



# I-90 ALLSTON MULTIMODAL PROJECT

## Board of Directors Update

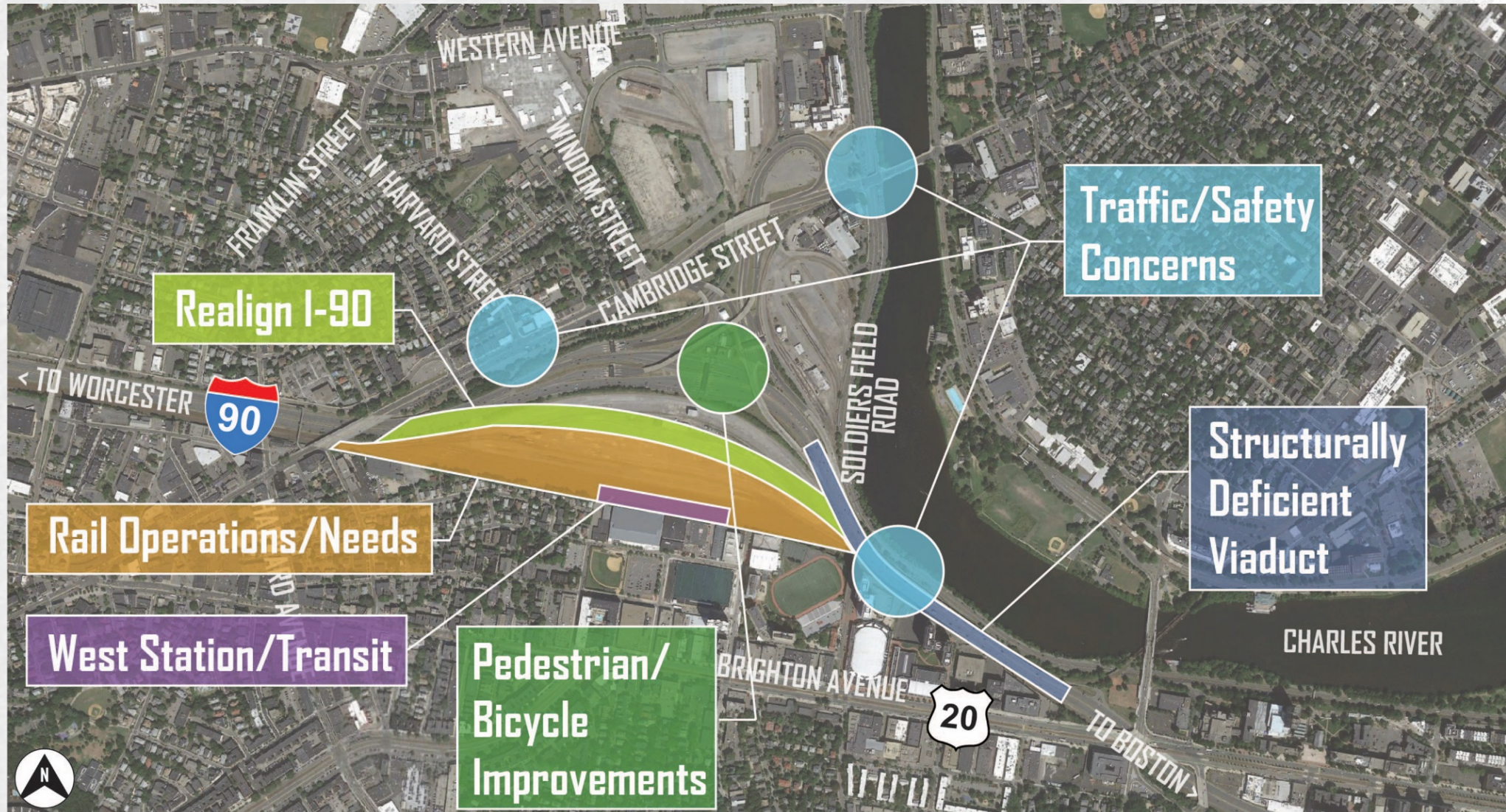
August 24, 2020

# Today's Agenda

- **Project Overview: Current Status**
- **Review of Scoping Summary Report**
  - Overview of Scoping Summary Report
  - Project Purpose and Need
  - Frequently Received Comments on the Scoping Report
  - Alternatives Carried Forward (No Build and Build Options)
  - Next Steps and Project Schedule
- **Questions and Discussion**



