

GENERAL

What is the budget for this project?

- ▶ Mayor Martin J. Walsh included this project in his proposed Capital Plan for this fiscal year upon the recommendation of Chief of Streets Chris Osgood and Acting Transportation Commissioner Gregory Rooney. The corridor was prioritized based on safety, equity, and inclusion in our planning efforts, such as Go Boston 2030 and the Franklin Park Action Plan. The budget was reviewed by Boston City Council through the spring of 2020 and adopted as of July 1. The project is included in the budget line “Strategic Bike Network.”
- ▶ We are confident that meaningful change can happen with quick-build solutions, better bus stops, modifications to signal timing, and new curb ramps.

What is the timeline for this project?

- ▶ With the support of the neighboring community, we can begin work this fall to calm speeds and create a more comfortable biking and walking experience. Some of the necessary changes, like improving bus stops, will take longer because they require additional engineering and construction. These changes will be phased in during the coming years.

What will the parking impacts be?

- ▶ Our design balances existing parking with providing a safe bike lane that is separated from traffic. Many of the homes and businesses on American Legion have off-street parking available via driveways and parking lots.
- ▶ In some places, yes the parking will be restricted. We aim to retain as much of the used on-street parking as possible. We are working on key segments to address parking concerns lifted up during our community meetings.
- ▶ In general:
 - From Cummins to Mt Hope, we are able to retain most of the existing on-street parking.
 - Between Mt Hope and Walk Hill, we are retaining some on-street parking near the Haley Pilot School.
 - In the area between Franklin Hill Ave and Blue Hill Ave, we are retaining all parking in the northbound direction. In the southbound direction, we are creating all-day parking for 23 vehicles, including 5 spaces that are van-accessible.

Can the City change the name of American Legion Highway to something other than “Highway”?

- ▶ More so than what the street is called, its design allows and even encourages fast driving. With this project, we are focused on using design tools to better control

speeds and improve safety and comfort for people who are walking, bicycling, and waiting for the bus.

- ▶ A coordinated group of neighbors may petition the Public Improvement Commission for a name change. Information on this process can be found at: boston.gov/public-improvement-commission

How will you assess the outcomes of this project?

- ▶ We are using every tool available to us at this time to improve safety and slow speeds. These tools are backed by significant research, and should have a positive impact on safety. We will also be looking at qualitative results from these interventions. For example, do people feel more comfortable waiting for the bus? Do people who live along the corridor feel safer crossing the street?

How does this design plan support the City's climate goals?

- ▶ Go Boston 2030, our citywide transportation plan, was guided by a commitment to climate resiliency, equity, and economic opportunity. Our current project on American Legion stems, in part, from that Go Boston 2030 plan.
 - You can learn more about Go Boston 2030 online: boston.gov/go-boston-2030
- ▶ Improving walking and biking is one of the strategies within our *Climate Action Plan*. We are working to make sidewalks and bike lanes more comfortable for more people, from children to our elders.
 - You can read our Climate Action Plan update online: boston.gov/departments/environment/boston-climate-action

SPEEDING

How can this design reduce drag racing? What can you do to stop the drag racing on American Legion?

- ▶ Drag racing is a common activity in multiple Boston neighborhoods from Back Bay to Mattapan. We have looked at strategies used in other cities in the U.S. as well as possible lessons from other streets in Boston. Unfortunately, our tools are limited -- and a lot of the weight lands on the shoulders of the Boston Police here, as it does in other cities in the country.
- ▶ Drag racing is both easy and prominent where there are long stretches of uninterrupted two or more lane travels. Our plan reduces travel lanes wherever possible. This has the twofold effect of disallowing any side by side racing as well as allowing vehicles traveling at the speed limit to set the speed for others on the corridor.
- ▶ Our speed data indicate that dangerous speeding happens **all day**. While our tools to address drag racing may be limited, our design tools should significantly lower speeds during the hours when people are walking to the park, visiting shops, and bringing their kids to school.

Can you install speed humps on American Legion?

- ▶ Speed humps are not the appropriate engineering tool for the scale of this street. American Legion carries between 25,000 and 29,000 vehicles per day. This volume of daily traffic would destroy any raised device we use.
- ▶ Speed humps are only installed as a repetitive series on local, small streets in Boston. We will be installing speed humps on streets in Mt. Hope/Canterbury neighborhood as part of Neighborhood Slow Streets program.

