



I-90 ALLSTON INTERCHANGE A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

TASK FORCE MEETING
Aug. 18, 2020– GoTo Webinar Event

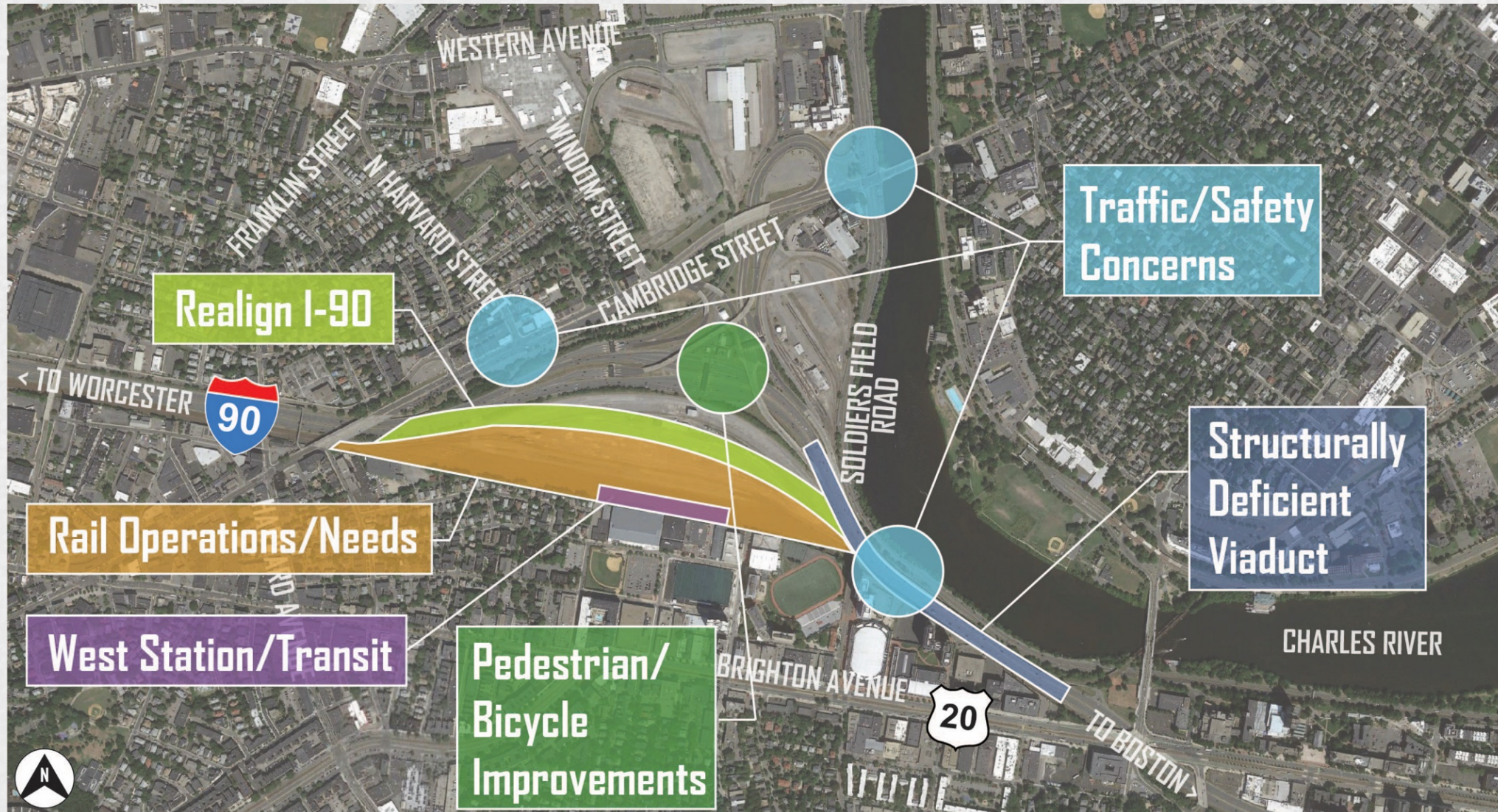
Today's Agenda

- **Scoping Summary Report**
 - Overview
 - Section 2: Purpose and Need
 - Section 3: Scoping Meetings and Public Outreach
 - Section 4: Responses to Frequently Received Comments
 - Section 5: Alternatives and Screening Criteria
- **Anticipated Schedule**
- **Next NEPA Milestone: Concurrence on the Preferred Alternative**
- **Next MEPA Milestone: Notice of Project Change**
- **Questions**

Scoping Summary Report - Overview

- **Scoping Summary Report** was published on MassDOT's website on August 7th and placed in local repositories on August 12th
- **Purpose**
 - Summarizes scoping process undertaken for the Project
 - Responds to comments received on the Scoping Report
 - Identifies what alternatives will move forward to the DEIS
- **Outline**
 - Section 1 - Introduction
 - Section 2 - Purpose and Need
 - Section 3 - Scoping Meetings and Outreach
 - Section 4 - Frequently Received Comments
 - Section 5 - Alternatives and Screening Criteria

Section 2. Purpose and Need (No Change)



Section 3. Scoping Meetings & Outreach

- Description of the opportunities provided to the public to comment on the Scoping Report
- Availability of the Scoping Report
 - MassDOT Website (Title VI Compliant)
 - Local Repositories
- Public Information Meetings & Advertisements
 - November 7th in Brighton
 - December 4th in Framingham
- Task Force Meetings
 - November 13th 4-hour Workshop
 - December 11th
- 37-Day Comment Period Concluded on December 12th
 - Over 800 comment letters and 2000+ individual substantive comments received

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation
and
Federal Highway Administration
invite you to the
Public Information Meeting to Introduce
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Scoping Document
for the
ALLSTON I-90 MULTIMODAL PROJECT
Thursday, November 7, 2019
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Brighton High School, 25 Warren Street, Brighton MA

Section 4. Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Transit



- **General lack of support for the inclusion of mid-day layover in the Purpose & 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 as well as ped. and bike connections in the vicinity of West Station**
 - All build alternatives include a four-track, three-platform station to accommodate potential future rail service to North Station via Kendall.
- **Construction of West Station should be accelerated**
 - 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.

Section 4. Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Scope



- Support for Rebuilding the Grand Junction Rail Bridge
 - 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 a Cambridge St. Bypass Road
 - 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.
- Concerns and suggestions regarding methods/models used to assess traffic and transit
 - MassDOT is committed to maintaining the current number of travel lanes for both I-90 and Soldiers Field Road in the final condition.
- Include environmental goals, such as enhancement of the Charles River, in the Project while prioritizing safe, improved ped. and bike connections
 - 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. MassDOT has included several multimodal elements in the Project's purpose and need directly related to pedestrian and bicycle connections as well as the Charles River Reservation.

