Now arriving: Expo Park-USC Station. Exit here for the TAJ and SADIQ have always loved all methods of transport. The California African American Museum and USC blares advertised:
across the extra-wide, bright yellow striped crosswalk and head out the train in a throng of passengers. Most are about a 12-minute walk. Many people walk in the neighborhood, so most days, Taj and Sadiq say hello to other walkers along the way.
If the traffic on Coliseum Street isn’t too heavy and the lights at Crenshaw and Rodeo are just right, they’ll stroll up the platform just in time for the 7:40 train. They might even have an extra moment to find a penny someone’s left behind at the TAP machine. Some days they get stuck waiting for a lull in the steady stream of cars at an unmarked crosswalk at Coliseum or the light at Crenshaw won’t turn until they’ve seen the eastbound train roll through the intersection. In that case, they wait for the 7:52 train. But, either way, the seven-minute train ride will get them to school well in time for their 8:05 bell.
Taj and Sadiq have always loved all methods of transportation, and the train ride to school is a dream come true. When they were babies, their parents used to push their pails and homework folders are tucked into their back packs. Check. Off they go to the nearest Metro station, to provide their parents with hugs and kisses, switching to each other’s arms to make sure everyone has gotten their proper lunch. No red light runners today. They cross toward the stand of stately trees with their exposed, smooth roots that from the Rose Garden and the architectural gem that is the California Science Center.
Often, Taj and Sadiq bounce or cartwheel their way up the wide sidewalk while their parents mime behind. The trucks and cars are especially loud on this stretch—everyone must shout their “I spy…” clues. For a long while, the boys would utter many hushed questions wondering why people had to sleep outside, under blankets on benches. Last year, a man was camped out for several days on the lawn outside the Rose Garden and didn’t bother to find a proper bathroom when he needed one, instead he used the area right next to his blanket—they couldn’t help but whisper to each other. But it’s been awhile since they’ve seen anyone sleeping on the benches flanking the entrance to the park, or eating from the garbage cans.
Heading east past the park, they stay toward the right, taking care as best they can to avoid bicyclists heading in the opposite direction, but once in a while they jump into the other ‘lane’ of sidewalk to pounce on the remnants of Olympic stars painted on the asphalt along Exposition. As Figueroa, they turn the busy corner, their lost stretch before arriving at the school gate. “Wow! It’s clean!” Sadiq takes note. The plants have been trimmed and much of the litter has been picked up. Here, most parents are darting across a little blocked side shunt that’s usually blocked by cones. “Please… the bell will ring soon. Thanks to the efforts of the new principal, Taj and Sadiq now enter through a pedestrian gate that opens to face Figueroa instead of following the car’s path and entering the driveway. A small consideration for the young walkers, this saves 90 seconds and a hundred steps from their morning commute. Arrived, they open their arms to each other and make sure they’ve got their proper goodbyes. “I love you mommymma?” “I love you daddy!”
For our morning walk when our kids graduate? It’s a great question. This walk has become a morning ritual, a constitutional Quality time. Will we be able to find a suitable junior high our kids can walk to? Will they even want us to walk with them? (We pretend that the answer to that second question will be “yes,” right through college.)

STORIES FROM THE STREETS WALKING TO SCHOOL IN SOUTH L.A.

by Randal Henry and Manal Aboelata-Henry

WALKING TO SCHOOL IN SOUTH L.A. is part of their daily commute, and they have taken it, rain or shine, for the last two years. The ride is an opportunity to read, watch all the cars pile up at the stoplights, or chat with an acquaintance. That’s right; they’re familiar faces on the 7:40 train, recognized by train operators, passengers, and Metro personnel.

“Now arriving: Expo Park-USC Station. Exit here for the California Science Center, the Natural History Museum, The California African American Museum and USC” blares the pre-recorded message. Taj closes his book. Sadiq rises to exit. The boys make sure their parents are with them and head out the train in a throng of passengers. Most are headed toward USC. A smaller handful exit as cars zoom across the extra-wide, bright yellow striped crosswalk separating two lanes of eastbound traffic whizzing toward Figueroa and the I10. The light changes, signaling it’s time to cross. Taj and Sadiq crane their heads to the right for one last look. No red light runners today. They cross toward the stand of stately trees with their exposed, smooth roots that from the Rose Garden and the architectural gem that is the California Science Center.

Often, Taj and Sadiq bounce or cartwheel their way up the wide sidewalk while their parents mime behind. The trucks and cars are especially loud on this stretch—everyone must shout their “I spy…” clues. For a long while, the boys would utter many hushed questions wondering why people had to sleep outside, under blankets on benches. Last year, a man was camped out for several days on the lawn outside the Rose Garden and didn’t bother to find a proper bathroom when he needed one, instead he used the area right next to his blanket—they couldn’t help but whisper to each other. But it’s been awhile since they’ve seen anyone sleeping on the benches flanking the entrance to the park, or eating from the garbage cans.

Heading east past the park, they stay toward the right, taking care as best they can to avoid bicyclists heading in the opposite direction, but once in a while they jump into the other ‘lane’ of sidewalk to pounce on the remnants of Olympic stars painted on the asphalt along Exposition. As Figueroa, they turn the busy corner, their lost stretch before arriving at the school gate. “Wow! It’s clean!” Sadiq takes note. The plants have been trimmed and much of the litter has been picked up. Here, most parents are darting across a little blocked side shunt that’s usually blocked by cones. “Please… the bell will ring soon. Thanks to the efforts of the new principal, Taj and Sadiq now enter through a pedestrian gate that opens to face Figueroa instead of following the car’s path and entering the driveway. A small consideration for the young walkers, this saves 90 seconds and a hundred steps from their morning commute. Arrived, they open their arms to each other and make sure they’ve got their proper goodbyes. “I love you mommymma?” “I love you daddy!”
For our morning walk when our kids graduate? It’s a great question. This walk has become a morning ritual, a constitutional Quality time. Will we be able to find a suitable junior high our kids can walk to? Will they even want us to walk with them? (We pretend that the answer to that second question will be “yes,” right through college.)

