

walk

Residents Fight for Traffic Calming in Hyde Square

In our wonderful urban village in Jamaica Plain, reckless drivers regularly endanger children, senior citizens, and all who use our sidewalks to play, talk with neighbors, and stroll. About a year ago several crime watch and street-based groups formed the Hyde Square Traffic Calming Coalition (HSTCC). We were fed up with the city's response to our concerns, which was to increase enforcement for a period of time and dismiss our requests for physical changes to force drivers to drive at an appropriate speed. At our first meeting we set two specific goals: 1) To change the city's policy which we understood prohibited vertical traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, and speed tables; and 2) To build such vertical elements in our neighborhood.

We spent several months informing and uniting a large community to achieve our goals. We knocked on doors, recruited members, posted flyers, held meetings, and engaged other community groups, businesses, and community leaders. We communicated with elected and appointed officials. City Councilor Maura Hennigan and Rep. Kevin Fitzgerald supported us from the beginning. By the summer, we saw a few minor improvements, but we had not achieved either of our goals. In the fall, we began to publicize our efforts through the

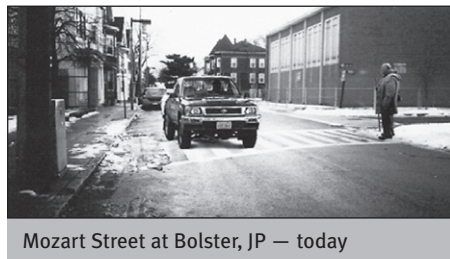
Jamaica Plain and Boston press. We gathered letters of support from every local community organization. We badgered city officials. We never wavered from our goals, and we never went away.

Finally in the fall, the HSTCC held a press conference with Councilor Hennigan to announce the introduction of an ordinance to promote traffic calming and to set a date for a community meeting to discuss the issue with the Boston Transportation Department. Also Mayor Menino met with several coalition members at a local restaurant and agreed to a pilot project in our area with raised crosswalks and neckdowns. Although there was an ice storm, nearly 100 residents attended a community meeting at the Kennedy Elementary School in January. We heard from Commissioner Andrea D'amato that the BTM would implement a pilot project, and work with the HSTCC on a community process to plan what would be built.

Although we have made progress and achieved our first goal, we will remain busy, working with the BTM to plan and implement traffic calming to achieve our second goal. Only when new measures are actually built, and safety for neighborhood residents is improved, will we declare victory. —By Erik Berg

Annual Meeting

WalkBoston celebrated its Tenth Annual Meeting on March 30th, 2000 in great style. The 200 members and guests thoroughly enjoyed the great views from the 60 State Street offices of Hale and Dorr, fantastic food from Leonie Howard, and much gay camaraderie. Our featured speaker, Robert Campbell, Architecture Critic for the Globe, entertained us with his vision of attractive buildings and public spaces. The annual Golden Shoe Awards were presented to the Save the Old Northern Avenue Bridge Coalition, the Hyde Square Traffic Calming Coalition, The Artery Business Committee, and Ann Fanton, a WalkBoston member, who has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Commonwealth keeps its promises with regard to mitigation efforts for the Central Artery. Thanks to Dayl Cohen and her committee for an outstanding event and to Rob Tuchman for the use of Hale and Dorr's glorious space.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Paris in April isn't much weatherwise (for those who remember the song), but otherwise-WOW. In spite of delectable food, its women and men are fit, beautiful and handsome. Probably because they walk and walk—to the clean, quiet, frequent metro, to take their children to school, and just to stroll, late into the night. The streetscape is designed for walking—wide tree-lined sidewalks, frequent crosswalks, and curb extensions with cafes.

WALK signals are automatic. There are midblock crossings even on the widest boulevards. Stoplights are located before the crosswalk not across the intersection. Thus, in order to see a light change, a car must stop before (and out of) the crosswalk. Sidewalks on narrow streets are free of clutter since streetlights hang off buildings and there is only one parking meter per block.

Buildings are 5-6 stories, coherent at the street level and well kept up because a law requires maintaining your building front every 7 years. Former industrial sites—Les Halles, the Citroen factory, an abbatoir, an elevated railroad viaduct—have been transformed into walkways, parks and playgrounds of great beauty. Paris puts the public sphere first. For a pedestrian, it is nirvana. Even in the rain.


