ALLSTON MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

Task Force Meeting

December 11, 2025

Zoom Controls

- Drop down menu to check microphone and speakers

- Ask a question and share comments; Alt+H

- Raise your hand - *9 for users dialing in; Alt+Y

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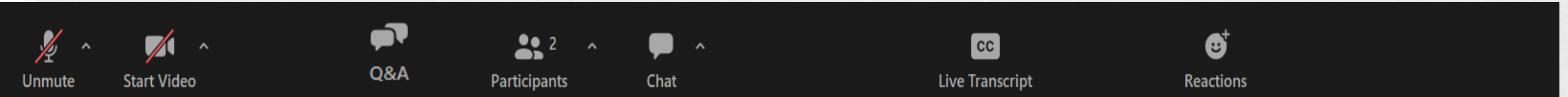

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Notification

- While this virtual public meeting is not being recorded, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation may choose to retain and distribute images, reports, and/or the Q/A transcript.
- All parts of this meeting are considered public record.
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Important notes

- Your microphone is automatically disabled upon entering the meeting.
- The meeting will be open to questions and answers at the end of the formal presentation, with opportunities to ask questions after each of the updates as well.
- Task Force members will be prioritized for questions and comments

All questions and comments are welcome and appreciated, however we do request that you refrain from any disrespectful comments.

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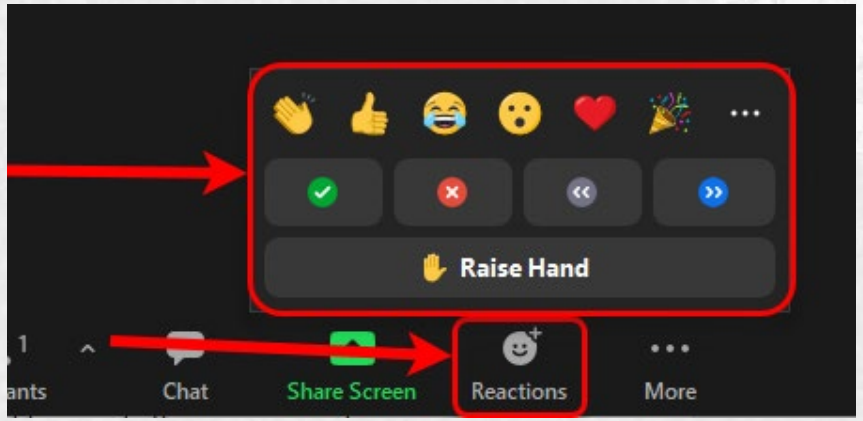
Thank you for joining our meeting. We appreciate your participation!

Share Your Questions and Comments

- Submit your questions and comments
- "Raise your hand" to be unmuted for verbal questions
- Please state your name before your question
- Please share only **1** question or comment at a time, limited to **2** minutes, to allow others to participate.
- To ask a question via phone, dial *9 and the moderator will call out the last 4-digits of your phone number and unmute your audio when it is your turn.



Please be advised that all comments are subject to disclosure for public records, therefore use these functions for project-related business only.

Today's Agenda

- **Welcome/Introductions**
- Lincoln Street Noise Barriers
- Rail Operations Analysis
- Independent Consultant RFP
- Next Steps

Today's Agenda

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- **Lincoln Street Noise Barriers**
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Lincoln St Noise Barriers Overview

- MassDOT (Mass Turnpike Authority) Type II Priority Locations 9 and 11
- Noise barriers are feasible and reasonable
- Neighborhood has voted in favor
- Barriers being evaluated by MassDOT as potential early action project

MassDOT Noise Abatement Policy

- Three Step Approach to Noise Abatement:

1. Is Noise Abatement **Warranted?**

- Are traffic noise impacts predicted?

2. Is Noise Abatement **Feasible?**

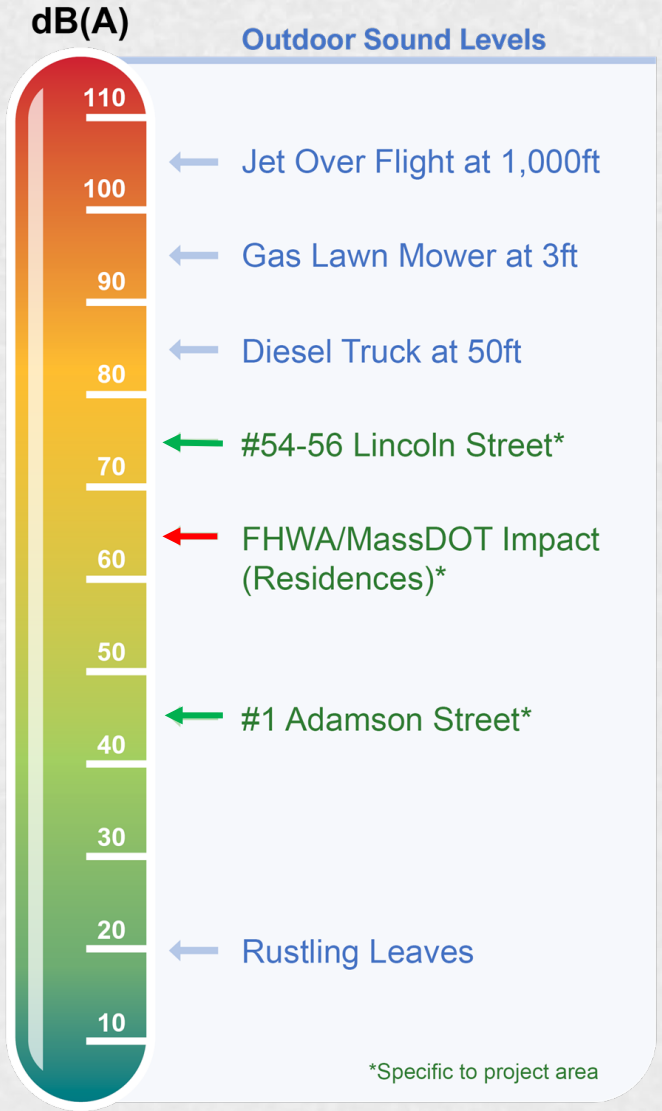
- Does it meet minimum reduction requirements and engineering feasibility?

3. Is Noise Abatement **Reasonable?**

- Does it meet design goals and cost-effectiveness criteria?
- Do the benefited receptors want the abatement?

