



A Call to Action to Make Roszie the Most Walkable Neighborhood in Boston

October 2, 2018

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY (christopher.osgood@boston.gov)

Christopher Osgood, Chief of Streets

City of Boston

One City Hall Square, Room 603

Boston, MA 02201

RE: Comment & Support Letter – Washington Street Bus/Bicycle Improvements – Roslindale

Dear Chief Osgood:

As another school year gets underway and normal routines begin again, I write on behalf of WalkUP Roslindale to express our views on three topics relating to the city's Washington Street Bus Improvements: (1) our thanks and strong support for Mayor Walsh's June decision to make permanent the implementation of the morning period inbound bus/bike lane on Washington Street from Roslindale Square to Ukraine Way; (2) our ongoing concerns that the final condition of the implemented lane be appropriately and effectively enforced over the long term; and (3) our advocacy for implementing a similar approach to the afternoon/evening period for the outbound direction.

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 thirty residents and have nearly 1,000 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at www.walkuprosindale.org. 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 support of our steering group members (indicated below) resulting from our mission and principles.

1. Thanks/strong support for the permanent Washington Street Northbound Bus/Bike Lane

We first want to reiterate our strong support and our thanks to Mayor Walsh and the entire team at the Boston Transportation Department responsible for implementing the May pilot of the Bus/Bike Lane and then making the pilot permanent in June. Those whom we specifically wish to thank at BTM include Vineet Gupta, Pat Hoey, and Don Kehoe, as well as you and BTM Commissioner Fiandaca. It's been stated before, but it bears repeating that the 1.5-mile stretch of Washington Street from Roslindale Square to Forest Hills hosts nine (9) separate MBTA bus routes that collectively carry more than fifty-eight percent (58%) of all people traveling through the corridor each morning. Furthermore, a 2016-2017 on-the-ground study of on-street parking utilization in the morning period found that over 75% of the parking spaces on Washington Street were being utilized by commuters from outside of the neighborhood. In summary, the need to

improve bus service in this critical corridor was obvious and the Mayor and your team responded to that need and made changes in the corridor that have reduced transit rider travel times by more than half during the peak period. Once again, we thank and support the Mayor and your team for undertaking these improvements.

2. Ongoing concerns regarding final condition of the permanent Northbound Bus/Bike Lane

Over the last several weeks, the permanent pavement markings for the bus/bike lane have come into focus. One issue that we will need to watch closely and that we intend to partner with BTM on is the level of enforcement needed to keep the lane clear during the bus/bike only morning peak period. We have had periodic reports of multiple cars and commercial vehicles blocking the lane over the summer and early fall. The apparent choice of not marking the on-street parking spaces with the red pavement covering seems to us to create the potential for misunderstanding that those areas are actually available for parking because they aren't so marked. We encourage BTM to be clear about its enforcement strategy and approach this fall and to include both the MBTA and BPS bus operations in the discussions about how the shared lane can and should be used by all authorized users.

3. Advocacy for Washington Street Afternoon/Evening Southbound Bus/Bike Lane

Finally, we firmly believe that the time is now to start planning for a spring pilot on the southbound side of Washington Street during the afternoon/evening peak period. Again, almost sixty percent (60%) of those traveling through this corridor in the evening are in buses and, with the increase in inbound cycling that seems to have resulted from the northbound shared lane, we believe cyclists deserve protection southbound in the afternoon as well. As was the case with the northbound pilot, we would be happy to work with BTM and the MBTA as well as our friends at the Livable Streets Alliance as part of their Better Bus campaign to canvass riders and spread the word on planning and implementation. In particular, we're aware of concerns about businesses and residents on the southbound side of Washington having to relocate any parked vehicles in the afternoon period and encourage BTM and the MBTA to try a pilot for two days and get feedback as was done with the morning pilot.

In closing, we wish to reiterate our thanks to you and the Mayor and everyone on your team for taking the important step of making the northbound shared lane permanent and we look forward to working with you on enforcement and piloting a shared lane in the pm peak period southbound. Thanks again!

Sincerely yours,



Matthew J. Lawlor

Resident @ 15 Basto Terrace, Roslindale, on behalf of the WalkUP Roslindale Steering Group

Ricardo Austrich, Resident @ 843 South Street, Roslindale

Lisa Beatman, Resident @ 180 Mount Hope Street, Roslindale

Rachel Blumberg, Resident @ 15 Newburg Street, Apt. 2, Roslindale

Ben Bruno, Resident @ 27 Colgate Road, Roslindale

Lucy Bullock-Sieger, Resident @ 33 Brookdale Street, Roslindale

Steve Gag, Resident @ 631 South Street, Roslindale
Liz Graham-Meredith, Resident @ 6 Crandall Street, Roslindale
Margaux Leonard, Resident @ 35 Harding Road, Roslindale
Mandana Moshtaghi, Resident @ 12 Arborough Road, Roslindale
Robert Orthman, Resident @ 31 Mendelssohn Street, #2, Roslindale
Rebecca Phillips, Resident @ 10 Tappan Street, Roslindale
Adam Rogoff, Resident @ 28 Ashfield Street, Roslindale
Adam Rosi-Kessel, Resident @ 36 Taft Hill Terrace, Roslindale
Rachele Rosi-Kessel, Resident @ 36 Taft Hill Terrace, Roslindale
Laura Smeaton, Resident @ 61 Cornell Street, Roslindale
Mark Tedrow, Resident @ 169 Sycamore Street, Apt. 1, Roslindale
Marc Theiss, Resident @ 55 Prospect Avenue, Roslindale
Greg Tobin, Resident @ 1 Sheldon Street, Roslindale
Nick Ward, Resident @ 35 Harding Road, Roslindale
Alan Wright, Resident @ 98 Birch Street, Roslindale

Copy to:

Hon. Martin J. Walsh, Mayor, City of Boston (mayor@boston.gov)
BTD Commissioner Gina Fiandaca (gina.fiandaca@boston.gov)
BTD Director of Planning Vineet Gupta (vineet.gupta@boston.gov)
Chief of Civic Engagement Jerome Smith, City of Boston (Jerome.smith@boston.gov)
Mr. Joseph Coppinger, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (joseph.coppinger@boston.gov)
District 4 City Councilor Andrea Campbell (andrea.campbell@boston.gov)
District 5 City Councilor Tim McCarthy (timothy.mccarthy@boston.gov)
District 6 City Councilor Matt O'Malley (matthew.omalley@boston.gov)
At-Large City Councilor Michelle Wu (michelle.wu@boston.gov)
At-Large City Councilor Ayanna Pressley (ayanna.pressley@boston.gov)
At-Large City Councilor Michael F. Flaherty (michael.flaherty@boston.gov)
At-Large City Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George (a.e.george@boston.gov)