

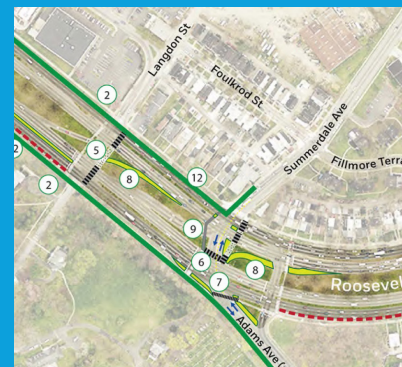


Roosevelt Boulevard

Route for Change Program

Executive Summary

May 2021 | City of Philadelphia



Executive Summary



Few roads are as iconic and vital, yet complex, as Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia.

One out of three people in Philadelphia live within a mile of the Boulevard, and the tens of thousands of people who use the Boulevard each day face difficult challenges, no matter how they travel. Yet, many who live along the Boulevard or depend on it to get around recognize its potential. In 2016, with support from a U.S. DOT TIGER planning grant, the City of Philadelphia, PennDOT, and SEPTA joined together to develop the Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Program to make the Boulevard more safe, accessible, and reliable for all users.

Over the last five years, through 18 community meetings and many more stakeholder conversations, a vision for the Boulevard as safe, reliable, and accessible was crafted. From that vision, near-term improvements and longer-term guiding principles were developed.

Long Term Vision

Roosevelt Boulevard will be safe, accessible, and reliable for all users. The Boulevard will be an attractive and vibrant corridor that unites adjacent communities and offers a diverse and connected network of transportation choices.

Safe

People will be safe and not in danger of death or serious injury when they travel on the Boulevard. Today, Roosevelt Boulevard has one of the highest rates of crashes in the City, accounting for 14 percent of all crash-related fatalities in Philadelphia.

Accessible

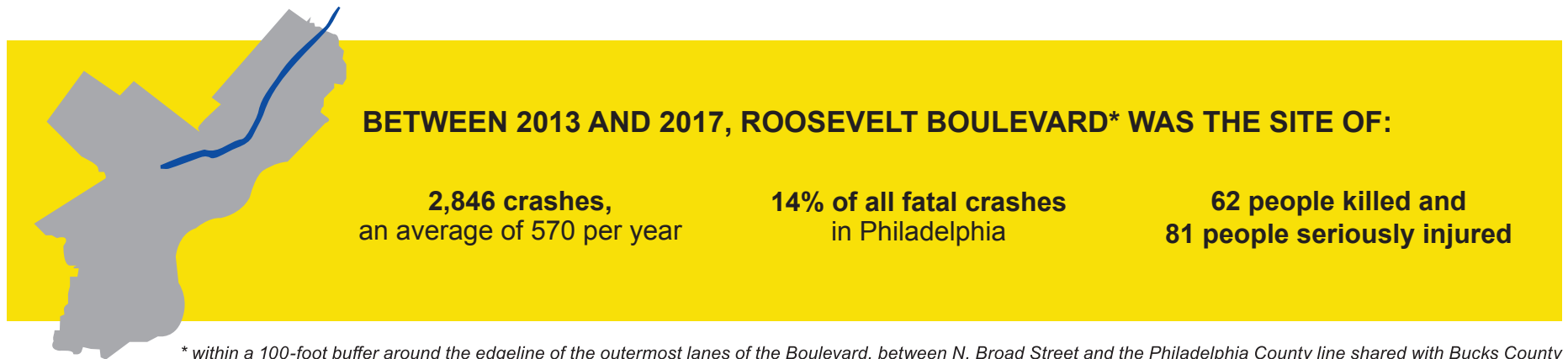
People will be able to use the Boulevard easily by any mode of their choice, including riding transit, driving, walking and biking. Improving bus transit, either implementing Direct Bus or future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), is a central aspect for increasing accessibility to the hundreds of thousands of jobs and opportunities located on the Boulevard.

Reliable

The Boulevard will be a reliable route for travel, connecting people to neighborhoods, commercial centers, and attractions throughout the city. Today, the frequency of crashes and incidents along the Boulevard makes travel unpredictable for those taking transit or driving.

Commitment to Vision Zero

Despite past incremental safety efforts, the number and severity of traffic crashes along the Boulevard continue to pose a significant public health threat to Philadelphians. When asked, 70 percent of public meeting participants said that they felt stressed or very stressed about traveling along the Boulevard.



