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Bus-Only Lane Experiment In Roslindale Ends



Bus-only lane experiment draws to a close in Roslindale.

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Bus-Only Lane Experiment Ends

For the past month, morning commuters riding MBTA buses in Roslindale have enjoyed the luxury of a bus-only lane. That's when parked cars are cleared from the curbside lane to allow buses to travel with fewer impediments. As a result, the buses no longer have to compete with cars for the same lane, and they can travel much more quickly.

The lane restriction was put into effect each morning from 5 to 9 along a mile long stretch of Washington Street from Roslindale Village to Forest Hills. Twenty thousand riders take the bus each day along that route, which is said to be the busiest in the MBTA's system.

Commuters said they saved anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes on their commutes and some as much as a half hour. "It's really good, it's improved my day and I know it's improved the day for a lot of people who go to Boston Public Schools, the drivers and the kids," said Evan Williams.

Williams was referring to the fact that Boston Public School buses are allowed to use the exclusive lane. Meanwhile motorists find it easier to navigate Washington Street since they don't have to accommodate buses pulling in and out of traffic to pick up passengers. And bicyclists are especially happy that they no longer have to share their lane with cars and find the buses much easier to coexist with.

The only negative comments have come from business owners like Bob Kisamy who owns a market next to the bus only lane.

"It is very bad because I can't even get deliveries," Kisamy said. "Most deliveries come between 5 and 9 o'clock in the morning. Customers cannot park here anymore so I lost the business from 7 o'clock to like 9 o'clock. None of them can park around here."

But other business people like Mark Sullivan of DBS Lumber said so far the bus only lane hasn't been a big problem for him.

"It's been a little tricky working around it, but we try to get the trucks out of here really fast when they come in so that it doesn't pose much of an issue," he said. "A few of the cops at the beginning came over to find out what was going

on and what we were doing and kind of said, 'Well, if you get 'em out quick, that'll work.'"

And what of all those parked cars that used to be in that lane everyday?

Steve [G]ag of the citizens group [\[Livable\]Streets](#), which is for the bus lane, said a survey his group did found that most of those cars belonged to commuters coming into the city who were not Roslindale residents. There is generally more parking available for residents of Roslindale compared to other parts of the city which makes a bus only lane more workable.

Now that the four week trial has ended, officials with the Boston Transportation Department will collect comments and reactions from commuters, drivers, residents and business owners before making a decision about making the bus only lane permanent. If so, it would be the first in Boston. But Mayor Walsh's administration has plans for more in the North End, Mattapan and Dorchester.