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## Better walking, better business

WalkBoston plays a leading role across Massachusetts to improve everyday conditions for our most basic, healthy and environmentally friendly form of transportation: walking. We have an impressive record of helping cities, towns, state agencies, developers, institutions and elected officials recognize and accommodate the needs of walkers.

For businesses, supporting improved walking conditions is a sound but sometimes overlooked investment. Dollar for dollar, the returns are impressive, from more customers to healthier, more productive employees.

Membership in WalkBoston is a worthwhile investment, strengthening our voice as we spread the Good Walking is Good Business message. Join today at [walkboston.org](http://walkboston.org).

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# walkBoston

good  
walking  
is good  
business



BostonCompleteStreets.org

## An investment in walking is a good business investment

Pedestrian facilities are a vital element of the public realm, serving all businesses and residents. They can pay off in increased retail sales, healthier employees and higher real estate values. Businesses gain wherever walking conditions are improved – attracting and retaining customers and employees, and making the community a better place to live and work.

### If you build it, you will prosper

More retail spending takes place in walkable areas. Major real estate developers now advocate for pedestrian-friendly development, giving places a “village feeling.” This encourages people to stay longer, offering the potential of increased sales.

Tourist spending comes directly from walkability. Some Boston-area sites have among the highest foot traffic in the nation – these people spend money.

People walking and taking transit save on auto expenses – typically the second highest expense for households. Lower transportation costs leaves more discretionary income, boosting the local economy.

### A valuable commodity

Higher home values come with walkability. Homes in more walkable neighborhoods – those with a mix of shopping, civic and social destinations within a short distance – command a premium price over similar homes in less walkable areas.

Health costs also are lowered by walking. People who walk regularly are more physically fit, which can translate into reduced absenteeism, fewer chronic diseases and improved employee productivity. This helps reduce the cost of health insurance and the cost of doing business.

Is your neighborhood or business district uninviting to pedestrians? Don't despair. They can easily be made more walkable. Older, dense, mixed-use neighborhoods are often ready for walkers with modest improvements. Low density areas can begin to accommodate walkers with infill and a better mix of land uses.

**Make an investment in improving the walking conditions around your place of business. It will pay off with more customers, healthier employees, and a stronger bottom line.**

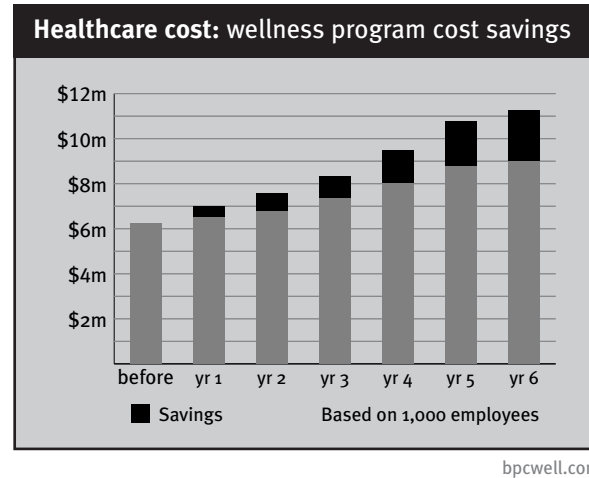
## For real estate

- Homebuyers are willing to pay an average \$20,000 to \$34,000 premium for homes in pedestrian-friendly communities compared to similar houses in surrounding areas. *[CEOs for Cities, 2009]*
- A 5 to 10 mph reduction in traffic speeds increased property values for adjacent residences by 18% to 20%. *[Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1999]*
- Every point increase in Walk Score [based on number of destinations within a short distance] brings up to a \$3,000 increase in home values. *[CEOs for Cities, 2009]*
- Homes in walkable urban neighborhoods have experienced less than half the average decline in price from the housing peak in the mid-2000s. *[Brookings Institution, 2011]*
- Dense, walkable, transit-accessible areas are valuable. Ten years ago the highest per-square-foot property values in Washington, D.C. were in auto-dependent suburbs. Today, city neighborhoods like Dupont Circle command the highest prices, followed by suburban neighborhoods near subway stops like Bethesda, MD. *[Brookings Institution, 2011]*
- 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 Est. Research Corp., 2002]*

