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Byenvini!

McGrath Boulevard Project

Transforming McGrath Highway into a street-level multimodal boulevard

Open House
December 4, 2025

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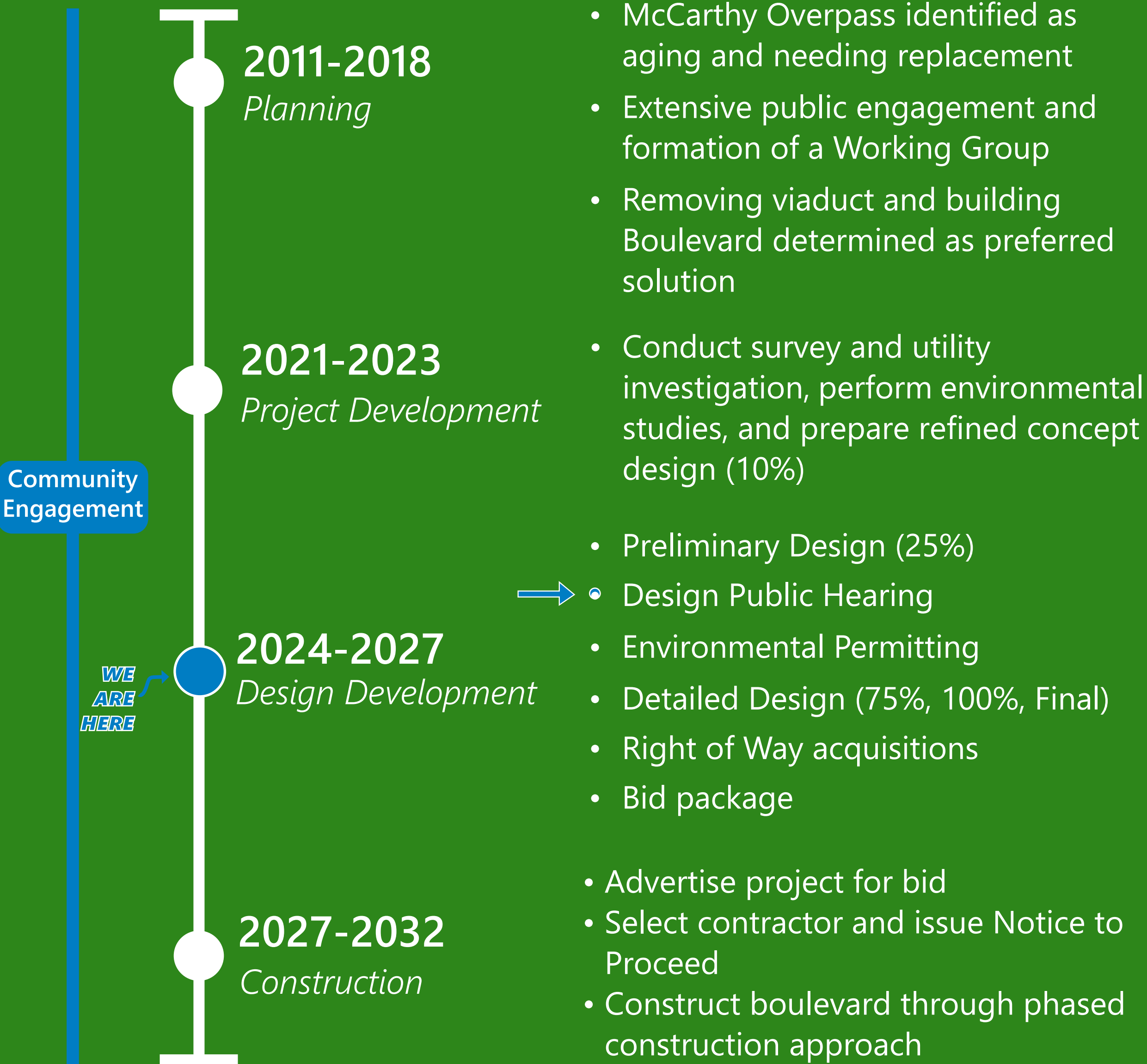


