



Copley Square Bus Stop & Saint James Ave Bus Lane

Project Snapshot & Update

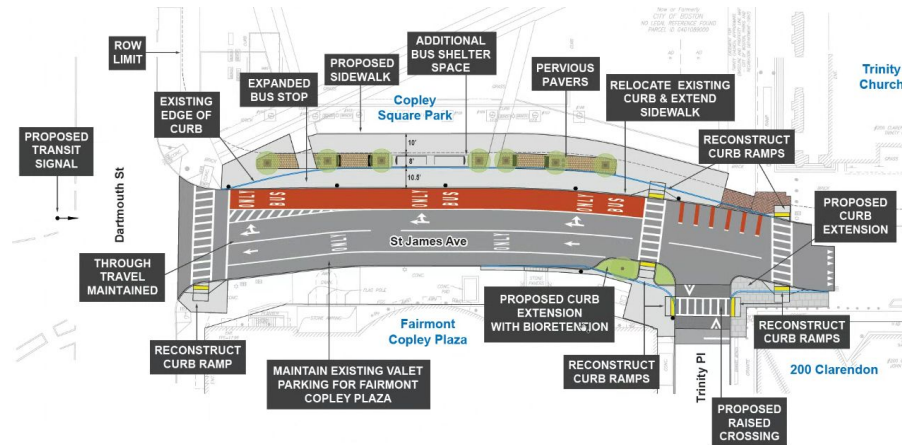
February 2025



Project Summary

The Copley Square Bus Stop and Saint James Ave Bus Lane are a two part project.

- **Bus lanes on Saint James Avenue** that facilitate movements for six (6) MBTA bus routes, installed in November 2023.
- **Bus stop improvements at Copley Square** that both complement the Copley Square Park Project, provide a dignified waiting space for passengers, and improve operations for MBTA services with construction anticipated in 2025.



Project Summary

Transit Data

- The Copley Square Bus Stop (Saint James Ave @ Dartmouth St) is the **7th busiest bus stop in the MBTA system**, with over 1,700 people boarding the bus every weekday. Currently, this bus stop serves one to two buses at a time, with up to seventy (70) buses during AM and PM peak service periods.
- In total, the bus lane on Saint James Ave directly serves 2,600. The bus lanes on Saint James Ave **save 44 seconds for an average bus trip and 94 seconds for peak period bus trips** based on MBTA data.
 - This time savings equates to 32 hours per day in rider savings - for comparison, this is equivalent to driving from Boston to Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- The six (6) bus routes serve a cumulative **26,000 daily riders**, making the time savings in this location even more impactful for bus route reliability across Boston.

Traffic Data

- Comparing overall vehicle delay before/after the bus lanes were installed, drivers have seen a minimal change to trip times. According to INRIX data, average delay per vehicle increased by 2 seconds at the intersection of Saint James Ave and Clarendon Street.

Project Summary

Project Partnerships

- We have partnered with the Boston Parks Department and MBTA to design improvements that align with the Copley Square Parks Project, with construction anticipated to begin in 2025.
- Close collaboration with the MBTA was an important part of the project. The MBTA took charge of construction responsibilities for the St. James Bus Lane, and was heavily involved in the design process of the Copley Square Bus Stop. **The MBTA has contributed a total of \$647,520 towards design and construction of the St. James Bus Lane and Copley Square Bus Stop.**
- We have engaged key stakeholders, including the Back Bay Association, Boston Properties (owners of 200 Clarendon Street), and Fairmount Copley Hotel, receiving generally positive feedback on the initiative.

Overview

- **What** is this project?
- **Why** is the project needed?
- **Who** does this serve?
- **Timeline** for this project
- **How** is the project paid for?
- **What** are the outcomes to-date? What are next steps?



A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a white bus with yellow accents is driving towards the camera. The bus has "10 CITY POINT" displayed on its front destination sign and the number "1836" on its front bumper. To the left of the bus, there is a pile of dirt and a sign that reads "MAYOR'S YOUTH SUMMIT". The background features a mix of architectural styles, including a large, ornate brick building on the left and modern glass skyscrapers on the right. Several cars are visible on the street, and American flags are flying from poles. The sky is overcast.

What's this project?

