Crafting a winning alliance for tactical bus improvements

Steven Higashide
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UCLA Lake Arrowhead Symposium
Aldermen, activists say buses to stay off Ashland, Western medians

August 3, 2018

By Susan S. Stevens

Shoppers, shopkeepers, and residents can rest assured that the middles of Ashland and Western Avenues will not become dedicated to buses any time in the foreseeable future, according to anti-Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) activists, Ald. Daniel Solis (25th), and Ald. Jason Ervin (28th).

Officials put on hold a five-year-old City plan to install BRT down the two busy streets’ centers in order to increase bus speeds, following community opposition. There it stays, according to the leaders and the aldermen.
Elderly lady looked at this chart. She laughed. She said that this is a joke.

She also said that “poor people will only use this service.” After I told her that I rely on public transit to get to CSUN, she told me to “get a car and that I’m a joke.” Definitely going to write an e-mail to Metro about this experience.
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### 16th Street NW Bus Lanes Project

#### 2016 (Planning Study Phase)
- 5th Citizens Advisory Group Meeting Presentation - September 2016
- Public Meeting Wall Map - January 2016
- Public Meeting Handout - January 2016
- Public Meeting Presentation - January 2016

#### 2015 (Planning Study Phase)
- 4th Citizens Advisory Group Meeting Presentation - December 2015
- Draft Alternatives: 16th Street NW Transit Priority Planning Study - October 2015
- 3rd Citizens Advisory Group Meeting Presentation - September 2015
- 2nd Citizens Advisory Group Meeting Presentation - August 2015
- 1st Citizens Advisory Group Meeting Presentation - May 2015
- Public Kickoff Meeting Summary - April 2015
- Public Kickoff Meeting Presentation - March 2015

### Previous Studies Documents
- 2016 Final Report: 16th Street NW Transit Priority Planning Study
- 16th Street Transit Priority Planning Study and Existing Conditions Report - October 2015
- 2013 Final Report: 16th Street NW Safety & Mobility
- The Metrobus 16th Street Line Study - February 2009
From “tactical urbanism”...
To “tactical transit”
Tactical transit lanes: Generally ~1 mile in length; using temporary materials; in areas where bus riders already make up substantial proportion of road users.
Tactical transit in the Boston region

2016: Everett “cone pilot” lane on Broadway

2017: BostonBRT technical assistance program: Everett enhancements, Cambridge/Watertown (Mt. Auburn St.), Arlington (Mass Ave.)

2018: Boston (Washington St.)

2019: Somerville (Broadway), Boston (N. Washington St. Brighton Ave.)
Washington St (Boston - Roslindale neighborhood)

- 1.2-mile corridor connecting to Orange Line heavy rail
- 19,000 bus trips/day on 6 bus routes
- Pilot bus/bike lane announced March 2018
- Pilot launched May 2018
A foundation of data

Bus riders = 58.4% of motorized road users in AM peak

Delay in Passenger-Hours/Mile

- Green: 0 - 20
- Light Green: 21 - 40
- Orange: 41 - 60
- Red: 61 - 80
- Dark Red: 81 - 235

(Boston Region MPO, 2016)
LivableStreets Alliance staff + volunteers organized riders around the Washington Street lane for 40 hours in Oct/Nov 2017 (2x/week during peak hours)
Streetfilms (national advocacy org) documented lane as celebration and pressure tactic
Pilots provide supportive data

Change in inbound run time on the Washington Street bus lane, Jan-Mar 2018 vs Jan-Mar 2019

Average trip got better; bad trips got way less bad
WASHINGTON ST (BOSTON - ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD)

- Peak-hour travel time improved by 20-25%
- 94% of bus riders and cyclists supported permanent lane
- Made permanent June 2018
Success spurs success: BTD staffs up for transit

JOIN US IN TRANSFORMING BOSTON’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

WE WILL BE HIRING:

- One (1) transit coordinator to set the City of Boston’s overall public transportation agenda and manage the Transit Team.

- One (1) transit planner to manage corridor bus lane and bus priority projects from concept to installation.

- Three (3) operations staff to install and maintain bus lanes.
More bus lanes are coming to Boston

By Adam Vaccaro Globe Staff, March 7, 2019, 2:23 p.m.

Walsh wants to pilot 2 more dedicated bus lanes

Also plans to open pickup-dropoff zone for ride hailing apps
Tactical transit compressed timeline (Arlington)

Timeline

**April-June:** Field Work and Data Collection, including stakeholder meetings

**May 16:** BRT Educational Forum

**June-August:** Corridor Scenario Development (Conceptual Design of Dedicated Bus Lane, Queue Jumps, Bus Stop Relocation and Related Improvements)

**May-October:** Stakeholder Meetings in East Arlington

**August 15:** Alternatives Scenarios Forum

**August-September:** Implementation

**October 9-November 9:** Bus Priority Pilot

**November 14:** Final Forum

**November-December:** Pilot Evaluation
Wraparound support for small municipalities

Barr Foundation provided technical assistance to Cambridge, Watertown, Arlington, Everett:

- Planning support (ITDP, Stantec)
- Graphic design (Ad Hoc Industries)

In many regions, a state DOT, large MPO, or transit agency could provide similar assistance.
Tactical transit spreads: Main Street (Cincinnati)

- 11,000 riders/day
- Pilot launched November 2018; additional signage added January 2019
- Announced as 6-month pilot but has been extended
Cincinnati’s Better Bus Coalition
Tactical transit spreads: H & I Streets NW (DC)

- 80,000 bus trips/day, up to 70 buses/hour at peak
- Pilot announced March 2019,
- Pilot launched June 2019
- Revised and made permanent Nov. 2019
Tactical transit spreads: Flower Street (LA)

- Up to 70 buses/hour at peak
- Announced as mitigation for closure of Blue Line rail
- Pilot launched May 2019
- Results: Travel time reductions of ~20%
- LA Metro recommending pilot continue after Blue Line reopening, through March 2020
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Further reading:

BETTER BUSES BETTER CITIES
HOW TO PLAN, RUN, AND WIN THE FIGHT FOR EFFECTIVE TRANSIT

BEST PRACTICES IN IMPLEMENTING TACTICAL TRANSIT LANES

FAST-TRACKED A TACTICAL TRANSIT STUDY

TCRP Research Report 207 (by Street Plans)

UCLA ITS
Thank you!

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