Section 4. Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Alternatives



- Criticism of the SFR Hybrid as MassDOT's preferred option, particularly centered around its impacts to the Charles River and its difficult and lengthy construction (Most Frequently Received Comment)
 - MassDOT proposed the SFR Hybrid as its preferred alternative 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 an all at-grade Throat Area Option will cause avoidable permanent impacts to the Charles River, a Modified At-Grade Throat Area Option will be carried forward to the DEIS to provide a comprehensive comparison of alternatives.

Section 4. Frequently Received Comments on the Nov. Scoping Report - Mitigation



- Support for a mitigation package 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 a mitigation package to address traffic impacts during construction of the Project
 - 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.

Major Themes of Public Concern with the SFR Hybrid on the Scoping Report



- Overwhelming public comment in opposition to temporary Soldiers Field Road/Paul Dudley White Path “trestle” located in the Charles River
- Major concerns of the SFR Hybrid included:
 - Impacts to the Charles River
 - Impacts to River users due to temporary narrowing of the watershed
 - Water Quality and Stormwater/TMDLs
 - Climate change and resiliency concerns with I-90 under SFR viaduct located below grade in order to limit height of the viaduct
 - Construction duration of 8-10 years disrupting travel from the west
 - MBTA operational disruptions including
 - Long-term closure of the Grand Junction bridge requiring design and construction of a new south-side commuter rail maintenance facility
 - Single Track Worcester Commuter Rail required during construction

A Note on Impacts to the Charles River

- The Charles River in Allston is a tremendous asset that should be restored, enhanced and made accessible. Mitigation measures must be thoroughly and transparently considered when selecting an alternative 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.
- MassDOT is fully committed to ensuring that the selected alternative ensures the treatment of all runoff to the maximum extent practicable 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.

Section 5. Alternatives & Screening Criteria

- **Preliminary Alternatives**
 - No Build
 - Major Rehabilitation and Replacement
 - 3L Re-alignment with Options
 - Throat Area Options
 - West Station Options
- **Design Updates**
 - No Build (Major Preservation)
 - 3L Re-Alignment
 - Updated Modified Flip West Station and Rail Layout
 - Modified Highway Viaduct Throat Area Option
 - Modified At-Grade Throat Area Option

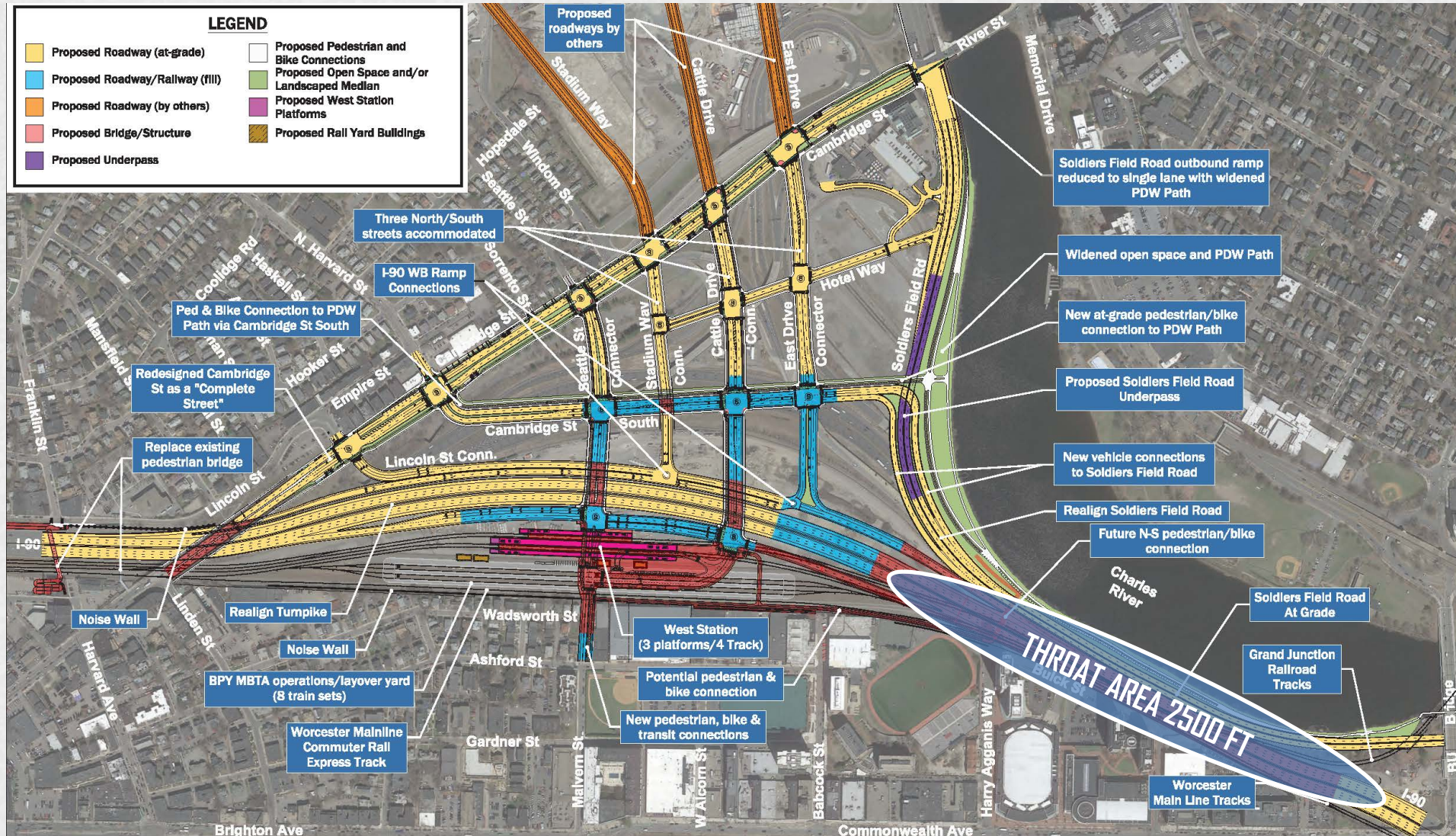
Section 5. Alternatives & Screening Criteria (Cont'd)

- **Alternatives Considered and Dismissed**
 - Major Rehabilitation and Replacement
 - 3L Re-alignment with the DEIR West Station and Rail Layout
 - 3L Re-alignment with the Flip West Station and Rail Layout
- **Alternatives Carried Forward to the DEIS**
 - No Build (Major Preservation)
 - 3L Re-alignment with the (updated) Modified Flip West Station and Throat Area Options:
 - Modified Highway Viaduct
 - Modified At-Grade
 - SFR Hybrid

