

BRIGHTON AVE (BOSTON)

Transforming a General-Purpose Travel Lane into a Shared Bus/Bike Lane

All Day Shared Bus and Bike Lane

Direct to Permanent

Permanent: June 2019



Brighton Ave Bus and Bike Lane (Before) // BostonBTD

After the success of the Roslindale project, the City of Boston was ready and eager to implement additional bus improvement corridors. The Brighton Avenue bus lane was a natural next project, as it was identified in both The [Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes](#), published in 2016 by CTPS, and [Go Boston 2030](#), published by the City of Boston in 2017. The CTPS report showed that in the morning peak time, approximately 40% of motorized roadway users were on the bus, providing evidence for prioritizing bus riders on this corridor.

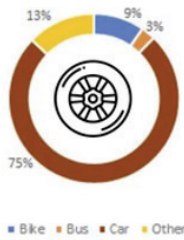
The City considered two design options for the bus lane: “**Option A**,” which would have utilized the parking lane, and “**Option B**,” which utilized one of the two travel lanes. The community’s concern over potential parking loss in the business district led the project team to ultimately choose “Option B,” avoiding any loss of parking along the corridor.

The City and the MBTA made the decision to have Brighton Ave’s bus lane be all day, rather than just for the morning peak time, as was the case for Washington Street in Roslindale. The corridor was wide enough to accommodate parking, a bus lane, and a general-purpose travel lane, so there was no need to restrict the bus lane to peak-only times. Consistent congestion throughout day, partially due to students traveling to the nearby universities, also helped make the case for a dedicated lane. Similar to Roslindale’s bus lane, people on bikes were allowed to share the lane with buses.

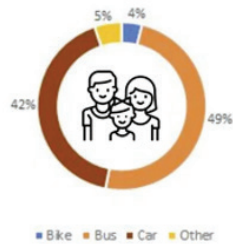


CASE STUDY / BRIGHTON AVE (BOSTON)

AM Peak Vehicles



AM Peak Passengers



The City of Boston's roadway utilization analysis shows that private cars on Brighton Avenue during the morning peak hours. Courtesy of the City of Boston Transportation Department.



Brighton Ave Bus and Bike Lane // City of Boston

The data collection effort that helped shape the success of Brighton Avenue was led by LivableStreets Alliance (LSA) in partnership with multiple local entities. Business engagement was extremely important. LSA surveyed people walking to and from businesses to ask about their travel mode. Approximately 75 percent of customers were walking, biking, or taking transit to and from local shops, not driving. This became a key talking point with businesses: bus priority would be helping their customers.

The City of Boston and the MBTA thought a lot about curb management for this project, specifically to address double parking, tour buses, and deliveries, all of which were frequent on Brighton Avenue. LSA helped to document curbside management needs, by asking businesses about deliveries and inquiring about employee parking patterns. This allowed LSA, the City, and the MBTA to determine how and when parking and loading space was used and most needed on the corridor. To address these challenges, the City decided to relocate a few bus stops and reprogram curb space for additional loading, short-term pick up and drop off, ridesharing, and food delivery.

In collaboration with Allston Village Main Streets (AVMS) and Allston Brighton Health Collaborative, LSA also surveyed bus riders about their user experience. This work revealed the extent to which unreliable bus service was spurring users to switch to ride share services like Uber and Lyft – at high cost. As a whole, the data collection helped show that a bus lane would benefit, not hinder, business activity and transportation along the corridor.

Initially, project roll out was delayed because the City wanted to ensure that the neighborhood was in favor of the project. LivableStreets Alliance sent letters to the district city councilor and at large councilors, the Mayor, and MBTA General Manager, to highlight the significant amount of community engagement work that had been done to date, and the support garnered through those

efforts. Due to this widespread support and BTD's previous experience implementing bus improvements in Roslindale, the City made the decision to move straight to permanent implementation, skipping a pilot entirely. Implementation was made easier through the use of MBTA's on-call design contracts, which were also used in Roslindale and had been set up for fast project delivery, in addition to available MBTA funding to implement right away once all stakeholders were on board.

Multiple internal stakeholders helped to make this project possible. Now that Boston's Transportation Department had seen a project in action, they were on board with additional improvements elsewhere in the City. Implementing an all-day bus lane could have been difficult but DPW staff were supportive and crucial to the success of this project. At the time, there was a new process in the City, with a project review committee and project review team. Brighton Avenue was one of the first projects to use this process.

