



Better
Bus
Project

Making transit
better together

MBTA 2020 Rapid Response Bus Lane Program

March 13, 2024



About the Boston Region

- Boston was Founded in 1630
- Regional Population: 675,647 (2020)
- America's first Subway (1897)
- America's first Public Park (1634)
- America's first Public School (1897)
- America's first University (1636)



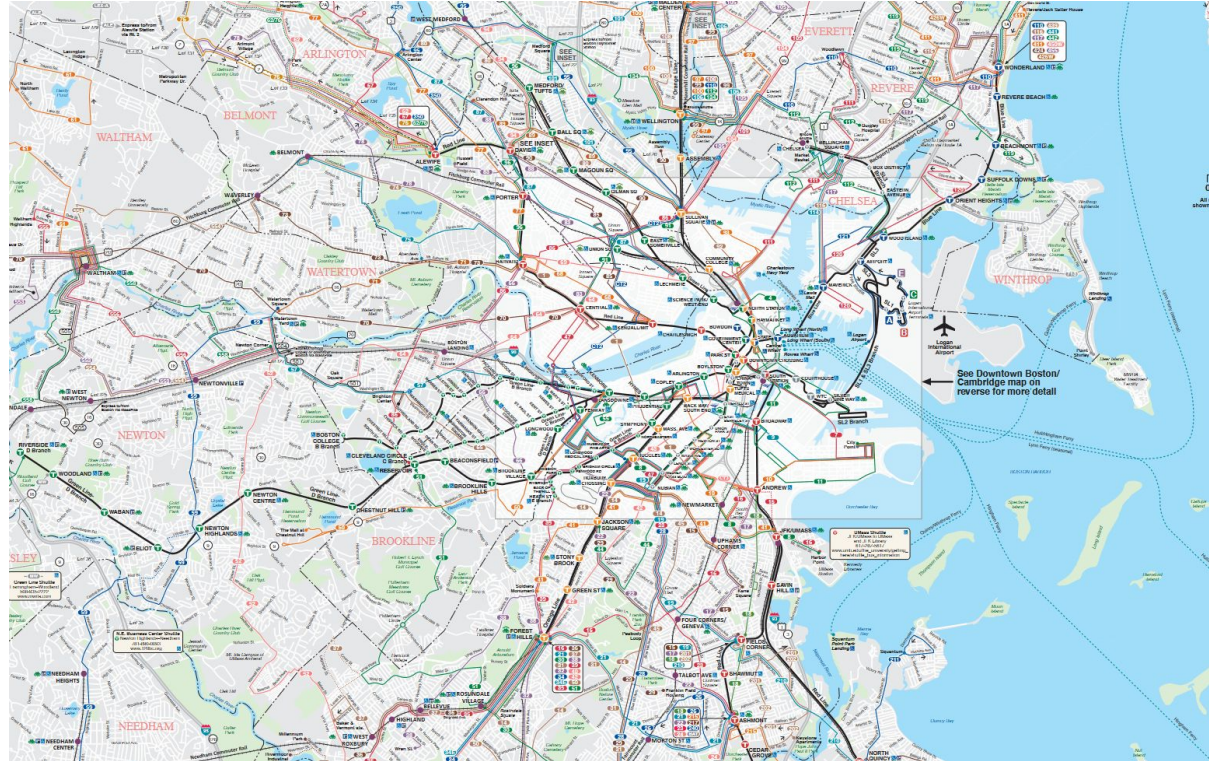
About the MBTA

- MBTA is one of the largest public transit systems in the country
- Serving nearly 200 cities and towns
- About 1 million daily riders on the subway, bus, ferry, and commuter rail.
 - 4 Subway Lines
 - 152 Bus Routes
 - 3 Ferries
 - 13 Commuter Rail Lines



About MBTA Bus Service

- 293,080 daily riders – 42% of System
(January 2024)
- 5 Bus Rapid Transit Routes
- 15 Frequent Bus Routes (15min or better)
- 7 Express Bus Routes (Highway Access)
- 125 Local & Coverage Bus Routes



Delivering bus
priority projects
is different:

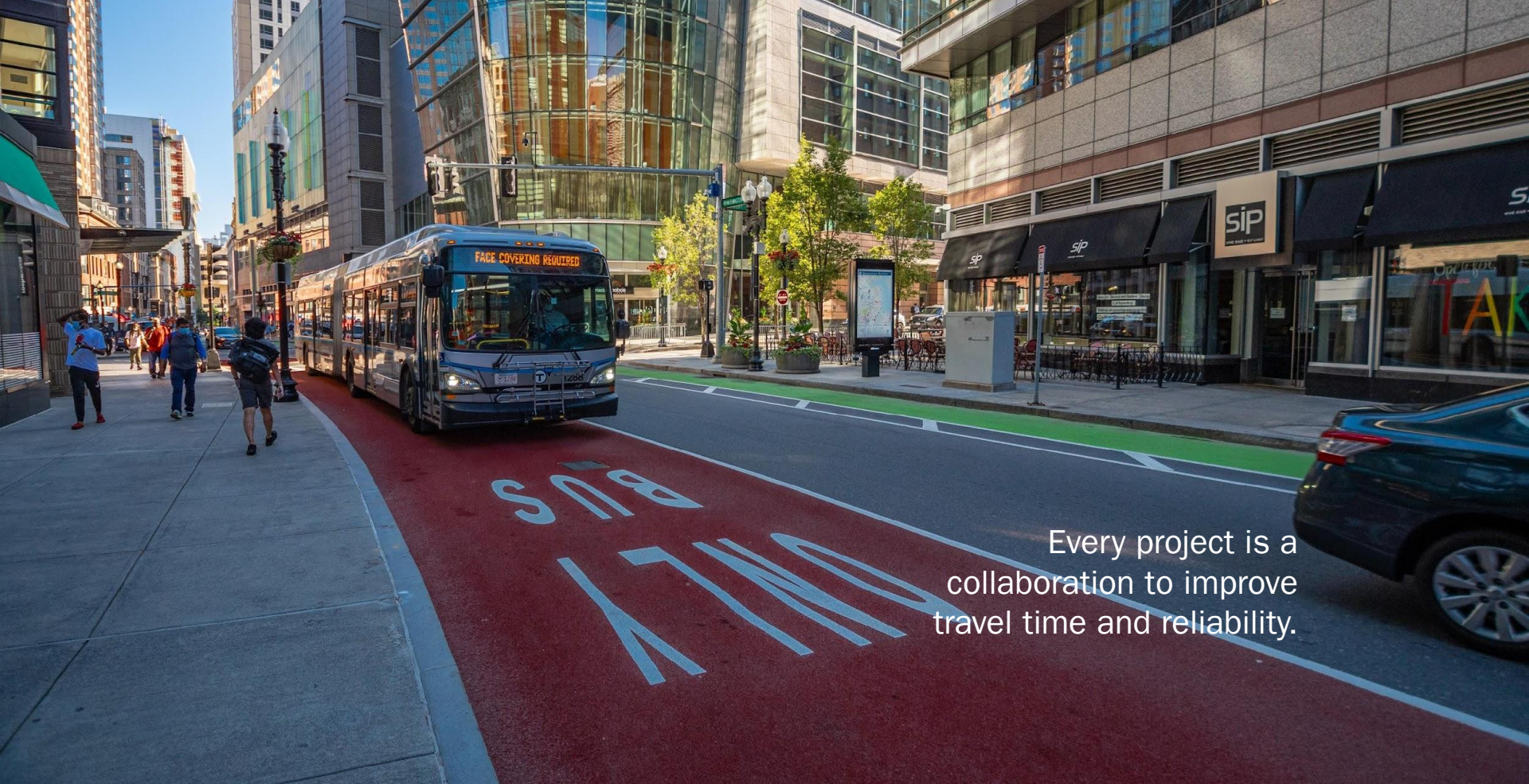


While MBTA operates the service . . .



we rely on municipality-owned signals, streets, and curbs for every trip.





Every project is a collaboration to improve travel time and reliability.

Building a Transit Priority Program

The Plan.... (2018)

Hire Staff

**Build
Toolkit**
(how-to guide)

**Identify
Where
To Build**

**Ask For
Funding**

**Engage
Public**

**Build
Bus
Priority**

Building a Transit Priority Program

2020 PANDEMIC EDITION!

The Plan.... (2018) What really happened

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Rapid Response Bus Lane (RRBL) Program

Program rationale based on public health response in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic

- 14+ new miles of bus lanes identified for implementation
- Partnering with 7+ municipalities
- Includes many firsts in MBTA service area

Focused on routes/corridors with:

- Durable ridership during pandemic
- Chronic delay pre-pandemic
- Crowding during pandemic
- High environmental justice impact

Lesson Learned for Rapid Response:

- Don't wait for perfect data when you already have good data



Collaborating with Municipalities

- **Identify corridors** that need bus priority based on chronic delay, social impact, operation needs
- **Identify opportunities** based on ongoing projects, developer mitigation, or immediate need (diversion mitigation, etc.)
- **Planning and design:** MBTA provides resources for design through on-call contracts; Municipality leads public engagement
- **MBTA or Municipality could lead on construction management;** MBTA funds bus priority elements and municipality funds other non-transit improvements
- **Developing Agreements** for each project to determine design, construction, maintenance, and operations agreements

