

Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor Project

Allston Civic
Association Briefing

June 21, 2023



City of Boston
Transportation



Agenda



WHO
is working on
this project?



WHY
are we
doing it?



WHAT
is the
project?



WHEN
is the
project
timeline?



HOW
can people
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*

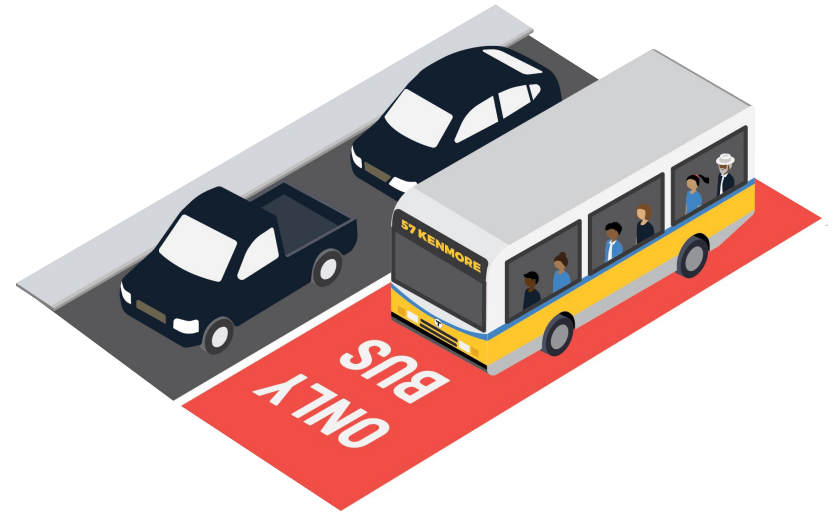
Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

Why are we doing this project?



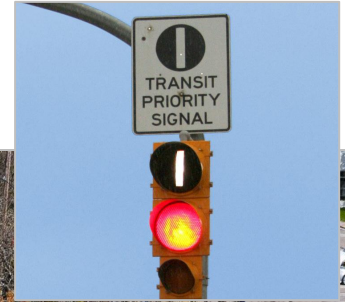
What is the Transit Priority Corridor Program?

- 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



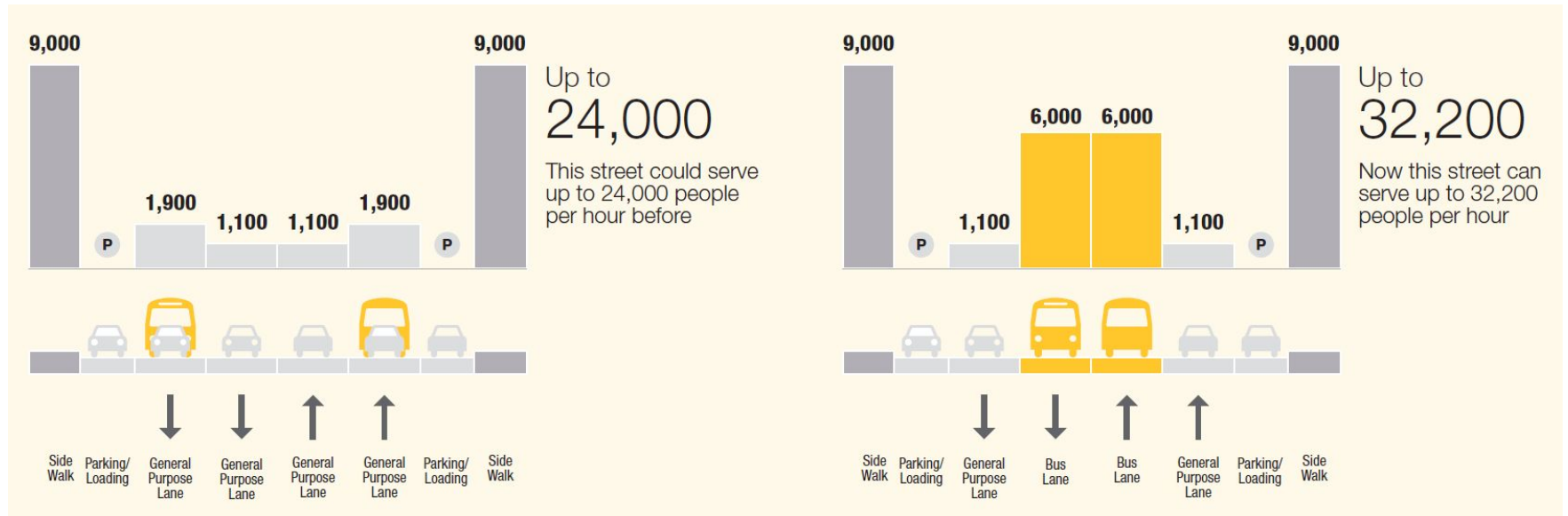
Why is the City of Boston Advancing Transit Priority?

