

Welcome!

Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor Project

Open House
February 15, 2024

CITY of BOSTON



Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority



Project Introduction

What is the **BTD Transit Priority Corridors** initiative?

- A new City of Boston Transportation Department program in partnership with the MBTA to make bus service better.

What is the **Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor** project?

- The project will make improvements to the Route 57 corridor in Allston and Brighton to reduce transit delay, enhance safety, and reduce confusion for everyone on the street.

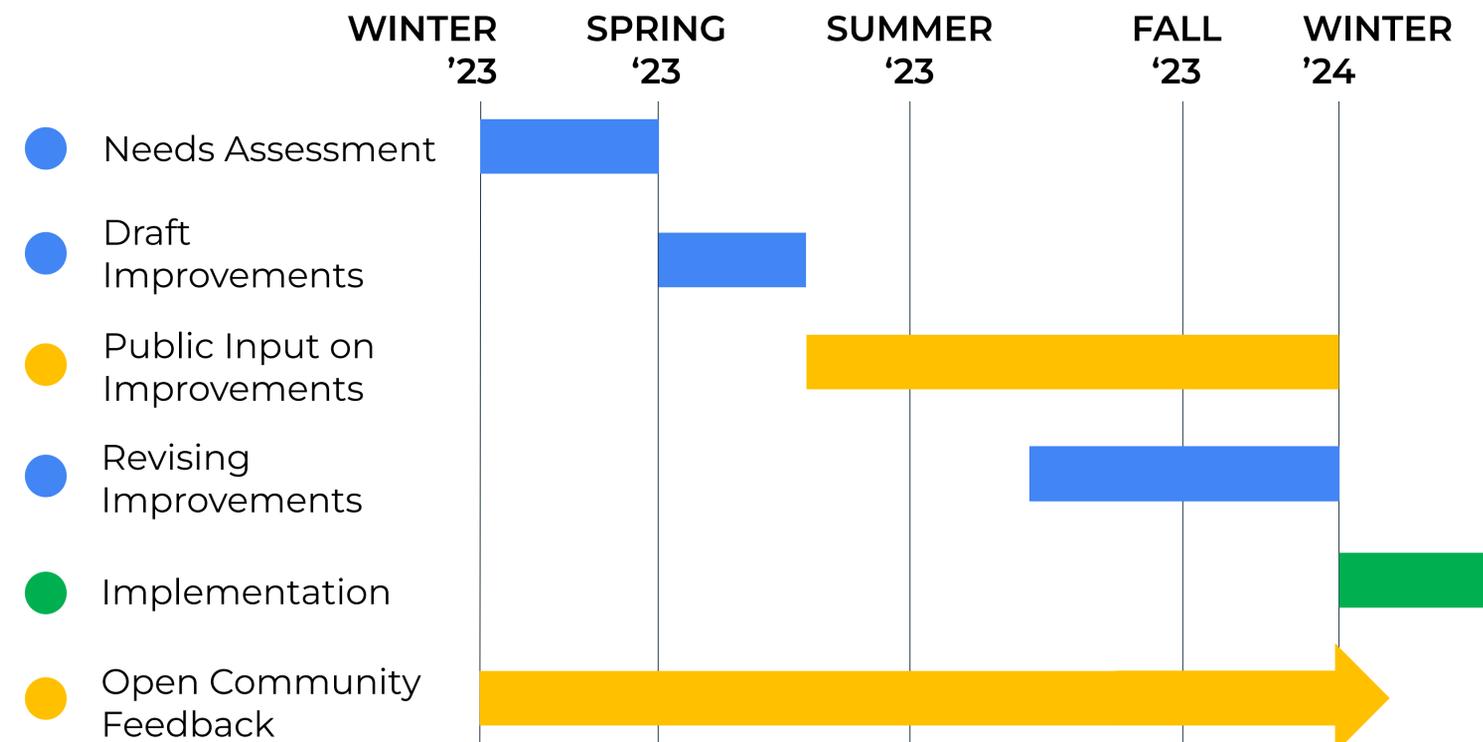
Project Goals

Accessibility: We want to ensure all bus riders can wait comfortably at their bus stops and board the bus safely. This includes accessibility for people with disabilities.

Reliability: We will look at infrastructure and signal improvements to help buses run on schedule.

Time Savings: We will study where the buses are delayed and explore solutions to save time for bus riders.

Project Timeline



Transit Priority Toolkit

What tools are available for improvements to the Route 57 corridor?

Bus Lanes

Bus Lanes are painted lanes **dedicated for buses** to move past traffic congestion. These could be **24-hour lanes** (general traffic never allowed) **peak hour-only lanes** (general traffic allowed at other times).

- Helps buses run faster and more reliably
- Could also function as a bicycle lane



Image source: MBTA

Bus Stop Improvements

Bus stops can be improved by moving stops **closer to crosswalks** and intersections, **combining stops** that are too close together, or **adding new shelters**, curb extensions, and other amenities.

