



# The People's Voice Visioning

Engaging Everyday People in the Visioning Process

People of all ages contributed their transportation visions at the Visioning Lab's Creation Station. The Creation Station invited Visioning Lab participants to draw, make, write, or collage their future of transportation.



## Public Engagement in the Visioning Phase

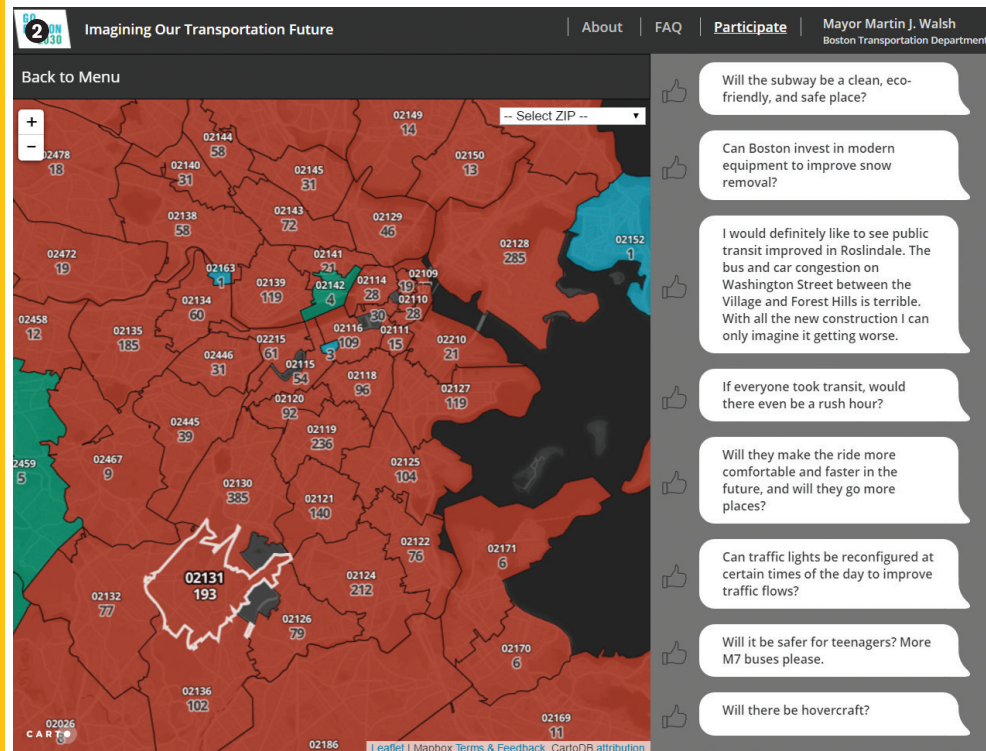
As Go Boston 2030 launched, the City of Boston saw a unique opportunity to think differently about how the public is involved in planning processes. By moving beyond the conventional community meeting model, which can limit imagination and tends to attract the same voices over and over, innovative techniques were used to bring new people into the process in fun and engaging ways. At each phase in the visioning process, the aim was to amplify the voices of people who have not typically been engaged in transportation planning.

The process started by soliciting questions from the public in order to understand their thoughts, ideas, and concerns during an intensive *Question Campaign*.<sup>\*</sup> From an analysis of the questions at a *Question Review Session*, nine organizing themes emerged. This broad categorization was then used to frame the *Visioning Lab*, a city-wide event that convened people to articulate their vision for our transportation future in captivating and creative ways. The draft Vision Framework, with its nine themes and corresponding Goals and Targets, emerged from the culmination of this iterative public feedback loop.

The questions formed the foundation of the entire Go Boston 2030 initiative.

A partnership with the Interaction Institute for Social Change, supported with funding from the Barr Foundation, allowed the initiative to use creative methods to reach the broadest possible audience using a combination of in-person and online engagement strategies.

<sup>\*</sup>A tool developed by the Interaction Institute for Social Change for broad public engagement.