The truth is, we are fortunate. While we were deliberate about choosing a walkable neighborhood to establish our household, we got lucky. Without a crystal ball, which we did not have when we moved into our home 12 years ago, we would’ve never guessed that our lovely, culturally diverse, well-maintained neighborhood would become the focal point for Metro’s rail expansion, first at Crenshaw and Exposition, and eventually down Crenshaw towards LAX.

It’s 7:20 on a brisk, sunny Monday morning in Crenshaw Manor. Brothers Taj and Sadiq check the clocks on their Hush Puppies and take one last look to make sure lunch packs are tucked into their backpacks. Check. Off they go to the nearest Metro station, about a 12-minute walk. Many people walk in the neighborhood, so most days, Taj and Sadiq say hello to other walkers along the way.

If the traffic on Coliseum Street isn’t too heavy and the lights at Crenshaw and Rodeo are just right, they’ll stroll up the platform just in time for the 7:40 train. They might even have an extra moment to find a penny someone’s left behind at the TAP machine. Some days they get stuck waiting for a lull in the steady stream of cars at an unmarked crosswalk at Coliseum or the light at Crenshaw won’t turn until they’ve seen the eastbound train roll through the intersection. In that case, they wait for the 7:52 train. But, either way, the seven-minute train ride will get them to school well in time for their 8:05 bell.

Taj and Sadiq have always loved all methods of transportation, and the train ride to school is a dream come true. When they were babies, their parents used to push their pails and homework folders are tucked into their back packs. Check. Off they go to the nearest Metro station, to provide their parents with hugs and kisses, switching to each other’s arms to make sure everyone has gotten their proper goodbyes. “I love you mommymma?” “I love you daddy!”
For our morning walk when our kids graduate? It’s a great question. This walk has become a morning ritual, a constitutional Quality time. Will we be able to find a suitable junior high our kids can walk to? Will they even want us to walk with them? (We pretend that the answer to that second question will be “yes,” right through college.)

The truth is, we are fortunate. While we were deliberate about choosing a walkable neighborhood to establish our household, we got lucky. Without a crystal ball, which we did not have when we moved into our home 12 years ago, we would’ve never guessed that our lovely, culturally diverse, well-maintained neighborhood would become the focal point for Metro’s rail expansion, first at Crenshaw and Exposition, and eventually down Crenshaw towards LAX. It’s easy to forget that just a few years ago we used to push our babies in their strollers along an abandoned rail line.

Randal Henry and Manal Aboelata-Henry are the founders of Crenshaw WALKS. You can find them at facebook.com/groups/CrenshawWALKS

In Los Angeles County almost 18% of trips are made by walking, but <1% of funding goes to walking and bicycling infrastructure.
OUR MISSION
Los Angeles Walks is a pedestrian advocacy group that makes walking safe, accessible, and fun for all Angelenos.

We are a volunteer-supported organization dedicated to promoting walking and pedestrian infrastructure in Los Angeles, educating Angelenos and local policymakers concerning the rights and needs of pedestrians of all abilities, and fostering the development of safe and vibrant environments for all pedestrians.

OUR VISION FOR LOS ANGELES
Los Angeles is a vibrant city in which people can and do walk regularly for transportation, exercise, or fun. Policy makers and residents appreciate walking as a valuable form of transportation, and Angelenos of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities are able to walk or move safely through their neighborhoods.

OUR HISTORY
In 1998, urban designer Deborah Murphy founded Los Angeles Walks along with friends who were focused on fostering a more livable city. Over the years, thanks to a large and dedicated group of volunteers, Los Angeles Walks has consistently worked to raise awareness about pedestrian issues and bring attention to the role of walking in the City of Los Angeles. In the fall of 2011, under the fiscal umbrella of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Los Angeles Walks began a sustained, grassroots effort at an increased level to support walking in L.A. In 2013, Los Angeles Walks was granted fiscal sponsorship by Community Partners, joining ISO local projects moving the region forward.

Hey, I’m Walking Here!
AN UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES WALKS’ ONGOING CAMPAIGNS

In 2003, Los Angeles Walks raised over $10,000 for Hey, I’m Walking Here!, the first-ever pedestrian campaign for Los Angeles. Our campaign is working to improve pedestrian safety as well as celebrate walking as a conscious act that’s happening all over the city. And by expanding upon our existing Los Angeles Walks work, including awareness, events, community networking, and action, we are able to support long-term efforts to build a more walkable Los Angeles. You can read more about our campaign at losangeleswalks.org/campaigns

Enjoy Footnotes, and let us know what you think at hello@losangeleswalks.org

Los Angeles Walks founder Deborah Murphy interviewed in the Los Angeles Times in 2008 about pedestrian safety issues

Los Angeles Walks founder Deborah Murphy interviewed in the Los Angeles Times in 2008 about pedestrian safety issues

A Letter from Our Executive Director
Los Angeles is really walking the talk. After 16 years of championing walking and the rights of pedestrians in Los Angeles, I am thrilled that many other pedestrian advocates and walkers have stepped forward into the light and helped to make Los Angeles one of the most walkable in the country.

We have an awesome and dedicated steering committee—Alexis Lantz, Jessica Meaney, Alissa Walker, Colleen Corcoran, Daveed Kapoor, Mark Vallianatos, My La, Tita Castro, and Randal Henry—who might you might have seen around the city dressed as superheroes, protecting the rights of pedestrians at dangerous intersections. Their enthusiasm has been contagious, and the walking activists in neighbor- hoods across L.A. are calling for more beautiful and engaging streets. Hundreds of Angelenos have walked in the No Walks, Asia events and on walks in Silver Lake, Eagle Rock, Koreatown, and other neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Supporters show up at public meetings to advocate for the rights of pedestrians. And every day, more people of all ages are using the streets—restoring their grounds, getting to school, walking their dogs, or just enjoying the beautiful Los Angeles environment.

