

Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor Project

Virtual Public Meeting
October 26, 2023

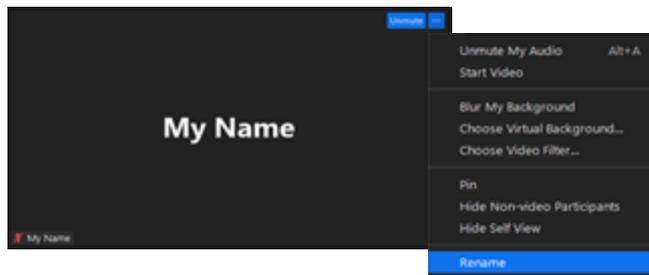


City of Boston
Transportation



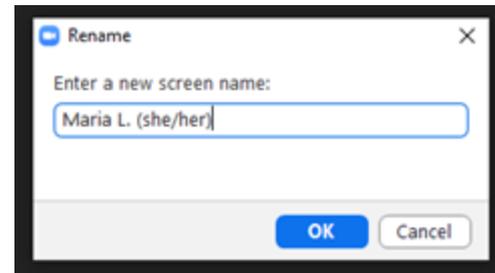
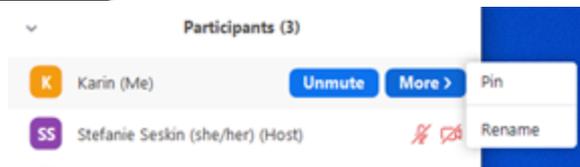
Welcome to the Open House

- This meeting will be recorded.
- Please update your name in Zoom and include your organization and/or pronouns if you would like.



Click the three dots in the top right of your video

OR next to your name in the "participants" list



Welcome to the Open House

- Your microphones are turned off for the main presentation to reduce background noise.
- Attendees will have the opportunity to speak later on during the Q&A segment to provide feedback and ask questions. To submit a question, click the **Q&A** icon at the bottom of the window

Agenda



Introduction



**Route 39
TPC Project**



**Public
Outreach**



**Design
Concepts**



**Next
Steps**

Poll Questions

At this time, we would like to ask two short questions to learn about how people travel along the Route 39 corridor. Please answer the following questions via Zoom's Poll feature:

- How do you typically travel along the Route 39 corridor?
- What is your home zipcode?

Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

Introduction



What is the Transit Priority Corridor Program?

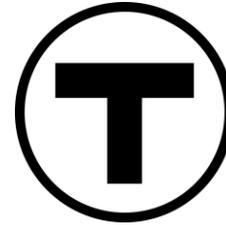
- The Transit Priority Corridor Program is a new Boston Transportation Department program to **improve bus service** by making it **faster, more reliable, and more accessible**.
- The City plans to complete multiple Transit Priority Corridor projects each year, starting with Route 39 and Route 57 in 2023.



Project Team



**City of Boston Transportation
Department, Transit Team**



MBTA

**With consultant support from Nelson\Nygaard, Regina Villa
Associates, and McMahon, a Bowman company.**

What is Transit Priority?

- Transit priority makes buses **faster and more reliable**. This means riders can get where they're going in less time and are more likely to be picked up and dropped off according to schedule.
- Transit priority is generally given through **dedicated lanes** for buses in the road, and through specific **traffic signal programming** or **transit-specific signals**.



Image source: Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates

Why is the City of Boston advancing Transit Priority?

Improving speed, reliability, and access to transit on high-ridership bus routes in Boston helps the City meet its mobility, climate, equity, safety and public health goals:

- **Transportation:** Advance *GoBoston 2030* goals to improve **safety**, expand **access**, ensure **reliability**, **reduce car use**, and **decrease emissions**.
- **Climate and Environment:** Achieve *Carbon Free Boston* goal to be a **carbon-neutral city** by 2050, by helping people make more trips on transit.
- **Equity:** Practice *equity* by improving bus service, which is used disproportionately by **people of color** and with **low incomes**.
- **Safety:** Help meet the City's *Vision Zero* goal to **eliminate fatal and serious crashes** by 2030, by designing streets that reduce conflict among different modes of transportation.

Where Did This Project Come From?

Go Boston 2030

- Two-year public process
- Thousands of members of the public provided comment and helped shape
- Recommended
 - Bus Service Reliability Improvements on Route 39
 - Walk and Bike Friendly Main Streets

VISION People's Voice | Boston Today | Goals and Targets

ACTION PLAN People's Voice 1 | Boston to 2030 | Projects and Policies

Local

Walk- and Bike-Friendly Main Streets

Improvements to neighborhood commercial districts for people traveling on foot and by bike

Project Score

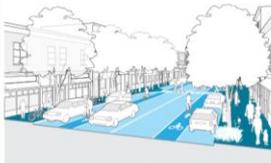
- Across 1
- Safety 1
- Reliability
- Sustainability/Resiliency 1
- Governance

- Across 2
- Safety 2
- Affordability
- Sustainability/Resiliency 2
- Governance

#1 in public voting

Project Description

Walking and traveling friendly Main Streets districts would focus on street and sidewalk improvements that encourage walking and biking to and through every local government district in the city. Significant coverage would prioritize walking with appropriate push buttons or automatic pedestrian cycles, longer walk times that start before turning red, and shorter crossing distances. Additions such as lighting, benches, and trees would also support people who chose to travel on foot and all improvements would be made accessible to everyone if not physically able. Bike-friendly features would include parking for bicycle lockers as well as additional bike parking, bike lane markers, and safe intersection design. Way finding, signage, parking, and trip planning provisions for closing streets to traffic are a temporary measure that would support people choosing to walk, bike, and take transit to see Main Streets.



Benefits and Issues Addressed

Many of Boston's 22 official Main Streets districts cover considerable stretch lengths for their respective cities. In total, they cover 114 miles through their own municipalities after designed to ensure viability for other than bicycling or moving vehicles and bicycles along and across main streets and walk along streets, and local government or other all other Main Streets districts are covered under all other Main Streets districts. Main Streets are covered around central airport improvements that can be used to complete walk and improvements to their sidewalk in East Boston's Central Square and P.T. Baker Square areas as a result of covering walk and bike along with benefits like green infrastructure and expanded space for walking off of main streets. Additional space for bike, or walking from the surrounding residential area will support local business with increased foot traffic and activated sidewalks.

Implementation

Planning Level Cost: \$1.1 million over five years for design and construction and district funding.

What's New: \$110 million for construction and district funding.

Best Practices

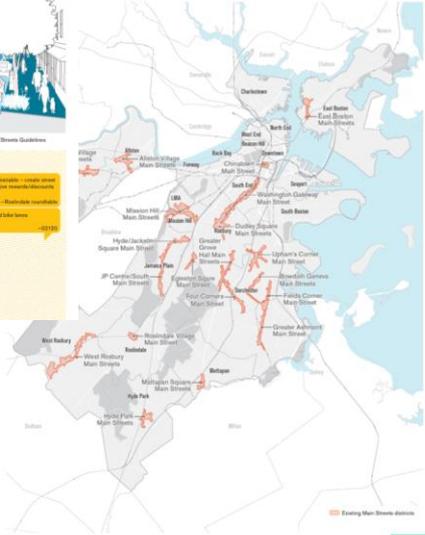
In 2014, Cambridge, MA, completed construction of Columbus Square on the edge of Central Square by reducing pavement at a regular intersection and reducing street width eight feet, a new shared lane with stops was created, covered the driveway, conflict vehicle and a barrier at the edge of Central Square to create a new walk and bike friendly gateway.

Public Input

More walking to and through main streets - create more sidewalks, bike lanes, green infrastructure and other improvements.

1,000+ comments received

2023



Go Boston 2030 144

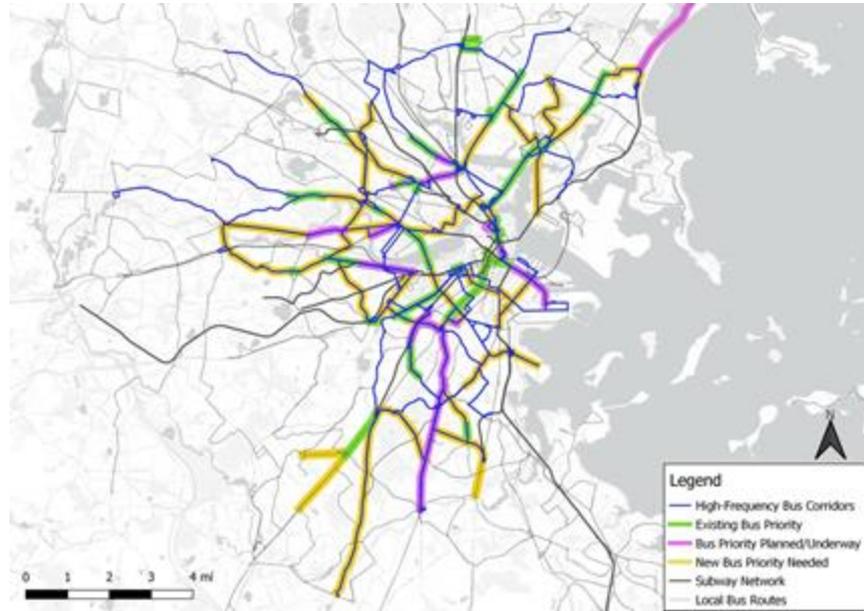
Boston Transportation Department 2023

Working Closely with The MBTA

The MBTA is working with municipal partners to implement the Bus Network Redesign service plan, which depends on a robust network of transit priority corridors



Source: <https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/2023-04/2023-04-18-bnrd-final-report-accessible.pdf>



MBTA's Bus Priority Plan - 26 Corridors Systemwide

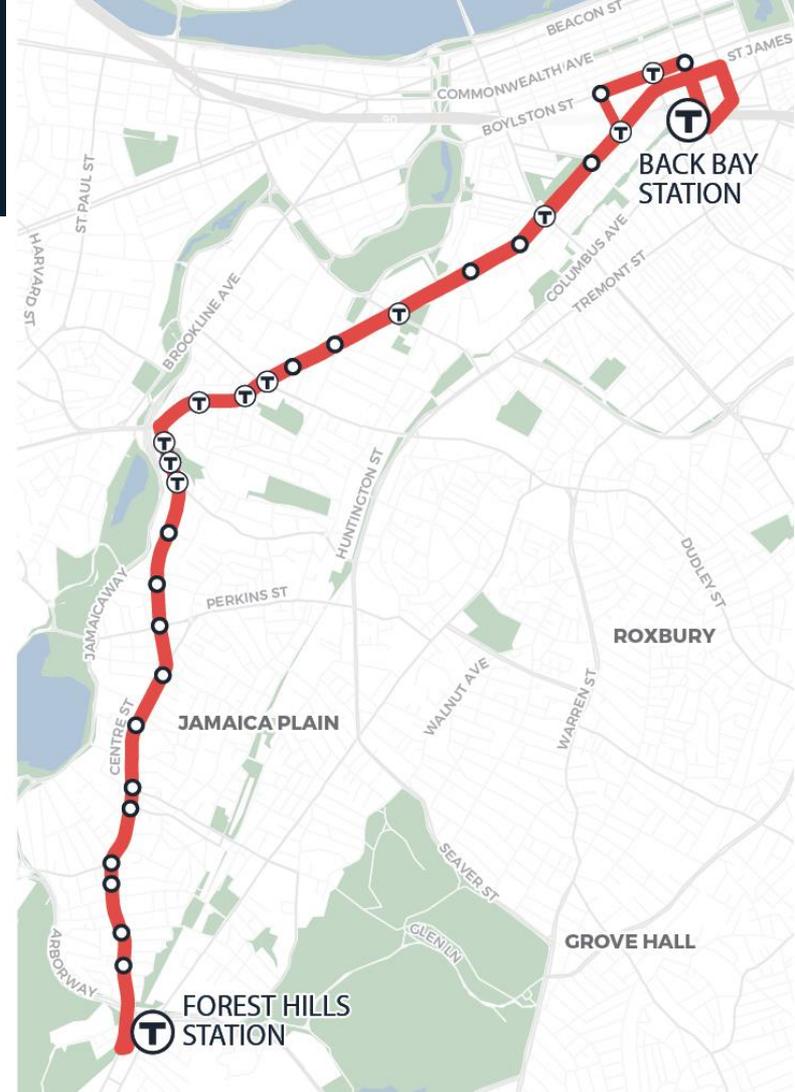
Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