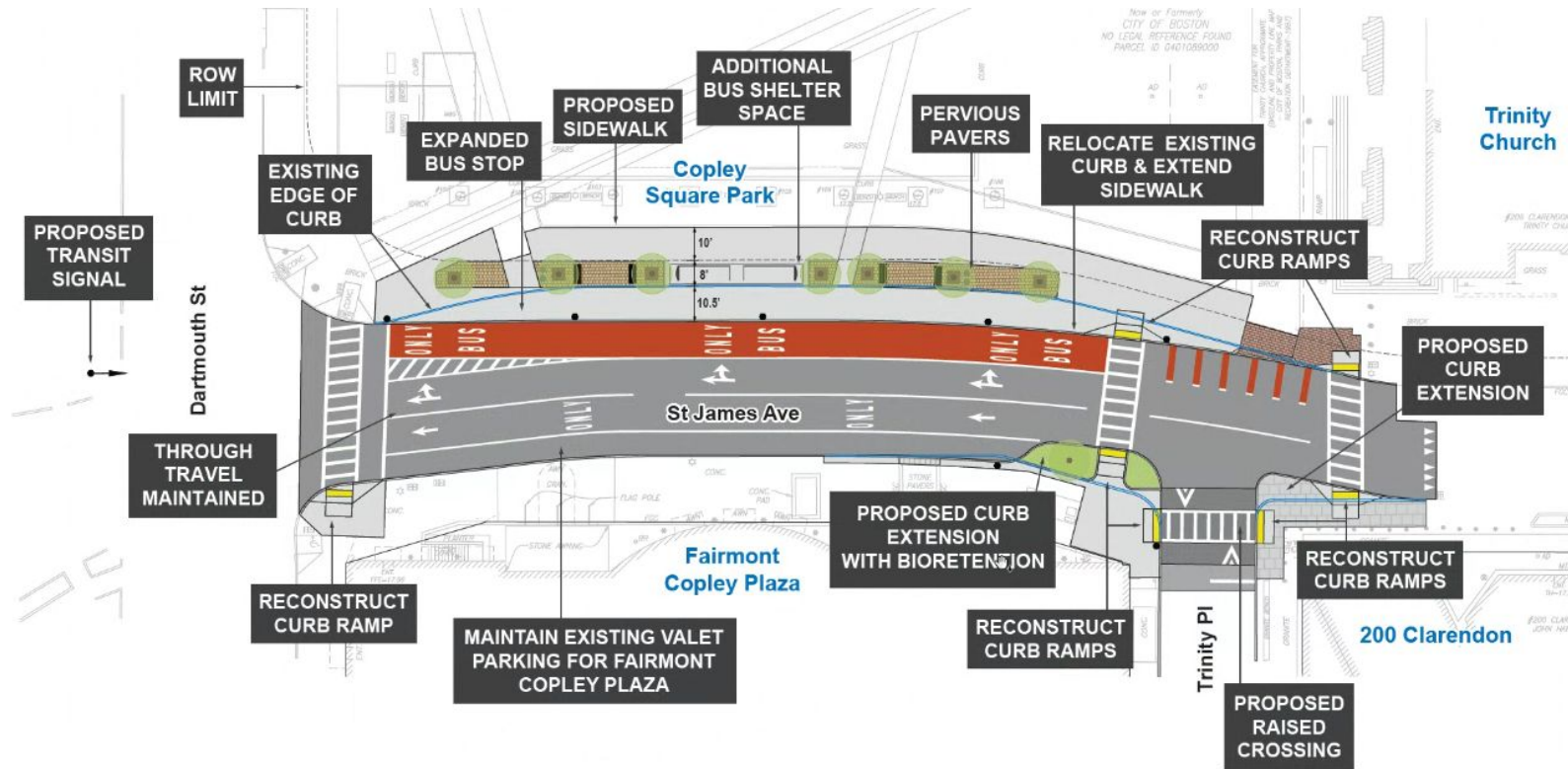
B

What are the project goals?

Project Goals:

- We are working to **complement the Copley Square Park Project** by ensuring that bus operations seamlessly integrate with Parks Department improvements, enhancing accessibility and multimodal connectivity.
- We are committed to **maintaining efficient bus operations** by preserving Saint James Avenue as a critical space for frequent bus service, preventing service disruptions and supporting reliable transit for thousands of daily riders.
- We are enhancing the **passenger experience at the Copley Square (Saint James Ave. @ Dartmouth)** bus stop with MBTA-funded improvements, including expanded waiting areas, additional shelters, accessible landings, and increased greenery to create a safer, more comfortable environment as riders wait for the bus
- We are prioritizing **equity and accessibility** by recognizing that most bus riders in this corridor do not have access to personal vehicles and rely on transit for work, school, and daily needs, ensuring our investments support transit-dependent communities.

