

Walk-ability . . .

more than just the ability to walk



Walkability . . .

- Definition of Walkability
- Pedestrian Infrastructure 101
- Improving walkability in the City of Boston

Walkability . . .

- Connections
- Destinations
- Safety
- Comfort



Allows people to get where they need to go

- Streets and sidewalks balance walking, biking, transit with cars
- Paths and crosswalks are where they are needed



Variety

- Mix of offices, shops, restaurants and residences
- Lots of destinations that appeal to different people



Provide safe crossings and smooth walkways

- Signs and crosswalks alert drivers to potential walkers
- Walking surfaces are smooth and well-lit



Maintain pedestrian environment year round

- Snow removal
- Trash collection
- Building façade improvements



Attract people

- Banners and art contribute to civic pride
- Festive lighting encourages evening activity year-round
- Installations can activate street life

Walkability can be . . .



Walkability is important for . . .

- **Health**

- Average resident of a walkable neighborhood **weighs 6-10 pounds less** than someone who lives in a sprawling neighborhood
- Brisk walking 2.5 hours/week can improve memory for older people, with effects as good as those from approved drugs

- **Environment**

- Your feet are **zero-pollution** transportation machines

- **Finances**

- Transportation is the **second largest household expense** in the US – walking is free
- **Strong local economy:** office, residential, and retail rents, retail sales, and for-sale residential values

- **Community**

- People living in walkable **neighborhoods trust neighbors more**, participate in community projects and volunteer more than in non-walkable areas



Road design affects **walkability** . . .

Traffic speed and pedestrian survival

HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:
**20
MPH**



9 out of 10 pedestrians survive

HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:
**30
MPH**



5 out of 10 pedestrians survive

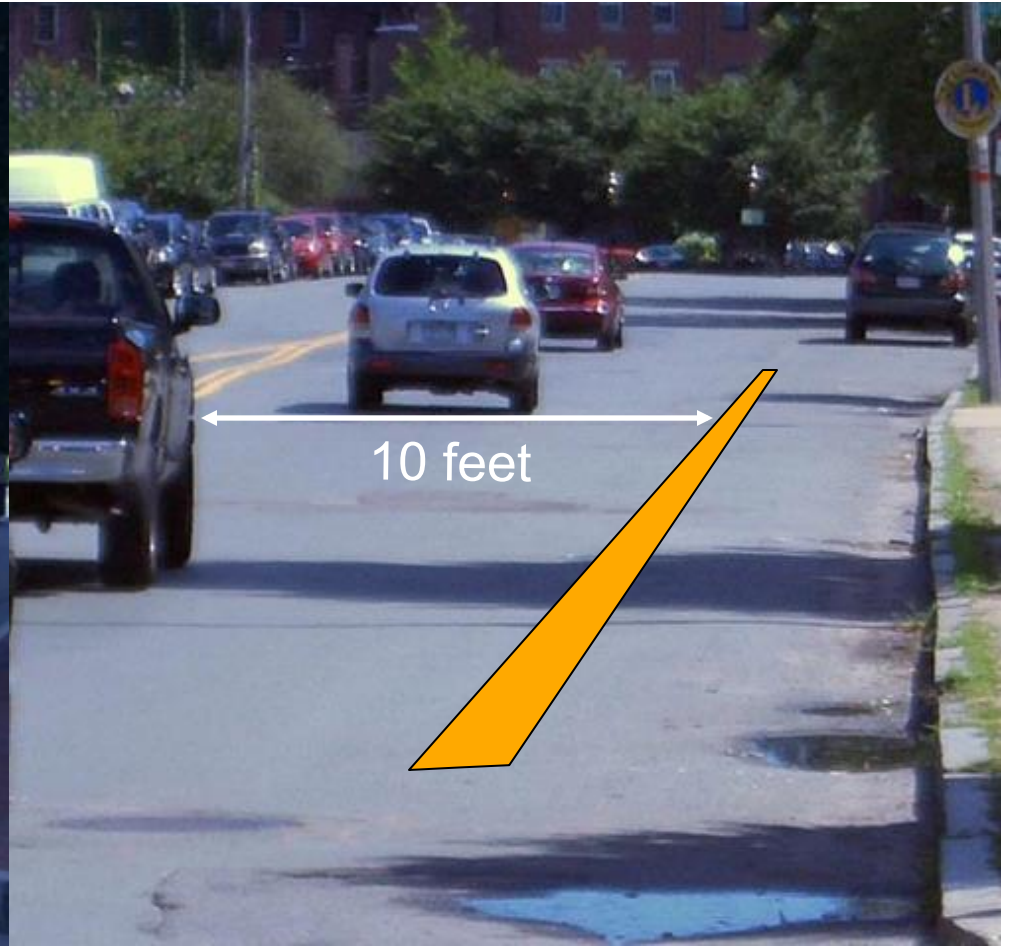
HIT BY A VEHICLE
TRAVELING AT:
**40
MPH**