# What the Allston Multimodal Project Addresses



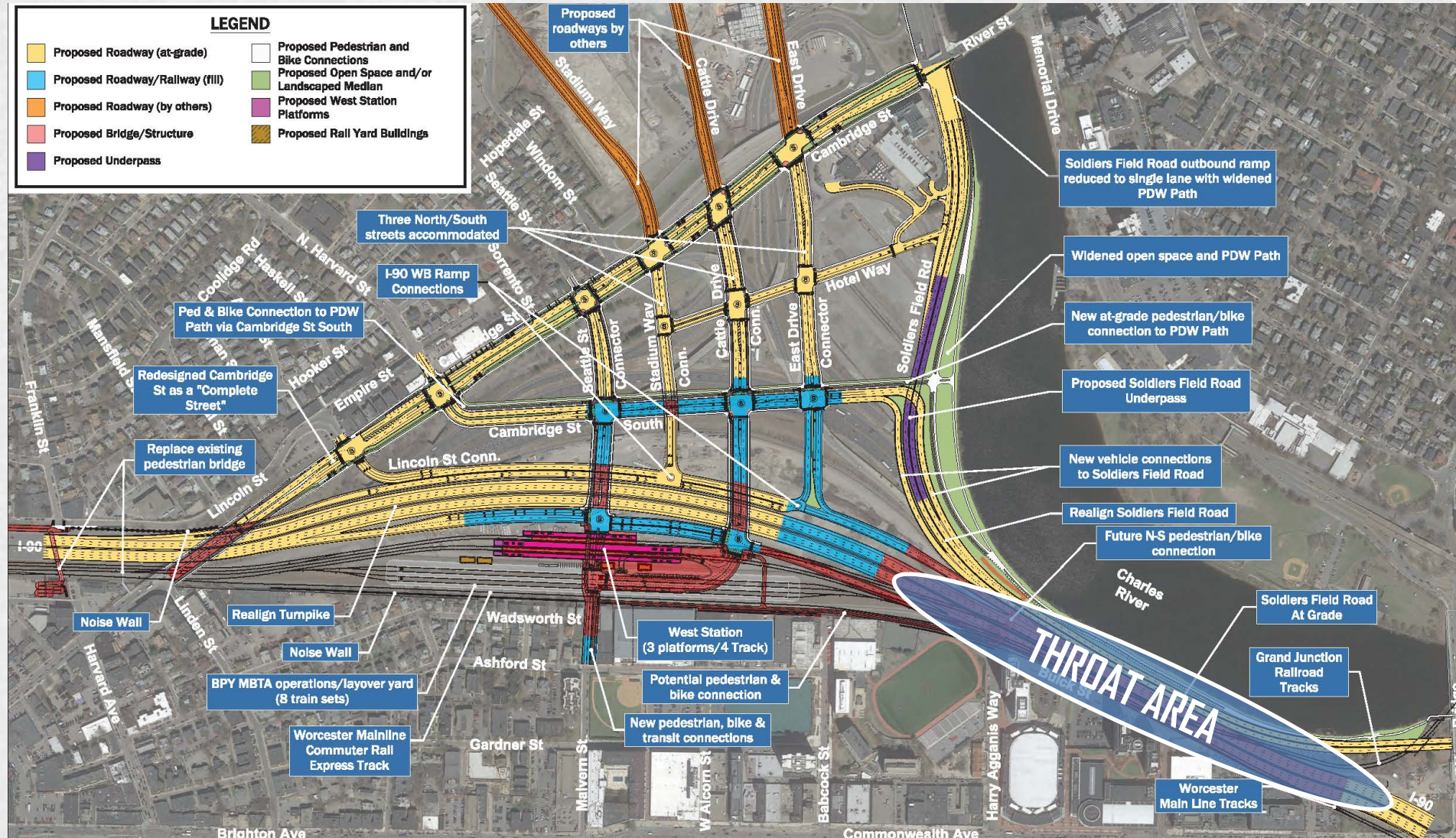


# Overview of the Allston Multimodal Project

- All “Build” alternatives carried forward in the Scoping Summary Report are multimodal and make transformative changes to the portion of the project on the former Beacon Park Yards. The three Build options all include:
  - A new interchange and associated street grid;
  - A four-track, three-platform commuter rail station (West Station) that supports current and future Worcester Line service and future Grand Junction and bus service;
  - Improved bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Charles River; and
  - An improved Paul Dudley White path with separate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Outside the “throat” the project is well-defined and ready for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to address environmental and traffic impacts, mitigation plans and other issues



