

walk

Back to School for Safe Routes to Schools

The students are back, and so is Safe Routes to Schools. WalkBoston's third year of promoting children to walk and bicycle to school promises to be even more successful.

The Safe Routes to Schools (SRS) program is a major initiative of WalkBoston. The Massachusetts Highway Department awarded WalkBoston \$144,000 in federal air quality funds to develop a program to encourage children to walk and bicycle to school. The increased funding for this year reflects the success of the program.

The two-year results of the program are good: walking to school increased at participating Arlington elementary schools from a baseline of 42% to 58%, and students walking to middle school increased from 19% to 24%.

The testimony of parents and children is powerful. One mother reported that the SRS program changed her life. Her daughter used to get no exercise. Bedtime every night was a struggle. Since the girl has been walking to and from school, sleep comes easily. Parents have been strong supporters of SRS.

WalkBoston is expanding its program this fall from Arlington and Boston to schools in Milton, where both

bicycling and walking will be encouraged. A fourth community has yet to be selected.

Moving beyond just operating the school programs, the SRS program will also focus on institutionalizing the program statewide through widespread use of the WalkBoston SRS how-to toolkit developed last year.



WalkBoston members managing the SRS program, Don Eunson and Dorothea Hass, recently received Conservation Hero awards from the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Division, which worked with WalkBoston to launch the SRS program in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts SRS program, one of the nation's first, has inspired other states, including California, Texas, Maine and Georgia. Working with America Walks, which represents 48 pedestrian U. S. advocacy groups, WalkBoston is advocating for inclusion of SRS in the next 6-year funding reauthorization for federal transportation projects.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Zakim Bridge and Big Dig Tunnel walks in May and August—cosponsored by WalkBoston—added nearly 90 new members to strengthen our effectiveness in advocating for more walkable communities. We welcome you.

WalkBoston's effectiveness stems from member advocacy. Thus, our membership form asks how you'd like to help. Many check "advocacy." This fall, at the suggestion of Jacob Meunier, Advocacy Committee co-chair, we are holding meetings to explore how members can be effective advocates.

The first meeting, held Sept. 18, brought members from Acton, Boxford, Wayland, Southbridge, Medford, Cambridge and Boston. Participants made dozens of excellent suggestions: e-mail action groups, background issue sheets, leafleting intersections, questionnaires to members, regular advocacy meetings. State Rep. Byron Rushing gave lively tips on approaching and building a long-term relationship with legislators.

A second opportunity to explore how to be an effective advocates will be held in Brookline on Tuesday, October 22, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please come and help us strengthen our advocacy skills. You will enjoy it. RSVP to 617.451.1570.

Ann Hershfang

Crosswalk Safety Study

Thanks to the efforts of WalkBoston, crossing a street in Massachusetts just might become a little safer.

The Massachusetts Legislature recently approved creation of a special commission to study the safety of the Commonwealth's crosswalks and to recommend improvements. WalkBoston had been advocating for the commission for several months, and many members contacted their representatives in support.

According to Chapter 246 of the Acts of 2002, "An Act Providing for Certain Transportation Improvements," the commission is to investigate "the frequency at crosswalks of irregular pavement markings, inadequate lighting, intrusive vegetation, poles or parked cars, missing stop signs or inoperative or defective traffic signals, traffic signals that do not allow a reasonable amount of time for pedestrians to cross, and moving violations, including speeding and red light violations."

The commission also is to study the potential safety impact of more uniform pavement markings, installation of speed bumps, improved police enforcement of right-of-way and speed limit laws, and the use of cameras to monitor dangerous intersections.

The 11-member commission will consist of six legislators, a designee from both the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction and Executive Office of Public Safety, and three people appointed by the governor — one of which will be recommended by WalkBoston.

The legislation requires the commission to report on its findings and present drafts of any legislation needed to implement recommendations within six months (late February 2003).

Boston

**MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES
MORE WALKABLE**

FALL 2002

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WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation, health and recreation through education and advocacy. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities.