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



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

Cross town

Oak Square to Comm Ave Rapid Bus

Create a rapid bus system to serve a large underserved neighborhood

Project Score

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

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 stranded dependent on not only on buses to get to work, others add to the congestion on those lanes creating driving to work because buses are a slower and less reliable option. Introducing rapid bus treatments on these prime routes will connect many thousands 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: RTD and Public Works with MassDOT
Time Frame: Weeks 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 cross-town service along 23rd Street in Manhattan.
www.mta.info/mta/planning/sbs

Public Input

*Traffic lights: Sequence the traffic signals. It gets really congested between Oak Square and Brighton Corner. Washington St is a small trail! -02185

Express bus: Between Oak Square and Cambridge (Kendall Square) there should be an express bus. The #84 meanders too much. -02185

*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! -02185

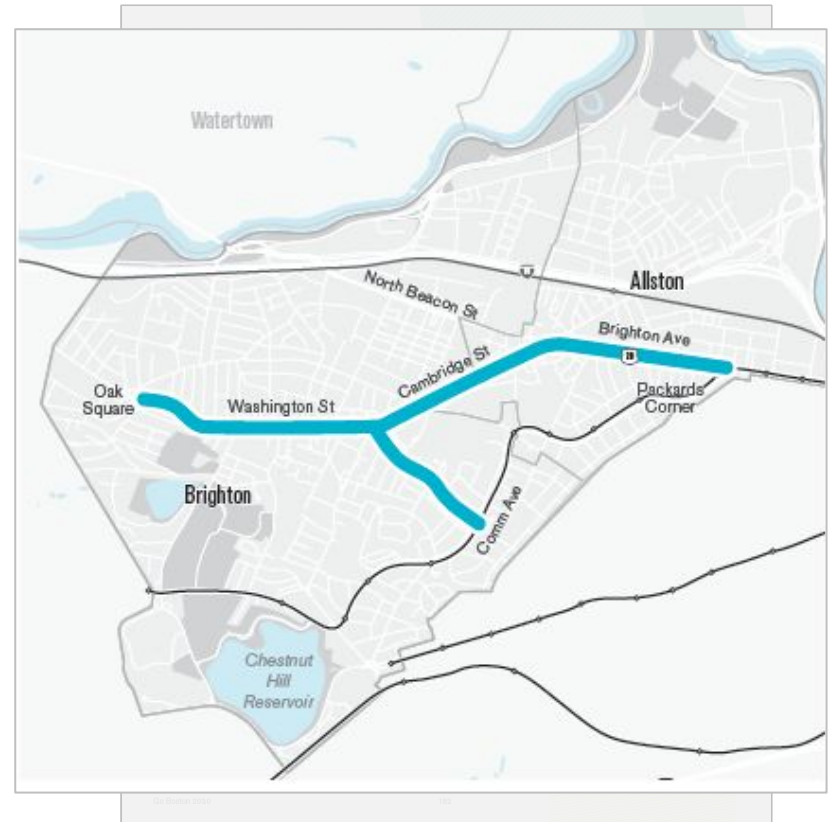
* Hart, N. and Belcher, J. (2016). Prioritization of Dedicated Bus Lanes. Retrieved from MassDOT. www.mass.gov/state-mv/Portals/49/Docs/BusLanes20160313%20.pdf

Go Boston 2030 182

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VISION People's Voice | 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 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 bus routes 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.