Only 1 out of 10 pedestrians survives

Road design elements to slow traffic

- Narrow lane widths
- Curb extensions
- Raised crosswalks
- Pavement markings
- Parking buffers



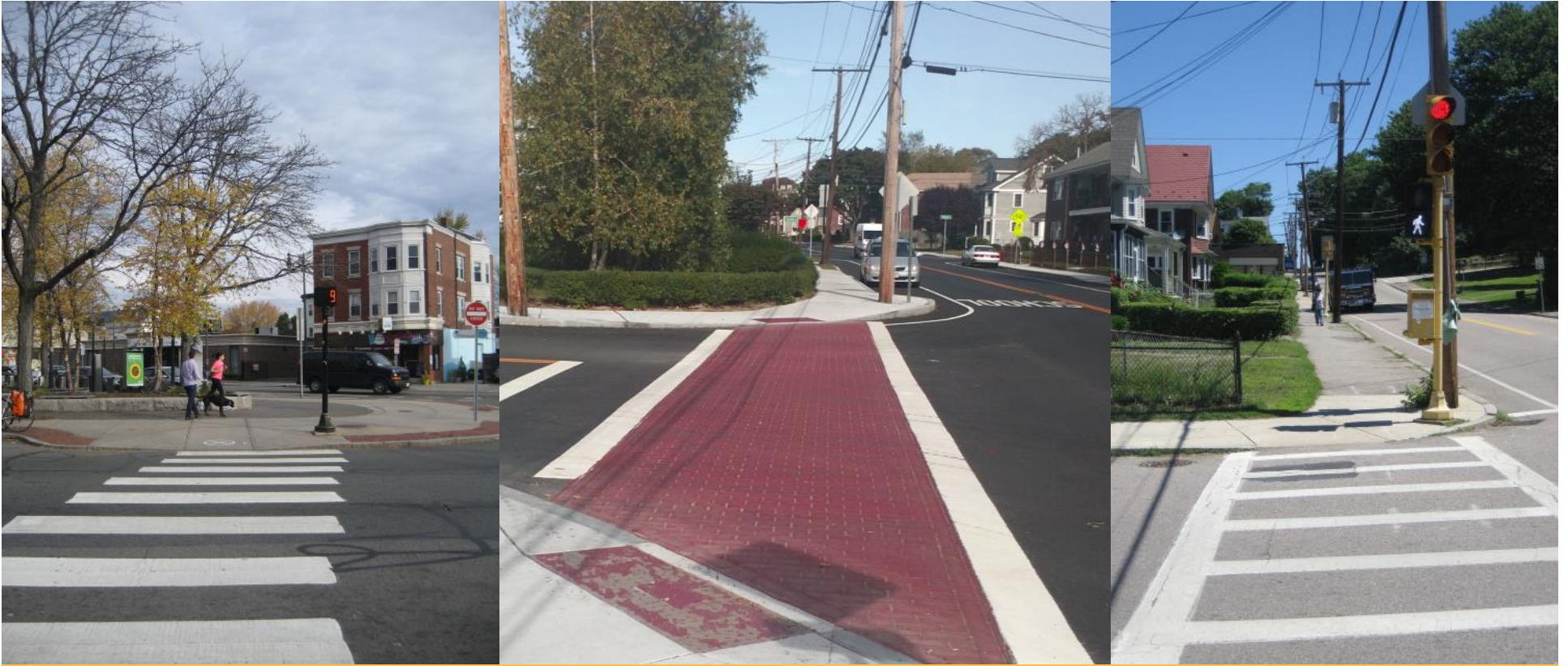
Lane widths

- Lanes should be no wider than 10 feet on main streets
- Narrowing a travel lane from 11 feet to 10 feet reduces speed by 7 mph
- Striping can cut a 16-foot lane down to an 10-foot lane



Curb extensions

- Shorten crossing distance
- Make walkers more visible
- Provide larger waiting areas (and space to store snow, away from walking zone)
- Can provide informal public spaces