Alternatives Carried Forward into the DEIS

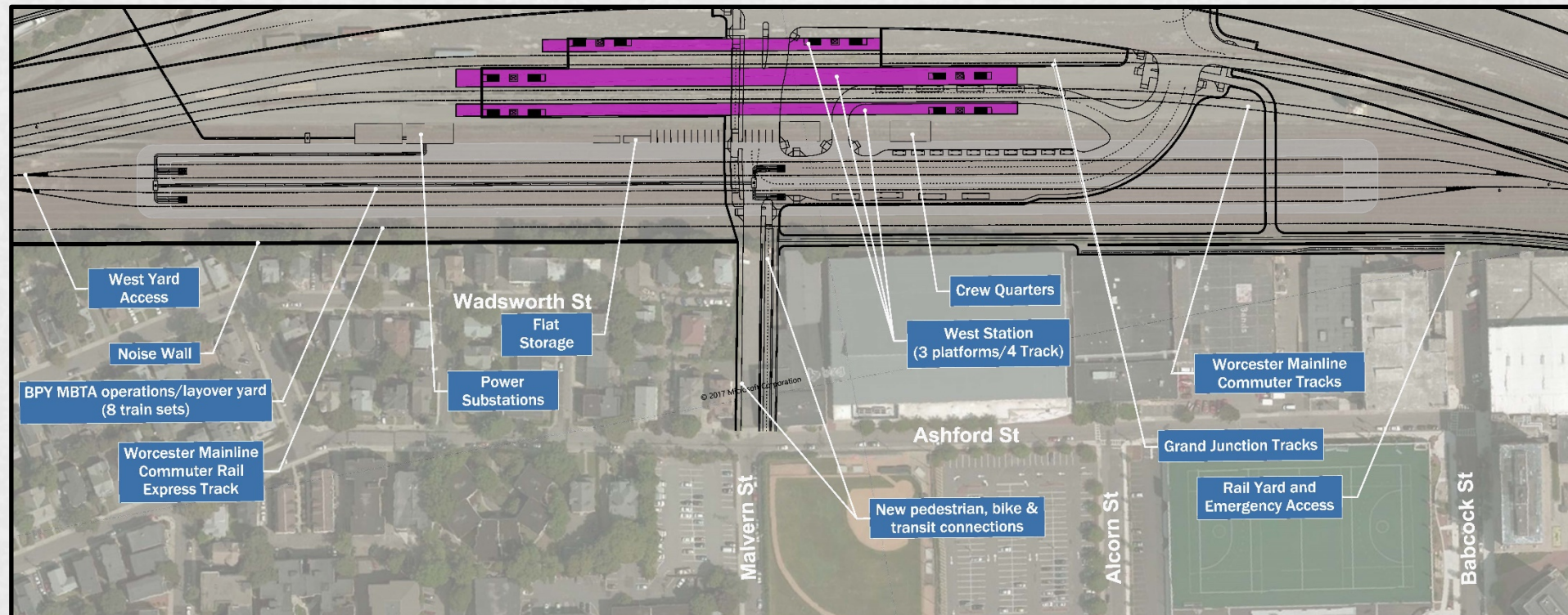
- **No Build:** A “No Build” option that rehabilitates the existing I-90 viaduct and three “Build” options.
- **Three “Build” alternatives** that are all multimodal and make transformative changes to the portion of the project on the former Beacon Park Yards. The three Build options all include a new 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 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.

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



Updated 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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Anticipated Schedule

- NEPA Scoping Summary Report: **Published August 2020**
- One Federal Decision Concurrence Point – Preferred Alternative: **Fall 2020**
- MEPA Notice of Project Change: **Fall 2020**
- NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement: **Spring 2021**
- MEPA Final Environmental Impact Report: **Spring 2021**
- NEPA Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision: **Winter 2021/2022**

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Cooperating Agencies Concurrence on the Preferred Alternative

- OFD, per the 2018 Federal MOU Implementing One Federal Decision, accelerates the timeframe from Notice of Intent to Record of Decision and established agency concurrence points to facilitate that deadline.
- To meet this timeframe, MassDOT will need to begin the state permitting process prior to publication of the NEPA DEIS, requiring timely concurrence on the preferred alternative.
- MassDOT and FHWA are pursuing the identification of a preferred alternative in preparation for this OFD Concurrence Point.
- Regardless of concurrence at this stage, all alternatives identified in Section 5.4 of the Scoping Summary Report will be thoroughly and equitably analyzed in the DEIS.

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MEPA Notice of Project Change

- Expected publication: Fall 2020
- The NPC will:
 - Respond to comments received on the DEIR
 - Update and analyze various design elements
 - 3L Interchange
 - West Station
 - Throat Area Variations
 - Introduce the SFR Hybrid into the MEPA process
 - Update the Purpose and Need to align with the NEPA Purpose & Need
 - Select the Preferred Alternative

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 Scoping Report)		Federal/State Agencies Concurrence Meeting (45 days after filing of Scoping Summary Report)	If concurrence reached, work proceeds on Draft Environmental Impact Statement
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	Meeting to review on whether there is concurrence on a throat alternative and, if so, on MEPA Notice of Project Change

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Questions?



Project Purpose - No change from Nov. 2019 Scoping Report



- **Address Roadway Deficiencies**
 - Replace structural 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.

Summary of Alternatives Under Consideration



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 Modified Highway Viaduct , 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 Modified At-Grade , 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

Design Updates - No Build (Major Preservation)

