



The Point Walk Assessment Salem, MA

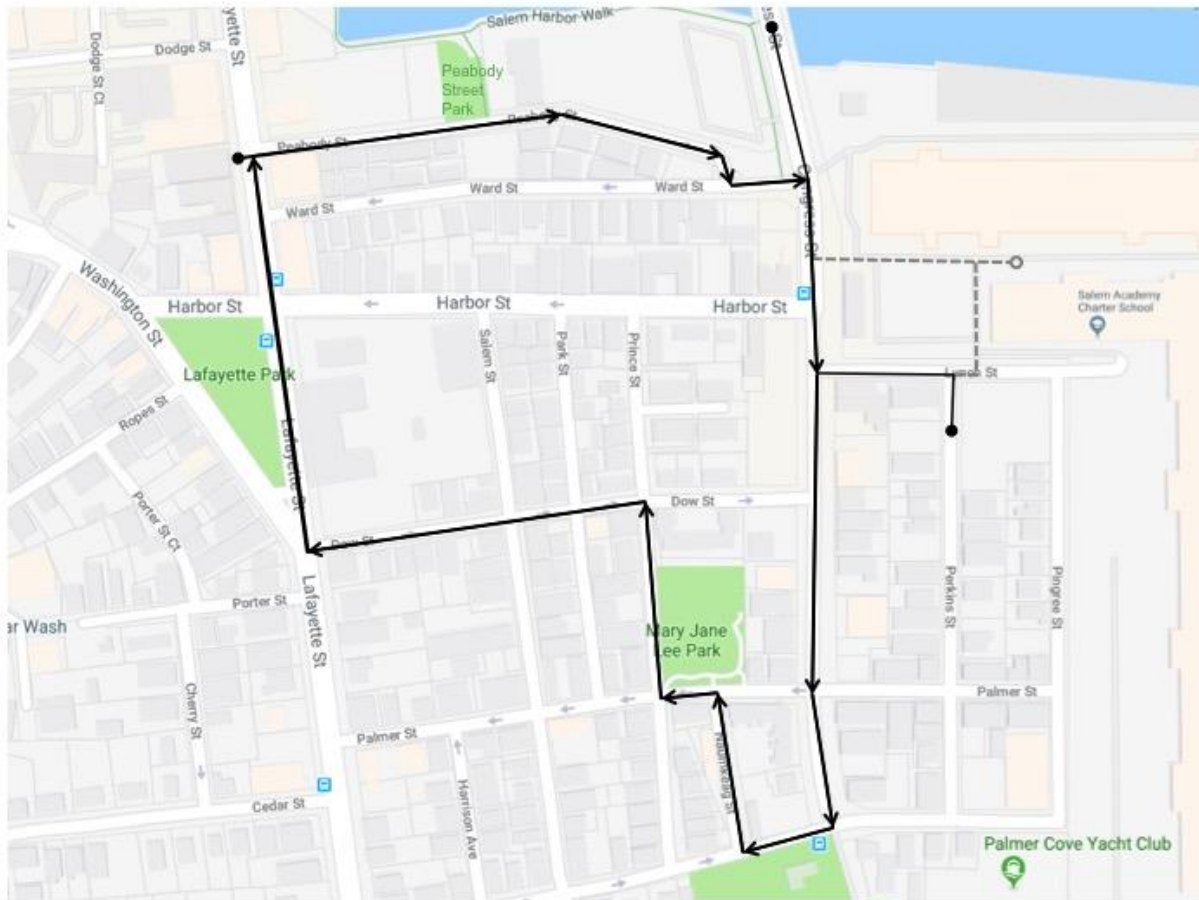
June 6, 2018

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Mass in Motion program

Walk Assessment Overview

On June 6, 2018, WalkBoston conducted a walk assessment in the Point neighborhood of Salem, with support from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Mass in Motion program to promote active transportation and healthy eating. The goal of the walk assessment was to recommend improvements to the local built environment that improve walkability and pedestrian safety. Participants included representatives from WalkBoston, Salem Mass in Motion, Salem Mayor’s Office, Salem Traffic and Parking Department, Salem Commission on Disabilities/Age-Friendly Salem, Salem Family Health Center, North Shore YMCA, and North Shore Community Development Corporation.