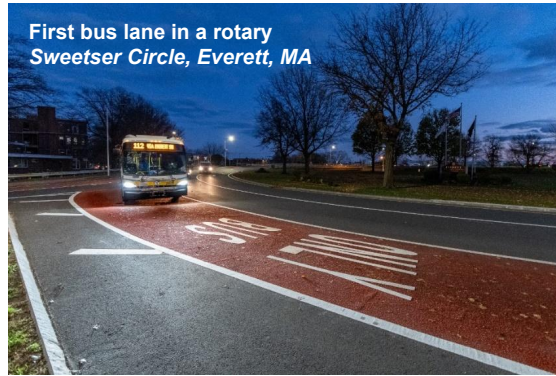


Bus Lane Paint Joint Procurement

- **Regional collective purchasing agreement** between MBTA, MassDOT, MassPort, and 13 service area municipalities that started in 2020 in response to COVID19
- **Quantity pricing** resulted in cost savings of up to 60% on bus and bike lane paint
- **Saved \$2 million** in the first year and reduces Rapid Response Bus Lane program costs by 10%
- **Ease of implementation** benefits



2020-2021 New Cities Participate and Regional Firsts



Florence St, Malden, MA



N Common St, Lynn, MA



Broadway, Chelsea, MA



Broadway, Revere, MA

Building a Transit Priority Program

The Plan.... (2021-2024)

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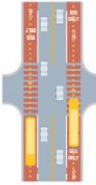


**Build
Bus
Priority**

Building a Transit Priority Program

Types of Bus Lanes

Table 7. Bus Lane Types



Type of Bus Lane and Description	Level of Investment Needed	Right of Way Needed	Level of Transit Priority
 <p>Short Bus Lane Short, dedicated transit lanes that exist only on the approach to an intersection</p>	<p>Low: Requires clearly marked lane decals and signage to communicate dedicated transit use</p>	<p>Low: Can be lengthened or reconfigured in any lane to meet needs of a given corridor</p>	<p>Low: Used for spot improvements to allow buses to bypass traffic at specific intersections, with less impact than a full bus lane</p>
 <p>Part-time Bus Lane Repurposes general purpose traffic or parking lanes for dedicated bus operations part-time</p>	<p>Low: Requires extra signage and may require new lane markings if existing parking lane is too narrow</p>	<p>Low: Converts general-purpose traffic or parking lanes, typically during peak periods</p>	<p>Low: Allows buses to stop in-lane and bypass congestion during the most congested periods of the day, but illegal parking and loading can cause delays.</p>
 <p>Curbside Bus Lane Repurposes general-purpose traffic or parking lanes along the curb for dedicated bus operations</p>	<p>Low: Requires minimal signage, may require new lane markings if existing lane is too narrow</p>	<p>Low: Converts existing curbside lane, either parking or travel lane</p>	<p>Medium: In-lane stops provide additional speed and reliability benefits. Parking lane conversion makes illegal parking and loading possible.</p>
 <p>Bus-bike Lane A shared lane for both buses and people cycling</p>	<p>Low: Requires minimal additional lane markings, like sharrows, or a dashed bike lane</p>	<p>Low: Can be implemented with most types of bus lane configurations</p>	<p>Medium: Improves speed and reliability, but not suitable for corridors with high transit or bike volumes, or fast traffic/ buses</p>
 <p>Parking Offset Bus Lane Repurposes a lane of traffic for dedicated bus operations, while preserving on-street parking and loading at the curb</p>	<p>Medium: Requires new lane markings and in-lane stops would require bus bulbs</p>	<p>Medium: Requires ROW for general-purpose traffic, parking, and dedicated bus lane</p>	<p>Medium: In-lane stops provide additional speed and reliability benefits, but illegal use of the lane can cause delays</p>
 <p>Bus-on-shoulder Authorizes buses to use the shoulder of an interstate highway or other routes when there is heavy congestion</p>	<p>Low: Requires extra signage and may require relocating or enhancing existing highway elements for safe bus operations; narrow shoulders would require widening</p>	<p>Low: Converts existing shoulder with minor changes to lane markings</p>	<p>Medium: Improves bus speeds and reliability through congested highway segments and state routes</p>