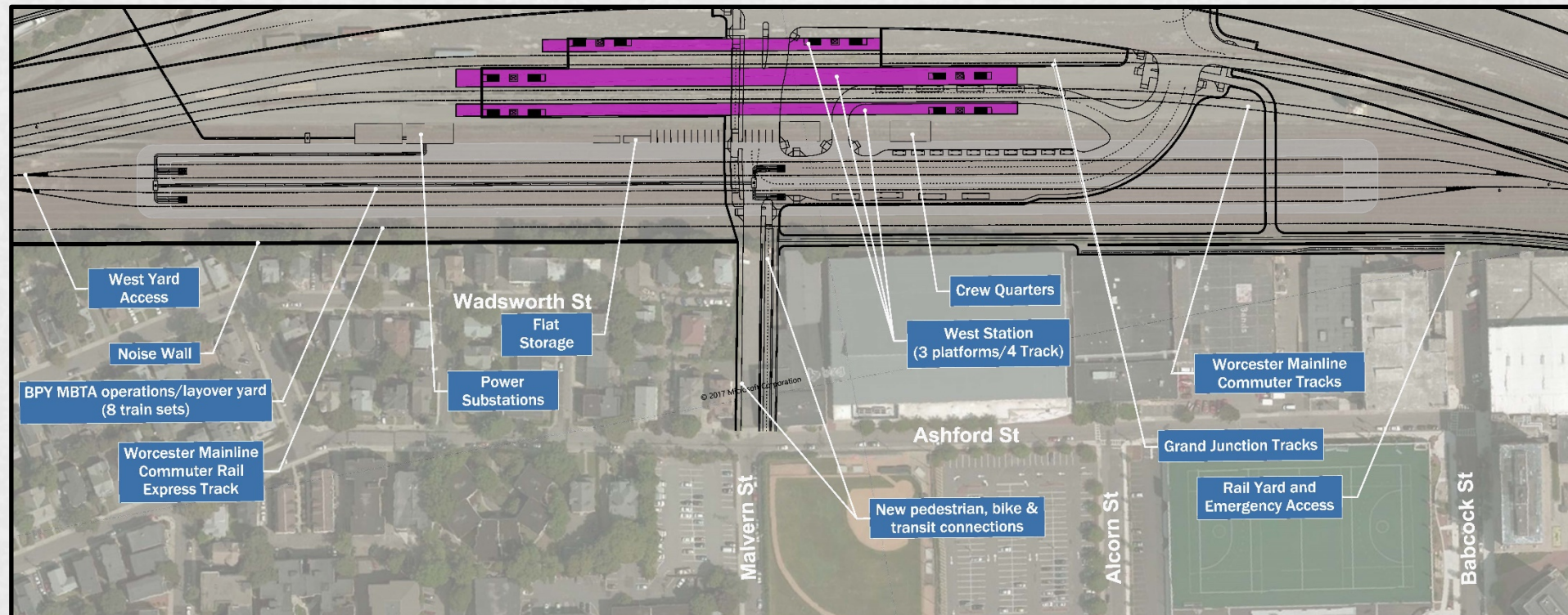


No Build (Major Preservation) cont.

- The No Build option in the Scoping Summary is 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 includes the use of the existing easement with minor modifications to yard leads to enable the layover of 8 train sets on 4 tracks with electric plug-ins
 - The No Build does not include the construction of West Station.
- While we all want to see the construction of a multimodal project that unlocks all of the benefits we envision 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. We simply cannot allow a critical piece of Commonwealth infrastructure to continue to degrade with no end in sight.

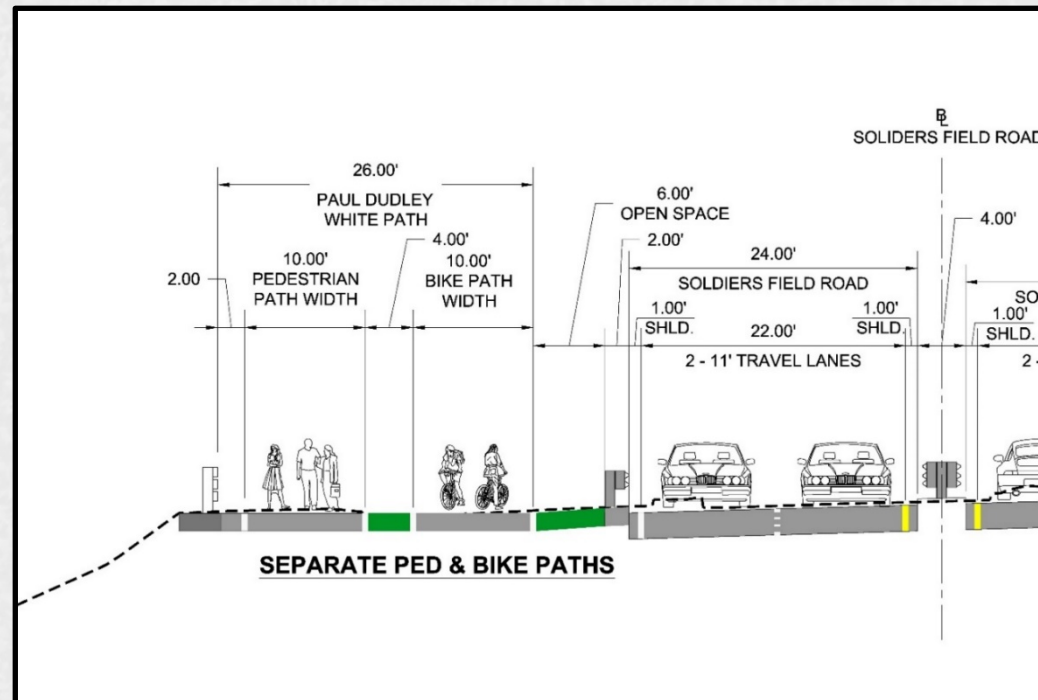
Updated Modified West Station

- Modified for 4 track & 3 platform operation
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Modifications to the Highway Viaduct alternative

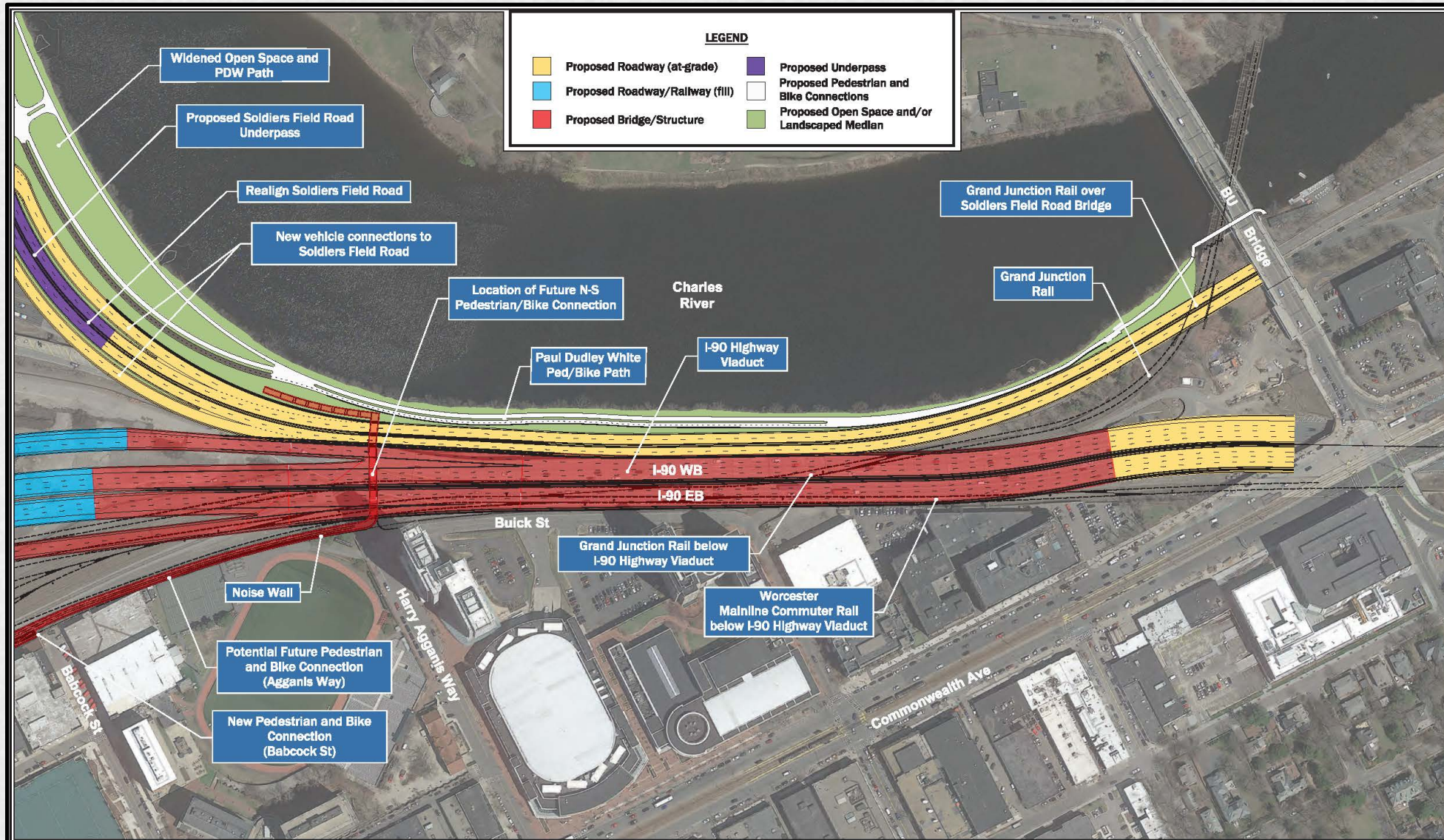
- Feasibility of an additional ped/bike connection at Agganis Way
- Modified highway viaduct is shorter and narrower
 - 2,800 feet long compared to the existing viaduct including ramps which is approx. 3,200 ft
 - Narrower than previous viaduct version by 8 feet, which allows for a 3 vs. 4 column arrangement resulting in further realignment of Soldiers Field Road to provide the following within the throat
 - Additional open space
 - Increased length of separated bike/pedestrian paths
 - Full river bank restoration



