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Thank you

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Nina Garfinkle | Garfinkle Design | Design
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You can strengthen our voice

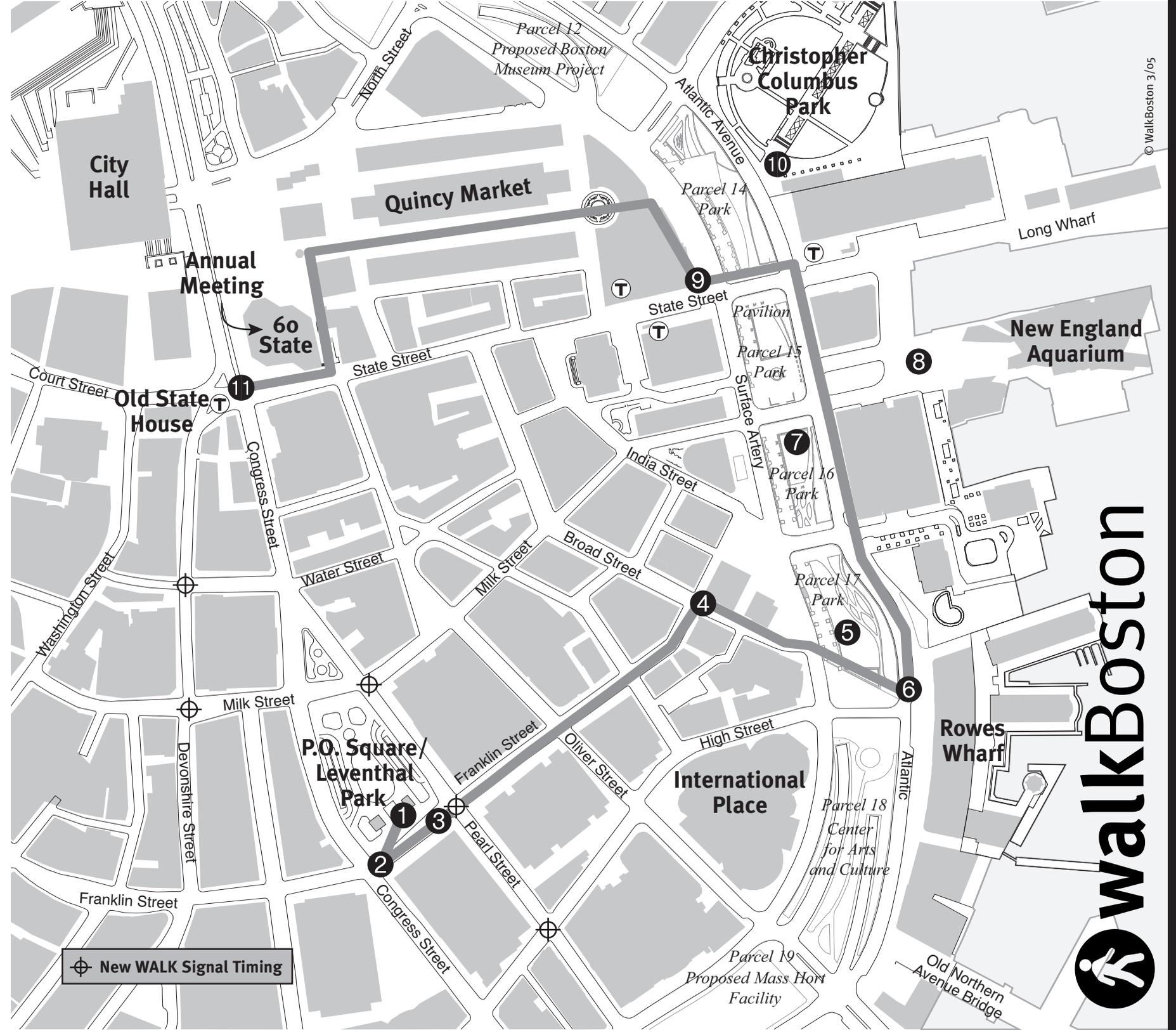
WalkBoston's advocacy on behalf of pedestrians began in 1990 when a handful of like-minded citizens decided they would be more effective speaking out collectively than individually. Fifteen years later, WalkBoston has grown to more than 500 members in 58 cities and towns, supported by some 60 corporate/organizational members. More impressive is WalkBoston's record of getting cities and towns, state agencies, developers, institutions, and elected officials to recognize and accommodate the needs of walkers, as on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Every additional voice helps WalkBoston's message to be heard. Become a member, visit www.walkboston.org.



MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE WALKABLE

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WalkBoston's 15th Annual Meeting — celebrated with a walk on the Greenway



Rose Kennedy Greenway



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About WalkBoston

Everyone walks at some point of every trip—to and from the car or the train, or all the way to your destination. We promote, encourage and facilitate walking and its many benefits. Walking is good for health, the environment and local businesses. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities. WalkBoston is the state’s principal resource on walking issues. [Join online at www.walkboston.org].

WalkBoston’s successful advocacy

Pedestrian advocacy means noticing the needs of walkers and making them high priority—in both small details and big projects. Since it was founded in 1990, WalkBoston’s special skill has been intervening at an early stage to ensure good pedestrian conditions at the end, often years later. Three such lengthy projects are the focus here—the Rose Kennedy Greenway streetscape [13 years of WalkBoston work], Boston’s new signal timing policy [10 years], and improvements at Congress/Court Streets [6 years].

Our Greenway work since 1992

A key factor in the success of the Rose Kennedy Greenway will be its walkability. When the Central Artery Project (CA/T) received its environmental approvals in 1991, only 6 lanes were approved for the new streets above the tunnel. However, at the request of the City of Boston, CA/T staff was designing 10 lanes.

WalkBoston and Move Massachusetts 2000, with support from CA/T, created the Pedestrian Issues Forum to re-examine the design. Two years later, in *A Pedestrian Perspective on the Central Artery Project* [1994], narrower roadways and wider sidewalks were recommended. After more persistent advocacy, the City reversed its position and supported the new approach.

Then, the Mayor convened the public-private Surface Transportation Action Forum [STAF] to further resolve design details for the Greenway, such as sidewalk and lane widths, and corner curb radii. STAF’s conclusions became official CA/T Project commitments. Together, the Greenway design and the new WALK light policy enhance the attractiveness of the Greenway for walkers.

The Rose Kennedy Greenway walk

❶ **Norman B. Leventhal Park** Popularly known as Post Office Square Park and open since 1992, the park offers design lessons for the Greenway: space shielded from street traffic and the ramps to a 1,400-car underground garage, diagonal paths, and an appealing restaurant. All draw walkers into and across the space. The park’s design anticipated its maintenance needs. Spare benches and paving bricks are kept on hand. Repairs of graffiti, bench vandalism and frequently damaged sidewalk bricks are made within 24 hours, assuring that Leventhal Park is a continuous delight for downtown workers in winter and summer.

❷ **Old Walk/Don’t Walk Lights** Frequent and lengthy WALK lights are crucial for walkers’ convenience and safety. For decades, Boston’s signal timing required people to push a button and wait a long time for WALK [provoking jaywalking]. Well-timed lights will encourage pedestrians to wait and cross legally and safely, which is a benefit to vehicular traffic too.

At the Congress/Franklin Street crossing, light timing could be better. On two sides, crossings are well timed for walkers to cross on the green light [with vehicles]. At the others, walkers wait 90-100 seconds for a WALK signal of 7 seconds. A wait this long is considered unsatisfactory for cars. For walkers it is unacceptable.

❸ **Improved Walk/Don’t Walk lights** In late 2004, a new City traffic signal policy was initiated, with WalkBoston’s help. The Franklin/Pearl intersection has the new signal timing. Formerly 2 of the 4 crosswalks here required pushing a button and you had a 110-second wait for an 8-second WALK. Now you cross with the green light [with vehicles], have about 30 seconds to WALK with the green across Pearl and about 50 seconds across Franklin. During every other cycle, a 4-way WALK with a chirper device guides the disabled in crossing the street.

While going down Franklin, notice that most walkers choose the wide sidewalks on the south side.

