Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor Project

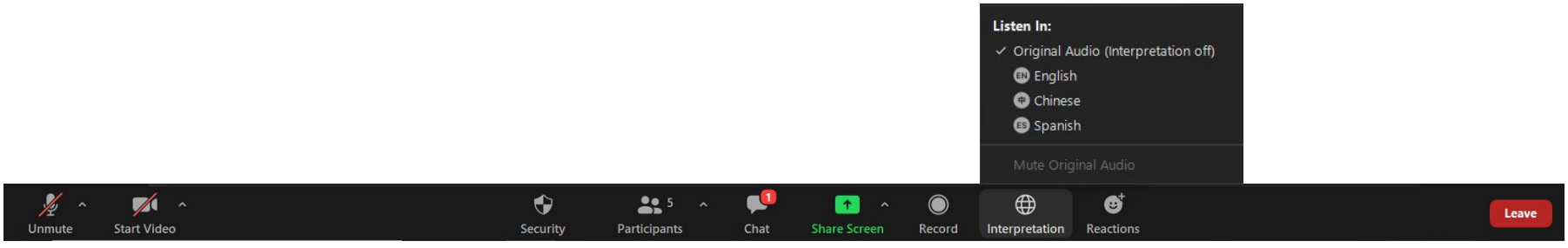
Virtual Open House

August 9, 2023

City of Boston Transportation

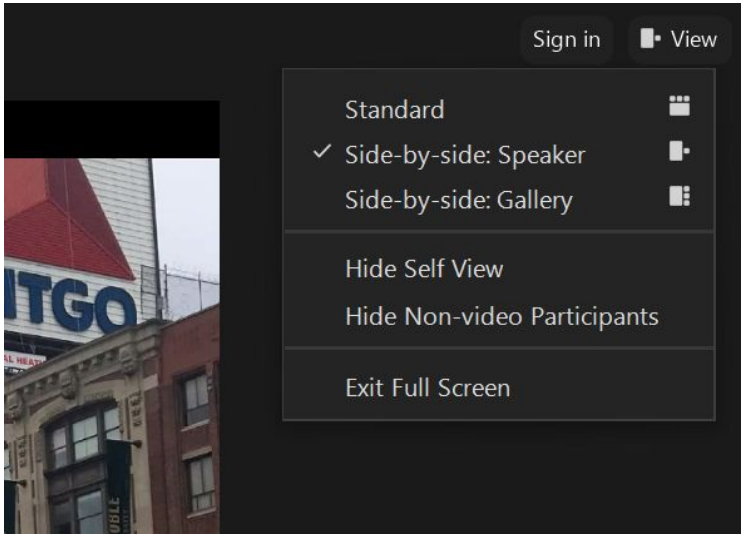
Welcome to the Open House

- We have interpretation in Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Mandarin, Cantonese, and American Sign Language tonight.
- At this time, click “Interpretation” and choose your language.
- Please also **type in the chat** if you need interpretation services and in what language. We will ensure these services are available to you during the discussion portion of the meeting.



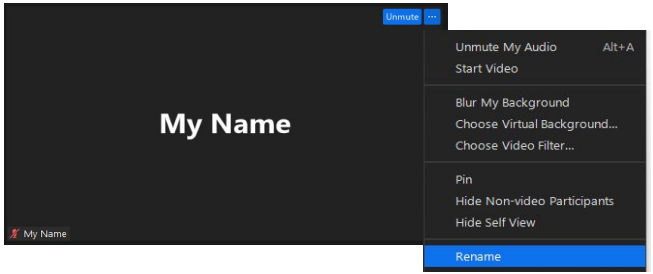
Welcome to the Open House

- To see ASL interpreters, click the ‘View’ button in upper-right hand corner of screen
- Then click ‘Side-by-side: Speaker’



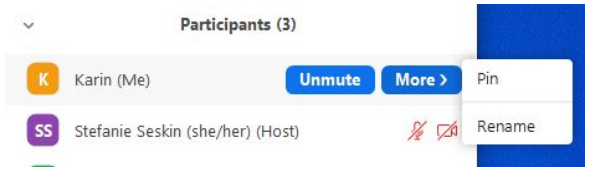
Welcome to the Open House

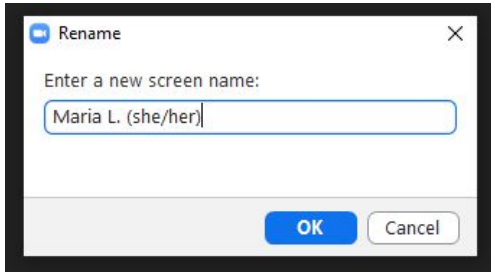
- This meeting will be recorded.
- Please update your name in Zoom and include your organization and/or pronouns, if you would like.



Click the three dots in the top right of your video

OR *next to your name in the "participants" list*





Welcome to the Open House

- Your microphones are turned off for the main presentation to reduce background noise.

- Attendees will have the opportunity to speak later on during our breakout sessions to provide feedback and ask questions.

Agenda

1

WHO
is working on this project?

2

WHY
are we doing it?

3

WHEN
is the project happening?

4

WHAT
is the project?

5

HOW
can we provide feedback?

Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

Who is working on the project?

Project Team

City of Boston Transportation Department, Transit Team

- Matthew Petersen, Project Manager

MBTA

- Andrew McFarland, Project Liaison

Consultant Support

- Joseph Poirier, Planning Lead
  - *Nelson\Nygaard*
- Taylor Adams, Outreach Lead
  - *Regina Villa Associates*
- Ned Codd, Design/Engineering Lead
  - *WSP USA*

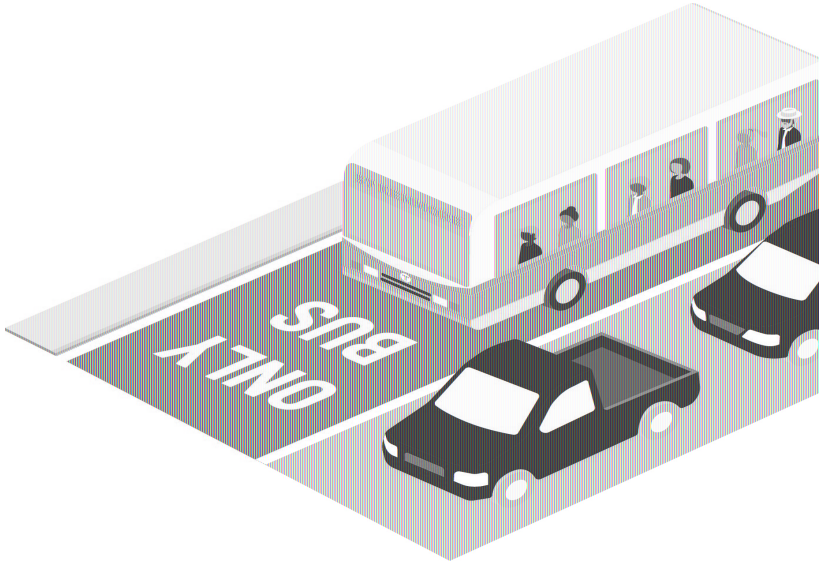
Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

Why are we doing this project?

What is the Transit Priority Corridor Program?

- A new City of Boston Transportation Department program to make bus service better by making it faster, more reliable, and more accessible.

- The City plans to complete multiple Transit Priority Corridor projects each year, starting with Route 39 and Route 57 in 2023.



What is Transit Priority?

- Transit priority makes buses **faster and more reliable**. This means riders can get where they're going in less time, and are more likely to be picked up and dropped off according to schedule.

- Transit priority can be given through **dedicated spaces** for buses in the road, and through **special traffic signals** that prioritize buses, as well as other features

Image sources, bottom to top: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA); City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CA; MBTA.

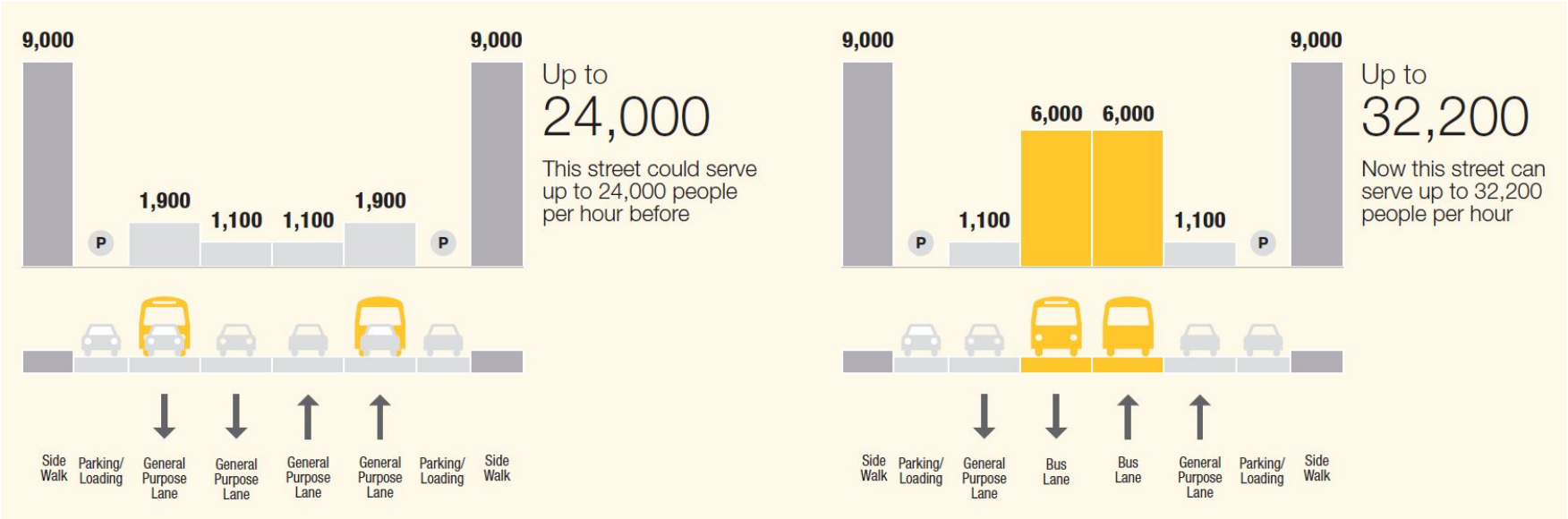
Why is the City of Boston Advancing Transit Priority?

Improving speed, reliability, and access to transit on high-ridership bus routes in Boston helps the City meet its mobility, climate, environmental, equity, and safety goals:

- **Transportation:** Advance *GoBoston 2030* goals to improve **safety**, expand **access**, ensure **reliability**, **reduce car use**, and **reduce emissions**.
- **Climate and Environment:** Achieve *Carbon Free Boston* goal to be a **carbon-neutral city** by 2050, by helping people make more trips on transit.
- **Equity:** Practice *equity* by improving bus service, which is used disproportionately by **people of color** and with **low incomes**.
- **Safety:** Help meet the City's *Vision Zero* goal to **eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes** by 2030, by designing streets that reduce conflict among different modes of transportation.