The Point is a dense residential neighborhood with high concentrations of immigrants from the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean more broadly. Working with local residents, the North Shore Community Development Corporation has established the Punto Urban Art Museum, a collection of dozens of colorful murals on local walls and buildings that lift up the neighborhood’s artistic and cultural identity. With more visitors coming to the Point, as well as additional plans for residential development in an already dense community, improving walkability is important for the neighborhood’s health and safety. As such, the Point presents an opportunity for the City of Salem to pilot its Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program to slow down motor vehicles and advance safer streets for all.



The walking route for the Point walk assessment, which started and ended at the North Shore Community Development Corporation’s office on Lafayette Street.

Walk audit participants discussed a number of general recommendations to improve walkability and pedestrian safety throughout the Point, as well as more specific recommendations at targeted intersections and locations. **The report sections that follow discuss these “Overall Recommendations” and “Specific Improvements” in more detail. “Overall Recommendations” include the following:**

- **Add and upgrade crosswalks throughout the neighborhood with fresh paint and highly visible ladder design and signage.**
- **Improve conditions of sidewalks and curb ramps throughout the neighborhood for accessibility and ADA compliance.**
- **Use daylighting and bumpouts/curb extensions at crosswalks to improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers, reduce long pedestrian crossing distances, and calm traffic.**
- **Improve pedestrian access and connectivity to parks and public spaces throughout the neighborhood.**
- **Provide more trash receptacles for neighborhood cleanliness and beautification.**

Overall Recommendations

- **Add and upgrade crosswalks throughout the neighborhood with fresh paint and highly visible ladder design and signage.** Some intersections in the Point lack crosswalks entirely; others have crosswalks that are largely faded and/or only utilize two parallel lines. Missing crosswalks should be added and faded crosswalks should be re-striped, and all crosswalks should be upgraded to utilize a more highly visible ladder design and signage (including in-street pedestrian crossing signs where feasible). Some crosswalks have decorative designs that have faded over time, so ladder upgrades should be explored at these crosswalks as well.
- **Improve conditions of sidewalks and curb ramps throughout the neighborhood for accessibility and ADA compliance.** While some sidewalks in the Point have recently been redone, others (particularly on Peabody, Ward and Congress Streets) are in poor condition, sometimes to the point of crumbling. In addition many crosswalks throughout the neighborhood lack curb ramps, and in other instances the ramps are in poor condition and/or lack the tactile warning panels needed for ADA compliance. A comprehensive strategy is necessary to address these issues. One walk audit participant suggested that the City designate a person responsible for sidewalk safety and provide resources to respond to alerts submitted through apps like SeeClickFix, thus creating clear mechanisms for accountability.
- **Use daylighting and bumpouts/curb extensions at crosswalks to improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers, reduce long pedestrian crossing distances, and calm traffic.** Vehicles throughout the Point often park right next to crosswalks, even though state law prohibits parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk. This creates safety hazards as drivers and pedestrians often cannot see each other around the parked vehicles. Posting of “No Parking” signs within 20 feet of crosswalks, combined with enforcement of these parking restrictions, can help “daylight”

the crosswalks and improve visibility. Another daylighting solution is to physically restrict parking using paint, plastic flex posts and/or planters in the short term at low cost.

Bumpouts/curb extensions at crosswalks can also make pedestrians more visible to drivers. Like daylighting, bumpouts can be implemented in the short term at low cost using paint and plastic flex posts. Bumpouts can also reduce long crossing distances for pedestrians and narrow wide turning radii for motor vehicles, thus creating safer crossings and calming fast-moving traffic. This is especially important along Congress Street, which is a wide street with high volumes of traffic and parked vehicles.



Vehicles park right next to crosswalks throughout the Point, preventing pedestrians and drivers from seeing each other.

