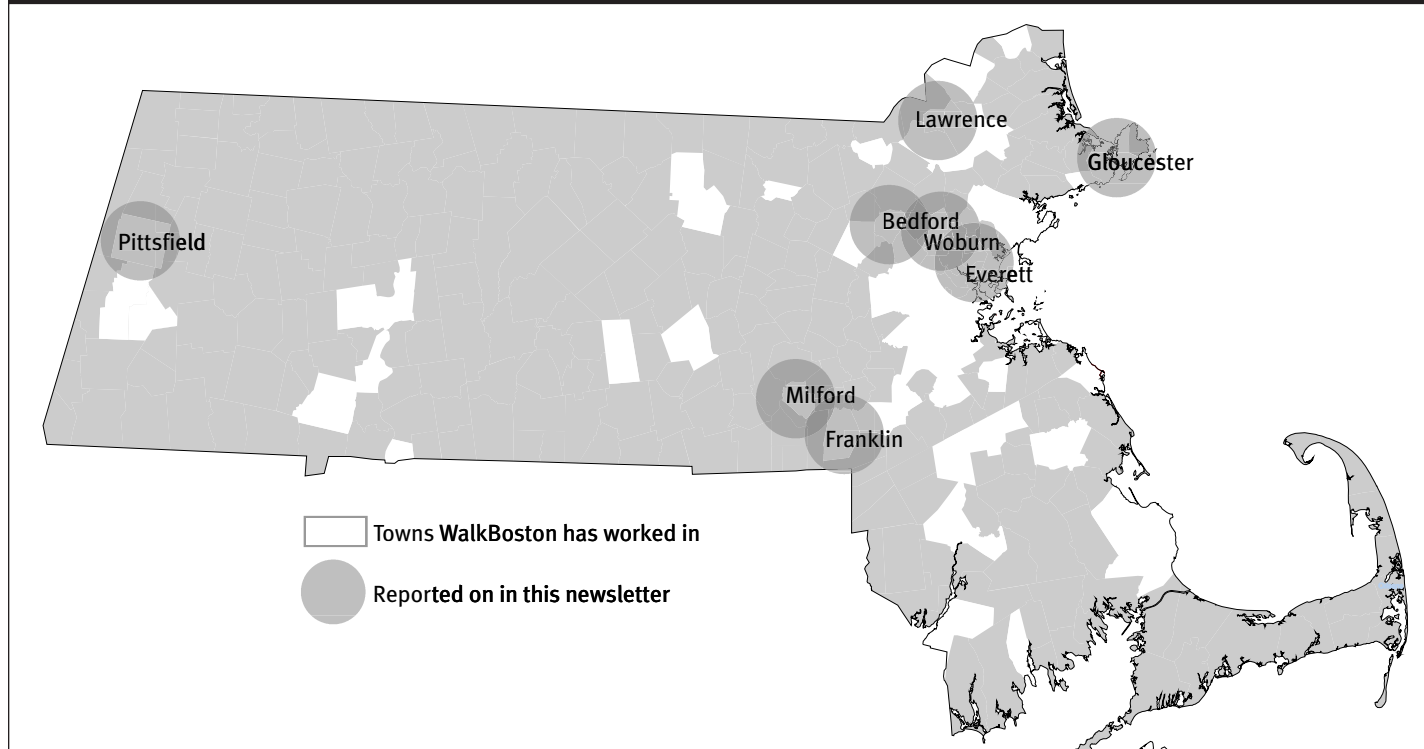


11.12

MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

walk

Seeking walkability, towns and cities statewide call on us for expertise.



Boston

Our work statewide shows increased demand and interest

Woburn & Lawrence: Blueprints for success

Walkability assessments aren't just about streets, but about creating places where everyone can enjoy walking. In Lawrence "the walkability survey changed teens' perceptions about how easy it is to walk," said Brad Buschur of Groundwork Lawrence. The Green Team's data on sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and other walking conditions showed that "this industrial city is accommodating to walkers."

As is often the case, WalkBoston's mission in Woburn and Lawrence was two-fold: creating a blueprint for upgrading physical conditions while changing community perspectives on walking. City planner Tony Sousa stressed the importance of the data collected during all five Woburn school walk audits, describing WalkBoston's work as a "game plan" that will guide Woburn planners. At the same time, this collaboration around walkability made it easier for children to choose the green, fun and healthy way of getting to school.

Gloucester: Mapping connections to villages

Downtown Gloucester is densely settled, like many older cities, and easy to navigate by tourists and residents. WalkBoston's new maps extend walking routes outside downtown into the villages of Annisquam, Lanesville and Magnolia — all walkable distances.