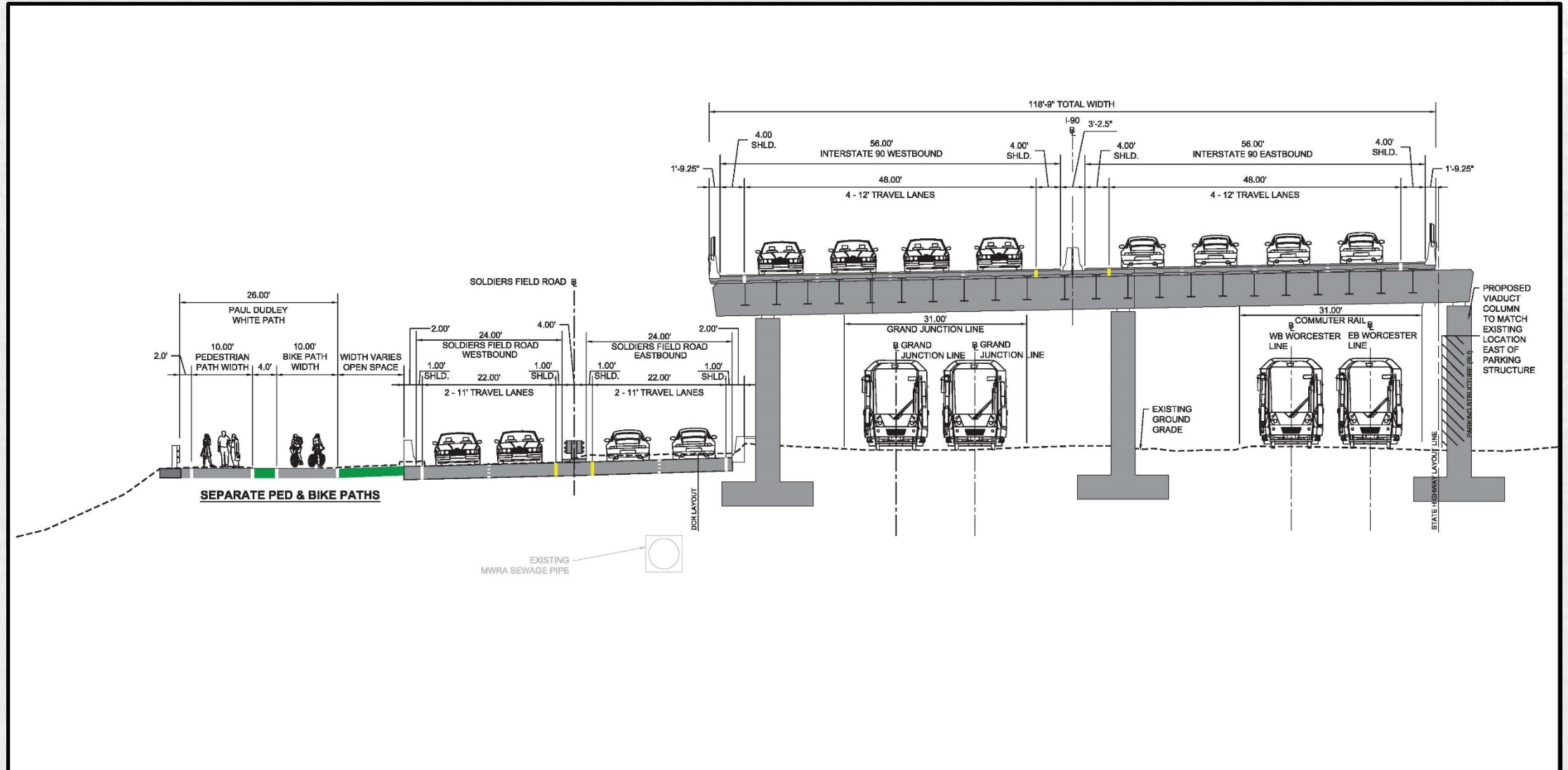
Other considerations for Modified Highway Viaduct alternative

- **Modified Highway Viaduct has many advantages compared to other Build alternatives**
 - Less complicated construction staging as a result of travel modes being replaced in their current horizontal and vertical locations, shortening time that construction disrupts travel from west
 - Does not require either temporary or permanent impacts to the Charles River beyond outfall reconstruction
 - Minimizes impacts to MBTA operations, eliminating need for long-term closure of the Grand Junction bridge
 - Greater resiliency to increased rainfall events because no below grade elevations are introduced
- **Visual impacts would be addressed with aesthetic treatments to both superstructure and substructure**
- **Noise impacts would be addressed with the addition of noise barriers**
- **Does not preclude reconstruction of Grand Junction bridge over SFR as a separate project as part of a future Grand Junction rail project**

