



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

35th Annual Celebration

April 9th, 2025

Venture Cafe

One Broadway, Cambridge



walk
massachusetts

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Image: Staff and Board of WalkMassachusetts

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Senior Program Manager

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WELCOME



Letter from Leadership

Dear Friends,

This year, WalkMassachusetts celebrates our 35th year as an organization. We're continually inspired when we hear from residents and elected officials who are seeking advice on how to make their streets safer. These are people who are willing to step up and do the work to make walking safer in their communities. From Beverly to Brockton, communities are organizing walk audits, documenting unsafe conditions, and calling for action.

Thank you to our board members for bringing different skills, expertise, and connections, while contributing volunteer hours and financial support. Our staff have grown more in their roles over the last year, bringing even more impact to our work.

I'm honored to continue to work on important policy topics that impact people walking and the importance of increasing funding for transportation. The 4th edition of our annual Crash Report found 78 people walking were struck and killed in 53 communities in 2024 - in places big and small across the Commonwealth.

Each year, this report continues to allow us to identify problems and highlight key themes that we're seeing from the crash data and inform recommendations to move forward together to fix these problems. Emma Itri led the effort to grow WalkMassachusetts' unique walking fundraiser, Beat the Bay State, which grew to nearly 700 participants. She has also continued to expand our communications reach through social media while amplifying the voices of our local and statewide partners. Jonny Gomez-Pereira remains deeply engaged in leveraging his bilingual grassroots community organizing experience in his home communities of Chelsea and East Boston. In the fall, NACTO announced their 2024-2025 Transportation Justice Fellows. From across the country Jonny was one of 11 named to the final cohort (120 people applied to the program). The program goal is about creating a more just and equitable mobility field and equitable transportation systems.

This year, Iolando Spinola is leading the Brockton Walk Audit Academy and expanding walk audits funded by the MA Office of Grants and Research. He is key to furthering our mission to make walking safer and more accessible across Massachusetts, including Beverly and surrounding communities.

Jonny and Iolando also helped to create our first round of engagement in both East Boston and Mattapan this past year on the City of Boston's CDC Racial & Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant in conjunction with the Boston Public Health Commission. The work in each neighborhood is different, as Jonny has worked with other staff to work at a pace that is comfortable for community members to have trusting relationships.

As a sub-recipient of federal funds - once considered one of the more stable funding sources - we recognize a portion of WalkMassachusetts' funding is at risk due to federal uncertainty. Over the last few years, in addition to the CDC grant above, we have been a proud partner with Boston Medical Center and now Tufts Medical Center on a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) working on walkability in and around Boston Public Housing developments.

We'll be completely honest: whatever we write today could be completely different tomorrow. But what isn't changing is our steadfast mission to support people in communities across Massachusetts who are looking to make a difference on street safety for pedestrians. Today we're asking you to help us ensure that these programs - and all of the work we do in communities across the State - is able to continue uninterrupted. We hope you will help ensure we have the financial resources to keep our work moving forward. Your support allows us to continue advocating for safe, accessible, and equitable walking environments for all.

Betsy Johnson
Board President

Brendan Kearney
Co-Executive Director

YEAR IN REVIEW



The Vision Zero Coalition gathered at the State House to raise awareness and advocate for stronger traffic safety measures across Massachusetts on World Day of Remembrance.



Jonny presented *Developing Equitable Civic Engagement: Caminatas Verdes y Seguras* at the Boston Area Research Initiative Conference, showcasing how an East Boston walking group boosts civic participation in city planning.



WalkMass's annual Bob Sloane Walk this past spring was in Worcester in conjunction with WalkBike Worcester and start at Union Station.



WalkMass participated in MVPC's walk audits in Amesbury, Haverhill, and Lawrence to assess walkability and advocate for safer streets in the Merrimack Valley.



WalkMass led a two-mile tour in Cambridgeport, where 30 participants observed stark urban heat differences—113°F in parking lots vs. 76°F in green spaces—while also discussing infrastructure challenges.



