

# Welcome!

## Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor Project

### Open House

*August 2, 2023*

**CITY of BOSTON**



Massachusetts Bay  
Transportation Authority



“MBTA route 57 bus at Kenmore station, September 2018” by Byron A. Nash is licensed under CC BY 2.0.



# Project Introduction

## What is the BTD Transit Priority Corridors initiative?

- A new City of Boston Transportation Department program in partnership with the MBTA to make bus service better.

## What is the Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor project?

- The project will make improvements to the Route 57 corridor in Allston and Brighton to reduce transit delay, enhance safety, and reduce confusion for everyone on the street.



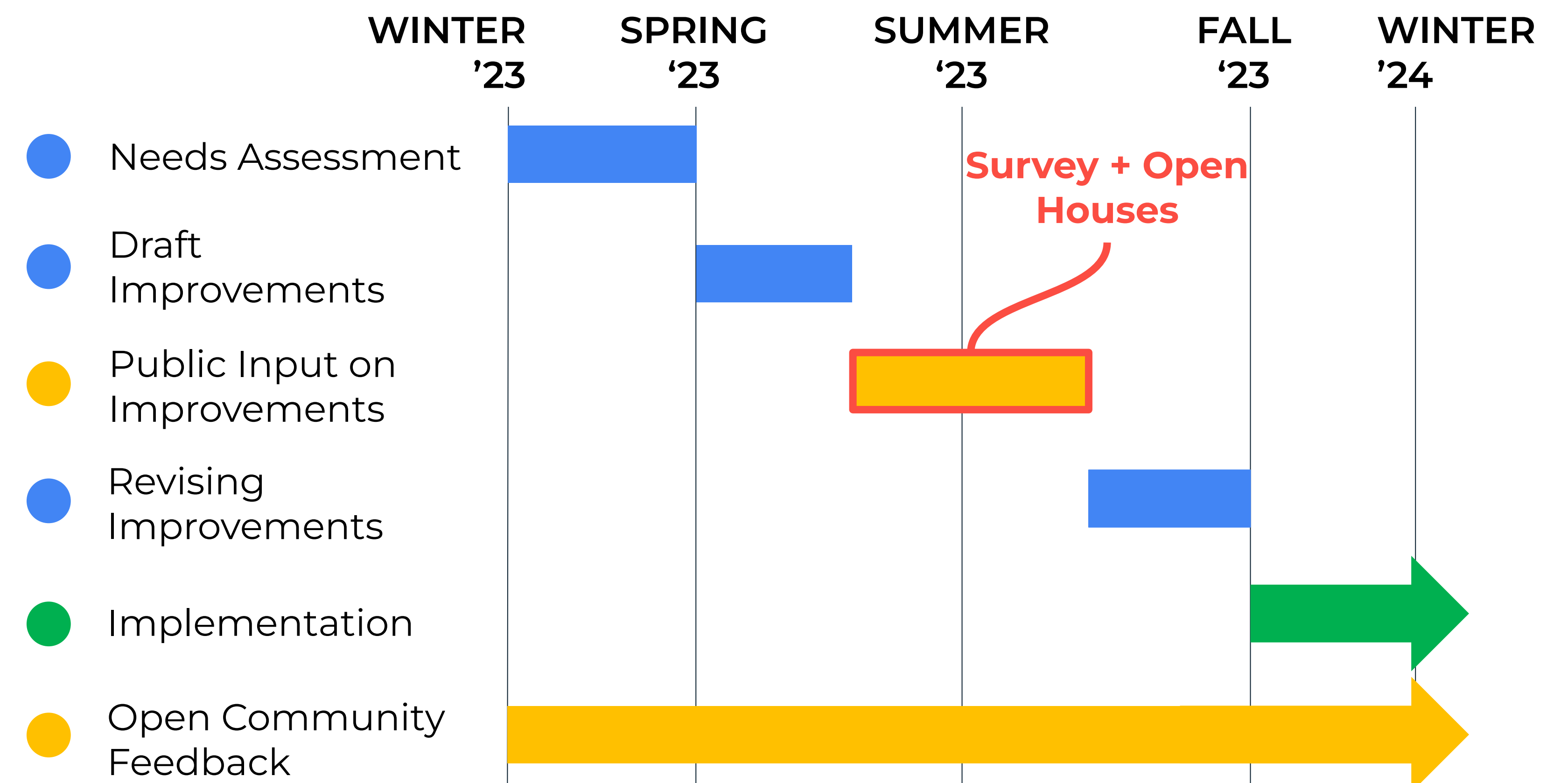
## Project Goals

**Accessibility:** We want to ensure all bus riders can wait comfortably at their bus stops and board the bus safely. This includes accessibility for people with disabilities.

**Reliability:** We will look at infrastructure and signal improvements to help buses run on schedule.

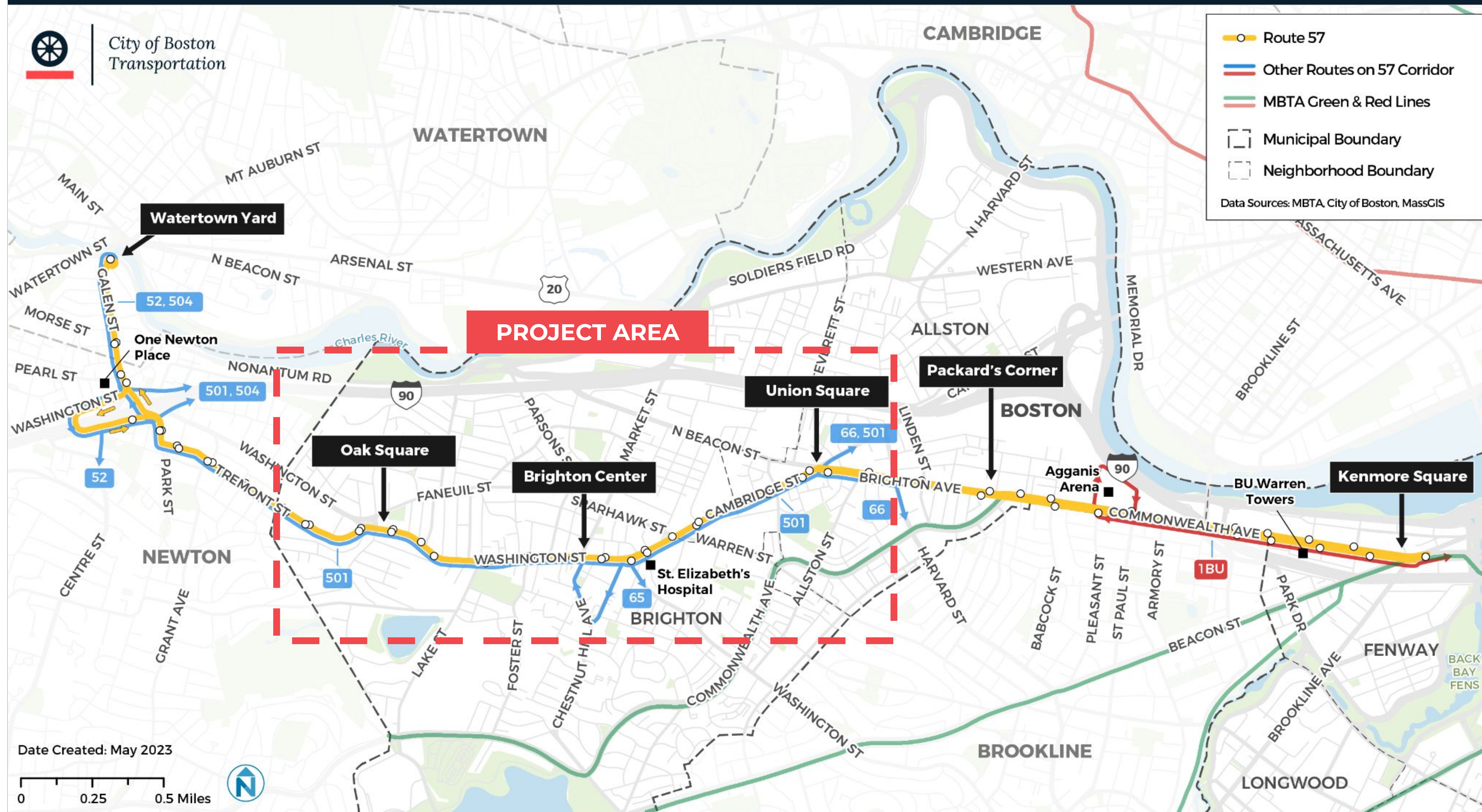
**Time Savings:** We will study where the buses are delayed and explore solutions to save time for bus riders.

## Project Timeline





# Route 57 Corridor Overview



- The corridor includes Watertown, Newton, and Boston. The project focus area is from the Boston city line to Allston Street in Boston.
- Seven bus routes operate on the corridor (52, 57, 65, 66, 501, 504, BU Shuttle).
- Bus service is very frequent, with Route 57 arriving every six minutes during rush hour.

Day Type	Span of Service	Headway Range	Average Headways		
			AM Peak	Mldday	PM Peak
Weekday	5:02 AM - 1:10 AM	5-25 mins	6 mins	8 mins	6 mins
Saturday	5:05 AM - 1:11 AM	7-18 mins	10 mins all day		
Sunday	6:00 AM - 1:12 AM	12-20 mins	15 mins all day		



# Transit Priority Toolkit

## What tools are available for improvements to the Route 57 corridor?

### Bus Lanes

Bus Lanes are painted lanes **dedicated for buses** to move past traffic congestion. These could be **24-hour lanes** (general traffic never allowed) **peak hour-only lanes** (general traffic allowed at other times).