- Makes traveling to and from stops safer and more accessible
- Stopping less often saves ride time
- Some people may need to travel farther to a stop
- Gives people a better place to wait



Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

Parking Policy

Changing **where and when parking** can occur, as well as what types of parking (e.g., **parking vs. loading**).

- Increase parking turnover so more people can park and access businesses in commercial districts



Turn Restrictions

Restricting turns on to and off of the corridor allows all traffic to flow with **fewer backups**.

- Buses and general traffic won't get held up behind turning vehicles

Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

Transit Signal Priority (TSP) uses **special signals** to move buses through intersections. This could mean **extending a green light** if a bus is approaching an intersection, or a dedicated signal **just for buses**.

- Helps general-purpose traffic if near bus
- Minimal impact to general-purpose traffic
- Can be used with short bus lanes



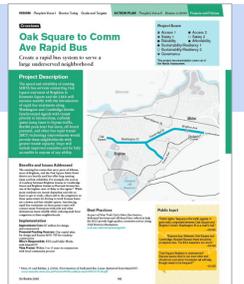
Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

Planning Background

There have been consistent calls for improvements to the Route 57 corridor:

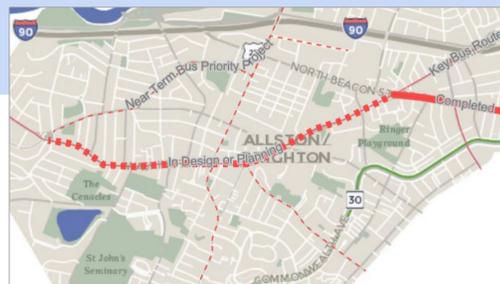
GoBoston 2030

- Completed in 2017; included two-year public process receiving thousands of comments
- Recommended Oak Square to Comm. Ave. rapid bus and reliability improvements for Route 57



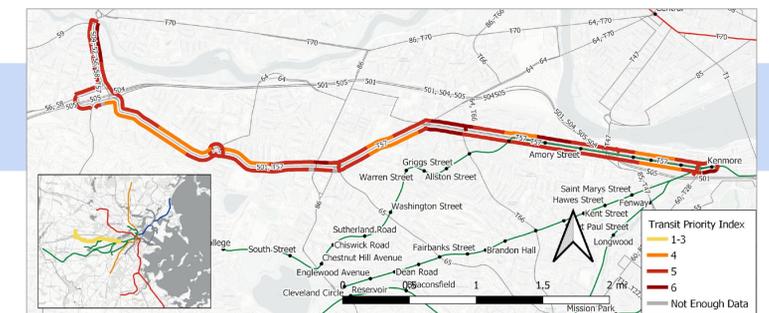
Boston Transportation Department Transit Priority Network

- Developed in 2021 by BTD Transit Team
- Based on existing ridership and delay patterns, locations of transit-critical populations, and previous plans and studies



MBTA Bus Network Redesign and Transit Priority

- Ongoing efforts, including planning to create a high-frequency bus network
- Seeks transit priority on Route 57 corridor



Allston Brighton Health Collaborative Mobility Audits

- Conducted in 2022; project team walked streets to identify safety, access, and mobility issues
- Recommended adding crosswalks and curb ramps, limiting double-parking, and improving visibility and traffic flows



Allston-Brighton Mobility Plan

- Adopted in 2021; included 4 open houses, 6 workshops, 10 civic groups, 1,600 comments
- Recommended peak-hour bus lanes on Washington and Cambridge streets