WalkMassachusetts hosted its first Spanish-first community walk, where residents shared insights on transit, housing, and environmental justice in East Boston.



WalkMassachusetts received the Underserved Communities Traffic Safety Grant to support the Walk Audit Academy in Brockton, funded by the NHTSA. More to come in 2025.



As part of a Boston Children's Hospital grant, WalkMass led a demonstration on Meridian and Lexington Streets, testing temporary safety measures and gathering community feedback on pedestrian needs.



WalkMassachusetts partnered with the Boston REACH project to engage East Boston residents at community events, providing translated materials and interpretation services to support active mobility planning.



Brendan discussed the need for pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and investment instead of increasing jaywalking fines, advocating for a safer, more walkable Massachusetts with GBH.

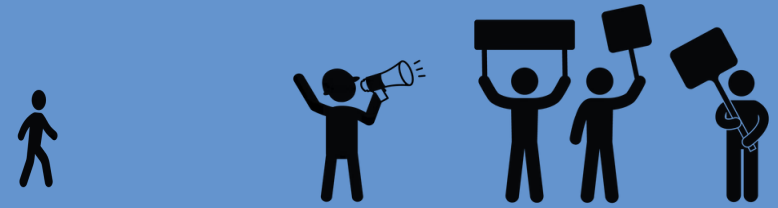


Iolando joined community members for a World Day of Remembrance march in Brockton, calling for protected bike lanes and safer streets to prevent future traffic fatalities.



Emma attended Comnet2024 in Kansas City from support from Barr Foundation to elevate our communications as a nonprofit.

FACTS & FIGURES



Our Work by the Numbers

At WalkMassachusetts, we know that walkable neighborhoods improve individual and community health, environmental resilience, and economic vitality. Here are a few ways we measure our advocacy efforts and reach across the state:

- 137** 137 municipalities helped by WalkMass including 126 walk audits
- 12** Education opportunities through monthly WalkMass Network calls
- 86** Walking maps prepared with municipalities and partner organizations
- 8** Took part in Walk Audits and RSAs across Massachusetts in 2024
- 10** Letters and testimony on legislation, development, and transportation projects in 2024
- 197** Golden Shoes awarded to walking advocates

2024 Beat the Bay State: Event Spotlight

\$39,846 raised 57,790 miles
655 participants 38 teams

For more information on the event, 2024 results, and sponsorship opportunities in 2025, head to WalkMass.org/baystate



2024 MA Pedestrian Crash Data

Every life lost on Massachusetts' roads is tragic. WalkMassachusetts advocates for the most vulnerable road users - people walking. Below is a snapshot of Massachusetts' pedestrian crash data for 2024 as shared in our report released on April 2, 2025.

- 78** At least 78 pedestrians lost their lives in traffic crashes in 2024
- 53** 53 cities and towns in MA had a fatal pedestrian crash
- 21** Pedestrians accounted for 21% of all lives lost in traffic crashes
- 37%** 37% of fatal crash victims were age 65 or older
- 66%** 66% of MA fatal pedestrian crashes occurred in Environmental Justice Block Groups
- 61%** 61% of fatal pedestrian crashes occurred in the dark

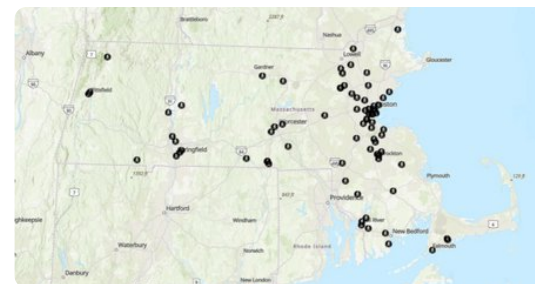


Image: Map of fatal pedestrian crashes in Massachusetts, 2024.