- **Improve pedestrian access and connectivity to parks and public spaces throughout the neighborhood.** Walk audit participants highlighted several priorities for improvements:
 - A crosswalk across Peabody Street at Peabody Street Park. (Forthcoming development of the lot just across the street will mean more people walking in the area.)
 - Better access to Palmer Cove Park at Congress and Leavitt Streets. (There are no crosswalks across Leavitt Street and park access is often blocked by parked vehicles.)
 - Safe pedestrian crossings to Mary Jane Lee Park. (There are currently no crosswalks at Naumkeag, Palmer and Prince Streets in the immediate vicinity of the park.)

Walk audit participants also expressed interest in better creating better pedestrian connections to the Salem Harborwalk from Lafayette Street and Congress Street.

- **Provide more trash receptacles for neighborhood cleanliness and beautification.** Walk audit participants noticed a high prevalence of litter in the neighborhood, especially along Congress Street. This detracts from the quality of the walking environment. Since the Point is the most dense residential neighborhood in Salem, walk audit participants suggested that more trash receptacles should be provided to address this problem.

Specific Improvements

Lafayette Street at Peabody Street



Crosswalks at Lafayette Street and Peabody Street are largely faded and lack a highly visible ladder design.

The crosswalks at Lafayette Street and Peabody Street are largely faded and there is no crosswalk across Lafayette Street to and from the south side of Peabody Street. Walk audit participants suggested that upgrading crosswalks at this location would improve pedestrian safety and support potential placemaking efforts to activate and enliven the alley next to the North Shore Community Development Corporation's office on Washington Street. Walk audit participants also noted the lack of pedestrian access and connectivity to the Harborwalk between the Wendy's and Beverly Bank, even though this is a common desire line for people walking. **Strategies to improve walking safety and connectivity include the following:**

- **Restripe and upgrade crosswalks from two parallel lines to more highly visible ladder designs.**
- **Consider adding a crosswalk with highly visible ladder design across Lafayette Street at the south side of Peabody Street.**
- **Work with Wendy's and Beverly Bank to explore strategies for a marked pedestrian path and wayfinding to connect people to the Harborwalk.**

Peabody Street at Ward Street



Narrowing the turning radii and extending the double yellow centerline at Peabody Street and Ward Street will create more predictable vehicular movements and calm traffic.

The crosswalk across Peabody Street at Ward Street is relatively long and because of the wide curb radius, drivers turn left from the one-way section of Peabody Street at high speeds without slowing down. In addition, the vehicular travel lanes are not clearly defined on the short two-way section of Peabody Street that connects Ward Street and Congress Street, and as a result drivers turning left from the one-way section of Peabody Street often take the wrong lane. Walk audit participants also noted that the curb ramps at this location are oriented at a 45-degree angle to the crosswalk, which can have the unintended effect of directing people with visual impairments or mobility aides into the middle of the intersection. **Strategies to improve walking safety include the following:**

- **Add bumpouts/curb extensions at the crosswalk across Peabody Street to reduce the long crossing distances, narrow the turning radii and calm traffic.** Bumpouts can be added at low cost in the near term using paint, planters and/or plastic flex posts.
- **Extend the double yellow centerline and add arrows/pavement markings to more clearly delineate vehicular movements on the two-way section of Peabody Street.**
- **Reorient the curb ramps and tactile warning panels at the crosswalk across Peabody Street so that they are directly aligned with the crosswalk.**

Congress Street at Peabody Street



Long crossing distances and wide turning radii create safety hazards for pedestrians at Congress Street and Peabody Street.

The crosswalks at the intersection of Congress Street and Peabody Street are very long for pedestrians. In addition, the turning radii for motor vehicles at this intersection are very wide. Both these conditions create safety hazards for pedestrians, as they are exposed to vehicular traffic that can take turns without slowing down. In addition vehicles frequently park right next to the crosswalks, thus blocking sightlines for pedestrians and drivers.

Walk audit participants also noted that there are no crosswalks across Congress Street between Peabody Street and Derby Street – a distance of nearly a quarter-mile. In addition to creating potential safety hazards, this dearth of crossing options also limits pedestrian access to the Harborwalk on the west side of Congress Street, just south of the Congress Street Bridge.

