



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## BOSTONBRT

# Introduction

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BostonBRT seeks partners to lead efforts to pilot Gold Standard BRT elements in the Greater Boston region. Through a competitive grantmaking process, BostonBRT will offer technical, planning, and outreach support to selected grantees around the implementation of specific pilot projects for a set duration of time. Our goal through this process is to collaborate with grantees to 1) help educate the public (both people who ride the bus and who drive cars) about the possibilities of Gold Standard BRT, and 2) collect data on how better bus design impacts streets and the larger neighborhood ecosystem.

BostonBRT is a research and community engagement initiative raising awareness about the opportunities of Gold Standard BRT and demonstrating how it can be part of Greater Boston's mobility planning. The campaign has built substantive engagement among

elected officials, local municipalities, community advocacy groups, and the MBTA. We are proactively seeking to turn this solid planning and outreach work into a highly visible campaign that creates excitement for advancing several pilots that can be successfully implemented with local and agency partners.

Municipalities, planners, transit advocates, community organizations, agencies, or other entities with an interest in transit equity, local economic development, or the environment and the ability to carry out a pilot implementation program are welcome to apply. Applicants must be affiliated with municipalities, nonprofit organizations, or neighborhood and business associations.

## Why BRT?

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Greater Boston is a region of firsts. From the beginning, the region has played a groundbreaking role in America's transit history, with the first chartered ferries, first subway system, and strategic investments in public transportation in the 1960s. But today, our public transit must evolve to meet the growing needs of the region. The Boston lifestyle is changing, with more people needing to get more places not served well by the region's traditional "hub and spoke" rail system. At the same time, streets in Greater Boston are

adapting to accommodate a range of mobility options beyond cars—creating better community connectivity, economic development, and cleaner air. Gold Standard BRT can be a centerpiece of Boston and surrounding communities' streets of the future by providing reliable, efficient, and cost-effective mass transit to riders in every neighborhood.

## BostonBRT Project Background

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The BostonBRT campaign was convened in 2013 by the Barr Foundation as part of its climate program, acknowledging that any serious efforts to address climate change must advance solutions for mobility.

BostonBRT began with a rigorous analysis to determine if and where Gold Standard BRT might be technically feasible in Greater Boston, looking at measures such as ridership and bus frequency, roadway widths, and parking impacts. The analysis was led by the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP), an internationally-renowned nonprofit organization that is an expert on BRT. ITDP was supported by a study group made up of local community leaders and transit experts. The group compiled their

findings, which included five initial recommended corridors, into a [June 2015 report](#).

With these technical findings in hand, BostonBRT is now guided by an Advisory Committee made up of community, business, and government leaders.

# Request for Proposals

BostonBRT seeks 2-3 potential bus corridors to pilot Gold Standard BRT. Applicants must be affiliated with municipalities, nonprofit organizations, agencies or neighborhood and business associations within the Greater Boston Region or in Massachusetts and have the ability to carry out a pilot implementation program. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in supporting transit equity, increasing local economic development, and reducing greenhouse gases. If you are interested in piloting BRT, BostonBRT can support you through:

- **Technical assistance.** Nelson\Nygaard and the Institute for Transportation Development Policy (ITDP) will provide technical support to grantees that demonstrate a strong interest in piloting a BRT corridor. We will then work with you to ensure that BRT plans are consistent with international best practice and strive to meet the Gold Standard as outlined in the [BRT Standard](#). Technical support will be offered as part of the grant and may include the following as determined or requested:
  - Development of concept plans in coordination with Gold Standard BRT Principles
  - Coordination assistance with MassDOT/MBTA
  - Explanation of the tradeoffs between modes
  - Establishment of evaluation criteria for use in measuring success of pilot
  - Existing conditions/data gathering
  - Assistance in developing operating parameters and staffing
  - Pilot Design
  - Development of project graphics
  - Implementation assistance – in either direct or indirect costs
  - Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Additional technical support.** In addition to BRT assistance, grants for additional technical support can be awarded up to \$100,000, and can be augmented by municipal or other funds. Grants funds will be awarded according to the need for technical support beyond the scope of ITDP and Nelson\Nygaard's areas of expertise, such as the creation of detailed engineering or architectural plans or a financial feasibility study. Grant funds can also be used to cover costs of pilot operations or materials. Applications should include general descriptions of technical support requested, and should outline overall contribution to the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of a pilot. The ultimate level of design needed to implement a pilot will be determined by the host municipality or agency.