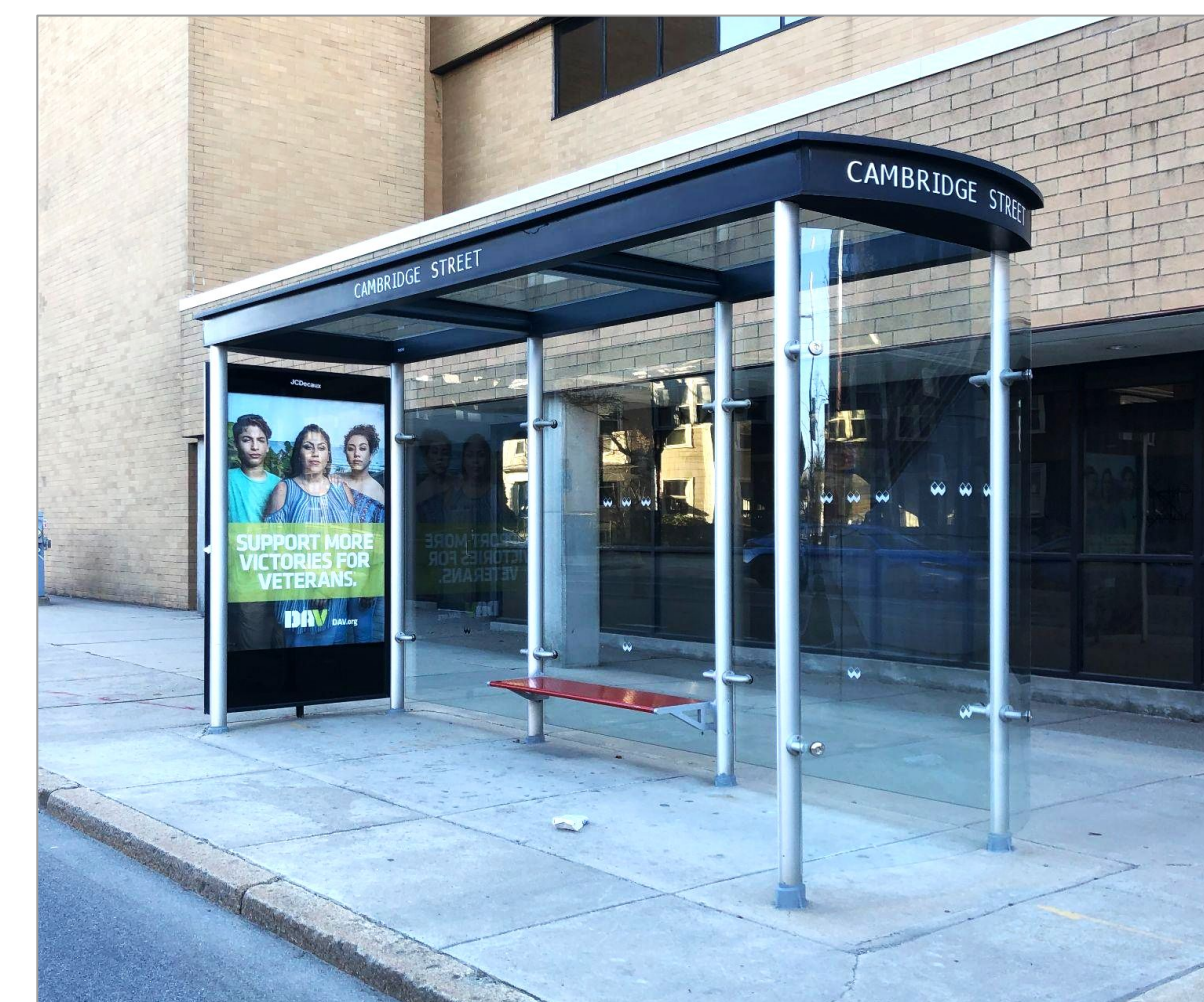
- Helps buses run faster and more reliably
- Could also function as a bicycle lane



### Bus Stop Improvements

Bus stops can be improved by moving stops **closer to crosswalks** and intersections, **combining stops** that are too close together, or **adding new shelters**, curb extensions, and other amenities.

- Makes traveling to and from stops safer and more accessible
- Stopping less often saves ride time
- Some people may need to travel farther to a stop
- Gives people a better place to wait



### Parking Policy

Changing **where and when parking** can occur, as well as what types of parking (e.g., **parking vs. loading**).

- Increase parking turnover so more people can park and access businesses in commercial districts



### Turn Restrictions

**Restricting turns** on to and off of the corridor allows all traffic to flow with **fewer backups**.

- Buses and general traffic won't get held up behind turning vehicles

### Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

Transit Signal Priority (TSP) uses **special signals** to move buses through intersections. This could mean **extending a green light** if a bus is approaching an intersection, or a dedicated signal **just for buses**.

- Helps general-purpose traffic if near bus
- Minimal impact to general-purpose traffic
- Can be used with short bus lanes



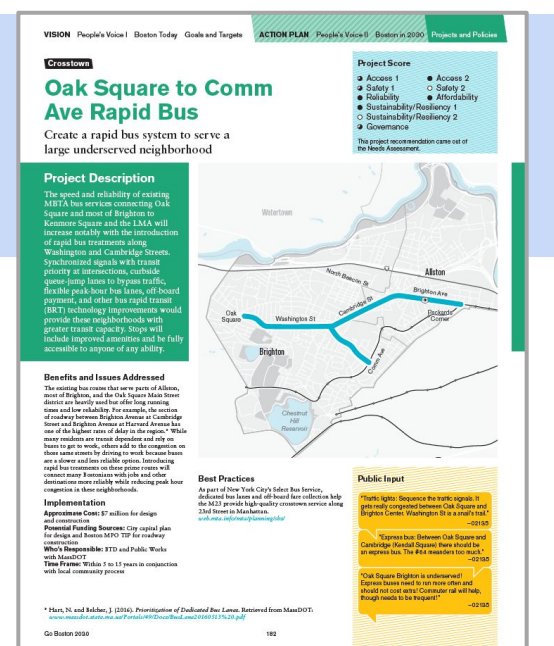


# Planning Background

There have been consistent calls for improvements to the Route 57 corridor:

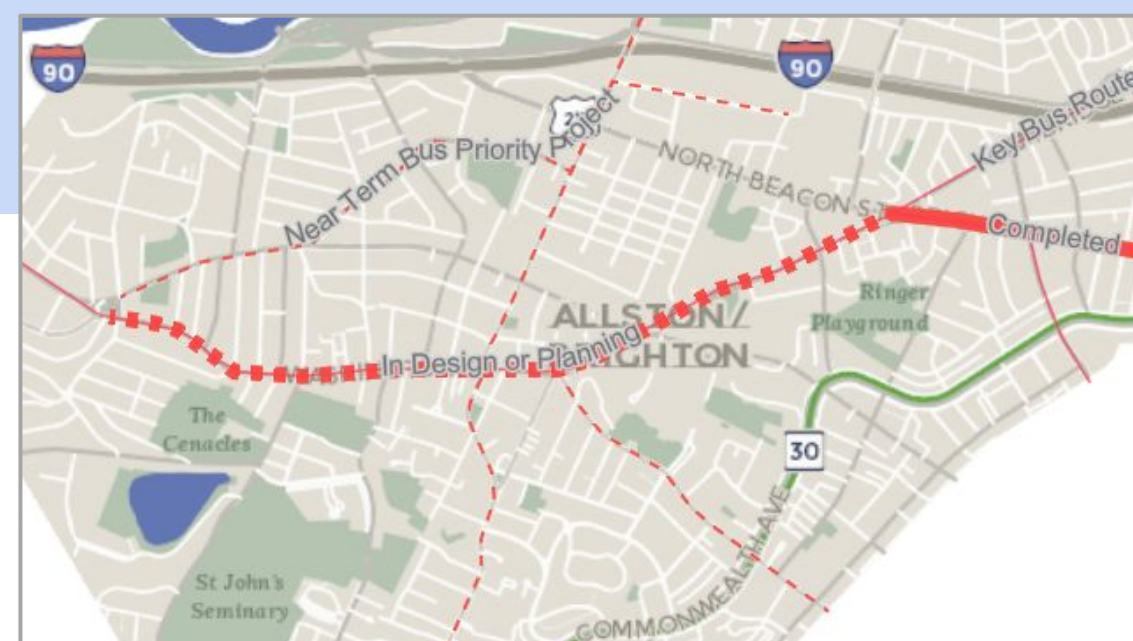
## GoBoston 2030

- Completed in 2017; included two-year public process receiving thousands of comments
- Recommended Oak Square to Comm. Ave. rapid bus and reliability improvements for Route 57



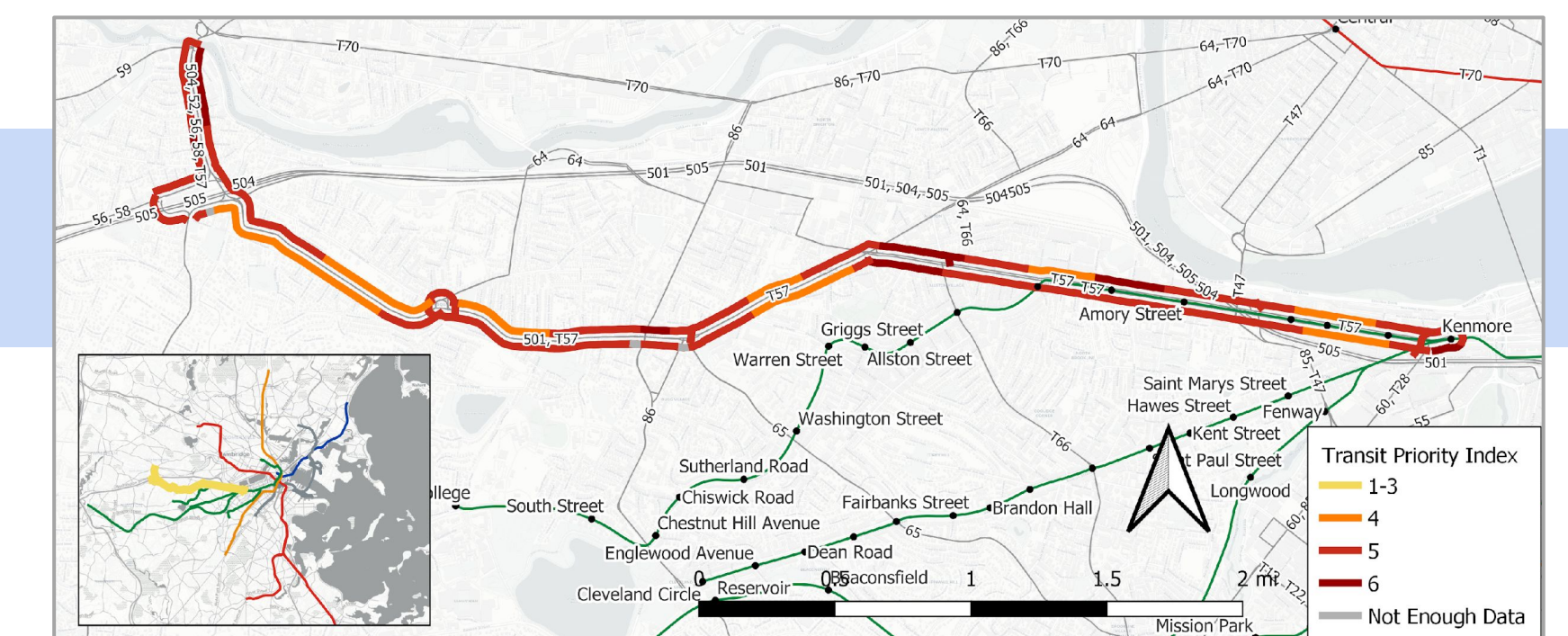
## Boston Transportation Department Transit Priority Network

