

Blue Hill Ave

Transportation Action Plan

Community Engagement Report



PREPARED BY

Grayscale Collaborative

ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS

Public Sector (BHA Core)

Boston Transportation
Department (BTD)
Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority,
Transit Priority (MBTA Transit
Priority)
Boston Planning and
Development Agency (BPDA)

Community Organizations (BHA Core)

Garrison Trotter Neighborhood
Association
Greater Grove Hall Main
Streets
Greater Mattapan
Neighborhood Council
Mattapan Food and Fitness
Coalition
Mattapan Square Main Streets

Engagement Consultants (BHA Core)

Consult LeLa
Grayscale Collaborative
Powerful Pathways
Toole Design

Community Leaders

Boys and Girls Club of Boston
Franklin Park Coalition
Franklin Park Zoo
Harvard Street Neighborhood
Health Center
LivableStreets Alliance
Mattapan Community Health
Center
Mattapan Teen Center
Morning Star Baptist Church
Prince Hall Grand Lodge
Project R.I.G.H.T. Inc.
Reclaim Roxbury
Zoo New England

REAL TALK COMMUNITY FACILITATORS & CODERS

Aydan Johnson
Darell Alao
Darian Alao
Jacquie Martinez
Jocelyn McElrath
Karen Bunch
Leila Carter
Maia Raynor
Sharina Jones
Shavel'le Olivier
Shawntell Usher
Zee Brown

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

LivableStreets Alliance
Real Talk for Change - MIT
Department of Urban Studies
and Planning (DUSP)

PARTNER AGENCIES

Public Sector (City)

Boston Age Strong
Commission
Boston Environment
Department
Boston Parks and Recreation
Department
Boston Planning and
Development Agency
(BPDA)
Boston Public Works
Department
Boston Transportation
Department (BTD)
Mayor's Disabilities
Commission
Mayor's Office of Arts and
Culture
Mayor's Office of Economic
Opportunity and Inclusion
(OEI)
Mayor's Office of Housing
(MOH)
Mayor's Office of
Neighborhood Services
(ONS)
Mayor's Office of New Urban
Mechanics (MONUM)

Public Sector (State or Quasi-Public)

Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority
(MBTA)
Massachusetts Department of
Conservation and Recreation
(DCR)
Massachusetts Department of
Transportation (MassDOT)
Metropolitan Area Planning
Council (MAPC)

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Photo Credits: MBTA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Community members reached through passive¹ and direct outreach²



Months of continuous engagement



People directly engaged



Recorded comments



Local and State agencies engaged

This engagement report presents a comprehensive view of community priorities, concerns, and hopes documented in relation to the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan (BHA TAP). In many public engagement processes, there can be a tendency to conflate the individuals in a specific venue with “the community.”

This report provides a view of the community voices uplifted across all BHA TAP engagement activities. As shown here, these activities include direct outreach with over 2,800 residents, business owners and staff members, young people, bus riders, community organization representatives, and more. **This outreach total corresponds to over 12% of the total residential population living within a half mile of the project area.**

Across **over 2,000 recorded comments** - all of which are publicly available in anonymized form in the Appendix - **there were many areas of shared concern. These include:** safety concerns among travelers of all modes, a perceived lack of respect among travelers, the need to protect community members and businesses from potential negative impacts of infrastructure investment, and the need to support a thriving civic and commercial corridor along BHA. However, as shown in “Engagement Summary,” **there were differing approaches on how best to address those concerns.**

To facilitate more informed engagement and discussion, the project team shared **two alternative design approaches** to:

1. Demonstrate how design can support improvements to community life, safety, and overall well-being
2. Compare the effectiveness of a “multimodal corridor” approach vs. an “enhanced existing” approach in tackling these shared issue areas.

The information in this summary report will be shared with the broader public and with elected officials as part of a robust communications campaign in the fall of 2023. By the end of the year, the City will be responsible for the final decision on what type of street design to move forward with for Blue Hill Avenue. The Mayoral administration will make this decision in consultation with local elected officials, BTD, MBTA, other state and local partners, and community constituents.

The project team is looking forward to sharing out the takeaways from this report. **If you would like to get in touch, please email us at bluehillave@boston.gov or call us at 617-635-3944.**

TARGETED ENGAGEMENT OUTREACH

To ensure comprehensive and inclusive engagement, the BHA TAP team invested in a number of targeted outreach methods to connect with people typically under-represented in transportation planning projects. Specifically, this included **young people, bus riders, and bus operators - many of whom were new to planning processes before the BHA TAP.**

While these perspectives were varied and nuanced, there were a number of collective experiences and themes that came out of this targeted engagement. The full set of engagement takeaways are shown in “Engagement Summary,” but **the following came most directly from young people, bus riders, and bus operators:**



I'm a young person!



I'm a bus operator!



I'm a bus rider!



1. In general, travelers of all modes noted multiple challenges and frustrations when moving along this stretch of BHA. **For these groups, the concerns were largely based on concerns about personal safety and bodily harm due to speeding or other illegal driving behaviors.**



2. **Transit service and reliability is about more than convenience - it is directly linked to access to services and opportunities.** Students noted times when they had been penalized or blamed by their school or by family members due to bus delays; some young people expressed feelings of dismay and apathy about going to school upon learning of significant transit delays. Other bus riders shared instances where they were late for jobs, healthcare appointments, or childcare pickup, due to unforeseen transit issues.



3. There are many reasons why people choose to drive, including physical ability, family arrangements, perceptions of safety, and convenience. **However, not all people had the ability to choose their primary mode of travel.** For example, many bus riders did not explicitly “choose” to use public transit, but did so by default - either because of lack of access to a car or rideshare, age, travel distance, or physical ability.

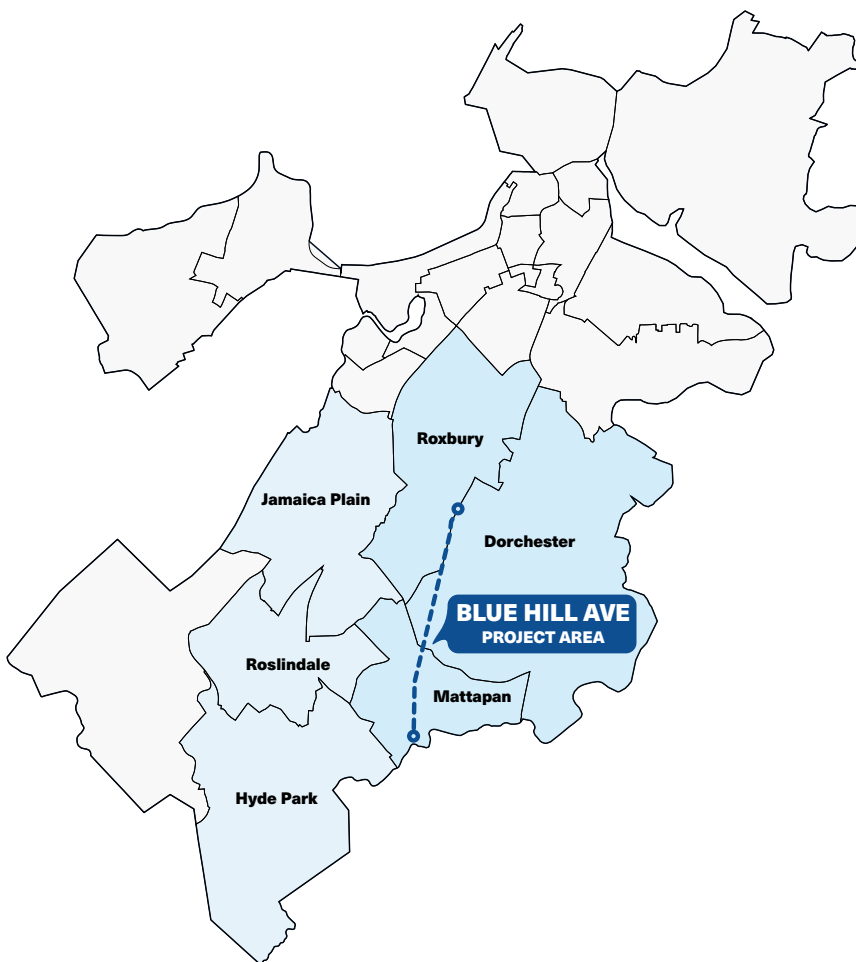
In most cases, these were individuals speaking on behalf of themselves rather than previously-organized community groups or interests. For this reason, in-person and direct engagement methods (see “Engagement Methods” - *Real Talk, Complete Streets Deetz workshops, bus rider survey, bus operator interviews, street team outreach*) tended to be more effective than passive or virtual outreach methods.



Photo Credit: Graham Moitoso

INTRODUCTION

Blue Hill Ave (“BHA” or “the Avenue”) has long been a major street in Boston, connecting people and opportunities as well as featuring some of the City’s most important civic and cultural hubs. Today, the Avenue is one of the busiest transportation corridors in Boston. Despite its role as a critical street, BHA is plagued by issues of congestion, transit delays, safety risks to travelers of all modes, and uneven maintenance, to name a few. **The Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan is focused on enhancing the experiences of people living, working, playing, or praying along the Avenue, by ensuring that its design and function respond to present-day concerns and create a foundation for future thriving and success.**



To date, the City of Boston (“the City”) has not landed on a final design decision for BHA. The BHA TAP engagement process has surfaced a wide range of opinions and priorities, some of which overlap and some of which are in direct conflict with one another. This report provides a detailed overview of the goals, methods, and takeaways from the engagement process, including a copy of all feedback collected during the 20+ month campaign (see Appendix).

When the BHA TAP process was formally announced, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) outlined values around “co-empowerment and trust,” long-term relationship-building, and meaningful partnerships with the City and community member groups.³

The BHA TAP engagement process has marked a series of firsts for the Boston Transportation Department (BTD):



Putting engagement & partnership-building before design.

The City intentionally began this process with engagement, not as a checklist item on a larger design contract, but instead as a separate and distinct activity. This decision was made so that the project team had the space to build or strengthen relationships within Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, and so that a broad collection of community feedback could inform the final design concept. One of the core public commitments behind this process was that public funding will be allocated based on public feedback.



Supporting holistic planning & collaboration, not just transportation.

BTD has consistently reaffirmed their view of transportation as a connector, rather than the end goal in itself. Throughout the engagement process, the project team has convened a series of cross-departmental meetings with local and state agencies to connect the BHA TAP work to housing, economic development, green infrastructure, and more.



Providing data transparency at every stage.

The project team has folded in community leaders since the beginning of the engagement process, and has developed engagement tactics and methods in direct response to community questions and feedback. In addition, BTD has translated and published all internal decision-making documents and presentations for public review.



Facilitating community-supported data analysis.

The engagement process generated a large set of qualitative data. To synthesize themes and connect patterns across all the feedback collected, the consultant team invited community residents into processing these data. This ultimately informed the development of Real Talk themes ([see website](#)) as well as the analytical framework for this very report (see “Engagement Summary: What We Heard”).

Notably, this document does not include design or policy recommendations. Rather, it presents a comprehensive view of community priorities, concerns, and hopes documented in relation to the BHA TAP. These include perspectives expressed on behalf of individuals, as well as others who self-identified as speaking on behalf of a broad organization, community, or other interest group. As detailed further in “Engagement Summary: What We Heard,” there were as many points of shared concern as there were differing opinions on how to address those concerns.

The information in this summary report will be shared with the broader public and with elected officials as part of a robust communications campaign in the fall of 2023. **By the end of the year, the City - namely, the Mayoral administration - will specify the final design direction in consultation with local elected officials, BTD, MBTA, other state and local partners, and community constituents.**





Photo Credit: Graham Moitosa



Photo Credit: MBTA



Photo Credits: Graham Moitosa

PROCESS OF COLLABORATION

- 1. A Different Kind of Planning Process**
- 2. Community Conversations & The “BHA Core”**



PROCESS OF COLLABORATION

The following section provides:

An overview of how and with whom BTD oversaw the BHA TAP engagement process (“A Different Kind Of Planning Process”; “Community Conversations & The 'BHA Core'”).

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PLANNING PROCESS

From the beginning, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) was interested in supporting a different kind of engagement and planning process for the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan (BHA TAP). The original Request for Proposals outlined a specific scope for engagement - as a distinct precursor to the design process - as well as high-level values around “co-empowerment and trust,” long-term relationship-building, and meaningful partnerships with City and community actors.

What We Did:

1. Local leadership was represented within the consultant team. BTD worked with an entirely Boston-based team, with 50% of the consultant principals identifying as residents of the corridor.

Team Leadership

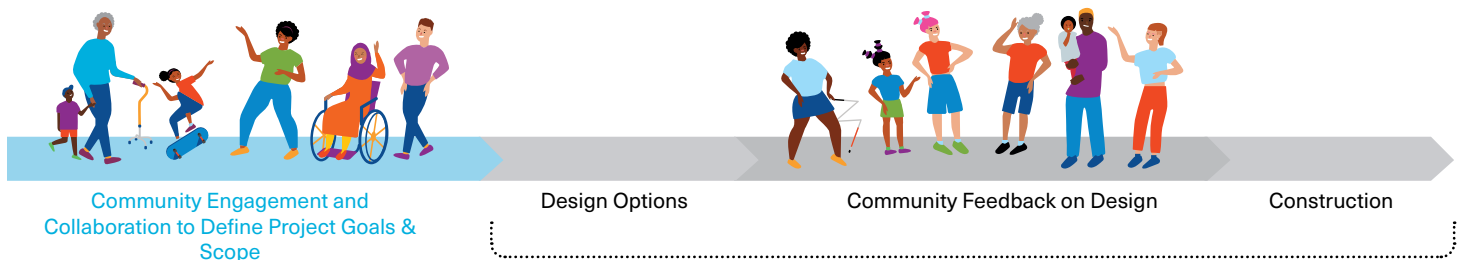
100%

Boston based team

50%

residents of the BHA corridor

Our Engagement Process



Typical Engagement Process

In a typical engagement process, engagement begins after design and scope development.

2. Community leaders were at the decision-making table throughout the engagement process. This initially took the form of small-group discussions with the consultant team, which later evolved into a **cross-sector planning group** (“the BHA core”) consisting of:

- + Boston Transportation Department
- + The consultant team: Grayscale Collaborative, Powerful Pathways, Consult LeLa, Toole Design
- + Partner agencies: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)
- + A network of community leaders based around BHA - fluctuating membership which included: Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association, Greater Grove Hall Main Streets, Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Mattapan Square Main Streets
- + In addition, community constituents (individuals who live, work, or play along BHA) led a number of small-group, intimate conversations (“Real Talks”) with their peers; these facilitators also informed the creation of the engagement analysis framework through a community coding workshop.

3. BTD convened topic-specific and recurring checkpoints with City, state, and regional partners to support project coordination. This included: Arts & Culture, Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR), Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Mayor’s Office of Housing (MOH), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion (OEIO). See “Engagement Summary: Engagement Methods” for more details.

4. The core team oversaw a diversity of engagement methods to allow for both in-depth and broad outreach. This group

focused on accessibility, transparency, and targeted outreach and activation. The BHA TAP engagement process captured feedback from a range of voices, including well-known civic leaders as well as those who had participated in a planning process for the first time. The specific methods and engagement goals are detailed further in “Engagement Summary.”

5. The project team dedicated half of the project budget to go back into community. (See call-out box below.)

COMMUNITY COMPENSATION

Community wisdom and labor drive all engagement processes. For the BHA TAP, the project team provided community partners with the option to accept compensation on behalf of their organization or themselves. This included folks who were part of the BHA core, bimonthly discussions, or otherwise provided strategic guidance, outreach support, or direct engagement support.

While some opted for no compensation, others opted for hours worked or in-kind services valued at an hourly rate equal to that of the consultant team.



50%

of the project budget was set aside for community members

COMMUNITY LEADER CONVERSATIONS & THE “BHA CORE”

The consultant team kicked off the BHA TAP engagement process with a series of one-on-one conversations with a range of community leaders.

These included neighborhood associations, faith-based representatives, advocacy organizations, youth-serving organizations, and recreational institutions. As the project progressed, the discussions honed in more specifically on the concerns, questions, and hopes of community leaders and their respective networks. (See call-out box for a list of the orgs we spoke to.)

These conversations culminated in a series of three visioning workshops, which outlined:

1. Primary issues along this stretch of BHA



- Unsafe sidewalks
- Lack of access to health facilities due to traffic congestion
- Double and triple parking; not enough parking for persons with disabilities
- Commuters using business and resident parking spots
- Limited public realm areas, some “green” medians are the only green spaces in the area
- Air quality, particularly around busy intersections

2. Definitions of “success” for the BHA TAP project



- Center quality of life, health, and safety (heat islands, air quality, pedestrian safety, green space)
- Ensure this project makes it convenient and reliable to access businesses, services, and cultural centers
- One size doesn’t fit all for Blue Hill Ave. How can we tailor change to the needs of particular locales?

ORGS WE SPOKE TO 1 ON 1

Franklin Park Coalition
Franklin Park Zoo
Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association
Greater Grove Hall Main Streets
Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council
Mattapan Community Health Center
Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
Mattapan Square Main Streets
Mattapan Teen Center
Morning Star Baptist Church
Project R.I.G.H.T. Inc.

3. Geographies of focus



- Geneva Ave and BHA
- Seaver St and BHA
- Columbia Rd and BHA
- Glenway St and BHA
- Talbot Ave and BHA
- Morton St and BHA
- Woodrow Ave and BHA
- Mattapan Square
- and more...

4. Key constituents (including those typically missing from the proverbial table).



- Residents of public housing
- Seniors
- Families with young children
- Youth/Students
- Businesses + shoppers
- Churches
- Health Centers
- Developers and building owners
- Bicyclists/Drivers/Bus Riders

Collaboration Diagram



All organizations who participated in the workshops were invited to join the weekly planning meetings with BTD, MBTA, BPDA, and the consultants as part of the “BHA core.” Some joined the core, while others opted for regular updates and opportunities to provide input to the project team. Participation across the BHA core varied throughout the project timeline, with different organizations stepping in and out of the core depending on interest and capacity.

Ultimately, the BHA core shaped the engagement strategy, goals, outreach materials, and implementation tactics for the BHA TAP. The consultants leveraged their own local connections as well as those of the community partners to manage a range of

engagement activities, and to enhance outreach and awareness throughout the project timeline.

As an ancillary outcome, the core team created a space for dialogue between BTD and community advocates, including skeptics or outright critics of the BHA TAP. **In some ways, the BHA core provided a window into the wide diversity of opinions and emotions expressed throughout the engagement process.** This process provided the City with many opportunities to gain a comprehensive view of public sentiments. The “Engagement Summary” section of this report provides a bird’s eye view of the tapestry of community voices and experiences uplifted through the BHA TAP engagement process.



Photo Credits: Graham Moitoso

PROJECT CONTEXT

- 1. Why We Collaborated this Way**
- 2. The (Abbreviated) History of BHA**
- 3. Data Snapshots of BHA Today**



PROJECT CONTEXT

The following section provides:

An outline of the background motivations for setting up this particular process of collaboration (“Why Did We Collaborate In This Way?”), an overview of planning history around BHA (“The (Abbreviated) History Of BHA”), and a data snapshot of BHA today (“Data Snapshots of BHA Today”).

WHY WE COLLABORATED THIS WAY

The City and engagement team began this process by asking a few fundamental questions:

- Why is it important to undertake a different kind of engagement process for the BHA TAP?
- Why is it necessary to form an engagement team made up of local community leaders, local community organizations, and residents of the corridor, rather than a team solely comprised of external consultants?

Legacies of urban planning shape the context in which planning happens along the corridor today. These legacies are two fold.

1. First, there has been uneven infrastructural investment leading to material inequalities along the corridor. This inequality frames the current need for significant improvement.
2. Second, these histories live on in the memories of those who lived through them — from the mid-twentieth century until today.

