

## Better walking, better business

WalkBoston plays a leading role all 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.

WalkBoston is spreading the Good Walking is Good Business message. Strengthen our voice and this message by joining today at [walkboston.org](http://walkboston.org).

## Successful business districts

If you want

- more potential customers
- happy, healthy employees
- higher, stable property values
- public sector cost savings

Then make walking

- easy and convenient
- safe for everyone
- comfortable and inviting
- interesting and fun

## program support



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# walkBoston

good  
walking  
is good  
business



BostonCompleteStreets.org

## An investment in walking is a good business investment

Pedestrian facilities are an essential community benefit. Whether you are a retailer, homeowner, city official, or CEO, an investment in walkability pays off.

Walkability contributes to the quality of life in a town or neighborhood, encouraging residents and visitors to shop locally; helping to attract and retain workplaces and associated employees; and raising real estate values, civic pride, and community involvement.

Retail spending is often higher in walkable areas. A welcoming walking environment attracts strolling visitors and local customers running daily errands. People on foot are more likely to see window displays, to go into more stores, and to stay longer, all of which offers the potential of increased sales.

Walkability is now a part of the conversation for every real estate transaction. Walk Score [a measure of amenities that can be accessed by walking] is discussed in every local market: residential and commercial, sales and rental.

Across the U.S., properties in mixed-use, walkable districts now tend to have higher and more stable values than those in less walkable areas.

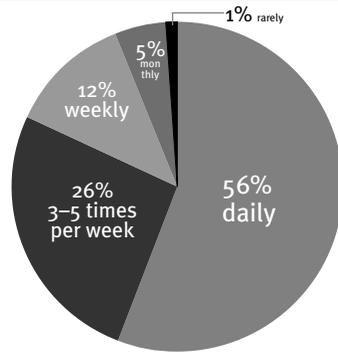
Younger workers want to walk to work and have social interactions, and are less interested in owning cars. When businesses pick sites, they locate where they are likely to find, attract and keep the employees they want.

The benefits of walking are widely recognized. People who walk as part of their daily routine are more likely to get the exercise needed to stay healthy. A healthy workforce greatly reduces healthcare costs for employers and the public. Walking is also a social activity, and people who walk in their neighborhoods tend to be more involved in neighborhood life and civic activities.

Neighborhoods or business districts can be made more walkable. Modest improvements, such as active storefronts, benches, and fun events help enliven areas and attract walkers. Since people want to be where the action is, the more that people are out and about walking, the more exciting your neighborhood will be.

**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.**

## How often customers walk to Central Square

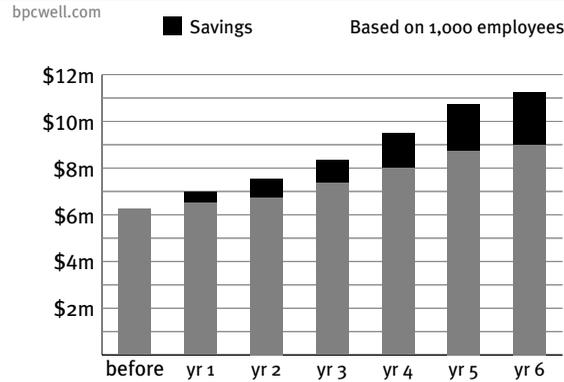


City of Cambridge, Customer Intercept Survey 2009

## For retail businesses

- 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, 2003]*
- **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 visit often, stay longer and spend more money. *[Urban Land Institute, 2010]*
- 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]*

## Healthcare cost: wellness program savings



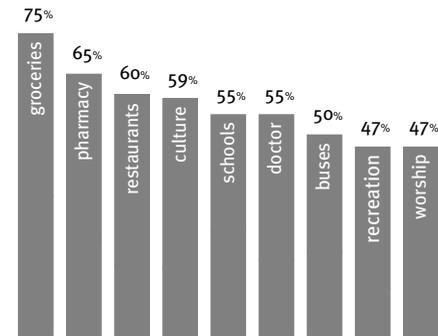
## For employers

- 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]*
- **Employers can save \$16 for every \$1 they spend on health and wellness, and workplace fitness programs have been shown to reduce employer health care costs by 20% – 55%.** *[American Heart Association, 2011]*
- 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]*
- Younger workers want to be in walking distance of work, restaurants, and shopping; they’re looking for more social interaction. *[CNN/Fortune, 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]*



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

## Percent of homebuyers wanting to walk to:

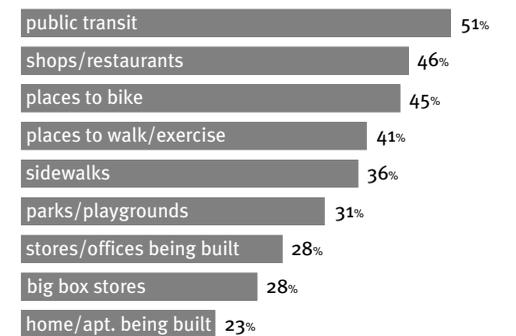


National Association of Realtors, 2011

## For real estate

- 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 Estate Research Corp., 2002]*
- 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]*
- **A one-point increase in Walk Score [based on number of destinations within a short distance] is associated with between a \$700 and \$3,000 increase in home values.** *[CEOs for Cities, 2009]*
- A 10-point increase in Walk Score increases commercial property values by 5% – 8%. *[University of Arizona & Indiana University, 2010]*
- 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]*
- 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]*
- A 5 to 10 mph reduction in traffic speeds increases property values for adjacent residences by 18% to 20%. *[Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1999]*

## Percent of residents wanting more:



National Association of Realtors, 2011

## For 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]*
- The percentage of people who have ceased driving doubles each decade after age 65. Providing mobility options to a rising number of older non-drivers will be a planning challenge as both life expectancy and the number of older Americans grow. *[National Household Travel Survey, 2009]*
- If one in ten Massachusetts adults started a regular walking program, the state would save \$121 million in heart disease expenditures annually. *[MA Dept. of Public Health, 2008]*
- 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]*
- **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]*

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The full text of each reference is online at WalkBoston.org.