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Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Highway Division

Northampton Main Street (Route 9) Complete Streets Reconstruction

25% Design Public Hearing

Virtual Meeting | April 26, 2023 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Project File No. 609286

Zoom Hearing Controls

- Ask a question and share comments (Alt + H)
- Raise your hand - *9 for users dialing in and Alt + Y to raise your hand
- If you are unable to access the internet or are having technical problems, please call into the meeting at +1.646.876.9923 with Webinar ID 832 8577 0334
- Closed captioning automatically generated by Zoom
- Use the View button in the upper right-hand corner to adjust the meeting view settings to your preference

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[+**1.888.799.9666**]

Public Hearing Notes and Procedures

Public record

- While this virtual public hearing is not being recorded, MassDOT may choose to retain and distribute the images, audio and the Q&A transcript from this hearing.
- All parts of this hearing are considered public record.
- If you are not comfortable being recorded, please refrain from using the Q&A feature or you may choose to excuse yourself from the hearing. Information from this hearing will be posted on the Mass.gov website.

Important notes

- Your microphone and webcam are automatically disabled upon entering the hearing.
- This hearing will be open to questions and answers at the end of the presentation.
- Please take time to respond to our survey at the end of the presentation. Your feedback is important.

Notice of MassDOT's policy on diversity and civil rights

- All MassDOT activities, including public meetings, are free of discrimination.
- MassDOT complies with all federal and state civil rights requirements preventing discrimination based on sex, race, color, ancestry, national origin (limited English proficiency), religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or veteran's status.
- We welcome the diversity from across our entire service area. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit https://www.mass.gov/nondiscrimination-in-transportation-program to reach the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights.

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

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Agenda

01 Introductions

02 Project Background

03 Existing Issues

04 Project Goals

05 Project Scope

06 Next Steps

07 Questions & Answers

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Panelists

City of Northampton
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor
Carolyn Misch, Director of Planning & Sustainability
Donna LaScaleia, Director of Public Works

MassDOT
Stephanie Upson
Zachary Feury
Paula Simmons
Laura Hanson
Raissah Kouame
Leah Grodstein

Toole Design
Jason DeGray
Stephanie Weyer

Stenographer – Advanced Court Reporting, LLC
Melissa Lupo

Thank You for Your Support

Local Newspaper Advertisement:

- Daily Hampshire
- The Reminder

MassDOT Facebook and Twitter

facebook.com/massdotinfo/
twitter.com/MassDOT

Municipal Partners:

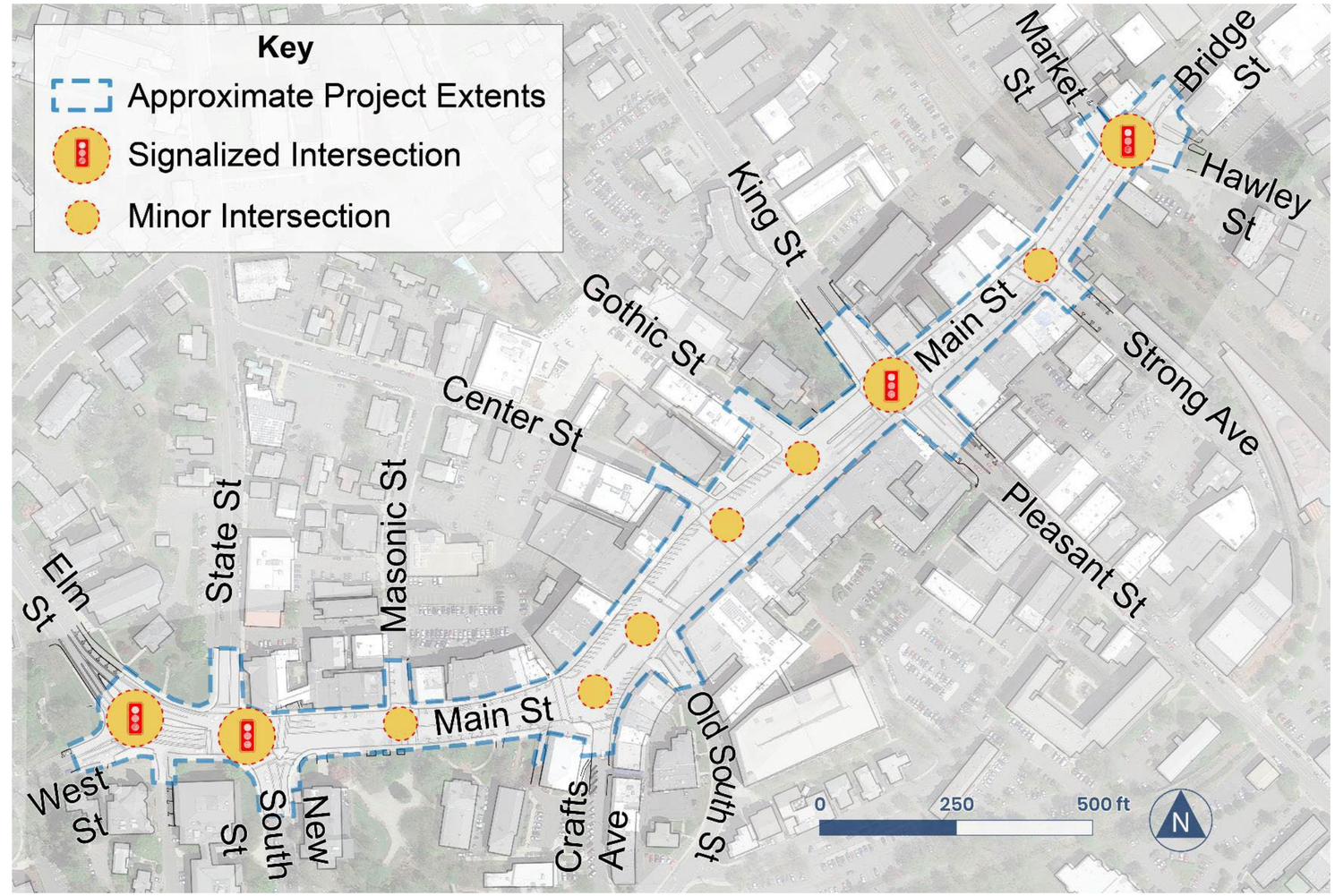
- City of Northampton
- Council on Aging
- Forbes Library

Community Organizations:

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Northampton Association
- Soofa

Project Basics

- Reconstruction of Main Street in downtown Northampton from building face to building face
- The project extends approximately 0.4 miles from:
  - West of the intersection of Elm and West Streets
  - East to the intersection of Market and Hawley Streets
- All intersections within the extents are included in the project



How did we get here?

2005 - 2019
Prior Projects

Planning, study, and community engagement

2020
Analysis

- Project kick-off
- Route 9 Road Safety Audit
- COVID-19 begins affecting life in Northampton

2021
Design Development

Selected and developed preferred alternative

2022
Review

25% design plans submitted to MassDOT

April 2023
25% Design Hearing

Stakeholder & Public Outreach

Winter 2020

- **Jan 13: Community Kick-Off**
- **Jan 13:** Project Advisory Group Meeting
- **Jan 14:** Business Group Meeting
- **Jan 14:** Joint Parking & Bike/Ped Committee Mtg.
- **Jan-March:** Community Survey #1

Summer 2020

- **Sep 10:** Business Forum
- Outdoor Dining on Lower Main St installed
- Temporary Project on Upper Main Street using MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces Grant
- Community Survey #2

Fall 2020

- **Oct 20:** Transportation & Parking Meeting
- **Oct 21:** Bike & Ped Subcommittee Meeting
- **Oct 22:** Planning Board Meeting
- **Oct 29:** Downtown Northampton Association Mtg.

