



walk

massachusetts

COMMUNITY | MOBILITY | ACCESS

spring 2024

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CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' LETTER

2023 was a busy year with a second successful Walk Audit Academy cohort, Beat the Bay State Challenge, wayfinding projects, statewide community engagement, and our organizational rebrand roll out. Our work continues to make walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment, and more vibrant communities.

This past fall, our board took a step in another new direction, adopting the organization's first co-executive directors model — a model that has become increasingly popular in the nonprofit world to balance organizational workload and play to different people's strengths. Here's a little about us:

Althea focuses on fundraising and administration. Prior to joining the organization, she oversaw fundraising and events for both the USS Constitution Museum, where she led a record-setting gala, and Boston Children's Museum, where she created new and innovative events while earning a Best of Boston® award from Boston Magazine.

Brendan focuses on advocacy and communications. He is a founding member of the City of Boston's Vision Zero Task Force, and is an appointed member of the Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (MABPAB), which serves in an advisory role on advancing bicycle and pedestrian transportation for MassDOT and other state agencies.

The two of us have worked side-by-side for years now and look forward to leading the organization as we enter this new chapter as WalkMassachusetts, and continue to expand our reach across the state. There's much more work to be done this year, and we could not do it all alone. We are grateful for the support of our board, volunteers, and staff who help us keep things moving forward.

Best,

Althea & Brendan

BY JONATHAN GOMEZ-PEREIRA / WALKMASSACHUSETTS PROGRAM MANAGER

Developing equitable civic engagement in East Boston

WalkMassachusetts is proud to highlight our partnership with GreenRoots, an environmental justice nonprofit that works to achieve quality of life through collective action, unity, and education in East Boston. Through this partnership and our support of Caminatas Seguras, a weekly walking group, we are contributing to the development of civic engagement in East Boston. Together we aim to improve the built environment and walkability of East Boston while also enhancing access to green spaces and open areas for families in the community.

During weekly gatherings, we gather to walk to nearby parks and green spaces. This results in increased motivation, physical activity, and fosters social connections. A key element of this program includes consistent and diverse participation. Members of Caminatas Seguras are multilingual (Spanish/English) and multigenerational. They include older adults, young

families, children, and those with differing abilities and health conditions. As a native Spanish speaker, I am especially pleased that we are dedicating time and resources to engage with groups that have historically been left out of planning and engagement processes.

The program also serves as an organizing tool and platform where members are able to mobilize on key issues that affect the community, such as climate change, housing, environmental justice, and their intersections with transportation.

During our walks, participants gain a deeper understanding of the power of the walking group and how their engagement can be instrumental in identifying and addressing community issues. Group members are eager to create positive changes in East Boston, especially in light of the area's rapid development. By leveraging the insights and ideas generated *continued*

BY EMMA ITRI / WALKMASSACHUSETTS DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

WalkMassachusetts Network: Community Connections

The WalkMassachusetts Network's main objective is to connect, support, and empower both new and emerging local organizations, community groups, residents, municipal staff, committees, and elected officials who are working toward creating walkable communities across the Commonwealth. This includes, but is not limited to, creating safer pedestrian infrastructure, improving public transportation, and enhancing public spaces to make them more accessible and welcoming to all members of the community.

The Network meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 1pm on Zoom. We'd love you to come to

an upcoming meeting! Sign up at walkmass.org/walkMANetwork.

March 20, 2024: Preview of the Fatal Pedestrian Crashes in MA 2023 Report. The discussion will focus on a comprehensive WalkMassachusetts report compiling and analyzing public data on these tragic incidents to identify patterns and contributing factors in 2023. The report serves as a valuable tool for advocates to highlight the areas where they can make a significant impact in reducing pedestrian fatalities and improving safety. (Full report to be released in March.) *continued*

Celebrate!

34th Annual Celebration
Wed, April 10, 2024
5:30—8 pm @ Kendall Square

Speaker / Monica Tibbits-Nutt:
Massachusetts Secretary of
Transportation. Topic: MassDOT at 15

Golden Shoe Winners:

- Worcester DPH: For leading walk audits as part of community outreach and engagement efforts
- Noemy Rodriguez: Campeóna de caminatas en East Boston / East Boston Walking Champion
- First Resource Companies: For ensuring walkability is front of mind when building housing

In person \$30 5:30-8pm
Livestream free 6:30-8pm
Donations appreciated
RSVP: walkmass.org/register

Get involved

Are you passionate about walkability, community, transit, and the environment? Want to help make towns in Massachusetts more accessible and safe for all?

We're seeking board and committee members with varied experience from across the state. People with expertise in the following areas are specifically encouraged to apply: legal, finance, operations, human resources, technology, development, public health, climate resiliency, and DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion).

Make a difference today! If you're interested in joining our board or serving on a committee, you can learn more and fill out an interest form at walkmass.org/get-involved.

WalkMassachusetts Network cont.

April 17, 2024: Working with Local Elected Officials on Transportation Safety Issues. Etel Haxhiaj, Worcester City Council District 5 representative, and Karin Valentine Goins, founder of WalkBikeWorcester, will discuss Worcester's Transportation and Mobility Department. During this session, you'll learn about the department's ongoing initiatives, including the development of the Worcester Mobility Action Plan and implementation of a Vision Zero Action Plan; they'll also discuss how you can support street safety initiatives and work with elected representatives to make transportation systems more accessible, equitable, and efficient.

May 15, 2024: Learn more about Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). A speaker from the US Access Board will give an overview and answer questions about the newly published guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) addressing access to sidewalks and streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on-street parking, and other components of public right-of-way.

The WalkMassachusetts Network is committed to creating a more walkable, livable, and sustainable future for all residents of Massachusetts. By working together, we can help make our communities more vibrant, healthy, and enjoyable places to live, work, and play. View recordings of previous sessions at walkmass.org/walkMANetwork.

Annual Celebration Wed, April 10
SPEAKER: Monica Tibbits-Nutt/ Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation
RSVP: walkmass.org/register

SPRING 2024

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

Mission

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Night Shift Brewing
Old Colony Planning Council
Roche Bros.
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Equitable engagement cont.

through these walks, Caminatas Seguras aims to ensure that community development benefits all East Boston residents and avoids displacements. Additionally the Caminatas Seguras walking group, and the relationships formed within it, have served as catalysts for members to become not only more physically active, but more civically engaged in neighborhood initiatives.

WalkMassachusetts is deliberately working to address power differentials in transportation and community planning, an issue championed by Caminatas Seguras members. By actively involving walking group members and providing opportunities for them to voice their concerns, collect data, and generate solutions, we have sought to amplify their voices and insights. Through events such as community meetings, picnics, and guest speakers, group members have been able to share their experiences and perspectives with key stakeholders, including Boston's Office of Neighborhood Services. This ensures that the concerns and needs of the community, in particular those with limited English skills, are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

This program was made possible by generous funding from Boston Children's Hospital's Collaboration for Community Health, which aims to remove obstacles to children's health and well-being in Boston. Thank you BCH!