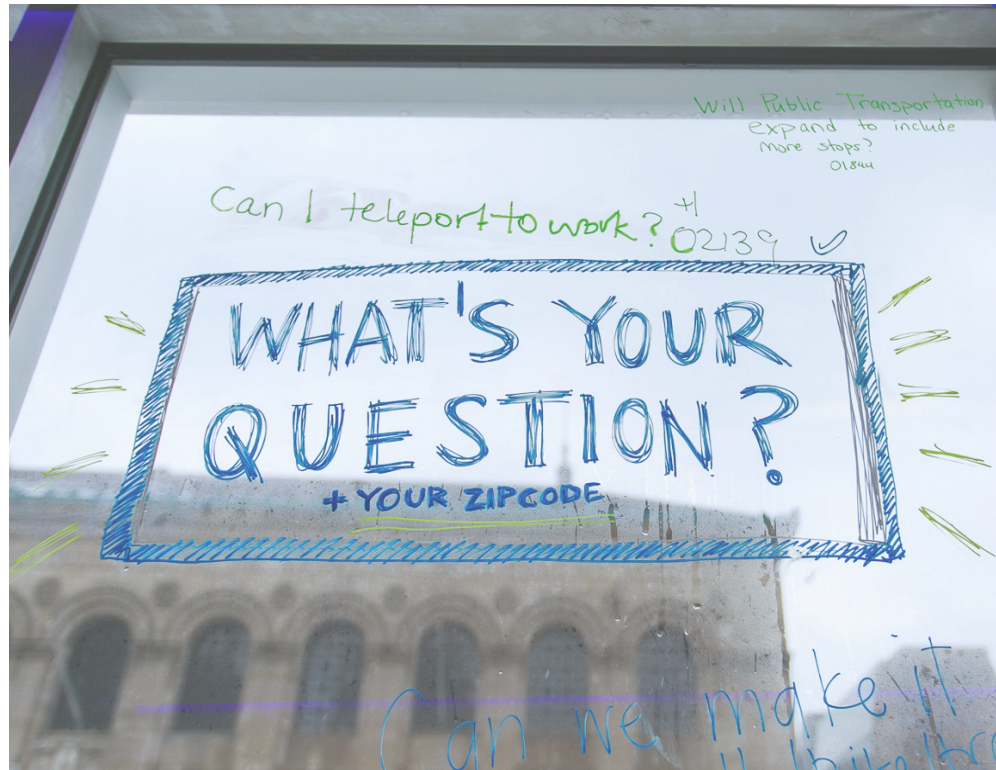


- The question campaign was piloted at Circle the City in September 2014.
- An online database of questions allowed people to see what was asked by zip code.
- Walls for each theme at the Visioning Lab invited the public to read and comment on questions and ideas.
- Provocative advertisements invited people to ask questions online or via social media in English, Spanish, and Chinese.



# The Question Campaign

## Initiating a Broad Conversation about Transportation



People could share questions in person at the Question Truck, online at the official website, or via social media.

GoBoston2030 @GoBoston2030 · Feb 20  
 MT @bikesnotbombs #GoBoston2030 questions are IN! Write yours up by midnight tonight! [goboston2030.org](http://goboston2030.org)



Go Boston 2030 wanted to create a way for a diverse range of people to express their ideas, experiences, thoughts, and concerns in order to frame the public conversation about transportation. Using a technique called a *Question Campaign*, people who live in, work in, and visit Boston were asked, “What’s your question about getting around Boston in the future?”

Listening to people’s questions served as a way to understand the breadth of the issues, what people’s diverse experiences are, and what individuals value most. Anyone can have a question, even if they do not see themselves as “experts” on transportation planning. Crafting opportunities for people to donate their questions online and in person across the city resulted in an easy, low-barrier way for thousands of people to participate.