We’ve also seen engagement from the City as departments like LA DOT, the Department of City Planning, and the Bureau of Street Services recognize that streets are for people, not just for the movement of cars. Thanks to an excellent column by Steve Lopez in the Los Angeles Times (above), the Los Angeles City Council has responded to a wake-up call that sidewalk repair is as critical as fixing potholes through the Save Our Streets Funding proposal. The state legislature has introduced laws to address the increasing number of hit-and-run crashes. And in 2013, Mayor Eric Garcetti, who first appointed me as the chair of the City’s Pedestrian Advisory Committee when he was a city councilmember, announced the Great Streets Initiative to create safer, more vibrant streets for Los Angeles.

In this new year, we have a number of challenges ahead to address the 5% of pedestrian safety; engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation and Equity. We must increase the funding for pedestrian improvements; educate more drivers on pedestrian safety; enforce traffic laws to reduce crashes and make our streets safer for all; encourage more people to walk as a part of their daily lives, for their health as well as the health of their communities; evaluate the improvements and programs that we create to make sure that they are effective; and make sure that we equitably address issues across our city.

We need all of you to make sure that we can achieve these goals. For more on Los Angeles Walks or to sign up for our newsletter, visit losangeleswalks.org. Join us to participate in our activities and call to action.

— Deborah Murphy

Brought to You by…
edited by Alissa Walker designed by Colleen Corcoran produced by the Los Angeles Walks Steering Committee Deborah Murphy, Tita Castro, Colleen Corcoran, Randal Henry, Daveed Kapoor, My La, Alexis Lantz, Jessica Meaney, More Vallianatos, Alissa Walker

GET IN TOUCH…
losangeleswalks.org @losangeleswalks facebook.com/losangeleswalks hello@losangeleswalks.org 323.661.3173

A HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES ON FOOT: GREAT MOMENTS IN L.A.’S WALKING PAST
edited by LAHistory

NUESTRA MISION
Los Angeles Walks es un grupo de apoyo a los peatones que procura que caminar sea seguro, accesible y diversificado para todos los angelenos.

Somos una organización de voluntarias dedicada a promover el apoyo para caminar así como la infraestructura peatonal en Los Angeles, así como a la educación de los angelenos y los responsables de la política local relacionados con los derechos y necesidades de los peatones de todas las capacidades, y a fomentar el desarrollo de entornos seguros y dinámicos para todos los peatones.

NUESTRA VISION DE LOS ANGELES
Los Angeles es una ciudad dinámica en la que la gente puede y camina regularmente para transportarse, ejercitarse o divertirse. Para los políticos y residentes la caminata es una forma valiosa de transporte. Los angelenos de todas edades, etnias, ingresos y habilidades pueden caminar o moverse con seguridad en todos los vecindarios.

NUESTRA HISTORIA
En 1999, la diseñadora urbana Deborah Murphy fundó Los Angeles Walks junto con unos amigos enfocados a fomentar una ciudad más habitable. A través de los años, gracias a un gran número de defensores de voluntariado, Los Angeles Walks ha trabajado constantemente para crear conciencia sobre temas de peatones y proporcionar atención a la función de la caminata en la ciudad de Los Angeles. En el otoño de 2011, batió la fiscalía de la Coalición de Ciclistas de Los Angeles, Los Angeles Walks comenzó a desplegar esfuerzos sostenidos, basándose en el mayor nivel de apoyo para la caminata en L.A. En 2013, Los Angeles Walks se le concedió el patrocinio fiscal por los socios de la comunidad (Community Partners), uniendo a 150 proyectos que impulsan a la región.

¡Ay, estoy caminando! UNA ACTUALIZACIÓN SOBRE NUESTRAS CAMPAÑAS

En 2013, Los Angeles Walks recaudó más de 13,000 dólares para ¡Ay, estoy caminando! la primera campaña para peatones en Los Angeles. Nuestra campaña es para mejorar la seguridad de los peatones y reconocer a la caminata como un acto de conciencia de lo que está pasando en toda la ciudad. Expandiendo nuestro trabajo en Los Angeles Walks, incluyendo hacer tomar conciencia, eventos, reuniones de la comunidad y acción, somos capaces de apoyar los esfuerzos para que Los Angeles sea una ciudad en la que se pueda caminar. losangeleswalks.org/espanol

Disfrute de un conocimiento sobre el trabajo de Los Angeles Walks.
Los Angeles Walks steering committee member Alissa Walker talks to the Los Angeles Times architecture critic.

Alissa Walker: First, thank you for such a great conversation with Mayor Garcetti at Occidental College in February. With Villaraigosa we saw this empire-building when it came to transit, but last year I didn’t think we’d be talking about transit much at all. Now we’ve got a mayor who walked five miles to City Hall on Walk to Work Day! How else is Garcetti’s approach different, in your opinion?

Christopher Hawthorne: Villaraigosa, near the end of his time in office, really began paying attention to pedestrian safety and some of the success stories of urban walking and transit. But it took almost eight years for his administration to get to that point. Garcetti is unusually knowledgeable about and interested in urbanism. To me, the transition was clear in his Occidental conversation we had, and we’re still very early in his administration, but his message with respect to urban design — especially a combination of execution and nerve. How will he be able to fund improvements to pedestrian access, and sidewalks when they conflict with some voices? (and media outlets) — deserves to keep car traffic moving as efficiently and as possibly as possible, and how will he be able to defend controversial or even unpopular changes to street design?

What would you like to see happen with Garcetti’s new Great Streets Initiative?

I’d like to see it ultimately produce a ser of ambitious and thoughtful blueprints that can be applied—with adjustments, of course, for different neighborhoods, and topography— across the whole city, and not just among certain corridors. There have been some tremendously encouraging changes in the city’s streetscapes that we use and think about the streets, but many have been either temporary ( CicLAvia) or limited in scale (Sunset/Trangle Plaza). We need a way of making these improvements both permanent and more common, so they shape the experience of moving through L.A. in a more meaningful way.

Speaking of great streets (or Great Streets) I remember something you said about York Boulevard a few years ago where you pointed out what made it such a great street. The width of the road the height of the buildings, the use of, use of, strip malls. You really taught me how to “read” an L.A. street and change the way I thought about streets as important public spaces in Los Angeles. So thank you for that. York, to me, has really naturally become one of the city’s great streets.