- Developed in 2021 by BTD Transit Team
- Based on existing ridership and delay patterns, locations of transit critical populations, and previous plans and studies



## MBTA Bus Network Redesign and Transit Priority

- Ongoing efforts, including planning to create a high-frequency bus network
- Seeks transit priority on Route 57 corridor



## Allston Brighton Health Collaborative Mobility Audits

- Conducted in 2022; project team walked streets to identify safety, access, and mobility issues
- Recommended adding crosswalks and curb ramps, limiting double-parking, and improving visibility and traffic flows



## Allston-Brighton Mobility Plan

- Adopted in 2021; included 4 open houses, 6 workshops, 10 civic groups, 1,600 comments
- Recommended peak-hour bus lanes on Washington and Cambridge streets





# Ridership and Amenities

## 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.

## Ridership by Trip

- Many weekday riders get on the bus during the morning and evening peak times.
- Peak-hour bus lanes would serve these high-ridership times of day.

## Amenities

- Union Square, Brighton Center, and Oak Square have high-ridership stops that don't have bus shelters.
- Several popular stops are not near Bluebikes stations.

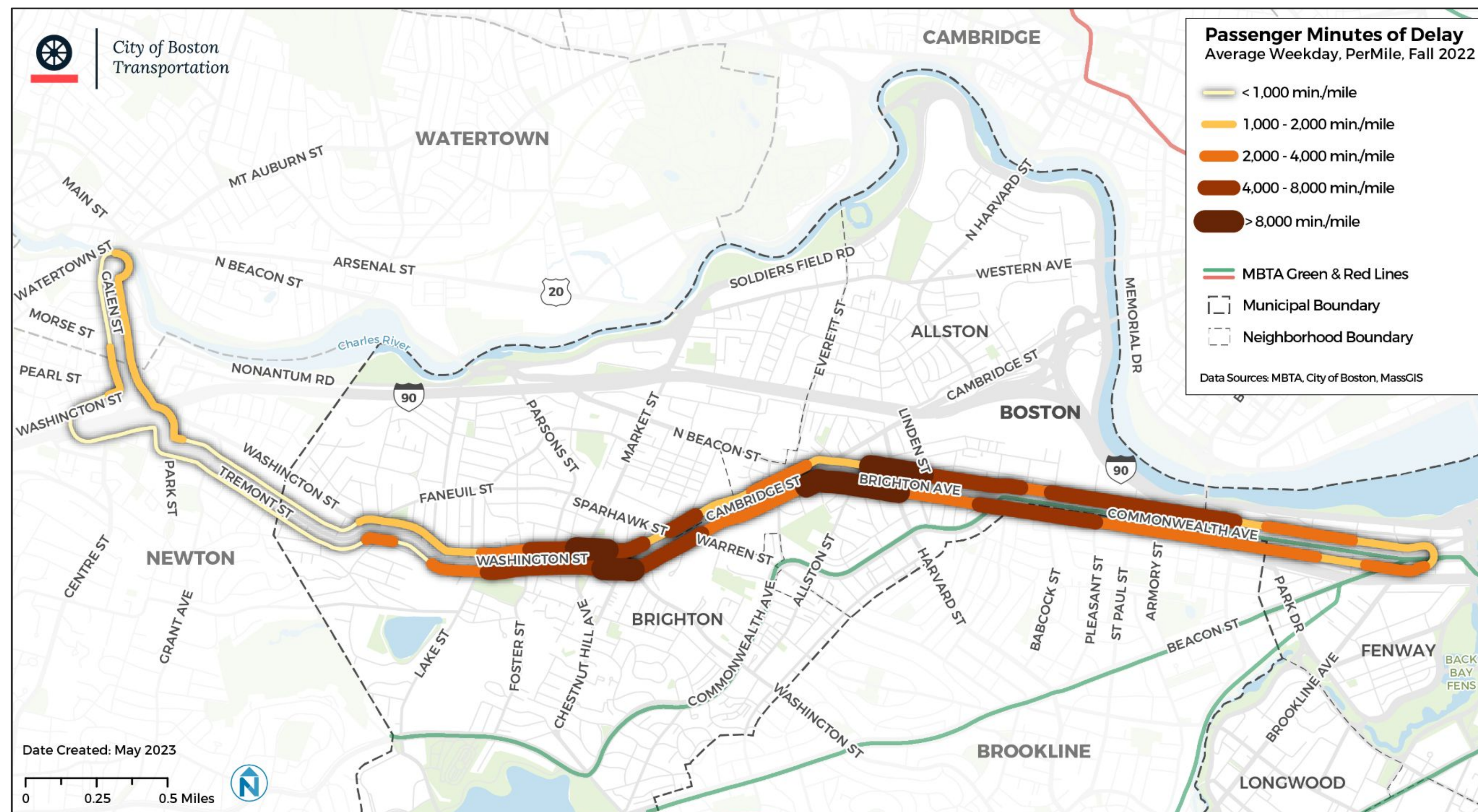


## Transfers with Route 57

- The Green Line is the most popular transfer overall.
- Route 66 is the most popular bus transfer.
- Ensuring other routes benefit from transit priority improvements on the Route 57 corridor is also important.

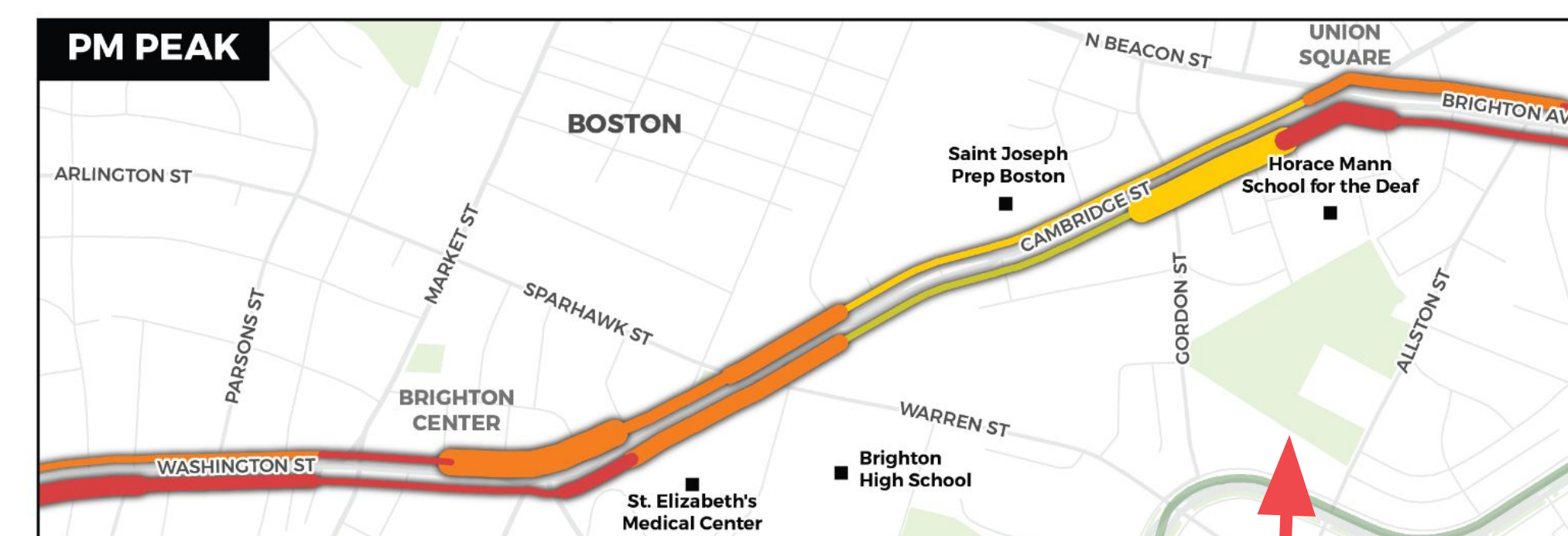
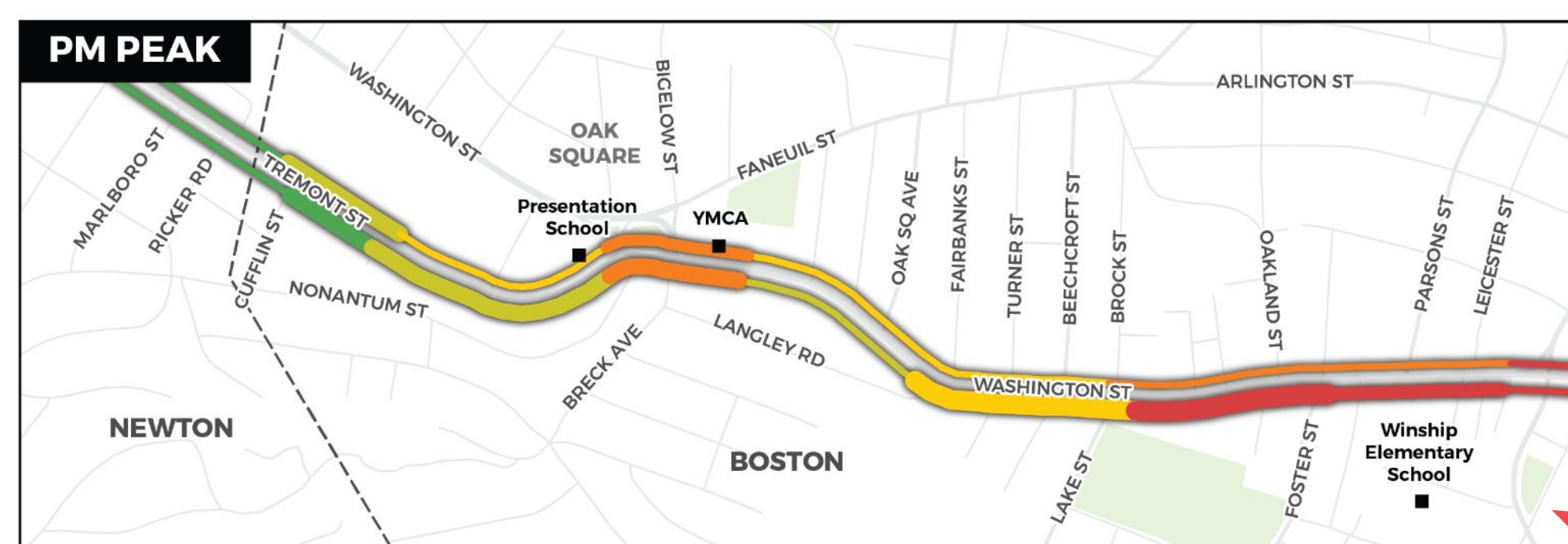


