

# Side Street Crossing Tables on Tremont St - Boston, MA

## Site and Treatment Description

In Boston's South End district, Tremont Street was reconfigured from four lanes to two, with parking-protected bike lanes (at street level) on either side of the street. Curbs were not moved, but several small islands were added. Construction was completed in early 2024. Where a minor street meets a major street, a crossing table across the mouth of the side street ensures that cars passing over the crosswalk, either to enter or



leave the intersection, do so at a very low speed. They also reinforce pedestrian priority, as drivers ramp up to sidewalk level, rather than pedestrians ramping down into the street.

At every unsignalized intersection in the project area, crossing tables were installed across the side street, carrying the walking path across the side street without any change in elevation. In total, 20 side street crossing tables were installed as part of this project. The protected bike lanes, which are at street level, were not elevated or carried on the crossing table; they remain at street level through the intersection. The side street crossing tables thus consist only of a raised crosswalk, with ramps leading to and from it.

## Emergency Response and Snow Removal Impacts

Because all vehicles passing over a side street crossing table would have been going slowly anyway (they have a Stop sign if entering an intersection, and are turning into a narrow street if exiting), Tremont Street's SSCT's make no appreciable impact on travel time. The ramps make them far less jarring than a speed bump. For these reasons, they have not generated complaints from emergency response agencies or the public.

Also, because Boston's SSCTs have a gentle ramp profile, they can be plowed even more easily than speed humps (which have a parabolic profile), which snowplow operators in Boston are used to because Boston has more than 600 speed humps.

In the Tremont Street project, concern about accommodating larger vehicles at intersections affected the size and placement of median islands but not the side street crossing tables, which were not seen as an obstacle to large vehicles.

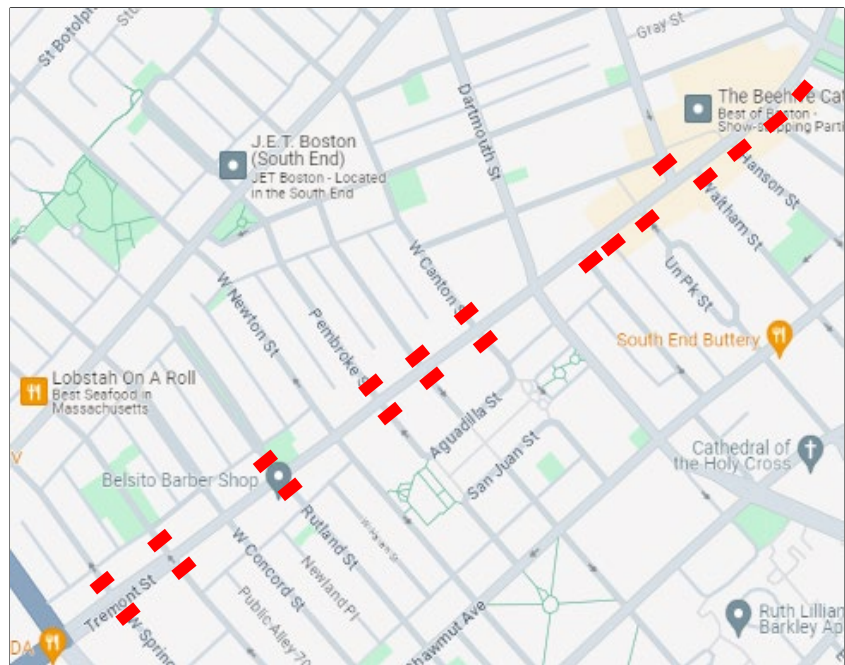
## Design Specs and Cost

The standard detail for side street crossing tables in Boston is found at the end of this case study; it can also be found on the City's website:

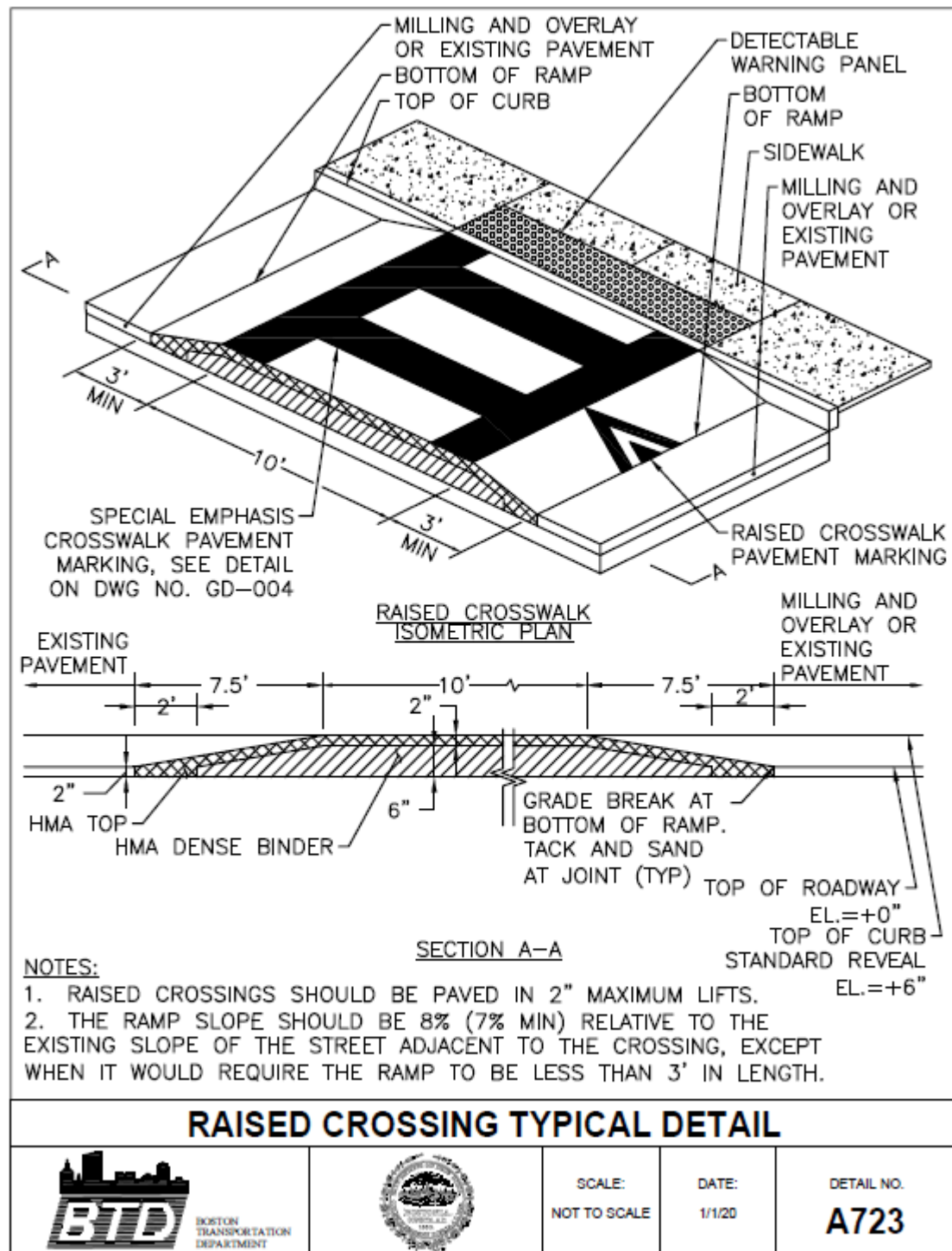
<https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/traffic-engineering-design-guidelines-and-standards>. Per this spec, side street crossing tables are 10 ft wide. They are as high as the curb reveal, typically 5 or 6 inches. They are constructed of hot mix asphalt (i.e., street pavement), with no curbing or precast blocks to reinforce their shape. Their slope is specified to be 8%, or 1 ft per inch of rise, with a ramp at least 3 ft long; however, field observation indicates considerable variability in slope and ramp length.

## Support Story

Even before the Tremont Street project, the City of Boston had begun to install side street crossing tables as part of several repaving projects. Examples where SSCTs can be seen are **Centre Street** in the Jamaica Plain district (side streets treated there include Estrella Street, Walden Street, and Mozart Street) and **Quincy Street** (8 unsignalized intersections between Blue Hill Avenue and Columbia Road). While the City does



not have a policy regarding their installation, the City shows a trend of including SSCTs as a part of repaving and reconstruction projects where local streets meet arterials or collectors.



Boston's spec for side street crossing tables and other raised crossings