

I-90 ALLSTON INTERCHANGE

A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

MEPA CONSULTATION MEETING
NOVEMBER 20, 2014 – BRIGHTON HIGH SCHOOL

Today's Agenda

- **1. Overview of the MEPA Process**
- **2. Project Overview**
- **3. Project Design Progress**
- **4. Environmental Impacts and Mitigation**
- **5. Question and Answer**

Public Comment

- Comment on the proposed project must be submitted in writing by December 15, 2014, via email or fax to:

Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Attn: MEPA Office, Holly Johnson (EEA #15278)
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

- Email comments to: Holly.S.Johnson@state.ma.us
- Fax #: (617) 626-1181

MEPA Process Overview

- **MEPA requires state agencies to study the environmental consequences of their actions, including permitting and financial assistance**
- **Requires all feasible measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment**
- **Requires that state agencies minimize damage to the environment by studying alternatives to the proposed project**
- **MEPA review is not a permitting process. MEPA requires public study, disclosure, and development of feasible mitigation**

MEPA Process Overview - Continued

- **Review Threshold Categories (310 CMR 11.03)**
 - **Land, Rare Species, Wetlands, Water, Wastewater, Transportation, Energy, Air, Solid/Hazardous Waste, Historic/Archaeological Resources**
- **MassDOT projects typically exceed thresholds associated with Land, Wetlands and Transportation**

MEPA Applicability

- The project is being both funded and permitted by state agencies
- MEPA jurisdiction is broad in scope (not limited to one area of environmental impact)
- MassDOT has consented to voluntary filing of Environmental Impact Report
- ENF Review Thresholds:
 - Tidelands: New non-water dependent use of filled tidelands
 - Transportation: Construction of new roadway $\frac{1}{4}$ or more miles
 - Transportation: Widening of existing roadway by 4 or more feet for $\frac{1}{2}$ or more miles

MEPA Process Schedule

- **Filed with MEPA: October 31**
- **Public Notice of Environmental Review in Newspapers:**
 - **October 31 – El Planeta (Spanish Language)**
 - **November 3 – Boston Globe and Boston Herald**
 - **November 7 – Allston Brighton Tab**
- **Noticed in Environmental Monitor: November 5**
- **Site Visit and Consultation: November 20 (today's meeting)**
- **Comments Due: December 15**
- **ENF Certificate Issued: December 24**

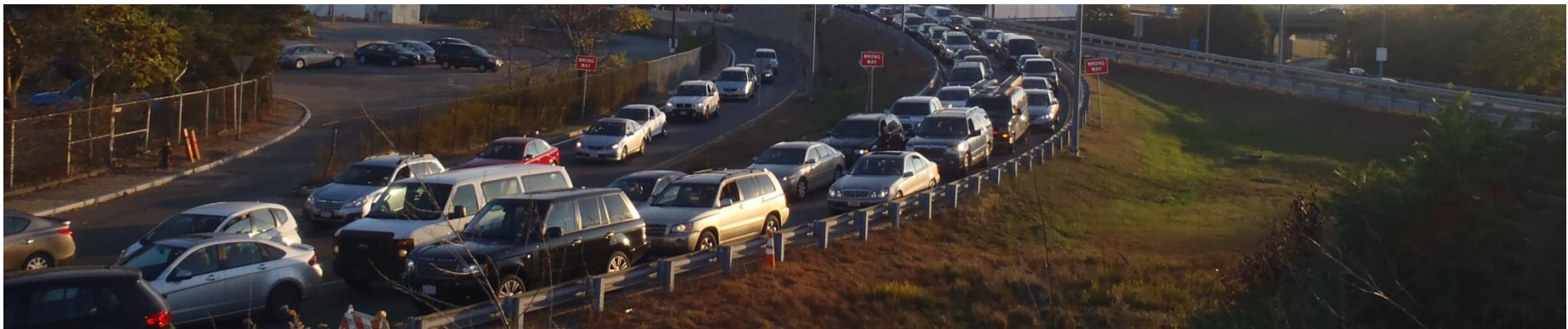
Project Overview

I-90 Allston Interchange Project Area



Project Purpose

- To replace existing viaduct and reduce maintenance costs
- To improve the flow of traffic through the project area
- To improve safety along I-90 by removing the existing toll plazas and providing geometric features in compliance with Highway Design Standards
- To improve safety within the project area by providing improvements at affected intersections



Project Purpose (cont.)

- To reduce congestion and offer alternative (or non-motorized) modes of transportation, addressing local and regional air quality
- To provide the infrastructure to support construction of West Station and commuter rail services
- To enhance infrastructure to support alternative (or non-motorized) modes of transportation within the project area.



