



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

Mar 7, 2025

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

City of Boston
One City Hall Plaza, 9th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
Attention: Michael Brohel, Director of Basic City Services
(michael.brohel@boston.gov) and Mayor Michelle Wu
(michelle.wu@boston.gov) (mayor@boston.gov)

Dear Mayor Wu and Director Brohel,

This week, Mayor Wu admirably defended our city, its values, and its people before the United States Congress' House Oversight Committee. We share in the pride that Boston is the safest major city in the United States - and **street safety is a critical and everyday part of that safety.**

We are thus concerned by the administration's announcement of a 30-day Review of street safety improvements, which has created deep concern among residents who hope to be able to travel safely on all modes of transportation on our city's streets. Boston's dedicated bus lanes, speed humps, bike lanes, and pedestrian-focused infrastructure are all results of decades of advocacy from concerned citizens, community meetings, and sustained engagement. The removal of any piece of this vital infrastructure based on a 30-Day Review would be both demoralizing and counterproductive. This is especially so in a time where the federal government is recklessly slashing safety-related programs and infrastructure. We are counting on our City government to avoid contributing further to this atmosphere of fear, danger, and uncertainty. We would be happy to take part in the conversation and demonstrate the benefits of the safer street infrastructure.

We are especially grateful for the progress in street safety infrastructure that we have seen in Boston, and specifically Roslindale, in recent years.

- The Washington Street rush hour bus lanes that run between Forest Hills and Roslindale Square have [made a difference](#) for thousands of Boston residents, who are bus riders, *despite* drivers habitually obstructing them. Instead of considering the removal of bus lanes that are currently being prevented from realizing their full potential due to illegal parking, we should focus on solutions like expediting the implementation of automated enforcement cameras on buses. These cameras would ensure that bus lanes serve their intended purpose—providing faster travel times and safe, efficient boarding and disembarking for the bus-riding population. People who just need to get to work, shop, and access all of the services and amenities that our city has to offer and then return home deserve unobstructed bus routes and reliable public transit to do so.
- Speed humps installed as part of the Safety Surge and Slow Streets programs have reduced vehicle speeds throughout Roslindale’s neighborhoods, making them more walkable, bikeable, and simply safer to live in. The efficient and equitable city-wide implementation of the Safety Surge is particularly impressive, and demonstrates the value of data-driven projects over drawn-out community engagement that risks heightening the unfounded fears of a minority averse to change and derailing safety improvements that would benefit all street users.
- The traffic calming and protected bike lanes on American Legion Highway have been very effective at keeping vehicular speeds down, increasing pedestrian safety at intersections, and allowing people on bikes safe passage to eastern Roslindale’s stores and to Franklin Park and beyond (such as our local commuters to UMass Boston). After the initial repainting, drivers continued to block the lanes: it took the flex posts for drivers to respect the new parking and traffic patterns. The [unexplained removal of protective barriers from new bikeways is alarming](#). The day they came down, vehicles were immediately left obstructing the bike lanes and people who carefully planned a safe route were forced into the dangerous interaction with traffic at points where lawful drivers were not expecting them. We should be working to maintain and expand such physical barriers to ensure predictable traffic patterns for drivers and reduce points of conflict between people driving and biking.
- Finally, the City has invested time and money, and has broad support for its Roslindale Squares + Streets initiative, which relies on keeping *and*

expanding the infrastructure that makes Roslindale accessible, both for the transportation safety component and to accommodate the increase in housing and commercial space that we desperately need.

These pieces of infrastructure are not only crucial in making an efficient and safe city for its residents, but also are a critical piece of our city's climate resiliency plan, which we believe Mayor Wu still supports. With thoughtful use and expansion of public transport, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, the City is addressing the issues of local safety, and global/local climate change with simple and effective solutions.

We urge your administration to reaffirm its commitment to street safety by preserving and expanding the infrastructure that protects lives and promotes accessibility. The progress achieved in recent years should not be undone but built upon to create a safer, more resilient and more equitable Boston. We encourage the City to keep all of the safe streets infrastructure that currently supports walking, cycling, and transit, and where such infrastructure is currently only temporary - such as where only flexposts have been used to delineate a separated bike lane - to make it permanent as soon as possible. We are eager to meet with your administration to provide direct testimony on the benefits of recent street safety improvements, and to ensure the community's voice and concerns are well represented.

Sincerely,

WalkUP Roslindale Board of Directors

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 thirty residents and have nearly 1,000 additional supporters. More information about WalkUP Roslindale and our initiatives can be found at www.walkuproslindale.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 above) resulting from our mission and principles.

Copy to:

Chief of Staff Tiffany Chu (tiffany.chu@boston.gov)

Chief of Streets Franklin Hodge (jascha.franklin-hodge@boston.gov)

Director of Policy and Planning Vineet Gupta (vineet.gupta@boston.gov)

Roslindale Liaison Josh McCorkle (joshua.mccorkle@boston.gov)

District 5 City Councilor Enrique Pepén (enrique.pepen@boston.gov)

City Council President and Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijene (ruthzee.louijeune@boston.gov)

City Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia (julia.mejia@boston.gov)

City Councilor At-Large Erin J. Murphy (erin.murphy@boston.gov)

City Councilor At-Large Henry Santana (henry.santana@boston.gov)

Director of Stakeholder Engagement Mohammed Missouri (mohammed.missouri@boston.gov)