On April 15th, 2020, America Walks hosted the webinar, "Unusual Bedfellows: Expanding and Developing New and Different Partnerships", where we highlighted how important partnerships have been to the design, development and place making of livable, walkable communities.

We featured Jad Daley, President & CEO of American Forests, Robert Ferrin, Assistant Director for Parking Services for the City of Columbus, and Dr. Noah Lenstra, Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science at University of North Carolina Greensboro. Our inspiring panelists shared how expanding our partnerships can lead to creative and unexpected ways to engage the community and promote safe, walkable spaces.

America Walks received many questions and comments from attendees. Panelists took time to offer their expert answers, to continue the conversation and provide further insight on best practices they used for creating safe, accessible, and enjoyable walking conditions in their communities, so you can too.

**Can we ensure that the trees we are adding or maintaining in our cities are not invasive non-natives so we can preserve and enhance biodiversity rather than degrading it?**

**Jad:** That is absolutely standard practice in our work at American Forests, and we are developing a new forestry guide with the US Forest Service to help inform species selection and forestry techniques for health and climate.

**How do you see "Tree Equity" work fitting into tribal communities? Do you have any examples and are there opportunities for funding or grants?**

**Jad:** We are very eager to expand work with tribal partners, and we are working right now to expand funding opportunities for tribal grants through our policy work. Please follow up with me to learn more and share opportunities you might see for collaboration.

**Noah:** The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services has dedicated funding for tribal libraries. If you’re interested in doing anything with walking and tribal communities, I would definitely look into that funding source. It’s under-utilized https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/native-american-library-services-enhancement-grants

**Local main street merchant’s associations are clamoring for more structured and/or surface parking, regardless of the parking studies conducted by the city. ADA accessibility advocates are teaming up to demand more parking instead of curb management.**

**Robert:** It is important that parking and mobility practitioners, working with their communities, develop plans and programs to better manage existing parking and curb lane assets before jumping to building more parking. Columbus just completed a Strategic Parking Plan that guides our processes and it involves expanding mobility options and better managing the curb and not building more parking. Regarding ADA parking accessibility, this is an important factor as we
manage the curb. We need to balance all uses in the curb and look at off-street lots and garages to support ADA access. [https://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/parking/Strategic-Parking-Plan/](https://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/parking/Strategic-Parking-Plan/)

**Are there any educational virtual program presentations to share with our patrons on social media?**

**Robert:** IPMI has created a "stay connected" portal on the website that is offering a wealth of information on what is currently happening in the industry including shoptalks and webinars. [https://www.parking-mobility.org/stayconnected/](https://www.parking-mobility.org/stayconnected/)

**How does Robert keep delivery and food trucks out of bike lanes?**

**Robert:** It's a challenge gaining compliance from operators when demand exceeds supply at the curb. We are currently exploring the use of dynamic loading zones that will better serve the increased traffic we are seeing from pick-up and delivery vehicles that are otherwise parking in bike lanes. We do have an on-street food truck program where we allocate space to food trucks and that has kept them out of bike lanes. However, we still have a challenge of loading and unloading activities occurring in our bike lanes that we need to address through the activation of more spaces for legal loading along with active parking enforcement.

**For Mr. Ferrin - any thoughts about good data collection practices particularly for walker and bikers so we can make good decisions?**

**Robert:** I've reached out to staff at IPMI to see what resources are available around this topic. I would also invite you to check out any guidance that may have been provided by organizations such as NACTO and Transportation 4 America. The IPMI forum is also a great resource to post topics and limited memberships are available at the site. [https://www.parking-mobility.org/forum/](https://www.parking-mobility.org/forum/)

**For Mr. Ferrin - how does IPMI prioritize equity, particularly when thinking about modes used more often by people who cannot afford to own operate and maintain a car?**

**Robert:** You are seeing more parking and mobility practitioners look at how we can more equitably allocate space along the curb and in the right of way (ROW). Our industry is moving to a "highest and best use" mentality and that may mean removing on-street parking for bike lanes, car share spaces, shared mobility devices, and bus lanes. The biggest question our industry is trying to tackle right now, is how to protect the revenue streams coming out of curb lanes. Those revenue streams often fund not only parking programs and projects but other city initiatives.

**How do the librarians organize WSB? Do kids meet at library to walk to school? Who are the adult volunteers - librarians? Or parents? Do librarians walk kids after school back to the library or thru the neighborhood?**

**Noah:** Librarians organize the program, but the WSB does not begin at the library. Librarians, as experts in information organization, are well positioned to be those responsible for arranging the volunteers. I am including a few newspaper articles that describe this effort in more detail. The WSB starts at the high school. Elementary school aged students walk with the librarian and/or other adult volunteers organized by the librarian to the high school every morning at 7:30. The program started in 2014 and continues today. [https://www.theperrychief.com/news/20180903/walking-school-bus-returns-sept-7](https://www.theperrychief.com/news/20180903/walking-school-bus-returns-sept-7) [http://www.dmcityview.com/PerryJanuary2018/html5/index.html?page=1&noflash](http://www.dmcityview.com/PerryJanuary2018/html5/index.html?page=1&noflash)
Are the fitness classes at libraries free or a small cost?

Noah: They are mostly free. I have written a research brief on this trend - see link. Based on my research about 90% of fitness classes offered in U.S. public libraries are offered completely free, typically, with the support of partners like health departments or hospital foundations. https://programminglibrarian.org/blog/charge-or-not-charge-dilemma-programming-librarians

This is a fascinating idea for my library. Where could I get printed literature on the content of this Webinar?

Noah: You mean a physical book? Most of this content is in my new book Healthy Living at the Library (see link), which is now available for order. Almost all this content is also freely available on my website (Let’s Move in Libraries http://letsmovellibraries.org/) https://products.abc-clio.com/abc-cliocorporate/product.aspx?pc=A5725P

How can you collaborate with Public Libraries?

Noah: Maybe the better question is how can't you collaborate with public libraries? There is really nothing you can't do. Start up a conversation about walking and the importance of walkability and see where things go. Find a champion - someone who cares about walking and/or health at the library - they won't be hard to find.

Are there any educational virtual program presentations to share with our patrons on social media?

Noah: I'd really recommend this new Walking Scavenger Hunt game released today by a public library in New York - it's a great virtual activity any library could share on their social media to encourage walking and exploration outdoors during COVID-19 https://www.scarsdalelibrary.org/2020/04/14/get-out-get-moving-scavenger-hunt/