FTA RESEARCH

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

Walking to Transit

DECEMBER 2011

FTA Report No. 0031
Federal Transit Administration

PREPARED BY
WalkBoston

COVER PHOTO

© *WalkBoston*

DISCLAIMER

This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The United States Government assumes no liability for its contents or use thereof. The United States Government does not endorse products of manufacturers. Trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to the objective of this report.

Walking to Transit

DECEMBER 2011

FTA Report No. 0031

PREPARED BY

WalkBoston

Robert Sloane
Dorothea Hass
Rosa Carson
Joseph Cutrufo
Kate Zanetta
Phil Lacombe
Wendy Landman

SPONSORED BY

Federal Transit Administration
Office of Planning and Environment
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

AVAILABLE ONLINE

http://www.fta.dot.gov/research

Metric Conversion Table

SYMBOL	WHEN YOU KNOW	MULTIPLY BY	TO FIND	SYMBOL
		LENGTH		
in	inches	25.4	millimeters	mm
ft	feet	0.305	meters	m
yd	yards	0.914	meters	m
mi	miles	1.61	kilometers	km
		VOLUME		
fl oz	fluid ounces	29.57	milliliters	mL
gal	gallons	3.785	liters	L
ft^3	cubic feet	0.028	cubic meters	m^3
yd^3	cubic yards	0.765	cubic meters	m^3
		NOTE: volumes greater than 1000 L shall be shown in m^3		
		MASS		
oz	ounces	28.35	grams	g
lb	pounds	0.454	kilograms	kg
T	short tons (2000 lb)	0.907	megagrams (or "metric ton")	Mg (or "t")
		TEMPERATURE (exact degrees)		
^oF	Fahrenheit	5 (F-32)/9 or (F-32)/1.8	Celsius	^oC

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE	*Form Approved* *OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY	2. REPORT DATE December 2011	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED February 2009 - December 2011
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Walking to Transit		5. FUNDING NUMBERS FTA-2011-002-TRI
6. AUTHOR(S) Robert Sloane. Dorothea Hass, Rosa Carson, Joseph Cutrufo, Kate Zanetta, Phil Lacombe and Wendy Landman		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESSE(ES) WalkBoston 45 School Street Boston, MA 02108		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER FTA Report No. 0031
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration East Building 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE Washington, DC 20590		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER FTA Report No. 0031
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES http://www.fta.dot.gov/research		
12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Available from: National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Springfield, VA 22161 Phone 703.605.6000, Fax 703.605.6900, email [orders@ntis.gov]		12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE TRI-20

13. ABSTRACT

Using a real-life setting, WalkBoston's project focused on developing and testing techniques to broaden the scope and range of public participation in transportation planning in a large neighborhood in Boston. The team explored methods of seeking out and talking with people who are seldom involved in the formal planning processes. The goal was to explore public participation techniques designed to elicit their opinions on the plans being developed by public agencies.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Public participation; 'Underrepresented' community members; methods of soliciting informal opinions; outreach possibilities; Walk-By Visioning; merchant interviews; feedback to public agencies	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 67
16. PRICE CODE	

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	None

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Executive Summary
4 Section 1: Introduction
13 Section 2: Methodology
24 Section 3: Findings
37 Section 4: Lessons Learned
42 Section 5: Conclusions
45 Appendix A: Case Studies of Related Research Activity
47 Appendix B: Logic Model
48 Appendix C: WalkBoston Streetside Interview Form
50 Appendix D: City of Boston Interview Form
53 Appendix E: Demographic Data from Walk-By Visioning
54 Appendix F: Opinion Data from Walk-By Visioning
55 Appendix G: Additional Information on Merchant Interviews

LIST OF FIGURES

6	Figure 1-1:	Bus Route #39 in Boston, Fenway and Jamaica Plain
8	Figure 1-2:	Neighborhoods along bus Route #39 in Boston
14	Figure 2-1:	Centre/South Street Corridor in Jamaica Plain
19	Figure 2-2:	Proposed Centre/South Street improvements in Jamaica Plain
22	Figure 2-3:	Walk-By Visioning options, board 1
23	Figure 2-4:	Walk-By Visioning options, board 2
29	Figure 3-1:	Geographic location of all interviews
30	Figure 3-2:	Distribution of interviews by time of day
33	Figure 3-3:	Walk-By Visioning in action
35	Figure 3-4:	Eliciting preferences in Walk-By Visioning

LIST OF TABLES

7	Table 1-1:	Demographics along Bus Route #39 in Neighborhoods near Downtown
28	Table 3-1:	Examples of Results of Merchant Interviews
32	Table 3-2:	Actual and Potential Participation Sessions in the Centre/South Street Area
34	Table 3-3:	Results of Voting in Walk-By Visioning Exercises

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WalkBoston would like to thank the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the City of Boston Transportation Department for their assistance in this project.

ABSTRACT

Using a real-life setting, WalkBoston's project focused on developing and testing techniques to broaden the scope and range of public participation in transportation planning in a large neighborhood in Boston. The team explored methods of seeking out and talking with people who are seldom involved in the formal planning processes. The goal was to explore public participation techniques designed to elicit their opinions on the plans being developed by public agencies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WalkBoston's involvement in transportation planning and community development projects now exceeds 20 years, with continuous staff and board member participation in public planning exercises in Boston throughout that period. We have often noted that while traditional public participation processes carried out over this period by public agencies' planning exercises are often full of energy, they primarily attract participants who have a zeal for community activism, have previously participated in the planning process, and have honed their knowledge and understanding of transportation issues. These activists are able to participate with a high level of expertise, aiding public planning in a great variety of ways.

WalkBoston also noticed that many community members are missing from planning processes, in particular the "under-represented" people who seem to include members of minority groups, speakers who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), or residents who are not familiar with public input processes.

WalkBoston's project focused on developing and testing techniques to broaden the scope and range of public participation in a large neighborhood in Boston. The team explored methods of seeking out and talking with people who are seldom involved in the formal planning processes. The goal was to explore public participation techniques designed to elicit their opinions on the plans being developed by public agencies.

Background

WalkBoston is one of America's oldest and most respected pedestrian advocacy organizations, with more than 20 years of experience working with grassroots organizations and public agencies to make walking a safer, more practical, and more enjoyable means of transportation. WalkBoston undertook this project to identify tools/techniques for increasing local residents' participation in providing feedback to planning agencies on how walking to transit could be made more appealing and to develop and test public participation techniques that were low cost and easy to implement.

The Problem We Addressed

Our hypothesis was that the formal public participation process normally implemented by public agencies can unintentionally exclude many community members, such as people who are transit-dependent riders, immigrants, people who are low-income or members of a minority group, students, and business owners/employees or those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), because the processes are too long, too technical, and possibly uncomfortable or inaccessible to many residents. We identify these individuals as "under-represented" people.

Methodology

WalkBoston conducted its project in conjunction with a Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) study of Bus Route #39 in Boston that explored a reduced number of bus stops and added passenger amenities such as

bus stop shelters. WalkBoston also worked alongside a City of Boston planning and design team in the formal public participation process of the streetscape design project that focused on the corridor of Centre/South Street through Jamaica Plain, the same corridor served by Bus Route #39.

Our work identified and tested low-cost, low-tech public participation techniques such as short in-person surveys, door-to-door merchant interviews, presentations at local community meetings, and "Walk-By Visioning" exercises. Rather than inviting residents to come to planning meetings, we went to them—to bus stops, local professional/business/community meetings, community events, and door-to-door in merchant interviews.

Findings: New Participation Techniques

WalkBoston identified low-cost and low-tech techniques that are effective at engaging non-traditional participants in transit planning.

- Many people are very willing and interested in participating in quick surveys/visioning exercises.
- Approaching people in the field yielded high rates of participation. The venues that were tested for informal surveys and Walk-By Visioning exercises included bus stops and public events, and, for merchant interviews, person-to-person conversations at places of business (shops or offices).
- LEP transit users were reluctant to participate in surveys, even with a Spanish speaker conducting the interview. (Spanish is the primary second language spoken in the neighborhoods in which participation techniques were tested.)
- People with LEP were somewhat more willing to participate in the Walk-By Visioning exercise when photos were labeled in both English and Spanish.
- Walk-By Visioning and personal interviews with merchants were the most successful techniques in getting participation from people who do not normally participate.
- Walk-By Visioning is an interesting technique because of its novelty for most people, the responses it elicits from passers-by, and the potential it holds for providing input to the participation process that is not typically part of a planning effort.
- The merchant interviews were an effective means of communicating and helping to bring business people up-to-date on the planning projects, while also offering them an opportunity to give comments and suggestions.
- Working with neighborhood organizations proved difficult for this research project because our efforts were focused on the techniques and methods of gathering input, and the organizations were not interested in participating unless there was the potential for more direct planning and design input.
- The techniques are easily replicable for a wide variety of transit projects and could be undertaken by community groups as well as professional consultants and planners.

- Information resulting from the fieldwork accomplished in this research was supplied to agency planners for potential use in current projects and as guidance for future public participation efforts. The research pointed toward predictable snow removal as one of the top priorities for bus stops in Jamaica Plain; subsequent efforts by the MBTA have resulted in new policies applicable to snow removal.

Summary Conclusions

Given our initial study hypothesis that many transit users do not participate in traditional transit planning processes, our most significant conclusion is that there are effective, low-cost ways to bring new populations into the transit planning and design process. Such techniques should be used to help ensure that a full range of transit rider opinions and concerns are included in transit planning and design.

The informal participation techniques developed and tested in this project should be used to supplement, not replace, the lengthier, traditional public participation processes in which transit or other agencies meet with community representatives over several months and provide the public with detailed technical information.

SECTION 1

Introduction

WalkBoston's 22 years of involvement in planning for transportation and other projects has frequently led staff and board members to become involved in the public participation processes at the heart of public agency outreach efforts. In our experience, these exercises attract participants who have prior experience in the planning process, have a zeal for community activism, have honed their knowledge and understanding of transportation issues, and have a high level of expertise that aids public planning in many ways. Over the years, WalkBoston staff and board members have also observed that there are many individuals who do not generally participate and whose opinions are not represented by the "regular" meeting attendees.

WalkBoston's project focused on developing and testing techniques to broaden the scope and range of public participation in a large neighborhood in Boston. The team explored methods of seeking out and talking with people who are seldom involved in the formal planning processes. The goal was to explore public participation techniques designed to elicit opinions from people who we have observed to be under-represented in public agency outreach.

Focus of the Research

Traditional public participation processes often are not effective at attracting the participation of transit-dependent populations, including especially people with low incomes and Limited English Proficiency (LEP), many of whom walk to transit.

1. Is it possible to develop low-cost, easily-implemented techniques for increasing public participation in the transit planning process?
2. Is it possible to gather useful information from local residents who do not typically participate in formal planning exercises to guide planners in improving the walk to transit?

Our findings provide some answers to both of these questions and reveal that several of the techniques we tested can contribute to the practice of public participation by bringing new people into the process.

WalkBoston's Background

WalkBoston is a pedestrian advocacy organization committed to creating and sustaining walkable communities across Massachusetts. We encourage walking for transportation, health, and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to citizens to make their communities walkable. We believe

that walking should be the major transportation mode for short trips, combined with transit for longer trips.

WalkBoston was founded in 1990, and now has more than 20 years of experience in helping communities find ways to get more people walking and to improve the experiences of pedestrians with improved physical facilities and with walking programs. We have members in 75 municipalities in Eastern Massachusetts and have worked across the state advocating for safer and more attractive walking environments. As the nation's most enduring pedestrian advocacy organization, WalkBoston has amassed expertise in encouraging people to walk and enhancing their walking experience. In our advocacy and planning projects, the WalkBoston staff have explored numerous methods of involving people in advocacy efforts for improved walking in their own neighborhoods.

Organizing Structure and Scope of Report

This report begins with the context of the work and describes the local studies that were used as an anchor for testing new techniques to reach transit riders and seek their participation in planning exercises. The report provides details of the methodologies that were tested, the evolution of the public participation tools that were used, our experience in applying them, and the ways in which the tests led to new levels of participation. The report includes a summary of what was learned by engaging people with the new techniques. A discussion is provided about techniques that were not very successful, along with an analysis of what resulted and how it led to new trials. Finally, we draw specific conclusions about how applicable the relatively-new tools are to future public participation processes for other transit projects and issues.

A Real-Life Setting

The initiation of a traditional public participation process by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) provided an opportunity to both observe that process and then evaluate participation techniques that our research was interested in developing and testing. The subsequent and timely initiation of transportation planning efforts by the City of Boston focused on the same corridor and allowed the research to expand and develop under real-time circumstances.