Modified Highway Viaduct – Plan View



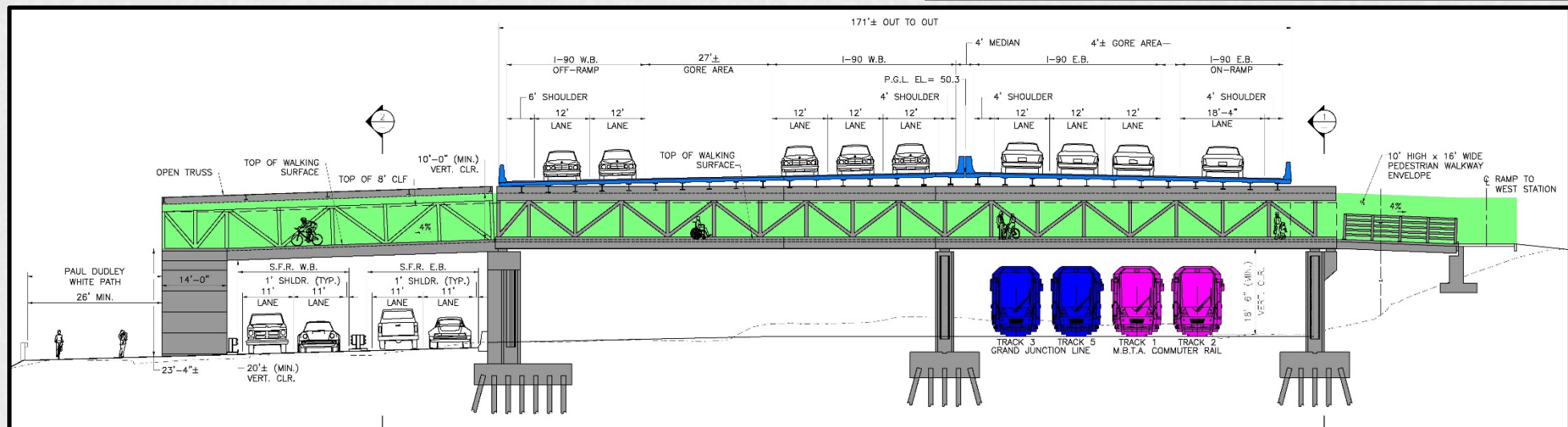
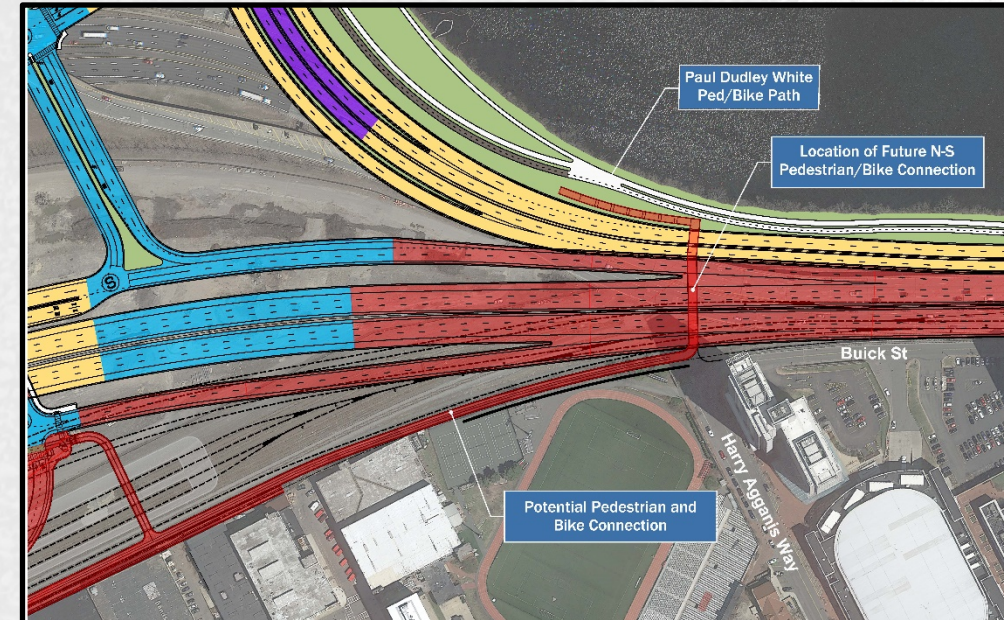
Modified Highway Viaduct – Section View



Potential for additional bicycle/pedestrian connection at Agganis Way



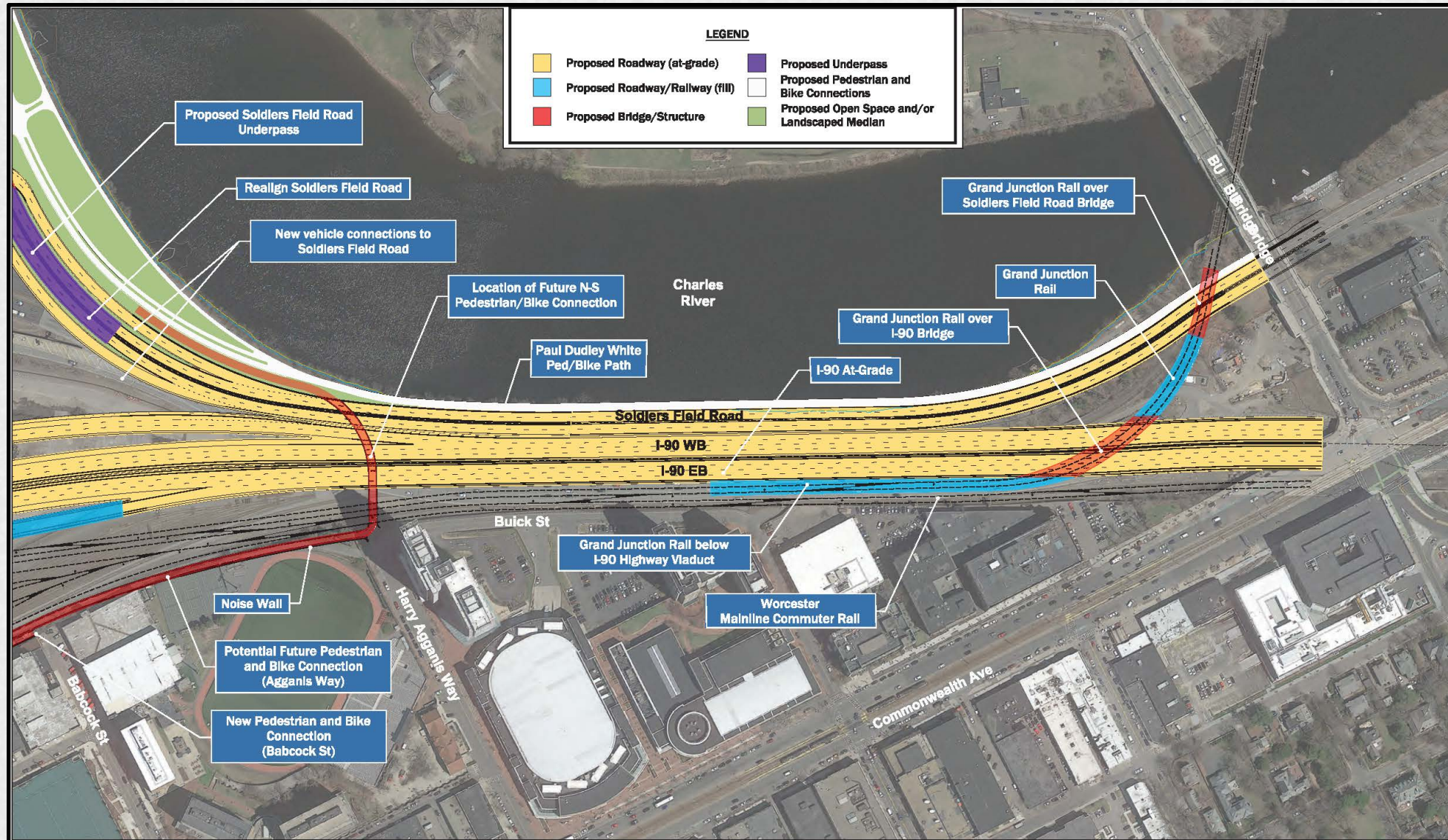
- Modified Highway Viaduct design allows for direct North-South Connection at Agganis Way (under viaduct & over rail)
- Includes a potential ped/bike connection from West Station to Agganis Way