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 TTY 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)

Policy Score

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

Identified on the ballot as an Early Action commitment



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

Map source: mbta.com/about_the_mbta_program/default.asp?id=1947

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. www.mta.info/pressroom/bsr




Image Source: www.nyc.gov/html/brt/html/routes/94th-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."

Go Boston 2030 168

Where Did This Project Come From?

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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.

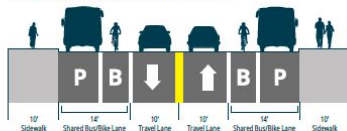
A parking utilization study along the entire corridor will precede and inform the implementation of the pilot bus priority corridor. Key considerations for the parking study will include the number of existing parking spaces (along the street as well as in adjacent public and private lots), parking occupancy 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



Existing Bus Stop


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

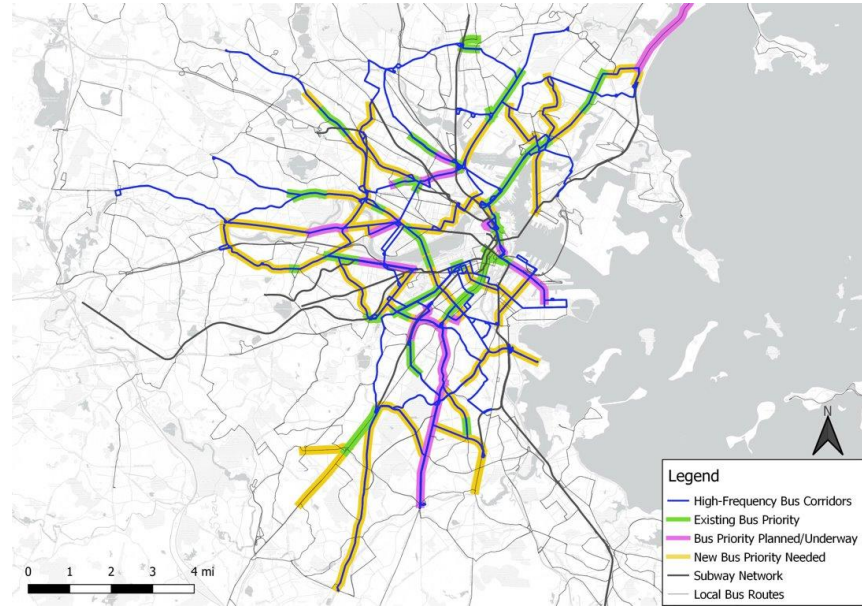
SECTION 6 | AREA-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