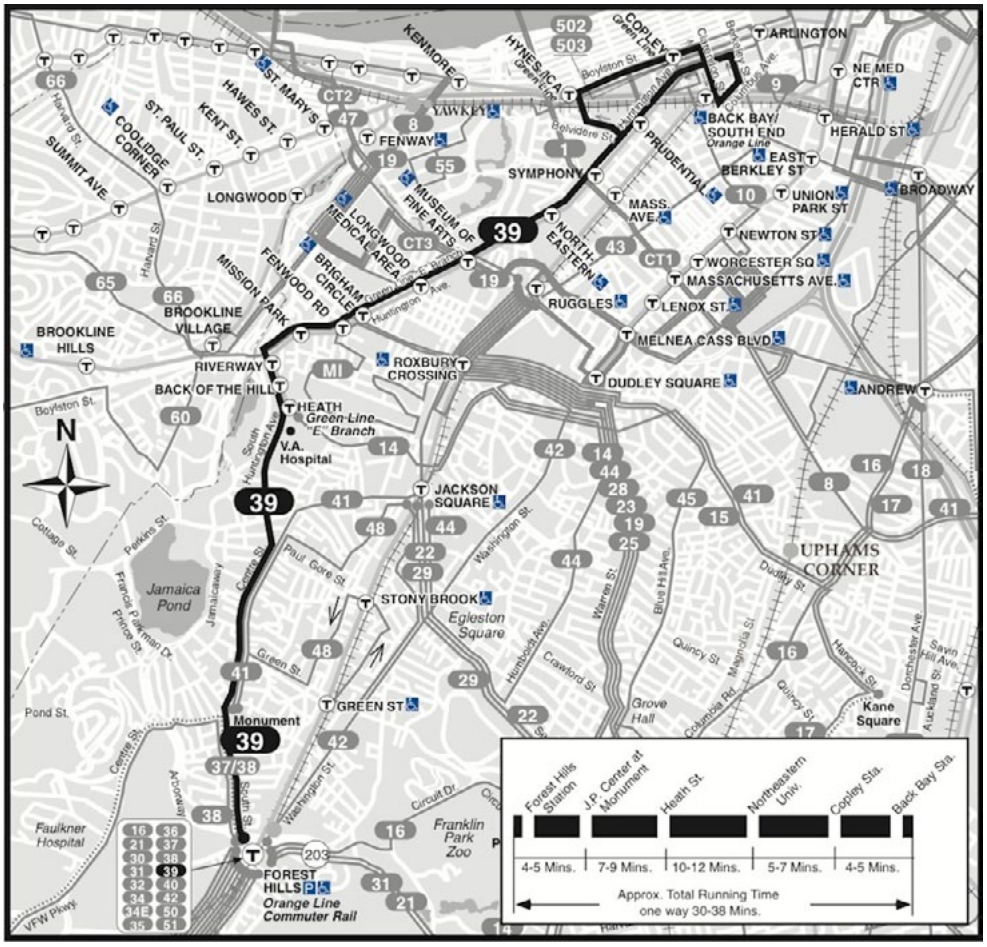
MBTA Bus Route #39 (Figure 1-1) goes through both residential and neighborhood business areas and attracts a high ridership. MBTA planned an assessment of bus stops along the route with the goal of eliminating several bus stops and enhancing some of the existing bus stops with bus shelters, route information, and sidewalk extensions that would facilitate efficient boarding and disembarking from newly-acquired articulated buses that were longer than existing bus stops.

Bus Route #39 traverses several distinct neighborhoods: Jamaica Plain, a largely residential area with a core retail district, and Fenway-Kenmore, a major employment area that includes the city's largest aggregation of hospitals. The project team looked at both population and MBTA ridership data to determine the number of people in the transit market and those who would become likely participants in this research.

Bus Route #39 runs along Centre/South Street in Jamaica Plain. Shortly after the MBTA study began, these two thoroughfares became the focus of City of Boston efforts to explore improvements to traffic management and streetscape. WalkBoston was fortunate to have two overlapping studies already underway as a basis for its research into transit and transit-related planning studies.

Figure 1-1

MBTA Bus Route #39 in Boston's Back Bay, Fenway, and Jamaica Plain



Walkers to Transit

Boston neighborhoods generate many transit users, in large part because of its convenience and relatively low cost. In the Jamaica Plain neighborhood, 37.7 percent of residents use transit on a daily basis. An additional 11.0 percent walk or bike daily. Table 1-1 presents demographic information for Jamaica Plain, along with the same information for the abutting Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood, also served by Bus Route #39. Both are compared with the City of Boston as a whole.

Table 1-1

Demographics of Neighborhoods along Bus Route #39 near Downtown

Category	Fenway Kenmore and Back Bay	Jamaica Plain	Citywide
Population	36,191	38,074	589,141
% of total city population	6.1%	6.5%	100.0%
Population density per sq. mi.	29,186	12,402	12,172
College students	20,933	5,359	85,847
Poverty rate	37.3%	20.9%	19.5%
Jobs (selected categories)			
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7.6%	7.8%	10.4%
Education/Health/Social Services	37.5%	34.1%	26.8%
Professional/Scientific/ Administrative	15.9%	15.8%	14.8%
Race			
White	67.7%	50.9%	49.4%
Black/African-American	7.4%	18.0%	24.9%
Hispanic or Latino	8.3%	22.7%	14.5%
Other	16.6%	8.4%	11.2%
Transportation to work			
Drove alone or carpooled	17.2%	46.8%	50.7%
Public transit	36.5%	37.7%	32.3%
Walked or biked	44.3%	11.0%	14.0%

Jamaica Plain was chosen for this study because it provides a good reflection of the city's demographics. It is also well served by transit with Bus Route #39, the most heavily-used bus route in the MBTA system, stretching 4.1 miles from the Jamaica Plain neighborhood into Boston's Back Bay Station. Route #39 carries 14,400 passengers each day, and MBTA developed plans to operate the route more efficiently by re-designing bus loading areas and other measures.

Route #39 traverses the spine of several neighborhoods (Figure 1-2). Orange Line rapid transit service is located on the eastern border of the community. Destinations effectively determine the pattern of transit use by Jamaica Plain residents: the rapid transit line efficiently reaches Downtown Boston and Back

Bay, while the bus line directly serves the vast Fenway-Kenmore medical area, which can otherwise be reached only via a ½-mile-long, indirect, and hilly walking route from the rapid transit line.

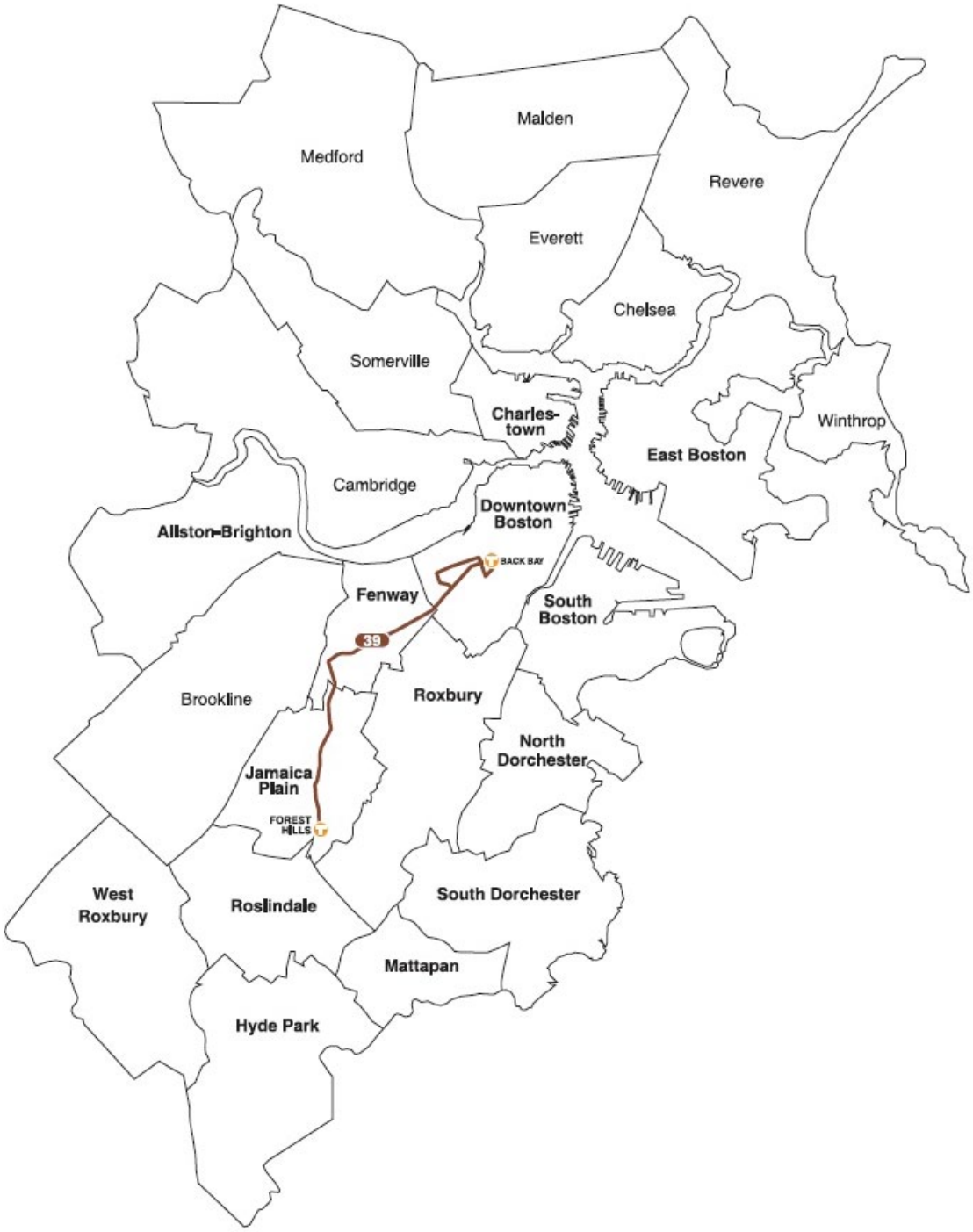


Figure 1-2 *Neighborhoods along Bus Route #39 in Boston*

Issues in Increasing the Number of Participants

Many planning processes in Boston include comprehensive efforts to engage the public in exploring issues and options and the outreach efforts often provide quite a lot of time for considering suggestions or opinions offered by participants. In and near Jamaica Plain, agencies have made significant efforts to keep the processes understandable by setting goals and schedules expected to lead to decisions or a consensus among participants. Our staff examined and compared five planning studies in and around Jamaica Plain, noting the efforts of each planning study to attract participants from the neighborhoods (see Appendix A). WalkBoston's research occurred at the same time as two of these planning efforts.

People who do not participate in transportation studies might include residents who are not interested in planning or segments of the population that are not comfortable offering their opinions at public meetings or are dubious that they can have a voice or an impact in public affairs. Based on our observation of many public processes and our review of previous planning efforts in Jamaica Plain, we noted that there seemed to be few participants from the following groups: merchants, older adults, children and older students, people on limited incomes, immigrants, LEP residents, and people with mobility disabilities. Nearly all of these people might walk or roll to local bus stops and transit stations, but they are seldom involved in public planning exercises. The reasons they are not involved may include the following:

- **The depth and breadth of the planning effort** – Transportation planning efforts can lead to potentially important improvements, yet efforts to explain projects that may be built in the future may not be understood. It may be difficult to understand a planning effort geared to varying levels of public interest, agency policies, federal or state mandates, and available resources or consultants to carry a study forward. Agencies try to provide varied approaches to the improvements based on potential impacts for residents, where individual street crossings may be minor, but major changes to transit service could generate a great deal of neighborhood concern.
- **Publicity surrounding the planning effort** – Planning efforts frequently proceed without widespread knowledge in the directly-affected communities. Proposals for improvements are frequently unknown to people who live or work where the proposal is planned, despite the best efforts of a public agency to reach them. Proposals become subject to word-of-mouth reporting, which is not always accurate and perhaps not effective in attracting people to public meetings or disseminating information on what projects are intended to accomplish. People may also lack information about planning because they do not read local newspapers or have Internet access.

- **Excessive meetings/time commitment** – Transit planning processes frequently include many meetings; complicated projects can require a number of opportunities for people to absorb information and ask questions. Local residents may be unwilling to make a commitment to devote multiple evenings to the participation process. Hours spent attending meetings require time away from work or from family obligations.
- **Language and cultural barriers** – Urban neighborhoods have diverse populations and often include residents who are LEP speakers or unfamiliar with American cultural customs and procedures. These people may ride transit with strong and well-informed opinions about how services and facilities might be improved. Public agencies make efforts to reach out to all language and cultural groups affected by proposed changes or improvements; these efforts are not always successful in reaching all who should be included.
- **Meeting complexity** – Complex information, graphics, or maps may be difficult to portray simply, either orally or graphically or in printed material and, as a result, may intimidate potential participants. Meetings may be organized in a format that is intimidating to many members of the public, particularly those who are new to the community and may be unfamiliar with the content, LEP, or older adults. These residents may be a part of the under-represented individuals that the process should be reaching. People may be unsure about the ways in which their views may be expressed and received. Meeting formats may be uncomfortable for residents, especially if presenters are not attuned to local issues, fail to keep on subject, or include discussions that disorient or intimidate residents who lack relevant knowledge.
- **Local interest in the topic may be low** – Transportation projects are frequently initiated by public agencies in response to a need expressed by regional or neighborhood agencies and civic leaders. Projects reflect concerns or issues that affect significant numbers of people and that change a transportation system—often dramatically—and have potentially high implementation costs and high levels of impacts on the neighborhoods the improvements are intended to serve. Despite potential impacts, local interest may not arise, depending on whether projects seem relevant and whether the public agencies appear to have a realistic approach, a reasonable chance of a project being implemented, and sufficient resources in staffing or consultant activity.
- **Timing of the process** – With limited public resources, a planning process might not be fully inclusive of potential participants simply because of the time required. Agencies try to streamline and focus the participation process while making it as lively, attractive, and comprehensible as possible. Yet, in some cases, there is scant time to fully comprehend a process spread out over weeks or months. Frequently, this results in the need for an agency to repeat information at each meeting to ensure that all participants are brought along as the audience changes from meeting to meeting.