Planning in Action



An important part of the Route for Change program is not just to *plan* for change along the Boulevard, but to *make* change happen. This program focuses on implementing incremental improvements and creating a safe and inviting corridor over the long-term, thereby inspiring Philadelphians to feel more ownership and pride in the Boulevard. As community and transportation needs were uncovered during the planning process, solutions were pursued and implemented to truly demonstrate that change can happen on the Boulevard:

New Bus Stations and Direct Bus Route

In response to identified need to improve bus stops and bus frequency, the City and SEPTA worked together to build eight new high quality bus stations and initiate the City's first Direct Bus Route, Boulevard Direct, which runs buses every 10 minutes during rush hour and every 15 minutes during most other periods.

Camera Automated Speed Enforcement

In response to the persistently high occurrences of severe and fatal crashes on the Boulevard, the Pennsylvania legislature authorized automated speed enforcement cameras along Roosevelt Boulevard in 2018 as part of a five-year pilot program. In 2019, Mayor Kenney signed legislation with support from City Council permitting the pilot program. Active since June 2020, the City and the PPA. The City and the PPA are monitoring the program, and anticipate extending it to new locations, as well as making the cameras permanent. Adding automated speed cameras on the Boulevard is one of the most effective steps towards eliminating traffic deaths on the Boulevard.

Section 1: About Roosevelt Boulevard

Section 1 provides the history of the Boulevard and what today's conditions are like for people who drive, walk, bike, or ride transit along it. Crashes on Roosevelt Boulevard are frequent and severe, accounting for 6 percent of all crashes and 14 percent of all fatal crashes in the City.



56

SIGNALIZED
INTERSECTIONS



94

UNSIGNALIZED
INTERSECTIONS

252

NON-INTERSECTION
ACCESS POINTS

Evolution of the Boulevard

Since opening in 1914, the Boulevard and the neighborhoods around it have evolved in North Philadelphia and the Boulevard was extended to to the Far Northeast and Bucks County. Today, more than 20 neighborhoods fall along Roosevelt Boulevard and are home to one in three Philadelphia residents. The communities along the Boulevard continue to diversify; 18 percent of the corridor's residents are born outside the United States, and almost one third speak a language other than English.

Community engagement

Over the past five years, the planning process for the Route for Change Program included five rounds of public forums, totaling 18 meetings, to gather input on ideas for improving Roosevelt Boulevard. Input received in the rounds of public meetings crafted a vision for the Boulevard to be an attractive and vibrant corridor that unites adjacent communities and offers a diverse and connected network of transportation choices.

Current function

Most of the Boulevard has 12 lanes of moving traffic, carrying between 39,000 and 90,000 vehicles per day and 10 bus lines for all or a significant portion of their routes. There are sidewalks on both sides for large sections of the Boulevard, but there are also significant gaps in the sidewalk network.



1 out of 3

people in Philadelphia
live within one mile of
the Boulevard



18% of the
corridor's residents
were born in a
foreign country.



Almost **1/3** of the
corridor's residents speak
a language other than
English at home as their
primary language.

Section 2:

Next 5+ Years 2025 Improvements

Section 2 highlights ways to improve safety, accessibility, and reliability in an incremental approach. Route for Change created a toolbox consisting of near and mid-term improvements with a planning horizon of 2025 and focused on addressing safety concerns that are prevalent along the full corridor. The program will include improvements to transit, safer pedestrian access, intersections, and landscaping.



Local Bus Stop Improvements

Improvements to the Boulevard will include upgrades like bus shelters and new seating at 62 local bus stops.

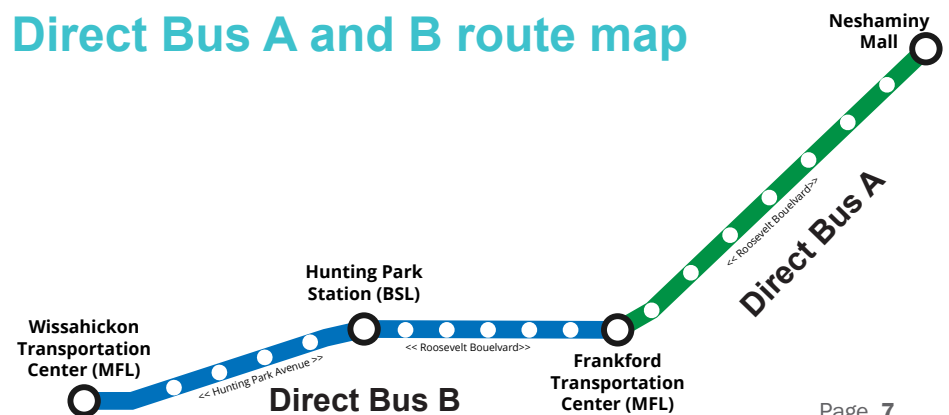
Business Access Transit Lanes (BAT)

BAT lanes will provide designated space for buses to travel separately from general traffic. This will improve accessibility and reliability for transit riders. BAT lanes will support both Direct Bus and local service along the Boulevard while maintaining access to local businesses.