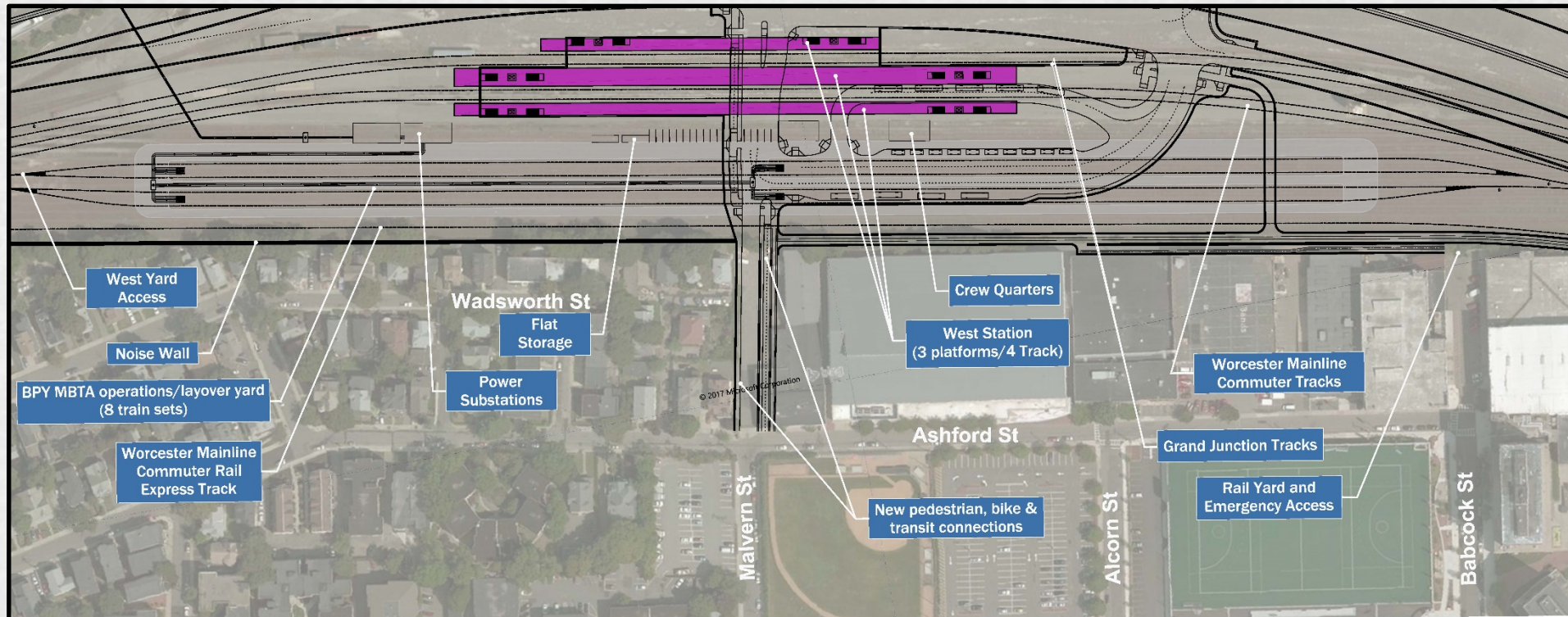
# Outside the "Throat" the Project is Well Defined: Re-alignment Alternative "3L"





# All Options Now Include a Modified West Station

- Modified for 4 track & 3 platform operation
- Includes express track to the south to accommodate more express trains in future
- Allows for future two-track urban rail service to Cambridge



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# Overview of Scoping Summary Report

- **Purpose**
  - Summarizes scoping process undertaken for the Project
  - Responds to comments received on the Scoping Report
  - Declares what alternatives will move forward to the DEIS
- **Scoping Summary Report posted on MassDOT's website Friday August 7**
- **The Scoping Summary Report makes the following changes to the project as described in the November 2019 Scoping Report**
  - Defines the "No Build" option as a major rehabilitation of the viaduct instead of perpetual maintenance
  - Proposes three "Build" alternatives for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) instead of just the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid



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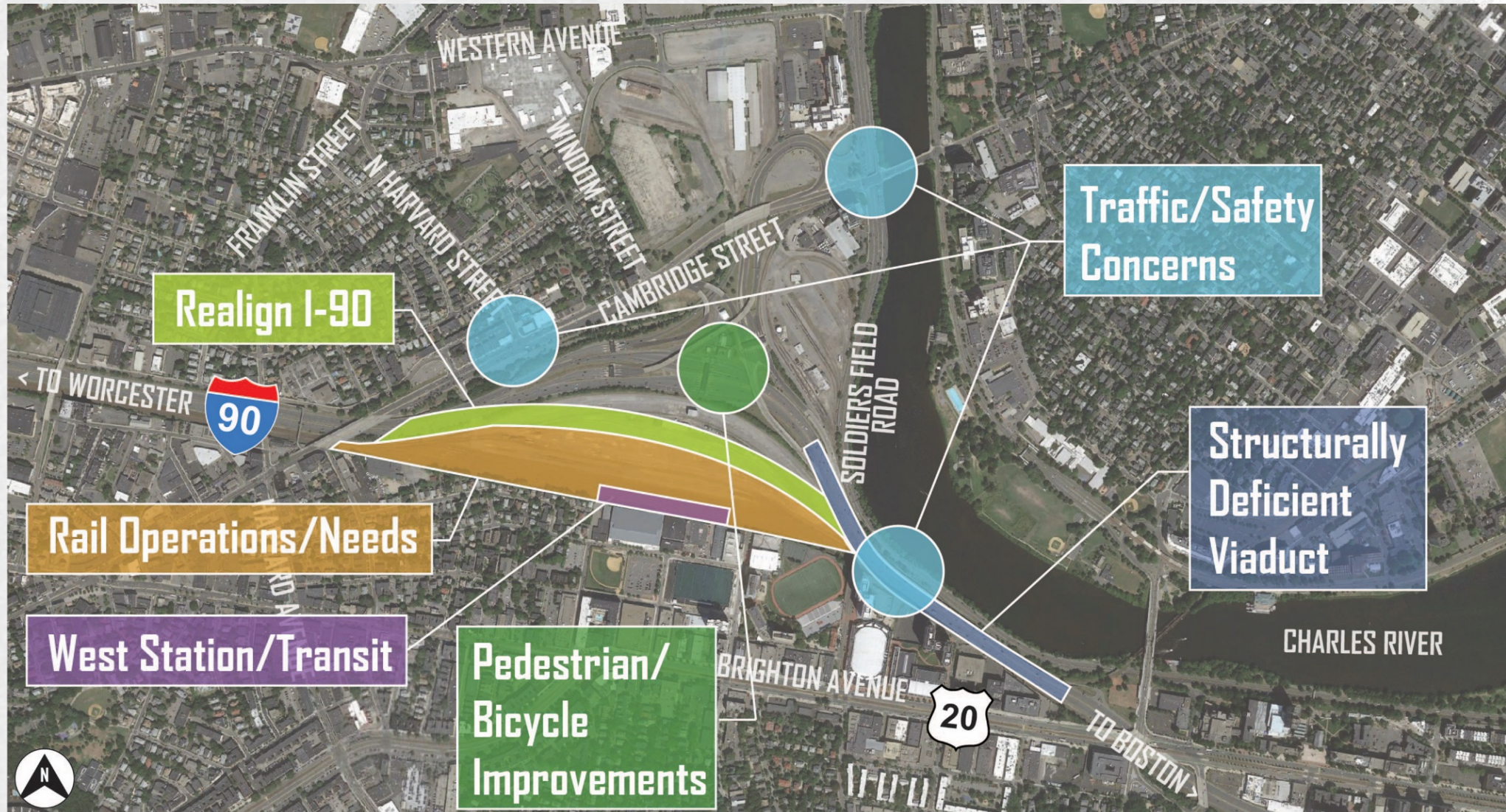
# Project Purpose - No change from Nov. 2019 Scoping Report



- **Address Roadway Deficiencies**
  - Replace structurally deficient viaduct and reconfigure the I-90 Interchange
- **Address Safety Issues**
  - Reconfigure the I-90 Interchange, including the viaduct
- **Provide Rail Improvements**
  - Reconfigure transit and commuter rail facilities
  - Construction of new West Station and infrastructure supporting mid-day commuter rail layover
- **Improve Mobility and Transportation Access**
  - Provide or allow for connections from Allston, Brighton, Brookline, and BU neighborhoods to the Charles River Reservation
  - Land use planning opportunities facilitated by a multimodal network of streets, paths, rail and transit facilities with Project Area
  - West Station designed to accommodate future rail connection to North Station via Kendall Sq.



# Project Need Components – No change from Nov. 2019 Scoping Report





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# Major Themes of Public Comments on the Scoping Report

- Overwhelming public comment in opposition to temporary Soldiers Field Road/Paul Dudley White Path “trestle” located in the Charles River
- Many comments addressed these themes
  - Impacts to the Charles River
  - Requested expansions to the Scope of the Allston Multimodal Project
  - Transit issues
  - Need for mitigation plans for traffic and environmental impacts
  - Alternatives



# Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Charles River



- Over 400 comment letters expressed concerns about temporary and/or permanent impacts to the Charles River
- The Charles River in Allston is a tremendous asset that should be restored, enhanced and made accessible. Impacts to the river should be avoided or minimized whenever possible and then mitigation measures must be developed to ensure the least overall harm and most overall benefit to this important regional resource.
- As we move through the NEPA process, one of MassDOT's guiding principles will be to avoid and minimize long term or permanent impact to the Charles River; indeed, to avoid all impacts if possible. MassDOT believes that any permanent impact or encroachment into the river is inappropriate if there is an alternative that meets the project's purpose and need and avoids or further minimizes such impact.
- We are also fully committed to ensuring that the selected alternative ensures the treatment of all runoff to safeguard this vital resource. Once we get to concurrence on a preferred alternative, we can begin discussions around the appropriate mitigation for the river.



# Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Scope

- Support for including reconstruction of the Grand Junction Bridge as part of the project
  - MassDOT will not expand the project to include the Grand Junction Bridge; that is a separate project, with its own set of complicated issues, that must go through its own planning and funding process.
- Support for including the construction of the Cambridge Street Bypass Road as part of the project
  - While the construction of the Cambridge Street Bypass Road may have some ancillary benefits for the project, its primary purpose is to provide access for future air rights development. As such the Allston Multimodal Project will be constructed so as not to preclude the construction of the Cambridge Street Bypass Road by others.
- Support for including the enhancement of the Charles River as part of the project's purpose and need
  - MassDOT is committed to mitigating project impacts including considering restoration of the Charles River bank, but it is not part of the purpose and need of the underlying transportation project.



# Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Transit



- **General lack of support for mid-day layover and questions about its need**
  - Mid-day layover is an ongoing need of the MBTA and the limited layover provided at Allston is an integral part of solving that need. It is also consistent with existing easement rights.
- **Support for a 4-track station and 15-minute inbound and outbound service on WML and accelerated construction of West Station**
  - All build alternatives include a four-track, three-platform station to accommodate potential future rail service to North Station via Kendall. The project will no longer be constructed in three phases and West Station will now be constructed as part of the overall project.
- **Support for maintaining two tracks on the Worcester Line during construction**
  - Detailed construction planning is underway with the goal of preserving two track service during construction as much as practically feasible. However, the design-builder may be required to reduce mainline service to a single track generally limited to the area between Boston Landing and Commonwealth Avenue.



# Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Mitigation



- Support for the development of a mitigation plan to address environmental impacts of the project
  - The DEIS will document the environmental impacts of each alternative and, once a preferred alternative is selected, MassDOT will work with the public and the affected resource agencies to develop a mitigation plan to address those impacts. We will also consider the magnitude of the environmental impacts as an input in our decision about which alternative to select as the preferred.
- Support for the development of a mitigation plan to address traffic impacts during construction
  - MassDOT realizes that whatever alternative is selected, it will be important to provide mitigation measures to manage the commute during construction. Working with the public, we will develop a mitigation plan during the environmental process to manage traffic disruption. We will also consider the magnitude of such disruption as an input to our decision about which alternative to select as the preferred.



# Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Alternatives



- Criticism of the SFR Hybrid as the preferred option, particularly centered around its impacts to the Charles River and its difficult and lengthy construction
  - MassDOT proposed the SFR Hybrid as its preferred alternative in the November 2019 Scoping Report because we believed it to be a consensus opinion. We now know that not to be the case and we will carry three build options forward into the DEIS. We have heard and agree with the concerns expressed about the alternative.
- Support for an At-Grade Throat Area Option to be further analyzed in the DEIS
  - While MassDOT remains concerned that an all at-grade Throat Area Option will cause avoidable, permanent impacts to the Charles River, a Modified At-Grade Throat Option will be carried forward to the DEIS and MassDOT will continue to work with stakeholders to modify and improve the at-grade option to ensure that the best version of that option that meets the project's Purpose and Need will be compared to the other options this fall before a preferred alternative is selected. Specifically, FHWA has agreed that A Better City's at-grade option is not, for NEPA purposes, at fourth alternative but elements of the modified at grade are best considered a variant of the at-grade alternative presented in the SSR.



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# Summary of Actions Taken on Scoping Report Alternatives

Table 1. Summary of Alternative Actions

Alternative	Option	Scoping Report Suggestion	Final Scoping Summary Action	Reasoning
No Build	N/A	Suggested to be carried forward into DEIS	Updated to include Major Preservation of the I-90 viaduct. Carried forward into DEIS	Required by NEPA 40 CFR §1502.14(d)
Major Rehabilitation & Replacement	N/A	Suggested for dismissal from further evaluation	Dismissed from further evaluation	Does not meet Purpose & Need
3L Re-Alignment	Highway Viaduct Throat Area Option	Suggested for dismissal from further evaluation	Design updated and re-named <b>Modified Highway Viaduct</b> , Carried forward into DEIS	Determined to be reasonable: Meets Purpose & Need and Screening Criteria
	At-Grade Throat Area Option	Suggested for dismissal from further evaluation	Design updated and re-named <b>Modified At-Grade</b> , Carried forward into DEIS	Determined to be reasonable: Meets Purpose & Need and Screening Criteria
	SFR Hybrid Throat Area Option	Suggested to be carried forward into DEIS	Carried forward into DEIS	Determined to be reasonable: Meets Purpose & Need and Screening Criteria
	DEIR West Station & Rail Layout Option	Suggested for dismissal from further evaluation	Dismissed from further evaluation	Does not meet Purpose & Need
	The Flip West Station & Rail Layout Option	Suggested for dismissal from further evaluation	Dismissed from further evaluation	Does not meet Rail Operations Screening Criterion
	The Modified Flip West Station & Rail Layout Option	Suggested to be carried forward into DEIS	Design updated, Carried forward into DEIS	Determined to be reasonable: Meets Purpose & Need and Screening Criteria



