

Transit Strategies

TRANSIT EMPHASIS CORRIDORS



Bus transit networks are often designed in a hub-and-spoke manner, bringing people to a dense downtown area from lower-density outlying areas. This design leads to many buses serving the same corridors downtown, usually corridors with high levels of congestion. As described below, Transit Emphasis Corridors employ transit priority strategies along these routes in order to facilitate frequent transit service during peak traffic times.

Elements of Transit Emphasis Corridors

Transit Emphasis Corridors serve multiple bus, rapid bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), and/or streetcar routes along the same busy street. This street has some combination of the following transit priority elements:

- **Bus-Priority Lanes:** In a Transit Emphasis Corridor, one lane, multiple lanes, or up to the whole street may be designated only for transit. These lanes may also allow taxis/ride-hail, bikes, and/or right turns by private vehicles. For corridors with mixed-traffic, queue jump lanes may be used for parts of the corridor.
- **Signal Priority:** Transit Emphasis Corridors may be equipped with Transit Signal Priority (TSP) at the intersections, which extend green lights and shorten red lights when buses are approaching. Signals for transit may also be separate from general traffic signals.
- **High Quality Bus Stops:** The stops along Transit Emphasis Corridors must serve multiple buses at a time. Bus shelters tend to be larger and accommodate more people. If the technology is available, off-board fare-payment at the stops can lead to speedier service.

Signage on 3rd Avenue in Seattle, WA



Transit Emphasis Corridors, especially those with bus-priority lanes, may be active at all times of the day or only at peak times. Signage is crucial to let those driving private vehicles know when they may not use the lane or street. Cities usually post signs with times when cars are not allowed or utilize LED signage that lights up during corridor active hours.

Examples of Transit Emphasis Corridors

Marq2 Corridor, Minneapolis, MN

In the 2000s, Minneapolis converted two congestion-heavy downtown streets, Marquette Avenue and Second Avenue, into transit corridors as a part of their “Transit First” policy. On these avenues, two lanes were removed from general traffic and converted into bus lanes and contra-flow bike lanes. The transit agency also consolidated downtown express bus traffic to these two one-way streets.

Marq2 Corridor Directions and Stops



Bus Travelling in Contra-Flow Lane on Marq2 Corridor, Minneapolis, MN



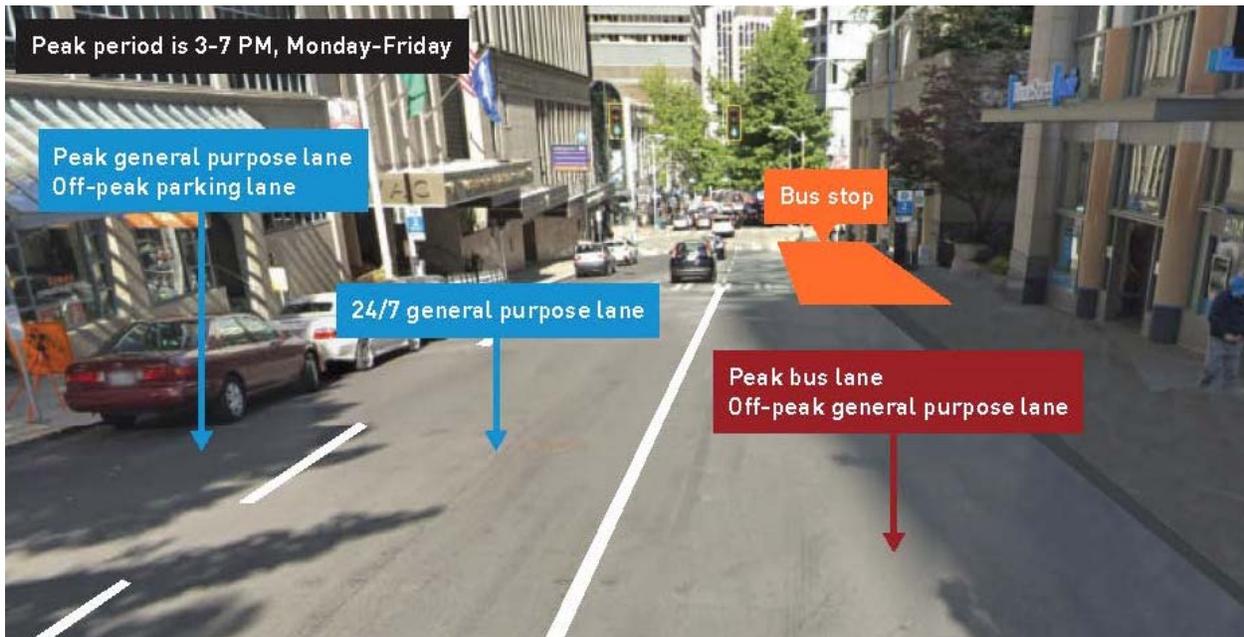
Transit benefits of the project were significant; ridership increased by 4% in the first year, bus travel times decreased over 80% during the morning peak hour, and bus capacity increased as

