

walk

State is hopping with pedestrian potential

"I want there to be a pedestrian army in this state," said Doug Foy, new Chief of Commonwealth Development for Massachusetts, at the WalkBoston Annual Meeting. WalkBoston grabbed the challenge and obtained seats on two new statewide committees, carrying out the Romney Administration's rethinking of government operations under "Communities First."

The Highway Design Manual Task Force consists of 27 appointees from across the state, staffed by MassHighway personnel. Its goals are to rewrite the MassHighway Design Manual, the state's guidance for highway and street design, to include the safety and mobility of all users; incorporate the principles of Context Sensitive Design; and simplify project development and design processes. WalkBoston is on the User Safety/Pedestrian/Bike/Traffic Calming/Public Transportation subcommittee. The work is to be completed in October 2003.

The second committee, Trails and Greenways Task Force, will pursue opportunities for extending, improving, and connecting the statewide trail network. Staffed by MassHighway and EOTC, it continues the work of the

Massachusetts Trails and Greenways Network co-founded by WalkBoston and 10 other organizations five years ago.

This committee, with many cyclists and trail users, is looking at developing new guidelines for the development of trails. Existing guidance outlined in MassHighway's "Building Better Bicycling" could be enhanced to call for separated, parallel trails that would reduce conflicts between faster-moving cyclists and rollerbladers and slower pedestrians. Analyzing shared and separated trails across the country, the committee will recommend new innovative guidelines for trail width, surface type, and lateral clearance.

In early June WalkBoston met with Steve Burrington, Deputy Chief of Commonwealth Development, and Astrid Glynn, Deputy Secretary for Capital Planning and Multimodal Transportation of the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction. We presented recommendations for a state Walking Initiative, and learned about reorganization plans and the Communities First program. Keep tuned.

Boston

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES
MORE WALKABLE

SUMMER 2003

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

On my travels I check out how cities are drawing people back downtown. On a recent ramble, **Wilmington, NC**, stood out. Because its townspeople refused to widen the main street, the drive into town features a narrow tree-lined street with beautiful old mansions and trees and bustles, with people, art, speed bumps, and some all-brick streets. A multi-block woonerf (a space for peds, bikes and cars) invites strolling along the Cape Fear River.

Chattanooga, TN, is reviving its downtown with pedestrian streetscapes and museums. An old, elegant highway bridge was converted for pedestrians and bicycles. **Charleston, SC**, is glorious for pedestrians. For 28 years, the mayor's goal has been making downtown vital. He saves buildings, pierces blank walls for lively storefronts, nixes surface parking, widens sidewalks. The main shopping area has 8-foot travel lanes, speed humps, and lots of walkers. **Macon, GA**, is bringing people downtown with narrowed streets and cafes at the curbs that leave the sidewalks clear for walking. All of these cities have lengthy and automatic WALK lights. And then, in **Portland, OR**, I was blown away by the care for walkers evident in every design detail. Wide sidewalks unobstructed by poles, newsboxes, or clutter, short 60-second light cycles that reduce wait time for both walkers and cars, and automatic WALKs. Tall shrubs mask parking lots—a lovely detail—and a couple of surface lots were almost hidden by retained building facades. Even better is the Green Wave, progressive signals timed at 18 mph. Cars move steadily at a speed compatible with urban life.

WalkBoston is trying to foster this sort of careful thinking about all those using our common space in the Boston region.

Ann Hershfang

Annual Meeting— WalkBoston urged to action

There may be no better time for WalkBoston members to speak up about improving walkability in Massachusetts. Doug Foy made that clear when he addressed nearly 200 people at our 13th Annual Meeting on March 26.

Foy is Chief of the new Office of Commonwealth Development, which is developing an agenda and strategy for the transportation, environment, housing and energy agencies. Having walkable communities is a key component in each of those areas, Foy said, and he

asked WalkBoston to be even more vocal advocates.