- **Discomfort with public speaking** – Many people shy away from public speaking, even if they have opinions that they would like to register with public agencies undertaking planning efforts. Speaking out at a meeting may be difficult for people unaccustomed to such settings. Frustration levels can be high if people feel they are competing with others who are more practiced in attending public meetings and show their knowledge of agency procedures fairly well. Meeting leaders may not be patient in dealing with participants one-on-one, eliciting concerns and opinions that can be expressed only slowly or tentatively.

Levels of Participation

Jamaica Plain had a population of 38,074 people in 2000. In the Bus Route #39 study, the appointed citizen participants, along with some volunteers, represented various groups and points of view. The group totaled 15 people at each meeting. This is equivalent to about 0.04 percent of the neighborhood's total population. If each of the participants represented 30 people, it would still only be 0.08 percent of the total population. If the 15 participants represented only the 14,363 daily transit users, they would constitute 0.1 percent of all riders. Obviously, these are extremely low participation rates. The MBTA studies are not alone; other patterns of representation for planning studies are similarly low.

Project Goals

WalkBoston entered into this project with the over-arching goal of finding low-cost, simple techniques to engage a more diverse cross-section of transit users who do not traditionally participate in planning public transit improvements. The research began with a number of underlying ideas:

- The participation techniques should not replace the traditional public participation process, but should focus on broadening outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Information gathering should explore contacts on the street, outside the formal constraints of meeting-based participation efforts constrained within rooms.
- Street interviews should be devised to give out information about the project and to solicit opinions at the same time.
- Both structured and unstructured informal interview techniques should be explored.
- Techniques should expand public participation at a low cost.
- Street interactions should be informal and engaging. Techniques should be upbeat, optimistic, and designed to encourage public participation.
- New technology should be tested to see whether it could help to encourage participation.

- Actively engaging participants in streetside encounters should be tested as a way to attract participation and to encourage the sharing of opinions.
- The basic information presented should be brief, easy to understand, and directed toward assuring participants their opinions are valuable.
- Alternative communications techniques should be tested, including methods of engaging people in short spurts of participation.
- Methods should be explored to determine the points in planning processes where informal opinions might be most useful.
- Each technique should be tested in both English and Spanish to ensure that it would be accessible to the significant Spanish-speaking population in the study area.
- Techniques should be used in low-key trial-and-error approaches to investigate incremental improvements that might be made to each.

SECTION 2

Methodology

Interactions between planners and community residents are often limited to regularly-scheduled meetings as venues for information dissemination and participation. Such meetings are critical for outreach and to keep citizens informed of the progress being made on planning and design projects.

WalkBoston's project focused on developing and testing supplemental techniques to broaden the scope and range of public participation. The team explored methods of talking with people not ordinarily involved in the formal planning processes to elicit their opinions on the public agency plans.

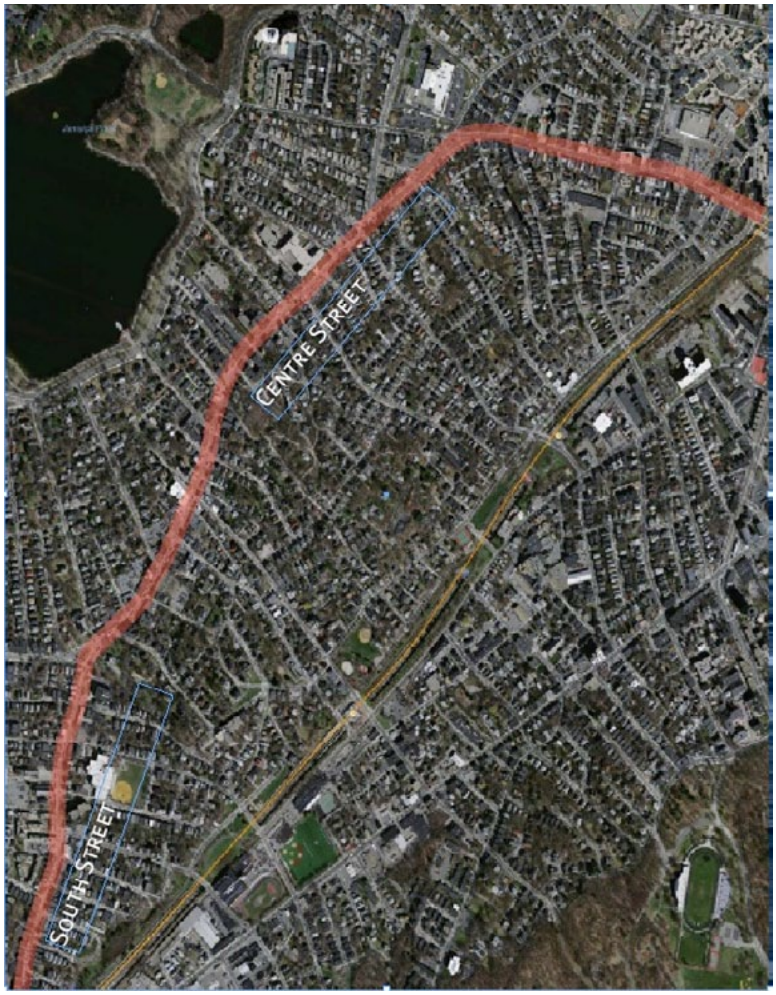
Research Setting

WalkBoston used MBTA's Bus Route #39 (Figure 1-1) as a setting to test public participation techniques that would engage people who walk to transit. At the outset of the study, MBTA was planning for some route improvements, and WalkBoston was drawn to this particular planning effort because the route is heavily traveled (daily ridership of 14,300+ passengers) and it runs through densely-populated, diverse residential areas and a neighborhood main street corridor. WalkBoston's testing of participation techniques coincided with MBTA's proposal to reduce the number of bus stops along the route and enhance some of the remaining stops with bus shelters, seating, and more convenient boarding areas. Hence, the participatory techniques could be tested in a real-world situation.

After the WalkBoston research project began, the City of Boston proposed a re-design of Centre/South Street that included a major portion of Route #39 (Figure 2-1). WalkBoston attended community meetings associated with MBTA's proposed design and the City's meetings and also tested the ease with which local residents could understand and interpret street/sidewalk plans.

Figure 2-1

Centre/South Street Corridor in Jamaica Plain



Evolution of Techniques

One of the most interesting results of this project is the way in which the techniques were tested and then modified over several subsequent iterations of our research. Each technique changed over the course of the project, starting by using traditional methods of obtaining participant information:

- Discussion and feedback at neighborhood meetings
- Bus stop surveys

We anticipated a period of exploration to see where these techniques would lead. Working with MBTA staff, we attended the meetings of the working committee invited to help guide the planning process. This group was fairly small, and we wanted to supplement its input to the planning process by soliciting opinions from others in the community. Our goal was to integrate field information with the formally-constituted planning process. The process was intended to be detailed and completed relatively rapidly (as MBTA was

on a short-term, federal stimulus-funded project). We began our research immediately with outreach into the community.

We contacted many neighborhood groups, senior centers, and business-focused and other associations within the Route #39 corridor to initiate contacts. Our intent was to learn if organizations were aware of the MBTA study and its possible effects on transit service and to relay comments back to MBTA's working committee. A few groups responded, and we began presentations of our process to solicit ideas about Route #39. We continued contacts to learn if face-to-face meetings or walk audits with other groups could be arranged.

At the same time, we began planning a second effort of carrying out interviews at bus stops to engage people and to learn what transit riders might say about proposed changes to the bus stops along Route #39. We developed a questionnaire and experimented with the survey at high-volume bus stops.

Meanwhile, the City of Boston study of Centre/South Street got underway. This study was intended to closely parallel the MBTA study. The City was interested in an overall plan for the corridor that would go beyond the bus stop improvements and would improve the streetscape while enhancing the operations for all modes of transportation. The City departments involved in the study were also interested in obtaining good background information. We explored with them the use of data from the interviews we had planned at bus stops and with businesses, and they decided that a formal survey of businesses might be more appropriate to satisfy the need for data more quickly and efficiently, with a more statistically-supportable framework.

New Methods Developed

We worked with the City on surveys of individuals and coordinated efforts with MBTA for meeting with neighborhood groups. In addition, we explored ways of making the meetings and the interviews more interesting and compelling to participants who were still under-represented in planning activities. We decided that an interesting new method of finding participants would be to directly contact all merchants in the area, not just reaching out to a sample of business people. A second method we developed to more fully engage participants was to ask about preferences for specific kinds of improvements that were represented visually. The net result was the evolution of the two most successful techniques of this research effort: Walk-By Visioning and One-on-One Merchant Interviews. Each of the four techniques we tested is described below, with details on what each entailed. The results of our tests are described in the following chapter.

Testing Public Participation Techniques

Public Participation Technique: Discussion/Feedback at Neighborhood Meetings

Working in parallel with MBTA's Bus Route #39 study team, WalkBoston's initial step was to contact local organizations in Jamaica Plain. WalkBoston theorized that organizations such as neighborhood associations and institutions such as local churches would provide access to local residents who do not regularly participate in local planning projects. The project team found that older adult housing developments and churches scheduled frequent meetings for discussions of events, including City or State planning efforts, and the team integrated into these public participation opportunities.

WalkBoston requested a brief amount of time (usually 20 minutes) within an existing meeting agenda to present information about MBTA's proposed consolidation of bus routes and to ask for feedback on how these changes would affect residents' walking routes and bus experience and whether other neighborhood people should be contacted. We made it clear that WalkBoston was not the voice of MBTA but was merely seeking opinions about impacts and whether residents were aware of options being discussed.

WalkBoston offered to send a staff person to make a presentation of the issues and to lead a follow-up discussion and to elicit opinions. We did not ask the groups to set up an "extra" meeting for the presentation but rather asked to be included within already-scheduled meetings or events.

Public Participation Technique: Bus Stop Surveys

Survey interviews with transit riders were carried out at bus stops along Route #39. The interviews were informal and covered the following data:

- Origin of an individual's walk to the bus stop
- Route taken by the walk
- Time taken by the walk
- Frequency of the walk
- Other routes that were alternatives
- Opinion about bus stop and bus service (e.g., is a different and relatively close bus stop a possible alternative to this stop?)

A copy of the list of questions used in this in-person interview, whether recorded on paper or on a hand-held device, may be found in Appendix C.

In addition, WalkBoston employed a form of "strategic questioning" to pursue greater detail from respondents. For instance, to encourage participation and to avoid personal questions, the project team did not ask for addresses but rather distances in terms of minutes or city blocks involved. The most important question—"Would you be willing to walk an additional block to your bus stop?"—was an important part of the MBTA Route #39 bus study, which proposed consolidating bus stops. It meant very specifically that some individuals would have to walk farther, and an opinion on this subject was very desirable. When time permitted, additional questions such as "How would you like it to be?" or "How will it affect you?" were added to encourage the respondent to engage in a rudimentary form of visioning.

Bus Stop Surveys Using Paper Forms

WalkBoston carried out about 60 interviews at bus stops in the winter of 2009 using traditional paper survey questions and reply forms. From the beginning, WalkBoston determined that time would be best used if interviewees were not confronted with a large number of questions or with a paper form to fill out. A WalkBoston staff member filled out the survey form, entering responses as given by the respondent. This approach minimized the time needed because the staff person knew the form of the questionnaire and interviewees did not have to hold the clipboard, read the question, or be given any instructions.

The individual paper forms for the interviews were shown on a clipboard. The use of two sides of a piece of paper proved awkward for fieldwork, as turning pages on a clipboard is difficult to do at a bus stop and is unnecessarily time-consuming when the interviewee is waiting and the bus is approaching.

A staff member subsequently tabulated the fieldwork data by recording each of the responses on the paper forms into a computer. To avoid this step, WalkBoston later experimented with entering responses directly into an iPad tablet computer during the course of the interview.