Ann Hershfang

Boston

A NON-PROFIT
PEDESTRIAN ADVOCACY
ORGANIZATION

FALL 2000

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WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation and recreation. Our mission is to create and preserve walkable, livable communities through education and advocacy.

mission

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WB fall walks

Sunday, Sept. 24, 1pm - Boston's Central Waterfront

With historian Nancy Seasholes, we will track the filling of the Town Cove from the 1630's to the 1870's, and it's connections with today's Harborwalk.

Sunday, Oct. 1, 1pm - Brookline: Secret Stairways and Paths

Remarkable pedestrian links in residential developments provide short cuts to transit and parks. We will look at their history and design.

Saturday, Oct. 21, 1pm- Cambridge: Traffic Calming Works!

Whole streets have been transformed by traffic-calming efforts. Take a walk through East Cambridge lead by Cambridge's Traffic Calming Coordinator.

Sunday, Oct. 30, 2pm - Concord: Suburban Pedestrian Connections

Our suburban walk will touch national important historic sites and a wide range of the most handsome freestanding housing in the Commonwealth.

Maps and path description will be handed out. Walks will take approximately 2 hours.

calendar

October 13-14 - MA Trails & Greenways, Salem MA,

2 1/2 day workshops on how to overcome opposition & get your trail built. Walks in the afternoon. For more info., contact Pat King at: mantis1994@aol.com.

membership application

Complete this form & mail along with your check made payable to:
WalkBoston, 156 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109.
T: (617)451-1570 F: (617)451-6475 walkbos@shore.net | www.walkboston.org

name(s) _____

address _____

phone:daytime _____ evening _____

e-mail _____ fax _____

- check one: STUDENT / SENIOR OVER 70 \$10 SUPPORTER \$50
 MEMBER \$25 FRIEND \$100
 DUAL / CONTRIBUTOR \$35 CORPORATE \$250 | \$500 | \$1000

- circle committees you are interested in. (to contact them directly - see front)
- membership advocacy education/pr/publications
 legislative fundraising programs

Your donation is tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

wish list

Volunteers needed

–bookkeeping skills, 6 hrs. a month.
–assemble WalkBoston news-clips.

Executive Director/Office Manager

20 hours a week, paid, part-time.

We are looking for good stories on traffic calming, and examples of great streetscapes. Please submit yours to walkbos@shore.net.

Email list

We are setting up a list to keep members up to date on action alerts, walks, events, etc. If you have not been getting email from us, send your e-ddress to walkbos@shore.net. Want to be taken off our list? email us and we'll take you off in a flash.

walktalk

San Jose has joined America Walks.

Walk Arlington is forming in Virginia.

The "Boston Informer" reports quarterly on transportation happenings in the region. A very good read and a steal at \$20. To subscribe contact (617) 723-3584 or email: 103477.556@compuserve.com.

The Surface Transportation Policy Project recently calculated that the fatality rate per 100 million miles traveled by car was 1.4. For pedestrians it was 49.9. Nearly 6 in 10 pedestrian traffic fatalities took place in areas where no crosswalks are available. A steep drop in walking of 42% in 20 years is attributed to poor walking conditions.

achievements

"Gaining Ground: Creating Land in the 19th Century South End," a talk by historian/ archeologist Nancy Seasholes was splendid. The rain came down in torrents; the vestibule ceiling fell. Still, 80 people attended. WalkBoston made \$800 from the event and auction.

Thank you Erik Scheier for leading your walk through Charlestown on June 25. It was well attended by 45 delighted walkers.

We're grateful to generous supporters for a donated computer and monitor.

The Boston Municipal Court has seen a significant upsurge of tickets involving motorists failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.

"Walking can be many things: a means of transport, a way of keeping healthy, a form of relaxation, a sport. It can be a gregarious social activity or a solitary opportunity to meditate. It varies with whim and circumstances. Commuters scurry; shoppers meander; bushwalkers trek; power-walkers stride; lovers stroll; tourists promenade; protester march. But we all walk."
—Australian Pedestrian Charter

The City of Cambridge published a Cambridge Traffic-Calming brochure. It explains traffic calming techniques with simple diagrams and pictures and the process the city undertakes for a traffic-calming project. Call 617-349-4655 or email traffic-calming@ci.cambridge.ma.us.

Wanderlust: A History of Walking, by Rebecca Solnit, is a great read.