# Current Bus Challenges

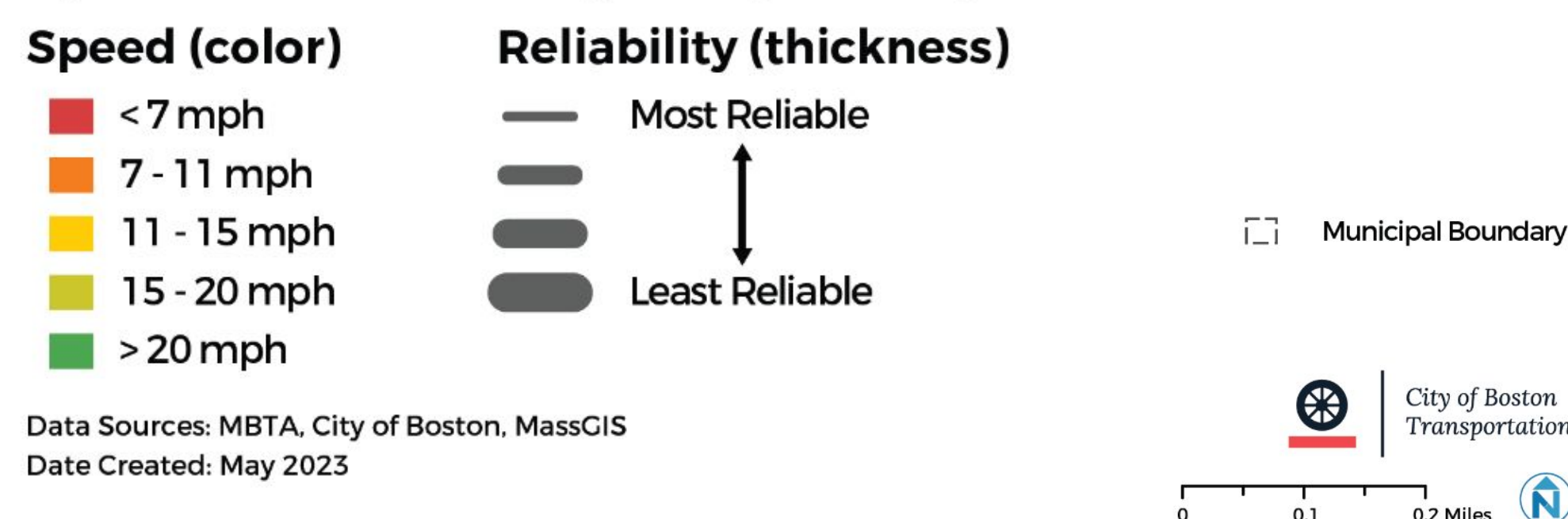


## Passenger Delay

- Transit riders experience considerable delay on the corridor, especially near Brighton Center and Union Square
- Bus riders on the Route 57 corridor lose a collective 600 hours in traffic every day
- If all the delay on Route 57 were eliminated, a round-trip would be 20 to 30 minutes faster.



## Speed and Reliability



### HOW TO READ THIS MAP

Thick lines show where the bus is very unreliable, meaning it doesn't arrive on time. Red lines show where the bus is very slow. Thick, red lines show bus service with the greatest opportunity for improvement.

## Speed and Reliability

- In some places, buses travel an average of 5 mph, which is only a little faster than walking!
- Buses are extremely unreliable along much of the corridor, meaning they don't arrive on time. Unreliable bus service can make people late for work, school, and other important events, and makes it harder for people to trust transit.



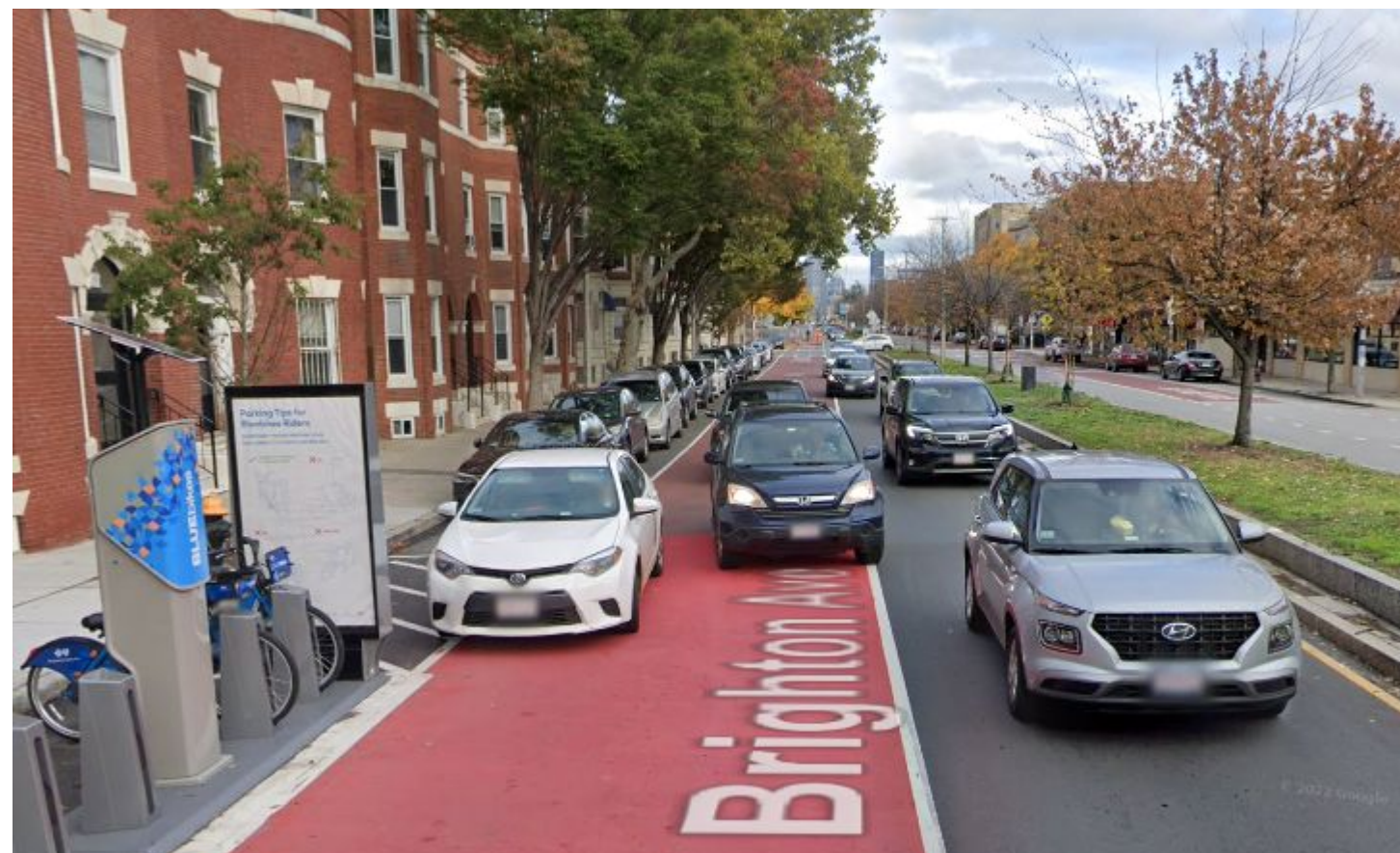
# Brighton Ave. Bus Lane Support



## Brighton Ave. Bus Lane Challenges

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 and makes service unreliable.
- Parking and loading in bus stops forces some riders to walk in the street to access the bus.