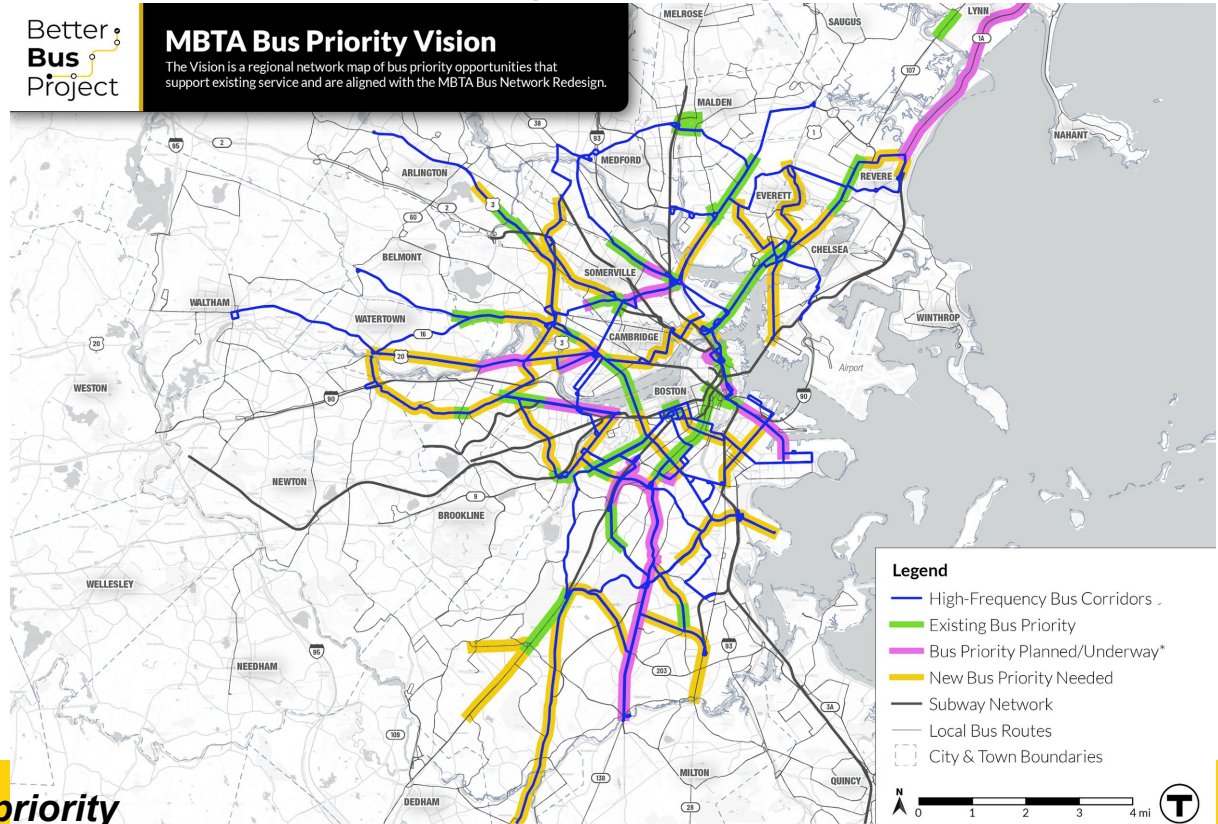
Building a Transit Priority Program

Better
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MBTA Bus Priority Vision

The Vision is a regional network map of bus priority opportunities that support existing service and are aligned with the MBTA Bus Network Redesign.

Identify
Where
To Build



Building a Transit Priority Program



**Ask For
Funding**

Sources:

- Agency Funding
- Municipal Funding
- State Funding
- Federal Funding
- Developer

Funding Mechanisms:

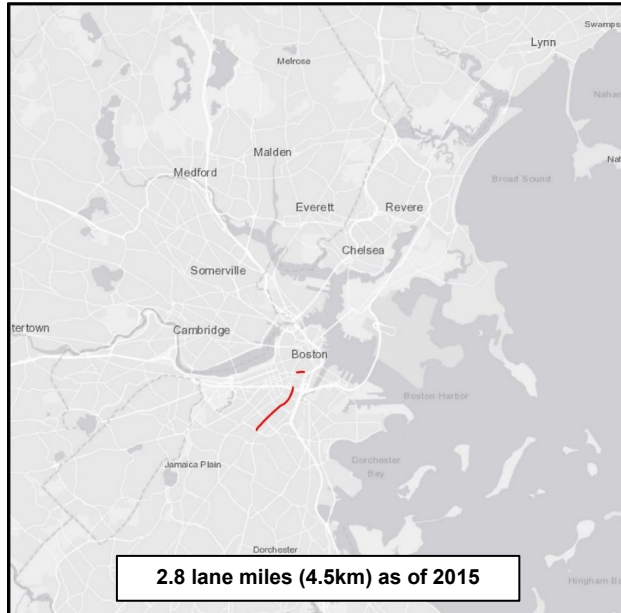
- Grants
- Capital Budgets
- Mitigation
- Coupling with other projects