Fall 2020 (continued)

- **Nov 5:** Project Advisory Group Meeting
- **Nov 10: Community Meeting on Goals & Concepts**
- **Nov 20:** Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Committee Meeting
- Community Survey #3

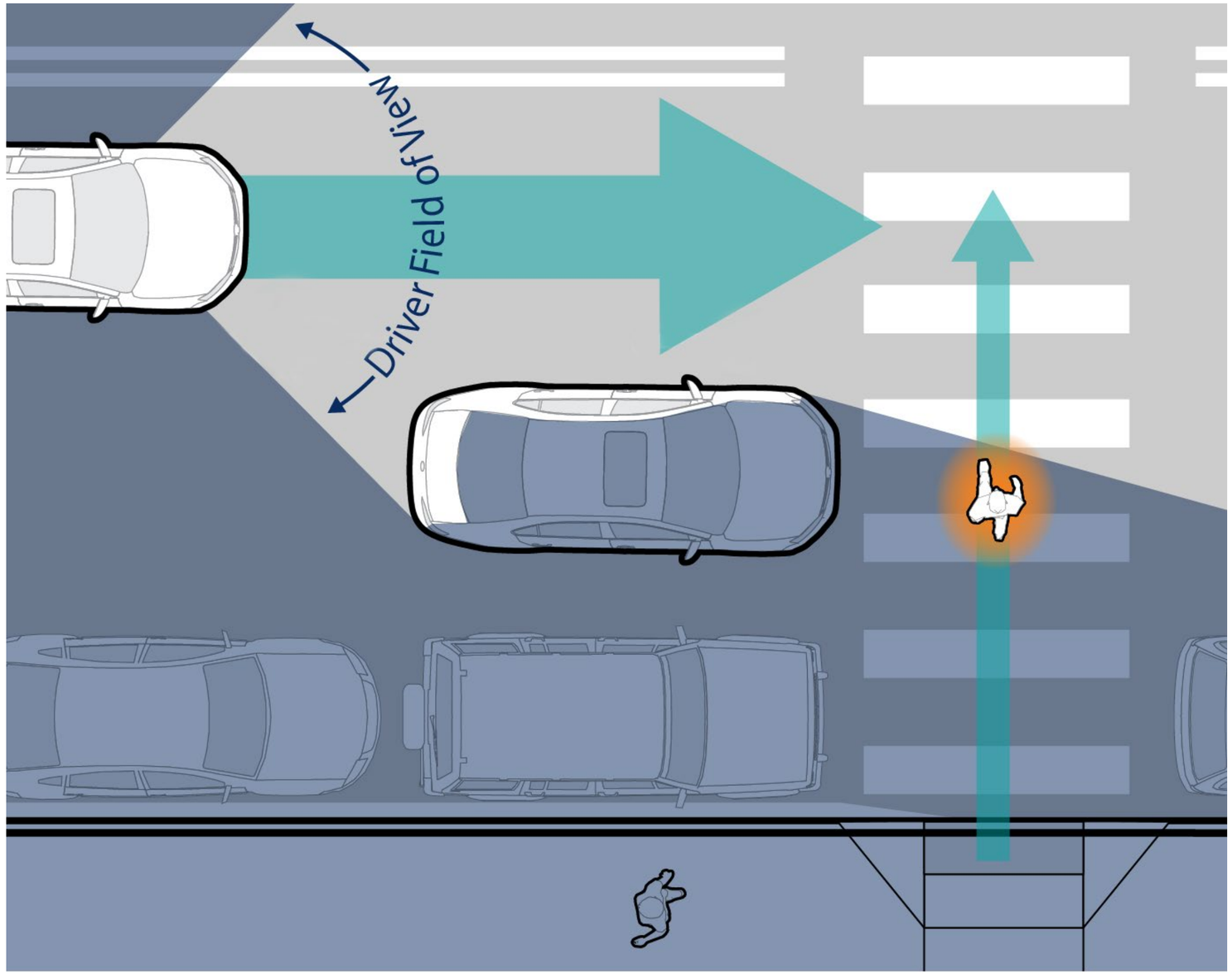
2021

- **Feb 23: Public Launch of Picture Main Street Website**
- **April 14: Community Design Alternatives Meeting**
- **May:** Small Community Group Meetings
- **June 2**: Bike & Ped Subcommittee Meeting
- **June 7:** Business Meeting
- **June 24: Community Preferred Alternative Meeting**
- **Sep 21: Community Forum on East Section**
- **Sep 30: Community Forum on Middle Section**
- **Oct 19: Community Forum on West Section**

Why was this project initiated?

Safety Issues

- MassDOT identified high crash location
- Confusion over travel lanes
- Poor visibility at crossings
- Lack of accessibility
- No dedicated space for cyclists



Additional Considerations

- Accessibility and waiting space for public transit
- Attract business investment
- No designated space for loading
- Planting areas for trees not sufficient
- Subsurface utilities need improvements

What do we want to accomplish?

Goal 1: Improve Safety and Access for All

- Narrow the roadway
- Delineate travel lanes and crossings
- Improve visibility with geometry changes and lighting
- Improve accessibility
- Provide dedicated space for people on bikes

Goal 2: Promote a Vibrant and Attractive Downtown

- Widen sidewalks
- Support businesses with space for:
  - Outdoor displays
  - Outdoor dining
  - Additional bench seating
- Provide flexible curbside space

Goal 3: Create a Functional, Enduring, and Sustainable Streetscape

- Renew surfaces
- Address utilities
- New tree planting with:
  - Sufficient soil volume
  - Room for root and canopy growth
- Infiltrate stormwater

MassDOT Design Guides and Policies

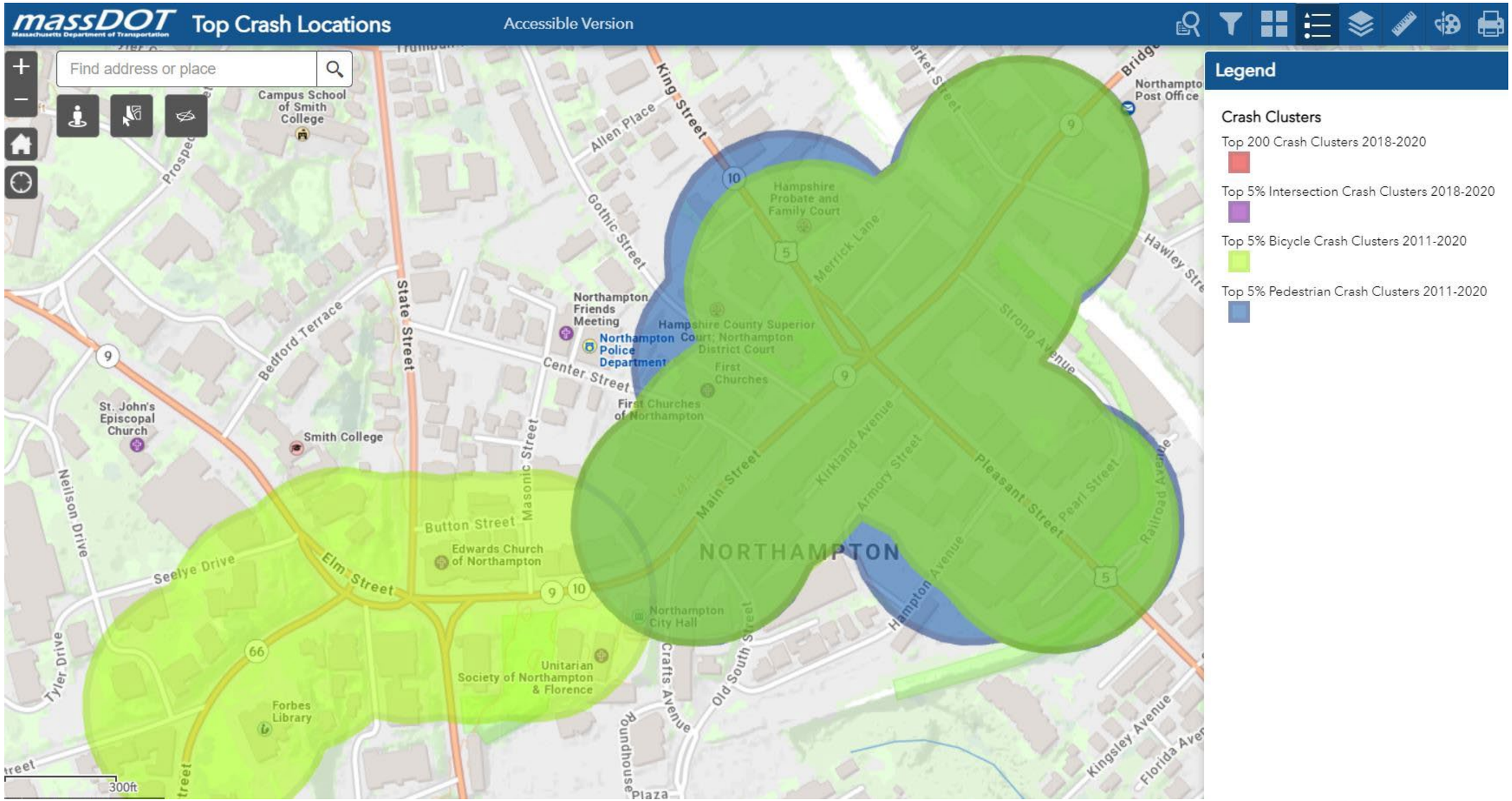
MassDOT Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide – (https://www.mass.gov/doc/cover-introduction-and-table-of-contents/download)

MassDOT Healthy Transportation Policy Directive - (https://www.mass.gov/doc/healthy-transportation-policy-directive/download)

Massachusetts Vulnerable User Law

(https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-general-laws-c90-ss-14#updates-)

MassDOT Crash Map – Main Street, Northampton, MA



https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/topcrashlocations/

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What alternatives were considered?