For more information, read the full 2024 Massachusetts crash data report on our website:

walkmass.org/fatal24

2025 ANNUAL CELEBRATION



Keynote Speaker: Etel Haxhiaj: A Trailblazer for Equity, Housing, and Community Advocacy in Worcester

Etel was re-elected to a second term representing District 5 on the Worcester City Council, making history as the first Albanian-born immigrant elected in both Worcester and Massachusetts. Throughout her career, she has been a dedicated advocate for the unhoused community, a livable climate, affordable housing, road and traffic safety, and accessible government.

Her journey mirrors that of many who have fled violence and poverty in search of a better life. After escaping political upheaval in Albania in 1997, she arrived in Worcester in 2001 as a young adult with her parents. Embracing the opportunities of her new home, she pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees in Community Development and Planning at Clark University. Committed to giving back, she has dedicated her life to public service, raising her two sons in the city she now calls home.

For more than two decades, Etel has worked to strengthen the Worcester community. She has served as a youth mentor, supported residents through the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, assisted families in public housing and emergency shelters, and organized mothers in the fight for climate justice. Her advocacy extends to homelessness prevention, both in Worcester and beyond. As Policy Manager for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and Director of Public Education and Advocacy for the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, she has championed national, state, and local policies addressing affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

Etel's leadership extends to numerous boards and commissions focused on racial and gender equity, further cementing her commitment to building a more just and inclusive community for all.



2025 ANNUAL CELEBRATION



Golden Shoe Winners

WalkMassachusetts presents Golden Shoe Awards at our annual celebration each March to celebrate and reward those who have bettered the walking environment and who exemplify the ideals that guide WalkMassachusetts. Golden Shoes are awarded to individuals, agencies, municipalities and companies.

Our 2025 Golden Shoe Awards:

Direct Vision Study

A study by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) found that many vehicles have significant blind spots, making it difficult for drivers to notice vulnerable road users. For example, the study revealed that 50% of heavy-duty trucks fail to provide direct visibility of a child in a crosswalk, while 90% cannot see a child in a bike lane. Conducted in partnership with the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, the research assessed visibility from 60 vehicle types across MassDOT and nine cities, including Boston. The findings highlight significant visibility disparities among vehicle classes; some heavy-duty trucks can see a child at 3.41 feet, while others have blind spots exceeding 10 feet. Additionally, nearly all tested medium-duty trucks, such as the Ford F-350 and F-450, also had limited visibility.



Samuels / Lyrik

Lyrik Back Bay is a transformative air-rights project over the Mass Pike and MBTA railways—the largest of its kind in Boston in 40+ years. Formerly Parcel 12, it has turned unused space into a vibrant gateway to Newbury Street. The project involved building a platform over the highway, adjusting the Mass Pike on-ramp, and modifying the MBTA Hynes Green Line station entrance. This complex engineering feat took over a decade of planning and collaboration.

At its core is 1001 Boylston, a 450,000-square-foot lab and office space, home to CarGurus' global HQ and a new U.S. base for The LEGO Group. Designed with placemaking in mind, the building preserves sunset views and improves pedestrian and vehicle safety at the Massachusetts Avenue Pike entrance. Despite remote work trends, developer Steve Samuels sees Lyrik as proof that well-planned developments can thrive. With office, retail, hospitality, and public space, it sets a new standard for air-rights projects in Boston.



Want to nominate an individual or organization for a Golden Shoe? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at contact-us@walkmass.org

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Advancing Safe Mobility with Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health

WalkMassachusetts is excited to share that it has been designated as a subgrantee through the Boston Public Health Commission for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant. REACH is a federally funded 5-year grant (2024-2029) by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and focuses on health equity projects, prioritizing populations that experience the highest rates of health inequities. The grant is designed to address health disparities using culturally appropriate approaches designed for minority groups such as African American or Black, Latinx, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American and Alaskan Natives. This grant is intended to use community-based, participatory approaches to identify, develop and share effective strategies to mitigate health disparities.

WalkMassachusetts staff have served as community engagement consultants, leveraging their bilingual abilities to collect data from the two project sites of Mattapan and East Boston. These neighborhoods have been selected as priority areas due to the disproportionately high rates of hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes compared to Boston overall, particularly among Black and Latino residents.

