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Back Bay, Beacon Hill, South End rank as most-walkable neighborhoods

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(Dina Rudick/Globe Staff)

Lucy McDermott walking her puppies through the Back Bay last winter.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Boston has always been known as one of the most convenient cities for navigating on foot, but which are the Hub's best neighborhoods to walk around?

Some number-crunchers actually made a science of "walkability" several years ago, ranked the most walkable cities in the country. In the process, they **crushed the belief** held by many local residents, businesses, and city officials that there was no better city than Boston to hoof it.

Now, those same statisticians are providing an even closer look at precisely which areas within various U.S. cities, including Boston, are most and least pedestrian-friendly.

According to WalkScore.com, Boston's most walkable neighborhoods are the the Back Bay, Beacon Hill and the South End with walk scores of 97, while

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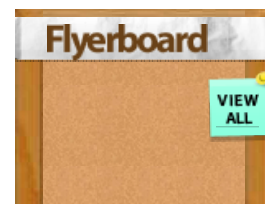
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Fenway-Kenmore, the downtown area, and Allston-Brighton round out the top five.

"Walk Score measures how easy it is to live a car-lite lifestyle — not how pretty the area is for walking," the site [explains](#). Its "algorithm awards points based on the distance to amenities in each category. ... The number of nearby amenities is the leading predictor of whether people walk."

With a score of 60, the site says West Roxbury is the least walkable neighborhood, and is topped by Mattapan, East Boston, Hyde Park, and Roslindale.

Overall, Boston scores a 79, good for third-best in the country behind first-place San Francisco and second-place New York City, according to the site which launched in 2007 and has an advisory board comprised of urban planning, environmental and technical experts from institutions such as The Sighting Institute and The Brookings Institution.

Brookings conducted [its own study](#) the same year WalkScore.com launched and ranked Boston second behind the nation's capital, which WalkScore ranks seventh.

Walkability has become a buzzword in real estate, and some realtors told the [Globe in 2009](#) that houses with high walkability scores can be easier to sell.

Below is the [complete list](#) of neighborhoods and walk scores as determined by WalkScore.com. You can also check out a heat map that shows the best and worst spots of Boston to stroll around by [clicking here](#):

1. Back Bay-Beacon Hill - 97
2. South End - 97
3. Fenway-Kenmore - 96
4. Central (Downtown, West End, North End, Financial District, Chinatown, Theater District) - 95
5. Allston-Brighton - 86
6. Jamaica Plain - 84
7. Charlestown - 81
8. North Dorchester - 80
9. South Boston - 80
10. Roxbury - 78
11. South Dorchester - 77
12. Roslindale - 73
13. Hyde Park - 67
14. East Boston - 66
15. Mattapan - 61
16. West Roxbury - 60

What the scores mean, according to WalkScore:

- 90–100 Walker's Paradise — Daily errands do not require a car.
- 70–89 Very Walkable — Most errands can be accomplished on foot.
- 50–69 Somewhat Walkable — Some amenities within walking distance.
- 25–49 Car-Dependent — A few amenities within walking distance.
- 0–24 Car-Dependent — Almost all errands require a car.

To learn more about scores and rankings are determined, [click here](#).

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