Alternatives

- Four (4) alternatives were presented to the public in April 2021
- They varied by number of travel lanes and configurations of parking and bike lanes
- They were evaluated through criteria aligned with the project's goals
- Public was surveyed on importance of each criteria and ranking of each alternative

Picture Main Street Website

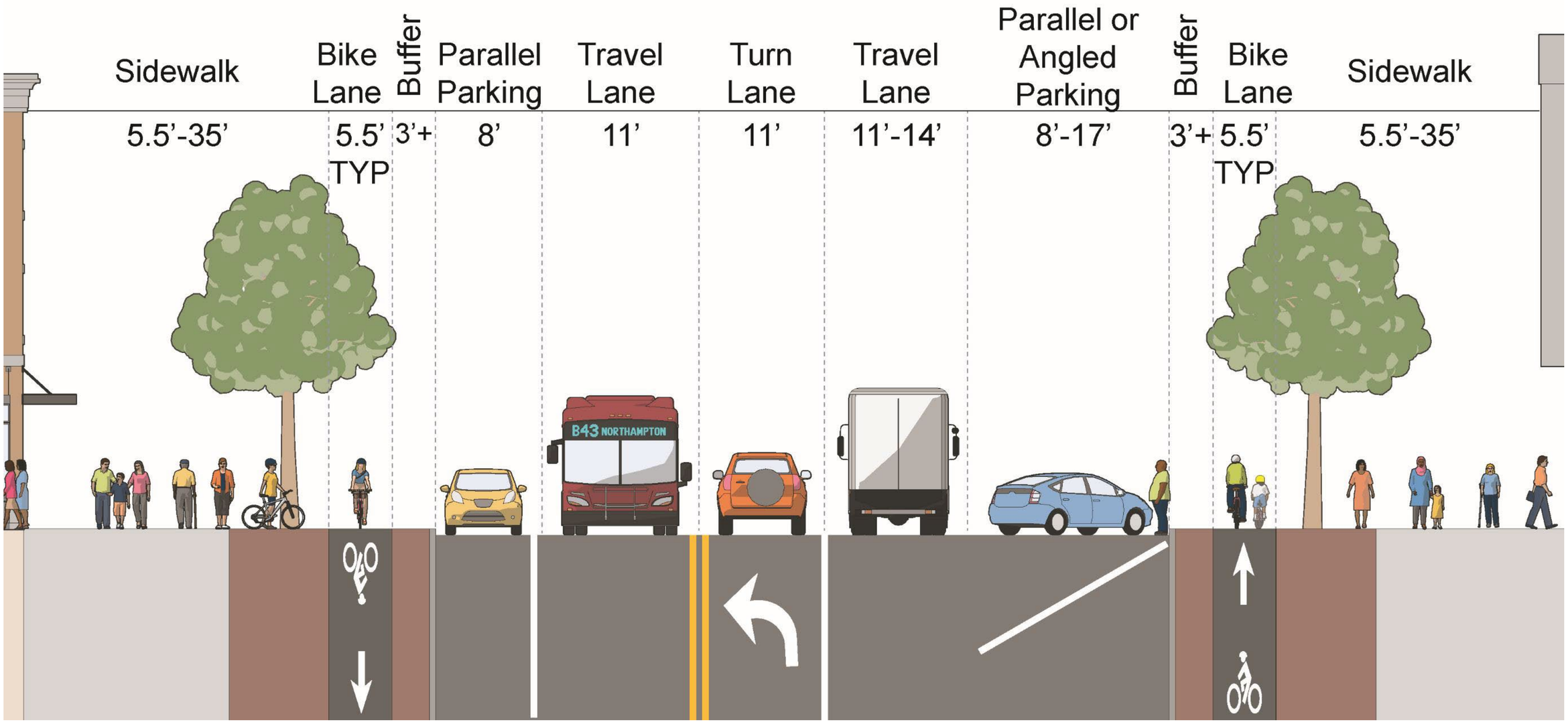
For full details on all alternatives, visit the project website: Scan the QR code, or type the URL link below into your browser

https://tinyurl.com/PictureMainStreet

What is the preferred alternative?

Preferred Alternative

Three vehicle lanes with expanded sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and mix of parallel and angled parking



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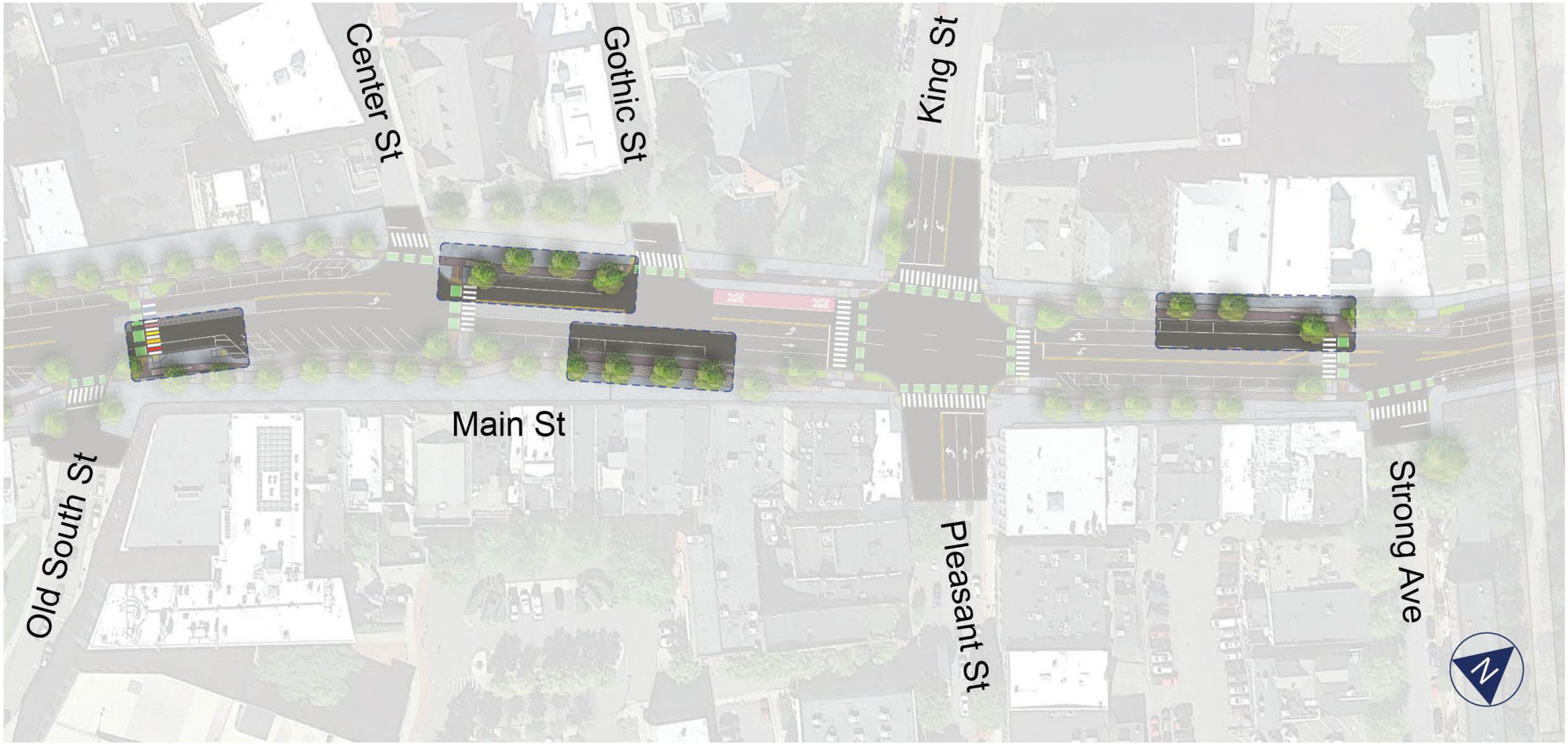
Flex Zones

Timed zones for both loading and pick-up/drop-off or parking



Public Parking

How is parking changing?

- 130 total existing on-street spaces in Main Street project area today
- 57 on-street spaces removed
- 73 total proposed on-street spaces after reconstruction
- 4 flex zones added for loading, parking, pick-up / drop-off

Sufficient parking will be available for the public to access the Main Street area

How is parking remaining the same?