WalkMassachusetts partnered with Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (MFFC) and the East Boston Healthy Family Collaborative (EBHFC) to create neighborhood action plans that promote physical activity, aiming to reduce cardiovascular disease. These efforts address systemic inequities in transportation, green space, and housing.

As the leading pedestrian advocacy organization in the state, staff have used a variety of methods for collecting data in order to collaboratively identify priority areas for pedestrian improvement throughout the two neighborhoods. The work for the REACH grant is done in parallel to other investments in the City of Boston such as the redesign of Blue Hill Ave in Mattapan and the redesign of Maverick Square. By providing technical assistance, staff have been able to document and strategically identify activities that would increase civic participation in city planning processes as various transportation projects develop.



Image: Jonny, Program Manager at WalkMassachusetts at tabling event

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



North Shore Walk Audit Training: A Step Toward Safer Streets



Image: Handheld speed detector, Walk Audit Prompt sheets, & Beer from our host, Gentile Brewing



Image: Walk Audit Participants recording vehicle speeds

WalkMass partnered with the Beverly Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to lead a successful Walk Audit training in Beverly, MA. The event, held at the Gentile Brewing, brought together local advocates and residents eager to improve pedestrian safety in their communities.

Participants learned key walkability concepts, including how to assess sidewalk conditions, crosswalk visibility, and overall pedestrian accessibility. With guidance from WalkMass, attendees conducted a hands-on Walk Audit in the neighborhood, identifying potential hazards and areas for improvement.

This collaborative effort, supported by BPAC and community members, is a significant step toward making Beverly and surrounding areas safer for walking. WalkMass remains committed to working with local organizations to ensure that walking is a safe, accessible, and enjoyable mode of transportation for all.

BPAC intends to complete a series of ward based audits informed by incident data, routes to schools and councilor input on residents' concerns. The goal is to materially complete the audits by early May with a formal City Council review in late May. Beverly residents who attended the walk audit training that Saturday will get an invite to participate as the audits get going.

Read more in our spring newsletter: walkmass.org/newsletters

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Moving Together Conference: WalkMass/MassBike Walk Audit

Last October WalkMass, MassBike, and the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) partnered to lead a walk audit workshop during the Moving Together Conference, hosted by MassDOT and the UMASS Transportation Center. This hands-on session provided participants with the opportunity to practice conducting bike and walk audits while discussing best practices for advocating for safer, more accessible streets.

The session quickly filled up with individuals eager to learn how to evaluate pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in real-world conditions. Attendees walked together from the conference to the audit location a few blocks away, where they assessed sidewalk conditions, crosswalk accessibility, and other key walkability factors.

RTAG (Riders' Transportation Access Group) played a vital role in the event, highlighting the challenges faced by individuals of different abilities while walking and emphasizing the need for inclusive infrastructure improvements. This focus on accessibility aligned with broader efforts in recent years to provide advocates with the tools they need to effect change. In 2023, the League of American Bicyclists collaborated with AARP to produce the AARP Bike Audit Toolkit, while WalkMass launched a Walk Audit Academy training video series—both designed to educate and empower communities.

Guided by Galen Mook of MassBike and Brendan Kearney of WalkMassachusetts, the workshop reinforced the importance of walk audits in identifying and addressing infrastructure issues. WalkMass remains committed to working with local organizations and advocates to ensure that walking and biking are safe, accessible, and viable transportation options for all.



