



with



Poplar Street Walk Audit, Roslindale, MA

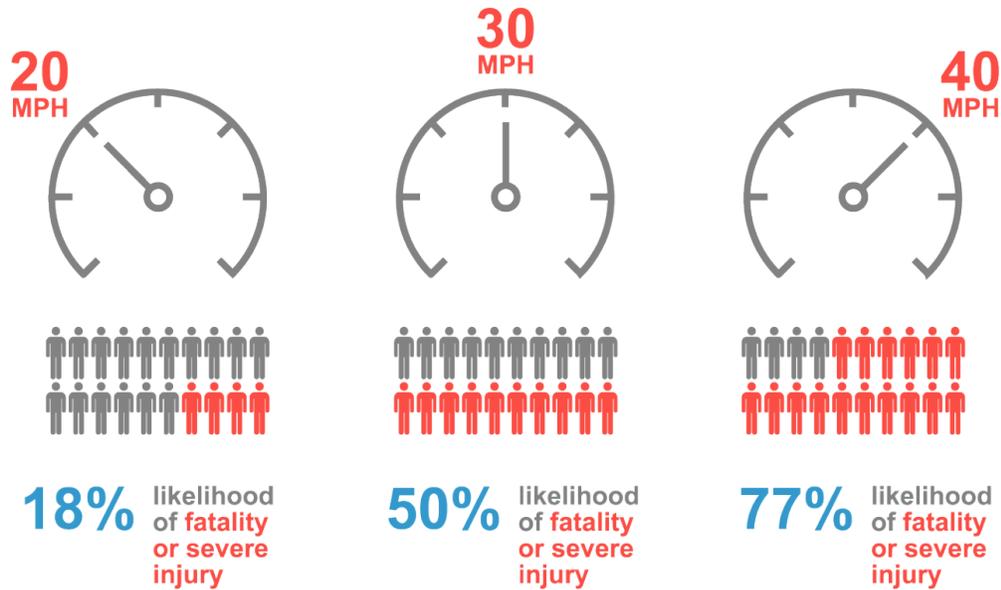
WalkBoston with WalkUP Roslindale

Issue Date: 15 August 2022

WalkBoston was invited by WalkUP Roslindale to help lead a walk audit on May 7th to examine existing conditions and discuss ideas for street safety improvements on Poplar Street, from Roslindale Square to the intersection with Hautevale Street. We were joined by about 15 neighborhood residents along with District 5 City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo and several of his staff, Boston's Chief of Streets Jascha Franklin-Hodge, and Boston's Active Transportation Director Stefanie Seskin. The group divided into two teams with WalkUP Roslindale's Matt Lawlor leading the team looking at the area near the George Conley Elementary School (from Hautevale Street to Whitford Street) and WalkBoston's Wendy Landman leading the team looking at Poplar from Roslindale Square to Whitford Street.

How to Make Poplar Street Safer and More Walkable

Slowing traffic speed is the most important method of increasing pedestrian safety and creating walkable neighborhoods. As shown in the graphic below, the benefit to pedestrian safety of slowing traffic from 30 mph to 20 mph is enormous. Not only is the severity of injury and death reduced, but because drivers have a much wider cone of vision when they are moving more slowly. They are able to see pedestrians and crashes are accordingly avoided.



Overall Observations and Suggestions

The most significant problems and some potential fixes identified during the walk are summarized below:

- **Slow vehicular traffic** on all of Poplar Street, especially between Grew Avenue and Hautevale Street, to improve the safety of all street users, especially vulnerable street users on foot, bike, or non-vehicular personal mobility devices by:
 - Tightening the corners at most of the intersections along Poplar Street to slow turning vehicle drivers
 - Adding speed humps where appropriate to slow vehicular traffic between intersections
 - Adding raised intersections on the side streets where they adjoin Poplar
 - Adding fog lines or parking lane lines between Grew Avenue and Hautevale Street as a possible low-cost way to narrow the travel lanes
- **Improve and add pedestrian crossings**
 - The most critical crossing is the intersection of Poplar and Cornell Street where many children cross to the Conley School
 - In the many blocks of Poplar Street between Roslindale Square and Canterbury - approximately 3,000 feet - there is only a single, non-standard crosswalk at Florence Street. Safe, ADA compliant,

preferably raised crosswalks should be added in locations near the senior housing at Roslindale House and the Poplar Street Park