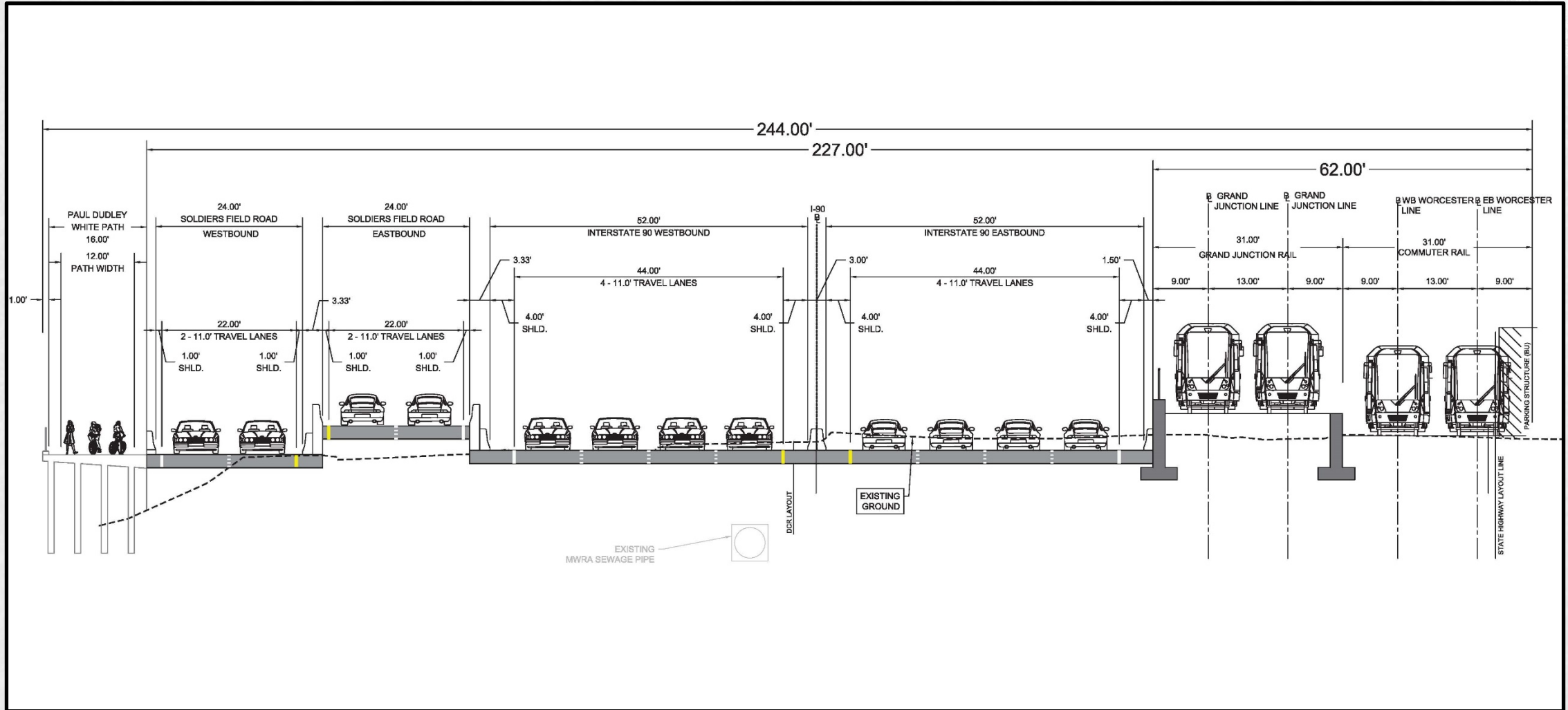
Modifications to the At-Grade Alternative

- Feasibility of an additional ped/bike connection at Agganis Way
- Increasing I-90 shoulder widths from 2-ft to 4-ft wide to ensure safe and effective highway operations, accommodations for stormwater collection infrastructure to prevent ponding and flooding of road surface and snow clearing to maintain highway during storms
- Increasing SFR travel lane widths from 10-ft to 11-ft to match existing lane widths