Use Our Shared Roadways More Efficiently

Transit is the most efficient way to move people

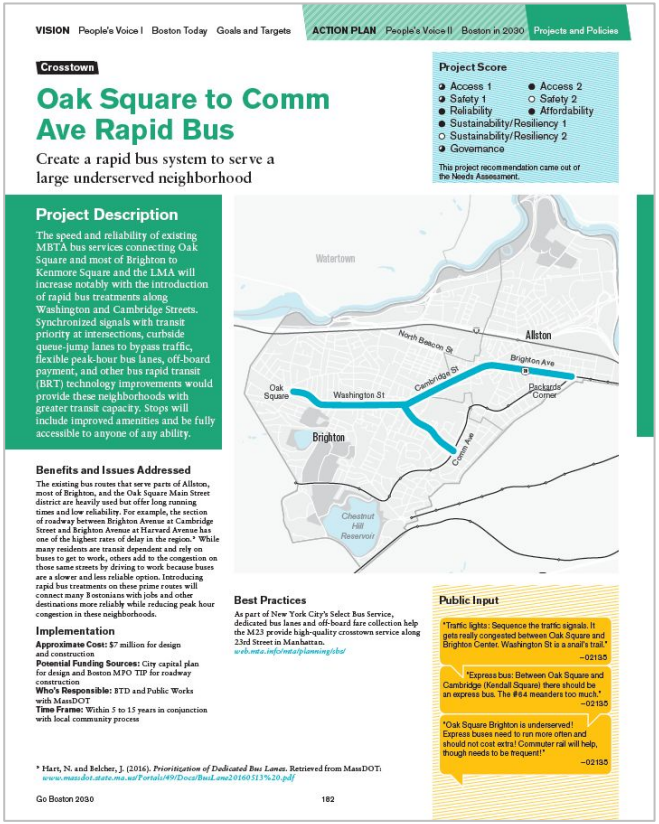


Source: MBTA draft Bus Priority Toolkit. 2023.

Where Did This Project Come From?

Go Boston 2030

- Two-year public process
- Thousands of members of the public provided comment
- Recommended
  - **Oak Square to Comm Ave Rapid Bus**
  - **Bus Service Reliability Improvements** on Route 57



VISION People's Voice I Boston Today Goals and Targets ACTION PLAN People's Voice II Boston in 2030 Projects and Policies

Crosstown

Oak Square to Comm Ave Rapid Bus

Create a rapid bus system to serve a large underserved neighborhood

Project Score

- Access 1
- Access 2
- Safety 1
- Safety 2
- Reliability
- Affordability
- Sustainability/Resiliency 1
- Sustainability/Resiliency 2
- Governance

This project recommendation came out of the Needs Assessment.

Project Description

The speed and reliability of existing MBTA bus services connecting Oak Square and most of Brighton to Kenmore Square and the LMA will increase notably with the introduction of rapid bus treatments along Washington and Cambridge Streets. Synchronized signals with transit priority at intersections, curbside queue-jump lanes to bypass traffic, flexible peak-hour bus lanes, off-board payment, and other bus rapid transit (BRT) technology improvements would provide these neighborhoods with greater transit capacity. Stops will include improved amenities and be fully accessible to anyone of any ability.

Benefits and Issues Addressed

The existing bus routes that serve parts of Allston, most of Brighton, and the Oak Square Main Street district are heavily used but offer long running times and low reliability. For example, the section of roadway between Brighton Avenue at Cambridge Street and Brighton Avenue at Harvard Avenue has one of the highest rates of delay in the region.* While many residents are transit dependent and rely on buses to get to work, others add to the congestion on those same streets by driving to work because buses are a slower and less reliable option. Introducing rapid bus treatments on these prime routes will connect many Bostonians with jobs and other destinations more reliably while reducing peak hour congestion in these neighborhoods.

Implementation

Approximate Cost: $7 million for design and construction
Potential Funding Sources: City capital plan for design and Boston MPO TIP for roadway construction
Who's Responsible: BTD and Public Works with MassDOT
Time Frame: Within 5 to 15 years in conjunction with local community process

Best Practices

As part of New York City's Select Bus Service, dedicated bus lanes and off-board fare collection help the M23 provide high-quality crosstown service along 23rd Street in Manhattan.
web.mta.info/nyct/planning/sbs/

Public Input

"Traffic lights: Sequence the traffic signals. It gets really congested between Oak Square and Brighton Center. Washington St is a snail's trail." –02135

"Express bus: Between Oak Square and Cambridge (Kendall Square) there should be an express bus. The #64 meanders too much." –02135

"Oak Square Brighton is underserved! Express buses need to run more often and should not cost extra! Commuter rail will help, though needs to be frequent!" –02135

* Hart, N. and Belcher, J. (2016). *Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes.* Retrieved from MassDOT: *www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/49/Docs/BusLane20160513%20.pdf*

Go Boston 2030 182

Where Did This Project Come From?

Go Boston 2030

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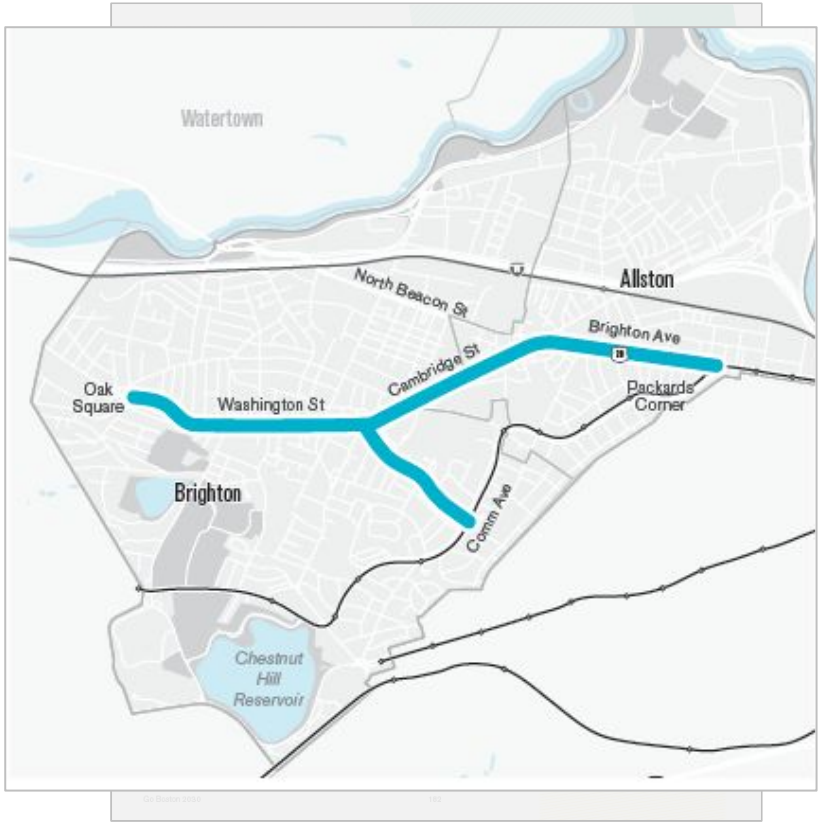
- Thousands of members of the public provided comment
- Recommended
  - **Oak Square to Comm Ave Rapid Bus**
  - **Bus Service Reliability Improvements** on Route 57



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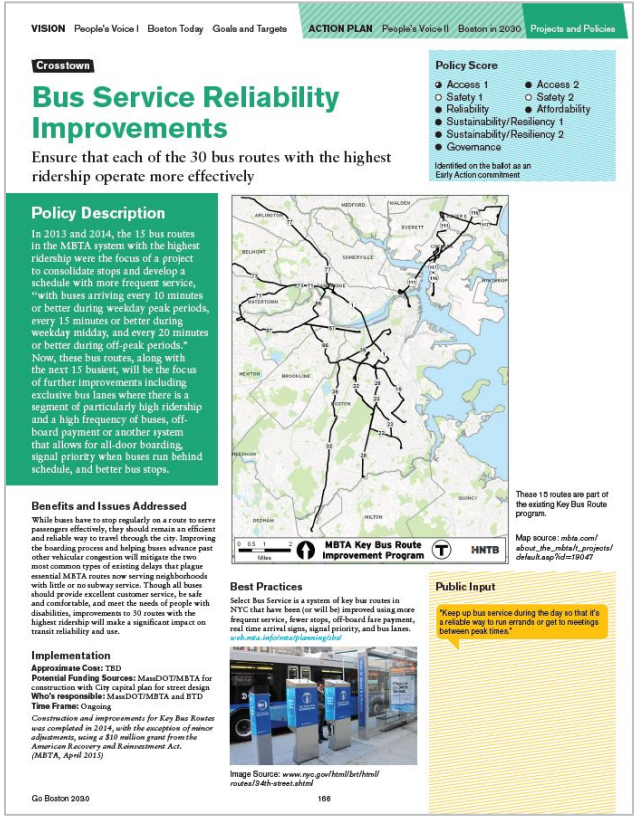


VISION People's Voice I Boston Today Goals and Targets | ACTION PLAN People's Voice II Boston in 2030 Projects and Policies

Crosstown

Bus Service Reliability Improvements

Ensure that each of the 30 bus routes with the highest ridership operate more effectively

Policy Score

- Access 1
- Access 2
- Safety 1
- Safety 2
- Reliability
- Affordability
- Sustainability/Resiliency 1
- Sustainability/Resiliency 2
- Governance

Identified on the ballot as an Early Action commitment

Policy Description

In 2013 and 2014, the 15 bus routes in the MBTA system with the highest ridership were the focus of a project to consolidate stops and develop a schedule with more frequent service, "with buses arriving every 10 minutes or better during weekday peak periods, every 15 minutes or better during weekday midday, and every 20 minutes or better during off-peak periods." Now, these bus routes, along with the next 15 busiest, will be the focus of further improvements including exclusive bus lanes where there is a segment of particularly high ridership and a high frequency of buses, off-board payment or another system that allows for all-door boarding, signal priority when buses run behind schedule, and better bus stops.

These 15 routes are part of the existing Key Bus Route program.

Map source: *mbta.com/about_the_mbta/t_projects/default.asp?id=19047*

Benefits and Issues Addressed

While buses have to stop regularly on a route to serve passengers effectively, they should remain an efficient and reliable way to travel through the city. Improving the boarding process and helping buses advance past other vehicular congestion will mitigate the two most common types of existing delays that plague essential MBTA routes now serving neighborhoods with little or no subway service. Though all buses should provide excellent customer service, be safe and comfortable, and meet the needs of people with disabilities, improvements to 30 routes with the highest ridership will make a significant impact on transit reliability and use.

Implementation

Approximate Cost: TBD
Potential Funding Sources: MassDOT/MBTA for construction with City capital plan for street design
Who's responsible: MassDOT/MBTA and BTD
Time Frame: Ongoing

Construction and improvements for Key Bus Routes was completed in 2014, with the exception of minor adjustments, using a $10 million grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. (MBTA, April 2015)

Best Practices

Select Bus Service is a system of key bus routes in NYC that have been (or will be) improved using more frequent service, fewer stops, off-board fare payment, real time arrival signs, signal priority, and bus lanes.
web.mta.info/nyct/planning/slbd

Image Source: *www.nyc.gov/html/brt/html/routes/34th-street.shtml*

Public Input

"Keep up bus service during the day so that it's a reliable way to run errands or get to meetings between peak times."