A summer intern worked with WalkBoston to develop routes. Harbor routes take advantage of the city's unique waterfront and connect downtown to Eastern Point where a seasonal ferry makes stops. Flip over the map to pick routes outside downtown.

The walking constituency will grow, says planner Steve Winslow, just as it has for bicycling, and local advocates play an important role. Next steps for Gloucester are to gain approval for a draft Complete Streets plan, and bring Safe Routes to Schools programs to its elementary schools.

Berkshires: Foot traffic builds business

Our Good Walking is Good Business presentation illustrates a simple point: active pedestrian environments increase commercial activity. In the Berkshires, we delivered this message to emergency services providers, planners, board of health members, business owners and city administrators from Pittsfield, Lenox,

Lee, Stockbridge, Housatonic, Adams and North Adams. Hosted by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission [BRPC], WalkBoston's presentation challenged planners to think beyond sidewalk improvements.

"Towns with limited budgets can tie into existing programs like Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools," said BRPC planner Mackenzie Greer. Planners recognized that incremental changes like widening road shoulders increase walkability and address safety concerns. "Just seeing the pedestrian point of view begins to change attitudes."

Milford & Franklin: Walking the walk

In two suburban communities southwest of Boston, city planners were not the only ones to enlist our help. Lauren Marciszyn, Director of Youth & Community Wellness at the Hockomock YMCA in Franklin, asked us to raise the profile of walking by conducting walkability assessments.

In Franklin and Milford, WalkBoston staff partnered with planners, engineers and community leaders, stimulating entire communities to get involved in identifying problems and low-cost improvements to walking conditions.

As a part of this collaboration, both towns created community walking maps which invite walking for transportation and fun. "The maps are a tangible tool for groups encouraging active transportation," said Marciszyn. "Residents respond because walking is free and available to everyone." In downtown Milford, history buffs got creative with their map and inaugurated a walk called "The Little Engine That Could," after the beloved children's book written by Milford native Mabel Bragg. Together these assessments and maps represent just the start of the work that Marciszyn and both towns hope to do with WalkBoston.

Everett: Energizing residents

"Walking is what makes us human — yes, eating and walking are what we do best as a species," says Kathleen O'Brien, who coordinates a program called Energize Everett. "Yet it takes education to convince people to invest in lively, enjoyable walking environments."

Starting with Everett residents, Energize Everett asked WalkBoston Sr. Projects Manager Bob Sloane to [cont.]

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health

The evidence is mounting that walking confers health benefits similar to vigorous exercise...and with lower risk of injury. I view walking as a nearly perfect form of exercise. Despite all the technological advances in modern medicine, physical activity is as close as we've come to a "magic bullet" for good health. We now know we can "walk away" from heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, certain cancers, and other chronic diseases.

— Dr. JoAnn Manson, Chief of Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School

walking tidbits

If one in ten Massachusetts adults started a regular walking program, the state would save \$121 million in heart disease expenditure annually.

— MA Department of Public Health

Real estate values over the next 25 years will rise fastest in communities with a compact mix of residential and commercial districts in a pedestrian-friendly configuration.

— Real Estate Research Corp

Families living in walkable areas save \$400 to \$500 monthly in auto costs compared to those in auto-dependent communities.

— Center for Neighborhood Technology & Surface Transp. Policy Project, 2000

statewide work [continued]

create a map with timed walking routes from Everett's dense central district to paths, parks and shopping districts. The map stimulated more walking initiatives — a walk audit led by WalkBoston staff near City Hall, a presentation of "Good Walking is Good Business" to local business owners, and technical advice to city planners that prepared them to introduce a Complete Streets resolution to City Council. Future development projects in Everett will ensure pedestrians are a part of the transportation conversation.

Moving beyond Boston: help from friends and funding partners

As evidence grows about the importance of walkability to personal health and community vitality, more — and more varied — inquiries about working on walking come into WalkBoston headquarters. Funding for this work has also increased [although it never catches up with the level of interest].

New funding from the Department of Public Health "Mass in Motion" program enhances opportunities for physical activity. State revenues and health foundations support Mass in Motion programs in 52 communities. Support for the WalkBoston projects in this newsletter also comes from unrestricted revenues raised from our individual and corporate members [thank you all!], and from Metrowest Health Foundation, Barr Foundation, Mass Smart Growth Alliance, MassDOT, and the US Centers for Disease Control.

11.12 statewide

WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and vibrant communities.

mission

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Complete this form and mail along with your check made payable to: WalkBoston, Old City Hall, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.

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