Walking Our Way to Age-Friendly Communities

New England Bike-Walk Summit, April 27, 2018
WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and vibrant communities.
What is Age-Friendly Walking?
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– Sidewalk conditions
– ADA compliance
– Benches
– Lighting
– Shade
– Public restrooms
– Pedestrian signals
– Crosswalks
– Traffic calming
– ...and more!
Age-Friendly Walking Principles

- Walkability is key to ensuring that seniors can age in community, maintain good physical, cognitive and mental health, access important goods and services, remain socially and civically active, and maintain physical and economic mobility
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• *Safe and comfortable walking for seniors means safe and comfortable walking for everyone!*
WalkBoston and Age-Friendly Walking

- Belchertown
- Boston
- Brookline
- Fall River
- Gloucester
- Weymouth
- Williamsburg
Advancing Walkability in Boston

• Age-Friendly Walking – advance safe and comfortable walking for Boston seniors (and by extension everyone!)

• Vision Zero – reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries for all road users to zero
Age-Friendly Walking in Boston

Improving Boston’s Walkability a Priority for Seniors

- Nearly 50% of all listening session recommendations centered on improving Boston’s walkability.
- Conditions of sidewalks and timing and location of crosswalks are a primary challenge.
- Trash and graffiti make walking unpleasant in some areas.
- Safety and availability of parks are strengths.

Source: Adapted from WHO by S. Harris (Design for Aging Committee, BSA)
Age-Friendly Walking in Boston

- Three-year partnership (2016-2018) between WalkBoston, Elderly Commission, and other city agencies and community partners to advance safe and comfortable walking for Boston seniors

- Project funding from Tufts Health Plan Foundation and Massachusetts Councils on Aging
Age-Friendly Walking in Boston

• Near-term goal: work from 2016-2018 in three pilot neighborhoods (South End, Mattapan, East Boston) to implement street and sidewalk improvements

• Long-term goal: use lessons learned from pilots to create guidelines for a multi-agency citywide approach to senior walking
Age-Friendly Walking Pilot Neighborhoods

- East Boston – Meridian/Border Street corridors
- South End – Mass Ave corridor
- Mattapan – Mattapan Square

Neighborhoods selected in part based upon racial and economic demographic data (focus on low-income seniors and seniors of color)
Age-Friendly Walk Audits

- Foster an awareness of the elements that contribute to the walking environment
- Evaluate the safety and quality of the walking experience
- Recommend improvements
Age-Friendly Walk Audits

Left to right: South End, Mattapan, East Boston
Age-Friendly Placemaking
Vision Zero

- Comprehensive approach to traffic safety
- Equity increasingly part of the conversation
Age-Friendly/Vision Zero synergy

• “Improve pedestrian safety in partnership with Vision Zero” is now a key recommendation in the City’s Age-Friendly Boston action plan, with WalkBoston named as implementation partner.

• Mattapan Square selected as a “Safe Crossings” focus area under Vision Zero due to Age-Friendly Walking advocacy.

• South End/Mass Ave corridor selected as Age-Friendly Walking pilot neighborhood in part because of Vision Zero focus there.
Next Steps

• Work with agency/community partners to advance improvements in pilot neighborhoods

• Work with agency partners to create processes for citywide action items
Technical Assistance from WalkBoston

• Pedestrian Advocacy 101 (“Ped 101”) community discussions
• Local walking workshops (walk audits/assessments)
• On-call strategic assistance and planning/design advice
Questions?

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