

BY MICHELLE DENG / QUINCY-PENN'S HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION GATE COMMITTEE MEMBER

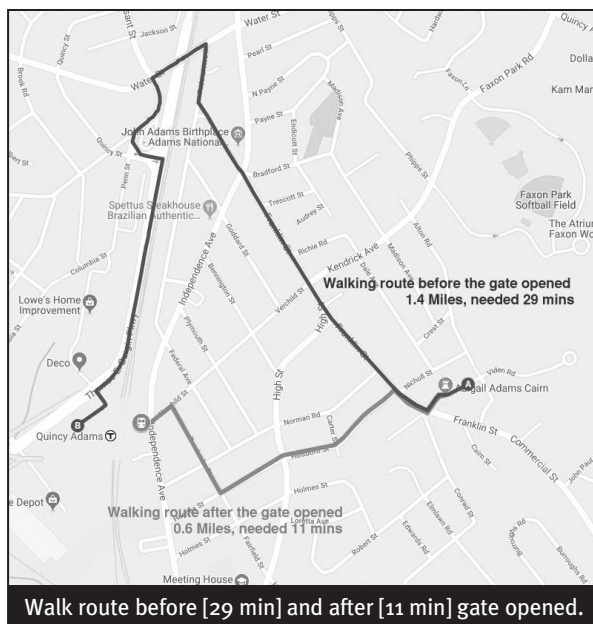
Small change has big impact: The Quincy Adams gate

Michelle Deng is a Transportation Engineering graduate student with a background in traffic safety and a transportation advocate.

For three decades, residents of South Quincy could not access the nearby Quincy Adams MBTA station due to a locked pedestrian gate. Penn's Hill neighborhood residents faced a 1.2-mile walk along busy streets to get to the station, instead of a 120-foot path connection. Thanks to the advocacy of the Penn's Hill Neighborhood Association [PHNA], the gate is now opened. Residents have a short and pleasant walk to the station, reinforcing the walking-transit connection that is so important to walkable communities.

The PHNA was founded in 2015 with the mission to enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood by bringing residents and businesses together. In early 2016, after the MBTA announced the South Shore Red Line stations renovation project, the debate of reopening the gate escalated within the surrounding neighborhoods. The PHNA Gate Committee was formed in early 2017 to create a platform to discuss opening the gate.

The Committee conducted a neighborhood-wide survey in summer 2017 to obtain feedback from the residents. The survey was set up as a Google form and distributed via a neighbor email listserv, an online newspaper article, and Facebook. Over one month, 504 people responded, with the majority of feedback in favor of opening the gate.



Following the survey, the Committee hosted two neighborhood public meetings to discuss survey results and hear public opinion. Approximately 90 neighbors attended each meeting. The survey results and neighborhood concerns were shared with the Quincy mayor soon after the first two public meetings. In April 2018, the mayor granted approval to reopen the gate and stated that the city would work with the MBTA to develop mitigation plans to address the residents' concerns about parking and traffic impacts on their street.

The gate was finally reopened in December 2018. This simple action has reduced pedestrian travel time to Quincy Adams station from 35-45 minutes to 2-10 minutes, making walking a more viable option. The City of Quincy also upgraded the nearby intersection with new crosswalks, ADA compliant ramps, and a push button-activated traffic signal.

The PHNA Gate Committee continues to work closely with the city and the neighbors to ensure that negative impacts are minimized, and benefits to the surrounding neighborhoods are maximized.

Related Press:
The Boston Globe, 4/26/18
"A decades long transit debate in Quincy is settled with the simple crack of a gate"
The Patriot Ledger, 4/25/18
"City to open controversial Quincy Adams pedestrian gate"

BY ADI NOCHUR / WALKBOSTON PROJECT MANAGER

New state Pedestrian Plan is a positive step

As the largest single investor in the state's roadway and pedestrian system, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation [MassDOT] has a critical responsibility to take pedestrian safety, accessibility, and convenience seriously in all of its actions and investments. With its release of a draft Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan last fall, the agency has expressed a strong commitment to addressing these issues.

The Plan recommends policies, programs, and projects for MassDOT to guide decision-making and capital investments. It also provides a Municipal Resource Guide for Walkability to support cities and towns in their efforts to improve walkability on local streets. The Plan advances a vision that all people in Massachusetts have a safe and comfortable option to walk for short trips.