- **Communications support.** BostonBRT has a variety of materials including fact sheets, images, video, and a report on Gold Standard BRT to help you educate key audiences about BRT. We can also work with your team to develop tailored materials about how BRT could fit into your local community.

- **Community engagement support.** Where support for BRT develops, we will work with you on implementing local engagement and mobility planning activities that will help connect local voices to those capable of bringing the community's vision to fruition. However, to be considered for a pilot grant, the municipality or organization must first demonstrate a baseline level of support or openness from community stakeholders to explore Gold Standard BRT further (please see "Pilot Attributes Required for Consideration" section for more information).

BostonBRT will work with your organization or municipality for up to 6 months as you plan for the undertaking of your pilot project.

## What is BRT?

BRT is a bus-based transit system that can deliver fast, comfortable, and cost-effective services to riders in every neighborhood. The BRT Basics are the five features that define BRT. These features most significantly result in a faster trip for passengers and make traveling on transit more reliable and more convenient.

Gold Standard is the highest standard of BRT, as defined by the global [BRT Standard](#). Gold Standard BRT corridors feature the very best in international best practices. Gold Standard corridors may include features such as real-time passenger information, a high frequency of service, and full BRT infrastructure through





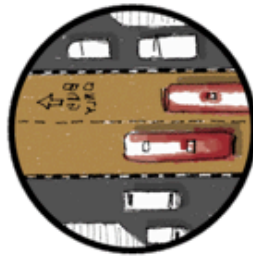
high demand sections of the city. Gold Standard corridors often feature integration with other modes of transport and with bicycle share systems. Such systems have the greatest ability to inspire

the public as well as other cities. Examples of Gold Standard BRT corridors include Guangzhou, China's Zhongshan Avenue corridor and Medellín, Colombia's Metroplús.



### Dedicated Right-of-Way

Bus-only lanes fully segregated from mixed traffic



### Busway Alignment

Bus-only lanes aligned to the middle, not the curb, of a road



### Off-Board Fare Collection

Turnstile-controlled or proof-of-payment fare collection system



### Intersection Treatments

Mixed-traffic is prohibited from making turns across the busway



### Platform-Level Boarding

Station platforms level with bus floors when boarding and alighting

## BRT Corridor Precedents

The photographs below provide examples of BRT found in the US and around the world.



MOVE BRT, Belo Horizonte, Brazil



Metrobús, Mexico City, Mexico



HealthLine BRT, Cleveland, Ohio



Emerald Express, Eugene, Oregon



Yichang BRT, Yichang, China



Rea Vaya, Johannesburg, South Africa

# Pilot Attributes Required for Consideration

All interested local and agency partners should strive to meet the 5 elements included in ITDP's [BRT Standard](#). A BRT corridor is a section of road or contiguous roads served by a bus route or multiple bus routes with a minimum length of 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) that has dedicated bus lanes. For purposes of this pilot, shorter segments will be considered provided they can demonstrate both high potential impact and visibility.

To be considered for the BRT pilot, a corridor must include, at minimum, 2 of the 5 elements listed below, plus incorporate other criteria as feasible included in the [BRT Standard](#). For features that are difficult to implement in a pilot (e.g. platform level boarding, station design, etc.), they may be modeled or graphically conceptualized to help demonstrate what Gold Standard BRT can look like. Preference will be given to submission that strive to include as many elements as possible:

1. *Dedicated right-of-way.* Bus-only lanes make for faster travel and ensure that buses are never delayed due to mixed traffic congestion. The dedicated lane can be in place for only part of the day for pilot purposes.
2. *Busway alignment.* Center of roadway or bus-only corridor keeps buses away from the busy curbside where cars are parking, standing, and turning.
3. *Off-board fare collection.* Fare payment at the station, instead of on the bus, eliminates the delay caused by passengers waiting to pay on board.
4. *Intersection treatments.* Prohibiting turns for traffic across the bus lane reduces delays caused to buses by turning traffic. Prohibiting such turns is the most important measure for moving buses through intersections – more important even than signal priority.
5. *Platform-level boarding.* The station should be at level with the bus for quick and easy boarding. This also makes it fully accessible for wheelchairs, disabled passengers, strollers and carts with minimal delays.

