

walk

Boston Foundation supports a walkable Boston

A \$50,000 grant from The Boston Foundation gives a big boost to WalkBoston's 10-year effort to convince the City of Boston to give walkers a WALK light when cars get the green, standard practice nationally. No need to push a button and a long wait. Now WalkBoston can develop strong technical and political arguments for WALK lights that serve walkers, and engage city officials to update signal timing policies to match those of other U.S. cities (and Cambridge).

BY ANNE MCKINNON

West Roxbury has hope

Is Centre Street in West Roxbury a highway or a vibrant arterial serving the neighborhood's residents and businesses? WalkBoston has been working with a broad coalition of residents, businesses, transportation consultants, pedestrian advocates, landscape architects and urban designers in West Roxbury on plans to slow traffic and improve pedestrian conditions by reducing the width of Centre Street. The City of Boston has allotted funds for reconstruction—in particular to upgrade signalization. The coalition sees this as an opportunity to narrow Centre Street, the neighborhood's commercial spine.

The Boston Transportation Department insists that Centre Street must keep two travel lanes in each direction, or four total lanes. The coalition's position, ably promoted by WalkBoston's Traffic Engineer, Chan Rogers, is that two through lanes plus a turning lane would provide sufficient capacity. Chan and Dorothea Hass have made presentations at well-attended meetings in West Roxbury which have asked the City to explore in detail alternatives that meet local needs.

The City has been asked to conduct a "community-based design process" as recommended in BTDA's {and WalkBoston's} "Streetscape Guidelines for Boston's Major Roads," to examine the merits and issues involved in reducing the number of lanes. Despite imminent construction this spring, the West Roxbury coalition hopes to convince the City to step back for a relook.

BY ROBERT SLOANE

SRS takes steps

With two new grants, WalkBoston is broadening its Safe Routes to Schools programs. A grant from New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc. is enabling us to launch SRS at the Thomas Gardner Elementary School in Allston, focusing on its after-school program

A second grant, under the new STEPS program, allows WalkBoston to take part in a broad 5-year community mobilization program led by Boston's Public Health Commission to reduce obesity, diabetes and asthma in seven Boston neighborhoods: Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, South Boston, South End and Hyde Park. This first year, walking to school will be promoted in 2 elementary schools.

WalkBoston has long been eager and is now pleased to be working closely with health and footwear related organizations to increase the number of people who walk for health.

We are grateful to The Boston Foundation for this support. The WalkBoston grant was among more than \$50 million awarded last year by The Boston Foundation for projects which explore important issues and find new ways to build community.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

2004 begins with two steps forward: one is the Boston Foundation funding for our project to change Boston's policy for WALK/DON'T WALK signal timing. The second is a promising joint pilot program with the City to retime six intersections in the Back Bay, an effort led by BTDA Chief Engineer, John DeBenedictis. John is also improving pedestrian and disability access to the Back Bay/South End and Massachusetts Avenue MBTA stations, and enforcing "no-parking" on sidewalks.

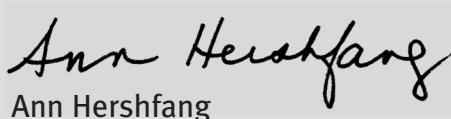
Alas, one slippery step back: A letter about icy Southwest Corridor sidewalks sent to the state's new Department of Conservation and Recreation evoked: "Unfortunately with limited (sic) staffing available, this often means snow and ice removal from walkways are delayed while we devote all our energies to our roadways and parkways, which are a public safety priority for the Division of Urban Parks." Similar indifference greeted an earlier request from member David Loutzenheizer, chair of Cambridge's Pedestrian Committee, to clear snow and road slush from DCR bridge sidewalks.

Also at the state level, the Bicycle Advisory committee has finally been selected, and will include pedestrians. Interested? Call the office.

Outspokenness works! WalkBoston member Betsy Boveroux asked DNC Chair Gov. Bill Richardson (New Mexico), appearing at the Harvard Club, if he would urge Mayor Menino to emphasize walking for the Convention. Richardson said "yes" — to much applause from the audience.

Do join WalkBoston on March 25th at our 14th festive Annual Meeting. Our speaker is Dan Burden, the country's most exciting and charismatic pedestrian redesigner of communities in the U.S.. Dan led charrettes in the Boston area last year. He gets traffic engineers excited about change.