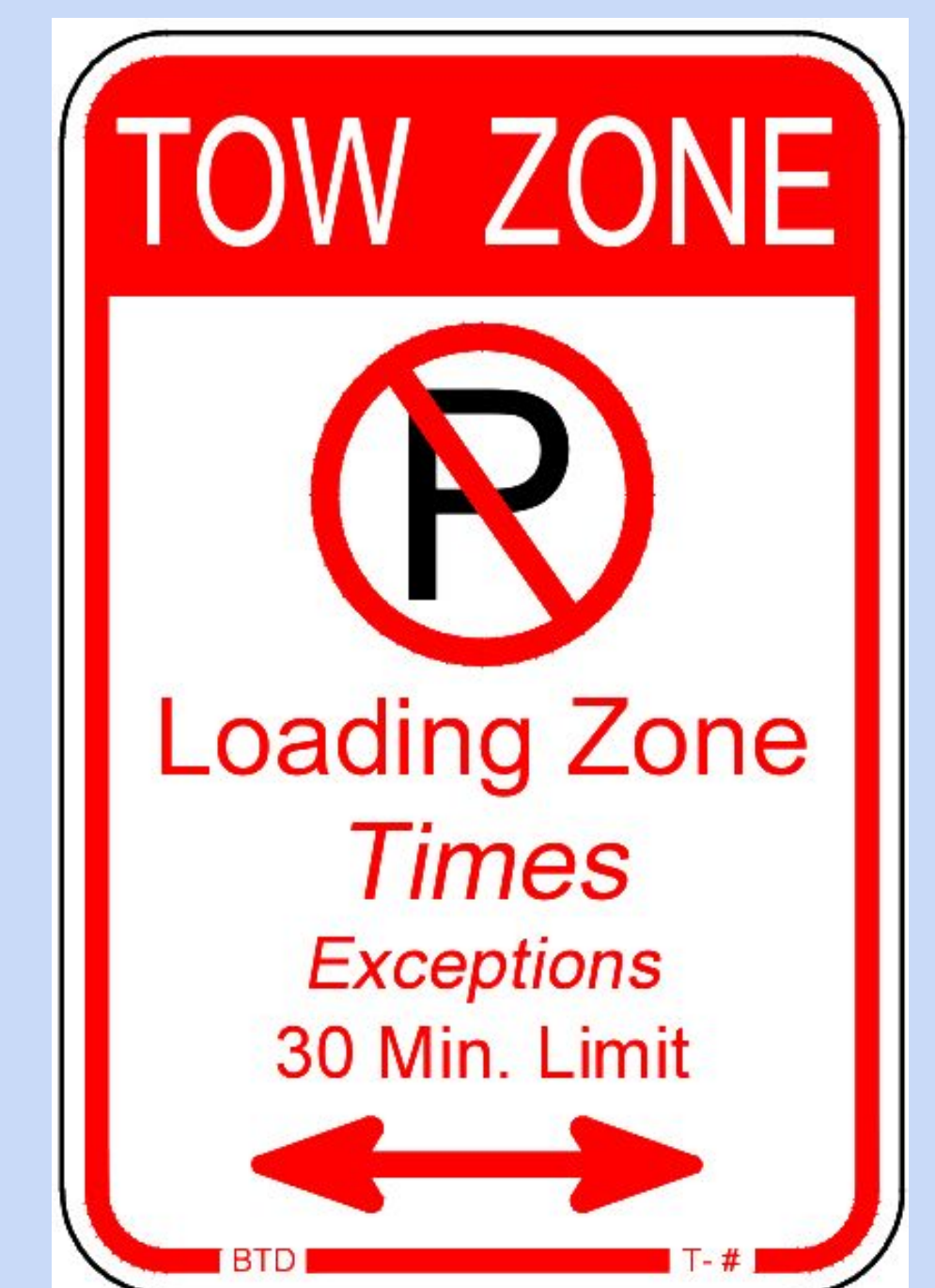
## Parking Policy

- Double-parking can be reduced by creating more loading and pick-up/drop-off (PU/DO) zones. Shortening time limits for parking spaces also discourages long-term parking.
- Adding loading and PU/DO zones has helped reduce double-parking on Boylston Street in Fenway and on Cambridge Street in Beacon Hill.

## Planned Changes

In 2023 and 2024, the City of Boston will be developing and implementing a metering and loading zone plan for Brighton Avenue.

The goal of these changes is to increase parking and load zone availability for residents and businesses on Brighton Avenue, and reduce the amount of parking and loading that occurs in bus lanes and stops.





# Future Work on Comm. Ave.

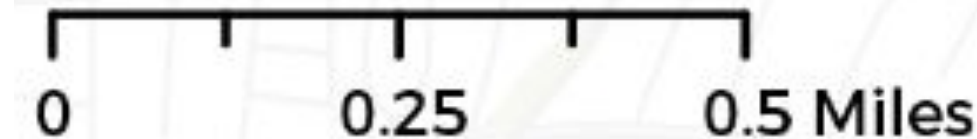


## Passenger Minutes of Delay Average Weekday, Per Mile, Fall 2022



Data Sources: MBTA, City of Boston, MassGIS

Date Created: May 2023



## HOW TO READ THIS MAP

Thicker, darker lines show where more bus passengers are experiencing delay. Thinner, lighter lines show where the bus is running more reliably, and passengers experience less delay.

## Commonwealth Avenue Bus Challenges

- Buses encounter significant delay, and high ridership, on the section of Commonwealth Avenue from Packard's Corner to Kenmore.
- Uneven parking can force buses to straddle the centerline and take up two lanes.
- Heavy loading and pickup-dropoff activity results in frequent double-parking.
- This section of roadway is one of the areas of highest delay for the Route 57 bus.

## Planned Efforts

In 2023 and 2024, in collaboration with the MBTA, Boston University, and the community, the City of Boston will be developing and implementing a transit priority plan for Commonwealth Avenue. This could include new bus stop locations, bus lanes, transit priority signals, or other types of transit priority to enable both MBTA buses and BU Shuttles to move more people more quickly.

The goal of these changes is to increase reliability of transit service along Commonwealth Avenue, and enabling more people to rely on transit as their primary means of transportation, which will help to reduce traffic volumes, decrease emissions, and advance the City's equity and decarbonization goals.



# Trade-Offs: Brighton Center

**Proposed Change:** Buses experience considerable delay at the Market Street/Washington Street/Chestnut Hill Avenue intersection in Brighton Center. To reduce this delay and help the ~3,900 people who ride the bus here every day, we are proposing eliminating the left turn from Washington Street on to Chestnut Hill Avenue. This will allow space for a dedicated bus lane on Washington Street.



## What trade-offs are we weighing as part of this design decision?

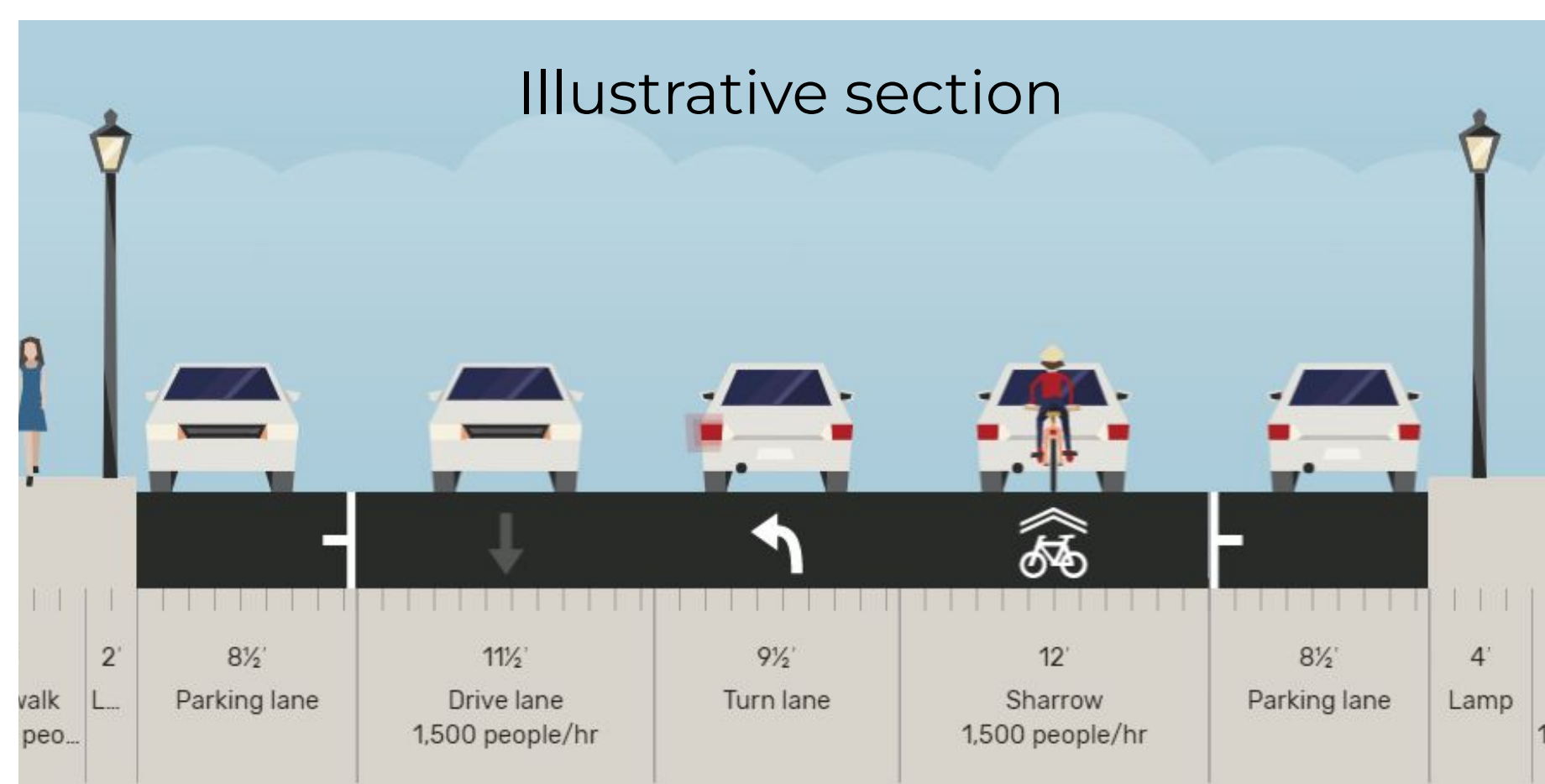
### Option A: No Bus Lane, Maintain Left-Turn Lane

#### Pros

- Gives people driving more choices

#### Cons

- Makes the bus slower and less reliable, as there is not enough room for a bus lane, and turning vehicles delay traffic
- Prioritizes autos, which are the least space-efficient mode of transportation
- Allowing left turns increases risk of a crash