The local and agency partners must demonstrate a level of

corridor interest in pursuing the pilot. Recognizing that different corridors include different constituencies (e.g. whether a corridor runs through a residential, main street, or industrial area), “corridor interest” could take different forms. Depending on the makeup of the corridor, examples of stakeholders to be engaged could include:

- Riders of the closest current bus routes
- Corridor neighbors
- Local businesses
- Elected officials representing the corridor
- Organizations advocating for the needs and interests of groups who would be impacted by a corridor, particularly vulnerable populations

A demonstration of initial support could take the form of letters of interest, a group roundtable of key stakeholders, or a community poll.

The local and agency partners should be willing to prioritize use of roads/roadways for Bus Rapid Transit. For example, the dedicated bus lanes needed for BRT may mean the removal of on-street parking, vehicular traffic lanes, or bike facilities. Applicants should be aware that it is our expectation that acceptance of this award signals a willingness to engage local residents and their municipalities in discussion and subsequent decisions about use of roadways for BRT. Applicants must demonstrate – through the application process – the support of local governing agencies to explore and implement necessary trade-offs. Localities that are not able or willing to make some of the key trade-offs needed to support BRT will not be considered for this program.

# Specifications/Timeline/ Submissions Process

To be considered for the BRT pilot, applicants must provide:

- A letter of interest from applicant lead being considered for a pilot. Letter must include a map and description of the proposed pilot corridor.
- Demonstration of support from municipality(ies) in which pilot will take place.
- If the pilot involves modification to MBTA services, applicant must indicate what elements will need to be coordinated with the MBTA (coordination with the MBTA should occur through the BostonBRT technical team).
- If pilot does not include MBTA services, applicant must demonstrate ability to provide, operate, or fund bus service for duration of pilot.
- Demonstration of initial community support to explore a pilot further (please see above for more details).
- Description of existing conditions on the corridor including, but not limited to, a description of existing transit services, level of demand for existing transit services, relevant performance measures for existing transit services, description of land use adjacent to the corridor, and account of residential and commercial density in area around the corridor.

- A community engagement and advocacy plan to cultivate community and political support for a Gold Standard BRT pilot. Plan must include pilot corridor timeline and budget.
- A plan to collect and evaluate before and after data on the pilot corridor. Data collection and evaluation must include data on time savings and ridership.

Questions from applicants regarding their qualifications or preliminary technical analysis should be e-mailed to [pilot@bostonbrt.org](mailto:pilot@bostonbrt.org), with subject line “RFP” by April 19th. Frequently asked questions will be posted with answers on [bostonbrt.org/pilot](https://bostonbrt.org/pilot) as warranted.

Letters of interest from applicants are due by May 3rd and should be sent to [pilot@bostonbrt.org](mailto:pilot@bostonbrt.org) with the subject line “RFP letter of interest.” The BostonBRT technical consultants will confirm that applicants are eligible to lead a pilot by May 10th via email.

Eligible applicants must submit all other application materials by May 31st. All relevant materials should be sent to [pilot@bostonbrt.org](mailto:pilot@bostonbrt.org) with the subject line “RFP application.”

BostonBRT will inform selected grantees by June 30th.

## Evaluation Process

All applications will first be reviewed by BostonBRT’s technical consultants to determine whether [the corridor has the baseline technical requirements necessary to pilot Gold Standard BRT features, and if the applicant has recognized appropriate tradeoffs.](#) Further technical review and approval by municipality or MBTA will be sought when necessary. The BostonBRT Advisory Committee will then evaluate all technically-approved proposals. In addition to technical feasibility of the corridor, the applicants will be evaluated according to the following:

- Ability to lead the implementation of the pilot on the purposed corridor.
- The number and quality of Gold Standard BRT elements proposed.

- Level of visibility within the municipality(ies) in which the corridor is located. This could be demonstrated by showing the level of existing bus ridership on the corridor or the level of residential or commercial density near the corridor, for example.
- Ability to benefit the existing bus ridership in the municipality(ies) where the corridor is located.
- Ability to improve the quality of existing bus services on the corridor if bus service currently exists.
- Demonstrated support from local stakeholders (Municipal, Agency, Business, Community).
- Ability to incorporate necessary right-of-way tradeoffs to implement pilot program.
- Priority will be given to pilots that align with local master or vision plans.