It’s something I noticed when I lived on Eagle Rock—that York seemed more accessible to bikes and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of its manageability and scaleable, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, “like a room’s ‘attic.” It’s narrow enough that you can access it on both sides and have a stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because the way it was adapted to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there’d be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you’d have to shout or wave your arm to make your presence known, and even that might not work. It’s more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. I think that we can’t be made to be more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

It’s something I noticed when I lived on Eagle Rock—that York seemed more accessible to bikes and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of itsmanageability and scaleable, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, “like a room’s ‘attic.” It’s narrow enough that you can access it on both sides and have a stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because the way it was adapted to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there’d be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you’d have to shout or wave your arm to make your presence known, and even that might not work. It’s more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. I think that we can’t be made to be more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

It’s something I noticed when I lived on Eagle Rock—that York seemed more accessible to bikes and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of its manageability and scaleable, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, “like a room’s ‘attic.” It’s narrow enough that you can access it on both sides and have a stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because the way it was adapted to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there’d be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you’d have to shout or wave your arm to make your presence known, and even that might not work. It’s more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. I think that we can’t be made to be more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

It’s something I noticed when I lived on Eagle Rock—that York seemed more accessible to bikes and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of its manageability and scaleable, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, “like a room’s ‘attic.” It’s narrow enough that you can access it on both sides and have a stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because the way it was adapted to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there’d be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you’d have to shout or wave your arm to make your presence known, and even that might not work. It’s more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. I think that we can’t be made to be more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

It’s something I noticed when I lived on Eagle Rock—that York seemed more accessible to bikes and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of its manageability and scaleable, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, “like a room’s ‘attic.” It’s narrow enough that you can access it on both sides and have a stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because the way it was adapted to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there’d be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you’d have to shout or wave your arm to make your presence known, and even that might not work. It’s more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. I think that we can’t be made to be more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends. Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.
Street Vendors Can Help Make Great Streets

by Rudy Espinoza

Street vending is illegal in Los Angeles. This surprising fact is something that 40 L.A. organizations hope to change this year in a movement currently making its way through City Council.

Legalizing street vending will create thousands of jobs and bring healthier food into low-income food deserts through a program and incentive program. It’s about time that we embrace entrepreneurism can make L.A.’s streets safer and more pedestrian-friendly. Street vendors can add to great streets. It has been heard and time and again in town halls that the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign hosted last year across the city to inform our advocacy effort. Working with over 600 people, we learned that street vendors are ambassadors of the sidewalk. Vendors are trusted members of communities, innovators in how to use the public right-of-way to attract pedestrians, and purveyors of culture that makes neighborhoods truly special. It’s not uncommon to see a food vendor beautifying the street with her colorful bouquet, a taco vendor modifying a cart with wheels to increase his mobility in a neighborhood, or an ice cream vendor ringing her bell to attract customers as they walk by. To me, these things add value, and even help to slow down some of our streets so pedestrians can actually see the small businesses that line our commercial corridors. They remind us everyday that the sidewalks belong to us.

In this respect, some businesses have begun to see the value of vendors, too. Recently, a business owner who signed on to support the Street Vendor Campaign explained that after experiencing a violent robbery at her business in South L.A., she realized that it might have been avoided if more pedestrians on her block. In her opinion, a street vendor could attract more pedestrians, while offering a vibrant presence that helps keep the space occupied. She described it well as “eyes on the street,” which can only help to make our communities safer.

This story is only one of many that describe how vendors are working with small businesses in an attempt to attract pedestrians and make streets safer. In some cases businesses and street vendors are even partnering by selling complementary goods or sharing spaces to keep retail establishments active beyond traditional business hours.

Currently, the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign is monitoring the development of a citywide report that will suggest how the City Council can develop a permit system for street vendors. In order for the initiative to be successful, it will be important for all of us to get involved and recognize the role street vendors play in making our streets safer, more economically viable, and more pedestrian-friendly.

Jobs. Healthy food. Safe streets. There are so many great reasons to legalize street vending in Los Angeles. But here’s another surprising fact: Of the ten largest cities in the U.S., Los Angeles is the only city without a street vending permit system. It’s time for us to catch up. I’m confident that we’ll not only see gains in employment and food accessibility, but we’ll also see the emergence of a new energy that will draw people to the streets and make our communities more vibrant.

In sum, legalizing street vending will make our communities safer. This is something that 40 L.A. organizations hope to change this year in a movement currently making its way through City Council.

Like many of you, I prefer getting places without driving whenever possible. There’s a convenience store, a family taco stand, and a coffee shop a few blocks from my house. I live across the street from a park where I take my dog, and if I need a bus, there are two stops close by. All I need to do to get there is head down the middle of the street.

When you might ask, why would you want to walk in a wheelchair busy Blake Street, going head-to-head with semis who seem to be on their way to Fast and Furious 7? The tacos are good, but I must be risking my life for that al pastor! My nice convenient neighborhood is, in many ways, a microcosm of the problems associated with pedestrian right-of-way for people with disabilities in L.A. There’s a good chance that you’ve actually seen people in wheelchairs or scooters on the road before. Trust me, these are not people trying to start some kind of improbable disability rally or Critical Mass: Wheelchair Edition. They are simply pedestrians who do not have the physical ability to maneuver through the labyrinth of cracks, holes, and other obstacles that litter city sidewalks. And although incredible progress has been made in the realm of public access since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990, there is no regulatory body backing around ensuring that standards are being upheld. That being said, sidewalks that were completely accessible via wheelchair when the concrete was poured in the 90s may today look like a demolition crew just took a lunch break. Many sidewalks contain sections at outrageous angles that have made me question just how close is safe to the San Andreas Fault. Cracks and holes are more prevalent than cigarette butts and occasionally there are entire chunks of concrete missing or pulverized. Signposts are sometimes placed in the middle of the sidewalk, making it impossible for wheelchair users. Most repairs to these damages are quick but band-aids that don’t last long. “I know just throw down some asphalt!” I’ve encountered plenty of stress such as stress that these first moves back to the corner and the street to get around. When I get a wild hair to head out and take on the mighty beast that is the L.A. sidewalks, it’s even more frustrating when I can’t even reach them. There are still corners or plenty of intersections that don’t even have curb cuts. When a corner actually has a curb cut, the slope complies with federal standards. I’ve struggled up plenty of steep ramps like this throughout the city and simply avoided those that I knew would tip me over if I’m a too much as attempted.