Design Plan



A photograph of a city street during the day. On the left, a white bus with yellow accents is stopped, displaying '10 CITY POINT' on its destination sign and the number '1836' on its front. To the left of the bus is a large, ornate brick building with many arched windows. In the background, several tall city buildings are visible, including one with an American flag. On the right side of the street, there are more cars, including a white SUV and a silver sedan, and a building with classical columns and multiple American flags. The street is wet, suggesting recent rain. The overall scene depicts a busy urban environment.

Why is this project needed?

B

Accessibility and Safety

Enhancing Accessibility and Safety at the Copley Square Bus Stop

We have **designed this project with accessibility at its core**, ensuring that transit riders, pedestrians, and all street users can move safely and efficiently through Copley Square.

- **Safer, More Accessible Crosswalks** – We are improving crosswalks with better alignment, upgraded signals, and ADA-compliant curb ramps, making it easier for all pedestrians, including those with mobility challenges, to navigate the area safely.
- **Accessible Bus Stop and Wider Sidewalks** - We are expanding the sidewalk at the bus stop, giving riders more space to move along the sidewalk, wait for the bus, and create an accessible landing pad for buses to deploy their ramps when needed.
- **Clear Signage** - New design elements will improve signage and clarify lane assignments, simplifying the experience for people driving along this street.

“I had a broken leg and couldn’t get down steep stairs at green line - couldn’t go where I needed to go.”

