

EXEC. DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Walking: everyone, everywhere, every day
At some point in every trip, we all walk. Because of this, promoting safe walking for everyone is central to our mission.

WalkBoston is discussing how best to articulate the ways walking advocacy aligns with the dignity of every human being and the diversity of Boston's population.

One hundred million Americans do not drive. More than 30% of Boston households do not have a car; 25% of women over age 65 don't drive; 20% of the population is too young to drive; young adults are driving less; and many people with physical or mental disabilities are unable to drive.

Imagine you are an elderly person who walks and takes buses to get around. Your city spent thousands of dollars clearing snow from streets, but left your sidewalks icy. Bus service is sparse midday and weekends when you do your errands and visit friends. You must carry your groceries long distances and walk in the street, with cars zooming past.

Or perhaps you are a teenager walking home from school. It's dark and you know passing through the park is not a good idea even though it would save you 15 minutes. You wish there were better security and lighting in the park so you felt safe walking there.

Or maybe you're living in central Massachusetts and your job is 2 miles away. The distance is just a 40-minute walk, but since there are no sidewalks, you have to walk in the road. For six months a year half your commute is in darkness. Your risk of injury is twice that of the average pedestrian.

For many, walking is the only transportation choice. Safe conditions and good access to transit are needed for everyone, every day. WalkBoston is striving to create this reality and we invite you to join us.



Wendy Landman

BY NINA COHEN

Profile: Enrique Peñalosa

On Ciclovía Sundays, life in Bogotá, Colombia, takes to the streets. Every week, miles of city streets are closed to vehicles, allowing residents to go outside for sports and fitness, or to visit with friends and family. This people-centered initiative is an example of the changes made by Mayor Enrique Peñalosa.

In a city where 80% of residents do not own cars, Mayor Peñalosa in 1998 rejected plans for a new elevated highway and redirected funding toward low-cost transportation and infrastructure improvements. Convinced that rail transit could not generate revenue to cover operating costs, Peñalosa created a bus rapid transit [BRT] system operating in dedicated bus lanes on existing streets. The system, known as Transmilenio, runs low-emission buses with stations offering bike storage, bus entry that is level with station platforms, and off-bus fare collection allowing passengers to board quickly.

Routes have expanded steadily. By 2011, 104 stations served over 116 kilometers of bus routes and reduced the average user's commute by 40 minutes a day. Transmilenio can carry up to 1.7 million daily riders.



Bus Rapid Transit [BRT]: Transmilenio, Bogotá, Colombia

Believing walking to be essential to human happiness, Peñalosa expanded landscaping and lighting along sidewalks, parks and pathways, and created new parks and playgrounds. One example is Cicloruta, a multi-use pathway over 200 miles long that serves as both parkland and transportation route.

Peñalosa's ideas have spread to other countries. In Guadalajara, Mexico, city streets open every week for a version of Ciclovía called Recrovia, a rolling party that brings people outside for social and family time. Ciclorutas have opened in Medellín, Cartagena and Cali [and tried in Boston, Somerville and across Massachusetts]. In 2010, New York City transportation officials created dedicated rapid bus transit lanes in all five boroughs.

According to Peñalosa, the quality of public space reveals the society that exists in any particular city. High quality bike paths, parks and walkways show a respect for city residents.

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BY ANN HERSHFANG

Taking [some very local] issue with Walk Score

WalkScore rates walkable cities using an "algorithm" based on proximity to transit and "amenities," such as stores and restaurants. Boston comes in 3rd after New York City, and San Francisco, and its top-rated neighborhoods are Bay Village, Chinatown and Beacon Hill. I may step on someone's toes, but I beg to differ.