Image: Members of RTAG shared their experiences and challenges navigating the streets as pedestrians with limited mobility.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2024



Unrestricted Net Assets	
Revenue	
Grants and Contributions - including Release from Restrictions	\$306,532
Grants - Contract Awards	136,235
Fundraising	136,256
Total Revenue	\$579,023
Expense	
Payroll & Related Payroll & Related Expenses	\$447,185
Direct Project Expense	33,172
Program Support & Administration	121,533
Fundraising and Membership	16,191
Total Expense	\$618,081
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	-\$39,058
Donor Restricted Net Assets	
Grants and Contributions - Restricted	\$208,032
Grants and Contributions - Release from Restrictions	-\$306,532
Change in Donor Restricted Net Assets	-\$98,500
Change in Total Net Assets	-\$137,558



Image: Summer Walk in Cambridge



Image: Bob Sloane Walk in Worcester

WALKMASSACHUSETTS SUPPORTERS



Racewalkers



Where the world comes for answers



Barr Foundation | Support for safe streets work, WalkMassachusetts Network, communications, organizational development, strategic planning and racial equity training, Transportation for Massachusetts efforts, rebranding, and staff and board recruitment

Boston Children's Hospital Collaboration for Community Health | Connecting Kids and Families to Parks and Open Spaces in East Boston

Conine Family Foundation | General Operating

Tufts Medical Center | Community Strides: Multi-level Physical Activity Intervention for Low Income Public Housing Residents

Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Research Fund, Mass General Brigham | Pedestrian Safety and Injury Prevention Training Program

Helen and William Mazer Foundation | Sidewalk snow removal advocacy

Massachusetts Department of Public Health | Technical assistance for Mass in Motion communities; Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds - Hilltowns Age Friendly Walking

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration | Walk Audit Academy Brockton

Plymouth Rock Foundation | General Operating

Solomon Foundation | Gateway Cities Walk Audits, Billerica Healthy Pathways

Point32Health Foundation | Support for Massachusetts Age-Friendly Walking

University of Massachusetts Worcester Prevention Research Center | Walk Audit Academy

WS Development Seaport Community Grant Program | Pedestrian Safety and Vision Zero Implementation

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



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Crawford
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Amblers

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Jonathan Hecht
& Lora Sabin
Nina Garfinkle
Ann M. Hershfang
Mary Holmes
Anita Johnson
Betsy Johnson
Jonas Family Foundation
Derek Lessing
Wendy Landman

Individual Cont.

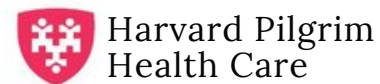
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This page was intentionally left blank
to leave room for you to imagine
your role in our collective stroll toward
an equitable, pedestrian-friendly future.



Addressing inequity, one step at a time.

WalkMass advocates for inclusive communities
that support healthier lives for everyone.



Point32Health Foundation

Visit us at [www.Point32 Health Foundation.org](http://www.Point32HealthFoundation.org)



We thank WalkMassachusetts for promoting walkability throughout the Commonwealth to residents and visitors alike.

**MASSACHUSETTS
CONVENTION CENTER
AUTHORITY**

GLORIA LARSON
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

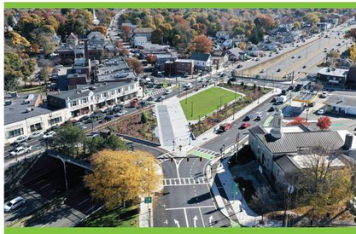
DAVID M. GIBBONS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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HOWARD STEIN HUDSON
Engineers + Planners

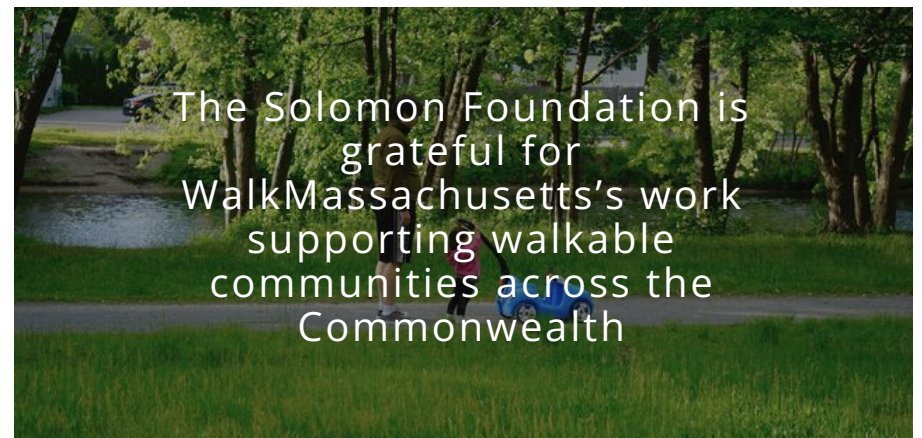


TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & ENGINEERING |
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LAND USE PERMITTING & PLANNING |
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES |
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Worcester Boston Chelmsford