## For tourism

- Massachusetts tourism is a \$15.6 billion industry, thriving in Boston and smaller, walkable New England communities with pedestrian-friendly town centers. Boston is one of the most walkable cities in the U.S. In 2010, Frommer's International called it one of the 10 most walkable cities in the world; New York was the only other city representing the US.
- Walkable destinations are among the most visited urban attractions in the country. Faneuil Hall Marketplace [FHM] gets 20 million visitors each year, surpassed only by Times Square, Washington, D.C.'s Mall and the Las Vegas Strip. *[FHM]*

- Walking routes attract tourists. Boston's Freedom Trail is one of many including the Esplanade in Boston, High Line in Manhattan, the Riverwalks in San Antonio and Providence, Chicago's Magnificent Mile, and the East River Promenade in Brooklyn.



## For healthy employees

- If one in ten Massachusetts adults started a regular walking program, the state would save \$121 million in heart disease expenditures annually – equivalent to paying the college tuition of 11,530 Massachusetts students each year. *[MA Dept. of Public Health, 2008]*
- More than half of adults and one-third of Massachusetts children and teens are now either overweight or obese, resulting in an associated medical cost of \$15 billion for all related illnesses. *[MA Dept. of Public Health, 2008]*
- In Times Square after Broadway was closed to vehicles, injuries to motorists and passengers went down 63%. Pedestrian injuries went down 35%. *[New York City Dept. of Transportation, 2009]*
- In order to attract and maintain a highly qualified workforce, Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group and BellSouth help employees find housing to reduce commute times. *[National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, 2004]*

## For transportation

- 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]*
- Nearly half the U.S. population – 150 million baby boomers and their children – may be in the market for walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods with smaller homes. Boomers are downsizing as their children leave home. *[Brookings Institution, 2011]*
- Fewer young people want cars. In 1995 people age 21 to 30 drove 21% of all miles driven in the U.S.; in 2009 it was 14%, despite consistent growth of the age group. Living car-free in walkable areas fits younger lifestyles. *[Advertising Age, 2010]*
- Walkable neighborhoods cost the taxpayer less because low density and auto-dependent areas raise infrastructure costs and taxes. A home built on the urban fringe requires \$10,000 more in public services and utilities than one built in the urban core. *[Federal Office of Technology Assessment, 1998]*

## For livable communities

- Reinvestment in existing infrastructure is less costly, reduces expenses and boosts profits over the short- and long-term. *[National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, 2004]*
- Increasing density creates a comfortable sense of place. Prime targets for infill redevelopment are big-box parking lots, dead shopping centers, strip malls and transit stations. *[National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, 2004]*
- Small-scale pedestrian improvements along streets result in higher physical activity levels and have high levels of public support. *[Centers for Disease Control, 2011]*
- People living in walkable neighborhoods trust neighbors more, participate in community projects and volunteer more than in non-walkable areas. This positive social aspect improves health and economic opportunities and leads to a higher quality of life. *[University of New Hampshire, 2010]*

## For retail business

- A dollar spent at an independent business generates about 3 times as much benefit to the local economy as spending a dollar at a chain retailer. Locally-owned businesses thrive in densely-built, walkable communities and are more likely to stock local products, supporting other local businesses. *[American Independent Business Alliance]*
- Patrons of retail businesses who arrive by foot and bicycle in a neighborhood shopping area visit the most often and spend the most money per month. *[Toronto Clean Air Partnership, 2009]*
- Walkable retail areas with unique visual, cultural, social and environmental qualities provide competitive advantages. Their “place-making dividend” attracts people to stay longer, spend more money, and visit often. *[Urban Land Institute, 2010]*
- In New York City, frequent visitors to SoHo spend about 5 times as much money – not because they come more often, but they spend more each time. *[Transp. Alternatives & Schaller Consulting, 2006]*
- In Los Angeles, walkable, densely-built shopping districts saw retail activity up to 4 times greater than strip shopping areas. *[Boarnet, Retrofitting the Suburbs to Increase Walking, 2010]*
- Revenues from businesses rose 71% in 2008, when Broadway, a diagonal through Times Square, was closed to traffic and became a pedestrian plaza. *[New York City Dept. of Transportation, 2009]*



Our award honors the business communities' efforts in creating lively walker-friendly places.