

# walk

BY DOROTHEA HASS

## Our STEPS to Health

WalkBoston is beginning its third year of participation in the five-year “STEPS to a Healthier US” program. This program is being implemented through the Boston Public Health Commission [BPHC], which received the program grant along with 20 other governmental entities throughout the U.S. Each year the BPHC receives approximately \$2 million to implement a community-based program to improve physical fitness, encourage residents to eat more nutritiously, and reduce the incidence of obesity and asthma. The program is targeted toward residents of seven Boston neighborhoods: Roxbury, Dorchester, South Boston, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park and the South End/Chinatown.

WalkBoston has been working with the BPHC as a sub-contractor to create more “walkable” neighborhood environments and to implement a “Safe Routes to Schools” program in elementary schools.

Along with neighborhood groups, WalkBoston conducts walkability audits to identify a number of low-cost maintenance improvements to make neighborhoods more walkable. These improvements include: fixing broken WALK lights, painting faded crosswalks, upgrading traffic signalization, repairing cracked sidewalks, monitoring trash collection, and implementing other low-cost improvements that make walking environments safe, attractive and inviting. We are happy to report that the City of Boston has been very responsive in addressing these improvements. WalkBoston looks forward to continuing its work with neighborhood advocates to further enhance walking conditions in their neighborhoods.

WalkBoston is implementing the Safe Routes to Schools program at the Hurley School in the South End [Boston], the O’Hearn School in Fields Corner [Dorchester] and the Dever School in South Boston. Each school is working with WalkBoston to develop programs to educate students about the health and safety benefits of walking. Key program initiatives include the “Walking School Bus,” sponsorship of “Walk to School” days and “on-street” safety training. A Walking School Bus is a safe, fun and healthy way for children to travel to and from school. Led by trained adult volunteers, children walk in a group, joining up at prescribed meeting points. Along the way, children can visit with friends, learn pedestrian safety skills and enjoy some independence.

I’ll be leading a **Fields Corner walk in February**. Join me and learn what neighborhood groups recommend for the redesign of Dorchester Avenue.

BY WENDY LANDMAN

## Active Living & Social Equity

Recent national research indicates that the quality of the physical environment is one cause of health disparities among different racial and socio-economic groups in the U.S. The results of this research are groundbreaking in highlighting the direct relationship between personal health and a good physical environment. WalkBoston’s work with the Boston Public Health Commission is focused on neighborhoods where residents have elevated levels of diabetes, asthma and obesity. One cause is lack of physical activity—the focus of our effort.

WalkBoston will use this new information on the relationship between the physical environment and health to develop strategies and programs to support, create

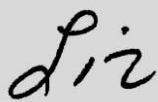
## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

WalkBoston is a marvelous example of advocacy and civic leadership. With limited resources on hand, WalkBoston strives to make our communities more walkable through efforts implemented at the grassroots level. Whether it is our “Safe Routes to Schools” program, our advocacy for pedestrian-friendly traffic signals, our STEPS program in the neighborhoods, or our passion for a walkable Greenway, we create meaningful change. We are able to create that change because of the support and energy of you, our members. In the 2005—2006 year we need your support even more, so that we can continue to improve the quality of life in urban communities. Here are the simple “steps” that you as members can take to enhance our success:

- Renew your membership if you haven’t already. Join at a higher level than you’ve done before. Each dollar means more direct services that we can provide. [renew online at [walkboston.org](http://walkboston.org)]
- Encourage your friends, neighbors and colleagues to join. You do them a favor because walking is a vital part of their life and they, like you, benefit from walkable communities.
- Volunteer as a committee member or for our special events. We want your ideas, personal activism and involvement.
- Identify corporations that may want to support us. Many businesses are eager to improve the health of employees and their families through walking and will want to advance our goals.
- Come to our fall “open house” on Nov. 15th at my home at 48 Appleton St. in the South End and meet our Board and members.

I love giving my time, energy and passion to WalkBoston because it is an investment in what I value—walking, good public transportation, an inviting, safe physical environment, livable communities and my health. Celebrate those values with me through your membership and volunteerism in our special organization.

Thank you so much!



Liz Levin

and sustain good walking conditions in urban communities. Our efforts include walkability audits [see STEPS] and technical support for neighborhood walking groups; providing “Safe Routes to Schools” for Boston elementary schools; and developing “Walking Prescriptions” with two neighborhood health centers. Walking Prescriptions would focus on promoting walking as a healthy activity and improving the physical walking environment in city neighborhoods as a means to reduce neighborhood health disparities. [continued]

# Boston

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES  
MORE WALKABLE

FALL 2005

### WALKBOSTON BOARD

Gretchen Ashton  
Chalita Belfield  
David Black  
Betsy Boveroux/co-vice president  
James L. Brantley III  
Dan Breuer/treasurer  
Patricia Courtney  
Sherry Dong  
Tom Doolittle  
Nina Garfinkle  
Ann Hershfang  
Beverley Johnson  
Karla Karash  
Peter Lee/secretary  
Liz Levin/president  
Erik Lund  
Frank Middleton  
Daniel Moon  
Bill Reyelt  
Duncan Sanger  
Erik Scheier/co-vice president  
Phil Troped

### COMMITTEES/CONTACTS

**executive director**  
Wendy Landman 617.367.9255

**operations manager**  
Robert Sloane 617.367.9255

**advocacy**  
Tom Doolittle 617.923.7108

**consulting**  
Liz Levin 617.542.1253

**communications**  
Nina Garfinkle 617.424.9115

**fundraising**  
Betsy Boveroux 617.598.8256

**newsletter design**  
Nina Garfinkle 617.424.9115

**newsletter editor**  
Beverley Johnson 617.522.7003

**safe routes to schools**  
Dorothea Hass 617.232.0104

**walks**  
Robert Sloane 617.367.9255

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.