Bus Stop Surveys Using an iPad

WalkBoston explored using a hand-held iPad to allow the interviewers to enter responses directly into an electronic format, eliminating the need for staff to transcribe responses into a computer database back at the office. The touch-screen was viewed as potentially important as a labor-saving device and as a method for moving interviews at a somewhat faster pace than using paper forms. Because the device was not connected to the Internet, there were no ongoing connection expenses involved. However, WalkBoston did have to purchase an application called HanDBase to make surveys possible. The only hardware purchased were two iPads used in collecting field data during a portion of the interviews.

Interviewers approached respondents and asked them questions and entered responses onto the iPad. The questions and potential responses as recorded on the hand-held device were not shown to the respondent. Information gathered on the hand-held device was simply downloaded into a spreadsheet, where it was tallied and recorded automatically.

WalkBoston had hypothesized that participants would find the iPad devices intriguing and lean over the shoulder of the interviewer to check out how these devices worked. This was not the case. Interviewees seemed to be indifferent to the recording method.

From the researchers' point of view, using touchpad devices for recording responses in the field was more efficient than recording responses on paper-based clipboard survey forms. After a questioner gained familiarity with the device and the questionnaire layout, it was quick and easy to use. The touchpads were not convenient for recording information from more extended interviews in the field as they required a table or other surface to enable the interviewer to type with two hands.

Public Participation Technique: One-on-one Merchant Interviews

WalkBoston initially planned to undertake formal walking audits to evaluate the pedestrian environment along a single street or throughout an entire neighborhood. However, setting up formal on-street audits required the participation of community groups such as churches, non-profits, and neighborhood associations. WalkBoston found that consolidation of bus stops and the condition of walking routes in this neighborhood were not sufficiently compelling to generate interest in setting up formal audits.

However, as the City of Boston's study of the Centre/South Street corridor got underway, it became apparent that a new technique might reach more of the affected people, particularly those who are not ordinarily represented in formal planning processes. The research team incorporated basic audit questions into interviews with local merchants in a door-to-door interview exercise.

Although representatives from larger and more established businesses frequently attend meetings of community or professional organizations, representatives from small businesses may be less able or inclined to attend meetings. In addition, business people are not familiar with neighborhood walking audits. In conjunction with the Centre/South Street study, we developed informal, open-ended interviews with local merchants as a form of a walking audit. These walking audits relied on local business-owners' in-depth knowledge and understanding of the areas around their establishments. All questions were based on easily observable pedestrian conditions along this transportation corridor.

As part of the walking discussions with business proprietors or their employees, the WalkBoston team asked them to reflect on how pedestrians walk in their immediate vicinity. In each interview, five basic questions were asked:

1. Proportion of customers arriving on foot
2. Problems of access for pedestrians coming to each store
3. Problems with the condition of sidewalks
4. Street crossing issues for pedestrians
5. Awareness of City's planning program for the street

In addition to the interviews, the WalkBoston team explored the question of whether most individuals could readily read graphic plans. To test this hypothesis, the team developed poster boards, shown in Figure 2-2, illustrating potential re-designs of two intersections along the Center/South Street corridor. These poster boards would then be presented to merchants who were asked to select their favorite from the three options: no change, alternative 1, or alternative 2, as developed by the City of Boston's land use and transportation planning agencies.

Figure 2-2

Proposed Centre/ South Street improvements in Jamaica Plain

Public Participation Technique: Walk-By Visioning Exercises

One of the theories of our work was that there are a variety of forms of direct questioning and that the form of questioning may have significant effects on the results that are obtained.

Based on the limitations of the paper or iPad surveys, WalkBoston devised a new method of quickly eliciting and recording opinions at bus stops and other locations. The new exercises, called Walk-By Visioning, were developed to enable respondents to react to visual, rather than verbal, questions.

Staff carried out the visioning exercise in three contexts:

- At bus stops
- At special events such as a community festival
- At meetings of neighborhood business and professional groups

Bus stop visioning exercises, in particular, gave us opportunities to engage under-represented citizens in the public participation process because the information was presented pictorially and the labels were presented in both English and Spanish. The visioning at the festivals enabled the study team to engage younger people and people who were new to the community.

The Walk-By Visioning technique is a very abbreviated form of the charrette technique frequently used in planning studies. It affords participants the opportunity to quickly assess a situation and offer an opinion—one or two introductory sentences are spoken by a staff person and the participant visually surveys the options and quickly comes to a conclusion.

The Walk-By Visioning Procedure

The exercises in Walk-By Visioning used by the WalkBoston team consisted of these steps:

1. Creating option boards with photos of potential improvements.
2. Placing the option boards on easels for showing to passers-by on the street or at events.
3. Obtaining demographic data from participants where possible and developing a set of questions helps to get consistent information from each contact.
4. Handing each participant three stickers to place on the option board photos to register his/her three top preferences; votes were prioritized by sticker color, with green indicating a top preference for an improvement, yellow indicating the next most important preference, and red indicating the third most important.
5. Counting preferences for each improvement by the number of stickers on each of the photos on the option boards.

Creating Walk-By Visioning Option Panels

For the Walk-By Visioning, WalkBoston created laminated photos on posters showing relatively large, colored, and recognizable images of potential improvement choices, including bus stop shelters, street crossing protection, snow removal, etc. The photos included the following potential improvements, each provided with both English and Spanish captions:

- Enclosed bus shelter (walls and roof)
- Open-sided bus shelter (just a roof)
- Real-time bus arrival information
- Pedestrian signs at crosswalks
- Crosswalk markings at bus stops
- Extended sidewalks at bus stops
- Count-down signals
- Posted route numbers
- Posted bus schedules
- Sidewalk repair
- News stands
- Trash cans
- Street lights
- Snow removal

The completed laminated photos were then grouped on option panels (shown in Figures 2-3 and 2-4) portraying improvements that participants were asked to consider. Comparable improvements are shown side-by-side, as with the open-side bus shelter as opposed to the enclosed bus shelter.

For an evaluation of the options, the study team asked participants to place stickers on their preferred images to demonstrate their opinions and preferences. The stickers were colored (usually, green, yellow, and red) and were given to participants with a direction that green should be the most favored alternative, yellow the next most favored, and red the least favored. Participants were told to post their stickers directly onto the laminated poster photos to represent their opinions and their priorities. The photos were laminated to allow the stickers to be placed and then removed so the panels could be re-used.

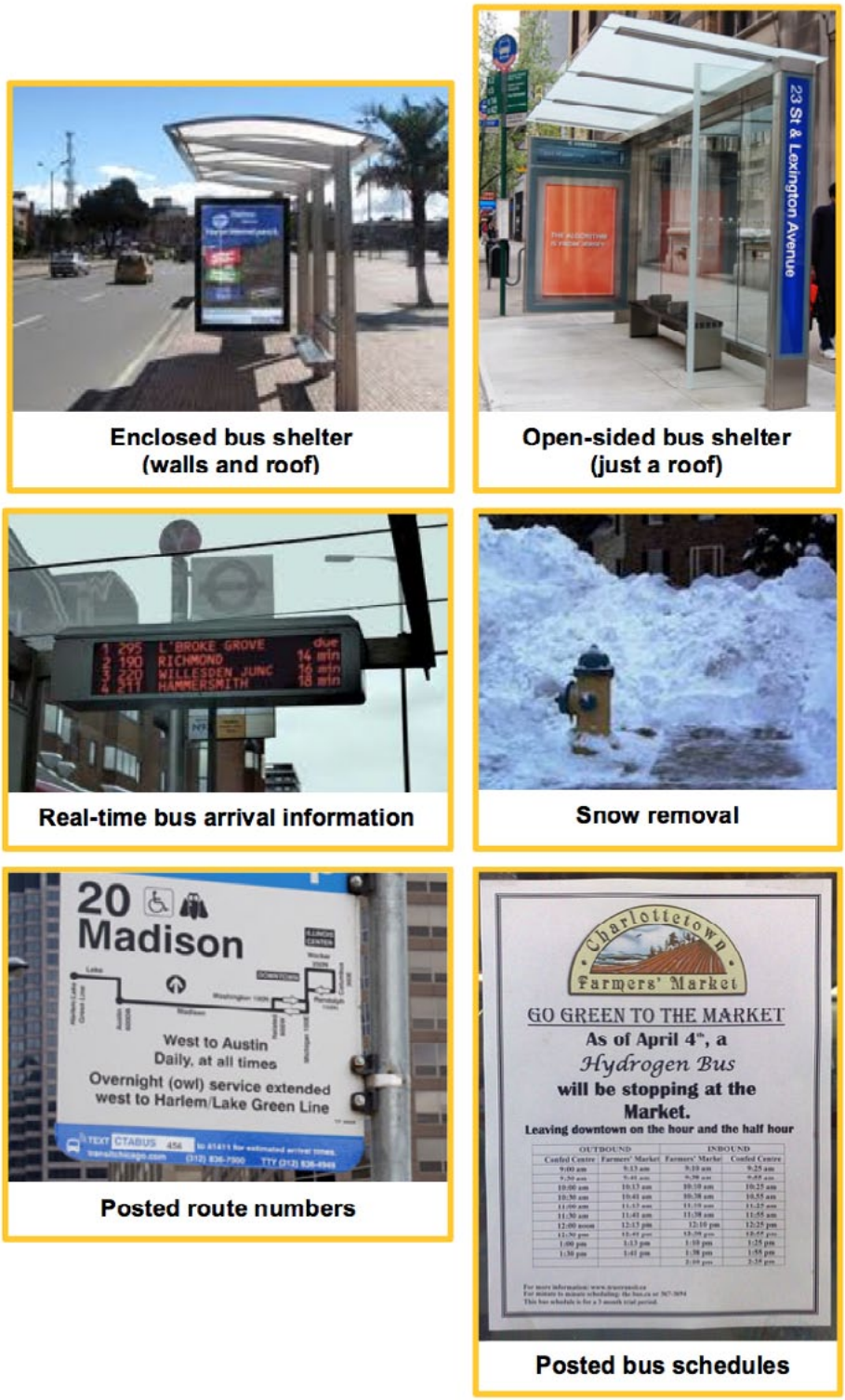


Figure 2-3 *Walk-By Visioning options, board 1*

Figure 2-4 *Walk-By Visioning options, board 2*

SECTION 3

Findings

In the introduction to this report, two questions were highlighted as the focus of this research:

1. Is it possible to develop low cost, non-technical techniques for increasing public participation in the transit planning process to guide planners in improving the walk to transit?
2. Is it possible to gather useful information from local residents who do not participate in formal planning exercises?

The project addressed these questions by testing a variety of techniques, including neighborhood meetings, bus stop surveys, Walk-By Visioning exercises, and interviews with local merchants and service providers. The findings about each of these techniques are discussed below. Our findings focus on the process of improving participation among residents, and not on the specific comments we gathered about ongoing transit and urban design planning.

Findings: Neighborhood Meetings

- Government agencies generally do a good job at getting participation in public meetings focused on planning. The meetings are scheduled periodically, well-attended, and professionally managed. They provide a method for disseminating solid information and receiving feedback.
- Gathering information by attending the meetings of existing local organizations are good methods that supplement the public meetings organized by project proponents. Along with a series of agency-organized public meetings, it makes sense for agencies or their representatives to go outside their own scheduled events and provide many supplemental opportunities to share information and solicit additional opinions from people who attend their own neighborhood meetings (such as church groups, local neighborhood or business associations or crime watch groups).
- Established neighborhood organizations can be well-represented in agency-led meetings. Public meetings do not always attract a wide range of people, but established neighborhood groups are frequently well-represented. Many participants who attend scheduled agency-led meetings represent neighborhood organizations and, since they are experienced in working in public sessions, they regularly speak up.
- Established neighborhood groups tend to not include the people who are under-represented in planning efforts. People in neighborhood organizations attend their meetings to get information about events and processes that might affect them and to ensure that their views are represented as the

group presents a position to a planning agency. Though they have found a method of being heard, they do not represent all members of a community.

- Neighborhood groups are, appropriately, more interested in substance than in process. WalkBoston was effective in reaching people informally on the street. We had greater difficulty connecting with the public through regular neighborhood meetings and got only tepid responses to our outreach to neighborhood groups. WalkBoston could not provide the voice of the MBTA or City of Boston agencies and deal directly with the substantive planning questions. Neighborhood groups were not interested in meeting with us to investigate participation techniques.

Findings: Bus Stop Surveys

- Surveys or interviews conducted at bus stops are useful. Quick surveys require little time from interviewees and can glean information from participants. However, bus stop surveys also have limitations:
  - Limits of time mean that only a few questions can be asked.
  - Waiting bus passengers frequently were diverted as they anxiously glanced down the street for the next bus, which interfered with completing the limited number of questions in each interview.
  - LEP speakers were reluctant to participate in the surveys even though Spanish speakers were approached in their own language.
  - Surveys take approximately the same amount of time as the visioning exercises, but WalkBoston found that surveys were less engaging tools than Walk-By Visioning exercises.
- Meeting residents and transit riders at informal venues is effective. Our project work suggests that gathering information at bus stops, places of business, and local events are effective and inexpensive ways to get public input across a broad spectrum of the population. Brief, one-time interviews, surveys, or Walk-By Visioning exercises are effective participation tools.
  - Most individuals were approachable and willing to answer simple, direct questions about their walk to transit and their bus stop preferences.
  - The time individuals were willing to spend on a survey, visioning exercise, and interview was fairly brief. (None of the interviews or interactions with participants took more than 15 minutes; most took about 5 minutes. Note that this is significantly less time than the 1.5–2 hours typically required to attend a public meeting.)
  - Individuals are willing to participate in brief participatory exercises if it is part of their regular daily routine (as in the case with the bus stop interviews and merchant interviews, which took place at their places of business).
  - Virtually all information assembled using informal techniques is qualitative only.