*Thank you to the MA
Vision Zero Coalition for
their continued efforts to
make Boston and
beyond a safer place to
walk, ride and roll.*



The Solomon Foundation is grateful for WalkMassachusetts's work supporting walkable communities across the Commonwealth



THE LAWRENCE & LILLIAN
SOLOMON FOUNDATION

STEP INTO THE SAFETY OF LIGHT



SPECLINES
DARK SKY, BRIGHT FUTURE



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SPECLINES

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Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Honoring the 2025 Golden Shoe Awardees

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center is proud to join WalkMassachusetts in celebrating this year's Golden Shoe Award recipients, who exemplify the ideals of making walking safer and easier in the Commonwealth.

**Boston
Children's
is proud
to support
WalkMassachusetts**



Boston Children's

Where the world comes for answers

bostonchildrens.org/community

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East Boston, Massachusetts

*Your community partner in
revitalizing neighborhoods,
fostering opportunity, and changing lives.*



The Plymouth Rock Assurance Foundation proudly supports WalkMassachusetts in its mission to make Massachusetts safer for pedestrians.



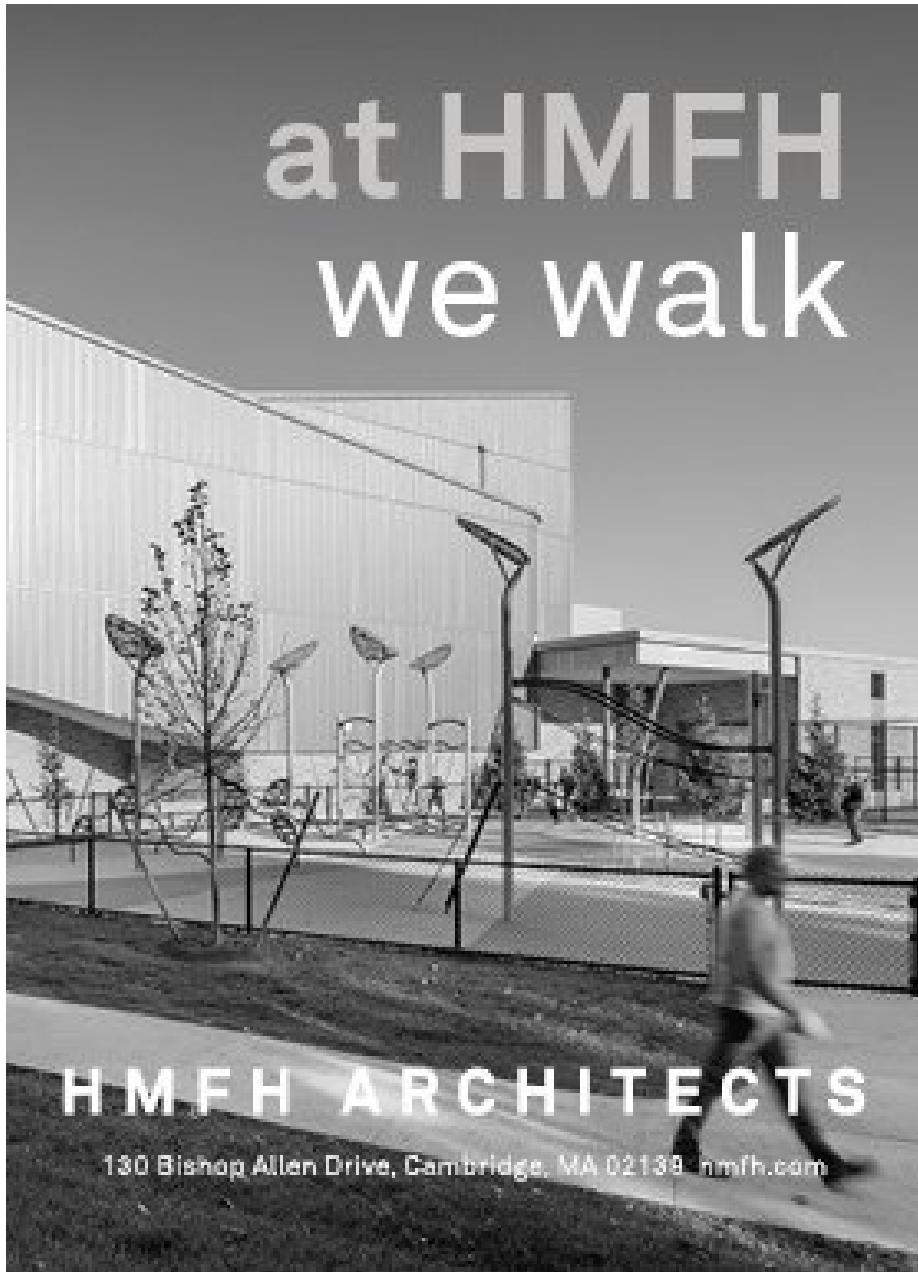
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Thank you to WS Development for your continued support and continuing to expand pedestrian safety in The Seaport.

