

LivableStreets Rethinking urban transportation

e-bulletin #12

April 19, 2006

Greetings!

Click here to view this ebulletin [as a printable PDF](#).

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LivableStreets E-bulletin reaches 1000 subscribers!
 Got a lead for a good story? Have something about your organization to publicize? Email us!

[Click here for a comprehensive calendar of events.](#)

LivableStreets Alliance is a non-profit organization that believes urban transportation has the power to make Boston a more connected, livable city. We challenge people to think differently and to demand a system that balances transit, walking, and biking with automobiles. We promote safe, convenient, and affordable transportation for all users in urban Boston. Streets that are enjoyable to use will better support neighborhoods and small business districts. LivableStreets believes that to remain a competitive, world-class city, Boston needs a world-class transportation network – one that makes our city a better place to live, work, and play. The Boston Bicycle Planning Initiative is now a project of LivableStreets.



Success! The four Citizens' Forums co-sponsored by LivableStreets and the Museum of Science reached over 150 participants! [Click here for more information and resource guides.](#)

LivableStreets is a not-for-profit 501(c)3. Consider making a [tax-deductible contribution](#) to help us in our work.

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The Boston Globe

SHIFTING GEARS, GROUP MERGES TRANSIT MESSAGE

*By Will Kilburn
 March 19, 2006*

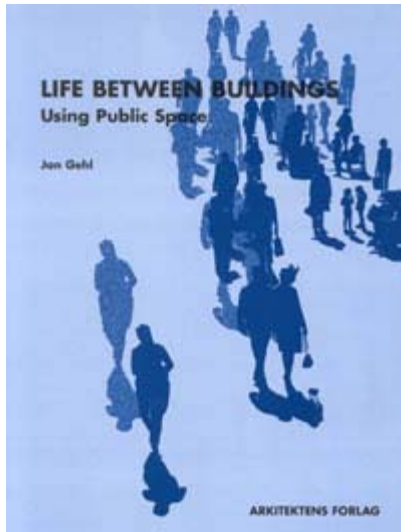
Usually, when advocates for non-car-based transportation try to get something done -- better bike paths, say, or improved mass transit -- they go it alone. But now, a new advocacy group called the LivableStreets Alliance is pledging to tie all of those interests together.

"We feel strongly that one of the reasons that advocacy hasn't been as successful as it could be in Boston is that people have been very 'siloed' in their modes, and it's hard to get traction," said Jeffrey Rosenblum, executive director and cofounder of the alliance. "Whereas when we power in with the bike advocates, the pedestrian advocates, [and] the advocates for transit, that's going to require them to take notice."

ANNUAL MEETING

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1. THU APR 20: WORLD-RENOWNED JAN GEHL TALKS ABOUT LIVABLE STREETS



"The Human Dimension in Architecture and City Planning"

**Thursday April 20
6:00 pm**

Piper Auditorium, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

48 Quincy St., Harvard Square, Cambridge

[Click here for a map.](#)

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Loeb Fellowship and the Urban Planning Program

Jan Gehl is a practicing Urban Design Consultant

and Professor of Urban Design at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen, Denmark. He has extensively researched the form and use of public spaces and put his findings to practice in a variety of locations around the world.

His company, Gehl Architects – Urban Quality Consultants, focus strongly on the facilitation of public life in public spaces, often pushing the boundaries beyond common uses of the public realm. To Gehl, design always begins with an analysis of the spaces between buildings. Only after a vision has been established of what type of public life one wants to see flourishing, is attention given to the surrounding buildings and how they can work together to support public spaces.

"The patterns of pedestrian life he has observed and the recommendations he has made are highly applicable to American cities... [Life between Buildings] is a splendid piece of work." -- William H. Whyte.

"In 1971... Jan Gehl was one of those lone protagonists for the humane values that he so excellently studies, formulates, and illustrates...more than a decade later we can discern an increased interest among architects and others in these values he so eminently defends. Further, over the years Jan Gehl's message has been developed with increased concentration and [achieved] the characteristic of timeless truth." -- Ralph Erskine, 1986, Foreword to Life between Buildings.

[Click here to learn more about Jan Gehl from Project for Public Spaces.](#)

This month at the Sherman Cafe in Somerville, Alliance board member Phil Goff, formerly a planner for the city of Portland, Ore., presented a slide show of changes made to the transportation grid there, along with suggestions for applying Portland's solutions to Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville.

Afterward, board member Mark Chase, one of the founders of Zipcar, said he believes that the group's approach -- idealism balanced by professional expertise -- will set it apart from others with a more radical, less practical approach.

"It's not anti-car; it's really looking at the balance of the system. The power that we have in our group is a lot of professional transportation planner-thinker people who are not just reactionary," he said. "We all like alternative or sustainable transportation, but people drive and use cars, and we're really looking for a balanced system."

[Click here for the full article.](#)

Other Links...

[About Us](#)

ATTENTION STUDENTS AND PRACTICIONERS: On Friday April 21 from noon - 2:00 pm, GSD is hosting a student brownbag with Jan titled, "Creating a Livable Street." Email Etty at expadmod@comcast.net for more information.



