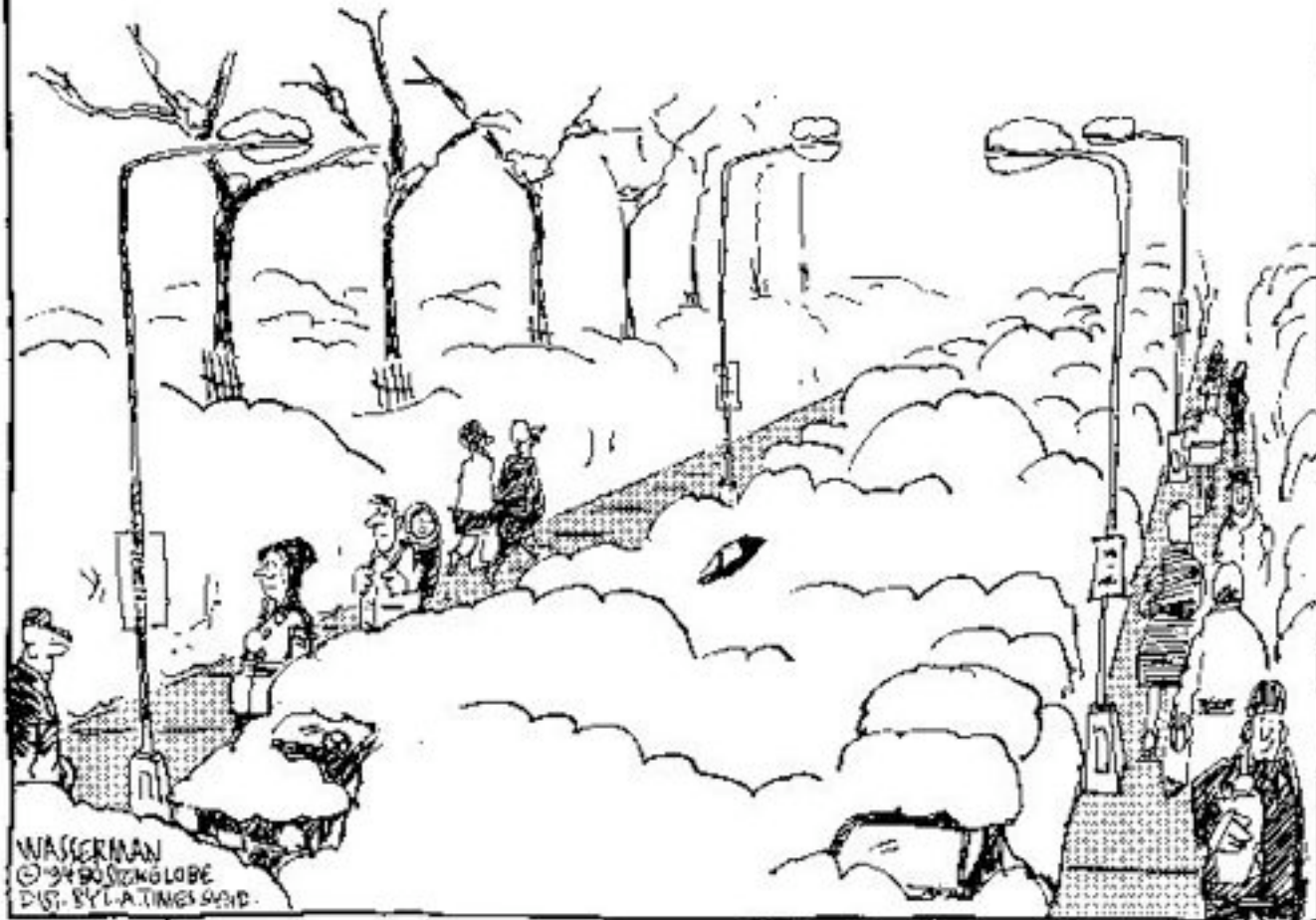




recommendations for improved  
sidewalk snow/ice clearance

# IF PEDESTRIANS HAD CLOUT...

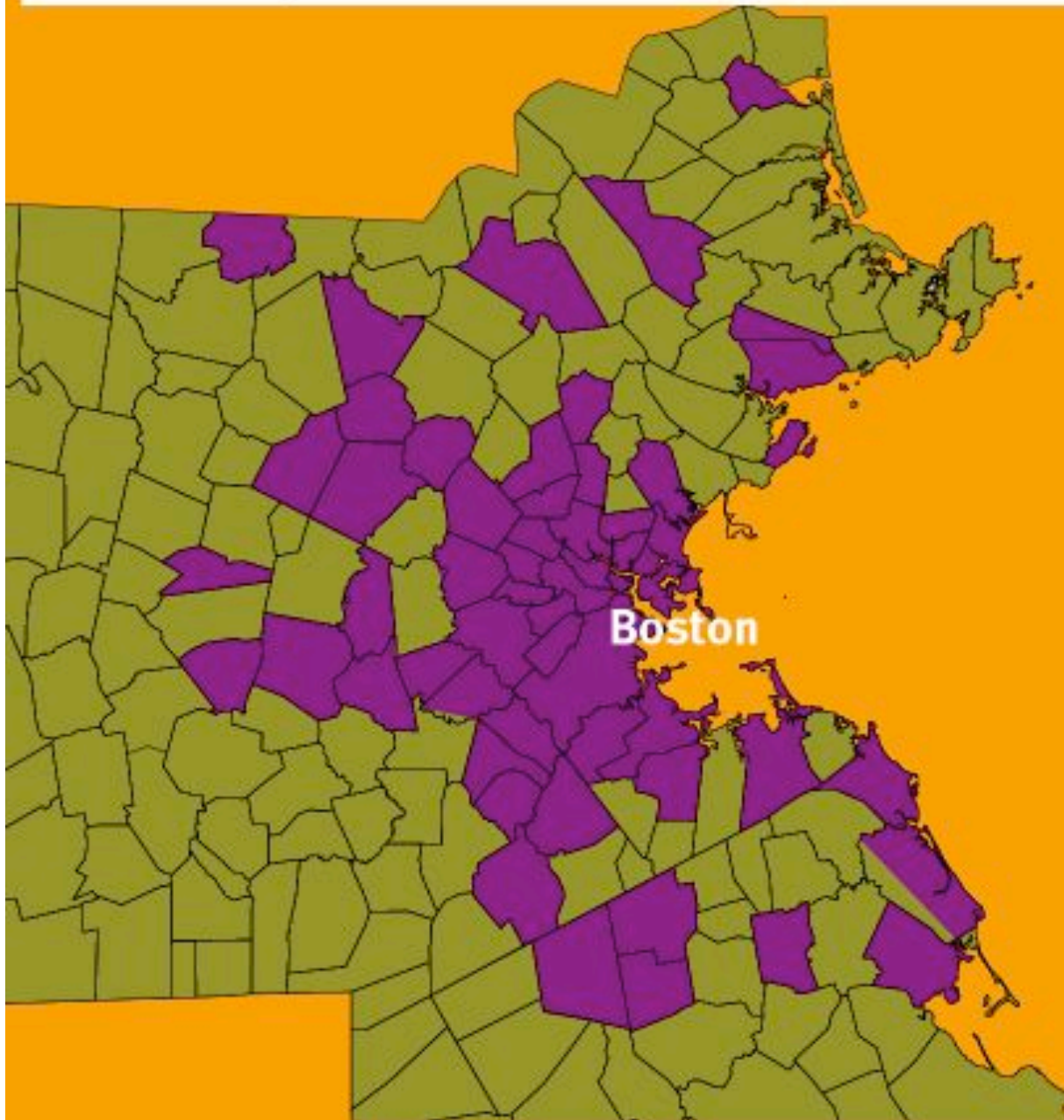


**1. who we are/what we do**

# **making communities more walkable**

**WalkBoston encourages walking throughout Massachusetts for transportation, health and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to citizens to make their communities walkable.**

## Membership distribution in Eastern Massachusetts



# why is snow clearance so important?

- walking is a component of almost every trip
- clear sidewalks provide access to transit, schools, jobs, health care
- children, elders, persons with disabilities are most affected
- safety .....