Where Did This Project Come From?

Go Boston 2030

- Two-year public process
- Thousands of members of the public provided comment
- Recommended
  - **Oak Square to Comm Ave Rapid Bus**
  - **Bus Service Reliability Improvements** on Route 57

Where Did This Project Come From?

Allston-Brighton Mobility Plan

- Adopted May 2021
- Robust outreach
  - 4 open houses and 6 workshops
  - 10 civic groups, 313 event attendees
  - 1,600 comments received
- Recommended
  - Pilot **peak-hour bus lanes**
  - Permanent **bus priority corridor**

1

Cost $$$$

Implementation

TBD

Pilot Peak Hour Bus Lanes

The recommendation proposes a 3 year peak period bus lane pilot on the A-B Transit Corridor between Parsons Street and Union Square. Dedicated bus lanes make it possible to increase the frequency and reliability of bus service. Additionally, dedicated bus lanes can increase bus ridership and help reduce congestion on adjacent travel lanes.

A parking utilization study along the entire corridor will precede and inform the implementation of the pilot bus priority corridor. Key considerations for the parking study will include the number of existing parking spaces (along the street as well as in adjacent public and private lots), parking occupancy and turnover, identification of users, and curbside parking and loading patterns associated with businesses and institutions along Washington Street and Cambridge Street. The parking study will also propose strategies for addressing the parking needs of residents and businesses during the peak hour bus lane operations.

Recommended

Recommended Peak Period Bus Lanes

Recommended Off Peak - Existing Conditions

Recommended Pilot Bus Lane between Parsons Street and Union Square

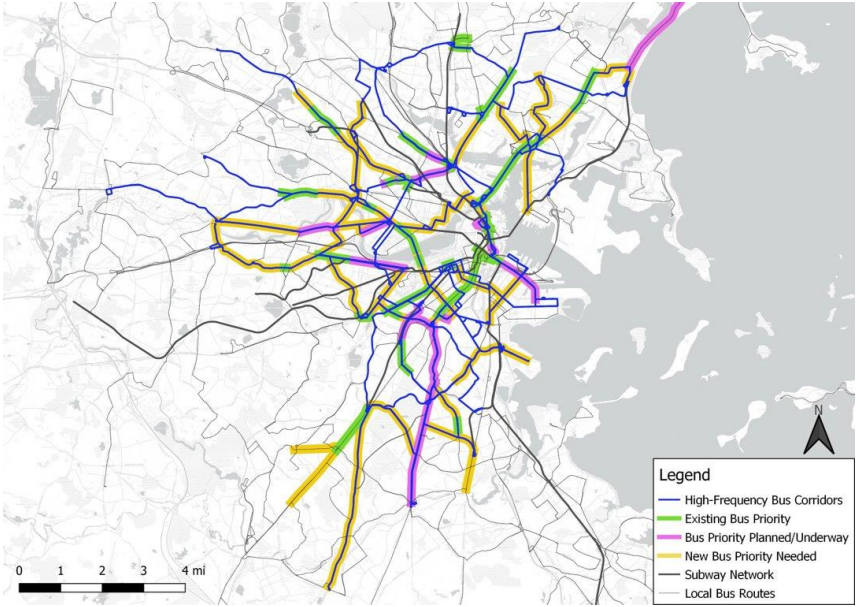
54 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON MOBILITY PLAN

SECTION 6 | AREA-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Working Closely with The MBTA

The MBTA is now working with municipal partners to implement the Bus Network Redesign service plan, which depends on a robust network of transit priority

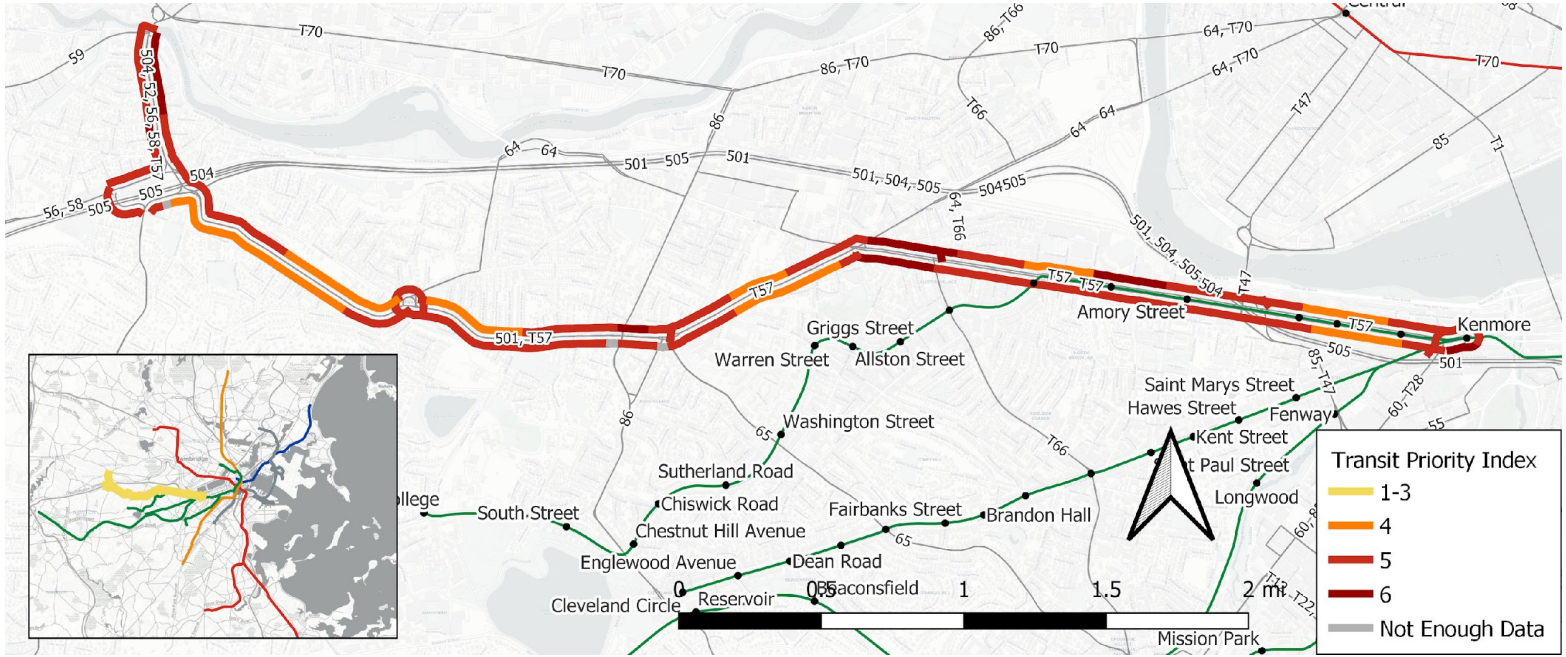
Source: https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/2023-04/2023-04-18-bnrd-final-report-accessible.pdf



MBTA's Bus Priority Plan - 26 Corridors Systemwide

Working Closely with The MBTA

MBTA Identifies the Route 57 Corridor As Having Highest Potential Warrant for Transit Priority Investment



Source: MBTA. December 12, 2022. Draft BNRD Transit Priority Needs Assessment. Slide 51.

Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

High Ridership

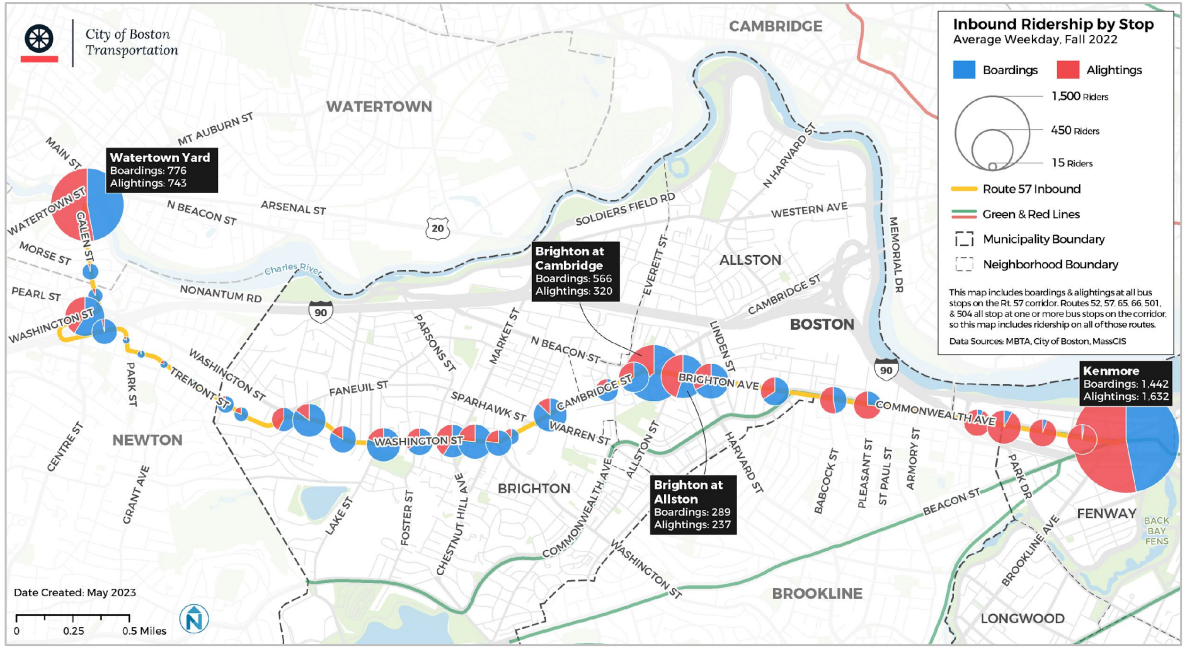
Delay

Access

Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

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.



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Slow and Unreliable for Bus Riders

- On an average weekday, bus riders on the Route 57 corridor spend **over 600 total person-hours sitting in traffic**.