 **Jeffrey Glassman**
INJURY LAWYERS



AARP[®] Massachusetts



AARP Webinar Dates all from 11:30AM-12PM

4/15: Why Walkability Matters: How Streets Shape our Communities

6/12: From Observation to Action: Planning and Executing a Walk Audit

8/14: Making an Impact: Turning Walk Audits into Action

10/09: The Walkability Advantage: How Walkable Communities Improve Health

TAKE ACTION: CONDUCT YOUR OWN WALK AUDIT WITH WALK AUDIT ACADEMY



What is the Walk Audit Academy?

The Walk Audit Academy is a hands-on training program that equips community members, municipal staff, and advocates with the skills and confidence to identify and address walking-related safety concerns in their neighborhoods.

Participants learn how to conduct a walk audit—a structured process that examines the safety, accessibility, and overall walking experience of streets and intersections. The goal? To build local knowledge, create actionable recommendations, and work together to make walking safer and more comfortable for everyone.

How Does It Work?

Over a series of interactive sessions, WalkMassachusetts guides participants through:

The Basics of Safe Street Design: Learn how street design impacts walkability and how to recognize features that help—or hinder—safe walking.

Conducting a Walk Audit: Go out into the neighborhood to assess streets firsthand. Participants observe, take notes, and capture photos to document barriers and opportunities.

Identifying Solutions: Turn observations into recommendations. Whether it's better lighting, improved crossings, or sidewalk repairs, we help communities prioritize next steps.

Advocacy and Action: Learn how to share findings with decision-makers and advocate for meaningful change. We help you frame your message, connect with stakeholders, and move toward implementation.

Who Should Participate?

The Walk Audit Academy is for anyone who cares about safer, more walkable communities, including:

- Residents and neighborhood groups
- Public health professionals
- Local government staff
- Community-based organizations
- Advocates for older adults, youth, and people with disabilities

No prior experience is needed—just a desire to make a difference.

Why It Matters

The Walk Audit Academy empowers local voices to play a direct role in shaping safer, healthier environments. Walking is the most basic form of transportation, yet too many streets are unsafe or inaccessible—especially in underrepresented communities. Through this program, we're shifting power, increasing awareness, and sparking action.

Get Involved

Interested in bringing the Walk Audit Academy to your city or town? Want to learn more or support this work?

Visit walkmass.org/walk-audit-academy

Contact us at info@walkmass.org

Let's walk together toward safer, healthier communities.