Acoustical Study – Noise Fundamentals

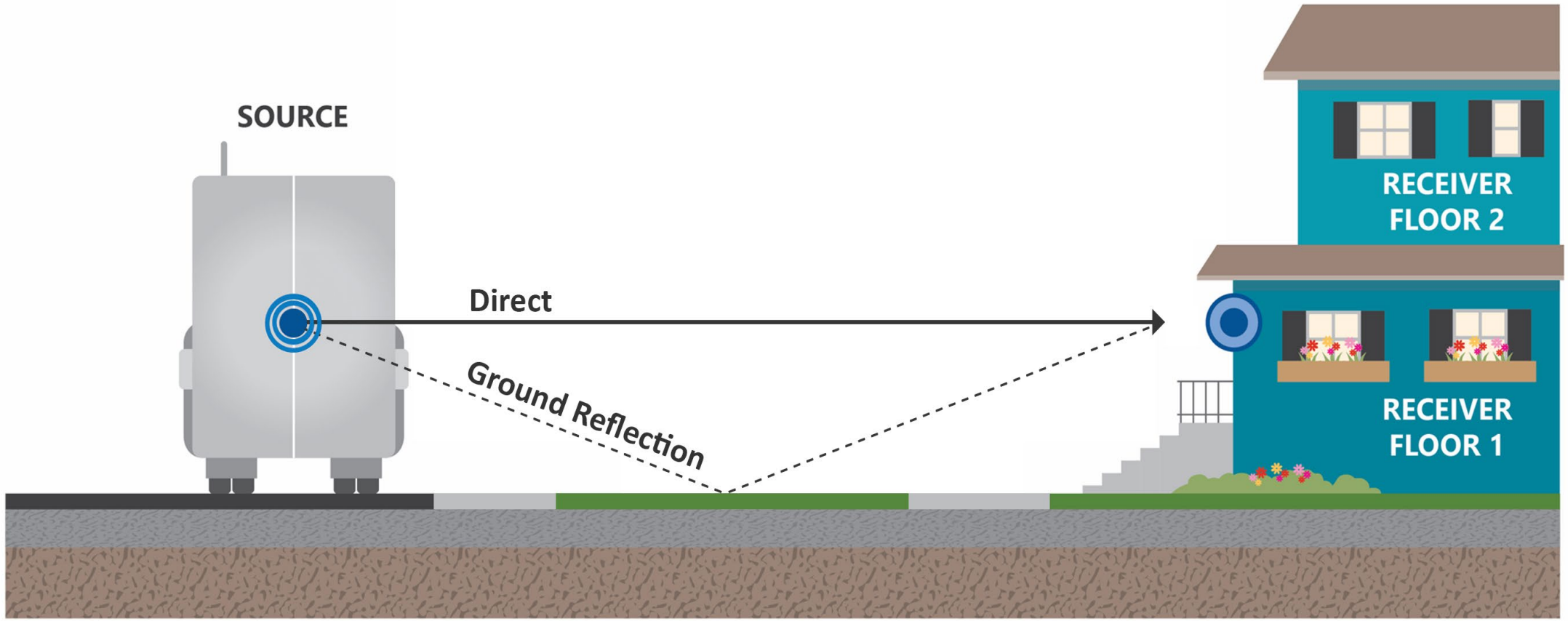
- Sound levels are described in A-weighted decibels (dBA)
- A-weighting reflects how the human ear responds to sound
- Perception of a *Change* in Sound Level
  - 1-2 decibels: Not perceptible
  - 5 decibels: Noticeable Change
  - 10 decibels: Twice or Half as Loud



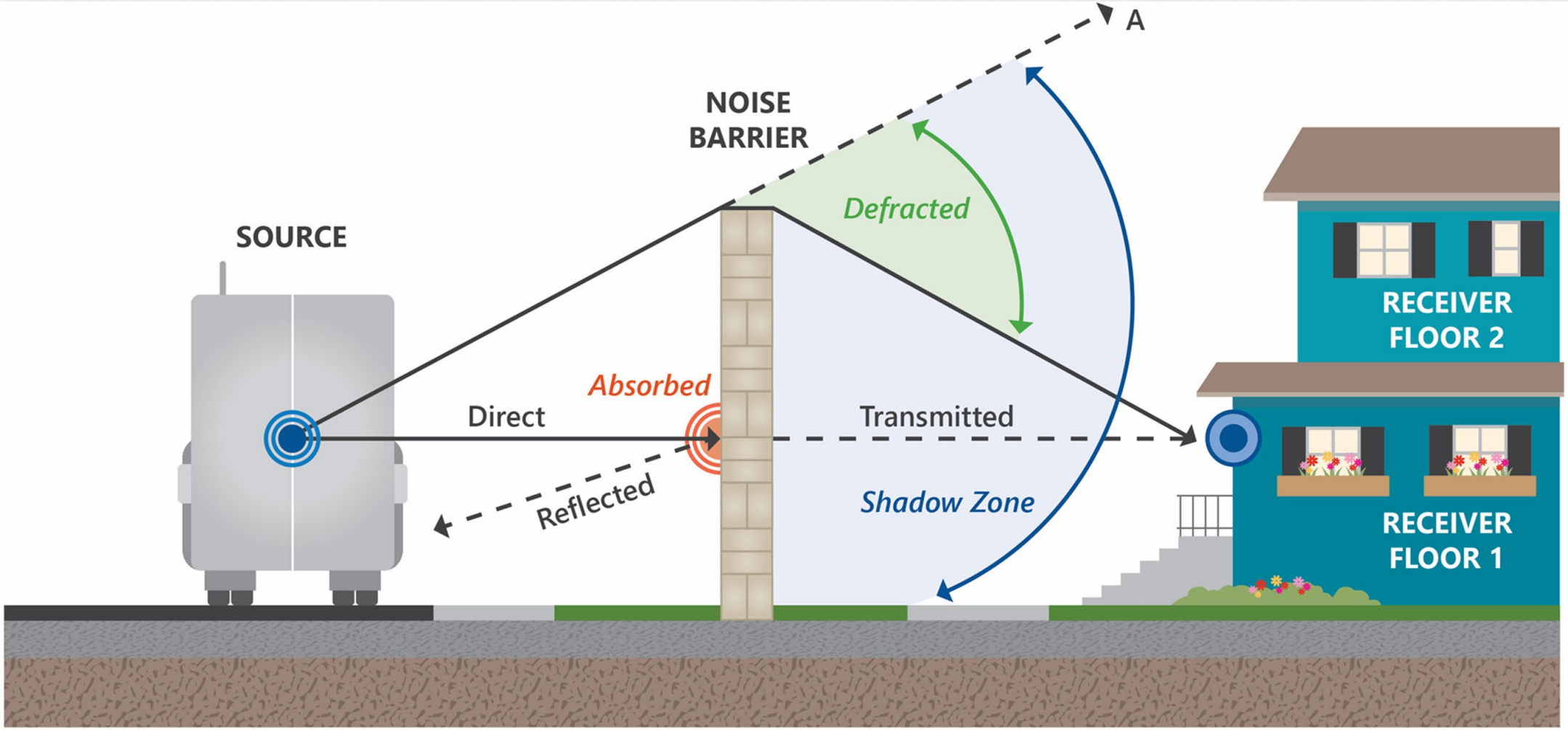
FHWA Model Inputs

- Roadway and site geometry
- Traffic volumes, vehicle mix, and speeds
- Ground type and terrain
- Buildings and structures
- Locations of noise-sensitive land use (receptors)