What This Project Will Do

- Remove the elevated overpass on McGrath Highway (Route 28) over Washington Street and replace it with a ground-level road
- Make travel safer for everyone - those driving, walking, biking, and taking transit
- Add green space and support local business



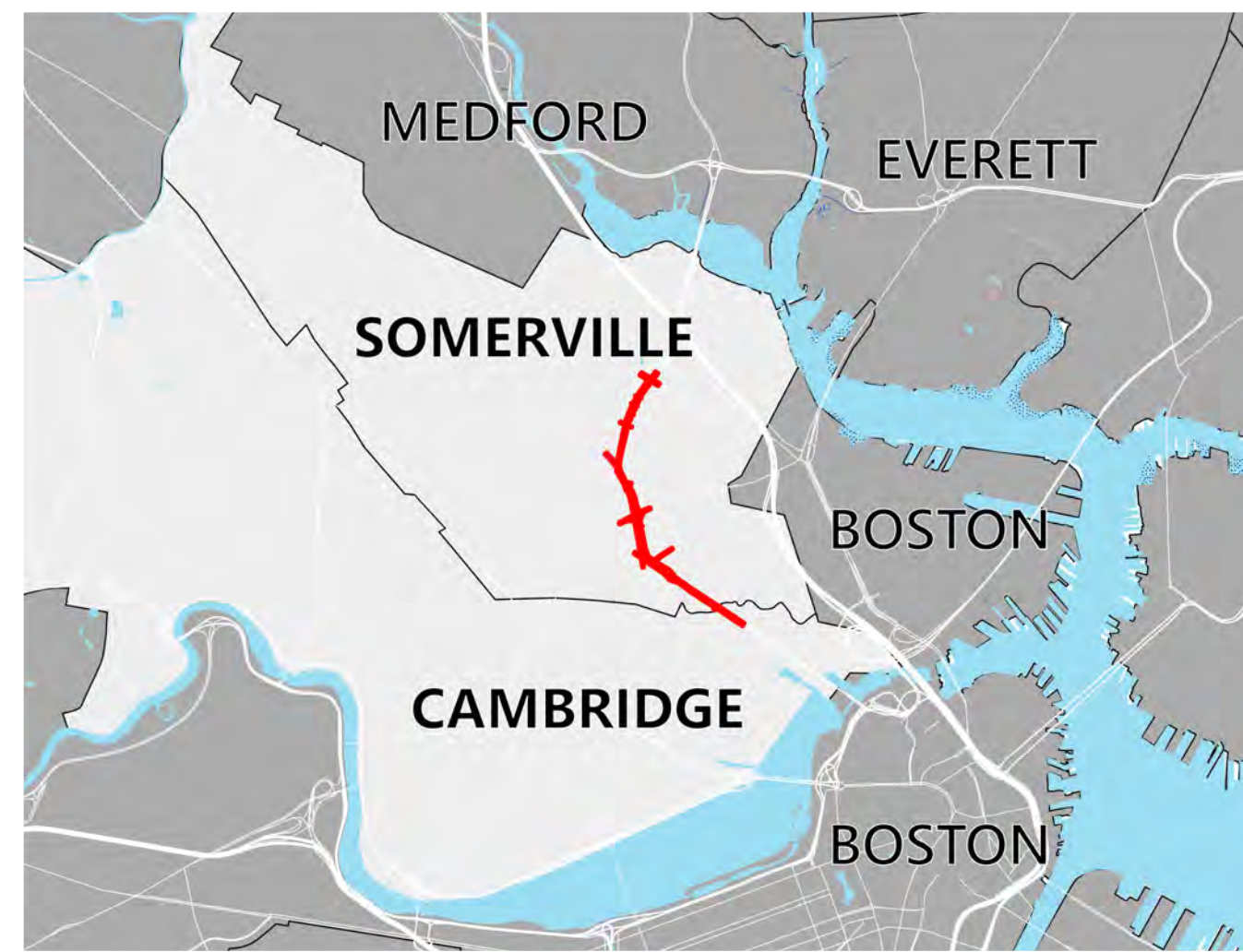
Timeline



McCarthy Overpass at Washington Street - Existing

Washington Street - Planned

Many design options were evaluated including potential cross-sections and intersection configurations. Through a consensus-driven design process, the preliminary design here was selected as the "preferred alternative".