LivableStreets breakfast work session with Jan Gehl-- April 19, 2006

E-bulletin #12 Sponsor:



[Haley House Cafe](#)
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 Creating economic sustainability for under-employed women and men and to nurture the Dudley Square community.

2. BUS MARATHON HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR IMPROVED BUS SERVICE

The fastest runners in the world take a little over 2 hours to finish the 26-mile Boston Marathon. How far can you get on your bus in that amount of time?

On April 18, Alternative For Community and Environment (ACE) and the T-Riders Union sent out teams of everyday MBTA riders in Roxbury/Dorchester (the Blue Team) and in Chelsea (the Red Team) will ride "marathon routes" on the day after Boston's famous road race.



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"It takes more time to commute six miles round trip from Dorchester's Four Corners to downtown on an MBTA bus than it takes a marathoner to run 26 miles," said Khalida Smalls. 12th grader Christopher Valencia, a student at South Boston High School, commutes to school from Jackson Square on the Orange Line, to Broadway on the Red Line, and then to City Point in South Boston on the #9 bus-- he leaves his home in Jamaica Plain every morning at 6:30, but finds the bus portion of the trip makes him so late to school that the doors are often locked when he arrives at 8 am.

According the MBTA's schedules:

- The Silver Line (it's a bus, not a train) travels an average of 7.32 mi/hr during the morning rush hour. Meanwhile, the Men's Champion ran an average of 11.93 mi/hr during the 2005 Boston Marathon.
- The Fairmount Commuter Rail Line travels an average of *23.76 mi/hr as compared to the #116 bus, which travels an average of 10.43 mi/hr.

Every day MBTA bus riders complete their own marathon rides just to get to work, school, shopping or recreation. ACE believes lower-income communities and communities of color deserve faster, more reliable, and more frequent service. Lee Matsueda told the Globe, "Our message goes not only to the MBTA, but really to our next governor and legislators."

The Boston Globe [Click here for an April 13 article on the Bus Marathon.](#)

[Click here for ACE's April 18 press release.](#)

Despite continued concerns with bus service, LivableStreets Alliance commends the work of the new MBTA General Manager Dan Grabauskus for the many improvements to the system under his watch. The problems with transit in Boston go deeper than just management. The governor and legislature must provide the necessary resources for Grabauskus to be able to do his job.

[Click here for more information](#)

3. ADAPTIVE ENVIRONMENTS CONCERNED ABOUT SOUTH STATION DEVELOPMENT PLANS REGARDING PEDESTRIANS AND TRANSIT RIDERS



Adaptive Environments

Adaptive Environments (AE) has submitted a letter to the Massachusetts

Environment Policy Act (MEPA) office with concerns that the proposed development at South Station does not adequately accommodate the needs of the thousands of pedestrians who ply this area per day, getting to and from

AE believes that "any new development should do more than the minimum. Compliance alone would not make for places that are usable and welcoming for everyone... Attention to wayfinding, to maximizing access to daylight, thoughtful acoustics, wide pedestrian crossings that feature flush curbs, and healthy indoor air quality are examples of enhancing the human experience of place through design." Pedestrian conditions and connectivity should be maintained throughout and around the South Station area and to Fort Point Channel.

Recommendations include:

- **Station access improvements-** The narrow passageway between subway and train station should be widened. Train platform entrance from the street should be converted from stairs and ramp to sloped walkway.
- **No rough brick-** The planned rough brick creates a surface that is a tripping hazard and uncomfortable for wheelchair riders; should be replaced with granite, wire cut pavers, or high quality concrete.
- **Increase walk signals-** Traffic and pedestrian signals should be made accessible for people with vision impairments and walk times should be increased to accommodate the elderly and improve the flow of pedestrians.
- **Wide and friendly sidewalks-** Some sidewalks in the design are too narrow. There are too many "curb cuts" where vehicles entering and exiting garages cross high-pedestrian areas. Sidewalks crossing driveways should maintain a level surface for pedestrians, requiring vehicles to ramp up and down rather than pedestrians.

AE is a 28 year-old international non-profit organization based in Boston and committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities.

[Click here for a complete copy of the letter.](#)

[Click here for more information about Adaptive Environments.](#)

4. APRIL 28: SOME CAMBRIDGE FAMILIES ABANDON CARS FOR A DAY



Families abandon cars for a day
Cambridge Chronicle, April 13, 2006

Cambridge Green Streets Initiative's first Walk/Ride Day on March 31 was a great success. Adults and children from public and private schools and the Museum of Science walked, biked, jogged,

scootered, strollered and/or rode the bus or train, to school, work or errands without cars. Others carpooled, or drove partway.

One Baldwin family took a bus to Harvard Square, celebrated a child's birthday at breakfast, then bused to school. Two fourth-graders surprised friends for breakfast, then cycled together to school. Amigos' eighth-graders distributed "passports" and stamped hands.

