

WalkBoston (Massachusetts' main pedestrian advocacy organization) is working to reach beyond active transportation and smart growth partners to recruit allies in the retail, employer and real estate worlds to promote walkable communities. Our latest publication, [Good Walking is Good Business](#), presents a wide array of research that shows how walking benefits many elements of the economy. Posted by Wendy Landman, WalkBoston Executive Director

According to the Urban Land Institute, vibrant, walkable retail areas have a “place-making dividend” that attracts people to stay longer, spend more money, and visit more often. According to Marlon Boarnet, director the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California-Irvine and author of Retrofitting Suburbia, the most walkable, densely-built shopping districts in Los Angeles have four times the retail activity of “strip mall” shopping centers in less dense areas.

LINK:

<http://www.uli.org/sitecore/content/ULI2Home/ResearchAndPublications/Fellows/McMahon/Commentaries/PlaceMakingDividend.aspx>

LINK: <http://www.infrastructurist.com/2011/01/10/new-report-commercial-density-not-street-geometry-facilitates-walkable-centers/>

Some of the country's most popular tourist destinations, like the National Mall in Washington DC and the Las Vegas Strip, are also some of the most pedestrian-oriented places around. In Massachusetts, our \$15.6 billion tourist industry thrives not just in Boston, which Frommer's lists among the 10 most walkable cities in the world, but also in the Commonwealth's compact, historic town centers.

LINK: [http://www.frommers.com/slideshow/index.cfm?p=9&group=391&cat\\_cd=FAMILY#slide](http://www.frommers.com/slideshow/index.cfm?p=9&group=391&cat_cd=FAMILY#slide)

The economic impact of walkability affects homeowners – and taxpayers – too. Homes in walkable areas command a premium – on average \$20,000-\$34,000 – over similar homes in less walkable areas, and they have experienced less than half the average decline in value since the real estate peak in the mid-2000s. At the same time, walkable, higher-density neighborhoods cost the taxpayer less: a home built in a low-density suburb requires, on average, \$10,000 more in infrastructure than a home built in the urban core.

LINK: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/lbt/lts/0703lbt.html>

LINK: <http://www.ceosforcities.org/work/walkingthewalk.html>

There's also evidence that walking can lower health care costs. In Massachusetts, if only 1 in 10 adults started walking regularly, the Commonwealth would save \$121 million in heart disease expenditures.

LINK: <http://www.walkboston.org/resources/links.htm>

And of course, there's the cost of car ownership. While people who live in auto-dependent communities may pay up to \$500 a month toward gas, insurance and car payments, in walkable communities, that money can be spent on local goods and services.

LINK: <http://www.cnt.org/tcd/ht>

Research also shows that today's young adults don't drive like they used to. In 1995, people ages 21-30 accounted for 21% of all miles driven in the United States. In 2009, the same demographic accounted for only 14%, despite steady growth of this age group.

LINK: <http://adage.com/article/digital/digital-revolution-driving-decline-u-s-car-culture/144155/>