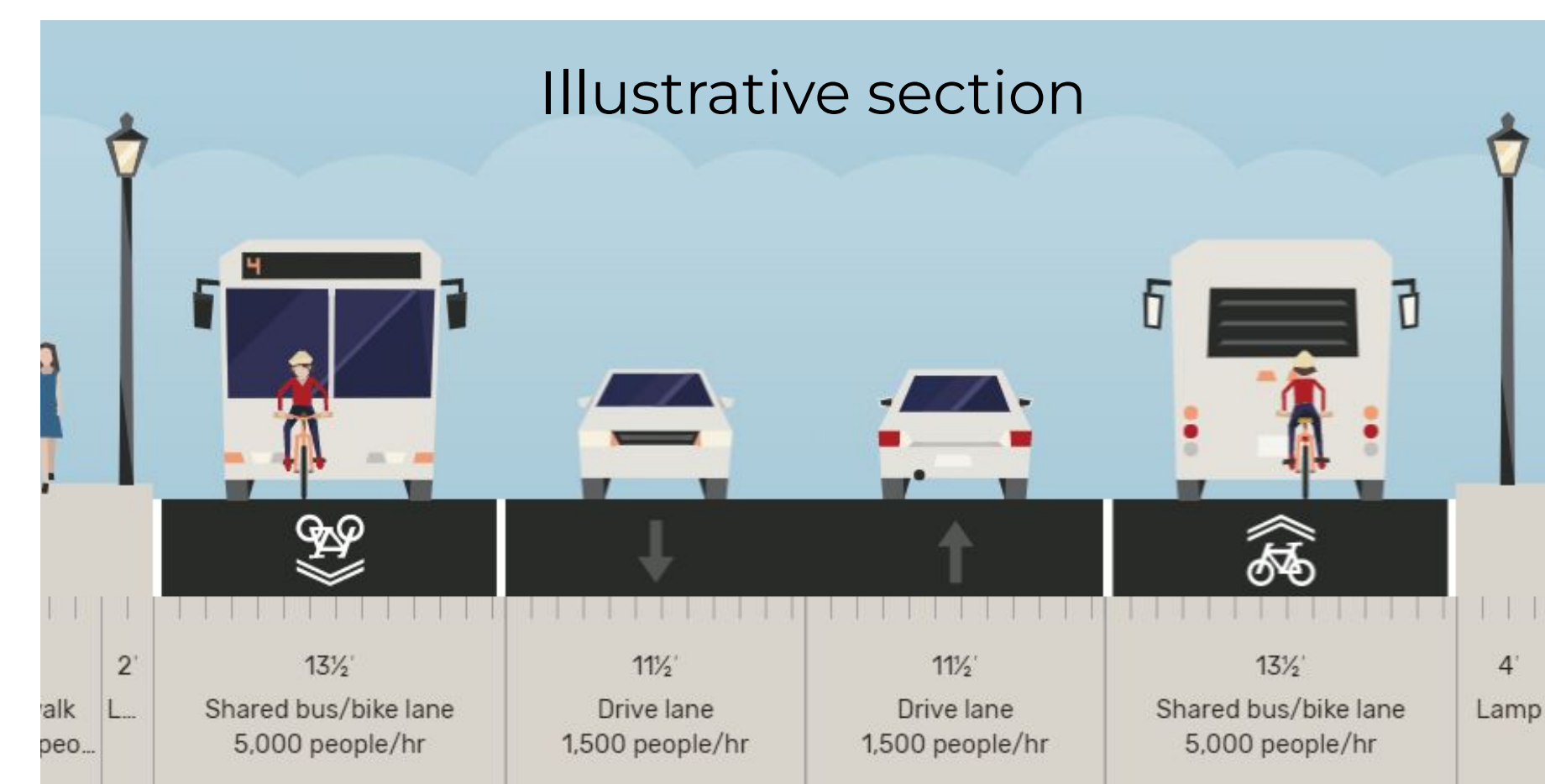
### Option B: Add Bus Lane, Eliminate Left-Turn Lane

#### Pros

- Makes the bus faster and more reliable by adding a bus lane and eliminating conflicts with turning vehicles
- Increases safety by eliminating turning conflicts
- Prioritizes transit, which is the most space-efficient mode of transportation

#### Cons

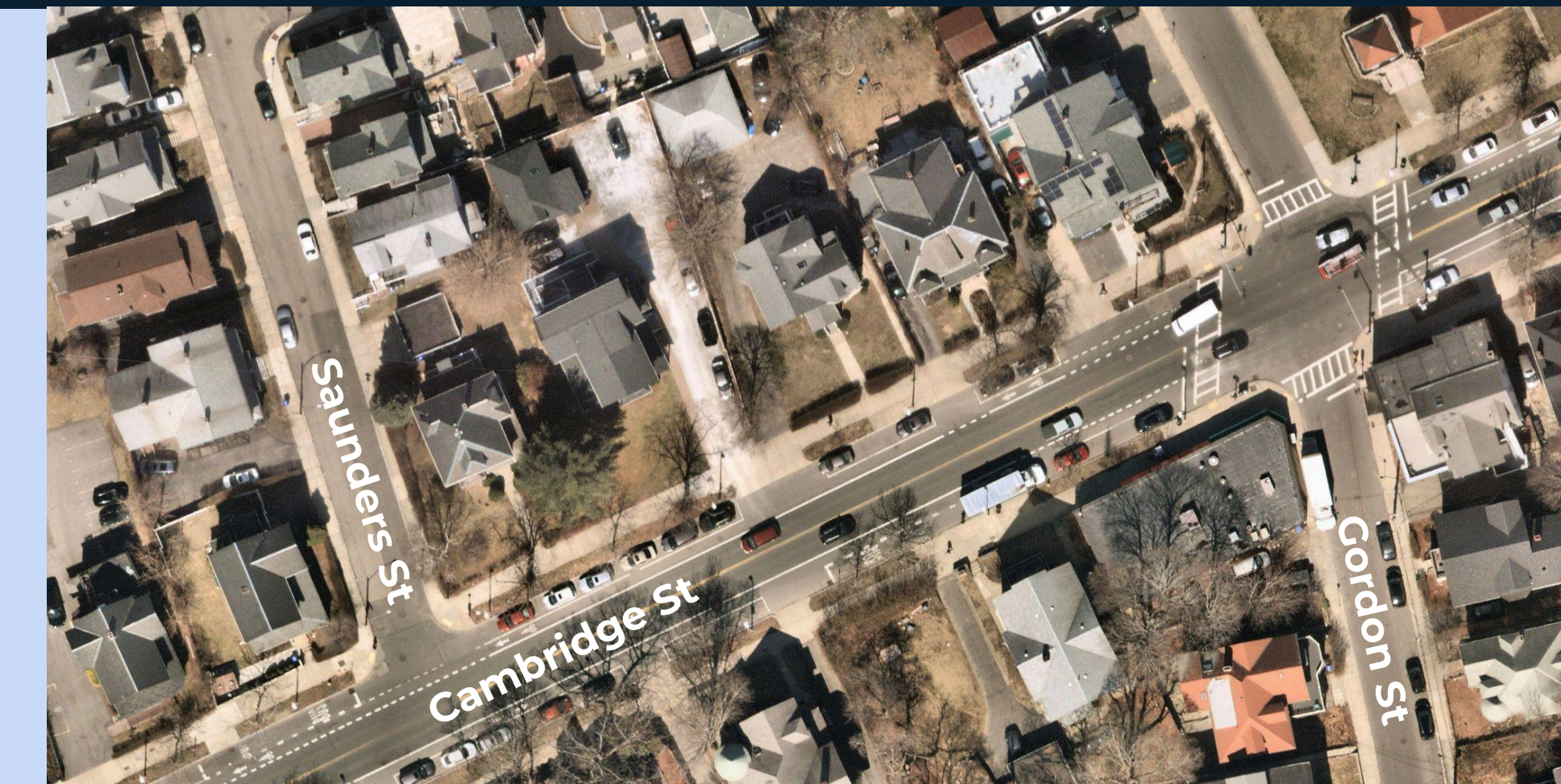
- Gives people driving fewer choices. Most drivers headed southbound on Chestnut Hill Avenue will use Winship Street instead.





# Trade-Offs: Cambridge Street

**Proposed Change:** Buses are less reliable and experience slow speeds along Cambridge Street at the Brighton/Allston border. To help speed buses and help the ~4,700 people who ride the bus here every day, we are proposing adding bus lanes in both directions. About half the existing parking spaces on Cambridge Street will be removed and the other half will allow overnight parking only. Cars can park on side streets and the number of accessible parking spaces won't change.



## What trade-offs are we weighing as part of this design decision?

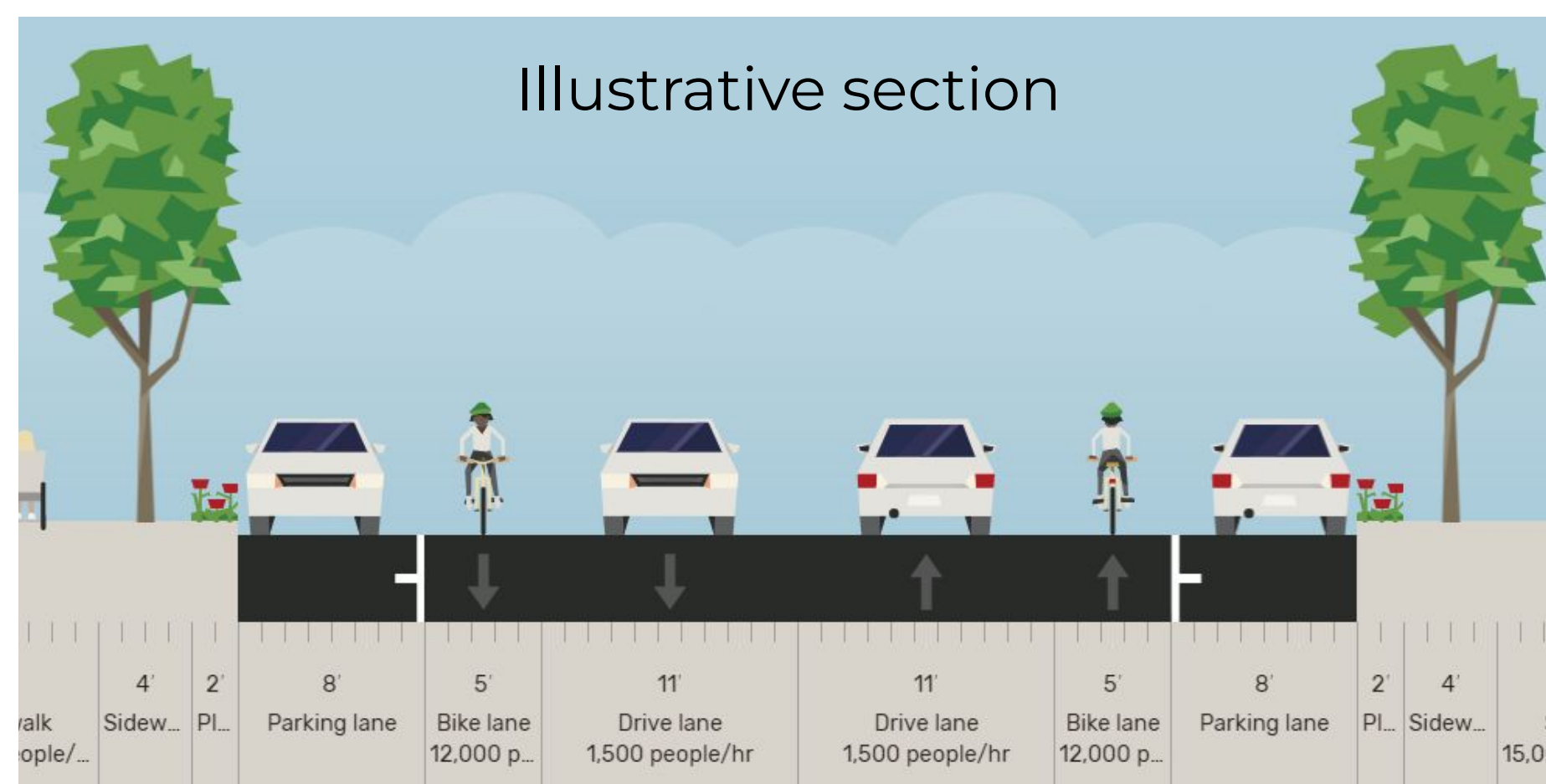
### Option A: No Bus Lanes, Maintain Parking on Cambridge Street