Ridership and Amenities

High Ridership

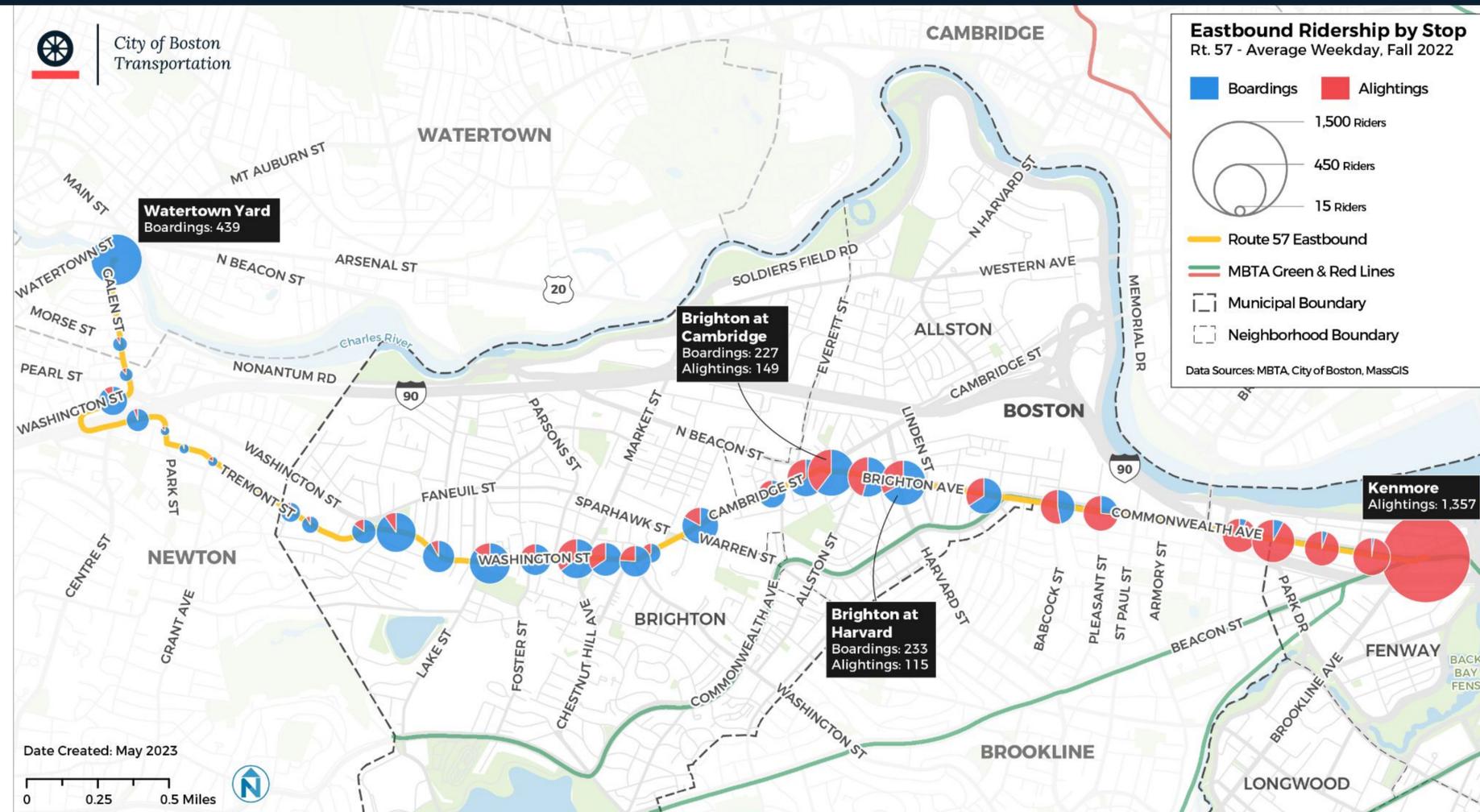
- Route 57 is the fifth-highest ridership route in the MBTA bus system.
- Route 57 carries about 7,500 riders per weekday.
- Over 9,400 riders board a bus on the Route 57 corridor every weekday.

Ridership by Trip

- Many weekday riders get on the bus during the morning and evening peak times.
- Peak-hour bus lanes would serve these high-ridership times of day.