Acoustical Study: Basic Highway Noise Model

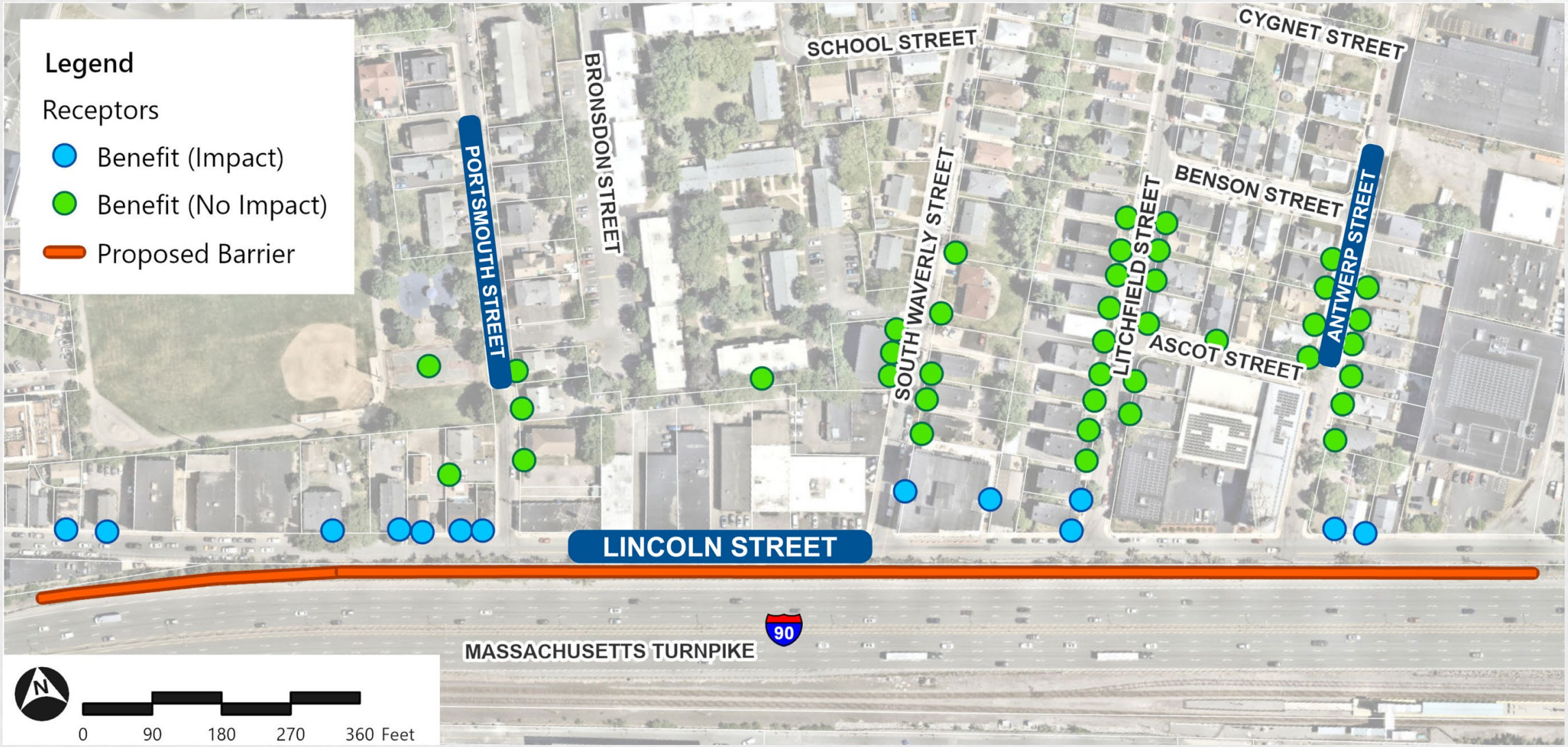


Acoustical Study: Basic Highway Noise Model w/Barrier



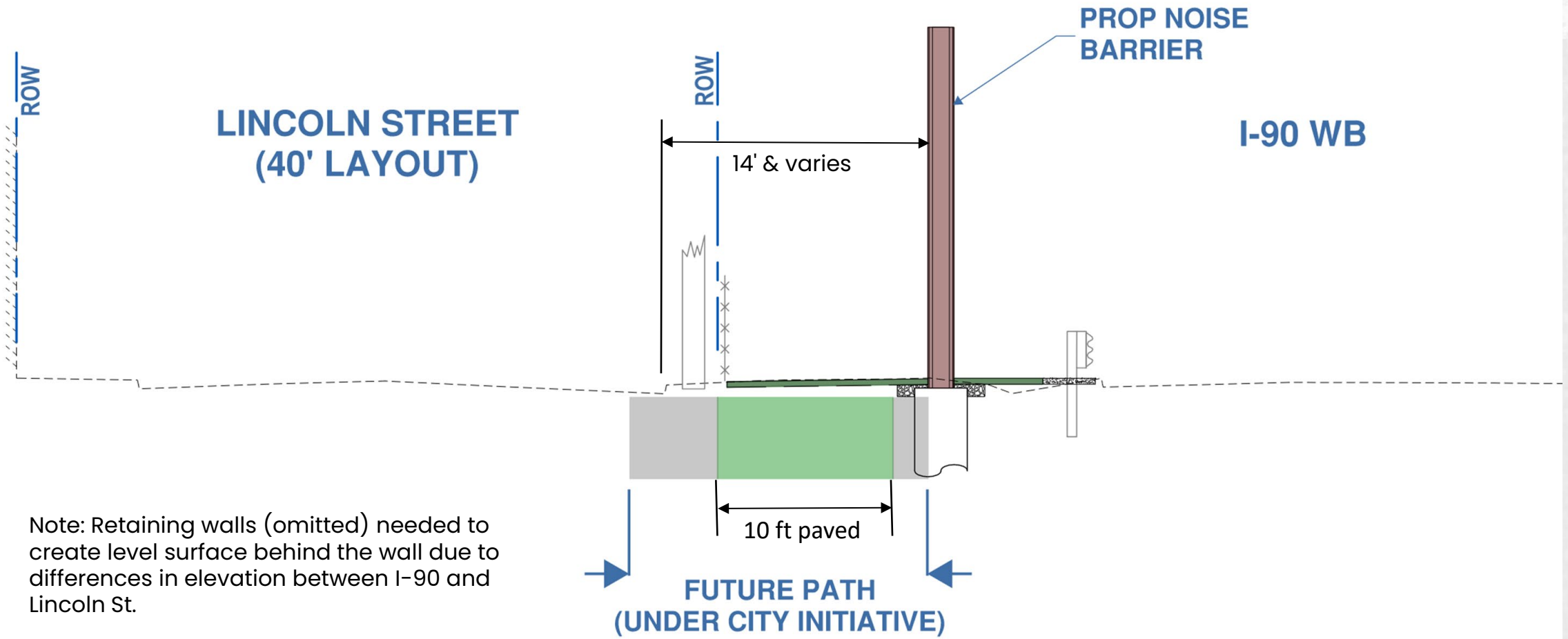
Computed Traffic Noise Levels

Noise Barrier 1 with Acoustical Benefits



Noise Barrier 2 with Acoustical Benefits