It's true that Bay Village, #1, is small, cozy with seductive alleys and little traffic. But its sidewalks are one-person wide with craggy bricks and rooty trees, with little to walk to and meager transit. Chinatown, #2, is full of intriguing [cont.]

events

Revere Walks — the movie

Tues., Feb 12, 5:30 - 7:00 pm

DLA Piper, 33 Arch Street Boston

Get a sneak peek at WalkBoston's newly completed micro-documentary on Safe Routes to School [SRTS] in Revere. Hear how the state is using WalkBoston's new survey and mapping tools to target SRTS programs to the communities where SRTS will make the most difference. RSVP to hborcherding@walkboston.org

WalkBoston Annual Celebration

Wed., March 20, 4—7:30pm

4:00 Charles River Ped/Bike Bridge walk

5:30 Schmooze, Drinks + Nibbles
Golden Shoe Awards, Speaker
Microsoft NERD Center

justice?

In Greater Boston, white commuters who drive have the fastest trips to work, averaging less than 27 minutes each way. Black bus riders have the longest, exceeding 46 minutes each way. They also spend an extra 66 hours a year waiting, riding, and transferring than white bus riders.

*Northeastern University's
Dukakis Center for Urban and
Regional Policy / 2012*

People living in low income communities are less likely to encounter sidewalks, street/sidewalk lighting, marked crosswalks and traffic-calming measures such as pedestrian friendly medians, traffic islands, curb extensions and traffic circles.

Robert Wood Johnson / 2010

we will miss them

Peter Lee, longtime Board member and champion of community health died on Dec. 25, 2012. He developed a landmark plan for statewide chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Peter was also the founding director of The Ecumenical AIDS Ministries of the South Carolina Christian Action Council.

Jane Holtz Kay, who died on Nov. 5, 2012, was a gifted writer, architecture critic, preservationist and chronicler of the human need for walkable cities. Author of *Asphalt Nation* she advocated for fewer cars, more and better mass transit and urban plans that encourage walking.

Both wished contributions in their memory be made to WalkBoston.

words to walk by

Important new advocacy tools — our thanks go out to both!

Jeff Speck's new book, *Walkable City: How downtown can save America, one step at a time*, is sweeping the nation and provides a terrific compilation of the many, many ways that walking makes our communities work. As Speck says, "What works best in the best cities is walkability." He identifies "ten steps to walkability" and details how to accomplish them.

Julie Campoli also has a new book, *Made for Walking: Density and Neighborhood Form*, which identifies essentials for a successful urban neighborhood, particularly the roles of density and diverse land uses.

1.13 all of us walk

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

mission

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

thank you!

RACEWALKERS



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CONTRIBUTORS

AAA
BR Alexander & Co.

BY ANN HERSHFANG

Taking issue with Walk Score [continued]

stores, restaurants, and good transit but also has produce bins crowding narrow sidewalks and heavy through traffic. Beacon Hill, #3, has charming architecture, shops, narrow streets, good lighting and impeded traffic. But its hill is steep, its transit poor, and its narrow sidewalks have heaving bricks, protruding steps and basement holes. All three have lots of in-street walkers!

Rated only #7 is my #1 choice—the South End. It is comfortably walkable with many desirable places to go—grocery/drug/pastry/candy/clothes and hardware stores, jewelry shops, galleries, 113 restaurants [per Google], varied architecture, affordable housing and diversity, parks, schools, gyms, hospitals, walkable alleys, tamed traffic, bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and excellent public transit! Its walkability was greatly improved by the South End Transit and Traffic Plan developed by activists in the mid-1970s and built by the city, thus creating the country's first and largest "traffic calmed" neighborhood. Commuter through traffic was discouraged by removing and narrowing lanes and putting their space into sidewalks, and by turning streets in opposite directions. Lately, Yield to Peds signs are springing up and walk signals are being timed for walkers. Formerly shunned and run down, the South End is now the city's most desirable neighborhood, due in large part, I believe, to these changes.

And your favorite walkable neighborhoods? Reasons? Let us know.

Become a 2013 corporate member today!

Join or renew online at www.walkboston.org.

Call 617.367.9255 or email info@walkboston.org for more information.