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



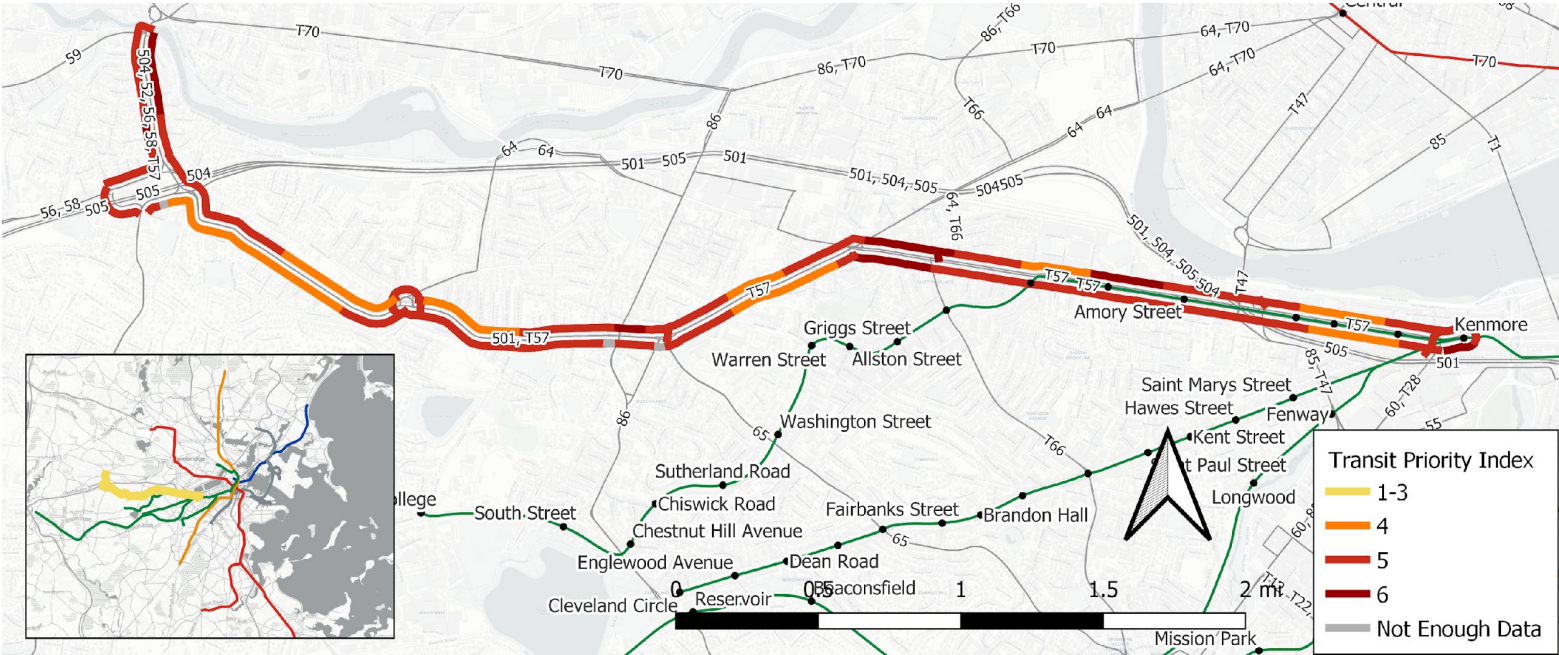
Source:
<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/2023-04/2023-04-18-bnrd-final-report-accessible.pdf>



MBTA's Bus Priority Plan - 26 Corridors Systemwide

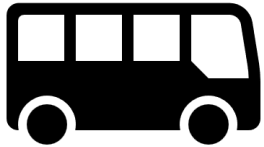
Working Closely with The MBTA

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



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Summary



Route 57 is a **high-ridership** bus route that directly serves thousands of daily riders in three municipalities



Route 57 encounters significant **delay**



Route 57 has considerable **access-to-transit issues:**

- Bus-stop failure
- Amenity improvements
- Bus-zone surfacing deficiencies

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.**
- This is the same amount of time it would take to drive from Boston to Los Angeles and back...seven times!
- In pre-pandemic conditions, delay was considerably higher.



Why is the City Of Boston Making Improvements?

