

Local

Flexible Lanes Repurposed by Time of Day

Dynamic curb regulations that can adapt for greater transit or biking capacity when needed or convert to expanded sidewalk space off-peak

Policy Description

Roadways have different demands depending on the time of day and day of the week. Responding flexibly to their real use can allow for a single lane to efficiently serve different uses during peak and off-peak hours. Flexible lanes can become exclusive bus or bike lanes for part of the day or they can change direction for additional capacity depending on the primary direction of travel. Flexible lanes might provide space for evening or weekend expansion of sidewalk space with temporary cafes or parklets, or they can accommodate expanded loading zones during the week to discourage double-parking. With advances in technology, particularly the use of smartphone navigation and autonomous vehicles, more adaptive lane uses will be possible, and the flexibility to adjust for large scale events or detours will also be possible. Boston is already working with Streetparkd, to create the underlying electronic database of all curb regulations citywide. This databased, called BPARC (Boston Parking Atlas and Rules Census), will ultimately link to user apps and technologies that make it easier to find car parking, shared rides, bicycle parking, and more.

Policy Score

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

#7 in public voting

Benefits and Issues Addressed

Currently, lane assignments and directions are fixed, and these lanes can be filled to capacity or be completely under-utilized, depending on the time of day. With flexible lanes, and improved technology to communicate and enforce their use, parking lanes in business districts can accommodate food trucks and parklets at lunch; peak hour travel lanes can become walking and bicycling spaces on weekends along Boston’s parkways or downtown streets and waterfront boulevards; farmers markets can regularly flow-out on the street; or center travel lanes could switch their direction of travel to better move neighborhood commuters to their jobs. More parking can be provided overnight for residents and return to travel lanes during the day.

Implementation

Approximate Cost: Costs would be accommodated in BTD operating budget
Potential Funding Sources: BTD operating budget
Who’s responsible: BTD
Time Frame: Ongoing

Best Practices

In San Francisco, a collaboration between Lyft and the non-profit Livable City is piloting a program that works within ride-hailing apps to encourage pickups at safe locations. Moreover, these locations are separate from other modes. The user simply sees the new location on their app when they request a ride.

livablecity.org/Curb-The-Cluster/

In Seattle, WA, the City has implemented lanes that accommodate transit during peak hours of the day, as recommended in the NACTO design guide. The City has nicknamed these “BAT lanes” (Business Access and Transit) and they are currently pursuing additional corridors.

nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/transit-lanes-transitways/transit-lanes/peak-bus-lane/

www.seattle.gov/transportation/aurora_rapidride_BAT.htm



Seattle allows only buses and bicycles to travel on certain streets during peak times.

Public Input

“Open up new routes for high traffic areas. Different let out times for workers”

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