### Nearly 5,000 questions were collected through the campaign.

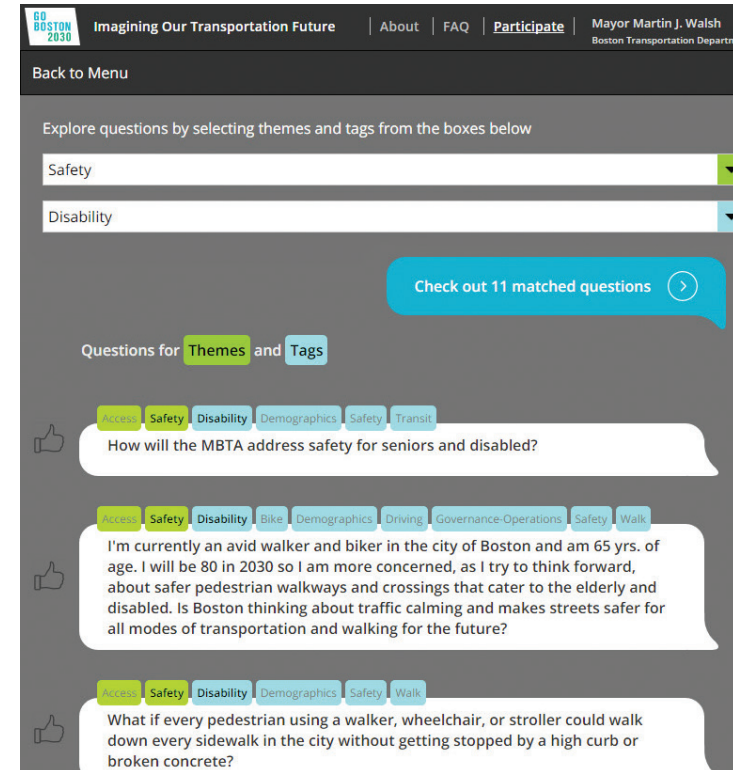
Community events and meetings were ideal places to collect questions from the public. Dozens of local organizations participated by soliciting questions from their members and constituents on paper cards. Among our many partners there were many examples of targeted outreach: Arts Emerson collected questions at intermission during their shows, Bikes Not Bombs collected questions from their youth mechanics, and the Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO) collected questions at hospitals in the Longwood Medical Area.

The [goboston2030.org](http://goboston2030.org) website was integral to the public engagement process. Initially, the site’s design

centered around collecting questions and allowing the public to interact with them. After donating a question and submitting a zip code, web users could read and like other questions, sort questions by tags or themes, and see all of the questions donated in a particular neighborhood.

Social media was also an important part of the public outreach. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram enabled the City to reach new participants and foster dialogue about transportation issues. @GoBoston2030’s Twitter followers in particular (871 at the time and over 1,900 today) have helped to continue the conversation.

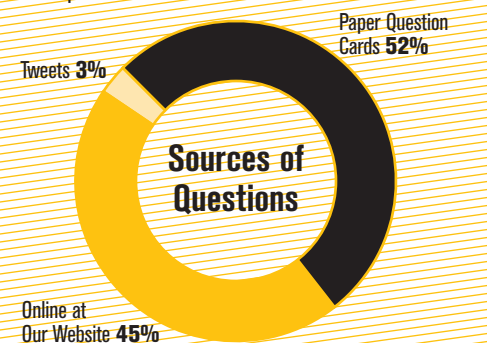
Read all the questions at [questions.goboston2030.org/?mode=read](http://questions.goboston2030.org/?mode=read)



### QUICK FACTS

Of the 5,000 questions,

- 52% came in on paper cards, 45% were submitted online, and 3% were tweets and Facebook posts.
- Every neighborhood in Boston contributed. Some zip codes submitted more questions than others. The top five were 02130 (Jamaica Plain), 02128 (East Boston), 02124 (Dorchester), 02119 (Roxbury), and 02131 (Roslindale).
- Only 16% of participants shared their age, but every age group was represented.