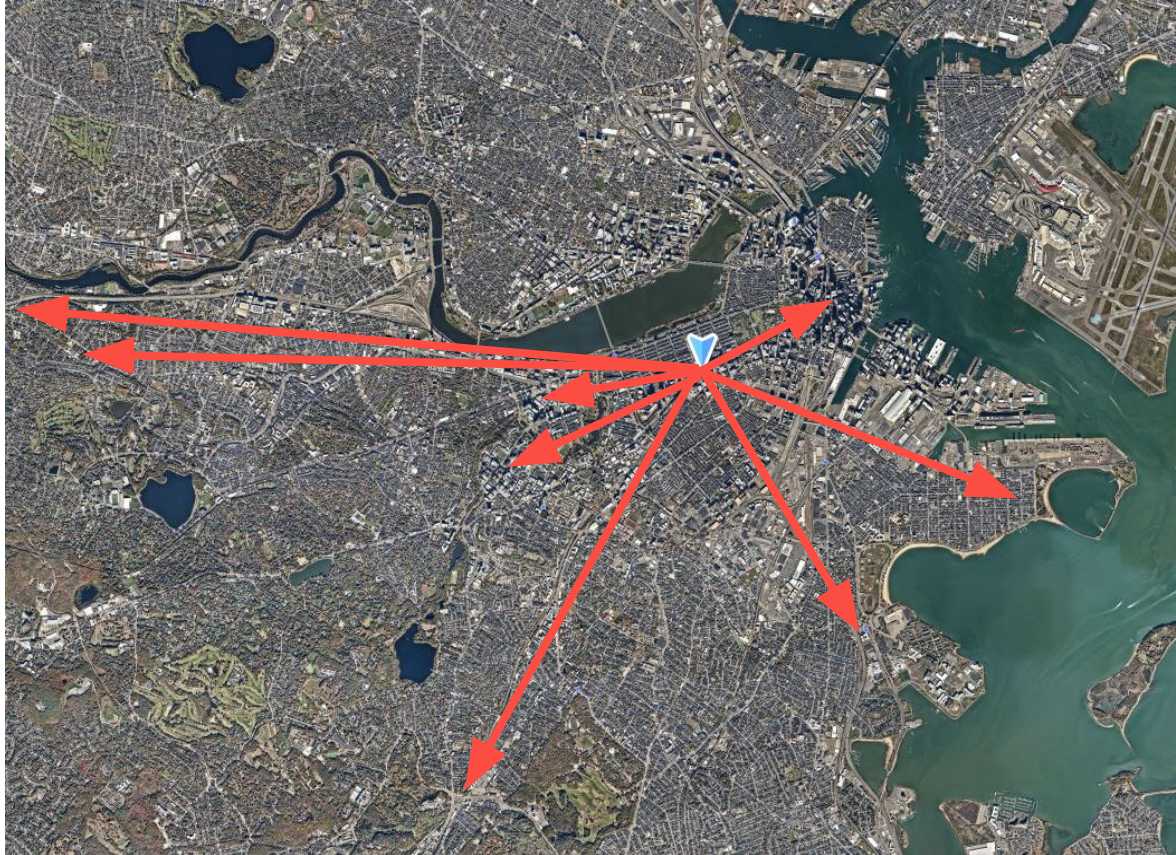
Route 55 Rider

In communities served by these bus routes, more than 56,000 residents have a disability and more than 98,000 residents are over the age of 60.

Better Transit Experience

- **Bus Stop Upgrades** – The Copley Square bus stop will be enhanced with wider sidewalks, additional shelter, accessible boarding areas, and more seating, creating a safer and more comfortable experience for riders.
- **Better Transit Experience** – By reducing congestion and better organizing bus operations, we are improving travel times and making transfers easier, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and those carrying strollers, luggage, or mobility aids.
- **Supporting Bus Operations** - Currently, this bus stop serves one to two buses at a time, with up to seventy (70) buses during AM and PM peak service periods. The bus lane helps get these buses up to the stop, helping save time for riders.
 - Frequent service continues during the day, with over 45 buses using this bus lane and stop during the mid-day service period
 - After Bus Network Redesign, this bus will need to serve two buses at a time, requiring the realigned curb and bus lane leading into the bus stop

Better Transit Experience



- **Regional Connection** – This stop serves riders from across the region, connecting Back Bay, South End, Fenway, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Longwood Medical Area, Brighton, Dorchester, Downtown, South Boston, Watertown, and Newton to Boston's core job and commercial centers.
- **Supports High-Ridership Bus Routes** – The bus lane improves reliability for multiple critical routes, including the 39 (one of the most-used MBTA bus routes), 9, 10, 55, 501, and 504 with 26,000 daily riders cumulatively.

A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a white bus with yellow accents is driving towards the camera. The bus has "10 CITY POINT" on its destination sign and the number "1836" on its front. To the left of the bus, there is a pile of dirt and a sign that says "MAJORS YOUTH SUMMIT". The street is wet, and there are other cars in the background. On the right side of the street, there are tall buildings, including a modern glass skyscraper and older stone buildings with American flags. The sky is overcast.

Who does this project serve?

B

Who does this project serve?



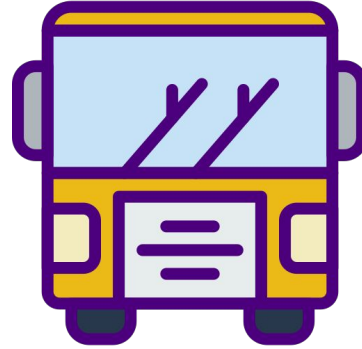
2,600 riders

An average of about 2,600 on a typical weekday



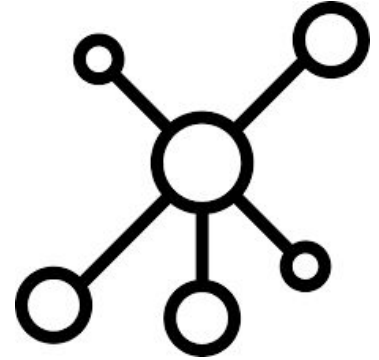
Income

60-70% of riders are defined as low-income under Title IV



Alternative Modes

75-80% of riders have 1 or fewer usable cars in their household



Trip Purpose

50-70% of trips are made to/from work or school

Stakeholder Feedback

Interagency Coordination

We have worked closely across multiple agencies to ensure the **Copley Square bus stop improvements** provide a **safe, accessible, and well-integrated** transit experience for all riders.

- **Streets, Parks and Recreation, and the MBTA** have partnered to design a **modern, more efficient bus stop** that aligns with the **Copley Square Parks Project**. This coordination ensures that transit infrastructure improvements seamlessly complement the surrounding open space enhancements.
- Close collaboration with the **City of Boston Disabilities Commission** ensures that **all accessibility standards are met**, creating an inclusive environment with features like **ADA-compliant curb ramps, accessible landing pads, and improved pedestrian pathways**. This helps Boston meet its curb ramp requirements.
- **The Office of Green Infrastructure** is involved in integrating **sustainable elements**, including stormwater management and landscaping improvements that enhance the overall streetscape.
- **The Office of Neighborhood Services has helped facilitate stakeholder engagement**, ensuring that area businesses have a voice in shaping these improvements

Stakeholder Feedback

We have actively engaged with key stakeholders to ensure that the Copley Square bus stop improvements align with the needs of the community and local businesses.