These are just a handful of the reasons why people in wheelchairs take to the streets in Los Angeles. And this is a huge population. Data from Metro shows that there are over 85,000 wheelchair boardings on buses alone each month, far more than in New York City’s entire public transportation network (which, I should add, has seven times the overall ridership). While these are boardings, not separate individuals, the point is clear: the number of wheelchair users in L.A. is huge and they get out in the community. But these aren’t the only pedestrians who rely on quality sidewalks. Grandma knows as hell isn’t going to get too far with her walker in conditions like these. Moms who didn’t think they’d need a Chicco stroller with a car seat for their infant in a stock-absorbing stroller with their walker inside knobby tires to get their babies around are out of luck, too. And let’s not forget pedestrians who are blind. Imagine the frustration of trying on a white cane for sight when every other section of concrete feels similar to the yellow safety bumps found on new curb cuts.

I should mention also that I use a pretty compact manual wheelchair. Anyone who needs a powerchair or scooter to get around really needs it because their devices are larger, further complicating navigation through the rubble. These devices are also way heavier, so if someone gets stuck on something they can be stuck there until the rescue team arrives. One advantage that these folks have over me, however, is more speed on the road!

Ultimately, all of these factors go beyond difficulties and limitations for pedestrians who rely on quality sidewalks. This is overall public safety concern for everyone walking down the sidewalk who isn’t carefully analyzing their next step. And it’s an issue that needs serious consideration.

So what’s the solution? The second largest concern from voters during the mayoral campaign last year was the con- dition of roads in the city—but what about the sidewalks? Clearly we favor the automobile in Los Angeles. But as more of us find our footing and wander about to enjoy this fair city and its beautiful climate, we should demand a more comprehensive approach to the design of our transportation network. This is one that takes into consideration all users.

For anyone out there who has yet to see the light, I offer this invitation: I can’t walk a mile in your shoes, but any time you want to take a spin in my wheelchair you can—just bring a helmet. And I also have to acknowledge the LA County Bar Association who have already gotten the jump on this issue with a comprehensive report that provides a comprehensive approach to the design of our transportation network.
Do you ever wonder why different neighborhoods and streets in Los Angeles look the way they do—and why some places seem to be more walkable than others? The history of how our land was developed includes economic demand, neighborhood preferences, and transportation infrastructure. But the most direct way that we collectively influence what our communities look like is through zoning. Although zoning is a local government tool for the regulation of land use, especially by planning and zoning.

Zoning is a regulatory system that most local governments employ to control how land is used. As the name suggests, it divides buildings into different zones. Depending on what zone a piece of land is located in, there are rules that restrict what types of uses can be carried out on the lot, as well as the location, size, and shape of buildings allowed on the property. And the physical structure of these communities influences how people live and how they move about their neighborhoods.

The City of Los Angeles is facing one of the biggest changes to the way it looks and functions—it is fundamentally updating its zoning code for the first time since 1946. The 1946 code helped shape a postwar city of single-family subdivisions with a growing reliance on cars. Revisiting zoning rules can hopefully strengthen the ways that a 21st century Los Angeles is transforming and help residents build a city where walking is a convenient and safe way to travel. Zoning is potentially our most powerful tool to create a more walkable Los Angeles.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ZONING IN L.A.

Los Angeles at the beginning of the 20th century was just beginning its explosive growth. Residential areas were rubbing up against both farms and burgeoning industrial areas. People complained about the smells and sights of slaughterhouses, saloons, laundries, brickyards, and other perceived negative land uses. The L.A. City Council created special districts to exclude certain economic activities from parts of the city. In 1909, L.A. consolidated many of these special districts into an ordinance dividing the city into industrial areas and commercial areas. This ordinance is considered to be the nation’s first general, citywide zoning law.

In the early 1920s, Los Angeles adopted a more comprehensive zoning code dividing the city into five zones: single-family residential, multiple-family residential, businesses, light industry, and heavy industry. With more and more residents driving, automobile interests and public officials began studying traffic. To reduce reliance on street parking, which was creating traffic congestion, in 1930 Los Angeles began requiring new businesses and multi-family housing projects to include on-site parking. In 1946, these minimum parking requirements were expanded to include single-family homes.

HOW ZONING IN L.A. WORKS.

In contemporary Los Angeles, zoning is integrated into the City’s broader urban planning framework. Los Angeles has had a General Plan since FRN that is meant to provide the overall vision and policy guidance for urban form and development of the city. Neighborhood plans give additional guidance and contain zoning maps of every property. L.A.’s two 1909 zones and five 1931 zones have expanded to more than 45 zones today, including 27 different residential zoning designations.

The zoning code is the legal “key” to these maps and properties. It contains rules for what uses and activities may be conducted in each zone when a new building is constructed (and when an existing building is converted to a use). For example, in many multi-family residential zones, it is illegal to locate a coffee shop on the ground floor of an apartment building, even if the residents and people living nearby might enjoy being able to walk there to get a cup of coffee in the morning. Height zones and floor area ratios control the size of buildings; while setbacks (required distance a building is “set back” from the street) influence where on a lot buildings may be located. The combination of size and setback requirements influence the architecture and density of different parts of Los Angeles.

Property owners can seek variances which allow them to become exempt from certain zoning standards. This is a time-consuming and expensive process, but many larger buildings could not legally be built without receiving multiple variances. The politics of zoning has been heated in recent decades. Opponents of new development often use the zoning approval process or environmental review process to seek, stop or alter proposed buildings.

LOCALIZING A WALKABLE CITY:

Think of a place in Los Angeles that you like to walk. Many of the places in L.A. that attract pedestrians are older commercial areas. These districts tend to share a few common features. They have buildings that come right up to the sidewalk rather than being surrounded by parking. They are located close to residences or even have apartments above shops. And, unfortunately, because of zoning rules, they are very difficult to legally build today.