# No Build Option is NOT a variant on the Multimodal Project

- The No Build option in the Scoping Summary Report is what would be built if the Multimodal Project does not proceed
  - By definition a “no build” option does not meet the project’s Purpose and Need but is built instead of the project under NEPA review
- The No Build option involves a major preservation of the existing viaduct, including replacement of the bridge deck, deck joints and bridge railings and repair of the substructure
  - The No Build does enable the layover of 8 train sets on 4 tracks with electric plug-ins
  - No other components of the Multimodal Project (straightening of I-90, the construction of West Station, bicycle and pedestrian improvements) are included
- While MassDOT wants to see the construction of a multimodal project that unlocks all of the benefits envisioned for the area, if there is no concurrence on a preferred alternative this fall, six years after the state environmental review process was launched, MassDOT will need to consider abandoning the Allston Multimodal Project and rehabilitating the existing viaduct. MassDOT simply cannot allow a critical piece of Commonwealth infrastructure to continue to degrade with no end in sight.



# The No Build Option (Major Preservation)

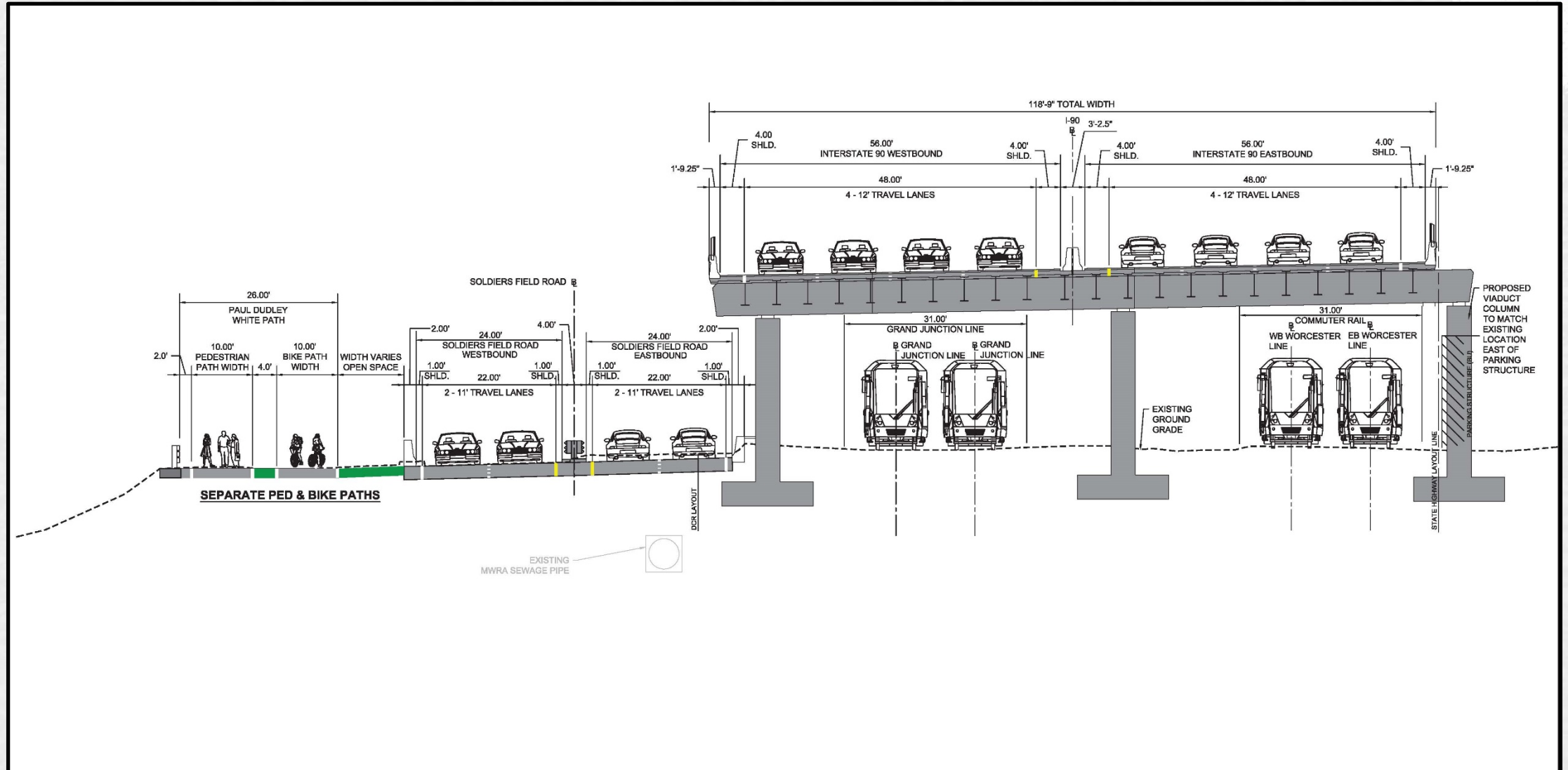




## Build Alternatives Carried Forward into the DEIS

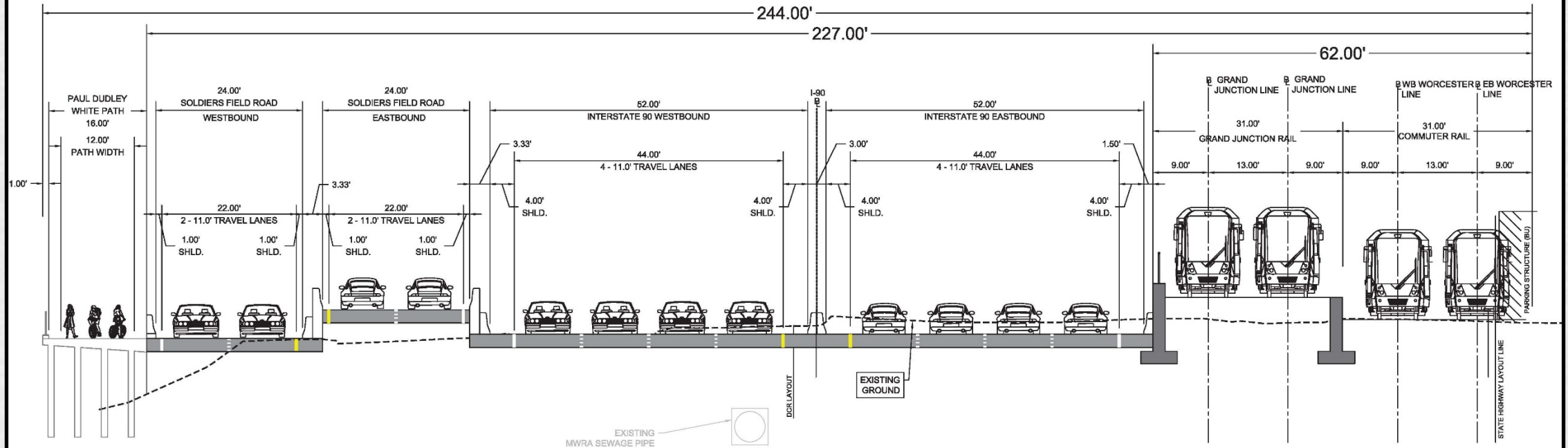
- All three “Build” alternatives are multimodal and make transformative changes to the portion of the project on the former Beacon Park Yards. The three Build options all include a new interchange and associated street grid, a four-track, three-platform commuter rail station (“West Station”); and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- The three build alternatives take different approaches to the area known as the “throat”
  - One involves a new I-90 Viaduct to carry the Turnpike, one that is further from the Charles River as compared to previously presented highway viaduct options and does not require any construction in the River either during construction or permanently.
  - Another puts Soldiers Field Road on a new viaduct and I-90 at grade, requiring construction in the Charles River but leaving no permanent infrastructure in the River.
  - The third eliminates any viaduct and put all rail tracks and roadways at- or below-grade, an alternative that requires construction in the Charles River and leaves some infrastructure in the River permanently.