Crosswalks

- Two parallel lines is standard
- Ladder is much more visible and widely recognized: worth the extra cost
- Should be repainted regularly: visibility is key to effectiveness



Safer crossings

- Raised crosswalks (aka speed tables) are visual, acoustical and physical reminders to slow down
- In-street pedestrian signs warn drivers of mid-block crossings



Parking

- Slows traffic
- Buffers walkers from traffic

Pedestrian elements to improve safety and comfort:

- Pedestrian countdown signals
- Wide, continuous, smooth sidewalks
- Few curb cuts; tight curb radii
- Separation from curb (verge)
- Street furnishings (trees and benches)
- Wayfinding signs



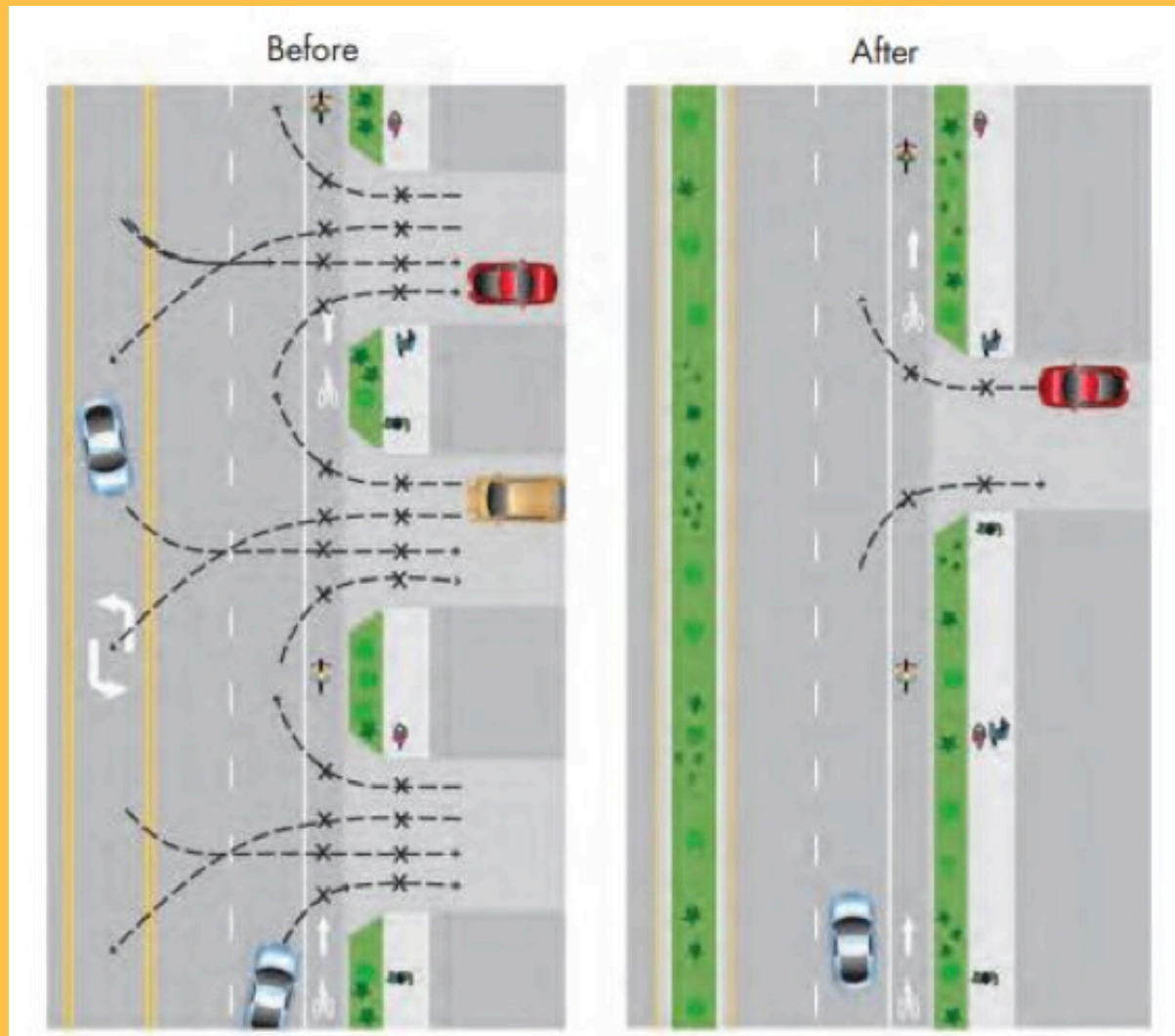
Signal timing

- Studies have shown that when countdown signals are installed at high crash intersections, pedestrian crashes have dropped by 50%