Route 39 TPC Project



Route 39 Project Goals

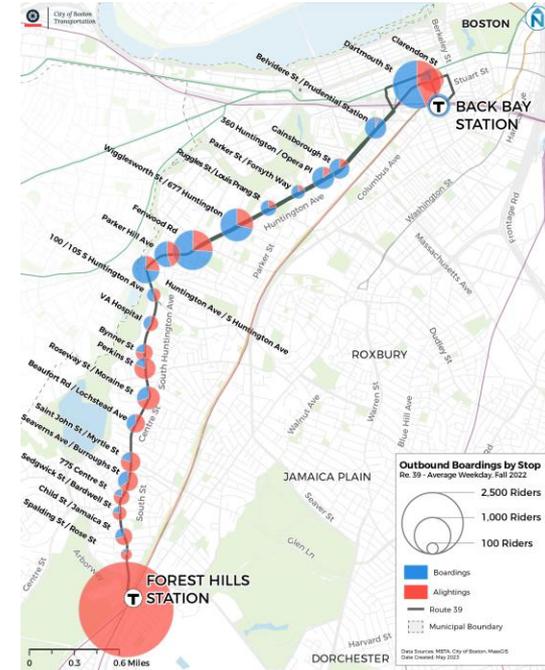
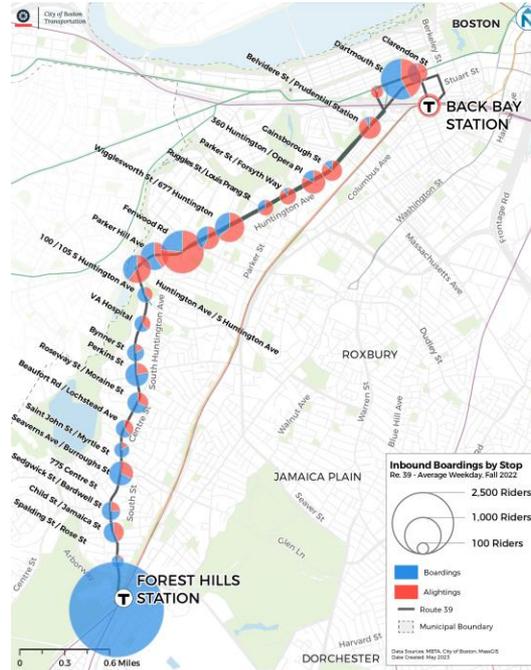
This project will improve **speed, reliability, and access to transit** on Route 39 and other routes that use the same corridor.



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

High Ridership

- Route 39 is the **fourth-highest ridership route** in the MBTA bus system.*
- Route 39 carries about **6,700 riders** per weekday.*
- Over **950 riders** make transfers to or from Route 39 every weekday.*



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Slow and Unreliable for Bus Riders

- On an average weekday, bus riders on the Route 39 corridor spend **over 1,400 total person-hours sitting in traffic.**
- This is the same amount of time it would take to drive from Boston to Los Angeles and back...fifteen times!



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Access can be challenging, especially for people with mobility challenges

- Bus zones are frequently occupied by non-bus vehicles, forcing riders to get on and off in unsafe places
- Road surfaces in bus zones are damaged and could be improved



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Driving the route can be tricky, even for experienced bus operators

- Bus zones are frequently occupied by non-bus vehicles, making it challenging to approach the curb
- Tight turning radii at some intersections make it difficult to drive alongside Green Line trains



Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

Public Outreach



Outreach efforts so far



Project
Website



Online
Survey



Informational
pop-ups



Operator
Interviews



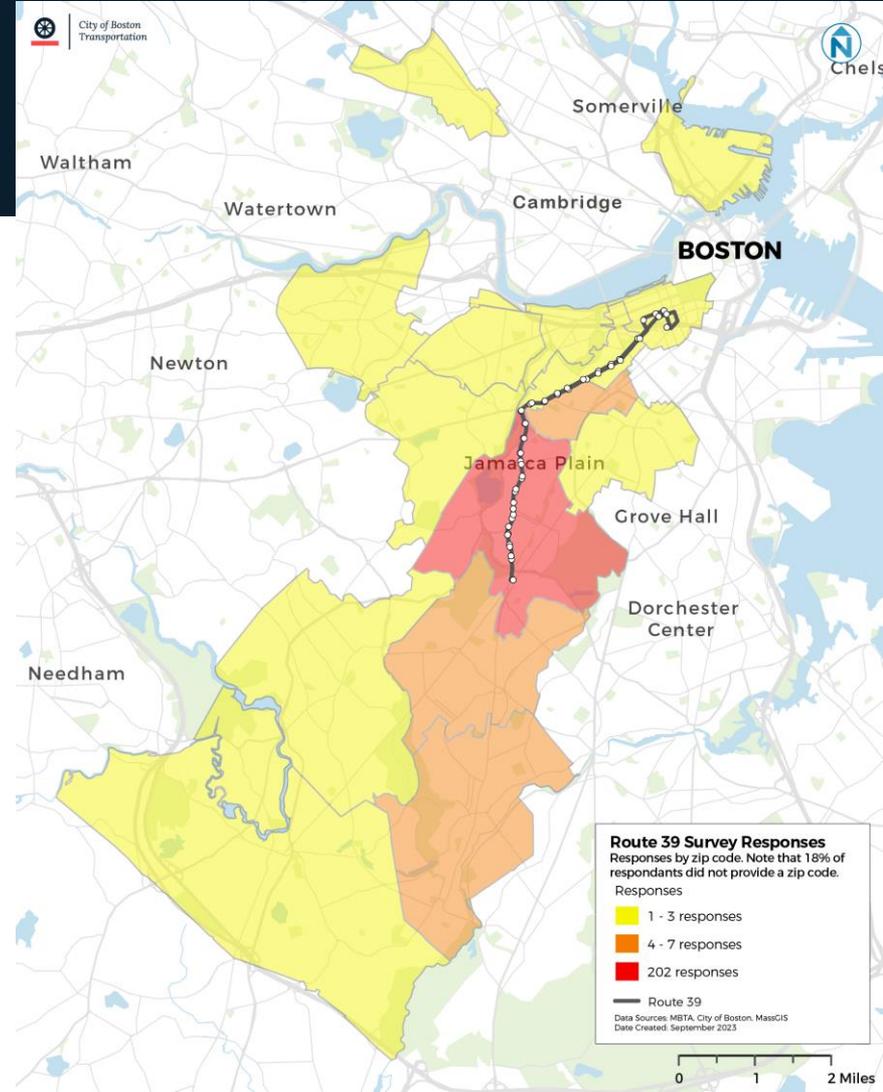
Stakeholder
Briefings

Public Survey

We asked the public about their **experiences accessing, waiting for, and boarding** at Route 39 bus stops.

The Route 39 Survey was open for approximately 2 months this summer and received **292 responses**.

55% of respondents rode Route 39 **at least once a week**.

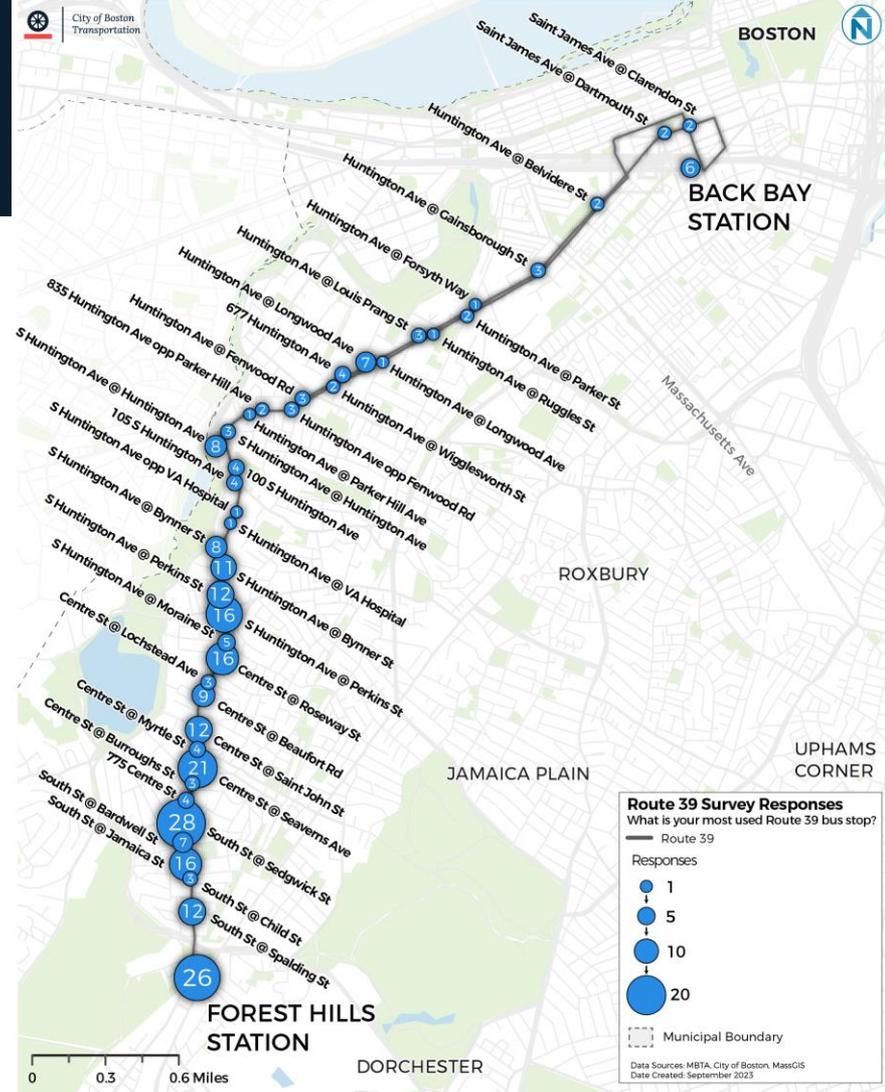


Public Survey

We asked people what bus stop they use most frequently and if they had any suggested improvements for them.

The most commented on stops included:

- Forest Hills Station
- South St @ Sedgwick St
- Centre St @ Seaverns Ave
- Centre St @ Roseway St
- South Huntington Ave @ Perkins St



Public Survey

82% of respondents felt **safe or very safe** accessing bus stops along the Route 39 corridor.

When asked about specific safety challenges,

- **20%** of respondents encounter **limited or inconvenient crosswalks**
- **16%** of respondents encounter **poor sidewalk quality**

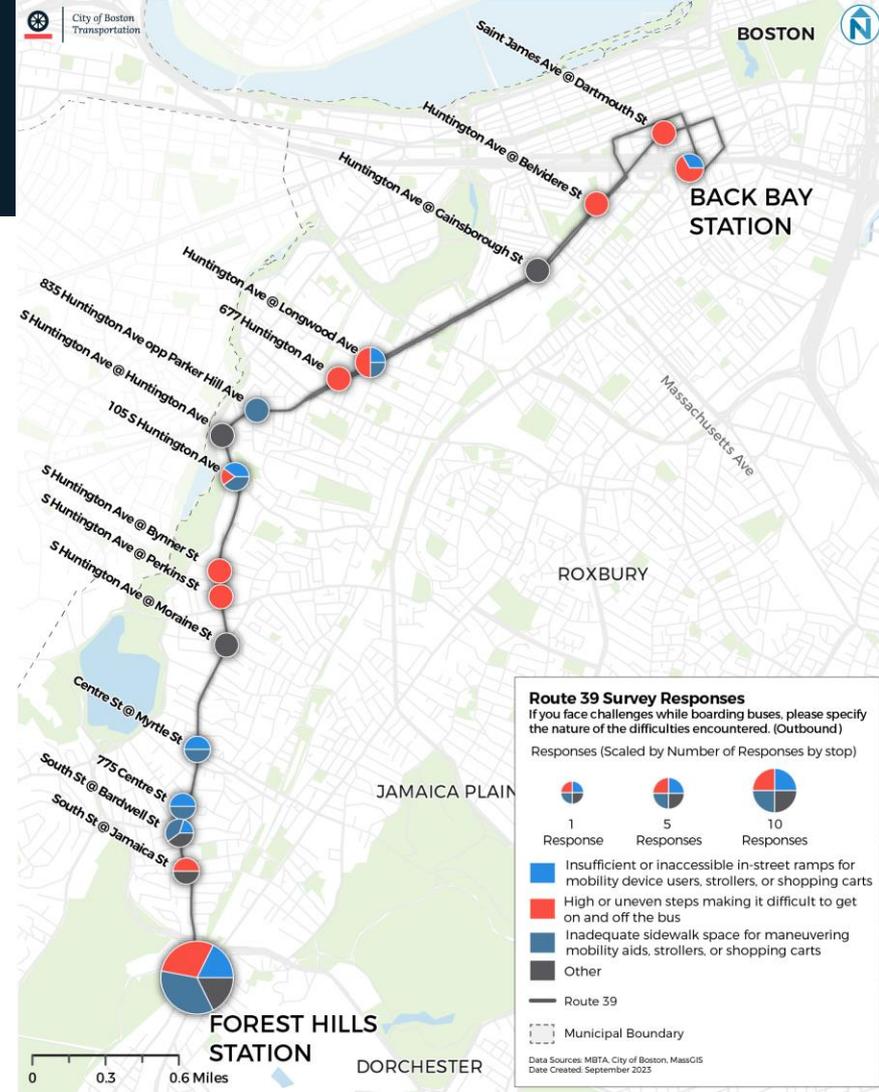
Notably, several stops along South Streets were among the most mentioned.