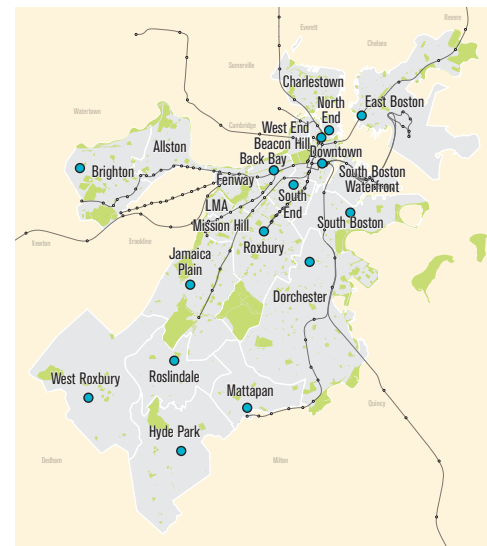
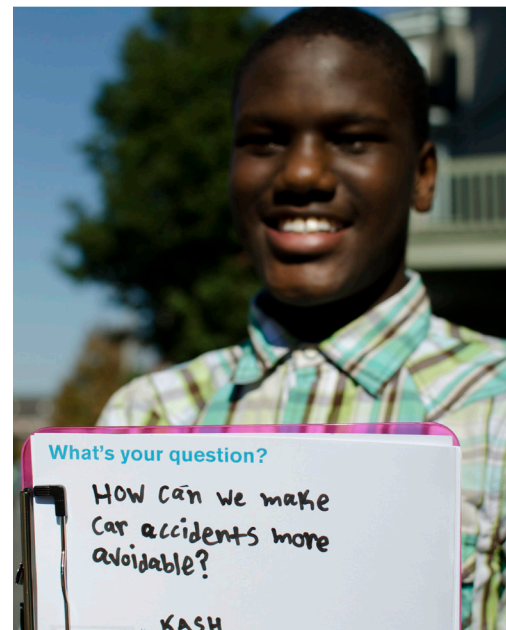


## The Question Truck

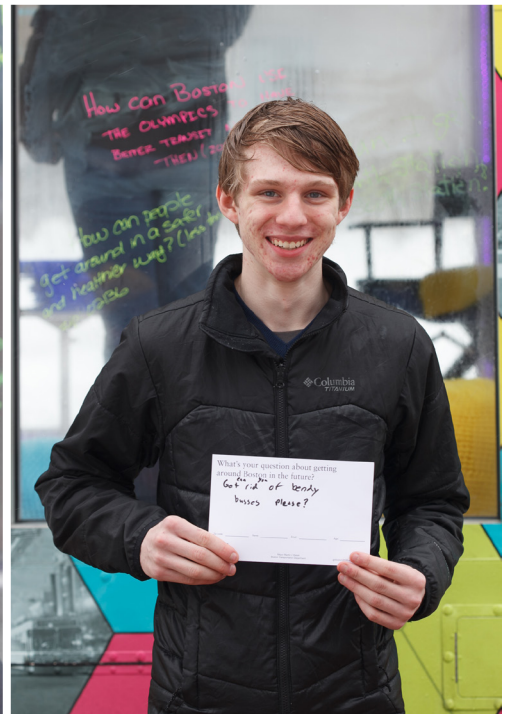
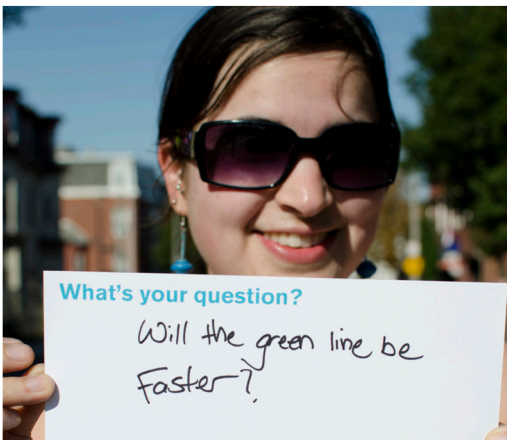
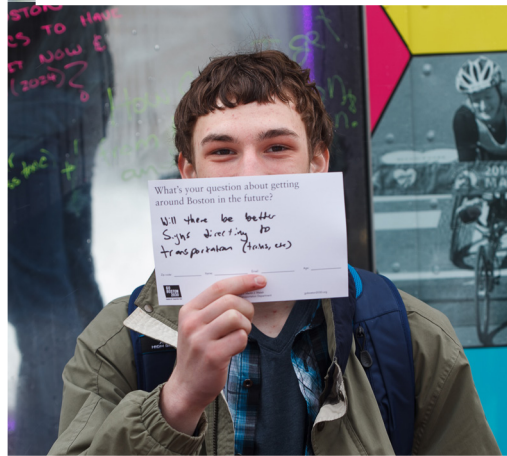
In late January and early February of 2015, the Question Truck visited 15 neighborhood locations collecting questions in order to meet people where they live, work, and travel. Passersby were invited to share their question and to read other people's questions. From a transportation themed soundtrack to hot chocolate, the festive spirit of the truck attracted people to join the conversation about the kind of future transportation system they wanted. People who stopped to participate could donate a question by writing on a card, the side of the truck, a Plexiglas hexagon, or an iPad.