well. Allowing two lanes for buses increases the speed of travel dramatically, with the left lane used for travelling only and the right lane for picking up passengers.

Transit Pathways, Seattle, WA

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has converted several streets in Downtown Seattle into transit emphasis corridors for peak times of the day. When buses that used to travel in a downtown transit tunnel were moved above ground in early 2019 in order to accommodate increased light rail frequency in the tunnel, SDOT implemented bus priority strategies on these streets with increased bus traffic.

5th/6th Transit Pathway, Seattle, WA



3rd Avenue Bus-Only Hours



The 5th/6th Transit Pathway opened in March of 2019, with one transit-only lane from 3PM to 7PM Monday through Friday, designed to facilitate northbound peak afternoon travel. New signs, traffic signals, and three new bus stops were also added to the corridor.

On 3rd Avenue, which carries more than 2,500 buses every day picking up and dropping off approximately 100,000 people, SDOT restricts car-traffic on the entire street during specific times. In August of 2018, the agency expanded the restrictions from peak morning and afternoon rush hour on weekdays to 6AM to 7PM every day of the week. Additionally, ORCA card readers and real-time arrival signs were added to every stop along 3rd avenue, enabling off-board payment and all-door boarding. Previously, off-board payment was only available for RapidRide buses, but now all buses that travel through 3rd Avenue use the system.

Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY

Since the late 1900s New York City has been putting in place a system of bus lanes to give priority for transit users in the ever-congested streets of the city. While some of these lanes are designed to move the MTA's rapid and express bus services, others function as transit emphasis corridors for a variety of buses, either 24/7 or at specific times of day.

One such corridor is Fulton Street in Downtown Brooklyn, used by bus routes B25, B26, B38, and B52. In the section called Fulton Mall between Flatbush Avenue and Adams Street, the two-lane street is open exclusively to buses and pedestrians at all hours of the day. Between Flatbush Avenue and Ft. Greene Place, the street expands to include general traffic, but there is a bus lane in each direction from 7AM to 7PM on weekdays. West of Ft. Greene Place, bus lanes continue but the time restrictions are only for the morning peak westbound and afternoon peak times eastbound.

Fulton Mall in Downtown Brooklyn, NY



Portland Transit Mall, Portland, OR

The Portland Transit Mall is a pair of one-way streets in downtown Portland forming a north-south corridor dedicated to transit. The mall opened in 1977 with two lanes on each street dedicated to buses. Between 2007 to 2009 the mall was extended southwards and rebuilt to accommodate light rail trains. Cars are permitted in the leftmost lane, but are not permitted to turn right at most intersections so as to keep the path of transit vehicles clear. Stops are located every 4 or 5 blocks, and the mall is currently served by 17 TriMet bus routes.