Amenities

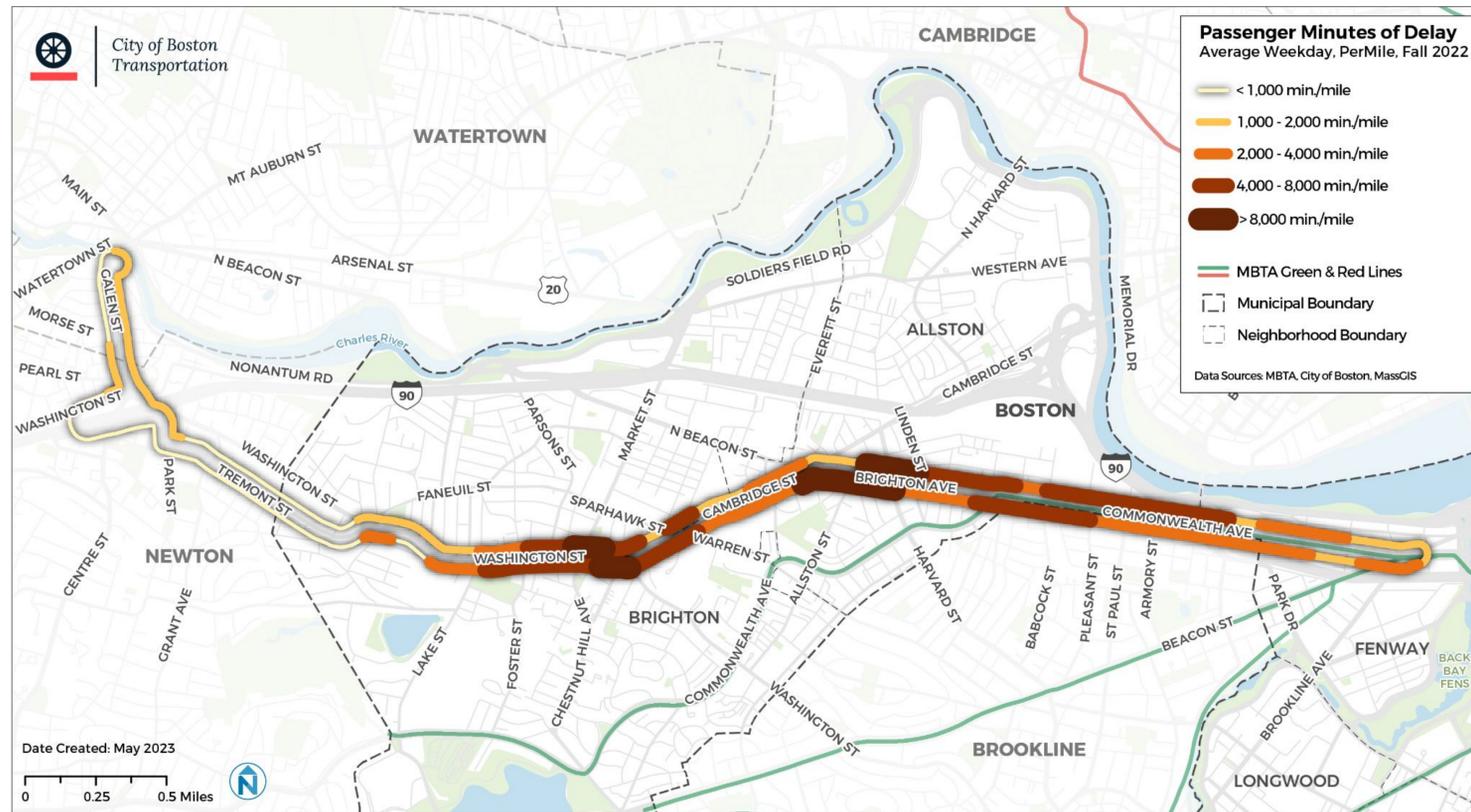
- Union Square, Brighton Center, and Oak Square have high-ridership stops that don't have bus shelters.
- Several popular stops are not near Bluebikes stations.



Transfers with Route 57

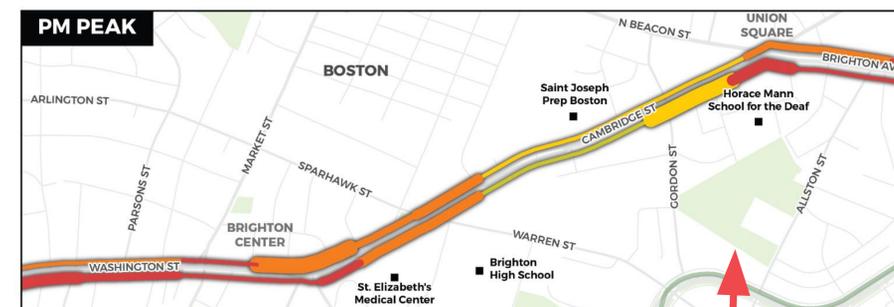
- The Green Line is the most popular transfer overall.
- Route 66 is the most popular bus transfer.
- Ensuring other routes benefit from transit priority improvements on the Route 57 corridor is also important.

Current Bus Challenges



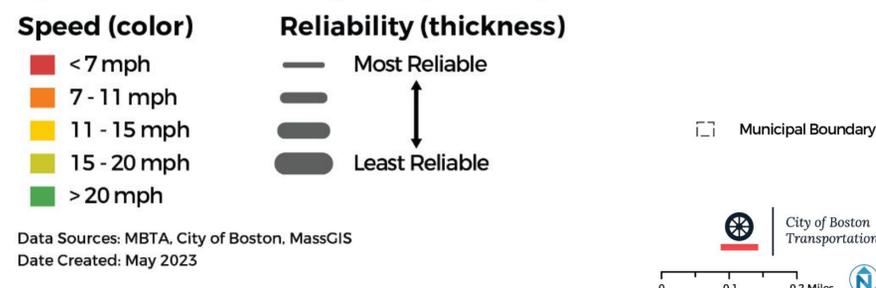
Passenger Delay

- Transit riders experience considerable delay on the corridor, especially near Brighton Center and Union Square
- Bus riders on the Route 57 corridor lose a collective 600 hours in traffic every day
- If all the delay on Route 57 were eliminated, a round-trip would be 20 to 30 minutes faster.



Speed and Reliability

Average Weekday, Fall 2022



HOW TO READ THIS MAP

Thick lines show where the bus is very unreliable, meaning it doesn't arrive on time. Red lines show where the bus is very slow. Thick, red lines show bus service with the greatest opportunity for improvement.

Speed and Reliability

- In some places, buses travel an average of 5 mph, which is only a little faster than walking!
- Buses are extremely unreliable along much of the corridor, meaning they don't arrive on time. Unreliable bus service can make people late for work, school, and other important events, and makes it harder for people to trust transit.