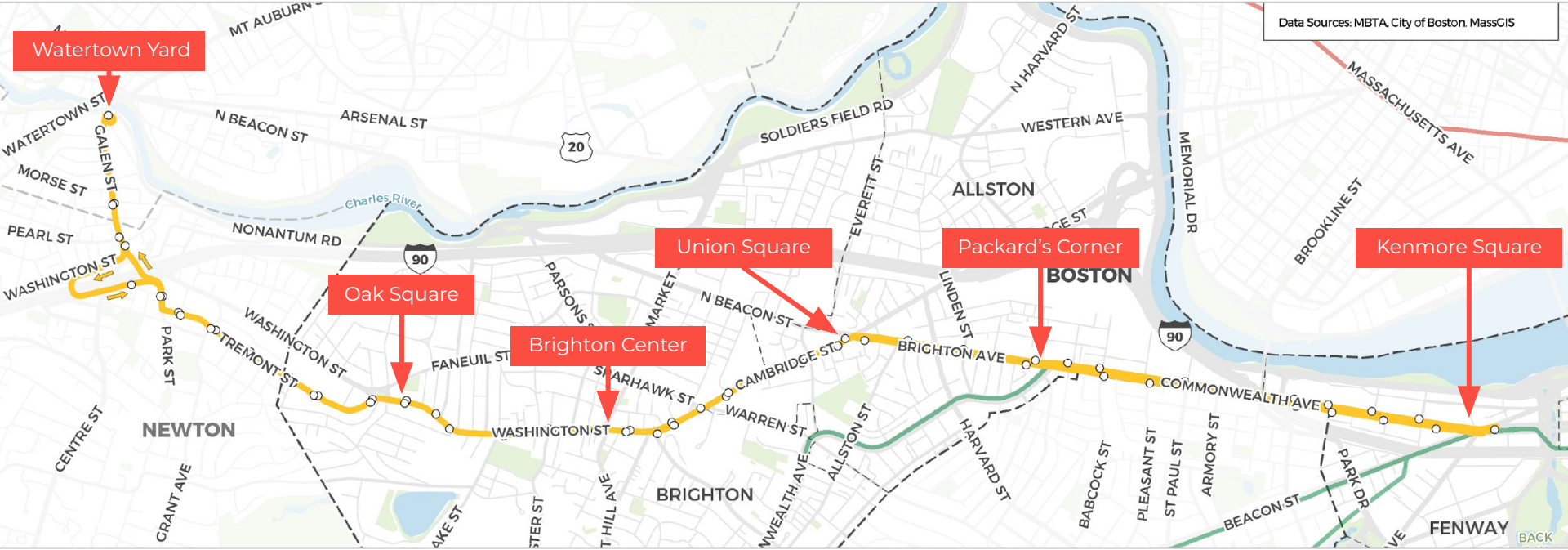
- If all the delay on Route 57 were eliminated, an end-to-end rider would save 20 to 30 minutes every day!

Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

What is the project?

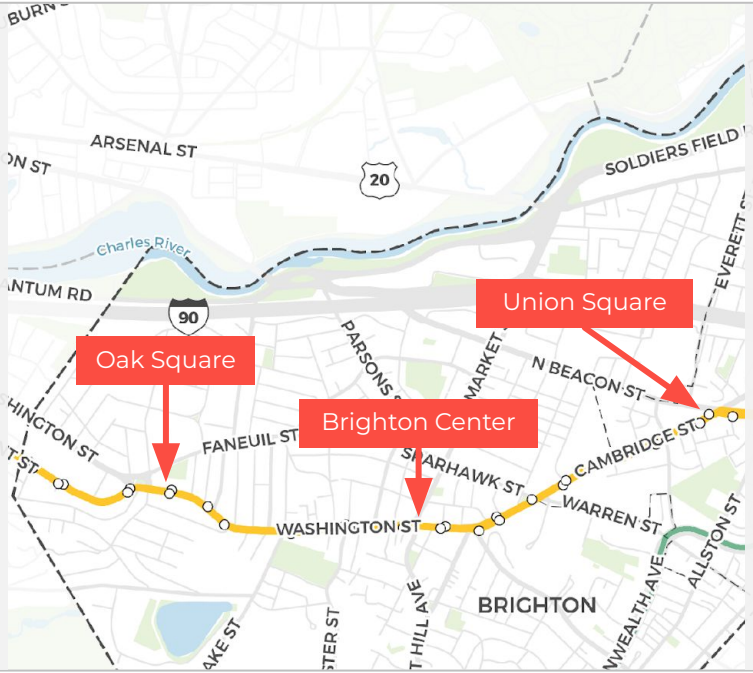
Route 57 Project Corridor

Full Route Alignment



Route 57 Project Focus Area

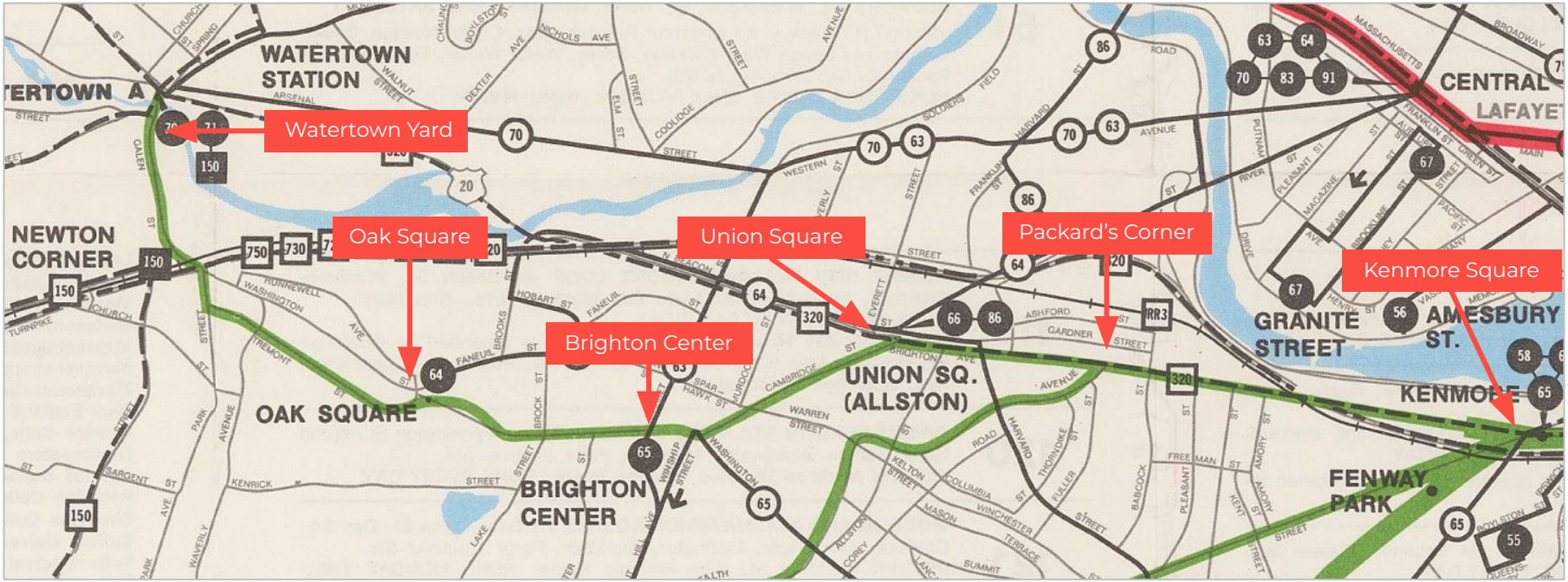
Boston City Line to Union Square



Focus area for this project

Route 57 History

Former Green Line A Branch



Source: MBTA 1967 System Map

Route 57 Project Goals

This project will improve speed, reliability, and access to transit on Route 57 and other routes that use the same corridor.

Transit-priority treatment toolkit:

- New bus lanes
- Transit priority at intersections
- Better bus stops
- ADA-accessible sidewalks and crossings

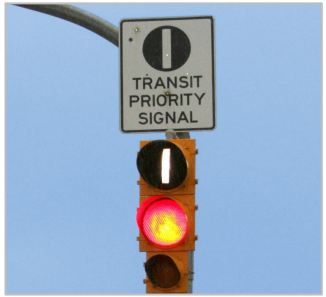
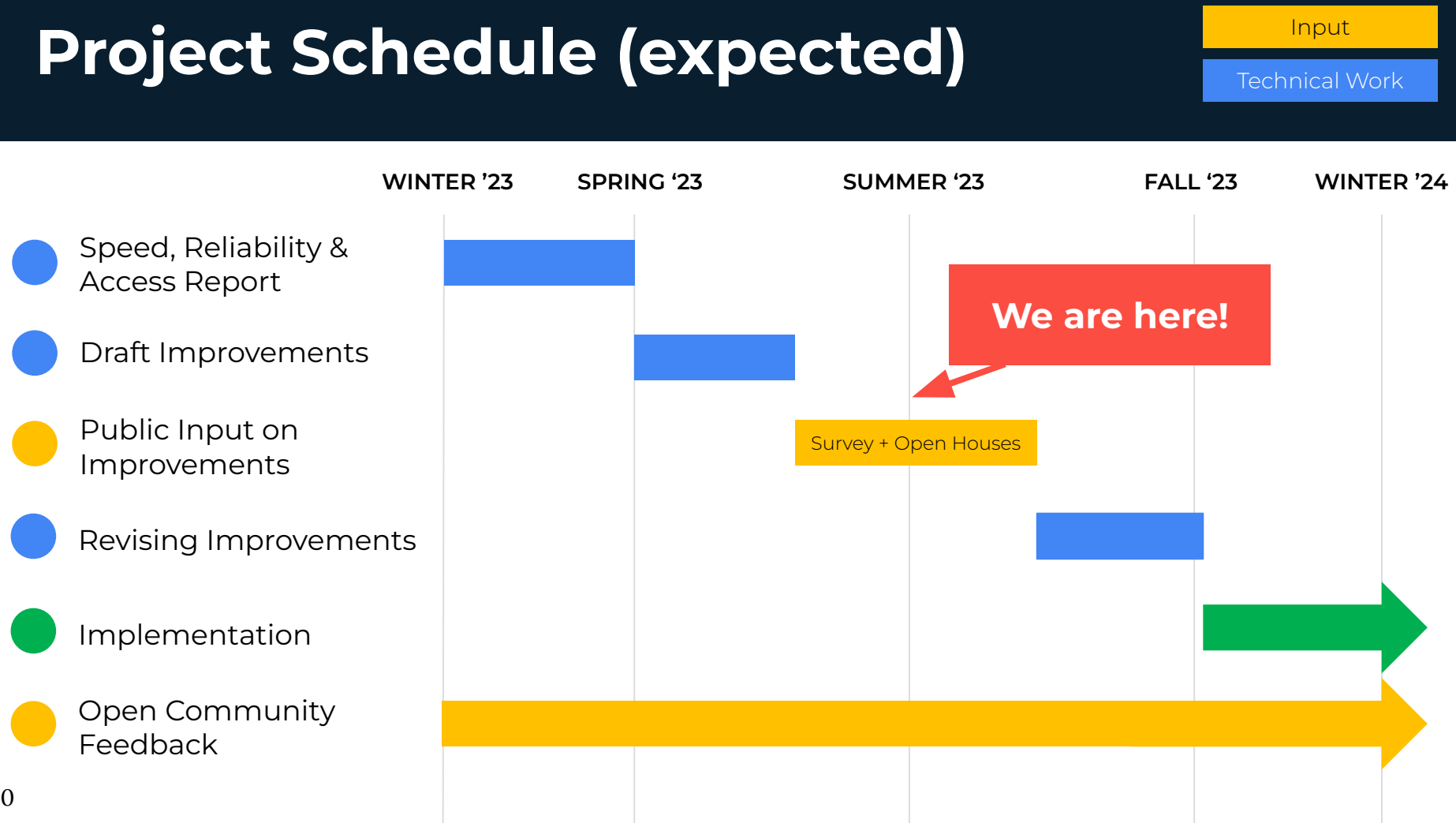


Image sources, clockwise from top left: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA); City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CA; MBTA.

Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

What is the project timeline?

Project Schedule (expected)



Brighton Avenue Curb Use Changes

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.
- Parking and loading in bus stops forces riders to walk in the street.