The result is a context of perceived failed promises, feelings of governmental neglect, and a general distrust of urban planning processes. These histories, and this present, necessitated an alternative planning process, one which championed local expertise, shared planning power, and an engagement timeline that involved giving communities along Blue Hill Avenue the opportunity to weigh in on the project scope prior to design.



THE (ABBREVIATED) HISTORY OF BHA



Blue Hill Avenue and Arbutus Street.

October 21, 1929. Boston City Archives, Public Works Department photograph collection.

The neighborhoods along Blue Hill Avenue from Grove Hall to Mattapan Square developed slowly throughout the late 1800s, as immigrants moved out of the congested industrial city in search of a better quality of life. During this period development was limited by a reliance on horse-car lines of transportation between downtown Boston and these outlying neighborhoods. By the early 1900s, however, this all changed. Horse-car lines were replaced with an electrified rail system, which by 1906 serviced Blue Hill Avenue all the way to Mattapan Square.

From this time until the mid-twentieth century, neighborhoods surrounding the avenue grew exponentially. With this new transportation infrastructure came thriving commercial districts and affordable housing developments. During this period, the neighborhoods surrounding the avenue became home to a growing Jewish community, which by the 1920s occupied nearly 100% of the housing along the corridor.⁴



The G&G Deli was a Jewish establishment on Blue Hill Ave. and Ansel Rd. 1948. Global Boston, Boston College.

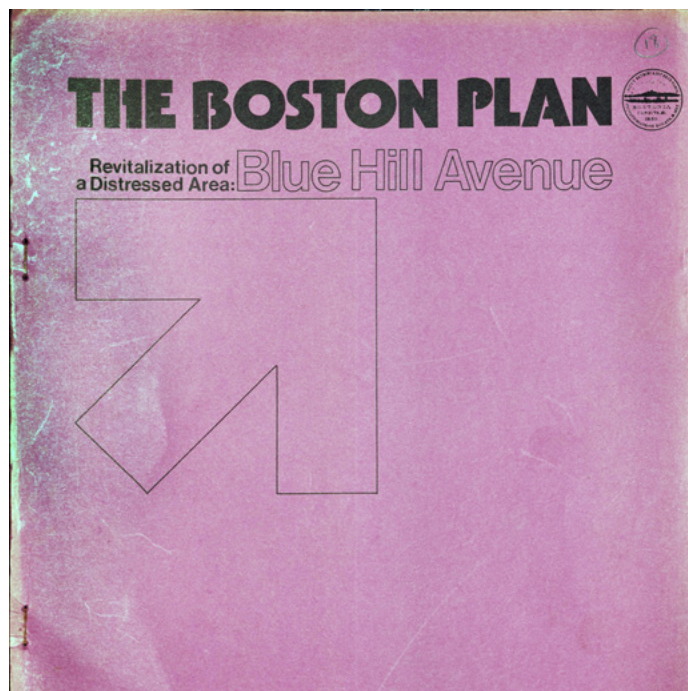
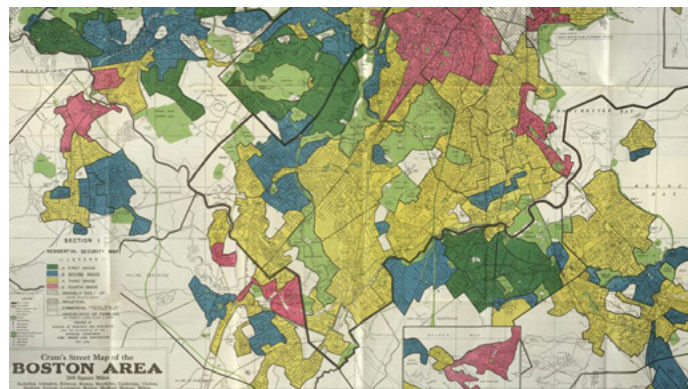


Morton Picture Theaters, Blue Hill Ave in Dorchester. 1942. Boston Public Library Arts Department, Boston Pictorial Archive.

This all changed in the mid-twentieth century. Federally funded policies, enacted as part of the 1949 Housing Act, subsidized suburban development for white families — catalyzing a period of “white flight” from city centers. With this came an increase in car traffic from the suburbs into downtown Boston along Blue Hill Avenue. Simultaneously, this same Act drove low income and substandard housing development along the Avenue and emboldened processes of blockbusting in its surrounding neighborhoods — racist private and state real estate policies that disproportionately affected Black and Brown residents.

As Black residents were forced out of other areas of Boston due to the effects of Urban Renewal and Redlining, they began to build communities along Blue Hill Avenue. And with this demographic shift, state and local agencies moved to privilege white suburban traffic rather than local Black residents — by the early 1950s, rail line service was discontinued and replaced with buses to make way for cars coming from the suburbs. By the 1970s Blue Hill Avenue had transitioned from a predominantly Jewish community to the “Black Belt” of Boston.^{5,6}

Replicating similar processes across the nation, this demographic shift was met with divestment and governmental neglect. In more recent years, the areas surrounding Blue Hill Avenue have become home to growing Black and Brown immigrant communities. From 1970 until the early 2000s no large investments were made along Blue Hill Avenue from Grove Hall to Mattapan Square. This was promised to change in 2009.



Boston HOLC Map. 1938. University of Richmond, Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.

"The Boston Plan, Revitalization of a Distressed Area: Blue Hill Avenue." 1975. Boston City Archives, Box 139.

"Police check locked stores on Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan." 1971. Grant, Spencer. Boston Public Library Arts Department, Spencer Grant Collection.

28X

In 2009, remaining funds allocated to Massachusetts through the Federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) were set to expire. In an effort to make use of these funds before they expired, then Governor Deval Patrick, working with MassDOT and the MBTA, announced a proposal to convert the 28 bus, which runs the length of Blue Hill Ave, into a Silver Line bus. While the project promised dedicated bus lanes and improved rapid transit service, it was not supported by many in the community. Some residents and local businesses argued that increased fare prices associated with Silver Line service were being forced on low-income residents without sufficient evidence that bus service would be upgraded. Furthermore, residents argued the constrained timeline of the project had precluded meaningful community engagement — **there was a widespread perception that the project was being forced onto the community.** The backlash that ensued prompted local and state lawmakers to request that the State withdraw the proposal.^{7,8}

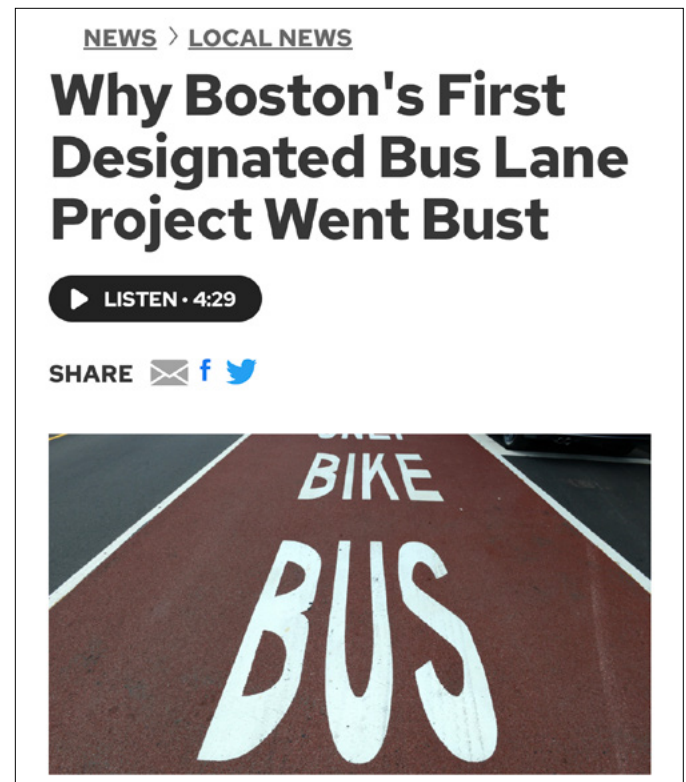
Despite the failures of the 28X planning process, the project did draw attention to transit inequity between Mattapan Square and the edge of the South End — one of the largest geographic areas not serviced by rapid transit in Boston. As a result, between 2011 and 2012 MassDOT conducted the Roxbury-Dorchester-Mattapan (RDM) Transit Needs study, which included conducting community surveys and three public meetings to identify publicly supported options to improve public transportation services along the corridor.⁹ The conversations generated through this work continued between 2013 and 2018 as part of Imagine Boston 2030 and Go Boston 2030, and in 2019 the city began the early stages of the BHA TAP.

It is important to note that both the 28X and RDM studies were run at the state level. In 2018

the City of Boston began to take a more active role and pivoted towards a focus on bus transit and equity focused transportation planning. While the MBTA is still collaborating with the City on project planning and implementation, the leadership shift from the state to city level was to ensure community voices would be better enfolded in the redesign process.



Proposed 28x transit line (yellow). 2009. MASS Streetsblog.



"Why Boston's First Designated Bus Lane Project Went Bust." July 18, 2019. WGBH News.

2019 BHA TAP Planning Process

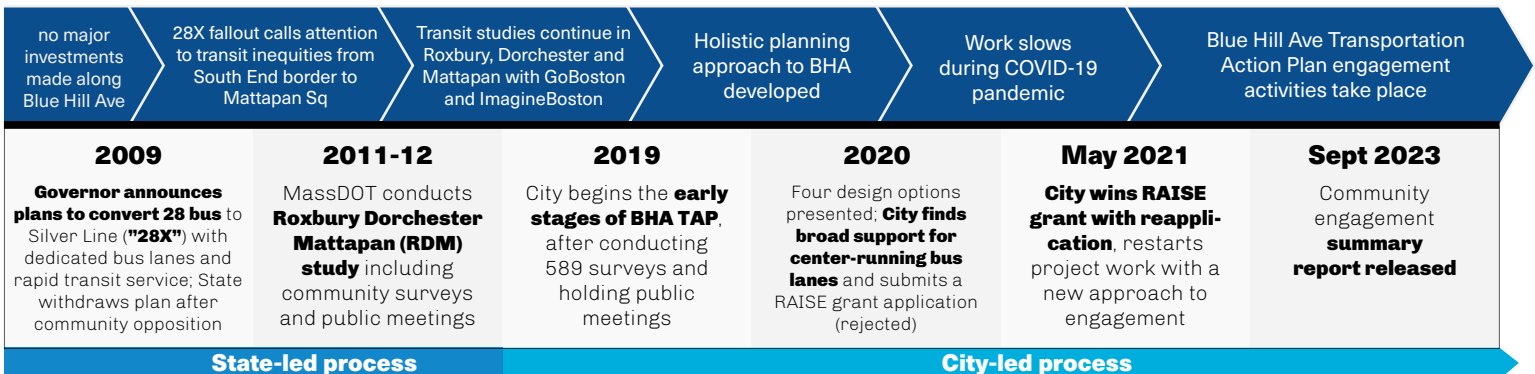
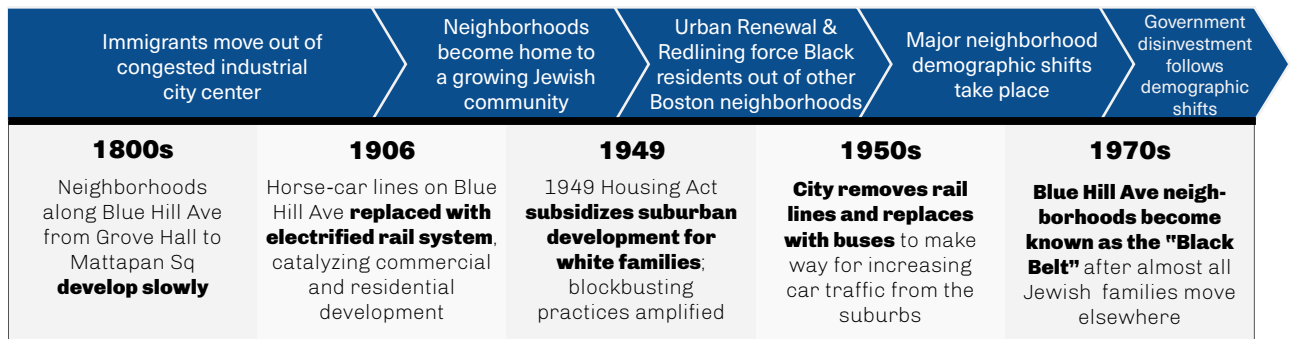
Between fall 2019 and summer 2020, the City initiated a planning effort rooted in a set of goals that responded to the feedback and follow-up conversations of 28X and the RDM study, specifically: **re-centering community voices, centering racial equity, designing with and for community members, and coordinating an interdepartmental approach.** During this period of work, the team focused on processes to ensure a holistic investment in BHA, with the aim of integrating transit improvements with planning for housing, local businesses, and more. In March of 2020, four design options were presented to residents.¹⁰ During this time, **the City found broad support by community participants for a multimodal corridor design** (specifically a design option that featured center running bus lanes), following the results of almost 600 surveys and 1,000+ comments collected over 120 engagement activities. In response, the City submitted a RAISE grant application to the Federal government in hopes of beginning work on BHA. This application was rejected. The project then entered a quiet period due to the Covid pandemic. In early 2021, the City decided

to begin the project anew, starting with a new approach to engagement. This period coincided with another, this time successful, **RAISE grant application** awarded in September 2021.¹¹

While this new phase of planning along the Avenue is distinct from previous planning efforts — the planning teams involved are different, as is the process — it builds upon the values and progress made in 2019-2020. The current engagement process has shown that, for residents along Blue Hill Avenue, this distinction requires convincing and significant relationship building. For some, the BHA TAP has been interpreted through the frame of 28X or even through extended histories of transportation planning - that is, as yet another phase of a longer process broadly understood to have been forced on the community.

It is because of this recent history, the longer history of unjust planning since the mid-century, and the ways these histories live on in the memory of residents, that an alternative — community centered — engagement and planning process was necessary for BHA TAP.

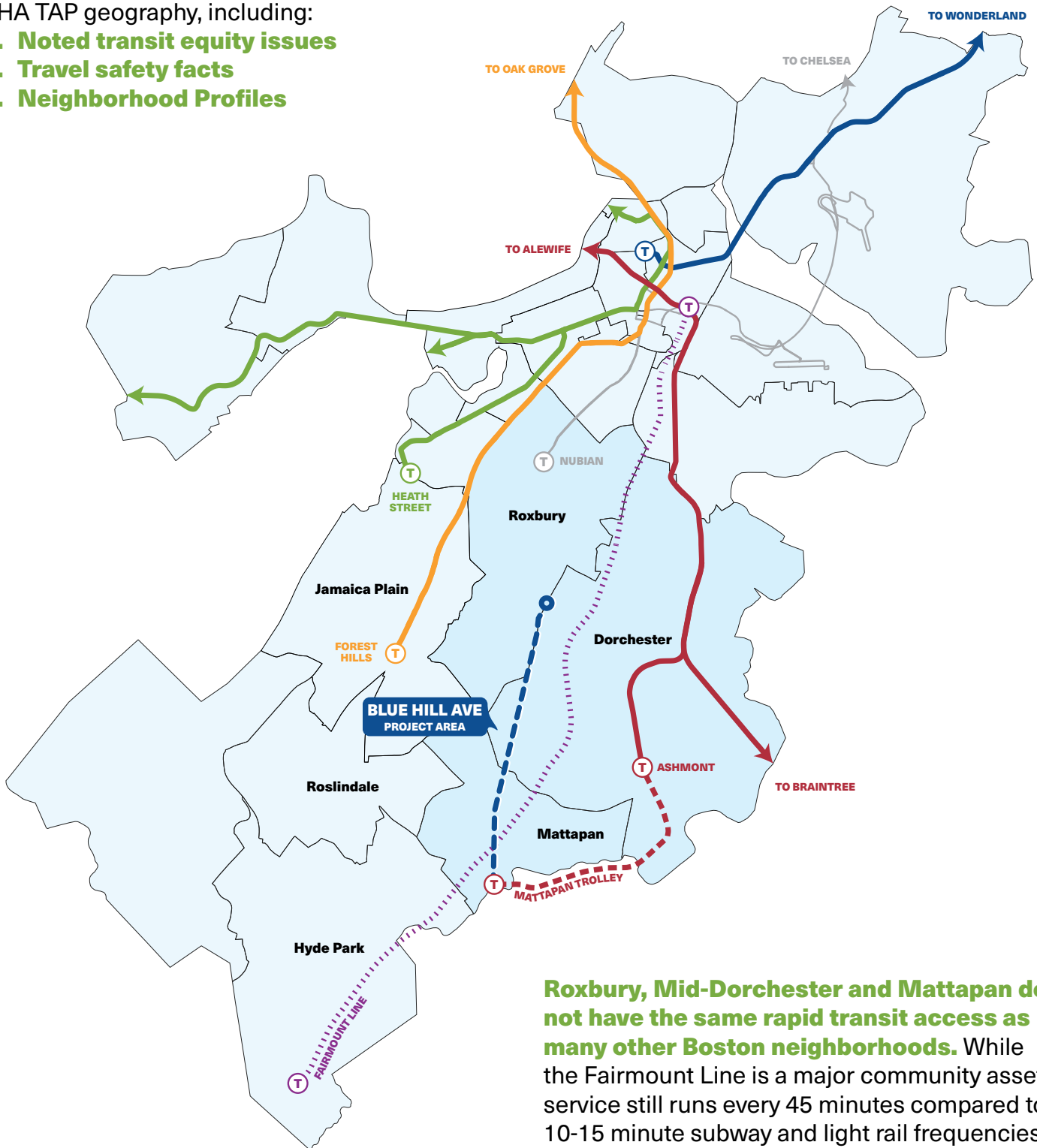
PROJECT TIMELINE



DATA SNAPSHOTS OF BHA TODAY

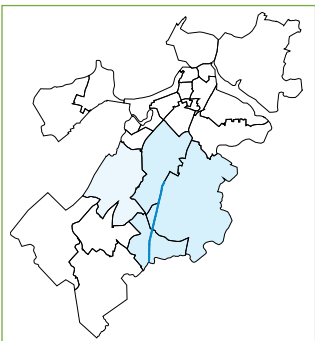
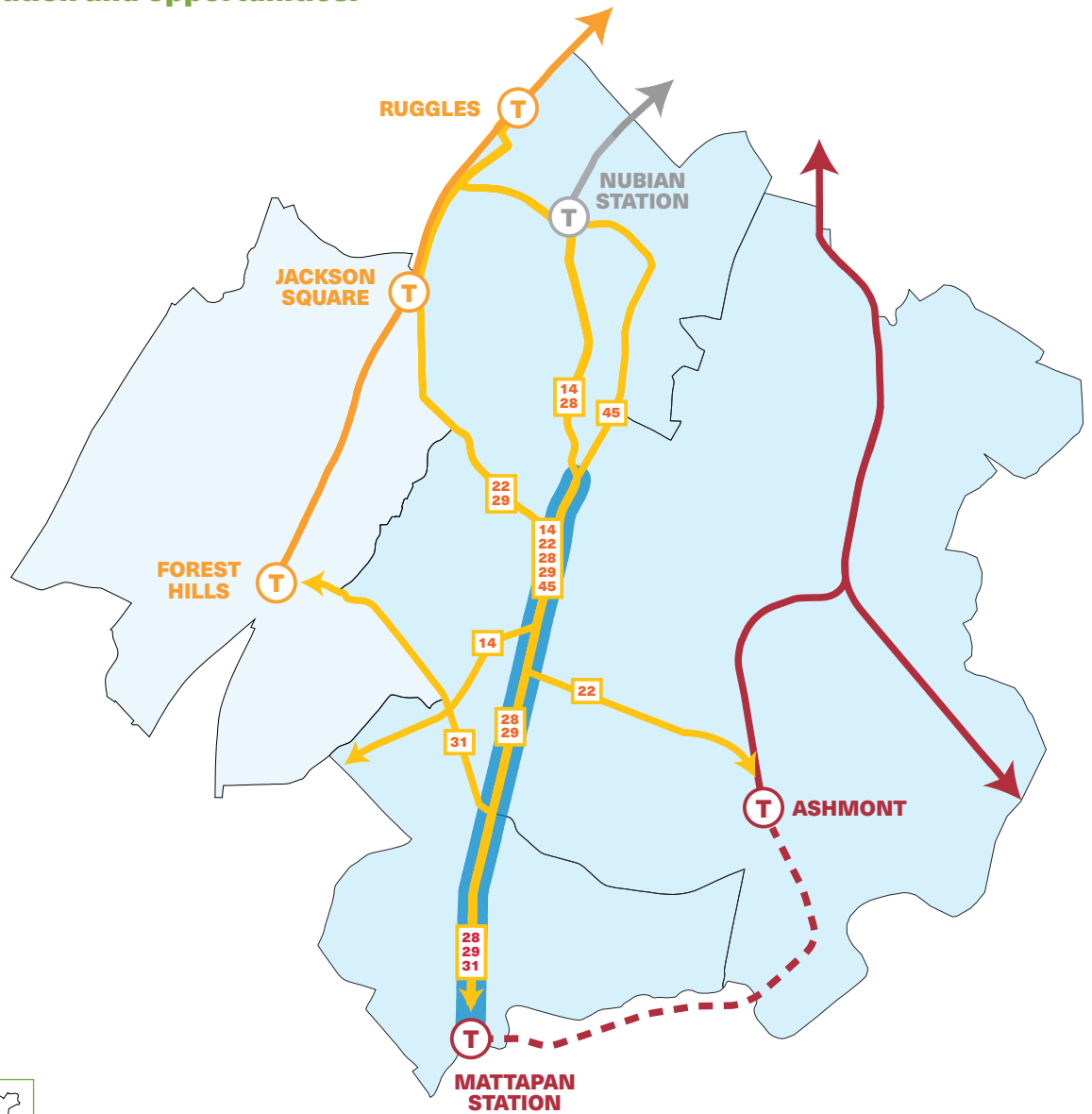
The following section provides a data-based snapshot of the communities surrounding the BHA TAP geography, including:

1. **Noted transit equity issues**
2. **Travel safety facts**
3. **Neighborhood Profiles**



Roxbury, Mid-Dorchester and Mattapan do not have the same rapid transit access as many other Boston neighborhoods. While the Fairmount Line is a major community asset, service still runs every 45 minutes compared to 10-15 minute subway and light rail frequencies.