#### Pros

- Gives people more parking options
- Benefits 217 drivers with existing parking spaces - many parkers along this corridor stay for 3 hours or more

#### Cons

- Makes the bus slower and less reliable, as there is not enough room for bus lanes
- Prioritizes autos, which are the least space-efficient mode of transportation



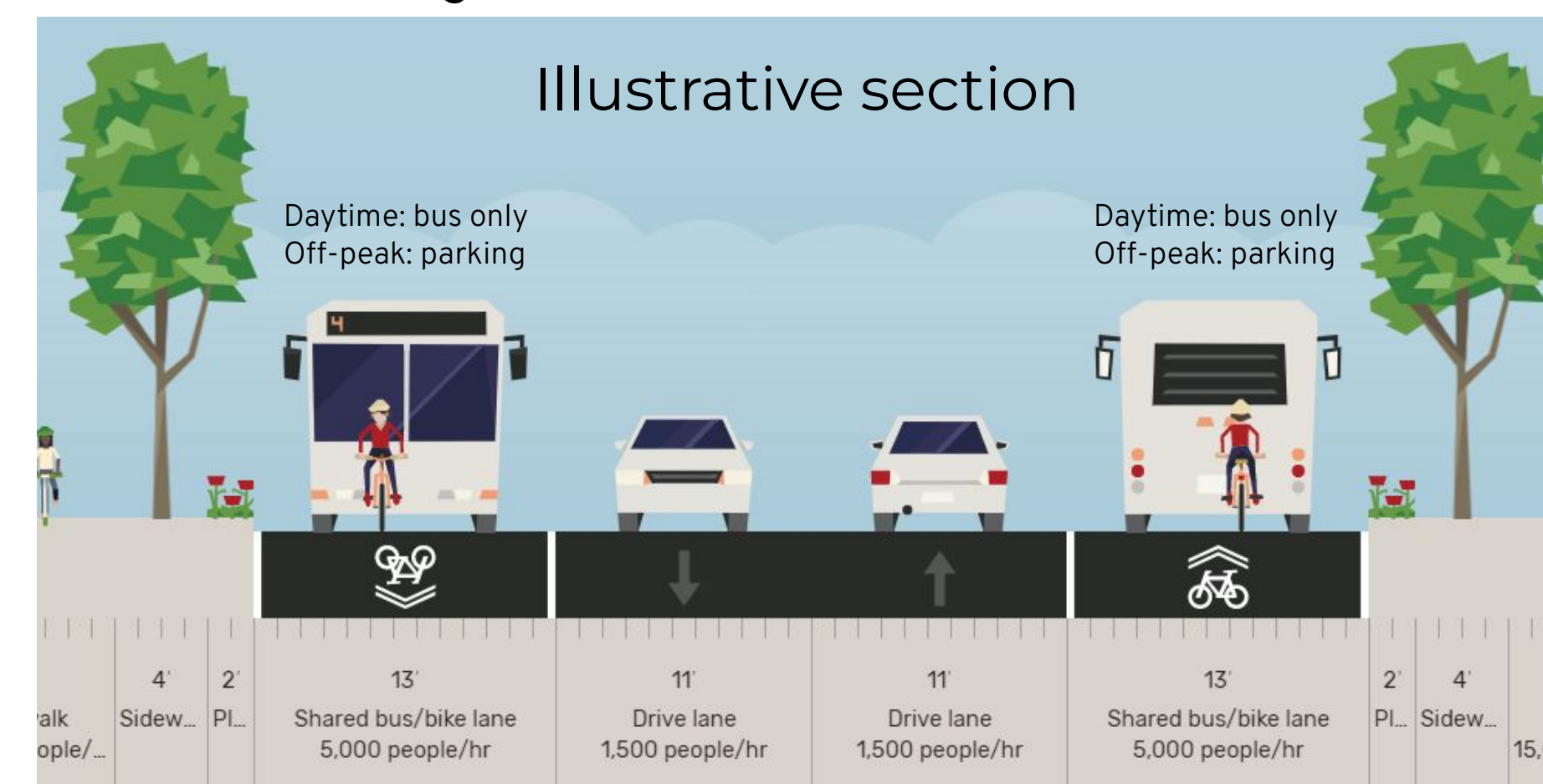
### Option B: Add Bus Lanes, Eliminate Parking on Cambridge Street

#### Pros

- Makes the bus faster and more reliable by adding bus lanes
- Prioritizes transit, which is the most space-efficient mode of transportation
- Benefits 4,725 bus riders each weekday

#### Cons

- Gives people driving fewer parking options





# Trade-Offs: Peak vs. 24-Hour Bus Lanes

## Peak-Hour Bus Lanes or 24-Hour Bus Lanes

- Bus lanes help buses filled with people move past traffic congestion
- Different bus lane types may work better in certain areas
- Each bus lane type can be combined with a bicycle lane

Peak hours are typically:

- **7AM to 9AM** (morning)
- **4PM to 7PM** (evening)

## Option A: Peak-Hour Bus Lanes

Bus lanes that are dedicated for buses during rush hour, and used for parking, driving, or loading all other times.

### Pros

- Makes bus service faster and more reliable when the most people are riding
- Allows people to use the lane for parking or driving when fewer people are riding the bus

### Cons

- People riding bus outside of peak hours get no benefit
- May be more likely to be violated
- More complicated to understand and enforce
- In off-peak hours, buses are forced into general traffic



## Option B: 24-Hour Bus Lanes

Bus lanes that are always dedicated to buses. Parking, loading, or driving is not allowed.

### Pros

- Makes bus service faster and more reliable all the time
- Less likely to be violated
- Easy to understand and enforce
- Gives bikes 24-hour mobility in a lower-stress environment

### Cons

- Parking and driving in the lane by vehicles other than buses is not allowed





# Access: Parking and Transit

People access businesses and homes on urban corridors in different ways. They walk, bike, ride transit, use cars, and take other modes of transportation. In busy urban areas, transit is the most efficient way to move people and provides the widest access.

## Access via Transit

A typical bus stop is about 450 square feet and can serve well over a hundred bus arrivals each day. A busy bus stop serves hundreds of people per day.

**Access to businesses:** In commercial areas, buses provide access for far more people than cars. In Oak Square, for example, the inbound bus stop in front of Dunkin' is used by about 250 people every day.

## Access via Street Parking

One parking space is about 130 square feet and it can only serve one vehicle at a time. When parking is unrestricted, it can serve a single car for many days.

**Access to businesses:** In commercial areas where people park for about an hour at a time (for example, to get lunch), a single parking spot supports about 12 cars per day, or approximately 12 customers.