In 2023 and 2024, the City of Boston will be creating a metering and loading-zone plan for Brighton Ave to:

- Increase parking and loading zone availability for residents and businesses
- Reduce parking and loading in bus lanes and stops

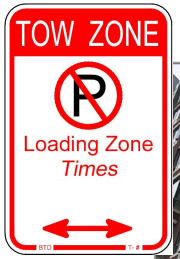


Image sources, clockwise from top left: Nelson\Nygaard; Google Street View; City of Boston; City of Boston.

Future Work on Commonwealth Avenue

Buses on Commonwealth Avenue have high ridership and significant delay from Packard's Corner to Kenmore.

- Improper parking can force buses to take up two lanes to pass.
- Frequent loading and pickup/dropoff results in double-parking.
- This road segment is one of the highest-delay areas for Route 57.

In 2023 and 2024, the City of Boston, MBTA, and Boston University will create a transit priority plan for Comm. Ave to:

- Move people more quickly on MBTA and BU buses by using solutions like new stop locations, bus lanes, and transit signals
- Reduce traffic volumes, decrease emissions, and advance equity in Boston by improving transit service for more people

Image sources, from left to right: Nelson\Nygaard; Google Street View.

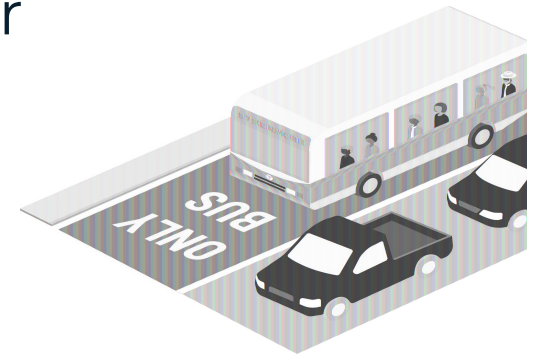
Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

What are we proposing?

Overall Benefit

We expect this draft design will:

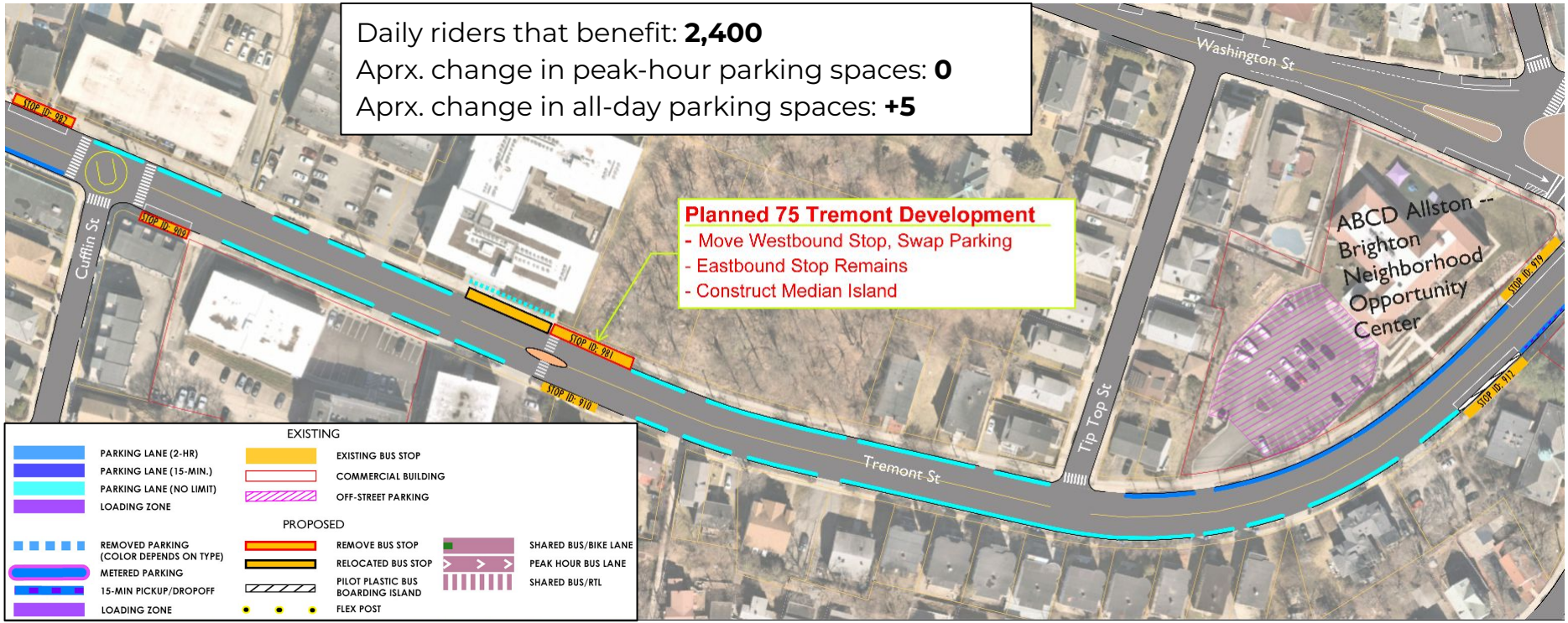
- Reduce typical bus delay by about 30%
- Make a bus round trip 10 minutes faster at rush hour, from about 40 to 30 minutes
- Eliminate about 90 hours of average weekday passenger delay
- Improve bus schedule reliability



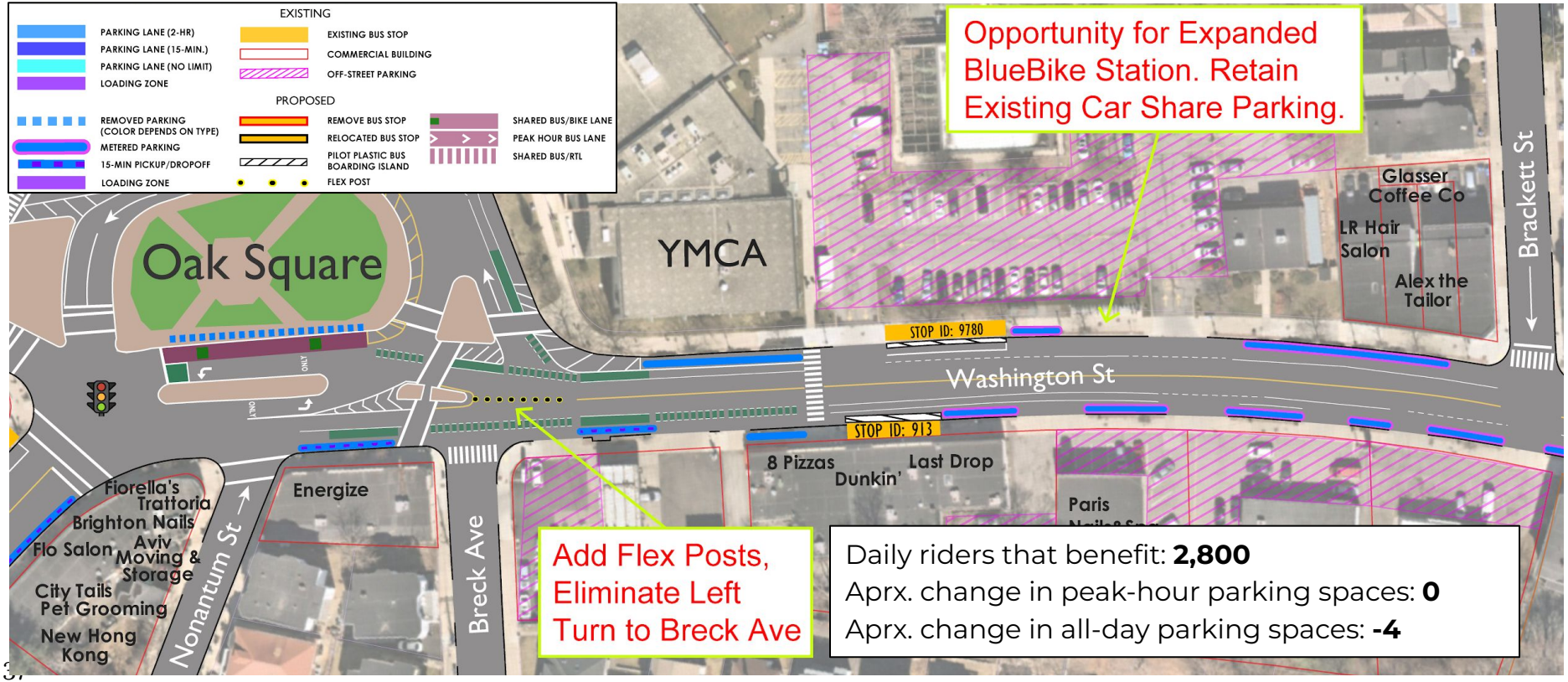
Draft Design Review

- We will now review the draft design one segment at a time.
- After we review the design, we will split up into breakout rooms to answer questions.
- Some details of the draft design may be hard to see on the screen, especially if you are using a mobile phone. You can download and review the draft design at our project webpage: boston.gov/route-57

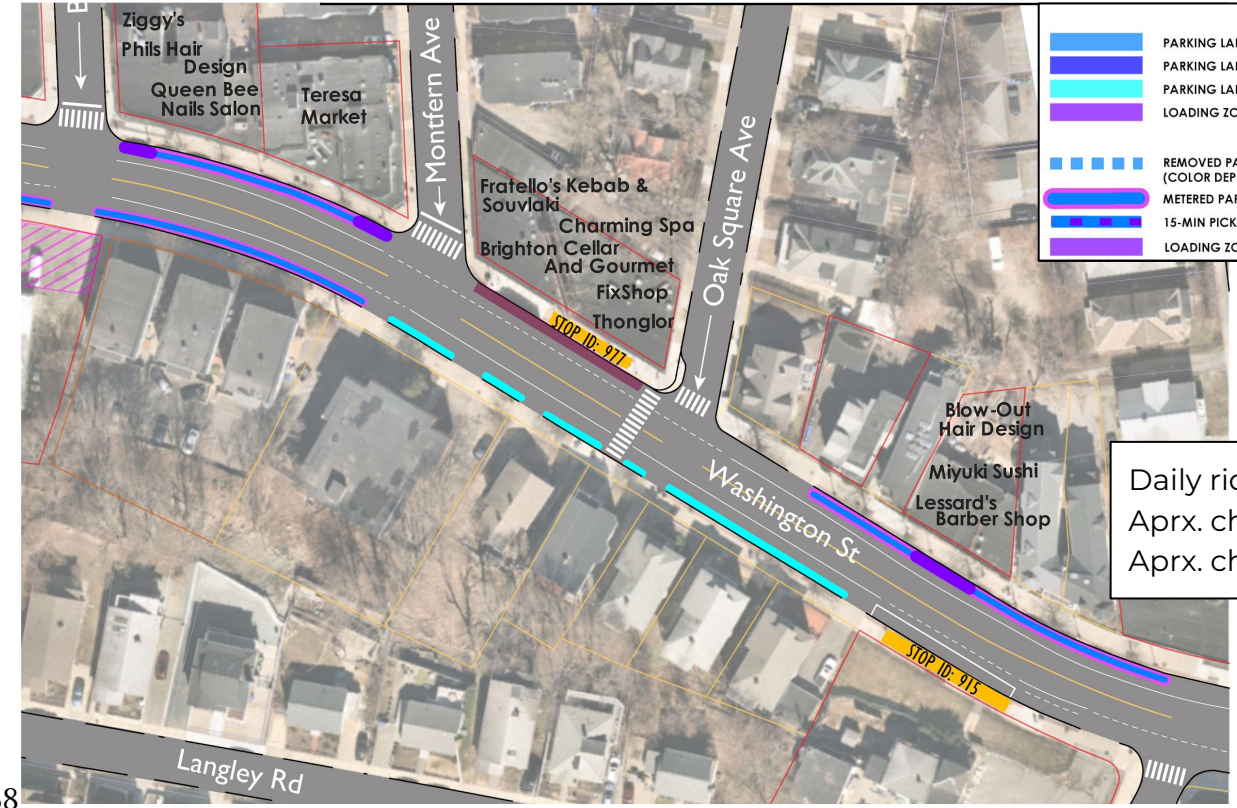
Section 1: Tremont St from Cufflin St to Oak Square