Brighton Ave. Bus Lane Support

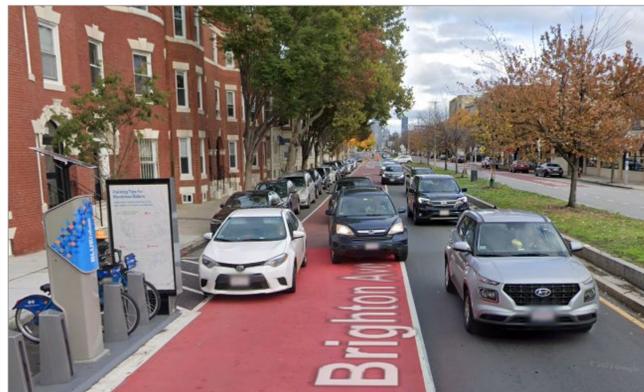
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Brighton Ave. Bus Lane Challenges

Both the public and bus drivers say the Brighton Avenue bus lanes don't work as well as intended because:

- Double-parking in the bus lane slows down the bus and makes service unreliable.
- Parking and loading in bus stops forces some riders to walk in the street to access the bus.



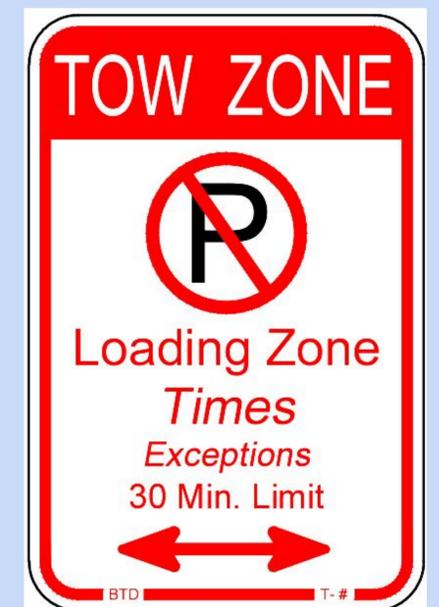
Parking Policy

- Double-parking can be reduced by creating more loading and pick-up/drop-off (PU/DO) zones. Shortening time limits for parking spaces also discourages long-term parking.
- Adding loading and PU/DO zones has helped reduce double-parking on Boylston Street in Fenway and on Cambridge Street in Beacon Hill.

Planned Changes

In 2023 and 2024, the City of Boston will be developing and implementing a metering and loading zone plan for Brighton Avenue.

The goal of these changes is to increase parking and load zone availability for residents and businesses on Brighton Avenue, and reduce the amount of parking and loading that occurs in bus lanes and stops.



Access: Parking and Transit

People access businesses and homes on urban corridors in different ways. They walk, bike, ride transit, use cars, and take other modes of transportation. In busy urban areas, transit is the most efficient way to move people and provides the widest access.

Access via Transit

A typical bus stop is about 450 square feet and can serve well over a hundred bus arrivals each day. A busy bus stop serves hundreds of people per day.

Access to businesses: In dense urban commercial districts, buses often provide access for far more people than cars. In Oak Square, for example, the inbound bus stop in front of Dunkin' is used by about 250 people every day.

Access via Street Parking

One parking space is about 130 square feet and it can only serve one vehicle at a time. When parking is unrestricted, it can serve a single car for many days.

Access to businesses: In commercial areas where people park for about an hour at a time (for example, to get lunch), a single parking spot might support about 12 cars per day, or approximately 12 customers.

445 people
boarding the bus

4,616 people
riding the bus

Cambridge St opp Dustin St
Average weekday, all routes
Daily Boardings: **268**
Daily Alightings: **40**

Cambridge St @ Dustin St
Average weekday, all routes
Daily Boardings: **31**
Daily Alightings: **296**

Cambridge St @ Saunders St
Average weekday, all routes
Daily Boardings: **37**
Daily Alightings: **89**

Cambridge St @ Gordon St
Average weekday, all routes
Daily Boardings: **109**
Daily Alightings: **30**



106 parking spaces

Future Work on Comm. Ave.



Passenger Minutes of Delay Average Weekday, Per Mile, Fall 2022



 MBTA Green & Red Lines

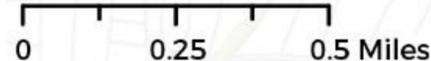
 Municipal Boundary

 Neighborhood Boundary

Data Sources: MBTA, City of Boston, MassGIS

Date Created: May 2023



 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

HOW TO READ THIS MAP

Thicker, darker lines show where more bus passengers are experiencing delay. Thinner, lighter lines show where passengers experience less delay.

Commonwealth Avenue Bus Challenges

- Buses encounter significant delay, and high ridership, on the section of Commonwealth Avenue from Packard's Corner to Kenmore.
- Uneven parking can force buses to straddle the centerline and take up two lanes.
- Heavy loading and pickup/dropoff activity results in frequent double-parking.
- This section of roadway is one of the areas of highest delay for the Route 57 bus.