Direct Bus, Phase B

Direct Bus service will be extended to new locations and connect the Frankford Transportation Center to the Wissahickon Transportation Center with frequent, reliable bus service. Phase B will also focus on elevating the quality and availability of transit service along the Boulevard.

Direct Bus A and B route map



Intersections & Segments

Today, many intersections and roadway segments along the Boulevard have confusing traffic patterns that are especially difficult to navigate for pedestrians and transit users that result in traffic crashes. To address these issues, the program identified six priority roadway segments for improvement. Recommendations to make them safer include curb extensions to shorten crossing distances, realigned crosswalks, realigned lane configurations and turn lanes, upgrades to traffic signals and timing, changes to traffic movements, and new or upgraded transit shelters and stations.

Pedestrian Safety

Route for Change will recommend five types of projects to improve the safety of the Boulevard for people who walk or bike:

- Improve the pedestrian crossing experience and make it easier to walk across the Boulevard safely with the walk signal
- Repaint crosswalks and improve curb ramps
- Build curb extensions to shorten pedestrian crossing lengths/times
- Close sidewalk gaps
- Extend the protected bicycle network to the Boulevard



Example of Intersection Improvements on Roosevelt Boulevard - Summerdale Ave. & Adams Ave. is one of forty-eight intersections that is studied in the plan. (pg. 129)

Crossover Improvements

Today, driving between the outer (local) lanes and the inner (express) lanes is challenging and requires using a crossover lane. In order to accommodate BAT lanes, improve safety, and mitigate congestion, 9 of the 34 total crossovers will be extended or improved.

Landscape & Public Art Improvements

Refer to the full Route for Change report for Landscape and Public Art (pgs. 84-93); Vision Zero Educational Campaign (pg. 180); Signage and Lighting (pgs. 183-184); Transportation Demand Management (pg. 185).

Section 3:

Long-Term Vision

2040 Improvements

The report presents two alternative visions for the future of the Boulevard. Both alternatives are founded upon the same principles and long-term vision, but they differ in specific infrastructure improvements and the cost and time needed for implementation.

Building Blocks for Long-Term Vision

**Bus Rapid Transit with
dedicated transit lanes**

**Widened and
continuous sidewalks**

**Reduce posted speed
limits for safe driving**

**Two-way protected bike
lane**

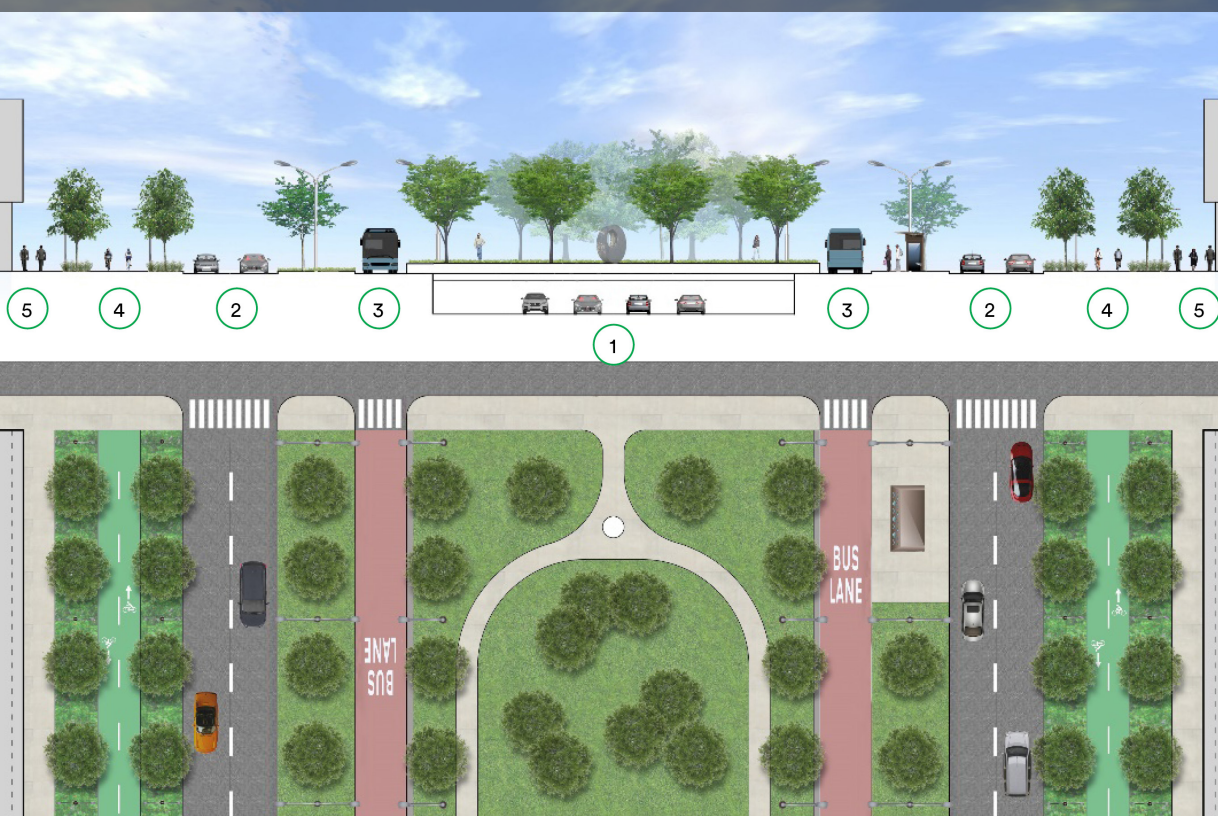
Alternative 1 “Partially Capped Expressway”