Generalized Cross Section

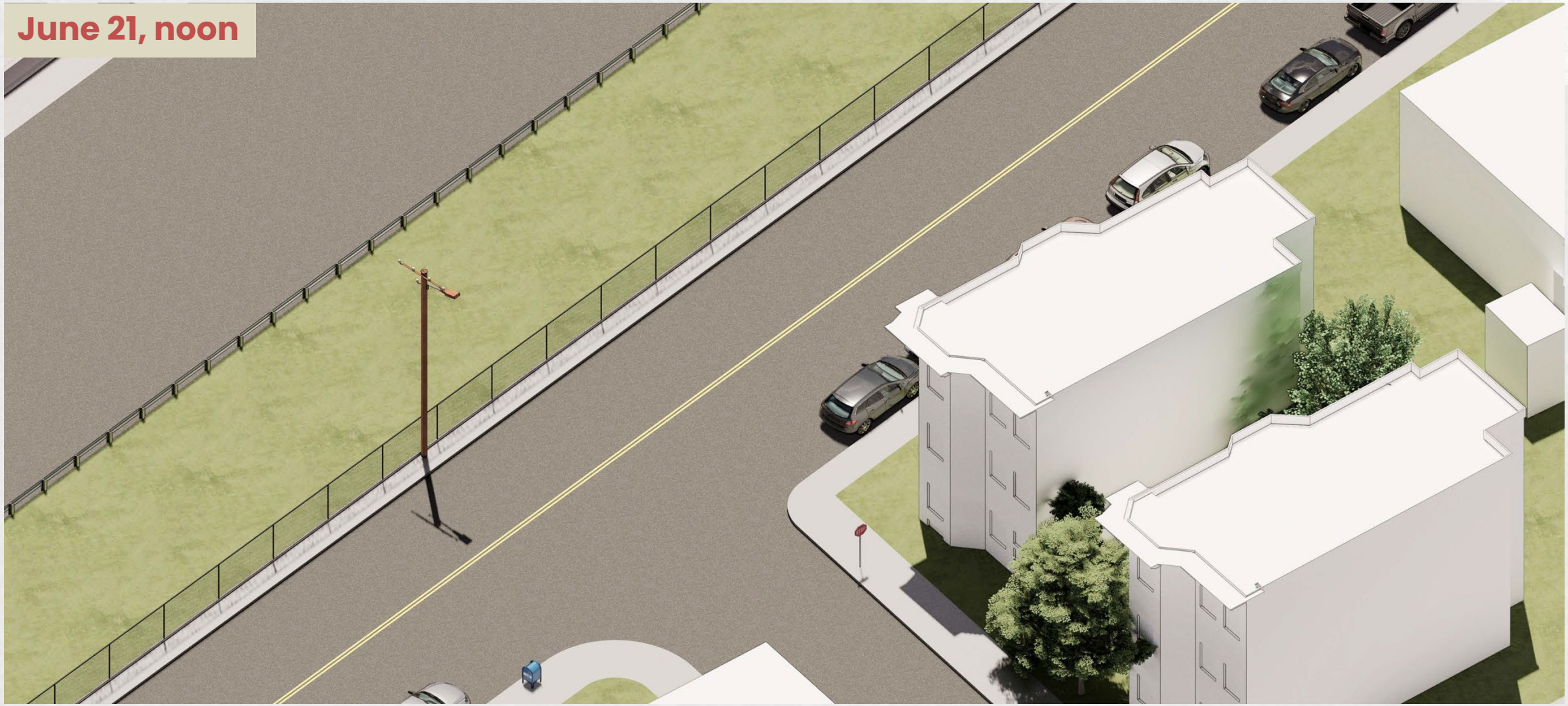


Note: Retaining walls (omitted) needed to create level surface behind the wall due to differences in elevation between I-90 and Lincoln St.

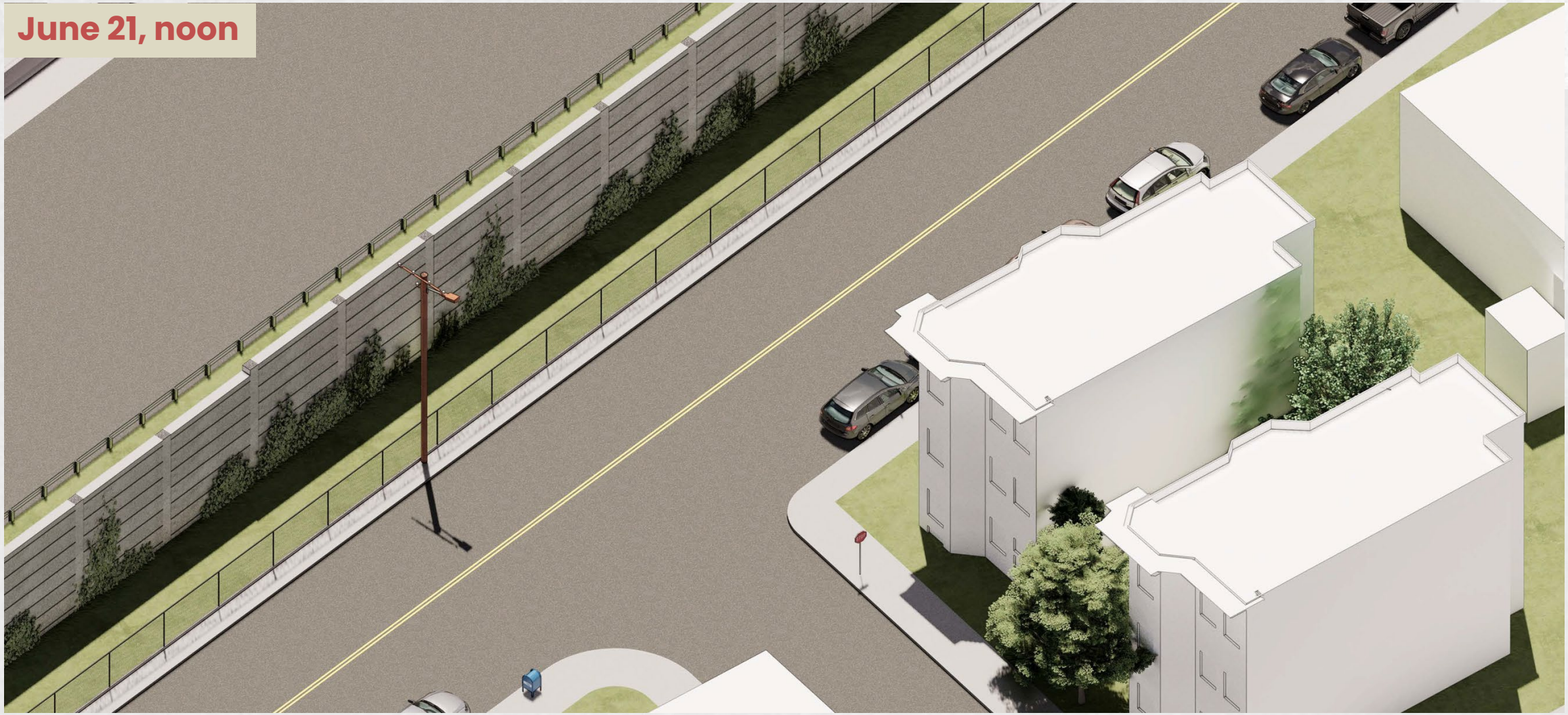
Shadow Study – Perspective Lincoln St @ Litchfield St

