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20 years strong AMERICA WALKS

March 2018

No, Automated Vehicles Won't Save Our Cities



A street in New Orleans filled with people, circa 1901. Photo courtesy Library of Congress.

As the world awaits the rise of automated vehicles, with their many (if sometimes questionable) promises of improved safety and efficiency, rather than continuing to orient our cities around cars we should be focusing instead on prioritizing transit and active transportation, **writes America Walks Executive Director Kate Kraft** in response to the recent and worthwhile interactive *New York Times* column **[Automated Vehicles Can't Save Cities](#)**.

Relatedly, Uber this month suspended its self-driving vehicle tests after **one of the cars crashed into and killed a pedestrian** in Arizona. **[Read our statement on the incident here](#)**.

US Pedestrian Fatalities Aren't Slowing Down

Tracking of 2016 pedestrian fatalities showed an alarming increase in the number of people killed while walking. Late last month, **the Governors Highway Safety Association shared its preliminary estimates for 2017**, and it seems as though little has changed: an estimated 5,984 people were killed compared to 5,997 people in 2016. **Read our response to the disappointing numbers here.**

America Walks Receives National Grant to Promote Pedestrian Safety

America Walks, in partnership with the **UNC Highway Safety Research Center**, this month was awarded a **2018 Road to Zero grant from the National Safety Council**. The grant will be used to fund and implement a new technical assistance pedestrian safety program for midsize cities that helps selected communities assess, plan, and prioritize effective and context-sensitive safety treatments to reduce the growing numbers of pedestrian fatalities and injuries. **Read more here.**

Community Change Spotlight

Our 2017 Community Change grantees are hard at work and we are already seeing results. **Portland, Oregon's PedPDX** has released a series of videos exploring what its like to walk in the city. **Take a virtual trip to Portland with these short films.**



Creating Opportunities for All to Be a Fan

This past weekend, hundreds of thousands of people gathered to use their feet to take a step on the path towards gun safety. Parades, marches, and similar public gatherings create opportunities to engage, connect, and use our shared voice. Disability rights advocates **Juliette Rizzo shared her experience at a recent parade to remind us that when we create these opportunities, we are creating them for all community members.**

Walk to School with New Walking Audit Toolkit

Walking audits are a great way to engage community members and gain important understanding in opportunities and deficiencies presented by the built environment vis a vis walkability. Our partners at the Safe Routes To School National Partnership have unveiled **a new, free walking audit toolkit** to assist in the planning and conducting of these valuable endeavors.

Mark Those Calendars

- **April 2:** **Submit comments** for the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report.
- **April 4:** Join America Walks for the next installment in our ongoing social justice webinar series **Walking Toward Justice**. This free session will focus on the problem of street harassment. **Register here.**

- **April 11:** America Walks hosts *Making the Case For Transit*, a free webinar focused on the critical role that public transit can play in supporting a walkable community. [Register here.](#)

What We're Reading

A look at some of the articles circulating around our networks this month:

- PBS follows up on the **beating by a police officer** of a black North Carolina man accused of jaywalking last August. Felony assault charges have been filed against the officer. Relatedly, The New Republic published **The Case Against Jaywalking Laws.**
- CityLab covers the **plogging trend** in which outdoor exercisers are working trash collection into their fitness routines.
- Slate considers the **importance of exercise in combatting depression** and why more American medical practitioners aren't promoting its mind-altering benefits.

Quote of the month

"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at."

-Stephen Hawking

Walking across America

Calling all photographers! We want to see images of walking in your community. Send us your photos capturing special events, everyday walking, and anything that reflects what walking means to your town for possible inclusion in a future newsletter or other publication. We'll give you credit and you'll help us make the case for making America a better place to walk. **Email your photos to Heidi Simon.** Images that include people are preferred. Be sure to include any captions or descriptions that should be included.



Signs of Improvement?

America Walks was heartened to discover that Rice University took note of our [concerns raised this summer](#) about the tone and legal accuracy of the signs that had long circled its otherwise appealing pedestrian track around campus. Many of those signs have since been replaced with these. We still wouldn't call them ideal, but they are at least in line with Texas law.

Our Sponsors

America Walks thanks our sponsors for their generous support of this publication and all of the work being done by America Walks to promote the walkable movement. Thanks for helping to make America a great place to walk!

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

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