Can you install more speed limit signs along American Legion? What about speed feedback signs?

- ▶ We will not post new speed limit signs in the near term. If we implement the proposed design changes, we will be able to conduct new speed studies with the new conditions. We would submit those speed studies to the State Department of Transportation. If speeds have been reduced enough, we will be able to change the speed limit.
- ▶ We can evaluate potential locations for speed feedback signs at a later date. These signs can be effective in reducing high-end speeding. However, the speeding issues on American Legion are unlikely to be significantly altered with these signs.
 - We also want to be careful on this corridor. Sometimes, these signs have the opposite effect: some drivers speed up to “beat” the sign.

When did you conduct your speed study?

- ▶ The speed studies were conducted on Tuesday, April 30 and Wednesday May 1 in 2019.

What is the highest speed that was recorded during your day/night measurements?

- ▶ We captured a few people -- 2 to 3 depending on the section of the corridor -- who were traveling between 75 and 80 mph. **More importantly**, we see very high percentages of people traveling faster than 35 mph, which drastically increases the likelihood of severe injury or death.

Were any tickets issued for speeding violations during your counts?

- ▶ We do not have access to BPD's database of violations, but they are active on the corridor to deter drag racing.

BIKES

How will this design make it safer to enter and exit driveways of apartment buildings, shopping malls, and schools? Won't bikes make it more dangerous?

- ▶ Generally throughout the project we are narrowing travel lanes to help the corridor move at safer speeds; this will make it easier to enter and exit driveways with less conflict. Drivers will also need to turn more slowly, which means they will have more time to see and react to people in the crosswalk and to bicyclists.
- ▶ Providing space for bicycling that is separate from both motorists and from pedestrians makes streets safer for everyone.

Don't bike lanes make turning more dangerous if there was a visibility issue caused by parked vehicles?

- ▶ Our design takes this into account and restricts parking that is close to a driveway or turn, allowing higher visibility that was existing previously.
- ▶ When we design separated bike lanes, we often are able to introduce "offset intersections" -- this design forces a slower speed turn and allows the driver to better see people biking and crossing the street.

How do you do street cleaning and snow removal with bike lanes and flex posts?

- ▶ We own smaller street sweepers and plows that we use in our bike lanes. We work carefully to ensure our designs match the requirements of our Public Works teams and their equipment.
- ▶ We will monitor flex post damage through the winter and beyond. We will purchase extras to replace those that are damaged. We also can explore more durable materials.

What type of "protection" do you anticipate for the protected bike lanes?

- ▶ We are using flex posts on modular plastic bases. We have found that this holds up better than our standard single post. We can look into other tools, pending concurrence on the project design from the community and our observations of how things go in the field.
- ▶ We will monitor flex post damage through the winter and beyond. We will purchase extras to replace those that are damaged. We also can explore more durable materials.

Why aren't there protected bike lanes the entire length of the corridor?

- ▶ Today, there are no protected bike lanes on the corridor. The existing bike lanes are intermittent and high-stress. With this project, we propose added separated bike lanes for almost the entirety of the corridor. Without major construction, we do not have the space within the existing curb-to-curb to provide buffers and physical barriers in these locations:

- 150' South of Canterbury/Kingbird Intersection heading southbound.
- 225' Southbound on ALH approaching Cummins Highway
- ▶ More than 97% of the total 2.2 mile corridor will have protected bike lanes.

Explain why the northbound bike lane ends at Franklin Hill Ave.

- ▶ One of our project goals is to enhance American Legion’s role in connecting communities and open spaces across Mattapan, Roslindale, Dorchester, and beyond. By directing northbound cyclists into a two-way bike lane on the west side of American Legion, we can create a direct route into Franklin Park for people on bikes. Via Circuit Drive, people can reach Morton St, which brings them to the Arboretum and to the Southwest Corridor.
- ▶ We can revisit the northbound connection as part of the community conversation for the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan.

WALKING

How does this design improve the experience of the pedestrian? Can we add more shade? Can we add more lighting?