Build a below-ground expressway and make at-grade connections on top for people driving, taking transit, biking, and walking. Keep the high-speed highway option for people driving.

Cost Estimate: \$10,864,000,000



Cross-section and aerial view of Alternative 1 “Partially Capped Expressway”



Shown at left:

1. Four below-grade expressway lanes (two northbound, two southbound); higher speeds
2. Four at-grade local lanes for local traffic and buses (two northbound, two southbound); slower speeds
3. Two dedicated bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes on the inside next to the medians
4. Two two-way protected bike lanes on the outside near the sidewalks
5. Widened sidewalks along both sides
6. Nine on/off ramps to connect expressway lanes with local lanes (Not pictured)
7. Five fully capped segments; nine BRT stations located on capped segments creating neighborhood scale access hubs (Not pictured)
8. Other segments have depressed lanes with no/partial cap; segments, including everything north of Bowler St., are at-grade (Not pictured)

Alternative 2

“Neighborhood Boulevard”

Replace some vehicle lanes with other elements including BRT lanes, bike lanes, and wider sidewalks. Add flexible space that can change during time of day for parking or vehicles depending on demand. Build new intersections to make a better grid and safer crossings.

Cost Estimate: \$1,957,000,000



Cross-section and aerial view of Alternative 2 “Neighborhood Boulevard”



Shown at left:

1. Six at-grade vehicle lanes (three northbound, three southbound); local buses use outermost lanes; all have slower speeds
2. Two flex lanes (one northbound, one southbound); off-peak used for local bus boarding, on-street parking, and loading/delivery; peak used for business access transit (BAT) lanes
3. Two dedicated BRT lanes in between at-grade vehicle lanes next to side median.
4. Two two-way protected bicycle lanes on the outside near sidewalks
5. Widened sidewalks along both sides
6. Twenty-eight signalized intersections that improve safety by reducing long blocks, provide drivers more choices, and build new direct access to adjacent neighborhoods (Not pictured)
7. Preserves any landscape improvements built in 2025. (Not pictured)

Next Steps



Read the full Route For Change Report at www.phila.gov

Implementation of the Route for Change program depends on multiple government agencies and community partners continuing to work together into the future. While many of the early actions have already been implemented, more is planned in the coming years. These improvements include an improved intersection at Summerdale/Adams to address the high number of crashes occurring on the S-curve, implementation of Direct Bus, Phase B, and cross-over on mitigation in key locations. The full report recommends future studies for Walkable Station Areas around the Boulevard to plan for compact residential, commercial, and employment hubs near transit.

As a next step, partners including PennDOT, the City of Philadelphia, SEPTA, and community members must come together to develop environmental screening parameters for the two 2040 alternatives to secure funding for implementation. The Program developed incremental improvements that can be layered into place, creating a continually more inviting corridor and inspiring Philadelphians to feel more ownership and pride in the Boulevard. We appreciate the support of all who have been involved in this process. Together, we will root for change to transform Roosevelt Boulevard.