



A call to action to make Roslindale Boston's most walkable neighborhood.

November 9, 2018

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

The Honorable Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston
Boston City Hall
One City Hall Plaza
Boston, MA 02201
Email: mayor@boston.gov

Re: Pedestrian Safety and Traffic Calming in Roslindale Square

Dear Mayor Walsh:

We write to express our full and complete support for the recent pedestrian safety and traffic calming improvements the City of Boston made in Roslindale Square. Please accept our gratitude, and particularly to the staff at the Boston Transportation Department (BTD), for your commitment to making Roslindale Square a safer place to travel, work, run errands, and shop by foot, bus, bike, and car. We recognize that no single group of people can be said to speak for our entire neighborhood – instead, please take these comments as representing the collective, specific viewpoint of our steering group members (indicated below) and offering what we see as the analysis that results from our mission and principles.

Roslindale Square (or Village) is the thriving commercial and civic center of our beloved neighborhood. The Square has many positive assets but perhaps its greatest strength is its compact, walkable design. As a destination, Roslindale Square is accessible through many modes of initial travel. Once there, the Square is perfectly laid out for one to walk around and dine at one of the many great restaurants, to visit our unique local shops, obtain services at government and private offices, and to enjoy the Saturday Farmers Market and fresh air and greenery in Adams Park. The Square is also the natural civic center of significant pedestrian activity with children walking to school, seniors accessing services, and individuals heading to and from the commuter rail or bus stops. As a group, WalkUP Roslindale has strongly advocated to improve the walkable nature of the Square in order to enhance our community center, support our local businesses, and to ensure a safe walking environment for all residents and visitors.

We are delighted that after several walk-throughs and discussions with BTD representatives and our elected officials, the City took meaningful action this year to enhance Roslindale Square as a safe, walkable urban center. We wish to highlight the following beneficial changes:

- *Flexposts around Adams Park to protect pedestrians in crosswalks and better control traffic flow and speed.* These changes are important with Adams Park as a traffic island in the center of the Square attracting significant pedestrian



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activity particularly for the Saturday farmers market and other events there throughout the week. Adams Park is also a frequent destination for families with small children who are at particularly high risk when drivers are too fast and engage in illegal maneuvers.

- *Daylighting crosswalks on South Street and Corinth Street.* Previously, motorists often parked vehicles right up to (and sometimes in) the crosswalks and intersections in question, which is a violation of the law and prevents passing motorists from having clear sightlines to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- *Moving selected bus stops on South Street and Poplar Street to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow.* One bus stop has been moved off the corner of Taft Hill and South Street to un-choke that corner where the main municipal parking lot is situated and also improve visibility at the pedestrian crossing to Adams Park on that corner. Another bus stop is to be moved off the corner of Poplar Street and Washington Street. Shifting the bus stop further up Poplar Street will open up that corner and importantly improve travel times for the #30 bus which no longer will need to traverse all of Roslindale Square (through the loop of South-Belgrade-Corinth) to reach Cummins Highway heading to Mattapan. By shaving minutes off of bus routes with simple changes like this, the MBTA can increase its level of service at no cost and also shift the cost/benefit calculation people make when deciding whether to drive or take public transportation.

Additionally, we believe there are additional measures the City can take to further enhance Roslindale Square. We urge the City to step up enforcement of the existing 2-hour parking both at prime on-street spots in the Square and in the Taft Hill municipal parking lot to force turnover and discourage commuter and long-term parking there. The evidence shows there is ample available parking in Roslindale Square but that better management and turnover of spots is necessary. To that end, we attach data gathered by WalkUP Roslindale volunteers monitoring the availability of parking spots in the Taft Hill municipal lot throughout weekdays in September 2018. As you can see, the municipal lot is rarely close to its parking capacity during the day and is usually far from it.