Shadow Study – Lincoln St @ Litchfield St w/Barrier

Oblique Lincoln St @ Litchfield St – No Barrier



Oblique Lincoln St @ Litchfield St – w/Barrier



Interface at Brick Wall

Gray-Fluted Concrete Option

Light Ashlar Block Option

Dark Brown Block Option

Next Steps

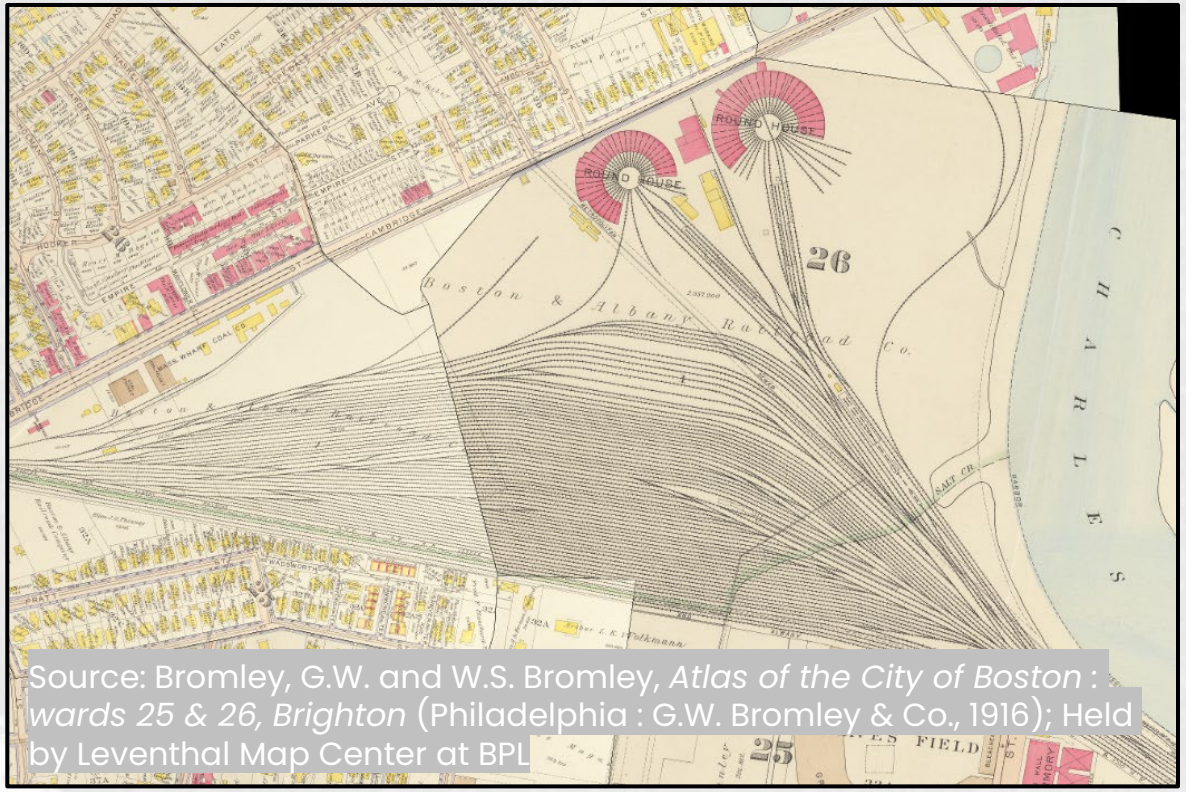
- Engage community on aesthetic design elements
- Utility coordination
- Finalize design package

Today's Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Lincoln Street Noise Barriers
- **Rail Operations Analysis**
- Independent Consultant RFP
- Next Steps

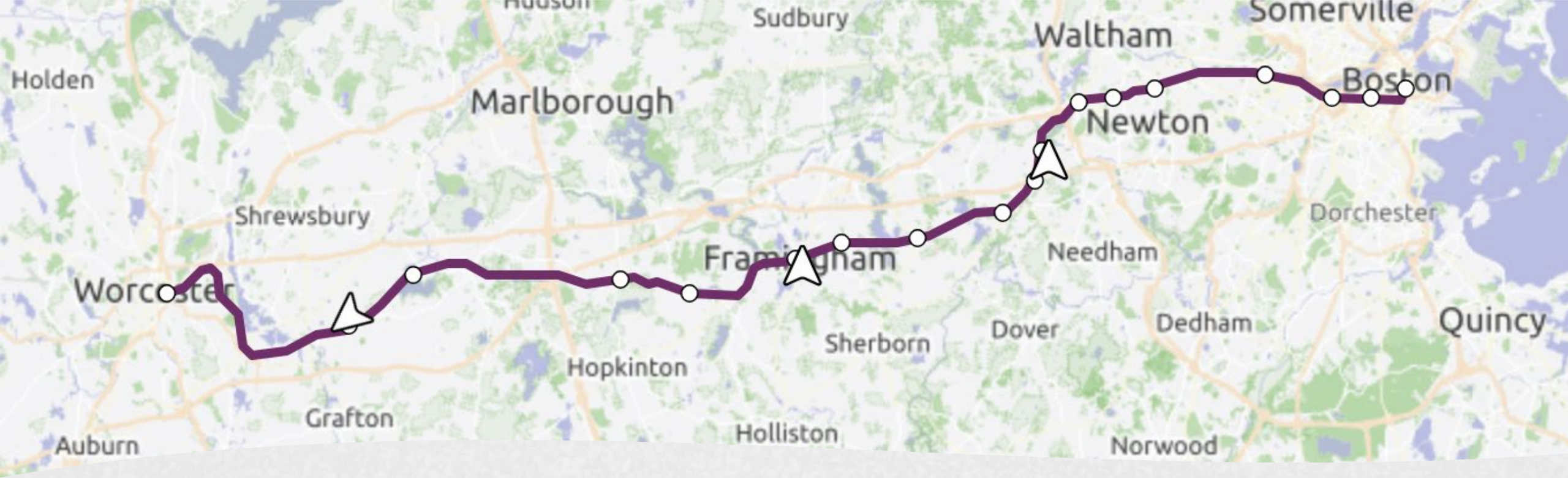
History: The Worcester Main Line

- Before Turnpike, Worcester Line mostly had four tracks between Boston and Framingham
- In 50s/60s, construction of Turnpike eliminated two tracks, halving capacity on the line



Source: Bromley, G.W. and W.S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Boston : wards 25 & 26, Brighton* (Philadelphia : G.W. Bromley & Co., 1916); Held by Leventhal Map Center at BPL

Photo Credit: New York Central System Historical Society, Inc.