- 400 additional on-street parking spaces within a 5-minute walk of Main Street
- 1,000 additional off-street spaces in public lots and garages

Updated City parking management policy

Scan QR code or type link below for details on City parking changes:

https://www.northamptonma.gov/1543/New-Parking-Changes

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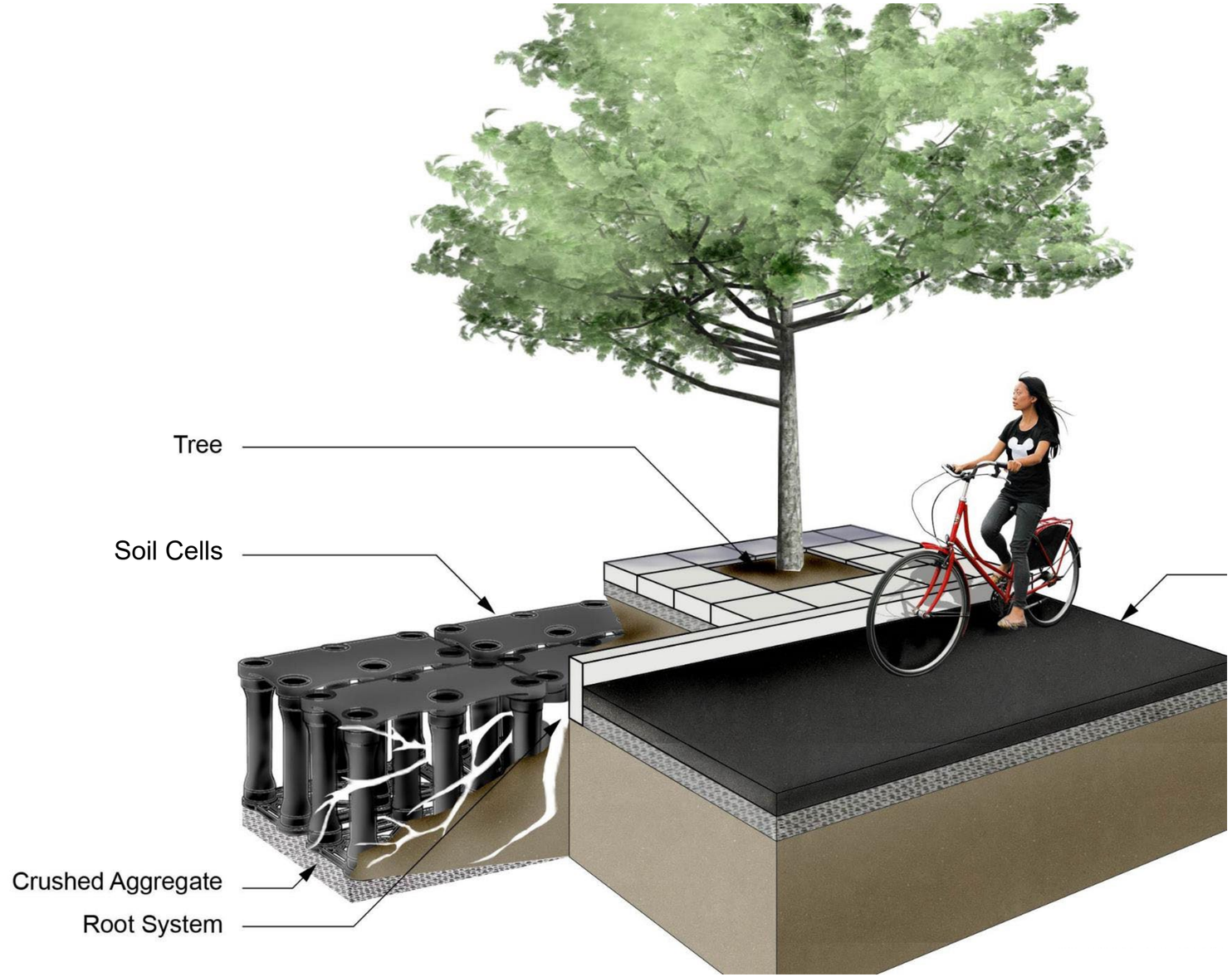
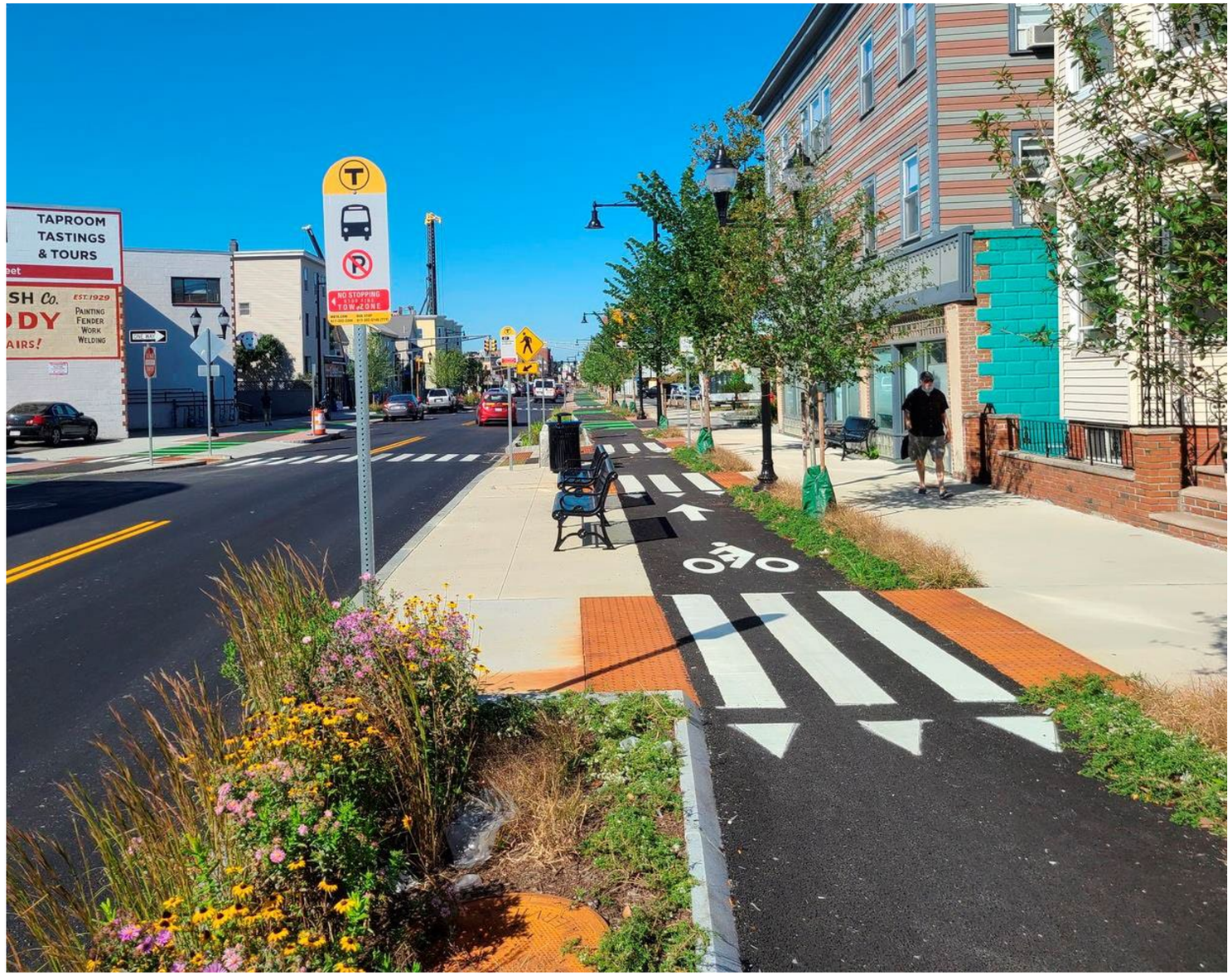
Sidewalk & Trees

- Wider sidewalks for easier travel and more amenity space
- Some tree preservation. Most trees removed due to poor health or location
- Significant new tree planting
- Increased soil volume with:
  - Connected trench
  - Structural soil and/or soil cells