Planned Efforts

In 2024 and 2025, in collaboration with the MBTA, Boston University, and the community, the City of Boston will be developing and implementing a transit priority plan for Commonwealth Avenue. This could include new bus stop locations, bus lanes, transit signals, or other types of transit priority to enable both MBTA buses and BU shuttles to move more people more quickly.

The goal of these changes is to increase reliability of transit service along Commonwealth Avenue, which enables more people to rely on transit as their primary means of transportation, which will help to reduce traffic volumes, decrease emissions, and advance the City's equity and decarbonization goals.

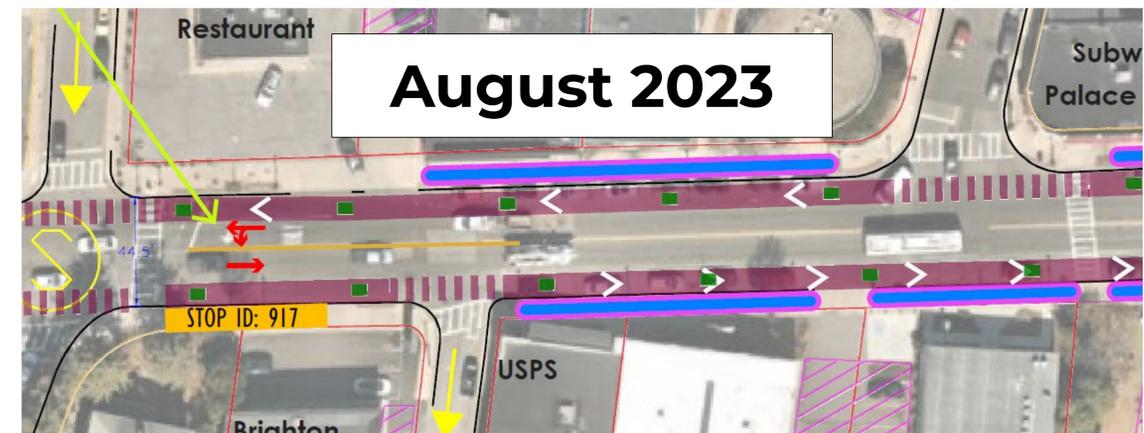
Design Changes Since August

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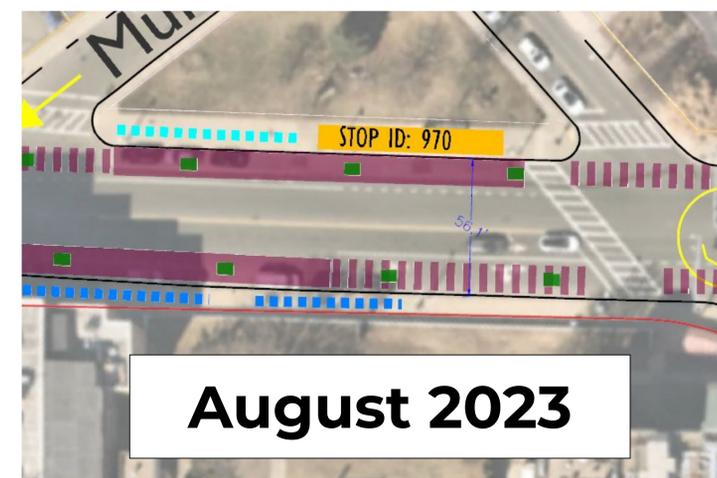
Shorter full-time bus lanes instead of longer part-time bus lanes

Based on feedback from the community and from MBTA bus operators, we have reduced the extent of peak-hour bus lanes and retained more all-day parking along the project corridor.



More parking retained on Cambridge Street

As our design has progressed, we have been able to retain additional parking spaces, including ADA spaces, on Cambridge Street in high activity areas near Warren Street, Gordon Street, and Imrie Road.