We also support a serious community conversation about and more holistic look at the overall parking situation and traffic patterns in Roslindale Square. To that end, we suggest consideration of the following possible measures:

- *Parking meters in Roslindale Square* to better manage space turnover. This could include possibly making Roslindale Square a pilot for the *city's first parking benefits district* where a portion of meter revenue could be dedicated to Roslindale Square infrastructure and improvements. On-street spots could be low cost and time-limited to focus on quicker trips and turnover for our businesses, and the Taft Hill lot could include some higher cost and longer duration meters for extended stays, as one of many possibilities.
- Looking at existing commercial loading zones in Roslindale Square and consider *creating additional loading zones* to ensure our businesses have appropriate space and time for needed deliveries.



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- A more expansive analysis of the entire traffic pattern including *considering a return to a two-way Washington Street at Adams Park* to alleviate southbound congestion and improve bus travel times especially during the evening commute.
- Creating an *evening commute Washington Street bus lane* from Forest Hills to the Square to give transit riders the priority they deserve.

These possible actions listed above can ameliorate concerns raised by some businesses about the loss of a handful of on-street parking spots and a perceived but unsubstantiated increase in congestion due to the pedestrian safety and traffic calming improvements. We welcome a community conversation with our neighbors, businesses, and City officials about these and other possibilities in the Square.

The recent pedestrian safety improvements go a long way to enhancing the walkable experience and safety in Roslindale Square. We greatly appreciate how seriously you and other city officials took these concerns and acted upon them. We recognize that the communication could have been better at times on explaining the need for these safety improvements, particularly as it relates to some nearby businesses. We hope going forward that better communication lines will be open, as they were on the successful Washington Street morning commute bus lane. But, regardless of any shortcomings on communication, the substance of these improvements is sound and long overdue in Roslindale Square. We stand ready as a group to mobilize support to protect these improvements and will continue to advocate for the betterment of our central civic and business district. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Wright".

Alan Wright, 98 Birch Street

On behalf of the WalkUP Roslindale Steering Committee, including:

Ricardo R. Austrich, 843 South Street

Lisa Beatman, 180 Mount Hope Street

Rachel Blumberg, 15 Newburg Street, #2

Ben Bruno, 27 Colgate Road

Lucy Bullock-Sieger, 33 Brookdale Street

Steve Gag, 631 South Street

Liz Graham-Meredith, 6 Crandall Street

Matt Lawlor, 15 Basto Terrace

Margaux Leonard, 35 Harding Road

Sarah Lee, 65 Cornell Street

Mandana Moshtaghi, 12 Arborough Road

Robert Orthman, 31 Mendelssohn Street, #2

Rebecca Phillips, 10 Tappan Street



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Adam Rogoff, 28 Ashfield Street
Adam Rosi-Kessel, 36 Taft Hill Terrace
Rachele Rosi-Kessel, 36 Taft Hill Terrace
Mark Tedrow, 169 Sycamore Street, #1
Mark Theiss, 55 Prospect Avenue
Greg Tobin, 1 Sheldon Street
Nick Ward, 35 Harding Road
Rick Yoder, 180 Mount Hope Street

Cc: Timothy McCarthy, City Councilor – District 5
Michelle Wu, City Councilor – At-Large
Annissa Essaibi-George, City Councilor – At-Large
Michael Flaherty, City Councilor – At-Large
Ayanna Pressley, City Councilor – At-Large
Chris Osgood, Chief of Streets
Joseph Coppinger, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services - Roslindale
Alia Hamada Forrest, Executive Director - Roslindale Village Main Street
John Malley, President - Roslindale Business Group

Encl. Taft Hill Lot Parking Space Count – September 2018

About WalkUP Roslindale:

WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster "Walkable Urban Places," is a collaborative group of residents dedicated to making Roslindale the most walkable neighborhood in Boston. We advocate for a dynamic, livable streetscape and we support positive changes to our public and private built environment that strengthen walkability and other forms of active mobility as means toward better personal and public health, safety, social capital, economic development, and environmental sustainability. We are led by a steering group of about 25 residents and have over 500 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at walkuproslindale.org.