The truck also provided a gathering place for initial conversations about the existing transportation system and ways to improve it in the near term. With its neon décor and bright lights, it created an inviting space that welcomed participants in from the cold. Its appearance also built buzz and familiarity with the Go Boston 2030 brand, generated press coverage, and provided a destination for people to engage with the process in person.

The Question Truck provided many ways to donate a question at each of the locations shown below.





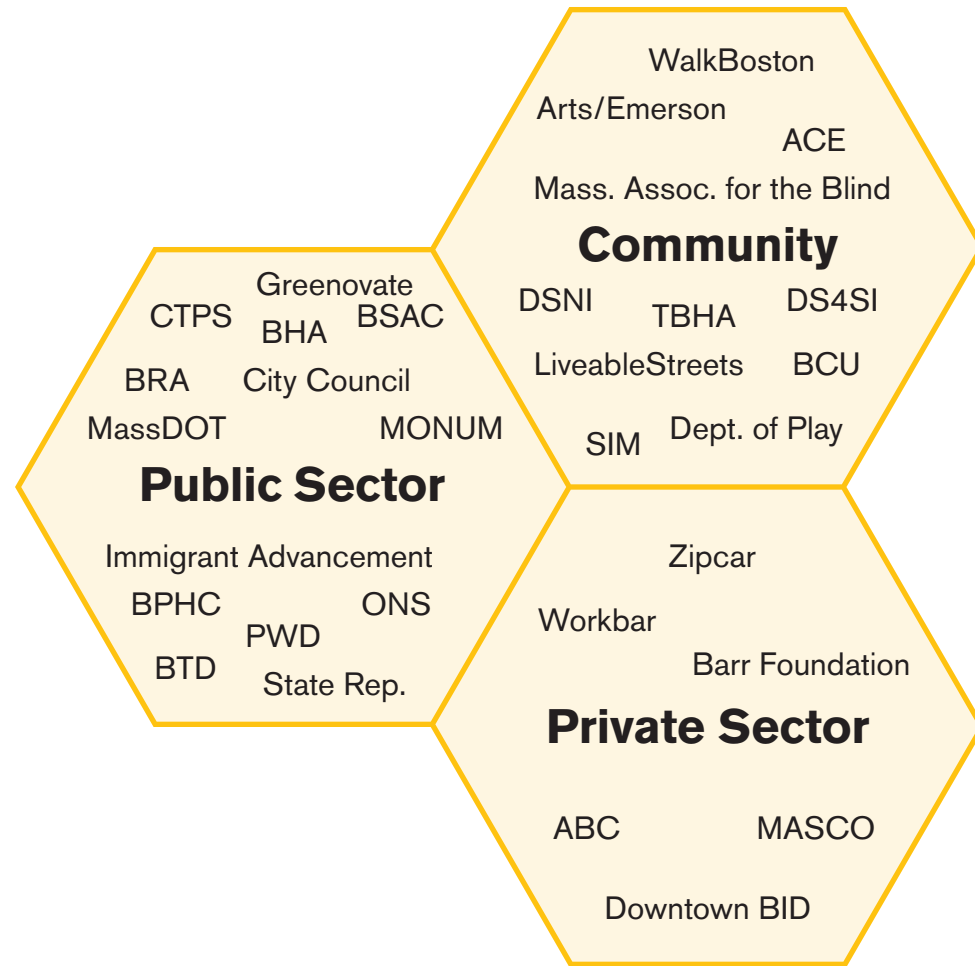




# Question Review Session

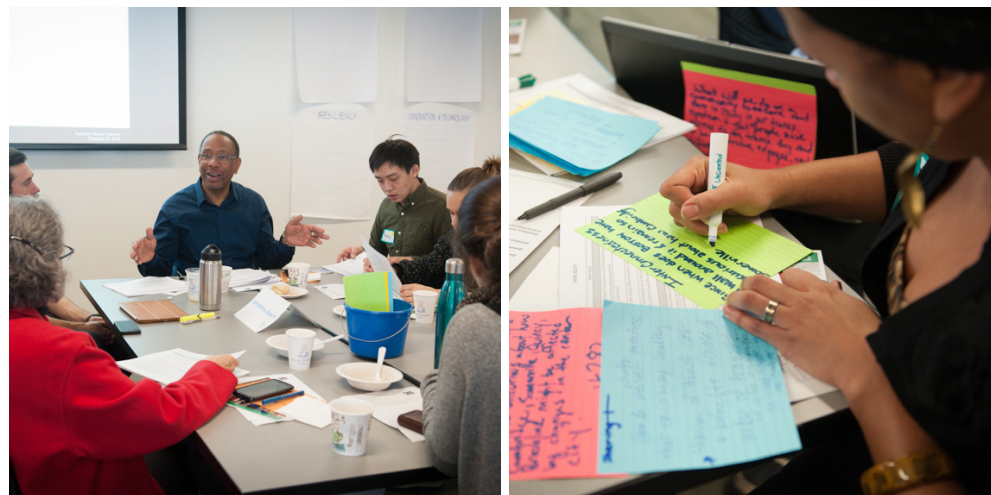
## Making Meaning of What the Public Said

After collecting over 5,000 questions from the public, Go Boston 2030 needed to make meaning of what was said. The *Question Review Session*, in late February of 2015, was a half-day convening of City officials and community leaders who reviewed all of the questions and worked together to understand and articulate what the public was saying. This collaboration cultivated a shared responsibility for carrying forth the voice of the people. As the questions were analyzed and sorted in preparation for the Question Review Session, multiple underlying themes emerged. After a consolidation process, nine themes were selected as the best way to organize the questions. At the event, every donated question was carefully reviewed, giving all voices equal weight. Pairs reviewed a set of clustered questions within a particular theme and discussed issues that resonated with them. Then groups of participants identified sets of "priority questions" that best represented what was most recurrent, provocative, and visionary to represent the full array of the public input.



## A set of priority questions were identified to represent each of the nine themes.

This process further refined the themes and established the core issues embedded in each of the nine themes: Access, Affordability, Experiential Quality, Governance, Health, Innovation and Technology, Reliability, Safety, and Sustainability and Resiliency. The priority questions were then used to frame discussions at the next public engagement event, the Visioning Lab.