Anywhere from two to five bus routes are traveling along Blue Hill Ave at any given time between Grove Hall and Mattapan Square. These buses, especially the 22, 23, 28 and 31, are some of the highest ridership routes in the entire MBTA network. **Riders are often using these buses to connect to rapid transit routes (such as the Orange or Red Lines) to access jobs, education and opportunities.**



DID YOU KNOW?

37,000

riders get on/off buses every weekday on BHA.



That's busier than any of the individual branches of the Green Line...¹⁴



...and one of the **highest ridership rates** on any corridor in the MBTA system.



It's also **2x the capacity of TD Garden!**¹²

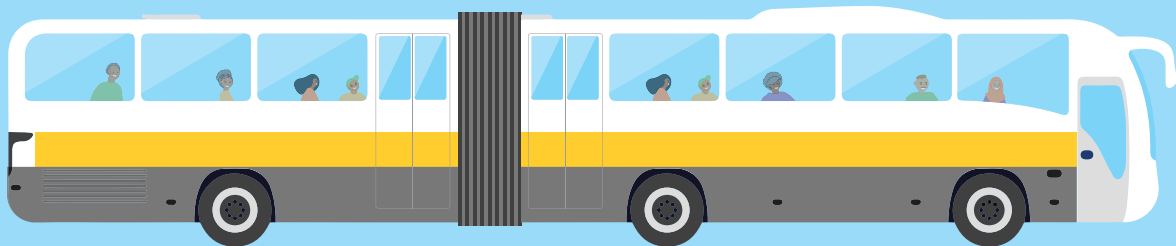


<p>5,000</p> <p>riders get on and off buses each weekday on BHA in and around Grove Hall.</p>	<p>12,000</p> <p>riders get on and off buses on BHA in Mattapan alone (south of Morton St.)¹³</p>
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DID YOU KNOW?



52% of the travelers on BHA during rush hour are riding buses!¹⁶



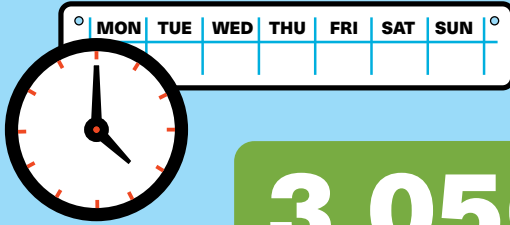
The 28 bus

The 28 carries more passengers than any other bus in New England!



4 of 5 Mattapan transit riders use an MBTA bus!¹⁵

DID YOU KNOW?



3,056

Hours per weekday are lost collectively by bus riders on BHA due to traffic and delays.¹⁷



In that amount of time, someone could walk from Boston, MA to Anchorage, AK, and back!¹⁸



64 more hours per year are spent by **Black bus riders on MBTA buses** compared to their fellow White passengers.¹⁹



BENEFITS OF BUS NETWORK REDESIGN

I don't have to transfer buses!



Riders along BHA will have **new, one-seat rides to high-demand destinations** like the Longwood Medical Area, Fenway, and Kenmore Square. **No transfer needed!**²⁰



2.7 - 6 min



A bus will come between every 2.7 and 6 minutes depending on where you are along BHA (faster in some locations due to more overlapping routes).²¹

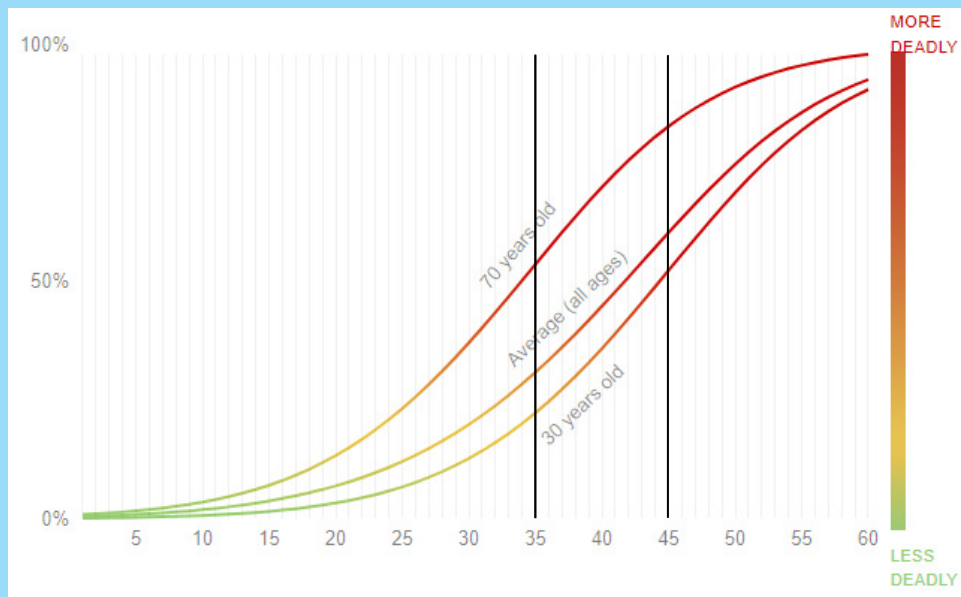
GROVE HALL

BUS



Grove Hall would see an increase of 193 bus trips per day.²²

TRAVEL SAFETY FACTS



Groeger, Lena. "Unsafe at many speeds," ProPublica, 2016 May 25.

In the past year:

- 10% of drivers traveling in the BHA project area were going 10 mph+ over the speed limit (i.e. **35 mph or greater**).
- 0.5% of all drivers were traveling at speeds over **45mph!**²³

Given the connection between higher vehicle speeds and risk of pedestrian deaths, these speeds are especially concerning on a corridor where many people must cross the street every day.²⁴



There is, on average, a crash requiring EMS every three days on Blue Hill Ave.²⁵ BHA is part of the [Vision Zero High Crash Network](#); the number of motor vehicle **crashes per half mile is in the top 3% of Boston's streets.**²⁶

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

Neighborhoods flanking the BHA corridor include some of the most diverse, majority-minority areas of the City.



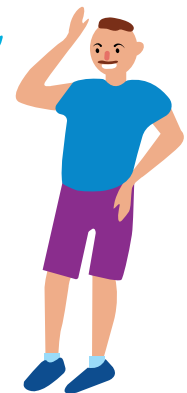
Racial representation²⁷

	MATTAPAN	DORCHESTER	ROXBURY	CITY OF BOSTON
Black or African American	74.4%	44.0%	50.3%	22.7%
Hispanic or Latino	14.1%	19.9%	30.7%	19.8%

The per-capita income of BHA neighborhoods is lower than citywide levels.

Per-Capita income²⁸

	MATTAPAN	DORCHESTER	ROXBURY	CITY OF BOSTON
Per-Capita Income	\$28,358	\$29,767	\$20,978	\$44,690



Mattapan and Dorchester residents have relatively greater access to vehicles compared to Roxbury or citywide rates.



Vehicles per household²⁹

	MATTAPAN	DORCHESTER	ROXBURY	CITY OF BOSTON
No Vehicle	24.8%	29.7%	45.3%	35.7%
1 Vehicle	45.1%	42.1%	37.7%	41.3%
2 Vehicles	24.6%	21.6%	12.8%	17.0%

BHA communities have higher rates of families with young children than do other areas of Boston.

Age³⁰

	MATTAPAN	DORCHESTER	ROXBURY	CITY OF BOSTON
0 - 17	23.9%	21.9%	19.2%	19.8%
18 - 19	2.2%	3.0%	4.6%	3.0%
20 - 34	22.0%	26.0%	29.1%	21.1%
35 - 59	33.0%	32.2%	29.2%	32.8%
60+	18.9%	17.0%	17.9%	23.2%





Boulevard
Cleaners · Tailors

Same

Wed

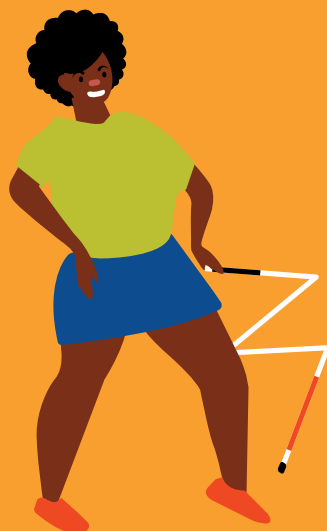
Photo Credit: Graham Moitoso



Photo Credit: MBTA

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- 1. Goals & Project Commitments**
- 2. Phasing**
- 3. Engagement Methods**
- 4. What We Heard**



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The following section provides:

An outline of the high-level engagement goals (“Goals and Project Commitments”), how the goals shifted over time (“Phasing”), and the specific methods and datasets used to support those goals (“Engagement Methods”). This section concludes with a comprehensive overview of what we heard and whom we heard from (“What We Heard”).

GOALS & PROJECT COMMITMENTS

Working in close coordination with community and public sector partners (the “BHA core” or “core group”), the project team conducted a long-term, intensive engagement campaign for the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan (January 2022 - September 2023).

Visioning Kick-Off

The engagement process kicked off with a set of community-led discussions and visioning workshops, which served the broad goals of:

- Understanding the landscape of community priorities, concerns, and baseline experiences with planning and transportation development along BHA
- Forging meaningful, cross-sector partnerships that would be capable of translating a broad range of community priorities into high-level goals and a cohesive engagement plan
- Laying the foundation for a transparent, accessible engagement process

Process Goals

The relationships and information gleaned from these discussions shaped the [high-level process goals for the BHA TAP engagement campaign to:](#)



- 1. Value community expertise:** By planning with organized community groups and interests

- 2. Conduct targeted outreach & activation:** By connecting with constituents who were relatively new to planning processes, or had been under-engaged in past processes, and by connecting with public and private sector leaders who hold on-the-ground or operational knowledge



- 3. Provide transparency & accessibility throughout the project timeline:** By sharing all key decision points with the BHA Core, and by translating and posting all materials publicly

Engagement Practices

These goals informed the overall phasing of the engagement plan, as well as [specific practices adopted by the project team](#):

1. Providing the requisite time and resources to form cross-sector, meaningful partnerships
2. Compensating community labor and wisdom at a level equal to that of the contractor team (i.e., folks on the core team as well as community facilitators and “sensemakers” for the Real Talk process)
3. Creating multiple, accessible pathways to provide feedback and/or meet with the project team, including:
 - + Recurring touchpoints with the core team, including detailed documentation of each meeting
 - + Establishment of virtual, web-based, and in-person methods of gathering questions and soliciting feedback
 - + Spanish and Haitian Creole interpretation and translation for large meetings, in-person events, and all project materials
4. Allowing for flexible iteration of engagement tactics in real time, to support accessibility and targeted outreach
5. Sharing regular updates about project materials and decision-making milestones on the website, through the project newsletter, local media, and local advertisements
6. Connecting with public agencies to provide technical support and information
7. Formally documenting a series of public commitments ([See Call-Out Box](#))

PUBLIC COMMITMENTS

Commitment 1

The City and engagement team are committed to making informed, data-driven decisions which respond to questions raised by the public.

Commitment 2

The City and engagement team are committed to improving pedestrian safety along Blue Hill Ave.

Commitment 3

The City and engagement team believe that the public funding for this project should be allocated based on public priorities.

PHASING

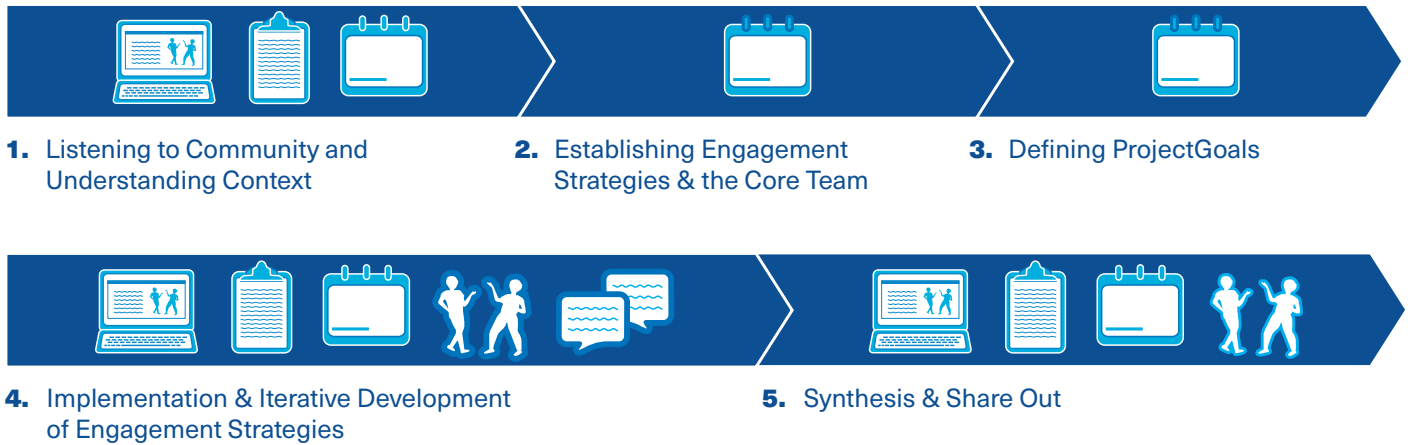
The information, relationships, and deliverables from each phase of engagement successively built on one another. These phases are described here, including a summary of the **methods used within and across the project timeline:**

1. Listening to community and understanding context. The engagement consultants met directly with community leaders based along the BHA corridor (listed in the “Process of Collaboration” section) to discuss opportunities, priorities, and questions about the BHA TAP process. BTD and MBTA were invited to join these in-depth, small-group conversations every other week.

These early touchpoints allowed the project team to understand baseline concerns and hopes, expand the network of community contacts, and start to create an infrastructure for public communication and collaboration.

2. Establishing engagement strategies & the core team. The community discussions outlined a framework for engagement: defining key constituent groups and underrepresented voices, building outreach strategies around those groups, and developing outreach tools to support implementation. These meetings culminated in a series of visioning workshops facilitated by the community organizations and consultants. At this point, community leaders with the interest and capacity to join weekly meetings became a part of the “core team.”

Phasing Diagram



Engagement Types



Targeted Surveys & Data Collection

Bus Riders
Local Businesses
Bus Operators
General Surveys



Workshops & Meetings

Virtual Public Meetings
Visioning Workshop
Community Leaders Conversations
Complete Street Deetz (Youth)



Real Talk

Real Talk
Conversations
Real Talk Coding Workshop



In-Person Community Events

Pop Ups and Tabling
Open Houses
Exhibits
Office Hours
Community Walks



Media Campaigns

Mailers
Fliers
Newsletters
Ads on Buses
Mobile Ads
Bus Shelter Ads
Website
FAQs
Inbox/Phone Line
Local Radio
Social Media Ads

3. Defining project goals. Building on the values and considerations outlined in the community workshops, BTD convened a number of cross-department discussions focused on the BHA TAP. In consultation with the core team, BTD formally defined three main project goals:

- + Improve pedestrian safety
- + Expand transportation options & reliability
- + Connect infrastructure investments to the work of other City departments and State agencies (including housing and development, business and economic development, environmental resilience, and public realm improvements)

4. Implementation & iterative development of engagement strategies. From September 2022-2023, the engagement consultants and BTD staff oversaw a wide range of engagement activities. Through the weekly core meetings, the team was able to iteratively refine engagement strategies in real time. Community leaders provided strategic guidance, outreach support, and in some instances led or supported engagement events. The diverse breadth of engagement activities allowed the team to:

- + Balance opportunities for large public discussions with smaller-group, nuanced conversations;
- + Appropriately scale the distribution of in-person and virtual engagements, in alignment with shifting pandemic regulations and seasonal weather changes;
- + Conduct targeted outreach to ensure that a range of feedback was captured, including from those who do not typically join large public meetings (e.g., younger folks, working families, transit riders, etc.) provide multiple options for people to engage on their own time (e.g., online surveys; project inbox and phone line;

- advertisements with informational links);
- + Provide multiple options for people to engage on their own time (e.g., online surveys; project inbox and phone line; advertisements with informational links)
- + Ensure presence at high-traffic locations to meet people where they are at (e.g., drop-ins; street outreach; tabling at existing community events). The specific methods are described in more detail below.

5. Synthesis and share out. This engagement report marks a key milestone in the BHA TAP process: distilling key takeaways across the various engagement activities, addressing tensions and competing priorities, contextualizing present-day concerns with past experiences and narratives, and setting up a foundation for the next phase of the project.

Notably, this report does not mark the end of the engagement process. The project team is maintaining several pathways for communication and engagement (e.g., project inbox and phone line; in-person street outreach) and providing opportunities for community members to directly shape engagement analysis (e.g., Real Talk portal). Regardless of the decision reached, BTD will continue to engage residents to collect feedback to refine the design and move it into construction.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The project team deployed a variety of methods to support the engagement phases outlined above. **This section:**

1. Describes the format and purpose of each method
2. Provides an overview of the target constituents
3. Quantifies the total number of people reached through each method

Notably, while most individuals engaged in this process were speaking on behalf of themselves, some self-identified as representatives of a particular organization or community (e.g., members of the BHA core; elected officials or staff members).

To leverage the connections and wisdom of community organizations within the BHA core, the strategy and implementation plan for each engagement activity were discussed in weekly core meetings. Community leaders and public sector partners also received email updates prior to each engagement push. The goal was to provide information to this smaller group of community and institutional representatives, who could then communicate with their respective networks.