Access can be challenging, especially for people with disabilities

- Bus zones are frequently occupied by non-bus vehicles, forcing riders to get on and off in unsafe places
- Some bus stops do not have needed amenities, such as shelters
- Road surfaces in bus zones are damaged and could be improved



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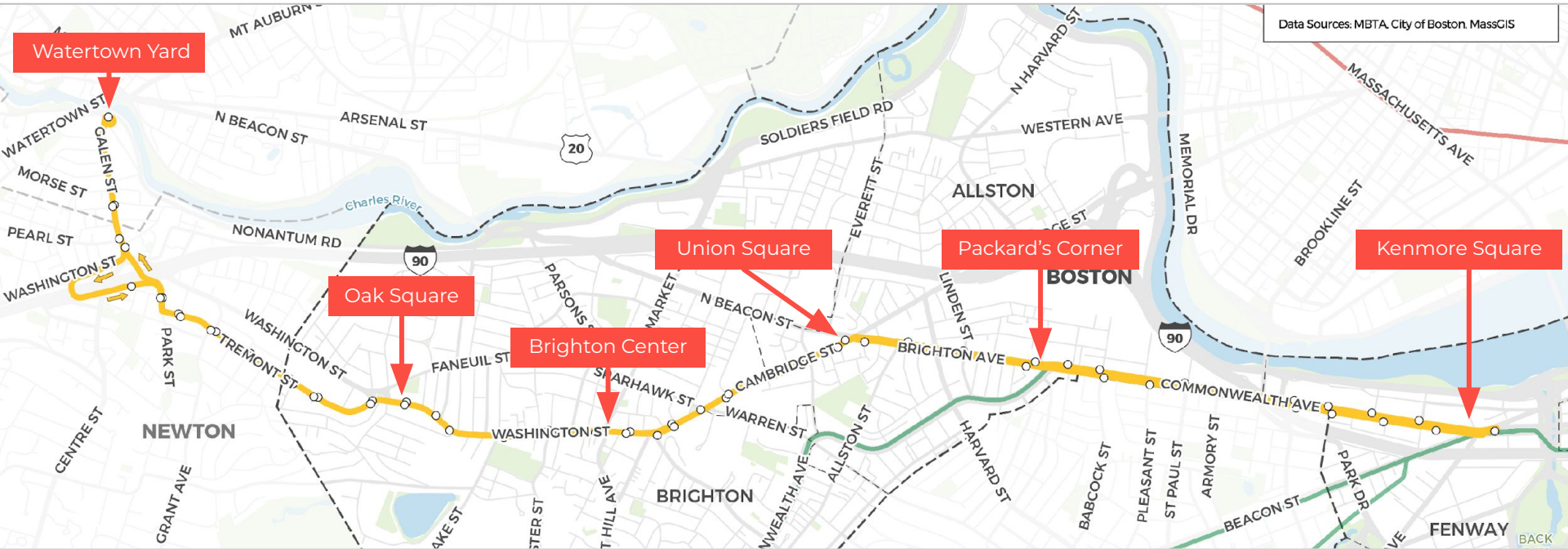
Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

What is the project?



