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## September 2017 National Walking Summit Special Edition

### Looking Back at St. Paul

As most of you know by now, the **2017 National Walking Summit** took place in St. Paul, MN earlier this month to a sold-out crowd of over 600 participants. The Summit's theme, **Vital and Vibrant Communities: The Power of Walkability**, reflected the idea that walkability is at the cornerstone of creating desirable places in which all members of a community can enjoy safe opportunities for physical activity, social and civic engagement and access to jobs and other everyday needs. We left Minnesota inspired, energized, and ready to get to work on the many challenges and opportunities ahead. We wanted to use our September newsletter as a way to share some of the experiences and lessons from the conference and to help us look forward as to what's next.



### Engaging Panels Offered Insight to Work Being Done Across Sectors

The **National Walking Summit** covered a variety of topics related to walkability and reflected the ever-expanding definition of what we mean when we talk about walking. Discussions included:

- National expansion of the Vision Zero strategy to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries, including a discussion of some of the criticisms of the movement with regard to increased



Attendees hear from experiences and lessons of the Rondo Neighborhood in Minneapolis.

- enforcement and implications for exacerbating racial injustice;
- Designing for inclusive health that takes into account people of all ages, resources, races, and abilities;
- How to mitigate gentrification and other undesirable effects sometimes associated with enhanced walkability;
- Dozens of examples of community-led efforts to make places more walkable, engaging, and accessible; and
- Stories and lessons from our host city St. Paul on what it is doing to increase walkability.



A mobile workshop gathers to discuss their experience

Not everyone was able to join us in St. Paul, so we will be adding presentations, resources, and blog posts from speakers and facilitators to the [National Walking Summit website](#) as they become available. Stay tuned!

## Featured Speakers Represented the Diversity of the Walking Movement

Keynote speakers and panels throughout the conference kept attendees engaged, inspired, and remembering that the walking movement isn't just about sidewalks and crosswalks.

**George Halvorson**, CEO of the Institute for InterGroup Understanding and father of Every Body Walk!, focused on preventing racism and ethnic conflict and told the crowd gathered that "we need to make the right thing easy to do." Mr. Halvorson was an earlier champion for walking and walkability and offered his expertise to the crowd at the opening reception. He was joined by St. Paul Deputy Mayor Kristin Beckmann who offered insights as to her favorite places to walk in St. Paul.



Photo of Halvorson by Anna Min of Min Enterprises Photography

**Glenn Harris**, pictured at left in the photo at right, of social justice organization Race Forward, and disability rights advocate **Juliette Rizzo**, briefly shared the stage at the Summit after their individual remarks at the opening plenary. "If you live long enough, you will have a disability," Rizzo reminded the crowd. "If we fix what is most harmful in our communities for those who are most vulnerable, we will always come up with a solution that works better for all of us," Harris said in his remarks.



Photo of Harris and Rizzo by Anna Min of Min Enterprises Photography

"Equity and social justice are just words," speaker **Tamika Butler**, of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, told the crowd gathered for a lunchtime plenary. "What are we actively doing to change things?" Butler led a panel of speakers who examined how walking and walkability intersect with concerns about racial inequality. The panel was an opportunity for attendees to engage with tough but necessary questions looming



Photo of Butler by Anna Min of Min Enterprises Photography

large in the walking movement.

"Equity is giving people what they need in order to be their best selves," Rutgers professor and America Walks Board Member **Charles Brown** (second from left in photo at right), said at the Summit's closing session. The session featured a performance by the Theater for Public Policy, a local improv group that focuses on addressing complicated topics through humor and art.



Photo of Danger, Brown, Rahman, Omishakin by Emilie Bahr

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## Looking Ahead

Our work is far from done and we hope you will help us continue the work started in St. Paul by:

- Registering for one of our free webinars: "**Workplace Wellness: Walk this Way**" takes place October 5th at 2pm Eastern, 11am Pacific and "**Friends and Allies in the Walking Movement**" will be held on October 11th at 2pm Eastern, 11am Pacific;
- **Complete an organizational survey:** Take this short survey to help us in our work to map and measure the growing walking movement; and
- **Listening to our own Kate Kraft** on the latest episode of **Third Wave Urbanism's podcast**. She talks about walking as the common denominator and the work America Walks is doing to engage new partners in the work of walkability.

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Have an item for our newsletter or a question for our team? Contact America Walks

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