Outreach efforts have included direct engagement with direct abutters:

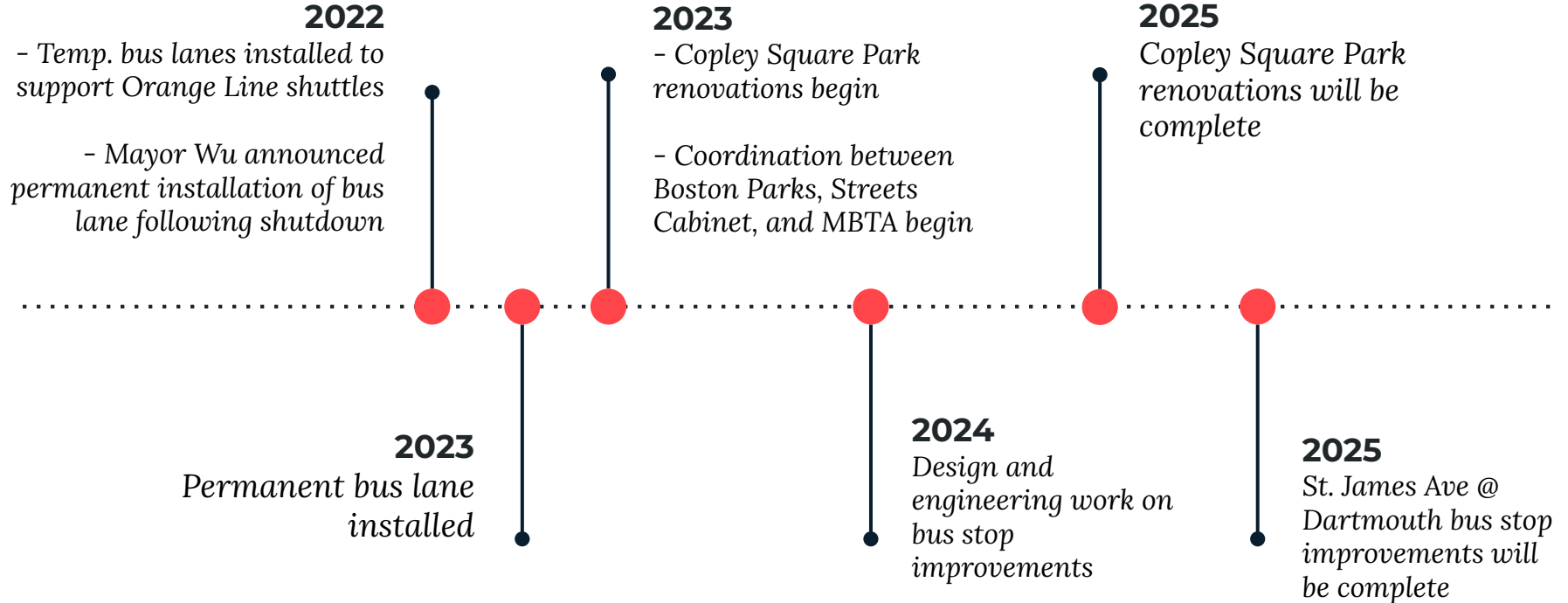
- **Back Bay Association**
- **Boston Properties (200 Clarendon Street Management)**
- **Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel**

Overall, feedback has been positive, with stakeholders expressing **general support for the project's goals and its anticipated benefits**, including improved transit access, enhanced pedestrian safety, and better curbside management.

A photograph of a city street during the day. On the left, a white bus with yellow accents is stopped, displaying '10 CITY POINT' on its destination sign and the number '1836' on its front. To the left of the bus is a large, ornate brick building with many arched windows. To the right of the bus is a construction site with a pile of dirt and a sign that reads 'MAYOR'S YOUTH SUMMIT'. The street is wet and has white lane markings. In the background, there are several tall buildings, including a modern glass skyscraper and older stone buildings. American flags are visible on poles and hanging from buildings. A few cars are driving on the street, and a few pedestrians are walking on the sidewalk. The sky is overcast.