Passable sidewalks

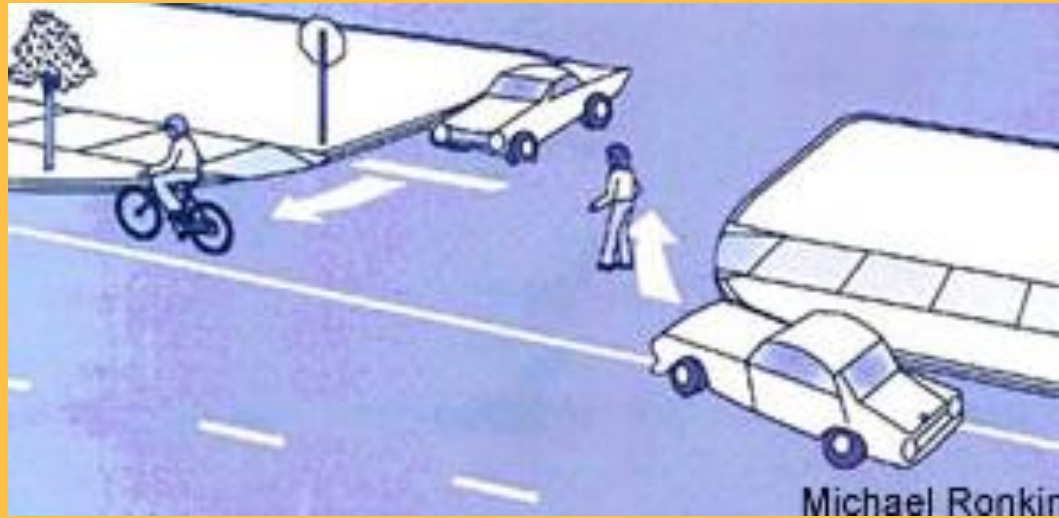
- Sidewalks should be continuous, unobstructed and clear
- Hedges and trees should be trimmed



credit: pedbikesafe.org

Curb cuts

- Limit frequency: sidewalks are the pedestrian zone



Driveways should not look like intersections



Driveways should provide a level, continuous sidewalk

credit: saferoutesinfo.org

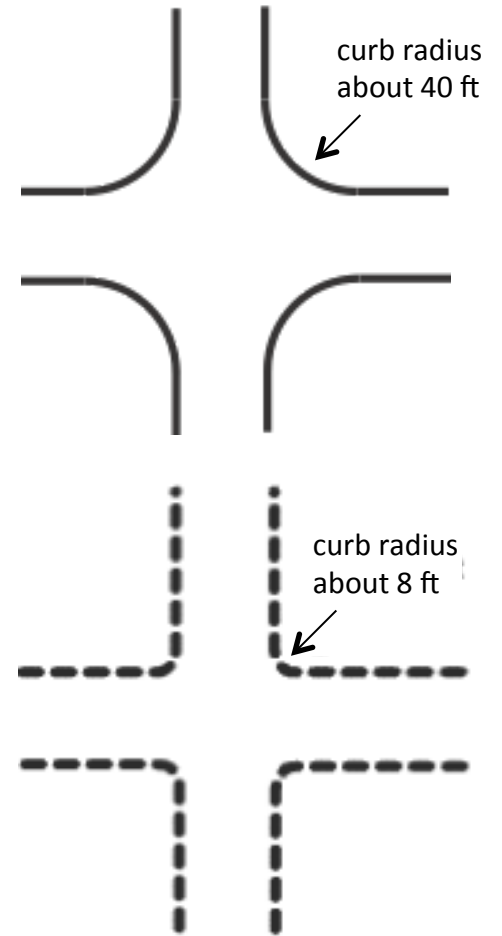
Curb cuts and continuous sidewalks

- Driveways/entryways should have flat, continuous sidewalks
- Slope should be moderate and minimized as much as possible



Curb cuts and curb radii

- Driveways/entryways should be narrow
- Curb radii should be tight



Tight curb radii (sharp corners)

- Require drivers to slow down when turning into the driveway
- Can be temporary installation or more permanent solution