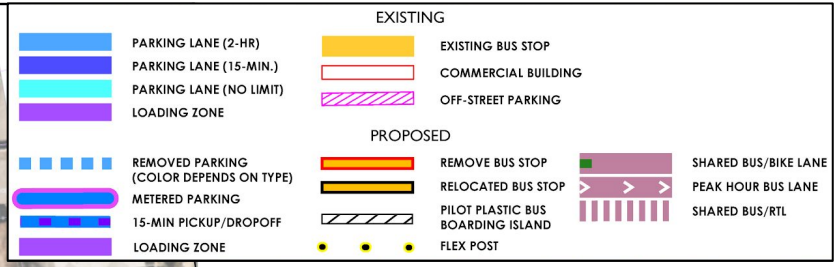


Section 2: Washington St from Oak Sq to Brackett St



Section 3: Washington St from Brackett St to Langley Rd

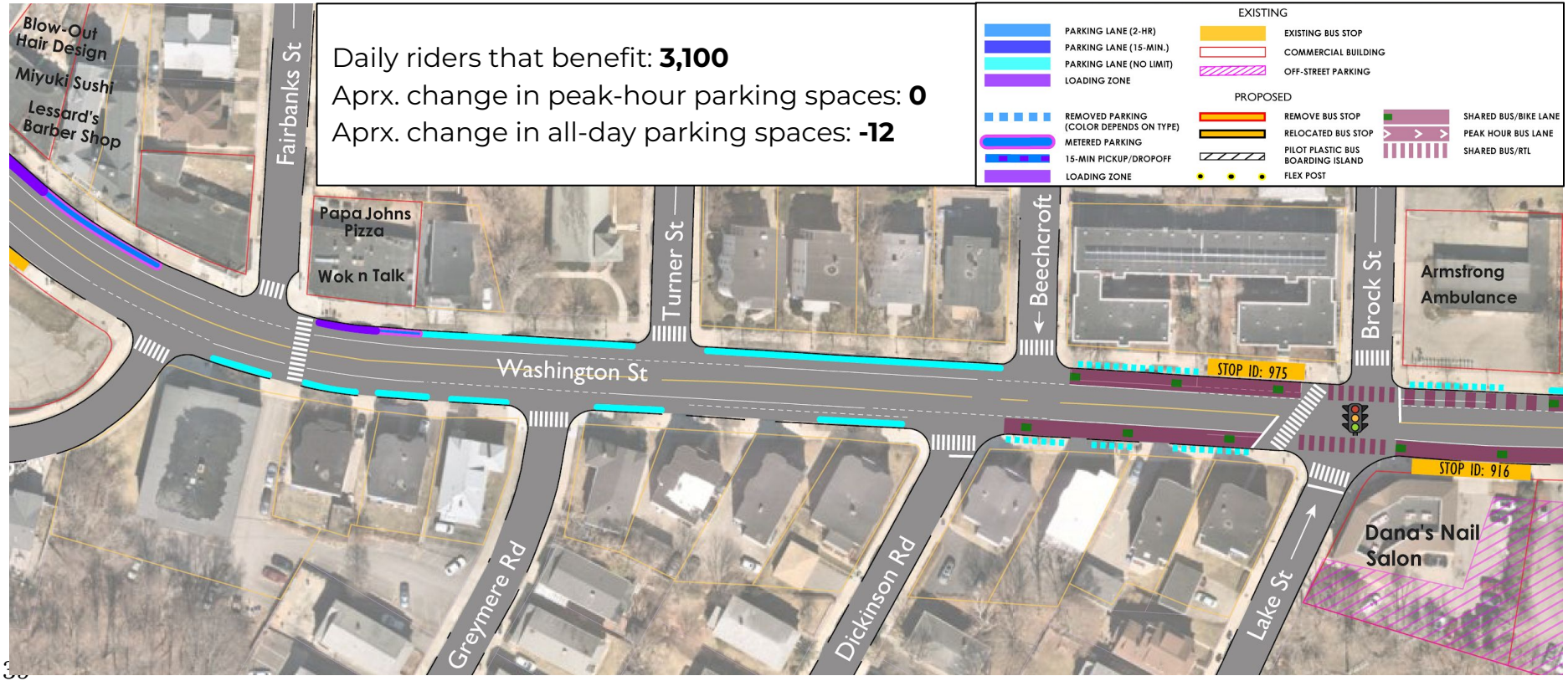




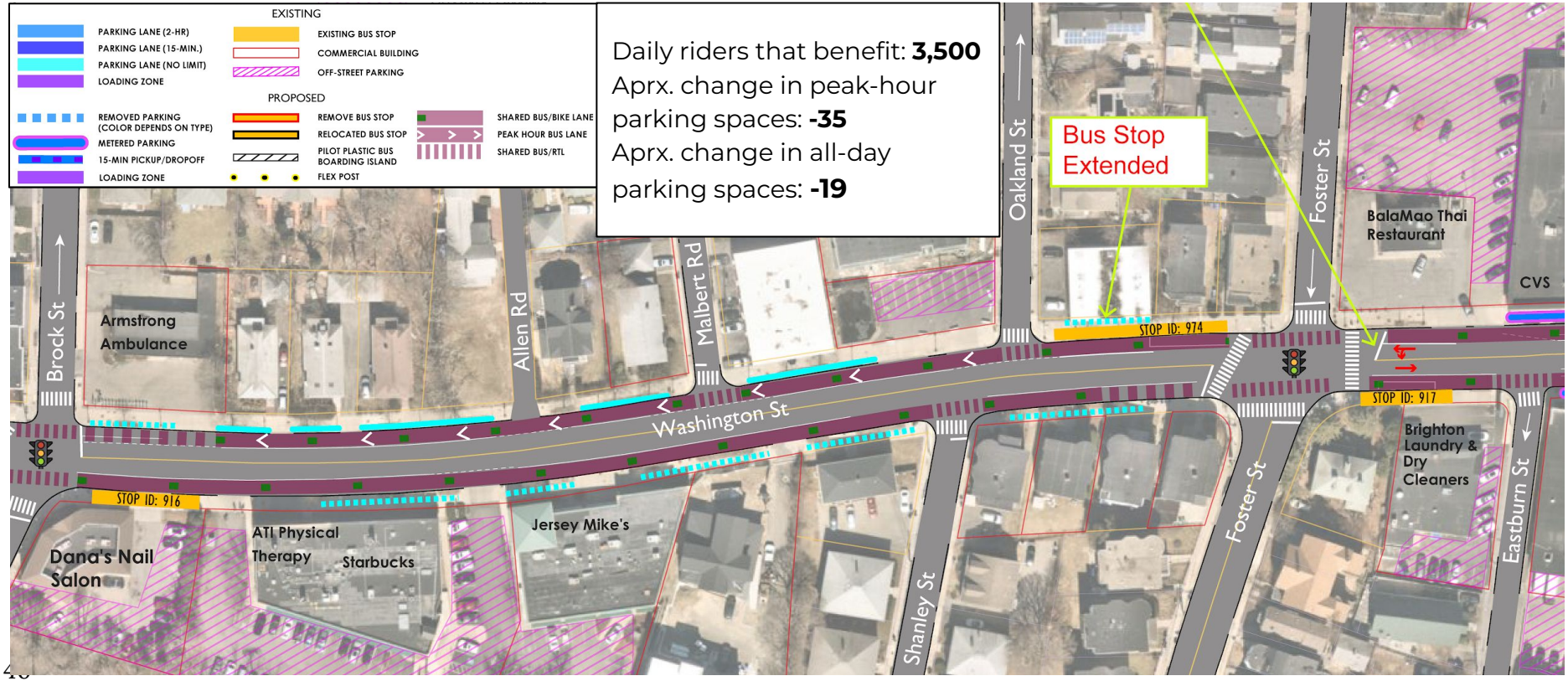
Daily riders that benefit: **3,000**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **0**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **0**

Section 4: Washington St from Langley Rd to Brock St

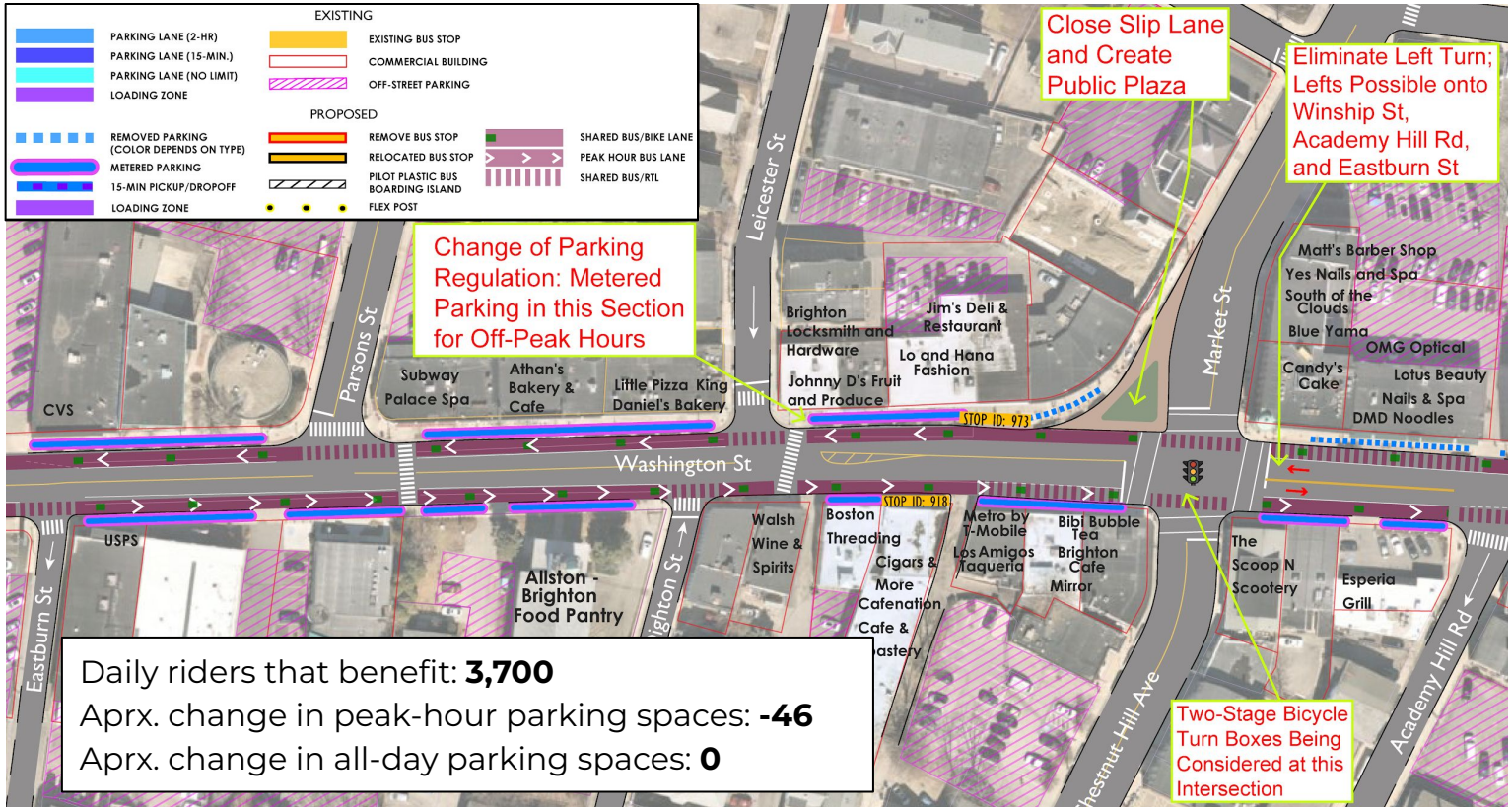
Daily riders that benefit: **3,100**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **0**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-12**