Design Changes Since August

Improved Bike Facilities

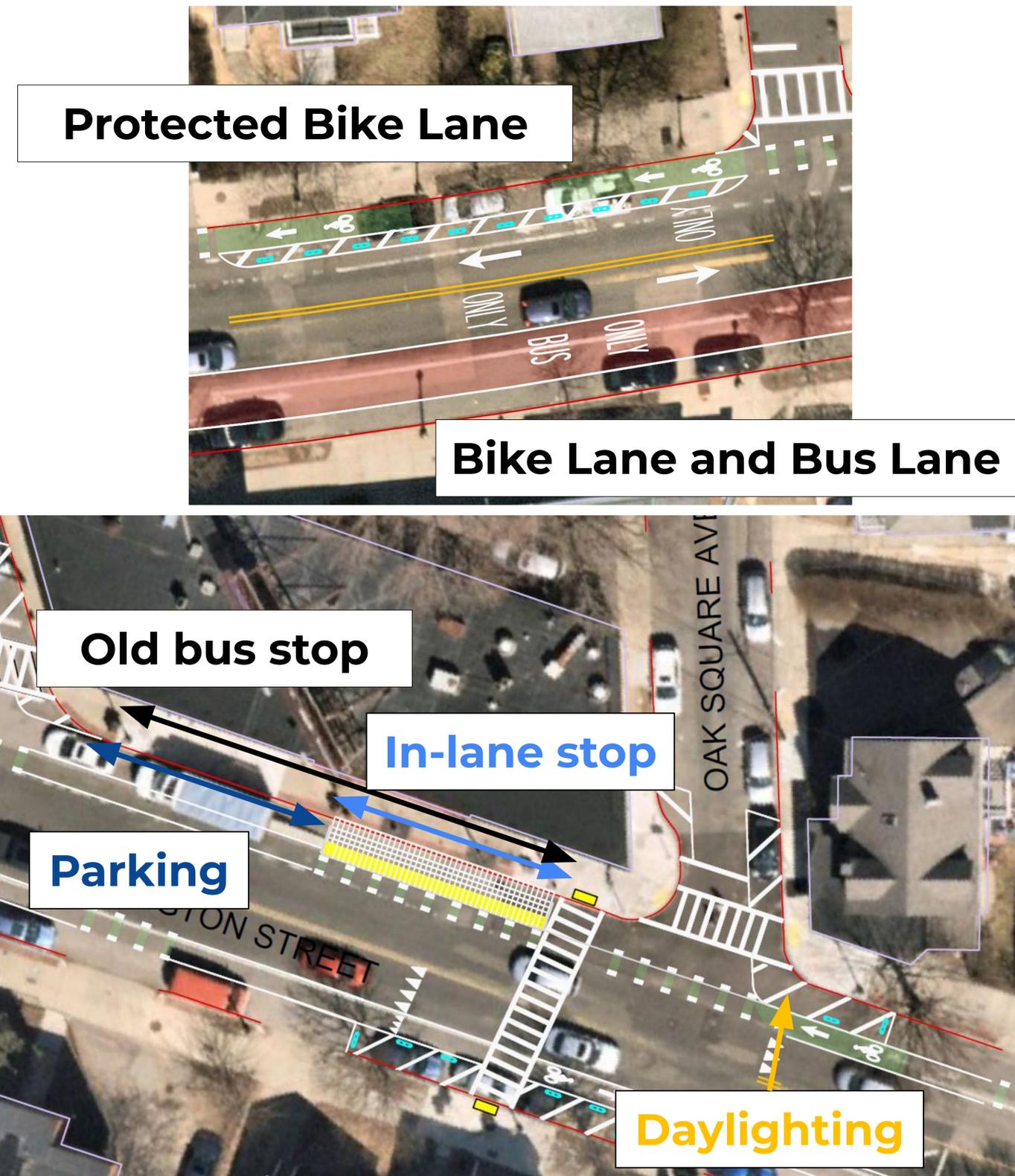
We heard loud and clear from community members that better bike facilities were a priority on this corridor, and that bus-bike lanes don't always feel comfortable. Where possible, we have separated buses and bikes to give everyone their own lane, and installed protected lanes.

More In-Lane Bus Stops

We are proposing to make greater use of modular bus boarding platforms, allowing for safer and more accessible boarding at more bus stops. In-lane stops also reduce the length of bus stops and add back parking where they are installed. Additionally, in-lane stops reduce the amount of time buses spend blocking traffic and make bus service run more efficiently.

Safer Crossings for Pedestrians

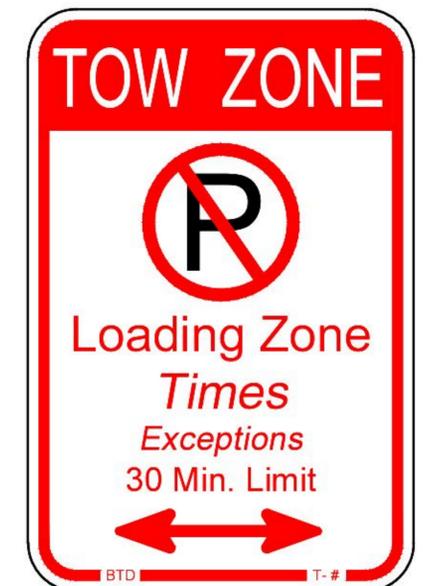
We have reduced pedestrian crossing distances wherever possible, and have added daylighting markings in order to improve visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.