Many West Cambridge students from King Open walked to school. At Shady Hill School, where hands were stamped, many were shocked at how easy and quick train and bus trips were. The head of Cambridge Montessori School walked 10 miles from Lexington and has doubled the school's number of bike racks.

In some classes, half the children and staff who normally drive came by other means.

People came from opposite sides of Cambridge, Medford, Somerville, Belmont, Lexington, Brookline, Arlington, Boston. Many plan to do it every Friday; some kids are requesting every day.

Join in the next Walk/Ride Day, Friday, April 28. Visit <http://greenstreets.blogspot.com> for coordinators, bike store coupons and more.

[Click here for the article source.](#)

[Click here for more information.](#)

5. URBAN LIFE CELEBRATED AT WALKBOSTON ANNUAL MEETING

WalkBoston's annual meeting held March 30, 2006--



Barnaby Evans, artist, who created WaterFire in Providence, was the keynote speaker. WaterFire is installation art that combines river surfaces with man-made fires to produce a dramatic form of public event that comes to life regularly and brings out thousands of walkers for evening strolls. WaterFire appeared in 1994 in Providence as First Fire to celebrate the tenth anniversary of First Night Providence. With hundreds of volunteers and the broad support of the community he established WaterFire as an on-going installation in 1997. WaterFire has been discussed in hundreds of articles and in symposia worldwide, and has appeared in urban studies books, novels, poems and narrative films.

[Click here for a copy of the Annual Meeting program.](#) (PDF 1 MB)





LivableStreets Board Members' Ken Kruckemeyer and Christopher Hart receive Golden Shoe Awards.

[Click for more information.](#)

6. 2006 BOSTON BIKE WEEK MAY 13 - 21 !

[Click here for a listing of BikeWeek events from the MassBike website.](#) Don't miss the Bike The Charles ride on Saturday May 13th, and the blowout party at RedBones in Davis Square on May 15th.



The [National Bicycle Greenway](#) came to Boston to talk with some of the people who bicycle Boston which is one of America's very first cities. Eight Boston cyclists a chance to help us see Boston roads through the eyes of a cyclist.



[Click here to listen to the interviews!](#)

Celebrate bicycling! What's going on elsewhere?

"**Bike Chicago**" is a five-month celebration of Chicago's commitment to become more bicycle friendly. Yes, that's right, FIVE MONTHS of celebration! [Click here for the details.](#)

The 15th Annual "**NYC Bike Month 2006**" is presented by Transportation Alternatives and the New York City Department of Transportation and Department of Health. [Click here for more information.](#)

The **city of Amsterdam** has announced that it will invest EUR100 million over the next five years to improve bicycling infrastructure. Their goal is to have 37% of city trips made by bicycle. [Click here for the news article.](#) (in Dutch)



Portland, Oregon celebrates cyclists with "Breakfast On The Bridge" once a month. [Check out this 4-minute video.](#)

[Click here for a 20-minute video about urban planning for bicycles in **Copenhagen.**](#)



MASSBIKE SELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DAVID WATSON Starting May 1, Winchester resident David Watson will take over the reins of MassBike. Current Director Dorie Clark will be staying on through the end of May . Currently an attorney for a high-tech startup company, David is a passionate road and mountain biker. He previously served on the Board of Directors for the Greater Boston chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and as Director of Greater Boston NEMBA's Mountain Bike Patrol. Meet him at MassBike's April 20 Harpoon social ([Click here for details](#)).



MEANWHILE... Bikes Not Bombs, is seeking an Executive Director to direct their programs that promote bike education through community-based, international and youth-centered programming. For a complete job description, email EDSearch@bikesnotbombs.org.

[Click for more information.](#)

7 OPINION: Hybrid cars; BAD NEWS: Elderly pedestrian fined

"Hybrid cars are the hippest automotive fashion statement to come along in years-- And yet like fat-free desserts, which sound healthy but can still make you fat, the hybrid car can make people feel as if they're doing something good, even when they're doing nothing special at all."

"Just because a car has so-called hybrid technology doesn't mean it's doing more to help the environment or to reduce the country's dependence on imported oil any more than a nonhybrid car. The truth is, it depends on the hybrid and the nonhybrid cars you are comparing, as well as on how you use the vehicles," says Jamie Lincoln Kitman, New York bureau chief for Automobile Magazine, in an April 16, 2006 opinion piece for the New York Times. Are the myriad of pro-hybrid laws and incentives really going to help? [Click here to read the entire piece.](#)

Elderly Woman Ticketed For Walking Too Slowly.

April 10, 2006, LOS ANGELES -- An 82-year-old woman has received a \$114 ticket for taking too long to cross a street in the San Fernando Valley, Calif. Mayvis Coyle said she began shuffling with her cane when the light was green, but was unable to make it to the other side before it turned red. "It turned red before I could get over. There he was, waiting, the motorcycle cop," Coyle told the Los

Angeles Daily News. "He said, `You're obstructing the flow of traffic.'"... On Friday, the light changed too quickly even for high school students to make it across without running. It went from green to red in 20 seconds... [Click here for the entire article.](#)

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