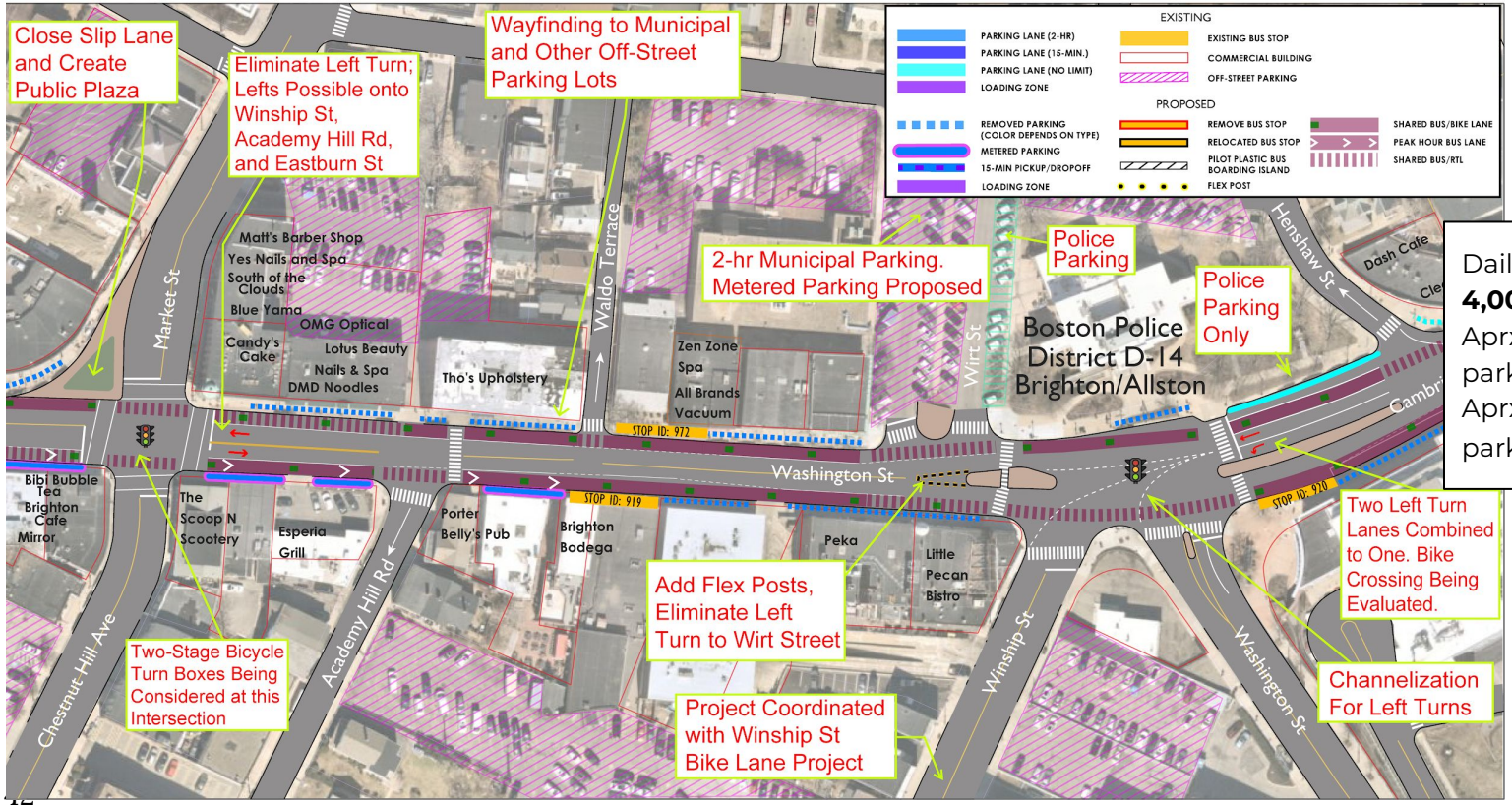
Section 5: Washington St from Brock St to Eastburn St



Section 6: Washington St from Eastburn St to Chestnut Hill Ave

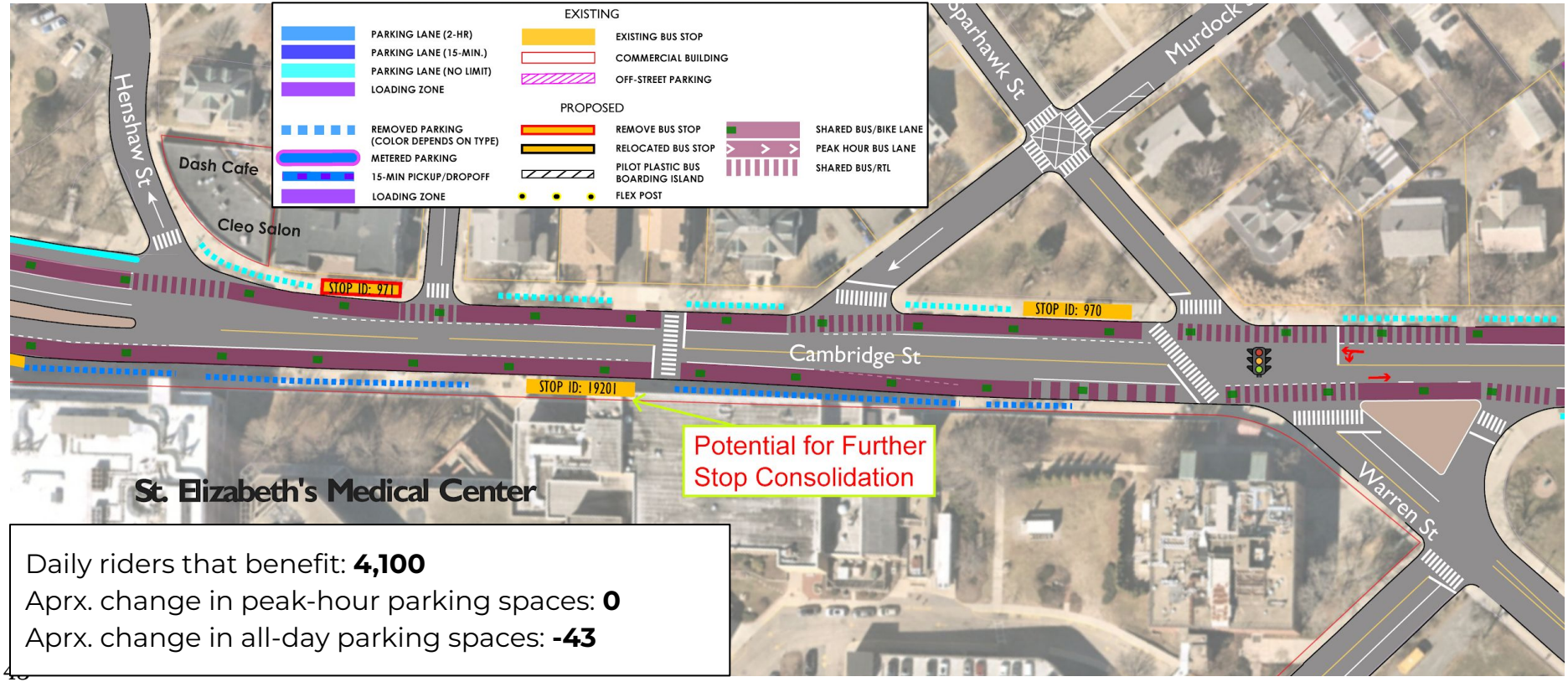


Section 7: Washington St from Chestnut Hill Ave to Henshaw St



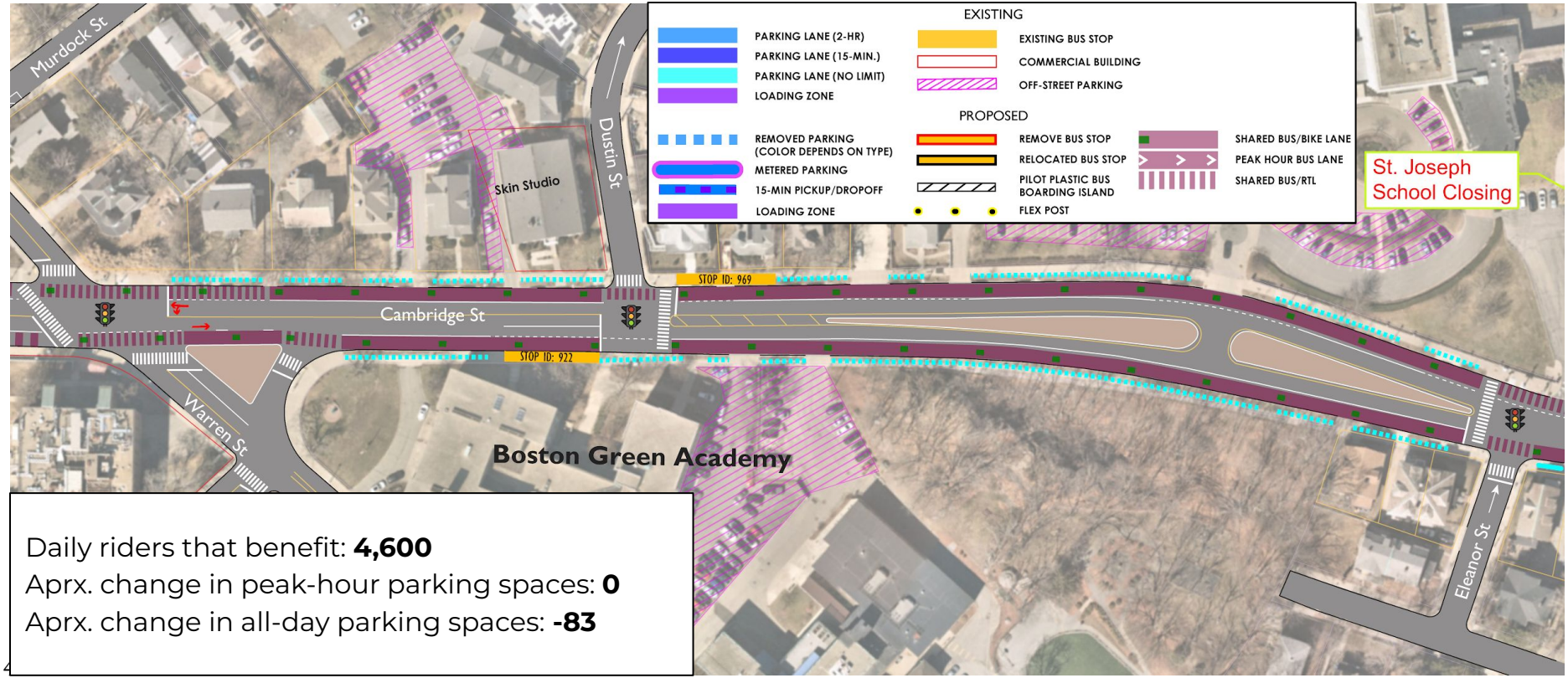
Daily riders that benefit: **4,000**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **-8**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-42**

