

ROSLINDALE (BOSTON)

Transforming a Parking Lane into a Shared Bus/Bike Lane for the morning commute

Morning Peak Hour Shared Bus/Bike Lane

Pilot: December 2017 and May 2018

Permanent: June 2018



Roslindale bus lane // City of Boston

Following on the heels of Everett's success, bus pilot implementation became something like a domino effect in the region. In March 2017, a mere three months after Everett's pilot, the City of Boston released their [Go Boston 2030 plan](#), a multi-year planning effort designed to guide the city's transportation plans and policies for the following decade. One of the top projects identified in this plan was the inbound Washington Street bus lane in Roslindale.

Listed as an "early action project" in Go Boston 2030, the Washington Street bus project was identified as one that would significantly improve bus reliability and speed on a bottleneck corridor with a high number of buses and a large number of bus riders during peak times. The plan proposed to implement bus priority improvements inbound on Washington Street from Roslindale Square to Forest Hills.

In addition to Go Boston 2030, this corridor was identified as a candidate for a bus lane in the Central Transportation Planning Staff's (CTPS) 2016 [Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes](#) report, which examined corridors in the Boston region where ridership is high and buses are routinely delayed in traffic.



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With the support from two major planning documents, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) decided to try out a bus lane on Washington Street. The pilot was designed to utilize the inbound parking lane during the morning peak time, meaning that all those parking spaces needed to be vacated prior to the 5:00 a.m. start time. In 2016, before the pilot began, BTD worked with MAPC to collect parking data and better understand the impacts if parking were to be removed. This also equipped the city with data about parking need and utilization they could show if push-back about parking removal should occur.

After analyzing the data, MAPC concluded that a large number of the parking spaces on Washington Street between Roslindale Square and the Forest Hills MBTA stop were being utilized during the day not by local residents, but instead by commuters using the corridor for free all-day parking before heading to downtown Boston via the Orange Line train. In addition, only half of the parking spaces in the study area were occupied at 6:00 a.m., and peak demand wasn't until 11:00 a.m., well after the morning pilot would end. After referencing the data, the City decided to restrict all 146 inbound parking spots during the morning peak time, largely used by non-residents, to move forward with a pilot to see if a bus lane would make the morning commute more reliable for thousands of people.

The city created a task force to think through how the pilot would work, which led to new and enhanced cooperation among staff. The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) created a list of tasks and materials during the initial stages of the

project. The list included all the things they felt were necessary to make a bus lane happen, including coordination with trash collection, making sure they had enough cones in stock, trimming curbside trees, connecting with abutters, etc.

Street sweeping day was leveraged as the day for the initial “operational pilot” in December 2017. Since cars were already restricted on the inbound side of the street, it was easier to schedule the pilot at the same time. The pilot ran inbound on weekdays during rush hour from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. People riding bikes were welcomed to use the lane as well as school buses. Early on, enforcement of the lane was necessary. The City partnered with the MBTA and Boston Police Department to ensure that only buses and bikes were using the dedicated space.

The Go Boston 2030 plan had included extensive and varied community engagement strategies, which gave the city a running start on engagement. All the feedback gained from the multi-year planning process allowed the city to move this project forward more quickly than would have been possible otherwise.

Although a traditional engagement process wasn't planned for this project, many less formal methods were employed to engage with the local community. The city received on the ground support from MAPC and LivableStreets Alliance (LSA), supported by the Barr Foundation. LSA played a huge role in talking to bus and bike riders along the corridor. From these conversations, LSA and MAPC collected a significant amount of qualitative and quantitative data from both bus and bike riders. They also partnered with local groups WalkUp Roslindale, Rozzie Bikes,



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and Roslindale Village Main Streets. Outreach for this project involved business owners, and large housing complexes. The City did extensive flyering in the area and used variable message boards both before, during, and after implementation to keep everyone informed about the use of the lane, and any upcoming alerts.

All the on-the-ground efforts by LSA, local groups, and volunteers, including extensive surveying of roadway users, ultimately led to one of the biggest talking points about the project – that 94 percent of people riding the bus along Washington Street supported the bus lane. In addition, 92 percent of bus riders perceived that the lane decreased their travel time, and 89 percent of cyclists reported feeling safer in the shared lane. This data convinced the City of Boston to make the bus lane permanent.

On June 7, following a continuous four-week spring pilot, the City of Boston announced the permanent installation of the inbound Washington Street bus lane in Roslindale. The permanent installation was able to be implemented quickly through the use of MBTA's on-call design contracts and available MBTA capital funding.

“Washington Street was the perfect candidate for the bus lane pilot and had already been identified in our Go Boston 2030 transportation plan. The corridor was experiencing some pretty significant delays for transit riders stuck in mixed traffic trying to make their way to Forest Hills and data showed the majority of roadway users were actually bus riders, not motorists. Converting the parking lane to use as a bus lane seemed as much of an issue of fairness as anything else and it turned out the intervention ended up saving bus riders at least an hour of commuting time in the mornings over the course of a week. When we saw that 94% of bus riders supported the lane, we knew this was an intervention we should replicate around the City.”

