



# Washington Street Bus Lane Chinatown - Downtown Crossing

Project Update

May 2025



# Contents

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- Project Summary
- Data Analysis
- Current Conditions & Ongoing Efforts
- Appendix

# Summary

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The Washington Street Bus Lanes were extended from Herald Street to Downtown Crossing in Spring/Summer 2020. The Project included:

- **Bus Improvements**

- Bi-directional shared bus-bike lanes between Herald St and Stuart St/Kneeland St
- Inbound Bus Lane North of Stuart/Kneeland St

- **Bike Improvements**

- Protected Bike lane from Stuart/Kneeland St to Downtown Crossing

- **Safer, Consolidated Loading**

- Maintained all parking, pickup and drop-off, and current curb uses at Tufts Medical Center
- Created a new, designated loading zone between Boylston St and Avery St, and on Ave de Lafayette



# Summary - Planning Origin

This project was guided by **Go Boston 2030**, the City's comprehensive transportation plan.

Go Boston 2030 outlined the need for improved Silver Line between Nubian Station and Downtown Boston, and for better bike lanes

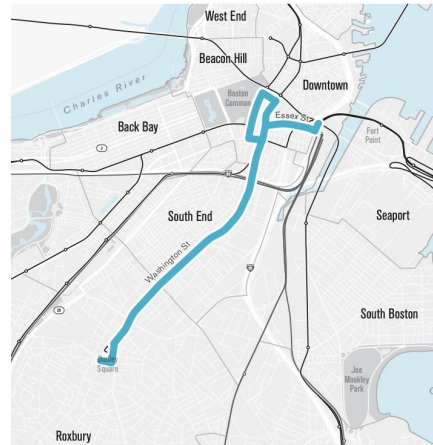
## Crosstown

### Improved Silver Line: Dudley to Downtown

Better rapid bus service and terminals on the Silver Line from downtown to Dudley

#### Project Description

Today the Silver Line between Dudley and downtown along Washington Street has protected bus shelters and an exclusive red bus lane. In the next five years, the width of the lane will be increased, physical buffers and stronger enforcement will ensure that it is not used for double parking, an off-board payment system will allow for all-door boarding and prevent long passenger queues from delaying stops, automated signal priority will avoid red-light delays, and raised, accessible platforms will make it safer and easier for passengers of all abilities to board. An *improved Dudley Station* will be paired with *improved termini at Downtown Crossing and South Station*, where new in-street platforms will enable faster transfers to the Orange, Red, and waterfront Silver Lines.



Boston Transportation Department March 2017

## GO BOSTON 2030

### Local

### Better Bike Corridors

Rebuild streets with protected and low-stress bicycling facilities

#### Project Description

New projects will aspire to make bicycling a safe, comfortable, and convenient choice for more of Boston's residents and visitors. Better bike lanes go beyond traditional bike lanes, which are painted on the street between moving and parked cars. The city will pursue more priority routes with bike lanes that are separated from moving vehicles and on neighborhood streets that are retrofitted to slow traffic. Similar approaches are part of Boston's *Complete Streets Guidelines* and *Neighborhood Slow Streets* efforts. Today, Boston residents can experience protected bike lanes on parts of Western Avenue in Allston; Commercial Street, Standish Street, and Atlantic Ave in the North End and West End; and parts of Beacon Street and Massachusetts Avenue in the Bay Bay. Future better bike lanes are planned for additional corridors, including:

*Columbia Road Greenway SW Corridor Extension to Back Bay and MGH*  
Melrose Cast Blvd, where protected bike lanes will connect the SW Corridor to Boston Medical Center

**Benefits and Issues Addressed**  
Building better bike corridors has increased cycling rates across the nation and in the Boston region. A connected network of more comfortable routes makes bicycling a more realistic option for people who would otherwise choose to drive or rely on transit. Through the Go Boston 2030 process, the call for building better bike corridors and facilities that provide "time areas" connections for cyclists) has been heard from across all neighborhoods and from current and potential cyclists alike.

