

## **A better bus experience on the Silver Line**

*Board the Washington Street Silver Line Bus Through All Doors from May 24-June 6*

From May 24 through June 6, BostonBRT in partnership with MassDOT, the MBTA, the City of Boston, and local community organizations are demonstrating all-door boarding – a key feature of BRT – along the SL4 and SL5 Washington Street Silver Line between Dudley Square and downtown.

**During the Silver Line Better Bus Experience, riders are able to board and exit buses through all doors to test how this improvement creates a faster, more convenient, and reliable ride.**

Two-thirds of the delay on the SL4 and SL5 comes from the amount of time it takes for riders to get on and off the bus. Riders currently only board at the front door, in a single-file line, paying as they get on. This creates wait time at each stop that adds up over the course of a ride.

---

### **Who is leading this demonstration?**

The demonstration is being led by BostonBRT, a research and community engagement initiative, in partnership with MassDOT, the MBTA, the City of Boston, and local community organizations. This level of partnership between a transit agency and municipality to improve transit service and test new ideas is critical to the implementation of full BRT.

### **What is the purpose of the demonstration?**

Riders will experience a critical component of BRT and learn about how other Gold Standard BRT features could improve their bus experience even further. Riders will be exposed to faster boarding and travel time, and BostonBRT will collect data to evaluate the effectiveness of all-door boarding.

### **What does the demonstration include?**

The demonstration includes all Silver Line Washington Street buses (SL4 and SL5) in both directions, at every stop, from start of service on May 24 through the end of service on June 6.

During the demonstration, riders can board at all doors (no waiting at the front door to board!) while experts and volunteers from BostonBRT and community partner organizations survey riders to better understand how the demonstration impacted their ride.

### **Why “all-door boarding”?**

All-door boarding speeds up the process of boarding the bus by creating a boarding and exiting process that works like a subway train. The current front-door-only boarding process is a major contributor to delays on the SL4 and SL5.

All-door boarding is one element of bus rapid transit (BRT), which is made up of 5 core improvements that create a faster and more reliable commute for people riding the

bus. All-door boarding is made possible by off-board fare collection on Gold Standard BRT routes.

This demonstration will test the impact of all-door boarding on service times and preview benefits that could be similar to those expected from the MBTA's future fare payment system.

### **Why is this demonstration happening on the SL4 and SL5?**

The Silver Line Washington routes (SL4 and SL5) are the MBTA's highest ridership bus routes and are as close as the MBTA gets to true bus rapid transit (BRT). Recent data shows that this section of Washington Street, on an average weekday, carries about 12,000 cars and 14,000 Silver Line riders.

Two-thirds of the delay on the SL4 and SL5 is from the amount of time it takes for riders to get on and off the bus. We are testing "all door boarding" to measure how much time the bus could save if people can board the bus through any of the doors.

The demonstration also leverages two other core BRT elements that exist along certain parts of the route: dedicated bus-only lanes and transit signal priority, which minimizes the amount of time buses are stopped at red lights. Testing all-door boarding together with these existing BRT elements will showcase the possibilities of implementing true BRT throughout Greater Boston.

### **What is Gold Standard BRT?**

Because the quality of BRT can vary in execution, and most cities have not experienced it at a high level, it can be difficult to clearly define. To address this, a committee of international experts developed the BRT Standard, a set of scored criteria to rate BRT corridors and celebrate the best as Bronze, Silver, or Gold. Gold Standard is the highest level this mode of transit can achieve, delivering transformative results in speed, capacity, and passenger experience. [Learn more about BRT features.](#)

### **Is the Silver Line considered Bus Rapid Transit?**

No, the Silver Line is not considered BRT because it does not incorporate [all essential features that define BRT.](#)

The MBTA Silver Line Washington routes (SL4 and SL5) are closer to BRT than other traditional bus routes. Along most of the SL4 and SL5 corridors, the City of Boston has two core BRT elements in place: dedicated lanes/bus-only lanes, which separate buses from car traffic to create a faster and more reliable experience for people riding the bus, and transit signal priority, which minimizes the time buses are stopped at red lights, which is currently at eight intersections along the routes.

### **What's next?**

At the conclusion of this demonstration, BostonBRT, MassDOT, the MBTA, and the City of Boston will share the results with the public, and results will help inform future demonstrations and decision-making.

BostonBRT will continue to work with more communities on BRT demonstrations. The process is open for applicants until May 31, 2017 through the [BostonBRT RFP](#). We will announce our next demonstrations this summer, so stay tuned!

Other ways to get involved:

- The [Beauty and the Bus](#) social media contest has been extended through June 7! Keep sharing photos of beautiful bus moments using #BosBRT for a chance to win a Boston weekend “staycation” at Aloft Seaport Boston, Element Seaport Boston, or the Westin Boston Waterfront.
- We will announce the winner of the [Station Design Competition](#) on May 23, 2017 at [an in-person event, StreetTalk: Cities on the Move](#), hosted by the LivableStreets Alliance. Join us in bringing to life exciting new ideas for BRT stations that are state-of-the-art, create a sense of civic pride, and deliver a transformative world-class transit experience to Bostonians.

### **How can I learn more?**

For questions or feedback please email [pilot@bostonbrt.org](mailto:pilot@bostonbrt.org). Follow along on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram through @bosBRT and #bosBRT and learn more at [an in-person event, StreetTalk: Cities on the Move](#), hosted by the LivableStreets Alliance. Get involved in LivableStreets Alliance and their [Better Buses initiative](#) to help them advocate for better transit service throughout the Boston area.

###