Zoning contributes to making Los Angeles a challenging place to walk. The main way that it harms walking is by separating different land uses, increasing distances and making it more difficult to walk to the amenities we need on a daily basis. In his book Walkable City, Jeff Speck describes a “General Theory of Walkability” that holds that people will walk more if it is useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting—four things that can be improved by better zoning.

The revision of L.A.’s zoning code and ongoing updates of community plans create opportunities to remove obstacles to walking and thereby make Los Angeles a more healthy, sustainable, and socially connected city. Here are three ways to make a more walkable L.A.: 

Increasing mixed-use zoning. Currently less than five percent of the city is zoned to allow residential and commercial activities to coexist on one property. Allowing more types of uses in many of the city’s zoning categories, or consolidating separate zones into a smaller number of mixed use zones, would help boost walking. Many studies indicate that the presence of a variety of amenities close to where people live is one of the strongest predictors of rates of walking.

Eliminating or reducing mandatory parking requirements. Mandatory minimum parking requirements encourage driving, make rents less affordable, make our surroundings uglier and more dangerous, and increase the temperature of Los Angeles in an era of climate change. These requirements should be eliminated as in many parts of the City as possible, following the lead of the newCornfields Arroyo Seco Specific Plan.

Shaping pedestrian-friendly buildings and streets. Zoning rules can require that buildings interface with sidewalks and streets in a manner that improves the quality of the walking experience. Zoning can bring shops up to lot line next to the sidewalk, encourage retail and windows at ground level, and move curb cuts or parking spaces next to alleys rather than main streets.

Mark Valliattamis is a Los Angeles Walks steering committee member and policy director at Occidental College’s Urban and Environmental Policy Institute. You can read more about the updates to L.A.’s zoning code, and find out how you can get involved, at recode.ca.

In the City of Los Angeles, there are 4600 miles of sidewalks in disrepair which would cost $1.5 billion to repair.

There are 2,500 trip and fall lawsuits in the City of L.A. each year.

Mapping L.A.’s Pedestrian Collisions

The City of Los Angeles recorded over 19,000 pedestrian-vehicle collisions between 2003 and 2009. That’s an average of 2,700 per year.

The map below shows a closer view of central Los Angeles. The numbers in the intersections represent the average number of people hit by vehicles at that location each year.
We know walking is good for our communities and good for our health. But how does designing for walking help businesses—and the city—improve their bottom lines?

As founder of Linear City Development, Yuval Bar-Zemer has led the transformation of several neighborhoods by staging special events to lead to development. Over lunch at Urban Radish, a new Arts District grocery store developed by Linear City, Bar-Zemer described five ways he’s seen walking boost L.A.’s economy.

DENSITY IS CHANGING THE WAY ANGELENOs SPEND MONEY.

From an urban-planning perspective, you have to think of what level of density will create an environment in which we don’t have to rely on the car for basic functions. Can we get your job closer to your home? Can we get your kids’ school closer? Can we get you to your favorite restaurant? Can we get you to your grocery store?

If you manage to do that, then the option of walking is no longer a “pioneering, visionary” type thing, but rather becomes the most sensible thing. You get your exercise and you get where you need to go by foot. We built the Urban Radish store around this idea. If you live nearby and you want to come and do your shopping here, it sounds reasonable that you will walk a couple of blocks, and you can do it three times a week and leave your car in your garage.

CAR-SHARING HELPS ALLEVIATE FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR RESIDENTS.

Linear City installed the largest public electric vehicle-charging facility in the city, and placed two electric vehicles that operate as a community car-share program.

You can literally live in this city without the need to own a car. If you need one, you just go online and reserve a car. You have a car for the day. I think this is going to be the future of the automobile. The flexibility of not owning a car but still using it to address your needs—doing some errands or visiting a friend—makes a lot of economic sense and will enhance the choice of walking. I believe that many people would be happy to get rid of their car or the $400 to $500 per month associated with owning a car as long as they have most of what they need in a walking distance and the availability of a car when they need it.

GOOD WALKABILITY PROVIDES AN ECONOMIC BOOST TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Once you manage to change people’s priorities, and the preferred model of transportation becomes cycling and walking, that means that the available radius for amenities shrinks dramatically. This dynamic enforces the local businesses that can rely on the support of the immediate neighborhoods to patronize their businesses, as opposed to a large area for development, requiring everyone to drive far away on a freeway and park in a big parking lot. You are localizing commerce. You benefit from tax revenues, localized sales tax, and the local services. Everyone can show that the community that you are supporting local businesses by making walking a priority.

STORIES FROM THE STREETS

REMEMBERING MY COUSIN MARLENE by Andy Martinez

On Valentine’s Day, when people normally spend time with their loved ones, I received the terrible news that my cousin Marlene Barreto was killed by a driver in a crosswalk at the intersection of Bronson and Fountain across from Le Conte Middle School. As my cousin and her nine-year-old daughter walked through the crosswalk, the driver of the big rig truck sped through a stop sign into the intersection. Her maternal instincts immediately came into play, and she pushed her daughter out of the way to protect her from the oncoming truck.

The dangerous intersection now serves as a memorial site where many of her parents’ biggest fears came to reality. Right now, the daughter is experiencing intense trauma from the loss of her mother. It has impacted her to the point where she can hardly speak. She directed the daughter to the point where she can hardly speak. She directs the daughter to the point where she can hardly speak. She directs

Emotionally, it has taken a toll on me, and I feel regret for not having seen her as much during the last few years. My extended family, including Marlene and I, lived together in the early 90s in MacArthur Park after they had recently immigrated to the U.S. Some of my earliest and fondest memories are playing with her when I was four years old.

The intersection currently lacks a traffic light or significant safety design. Parents had been pleading with the City of Los Angeles for years to install a crossing guard but the City claimed there weren’t sufficient financial resources. Parents became discouraged after such a minimal response and disappointed that their families’ safety wasn’t considered a priority. Parents of Le Conte students I have spoken to after the tragedy now refuse to let their children walk by themselves to school because of the path collision.

Last year, as an active board member with Multicultural Communities for Mobility, an organization dedicated to educating and empowering low-income cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, I spearheaded several pedestrian and bicycle safety workshops throughout L.A. County. Only five months ago, I opened a pedestrian safety workshop right here in Hollywood.