Keep talking up walking and let us (and the media) know. Thank you for all you do.


Ann Hershfang

Boston

**MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES
MORE WALKABLE**

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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.

mission

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wanted

WalkBoston is looking for a new Executive Director. Call the office or visit our website to view the job description.

Signal-timing engineer to work on Boston Foundation w/DW project.

Appointees to the State Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee

Volunteers for annual meeting, to help with food arrangements, registration, and sales of WalkBoston books, maps and pedometers.

Computer Donations
 Looking for a good place to unload your old hardware? Give it to us and a write it off!

- **Macintosh laptop** running OS9 or higher.
- **LCD panel or LCD projector** laptop compatible, PC or MAC.

walkBoston

Winter Walk – Sat., Feb 28.
 Explore current and potential pedestrian streetscapes along the MassPike corridor. Meet: 1:00 pm, Kenmore T station, end at Back Bay T station. Lasts about 1.5 hours. Reservations: 617.367.9255; also for cancellation due to weather.

14th Annual Meeting
 Thursday, March 25th, 5:30 pm at Hale and Dorr, 60 State St., 26th floor. It's great company, great food and a great speaker, the nationally-acclaimed Dan Burden.

WalkBoston, the book, is climbing on Amazon.com. Debuting at no. 1.7 million on the list, it climbed to 62,300 in Dec., ranking as the 7th best-seller among 140 AMC titles. As of 1/04, 1740 copies had been sold. Available in 100+ bookstores, 30+ websites, and the WB office.

resolutions

Is 2004 the Year of the Pedestrian?
 Here's what Boston Transportation Commissioner Andrea d'Amato told the Boston Herald when asked for a New Year's resolution: "To continue to improve the delivery of basic services—including well-marked crosswalks, improved signage and signal timing—to Boston residents and visitors."

And the Boston Globe's lead editorial wished for "a culture that...takes a walk." Us too.

Transit saves time
 A Texas Transportation Institute study concludes that public transportation use saves metro Bostonians 62M hours of delay a year, a \$826M value.

events

National Congress of Pedestrian Advocates. America Walks is sponsoring the Congress from May 6-8, 2004, in Silver Spring, Md. Its theme: "Walking: Everybody's Business — Revitalizing People and Places." www.AmericaWalks.org/congress

Free Trails & Greenways Seminars. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is launching a series of 6 expert training workshops on trail advocacy building and management. For more information contact RTC at www.railtrails.org/newengland T: 508-755-3300.

The 5th International Pedestrian Congress will be held from June 9-11, 2004 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Theme: "Cities for People." Info: www.citiesforpeople.dk

membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to: WalkBoston, Old State House, 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108.
 T: 617.367.9255 | F: 617.367.9285 | info@walkboston.org | www.walkboston.org

name(s) _____

address _____

phone:daytime _____ evening _____

e-mail _____ fax _____

- check one: STUDENT / SENIOR [65+] \$15 SUPPORTER \$50
 MEMBER \$30 FRIEND \$100
 DUAL / FAMILY \$40 ORGANIZATION \$250 | \$500 | \$1000

- 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.

What a hike

Newton resident Jim Purdy recently completed a six-month hike of the 2,171-mile Appalachian Trail, from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to Maine's Mount Katahdin. Carrying a backpack weighing almost 30 pounds, Purdy walked 7 to 10 hours a day, averaging almost 15 miles.

Purdy is a WB author and hiking/backpacking leader in the Appalachian Mountain Club. The land use planning consultant took a leave of absence to make the long-time dream a reality.

He encountered bears, moose and rattlesnakes, but never felt in danger. "It was a unique opportunity to experience the natural environment and to see a cross-section of our nation." The best breakfast? "Shaw's boarding house in Monson, ME."

BTD is spending

The Boston Transportation Department is spending \$700,000 for reflective thermoplast crosswalk and lane striping to improve safety on neighborhood streets. A spokesman for Commissioner Andrea d'Amato said such upgrades usually receive about \$100,000 a year. Striping will be done this spring at intersections in downtown, South End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay and South Boston. Last fall, intersections were striped in Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Brighton. Rumors abound that Boston may finally provide in-road "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk" cones.

Federal aid funding nationwide for pedestrian and bicycle projects and programs rose from \$17.1M in 1991 to \$422.7M in 2003. Whoopee.