MBTA customers rely on the MBTA bus system for all or part of their daily commute. Almost all bus customers traverse public roads and sidewalks to access their bus service, which serves over 7,600 bus stops. Providing pedestrians with a safe, accessible, and convenient path of travel to and from each bus stop is critical if the MBTA is going to adequately serve the public, including seniors and persons with disabilities.

The MBTA's Systemwide Accessibility Department (SWA) recently completed an accessibility audit of all bus stops throughout the system. The audit revealed that a significant portion of the MBTA's bus stops have varying degrees of accessibility and safety deficiencies. WalkBoston has been a very active participant in the advisory committee and with MBTA staff carrying out

these audits under the Plan for Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI).

It's not uncommon for a bus stop to be located along a busy roadway where there are no sidewalks present. For a pedestrian to get to the bus stop, they must travel along the edge of the road – often less than a foot from a busy vehicular travel lane. In other cases, bus customers are dropped off on an isolated sidewalk or traffic island without any ramps or sidewalk connections. For someone in a wheelchair, they are literally stranded. A significant portion of bus stops don't meet ADA requirements; pedestrian ramps are too steep or non-existent and sidewalk paths of travel are blocked.

The MBTA is currently advancing a program that starts to address these deficiencies and dramatically continued

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Annual Celebration — 3.29.2018

Thurs, March 29, 5–8PM

Fort Point Room/Atlantic Wharf, 290 Congress Street, Boston

5PM: Doors open, schmooze, eat and drink

6PM: Golden Shoe Awards and speaking program

\$25 admission

RSVP by March 21

617.367.9255 or www.WBMarch29th.eventbrite.com

WALKING + CONNECTIONS = STRONG COMMUNITIES

Communities and advocates are stronger when they connect, learn, and help each other. We are excited to launch the WalkMassachusetts Network to support local committees and organizers. Come learn about the network's valuable peer-to-peer forums and technical assistance.

GOLDEN SHOE AWARDS

- **MBTA's PATI Team: Laura Brelsford, Kathryn Quigley, Chris Hart, Melissa Dullea & Erik Scheier** Transit user accessibility and safety champions
- **Underground at Ink Block: MassDOT, National Development & partners** Art and environmental public space magicians
- **Matt Lawlor & Hillary Borcharding** Board and Board/Staff heroes

SPEAKER: **Jeff Speck** *Walkable City* author, TED speaker

#ClearCurbCuts

To highlight challenges pedestrians face daily, WalkBoston produced a short video showcasing Amy Corcoran Hunt, who uses a wheelchair, navigating curb cuts 5 days after a snowstorm. In just 3 blocks Amy encountered 6 impassable curb cuts. The video was posted on Twitter and Facebook and viewed 55,000 times. WBUR then interviewed Amy, Channel 5/WCVB did a piece on the video, and the South End News featured it on its front cover. A letter to the editor by WalkBoston Board member Carol Steinberg followed:

During these snowy, icy days, we want to remind everybody to keep curb cuts completely cleared at all times so that wheelchair users are able to cross the streets like everybody else. I have often rolled to the end of a shoveled sidewalk, only to find the curb cut blocked with snow.

When my path is blocked and I stop, looking desperate, kind strangers will sometimes attempt to hoist my power wheelchair over the piles or stop traffic to help me cross at a driveway. We certainly cannot rely on the kindness, availability, and possible muscle power of strangers.

We must handle the snow so that everybody can get around.

Excerpt of Boston Globe letter 1/12/2018
WalkBoston Board member Carol Steinberg

3.18 action plan

Renew or join today!

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mission
WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and vibrant communities.

thank you!

RACEWALKERS

MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY



Plymouth Rock

Robinson+Cole



STRIDERS

The Boston Foundation
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walking to transit continued

improve walking connections to bus service. Starting this summer, the MBTA will be engaging in a yearlong project to construct improvements at over 140 bus stops located in 20 different communities. These bus stops were identified in the recently completed audit as being the worst bus stops in the system in terms of accessibility.

Improvements will include new sidewalks, curbing, pedestrian ramps, signage, and general path of travel improvements. New crosswalks will be installed at multiple locations and several of these will be provided with flashing beacons or warning signs with flashing LEDs. The project will also include limited construction of bulb-outs, bus shelters, and benches.

Along with removing serious safety hazards and barriers to access, these improvements will improve and enhance walkers' experience along sidewalks and streetscapes. Reconstructed and fully accessible bus stops with customer amenities will improve the experience of our current customers, and encourage new bus riders.

In addition to the MBTA, 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) provide bus service to cities and towns across the state. WalkBoston is expanding our work to help RTAs meet walkers' needs. By improving customer conditions at RTA bus stops and stations, we can further expand transit use and reduce driving trips.

Become a corporate supporter today! walkboston.org