Public Survey

While less than half of respondents acknowledged facing challenges to board the bus,

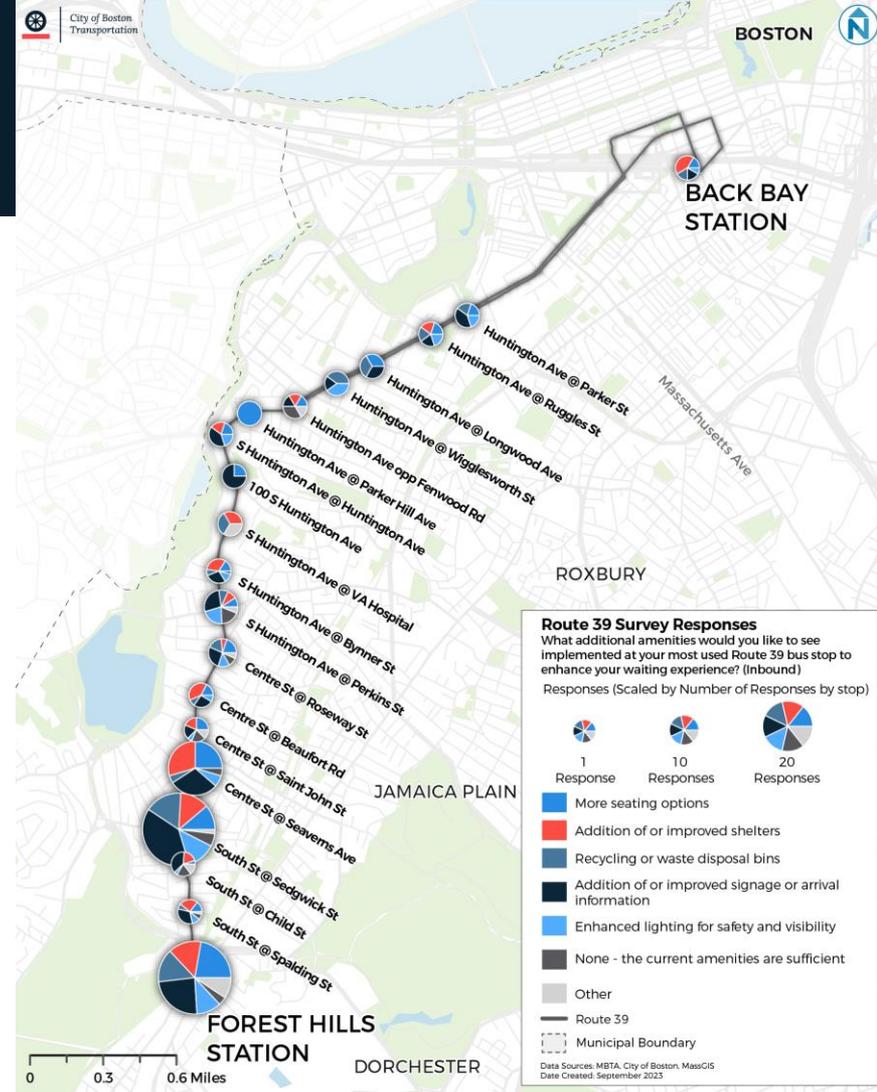
- **43%** of them said **high or uneven steps** make it difficult to get on and off the bus
- **51%** of them feel like there is inadequate sidewalk space or insufficient in-street ramps for maneuvering mobility aids, strollers, or shopping carts



Public Survey

74% of respondents expressed feeling neutral to very satisfied with the amenities available at their most frequently used bus stop.

Information displays, shelters and seating were the most popular amenity requests, in that order.



Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

Design Concepts

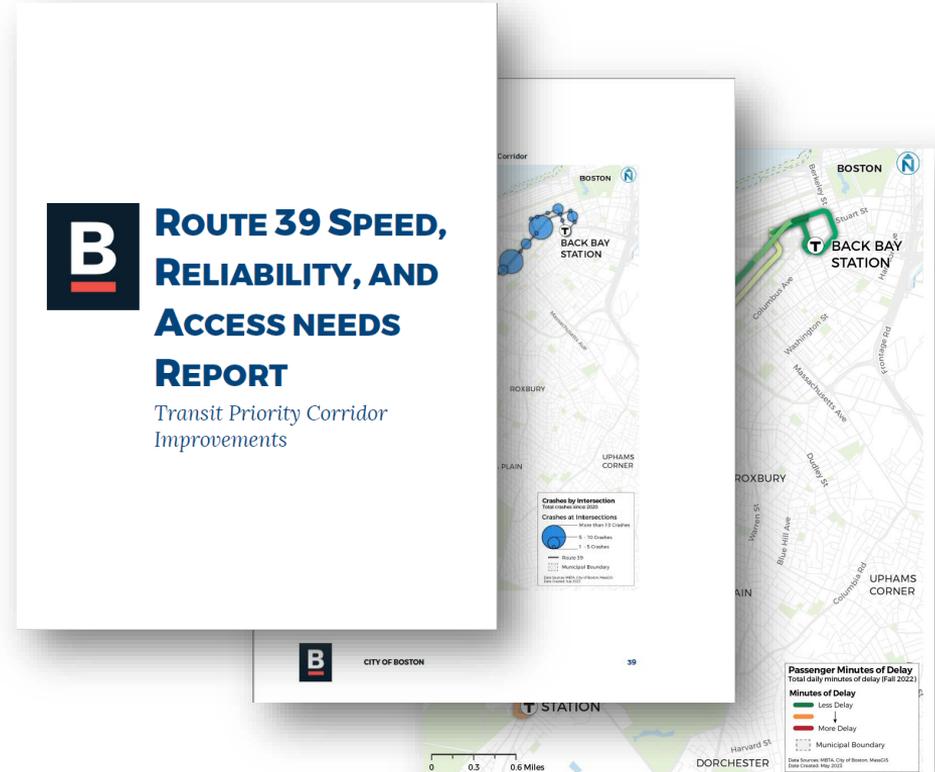


Developing Concepts

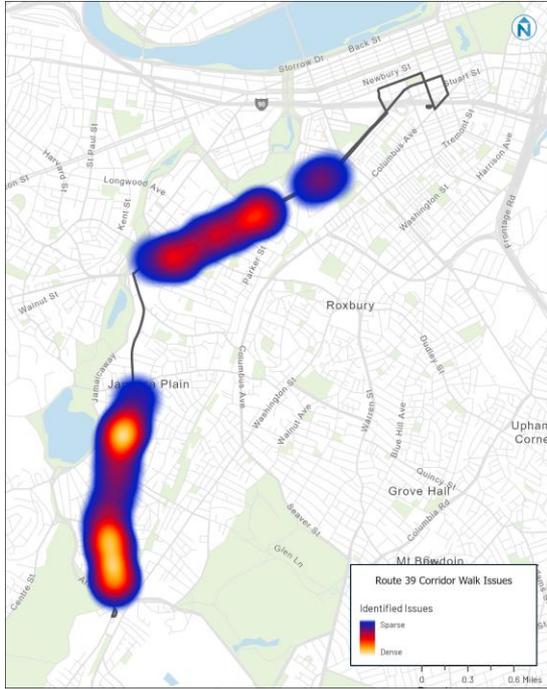
Speed, Reliability and Access Needs Report

Analyzed existing service, access to transit, and speed and reliability conditions to identify issues and needs along the corridor.

- High crash locations
- Slow traffic zones
- Need for pedestrian and bus stop amenity improvements
- Opportunities for more efficient bus operations



Developing Concepts



Corridor Walkthrough



Traffic Analysis and Observations

Image source: Nelson Nygaard

Types of Interventions

1

State of Good Repair

Small-scale sidewalk, curb ramp and crosswalk improvements that could be folded into the City's ongoing street maintenance projects

2

TPC Concepts

High-impact, quick-build improvements that could be implemented by the City in the short- to medium- term

3

Long Term Recommendations

Ideas for large-scale interventions that could be implemented in the long-term. Further coordination and analysis is needed to further designs and understand impacts.

Transit Priority and Access Toolkit

The transit-priority treatment and access toolkit includes:

- New bus lanes
- New queue jumps
- Traffic signal retiming
- Bus stop relocation
- Better bus stop amenities
- Curb bump-outs
- Daylighting
- Changes to curbside uses like parking and loading



Transit Priority and Access Toolkit

Bus Lanes

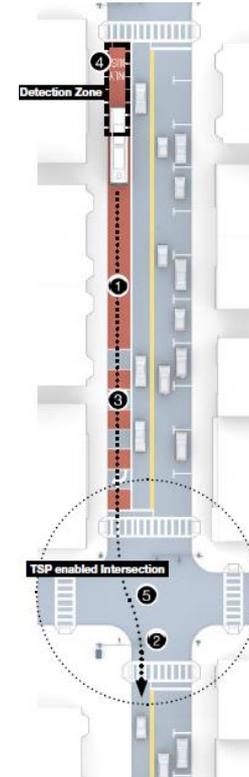


Source: MBTA Bus Priority Toolkit

Transit Signal Priority (TSP)



Queue Jumps



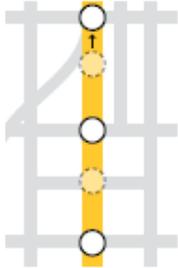
Source: MBTA Bus Priority Toolkit

Transit Priority and Access Toolkit

Better Bus Stop Amenities



Bus Stop Consolidation



Source: MBTA Bus Priority Toolkit

Bus Stop Relocation



Far side

Near side

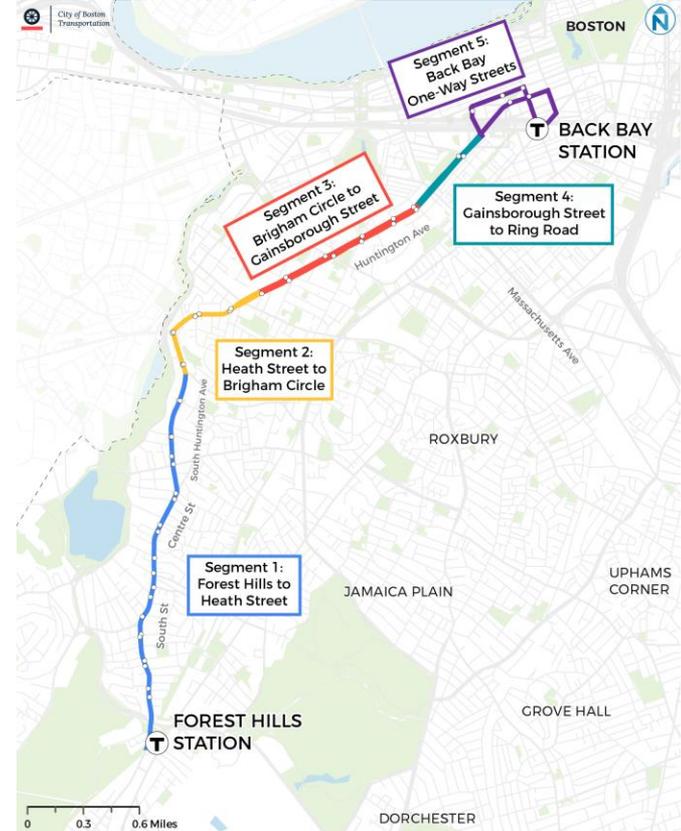
Mid-block

Source: MBTA Bus Priority Toolkit

Concept Design Process

Route 39 was divided into five segments based on operating characteristics for this process.