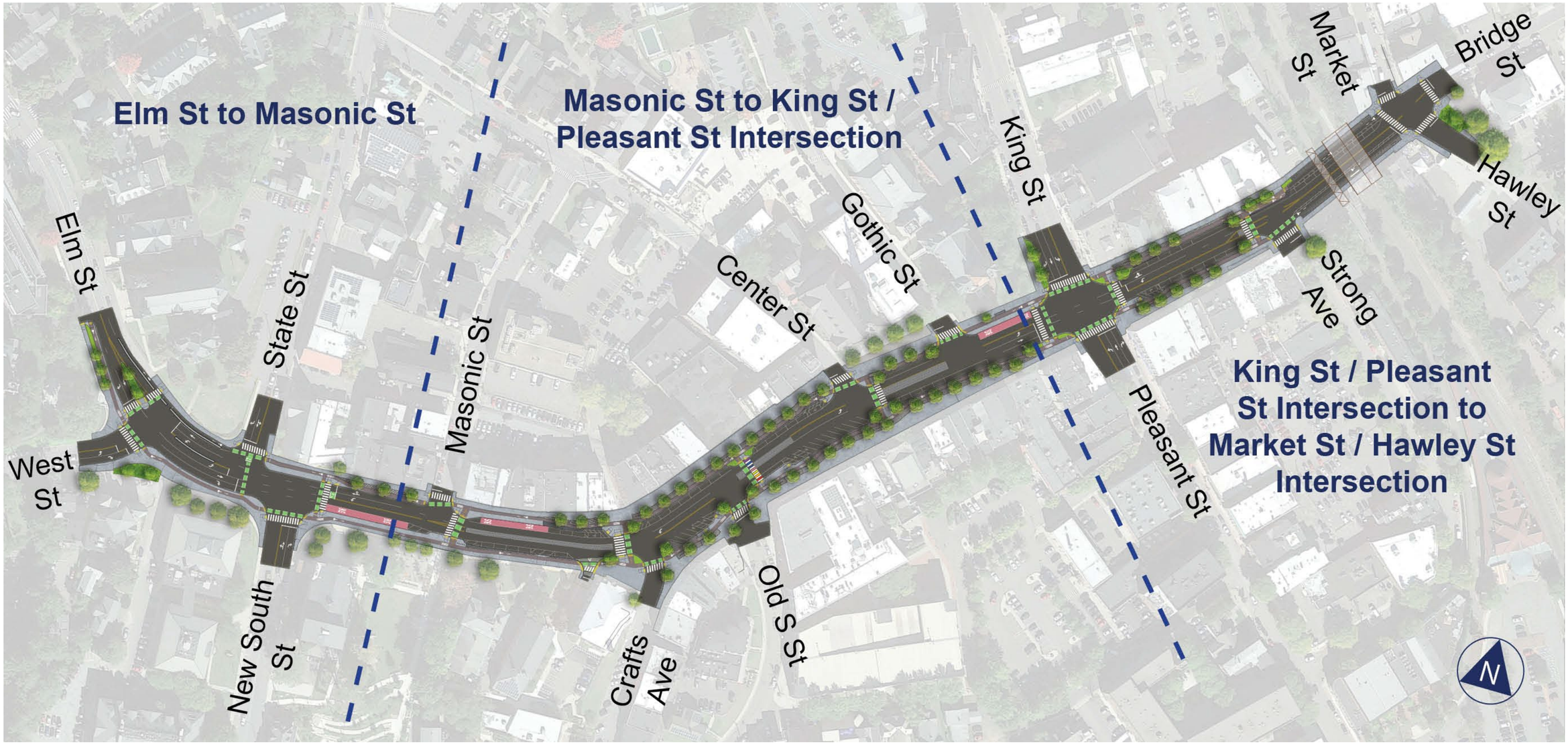
Bus Stops

- Clarified space for bus queuing at Pulaski Park, Masonic Street, and Court House stops
- Additional space for people waiting on the sidewalk
- Waiting areas are 8’ deep for accessible bus entry/exit
- Bike lanes directed behind waiting areas