Strategies to improve walking safety and connectivity include the following:

- **Add bumpouts/curb extensions at the crosswalks to reduce long crossing distances, narrow turning radii, and improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers.** Bumpouts can be added at low cost in the near term using paint, planters and/or plastic flex posts.
- **Daylight crosswalks to further improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers.** As described above, bumpouts at crosswalks can accomplish this goal. Adding “No Parking” signs near the crosswalks and enforcing the new restrictions and/or physically restricting parking next to the crosswalks using paint, planters and/or flex posts can also improve crosswalk visibility.
- **Consider adding a midblock crosswalk where the Harborwalk meets Congress Street, along with wayfinding signage to let pedestrians know the Harborwalk is there.** This crosswalk should utilize a highly visible ladder design as well as daylighting measures to ensure visibility.

Shetland Park Small Business Center



The entrance to the Shetland Park Small Business Center lacks a marked pedestrian path.

Students attending the Salem Academy Charter School on Lynch Street often use the parking lot of the Shetland Park Small Business Center as a pedestrian cut-through to and from Congress Street. While there are marked pedestrian lanes with yellow paint in the business center parking lot, there is no such path at the entrance/exit to the parking lot at Congress Street. Walk audit participants suggested that the City of Salem could work with the business center to create a clearly marked pedestrian path at this location.

At the far end of the parking lot closer to the school, there is a crosswalk with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, which is activated when pedestrians push a button to alert drivers to their presence in the crosswalk. Walk audit participants suggested that a similar traffic calming measure could be implemented at the nearby intersection of Lynch Street and Perkins Street. This intersection is immediately adjacent to the school and sees high volumes of students crossing the street.

Lynch Street at Perkins Street



Students attending the Salem Academy Charter School often walk through the intersection of Lynch Street and Perkins Street.

The intersection of Lynch Street and Perkins Street is heavily utilized by students walking to and from the nearby Salem Academy Charter School. **Strategies to improve walking safety include the following:**

- **Install STOP signs, STOP lines, and crosswalks with highly visible ladder design at all three legs of the intersection.**
- **Consider the installation of raised crosswalks or a raised intersection (also known as a speed table) to calm traffic and increase pedestrian visibility.**
- **Consider the installation of a flashing light or a pedestrian-activated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon as a traffic calming measure.**

Congress Street at Lynch Street



There is no crosswalk across Congress Street at Lynch Street, even though this is an important pedestrian route for children walking to and from the Salem Academy Charter School on Lynch Street.

The intersection of Congress Street and Lynch Street lacks a marked crosswalk across Lynch Street, even though the ramps for this crosswalk exist (albeit in poor condition and without tactile warning panels for ADA compliance). This intersection also lacks a crosswalk across Congress Street, which presents safety hazards for children walking to and from the Salem Academy Charter School on Lynch Street. **Strategies to improve walking safety include the following:**

- **Add a crosswalk with highly visible ladder design across Lynch Street.**
- **Repair curb ramps and add tactile warning panels for ADA compliance.**
- **Explore the addition of a crosswalk with highly visible ladder design and ADA-compliant curb ramps across Congress Street.** To ensure pedestrian visibility this crosswalk should be installed in tandem with daylighting strategies (installation of “No Parking” signs and enforcement and/or physical parking restrictions using paint, planters and/or flex posts).

Congress Street at Leavitt Street



Bike and pedestrian access to Palmer Cove Park is inhibited by a lack of crosswalks and paths and the presence of parked vehicles at Santisi's Garage.

The intersection of Congress Street and Leavitt Street is relatively wide, which causes traffic to move at high speeds through the open expanse of pavement. The intersection is also next to Palmer Cove Park, which is popular with local residents for its walking and biking paths, but access to the park from this intersection is dangerous and unattractive. There are no crosswalks across Leavitt Street to the park and parked vehicles at Santisi's Garage present an additional obstacle for people walking and biking.