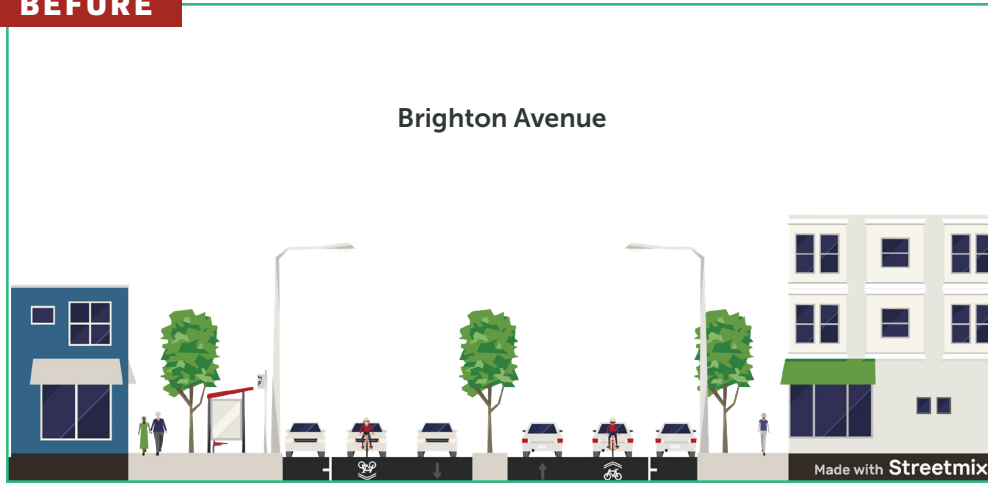
After the project was implemented, an informative experience in shaping the opinion of leadership was Mayor Walsh's bus ride on the corridor. He got to see and feel how the project was working, as well as talk to local business owners that raved about how much they liked the project. Overall, survey data showed that 94% of bus riders ranged between neutral and very satisfied with the lane and 93% of bike riders viewed this project positively. The bus lane resulted in an increase in bus ridership and a decrease in traffic volumes on Brighton Avenue. ([Reference](#))

What happened next?

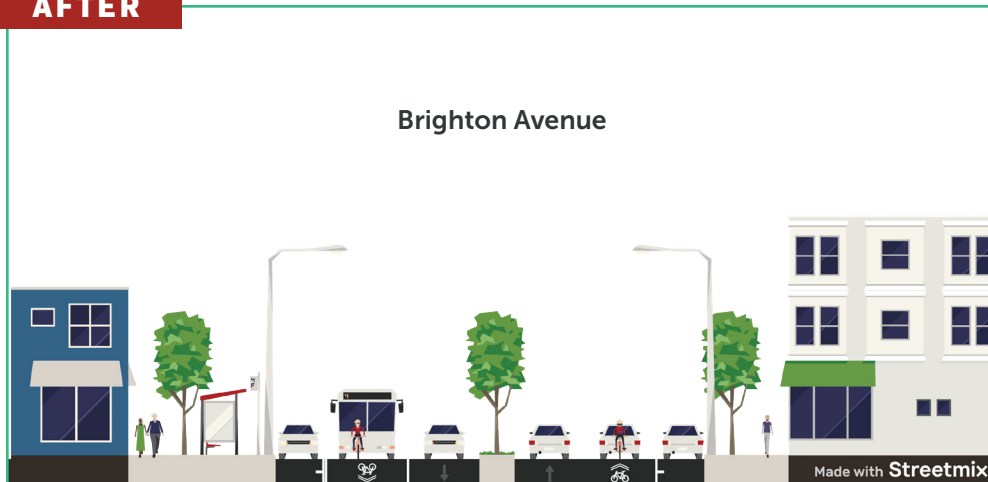
In the fall of 2019, an outbound bus lane was installed on Brighton Avenue between Union Square and Packards Corner. The City is also considering other public realm improvements to reallocate space to enhance the pedestrian and cycling experiences in Allston.

CASE STUDY / BRIGHTON AVE (BOSTON)

BEFORE



AFTER



DATA

Type of Improvement:

All-day bus lane

Length of Improvement:

0.6 Miles

Bus Routes Along Corridor:

51, 57, 57A, 66

Exact Location:

Brighton Ave, between Cambridge St and Commonwealth Ave, and between Packard's Corner and Union Square, in Allston

Starting Intersection/Point:

Brighton Avenue at Islington Street

Ending Intersection/Point:

Brighton Avenue at Commonwealth Avenue

Weekday Ridership: 14,000 bus riders, 1,300 bike riders

Vehicles Allowed to Use Bus Lane: MBTA buses, emergency vehicles, school buses, bikes

Multimodal Improvements:

Bus, bike, and pedestrian improvements

Land Uses Along Corridor: Commercial and residential

Pilot or Direct to Permanent: Direct to permanent

Dates of Pilot: No pilot

Dates of Implementation: June 2019 (Inbound lane)

Parking Study: Yes (by MAPC)

Planning Study: CTPS (2016) and Go Boston 2030 (2017)

Bus Ridership Change:

5.3% increase (morning peak)

8.1% increase (evening peak)

Post-implementation Survey Satisfaction:

Bus Riders – 94% neutral to very satisfied

Bike Riders – 93% somewhat satisfied to very satisfied