

MASSDOT AND MBTA BUS INFRASTRUCTURE COORDINATION

Joint MassDOT and Fiscal Management and Control Board

May 20, 2019

Purpose

The Fiscal Management and Control Board requested an update on MassDOT/MBTA bus infrastructure coordination generally, and on **Rutherford Avenue's** potential for bus priority specifically.

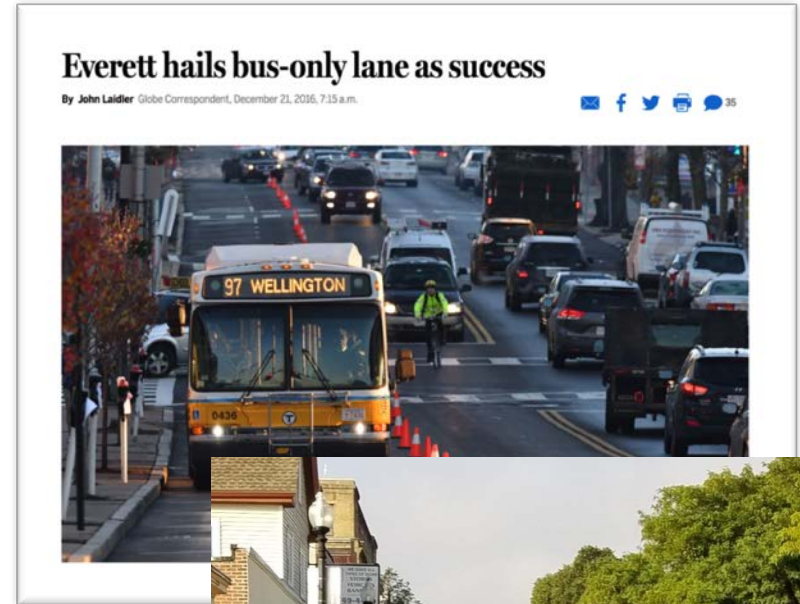
Rutherford Avenue –

- The City of Boston is currently advancing plans for reconstructing Rutherford Avenue
- The MBTA does not currently operate any revenue bus service on Rutherford Avenue
- Rutherford has been identified through planning efforts (Everett Transit Action Plan and the Network Redesign) as a potential corridor for re-routed bus service

This presentation will describe how intra-party coordination (MBTA, MassDOT Highway and Planning, municipalities) currently happens, and how Rutherford fits into this framework.

Bus Lanes Completed or Near Implementation

- **Everett Broadway Bus Lane:** Identified in Everett Transit Action Plan
Coordination with MBTA and City of Everett
- **North Washington Street Bridge:** Opportunity identified by MassDOT
Planning on existing design project
Coordination with MassDOT Highway, City of Boston, and MBTA
- **Roslindale Bus Lane:** Top priority from Focus40 Dedicated Bus Lane Study (CTPS)
Implementation led by City of Boston and MBTA
- **Municipal/MBTA Coordination**
 - **Arlington:** Massachusetts Ave. bus lane (expected 2019)
 - **Boston:** Brighton Ave, N. Washington St bus lanes (expected 2019)
 - **Somerville:** Broadway bus lane (expected 2019)
 - **Cambridge:** Mt. Auburn St and Mass Ave bus lane (2018)
 - **Everett:** Street-level boarding (2018)



Current Bus Coordination Framework

Bus infrastructure improvements typically come out of one of four drivers:

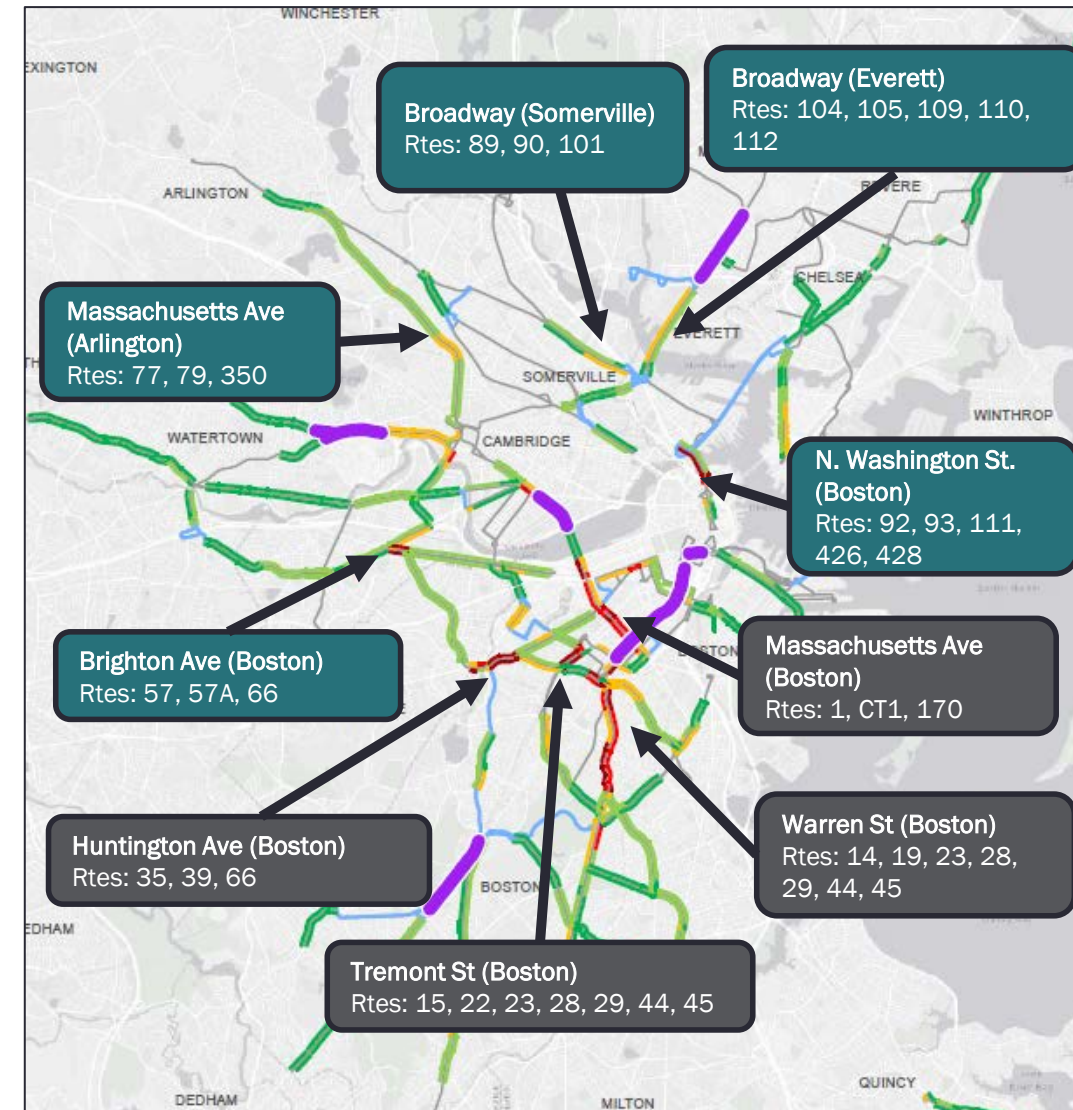
1. MBTA internally identified priorities (14 miles, Better Bus Project)
2. Opportunities created through Municipal coordination
3. Opportunities identified through MassDOT Planning efforts
4. Opportunities created through MassDOT Highway project review process

Each approach follows a coordination process involving the MBTA, MassDOT, and municipalities to plan, assess, design, and implement improvements.

MBTA Identified 14 Miles of High Priority Corridors

The MBTA identified the **14 miles** of high priority corridors where investment in bus priority infrastructure will have the highest returns, ensuring our highest ridership buses can move quickly and reliably through these often congested areas.

MBTA is coordinating with roadway owners to identify the best transit priority strategies and implement improvements on these corridors.