- **School pick-up/drop-off**
 - Built environment and street management tools should be identified to better manage and improve the safety of pick-up and drop-off periods at the Conley School
- **Sidewalk condition and accessibility** should be improved for all sidewalks and crosswalks along Poplar Street.

WalkUP Roslindale will pursue follow-up on the walk audit and work with the residents and Conley school parents who called for this effort to make the neighborhood safer for students at the school and for all neighborhood residents using Poplar Street.

Detailed Observations

Roslindale Square to Grew Avenue

- Sight lines at the Poplar/Washington intersection should be improved - consider tightening the southeastern corner and prevent illegal parking in the crosswalk.
- Review the signal phasing and timing at the Poplar/Washington intersection to maximize the clarity for all intersection users and to maximize pedestrian crossing times
- Adjust the single crosswalk at Florence Street to straighten and shorten the crossing distance. This will likely require some reconstruction to modify drainage and add curb ramps or raise this crosswalk - this intersection is adjacent to the senior housing at Roslindale House and is therefore especially important
- Adding a center stripe between Sycamore and Canterbury would provide a visual cue about lane width and help to slow traffic. It would also signal to drivers that there may be oncoming traffic and encourage them to keep to the right.
- Tightening the corners at Augustus Avenue, Sherman Street, Delano Park, Hillburn Street, and Canterbury Street would substantially slow vehicular traffic and shorten crossing distances.
- Speed humps, placed at appropriate intervals between intersections, should be considered for the entire length of this section of Poplar.
- Specific concerns were raised by participants about poor visibility at several intersections, including the Hillburn/Poplar intersection (described as a “complete blindspot”) looking toward Canterbury, which makes taking a left from Hillburn onto Poplar a very dangerous proposition, and, in the participant’s own experience, creates near head-on crashes several times a day, and the

Brown/Poplar intersection, where the street narrows considerably and the sidewalk, which sees heavy use, is quite narrow as well.

- The WALK light timing and phasing at Poplar/Canterbury should be reviewed and adjusted to better serve pedestrians.

Area near Conley Elementary School

Poplar after Canterbury (the hilly part) - This street is wide, encouraging people to drive much faster than the 25 mph speed limit, both uphill and downhill. Parked cars help to calm traffic, though on this stretch people tend to park partly on the sidewalk (to protect against being hit by the speeding drivers). Any changes to the street (narrowing, fog lines which leave a parking lane, speed tables) that will reduce speed would be useful and should be considered.

There was much discussion about the Conley School dropoff issues, for which a separate follow-on discussion among parents, school staff, and BTD staff is needed. One potential nearby example to consider is the allowance of resident-only vehicular access now in place on Basile Street for pick-up and drop-off periods at the Sumner School.

Several observations and suggestions were made about bike facilities that could be explored when design of Poplar Street safety improvements are undertaken.

- On Poplar between Washington and Sycamore (the part that's one-way), parking should be moved over to the right hand side, and a contraflow bike lane installed on the left (similar to the recently installed and well-received lane on Mt. Hope Street in eastern Roslindale).
- This might reduce the illegal parking near Washington St. since the most desirable spots (next to PS Gourmet, which could be posted for 10 or 15 minutes) would be legal, and if people parked in the bike lane it would be more obvious that it's not permitted.
- This would provide a much better bike connection than "right on Sycamore, left on Cummins, and figure out what the heck to do when you get to the light at Washington" as described by one walk participant.