# safety....



- falls and fractures increase during snowy/icy conditions
- uncleared sidewalks cause people to walk in streets that are narrowed by snow - endangering pedestrians and motorists
- access by emergency, fire, home health and other services are impeded by snowy sidewalks

# why does the system not work well?

- multiple responsible parties
- different rules and different responsibilities in each jurisdiction
- lack of public and agency of awareness of the importance of clear sidewalks
- difficult to do well (our freeze and thaw climate zone)



# whose responsibility?

- municipalities
- private property owners
- state agencies/authorities

## varied methods

- all public clearance
- public clearance only of sidewalks abutting municipal property
- public clearance of some sidewalks, private clearance of other sidewalks

# recommendations

1. create a norm of clearance
2. identify a municipal point person
3. set priorities for clearance and enforcement
4. improve monitoring and enforcement
5. design/build sidewalks that are easier to clear
6. train municipal/private personnel to be aware of pedestrian ramps, corners, islands
7. enact sensible state liability and fine policies

# create a norm of clearance

- “social marketing” to/with residents, school children, social service providers, municipal & postal workers
- be a “good neighbor” - keep streets safe and accessible
- many tools - flyers with tax bills, city websites, door to door leafleting, local tv/radio spots, school handouts, etc.
- shared state and municipal responsibility



## It's the neighborly thing to do!

Snow and ice make walking difficult for everyone: school children, mail carriers, elders, and T riders. In Cambridge almost everyone walks at some time. If you own property, remember to:

- Keep the adjacent sidewalks clear of snow and ice. If you go out of town, be sure someone else will do it.



- Clear openings at corners and crosswalks so pedestrians can cross safely.

- Dig out fire hydrants and catch basins.

- Always park your car at least 20 feet from the street corner so plows can push snow away from the crosswalks.

- Pay attention to "No Parking" signs during snow emergencies.

## It's the law!

If you fail to comply with the City's sidewalk clearance ordinances, you will be issued a \$25 a day fine for violations.

Don't throw snow from your sidewalks into the street. When digging out your car, don't throw snow over the sidewalk, either. It is illegal to "reserve" parking spaces; objects left in on-street parking spaces will be hauled away.

## Please don't take it personally.

Often the DPW plows snow back into your driveway. Pushing snow into a driveway opening or along a car parked on the street is really unavoidable as we work to keep streets passable during all stages of a storm.

## About that ice:

For people on foot, ice can be worse than snow. It can cause dangerous falls. You are as responsible for ice on your sidewalks as you are for snow. You must remove it or melt it within 6 hours.

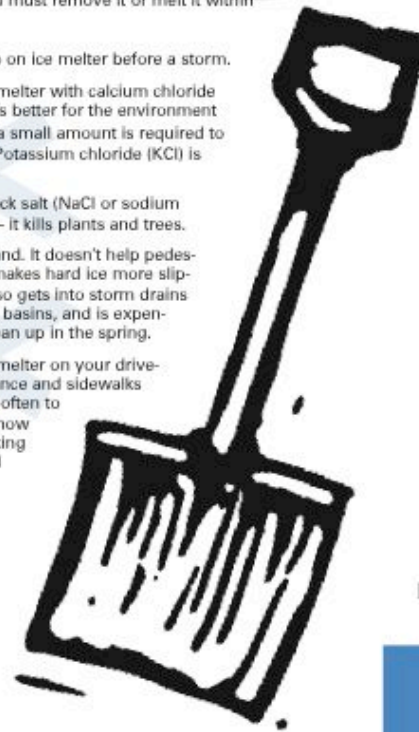
- Stock up on ice melter before a storm.

- Use ice melter with calcium chloride ( $\text{CaCl}_2$ ). It's better for the environment and only a small amount is required to melt ice. Potassium chloride (KCl) is okay, too.

- Avoid rock salt (NaCl or sodium chloride) – it kills plants and trees.

- Avoid sand. It doesn't help pedestrians; it makes hard ice more slippery. It also gets into storm drains and catch basins, and is expensive to clean up in the spring.

- Use ice melter on your driveway entrance and sidewalks early and often to prevent snow from packing down and forming into ice.



## Sidewalk Hotline: 617- 349-4903

Help keep the City's 225 miles of sidewalks safe by reporting unshoveled or icy sidewalks to the Snow Hotline, 617.349.4903 (TTY: 617.349.4805) 24 hours a day. Please leave an accurate address.

