

Local

Walk- and Bike-Friendly Main Streets

Improvements to neighborhood commercial districts for people traveling on foot and by bike

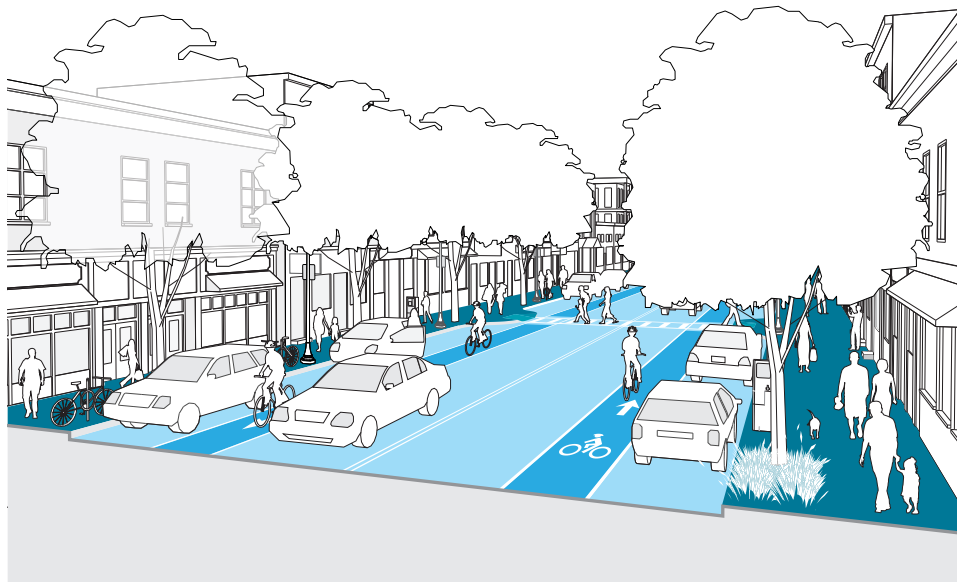
Project Score

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

#1 in public voting

Project Description

Walking- and bicycling-friendly Main Streets districts would focus on street and sidewalk investments that incentivize walking and biking to and through every local business district in the city. Signalized crossings would prioritize walking with responsive push-buttons or automatic pedestrian cycles, longer walk times that start before turning cars, and shorter crossing distances. Additions such as lighting, benches, and trees would also support people who chose to travel on foot, and all improvements would be made accessible to anyone of any physical ability. Bike-friendly features would include priority for better bike corridors as well as additional bike parking, bikeshare stations, and safer intersection designs. Way-finding signage, parklets, and simplified processes for closing streets to traffic on a temporary basis would also support people choosing to walk, bike, and take transit to our Main Streets.



Vision for a Neighborhood Main Street with small businesses from Boston's Complete Streets Guidelines

Benefits and Issues Addressed

Many of Boston's 21 official Main Streets districts cannot accommodate enough parking for their patrons to arrive solely by car, but the roadways through them are nonetheless often designed to maximize vehicular flow rather than focusing on moving walkers and bicyclists along and across streets to easily and safely shop, dine, and build community on either side of the street. Since many Main Streets are centered around uniquely shaped intersections that can be hard to navigate on foot, improvements like those underway in East Boston's Central Square and JP's Hyde Square could serve as a model for improving walkability—along with co-benefits like green infrastructure and expanded plaza space. People getting off of buses or trains, arriving by bike, or walking from the surrounding residential area will support small businesses with increased foot-traffic and activated sidewalks.

Implementation

Planning Level Costs: \$25 million over five years for design and construction

Funding Sources: City capital plan and developer funding

Who's Responsible: BTB and Public Works with Boston Main Streets

Time Frame: Ongoing, with an estimated two to three districts per year

Best Practices

In 2004, Cambridge, MA, completed construction of Lafayette Square at the edge of Central Square. By reclaiming pavement at a triangular intersection and realigning streets at safer right-angles, a new plaza lined with shops was created, crosswalks shortened, conflicts reduced, and a barrier at the edge of Central Square became a new walk and bike friendly gateway.

Public Input

"Make walking fun and desirable – create street culture. Ex. businesses give rewards/ discounts for walking/biking."

—Roslindale roundtable

"Add more defined bike lanes on main streets."

—02120