- ▶ We are adjusting signals to provide more time for pedestrian crossings, based on our current guidance for signalized intersections.
- ▶ We are looking to add at least two new crosswalks in places you have asked for them: near the Circuit Drive entrance on American Legion and by Stella Road. We can study additional locations for new crosswalks.
- ▶ We are also refreshing crosswalks where possible to make the crossings more visible.
- ▶ Creating separated bike lanes will help to increase the distance between traveling vehicles and sidewalks. Reducing the width of the travel lanes, and the total number of travel lanes in some places, will help reduce speeds. Slower speeds should produce less noise.
- ▶ We will review the current street lighting with our Public Works Department to ensure it meets their standards.
- ▶ Adding more trees is outside the scope of this project, although we can make requests to the Parks Department.

The sidewalks are broken and uneven, can you fix them with this project?

- ▶ Sidewalk problems should be reported to 311. If they can be fixed easily, the Public Works Department will send a crew. If more extensive work is needed, the condition is noted and evaluated for the annual sidewalk reconstruction program.
- ▶ We are prioritizing fast implementation of safety interventions. Sidewalk reconstruction is expensive and would take several years. We will review locations in need of critical accessibility improvements and program those for construction in future years.

Can the streets and sidewalks be cleaned more frequently? There is broken glass and litter everywhere.

- ▶ Our Public Works Department regularly sweeps the roadway, but does not clean sidewalks routinely. Please report all incidents of broken glass or litter to 311. A crew will be sent to the location to clean up.

Regarding extending the signal crossing times, are the ped signals currently concurrent or exclusive, and are there No Turn on Red restrictions to avoid conflicts? And what changes would be contemplated?

- ▶ We do not plan to change the existing walk signal phasing from how current conditions operate. As a quick reminder:
 - Exclusive Walk signals generally mean pedestrians must wait the longest amount of time before crossing, but all drivers in all directions have a red light.
 - Concurrent Walk signals generally mean pedestrians are not waiting nearly so long to be able to cross, but that some drivers have a green light that allows them to turn while the Walk signal is on.
- ▶ Pedestrian crosswalks are phased as follows:
 - Franklin Hill Ave - exclusive walk
 - Canterbury/Kingbird - concurrent walk
 - Walk Hill - exclusive walk
 - Canterbury - exclusive walk
 - Mt Hope - concurrent walk
- ▶ We will make crossing times longer, compliant with the latest guidance.
- ▶ While out in the field, we did not see No Turn on Red signs at many of the signalized intersections. BTM generally includes those turn restrictions (and accompanying signs) at intersections with exclusive pedestrian phases. We will bring this item back up with our Signals Team to incorporate within the analyses.

VEHICLE TRAFFIC

Will this change to American Legion make traffic worse on other streets? How can you prevent people from cutting through neighborhood streets?

- ▶ The changes we are proposing are designed to accommodate the current volume of traffic (varies between 25,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day). We anticipate most drivers will experience minor additional delays at traffic signals. The total time to travel the corridor will also go up slightly because more people will be driving at or below the speed limit -- a positive outcome!
- ▶ We do not implement tools to prevent people from driving on certain public streets.
- ▶ American Legion serves a unique connection within Boston's street network, so it is unlikely that drivers will divert to other corridors.
 - With the coming speed humps and other safety improvements on Canterbury and within the Mt Hope/Canterbury neighborhood, we expect

those routes will be unattractive to people looking to save a few seconds of travel.

- ▶ We're working on implementing designs for 15 Neighborhood Slow Streets zones, representing more than 40 miles of streets in the City, including the Mt Hope/Canterbury neighborhood. Our construction was delayed this summer, but we continue to work with the contractor to press for progress this year.

Is it really necessary to maintain four lanes of traffic on ALH?

- ▶ Yes. American Legion carries between 25,000 and 30k,000 vehicles every day. We are reducing the number of lanes where we can. With volumes this high, we see extremely long queues at signalized intersections if there is only one lane for drivers to line up.

How will the proposed new turn-restrictions be enforced?

- ▶ We will look to close some breaks in the median, either fully or partially. Partial closures will continue to allow turns but will better manage them by slowing drivers. In some places, we may look to completely close a median break to prevent all turns. We will be judicious in full closures, as we don't want to unnecessarily limit access if there are no safety benefits.

Are there any plans to improve driver safety at the entrance ramp to ALH from Morton St. (traveling east on Morton)?