The McGrath Boulevard project stretches roughly 1.5 miles from the intersection with Broadway in Somerville to Third Street in Cambridge.

Draft for conceptual review. Designer's advance notice: this design is preliminary and conceptual despite the hard-line finished style produced by the software program used. Line work does not exactly correspond to the aerial photograph due to the distortion of the orthographic photogrammetry.

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Why This Project Matters



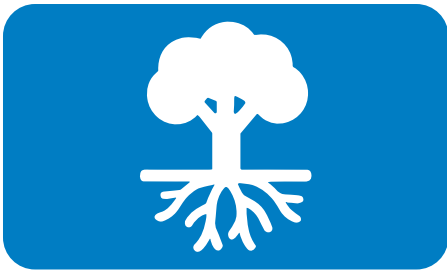
Integrates safety improvements to slow speeds and support Vision Zero



Prioritizes accessible design that removes barriers for those with limited mobility



Adds and improves bicycle and pedestrian facilities supporting sustainable transportation

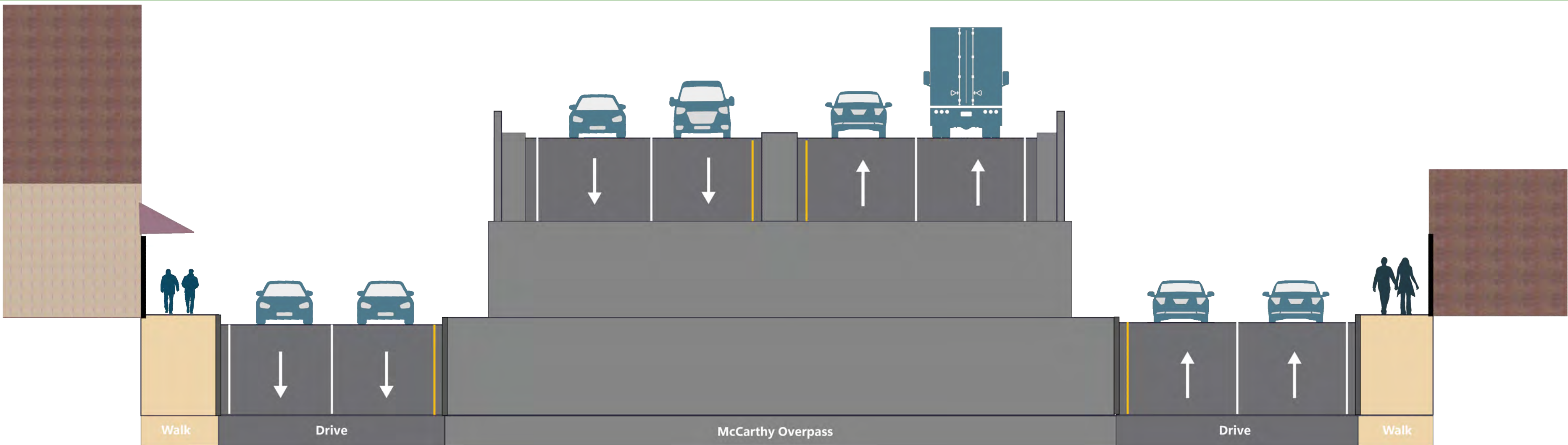


Adds new street trees and decreases impervious surface which will reduce stormwater run-off and cool the surrounding environment