Timeline for this project?

Timeline



A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a white bus with yellow accents is driving towards the camera. The bus has "10 CITY POINT" on its destination sign and the number "1836" on its front. To the left of the bus, there is a pile of dirt and a sign that says "MAJORS YOUTH SUMMIT". The background features a mix of architectural styles, including a large brick building with arched windows on the left and modern glass skyscrapers on the right. American flags are visible on poles and building facades. The sky is overcast.

How is this project paid for?

B

Costs

Saint James Ave Bus Lane

- Designed by City of Boston for \$50,000
- Implementation by MBTA for \$67,000

Copley Square Bus Stop

- Designed by MBTA
- Cost of installation shared between City of Boston (Streets & Parks and Recreation) and MBTA
 - Streets - \$660,000
 - Parks and Recreation - \$137,000
 - MBTA - \$510,000
- Costs include accessibility upgrades, green infrastructure, traffic signal upgrades, paving, signage, and striping

A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, a white bus with yellow accents is driving towards the camera. The bus's destination sign reads "10 CITY POINT" and its license plate is "1836". To the left of the bus, there is a pile of dirt and a sign that says "MAJORS YOUTH SUMMIT". The street is wet, suggesting it has recently rained. In the background, there are several tall buildings, including a large brick building on the left and a modern glass building on the right. American flags are visible on poles along the street. Other cars are visible in the distance.

What are the outcomes so far? What are next steps?

Transit Conditions on Saint James Ave

We have **made transit a more reliable option** by ensuring buses can move efficiently on Saint James Ave, supporting thousands of daily riders who depend on these routes.

The bus routes on this 2 block segment save:

- 44 seconds on an average trips
- 92 seconds on peak hour trips

With 2,600 weekday riders, this amounts to almost **32 hours of daily time savings**.

Transit Conditions on Saint James Ave

Added up across
all riders, this two
block bus lane saves

**32 hours
each day**

or the amount of time
it takes to drive from
Boston to Santa Fe.



Change in Ridership Since 2023

Ridership on bus routes serving Saint James Ave bus routes has generally increased faster than the MBTA system as a whole.

Transit	Ridership in Jan 23	Ridership in Jan 25	% Change in Ridership
Systemwide	720,632	778,567	+8%
All Buses	267,435	296,929	+11%
9	4,005	5,173	+29%
10	1,913	2,297	+20%
39	7,453	8,309	+11%
55	54	75	+39%

*Data on the 502 and 503 (which also use the St. James Ave bus lane) to be added when available

Source: *Transit Matters "Data Dashboard"*, MBTA *"Ridership on the T"*



Traffic Conditions on Saint James Ave

Based on an analysis of INRIX* data, we found that the bus lanes had a minor impact on traffic congestion at the intersection of **Saint James Ave and Clarendon Street**.

Average delay per vehicle increased by two (2) seconds after the bus lane was made permanent and red paint/bus signage installed.**

- Before: 28.2s of delay per vehicle, on average
- After: 30.3s of delay per vehicle, on average

*INRIX compares trip times from May 2023 and May 2024.

** Delay metrics look at vehicles making the through movement on Saint James Avenue at the intersection with Clarendon Street



Field Observations

City Staff Field Observations

Saint James Ave Bus Lane & Copley Square Bus Stop

“This stop is a bus transit hub. This is such a busy stop that during these peak hours, it is common to see 2-3 buses boarding passengers at one time.”

“Isolating bus traffic and personal vehicle traffic into separate lanes is critical for ensuring efficiency for all types of vehicles. Without an independent bus lane, buses would block up traffic every time they needed to stop at St James Ave @ Dartmouth St. The bus lane allows for personal vehicle traffic to continue flowing as buses stop for passenger boarding. While observing traffic flow, it was striking to see all personal vehicles successfully pass through the intersection during one green light phase, regardless of bus loading duration.”

Field Observations

City Staff Field Observations

Tour Bus Double Parking

"Keeping bus lanes clear is key to reliable transit and pedestrian safety. Tour buses parking in the Saint James Ave bus lane have been a concern, but with new enforcement cameras, we'll be able to address violations more effectively and keep the lane open for buses and riders. We will look into options near-term on enforcement as well."

Other Double Parking

"We've seen challenges with vehicles stopping in Saint James Ave general purpose travel lanes - specifically at the hotel - which can impact traffic flow. Improved enforcement and coordination with the hotel valet could help keep the lane clear and ensure that designated loading and drop-off areas are used as intended."

