

# STORIES FROM THE WALKING COLLEGE: PAT JEWETT

2017 WALKING COLLEGE FELLOW  
WEBSITE MANAGER AND WALKABLE COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

***“I never was an outspoken person, and the Walking College helped me create my identity”***

Eight years ago, Pat Jewett launched her own website with information about the walking trails near her neighborhood in North Portland, OR. Later, she started writing a walking and hiking blog and got involved with the American Volkssport Association (AVA) both nationally and locally.

Although Pat prefers to stay more in the shadows, she now serves on multiple boards and committees that advocate for walking and hiking. She credits the change to her participation in the Walking College, saying, *“I never was an outspoken person, and the Walking College helped me create my own identity and play my role behind the scenes. That’s where I knew I could make the biggest impact.”*

## ***From Walking to Walkability***

Originally Pat Jewett grew up in North Hollywood, California. Since graduating from Northern Arizona University, she has worked in biomedical research and held positions with the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center.

After moving to Portland 32 years ago, she began collecting and “favoriting” information about the trails in her area. Eventually, she realized that others were searching for similar resources, and began sharing them through her website and blog. When she applied to a Walking College in 2017, Pat was actively involved in walking – since completing her Fellowship, she has been actively involved in walkability!

Pat’s community is changing. *“This provides opportunities to build more sidewalks and ADA ramps in the neighborhood. New apartments are being built with walkability in mind. Younger people with families are changing the infrastructure of the community and that is encouraging.”*





*Pedestrian crossing light with the HAWK signal.*

According to Pat, the biggest challenges to walkability in her community are a lack of continual ongoing support for walkability (advocates are often too busy to be active) and the freight industry. Transit options are also limited, micromobility is not fostered and The St Johns bridge has notoriously narrow lanes – part of the truck route sharing lanes with cyclists. All this coupled with hindering sidewalk road debris and speeding makes for particular barriers to making the area a walkable, connected community.

Before the Walking College, Pat had *“always walked, hiked, and backpacked, and had encouraged others to walk, but was not involved in walkable community design.”* Ultimately, she joined the Walking College because she felt that it would give her the confidence and tools to advocate for walkable cities and trails. She also hoped to make new connections and to gain opportunities to explore walking in a different capacity.

### **Taking on the Trucking Industry**

As part of her Walking Action Plan, Pat connected with the Oregon State House Speaker Tina Kotek, who was advocating for a signalized pedestrian crossing on Columbia Boulevard, a busy trucking route.

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*Truck route at the intersection of Jewett's main street.*

Kotek received 1.5 million dollars to work on an area at Columbia Blvd. Jewett noticed that sidewalk connections were missing from the plans so she advocated for the sidewalks to be added. Jewett was able to get High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk installed and a new sidewalk. Now, there are also curb ramps and bioswales under construction at the intersections in the immediate neighborhood. Pat’s role was to engage her neighbors in advocating for the improvements.

As a result of her experience in the Walking College, Pat has become active with several clubs and boards related to walking and walkable community design.

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She is on the AVA’s publicity committee and is a member of the Columbia River Volkssport Club in Portland. She is in charge of publicity for the Oregon Trail State Volkssport Association (OTSVSA), which does business as Walk Oregon, which involves promoting their walking events through Meetup, Twitter, and Facebook. She is also on the Pedestrian Advisory Committee for Portland, and previously served on the Vision Zero Task Force.

Pat says that “[her] experience with the college has given [her] the ability to be assertive, so [she] could speak and actively participate in all of these groups.” All of the clubs, committees, and conferences, in addition to the Walking College, have helped her find support in her volunteer work. She also uses her website to connect with other prominent people in walkability.

Since her retirement, Pat has been an active proponent of walking and hiking on multiple different fronts. She says that “being retired keeps me engaged and active, pursuing things [that] I want to support.” The most rewarding part of her work has been educating younger generations about the trails in her area. Her website has a contact form, where she receives comments from Girl and Boy Scout leaders. She always responds] to the comments because it can lead to meeting people. Additionally, Pat’s contribution to the Element3 Health blog allows her to get seniors involved in activities and clubs that keep them physically and socially active.

Pat also volunteers with trail advocacy - serving on a couple of advisory committees with 40 Mile-Loop and npGreenway, both of which are trying to fill gaps in the regional trail system. She is also involved in St. Helens Parks and Recreation Committee and an urban trail being proposed between four small cities around Hermiston, Oregon.

In the future, Pat is hoping to get involved with Portland Bureau of Transportation’s new project North Portland in Motion where she hopes to push for a sidewalk that goes from north Portland Rd to the St Johns Prairie to connect to the new trail.

The St Johns Prairie was formerly the city dump and has been transformed through Metro of Portland.

She joined the npGreenway and 40 Mile Loop to work on trail gaps one of them being the connection from Pier Park to Kelley Point Park through the St Johns Prairie.

This is a collective effort between many agencies and organizations outside of the Boards.



Before/after of ADA ramps and roadwork. Some grassy areas that still need sidewalks.