- Conducting surveys using handheld electronic devices did not increase participant interest or responses, contrary to the team's expectations.
  - WalkBoston hypothesized that participants would find electronic devices intriguing and want to check out how they worked. However, interviewees were indifferent to the recording method, both paper and electronic.
  - Using electronic devices for recording responses in the field was more efficient for staff to use than recording responses on paper-based clipboard survey forms.
  - Electronic devices afford large time and effort savings in uploading survey data to office computers for analysis without copying the responses from paper to computer.
- Detailed information was not accumulated due to the focus of the research on the participation process. However, results suggest potential benefits of additional in-depth research.

Findings: One-on-One Merchant Interviews

- Interviews with local merchants reached many people who are not frequently involved in public participation and provided a useful perspective on local conditions.
- The WalkBoston research team conducted interviews with virtually all local businesses along the bus route. These were walk-in interviews and were kept casual and informal.
- Many of the merchants we spoke with had never been involved in public participation, even those who live and/or own and operate a business within this study area.
- Generally, respondents were able to provide a perspective on the neighborhood and their customer base, including the breakdown of how many were locals who arrived on foot and how many were workers or shoppers who arrived by walking, transit, bicycle, or car. Most merchants indicated that a slight majority of their customers either walked in from the neighborhood or took transit along Centre Street or South Street.
- Merchants/service providers were receptive to the interviews conducted by the WalkBoston team. The informal, non-scheduled nature of the interviews resulted in an easy, positive response on the part of local merchants and service providers.
- Owners and employees of small, local stores were more open to interviews than were the managers and employees at larger merchants and branch banks. Perhaps because the larger stores and banks were often part of a chain, staff did not feel at liberty to express their personal opinions as easily as staff at locally-owned and operated stores and businesses. This was an excellent way of reaching the LEP community. Many of the business were owned and managed by immigrants, and most of the owners or their

employees spoke some English; WalkBoston had Spanish-speaking staff available for all interviews if needed.

- Informal, unscheduled interviews with merchants were a time-effective method of reaching interested local community members. WalkBoston staff did not set up the interviews in advance, so there was no staff time spent in scheduling—often the most time-intensive portion of outreach efforts. Each interview took only 10–15 minutes, after which the two-person interview team moved on to the next location.
- Findings from these interviews may be skewed toward the smallest businesses because of the interview protocol we used. Respondents typically owned or were employed at small businesses that were open and responsive at the time of the interview—all conducted during daytime business hours. Large businesses (the supermarket) or exceedingly busy ones were as a result largely unrepresented in the data.
- Merchant interviews did not include the Walk-By Visioning poster boards and photos; however, graphic plans were shown of the options being developed as part of the City's Centre/South Street study. These plans, presented on posters, showed the two or three options for improvements in the two major intersections of Hyde and Monument Squares and elicited considerable interest.
- Respondents were generally able to view and comprehend roadway and sidewalk plans from the City's planning efforts for Centre/South Street for the re-design of intersections along the Route 39 corridor. Respondents easily understood and grasped the potential of the changes, based on our test to see if these individuals had difficulty reading maps and interpreting the plans.

Table 3-1 *Examples of Results of Merchant Interviews**

Merchant interviews - FTA project						
Business name	**General Comments**	**Snow removal**	**Crosswalks**	**Bus stops**	**Safety**	**Trees**
JP's Finest Barber 110 South St.		Poor	Used correctly by walkers			
Fernandez Liquors 128 South St.		OK		Spacing bad		
Maria's Hair Fashion 138 South St.		OK	Cars don't stop			
Botanica San Miguel 146 South St.					Usually	
Great Wall Chinese 779 Centre St	No comments					
AAA Appliance Sales 769 Centre St.	No comments					
Purple Cactus 674 Centre St.	Overall - good		Cars don't stop- need barrels			
David's Barber Shop 170 South St.		Store owners do it				
Primo's Pizza 172 South St.		Should be better	Not many nearby	Close bus stop		More needed
USA Cleaners 168 South St.	Generally okay all around					
Rootz Hallal Market 166 South St.		Done by city or store			Safer now than before	
Forest Hills Chirop. 140 South St.	Pretty good place to walk					
Farnsworth House 90 South St.	Generally good	Keeps people from walkng		More seats needed		
Ferris Wheels 66 South St.		Problems with snow removal	Cars pretty good about stops			More needed
Harvest Coop Mkt 57 South St.					More st. lights	
JP Licks Ice Cream 659 Centre St.		Businesses are conscientious	Need more		More bike racks	

*more in Appendix G

Findings: Merchant Interviews

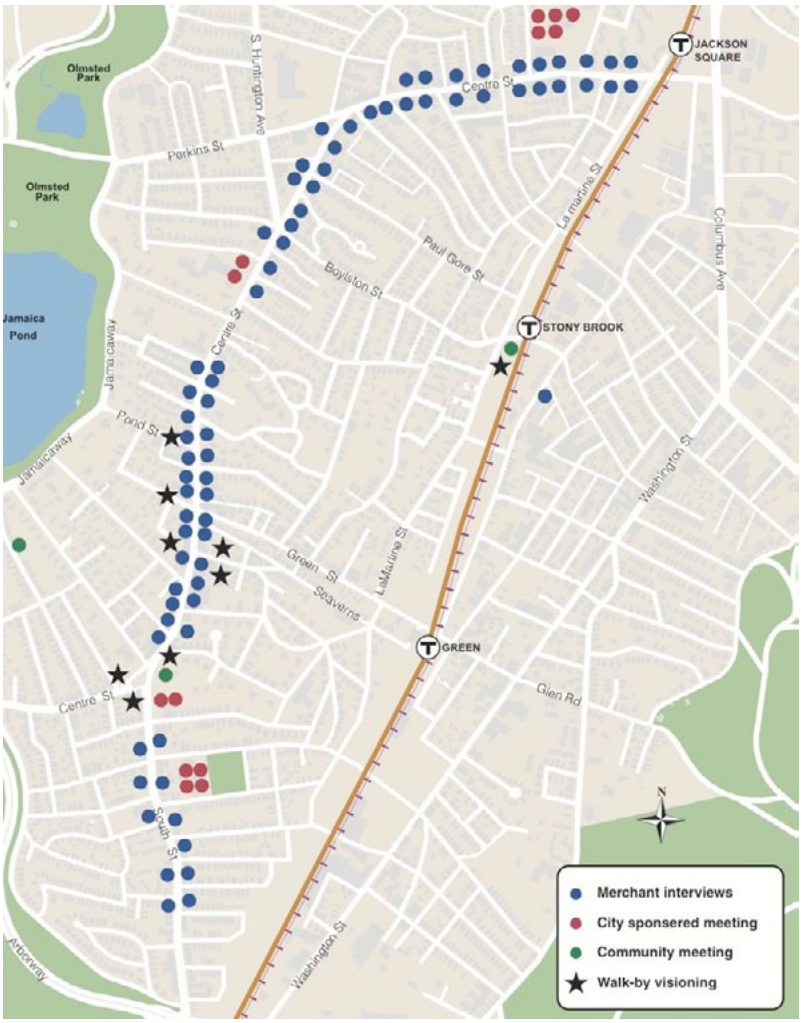
- Despite some locations with cracked sidewalks, trash, and lack of landscaping, interviewees felt the streets and sidewalks were adequate and expressed few complaints other than a lack of sufficient parking.
- Merchants expressed concern with street crossings. Many of the merchants observed that cars did not always yield the right-of-way for pedestrians and believed that there were an insufficient number of crosswalks. Some merchants also thought that the area was unsafe to walk at night. (This varied considerably in different parts of the corridor.)

Interview Locations

During the project, WalkBoston worked to supplement the City of Boston's efforts to reach out into the community and find additional participants to help shape planning ideas for the Centre/South Street corridor. Figure 3-1 shows that the merchant surveys were evenly distributed along the corridor. By comparison, all other participation techniques, city-sponsored meetings, neighborhood association meetings, and Walk-By Visioning required participants to attend at specific times and in specific places and therefore may not have reached people from all parts of the corridor.

Figure 3-1

Geographic location of all interviews



Distribution of Interviews by Time of Day

The merchant surveys were accomplished entirely within the working day when shops were open. Sessions of streetside Walk-By Visioning were also undertaken during the daytime. Community advisory meetings and neighborhood meetings were all held in the evening, a schedule that may be difficult for many possible participants who thus may be inadvertently excluded from participating in planning for their neighborhood. Figure 3-2 shows the distribution of interviews by time of day.

Figure 3-2

Distribution of interviews by time of day

Findings: Participation Mapping

When should informal sessions be added to the planning process? Additional information from streetside participants might be added before detailed work begins, during the process of defining possible approaches, and after initial and/or final suggestions have been made. Informal sessions would not replace the City's community meetings; they would supplement the meetings and provide additional information and voices for consideration during the study's various stages.

Table 3-2 shows a timeline for the Centre/South Street study, supplemented to add new participants into the planning process. The additions are intended to be suggestive and indicate that informal sessions to provide comparisons and to add more opinions might have been added shortly after consultants were employed to enable a more complete search for new issues and for personal preferences and after formal surveys were undertaken. A final opportunity for informal sessions could come after draft or final designs were prepared, to elicit views from additional residents.

Table 3-2 *Actual and Potential Participation Sessions in the Centre/South Street Study*

Date	Actual Participation Process	Possible Additions to Solicit Input from More Varied Participants
Feb 5, 2009	Workshop soliciting & reviewing sessions	
Mar 6, 2009	Call for nominations to Advisory Committee	
May 5, 2009	Presentation of timeline	
Jul 14, 2009	Introduction of consultants	
Sep 30, 2009	Draft vision statement	
Oct 2009		Field work – interviews/Walk-By Visioning
		Look for: New issues & personal preferences
Nov 23, 2009	Finalized vision statement	
Dec 4, 2009	Trial survey in field	
Dec 16, 2009	Design of "nodes," streetscape guidelines	
Dec 21/22, 2010	Survey work in field	
Jan 4, 2010	Finalize guidelines, evaluate nodes Design strategies – pedestrians & bikes	
Jan 9, 2010	Survey work in field	
Jan 28, 2010	Survey results, final design guidelines	
Feb 2010		Fieldwork – informal interviews Look for: Data comparisons, opinions
Mar 23, 2010	Design of squares – "Nodes"	
Apr 14, 2010	Final design for squares, parking, transit	
Apr 2010		Fieldwork – informal interviews Look for: data comparisons, opinions
May 4, 2010	Choose preferred designs & draft report	
Jul 14, 2010	Presentation of draft final report	
Sep 21, 2010	Release of draft report for comments	
Sep 2010		Fieldwork – informal interviews Seek comments and opinions
Oct 6, 2010	Comments on draft report due	

Findings: Walk-By Visioning

- Walk-By Visioning exercises can be a successful participation tool that attracts the interest of the public, elicits immediate responses, and generates useful opinions and preferences that are quantifiable.
- Walk-By Visioning can reach a large number of people in a very short time. This form of visioning was tested at eight locations—bus stops, two neighborhood festivals and two neighborhood meetings. More than 200 individuals participated in the exercise.
- Walk-By Visioning is a simple technique. Inexpensive poster boards were used with photos of bus stop features, such as shelters, seating, and

schedule information. These straightforward photos were intended to help participants visualize options and make decisions.

- Walk-By Visioning reaches new people and bridges language gaps. The visioning exercise reached individuals who were not usual participants in traditional community participation committees and meetings. The photos drew more LEP participants than either the surveys or the merchant interviews.
- A Walk-By Visioning exercise creates an informal social event where individuals were attracted by the novelty and enthusiastically offered their opinions. The option boards were designed and positioned to allow several individuals to participate simultaneously. As the boards drew attention, they created a situation where people could informally converse.
- Participants responded to the photos on the visioning exercise more easily than paper or electronic surveys.
- Participants cited four physical features that affect their daily use of transit: enclosed bus shelters, snow clearance, real-time bus arrival signs, and posted bus schedules. Each of the four choices have particular effects on the daily use by transit riders: protection from bad weather (shelters), reduced walking access (snow), and maintaining personal schedules (real-time bus arrival signs and posted schedules).