- **Segment 1**, from Forest Hills to Heath Street
- **Segment 2**, from Heath Street to Brigham Circle
- **Segment 3**, from Brigham Circle to Gainsborough Street
- **Segment 4**, from Gainsborough Street to Ring Road
- **Segment 5**, Back Bay One-Way Streets

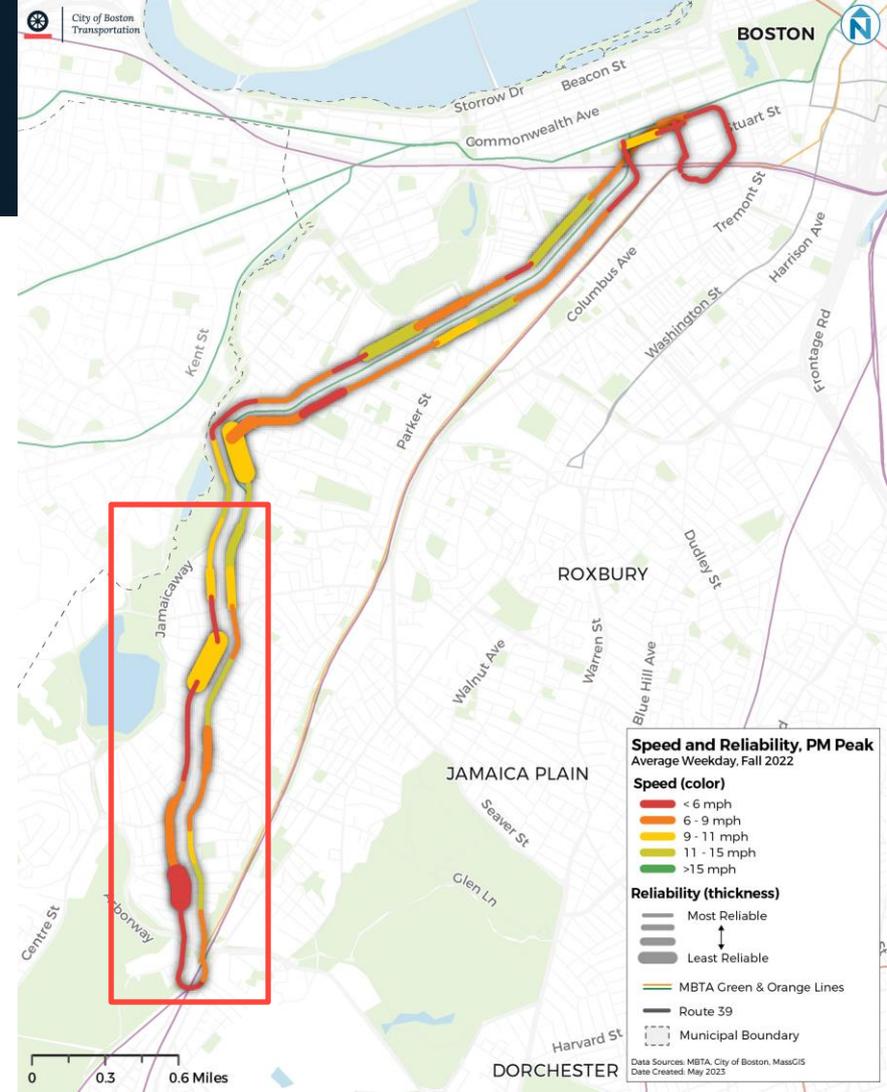


Segment 1 – Forest Hills to Heath St

Survey respondents identified Segment 1 as benefiting most from transit and access improvements.

Findings from our analysis:

- Consistently unreliable and slow in the AM and PM Peaks
- Safety, speed, and reliability concerns at Arborway intersection
- Pedestrian improvements are needed throughout the section, including crosswalk restriping, and addressing cracked or deteriorated sidewalks and curb ramps.



Forest Hills to Heath St

Operational Improvements

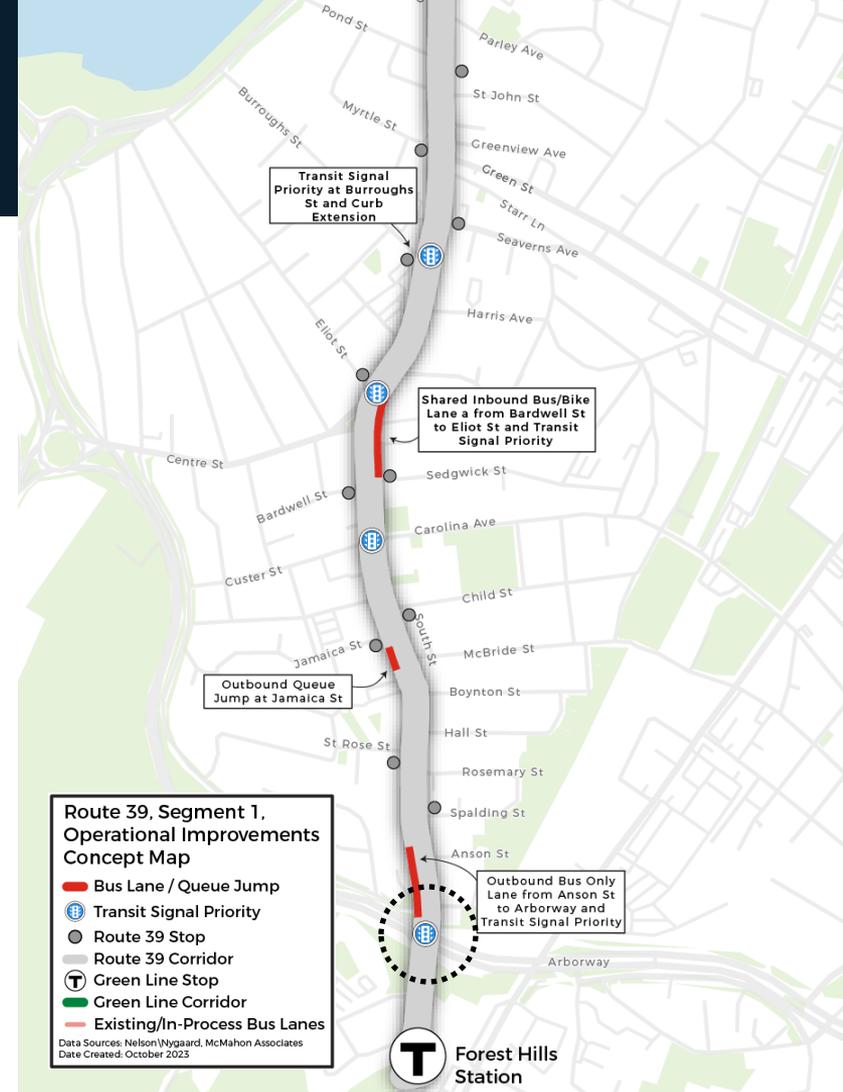
Proposed Improvements:

Bus Lanes and Queue Jumps

- Outbound bus-only lane on South St from Anson St to Arborway
- Outbound queue jump on Centre St at Jamaica St intersection
- Inbound bus/bike lane on Centre St from Bardwell St to Eliot St

Transit Signal Priority

- South St and Arborway intersection
- Centre St and Carolina Ave intersection
- Centre St and Eliot St intersection
- Centre St and Burroughs St intersection



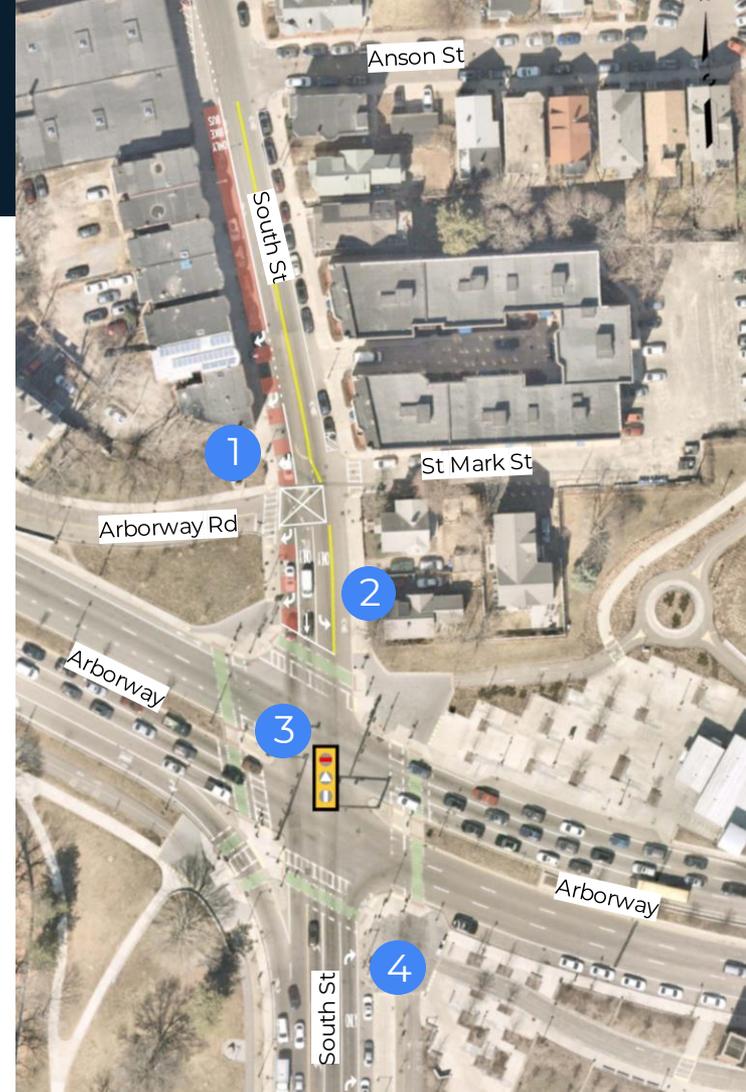
Forest Hills to Heath St

Draft Concept - South St and Arborway Intersection

Benefits:

- Reduce the significant delay buses experience when traveling along South St toward Forest Hills.
- Short dedicated bus lane paired with transit signal priority will help buses get to and cross the intersection faster.