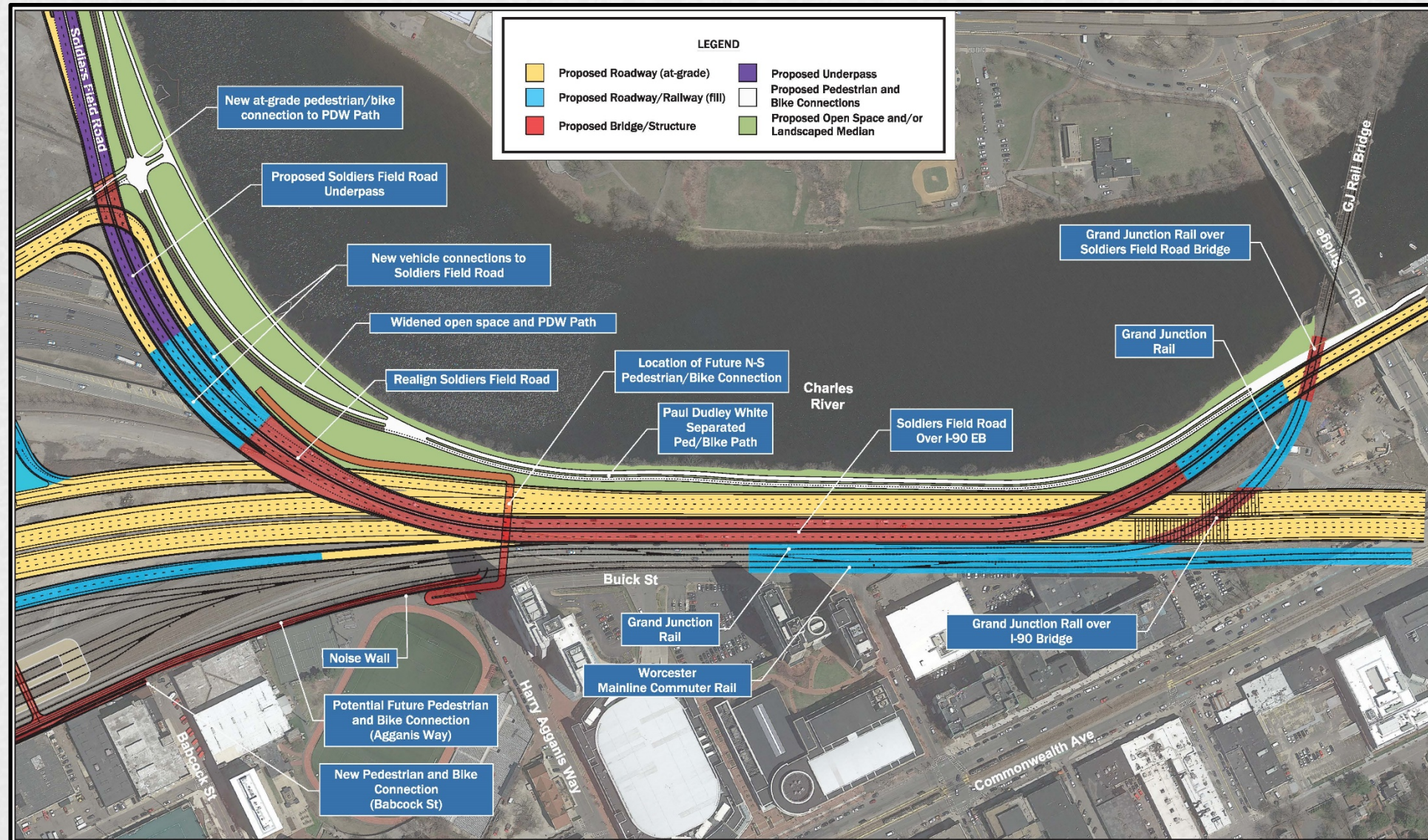
Modified At-Grade – Plan View



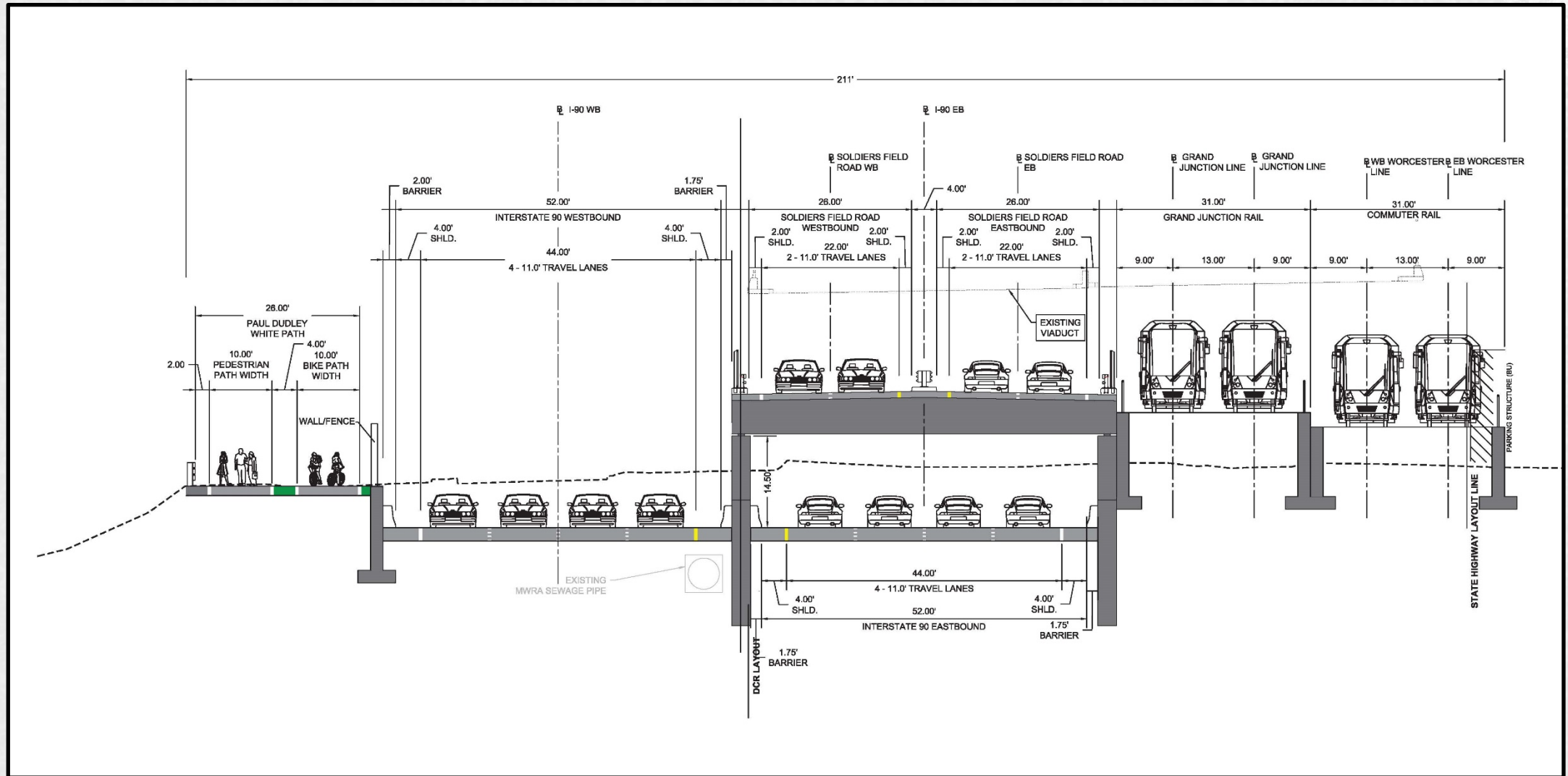
Modified At-Grade – Section View



SFR Hybrid – Plan View



SFR Hybrid (Final) – Section View



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