

City at a Downtown crossroads

Should walkers or cars rule shopping center?

By Thomas Grillo | Tuesday, April 14, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Business & Markets

Residents and businesses in Downtown Crossing will help determine the future of the district's pedestrian zone.

"One thing is for sure, the pedestrian mall is not working," said George Coorssen, a Tremont on the Common resident.

City officials will host the first of two workshops tonight at the Old South Meeting House to discuss improvements to the area's public ways.

The controversy over whether to reintroduce cars to Washington Street has raged for years between merchants, residents and activists.

On one side are those who favor allowing only foot traffic, with the exception of emergency vehicles.

On the other side are those who say that the pedestrian mall is a failed experiment and point to empty storefronts and the fact that pedestrians do not use Washington Street because they fear cars and trucks.



Wendy Landman, executive director of WalkBoston, said she favors keeping the area for pedestrians but with improvements.

"We should not give up on this idea," she said. "It works on Winter and Summer streets because there are no curbs and people feel safe."

But Coorssen insists that the area would be safer and more active if cars were allowed.

"Charles Street and Newbury streets are full of shops. Traffic flows and it works," he said.

Rosemarie Sansone, president of the Downtown Crossing Partnership, acknowledged that the rules about who can drive on Washington Street are confusing. "It's not clear how it operates," she said.

Sam Ditzion, a Downtown Crossing resident, said it's time for the city to do something. "Either keep it a pedestrian zone, but keep vehicles out," he said. "Or acknowledge that it won't work and open it to traffic. It's a joke as it is."

Article URL: <http://www.bostonherald.com/business/general/view.bg?articleid=1165444>

[Contact us](#) | [Print advertising](#) | [Online advertising](#) | [Herald history](#) | [News tips](#) | [Electronic edition](#) | [Browser upgrade](#) | [Home delivery](#) | [Herald wireless](#)

Save on Boston Herald Home Delivery

Jobs with Herald Media

For back copy information and more information on other collectible copies please call 617-426-3000 Ext. 7714. [Click here for Celtics, Patriots and Red Sox back copies](#)



© Copyright by the Boston Herald and Herald Media.

No portion of BostonHerald.com or its content may be reproduced without the owner's written permission. [Privacy Commitment](#)

.0.373089 : cached : owl.heraldinteractive.com