



## REQUEST FOR PILOT COLLABORATION

**BOSTON**BRT

# Introduction

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BostonBRT seeks partners to lead efforts to pilot Gold Standard BRT elements in the Greater Boston region. Through a competitive grantmaking process, BostonBRT will offer technical, planning, and outreach support to selected grantees around the implementation of specific pilot projects for a set duration of time. Our goal through this process is to collaborate with grantees to 1) help educate the public (both people who ride the bus and who drive cars) about the possibilities of Gold Standard BRT, and 2) collect data on how better bus design impacts streets and the larger neighborhood ecosystem.

BostonBRT is a research and community engagement initiative raising awareness about the opportunities of Gold Standard BRT

and demonstrating how it can be part of Greater Boston's mobility planning. The campaign has built substantive engagement among elected officials, local municipalities, community advocacy groups, and the MBTA. We are proactively seeking to turn this solid planning and outreach work into a highly visible campaign that creates excitement for advancing several pilots that can be successfully implemented with local and agency partners.

Municipalities, planners, transit advocates, community organizations, or other entities with an interest in transit equity, local economic development, or the environment and the ability to carry out a pilot implementation program are welcome to apply. Applicants must be affiliated with municipalities, nonprofit organizations, or neighborhood and business associations.

## Why BRT?

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Greater Boston is a region of firsts. From the beginning, the region has played a groundbreaking role in America's transit history, with the first chartered ferries, first subway system, and strategic investments in public transportation in the 1960s. But today, our public transit must evolve to meet the growing needs of the region. The Boston lifestyle is changing, with more people needing to get more places not served well by the region's traditional "hub and spoke" rail system. At the same time, streets in Greater Boston are

adapting to accommodate a range of mobility options beyond cars—creating better community connectivity, economic development, and cleaner air. Gold Standard BRT can be a centerpiece of Boston and surrounding communities' streets of the future by providing reliable, efficient, and cost-effective mass transit to riders in every neighborhood.

## Background

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The BostonBRT campaign was convened in 2013 by the Barr Foundation as part of its climate program, acknowledging that any serious efforts to address climate change must advance solutions for mobility.

BostonBRT began with a rigorous analysis to determine if and where Gold Standard BRT might be technically feasible in Greater Boston, looking at measures such as ridership and bus frequency, roadway widths, and parking impacts. The analysis was led by the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP), an internationally-renowned nonprofit organization that is an expert on BRT. ITDP was supported by a study group made up of local community leaders and transit experts. The group compiled their

findings, which included five initial recommended corridors, into a [June 2015 report](#).

With these technical findings in hand, BostonBRT is now guided by an Advisory Committee made up of community, business, and government leaders.

# Request for Collaboration

BostonBRT seeks to collaborate with municipalities, planners, transit advocates, community organizations, or other entities with an interest in transit equity, local economic development, or the environment and the ability to carry out a pilot implementation program. Applicants must be affiliated with municipalities, nonprofit organizations, or neighborhood and business associations. If you are interested in piloting BRT as part of your organization's efforts, BostonBRT can support you through:

- **Technical assistance.** BostonBRT will provide technical support to grantees that demonstrate a strong interest in building a BRT corridor. We will then work with you to ensure that BRT plans are consistent with international best practice and strive to meet the Gold Standard as outlined in the [BRT Standard](#). Technical support will be offered as part of the grant and may include the following as determined or requested:
  - Development of concept plans in coordination with Gold Standard BRT Principles
  - Coordination assistance with state/municipal agencies
  - Establishment of evaluation criteria for use in measuring success of pilot
  - Existing conditions/data gathering
  - Assistance in developing operating parameters and staffing
  - Pilot Design

- Development of project graphics
- Implementation assistance – in either direct or indirect costs
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Grants for technical support can be awarded up to \$100,000, and can be augmented by municipal or other funds. Applications should include general descriptions of technical support requested, and should outline overall contribution to the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of a pilot. The ultimate level of design needed to implement a pilot will be determined by the host municipality or agency.

- **Communications support.** BostonBRT has a variety of materials including fact sheets, images, video, and a report on Gold Standard BRT to help you educate key audiences about BRT. We can also work with your team to develop tailored materials about how BRT could fit into your local community.
- **Community engagement support.** Where support for BRT develops, we will work with you on implementing local engagement and mobility planning activities that will help connect local voices to those capable of bringing the community's vision to fruition.

Please see "Pilot Attributes Required for Consideration" section for more information.)

## What is BRT?

BRT is a bus-based transit system that can deliver fast, comfortable, and cost-effective services to riders in every neighborhood. The BRT Basics are the five features that define BRT. These features most significantly result in a faster trip for passengers and make traveling on transit more reliable and more convenient.