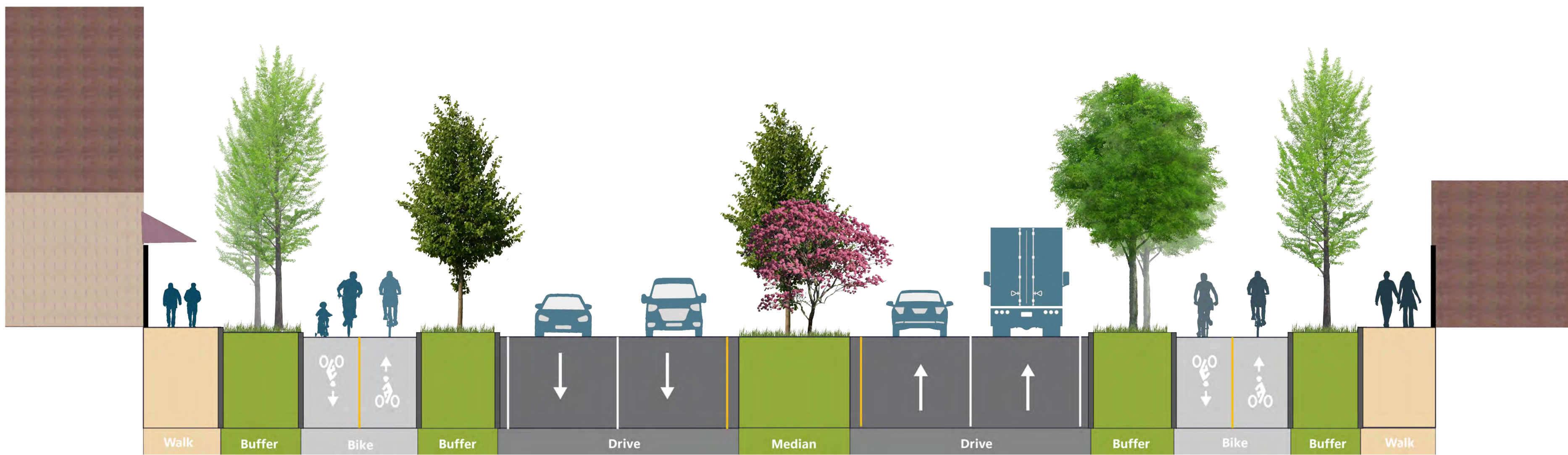


Improves neighborhood connections to nearby amenities by removing the highway overpass

- ## Key Design Elements
- Removal of the elevated highway
 - One travel lane removed from both northbound and southbound, leaving two travel lanes in each direction
 - Separated and buffered bike lanes installed
 - Pedestrian and bike connections improved, including a new at-grade crossing at Cross Street
 - Improved bus service with floating bus stops that accomodate bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Increased green space and shade trees



Existing section view of McGrath Highway at Washington Street, looking north. The McCarthy Overpass carries fast, through-traffic above the street, creating a physical and psychological barrier that divides the community. Sidewalks remain narrow, and bicycle travel is limited to on-road facilities.



Section view of McGrath Boulevard at Washington Street, looking north. The elevated highway is removed and replaced with a multi modal boulevard with separated bicycle and pedestrian accomodations and new planted areas with street trees.