Many of the methods that follow were geared towards engaging people who were new or otherwise infrequent participants in planning processes. These outreach methods worked through decidedly non-institutional pathways, for example: making use of pop-ups and intercepts in high-traffic community locations, conducting in-person engagement along bus stops, schools, and other locations targeted to meet people in everyday spaces.

The feedback gathered in earlier phases of engagement shaped the development of later-stage engagement tools - for example, the

Project FAQs were compiled based on common questions that were coming up in the BHA core meetings, small-group conversations, virtual meetings, the project inbox, online surveys, and other ongoing touchpoints. In addition, feedback and questions from the BHA core allowed the team to assess midstream who was being under-engaged in the process. The team updated engagement strategies and expanded capacity accordingly.

The majority of engagement methods were implemented by the consultant team and public sector staff from BTS, MBTA, and BPDA. **Specific methods - including Not Your Average Public Meeting and Real Talk conversations - were supported or led by community partners in the BHA core or by non-institutional community residents.** In addition, partner city and state agencies were asked to join certain virtual and in-person events geared towards large audiences.

The specific topics covered in these events are described in the pages that follow.



Above: Not Your Average Public Meeting (2023)

The pages that follow outline all of our engagement methods!



ENGAGEMENT METHODS

- 01.** BTD Project Inbox & Phone Line
- 02.** Leverage Existing Capacity Building Workshops
- 03.** Community Leader Conversations
- 04.** Community Leader Emails & Meetings
- 05.** Community Leader Visioning Workshops
- 06.** Core Team Meetings
- 07.** Cross-departmental Meetings
- 08.** Elected Official Briefings with BTD
- 09.** Bus Operator Interviews
- 10.** Bus Rider Survey
- 11.** Business Survey
- 12.** Community Inquiry Survey
- 13.** Community Walks and Rides
- 14.** Design Open Houses
- 15.** Drop-ins at Mattapan Square and Grove Hall
- 16.** General Communications
- 17.** Mailers
- 18.** Not Your Average Public Meeting
- 19.** Pop-up Historical Exhibition
- 20.** Project FAQs
- 21.** Project Newsletter
- 22.** Real Talk for Change Conversations
- 23.** Street Teams Outreach
- 24.** Tabling at Community Events
- 25.** Virtual Meetings
- 26.** Community “Sensemaking” Workshop

BLUE HILL AVENUE TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

First things first: We want to hear from you.

Questions? Contact:

TRANSPORTATION | TRANSIT TEAM

617-635-3944

BLUEHILLAVE@BOSTON.GOV

Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan Project Website

EMAIL INBOX AND PHONE LINE

Project manager Kirstie Hostetter set up a dedicated BHA TAP email inbox (bluehillave@boston.gov) and phone line (617-635-3944) to allow the community to reach out directly about the project. The email and phone line allowed the project team to address community questions, gather feedback, and direct individuals to more in-depth avenues of engagement. The email and phone line were included on all project materials and distributed at all public meetings. The project team checked the email inbox and phone line on a weekly basis.

20 residents emailed bluehillave@boston.gov. Many residents emailed to express support for a center-running bus lane, many expressed both support and opposition for improved bike facilities, while others emailed in opposition to a redesign process entirely.

“Between motorists not caring and double parking in the designated “bike lane” and all the buses darting in and out of the bus stops, this corridor is in serious need of a protected bike lane.”

- Email Sent to BHA TAP Email

“The traffic lights on Blue Hill are not well-calibrated to pedestrians... this makes it very inconvenient to get into [Franklin Park] despite it being visible out of our windows.”

- Email Sent to BHA TAP Email



Emails
Received



May 2022 -
Ongoing

02 Leverage Existing Capacity Building Workshops



T-Talks:
Transportation + Job Access

Our 9th T-Talk will focus the history of the Fairmount Indigo Line, the benefits the line has produced, future advocacy efforts of the line, and what it means for residents living in the area.

We will be joined by the Fairmount Indigo Transit Coalition made up of a group of residents, community based organizations, and community development corporations.

January 19, 2023
6pm-8pm
Register: bit.ly/T-Talks9

Logos for Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Powerful Pathways, and Barr Foundation are at the bottom.

COMPLETE STREETS DEETZ

Consult LeLa started hosting Complete Streets Deetz workshops in 2021 to **educate youth groups about transportation planning**. Youth groups involved since 2021 include Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Bikes Not Bombs, Speak For The Trees, Mattapan Teen Center, Mildred Ave Community Center, Boston Nature Center and the Boston Student Advisory Council. The BHA TAP team plugged into these workshops to introduce BHA-specific content at two events. Consult LeLa **collected input from youth on possible changes to Blue Hill Ave through the redesign process**. Suggestions included center running bus lanes, improved bus scheduling, safer bicycle infrastructure, and safer crosswalks.

T-TALKS

Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Powerful Pathways and Consult LeLa co-created and hosted the T-Talk series from 2020-2023 to focus on those who live in Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury and Hyde Park and **help people understand the importance of transportation, street changes and the connection to their own lives**. The BHA TAP team co-hosted 3 T-Talks that specifically focused on BHA. T-Talk topics included transportation displacement solutions, active transportation, histories of transit planning and Blue Hill Ave, climate and transportation justice, limits on Black mobility in the US, and food access and complete streets possibilities along BHA. All Talks were posted on YouTube.



BHA-focused Streets Deetz Workshops*

**There were 32 Streets Deetz in total (257 youth participants), with 2 focusing on BHA TAP*



T-Talks*

**3 of 11 total T-Talks focused on BHA TAP and Mattapan Square*



Summer 2020 - Summer 2023

PHASE

Understanding Context

Establishing Strategies

Defining Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and Share Out

03 Community Leader One-on-One Conversations

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The consultant team kicked off engagement with a set of one-on-one conversations with "community leaders" from a range of place-based organizations. These community conversations were informal, and the City was not in attendance. During these in-depth conversations, organization leaders discussed their questions, concerns, and hopes. See "Process of Collaboration" for more details.



04 Community Leader Emails and Meetings

COMMUNITY LEADER EMAILS

The BHA TAP consultant team sent email updates at least monthly to a group of "community leaders" who were engaged in the early stages of the process. These community leaders included prominent members of neighborhood associations, faith-based representatives, advocacy organizations, youth-serving organizations, and recreational institutions

The goals of these emails were to:

1. Share information with designated community points of contact, so that they could share event information and other updates with their networks.
2. Maintain contact with a group of trusted leaders to allow for increased participation as desired.

COMMUNITY LEADER MEETINGS

The project team hosted two meetings with community leaders in April and June 2023 to provide a detailed update on project progress, upcoming decision points, and key engagement tools.



Community Leader Meetings



Community Leaders

05 Community Leader Visioning Workshops

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The one-on-one community conversations culminated in a series of three visioning workshops with **12 community organizations**, which outlined: (1) primary issues along this stretch of BHA, (2) definitions of “success” for the BHA TAP, (3) geographies of focus, and (4) key constituents (including those missing from the proverbial table). The workshops helped to shape the engagement strategy by answering foundational questions:

1. Who should we be talking to?
2. What would success look like?
3. What are shared problem geographies (a.k.a common issue areas)?
4. What are shared problems with built infrastructure and/or development?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Talk to...** residents of public housing, seniors, families, youth/students, businesses and shoppers, churches, health centers, developers, bicyclists/bus riders/ drivers
- **Success would look like...** centering quality of life, health and safety, ensuring the project makes it convenient and reliable to access businesses, services and cultural centers, and tailoring different changes to different parts of the avenue
- **Common issue areas include...** (see map to the right)
- **Shared infrastructure problems include...** unsafe sidewalks, lack of access to health facilities, double/triple parking, lack of parking for persons with disabilities, commuters using business/resident parking and using Blue Hill Ave to access the city and avoid I-93, development-induced visual barriers, limited public realm areas and poor air quality (particularly around the busy intersections)



PHASE

Understanding
Context

Establishing
Strategies

Defining
Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and
Share Out

Engagement Summary

06 Core Team Meetings



FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The BHA core meetings **were attended by a cross-sector group who met on a weekly basis**. Early phase meetings focused on setting engagement goals and strategy. As the project progressed, core meetings focused on the format and content of outreach materials and refining implementation tactics for the BHA TAP. The community membership fluctuated over time, based on interest and capacity. To allow folks to step into the process as desired, **members of the consultant team conducted personal outreach to community leaders during the project timeline**.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The cross-sector group included public officials from BTS and the MBTA, engagement consultants and representatives from the design team, as well as community leaders. See "Process of Collaboration" for more details.



July 2021 -
July 2023 (*Weekly*)



Organization
Leaders Invited

PHASE

Understanding
Context

**Establishing
Strategies**

**Defining
Goals**

Implementation

Synthesis and
Share Out

07 Cross-Departmental Meetings

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

In addition to community touchpoints, **BTD held a number of cross-departmental meetings to ensure coordination with related projects (e.g., Mattapan Square) and overarching themes that were coming up in the course of BHA TAP engagement (e.g., housing).** These included coordination meetings for the BHA TAP as well as meetings to discuss related projects near the BHA TAP geography.

RELATED PROJECTS

- **Interdepartmental working group for the Mattapan Square redesign project (biweekly).** Agencies represented included Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion (OEI), Public Works Department, Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH), Disabilities Commission, BTD, Parks and Recreation
- **Arts & Culture meetings** to discuss utility box paintings and the Mattapan Square statue reconstruction
- **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) meetings** on Neponset Greenway and on traffic signals in Mattapan Square
- **Topic-specific meetings on related MBTA projects** with MBTA representation outside of the BHA core team. Included:
 - + Mattapan Line Transformation
 - + Bus Network Redesign
 - + Fairmount Line Commuter Rail Team
 - + Capital & Facilities Planning
- **Coordination meetings with MassDOT's bridge division** about plan to rehab BHA bridge that crosses the commuter rail tracks

BHA TAP COORDINATION

- **Cross-departmental meeting to present two alternative design scenarios** in June 2023, which included: OEI, Office of Neighborhood Services, Environment, Disabilities Commission, Age Strong Commission, MBTA, BPDA, MOH, Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics, MassDOT, Mayor's Office
- **Coordination meetings with guest speakers** ahead of the virtual public meetings
- **MOH Blue Hill Ave Action Plan** team meetings
- **Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) analysis meetings** to outline study parameters
- **Coordination meetings with MAPC and MOH on housing studies** to discuss existing conditions, data available, and outlining possible avenues for analysis. This work is ongoing
- **Parking study coordination and planning meetings** with MAPC
- **Cross-departmental workshop in September 2022**, which included: OEI, Office of Neighborhood Services, Environment, Disabilities Commission, Age Strong Commission, MBTA, BPDA, MOH, Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics, MassDOT, Mayor's Office
- **Community engagement checkpoints with BPDA**, including BPDA representation on the BHA core team
- **Three business walks with the OEI Chief & small business team** along BHA (spring/summer 2022: started in April); this work shaped the later collaboration on the parameters of the business survey and survey outreach plan
- **Engagement support for virtual and in-person events from MassDOT**

PHASE

Understanding
Context

Establishing
Strategies

Defining
Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and
Share Out

08 Elected Official Briefings with BTD

- Goal 1:** Improve pedestrian safety along Blue Hill Ave
- Goal 2:** Expand transportation options and reliability
- Goal 3:** Connect infrastructure investments to the work of other City departments and state agencies



FORMAT AND PURPOSE

At-large Councilor Julia Mejia held an additional BHA TAP Town Hall in January 2022 which facilitated a discussion between Chief of Streets Jascha Franklin-Hodge, Chief of Community Engagement Brianna Millor, the MBTA (including Acting Chief of Operations Planning, Scheduling, and Strategy Wes Edwards), Representative Holmes, other elected officials, as well as 100+ community members. The project team also hosted individual briefings with each Councilor and State Representative, and State Senator Russell Holmes from January-March 2023. In June 2023, BTD hosted a briefing that invited all of these elected officials in addition to the Mayor and Mayor's Office staff.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

BTD's goal was to brief elected officials at all levels (local, state, and federal).



Briefing Events



Elected Officials

PHASE

Understanding Context

Establishing Strategies

Defining Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and Share Out

09 Bus Operator Interviews

“Could you imagine the traffic if everyone on the bus was in the car?”

- Southampton Bus Operator, Bus Operator Survey.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons (July 2016)

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The BHA TAP team engaged with bus operators to better understand their perspective on working along Blue Hill Avenue. The team interviewed 39 bus operators from the three different MBTA garages:

- Southampton (14 interviews)
- Cabot (13 interviews)
- Arborway (12 interviews)

The interviews asked bus operators for their insights on what is working, current challenges, and what improvements are needed.

SUPPORT FOR TRANSIT PRIORITY

A large portion of the bus operators interviewed expressed support for center-running bus lanes, improving traffic safety, and preventing blocked bus stops as much as possible along Blue Hill Avenue.



MBTA Garages
Interviewed



Bus Operators
Interviews



February 2023 -
March 2023

PHASE

Understanding
Context

Establishing
Strategies

Defining
Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and
Share Out

10 Bus Rider Survey

Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan!

Plan Aksyon Transpòtasyon Blue Hill Avenue se yon inisyativ pou redesine Blue Hill Avenue soti nan Grove Hall jiska Mattapan Square. Lo pral gen ladann redesine twotwa yo, ajoute espas vèt, elaji atizay piblik, ak amelyore sèvis otobis yo.

Tanpri pran sondaj sou pasaje bis nou an! Eskane kòd QR la sou bò dwat la oswa tape bit.ly/bha-bus nan navigatè w la. Li ta dwe sèlman pran 3 minit pou konplete.

Vizite sit entènèt pwojè a pou aprann plis: boston.gov/blue-hill-avenue

CITY of BOSTON



LivableStreets **CITY of BOSTON**

Hi, my name is _____ I am a volunteer with the City of Boston. Today a group of us are talking with people who use bus service along Blue Hill Ave to better understand transportation needs and challenges along the road. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions about your experience? It should only take 3 minutes.

- In the last week, how have you traveled along Blue Hill Ave? (Select all that apply.)
 - I walked along BHA
 - I rode the bus along BHA
 - I drove along BHA
 - I rode a bike along BHA
- In the last week, why did you choose to take the bus? (to get to school, work, visit family/friends, etc?)
 - To get to work
 - To get to school
 - To get to church
 - To visit family/friends
 - To get to the grocery store
 - To get to the doctor
 - Other: _____
- Where in Greater Boston are these places located? _____
- What would make your trip along Blue Hill Ave more ideal?
 - Buses that come more consistently
 - My trips being affected by traffic less
 - Knowing when the bus will come + having MBTA time tables
 - Having cleaner bus stops
 - Other: _____
- While you are walking to the bus stop along Blue Hill Ave are there specific crosswalks or other locations that feel unsafe to cross? (Ask for specifics. Collect cross sections where possible) _____
- Are there any improvements you would like to see along Blue Hill Ave?
 - More seating/benches
 - More street lighting
 - Bike parking
 - Public restrooms
 - Where: _____
 - More bus shelters
 - Trees/Greenery
 - Art
 - Other: _____

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The Bus Rider Survey was developed by LivableStreets Alliance in close coordination with members of BTDA and Toole Design. From April 18 to June 3, 2023, LivableStreets led a team of Street Ambassadors (members of the BHA TAP engagement team and volunteers from LivableStreets) to **engage bus riders and gather feedback on their experiences traveling along Blue Hill Ave.** As a token of appreciation, the Street Ambassadors also distributed \$5 gift vouchers from two local businesses, Ali's Roti and Cafe Juice Up, to bus riders who participated in the initiative. A summary of findings was presented at the [July 2023 meeting](#); the full anonymized results are available in the Appendix.



Participants



Surveys Completed



Gift Vouchers Distributed



April 2023 - June 2023

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The Bus Rider Survey aimed to reach bus riders of all ages at stops along Blue Hill Ave during weekdays and weekends in the morning and evening peak hours. These stops included Blue Hill Avenue @ Morton Street, Blue Hill Avenue @ Franklin Park Road, and Blue Hill Ave @ Mattapan Square. While the above stops were targeted because they are among the busiest along the project corridor, many other stops were visited as well. Surveys were conducted in **English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.** The vast majority of the riders noted that they exclusively rode the bus or walked along Blue Hill Ave in the week prior to being surveyed.

PHASE

Understanding Context

Establishing Strategies

Defining Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and Share Out

11 Business Survey

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

BTD and the Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion (OEOI) developed the business survey in consultation with local business owners and community leaders. The survey was also informed by BTD's New Mobility team and transportation best practices. In late 2022 and early 2023, members of the project team from BTD completed surveys on a semi-regular basis, often after having conversations with business managers and owners through other engagement events. **From July 2023 to present day (efforts are ongoing as of the report publish date), members of the project team from Grayscale and Toole Design restarted the survey efforts with the goal of talking to every business along the corridor.** In summer 2023, the team visited the corridor 11 times to survey businesses, at both early morning, midday, afternoon and evening hours for 2-4 hour long time blocks to accommodate as many unique business hours as possible. **Working with Main Streets directors in Grove Hall and Mattapan Square as well as project interpreters, the project team completed 87 surveys, accounting for 55% of the businesses along Blue Hill Ave in the project area.** The team visited all 157 businesses along the corridor, but some were not available to speak at the time of the visit.

The team is continuing to conduct business survey outreach as part of a 'good faith' outreach effort with all small businesses along the corridor. 'Good faith,' as defined by the project team, means that at least one of the following is true: (1) the team made at least two in-person visit attempts; (2) for businesses that requested Spanish or Haitian Creole language interpretation, at least one of those visits was with an interpreter; (3) the team conducted phone calls for businesses who were unable to complete survey at any of our visits, but left a contact number. As of September 18, 2023, the team has successfully surveyed or conducted a 'good faith' effort with 113 businesses, 72% of the businesses along the corridor. **The business survey process is ongoing.**

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The survey hoped to gather (1) information on where businesses are getting deliveries and with which types of vehicles/at what times of day, (2) information on where employees park and how they get to work, as well as (3) how long customers visit each business. This information will be collected and used by the New Mobility team to make recommendations on curbside usage (e.g. whether parking spaces in front of businesses should be long-term, short-term or delivery) and the BHA TAP design team to accommodate business owners' needs and desires through the redesign.

B Boston Transportation Department
BUSINESS SURVEY

The City of Boston is planning to make changes to Blue Hill Avenue to make it safer for people who walk, drive, and ride a bike, and to make the bus more reliable. We want to hear from people who have businesses on Blue Hill Avenue to make sure your needs are met as we think about changes. Learn more about the project by visiting our website at boston.gov/blue-hill-avenue.

BUSINESS INFORMATION
 Business: _____ Address: _____
 Name: _____ Role (owner, manager, employee): _____
 Contact info/best way and time to reach you for future project updates: _____

LOADING/DELIVERIES
 Where do you currently receive deliveries? (Check and show on map)
 Curbside parking space Double park Off-street/loading dock

Is there somewhere you would prefer to receive deliveries? _____

Are you able to control when most of your deliveries arrive? (Circle one) Yes No Don't know

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL WEEK OF DELIVERIES LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

	AVERAGE # OF DELIVERIES	WINDOW OF TIME (between x - y am/pm)	AVERAGE DURATION (minutes)	VEHICLE SIZES/TYPES* (see below)
MON				
TUE				
WED				
THU				
FRI				
SAT				
SUN				

* Box Truck (BT); Large Tractor Trailer - 48' (TT 48); Extra Large Tractor Trailer - 55' (TT 55); Car, Van, or SUV (CV); Cargo Bike (CB)



Business Surveys Completed as of September 18, 2023



'Good faith' visits and/or Surveyed as of September 18, 2023

PHASE

Understanding Context

Establishing Strategies

Defining Goals

Implementation

Synthesis and Share Out

12 Community Inquiry Survey

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

As a precursor to the first large-scale engagement push (events designed to reach large groups of people, rather than the in-depth small conversations with community leaders), the project team released a simple Community Inquiry Survey. This survey was intended to invite constituents into the BHA TAP process by asking them: **What is your question about Blue Hill Ave?** The responses covered a range of concerns and hopes, including specific infrastructure issues and problem spots as well as questions about the planning process. Ultimately, the Community Inquiry survey responses helped to inform the creation of the [Project FAQs](#) document.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The survey reached the general public, in addition to the community leaders engaged previously in the process.