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## ACTION PLAN Projects and Policies

### Project Score

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

Identified on the ballot as an Early Action commitment



Protected bicycle lane on Standish Street, Boston

#### Best Practices

Since 2007, the NYCDOT has installed over 30 miles of protected bicycle lanes throughout the five boroughs of New York City.  
[www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-11-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-11-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf)

Based on what was spent by NYCDOT on bicycle infrastructure between 2007 and 2016, a study estimated that the city's 2015 outlay of \$8,109,311 resulted in 45.3 miles of new bike lanes. Taking into account the past cost of bike-related injuries and fatalities, they also estimated quality-adjusted life years (QALYs, a common economic metric) for all New Yorkers.  
[journalofenvironmentanddevelopment.org/html/eenvironment/transportation/bike-lanes-cost-effectiveness-public-health](http://journalofenvironmentanddevelopment.org/html/eenvironment/transportation/bike-lanes-cost-effectiveness-public-health)

A new study of cities that have expanded bicycle infrastructure with an emphasis in protected bicycle infrastructure shows that this correlates with increased rates of cycling and a decrease in cyclist injuries.  
[aigp.org/publications/origins/pdft0.2105/APR.2016.303507](http://aigp.org/publications/origins/pdft0.2105/APR.2016.303507)

In Boston, the expansion of bicycle facilities from 2007-2012 has been shown to correlate with a decrease in cyclist injuries.  
[aigp.org/publications/origins/pdft0.2105/APR.2016.303454](http://aigp.org/publications/origins/pdft0.2105/APR.2016.303454)

#### Implementation

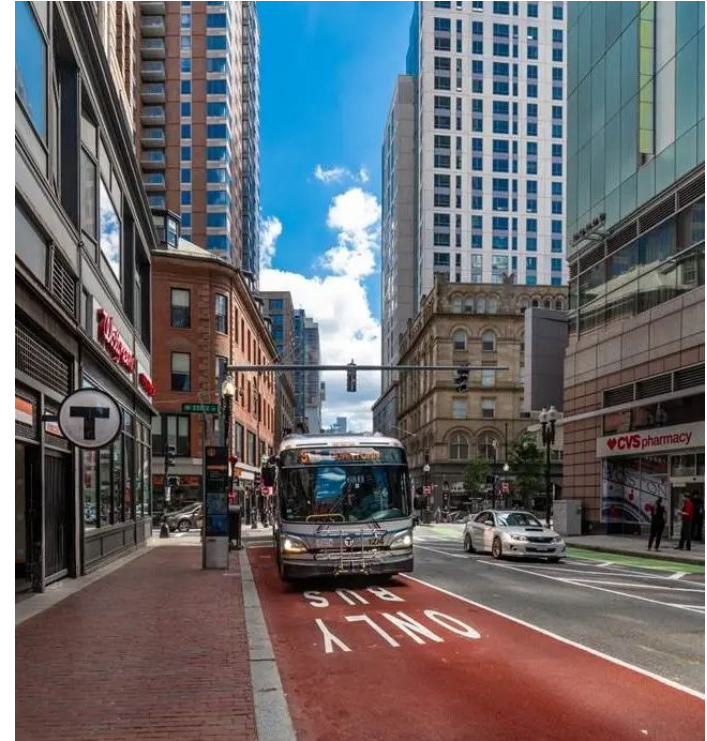
**Approximate Cost:** \$1 to \$2 million per year for design and construction  
**Potential Funding Sources:** COR capital plan and Boston MPD TID construction funds  
**Who's responsible:** BTD, Public Works, and MassDOT  
**Time Frame:** Opening and over 15 years in connection with local community process

#### Public Input

"Protected bike lanes in Roxbury? Install them on Blue Hill Ave, Dudley Street, Washington, Warren, and Malcolm X." -02125  
"Cambridge Street: Particularly outdoors, the street is VERY dangerous, yet it is the gateway to City Hall, state government, etc. Please remove the median and install dedicated bike route/path." -02139