How to Keep in Touch



Scan your phone's camera here to visit the project website

visit: mass.gov/mcgrath-boulevard-project



Contact the project team:
MassDOTMcgrathblvd@dot.state.ma.us

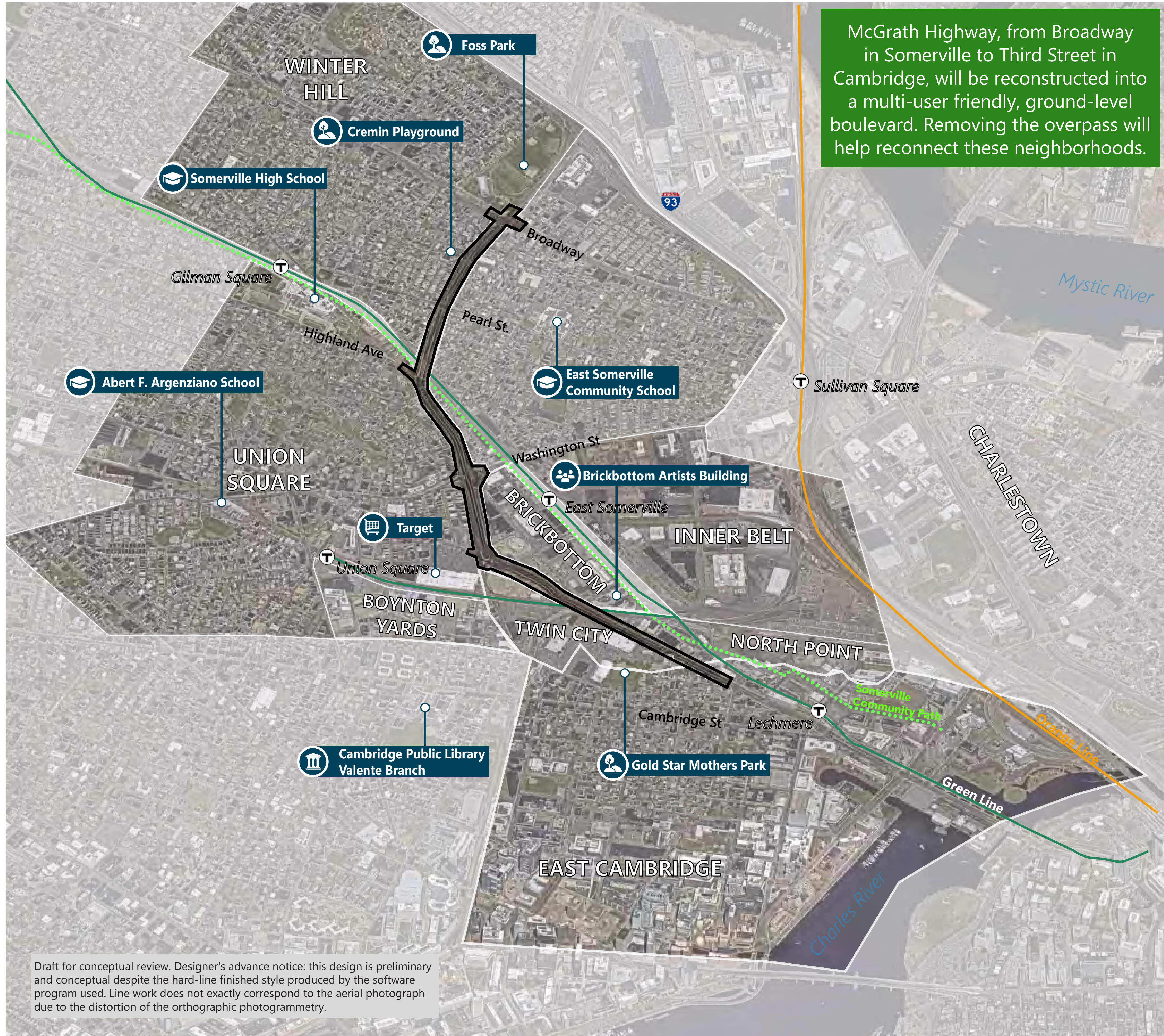
On the project website, **sign up for project email notifications** or **sign up for email list today**



Talk with project staff here today!

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Reconnecting Neighborhoods



McGrath Highway under construction in the 1950's.

When McGrath Highway was built in the 1950s, the goal was to give commuters a quick route into Boston. But the highway also ended up splitting Somerville and Cambridge apart, cutting off neighborhoods like East Somerville, Union Square, and Brickbottom from each other.

The raised highway doesn't just look like a wall — it acts like one. Traffic moves fast, sidewalks and bike lanes are too narrow, and crossing on foot or by bike often feels unsafe. The overpass also brings noise, pollution, and dark, empty spaces that make it unwelcoming.

This project is about fixing those problems. By taking down the overpass and building a boulevard at ground level, we can reconnect our neighborhoods, make walking and biking safer, add trees and green space, and create streets that people actually want to use. The McGrath Boulevard project is about undoing the damage of the past and building a healthier, safer future for our community.

While Washington Street connects Brickbottom to Union Square underneath the existing elevated roadway, the experience for pedestrians and bicyclists is unpleasant. Until the state initiative of converting McGrath Highway into a boulevard moves forward, it presents a major challenge to improving the safety and walkability of Brickbottom."

- Brickbottom Neighborhood Plan (2024), p.29