## mission

**walkboston**  
 45 School Street  
 Boston, MA 02108  
 T: 617.367.9255  
 F: 617.367.9285  
 info@walkboston.org  
 www.walkboston.org

## calendar

**Tues. Nov. 15, 5:30-7:30 pm**  
**Fall Open House** Home of Liz Levin,  
 48 Appleton Street, Boston  
 Orange Line/Back Bay Station  
 or Green Line/Copley Station

**Sat. Dec. 3, 12:00 noon**  
**Stepping Out: Walk the Downtown Entertainment District**  
 Meet: Corner of Washington  
 and Avery Streets  
 Orange Line/Chinatown Station

**Mon. Dec. 5, 7:00 pm**  
**WalkTalk: Paths in Portland, Oregon**  
 by Phil Goff, Urban Designer  
 Meet: WilmerHale, 60 State Street,  
 Orange or Blue Line/State St. Station

**Jan. Date TBD**  
**A Walk in the Old West End**  
 Meet: Whole Foods Market,  
 181 Cambridge Street, Boston  
 Red Line/Charles-MGH Station

**Feb. Date TBD**  
**Fields Corner—Walkable Neighborhood**  
 Red Line/Fields Corner Station

Join us on our walk in Fields Corner, a Dorchester neighborhood in transition from a 1960's Irish working class area to one more ethnically and economically diverse.

The focus is on cultural and land use changes: the establishment of small Vietnamese eateries, the conversion of Mickey's Bar to upscale condos, the re-built MBTA station and O'Hearn School SRS Program. Learn what the neighborhood recommends for City improvements.

Dorothea Hass, Project Manager for the STEPS grant, will illustrate a neighborhood audit—measure sidewalks and document any cracks, time traffic signals and explain how to request needed improvements.

## read and weep

Boston is among the five most expensive cities to park your car for the day, according to the fifth annual North American Parking Rate survey by Colliers Monroe Friedlander and Colliers International.

The survey of 48 U.S. markets and 10 in Canada was conducted in June and identified the top five cities as New York midtown [\$41], New York downtown [\$33], Boston [\$32], Honolulu [\$30] and Chicago [\$25].

Additionally, the survey indicated that monthly parking rates nationwide went up 2.7% for reserved spaces and 3.7% for unreserved spaces and that at least 20% of U.S. garages have a wait list with an average wait of 3.3 months.

Just more reasons to walk or take public transportation.

## money matters

WalkBoston depends on local foundations for support. In early October, we received a grant from a private foundation to fund capacity building and operational support over the next three years. This will allow us to increase capacity to conduct outreach programs, maintain current programs and continue advocacy efforts. The grant will help broaden the number of communities and individuals that participate in and are served by WalkBoston programs. It will enable us to increase corporate and individual memberships.

This is the second grant from this foundation and reflects our effective use of prior funding and our strong membership support. Every membership dollar is vital in supporting our advocacy efforts. We look forward to hearing from all of you soon!

## membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to:  
 WalkBoston, Old City Hall, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.  
 T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

phone: daytime \_\_\_\_\_ evening \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ fax \_\_\_\_\_

check one:  INDIVIDUAL \$30     SUPPORTER \$100—\$499     STROLLER \$1000  
 DUAL / FAMILY \$50     SUSTAINING \$500—\$5000     STRIDER \$2500  
 FRIEND \$65     AMBLER \$300     RACEWALKER \$5000

check committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)

membership     advocacy     communications  
 legislative     development     programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

## Greenway Update

**The Walking Environment and the InterContinental Hotel/500 Atlantic Avenue Sidewalk** WalkBoston has been fighting hard to keep the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway walkable.

Our efforts to get an acceptable sidewalk in front of the hotel include an event with Sidewalk Sam in front of South Station and continued advocacy with state and City officials. There may be progress toward a solution and we therefore extended the Notice of Project Change comment period to November 14th. Please send your comments to: Deirdre Buckley, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, 100 Cambridge St., Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114, EOE No. 10546, deirdre.buckley@state.ma.us.

See our website for latest info and pictures of the proposed designs.

Also, with Move Massachusetts, we have been meeting with CA/T and City staff to review as-built conditions and plans for sidewalks, crosswalks, street furniture and signal timing. We continue to work on existing problems and identify future Central Artery improvements.

## Active Living

[continued] To learn more, read "Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for All Residents, A Guide for Local Governments," available from WalkBoston and/or icma.org publication E-43306 of the International City/County Management Assoc.