– Patrick Hoey, Boston Transportation Department

What happened next?

After the success of the inbound bus lane, the Boston Transportation Department, in partnership with the MBTA, implemented an outbound afternoon peak bus lane on Washington Street from Forest Hills to Roslindale Square. This lane operates from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m, allowing a faster trip home for thousands of commuters. This lane was identified a priority project in the [City's Healthy Streets initiative](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbound lane was installed in Spring 2021, in conjunction with curb extensions in Roslindale Square that will improve bus access. The curb extensions will be complete by July 2021.



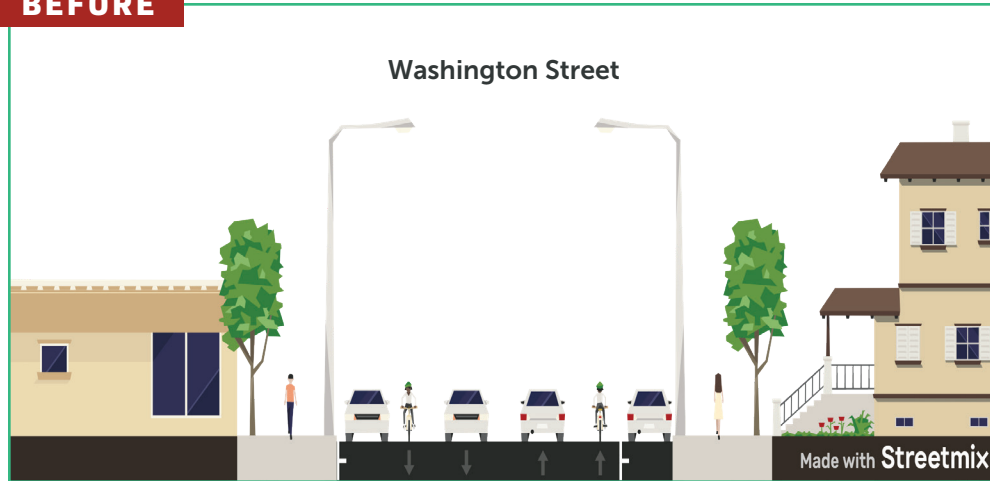
Roslindale Community Engagement// LSA



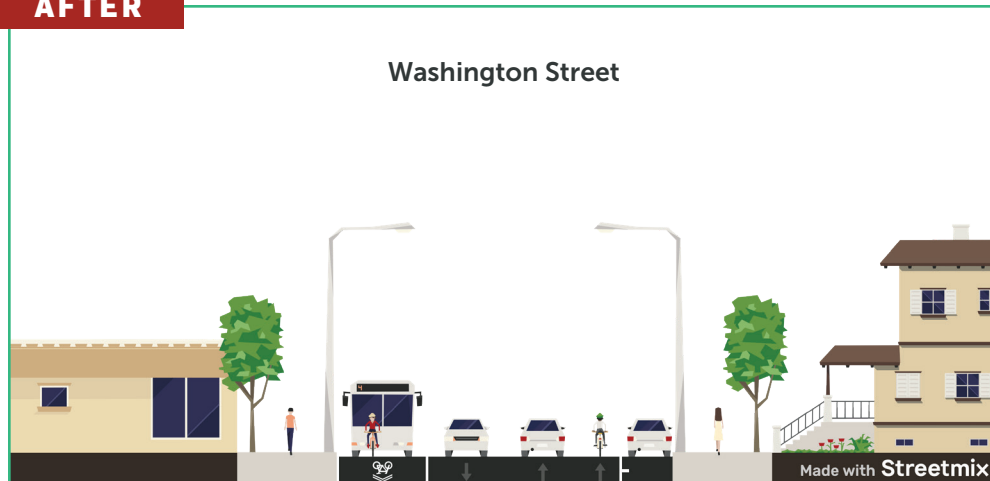
Roslindale Implementation // LSA

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BEFORE



AFTER



DATA

Type of Improvement:

AM Peak bus lane (5am-9am)

Length of Improvement:

1.0 miles

Bus Routes Along Corridor:

14, 30, 34, 34E, 35, 36, 37, 40, 50, 51

Exact Location:

Washington Street, inbound from Roslindale Village (Cummins Highway) to Forest Hills Station (Ukraine Way)

Starting Intersection/Point:

Washington Street at Cummins Highway

Ending Intersection/Point:

Washington Street at Ukraine Way

Weekday Ridership: 19,000 people**Vehicles Allowed to Use Bus Lane:**

MBTA buses, emergency vehicles, school buses, bikes

Multimodal Improvements:

Only bus infrastructure, but bikes allowed to use lane

Land Uses Along Corridor: Commercial and residential**Pilot or Direct to Permanent:**

Pilots first (2 1-day pilots in December, followed by a 4 week pilot in May), then permanent

Dates of Pilot: December 2017 and May 2018**Dates of Implementation:** June 2018**Parking Study:** Yes (by MAPC)**Planning Study:** Go Boston 2030**Average bus rider time saved:** 1 hour per week**Post-implementation Survey Satisfaction:**

Bus Riders – 94% positive

Bike Riders – 92% positive