Portland Transit Mall, Portland, OR



Transit Emphasis Corridors in Rhode Island

With its hub-and-spoke development pattern, Providence lends itself well to transit emphasis corridors that can provide faster, more frequent, and more reliable downtown bus service.RIPTA is now in the process of building Providence's first transit emphasis corridor, the Downtown Transit Connector (DTC), linking Providence Station to the Hospital District through Exchange, Washington, Dorrance, Dyer, and Eddy Streets. The corridor includes the following design features:

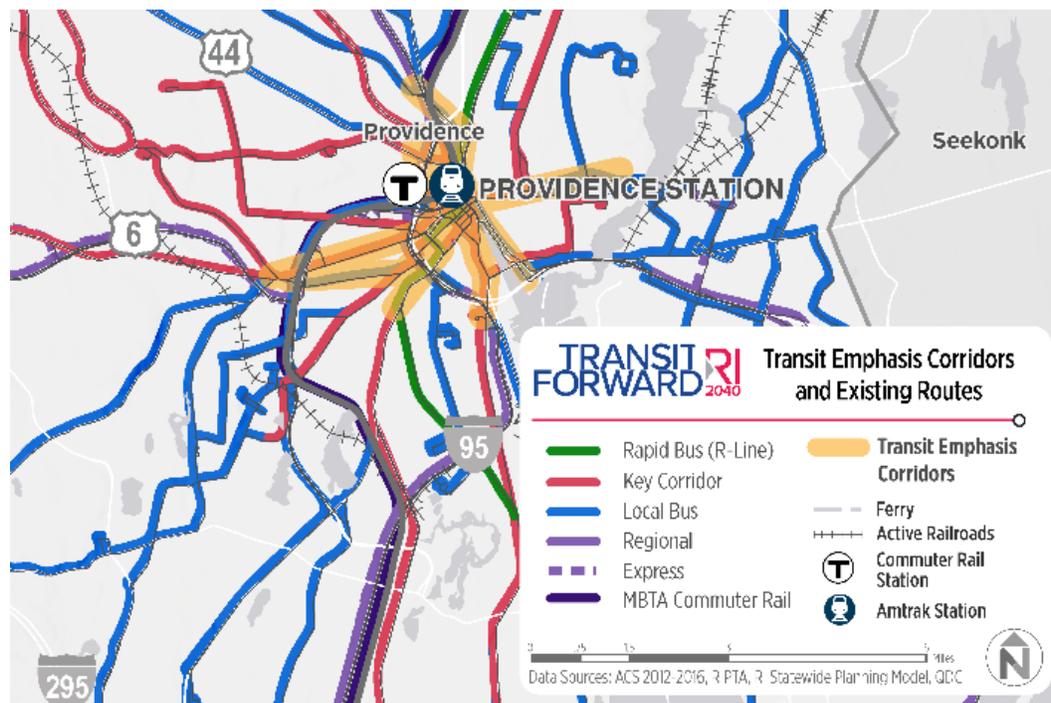
- **High-quality shelters** with seating, real-time information, lighting, and digital scheduling and wayfinding
- **Transit signal priority** through extension of green lights and special signal phases
- **Dedicated bus lane** on portions of the route

- **Bicycle infrastructure** including bike-share stations and bike lanes and signals on Exchange Street
- **Extension of existing routes** into the corridor to create super-frequent service and connections to many activity centers including six colleges and universities. The buses planned to operate in the DTC are Routes 3, 6, 50, 51, 55, 58, 62, and 72, as well as Routes 1 and 92 on sections of the DTC.
- **Corridor branding and unique shelter design** to ensure an identifiable, attractive, and consistent experience for riders.

RIPTA, RIDOT, and the City of Providence should consider putting in place additional transit emphasis corridors. The table below shows other potential streets that can be converted to Transit Emphasis Corridors, based on current bus routes that go through downtown Providence.

Corridor Location	Existing Routes Served
Charles Street	51, 55, 58, 72
South Main Street and South Water Street	35, 60, 78
Angell Street to Olneyville Square via Broadway	27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 40, 61X
Broad Street to Elmwood Avenue	6, 20, 22, R-Line
Westminster Street	17, 19
Gaspee Street and Francis Street near Providence Station	50, 56, 57

Proposed Transit Emphasis Corridors and Existing Routes



The map above shows these corridors in relation to existing RIPTA routes. Since the DTC is a north-south route, RIPTA should explore an east-west route for the next transit emphasis corridor. The route from Angell Street/Wayland Avenue to Olneyville Square is a good option, with high ridership and many amenities and destinations along the route.