Gold Standard is the highest standard of BRT, as defined by the global [BRT Standard](#). Gold Standard BRT corridors feature the very best in international best practices. Gold Standard corridors may include features such as real-time passenger information, a high frequency of service, and full BRT infrastructure through high demand sections of the city. Gold Standard corridors often feature integration with other modes of transport and with bicycle share systems. Such systems have the greatest ability to inspire the public as well as other cities. Examples of Gold Standard BRT corridors include Guangzhou, China's Zhongshan Avenue corridor and Medellín, Colombia's Metroplús.







### Dedicated Right-of-Way

Bus-only lanes fully segregated from mixed traffic



### Busway Alignment

Bus-only lanes aligned to the middle, not the curb, of a road



### Off-Board Fare Collection

Turnstile-controlled or proof-of-payment fare collection system



### Intersection Treatments

Mixed-traffic is prohibited from making turns across the busway



### Platform-Level Boarding

Station platforms level with bus floors when boarding and alighting

## BRT Corridor Precedents

The photographs below provide examples of BRT found in the US and around the world.



MOVE BRT, Belo Horizonte, Brazil



Metrobús, Mexico City, Mexico



HealthLine BRT, Cleveland, Ohio



Emerald Express, Eugene, Oregon



Yichang BRT, Yichang, China



Rea Vaya, Johannesburg, South Africa

# Pilot Attributes Required for Consideration

All interested local and agency partners should strive to meet the 5 elements included in ITDP's [BRT Standard](#). A BRT corridor is a section of road or contiguous roads served by a bus route or multiple bus routes with a minimum length of 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) that has dedicated bus lanes.

To be considered for the BRT pilot, a corridor must include 2 of the of the 5 elements. Proposals including more elements will be given greater consideration:

1. *Dedicated right-of-way.* Bus-only lanes make for faster travel and ensure that buses are never delayed due to mixed traffic congestion. The dedicated lane can be in place for only part of the day for pilot purposes.
2. *Busway alignment.* Center of roadway or bus-only corridor keeps buses away from the busy curbside where cars are parking, standing, and turning.
3. *Off-board fare collection.* Fare payment at the station, instead of on the bus, eliminates the delay caused by passengers waiting to pay on board.
4. *Intersection treatments.* Prohibiting turns for traffic across the bus lane reduces delays caused to buses by turning traffic. Prohibiting such turns is the most important measure for moving buses through intersections – more important even than signal priority.

5. *Platform-level boarding.* The station should be at level with the bus for quick and easy boarding. This also makes it fully accessible for wheelchairs, disabled passengers, strollers and carts with minimal delays.

The local and agency partners must also demonstrate a level of corridor interest in pursuing the pilot. Recognizing that different corridors include different constituencies (e.g. whether a corridor runs through a residential, main street, or industrial area), “corridor interest” could take different forms. Example of stakeholders to be engaged could include:

- Riders of the closest current bus routes
- Corridor neighbors
- Local businesses
- Elected officials representing the corridor
- Organizations advocating for the needs and interests of groups who would be impacted by a corridor, particularly vulnerable populations

A demonstration of initial support could take the form of letters of interest, a group roundtable of key stakeholders, or a community poll.

## Specifications/Timeline/ Submissions Process

To be considered for the BRT pilot, applicants must provide:

- A letter of interest from applicant lead being considered for pilot collaboration.
- Demonstration of initial community support to explore a pilot further (please see above for more details).
- Description of existing conditions on the corridor including, but not limited to, a description of existing transit services, level of demand for existing transit services, relevant performance measures for existing transit services, description of land use adjacent to the corridor, and account of residential and commercial density in area around the corridor.
- A community engagement and advocacy plan to cultivate community and political support for a Gold Standard BRT pilot. Plan must include pilot corridor timeline and budget.

Questions from applicants regarding their qualifications or preliminary technical analysis must be submitted [here](#), with subject line “RFPC.”

# Evaluation Process

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All applications will first be reviewed by the BostonBRT's technical consultants to determine whether [the corridor has the baseline technical requirements necessary to pilot Gold Standard BRT features](#). The full BostonBRT leadership team will then evaluate all technically-approved proposals. In addition to technical feasibility of the corridor, the applicants will be evaluated according to the following:

- Ability to lead the implementation of the pilot on the purposed corridor.
- Level of visibility within the municipality in which the corridor is located. This could be demonstrated by showing the level of existing bus ridership on the corridor or the level of residential or commercial density near the corridor, for example.
- Ability to benefit the existing bus ridership in the municipality where the corridor is located.
- Ability to improve the quality of existing bus services on the corridor if bus service currently exists.
- Demonstrated support from local stakeholders (Municipal, Agency, Business, Community)