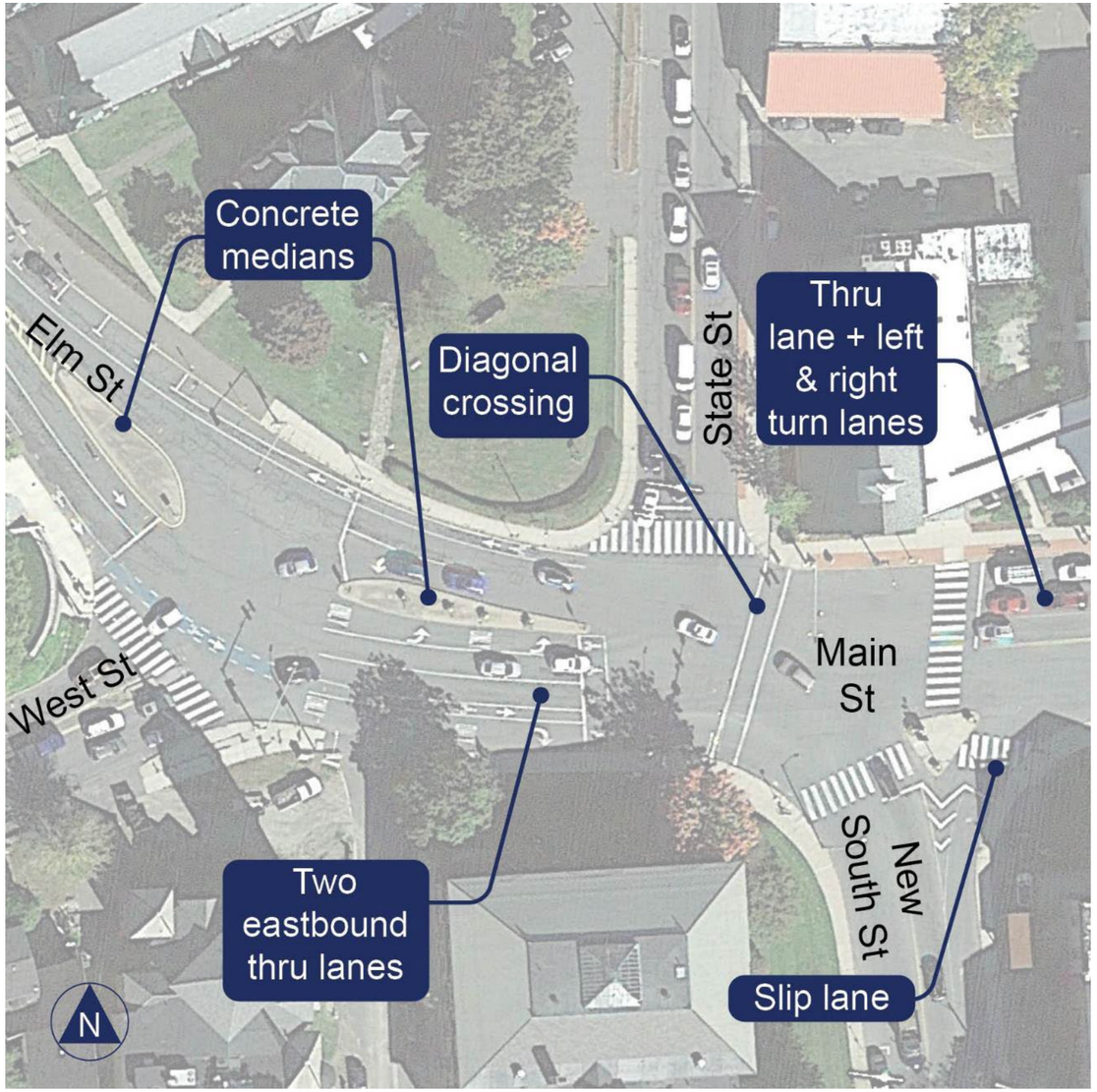
Sections of Main Street

Overview Plan



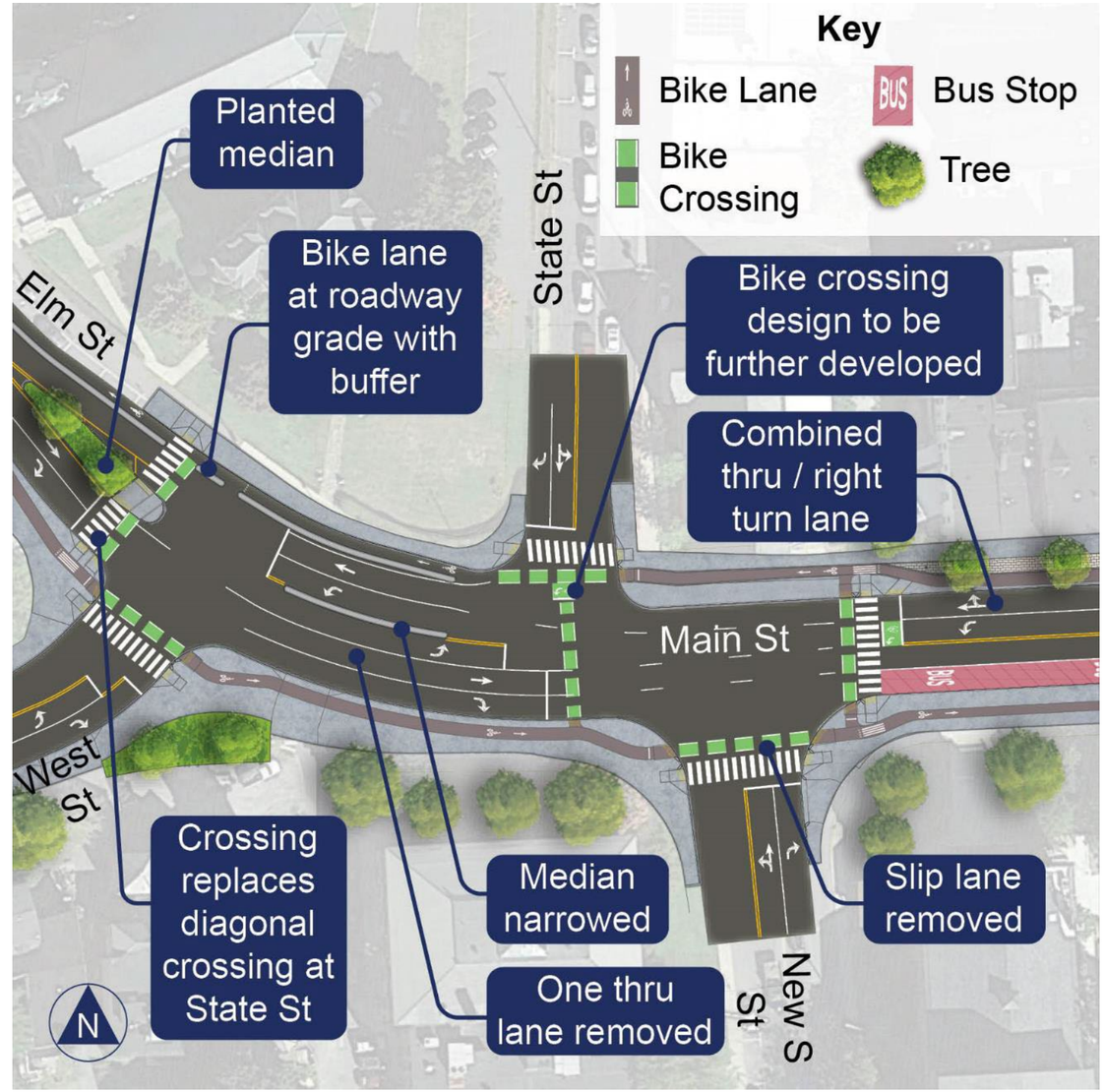
Elm / West / State / New South

Before



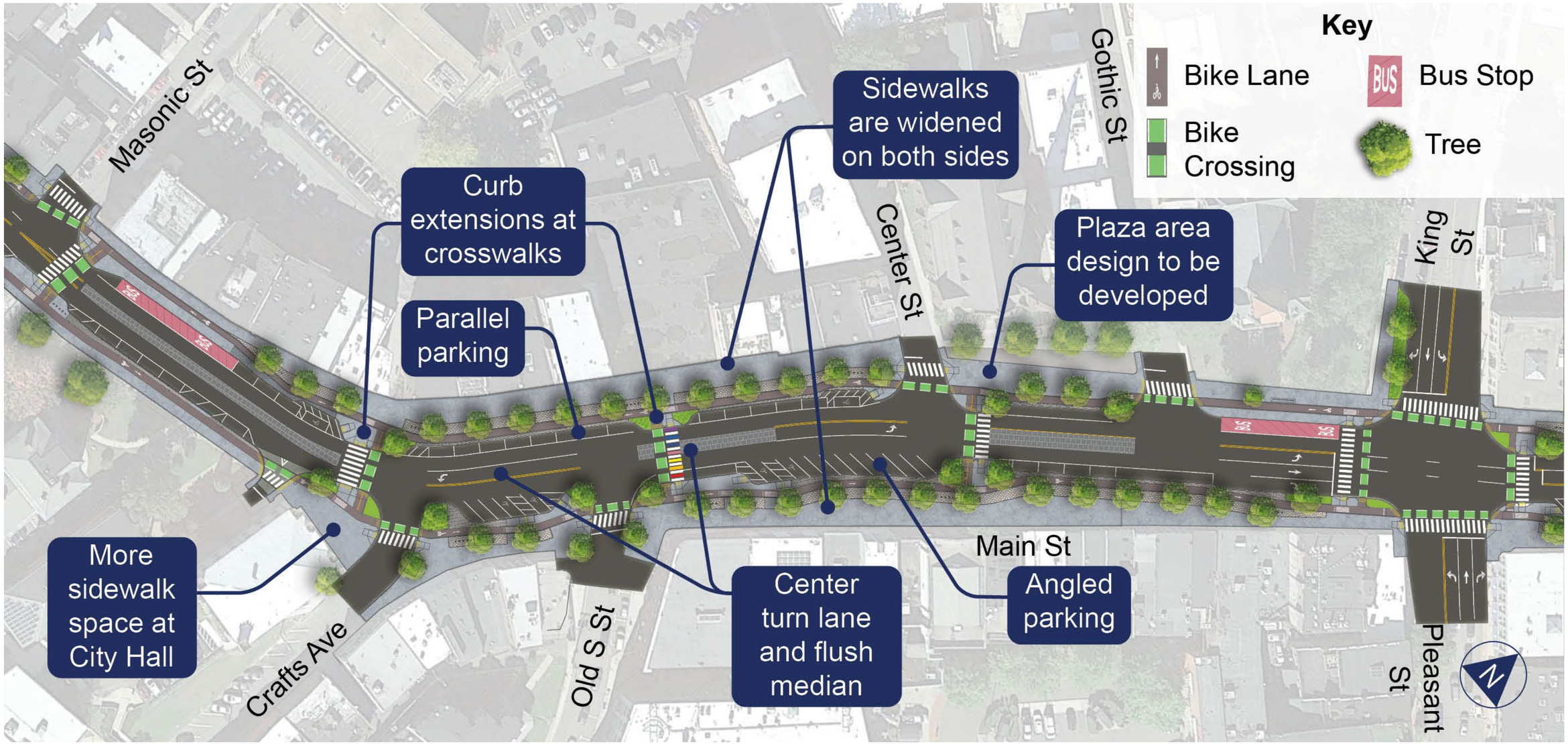
Elm / West / State / New South

After



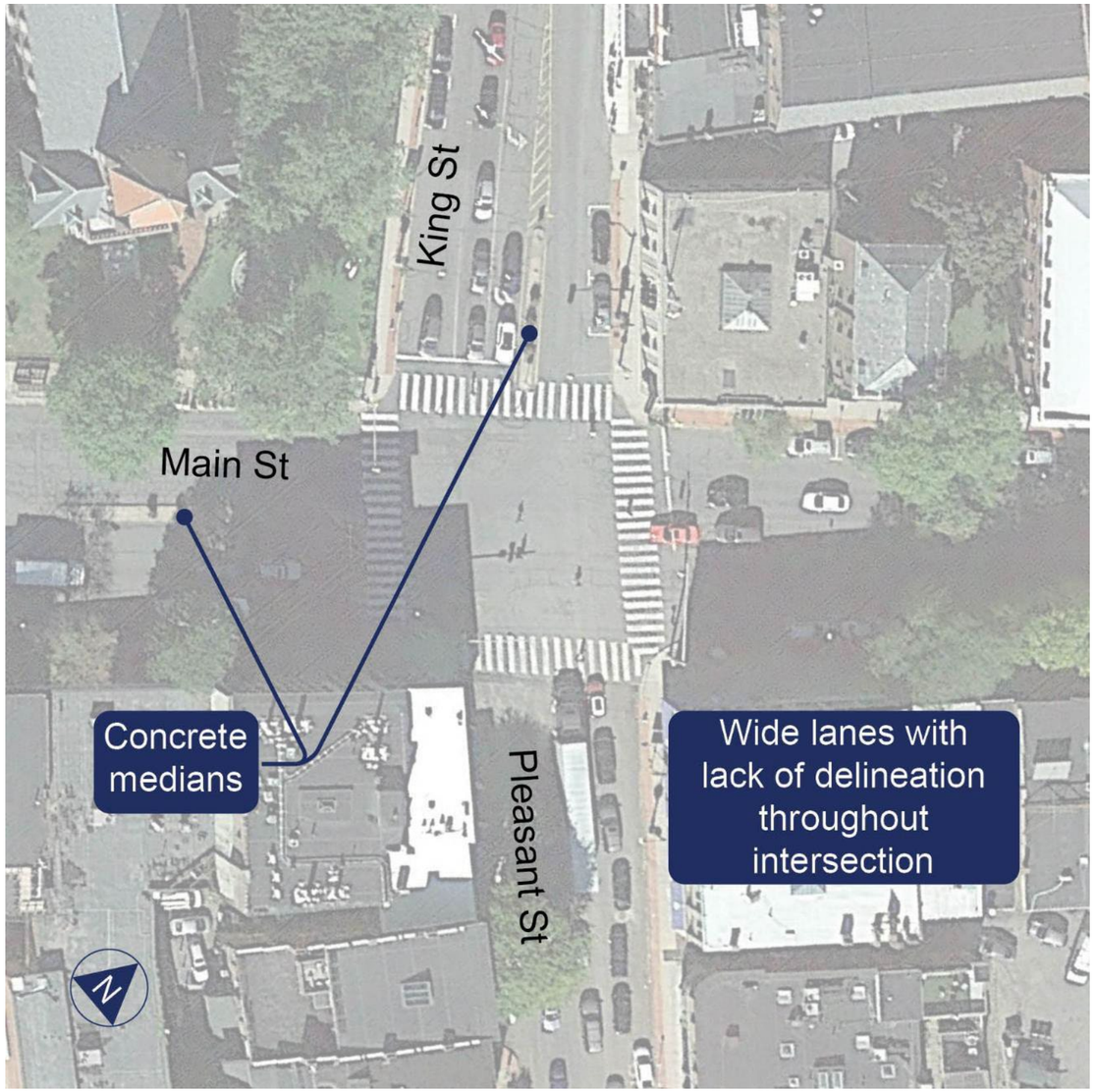
Preferred Alternative

Masonic Street to Intersection of Main St with King St and Pleasant St



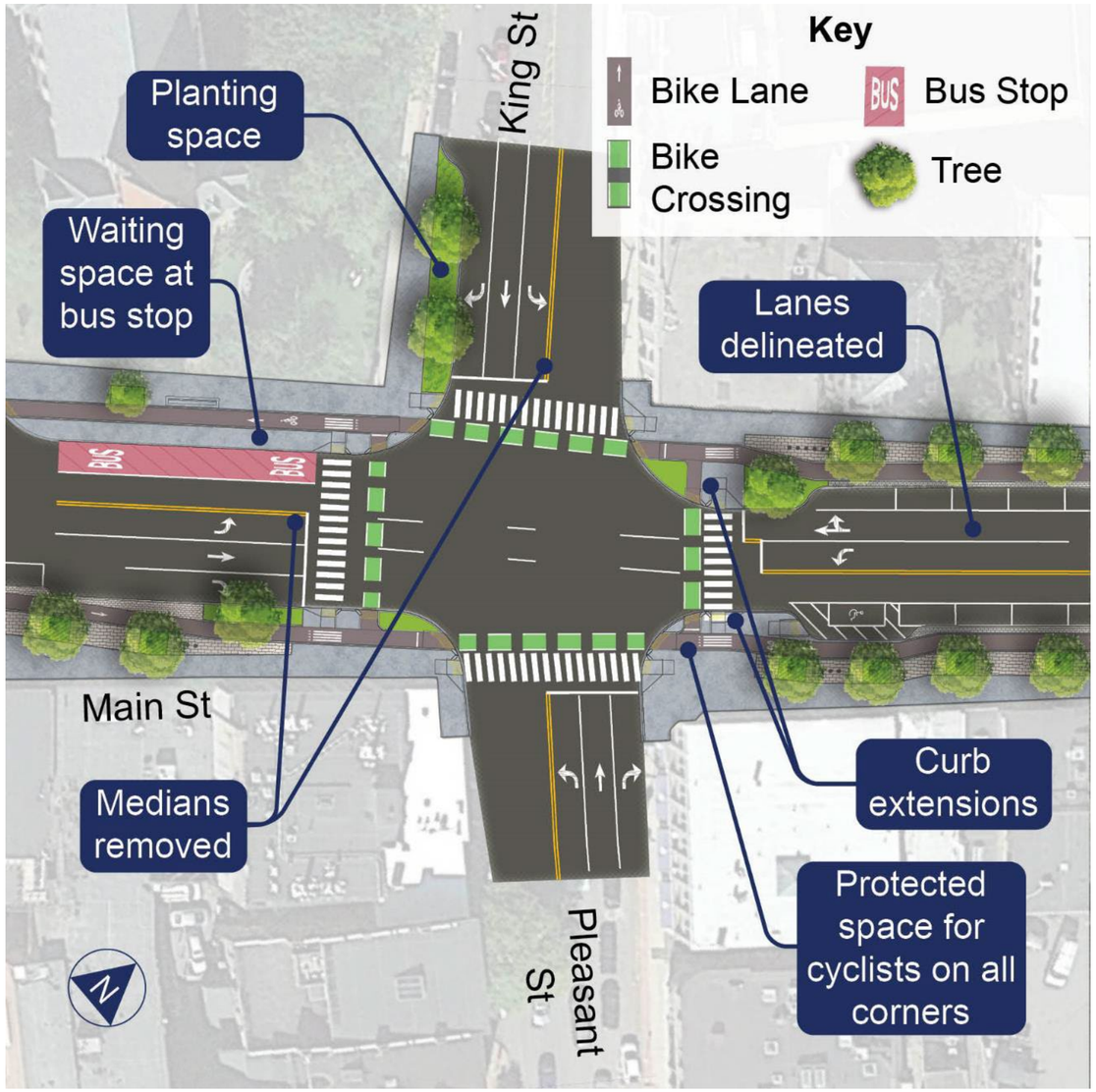
King / Pleasant

Before



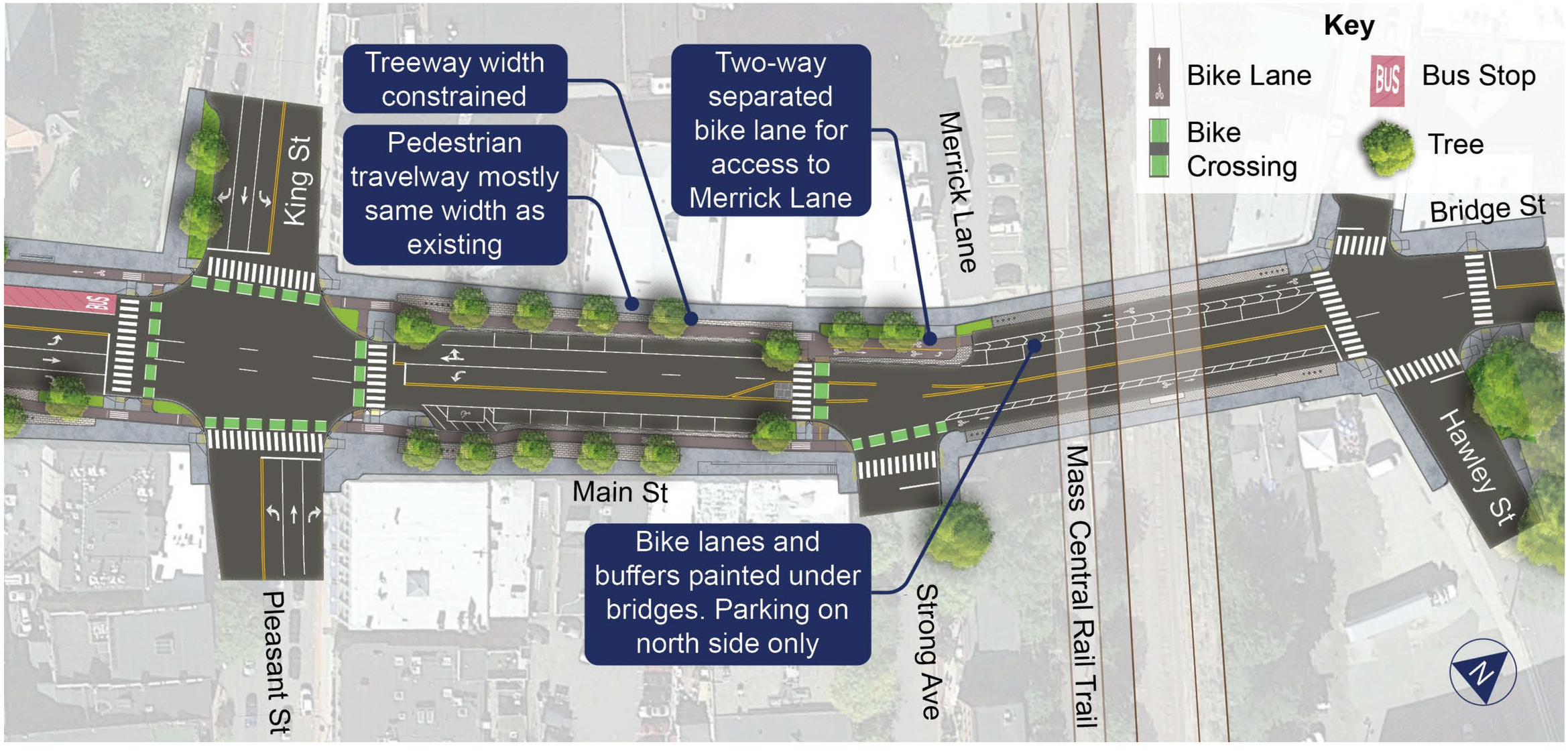
King / Pleasant

After



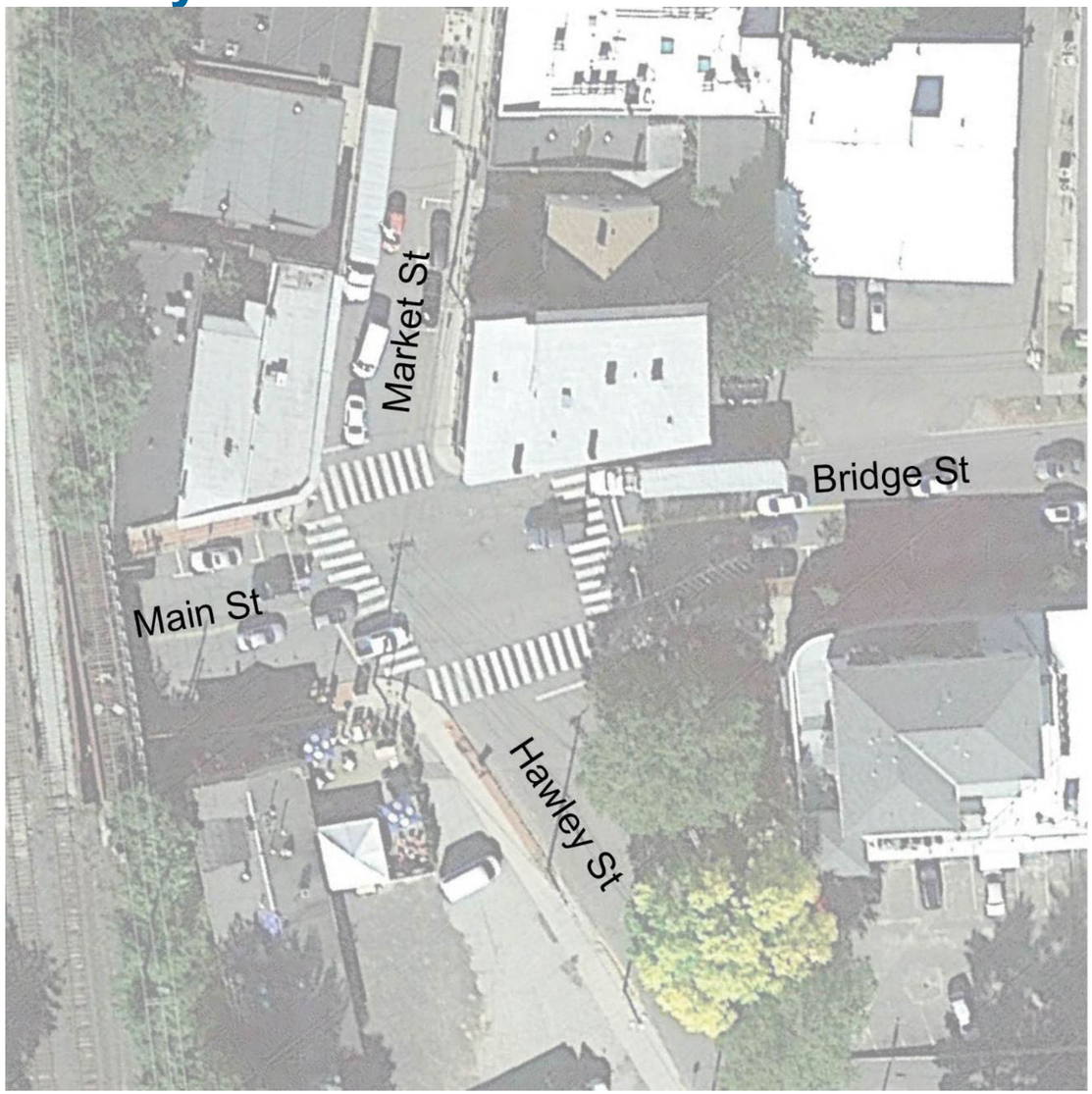
Preferred Alternative

King St / Pleasant St intersection to Market St / Hawley St intersection



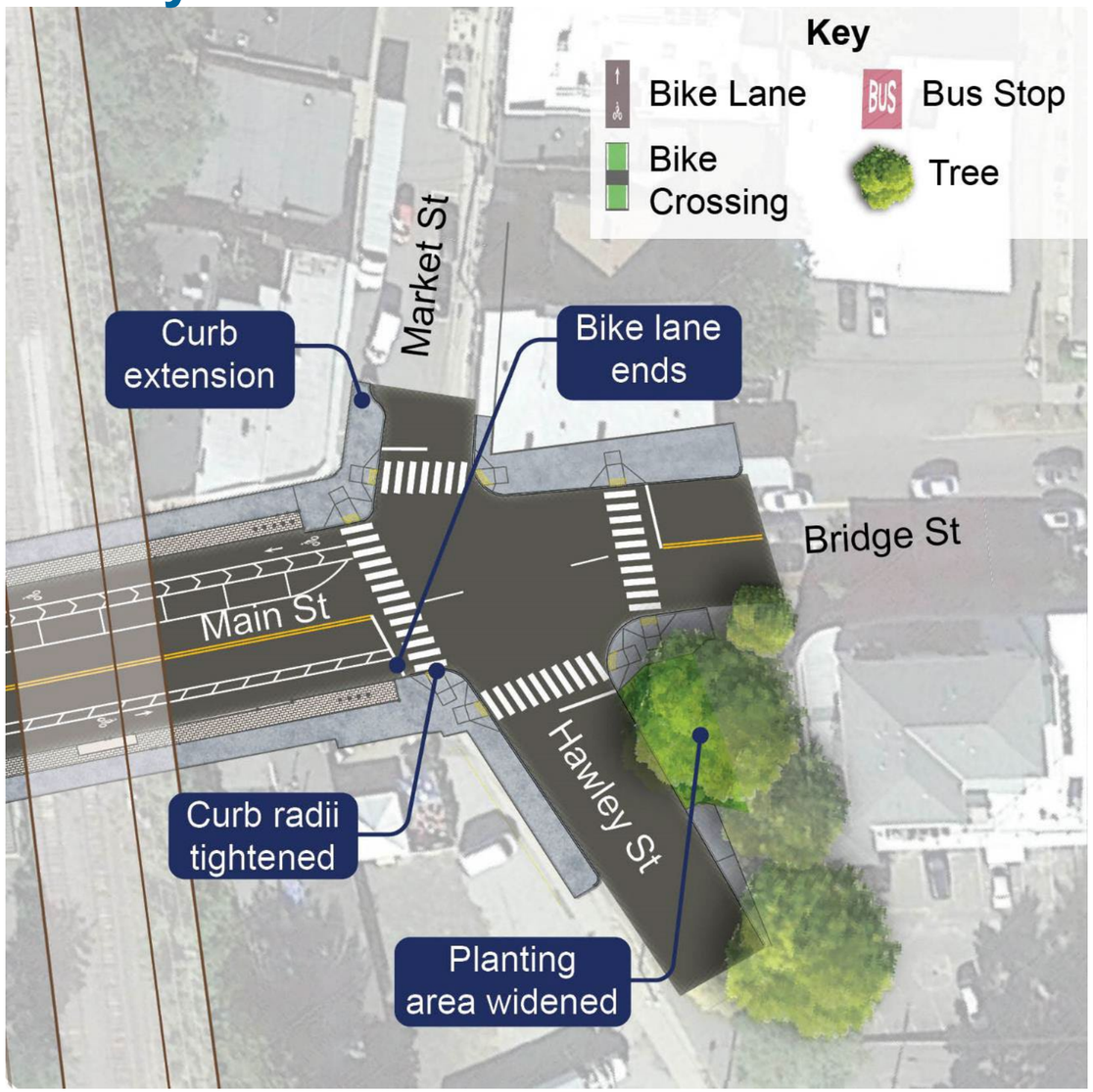
Market / Hawley

Before



Market / Hawley

After



How will your property be impacted?

Preliminary Right of Way (ROW) Discussion – 25% Design

- The City of Northampton is responsible for acquiring all necessary rights in public and private land for design, construction, and implementation of this project
  - Current design plans show 3 fee takings and 12 temporary construction easements
  - The ROW status may change as the design progresses
- Affected property owners will be contacted by personnel from the City of Northampton.