# Modified Highway Viaduct – Section View

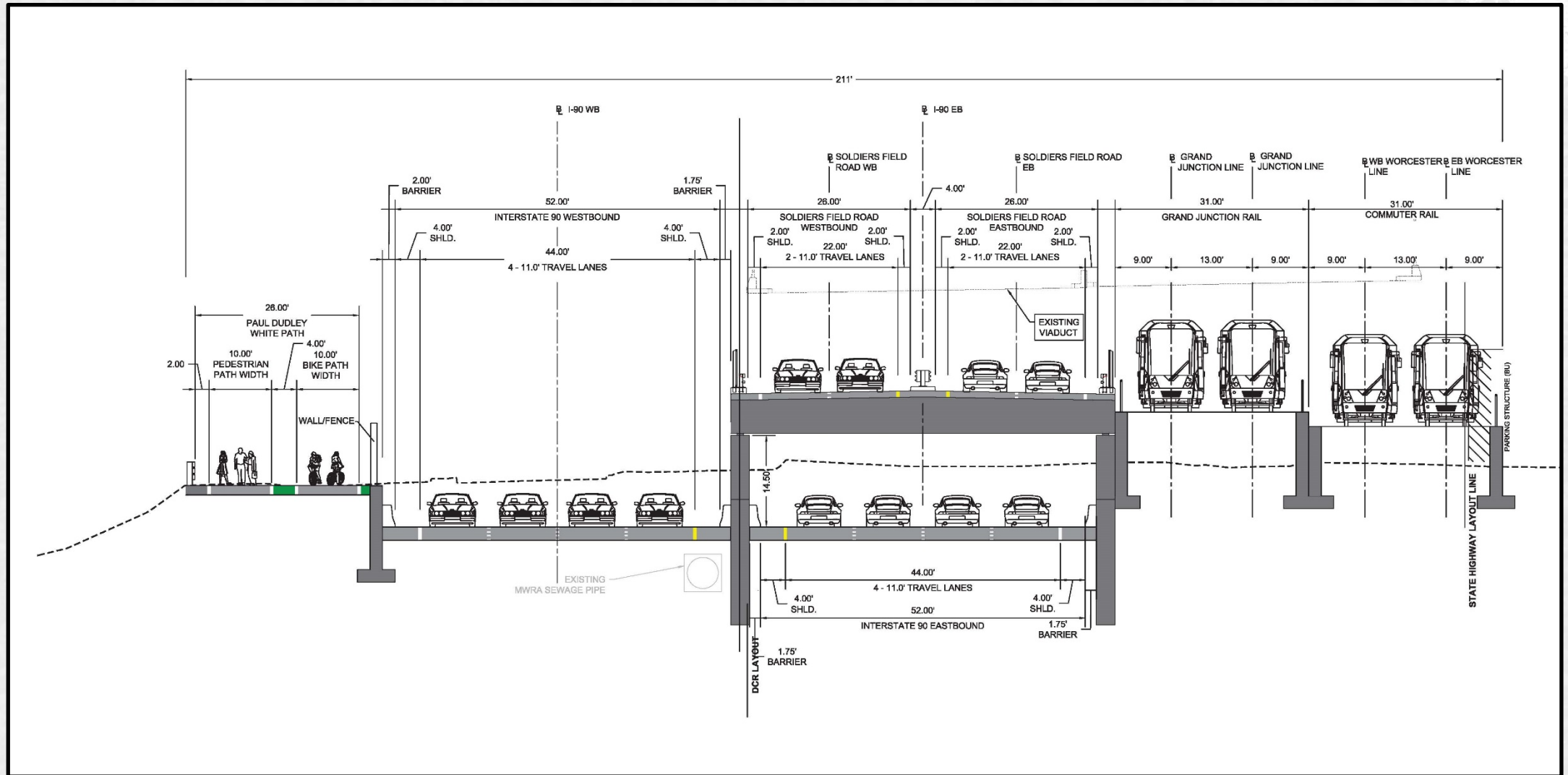




# Modified At-Grade – Section View



# SFR Hybrid (Final) – Section View





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# Concurrence process to select a Preferred Alternative

- After all state and federal concurring agencies have agreed on the alternatives carried into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, next step is concurrence on a Preferred Alternative
- Each Build alternative needs to be assessed against
  - Project purpose and need
  - Alternative selection criteria
- Additional information will be released in mid-September to allow cross-comparison of Build alternatives
  - MassDOT will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the process compares the best version of each of the Build alternatives

## Select Alternative Evaluation Criteria

1. Construction Impacts/Duration
2. Highway Operations/Maintenance
3. Mobility/Accessibility
4. Environmental Effects
5. Land Use/Economic Development
6. Costs/Life Cycle Costs



# Anticipated Review Process for Remainder of 2020



Process	June	July	August	September	October
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)			Scoping Summary Report (includes response to public comments on the Scoping Report)		Federal / State Agencies Concurrence Meeting (45 days after filing of Scoping Summary Report)
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)					Filing of Notice of Project Change to re-scope Final Environmental Impact Report (includes response to public comments on DEIR)
MassDOT Board of Directors	Board Update		Board Update on NEPA filings	Board Update on throat alternatives under consideration at concurrence meeting	Board Update on whether there is concurrence on a throat alternative and, if so, on MEPA Notice of Project Change
Task Force	Meeting to review progress		Meeting to review NEPA filings	Meeting to review throat alternatives under consideration at concurrence meeting	
Public Engagement				Additional information released and public meetings held	

## Updated Schedule

- NEPA Scoping Summary Report: **Published August 7, 2020**
- Concurrence Point #2 – SSR Carries Reasonable Range of Alternatives: **August 24, 2020**
- Cooperating Agency Information Exchange and Public Engagement on Choosing the Preferred Alternative: **September 2020**
- Concurrence Point #3 – Preferred Alternative: **October 2020**
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement: **Spring 2021**
- Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision: **Winter 2021/2022**
- Design Build Procurement: **Summer 2022**
- Design Build Contract Award: **Spring 2023**



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