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calendar

Tuesday, Oct. 22 | 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Advocacy meeting at Caffe La Scala, 318 Harvard Avenue, Brookline. The program will provide an introduction to effective advocacy and a discussion of issues that concern members. Refreshments provided. Seating is limited to 25. Reservations are required. Call 617.451.1570.

Walks: For reservations and more information call 617.451.1570
 WalkBoston members free, others \$5

Sun. Oct. 13 | 1:00 pm
 Around Deer Island, Winthrop

Sun. Oct. 20 | 1:00 pm
 The Neponset River Greenway, Boston/Milton

Sun. Oct. 27 | 1:00 pm
 Washington St.: Back to the Future

member news

Board member **Betsy Boveroux** was honored for 29 years of service as a member of The Women's Union Board of Trustees.

Jane Holtz Kay's portrait was featured in the Boston Public Library exhibit, "Beautiful Minds: Boston's Intellectuals Through the Bachrach Lens." Kay is the author of "Lost Boston" and "Asphalt Nation."

Anne McKinnon has signed on to be our new newsletter editor. She follows **Karla Karash**, outstanding editor for 6 years. Anne is co-editor of The Boston Informer, an award-winning newsletter about Boston planning, development and transportation.

David Loutzenheiser now chairs the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee.

advocacy

Boston Trans. Dept. Commissioner Andrea d'Amato invites our **help in identifying pedestrian problems**. If you see a construction site without a walkway, a malfunctioning walk/don't walk light, or any pedestrian problem, please e-mail James.Mansfield@ci.boston.ma.us or call Bill Jurewitz at 617-635-7283. Send WalkBoston a copy, too.

How to Conduct a Pedestrian Crossing Action. A 10-page guide to highlighting dangerous intersections in your community. americawalks.org/resources/Ped_Crossing_Action-howto.doc

Pedestrian Sting Operation: An on-line guide for officers to conduct a successful "sting." Aimed at increasing compliance with crosswalk laws. walkinginfo.org/ee/sting.htm

walking statistics

From the Boston Police: To date 2002 has seen 17 "**motor vehicle fatalities**", 9 of which were pedestrians. Five motor vehicle fatalities occurred in August of which three were pedestrians.

Boston intersections with highest pedestrian **fatalities and injuries are on the widest streets:** Massachusetts Avenue, Commonwealth Avenue, and Blue Hill Avenue.

How important is the Boston Pedestrian Protection Program? Boston's population is only about 600,000, but on an average week-day, there are **2 million pedestrians in the city**, when you count workers and visitors. With that many people walking in Boston, pedestrian safety is an issue of critical importance.

membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to: WalkBoston, 156 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109.
 T: 617.451.1570 F: 617.451.6475 info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

name(s) _____

address _____

phone:daytime _____ evening _____

e-mail _____ fax _____

- check one: STUDENT / SENIOR OVER 65 \$10 SUPPORTER \$50
 MEMBER \$25 FRIEND \$100
 DUAL / CONTRIBUTOR \$35 CORPORATE \$250 | \$500 | \$1000

- circle committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)
- membership advocacy education/pr/publications
 legislative fundraising programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

WB in action

Letters requested restoration of marked crosswalks across Memorial Drive at Western and River streets and automatic walk lights, both eliminated during MDC reconstruction.

Advised on the redesign of Quincy Shore Drive.

Wrote requesting further pedestrian improvements for Cambridge Street reconstruction in City Hall area.

Convinced MassHighway to stripe reconstructed Huntington Avenue project in accordance with original Boston plans that provided 14-foot bicycle accommodation and 11-foot travel lanes. MHD had changed the plans to two 12-foot travel lanes.

Requested the MBTA, City of Boston, and MassHighway restore nine marked crosswalks across Washington Street that were eliminated in the Silver Line project. Who was responsible? In-depth inquiries uncovered fingers pointing in all directions, or "Who, me?"

Wrote to Boston Globe commending article about Operation Sting as important driver education. Boston Police Commissioner Paul Evans responded, "The Operation has been in existence since April of 2000. Our officers have issued 32,717 citations." And collected \$100 for each violation. "My thanks to you and those involved in WalkBoston for your efforts to improve pedestrian safety in Boston."