# Summary - Why Bus Lanes?

- **High Ridership Corridor:** The Silver Line Chinatown/Downtown Bus Lane extension serves nearly **86,000 riders each week**
- **Transit Dependant Population:**
  - **82%** of riders are low income
  - **47%** of riders live households that do not own a car
  - **50%** of riders travel along the corridor 5 or more days per week
- **High Delay:** Before bus lane installation, buses traveling along the corridor faced up to **13 minutes of delay** during the PM peak



# Summary

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Analysis of bus runtime before installation (Fall 2019) and after installation (Fall 2024) shows that trips between Herald Street and Temple Place are **faster and more reliable** throughout most of the day

- Inbound median run time during the AM and PM peaks are **45-55 seconds faster**
- 90th Percentile Run-time is **almost one minute faster** during the AM peak and **over two minutes faster** during the PM peak



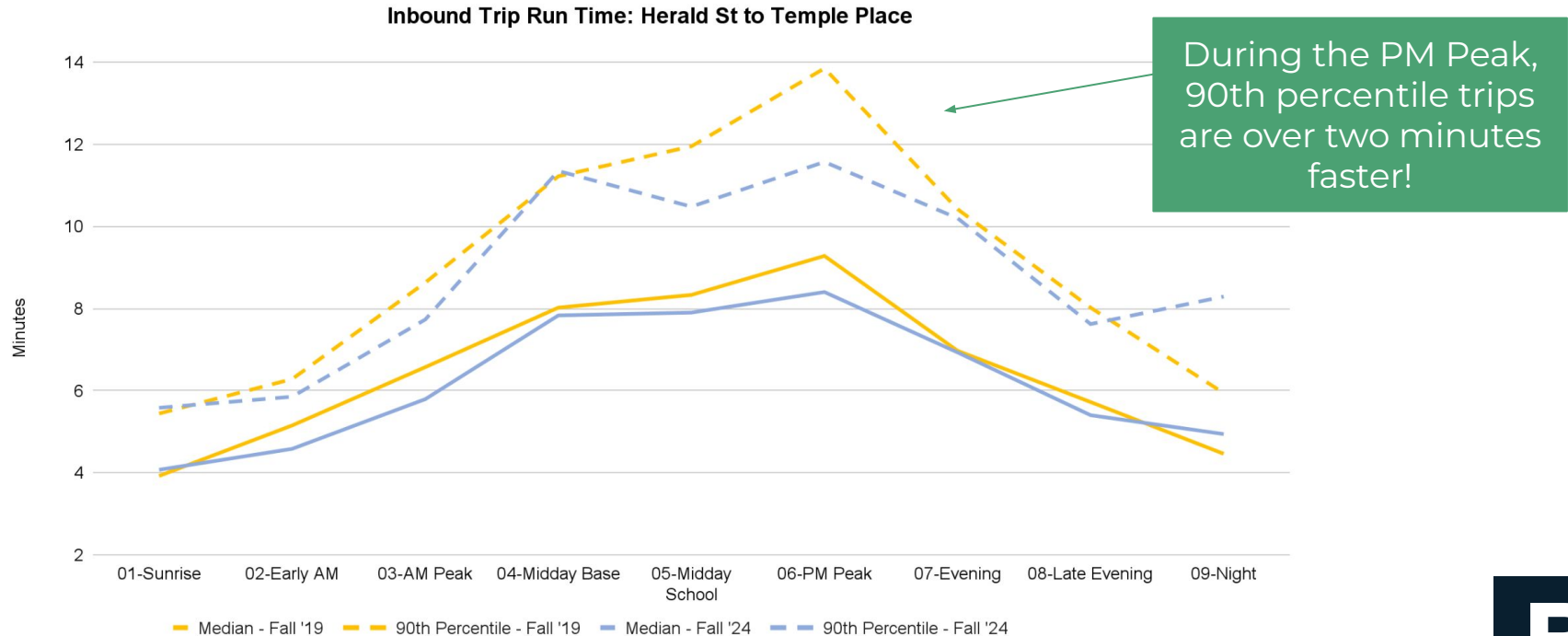


# Data Analysis

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# Inbound Run Time

Inbound Trips between Herald Street and Temple Place are **faster and more reliable** throughout most of the day