Pictures



Bus lane allows for bus to exit stop without impacting general vehicle movement



Multiple buses using stop at one time



Real time arrival screen at Copley Square

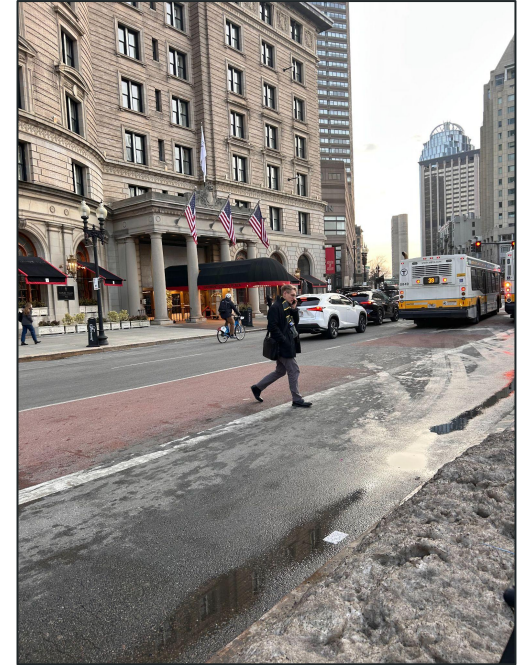
Pictures



Bus lane prevents bus movement from conflicting with vehicle movement



New bus lane in November 2023

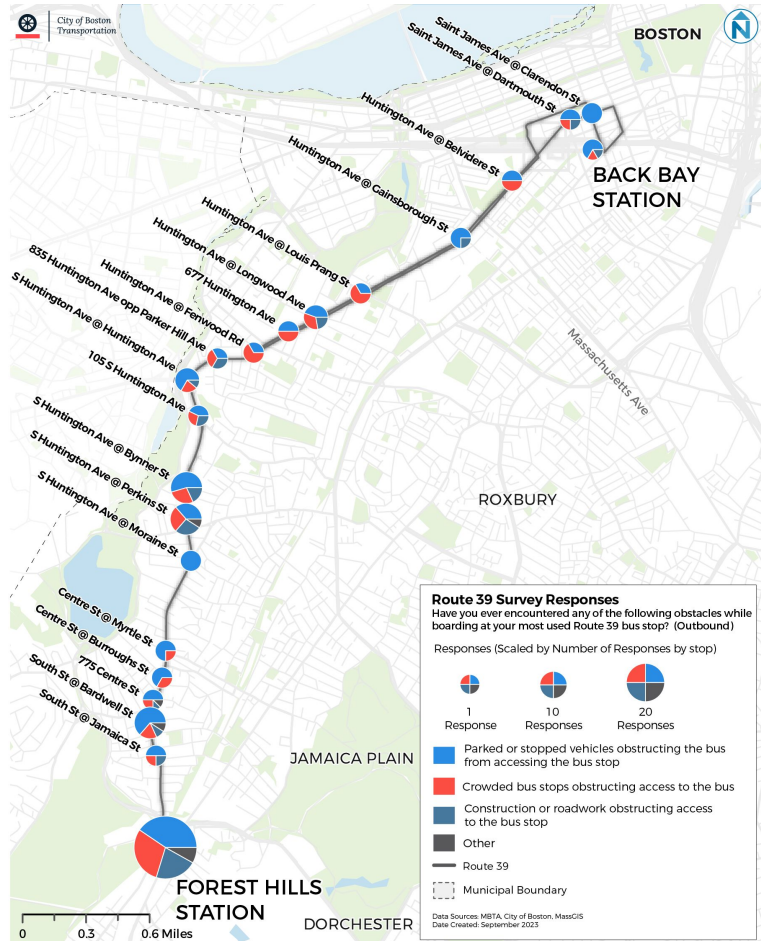
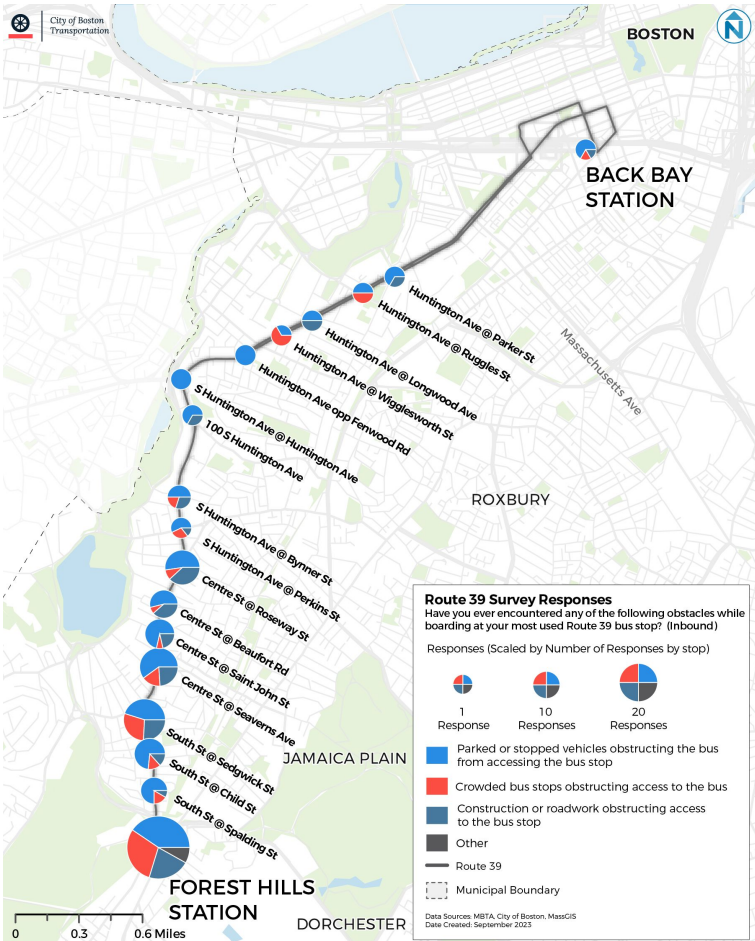