Walk-by Visioning took place in many locations. Figure 3-3 shows a session underway in Jamaica Plain. Two WalkBoston staff explained the process and encouraged individuals to participate, handing out colored stickers for participants to use in showing which of the options for street improvements they would prefer.

Figure 3-3

Walk-By Visioning in action

The results of several Walk-By Visioning events are summarized below, showing the preferences individuals registered after viewing options. In Table 3-3, preferences have been aggregated by location of the Walk-By Visioning site to provide an overall view of the voting preferences. More than 200 people participated, with clear preferences indicated by the numbers of individuals who preferred specific options.

Table 3-3 *Results of Voting in Walk-By Visioning Exercises*

	4/15/09	5/20/09	6/7/09	8/25/09	10/15/09	10/20/09	10/20/09	
Category	**Jamaica Hills Assn.**	**JP Business & Prof. Assn.**	**Green Roots Festival**	**JP Licks Festival**	**Monument Sq. Bus Stop**	**Monument Sq. Bus Stop**	**S. Huntington Ave. Bus Stop**	**Grand Totals**
Enclosed bus shelter	9	9	38	17	6	12	36	127
Snow clearance	9	7	34	12	5	18	27	112
Posted bus schedules	3	10	29	10	2	7	6	67
Sidewalk repair	0	0	20	5	3	2	3	33
Trash cans	0	3	19	8	3	9	2	44
Ped. signs at crosswalks	3	3	14	8	2	2	1	33
Street lights	0	0	10	5	3	2	5	25
Count-down signals	0	0	9	4	2	1	0	16
Crosswalk markings near bus stops	8	5	8	5	8	2	2	38
Posted route numbers	5	0	8	5	2	7	0	27
OpenBus shelter	0	2	9	4	2	8	2	27
News stands	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	6
Transit curb extensions	NA	1	8	0	2	5	3	19
Real-time arrival signs	NA	11	12	11	6	13	25	78

Figure 3-4 shows a Walk-by Visioning session in action at a site in Jamaica Plain. The option boards were set out on easels and a staff person took notes on participant demographics and informed participants that they could participate in expressing preferences by using stickers that were provided at each session. Note that the stickers were applied to the photos, with green indicating a preference for that improvement, yellow indicating the next highest preference, and red indicating the third highest preference.

Figure 3-4

Eliciting preferences in walk-by visioning exercises

Findings: Replicability

WalkBoston deliberately designed this project to explore techniques to elicit public participation that would be replicable in other parts of the country. In doing so, we began with well-known techniques of participation used all over the country—meeting with neighborhood groups and conducting interviews. These techniques were supplemented during the research, with the result being new techniques that were not only interesting but also relatively easy to institute and manage.

The results of the research indicate that the work on this limited number of techniques can be replicated elsewhere at low cost and with limited difficulty.

- *Little money is required.* Existing transit planning staff people can generally use these techniques with little training. Consultants are not required. Interviews can be spread out over time to accommodate other priorities.
- *Few materials are required.* Survey materials are minimal - paper, clipboard and pen. For Walk-By Visioning exercises, WalkBoston used photos from the internet or from local examples and reproduced them at low cost, and attached them to inexpensive boards.
- *New staffing is not likely to be required.* The techniques of interviewing and Walk-By Visioning we tested required two people to administer - one to interview, another to record information. Because the techniques were relatively simple, we encouraged staff to trade off between interviewing and record-keeping.

- *Formal sample interview surveys are not required to expand participation in planning efforts*, except where exacting quantitative results are required. A statistical approach to selecting people, including special sampling technique or stratification of groups of people to survey is not required in informal contacts. Informal approaches by nature provide only qualitative results.
- *The use of informal approaches attracts participants*. Informality draws people in and establishes a relationship with interviewers that is non-threatening to the participant. Informality allows for probing questions that are appropriate to the discussion but may go beyond a predetermined list of questions. Informality allows participants to ask questions, which should be recorded, if possible, by interviewers as input to the planning process.
- *For on-street, an informal contact with participants, a short list of questions is all that is required.* A predetermined list should include only the main and most important points.
- *Participatory efforts should support formal planning efforts wherever possible*. Informal public participation efforts should be supplemental to the ongoing planning efforts of public agencies. The work of this research did not attempt to replace any formal public participation efforts undertaken by a public agency.
- *Interviewers who are conversant in the predominant second language of an area are desirable* but not required.

SECTION 4

Lessons Learned

There are effective ways to draw new participants into public planning efforts. The research team hypothesized the need to make participation livelier, easier to understand, and more accessible to potential participants. Our hypothesis—that many relevant participants are missed because people have scant time or interest in attending meetings in which they may become frustrated—was substantiated by the level of interest and engagement that we found in alternative methods of interaction.

The research identified straightforward and inexpensive methods to expand public participation efforts to draw more people into the process and found ways for them to express opinions and preferences.

New participation techniques helped reach many of the people who will be affected by transit projects.

- The research team began by exploring how *previous planning efforts* had undertaken public participation programs. In addition to reviewing the participation techniques of the two planning efforts that were occurring at the same time that we carried out our research, WalkBoston also reviewed the experience of prior planning studies in the same Boston neighborhood to learn how participation efforts fared on those projects. In each case, we found similar results: in each planning study, there was a limited number of participants and they were fairly homogeneous in characteristics of race, income, and understanding of how to work within a planning process. The "meeting regulars" showed up over and over.
- The research team attended *regularly scheduled meetings* conducted by community organizations and project advisory groups and found that both the project-specific advisory groups and the neighborhood organizations were similarly small and homogeneous.
- *A formal survey* conducted by a public agency as part of its planning study did not significantly expand the base of public participation—in this case, with merchants in the area. While the people surveyed included some businesses that were not otherwise represented in the planning effort, it was not clear that the small sample group that was reached could represent the opinions of the broader community.
- *Media outreach* was conducted by all the planning projects; however, unless a project was extremely controversial, the research team found little evidence that people were motivated to submit comments or attend meetings because of the media coverage that was generated.

The research team documented that some broad groups of people whose lives would be affected by the projects were not represented in traditional participation events. Based on the research team's observations (both on this study and through more than 75 years of accumulated planning experience), planning meetings do not attract many transit-dependent riders, immigrants, low-income or minority groups, people with LEP, students, or business owners and their employees. The research team hypothesized that there are several reasons why these populations do not participate. First, their affinity groups may not be effectively contacted as part of traditional planning studies. Second, many of these individuals are not active members of groups. Third, the individuals who are members of these groups may not be comfortable participating in traditional public meetings where participation may require public speaking, signing in to an attendance roster, and participating in several meetings to gain an understanding of project issues.

In trying to expand participation, the research team reached out to existing groups in Jamaica Plain and made a number of attempts to bring new participants into the planning studies. We found the following:

- *Established neighborhood groups tend to represent a limited number of interests*. People who belong to neighborhood organizations attend their meetings to get information about events and processes that might affect them and to ensure that their views are represented as the group presents a position to a planning agency. Though the group members have found a method of being heard, they do not represent all members of a community.
- *Transportation-related planning issues are not always of interest to existing groups*. We explored pedestrian issues with existing neighborhood groups. For example, we offered to incorporate walking audits into previously-scheduled community meetings using techniques that can informally draw upon the vast experience of a wide diversity of community residents. This approach did not interest the informal advisory groups or neighborhood organizations that we approached in Jamaica Plain.
- *Some groups and individuals who were not represented in the planning process were not able to participate or interested in participating*. We contacted churches, public service groups, unions, and others to determine if any of these groups included people who were under-represented or had been overlooked in the process of assembling a public participation process for planning. Our offers to discuss participation and planning issues received a tepid response, at best. Most organizations that were not already participating did not have the time or desire to participate or get involved in planning.
- *Contacting under-represented individuals may be more important than reaching out to pre-existing neighborhood groups or organizations*. Established groups had largely already been contacted by public agencies and had been presented with participation options and encouraged to make suggestions. With few

groups interested in participation, the research team turned to the task of finding new ways to reach *individuals* to expand the number and diversity of participants.

The research team developed new techniques to reach individuals as participants in planning. The techniques evolved as we tested different options and encountered difficulties in implementation of the first methods.

- *Individuals were contacted primarily in outdoor settings*. The team decided to talk with people face-to-face on sidewalks where they walk on their way to transit, work, shop, etc., or where they wait for the bus at bus stops. This approach was designed as a way to reach a cross-section of the community that was certain to include individuals who were under-represented in traditional planning efforts.
- *The team prepared a short survey that could be answered while people waited to catch the bus*. Answers were recorded on paper forms and on handheld devices (iPads). The limited number of questions we could ask within the time constraint allowed us to gather some information about the participants but gleaned little of their opinions about planning. Participants were polite, but their interest in answering questions was minimal. Seeing staff members record their responses seemed to deter some people from participation and seemed especially off-putting to limited English speakers.
- *The team decided to add illustrations of possible transportation improvements to entice a greater level of involvement by participants*. Photos and sketches seemed to have a universal appeal to potential participants and were able to make clear precisely what kinds of choices were available. The illustrations and photos provided instant information about the elements that were included in the ongoing planning studies.
- *The team determined that participation could be expanded by keeping responses and opinions anonymous and informal*. We simplified participation even further by providing stickers of varying colors for participants to use in selecting the improvements they would like to see in their community. The stickers, showing first, second and third priorities, were applied directly to the visuals.
- *We named the new technique that evolved from our efforts Walk-By Visioning* to emphasize its potential for quickly reaching new participants in an informal, cost-effective way. The process is specifically designed as a way to reach people outside of the customary meetings included in planning processes. The technique was also successfully tested in traditional neighborhood organization meetings.
- *Participation is more effective if it is integrated with ongoing public agency planning efforts*. Real situations are much more engrossing because participants feel that they are providing input to physical planning elements that might actually be put into place. As part of the research project, WalkBoston could not provide the voice of the MBTA or City of Boston agencies and deal directly with the substantive planning questions. Thus, the team had greater difficulty

connecting with the public through regular neighborhood meetings and got only tepid responses to our outreach to neighborhood groups.

- *Informal processes should be considered as part of future participatory programs.*

One under-represented group that could not be reached in sidewalk contacts was merchants and their employees. The research team initially worked with the City of Boston to prepare a general survey of merchants in the Centre/South Street corridor and then tested other approaches as well.

- *A sample survey of corridor businesses was undertaken by the Boston Transportation Department*. WalkBoston worked closely with the City on this approach, which provided a considerable amount of information but did not include all of the merchants in the area. We do not know if the remaining business people had been informed about the planning studies or reached by the City to obtain opinions or suggestions.
- *After seeing the results of the City's survey, the WalkBoston research team decided to personally contact all the merchants* in the corridor to determine whether and how they had participated in planning studies. We learned that merchant knowledge of planning studies was very spotty, but for those who were aware of the studies, the information came from presentations at business association meetings, by rumor, from the local policeman on the beat, and from newspapers. Few merchants had directly participated either through advisory committee or neighborhood meetings.
- *Our in-person contacts with merchants were focused on questions about the City's planning study*. We sought to determine whether the plans were understood and also solicited opinions about what might help pedestrian safety. The research team used illustrations from the City's planning study to explain options and then asked questions about issues that affected the businesses and their patrons.
- *The merchants (including both management and staff members) were delighted to be interviewed* about the planning studies and appreciated the unscheduled, informal process. Feedback was immediate and positive.
- *The best vehicles for drawing new individuals into planning efforts have some similar underlying characteristics*. People are intrigued by physical planning but are not necessarily interested in long-running public participation processes. People on the street were definitely interested in planning, even if their encounters with ideas about proposed improvements were brief.
- *Planning efforts dealing with real situations afford the best opportunities for increasing public participation*. To make participation real, the team's research was undertaken in conjunction with agency planning efforts already underway or about to begin. A real-time approach offered the attractive possibility of testing the extent of public understanding of studies having potentially great impact. It also allowed the researchers to observe the working contacts the agencies develop with local people in the planning process.

- *Enhanced public participation should supplement existing agency efforts where possible*. The agencies that WalkBoston worked with were cooperative, interested, and eager to gain additional participants. All techniques for enhanced participation were designed to fit within the existing agency planning efforts.
- *Staying flexible was uppermost in finding and testing alternative vehicles for getting people involved*. The approaches to participation evolved as the research team adjusted its thinking about public participation techniques and tested specific methods. The team turned quickly to new approaches when we experienced difficulty in attracting people to get involved in planning.
- *Finding ways for people to express their opinions quickly and anonymously is crucial to bringing new participants into the process.*

The brief encounters of Walk-By Visioning and merchant interviews should not replace project advisory or neighborhood group meetings. These informal contact techniques are useful to supplement ongoing planning studies and their attendant participation efforts, but cannot deal with complicated technical questions.

SECTION 5

Conclusions

New techniques of learning from and about under-represented people are needed.

Techniques of involvement that are informal and anonymous and that do not require regular meeting attendance or responding to formal surveys hold promise for broadening participation.