- 1 Install bus bike lane
- 2 Reconfigure turning lanes
- 3 Implement transit signal priority
- 4 Reconfigure turning lanes



Forest Hills to Heath St

Operational Improvements

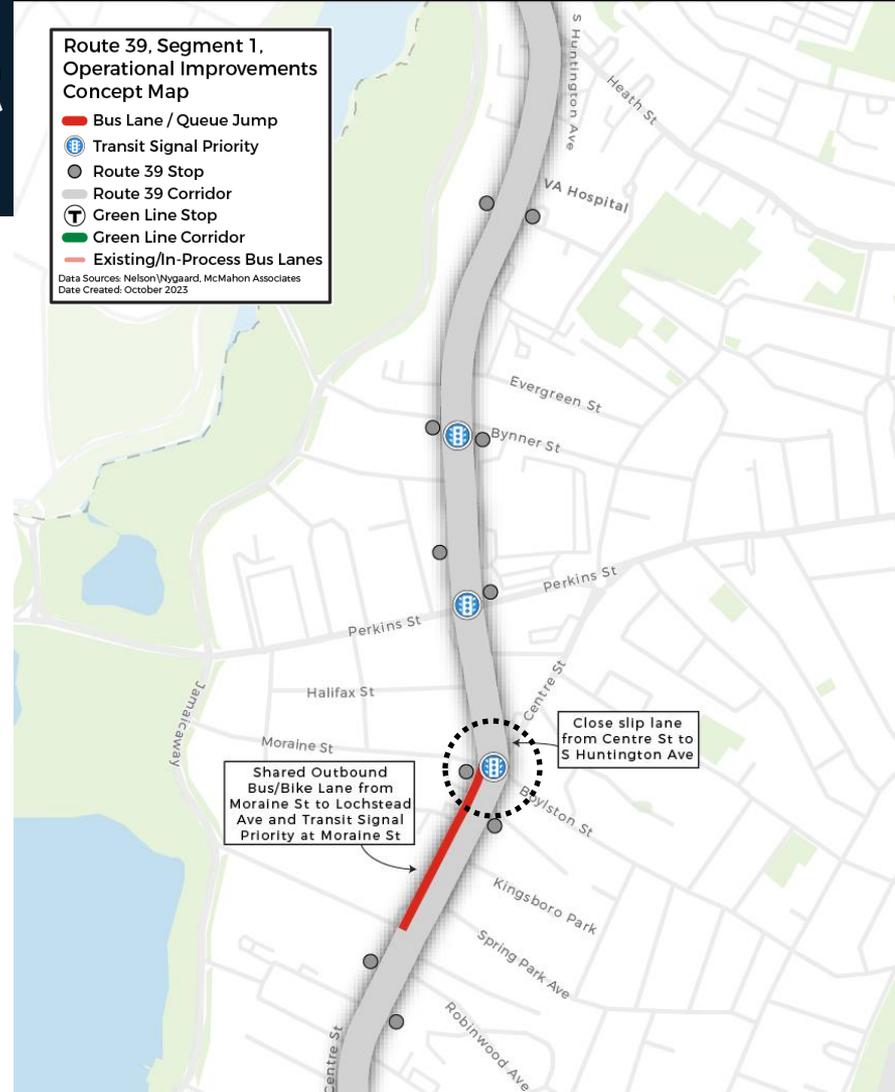
Proposed Improvements:

Bus Lanes and Queue Jumps

- Outbound bus/bike lane on Centre St from Moraine St to Lochstead Ave

Transit Signal Priority

- Centre St and Moraine St intersection
- Centre St and Perkins St intersection
- Centre St and Bynner St intersection

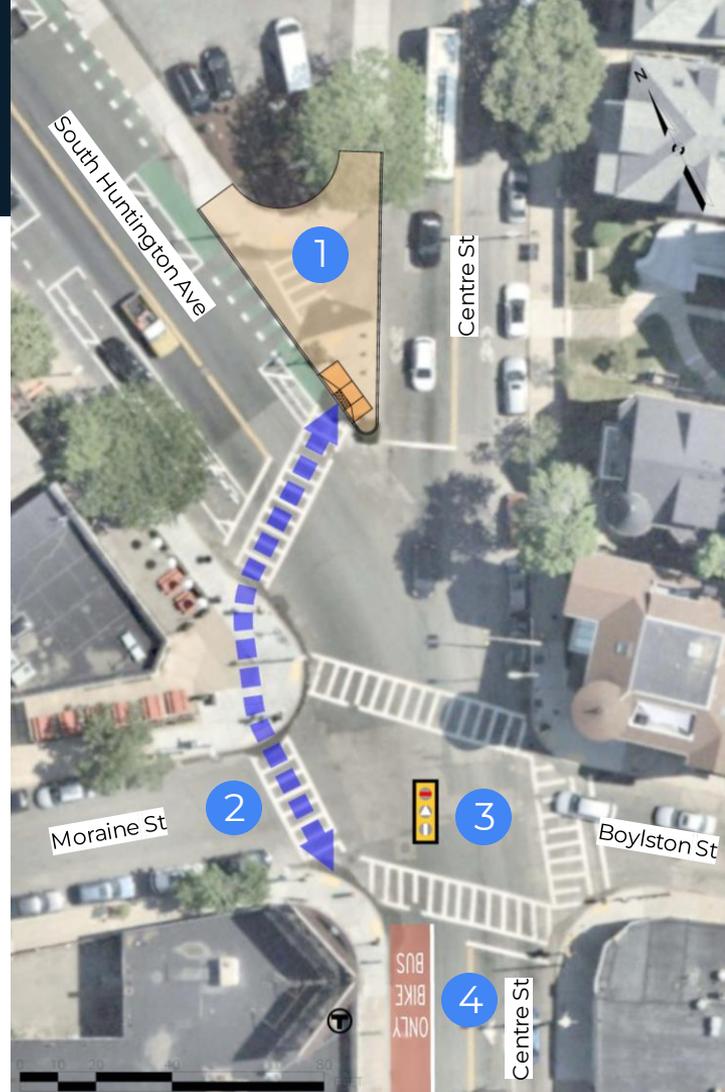


Forest Hills to Heath St

Draft Concept - South Huntington and Perkins/Moraine

Benefits:

- Improve pedestrian circulation across the intersection.
 - Slip lane has low vehicle volumes and closing it will increase pedestrian safety
- 1 Close southbound right turn slip lane and install sidewalk and curb ramp
 - 2 Improve pedestrian signal phasing
 - 3 Implement transit signal priority
 - 4 Install outbound bus bike lane



Forest Hills to Heath St

Bus Stop Improvements

Proposed Improvements:

New Shelter and/or Seating

- South St at Spalding St stop
- Centre St at Seaverns Ave stop
- Centre St at Burroughs St stop
- Centre St at Myrtle St stop

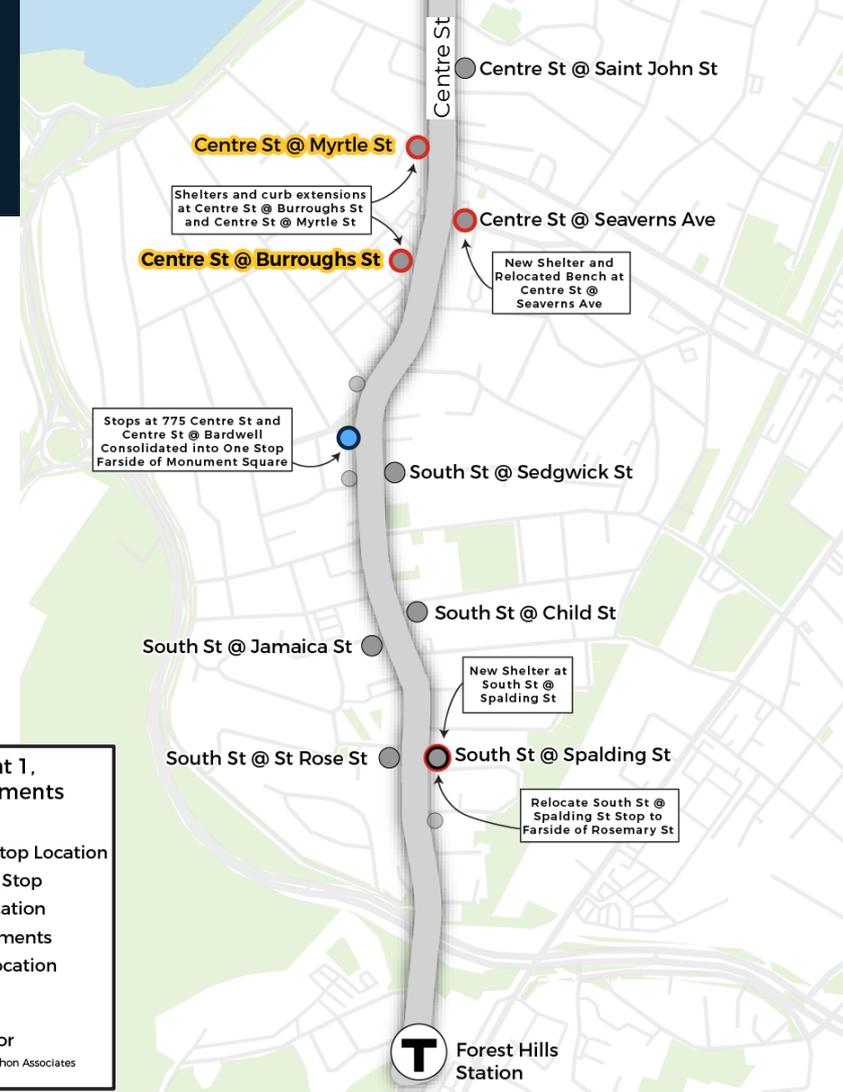
Curb Extensions

- South St at Bardwell St stop
- Centre St at Burroughs St stop
- Centre St at Myrtle St stop

**Route 39, Segment 1,
Bus Stop Improvements
Concept Map**

- Unchanged Bus Stop Location
- Consolidated Bus Stop
- New Bus Stop Location
- Amenity Improvements
- ▲ Curb Extension Location
- Route 39 Corridor
- Ⓣ Green Line Stop
- Green Line Corridor

Data Sources: Nelson\Nygaard, McMahon Associates
Date Created: October 2023

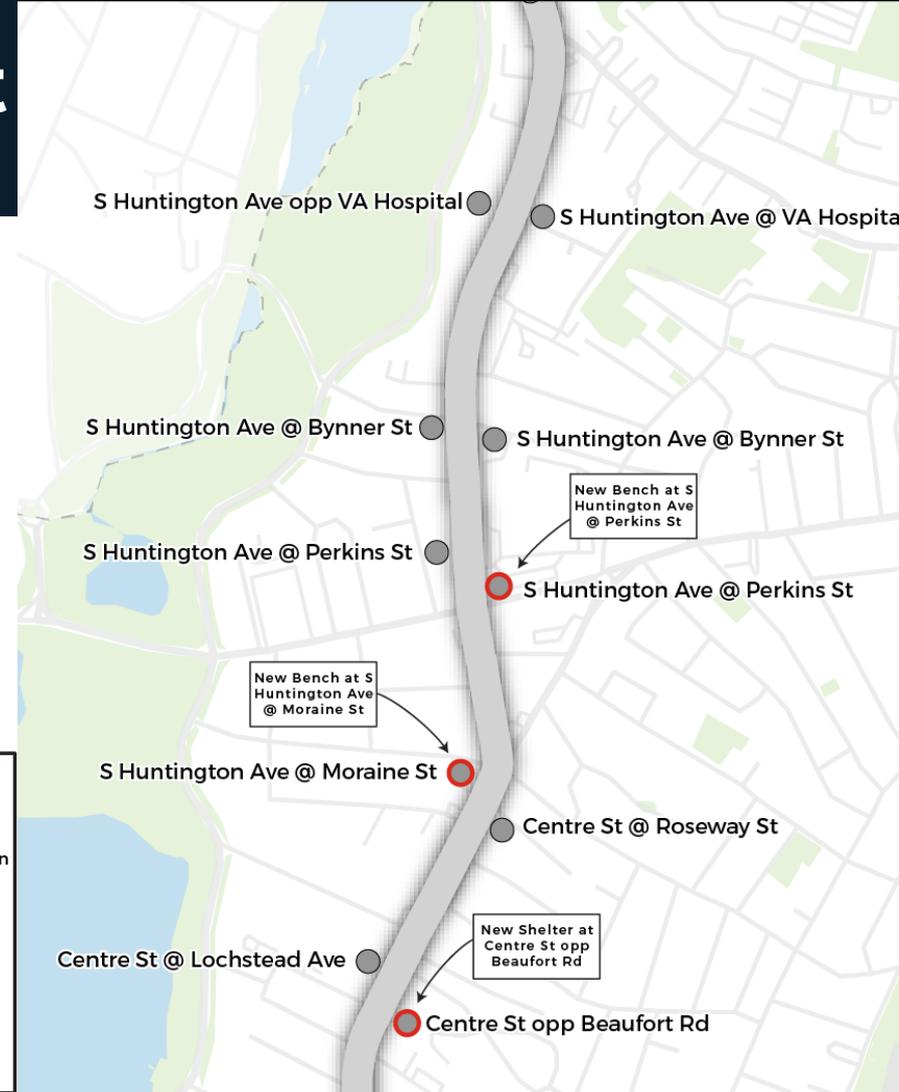


Forest Hills to Heath St

Bus Stop Improvements

Proposed Improvements: New Shelter and/or Seating

- South St opp Beauford Rd stop
- South Huntington Ave at Moraine St stop
- South Huntington Ave at Perkins St stop