Route 57 Project Corridor

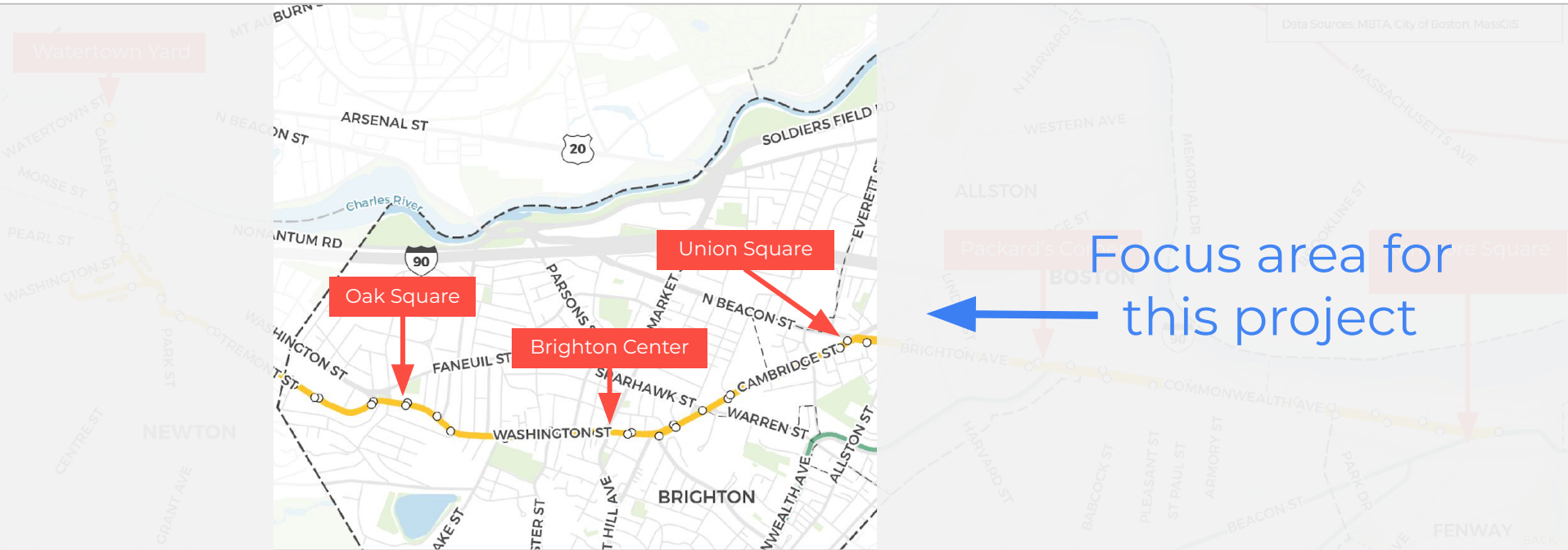
Full Route Alignment



Data Sources: MBTA, City of Boston, MassGIS

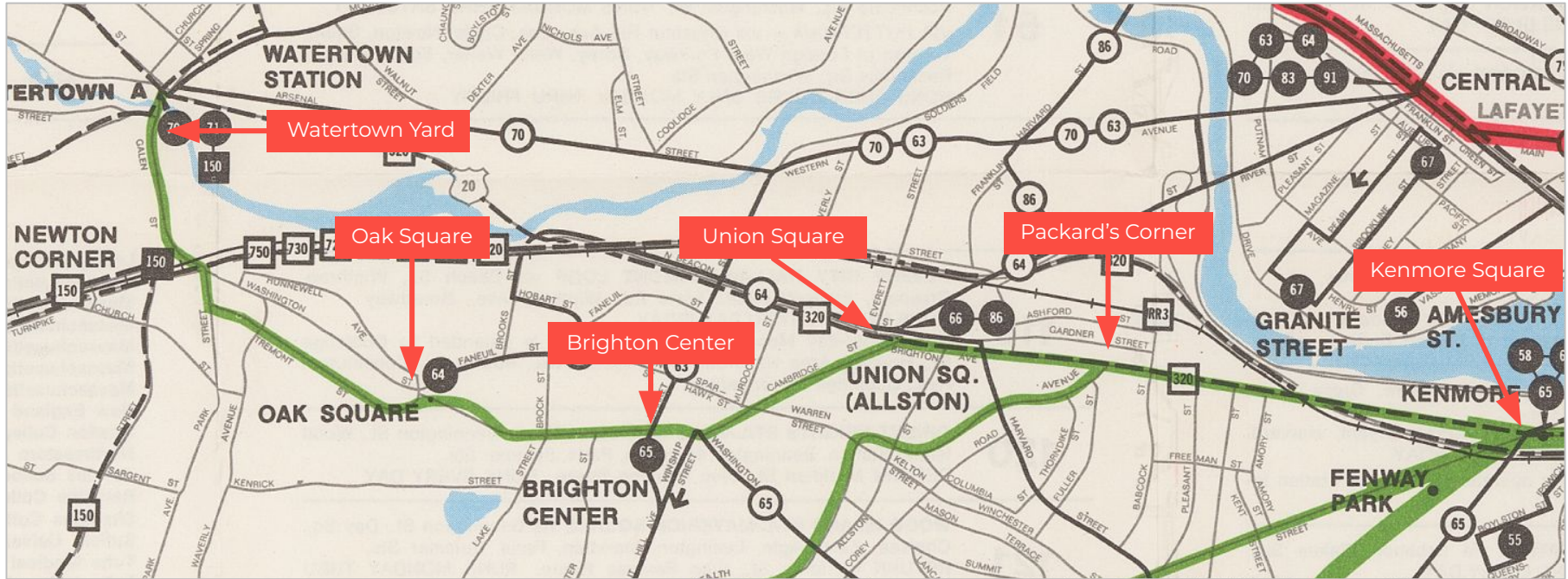
Route 57 Project Focus Area

Boston City Line to Union Square



Route 57 History

Former Green Line A Branch



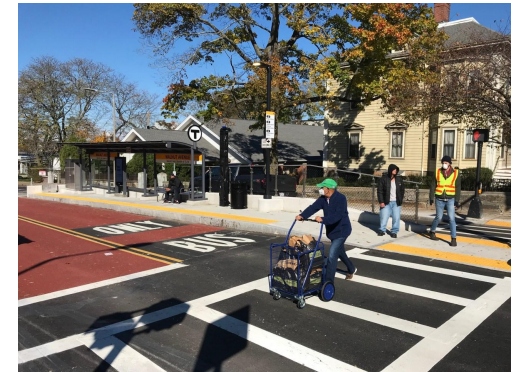
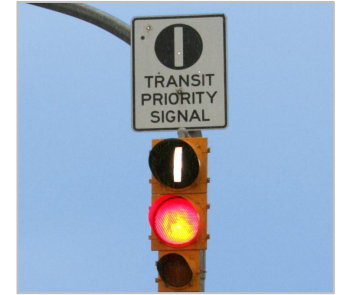
Source: MBTA 1967 System Map

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



Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

What is the project timeline?



Project Schedule (expected)