The Plan further outlines goals of eliminating pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries and increasing the percentage of short trips made by walking. It is rooted in principles of treating people walking the same as people driving, focusing on systematic safety improvements, and supporting municipalities to do the same. We are especially pleased that MassDOT is using the Plan to improve its own practices and lead by example — an approach that WalkBoston encouraged throughout the development of the Plan.

We support the Plan's vision, goals, and principles and applaud several of its action items, including research on the impacts and benefits of automated speed enforcement, construction of safe crossings to connect bus stops to destinations, piloting a winter snow and ice removal initiative on pedestrian facilities, and collection and analysis of pedestrian-focused data. Please see our comments on the draft Plan: walkboston.org/tag/pedestrian-plan.

WalkBoston also offered several recommendations to strengthen the Plan. These included preparing in-depth analysis of pedestrian injury patterns across the state and by race, creating an annual review process with advocates and peers outside MassDOT to ensure continuous improvement, and providing more in-depth state-level tracking and municipal guidance around pedestrian signals.

We look forward to seeing a final version of the Plan in 2019. As part of the Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, we will play an important role in guiding the Plan's implementation. Through continued collaboration with partners from the advocacy community, and state and local government, we will continue to make steady progress toward the goal of a more walkable Massachusetts for all.

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Annual Celebration

Mon. March 18, 2019, 5-8pm

Fort Point Room / Atlantic Wharf
290 Congress Street, Boston

Admission: \$30

Join us for our yearly celebration of mobility and walking advocacy!

Learning from each other

People want changes that encourage safe walking. From temporary tactics to permanent solutions, learn what has been done across Massachusetts and how you can get results in your community.

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WBmarch18th.eventbrite.com

dollars & sense

Walking costs cities very little, unlike driving and even public transit. A resident’s bus ride may cost \$1, but costs the city \$1.50 in bus operation. If a resident decides to drive, it costs the city \$9.20 in services like policing and ambulances. When a resident walks, the cost to the city is a penny. — *Jeff Speck, Walkability City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*

Gas taxes and other fees paid by drivers cover less than half of road construction and maintenance costs nationally. Regardless of the amount driven, the average American household bears a burden of over \$1,100 annually in taxes and indirect costs from driving, over and above gas taxes or other driving fees paid. — *MassPIRG/Frontier Group, Who Pays for Roads?*

BY BRENDAN KEARNEY / WALKBOSTON COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

WalkMA Network connects towns

At our WalkBoston annual meeting in March 2018, we announced that we were building a statewide WalkMassachusetts network. It would consist of advocacy organizations, municipal committees, and community groups working on walking.

The Network aims to connect and support new, emerging, and existing local organizations. Key Network features include community and statewide sharing of advocacy techniques, member recruitment strategies, and approaches for securing improvements to the built environment. Many organizations and committees have questions about how to build constituencies for improving local walking, and we see great opportunities to learn from each other and to work together. Early interest came from points all over the state, including Western and Central Massachusetts, the North Shore, Greater Boston, Metrowest, the South Coast, and the Cape. To maximize statewide participation, we gathered at Worcester Polytechnic Institute on Saturday, December 1, for our initial in-person meeting.

After introductions to let everyone learn a little bit about each person and group in the room, participants suggested topic areas to create the agenda in an “unconference” format. Each person proposed a topic they wanted to discuss by writing it on an index card. Cards were then exchanged, and everyone ranked the new card’s topic by writing a number between 1 and 5 at the top — and then trading for another card. Once a card had [continued]

thank you!

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mission

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

WalkMA Network continued

five ratings, each card was totaled for a score. These were the six highest-ranked topics used for breakout sessions:

1. Low-cost infrastructure improvements
2. Outreach. Emails. Social media. How to do it. Resources to use.
3. Content accessibility, navigation, mobility, features [sensory input]
4. Tools to incentivize behavior change
5. Vision Zero – enforcement of lower speed limits
6. Best practices for reaching out and gaining support from people not involved in bike/ped advocacy

We’re thankful to everyone who took part for their lively conversations, questions, and suggestions. At the end of the day, we launched an email listserv/online discourse forum to continue the connections that were made in Worcester. We also added notes from each of the breakout sessions and the full list of topic suggestions to the forum so that additional resources can be shared.

We’re excited that participation in the Network is growing to include so many groups working on walking throughout the Commonwealth—and we’re gearing up for more throughout 2019. **Visit walkMAnetwork.org to see participating groups and learn more about how you can get involved.**

Become a corporate supporter today! walkboston.org