This is why I feel even more determined to seek justice for low-income pedestrians. We have met with Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell’s office and are working to both rectify the intersection and look at citywide legislation to improve safety for pedestrians.

Andy Martinez is on the board of Multicultural Communities for Mobility, which you can find at multicultimobility.org.

How to Make Walking Better in Your Neighborhood

While Los Angeles Walks continues to push for large-scale changes across the City, we need you to help us understand the needs of people in your area and improvements in your neighborhood. This City of L.A. has launched 311—a one-stop customer service program where residents can let the City know of their transportation needs and they need, and we want to make sure better walking information is available to them.

To get started, you can dial “311” on your phone or go to fecity.org/mgLA311. If you have a smartphone, you can download the MyLA311 app.

So, what walking improvements are you asking for with 311?

CURB RAMPs: If you see an intersection crossing that doesn’t have a curb ramp, be sure to include not only the intersection but corner specifically.

UNEVEN PAVEMENT: If there is a broken sidewalk or some other defect that could cause someone to trip, be sure to note the nearest address.

BLOCKED SIDEWALKS: If there is garbage or a plant that is making walking on the sidewalk difficult, you can report this through the effective address 311.

CROSSWALK REPAIRS AND INSTALLATIONS: If crosswalk paint is faded or was never properly installed, be sure to make your report more clear.

SIGNAL TIMING: Be sure to note the pedestrian countdown that is white for at least three seconds, and then flashes red for at least five seconds for every four foot of street width

If the timing seems too quick, you can report it.

BROKEN STREETLIGHTS: If you notice a damaged or missing streetlight, you can easily request a repair.

To get your issue prioritized higher, identify these as a “Hazard.” Once the City is made aware of a dangerous condition, there is a greater legal urgency to fix it so it can help them avoid lawsuits. So, by mentioning that it is a hazard, you can speed up your request.

While the City might not act upon your request immediately, it is important to show the demand for better walking conditions by making as many requests as we can. Thanks for your help!

Marc Couser is a pedestrian advocate and transportation policy expert. Download 311 at fecity.org/mgLA311.
Bring plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals to life in your neighborhood through this new citywide program

Are you interested in ways to make your neighborhood better for people walking, bicycling and taking transit? Is the street space you spend time on challenged by narrow sidewalks, fast-moving vehicles, or a lack of nice places to linger, meet a friend, read a book, check your email, have a coffee, sit with your charming canine companion, or people watch? We ultimately want to bring permanent physical changes to our streets that address mobility, quality of life and public space accessibility issues within our communities. Typically, we think about our local government and elected officials initiating big projects to create public space opportunities, like neighborhood parks with grass and trees, or streetscape plans and road diets with physical infrastructure. However, these types of projects can sometimes take years—even decades—to come to fruition. The funding required is nothing to sneeze at, involving hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars. At the same time, neighbors don’t always agree on improvements like sidewalk bump-outs or cycletracks for bike riders. Pouring concrete permanently, and we all know people sometimes don’t like change. Does the labyrinth of project process, responsibility, and capital investment make you feel like there was a repurpose small slices of the streets in your neighborhood for space that people can enjoy quickly, and for a fraction of the cost? How can you start bigger conversations on urban design in a non-threatening way and, at the same time, demonstrate the benefits of investing in infrastructure to make it better for people moving around by foot or bike? Do you want to see something happen?

LET’S TAKE A WALK DOWN PEOPLE ST!

Communities can now easily transform underserved areas of L.A.’s largest public asset—our 7,500 miles of city streets—in creative, vibrant, and accessible public space with People St, a program of the City of Los Angeles Department of Trans- portation (LADOT). Eligible community partners can apply for approval to install three innovative types of projects: plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals. These temporary project types have one thing in common: they are situated below the curb. Unlike repurposing a vacant lot into a park, or planting trees along a sidewalk—both examples of above-the-curb improvements—People St projects reallocate pieces of the roadway, where you step down from the sidewalk, as their home.

PLAZAS are installed in underused or redundant road space by blocking off a segment of street with heavy planters and colored or textured surface treatments.

-PARKLETS and bicycle corrals are installed on-curb or metersed parking spaces.

-ALL THREE PEOPLE ST PROJECT TYPES transform below-the-curb roadspaces into spaces for people to enjoy.

A PROGRAM BASED IN PARTNERSHIPS

People St is all about facilitating partnerships between the community and the City of Los Angeles. Projects initiated by community can be brought to life by working through People St and community partners are required to be active players in building neighborhood support for a project. They are responsible for identifying an appropriate site, conducting outreach, raising funds required for materials and furnishings, installing project elements, and providing and funding long-term management, maintenance, and operations of the project.

WAIT, TEMPORARY? WHY SPEND MONEY IF THESE ARE TEMPORARY?

The projects are permitted through a one-year agreement between approved community partners and LADOT, with the option to renew the agreement annually. We hope that community support will be so strong that residents will work with the city and local elected officials to make the temporary transformations permanent or seek future capital investment, corridor-level urban design improvements. You can think of People St projects as quick “step one” interventions for speeding up the more permanent projects that take lots of work to achieve.

By physically and contextually demonstrating the benefits of capturing street space for public space, these projects can, in turn, attract, expedite and foster future investment in infrastructure that provides for walking, bicycling, and taking transit. Channeling the smarts of the business community is the ROI, or return on investment, for a community partner in installing a People St plaza, parklet or bicycle corral.

L.A. is a pedestrian-friendly city, with a walk score of 80. L.A. is the pedestrian capital of the world. L.A., with its 33 city council districts, has a smaller area than the city of London, but it has more miles of public space. 7,500 miles of city streets are open to pedestrians 24/7. Our pedestrian network is twice as wide as our bicycle network.

My, how far L.A. walkers have come—or have we? This pedestrian bill of rights was filed by the City Council in 1987. 27 years later, we’re still fighting for many of these basic pedestrian rights.