Section 8: Cambridge St from Henshaw St to Warren St



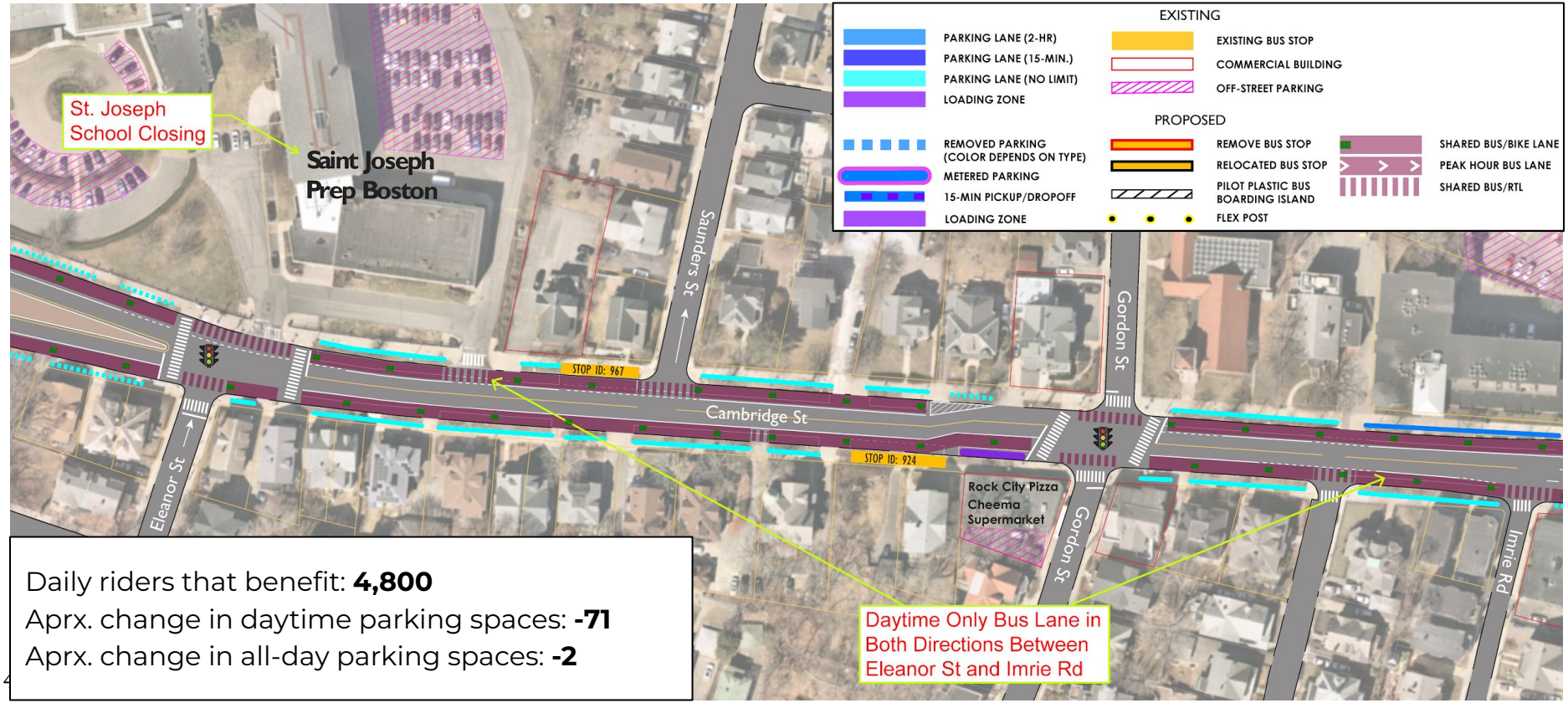
Daily riders that benefit: **4,100**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **0**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-43**

Section 9: Cambridge St from Warren St to Eleanor St



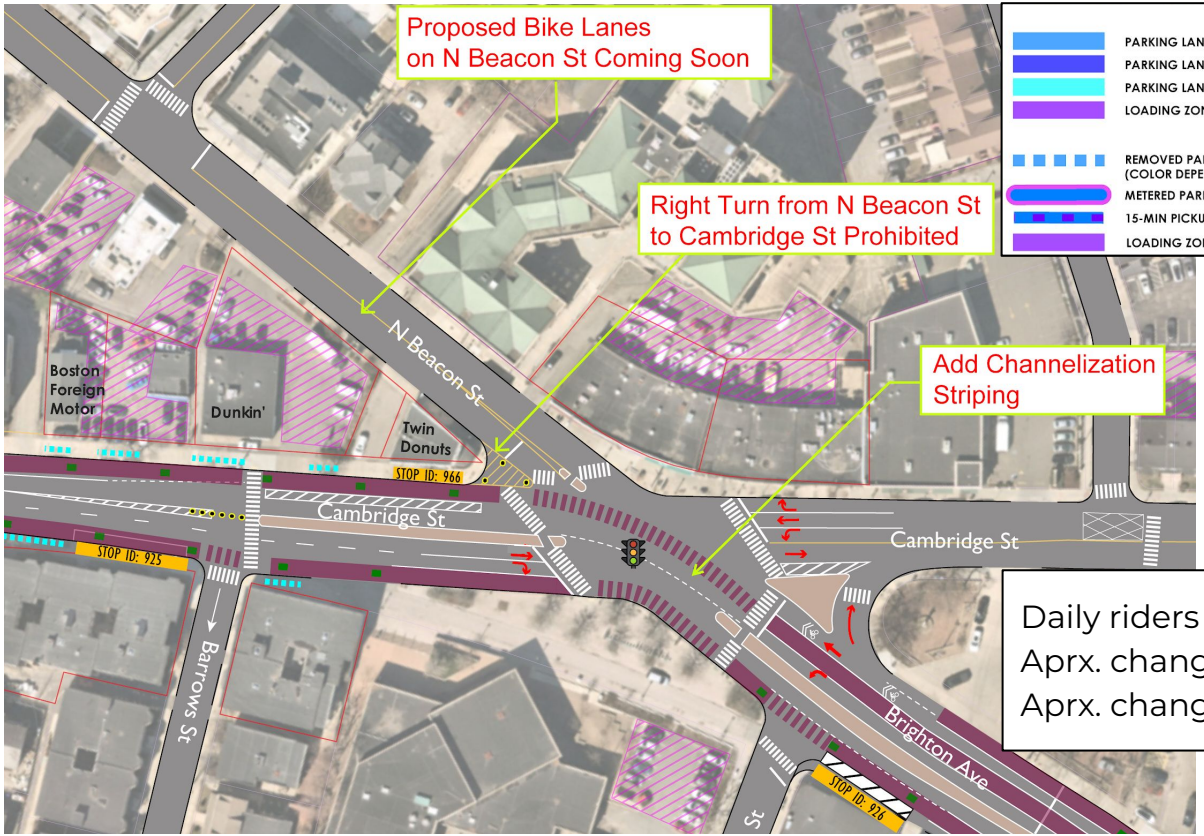
Daily riders that benefit: **4,600**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **0**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-83**

Section 10: Cambridge St from Eleanor St to Barrows St



Daily riders that benefit: **4,800**
Aprx. change in daytime parking spaces: **-71**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-2**

Section 11: Cambridge St from Barrow St to Higgins St

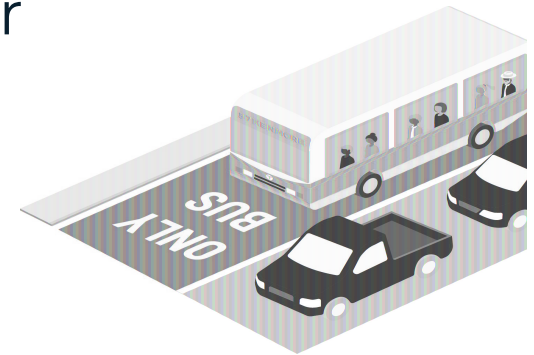


Daily riders that benefit: **6,600**
Aprx. change in peak-hour parking spaces: **0**
Aprx. change in all-day parking spaces: **-11**

Overall Benefit

We expect this draft design will:

- Reduce typical bus delay by about 30%
- Make a bus round trip 10 minutes faster at rush hour, from about 40 to 30 minutes
- Eliminate about 90 hours of average weekday passenger delay
- Improve bus schedule reliability



Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

How can people provide feedback?

How Are We Collecting Feedback?

Project Website

Public Survey

Open Houses (in-person and virtual)

Stakeholder Briefings

How Are We Collecting Feedback?

Project Website

- boston.gov/route-57
- Project resources
  - Background information
  - Project documents
  - Draft and final plans
- Subscribe for project updates
- Survey

Review the draft design and provide comments!

bit.ly/rt57-design-survey

Breakout Rooms

- We will now separate into breakout rooms for discussion about the project. The breakout rooms will run until **7:55 pm**. Staff will facilitate discussion and answer questions.
- Participants will be randomly assigned to a breakout room.
- If you need interpretation in a breakout room, please let us know in the chat.

Welcome Back

Please select your language from the ‘Interpretation’ menu again to be able to hear in that language.

Thank you

Matthew Petersen
transit@boston.gov

Review the draft design and provide comments!

boston.gov/route-57

bit.ly/rt57-design-survey

Breakout Rooms

At this time, meeting attendees are in small groups, discussing the project.

If you are just joining:

- We will place you in a breakout room to join the discussion.
- We will be reconvening at 8:00 pm.

The meeting has now ended.

Project website:

boston.gov/route-57

Review the draft design and provide comments!

bit.ly/rt57-design-survey