- ▶ Yes, drivers turning left onto or off of Morton Street will now only have to cross one lane of traffic and a bike lane to make their turn, greatly increasing safety. Drivers turning right onto or off of Morton Street will only have to cross a single bike lane into a single lane of traffic, marginally increasing safety. In addition changes to geometry, via striping and flexposts, will both shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians as well as slow turning vehicles so they cannot turn onto Morton Street at such high speeds.

TRANSIT/BUS

Can you improve the bus service on American Legion?

- ▶ The MBTA makes decisions regarding service levels on its bus lines. In response to the public health crisis, the MBTA has made changes to manage crowding, provide reliable service, and cut back on some routes that do not have enduring ridership. The 14 will operate at the same frequency this fall as it did before the pandemic. Some routes that serve Blue Hill Avenue and Seaver Street will be running more frequently.
- ▶ While the City does not decide bus frequency, we will work with the MBTA to modify bus stops along American Legion. We will make sure the bus stops are in the best place for bus service and for waiting passengers. We will build concrete pads to improve accessibility for people using wheelchairs and other mobility devices. We

are looking into purchasing benches so that bus passengers have a more comfortable wait.

ADDITIONS TO THE PROJECT SCOPE

There is a brook that runs along American Legion and is covered up, can it be uncovered and enhanced?

- ▶ Daylighting waterways is an aspirational vision, but one that is far beyond what we can do with this project. It would require a multi-decade process involving many agencies at various levels of governance. It would also require a significant monetary investment, far beyond BTD's capital budget.

Are you going to fix the intersection at American Legion/Cummins/Canterbury?

- ▶ Making changes to this intersection will require complete reconstruction of the intersection, including all the islands, the sidewalks, and the signal infrastructure. This level of effort is beyond what we are focused on with our project. It is possible that in future years, this intersection would be prioritized through our annual capital budget development process.
- ▶ We are working to provide bike connections to the east via Cummins, which means some changes for bike connectivity will be included -- largely via pavement markings and signage only.

Why isn't American Legion between Cummins and Hyde Park Ave included in this study and design plan?

- ▶ We are focused on the sections of American Legion that are in the Citywide high-crash network. This includes segments north of Cummins and along the Franklin Park edge. These sections were also identified as higher priority for Better Bike Lanes in Go Boston 2030 and as a barrier to accessing Franklin Park.
 - You can view the high-crash maps online: boston.gov/vision-zero
- ▶ We can always investigate addressing this segment in the future. We evaluate potential projects every year when developing a proposed Capital Budget.

Why aren't you also doing work on Walk Hill Street?

- ▶ We evaluate streets every year for inclusion in the Capital Budget. Walk Hill is not currently in our Capital plan.

Will the Cummins Hwy protected bike lanes be extended from Harvard St to American Legion?

- ▶ Yes, we are working on design plans to complete this part of the bike network.

Can we plant more trees and/or introduce bioswales? Can the sidewalks be wider?

- ▶ At this point, we do not have plans to add additional greenery along the corridor. We also do not have the funds for major sidewalk work. We can advocate for those to be added to future capital budgets.

MEETING QUESTIONS

Will our questions be archived and publicly posted?

- ▶ This meeting is being recorded and will be available after we transcribe it and add closed captioning. We will post a summary of this discussion and answer any questions we could not get to within the hour available for the meeting.

Why is this meeting set up so attendees can't see each other's questions?

- ▶ This is a standard virtual meeting practice. This allows us to monitor the questions for inappropriate material. We are reading as many questions aloud as we can, and we will share summaries online.

When will this presentation be available online?

- ▶ We aim to have the presentation materials online this month. We must transcribe the meeting and add closed captioning before we can post the video. We will post other relevant material, including responses to questions, the presentation files, and additional handouts online sooner.

LIVABLESTREETS ALLIANCE SURVEY

How was this survey conducted?

- ▶ LivableStreets hired several of your neighbors to be Street Ambassadors and administer surveys in person and online over a six week period between July and September of 2020. They also talked with neighbors about their experiences and collected stories.

How many people responded in total?

- ▶ 459

How many people who responded live in the neighborhood?

- ▶ The majority of replies were from residents in the neighborhoods near American Legion. Some of the responses to the questions “Where do you live?” included zip codes while others had full addresses, a neighborhood name, or a street. This makes it very difficult to provide an accurate answer. However, of all the people that responded to the question “Where do you live?” (430) and left their zip code *only 11 were not from neighborhoods around American Legion.*