Los Angeles City Council File Number 87-2261, dated December 8th, 1987

MOVE that Council adopts the following statements as the “pedestrian Bill of Rights” for Los Angeles:

1. Safe roads and safe places to cross the street
2. Pedestrian-oriented building facades, trees, flower stands, trash cans, awnings, etc.
3. Safe and comfortable bus stops and public transportation stations
4. Appealing use of landscaping and available open space
5. Full notification of all street widening that impinge on public open space and sidewalks
6. Access to streets and buildings for disabled people
7. Clean surroundings, removing of graffiti and advertisements from public property
8. Have needs of pedestrians considered as heavily as the needs of drivers
9. Public works of Art

FURTHER MOVE that City departments use this pedestrian Bill of Rights of Way to evaluate the needs in future development.

Los Angeles City Council File Number 87-2261, dated December 8th, 1987

1978 A pedestrian over Flower Street opens in downtown L.A., bringing what was then the Mexican Boulevard and Cahuenga Corridor. L.A. Community Planning Commission led by the City Planning Director and City Engineer. First of five pedestrian overpasses in the downtown Barney Island renewal project.

1982 The Board of Supervisors passes the “walking Ordinance” (L.A. Code Sec. 26.17), in an effort to improve pedestrian conditions on the streets. Los Angeles, with its 33 council districts, is a pedestrian-friendly city, with a walk score of 80. L.A., with its 33 city council districts, has a smaller area than the city of London, but it has more miles of public space—7,500 miles of city streets open to pedestrians 24/7. Our pedestrian network is twice as wide as our bicycle network.

1984 The Bus Riders Union is established as the local affiliate of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Los Angeles, along with Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Urban League. The Union’s primary goal is to form “people’s power movements” in opposition to industry. In 1984, the Union founded the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which is the primary entity charged with the bus service in Los Angeles County. The Union is a member of the Interstate Metropolitan Area Transportation Planning Council (I-MAPAC), which is the body that formulates the metropolitan area’s transportation policy and planning.

1996 In order to encourage walking and bicycling, the City of Los Angeles is working to promote bicycling and pedestrian safety and accessibility. The city is working to foster the creation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in underserved areas, including the use of public transit, bike paths and bike corrals. The City is also working to prioritize the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in underserved areas, including the use of public transit, bike paths and bike corrals. As a result, Los Angeles is seeing a significant increase in the number of people who are walking and bicycling for transportation. The City is continuing to work to encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in underserved areas, including the use of public transit, bike paths and bike corrals.

1998 Metropolitan Archaeologists design a pedestrian bridge to cross over the 101 freeway downtown near the historic 6th Street bridge, the pedestrian bridge over the 6th Street bridge is to be located at 6th Street and 10th Street. This historic pedestrian bridge was constructed in 1917 and is located at 6th Street and 10th Street.

2000 The 6th Street Bridge Pedestrian Bridge is located at 6th Street and 10th Street. The bridge spans the 101 freeway downtown near the historic 6th Street bridge. The bridge is located at 6th Street and 10th Street. The bridge is located at 6th Street and 10th Street. The bridge is located at 6th Street and 10th Street. The bridge is located at 6th Street and 10th Street.
PLACE. The other day while walking to mass. I crossed the cement spiled up by landfills out of the way behind the houses on Clark Avenue. I’ve crossed the avenue from the time I was a boy and the thirty 2 years I walked to follow my father’s death. But this time, a sheet of water—probably leaking from a back- yard hose—spilled across the concrete.

For the first time, I noticed that inscribed in the concrete were names, but almost worn smooth. Children had written awk- wardly, haphazardly in the wet concrete but with respect for each other’s work. Their names didn’t overlap.

The loose water had brought out the faint letters. I’m not ineptive. The qualities of the everyday interest me. Yet here were persistent marks of lives that had neighbored mine for years and which I had never seen, would never have seen except for the contingencies of that moment. I stopped.

Messing with the wet concrete of a new sidewalk is a trope of suburban comedy—Demis the Menace meets exasperated workman. In the innocence of that kind of comedy is the expectation that every mistake will be smoothed back.

The route takes me across the alley and down Clark Avenue hardly ever varies (part of my mildly obsessive— compulsive personality). The route is the same, but the walk is always different, and not just because the conditions of light and air and ambient sound are various. In the midst of the many things that persist are as many things that I see for the first and last time.

Like the pattern this morning of the leaves on the birch tree that leaves over the sidewalk. Like the shining tracks of snails gone in an hour. Like the bloomed-out roses behind the chick- enlink fence that will linger, with sublime differences, for another day or two.

The names of the children have been there for decades in the concrete in front of the alley. Their names will be there until some upheaval bulldozes away my neighborhood. I may never see the names again (although I know that they are there now). I used to think that we sought permanence in marks like the children’s names. I think now that what we get is provisional, despite our intentions. Enough stays the same on my walk to bolster my illusions about my place. Enough changes to question those illusions.

Walkers have a better appreciation of this wonder. Walkers see ordinary (even humble) vistas opening at a pace that lets by daydreams or sorrow while walking a suburban sidewalk, or the sight again of some pattern will momentarily lighten the darkness of self-absorption. And a sense of place is made.

TIME. Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) walked to work. He lived in Hartford, Connecticut where he was a corporate executive for the Hartford Accident & Indemnity Company. A fellow executive there recalled that Stevens was “respected, perhaps a little bit feared.”

Stevens never learned to drive. He walked from his white, two-story house at 181 Waverley Terrace to his office each workday, turning down offers of a lift from other men driving to work. It was a substantial walk of nearly two-and-a-half miles each way, most of it on a long, straight section of Asylum Street. Stevens walked as he murmured to himself in rhythms and rhymes. Montgomery, he would write down what he com- posed before he turned to work at his office, writing down lines about “A Man with the Blue Casket,” the “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock,” “The Emperor of Ice-Cream,” and “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird.”

Stevens was a successful businessman, an unhappy husband, and a poet who won the Pulitzer Prize in the last year of his life. He thought that having an everyday sort of career was important to his art. Stevens also thought that walking was a source of his poems.

His walking was paced to make time for a foot of verse. Work and walking made Stevens a writer. They made me one, too.