Surveys
Completed



October 2022

“In what ways will the community be at the forefront of this redesign and what benefits will they draw from it?”

“What are the plans for community education/outreach to reassure people’s concerns?”

“Could you provide the slides for the community meetings online, as well as prepare minutes? It’s difficult to review the public meetings except by watching the whole video, which is very time-consuming.”

“I don’t want to be killed biking on Blue Hill Ave - How will you ensure that doesn’t happen?”

“Aside from the Sept 2024 deadline, what limitations are there for using the federal funding—specifically in the final design?”

“Have 95%-100% of the businesses been included for input and yay or nay regarding Blue Hill Ave Corridor redesign???”

“Why doesn’t the proposed plan include grade/curb separated bike lanes more extensively?”

13 Community Walks and Rides



Photo: David Ryan, Boston Globe



SATURDAY, May 14
2:00 - 4:00pm ET

Meet at the Comfort Station, at the corner of River St and Blue Hill Ave. Language available in Kreyol & Español.

NEIGHBORHOOD WALK BLUE HILL AVENUE

RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/MattapanBHAWalk>



Scavenger Hunt!

We'll be looking for signs of neighborhood change and opportunity to identify what are the community needs.



Take Photos!

We'll capture photos of things we observe. We're also invite audio and video.



Participate in Research!

The information from the walk will help with important research.

Powerful Pathways is working with Mattapan community leaders to identify, track, and map land use and other aspects of the neighborhood, through oral histories, images and data research to inform processes with the city and in the community.

Questions? Contact us at powerfulpathwaysinc@gmail.com, 617-819-4783

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

BTD hosted various events with public agencies working on related projects. These included **site visits to the Columbus Ave bus lanes, business walks and listening sessions in Grove Hall, mid-Dorchester and Mattapan Square, as well as field walks** (co-hosted by engagement consultants) open to the public covering the history and current state of infrastructure along Blue Hill Ave. The engagement team and community partners involved BTD in a number of their own community walks including the Mattapan Square Stroll hosted by Consult LeLa in 2023.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

Public agencies involved included the MBTA, Disabilities Commission and the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion.



Walks and Rides



Participants

PHASE

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14 Design Open Houses

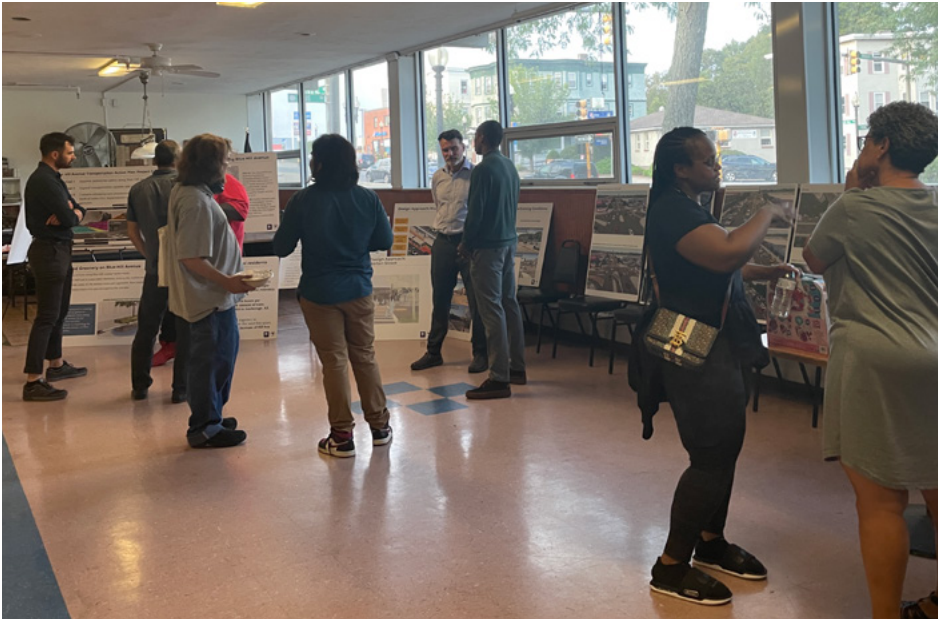


Photo: Charlotte Fleetwood, Carter Post Open House, August 7, 2023



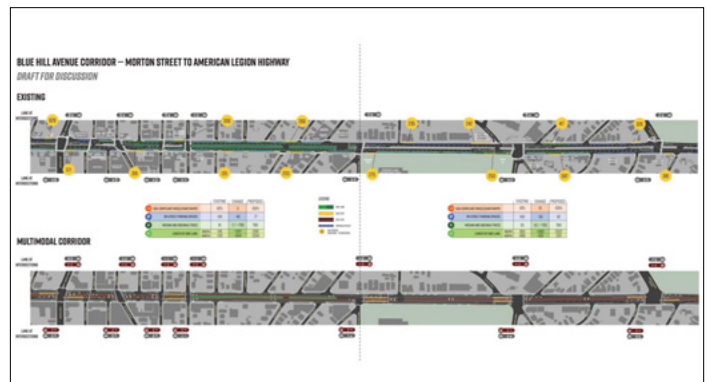
FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The project team held two design open houses in summer 2023, the first at Sportsmen’s Tennis and Enrichment Center in Dorchester and the second at William E. Carter Post in Mattapan. The team identified these locations as high-capacity spaces directly on the Blue Hill Ave corridor that would allow them to engage as many neighbors as possible.

The design and engagement teams were present in addition to BTD and the MBTA to share the [two design approaches \(multimodal corridor and enhanced existing\)](#), collect feedback from the public, and answer project questions.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

15 people attended the first open house and 20 attended the second. Many of these attendees had already been relatively involved with the project. The open houses also attracted a large proportion of drivers and less bikers, walkers, or transit users than other engagement methods.



Sample of draft roll plans for enhanced existing & multimodal corridor shown at open houses



Open Houses



Participants

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15 Drop-ins at Mattapan Square and Grove Hall

Mattapan resident: Travels all over the system because he works as a temp cook at different hospitals and universities. Relies on the 23, 28, 29 and 31 and wants to see more frequent, reliable service on the 16 and 31.



Grove Hall Drop-in

Seaver St resident: Believes people won't choose to take the bus and is worried about traffic and dangerous driving. "People won't choose to take the bus, it's not 24/7 like NYC."



Grove Hall Drop-in

Cummins Hwy resident: Likes how center-running bus lanes are similar to the trolleys that used to run down the corridor and wants to see better transit, more trees and safer, direct pedestrian crossings in Mattapan Square.



Mattapan Drop-in

Library visitor: Spends time along Blue Hill Ave everyday, didn't realize that so many people are in buses because they take up less space.



Grove Hall Drop-in

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

From January - April 2023, members of the project team from BTS and MBTA held a weekly pop-up in the Mattapan Station community room. The team intercepted many folks ranging from commuters to individuals looking to have more in-depth project conversations.

From April - May 2023, members of the project team held a weekly pop-up in the Mattapan Library in coordination with the Powerful Pathways exhibition.

From March - June 2023, members of the project team from BTS and MBTA held a weekly pop-up in the Grove Hall Library lobby. The teams noted high interest rates in Real Talk from attendees interested in having more in-depth conversations with project staff.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The times were frequently used for business owners and employees in Mattapan Square to talk to the project team and complete business surveys. Members of the Mattapan Square team also attracted community leaders and leaders of neighborhood associations to talk to the general Blue Hill Ave team. The Grove Hall location was helpful to connect with the attached Grove Hall Senior Center.

On average, the team intercepted between 5-10 people per week in both locations, providing one-on-one discussion opportunities between residents and planners.



Participants



Comments Collected



Drop-in Events



January 2023 - June 2023

PHASE

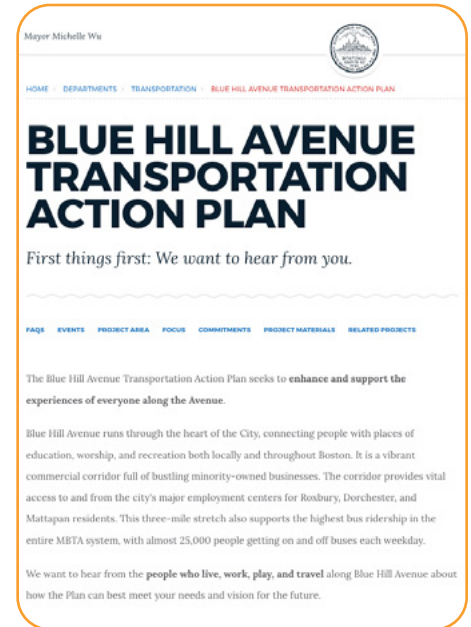
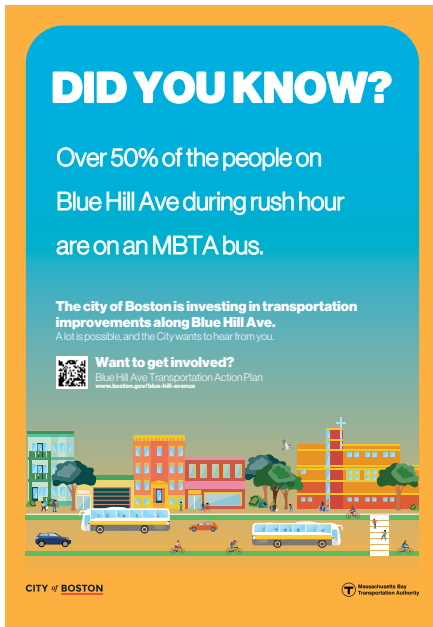
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BUS SHELTER ADS & ON-BUS ADS

The project team used advertising space on MBTA buses and bus shelters on and around Blue Hill Ave to raise awareness of the project. To reach transit riders, the team placed 800 ads on buses coming from the Arborway, Cabot and Southamptn garages. To reach drivers and pedestrians, the team placed bus shelter ads at 30 sites along Blue Hill Ave and Warren St.

There were three ad variations sharing key facts about travel along Blue Hill Ave:

1. "Did you know? Over 50% of the people on Blue Hill Ave during rush hour are on an MBTA bus."
2. "Did you know? Bus riders on Blue Hill Ave lose 3,056 hours per weekday due to traffic and delays."
3. "There is, on average, a crash requiring EMS every two days on Blue Hill Ave."

SOCIAL MEDIA ADS

The project team also deployed a social media ad campaign targeted at users in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan that generated **150,000 impressions**. **469 users** clicked through the ads.

WEBSITE

BTD maintained a [public-facing website](#) to serve as a one-stop location for all project materials and information. All written materials were translated into Haitian Creole and Spanish. In addition to written materials, the project website also featured public meeting recordings, slide decks, and other presentation materials.

SPARKFM ONLINE

Members of the project team joined SparkFM, a Boston-based digital radio platform, for an on-air conversation on July 26th, 2023. The stream was **viewed by 426 people**.



Bus Shelter Ads



Website Views
(January 2022 - August 2023)



FORMAT AND PURPOSE

To ensure maximum awareness of the BHA TAP, the team sent out mailers to 22,977 Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan households within a ½ mile radius of the Blue Hill Ave corridor between Grove Hall and Mattapan Square. Two rounds of mailers were sent out: the first in October 2022 to promote the project itself and the second in April 2023 to promote the Powerful Pathways historical exhibition and open houses. The mailers included general project information (including project goals, brief description of project events and ways to learn more/get in touch with the city).

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

Residents and businesses living within a half mile radius from Blue Hill Avenue.



Mailers sent out Apr '23



Mailers sent out Oct '22



All residents within a half mile of BHA received a mailer

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18 Not Your Average Public Meeting



Photos: Consult LeLa team, (L) Kay's Lounge NYAPM, (R) Franklin Park NYAPM

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The Consult LeLa team started the Not Your Average Public Meeting series to make planning a fun, enjoyable and inclusive experience in a different format than a typical public meeting. The team hosted NYAPM at popular locations along the project corridor (Kay's Lounge and the Franklin Park Clubhouse) with free food and music at each event, with short speaking portions for Consult LeLa to update attendees about the project (including what their team had heard from residents, commitments made by the City and what decisions could be made by the community about the project). The NYAPM series began in July 2022 and is ongoing with meetings specifically covering Mattapan Square.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

Each meeting was attended by 15-30 community members, many of whom were youth, as a result of the team's deliberate advertising and promotion to individuals aged 21-35 who may not have any interest in attending a typical public meeting and sharing their voice. Project team members set up tables at these events to help share information and made themselves available for one-on-one conversations with community members, and the Consult LeLa team brought a 3D model of the various design approaches to help lead conversations about the redesign.



Meetings*

**2 of 3 focused on BHA TAP broadly,
1 of 3 focused on Mattapan Square*



Participants

Young adult, skeptical of center-running bus lanes but likes more space for business pick-up and drop-off. Feels much safer both biking and driving on American Legion Highway now.

Franklin Park NYAPM

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19 Pop-up Historical Exhibition



Photos: Powerful Pathways team, Grove Hall Exhibit Open House

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The Powerful Pathways team created a Blue Hill Ave history exhibit that traveled along the corridor between Grove Hall and Mattapan Square. The exhibit educated residents on the history of Blue Hill Ave as a transportation corridor with extensive electric streetcar usage and the changing neighborhood demographics in the twentieth century, educated residents in the practice of transportation planning and street design and explained the proposed benefits with respect to transportation, safety, public space and resiliency that were possible through the transportation action plan, and invite residents to inform the current and future planning efforts for BHA through an interactive map activity.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The Powerful Pathways team held exhibit open houses in April 2023 to facilitate a dialogue between visitors of the Blue Hill Ave exhibit at the Mattapan Sq and Grove Hall libraries; with each open house, the team focused on the respective Blue Hill Ave geographies and surrounding communities between the Mattapan Square and Grove Hall Boston Public Library branches. The exhibition lived between the two libraries through the spring months and BTD / Powerful Pathways collaborated on drop-in hours and other in-person events relating to the exhibition and project in April and May.



Exhibit Open Houses



Library Drop-in Sessions



Comments Collected

PHASE

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Project Goals

1. Improve pedestrian safety on Blue Hill Ave.
2. Expand transportation options/reliability.
3. Connect infrastructure investments to the work of other City and State agencies.

Community feedback will be collected to inform final design decisions. **Have questions or comments?** bluehillave@boston.gov or 617-635-3944

View a list of the City's frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers received so far about the project based on community leader input.

CITY of BOSTON

Metas del Proyecto

1. Mejorar la seguridad de peatones en BHA.
2. Ampliar opciones de transporte y fiabilidad.
3. Conectar las mejoras de infraestructura con el trabajo de otras agencias.

El equipo del proyecto e recopilarán comentarios de la comunidad para informar las decisiones finales de diseño. **Tiene preguntas o comentarios?** bluehillave@boston.gov o 617-635-3944

Vea una lista de las preguntas y respuestas frecuentes de la ciudad sobre el proyecto basadas en los aportes de los líderes comunitarios.

CITY of BOSTON

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

Drawing from the Community Inquiry Survey responses and questions received across communication streams, including public meetings and tabling sessions, **the BHA TAP team compiled a running document of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for the project in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole.** The document organizes questions into the following categories: general, design, safety, parking, bikes, public realm, and related projects and policies. The Project FAQs are updated periodically as the team receives more questions from community members, with a way for the public to directly submit questions to be added to the living document. Click [here](#) to view the English FAQs, [here](#) to view the Spanish FAQs and [here](#) to view the Haitian Creole FAQs.

- Why is this project happening?
- What work has been done so far?
- What is the City's vision for Blue Hill Ave?
- How will the community be involved in the process?
- How can we stay up-to-date with this project and the public process?
- How are businesses along the corridor involved in this project?
- How is the City making sure they are coordinating with the MBTA?
- Which other City and State departments are collaborating on the BHA TAP?
- How will a decision be made?

General FAQs

- What is the City's preferred design approach?
- Is this the final design?
- Why does the City want to add a bus lane in the middle of Blue Hill Ave?
- How can I understand the impact of the proposed design approach?
- What if the City chooses not to move ahead with bus lanes on Blue Hill Ave?

Design FAQs

- How will this project make Blue Hill Ave safer?
- How will emergency vehicles navigate the road with bus lanes?
- What about traffic enforcement?
- How is it safe to ask bus riders to cross to the middle of the street?

Safety FAQs

- What's the plan for parking?
- What about parking enforcement?
- Does the design approach include a bike lane?
- How will the look of the street change?
- What is the City's plan for trees along Blue Hill Ave?

Parking, Bikes, Public Realm FAQs

- What else is going on around Blue Hill Ave?
- What other resources should I know about?

Related Projects and Policies

21 Project Newsletter

The City, working in partnership with the engagement team, is committed to a transparent, holistic, and community-centric planning process for the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan. The following Public Commitments summarize how the team is working to fulfill these goals. Please note that this list of Public Commitments was created in response to public feedback and questions thus far, and may continue to be updated as our team moves through the engagement process.

- **Public Commitment - Data & Process**
- **Public Commitment - Pedestrian Safety Investments**
- **Public Commitment - Community Funding**

Callout #1 In All Newsletters

Blue Hill Ave has long been a major corridor in Boston, allowing travelers to move from one end of the city to another and serving as a key connector between people, public resources, and many other places of economic and cultural significance. However, the Blue Hill Ave of today is very different from that of decades past. There have been many infrastructural and demographic changes along Blue Hill Ave & the surrounding communities over the last century. For those of you interested in learning more about the long and storied history of this important avenue, please check out [this video link](#). Allentza Michel, founding principal of Powerful Pathways and member of the engagement team, provides an overview of how shifting investment patterns, public policies, and large-scale migration trends have impacted Blue Hill Ave over time.

Callout #2 In All Newsletters

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

At the end of each month beginning in January 2023, **the project team sent out a tri-lingual newsletter to recap the engagement events of the previous month and preview the events of the coming month.**

The monthly newsletter included data results of previous engagement activities covered at public meetings, key project metrics (including public commitments and project goals), relevant BHA TAP resources (including links to past meetings and studies, project FAQs, community resources and ways to contact the project team) commonly asked questions and answers and updates on the design approaches as they evolved.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The newsletter sign-up was advertised at public meetings and through additional project materials, including on the project website, and had over 700 subscribers as of August 2023.



Trilingual
Newsletters
Released



Newsletter
Subscribers

PHASE

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22 Real Talk for Change Conversations



Photos: BHA TAP project team

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

Blue Hill Ave Real Talk for Change conversations occurred in small-group settings in which **participants were asked to envision a future of Blue Hill Ave and share personal stories that influenced this vision.** These conversations were facilitated in person and via Zoom by fellow community members as well as BHA TAP team members; participants and community facilitators were compensated for their time. Each conversation was, with participant consent, recorded, transcribed and uploaded to a public-facing website showcasing highlights and common themes across all conversations. [Click here](#) to visit the BHA TAP Real Talk website

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

Conversations were held with anyone who lives, works, plays or prays along Blue Hill Ave. **The conversations sought to hear from individuals who may have been uncomfortable speaking up in public meetings or other large forums.** The engagement team held conversations with hundreds of adults and youth with lived experience along the project corridor. Real Talk for Change conversations, conceptualized and co-designed by MIT Professor Ceasar McDowell, aim to amplify resident voices and experiences that are currently underrepresented in existing engagement conversations.