Public participation efforts can and should reach all parts of the community. Traditional efforts may reach only a narrow group of participants. In a study area in Boston affected by several recent transportation-planning projects, the research team discovered significant gaps in public involvement. In many cases, public agencies were able to engage only with participants from groups representing small neighborhoods or project advisory groups that met over an extended period of time. Many of the same participants were involved over and over, while a broader constituency was never reached.

Many residents are under-represented in public participation efforts. Under-represented people include transit-dependent riders, immigrants, low-income or minority groups, people with LEP, students, or business owners and their employees. Though they live and work in the affected community, they are hard to reach. The result is that few are aware of planning projects underway in their communities, and the project results may not reflect their views and needs.

Reaching under-represented people requires new public participation techniques. Traditional public participation techniques used in the study area were generally not attracting under-represented people. The research team examined each technique, evaluated it, and looked for supplemental ways to make the technique more effective in attracting under-represented people. The team concluded that many under-represented people were not only willing to participate but were able to provide useful and important insights into community needs and choices.

The research team began by investigating four existing methods of reaching residents:

- Formal meetings with project-focused volunteer advisory committees
- Formal meetings of existing neighborhood groups
- Supplementation by formal, statistically accurate individual surveys
- Media releases about the project

None of these methods produced the broad-based participation most valuable to public agencies.

Formal meetings are a modest method of expanding public participation. Keeping neighborhood organizations and project-focused advisory groups apprised of planning should continue, as it has proven to be successful to keep those groups involved in a project. However, such groups represent only a small proportion of residents.

Surveys expand public participation only slightly. Formal surveys, designed primarily to provide statistically-accurate polls of attitudes and opinions for a small group of people, result in responses from only a limited number of people from the groups that are under-represented in traditional planning efforts.

Participation is not broadened significantly through media coverage. Even when local newspapers, websites, or radio hosts provide information, under-represented individuals may be unaware that their participation is desired or even possible.

Adding participants should not be controversial. As more people are contacted through varied forms of participation, more will understand issues and give their opinions with more insight and information. Results may be more accurately tailored to meet citizens' needs.

New techniques in participation do not always mean in-depth involvement. A fleeting moment will do, if that is the only time that an individual can be reached. A rich array of positions and reactions can be found even in very short informal interviews and interactions. More sustained interaction, though it provides more in-depth input, is more costly and does not necessarily reach many under-represented people. Participation techniques must be designed to focus precisely and effectively in order to obtain useful information from participants with limited time.

All new techniques should address substantive issues. People are most interested in exploring issues that are real and that have direct effects on them. The challenge is to present issues and options in a way that ordinary people without much experience in transportation or planning can quickly comprehend and base an opinion on issues that are presented. People need to understand that the information sought from them is material to improvements they may need and hope to see in their community.

New techniques of public involvement can be kept quite low cost. Informal techniques can be designed to require limited staff time in preparation and execution. Informal techniques, with limited cost, can reach a large number of people.

Simple questions posed on the sidewalk or through informal interviews with business people can be illuminating. Responses will likely cover many issues when regular transit users are the participants and will help uncover issues that may otherwise go unnoticed. Flexibility in the techniques should allow the staff to vary the process to allow participants to express their views about any material issues (and perhaps vary from the issues that the staff had identified as important).

Interactive exercises are an especially attractive way to proceed. Walk-By Visioning engages people quickly, adds to their understanding of issues, and allows them to express opinions on the spot. It was well received by participants and by professionals interested in expanding the base of people they can contact through planning exercises. The research team believes Walk-by Visioning could be used in obtaining citizen impact on a wide variety of transportation and planning projects.

Based on the findings of this study, the research team recommends that further inquiry into new participation tools focus on bringing the outreach to the participants and tailoring the methods so they are simple and non-burdensome. The outreach should focus on the most relevant issues but be sufficiently flexible to adjust to unanticipated relevant information that may be provided.

APPENDIX

A

Case Studies of Related Research Activity

A number of proposals for development of land and transportation facilities have recently been fielded in the area of Jamaica Plain. All had components of public participation. They include:

- **Study of Centre/South Street**
  A project of the Boston Transportation Department and the Boston Redevelopment Authority
  www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViewInit&InitID=142
- **Study of Route 39 buses on Centre Stree**t
  A project of MBTA
  www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/t_projects/default.asp?id=19047#rt39
- **Addition of crosswalks between Jamaica Plain neighborhoods and Jamaica Pond**
  A project of the Emerald Necklace Coalition, the Solomon Fund, and the State Department of Conservation and Recreation
  www.emeraldnecklace.org/advocacy/#public-access
- **Study of Route 28 buses on Blue Hill Avenue**
  A project of MBTA
  www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/t_projects/default.asp?id=19635
- **Forest Hills Improvement Initiative**
  A project of the Boston Transportation Department and the Boston Redevelopment Authority
  www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/planning/PlanningInitsIndividual.asp?action=ViwInit&InitID=120

These five studies provided varieties of project purposes and approaches. The studies are of varying scales as well, offering the potential for examining differing methods of obtaining public participation and subsequent incorporation of citizen comments into ongoing work.

Comparison of the public participation aspects of these studies required methods to examine the various proposals and issues being addressed to determine how public participation components of the studies were planned and carried out and with what kinds of impacts or results. Details of public participation preparation and implementation were noted, with forms of meeting announcements, timing, and conduct, as well as representation of affected neighborhoods and specific citizen interest groups. Each study encountered

different kinds of participation, the give-and-take between presenters and participants, the kinds of questions asked, and the way they were fielded and the nature of follow-up contacts that may have been required. The relative degrees of success that each study achieved were assessed using methods to equalize our comments on each study or project.

The bulk of our work with the City of Boston falls into this category: identifying how and at what planning/design stages public participation can be most effective. By qualitatively evaluating various approaches by the City and other agencies in their public participation processes, we are identifying strengths and weaknesses in the state of public participation as it is commonly practiced in urban and transit planning projects.

Comparison of planning study characteristics

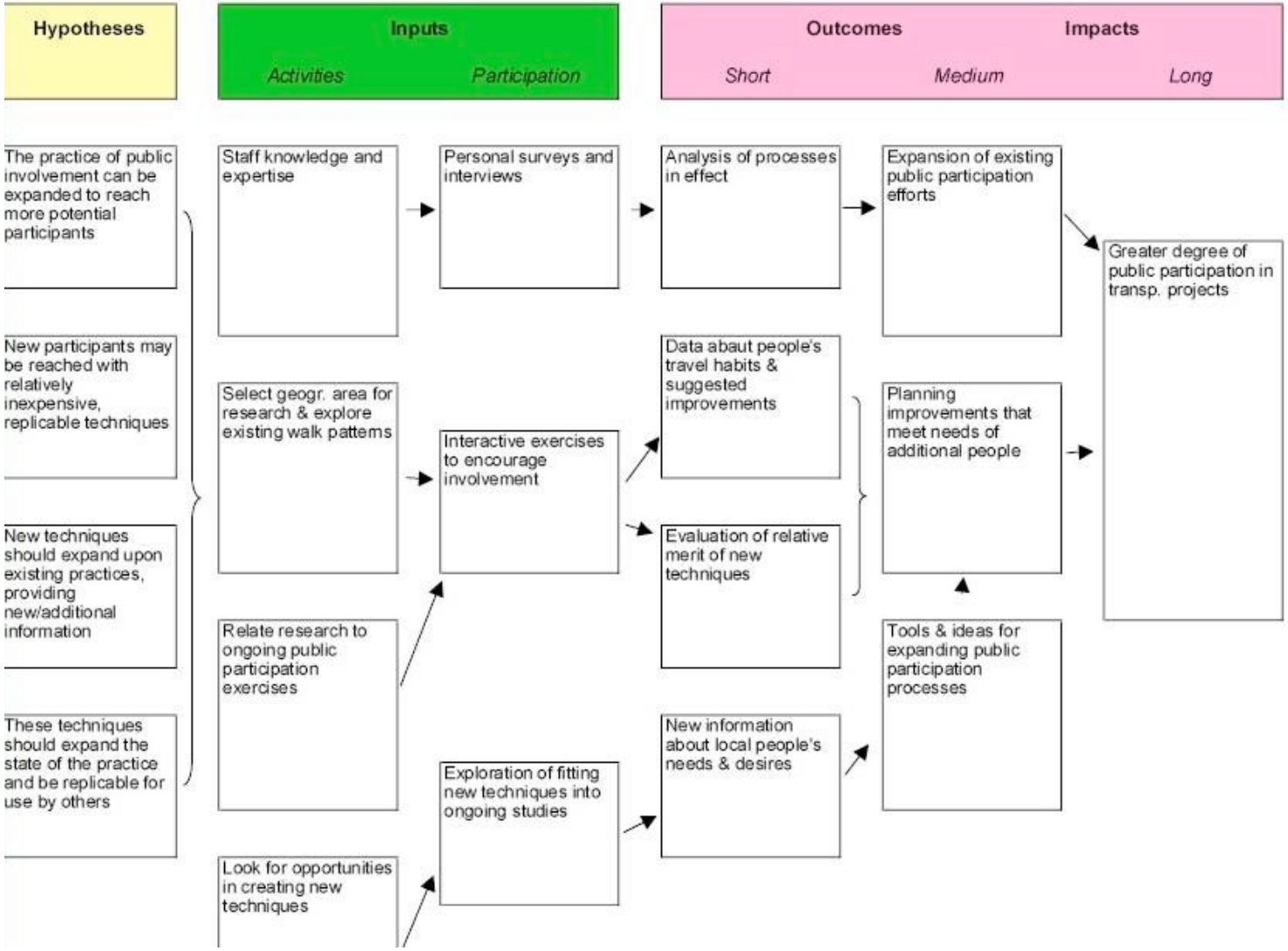
Name of Study	Centre/South Sts study.	Route 39 - MBTA study	Crosswalk at Eliot St.	Dorchester Av. study	Route 28 - MBTA study	Forest Hills improvement
Purpose of study	Improvements to streets	Improved bus service	Intersection safety imp.	Imp. to streets & signs	Bus rapid transit	Transit-oriented dev.
Location	Jamaica Plain	Jamaica Plain	Jamaica Plain	Dorchester	Mattapan	Jamaica Plain
Lead agency or agencies*	BRA/BTD	MBTA	Emrld Neck. Conserv; DCR	BRA/BTD	MBTA	BRA
Funding	City of Boston	MBTA	Local/DCR	City of Boston	ARRA; MBTA	City of Boston
Dates	2008-present	2008		2005-2007	2009-present	2006-2008
Consultants	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corr. Length	2 miles	5.1 miles	1 mile radius	4 miles	5 miles	1 mile radius
Population in corridor/area	40000 +	70,000 +	2,000 +	50000 +	40000 +	3,000 +
Transit riders	14,405 - Rte 39	14,405 - Rte 39	No transit near	5,000 +	12,000 - Rte 28	Bus transf. ctr.
Transit	Or. Line	Or. Line	No transit near	Red Line	NA	Or. Line
Name of study group	Community Adv. Gp.	Working Group	Neighborhood	Task Force	Project Adv. Gp.	Working Group
Participants	16	15	Ad hoc	15	15	Varied
Officially appointed	Yes	None appointed	None appointed	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appointed by	Boston Mayor	None	None	Boston Mayor	MBTA	Boston Mayor
Self-selected	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Months	Ongoing	12 mo.	6 + mo.	25 mo.	18 mo.	18 mo.
Formal meetings	13 +	10	2	Many	Unk.	10 +
Sub-group meetings	Several	None	Several	12	Many	10
Public mtgs	13 +	10	2	3 wkshops	5 Info/wkshps	10 +
Attendance/ meeting (av.)	20-25	10 to 15	60 to 80	10 to 15	up to 80	up to 125
Voting	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Controversy	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Widely known	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Door-to-door contacts	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ads/stories	Many	Several	Many	Several	Many	Several
Email used	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leaflets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Web site	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*BRA=Boston redevelopment Authority; BTD=Boston Transportation Department; DCR=MA Dept of Conservation & Recreation; MBTA=Mass. Bay Transportation Authority

APPENDIX

B

Logic Model



APPENDIX

C

WalkBoston Streetside Interview Form

The form of the interview is shown here. For comparative purposes, this form was maintained through all interviews, whether recorded on paper or on a hand-held device.