  - Property owners are protected under Massachusetts General Laws, primarily Chapter 79
- Preliminary ROW plans will be available for public review and comment at:

  City of Northampton Office of Planning & Sustainability

  210 Main Street, 2nd floor

  Northampton, MA

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What are the environmental, cultural resource, and community impacts?

Preliminary Environmental Review and Permitting

Historic:

- No impact to buildings
- Limited right-of-way takings of land

Water:

- No wetlands impacts
- Improving stormwater conditions

Endangered/Threatened Species:

- No critical habitat in project zone
- Endangered or threatened species, such as northern long-eared bat, within the County

Permits generally to be completed as part of 75% Design phase

Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Review

- Public shade tree removal above threshold of 5 trees
- Project includes Environmental Justice areas
- Environmental Notification Form will be filed followed by Environmental Impact Report
- Both have a public comment period of 37 days

Where do we go from here?

Our next steps: preliminary schedule

1

April 26, 2023

25% design public hearing

2

2023

- Complete 75% design
- File environmental permits

3

2024

Final design

4

Fall 2025

Construction begins

How will we keep you informed?

How to reach us

Submit written comments to:

Carrie Lavallee, P.E. Chief Engineer
MassDOT
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attention: Highway Design, PROJECT FILE NO. 609286

Submit email comments to:

MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us

For project information, visit the MassDOT Highway events website at:

https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-transportation/events

OR

<<< Scan the QR code

Questions and answers

Questions and Answers

- "Raise your hand" to be unmuted for verbal questions (Alt + Y)
- Submit your questions and comments using the Q&A button (Alt + H)
- 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 take a few minutes to complete the survey after the hearing to let us know how your experience was with this virtual hearing

All questions and comments are subject to disclosure for public records. Please use these functions for project related business only.

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Thank You

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