Real Talk conversations (including two in Spanish)



Adult and youth participants



Unique conversation highlights on public portal



April 2023 - August 2023

PHASE

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23 Street Teams Outreach



Photo: Emily Urbanski (Project Team), Street Team deployment outside Mattapan Library

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

To take advantage of the summer months, the project team led a Street Teams starting in July 2023 to conduct in-person outreach at busy public locations along the Blue Hill Ave project corridor. These locations included bus stops in Mattapan Square, Harambee and Franklin Parks, the Grove Hall Mecca and Grove Hall / Mattapan Square libraries. The goal of the Street Team deployments was to (a) spread awareness about the project and public materials including design approaches and (b) collect feedback from individuals interested in having more in-depth conversations. The teams were equipped with tri-lingual print-outs of the open house decks, flyers, fact sheets and conversation guides.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The teams hoped to reach folks who hadn't yet heard of the project and community members who had not yet given feedback.

Adult, wants safer bus boarding and feels the most safe on the crosswalk but not while crossing the street.

Mattapan Library

Older adult, concerned about crowded afternoon buses leading to passengers falling and bus operators closing the door on riders.

Harambee Park



Deployments



Flyers/fact sheets distributed per deployment



Comments Collected



July 2023 - Ongoing

PHASE

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24 Tabling at Community Events



Photo: Graham Moitoso (Project Team), Open Streets Roxbury (on Blue Hill Ave)

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The project team tabled at various existing community events along Blue Hill Ave to get the word out about the project, answer questions and gather community input on the design approaches. The team sought to be accessible to the public and meet community members at events they were already attending to get caught up on project updates.

TARGET CONSTITUENTS

The tabling events included many partnerships with Mattapan Square Main Streets and Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (including MSMS Health and Wellness Day in 2021 and 2022, the Mattapan Square Farmer's Market in summers 2022 and 2023 and the Activating the Square series), the Mayor's Office of Housing (including at Building Homes/Building Wealth events), local neighborhood associations (including summer events for the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association), local coffee hours with the Mayor and tenant associations, and Open Streets Roxbury (where the team tabled in 2022 and 2023).

Family with young kids who lives along Blue Hill Ave strongly supports changes to support biking, buses, parking and walking. Wants streets with more lighting and safer driving speeds. "Great idea, we need this."

Open Streets Roxbury

Older adult, mentioned the need for more places to sit. Excited about center-running bus lanes.

Mattapan Square Farmers Market

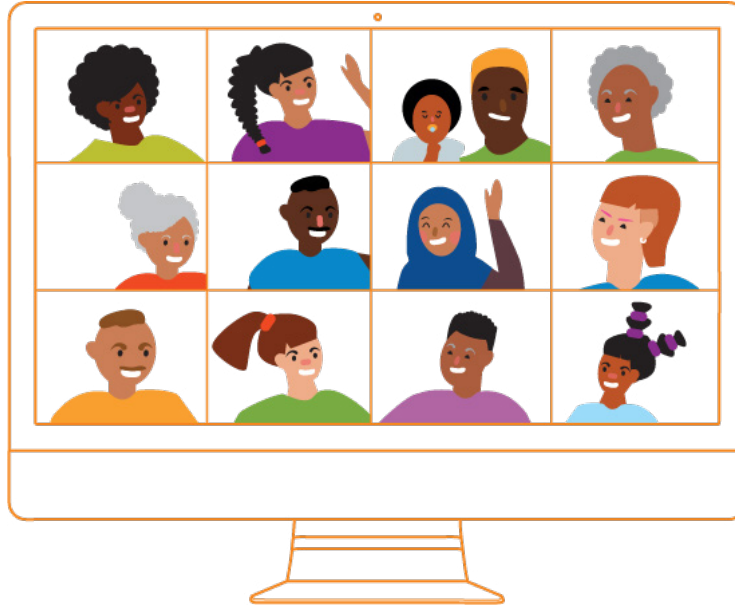


Events
attended by
project team



June 2021 -
Ongoing

25 Virtual Meetings



FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The BHA TAP project team held nine virtual public meetings between October 2022 and July 2023. These meetings were hosted on Zoom due to hesitancy surrounding in-person gatherings in the midst of COVID. The meetings were open to the general public and scheduled at recurring times (same time/day of the week each month). Each meeting included foundational project content that was repeated monthly, new content that responded directly to community questions raised during the previous meeting, presentations from partner agencies or community partners, and community discussions. Live interpretation rooms were available in Spanish and Haitian Creole for all meetings.



Virtual Public Meetings Held



Unique Attendees Across 9 Months

MEETING TOPICS

OCT	Historic Context / Powerful Pathways
NOV	Responding to FAQs / BTD
JAN	Public Commitments & Corridor Data Profile / MBTA
FEB	Housing / Mayor's Office of Housing
MAR	Parking / Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
APR	Columbus Ave FAQs / BTD Green Infrastructure / Director of Green Infrastructure
MAY	Project Updates: Upcoming Design Phase / Regina Villa Associates
JUN	Alternative Design Scenarios / BTD
JUL	Bus Rider Survey / LivableStreets Alliance

PHASE

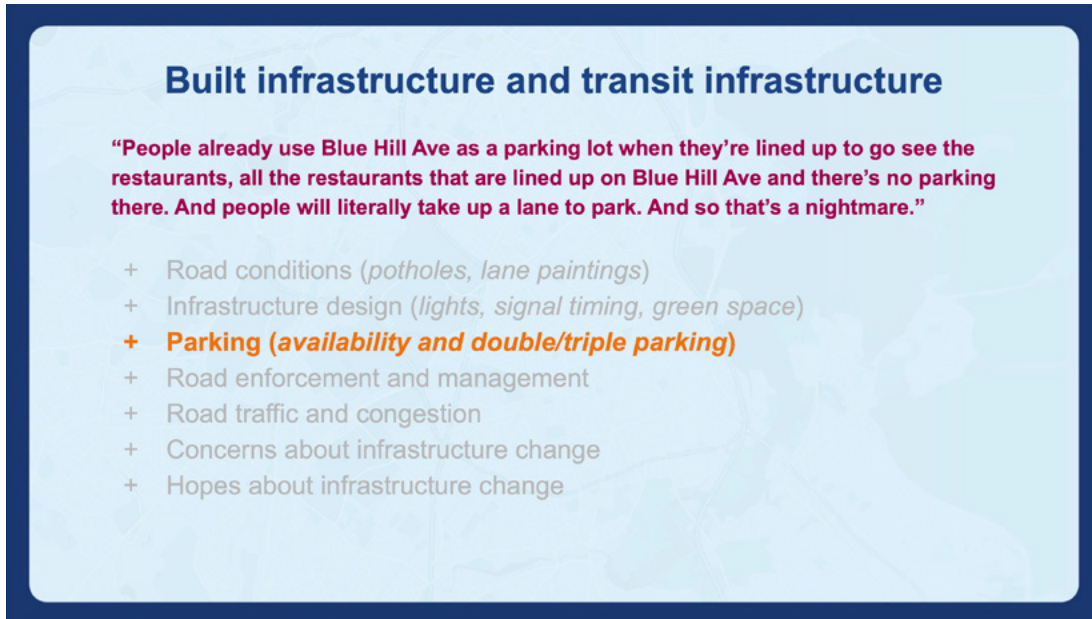
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Screenshot from workshop slide deck

FORMAT AND PURPOSE

The consultant team hosted a community “sensemaking” workshop (aka coding workshop) with past Real Talk facilitators and participants. These were residents who had facilitated a range of community conversations about BHA and/or participated in an intimate Real Talk with their peers. At a high-level, the workshop was designed to ensure that the complexity of Real Talk conversations was able to be distilled into a coherent set of themes for communication purposes, without losing nuance and local specificity. At a practical level, **the purpose of this interactive workshop was to (1) share the draft set of qualitative codes and subcodes drawn from the universe of Real Talk conversations and (2) conduct a structured listening session to validate and edit the Real Talk analysis codebook.** The workshop allowed the team to refine the Real Talk codebook and definitions.

WORKSHOP GOALS

The workshop also achieved the goal of opening up the engagement analysis process to community residents. As the Real Talk conversations were so in-depth and featured a broad range of community member groups, the framework developed through this coding workshop ended up becoming the thematic framework for this very report.

“The same theme came up in a meeting I facilitated. It brought up a lot of emotions for myself and the group when it comes to the dangerousness of the streets, accidents and people not paying attention. People don’t respect the signals, the crosswalks, pedestrians are at risk.”

Community Facilitator Observation

WHAT WE HEARD!

The pages that follow outline the High-Level Takeaways from the engagement process!



MANY PEOPLE AGREE ON PROBLEMS, BUT DIFFER ON APPROACH

As with any public planning process, there were many opinions expressed about the BHA TAP. **There were many points of shared concern**, but there were **different approaches on how to address those concerns**.

SHARED CONCERNS

Physical safety is a critical issue.

Safety concerns revolved around travel (particularly for older pedestrians, very young pedestrians, and those with mobility challenges) as well as general concerns about individual safety along BHA.



There is a lack of respect among many BHA travelers.

This includes unwanted or even illegal travel behavior (i.e., double parking; speeding; riding bikes on sidewalk) as well as a perceived lack of respect on transit (i.e., coming from operators or from other passengers).



The City must protect against the potential negative impacts of infrastructure investment.

These include concerns about increased pressures on existing road infrastructure (e.g., parking availability), small business support, and rising costs of living.



The City should support a thriving civic and commercial corridor along BHA.

Some people evoked memories or generational stories of the BHA as a “mecca for black businesses” in Boston. Others expressed a wish to be able to achieve all their needs and desires without having to leave BHA. There were practical commitments that people pointed to (e.g., regular maintenance of public spaces) as well as long-term community investments (e.g., ensuring that future planning incorporates community voices and prioritizes equity).



DIFFERING APPROACHES

Focus on **increasing** traffic enforcement to reduce speeding, rather than redesigning the street

Enhance travel infrastructure & signal timings, specifically for pedestrians and cyclists (e.g., safe bike lanes)

Increase traffic enforcement and management to reduce illegal travel behavior (e.g. double parking)

Improve transit operations and overall level of service to reduce crowding, delays, and frustration.
Enhance travel infrastructure to give all travelers their own lane

Protect and increase parking availability to support businesses and other institutions that rely on motorists

Provide direct financial or technical support for local businesses, cultural institutions, community-based organizations, or housing-unstable residents

Provide financial or technical support for local businesses, cultural institutions, community-based organizations, or housing-unstable residents

Prioritize public space investments in parks and recreation, pedestrian areas, green space

ALTERNATIVE DESIGN APPROACHES

BTD and MBTA shared two [alternative design approaches](#) in June and July 2023 (at a virtual community meeting and at three in-person open houses at Carter Post, Sportsmen's Tennis Center, and the Franklin Park Clubhouse).

Why Two Design Approaches Were Developed

Community engagement uplifted common concerns alongside a diversity of perspectives on how to tackle those concerns. To facilitate more informed discussion - both across community members and with the City - BTD and MBTA conducted a set of technical analyses to understand how street design could more comprehensively address these shared concerns.

As an initial step in sharing out this information, BTD shared the findings of their internal analyses in the [project FAQs](#) (namely, the sections on Safety, Parking, and Design). BTD and MBTA also developed a set of draft metrics intended to measure and compare the impacts of different design approaches. The metrics originated from (1) best practices in transportation planning and (2) conversations with community members, and were ultimately finalized following discussions with the BHA core and a presentation at the June 2023 virtual community meeting.

The Two Approaches

1. “Multimodal corridor” approach:

This refers to a street design that balances the needs of different travelers, including drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and bus riders. Fundamentally, it seeks to make travel safe and reliable for everyone. It also includes enhancements to green spaces and community spaces, such as art, tree canopy expansion, lighting improvements, and more. This approach was originally developed as part of the 2019 BHA TAP project, presented multiple times in 2020, included in the 2021 RAISE grant proposal, and refined for the current engagement process.



2. “Enhanced existing” approach:

This refers to small-scale safety improvements like better crosswalks, bringing BHA into a “state of good repair” (a technical term that includes street repaving, sidewalk repairs, and street restriping), and replanting empty tree pits. This approach was developed based on a subset of community feedback received as of May 2023, which focused on the desire to focus on traffic enforcement and management and to make minimal changes to the design of Blue Hill Ave.



As evident in the name, **the approaches focus specifically on how infrastructure design can address community concerns** and support improvements to civic life, safety, and overall well-being. **It is important to note that design, while of course related, is separate from policy or program changes** such as increased traffic enforcement and management, financial and technical assistance to businesses, or housing stability programs for residents. For this reason, BTD and MBTA have connected with 16 state and local agencies to ensure that the street design for BHA complements future policy and program investments.

WHAT WE HEARD

As BTD has previously stated:

“Transportation, while important, is primarily a connector - it connects people to housing, to jobs, to family and friends, and to our broader communities.”³¹

From the BHA TAP engagement process, it is clear that transportation is also about an individual’s **freedom of movement** and overall **quality of life**.

The following themes (aka “high-level takeaways”) are drawn from the range of engagement activities conducted during the project timeline. Some activities focused on reaching as many people as possible, which allowed the project team to engage with a wider diversity of perspectives and increase awareness of the project. Other activities focused on in-depth listening and discussion, which were generally longer conversations with smaller groups of individuals.

The takeaways are organized into six themes (see next page for more detailed information):

- 1.** Transit Access and Reliability
- 2.** Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration
- 3.** Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure
- 4.** Perceptions of Public Agencies
- 5.** Community & Civic Life
- 6.** Neighborhood Change.

While representative of cross-cutting topics from all engagement venues, **this analytical framework was developed in close conversation with a group of Real Talk community facilitators and participants.**

This group included community residents and constituents who had either led a number of intimate conversations about BHA or participated in these conversations with their peers.

Please see “Engagement Summary: Engagement Methods” for more information on Real Talk or [check out the Real Talk website](#) to listen to conversation snippets and learn more about these themes.



HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT THEMES

The following themes were derived from the various engagement activities of the last two years.

THEMES	DESCRIPTION
Transit Access and Reliability	This theme includes comments on how transit reliability impacts access to services & opportunities (i.e., to jobs, healthcare, education) as well as freedom of movement. This includes specific concerns or negative experiences about public transit along BHA.
Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration	This theme captures negative experiences and perceptions of safety, anxiety, or frustration among individuals or groups traveling along BHA (includes all modes of travel).
Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure	This theme captures specific comments about the current and future state of infrastructure design (i.e., road conditions, infrastructure design, parking, road enforcement/management, traffic) and management along BHA. These include infrastructure changes that people are worried about and changes that people are hopeful or excited about.
Perceptions of Public Agencies	This theme covers individual experiences and perceptions about public agencies and services along BHA. This includes: trust or lack thereof in the MBTA, public safety agency or enforcement-related concerns, comparisons to other areas of metro Boston (i.e., regarding investment or attention), and general comments about the history and current state of strategic planning around BHA.
Community & Civic Life	This theme covers comments related to public space, civic institutions, and community life (e.g., community organizations/hubs, urban design elements, green space and recreation, beautification projects, local businesses, shared community resources, feelings of belonging). These comments are organized by existing assets and opportunities, existing concerns, and specific ideals for the future.
Neighborhood Change	This theme includes: (a) past/generational experiences of residents and/or businesses being pushed out of BHA due to external pressures, (b) concerns about potential future residential or commercial displacement, (c) excitement about potential future change, (d) comments related to the rising cost of living, and (e) perceptions or experiences of the unintended consequences of investment (i.e., investment where the benefits do not equally accrue to all).

COMPILED TAKEAWAYS

1. There are many reasons why people choose to drive, including physical ability, family arrangements, perceptions of safety, and convenience. Many folks expressed the idea that driving allows for maximum control over your time, particularly in comparison to other travel options along this stretch of BHA. **Some people had chosen to buy a car due to unreliable or slow transit options.**

- **However, not all people had the ability to choose their primary mode of travel.** For example, many bus riders did not explicitly “choose” to use public transit, but did so by default - either because of lack of access to a car or rideshare, age, travel distance, or physical ability.

2. People recounted mixed experiences about riding the bus, including positive feelings about free bus fares as well as concerns with delays, crowding, perceived disrespect from bus operators, and unreliable schedule information.

- **In many anecdotes, transit reliability was not only about convenience - it was directly linked to access to services and opportunities.** Students noted times when they had been penalized or blamed by their school or by family members due to bus delays; some young people expressed feelings of dismay and apathy about going to school upon learning of significant transit delays. Other bus riders shared instances where they were late for jobs, healthcare appointments, or childcare pickup, due to unforeseen transit issues.

3. In general, travelers of all modes noted multiple challenges and frustrations when moving along this stretch of BHA. This perception that BHA does not work well for any traveler was also documented in the 2019 BHA TAP engagement and survey process (see “Project Context”). There were a number of shared concerns, although the exact nature of each concern varied depending on the primary mode of travel:

- **Safety concerns.** For cyclists and pedestrians, this generally referred to fear of bodily harm due to speeding or dangerous driving behavior. For drivers (aka “motorists”) and bus operators - fear of vehicular damage or collision with other travelers, or concerns about speeding.
- **Feelings of frustration.** Due to congestion, poor road maintenance, lack of parking, lack of traffic enforcement and management. For drivers in particular, these feelings of frustration led many to take alternate routes (i.e., side streets); some bus operators reported picking other bus routes to avoid having to drive on BHA.
- **Feelings of conflict with others.** Due to perceptions of self-serving, dangerous, or illegal behavior by other travelers; specific concerns included double and triple parking and speeding.

Many of these feelings of frustration and conflict went beyond travel experiences, and resurfaced in different public meeting formats. Particularly in the virtual meetings (perhaps due to the open chat function for all participants), there was often tension and conflict between different meeting participants.



4. While many people held shared concerns about traveling along BHA, there was a wide diversity of opinions on how the City should best address those issues. **Of the people who proposed potential solutions, these tended to fall into one of three categories:**

- **Some expressed a desire for specific roadway changes.** In general, these folks were interested in:
 - + In general, these folks were interested in **creating more space for non-motorists** (e.g., adding bike lanes; adding bus lanes or other technology to prioritize buses; creating more pedestrian crosswalks).
 - + If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to **safety concerns**.
 - + There was an observable **generational gap** in terms of a desire for roadway changes that increased the multimodal nature of BHA, with more young people tending to express this opinion.
- **Some expressed a desire for no major change to roadway design.** If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to one of the following issue areas:
 - + **Existing concerns about travel congestion** and delays, and fears of losing travel space for cars.
 - + **A general lack of faith in the MBTA or other public agencies** to successfully manage a redesign process.
 - + **Day-to-day impacts due to construction**
 - + **Perceptions that the existing issues along BHA would be best addressed through policy and enforcement** rather than design.
 - + However, even if people did not indicate a preference for major changes to roadway design, **many pointed to the need for better road pavings, lane paintings, and overall street maintenance.**

- **Others provided opinions that could be best classified as reactive against the prospect of a bus priority design.** If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to one of the following issue areas:
 - + **Perceptions that prioritizing buses would exacerbate existing problems** with travel congestion and delays for personal vehicles
 - + **Negative experiences when driving around other bus priority corridors or bike lane projects in the vicinity of BHA.**



5. In some conversations, it was evident that a subset of folks had a lack of trust in public agencies, negative past experiences with planning and development, or a general sense of engagement fatigue.

- For example, though BTD has not committed to a design decision - a fact which was reinforced in all public meetings, written communications, and small group discussions - **many people who expressed reactive opinions were operating under the assumption that the City had already finalized the street designs for BHA.**
 - + While the specific nature of someone's concern was not always explicitly defined, it is clear that many folks referencing "the proposal" or "the redesign" were referring to some type of multimodal corridor enhancement as a done deal.
- **In addition, several folks expressed their concerns about the project team's motives and positioning in the project context.** Over the course of many virtual meetings in particular, several attendees questioned whether the project team was fit to make decisions within the community.
- **Other folks questioned the project's methods and data sources.** This was especially true when the project team presented data that did not align with an individual's lived experience, regardless of the rigor or reliability of the data source.



