

# walk

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT — OUR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

This year WalkBoston can be wonderfully proud of our legislative initiatives. We started by meeting key state legislators and letting them know about WalkBoston. Then, led by our Executive Director Wendy Landman and the Advocacy Committee, we selected legislation to help craft and support—focusing on safety and health.



Rep. Ruth Balzer [C] led Newton Upper Falls legislator's walk with Jim Purdy

On April 11th we held our first-ever Beacon Hill briefing for legislators and their aides on our priorities at the State House. Following the briefing, Tom Doolittle [Board member and Greenway landscape architect] took legislators and staff on a walk along the Rose Kennedy Greenway. He provided insight into traffic signals, smooth walking surfaces and good landscaping—all aspects of the pedestrian environment we advocate for and that make walking safer, easier and more pleasant.

We have an extensive series of Legislator Led walks scheduled this spring, diligently organized by Bob Sloane. Walks in the legislators' districts give constituents a chance to walk with their representatives and learn about pedestrian issues and opportunities. They are an extraordinarily powerful way to educate people about walking.

We also are working hard on getting our legislation passed. On May 17, Karen Hartke organized an impressive group of 3rd graders from Boston's Young Achievers School, teachers and WalkBoston members to give testimony at the State House before the Joint Transportation Committee about the importance of funding a robust Safe Routes to School Program.

Our legislative effort is extraordinarily professional. We've made new friends at the State House who want to help us, while advancing their knowledge of walking. We hope these efforts result in legislation that improves walking conditions—this year and in years to come. We particularly thank Senator Jarrett Barrios and Representatives Frank Smizik, Kay Khan and Denise Provost, who have made the legislative briefings possible and worked with us to introduce legislation.

Liz Levin

# Boston

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES  
MORE WALKABLE

SUMMER 2007

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#### CONTACTS/COMMITTEES

**executive director**  
Wendy Landman 617.367.9255

**office manager**  
Courtney Curran 617.367.9255

**interns**  
Aaron Jette, Steve Miller, Kate Setterlund, Tina Yen

**senior project director**  
Dorothea Hass 617.232.0104

**senior planner/walks manager**  
Robert Sloane 617.367.9255

**safe routes to school coordinator**  
Karen Hartke 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 editor**  
Karla Karash 781.396.7775 x231

BY WENDY LANDMAN

## Safety, health our focus of 2007 legislative priorities

WalkBoston's 2007 legislative priorities focus on bills that would provide direct safety and health benefits for Massachusetts residents. We led off our efforts with an April briefing attended by 17 legislators [and staffs], and distribution of fact sheets on our priority bills to all Senators and Representatives. We have already provided written or oral testimony on four of the bills, and will follow each bill as it progresses. We will alert WalkBoston members to upcoming hearings and ask for your help in contacting your legislators to encourage them to support these bills. Please see our website and call or write the office if you have questions about any of the bills.

**Speed Limits—H3604** would reduce the default speed limit on local roads in urban districts [as defined in the legislation] from 30 mph to 25 mph, and in school zones from 20 mph to 15 mph. The bill reflects a joint effort of legislators, Mass Highway, local officials and WalkBoston. We hope this joint effort leads to passage of the bill! The lower speed limit would bring Massachusetts speed limits in urban areas into alignment with many other states. The bill is assigned to the Joint Committee on Transportation; a Hearing will be held in September 2007 or later.

**Snow Shoveling—H1987** will encourage sidewalk snow and ice clearance by eliminating liability for property owners who shovel their sidewalks in communities where such shoveling is required. The bill is modeled after similar Illinois legislation. **H1959** would increase fines for failure to clear sidewalks of snow and ice in those communities that require removal to \$100/day.

Current fines are set not to exceed \$50 in cities, and \$10 in towns—less than it costs to hire someone to shovel a sidewalk. Both bills were assigned to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government; WalkBoston testified in their favor at a Hearing on April 23, 2007.

**Safe Routes to School [SRTS]—H483** requires the development of school district wellness policies that address school nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity. One component would implement a Safe Routes to School [SRTS] program that encourages students who live within walking [1 mile] or bicycling [3 miles] distance to use these active modes of transport. This bill is aligned with the federal and state SRTS programs and requirements. The bill was assigned to the Joint Committee on Education with a Hearing scheduled for October 16, 2007. **H3539** requires the Executive Office of Transportation to establish a SRTS program to use additional federal funds for projects to encourage walking and biking and to improve safety in and around school areas. This legislation is modeled after California legislation that has provided robust funding for SRTS since 1999. The bill is assigned to the Joint Committee on Transportation, and WalkBoston, several legislators, Young Achievers students [from Jamaica Plain], and other advocates testified at a Hearing on May 17, 2007.