In-Person Survey for Route 39 Bus Stops

Information to be entered before or after each interview:

A. Bus stop (cross street name) _____
B. Direction
Inbound
Outbound

C. Age range (estimated)
Under 20
21-40
40-60
60+

D. Gender (observed)
Female
Male

1. How many minutes does it take you to walk here?
   a. 0–3
   b. 4–6
   c. 7–10
   d. 10+

2. What street do you use to reach Centre Street or South Street? _____

3. What are some things you like or don't like about your walking route?
   a. Too long
   b. The right length
   c. Too hilly
   d. Inconvenient/indirect
   e. Convenient/direct
   f. Not clean

g. Clean
h. Not safe (traffic)
i. Safe (traffic)
j. Not safe (crime)
k. Safe (crime)
l. Unattractive
m. Attractive
n. Proximity to businesses
o. Street lighting
p. Sidewalk obstructions
q. No snow clearance
r. Other: _____

4. Do you have trouble crossing Centre Street or South Street?
   a. No
   b. Yes
      i. Traffic doesn't stop
      ii. No stop light or sign
      iii. No crosswalk
      iv. No crosswalk markings

5. What, if anything, would you change about your bus stop?
   a. Nothing
   b. How close it is to my home
   c. How close it is to shopping or coffee shop
   d. Ease of doing errands from here
   e. Safety (crime)
   f. Safety (traffic)
   g. Cleanliness
   h. Furnishings (bench, shelter)
   i. Pavement surface (no bricks, blocks or pavers)
   j. Lighting
   k. Snow clearance
   l. Other: _____

6. Would you be willing to walk one extra block to a bus stop?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. Do you know about the study of Route #39 that the MBTA is doing?
   a. Yes
   b. No (hand out brochure with contact info.)

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX

D

City of Boston Interview Form

Jamaica Plain Centre/South Street Survey

1. How old are you?
    - <18
    - 18–24
    - 25–34
    - 35–49
    - 50–64
    - 65–80

2. What is your gender?
    - Male
    - Female
    - Other

3. Where do you live?
    - Jamaica Plain
        - Hyde Square
        - Monument
        - Jackson Square
        - South Street
        - Forest Hills
        - Other: _____
    - In another Boston neighborhood: _____
    - Brookline
    - Newton
    - Cambridge
    - In another city/town: _____

4. What is your primary purpose for coming to Centre/South Street today?
    - Grocery/food shopping
    - Retail/restaurants
    - Medical appointments
    - Business meetings
    - General errands (post office, dry cleaning, etc.)
    - I live on Centre/South Street
    - I work on Centre/South Street
    - To socialize or meet up with friends
    - Other: _____

5. How much money did you (or do you plan to) spend today? (please round to the nearest dollar amount) $_____

6. How many times per week do you typically travel to Centre/South Street?
   - Once a week or more
   - Once every two to three weeks
   - Once a month
   - Less than once a month
   - Other: _____

7. How did you get to Centre/South Street today? (check any combination of modes that apply)
   - Bike
   - Train
   - Bus
   - Car
   - Foot
   - Scooter/motorcycle
   - Zipcar
   - Wheelchair/wheeled device
   - Other: _____

8. Did you visit multiple destinations while here?

9. If so, how did you travel between the destinations?
   - Bike
   - Train
   - Bus
   - Car
   - Foot
   - Scooter/motorcycle
   - Zipcar
   - Wheelchair/wheeled device
   - Other: _____

10. What factor(s) led to your travel choice today?

11. If you traveled by car, where did you park?
    - At a parking space on the street
    - Please provide approximate location and cost: _____
    - At a parking space in a parking lot
    - Please provide approximate location and cost: _____

12. What would encourage you to bike more? (check up to three options)
    - More places to park bikes
    - More bike lanes
    - A bike share system where I could rent a bike at very low cost
    - More bikers on the road
    - Nothing – I am unlikely to start riding a bike
    - Other _____

13. What would encourage you to walk more? (check up to three options)
    - A more pleasant sidewalk experience
    - Safer sidewalks – better ramps, less clutter of newspaper boxes, lighting, tc.
    - Better connections across the street
    - More places to sit down and relax
    - Nothing – I am unlikely to walk more
    - Other: _____

14. What would encourage you to take the bus/subway more? (check up to three options)
    - If the bus/train was more reliable
    - If the bus/train was not so crowded
    - If there was a stop closer to where I live and/or my destination
    - If the bus/train cost less
    - Nothing – I am unlikely to take transit more often
    - Other _____

15. In your opinion, what is the identity of Centre/South Street? What do you believe Centre/South Street is known for?

16. Which of the following activities would encourage you to spend more time on Centre Street?
    - Informal music performances
    - Weekly farmer's market
    - Seasonal events
    - Outdoor concerts
    - Educational programs
    - Other: _____

17. Additional ideas, comments, and/or questions?

APPENDIX

E

Demographic Data from Walk-By Visioning Sessions

Demographic Data for walk-by sessions

Date	4/15/09	5/20/09	6/7/09	8/25/09	10/15/09	10/20/09	10/20/09	
Demographic info	**Jamaica Hills Assn.**	**JP Business & Prof. Assn.**	**Green Roots Festival**	**JP Licks festival**	**Monument Sq Bus Stop**	**Monument Sq Bus Stop**	**S. Huntington Av. Bus Stop**	**GRAND TOTALS**
Gender								
Female			52	31	12	24		**119**
Male			31	27	14	15		**87**
Race (observed)								
White			58	39	20	33		**150**
Black			11	5	4	5		**25**
Latino			7	3	1	1		**12**
Asian			4	1	2	0		**7**
NA			4	0	0	0		**4**
Ages								
Teens			7	3	3	2		**15**
20s			21	20	7	6		**54**
30s			23	14	4	18		**59**
40s			15	1	1	4		**21**
50+			15	7	11	5		**38**
Language								
English			75	25	NA	NA		**100**
Spanish			8	3	NA	NA		**11**
Number participating	14	14	68	28	15	24	39	**202**

APPENDIX

F

Opinion Data from Walk-By Visioning Sessions

Opinion Data for walk-by sessions

Date	4/15/09	5/20/09	6/7/09	8/25/09	10/15/09	10/20/09	10/20/09	
	Jamaica Hills Assn.	**JP Business & Prof. Assn.**	**Green Roots Festival**	**JP Licks festival**	**Monument Sq Bus Stop**	**Monument Sq Bus Stop**	**S. Huntington Av. Bus Stop**	**GRAND TOTALS**
Question			**Response yes**	**Response yes**			**Response yes**	
Rides #39 bus			29	21			29	**79**
Knows of MBTA study			11	5			9	**25**
Knows of City of Boston study			6	6			NA	**12**
Owns car			27	27			22	**76**
Other public participation experience			26	26			3	**55**
Question			**Response no**	**Response no**			**Response no**	
Rides #39 bus			25	7			NA	**32**
Knows of MBTA study			42	23			24	**89**
Knows of City of Boston study			43	43			NA	**86**
Owns car			24	24			13	**61**
Other public participation experience			25	25			32	**82**

APPENDIX

G

Additional Information on Merchant Interviews

Merchant interviews - FTA project							
Business name	**General**						
	Comments	**Snow removal**	**Crosswalks**	**Bus stops**	**Safety**	**Trees**	**Transport**
JP's Finest Barber	Good place to	Poor	Used correctly				
110 South St.	distribute info		by walkers				
Fernandez Liquors	Found Rotary in	OK		Spacing bad			
128 South St.	sdwlk banner						
Maria's Hair Fashion	No info on rotary	OK	Cars don't stop				
138 South St.							
ABCD JP		Poor	More			More	
753 Centre St.			needed			needed	
Primo's Pizza	No problem with	Should be better	Not many nearby	Close bus stop		More	
172 South St.	rotary					needed	
Rootz Hallal Market		Done by city or			Safer now		
166 South St.		store			than before		
Farnsworth House	No info on rotary	Keeps people		More seats			
90 South St.		from walkng		needed			
Ferris Wheels	No info on rotary	Problems with	Cars pretty good			More	
66 South St.		snow removal	about stops			needed	
JP Licks Ice Cream		Businesses are	Need more		More bike		60% walk
659 Centre St.		conscientious			racks		
Wainwright Bank			Distracted		Slow the		
687 Centre St.			drivers		drivers		
Forbes House			Feels safe for				Problem - too
545 Centre St.			elders				many cars
Gaughen et al	Unsure on rotary		Need more				
376 Centre St.			crosswalks				
Beauty Salon/Supply	Unsure on rotary		Cars don't stop				Pking at
397 Centre St.			for peds				Angell?
Velouria Expresso	Much ped traffic				Tree grates		
389 Centre St.					needed		
Atlantic Travel	Unsure about		Crossing needed				50% walk
379 Centre St.	rotary		reduce jaywalkg				Park@Angell?

Business name	General						
	Comments	Snow removal	Crosswalks	Bus stops	Safety	Trees	Transport
Hyde Sq. Tsk Force	Not involved in	Awful				Less $ for	Many walk to
375 Centre St	rotary					strscape	T station
Centre Nails	Found Rotary in						
373A Centre St.	sdwlk banner						
Quisqueyana	No info on rotary				Safe area		
373 Centre St.							
Moneshan Salan							50% walk
371A Centre St							Pking easy
Santo Domingo Mkt	No problem with		Crosswalk wld				50% walk
317 Centre St.	rotary		help				More pking
Capt. Nemo's Pizza		Hard to clear					More pking
367 Centre St.		sidewalks					
La Casa De Recalos	No info on rotary						More pking
370 Centre St.							
Centre Tailor	No info on rotary		New crosswlk				50% walk
366 Centre St.							
D'Friends Barbers	Good place to						Most walk
366 Centre St.	distribute info						
Vecina Beauty Shop		Owner does it					50% walk
364 Centre St.							More pking
Crystal Fruit	Customers from		Add crosswalk in				Most walk
278 Centre St.	lg area		front				pking not req
Camilo Liquor		Business do it	More crosswalks				
380 Centre St.		well					
All Checks Cashed	Trash greater		More crosswalks		Unsafe day		Many walk
282 Centre St.	probl than snow				& night		More pking
Yely's Coffee Shop	No trash issues		Many jaywalkers				Safe for wlks
384 Centre St.							
Amador & Oller	No safety improvs	People pitch in				Plant	
296A Centre St.	for peds.					flowers	
Angela's Salon	No English spkrs						
296 Centre St.							

Business name	General Comments	Snow removal	Crosswalks	Bus stops	Safety	Trees	Transport
Evelyn's Mkt	More foot patrols	OK	OK		Unsafe at		Most walk
298 Centre St.					night		Pking hard
Super 1 hr. Cleaners					Safer than		
390B Centre St.					30 yrs ago		
Tostado	Trash on sts. in				Police cover	Missing 1	
300 Centre St.	am looks bad				good		
Freddy's Mkt Bodega	Trash OK	OK	Many jaywalkers				
302A Centre St.			Need crosswlk				
Latino Restaurant			People use them		Unsafe at		50% walk
302 Centre St.			& cars stop		night		
Cappy's Pizza			Cars stop for		Unsafe at		Most walk
304 Centre St.			peds		night		More pking
La Gran Via Men's	Trash OK				Safe		50% walk
306A Centre St.							
Meat Land					Unsafe		Most walk
306B Centre St.					sometime		Pking good
Franklin's CDs	Conditions OK				Safe		Most walk
314 Centre St.							Pking good
Ramon Vasquez		Problem			Safe at		Most drive
340 Centre St.					night		More pking
Pimental Mkt	Little English						
340 Centre St.							
Mr. V Auto		Problem			More foot		Need meters
342A Centre St.					patrols		
Dunkin Donuts	Pkd cars block				Unsafe		More pking
315 Centre St.	views of peds						
Family Dental			Infrequent		Safe		Some walk
315 Centre St.			yielding				
GameStop						Recent	Mix wlk-dive,
315 Centre St.						replant	15% bus
Hair Stop	Good walking						Many take T
315 Centre St.							

Business name	General Comments	Snow removal	Crosswalks	Bus stops	Safety	Trees	Transport
Frugal Furniture 315 Centre St.	Fence st. to stop jaywalking		Too much jay-walking				
Expressions 315 Centre St.					Safe		50% walkers
Fellowship Church 317 Centre St.	Rundown property		Crossers needs caution				50% public transp.
DF Wireless 319B Centre St.	Tend to not yield to peds.		Too much jay-walking		Gangs		All modes
Kokoras Insurance 325 Centre St.	No walking problems						
Edianas Mkt 327 Centre St.			Cars yield, too much jaywlking				Most walk
Estella Bakery 333 Centre St.			Cars yield			More flowers	
Rent-A-Center 341 Centre St.	Little knowledge of walking						
Alex Chimis 358C Centre St.	No English						
Del Valle's Gifts 360 Centre St.	Saw plans at bus. assn. meeting						<50% walk > 2hr pking
Fernandez Travel 360A Centre St.	Plans complicated & beautiful				Safe		Mix of modes
Julie Nails 360B Centre St.	Unaware of plans				Safea		50% walk Pking good
Boston Check Cash 360 CentreSt.	No English						
JP Cellular Paging 362 Centre St.	Unaware of plan						Keep pking available
Vasallo's 362C Centre St.	Unaware of plan		No probs for peds				More pking Most drive
Guardian Healthcre 418 Centre St.	Unaware of plan				Pretty good		St pking bad most drive

Business name	General Comments	Snow removal	Crosswalks	Bus stops	Safety	Trees	Transport
City Realty 418 Centre St.	Heard about plan from policeman						50% walk No bikes, pls
Connolly Publ Lib. 433 Centre St.	Aware of plans - worse for cars					More green sp.	Most walk

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
http://www.fta.dot.gov/research