"What you all stand for is a very, very important message," said Foy, former president of the Conservation Law Foundation. "I need you to be ever more successful and aggressive. What you are arguing for will be one of the centerpieces in the new office of Commonwealth Development. "I want there to be a pedestrian army in this state," Foy said. "Keep growing. . . keep raising the awareness of your challenges [continued]"

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mission
 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.

who's walking

International Walk21 conference
 At this Portland, OR, conference, WB Board member Tom Doolittle and Nancy Stack presented how advocates can work with designers. Nearly 300 people from 20 countries attended. One survey reported that walking is the most common leisure time physical activity. 47% prefer to walk, 29% prefer yard work and 15% like to ride a bicycle.

The healthy mayor of Bolivar, MO
 is leading his residents into fitness while giving them a chance to talk politics. Mayor Charles Ealy heeded his doctor's advice and got moving. He now leads regular town walks with 20-50 residents. They discuss current events and city issues with the mayor while they exercise. Ealy has challenged other mayors countrywide to set up similar programs.

and who's not

National Household Travel Survey
 results reveal that 51% of urban trips are three miles or less. In fact, 27.7% of all urban trips are one mile or less and 65.7% of these trips are made by car. The survey also shows that close to 20% of all urban trips are auto trips that are one mile or less while less than 10% of all city trips are made by foot!

Jobs/residents close to transit
 The Boston Foundation's Boston Indicators Report (2002) states that almost 80% of jobs in Boston and 56% of Boston residents are within a 10-minute walk of an MBTA commuter rail, subway station, or trolley stop. Since buses are transit, too, the addition of buses to the equation would increase these numbers!

inter/national

Long-distance support
 Philip and Britt Hult get the 2003 "Membership Renewal" Award. The Hults sent in their dues from Hong Kong where they recently moved for Philip's work with EF Education. "We may end up back in Boston at some point," Britt wrote. "As important, we like your organization and have decided to continue to support it."

National Bike/Ped Assessment
 The National Center for Bicycling and Walking recently issued "Are We There Yet?", an assessment of efforts of state departments of transportation to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. The study reveals that 21 states do not have the federally mandated bike/ped plan and 30 states do not meet the benchmark for accommodating pedestrians.

board news

Five new board members elected
 at the Annual Meeting. Kim Alleyne, Manager of Information and Research Practice at MYTOWN; Holly Bogle, CommuterChoice program manager at Harvard University; Peter Lee, director of the Massachusetts Partnership for Healthy Communities; Warren Markarian, president of Prudential Center Residents Assoc.; and Sam Park, president of Sam Park & Co., an investment and real estate advisory company.

Ann Hershfang was elected president of America Walks, the umbrella organization of 51 pedestrian advocacy groups.

WalkAlbuquerque and Wisconsin Walks asked to model their mission and membership materials after those of WalkBoston.

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

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check one: STUDENT / SENIOR [65+] \$15 SUPPORTER \$50
 MEMBER \$30 FRIEND \$100
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circle committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)
 membership advocacy education/publications
 legislative development programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

Annual Meeting

[cont.] in communities everywhere."

Meanwhile, Foy will be doing that at the State House. "You've already had very receptive folks in the state agencies," Foy said. "Now you have even more of them."

A highlight of the Annual Meeting was presentation of Golden Shoe Awards to those exemplifying WalkBoston's mission.

Golden Shoe Recipients were:
 • Karilyn Crockett, executive director and co-founder of MYTOWN (Multicultural Youth Tour of What's Now), which uses community history as a tool for youth development and civic education.

- Cathy Hill, a physical education teacher who creatively integrates walking activities into the Newburyport school district's curriculum.
- The Safe Routes to Schools program's funding agencies (MassHighway and the National Park Service) and its administrative agency (CARAVAN for Commuters).
- Mass. Turnpike Authority Chairman Matthew J. Amorello, for the 2002 public walks on the Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge and in the Central Artery tunnel.
- Author and pedestrian advocate Jane Holtz Kay.
- WalkBoston board member and fundraiser supreme Betsy Boveroux.