



Pedestrian Advocates Plan Strategy

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Burlington has been billed as one of the most livable cities in the country. But for pedestrians, getting around the city can be a challenge. Now there's a plan to change that.

Fewer people walk to work or school nowadays than they did forty years ago. "Most people are now working further from home, and so walking is not an option," Chapin Spencer admitted. He and other organizers of a Pedestrian Summit in Burlington still think that people could - and should - walk more often. A national program called Safe Routes to School was started in Burlington this year, in which kids walk to and from school accompanied by adults to ensure their safety.

Those who want to see more emphasis on walking heard from Wendy Landman. She heads Walk Boston, a non-profit group that advocates for pedestrian amenities in big road projects. She pointed to Burlington's long-dormant Southern Connector, a project that's been delayed for twenty years. Still, she says pedestrian advocates should get involved in big projects from the beginning and not let up. "Get in there early," she advised. "Be forceful, show up at all the meetings and make sure when big projects are being framed, that you maintain continuity of intensity along the way."

"I think the greatest obstacle for us is challenging ourselves to look at the roadways in a different perspective. Figure out ways to bump out curbs, to make crossings shorter, to increase the street trees, to really make the hard investments into a pedestrian infrastructure," said Spencer.

Pedestrian advocates are aware that Burlington will have three million dollars or more in federal transportation money earmarked for local transportation projects. Their presence will be felt when these projects are proposed, planned, and built.

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