# Visioning Lab

## Sparking the Public Imagination



The culmination of the visioning process was a two-day event designed to attract and convene people from across the city. The *Visioning Lab*, in May of 2015, was a place for people to share their vision of our transportation future. It was designed to test the resonance of the themes and priority questions that emerged from the Question Campaign and Question Review Session. People were invited to look at all questions on a question wall, comment on some of the key questions, and to articulate how they imagine seeing the meaning of each theme come to life. This input became the basis for developing the goals and informing the targets of this Vision Framework report.

**Over 600 people attended the event over two days.**

Mayor Martin J. Walsh spoke of the importance of public participation in shaping our transportation future. Posters illustrated key data about how Boston gets around today, which became important context for people's recommendations. An evening discussion tackled the question "What would it mean to use transportation to build civic space?" Music, dancing, and visual arts were incorporated into the event to encourage people to open up to new ideas, to think creatively, to have fun, and to work together in a positive way. By writing on the walls and indicating preferences with hexagons and stickers, the City learned more about the vision and priorities of the participants.

### The feedback gathered from the theme walls led directly to the Goals of Go Boston 2030.

In advance of the Visioning Lab, the website also provided a portal for uploading photos of what people hope transportation looks like in 2030. Transportation suggestions and visions for the future—in the form of sketches, renderings, and images from other countries—poured in to encourage Bostonians at the Lab to think differently about how they'll get around in 15 years. A similar opportunity was provided at the Lab's Creation Station, where participants created mixed media visions for the future of transportation in Boston.