Coordination with Municipalities

MBTA and municipalities leverage city projects to:

- Deliver transit priority on the high priority corridors
- Identify additional opportunities for transit improvements on city roadways

The MBTA and municipalities move efforts forward through regular coordination meetings and partnerships on design and construction.

Boston MPO Long Range Plan allocated funding for municipalities for dedicated bus lanes program and transit modernization program.

Examples of Coordination

- North Washington Street (to connect North Washington Bridge and Haymarket)
- Somerville Broadway Bus Lane
- Massachusetts Ave in Cambridge

MassDOT Planning Efforts

MassDOT is identifying bus prioritization opportunities through planning initiatives and working with the MBTA and municipalities to implement them. These studies can help to identify next opportunities beyond the 14 miles.

Examples of plans with transit priority findings:

- **Everett Transit Action Plan:** Broadway bus lane, identified Rutherford Ave opportunity
- **Allston Transit Action Plan/I-90 Allston Interchange project:** Brighton Ave bus lane (Focus40/MBTA High Priority Corridor; coordination with City of Boston, MBTA) and Soldiers Field Road (coordination with MassDOT Highway, MBTA, and DCR)
- **State-Owned Roads:** Route 2 Alewife Access Road, Tobin Bridge, and Morton Street
- **Bus Network Redesign:** Internal MassDOT/MBTA task force identifying potential demonstration projects for consideration in late 2019
- **Green Line Capacity Study:** Huntington Ave

MassDOT Project Development Process

MassDOT Highway reviews all projects funded with State and Federal dollars and is institutionalizing consideration of transit and coordination with transit agencies throughout the project development process.

- Designated transit liaisons in every MassDOT Highway District (2016)
- Project scoring incorporates transit (2017)
- Project intake requires identification of transit routes in or near project area (as of 2018)
- Complete Streets review includes transit (as of 2018)
- Project scoping checklist requires inventory of all transit routes within project limits (new as of 2019)

Other

- MassDOT Planning includes MBTA in MEPA and Highway permit process
- Ongoing – technical trainings with DOT and MBTA staff (e.g. Transit Signal Priority Workshop in April 2019, NACTO Street Design)

Examples Outcomes

- Bus stop locations
- Accessibility improvements
- Amenities (benches, etc.)
- Curb cuts and bump outs
- Dedicated bus lanes

MassDOT Project reviews

- do not capture every municipal roadway project
- are a means of influencing municipalities to consider transit accommodations

Rutherford Avenue Coordination

The City of Boston is currently advancing plans for reconstruction of the corridor. Current plans include a bus lane from Everett to Sullivan Square and between the Tobin Bridge off-ramp and the North Washington Street Bridge, where existing MBTA service is routed.

MBTA's 14 miles of high priority corridors were identified based on *existing routes and ridership*, so Rutherford was not considered in that prioritization process.

MassDOT (Highway Design, District 6, Planning) and the MBTA, through coordinated review of the City of Boston's design for the corridor and in anticipation of the Bus Network Redesign have met to discuss opportunities to accommodate transit priority into the City's design.

Next Steps for Rutherford:

Use Origin-Destination dataset through Network Redesign process to determine market potential and benefits for transit corridor.

Work with City of Boston to identify opportunities to route buses and incorporate transit space on corridor.

Next Steps on Coordination

- **Goal:** Continue to institutionalize processes and coordination among MBTA and RTAs, MassDOT, and municipalities to ensure that all relevant capital projects consider transit accommodations.
- **On-going efforts**
 - Hire Director of Transit Priority, Municipal Coordination fellow, and Transit Signal fellow
 - Identify opportunities to coordinate transit improvement in locally-funded projects
 - Institute Policies and Engineering Directives with requirements for transit improvements in projects on corridors that have transit service
 - Example: Revision of the Healthy Transportation Policy and corresponding Engineering Design Directive to enhance transit service and access to transit service
 - Evaluate, and refine as needed, project intake forms for MassDOT reviewed projects
 - Capture technical and process-related lessons learned through a feedback loop