Input

Technical Work

WINTER '23

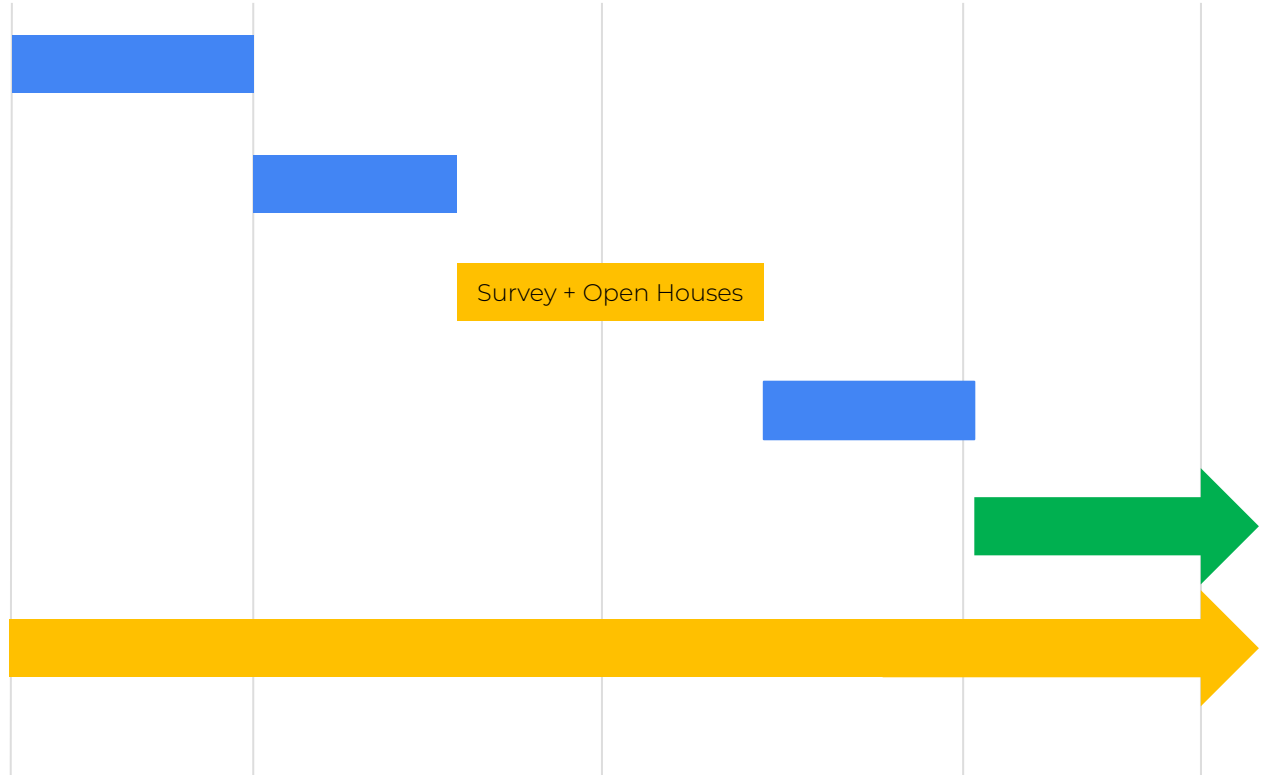
SPRING '23

SUMMER '23

FALL '23

WINTER '24

- Speed, Reliability & Access Report
- Draft Improvements
- Public Input on Improvements
- Revising Improvements
- Implementation
- Open Community Feedback



Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor

How can people provide feedback?



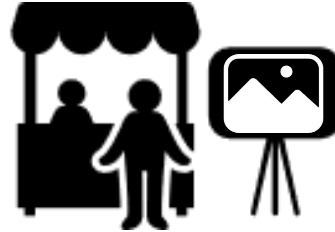
How Can People Provide Feedback?



Project
Website



Public
Survey



Open Houses
(in-person and virtual)



Stakeholder
Briefings

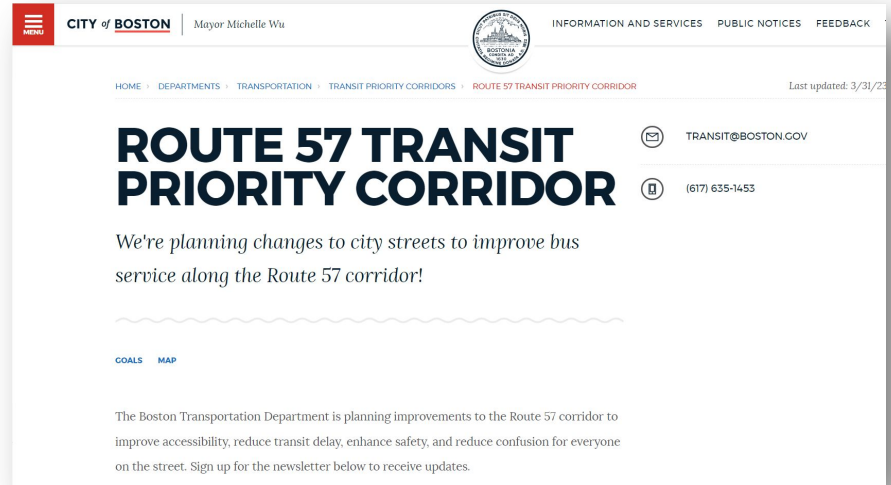
How Can People Provide Feedback?

Project Website

- Project resources
 - Background information
 - Project documents
 - Draft and final plans
- Subscribe for project updates
- Feedback form (coming soon)

boston.gov/route-57

Scan here! →



Thank you

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