Strategies to improve walking safety and connectivity include the following:

- **Add bumpouts/curb extensions at the crosswalk across Congress Street to reduce the long crossing distance, narrow turning radii and calm traffic.** Bumpouts can be added at low cost in the near term using paint, planters and/or plastic flex posts.
- **Add crosswalks with highly visible ladder design and ADA-compliant curb ramps across Leavitt Street to create safe pedestrian crossings to Palmer Cove Park.**
- **Add STOP lines and STOP signs on all three legs of the intersection to calm traffic.**
- **Paint a fog line on Leavitt Street to narrow the wide travel lane and calm traffic.**
- **Consider restricting and/or reorienting parking at Santisi's Garage to provide more space for pedestrian and bicycle access to Palmer Cove Park.** Adding and creating wider pedestrian sidewalks and/or dedicated walking and biking paths will create more comfortable and accessible conditions.

Mary Jane Lee Park



There are no crosswalks in the immediate vicinity of Mary Jane Lee Park, even though this park is heavily utilized by neighborhood residents.

Mary Jane Lee Park sees heavy use from residents of the Point, but there are no crosswalks in the immediate vicinity of the park, even though a number of nearby intersections have pedestrian ramps (some of them recently installed and including ADA-compliant tactile warning strips). **Installation of crosswalks with highly visible ladder design, ADA-compliant curb ramps and appropriate signage should be prioritized at the following locations:**

- **Palmer Street at Congress Street**
- **Palmer Street at Naumkeag Street**
- **Palmer Street at Prince Street**
- **Dow Street at Prince Street**
- **Dow Street at Park Street**
- **Dow Street at Salem Street**

Some walk audit participants also suggested that “SLOW ZONE” and “20 MPH” pavement markings be added as a traffic calming measure on several of these residential streets around the park.

Lafayette Street at Dow Street/Washington Street



Wide expanses of pavement and inadequate pedestrian crossing time present challenges at the intersection of Lafayette Street and Washington Street/Dow Street.

The intersection of Lafayette Street and Washington Street/Dow Street at Lafayette Park presents several challenges for pedestrians. The intersection is very wide and has few pavement markings and as a result traffic movements can be fast and unpredictable. The WALK signal at this location provides a pedestrian countdown, but pedestrians face long waits to get a WALK and the 28 seconds of WALK time currently provided is not enough for pedestrians to get across Lafayette Street, Lafayette Park and Washington Street in their entirety. Several walk audit participants suggested that the installation of adaptive signal technology at this intersection, as well as the nearby intersection of Lafayette Street and Harbor Street, appears to prioritize motor vehicles over people walking. **Strategies to improve walking safety include the following:**

- **Use bumpouts/curb extensions to reduce crossing distances, reclaim excess roadway space and calm traffic.** A curb extension has already been installed on the eastern side of Lafayette Street opposite Lafayette Park. Similar bumpouts/curb extensions could be installed at the crosswalk across Lafayette Street at Dow Street, as well as on the western side of Washington Street opposite Lafayette Park and the southern tip of Lafayette Park. Bumpouts can be added at low cost in the near term using paint, planters and/or plastic flex posts.
- **Add pavement and lane markings to create more predictable motor vehicle movements.**
- **Increase the amount of WALK time provided and consider upgrading the WALK signal to be on automatic recall (no push button required) so pedestrians do not face an inordinate amount of time waiting to cross.**
- **Consider removing the left-turn lane on Lafayette Street southbound.** Some walk audit participants suggested that this lane is unnecessary due to the long setback from Dow Street and low volumes of left-turning traffic. The roadway space freed up can then be reallocated for a pedestrian median or bike lanes.

Lafayette Street at Harbor Street



The WALK signal at Lafayette Street and Harbor Street does not provide adequate pedestrian crossing time.

The exclusive phase WALK signal at Lafayette Street and Harbor Street only provides 20 seconds of crossing time, which is not enough time for pedestrians to clear both legs of the intersection. Pedestrians also face long wait times for the WALK signal at this location. **Strategies to improve walking safety include the following:**

- **Increase the amount of WALK time provided and consider upgrading the WALK signal to be on automatic recall (no push button required) so pedestrians do not face an inordinate amount of time waiting to cross.**
- **Consider the implementation of concurrent signalization with a leading pedestrian interval, so that pedestrians cross in the same direction as traffic and get a head-start crossing before motor vehicles begin turning movements.**