I-90 Allston Interchange - Shared Priorities

- ✓ *Improve safety for all modes: walking, cycling, driving, transit*
- ✓ **Realign I-90**
- ✓ **Context sensitive design or:**
 - ✓ **Lessen impact of interchange**
 - ✓ **Avoid inducing cut-through traffic with new configuration**
 - ✓ **Reconnect sections of Allston to each other and the River**
- ✓ **Protect the neighborhood during construction**
- ✓ **A more vibrant Cambridge Street that serves all modes**
- ✓ **Accessibility to transit at West Station**

Task Force

- Convened by MassDOT to bring in-depth local knowledge
- Membership:
 - Area residents
 - Local merchants
 - Advocates
 - Elected Officials
 - Institutions
 - Partner agencies
- 10 meetings, beginning in May, last on November 5th
- Member Names and affiliations listed in the ENF

Task Force Influences on Concept Development

- Overall emphasis on neighborhood cohesion
- Advancement of urban interchange concepts
- Integration and location of West Station into the project
- Incorporation of a shared use path providing a route from North Allston to the Charles River
- Inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the project including connections to the Charles River waterfront, Cambridge, West Station and the Boston University area
- Flexibility for future land use development opportunities

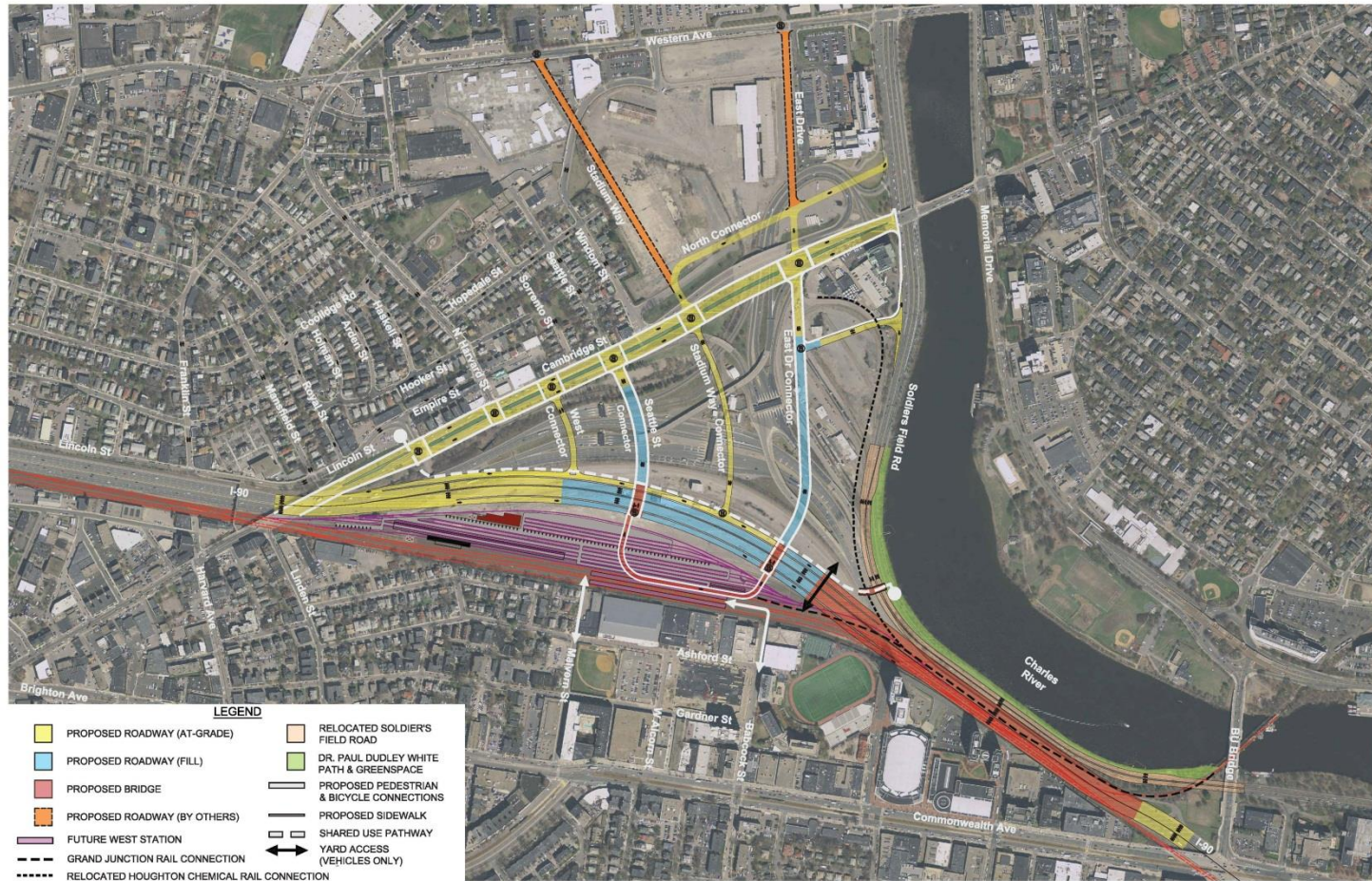
Task Force Influences on Concept Development (cont.)