**Route 39, Segment 1,
Bus Stop Improvements
Concept Map**

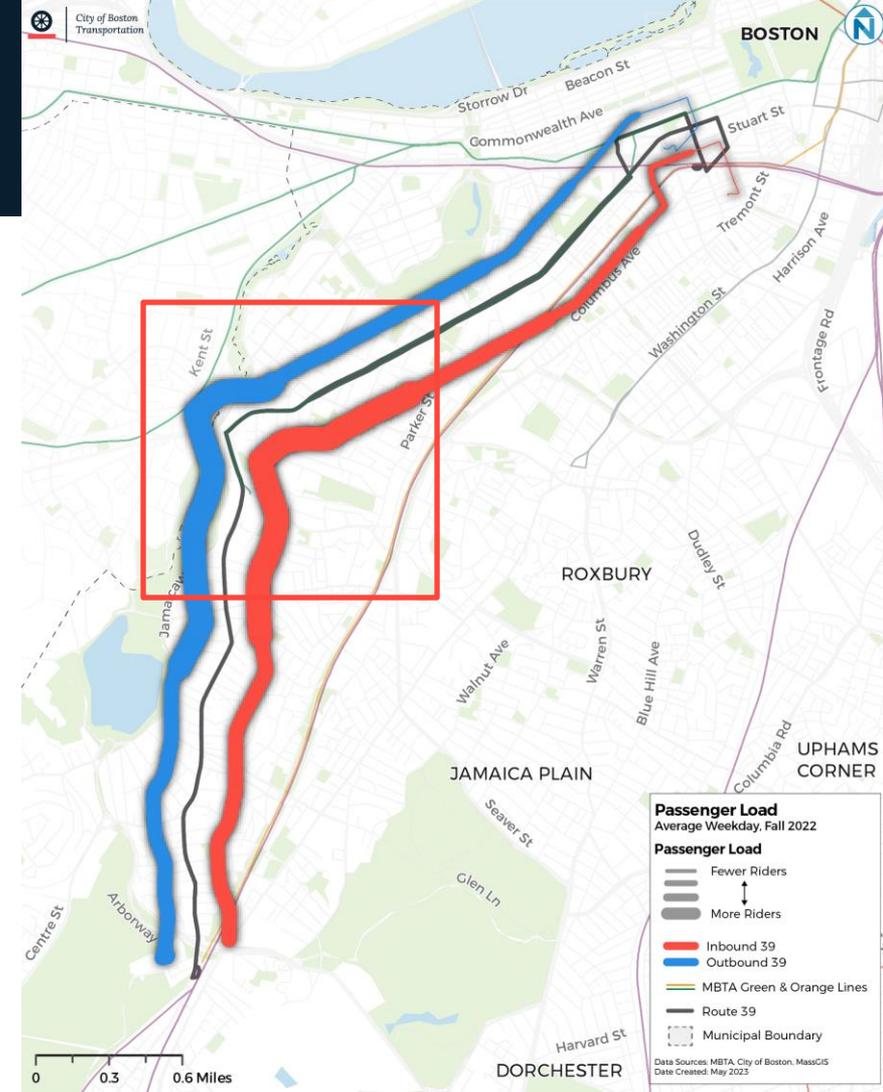
- Unchanged Bus Stop Location
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- Amenity Improvements
- ▲ Curb Extension Location
- Route 39 Corridor
- Ⓣ Green Line Stop
- Green Line Corridor

Data Sources: Nelson\Nygaard, McMahon Associates
Date Created: October 2023

Segment 2 – Heath St to Brigham Circle

Segment 2 has:

- The highest passenger loads in the corridor
- The greatest levels of passenger delay
- Slow speeds regardless of the time of day.

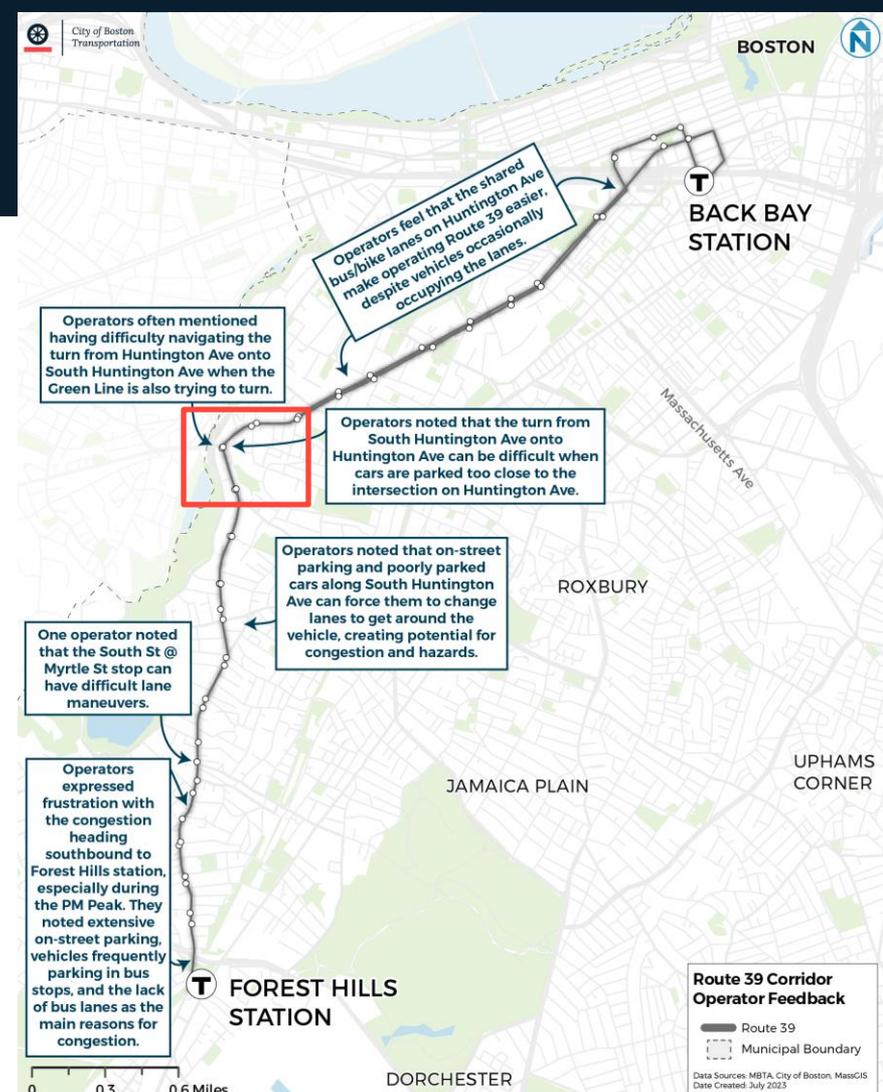


Segment 2 – Heath St to Brigham Circle

Many of the issues in Segment 2 are concentrated at the intersection at South Huntington Avenue and Huntington Avenue.

This location experiences:

- High crash volumes
- High transfer location to and from Routes 39 and 66
- Complicated transit operations because of turning movements of the 39, 66, and E Line
- Lack of rider infrastructure and amenities
- Severe pedestrian safety concern due to extensive pedestrian conflict areas



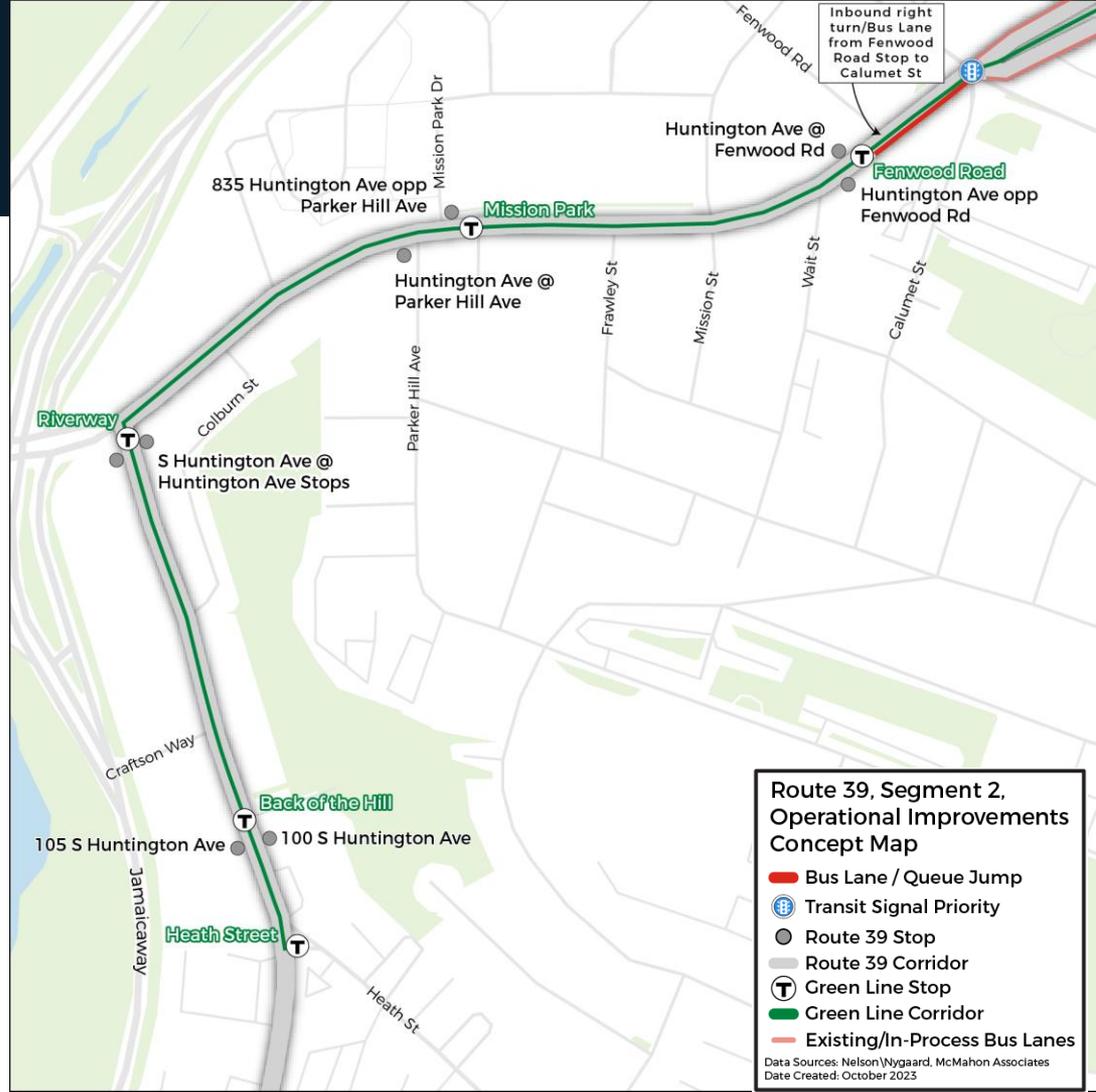
Heath St to Brigham Cir

Operational Improvements

Our team developed concepts to incorporate reliability, safety, and access improvements in this segment. The City and MBTA will further coordinate on designs in this area to improve transit operations for buses and the Green Line

Proposed Improvements:

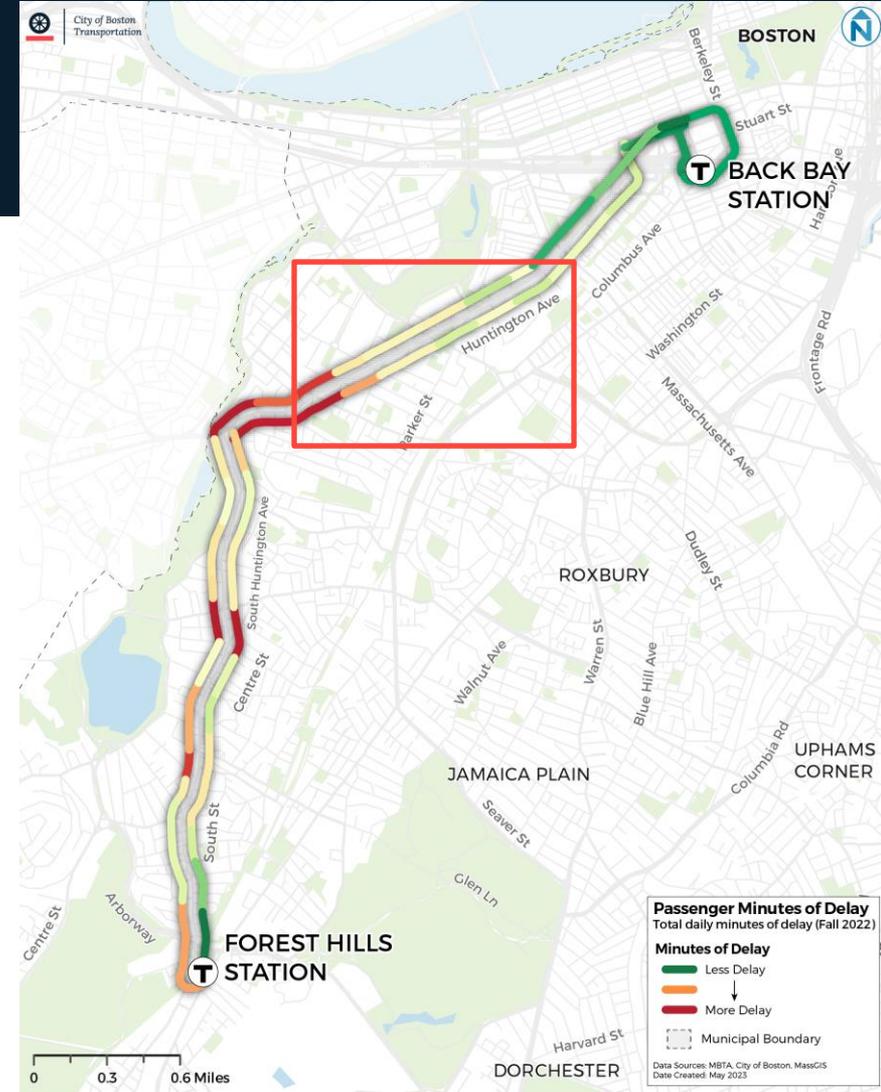
- Inbound bus/bike lane on Huntington Ave from Fenwood Road to Calumet St
- Transit signal priority at Brigham Circle



Segment 3 - Brigham Circle to Gainsborough St

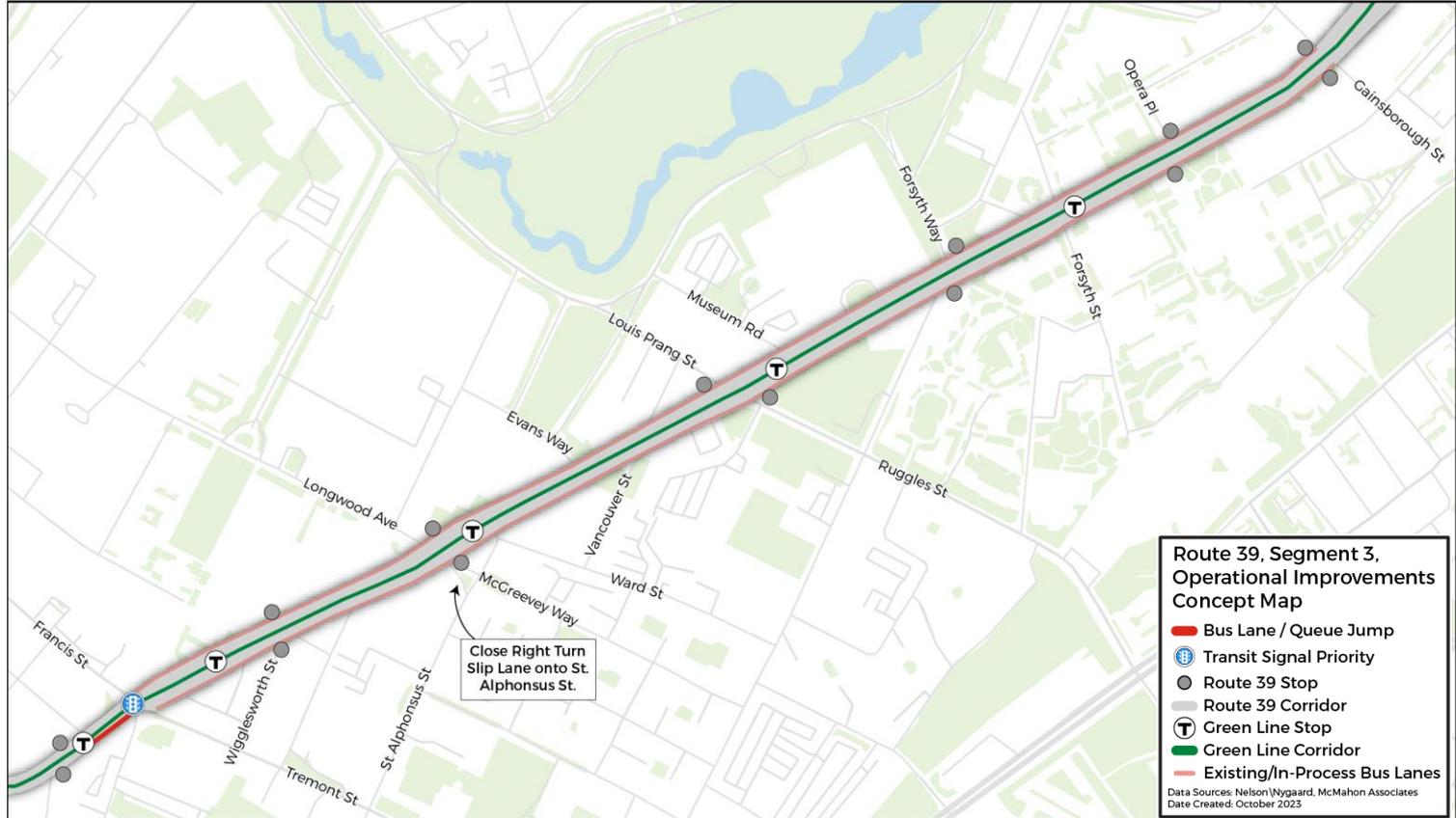
Segment 3 has better operating conditions than Segments 1 & 2.

- Huntington Ave bus lanes installed last fall (and permanent striping nearly completion):
 - Save passengers 125 hours per work week
 - Have made the route easier to navigate for operators.
 - According to the survey, have improved rider experience
- However, there is a need to improve enforcement to deter cars temporarily parking—mostly for pickup, drop-off, and deliveries—and cars driving in the lanes.
- The majority of curb ramps throughout this segment are deteriorated or are not present, creating a pedestrian and mobility hazard.