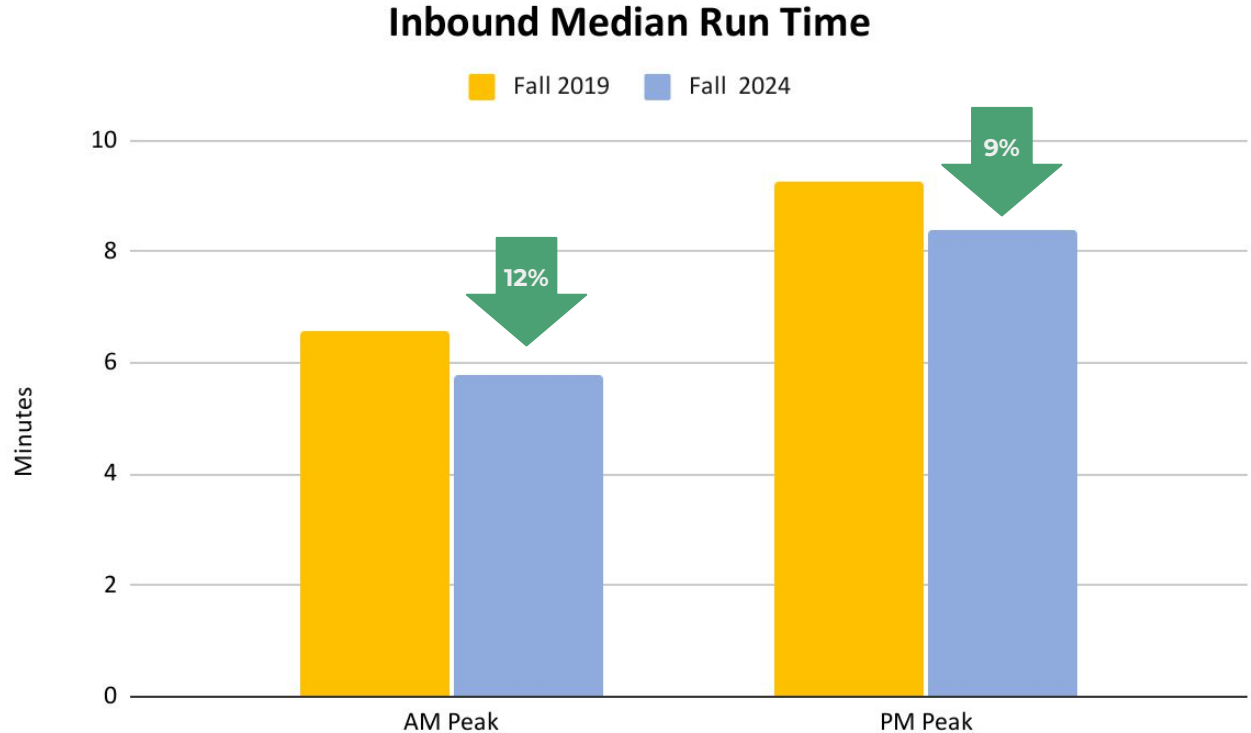




# Inbound Run Time

## Trips are Faster

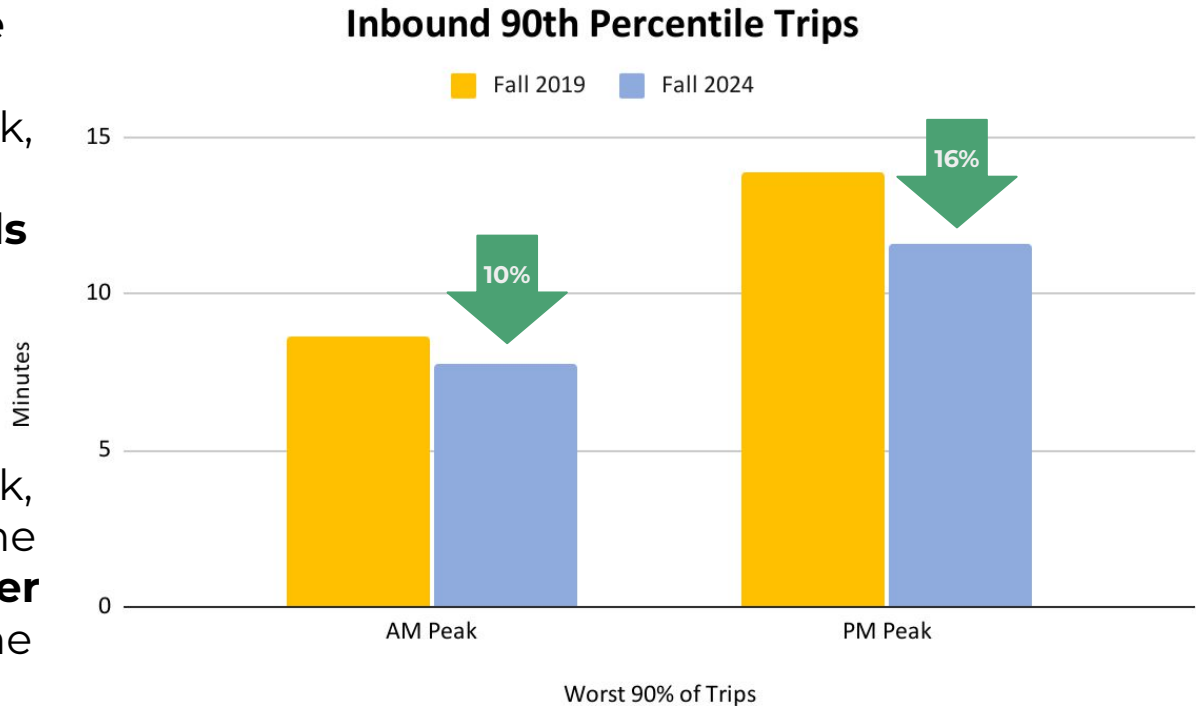
- During the AM Peak, the median trip time is **47 seconds faster** than before bus lane implementation
- During the PM Peak, the median trip time is **53 seconds faster** than before bus lane implementation



# Inbound Run Time

## Trips are More Reliable

- During the AM Peak, the worst 10% of trips are **54 seconds faster** than before bus lane implementation
- During the PM Peak, the median trip time is **136 seconds faster** than before bus lane implementation





# Current Conditions & Ongoing Efforts

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# Current Conditions

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*Google Maps, August 2024*

Although the Chinatown- Downtown Crossing Bus lanes have improved bus operation, the SL4 and SL5 **still experience operational difficulties** including:

- Unauthorized bus lane usage for parking, loading, and pick-up/drop-off activity
- Right turn conflict at Essex Street

The MBTA and the City are currently working on multiple efforts, including **routing changes** and **bus-mounted camera enforcement** to improve Silver Line performance.

# Ongoing Efforts

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## Bus Network Redesign

The MBTA's Bus Network Redesign (BNR) will combine the SL4 and SL5 into a new SL5 service with 4-8 minute headways all day, seven days a week. Well-functioning transit priority will be key to facilitating this high-frequency service.



## Silver Line Downtown Routing

The City is collaborating with the MBTA to plan downtown routing for the new SL5 that serves both Downtown Crossing and South Station, enhancing the SL5's connection to the MBTA's rapid transit network. This routing will also mitigate observed traffic issues along the route.

## Ongoing Efforts (continued)

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### **Camera Enforcement**

Massachusetts Bill S.2881 will allow the MBTA to ticket cars parked in bus stops and bus lanes through bus-mounted cameras. This program is planned to begin on select routes, including the .

### **Transit Signal Priority Upgrades**

Upgrades to Transit Signal Priority (TSP) are planned for Washington Street. These updates will allow buses to pass through intersections more efficiently, reducing delay.