The Worcester Line today

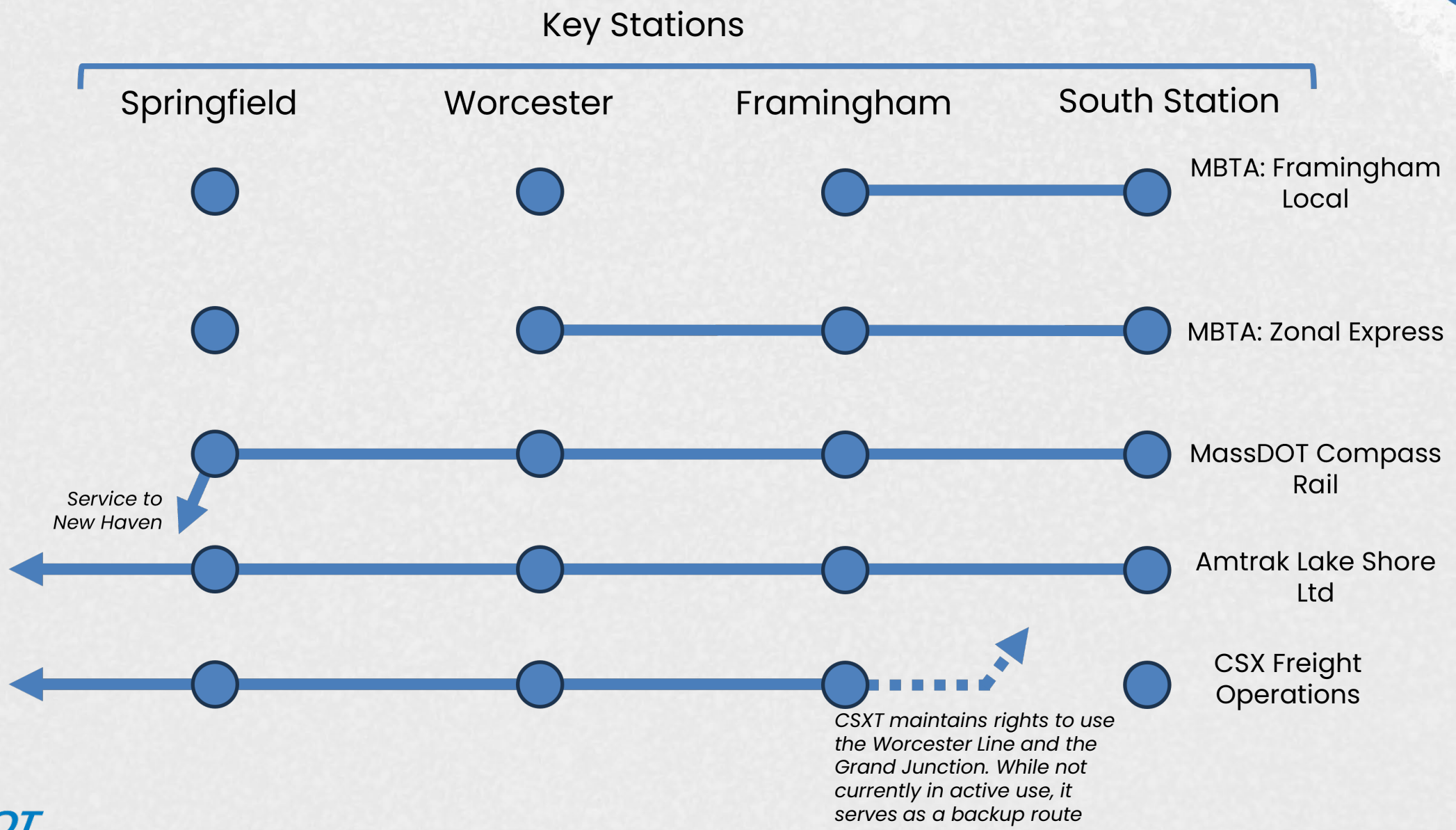
- Framingham/Worcester Line is second-highest ridership line in MBTA's system (~15,000 daily boardings)
- 18 stations, serving 10 cities and towns from Greater Boston to MetroWest
- Travel from Worcester to Boston takes ~80-100 minutes, which is not competitive with car for most of the day

Current and Future Traffic through the Project Area

- Dramatic increases in rail service are being planned on routes that will **utilize the Worcester Main Line's infrastructure**
  - Future MBTA revenue movements will be evenly split between Framingham local trains and Worcester zonal express trains. West Station will be served by **one** of these services.
  - MassDOT will inaugurate Compass Rail in 2030 and will run 4 trains per day by 2035
- Once re-opened, Grand Junction will **continue to be used** for non-revenue maintenance movements

Operator	Today	2035	Change
MBTA (Revenue)	55	160	***+105***
Amtrak (Revenue)	2	2	--
Compass Rail (Revenue)	0	4	***+4***
Maintenance Moves (Non-Revenue)	2	2	--
Total Trains per day	**59**	**168**	***+109***

Future Rail Planning: A Diverse Mix of Services



An Opportunity to Improve Rail Infrastructure

- Allston Multimodal Transportation Project provides an opportunity improve infrastructure for all modes, including for rail.
- MassDOT and MBTA have plans to bring more service to the Worcester Line (via Compass Rail and more frequent Worcester Line Regional Rail Service).
  - More service can only succeed with adequate infrastructure

Rail Planning – Policy Requirements

Design of rail infrastructure in the Allston project must:

- Balance local access with desire for more car competitive service for residents in Worcester and Metro West
  - No significant reductions in current Maximum Allowable Speed (MAS) of 79 through Allston project area
- Promote system resilience and prioritize eliminating constraints – recognize that rail is a system and impacts can spread throughout across lines
- Maintain ability to provide higher levels of service in the future
- Maintain freight operations per CSX rights
- Do not preclude robust and feasible transit options along the Grand Junction

Rail Traffic Controller (RTC Modeling)

- The objective of the operations model is to determine if the proposed track layout design for West Station is adequate for future services across the Worcester Line as a whole
- The MBTA uses industry standard rail simulation software called Rail Traffic Controller to test rail infrastructure changes
- RTC is a valuable tool for current and future operations planning
- RTC helps rail operators understand the resiliency (or lack thereof) of the region's passenger rail network
  - Resilient systems can recover from perturbances without long-lasting disruptions to the overall system
- If the Worcester Line is resilient, one would not expect to see fluctuations in performance based on localized disturbances

This Analysis Does	The Analysis Does Not
Test system resilience across multiple disruption scenarios (i.e. perturbed scenarios)	Directly consider time savings in routine operations
Identify bottlenecks and assess the potential impacts of service disruptions	Precisely mirror "real world" conditions – RTC offers more optimistic picture than actual operations

Worcester Line RTC Modeling: Key Inputs

Future Schedule

- Number and type of service patterns (locals, zonal expresses, intercity trains, freight)
- Frequency/timing of each service pattern

Infrastructure

- Station characteristics (single-sided, center-island, etc.)
- Track characteristics (single-tracked, etc.)
- MAS
- Interlockings

Operations

- Signal system operations
- Station dwell times
- Positive Train Control (PTC)

Worcester Line RTC Modelling: Key Inputs (Cont.)

Future Schedule

- MBTA:
  - 30-minute local trains to/from Framingham (80 trains per day)
  - 30-minute zonal express trains to/from Worcester (80 trains per day)
- MassDOT Rail & Transit/Compass Rail
  - 4 trains per day to/from Springfield
- Amtrak (Lake Shore Limited)
  - 2 trains to/from Chicago
- Grand Junction service is not included in analysis
- Non-revenue moves into BPY layover yard don't conflict with revenue moves
- CSX freight operations were included

Infrastructure*

- Completion of West Station (Baseline Alternative/Option 4A)
- No Worcester Triple Track
  - 3rd track between Framingham and Wellesley
- Newton stations
  - Upgrades at Newtonville (2 high-level platforms)
  - No upgrades at West Newton and Auburndale
- Completion of Controlled Point (CP) 16 and CP 44
- Examined under 3 infrastructure scenarios:
  - 0 mainline tracks
  - 1 mainline tracks
  - 2 mainline tracks

*Only funded and in-progress projects were included in infrastructure assumptions