Building a Transit Priority Program

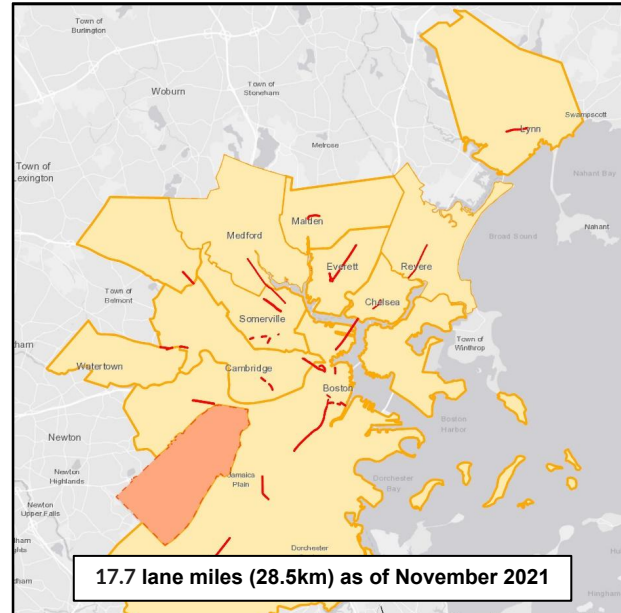
Engage Public



How far have we gone since the Pandemic

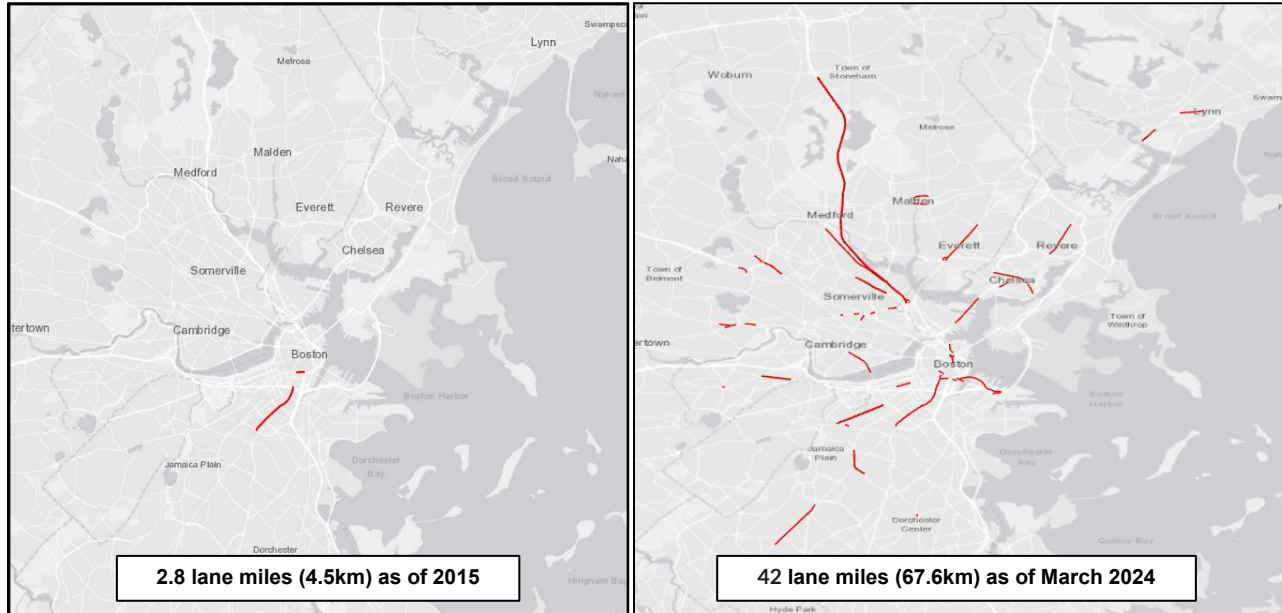


Bus lanes constructed as of 2015



Bus lanes completed as of November 2021

How far have we gone since the Pandemic



Bus lanes constructed as of 2015

Bus lanes completed as of March 2024



Municipal Collaborations: Bus Lanes Planned for 2024

***Subject to change as necessary*



Thank you!

Wes Edwards (he, him, his)

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