### **Essex Street Resurfacing**

Essex Street will be resurfaced from Atlantic Ave to Washington St, including restriping of the existing bus lane.

### **Chauncy Street Bus Shelter**

A new, development-mitigation-funded bus shelter will be constructed at the Chauncy @ Summer stop, which will be served by the new SL5 under BNR

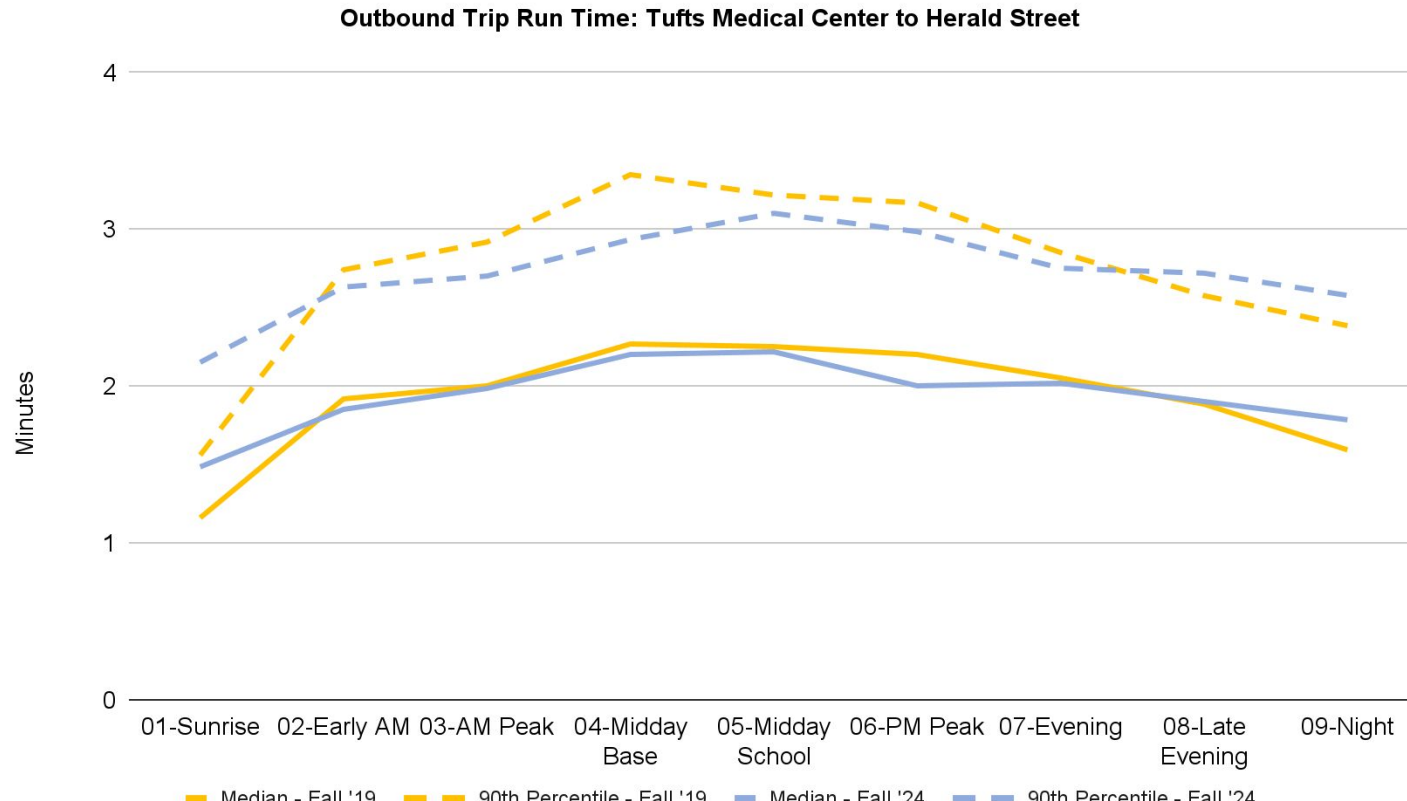


# Appendix

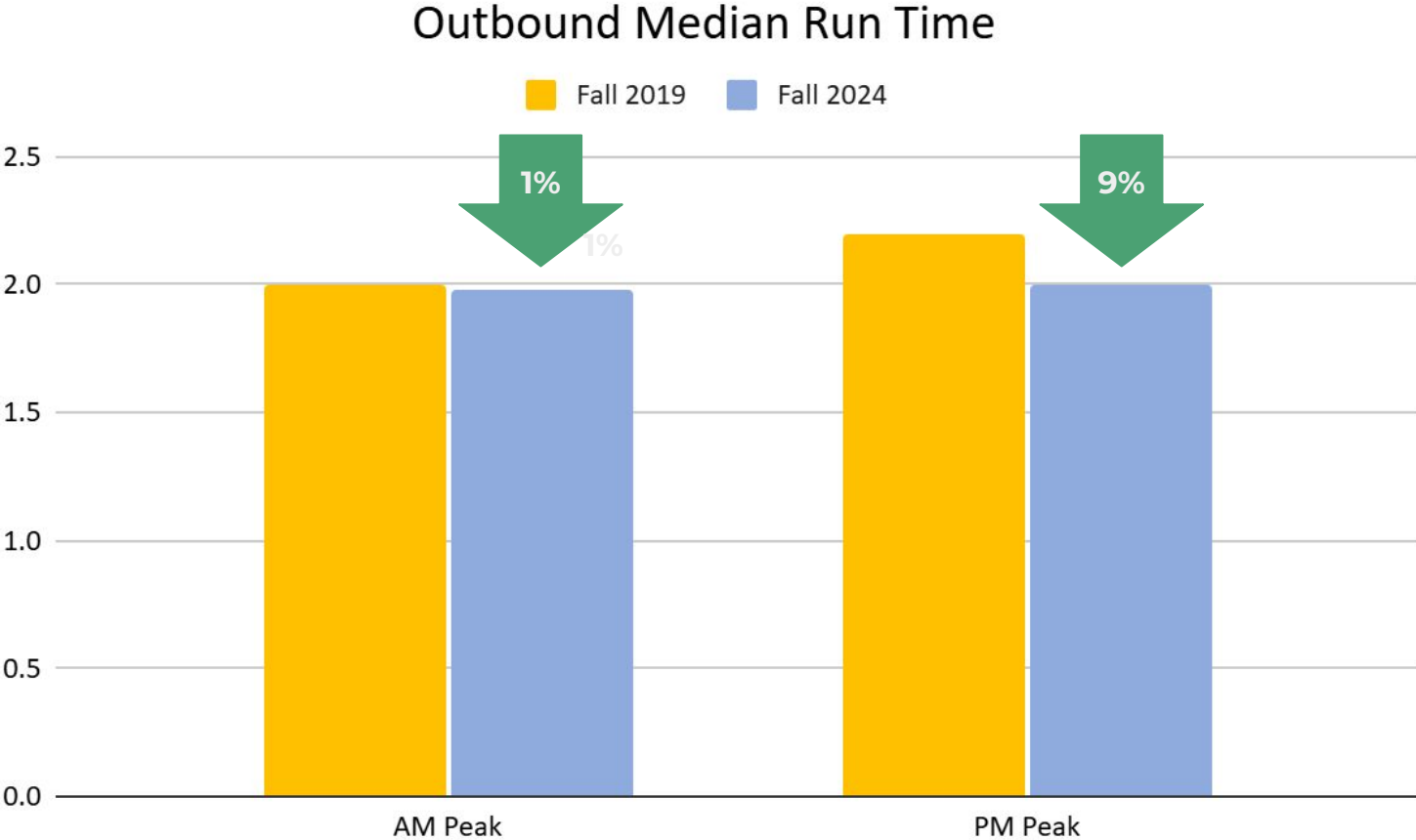
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# Outbound Run Time

Outbound trips are slightly faster and more reliable throughout most of the day



# Outbound Run Time





# Outbound Run Time