Future Rail Operations and Capacity Constraints

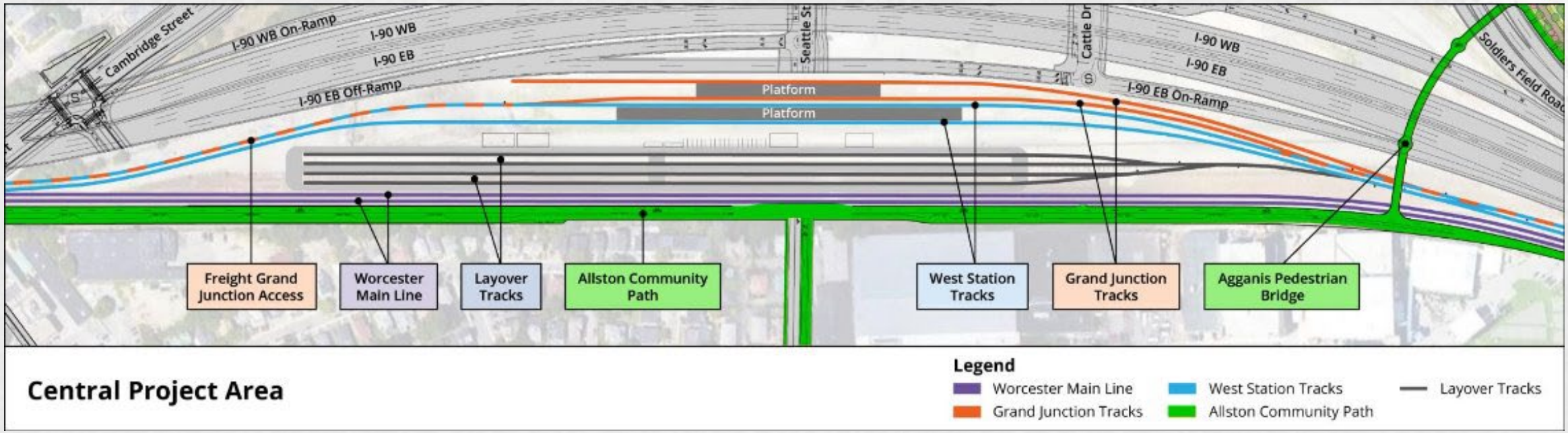
Future Service – What does Worcester 30-30 mean for operations?

- Average of train every 10 to 15 minutes operating in same direction
- Complexity of stopping patterns require trains to be scheduled as close as 5 minutes apart

Capacity Constraints on Worcester Line

- *Proximity of Boston Landing to West Station*
- *Single sided stations in Newton*
- *Long distances between crossovers, which is where a train can switch tracks.*
- *Today's biggest challenge on the Worcester Main Line is system resiliency*
  - Only two tracks
  - Large number of stations (8 within 11 miles)
  - Worcester Triple Track is currently unfunded

Baseline Alternative/Option 4A



Infrastructure (From South to North):

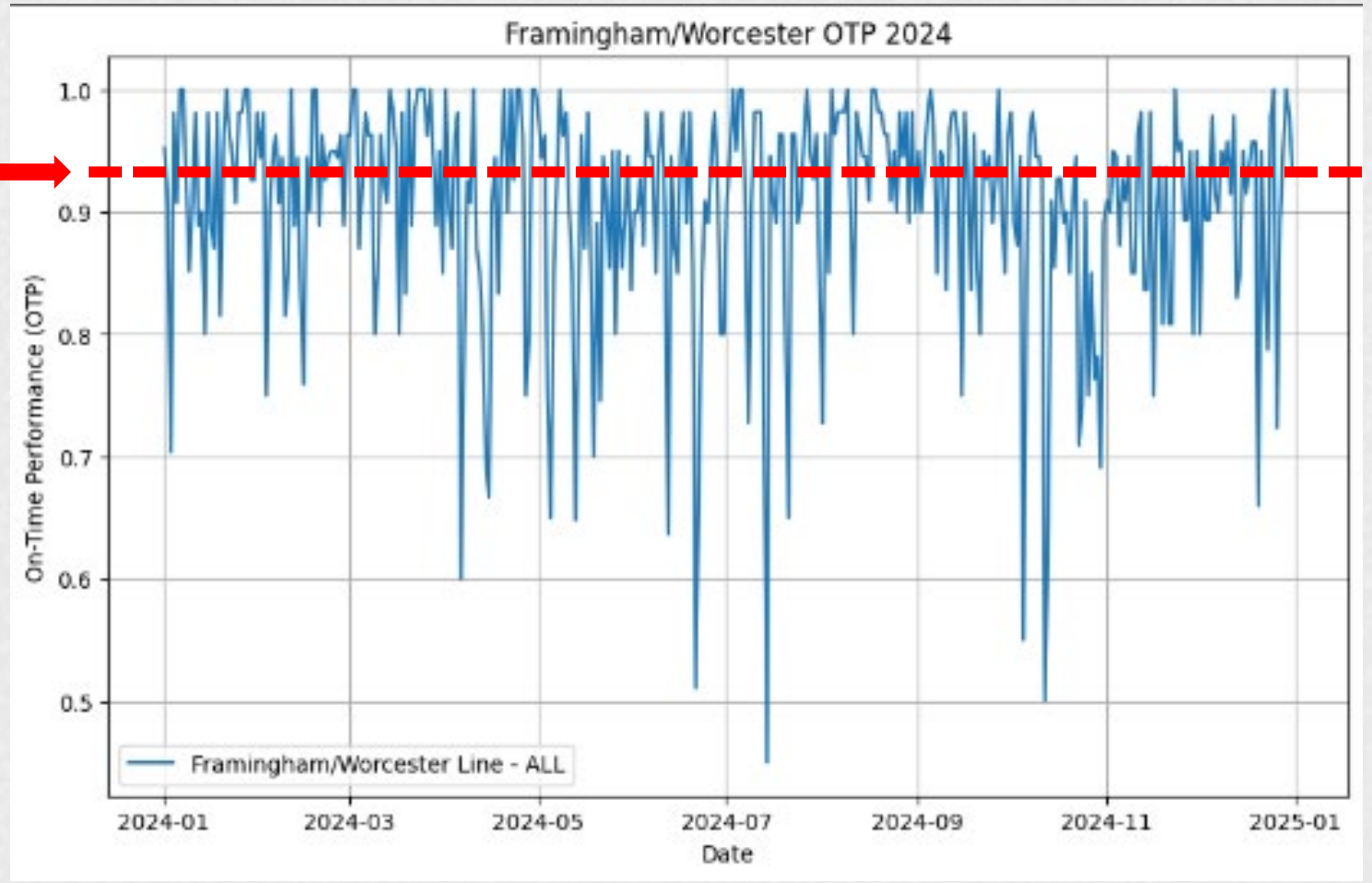
- Two Worcester Main Line tracks
- 4-track layover yard
- West Station – Worcester Line (2 station tracks, center island platform)
- West station – Grand Junction (2 station tracks, center island platform)

RTC: Testing System Resilience

- RTC model stress tested several perturbed scenarios based on real-world examples
- Perturbed scenarios were drawn from common, real-world examples of serious disruptions (unplanned track work, vehicle strike, medical emergency, weather impacts etc.)
- Each scenario was tested under different infrastructure assumptions for West Station for number of mainline tracks

Perturbances: A Fact of Life on the Railroad

Railroad Operations Target OTP



Worcester Line – Actual Daily OTP in 2024

RTC Modeling Results

- Across all scenarios, Worcester Line service performed best with two Worcester Mainline tracks and two separate West Station tracks. These tracks are in addition to two proposed station tracks needed for potential Grand Junction service.
- Two Worcester Mainline tracks and two separate West Station tracks minimized average train delay during service disruptions and led to a higher average on-time performance.

*Note: modeling did not include Grand Junction service

Looking Beyond Boston: Benchmarking North American Commuter Rail Systems

- MBTA/MassDOT team benchmarked future "Worcester 30-30" service against peer agencies
- *Key Question: Among agencies with similar frequencies (~166 trains/day), what infrastructure is available?*


Photo Credit: CT Mirror/Tyler Russell/Connecticut Public

Peer Agencies: Number of Trains (per 24-hour period) vs. Number of Main Operating Tracks

Agency	Route	Total Trains (Approximately)	Number of Operating Tracks
NJ Transit	North Jersey Coast Line	103	2
Metra	BNSF	105	2 - 6
MBTA	***Worcester Line***	***166 (Future Schedule)***	***2***
Metro-North	Hudson Line	182	2 - 4
NJ Transit	Morris & Essex Line	213	1* – 3
Metro-North	Harlem Line	217	1** – 4
Long Island Railroad	Mainline	331	3 - 4

*Metro-North Harlem Line has a single-track segment at the end of the line that is mostly served by shuttle
** NJ Transit Morris & Essex Line has a single-track segment between the outermost two stations

Data pulled from public agency GTFS data, refreshed on 12/10/25. Track numbers omit sidings and terminal throats.