**Red Light Violation Monitoring—H3512** [all MA communities] and **H3513** [Boston and Cambridge] would allow communities to employ a "traffic signal monitoring system" at traffic signals. The bill includes [continued]

WalkBoston encourages walking throughout Massachusetts for transportation, health and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to citizens to make their communities walkable.

## mission

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

## walks

More walks are being added—for details see [walkboston.org](http://walkboston.org), email [info@walkboston.org](mailto:info@walkboston.org) or call 617.367.9255. RSVPs are required; direct numbers are listed.

**Mon. June 11 @ 5:30 pm [1 hour]**  
**Mid-Cambridge with Representative Alice Wolf**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2400.

**Sat. June 16 @ 10:00 am [1.5 hours]**  
**Somerville's Davis Square with Representative Denise Provost**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2810.

**Sat. June 16 @ 8:30 am [1.5 hours]**  
**Roslindale Village with Representative Jeffrey Sanchez**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2700.

**Sat. June 16 @ 8:30 am [1.5 hrs]**  
**Newton Lower Falls with Representative Kay Khan**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2140.

**Sat. June 16 @ 10:00 am [1.5 hours]**  
**Brookline's Secret Stairways & Paths**  
Cost: \$25. Hilly/stairs.  
**RSVP required:** 617.230.2700.

**Sat. July 14 @ 9:00 am [1.5 hours]**  
**Jamaica Plain with Rep. Liz Malia**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2060.

**Sat. July 14 @ 9:00 am [1.5 hour]**  
**Mattapan with Rep. Willie Mae Allen**  
Cost: Free. Flat/accessible.  
**RSVP required:** 617.722.2575.

**Sat. September 8 @ 8 am [2 hours]**  
**Spectacle Island with Mayor Menino**  
A special WalkBoston tour discovering the new jewel of Boston Harbor.  
Cost: Free. Hilly/accessible.  
**RSVP:** 617.367.9255.

## factoids

**The number of commuters who travel 90 minutes or more each way—** known to the Census Bureau as “extreme commuters”—has reached 3.5 million, almost double the 1990 number. Americans, for all their bellyaching, are not the world’s most afflicted commuters. They average 51 minutes a day, to and from work. Pity the Romanians, who average 54. Or the citizens of Bangkok, who average two hours.

**Seattle study of older men, and walking.** Not only did men living in walkable neighborhoods get more exercise, but, mile for mile [after controlling for distance walked], their walks brought them into more contact with others, thereby reducing their chance of experiencing depression. Reported on the Pednet.

## walk talk

**Fernand Braudel—The Structures of Everyday Life:** It was this movement in and out of its walls that indicated the true town. “We had a great deal of trouble that day,” complained Careri, arriving at Peking in 1697, “because of the multitude of carts, camels and mares which go to Peking and return from it, and which is so large that one has difficulty in moving.”

**Interview with former Senator and basketball star Bill Bradley New York Times 3.25.07**

Q: What do you think is the best exercise? A: Walking outside, about five miles a day. People want a more intense experience, not realizing that walking is an intense experience.

## 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](mailto:info@walkboston.org) | [www.walkboston.org](http://www.walkboston.org)

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

address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

individual/family levels:  INDIVIDUAL \$30  SUPPORTER \$100—\$499  
 DUAL/FAMILY \$50  SUSTAINING \$500—\$5000  
 FRIEND \$65

corporate levels:  AMBLER \$400  STRIDER \$2500  
 STROLLER \$1000  RACEWALKER \$5000

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

## legislation [continued]

provisions to ensure the privacy of vehicle operators. A Hearing at the Joint Committee on Transportation will occur in September 2007 or later. **H1112** modifies existing insurance regulations to ensure that traffic signal violation monitoring systems do not increase insurance premiums. The bill was assigned to the Joint Committee on Financial Services. A Hearing was held on April 11, 2007 and WalkBoston supported the bill.

**Segways—S2028** would prohibit the operation of Segways on sidewalks unless a community specifically allows them. The Joint Committee on Transportation will hold a Hearing in September 2007 or later.

## partnerships

**The Kellogg Foundation**  
WalkBoston is part of the Boston Food and Fitness Collaborative [BFFT], which received a \$500,000 two-year grant from the Kellogg Foundation. This grant supports the creation of a community action plan addressing the problems of obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity. The BFFT is comprised of 52 organizations. The Kellogg Foundation also made food and fitness grants to the cities of Holyoke and Boston.

**American Heart Association [AHA]** requested our CityRoutes map as part of AHA’s Start!Boston program [preventing stroke and heart disease by encouraging walking]. The re-issued map will be widely distributed by AHA and was recently featured in *Metro*.