MID-CENTURY PLANNING HISTORIES

Please see "Project Context," which provides an abbreviated version of BHA's complicated history of transportation and neighborhood planning. This includes mass demographic shifts over the last 100+ years, as well as largely top-down infrastructure changes such as the introduction of an electric rail system in the early 1900s and subsidized suburban development in the mid-1900s (leading to the replacement of the streetcar line with bus service and car lanes).

RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

This perception that a design concept had already been finalized may be due to recent planning efforts around the BHA corridor. For example, the 2019 BHA TAP planning process advanced two design concepts at a large public meeting in March 2020, both of which included improved infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, and bus riders.³² The release of this booklet coincided with the start of the pandemic lockdown, so the process was paused until the current campaign. In addition, the City secured a federal RAISE grant in 2021 which featured a center-running bus lane proposal along BHA. Even though the current process did not start out with a predetermined design proposal, and in fact still has not finalized the design decision, the fact that some people understood otherwise points to potentially unclear communication on behalf of the City.

6. Not all concerns or solutions focused on transit infrastructure. In fact, most people brought up issues, questions, or hopes across multiple domains:

- **Many people asked for increased public and green space investments, including:**
 - + street lighting, street trees, better connections to parks and green space, enhanced seating options and rest spots, improved trash maintenance, public art, and outdoor restaurant areas.
- **Beyond design interventions, people expressed wishes for a thriving commercial and cultural corridor.** Some made comparisons to other neighborhoods in Boston, in terms of amenities and public maintenance. Others referenced past memories or generational stories about “the old days” of BHA, hinting at the idea of a civic space that should be restored. When mentioned, potential solutions pointed to the need for public support for local businesses.
- **Many people expressed concerns about rising costs of living for individuals, and community-scale residential or commercial displacement.** Some had personal experiences of unwanted displacement or ongoing affordability concerns; others talked about the potential future risks of residential or commercial displacement due to unmitigated development.

- The majority of folks focused on day-to-day concerns and hopes. **However, a handful of people flagged questions related to the future vision of BHA.**
 - + Some expressed a desire for large-scale infrastructure investments to enhance multimodal options, including the idea of a cyclist/pedestrian bridge, subway line through the area, or restoration of the trolley line.
 - + Participants raised questions related to strategic neighborhood planning and alignment with broader city development goals. This included questions about: long-term outcomes (both for individuals and for community life), the values embedded in public spending and budgets, and planning strategies for future neighborhood development.



WHAT WE HEARD

Transit Access & Reliability Freedom of movement

Perceptions of Public Agencies MBTA

KEY TAKEAWAYS

There are many reasons why people choose to drive, including physical ability, family arrangements, perceptions of safety, and convenience.

Many folks expressed the idea that driving allows for maximum control over your time, particularly in comparison to other travel options along this stretch of BHA. Some people had chosen to buy a car due to unreliable or slow transit options.

"I stopped taking the bus to work at Children's Hospital because it would take me 2 hours. In a car, it could be 20 minutes."

*- Grove Hall Drop-in
(Centralized Feedback Tracker), Dorchester resident.*



"I am not for or against center bus lane but it's unrealistic to think that a family of 4 perhaps with toddlers are going to give up the convenience of a car to take a bus. Families with children have to get to activities before and after school so a car will be needed."

- June 2023 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, primarily rides bus/train.



"Unfortunately biking isn't feasible for a working parent, I cannot commute via bike nor MBTA. I have a family to shuttle with multiple stops during the day. School, work, extracurricular activities all in a single commute up and down Blue Hill."

- June 2023 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, motorist.



WHAT WE HEARD

Transit Access & Reliability Freedom of movement

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Not all people had the ability to choose their primary mode of travel. For example, many bus riders did not explicitly “choose” to use public transit, but did so by default - either because of lack of access to a car or rideshare, age, travel distance, or physical ability.

“You know some of us don't have cars & public transit is the only option.”

- October 2022 virtual public meeting, zoom chat, bus/train rider.



"I really want to bring light to the fact that there are lots of adults who are living along Blue Hill Ave, that are living in Mattapan, that are living in Dorchester, that are Black and brown, that are struggling to support their families that aren't able to come to this meeting today because they are waiting for the bus. They are waiting for the bus to get home to their kids to feed their kids. They are waiting for the bus so that they can get to work to their night shift. And the idea that these people are unjustly being prioritized within the context of addressing systemic issues that are longstandingly affecting Black and brown people in this particular area... You know, I really, I really hope that folks can take a second and pay attention to the fact that not everybody can afford to buy a car or have access to a car even if they are of driving age."

- July 2023 virtual public meeting, spoken comment from community attendee, motorist.



WHAT WE HEARD

Transit Access & Reliability Concerns about public transit

KEY TAKEAWAYS

People recounted mixed experiences about riding the bus, including positive feelings about free bus fares as well as concerns with delays, crowding, perceived disrespect from bus operators, and unreliable schedule information.



"My kids have to tell me or text me the times that the bus will come. They have to track it for me."

- Bus Rider Survey. Bus rider without cellular data on their phone.

"Even if you're on the 28 and you're going down Blue Hill Ave, because of that double parking, the bus cannot get up to the sidewalk. I have fallen [sic] off the bus coming out of the back, because it wasn't close to the curb. But I won't go out the back, I will only go the front. [The bus operator] tells me to go the back, I refuse this because I know what could happen if they're not close enough to the curb."

- Real Talk participant.



"This is my worst nightmare, 30-40 minute wait on 31, when it says a minute it takes 15 minutes."

- Bus Rider Survey. Bus rider who works in West Roxbury & rides the bus everyday.



"I certainly echo that the state really has to work with Boston for this to work because I kid you not, if the orange line ran faster, I promise you I would not drive. I would not be on these roads if I could get to work faster... It's a blame game sometimes [of], 'Oh, if the state fixed this, it would work better.' But I'm like, 'There are certain things the city could do so that the bus could run more efficiently.' It's great if the bus is free, but if it takes an hour and a half to get there, who's going to take the bus?"

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Transit Access & Reliability Access to jobs, services and opportunities

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In many anecdotes, transit reliability was not only about convenience - it was directly linked to access to services and opportunities.

Students noted times when they had been penalized or blamed by their school or by family members due to bus delays; some young people expressed feelings of dismay and apathy about going to school upon learning of significant transit delays.

Other bus riders shared instances where they were **late for jobs, healthcare appointments, or childcare pickup, due to unforeseen transit issues.**

“Due to few jobs within these neighborhoods and lack of high quality schools in areas along Blue Hill Ave, many people have cars to get to the places where they find work or the schools their children attend. The ultimate result must recognize these long standing issues.”

- April 2023 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, motorist.



“...the bus can really take a long time, especially when you miss it, and you have to wait. And like he said, your parents get angry at you for getting late.”

- Youth Real Talk participant.



“And I wake up and I got to wait 30 minutes for the bus and I'm just like, 'Yeah, I don't know. I don't think I want to go to school!'”

- Youth Real Talk participant.



“I don't have a car so it's very important to have access to buses and be able to go someplace nearby where you can buy your food... having the supermarkets in your neighborhood and access to fresh food and low prices... is just so important.”

- Senior Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure

Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In general, travelers of all modes noted multiple challenges and frustrations when moving along this stretch of BHA.

This perception that BHA does not work well for any traveler was also documented in the 2019 BHA TAP engagement and survey process (see “Project Context”). There were a number of shared concerns, although the exact nature of each concern varied depending on the primary mode of travel.

“[Traffic] brings lots of anxiety because you are responsible.”

- Bus Operator Survey,
Arborway bus operator.

“I go home with a tension headache... a pounding in my forehead.”

- Bus Operator Survey,
Southampton bus operator.

“But my gosh, Blue Hill Ave is one of the worst streets all have [sic] that I've ever driven. I try to avoid it as much as I can. Sometime I go the longer route just to avoid it because of the traffic, the noise, the just unruliness sometimes.”

- Real Talk participant.

“Sometimes I drive around Blue Hill Ave since it's so crazy to drive on. This sounds like a nice plan.”

- Grove Hall Drop-in
(Centralized Feedback Tracker), Grove Hall
Library visitor.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Safety concerns:

For cyclists and pedestrians, this generally referred to fear of bodily harm due to speeding or dangerous driving behavior.

For drivers (aka “motorists”) and bus operators - fear of vehicular damage or collision with other travelers, or concerns about speeding.

Feelings of frustration. Due to congestion, poor road maintenance, lack of parking, lack of traffic enforcement and management. For drivers in particular, these feelings of frustration led many to take alternate routes (i.e., side streets); some bus operators reported picking other bus routes to avoid having to drive on BHA.

"There's more violence on the T than in the past. We're scared to take the bus."

- *Bus Rider Survey, older adult riding the bus.*



"Most of the times, I try to avoid Blue Hill Ave. I try to go Washington Street or all in the back, Forest Hills, to get away from... As a matter of fact, my son-in-law, he tells me he does not travel on Blue Hill Ave at all. He would not go up Blue Hill Ave, not for nothing."

- *Real Talk participant.*

"It's not our fault when buses are late. It happens because of traffic. Safety is priority."

- *Bus Operator Survey, Arborway bus operator.*



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Feelings of conflict with others:

Due to perceptions of self-serving, dangerous, or illegal behavior by other travelers; specific concerns included double and triple parking and speeding.

"People who are driving don't care about stopping or double parking."

- Bus Operator Survey,
Arborway bus operator.



"I understand that as a car owner, you do not want to lose access to your parking space. You don't want to not be able to use your car. You don't wanna miss out on your investment. But this is an investment in community going forward so that there are less barriers for people to have more choices as to how to navigate these different things."

- July 2023 virtual public meeting, spoken comment from community attendee, motorist.



"I just have to be cautious because the drivers always think they have the right of way."

- Bus Rider Survey,
bus rider at Blue Hill Ave
opposite Warren St.

"I have a lot of experiences with almost getting into accidents when I'm driving because people just stop their cars and leave them in the middle of the road. And it's not just one person, but lots and lots and lots and lots of people essentially creating an extra parking lane in a traveling lane. And it's really dangerous."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure Perceptions of Travel Safety, Anxiety, and Frustration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Feelings of conflict with others:

Many of these feelings of frustration and conflict went beyond travel experiences, and resurfaced in different public meeting formats. Particularly in the virtual meetings (perhaps due to the open chat function for all participants), there was often tension and conflict between different meeting participants.

"... the kids, the parents, the elderly people, the handicapped people, the disabled people, the people who rely on their bicycle because they cannot afford a car. They also have a right to participate in this project... It's very disheartening to see people who are pillars of community and are talking about advocating for community and then not speaking with the intention of protecting the most marginalized."

- July virtual public meeting, spoken comment from community attendee, motorist.



"Many people who say the bike lanes are hardly used are just not good at seeing us through their windshield. We bike our kids to school every day year-round, and it's clear drivers often don't see us."

- February 2023 public meeting, Zoom chat message, a set of parents who primarily bike around BHA with their children.

"Tired of the bicyclist riding entitled why don't you make them pay for bike id's the police never stop them they all play victim when they don't respect vehicles."

- July 2023 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, motorist.

"I think another perspective is needed. A street is a terrible thing to waste and streets don't just belong to cars."

- October 2022 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat.



"I'd like to see more accountability for the speeders or maybe... I don't know what they could do. People shouldn't... they know the speed limit."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure

KEY TAKEAWAYS

While many people held shared concerns about traveling along BHA, there was a wide diversity of opinions on how the City should best address those issues. **Of the people who proposed potential solutions, these tended to fall into one of three categories** (continues on pages 85-87):

1. Some expressed a desire for **specific roadway changes**. In general, these folks were interested in creating more space for non-motorists (e.g., adding bike lanes; adding bus lanes or other technology to prioritize buses; creating more pedestrian crosswalks). If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to safety concerns. **There was an observable generational gap in terms of a desire for roadway changes that increased the multimodal nature of BHA**, with more young people tending to express this opinion.

"Between motorists not caring and double parking in the designated "bike lane" and all the buses darting in and out of the bus stops, this corridor is in serious need of a protected bike lane."

- BHA inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker), cyclist traveling to work along BHA.



"I like the idea of bus lanes. There are so many buses on Blue Hill Ave and they getting [sic] stuck in traffic."

- Mattapan Library drop-in (Centralized Feedback Tracker), Mattapan Library visitor.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure

"I actually like the configuration where you have a bus lane (including school buses) on the right lane, parking in the lane next to that, and driving on the lane after that (similar to the configuration for protected bike lanes, but rather protected bus lanes)."

- BHA inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker).



"They need to make those lights on Blue Hill Ave, coming down, they have to check to see that the light's a little longer to allow you to get across."

- Senior Real Talk participant.



"In general, I'd like to see more Bluebike lanes, not Bluebike lanes specifically, but bike lanes. Because I find myself in odd situations, trying to connect to other lanes or trying to find a safe spot. Sometimes I have to ride on the sidewalk and whatnot and it can get annoying at times."

- Youth Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure

KEY TAKEAWAYS

2. Some expressed a desire for no major change to roadway design. If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to one of the following issue areas:
 - ◆ Existing concerns about travel congestion and delays, and fears of losing travel space for cars
 - ◆ A general lack of faith in the MBTA or other public agencies to successfully manage a redesign process
 - ◆ Day-to-day impacts due to construction
 - ◆ Perceptions that the existing issues along BHA would be best addressed through policy and enforcement rather than design.

However, even if people did not indicate a preference for major changes to roadway design, many pointed to the need for better road pavings, lane paintings, and overall

"I understand that the city wants to create spaces for bikes to ride, but a majority of people who live in these communities don't ride bikes. They take public transportation. The few people I see in the bike lanes very seldom look like me. So sometimes I wonder, we're creating these bike lanes, but are we creating them in the right communities? Why not create better transportation, better bus routes to get rid of the cars, increase the transportation access to people. We know who rides the majority of the buses in this community. Why aren't we making them work harder for the people who live in it?"

- Real Talk participant.



"And the idea of bringing more law enforcement or bringing more people into the area, more police cars, more parking and enforcement cars is also going to contribute to the congestion of too many cars being on Blue Hill Ave if they're constantly being there to give people tickets, because again, people aren't going to just stop leaving their cars places without enforcement. We acknowledge that, but if you are bringing more police officers and if you are bringing more enforcement officers into an environment that especially has a high concentration of people who are historically not treated well by law enforcement, that is very unlikely that it is going to lead to the outcome that you are intending to."

- July 2023 virtual public meeting, spoken comment from community attendee, motorist.



"Please leave Mattapan alone...we love it just the way it is."

- October 2022 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, Mattapan resident.

"As a property manager with buildings located on Blue Hill Ave I'm concerned about parking, on-street parking was already eliminated in many areas of Blue Hill."

- Not Your Average Public Meeting: Dorchester (Centralized Feedback Tracker), Dorchester resident.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Others provided opinions that could be best classified as reactive against the prospect of a bus priority design. If a reason was provided at all, it was usually due to one of the following issue areas:
 - Perceptions that prioritizing buses would exacerbate existing problems with travel congestion and delays for personal vehicles.
 - Negative experiences when driving around other bus priority corridors or bike lane projects in the vicinity of BHA.

"We can modernize Blue Hill ave by repaving and repainting the road and putting in better bump out sidewalks for crossing also by adding crossing lights. But what we don't need is a center bus lane. All this will do is add to the traffic congestion along Blue Hill."

- BHA Inbox, Grove Hall resident.



"I am horrified to think that we will move Blue Hill Ave to a one lane situation like American Legion Highway, like Columbus Ave, that area. Scares me, as you already heard people avoid Blue Hill Ave. It's just going to make the side streets that much more busier where most of our children live."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Perceptions of Public Agencies

KEY TAKEAWAYS

In some conversations, it was evident that a subset of folks had a lack of trust in public agencies, negative past experiences with planning and development, or a general sense of engagement fatigue. For example, though BTM had not committed to a design approach for BHA — a fact which was reinforced in all public meetings, written communications, and small group discussions — **many people who expressed reactive opinions were operating under the assumption that the City had already finalized the street designs for BHA.** While the specific nature of someone's concern was not always explicitly defined, it is clear that many folks referencing "the proposal" or "the redesign" were operating under the assumption that design decisions about BHA were already made and that the project was essentially "a done deal."

In addition, several folks expressed their concerns about the project team's motives and positioning in the project context. Over the course of many virtual meetings in particular, several attendees questioned whether the project team was fit to make decisions within the community. Other folks questioned the project's methods and data sources, regardless of the rigor or reliability of the data source. This was especially true when the project team presented data that did not align with an individual's lived experience.

"Why are you showing a picture with center bus lane? I thought decision has not been made????"

- June 2023 virtual public meeting, Zoom chat, motorist, (afterwards, BTM explains that the visuals help attendees visualize what different options could look like.



"Per the article in the Banner newspaper, residents are opposed to the plan, yet the end of the article sounded as if our voices do not matter as they were going to move quickly on the design. I would hate for such a proposal to go into effect as it will increase traffic, introduce road rage, and displace cars to nearby neighborhoods to circumvent the congestion, and decrease pedestrian safety."

- BHA Inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker), Mattapan resident.



"You're taking away so much parking for residents and businesses. This is going to cause more traffic just like on Columbus Ave."

- BHA Inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker).



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTEXTUALIZING FEEDBACK Perceptions of Public Agencies

This perception may be due to recent planning efforts around the BHA corridor. For example, the 2019 BHA TAP planning process advanced two design concepts at a large public meeting in March 2020, both of which included improved infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, and bus riders.³³ The release of this booklet coincided with the start of the pandemic lockdown, so the process was paused until the current campaign. In addition, the City secured a federal RAISE grant in 2021 to implement a center-running bus lane along BHA. If the City ultimately chooses not to implement a center-running bus lane, this federal funding is not guaranteed. Even though the current process did not start out with a predetermined design proposal, and in fact still has not finalized the design decision, **the fact that some people understood otherwise highlights the need for significant improvements in communication on behalf of the City.**

Please see “Project Context,” which provides an abbreviated version of BHA’s complicated history of transportation and neighborhood planning. This includes mass demographic shifts over the last 100+ years, as well as largely top-down infrastructure changes such as the introduction of an electric rail system in the early 1900s and subsidized suburban development in the mid-1900s (leading to the replacement of the streetcar line with bus service and car lanes).



"City Hall don't care. I think they should really look into Roxbury and Dorchester, especially Roxbury. They don't care for seniors anyway. It might be a harsh thing to say, but I know. I had the experience. They don't."
- Senior Real Talk participant.

"The people in these communities have been sold out, the rug pulled underneath them for years, and years, and years, and years, and years. So trust is a big issue... And I think once we get a trust factor involved, I think all that will change. But how do we get the community to trust? Because we've been lied to and the wool pulled over our eyes so many times. Not just by City Hall, but just by the state."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Community & Civic Life Ideals for future

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Not all concerns or solutions focused on transit infrastructure. In fact, most people brought up issues, questions, or hopes across multiple domains:

Many people asked for increased public and green space investments, including: street lighting, street trees, better connections to parks and green space, enhanced seating options and rest spots, improved trash maintenance, public art, and outdoor restaurant areas.

"I'd like to see more street lights all along the street, especially at the bus stops."

- Mattapan Library Drop-ins (Centralized Feedback Tracker), Mattapan resident.



"There ain't a McDonald's up here on Blue Hill Ave and we get McDonald's wrappers. We as a city, as a community, have to be responsible, not just about parking, but trash too."

- Real Talk participant.



"We need more trees along Blue Hill Ave. I've lived in Mattapan for over 30 years"

- Mattapan Library Drop-in (Centralized Feedback Tracker), Mattapan resident.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Community & Civic Life

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Beyond design interventions, **people expressed wishes for a thriving commercial and cultural corridor.** Some made comparisons to other neighborhoods in Boston, in terms of amenities and public maintenance. Others referenced past memories or generational stories about “the old days” of BHA, hinting at the idea of a civic space that should be restored. When mentioned, potential solutions pointed to the need for public support for local businesses.