Pedestrian jaywalking which should be mitigated with crosswalk improvements at Trinity Place

Appendix

B

Boarding Obstacles - Route 39 Corridor Study



Bus Routes Frequency

Route	Peak AM (5 - 9AM)	Late AM (9 AM - 12 PM)	Midday (12 - 4 PM)	Peak PM (4 - 8 PM)	Late PM (8 - 12 PM)
9	17	9	10	16	8
10	9	5	8	9	8
39	21	9	16	22	19
55	0	3	6	0	0
501	10	3	2	12	0
504	10	7	6	12	0

Source: Data from TransitMatters, "Data Dashboard" and MBTA



Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Neighborhood/Municipality	Total Population with a Disability	Population with a Disability As Percent of Total Neighborhood Population
Dorchester	19,691	15.70%
Mission Hill	2,413	15.07%
LMA	633	12.41%
Jamaica Plain	4,716	11.91%
South End	3,619	11.72%
Brighton	5,667	11.21%
Watertown	3,795	10.76%
Downtown	2,416	10.59%
South Boston	3,479	9.26%
Fenway	2,563	8.03%
Back Bay	1,233	7.33%
Newton	6,419	7.25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2023 5-year American Community Survey

Accessibility for Seniors

Neighborhood/Municipality	Total Population Over 60	Population Over 60 As Percent of Total Neighborhood Population
Newton	22,692	25.64%
Watertown	8,660	24.55%
Brighton	12,064	23.87%
South End	6,970	22.58%
Back Bay	3,581	21.28%
Downtown	4,674	20.48%
Jamaica Plain	7,201	18.19%
Dorchester	21,792	17.38%
Mission Hill	2,554	15.95%
South Boston	5,445	14.49%
Fenway	2,594	8.12%
LMA	69	1.35%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2023 5-year American Community Survey

Timeline in Detail

Saint James Ave

- **2022**
 - Temporary bus lanes installed to support Orange Line shuttles
 - Mayor Wu announced permanent installation of bus lane following the the shutdown
- **2023**
 - Permanent bus lane installed

Copley Square Bus Stop

- **2023**
 - Copley Square Park renovations begin
 - Coordination between Boston Parks and Recreation, Streets Cabinet, and MBTA begin surrounding bus stop improvements
- **2024**
 - Design and engineering work on bus stop improvements
- **2025**
 - Copley Square Park renovations complete (*exact date TBD*)
 - Saint James Avenue @ Dartmouth bus stop improvements complete (*exact date TBD*)