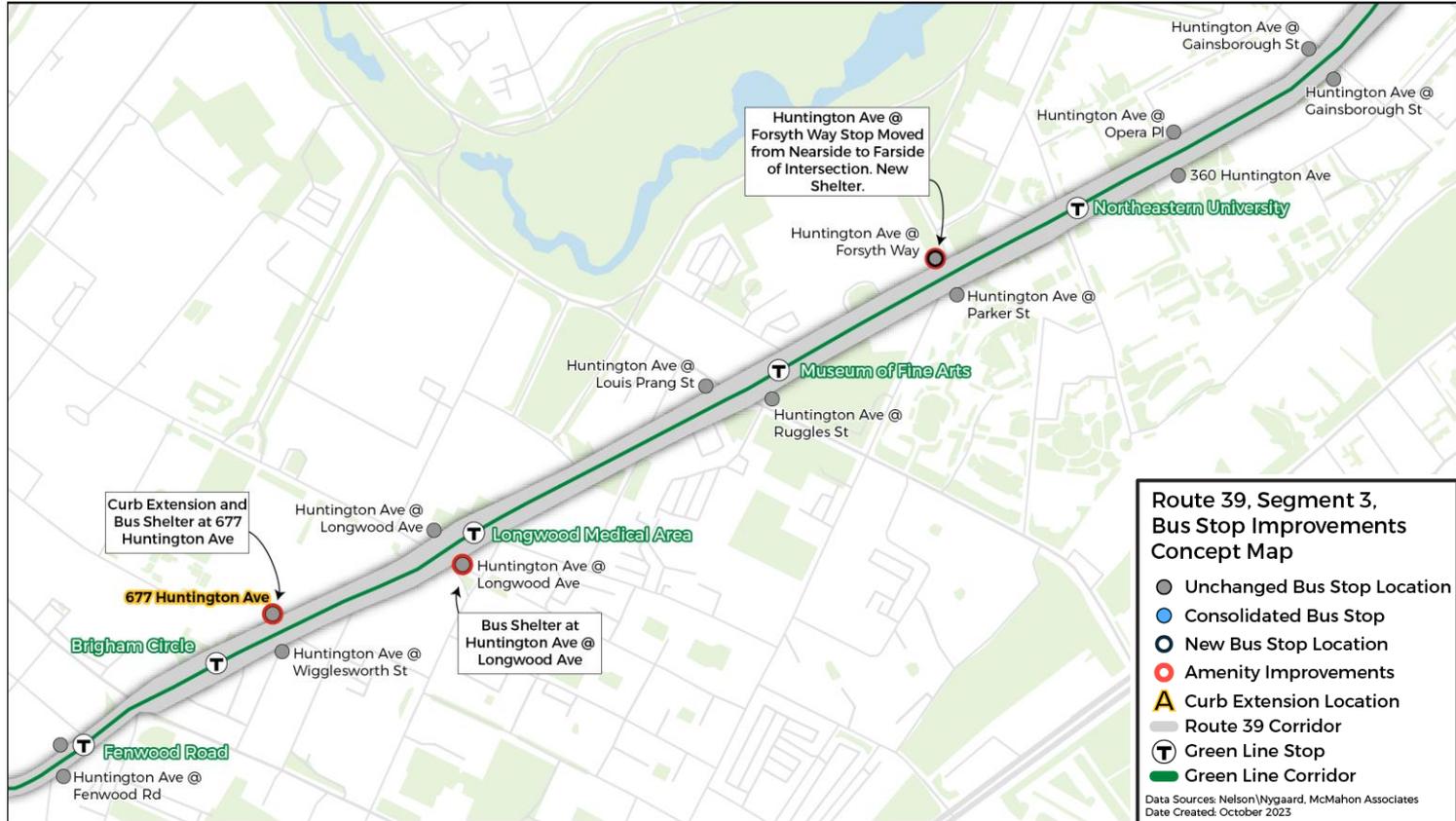
Brigham Circle to Gainsborough St

Operational Improvements



Brigham Circle to Gainsborough St

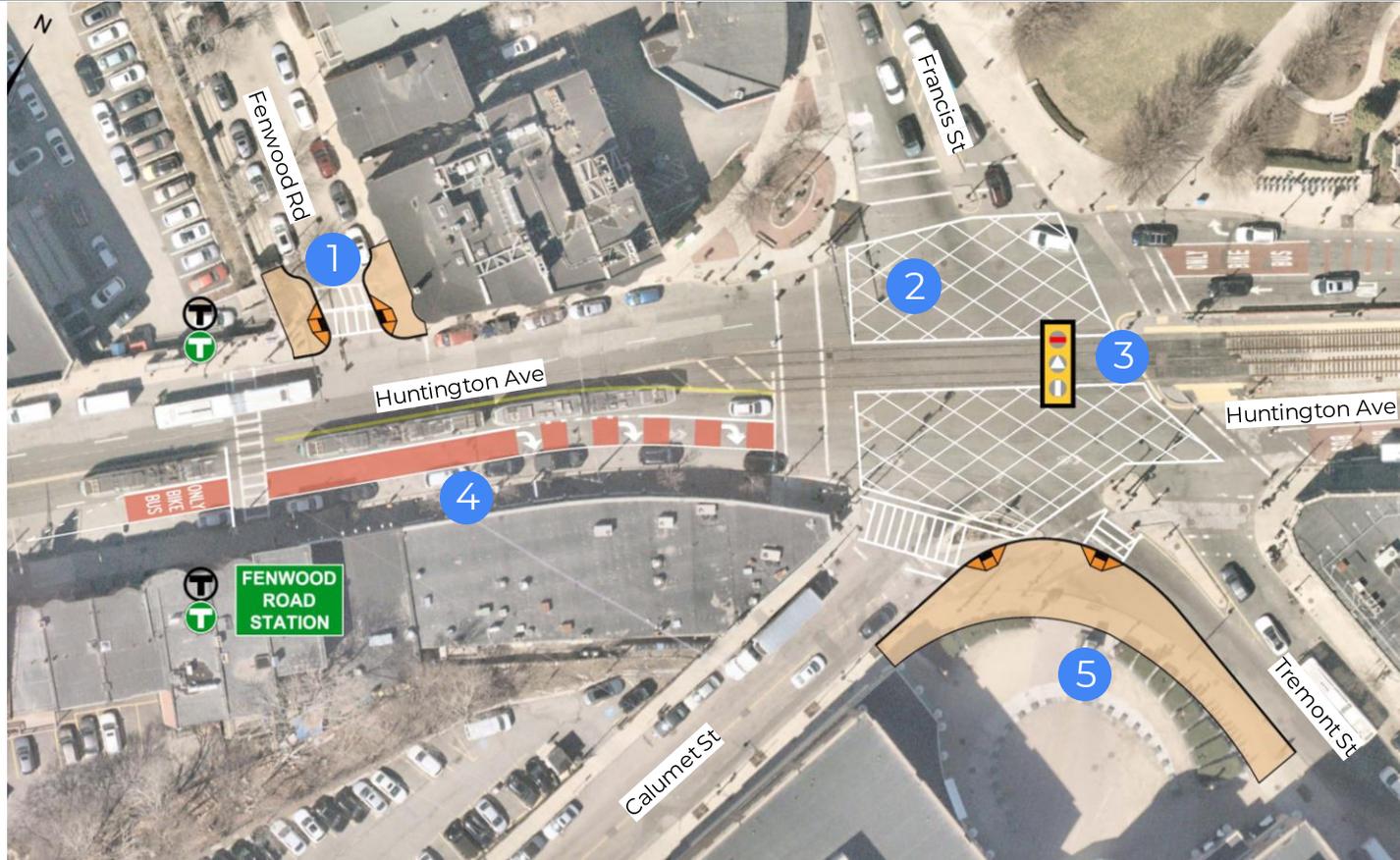
Bus Stop Improvements



Brigham Circle to Gainsborough St

Draft Concept - Brigham Circle

- 1 Construct curb extensions and curb ramps
- 2 Install “Don’t Block the Box” markings
- 3 Implement transit signal priority
- 4 Install inbound bus bike lane/shared right turn lane
- 5 Close northbound Right turn slip lane and widen sidewalk



Segments 4 & 5 - Gainsborough St to Back Bay

Operational Improvements

Despite having some of the lowest speeds on the route, the stop-to-stop segments near Back Bay Station in either direction are some of the most reliable segments along the Route 39 corridor.

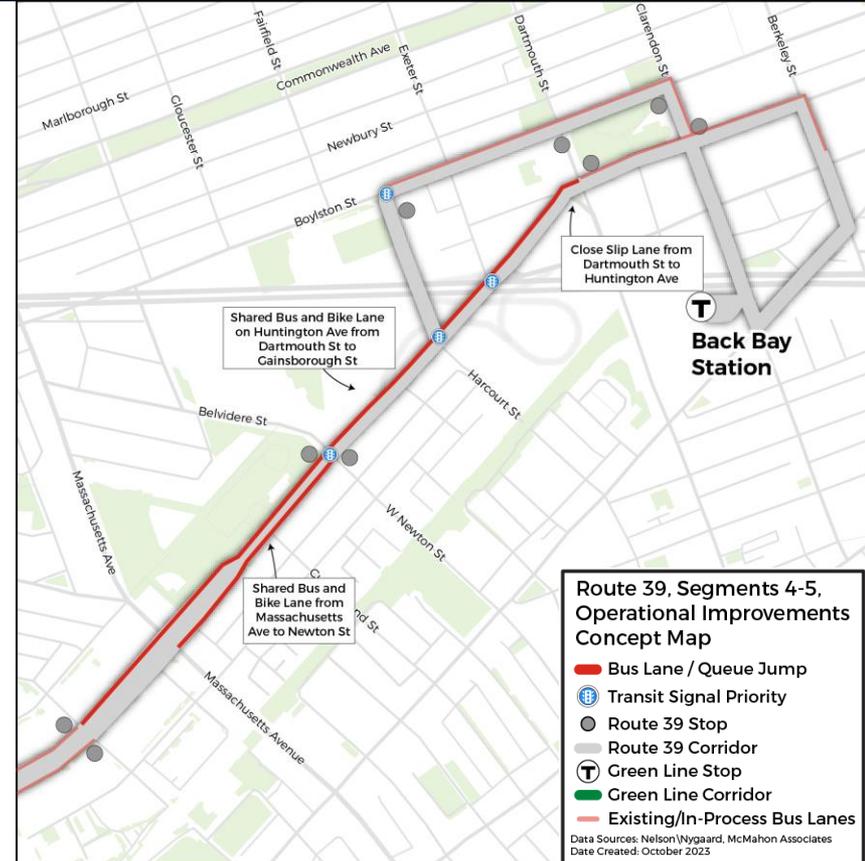
Proposed Improvements:

Bus Lanes and Queue Jumps

- Outbound bus/bike lane on Huntington Ave. approaching Gainsborough St.
- Outbound bus/bike lane on Huntington Ave. from Ring Rd to Belvidere St.

Transit Signal Priority

- Huntington Ave and Belvidere St intersection
- Huntington Ave and Ring Rd intersection
- Ring Rd and Boylston St intersection
- Huntington Ave and Exeter St intersection



Segments 4 & 5 - Gainsborough St to Back Bay

Bus Stop Improvements

Most of the recommendations in Segments 4 and 5 are focused on improving safety conditions at various high-volume crash locations.

Proposed Improvements:

New Shelter and/or Seating

- Huntington Ave at Gainsborough St stop (outbound)
- Saint James Ave at Clarendon St stop

Curb Extensions

- Huntington Ave at Gainsborough St stop (inbound)
- Huntington Ave at Belvidere St stop



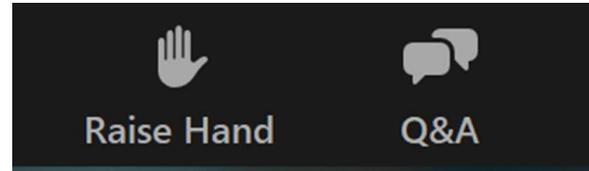
Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

Q & A



Q&A

- Please share only one question or comment at a time
- Use the **Q&A** button to submit a typed question or comment.
- Press the “**Raise Hand**” button to share your question or comment verbally. Wait for the moderator to recognize and unmute you before speaking.
- If you have joined by phone only, you may “raise your hand” by pressing the star button and then nine (*9)
- *After you speak, we will lower your hand and you will be muted to allow the team to respond and provide opportunities for others to participate*



Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor

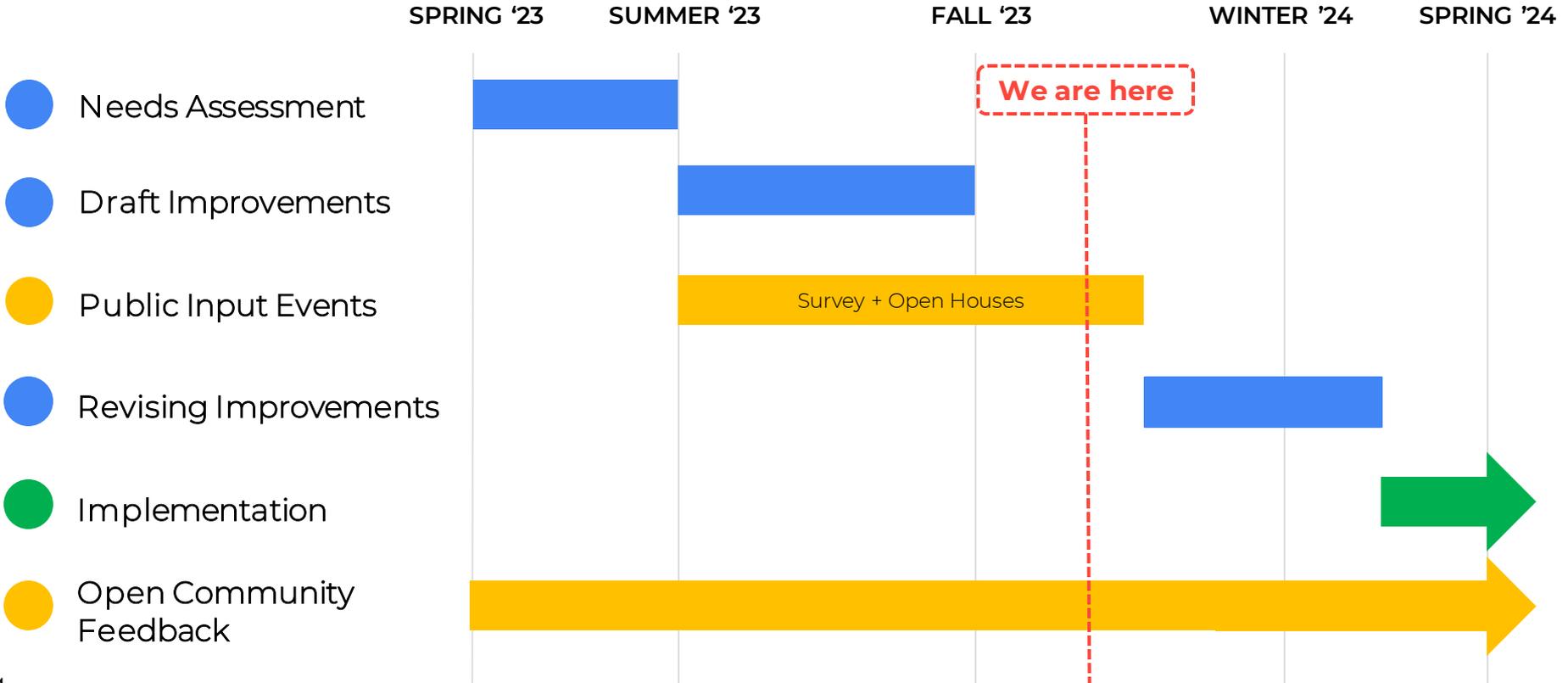
Next Steps



Project Schedule

Public Outreach

Technical Work



Evaluation Criteria

Impact

We want to prioritize concepts that improve high passenger load segments, high ridership stops or stops with high transfer activity.

Feasibility

We want to identify quick-builds and quick-wins. Concepts that have a low barrier of implementation and provide the highest level of benefit for the cost should be prioritized.

Safety

We want to ensure all bus riders feel safe while waiting at their bus stops and boarding the bus.

Accessibility and Passenger Experience

We want to ensure all bus riders can access their bus stops and wait at them comfortably.

Reliability and Time Savings

We want to prioritize improvements where the buses are currently experiencing delays along their routes.

Impacts on Other Modes

We want to ensure that impacts on other modes are considered and distributed.

Example Evaluation Metrics

- 1 Impact:** Is this concept located at a high ridership stop?
- 2 Feasibility:** Can this concept be included within other efforts upcoming or currently underway?
- 3 Safety:** Does this concept improve safety conditions at a high-crash location/intersection?
- 4 Accessibility and Passenger Experience:** Does this concept help operators better access/serve a bus stop?
- 5 Reliability and Time Savings:** Will this concept reduce passenger delay?
- 6 Impacts on Other Modes:** Will this concept impact existing or proposed bike lanes?

Evaluation Criteria

Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor Project

Proposed Concepts

Segment 1

Centre Street Bus Stop Improvements

Access can be challenging, especially for people with mobility challenges.

Concept Description

A new Boston Transportation Department program to make bus service better by making it faster, more reliable, and more accessible. The City plans to complete multiple Transit

Priority Score

- ● ● Reach
- ● ● Feasibility
- ● ● Safety
- ● ● Accessibility and Experience
- ● ● Reliability and Time Savings
- ● ● Impacts on Other Modes

Every concept will be scored across the six criteria



How can people provide feedback?

Project Website

- Project resources
 - Background information
 - Project documents
 - Draft and final plans
- Subscribe for project updates
- Reach out to transit@boston.gov with questions or comments



Scan
here!



boston.gov/route-39

Thank you

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