



*Working to Make Roszie the Most Walkable Neighborhood in Boston*

Matthew Warfield  
Boston Transportation Department  
1 City Hall Sq Suite 721  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Warfield:

We write to comment on the proposed [Roslindale Square Parking and Curb Access Plan](#). We understand this plan is the result of nearly two years of study focused on parking in and near Roslindale's central business district. [As we discussed when the findings of that study were published](#), it is clear that Roslindale has an adequate supply of parking spots but has failed to manage them to ensure optimal use. We believe the proposed changes shown on this [interactive map](#) go a long way toward fixing that balance. We offer the following feedback:

- We strongly support metering the core business district spots for relatively short-term (primarily one-hour) spaces. Currently, many of these spots are poorly used by drivers who leave their cars in place for hours, hurting the village shops by making it difficult to find spaces for a quick visit and increasing traffic congestion due to drivers repeatedly circling the area looking for a free space. With short-term meters, anyone who wants or needs to park on the same block as a village shop should always be able to do so.
- We likewise support the proposal to increase parking in the Taft Hill lot from 2 to 4 hours. This should provide ample time for visitors who have come to shop and dine to stay without fearing a ticket, while also deterring inappropriate full-day commuter users who should be parking in one of the paid MBTA lots.
  - We understand the City is considering ways to make the lot more visible so drivers know where to park. In addition to better signage (including in advance of the lot), we believe the sidewalk/street interface at the corner of Taft Hill and South Street could be reconfigured to make the turn into the parking lot more natural and safer.
  - There are currently no wayfinding signs from the Taft Hill lot to the square or vice-versa. A small investment in this regard (perhaps from the parking benefit district discussed below) could better bind together the parking lot, the village

businesses, the Arboretum, and the many nearby transit, bikeshare, and carshare options.

- We also urge the City to begin the process of evaluating meters for the Taft Hill parking lot. We understand the City currently does not have meters in any municipal parking lot, but we expect with the better use of the core business spots and increasing demand for shopping in Roslindale, it will eventually become necessary to meter the public lot to ensure that spaces are always available and not overused. We suggest the City consider a model where shorter-term parking in the lot is free (e.g. 1-2 hours) while longer term stays incur a modest fee. Under current conditions, this lot is almost never full, but if it begins to fill up, we hope a solution can be put in place quickly to ensure proper turnover.
- Some of the parking spots in the area create safety hazards because they block drivers' views of pedestrians. [NACTO recommends eliminating parking within 20-25 feet of intersections to improve visibility](#), and we understand the City similarly has a 20-foot "daylighting" standard. Currently, almost none of the street crossings in our neighborhood meet these safety standards. We call attention especially to the following crossings as particularly dangerous that warrant daylighting as part of this plan:
  - South Street and Taft Hill Terrace on the eastern side of the intersection, adjacent to the medical center. This crossing is particularly important to complement the goal of encouraging use of the Taft Hill parking lot for longer term parking. It should be easy, safe, and convenient for drivers to cross South Street after parking in the Taft Hill lot.
  - Washington Street and Basile Street on both sides of the intersection.
  - Washington Street Northbound at Murray Hill Road and Bexley Road.
  - Both of the Corinth Street crossings from the Village Market parking lot.
- Under the proposed changes, it appears Poplar Street will have 1-2 pickup/dropoff/delivery spots in addition to the bus stop. It thus will play a very minor role in providing parking capacity. Longer term, the City should consider either completely pedestrianizing Poplar Street or converting it to a [woonerf](#) where the only vehicle access would be for deliveries and emergency vehicles. This would ideally occur in conjunction with restoring Washington Street to a two-way street through Roslindale, which we believe would substantially improve pedestrian safety, eliminate unnecessary congestion, and better facilitate through-traffic on a major bus artery.
- We note the plan does not specifically address the many private parking spaces in the area. These spaces have been poorly managed for years but could play a crucial role in improving the parking landscape. We suggest the City consider the following, in particular:
  - Work with the MBTA to facilitate parking outside of peak commuter hours. The upper and lower MBTA lots are never full, and are particularly empty on evenings and weekends, but only provide a single rate for full-day parking. Allowing these

- lots to be used for free or inexpensive short-term off-hours parking would increase their utilization and enable those who need to drive to the square to easily and reliably find a convenient space.
- Work with Citizens Bank to eliminate illegal parking in its space adjacent to the Taft Hill lot. Drivers often park in this area for hours, including in areas that are not even designated for parking, creating safety hazards for pedestrians and other drivers attempting to pass through the lot.
  - Work with Village Market to eliminate illegal parking and driving in its lot. The Village Market lot is a major pedestrian route through Roslindale Square. In addition to illegal parking, it is also subject to frequent illegal driving as drivers ignore the one-way signs, exiting the lot at Corinth Street or entering at South Street, both of which endanger pedestrian (and driver) safety.
- The prior entrance to Birch Street from Corinth Street is currently regularly abused to hold two or sometimes even three vehicles (parked in parallel or perpendicular to traffic). These vehicles block pedestrian access across the sidewalks and the crosswalks of both Birch and Corinth. As Birch Street is to be configured with more permanent pedestrian structures this Summer, we strongly recommend that some approach be taken to provide immovable decorative obstructions in this space, which is level with the parking land, and not the sidewalk. Three large planters, such as found in areas of downtown Boston, would likely be very effective at low cost. A similar approach would also be effective at the Belgrade Avenue/Birch Street junction, which is abused in the same way.
  - Finally, consider making Roslindale a model for a [parking benefit district](#). Several Boston neighborhoods do not yet have paid parking, leading to frustration and conflict over scarce spaces and hurting neighborhood businesses. While we believe over time communities will appreciate the incentive for turnover created by parking meters, some may initially object to having to pay for what used to be “free.” Investing parking revenue back into the neighborhood where it is collected will help build neighborhood support, particularly if the funds are used to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and transit infrastructure.

We are happy to discuss any of these suggestions in more detail. Thank you for your consideration.

*About WalkUP Roslindale:*

*WalkUP Roslindale, which takes its name from the international movement to foster “Walkable Urban Places,” is a collaborative group of Roslindale residents and business owners 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 our board of directors and have over five hundred additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at [walkuproslindale.org](http://walkuproslindale.org).*