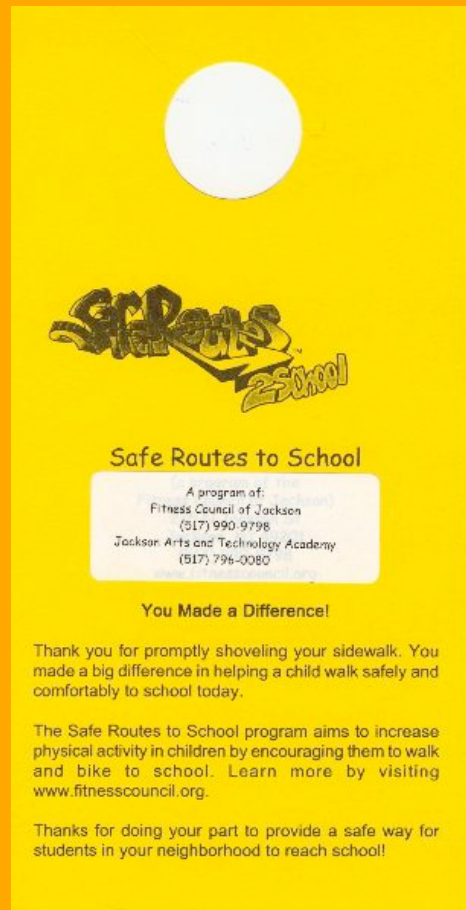
## What if you need help?

If you are a homeowner with a low income (defined as \$20,069 for a one-person household) and you are elderly or disabled, you may qualify for the City's Snow Exemption Program. If you qualify, the DPW will shovel your sidewalk.

To apply, call the Cambridge Council on Aging, 617.349.6220 (TTY: 617.349.6050).

If you do not qualify, the Council on Aging can provide you with a limited list of students who want to earn money by shovelling – you contact the student and negotiate a price – or a list of professional snow removal companies.

■ This publication has been produced in collaboration with the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee, 2002



one creative way to spread the word -

door hangars distributed by Michigan school children to thank (and remind) neighborhood residents about keeping the sidewalks clear - part of a safe routes to school program

# identify a municipal point person

- citizens need to know who to contact about ALL snow clearance questions and problems
- access is best 24/7 with personnel directly available from 6 AM - 8 PM
- a hotline is used in many places
- one person must be charged with ensuring follow through with all private and public parties

## **set priorities for clearance**

- create a plan so that resources can be used efficiently and for greatest benefit
- do more enforcement on higher priority routes
- inform all parties about the priorities
- set appropriate standards for clearance



# possible priority system - definition

- #1 major routes within 1/2 mile of schools/ institutions, access to transit, business areas, heavy traffic routes, bus routes & stops
- #2 all other sidewalks within 1/2 mile of schools, civic buildings, public transportation
- #3 other sidewalks in urban or thickly settled communities
- #4 sidewalks that are not 1st, 2nd, or 3rd priority  
- low density suburbs and rural areas

# possible priority system - rules

- #1 municipal clearance or private clearance with high level of enforcement
- #2 required clearance, moderate enforcement
- #3 required clearance, lower level of enforcement
- #4 clearance encouraged but not required



Too often cars are accommodated while pedestrians are ignored

## standards for clearance

- width of 48 inches or 75% of sidewalk, whichever is wider
- 1st priority sidewalks passable within 3-6 hours after storm (7AM - 9PM)
- clearance and walkability must include both snow and ice - with anti-slip applications
- municipalities urged to clear corner pedestrian ramps and pedestrian islands simultaneous with street plowing

# improve monitoring and enforcement

- identify who monitors and who enforces the rules
- monitoring by personnel who are “on-the-street” works best
  - e.g. parking officers, street crossing guards
- clearly define penalties and how they will be collected -  
consider clearing sidewalks after a warning and billing for services
- enforce rules with agencies as well as private property owners
- provide assistance to low income elders and persons with disabilities

# design sidewalks better

- wider sidewalks or tree lawns
- smooth surfaces (concrete, asphalt) are easier to clear
- place street furniture and utilities at the edge of the sidewalk
- carefully design and install pedestrian ramps to reduce drainage problems
- curb extensions make it easier to clear corners



# train plowing personnel



- do not pile snow at corners
- avoid blocking curb ramps once they are shoveled
- provide municipal clearance of critical pedestrian routes and pedestrian ramps
- WalkBoston is interested in your help in developing better plowing methods to help keep corners, islands and pedestrian ramps clear!!

# improve state policies

- fix liability law to encourage shoveling (H1987) and remove excess liability
- Allow communities to levy reasonable fines - increase the maximum from \$10/day (towns) and \$50/day (cities) to \$100/day (H1959)



# thank you!

Please contact us with questions,  
comments and suggestions

[info@walkboston.org](mailto:info@walkboston.org)

617-367-9255