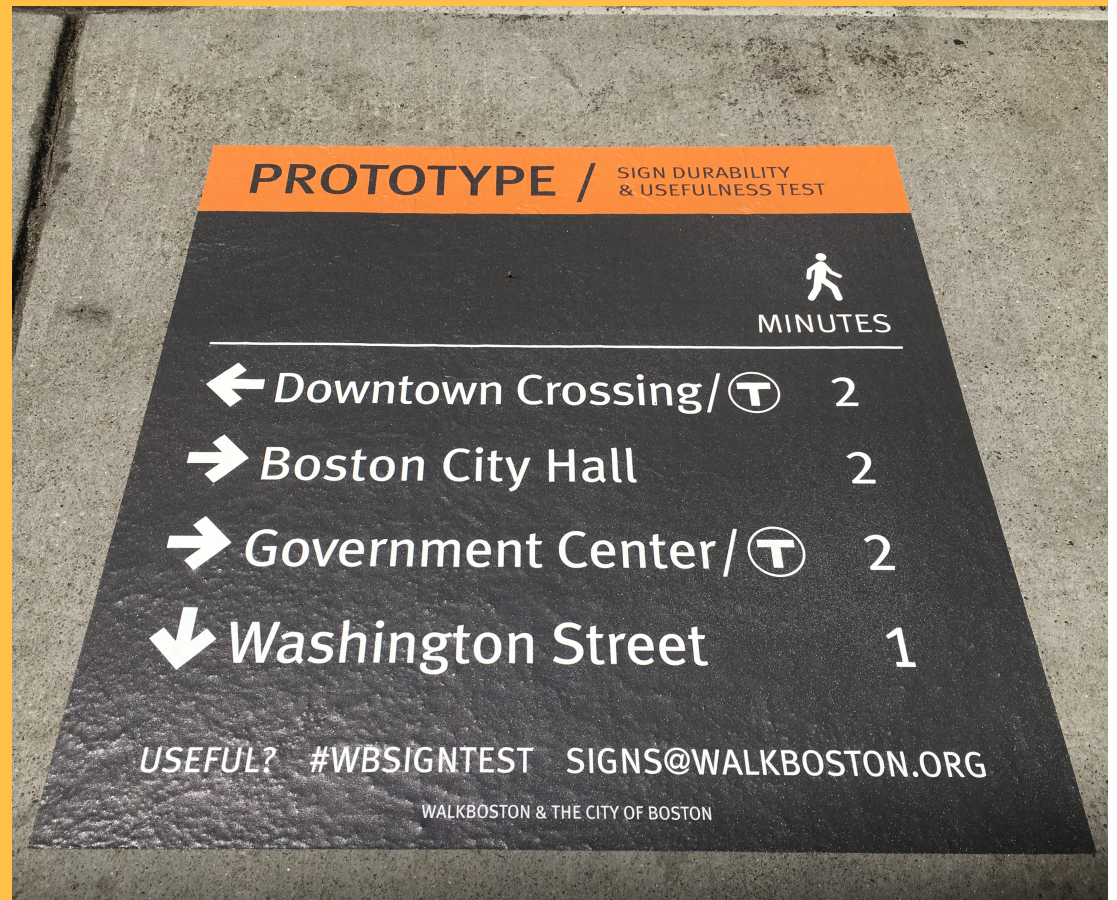
Separation between the walkway and moving traffic

- Trees or landscape strip
- Parking/pavement change delineates sidewalk edge



Trees, benches, trash receptacles

- Pedestrian scale elements that make people feel like they belong
- Add vibrancy to main streets and town centers



Wayfinding

- Signs with walking times reveal short distances between destinations
- Encourage walking rather than driving

Change is possible!



Before



After

Codman Square, Dorchester Vision Zero Improvements

Walkability improvement efforts in Boston

- Age Friendly walking
- Community outreach
- Walks
- Constituency building
- Vision Zero rapid response



Age Friendly Walking - Pilot Projects

- Mattapan Square Walk Audit
- East Boston and South End are other pilot neighborhoods



Community Outreach – WalkUp Roslindale

- Meeting with residents in the home of a community member



Walks to Observe Needed Safety Improvements

- South Boston – Cypher Street missing sidewalk on a busy truck route that is now serving many South Boston residents



Building new walking advocates – Asian Women for Health

- Mission Hill walk audit



Vision Zero – Rapid Response Site Visit with City Staff
Transportation, Police, Public Health, Public Works, EMS

Ways to advocate for change

- Speak up about walking issues at community meetings
- Use Boston 311 to report walking issues (and follow up!)
- Build relationships with local elected officials and municipal staff
- Contact local media to highlight the importance of safe walking
- Join with others to start a pedestrian committee in your neighborhood

Get in touch with **WalkBoston**

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