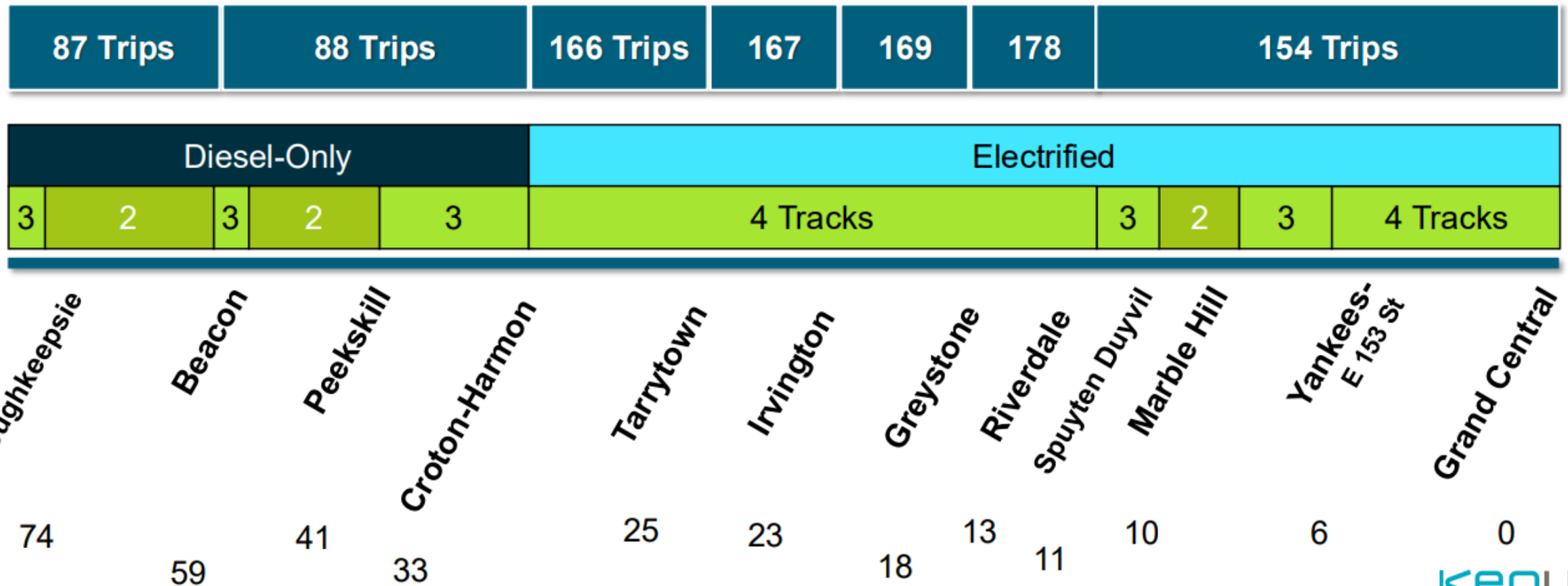
Metro-North – Hudson Line w/ Amtrak

Metro-North Railroad Hudson Line

182 Weekday Trips Total *on 12/10/25*

\+ AMTRAK®

Includes Amtrak Empire Service (ALB/BUF/NFL), Lake Shore Ltd. (CHI), Ethan Allen Express (Burlington), & Maple Leaf (Toronto)



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Independent Cost & Engineering Analysis

Context

- Major multimodal program in Boston's Allston neighborhood integrating I-90, rail/transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and local street/parkland improvements.
- Includes a proposed West Station, track and layover facilities, Soldiers Field Road realignment, and Charles River shoreline/park enhancements.
- Project paused after loss of $327M federal funding (July 2025), prompting reassessment of scope, cost, feasibility, and delivery approach.

Purpose of RFR

- Provide MassDOT with an independent, in-depth cost and engineering review.
- Align project goals, scope, schedule, and delivery with available resources.
- Evaluate options, alternatives, risks, and phasing/sequencing to support responsible, achievable implementation.
- Prepare materials to support stakeholder communication and informed decision-making.

Task 1 - Independent Cost Analysis

Objective: Establish an accurate, inflation-adjusted baseline cost and scope understanding to inform engineering decisions.

Key Activities:

- **Document Review:** Planning, environmental, design, and economic materials.
- **Budget and Cost Evaluation:** Alignment of costs to scope; escalation; major cost drivers; 5–15 year inflation outlook.
- **Component-Level Cost Review:** I-90 interchange, Soldiers Field Road, West Station, track/layover, local streets, parkland, "throat" area, etc.
- **Direct/Indirect Cost Assessment:** Construction staging, mitigation, rail operations continuity, life-cycle impacts.
- **Support to Stakeholder Engagement:** Support MassDOT with presentation materials.

Deliverables

- Task 1 Technical Memo: cost baseline, component findings, indirect costs and scope–budget gaps.

Task 2 - Independent Engineering Analysis

Objective: Evaluate engineering, phasing/sequencing, and delivery scenarios; assess risks; identify cost savings and feasible implementation paths.

Key Activities

- **Scoping, Design and Construction Options:** Full-build, hybrid, and reduced-scope options; feasibility, cost, permitting, service impacts.
- **Infrastructure & Operations Analysis:** I-90, West Station siting, track/layover capacity, Charles River/parkland design, Grand Junction mitigation options.
- **Phasing/Sequencing and Contracting Options:** Contract packaging, delivery methods, constructability, service continuity.
- **Early Action Options:** Evaluate opportunity for projects to be advanced independently
- **Engineering Efficiencies:** Scope adjustment, design optimization, material choices, etc.
- **Functionality at Varying Scales:** Component-level performance and sequencing
- **Risk Assessment:** Structured cost/schedule/safety review; sensitivity analysis; Risk Matrix
- **Independent Perspective and Insights:** Objective assessment of key project elements
- **Support Stakeholder Engagement:** Support MassDOT with presentation materials

Deliverables

- Task 2 Technical Memo and Risk Matrix supporting decision-making and next steps.

High Level Timeline for Independent Analysis

Task 1: Cost Analysis

- Costs Developed by Independent Team
- Monthly Allston Task Force Meetings
- Expected Output Available to Task Force
  - Briefings on Task 1 Results

Task 2: Engineering Analysis

- Options Developed by Independent Team
- MassDOT Review and Decision Points
- Monthly Task Force Meetings
- Expected Output Available to Task Force
  - Briefings on Task 2 Results

Concurrent MassDOT Effort with Existing Consultant Team

- Early-action project assessment
- Ongoing Layover Study, MassDOT/ MBTA and City of Boston

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Next Steps

- Proposed Upcoming Task Force Meeting Dates

  January TBD, February 26, March 24

- Potential Topics at Upcoming Task Force Meetings
  - Early Action Projects
  - Independent Consultant Review
  - City of Boston BPY Regional Framework

- Other Suggested Topics for Upcoming Task Force Meetings?

Thank You!