"But lower Blue Hill Ave had nothing but bustling stores... It had a really bustling kind of social interactions. So, in doing what they're going to do is they're going to create that kind of financial or fiscal ability for people in that community and outside of the community who would like to return, at least even as owners of businesses, to be able to create more of that familiar social interaction, which is ultimately, if we're going to build and have a real bustling new bus system and traveling wider sidewalks, and a bigger beautiful stations, what good is it if we're going past a lot of vacant lots all the way there?"

- Real Talk participant.



"I think the infrastructure's important for morale to give people dignity and something to be proud of and something to defend. And I think things like trees, and plants, and flowers will also improve people's just emotional being."

- Real Talk participant.



"Blue Hill Ave is not a highway and should not look like one or feel like one, but it does."

- BHA Inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker),
Dorchester resident.

"My question is [...] will [they] fix some of the stores around? Because I've seen, when walking around, I see some broke down stores or just stores that look really old. I wish they would upgrade them."

- Youth Real Talk participant.



"The reason why we don't have Bradlee's or Macy's in our community, a lot of these stores in our community, is because they don't come here because we had a bad rap. But it's changing. Give us a chance to have LL Bean, give us a chance to have Starbucks and all these other high-end companies on Blue Hill Ave. Blue Hill Ave used to be a vibrant, vibrant community."

- Real Talk participant.

WHAT WE HEARD

Neighborhood Change

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Many people expressed concerns about **rising costs of living for individuals, and community-scale residential or commercial gentrification and displacement. Some had personal experiences of unwanted displacement** or ongoing affordability concerns; others talked about the potential future risks of residential or commercial displacement due to unmitigated development.

"I want to know if it's going to be affordable for us. Because a lot of things that they're building or putting up around [are] not affordable. But ultimately it's not affordable for us. It's affordable for somebody who's working and [has] two incomes, and they're struggling. So I'm like, it's hard to even envision what we could have because what's going to be out there might not be for us. I signed up for an apartment down there, they [called] me and everything. I goes in there and it's affordable and I can't afford it because of the way they raised the rent so high."

- Senior Real Talk participant.



"I see the pain, the concern, and whenever we see improvement, we have mixed feelings. Because we know that as an example, the Blue Line train station, the people in the community here, I went to the church down the street on Blue Hill Ave for 17 years. People in the community here fought long and hard for that improvement with the train station. And now many of them have been gentrified out of the community because of that train station."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

CONTINUED...

Neighborhood Change

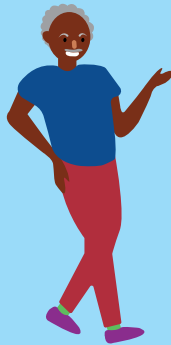
"The original community moved away, and then the infrastructure collapsed, and then it was... I don't think anybody really — the business trucks sort of went away. And I think we struggled to find new businesses to replace the old businesses. And then there was a feeling of, well, you know, this is the way it is when people came in, and recently I think they think that this is the way it's always been. And I think that then they're reluctant to change because they think it might be detrimental to them, and they're the only ones who, they may not be included. So I feel all of that just by being here. And when people say, "Well, people are passing through from other areas to get to other areas," I feel like I'm also passing through and I live here. But I can't shop here. I can't play here. It's sad."

- Real Talk participant.



"I was here with white flight. I'm now here with Come Back White Flight. And watching all the apartments around Franklin Park and how the neighborhood has changed and not seeing as many of my people as I'm used to seeing. And I'm hoping to take advantage of that when it comes to redoing Blue Hill Avenue. And maybe they'll pay better attention to our needs in the area. Because we're not all going. I know I'm not leaving."

- Real Talk participant.



"Black men could only go to Franklin Park and hang out because they weren't welcomed anywhere else in this state. So the Black men that lived in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Franklin Park was their haven. My husband plays golf up there. That's where they felt safe. They could sit, they could barbecue, they could be themselves because they couldn't go anywhere else in the city and be welcomed. Now they're trying to put these guys out of the only place they could go, the only place that they were welcome because gentrification, now Franklin Park is the place to be. They took away the parking, they put up these railings, so they can't even sit up there."

- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Community & Civic Life Ideals for future

Built Infrastructure and Transit Infrastructure Hopes about infrastructure change

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The majority of folks focused on day-to-day concerns and hopes. However, a handful of people flagged questions related to the future vision of BHA.

Some expressed a desire for large-scale infrastructure investments to enhance multimodal options, including the idea of a cyclist/pedestrian bridge, subway line through the area, or restoration of the trolley line.

"It would be great to have bike lanes on Talbot Ave improved and a [pedestrian/bike] bridge built so one can go directly into the [Franklin] Park without endangering oneself having to cross Blue Hill Ave."
- BHA Inbox (Centralized Feedback Tracker.)



"Let's say that the budget was unlimited. Would this be bringing back the trolleys instead? Would this be an expansion of the Mattapan line? Or would this just remain as a bus lane? Or is the bus lane the last thing you want?"
- Real Talk participant.



WHAT WE HEARD

Perceptions of Public Agencies Strategic Planning

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Participants raised questions related to strategic neighborhood planning and alignment with broader city development goals. This included questions about: long-term outcomes (both for individuals and for community life), the values embedded in public spending and budgets, and planning strategies for future neighborhood development.

"I think my question is just mainly what is the long term vision for Blue Hill Avenue, what is it for the City?"

-Real Talk participant.



"And then longevity. So who's going to come in and make sure that those things are still functioning even in the winter? Right now, man, Wu's done a wonderful job of making sure that the infrastructure that carries our families back and forth from Mattapan, Dorchester, Roxbury is free of charge. So will that change in the future? [...] And then when everything deteriorates, it's back to the community the way it was, which is not what we want. Right?"

- Real Talk participant.



"And long-term, daydreaming scenario, what would Blue Hill Avenue look like? Because I understand that budgeting is not always unlimited and you have to go piecemeal when it comes to certain things, but if that wasn't the issue, what is the city working towards?"

- Real Talk participant.

So when you talk about the future of transition of transportation in the communities of Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan, one of the first things that I would want to find out is realistically, how much money is the City of Boston looking and investing in our communities? Because the investment piece will be key to consistency, longevity, usability, X, Y, and Z. So for me it's how much money is the government putting into this? And will the City of Boston really consider those costs?

- Real Talk participant.



In recognition and gratitude for all the labor and voices that contributed to the BHA TAP engagement process, the full engagement datasets are also available in anonymized form in the Appendix.



Photo Credit: Ismail Chaib



Photo Credit: MBTA

ONGOING & FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

1. A Continuing Process



ONGOING & FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

The following section provides:

An overview of the next phases of the BHA TAP project.

A CONTINUING PROCESS

This report marks an important milestone for the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan, but does not mark the end of the process. **The BHA TAP will continue with planning and engagement in three main ways:**

1. Expanding engagement to share out this report and other BHA TAP milestones.

BTD will lead a robust communications campaign in the fall (planned to continue at least until November) to communicate the findings of this report as well as the broader BHA TAP planning timeline. This will include, among other to-be-confirmed activities:

- + Maintaining several online and in-person engagement methods - project inbox and phone line; street outreach and intercepts; tabling at existing community events
- + Continuing to update the project FAQs as new questions come up
- + Conducting new corridor-specific analysis related to parking and housing, and sharing these with community members

2. Finalizing the design approach by the end of 2023.

As stated in this report and in public communications to date, the Mayoral administration - in consultation with local elected officials, BTD, MBTA, and community

constituents - will make a design decision by the end of 2023. This decision will be based on:

- + Feedback collected during the BHA TAP engagement process, including direct feedback shared with elected officials
- + Broader City goals of vibrancy, resiliency, equity, and inclusivity, as outlined in citywide planning documents
- + Technical analyses on parking, traffic flow, alternative design scenarios (some of which have been released publicly, others of which are being produced and will be released publicly as they are shared with elected officials). As shown in this report, there are many shared concerns about traveling along Blue Hill Ave.

The decision will consider which design direction best addresses these shared concerns, and will consider which policy and program investments are necessary to support a holistic vision for BHA.

Once a design decision is made, the process of refining and finalizing the design concept will be overseen by the MBTA, with continued close collaboration by BTD and other City partners.

3. Integrating the BHA TAP process with the Mattapan Square redesign.

BTD has been managing an engagement and planning process for Mattapan Square since 2021. (All Mattapan Square project materials are currently hosted on the BHA TAP website.) This process has focused on the southern end of the BHA TAP project area, and has been focused specifically on the Mattapan Square intersection from Mattapan Square to Babson Street. More recently, the project team has also been working with the Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture on the restoration of the RISE sculptures, one of which was knocked down by a driver in May 2023.

To date, the Mattapan Square project team has presented design proposals for the intersection and conducted engagement on priorities and tradeoffs, including a survey of parking options. A separate report on the intersection design will be published in fall 2023. The street design for the area north of the intersection will be finalized as part of the BHA TAP design decision. This process will similarly be overseen by the MBTA, with continued collaboration by BTD and other City partners.

In addition, the City of Boston and MBTA are managing a number of infrastructure planning, construction, and engagement projects that connect to the communities around the BHA TAP. This includes ongoing projects such as:

- + The **MBTA Bus Network Redesign**, which is estimated to increase bus service system wide by 25% and introduce better and more frequent service for tens of thousands of residents by 2028 (including a one-seat ride from Blue Hill Ave to Longwood Medical Area)³⁴
- + The **Mattapan Line Transformation Project**, which includes redesign of

Mattapan Station and other stops along the Mattapan Trolley line³⁵

- + **MassDOT reconstruction of the bridge** on Blue Hill Ave over the Fairmount Line right of way, just north of Mattapan Square
- + **DCR construction of the Edgewater Greenway and a new shared use bridge** to connect paths on the Mattapan and Milton sides of the Neponset river
- + Future projects such as the **Roxbury Resilient Corridors initiative**³⁶

The BHA TAP engagement process is not over - the project team wants to hear from you!

To get in touch with the Blue Hill Ave project team, you can:

Email

bluehillave@boston.gov

Call the project phone line

617-635-3944.

Or, head to the Blue Hill Ave Transportation Action Plan [website](#) to sign up for the newsletter and learn about upcoming virtual and in-person events.

FROM THE FAQs

BTD does have a preferred design approach, but is not committed to this design. The decision will be finalized by the end of 2023. The following information is copied directly from the [Project FAQs](#):

What is the City's preferred design approach?

The City's preferred design approach is a multimodal corridor that includes:

1. center-running bus lanes
2. new bus shelters
3. new real-time bus information screens
4. large-scale pedestrian safety improvements
5. full sidewalk reconstruction
6. protected bike lanes
7. full roadway reconstruction
8. traffic signal retiming
9. enhanced lighting
10. significant tree canopy expansion
11. significant green infrastructure
12. public art
13. comprehensive review and update of parking regulations, especially to support small businesses along the corridor

Designing Blue Hill Avenue as a multimodal corridor will address the fundamental design of the road to make it safer.

A full redesign is more likely to reduce reckless speeding while not relying on dedicated law enforcement officers to be present 24/7.

A full street redesign means we would have room to plant a healthier, more substantial tree canopy and create comprehensive green infrastructure investments. We would use the latest techniques in green infrastructure design. These techniques create happier, healthier trees that grow bigger and survive longer without breaking up the sidewalk.

A multimodal corridor would give Boston residents multiple safe, reliable options for traveling along Blue Hill Avenue – regardless of income, ability, or age.

What if the City chooses not to move ahead with bus lanes on Blue Hill Ave?

The City is committed to bringing Blue Hill Avenue into a state of good repair, no matter the outcome of this process. That includes street repaving, sidewalk repairs, street restriping, tree pit replanting, and small-scale safety improvements like curb bump-outs. We would also make sure all crossings are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and would implement our new green infrastructure policy wherever significant sidewalk changes are made. If the design does not include bus lanes, we likely will not be able to keep the \$15 million in federal RAISE Grant funding since [the application](#) included center-running bus lanes as a key element of the proposed design. We would also lose the ability to attain any matching funds from the MBTA.



Photo Credit: Graham Moitoso



Photo Credit: Charlotte Fleetwood



APPENDIX

1. Engagement Data Sources



ENGAGEMENT DATA SOURCES

The following section provides:

A detailed description of the various engagement data sources used in this report, including the questions asked and methods of engagement (“Engagement Data Sources”).

[Click Here](#) to view an anonymized copy of all engagement data sources used in this report!

[Click Here](#) to visit the BHA TAP Real Talk website.

ENGAGEMENT DATA SOURCES

Centralized feedback tracker

The centralized engagement tracker was a repository of feedback collected across a number of online and in-person activities. Specifically, this included: the project inbox and phone line, open houses, drop-ins at Mattapan Square and Grove Hall, community walks and rides, tabling at existing events, street outreach/intercepts, the pop-up exhibit, and Not Your Average Public Meeting events.

For in-person outreach, particularly longer interactions, the team was able to fill out a standard intake form (shown below). For email or phone line outreach, the team was able to move exact quotes (written or verbal) into the spreadsheet. For all others, the team employed a mix of paraphrasing and direct quotes. Questions on intake form:

1. Have you heard about the Blue Hill Avenue Transportation Action Plan before today?
2. Initial response from people we're talking to:

3. In the last week, how have you traveled along Blue Hill Ave?
4. Why do you typically travel on Blue Hill Ave?
5. In the last week, what factors influenced your decision to travel that way?
6. When traveling on Blue Hill Avenue, where/when do you feel most safe and why?
7. When traveling on Blue Hill Avenue, where/when do you feel least safe and why?
8. What are the biggest challenges you face along Blue Hill Avenue today?
9. We've heard from community members that Blue Hill Avenue can be chaotic, no matter how you choose to travel. There can be conflicts between people walking, on bikes, in buses, and driving cars. In general, do you support (Strongly Support, Support, Neutral, Do no support, Strongly do not support):
 - + Biking - make it safer and less stressful for people to bike on the street
 - + Buses - make bus trips faster and more reliable for riders and have better bus shelters
 - + Parking - make it easier to find spots by homes, businesses, and community centers
 - + Walking - make it easier and more

pleasant for people to walk or roll along the sidewalks

10. Are there any other improvements you would like to see along Blue Hill Avenue?
11. Would you be interested in receiving updates about the project? If yes, please enter your phone number oWould you be interested in paid opportunities to share your experiences along Blue Hill Avenue with the City? If yes, please enter your phone number or email address.
12. What is the nearest street intersection to your home? Zip code?

Community Inquiry Survey

1. Email Address
2. Your Name (first and last)
3. Your email or phone number
4. What is your top question regarding Blue Hill Avenue? Please frame your sentence as a short and clear question.
5. Please provide more detail. If you are addressing a specific area along Blue Hill Avenue, please provide the nearest intersection or other details so we have a better sense of where you are referring to.
6. Do you have any additional comments or questions?
7. Your zip code
8. How do you primarily travel on Blue Hill Avenue?

Real Talk data

[Click Here](#) to visit the BHA TAP Real Talk website.

1. Please share your first name, where you are located right now, and the two travel methods you mostly use to get around Boston. Then let us know how you are feeling around one of the four PIES check-ins.
2. Do you have a question about how you, your family, or your friends will travel along BHA in the future? Do you have a question about

how BHA will look in the future?

3. Tell us a story about something you experienced in your life that got you to this question.
4. Then I want you to speak to that person and tell them why their question or experience resonated with you and share the story from your life that connects you with their experience.
5. Let's talk a little about what we are hearing. What are you hearing in people's experiences?

Bus rider survey

1. In the last week, how have you traveled along Blue Hill Ave?
2. In the last week, why did you choose to take the bus?
3. Where in Greater Boston are these places located?
4. What would make your trip along Blue Hill Ave more ideal?
5. When you are walking to the bus stop along Blue Hill Ave are there specific crosswalks or other locations that feel unsafe to cross?
6. Are there any improvements you would like to see along Blue Hill Ave? Where?
7. Would you be interested in receiving updates about the project?
8. Would you be interested in paid opportunities to share your experience about taking the bus along Blue Hill Ave with the City?
9. What is the nearest cross-streets of your home address?
10. What is the zipcode of your home address?

Business survey

1. Where do you currently receive deliveries? (curbside parking space, double parking or off-street/loading dock)
2. Is there somewhere you would prefer to

receive deliveries?

3. Are you able to control when most of your deliveries arrive?
4. What does a typical week of deliveries look like for your business? (average number of deliveries, window of time, average duration and with what vehicle size/type)
5. Does your business offer takeout, curbside pickup or delivery? If yes, where does the pickup take place?
6. How long do most customers stay at your business? (0-15 min, 15-30 min, 30-60 min, 60+ min)
7. What is the maximum number of people who visit your business at one time?
8. What are the various employee shifts (including hours) and how many employees are working for each?
9. How do your employees arrive to work? (walk, bike, bus, trolley, commuter rail, drive, Uber/Lyft/dropoff)
10. If your employees drive, where do they park?
11. Is there anything else we should know?

Bus operator interviews

1. What works well about operating a bus on Blue Hill Ave?
2. When operating a bus on Blue Hill Ave, what are your biggest challenges?
3. Are there certain streets or intersections where you experience chronic delays due to congestion?
4. Are there certain turns or other motions that are difficult for you to make while operating a bus?
5. What would you like members of the public to know about operating a bus on Blue Hill Ave?
6. Would you be interested in talking more with project team members regarding your experiences operating a bus on Blue Hill Ave?
7. Additional comments?

Virtual community meetings

Website includes poll results, attendee data, and anonymized meeting chats. The full recordings of each meeting can be found on the project website. Poll questions listed below:

1. Recurring Questions (asked at each monthly meeting):
 - What is your main way of traveling along Blue Hill Ave?
 - Drive
 - Bus/Train
 - Bike
 - Walk
 - Other
 - + Why is this your primary way to get around?
 - + What is your home zip code?
2. Month-specific Questions
 - + Are you interested in getting involved with future engagement activities for Blue Hill Ave? (January, February, March, April, May).
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - + When you travel on Blue Hill Ave, how many other people are typically in the same vehicle (car, bus, etc) as you? (January).
 - 0 (I usually travel along)
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3 or more
 - + Which potential benefits should be prioritized during engagement and planning? (January)
 - Safety for pedestrians
 - Faster, more reliable bus service
 - Safety for people on bikes
 - More space for trees, benches, and other amenities
 - My idea is not listed – I am typing mine in the chat
 - I am not interested in seeing any changes
 - + Which concerns should be prioritized

during engagement and planning?
(January)

- Increased car congestion/more traffic
- Losing access to important places
- Increased rent and housing costs
- Negative impacts on small businesses
- My idea is not listed – I am typing mine in the chat
- I don't have many concerns

+ Please select your top 2 parking concerns:
(February)

- Double parking
- Lack of parking enforcement
- I don't have parking concerns
- Availability of parking (or lack thereof)
- Commuters parking from 9-5 along Blue Hill Ave
- Duration of parking

+ What would you like to see more of on Blue Hill Ave? [please select up to 4]
(April)

- Light fixtures
- Real-time bus arrival signs
- Trash cans
- Trees and other greenery
- Plaques featuring neighborhood history
- Public art
- Seating
- Outdoor games
- Other (please write in the chat)

+ To what degree do these metrics reflect your interests and design questions?
(May)

- Strongly reflect
- Somewhat reflect
- Neutral
- Somewhat do not reflect

+ What questions do you have about this project? (June, July)





LEFT LANE
MUST
TURN LEFT

ONLY ONLY

ENDNOTES

Executive Summary

- 1 Mailers, general communications materials (website, ads, flyers, meeting recordings, newsletter)
- 2 Includes project inbox and phone line, and virtual and in-person outreach

Introduction

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- 35 “Mattapan Line Transformation,” <https://www.mbta.com/projects/mattapan-line-transformation>.
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