❹ **Broad Street** With the overhead Artery down, you can see the grand arched opening to the harbor at Rowes Wharf. The original CA/T design extended Broad Street as a roadway across the Greenway. In 2004 it

was removed and now only the pedestrian crossing remains. WalkBoston advised on the crosswalks and curb radii changes.

❺ **The Greenway** Prior to construction of the Artery tunnel, there were 12 roadway lanes in this corridor—6 surface lanes and 6 elevated highway lanes. The final street design has cut this number in half, to a total of 6 surface lanes—3 in each direction. Sidewalks are to have an 8’ minimum walkway width, plus additional edge space for street furniture and lighting. Total minimum sidewalk width is 15’ 7”.

Total street width is 37’ which includes two 11’ travel lanes and one 14’ car/bicycle lane. STAF also specified locations for crosswalks, permanent and off-peak parking, and curb extensions. Each curb radius was based on both vehicular and pedestrian needs.

Two major challenges remain. One is working with the City and CA/T to time traffic signals so that pedestrians get a WALK light at the same time cars going in the same direction get a green light. [This “concurrent green” is standard in most U.S. cities and reflects the new policy.]

The second is to protect public sidewalks from inappropriate uses by developers that interrupt the pedestrian right-of-way for loading, parking, and valet service. Since it is the City of Boston’s responsibility to determine and regulate sidewalk use, WalkBoston has suggested to the Boston Redevelopment Authority that the City develop guidelines that would ensure continuous, direct sidewalks along the Greenway.

❻ **Rowes Wharf Streetscape** Originally Rowes Wharf had an outstanding wide sidewalk and crossings. The width can still be enjoyed in front of the residences, but at the hotel, vehicle loading/unloading narrow the public sidewalk to only 7’ and 5’ in the busy luggage cart area.

❼ **Wharf Parcels** Parcels 14, 15, 16 and 17 are the Greenway’s central open spaces. The design of this parkland is formal on the city edge [a regular tree line, smooth stone surfaces] and informal on the harbor side [irregular plantings, rough stone].

❽ **Aquarium Place** The City is developing a plan for fewer vehicles and improved walking areas for the space in front of the Aquarium. And just across

Atlantic Avenue, a Harbor Park Pavilion will promote use of the harbor islands and contain a small cafe, a shop and an outdoor meeting place.

❾ **State Street & the Greenway** The sidewalk at the State/Surface Artery intersection is finished. It’s built to agreed-upon STAF Plan standards so you see the final widths. Although the sidewalk here is wide, trees were impossible to plant because underlying utilities can’t be disturbed by roots. The remainder of sidewalks along the Greenway will be constructed during 2005.

Using Boston’s once-in-a-century opportunity, Mayor Thomas Menino’s “Crossroads Initiative” will extend the Greenway and harborfront design further up and down 11 streets that cross or connect to the Greenway. On this walk, the “crossroads” are: State, Broad, Oliver and Congress.

❿ **Christopher Columbus Park** Good public spaces often result from the advocacy of an individual or citizens’ group. In the early 1970’s, the City’s waterfront Urban Renewal Plan proposed extensive building demolition and a parking garage where Christopher Columbus Park is today. In 1973, waterfront residents and the Sierra Club presented a detailed counter-proposal for a Great Cove Square, which included a “system of pedestrian streets,” and depressing the Central Artery[!]. To thwart demolition, a suit was filed against the City and one resident even jumped into the bucket of a front-end loader. Ultimately the waterfront/North End residents group succeeded in establishing the park and moving Atlantic Avenue away from the harbor’s edge. We owe them a lot.

⓫ **Old State House Plaza** Traffic islands and pavement dominate here. This spring, construction will begin to convert one piece of roadway into a plaza, slow down traffic turning at Congress Street, and give more WALK time—all helping to make the area walker-friendly. These pavement conversions and traffic improvements stem from a broader 1999 WalkBoston design proposal for taming traffic on Congress Street.

For 15 years WalkBoston’s work has been about improvements like these—good design, thoughtful education about walkers’ needs and the delights and possibilities of walking.