**445** people  
boarding the bus

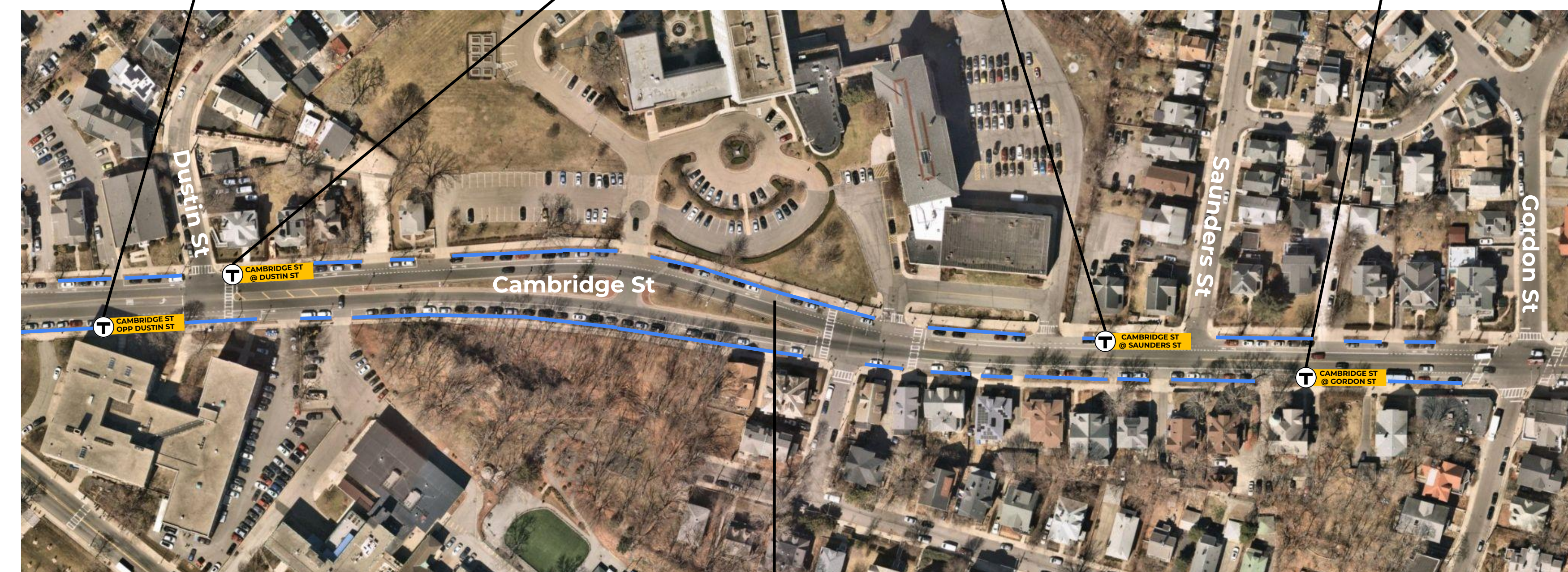
**4,616** people  
riding the bus

**Cambridge St opp Dustin St**  
Average weekday, all routes  
Daily Boardings: **268**  
Daily Alightings: **40**

**Cambridge St @ Dustin St**  
Average weekday, all routes  
Daily Boardings: **31**  
Daily Alightings: **296**

**Cambridge St @ Saunders St**  
Average weekday, all routes  
Daily Boardings: **37**  
Daily Alightings: **89**

**Cambridge St @ Gordon St**  
Average weekday, all routes  
Daily Boardings: **109**  
Daily Alightings: **30**

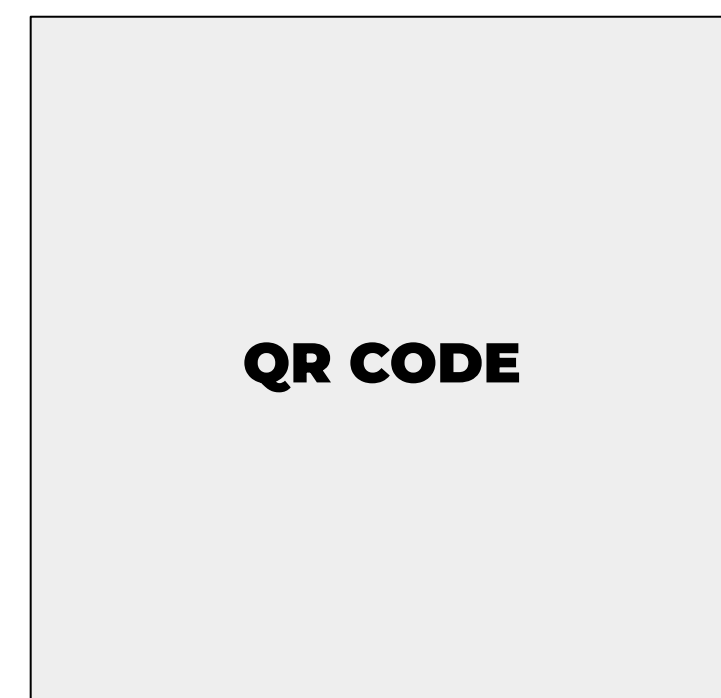


**106** parking spaces



# Outreach and Engagement

## How are we engaging the community during this project?



**Give us your  
feedback on the  
draft design!**

Survey link



Open Houses  
(in-person and virtual)

- Share findings and gather feedback on design



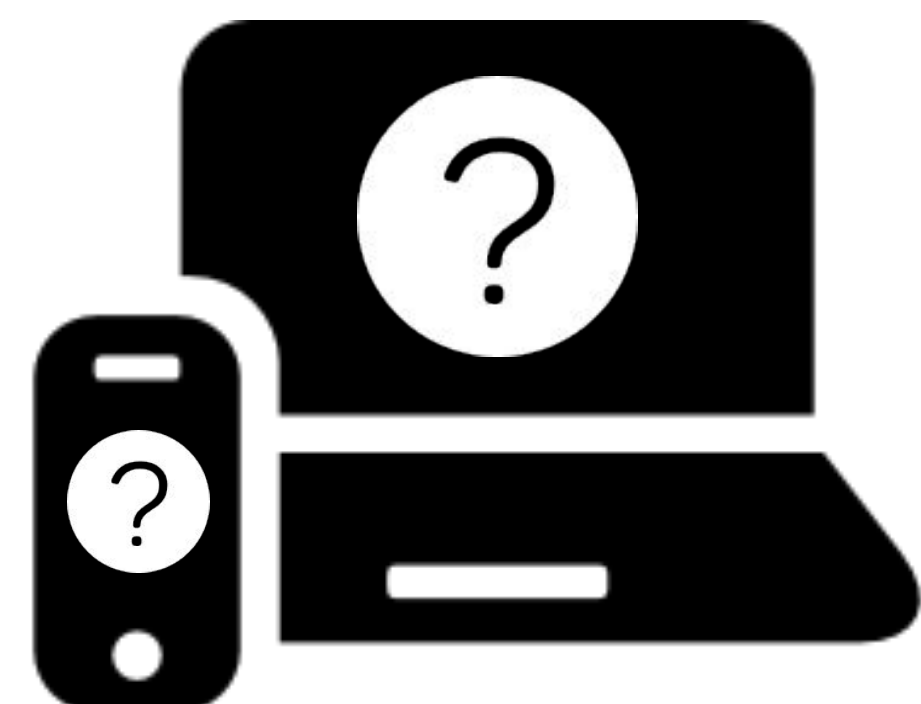
Neighborhood Pop-Ups

- Meet people where they are to discuss the project

[boston.gov/route-57](https://boston.gov/route-57)

Project Website

- Project documents, comment form, e-mail subscription



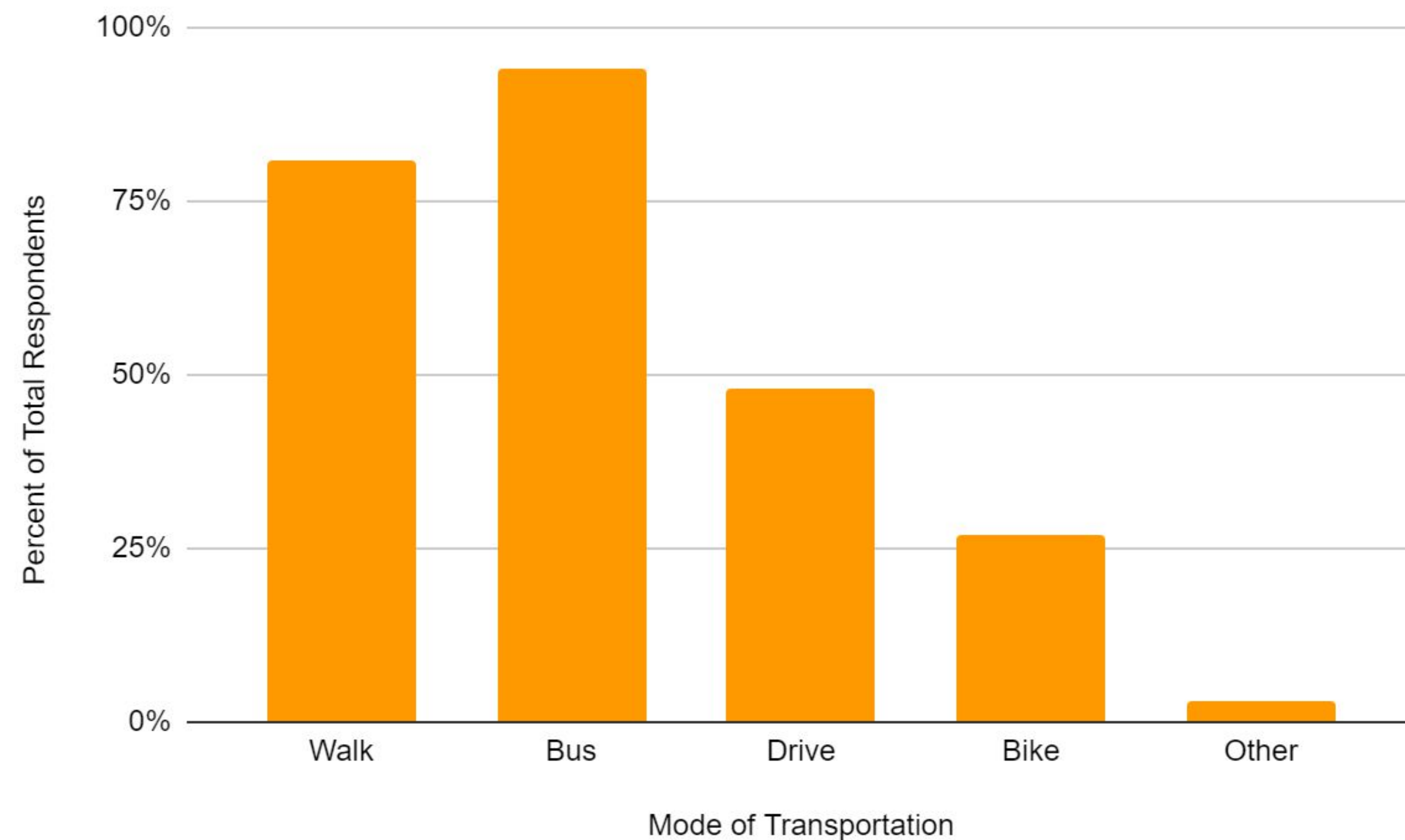
Stakeholder Briefings

- Meetings with community organizations



# What Are We Hearing?

## Who are we hearing from?



\*Source: Route 57 Transportation Corridor Pre-Design Feedback Form  
NB: Respondents were able to select multiple modes of travel and were able to respond more than once

## What have we heard so far?

### Current Challenges

- Double-parked cars (specifically delivery drivers) in bus lanes
- Bunching of buses leads to crowded and unreliable service
- Insufficient station amenities
- Lack of protected bike lanes
- Long, unsafe pedestrian crossings

### Hopes for the Future

- More reliable bus service
- Less chaotic roads and bus lanes
- Safer biking
- More pedestrian crosswalks
- Improved bus stations

“So many delays due to delivery and other vehicles stopped in the street”

“There will be 5 buses in the span of 10 minutes and then not another one for 30 minutes.”

“Being dependent on this bus route has become increasingly frustrating”