Parking Regulation Changes

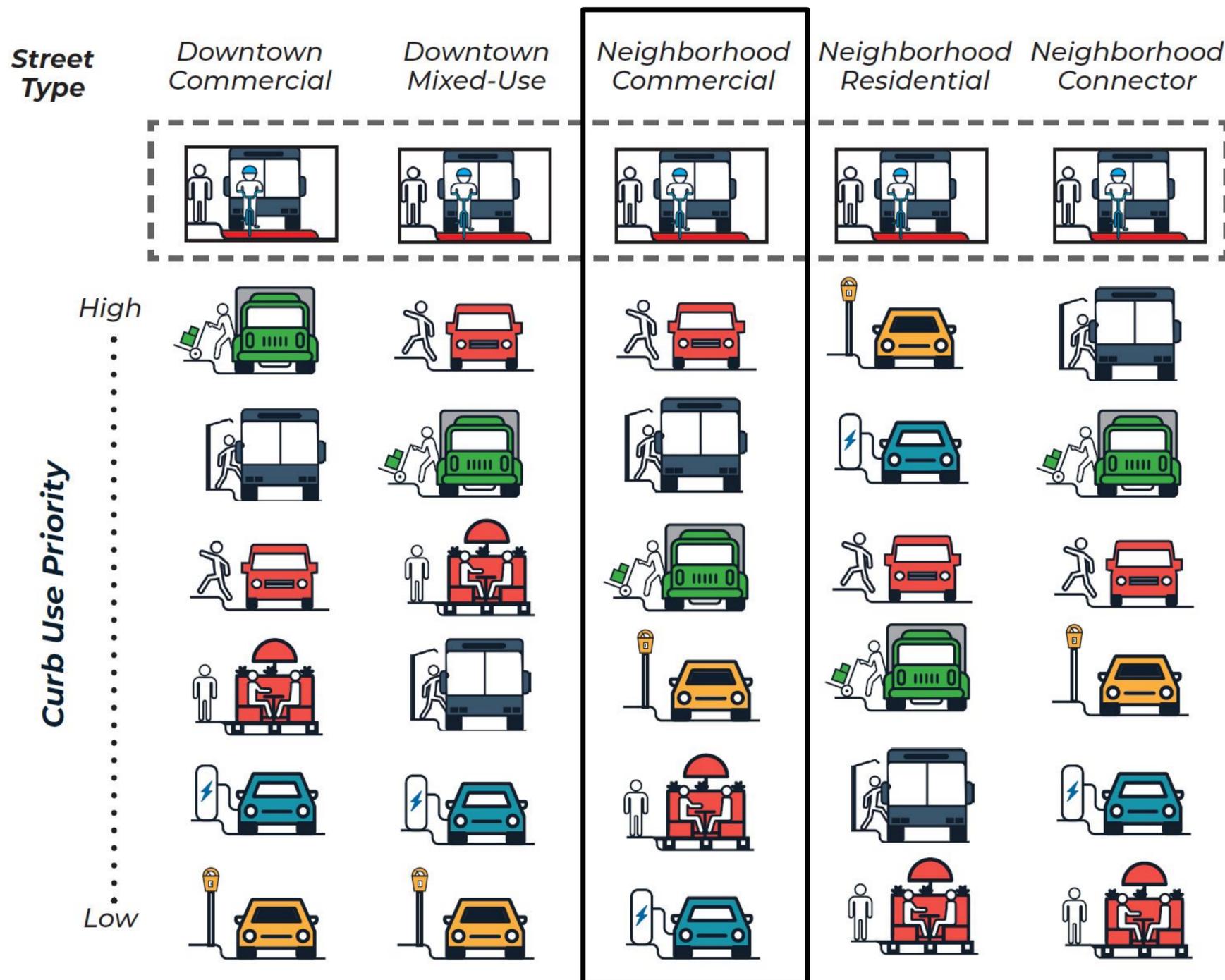
Parking regulations will change along the project corridor to enable more access and utility for existing parking spots.

- Parking meters will be installed in some parts of the project corridor to encourage turnover and improve access, and streets such as Market Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue will be considered for metering in the commercial area.
- Timed parking will extend until 8pm in more locations, in line with other commercial areas in the City, to provide more parking access during the dinner rush.
- In consultation with businesses, we will provide additional commercial loading and pick up/drop off zones where they're needed most.



Curb Management Plan

The City has a plan for curb management that sets clear priorities for curb uses on different kinds of streets.



Washington Street in Brighton Center is an example of a Neighborhood Commercial Street. On these streets, we prioritize curb uses in the following ways:

1. Multimodal mobility
2. Short-term access (pick-up/drop-off)
3. Public transit access (bus stops)
4. Goods delivery (loading zones)
5. Metered parking
6. Parklets and patios
7. EV Charging

These priorities reflect the need for our limited curb space to move people and goods and provide access to commercial centers.

Project Evaluation Program

We will evaluate how well the new design is working after we install it.

- We will conduct surveys of customers and visitors to businesses and institutions in the project area.
- We will monitor traffic after installation and make adjustments as necessary to signal timings, roadway features, and parking regulations.
- We will assemble data on transit ridership, transit speed, and transit reliability, and work with the MBTA to increase bus service.
- We will prepare quarterly updates during the first year of installation and receive community feedback on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation Program Timeline