- **Importance of a traffic design which discourages cut-through traffic on residential streets**
- **Defining the scale of Cambridge Street and including sidewalks, cycle tracks, and on-street parking to create an urban streetscape.**
- **Focus on reducing the impact of the interchange roadways on the surrounding neighborhood.**

I-90 Interchange

- **Interchange Alternative Designs: Alternative 3J-1, 3J-2 and 3J-3**
 - Suburban-type interchange concepts dismissed
 - 3J-1, 3J-2 and 3J-3 best meet goals of the project
 - Preferred concept identified – urban style interchange
 - Reconstruct viaduct to interstate highway design standards with four travel lanes in each direction, with shoulders and breakdown lane
 - Shared-use Pathway - alignment to be determined
 - Realignment of Soldiers Field Road to accommodate bicycle/pedestrian bridge to Paul Dudley White Bicycle Path

Preferred Interchange Concepts - Alternative 3J-1

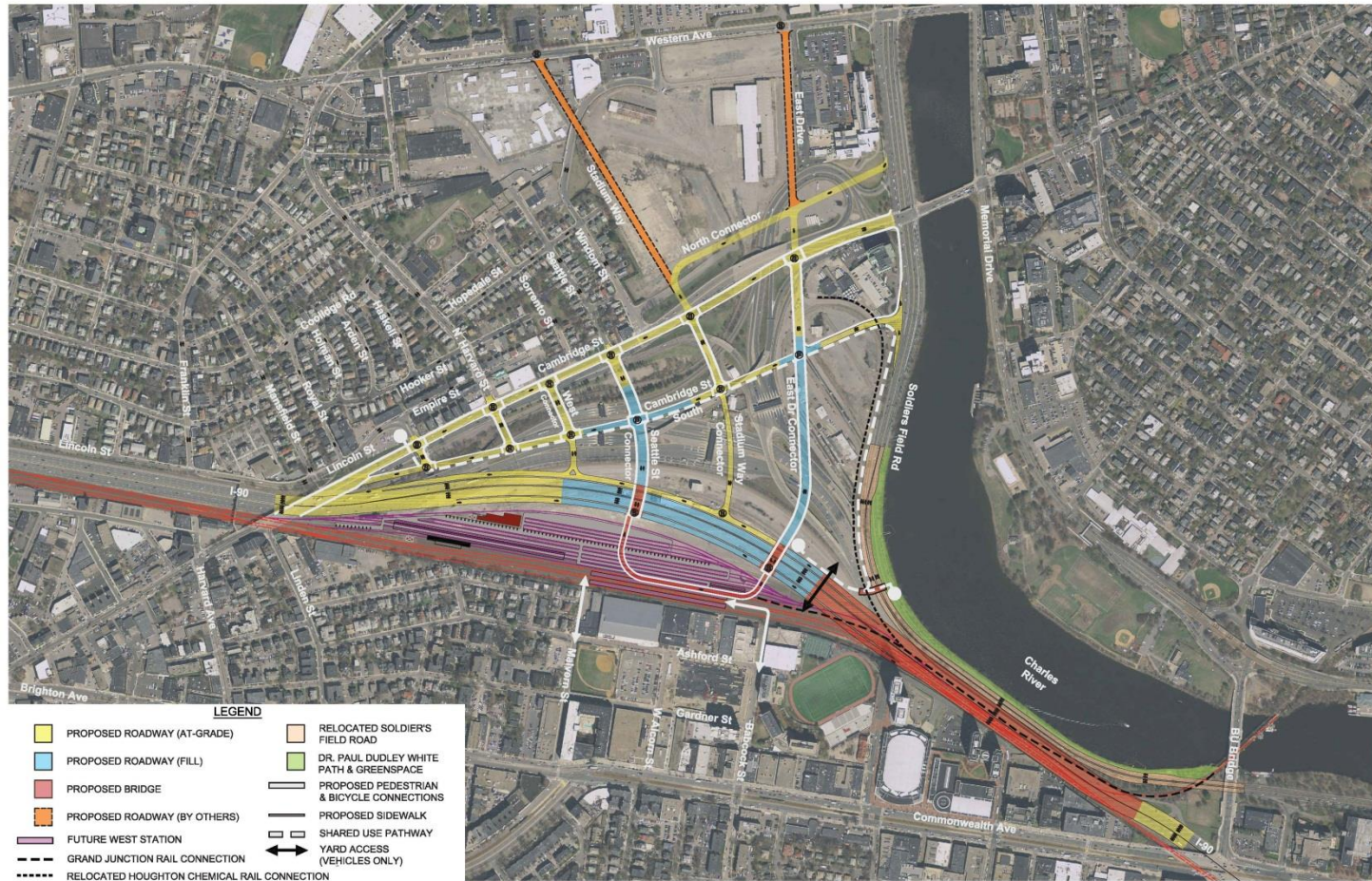


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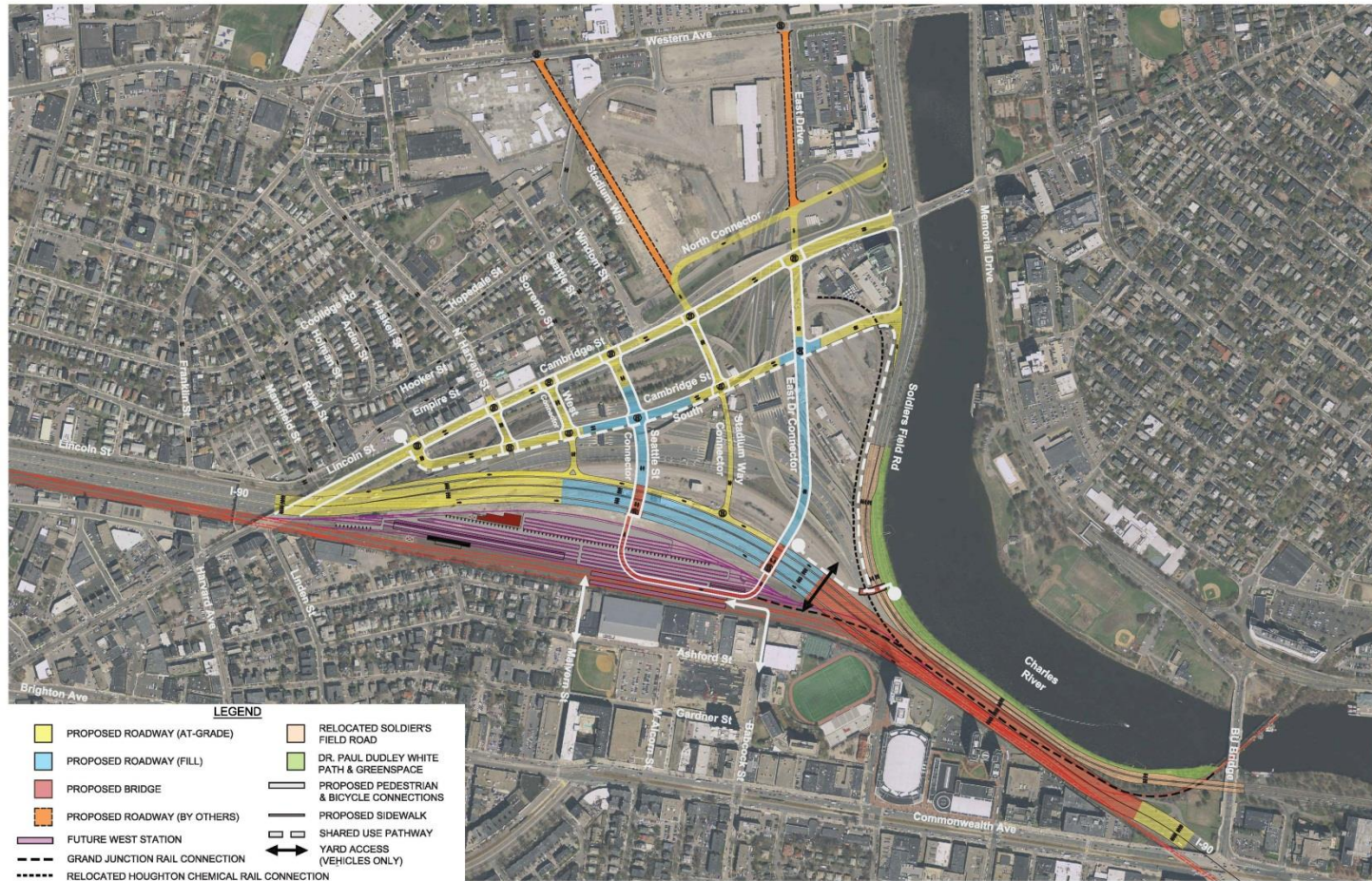
Option 3J-1

FIGURE
11A

Preferred Interchange Concepts - Alternative 3J-2



Preferred Interchange Concepts - Alternative 3J-3

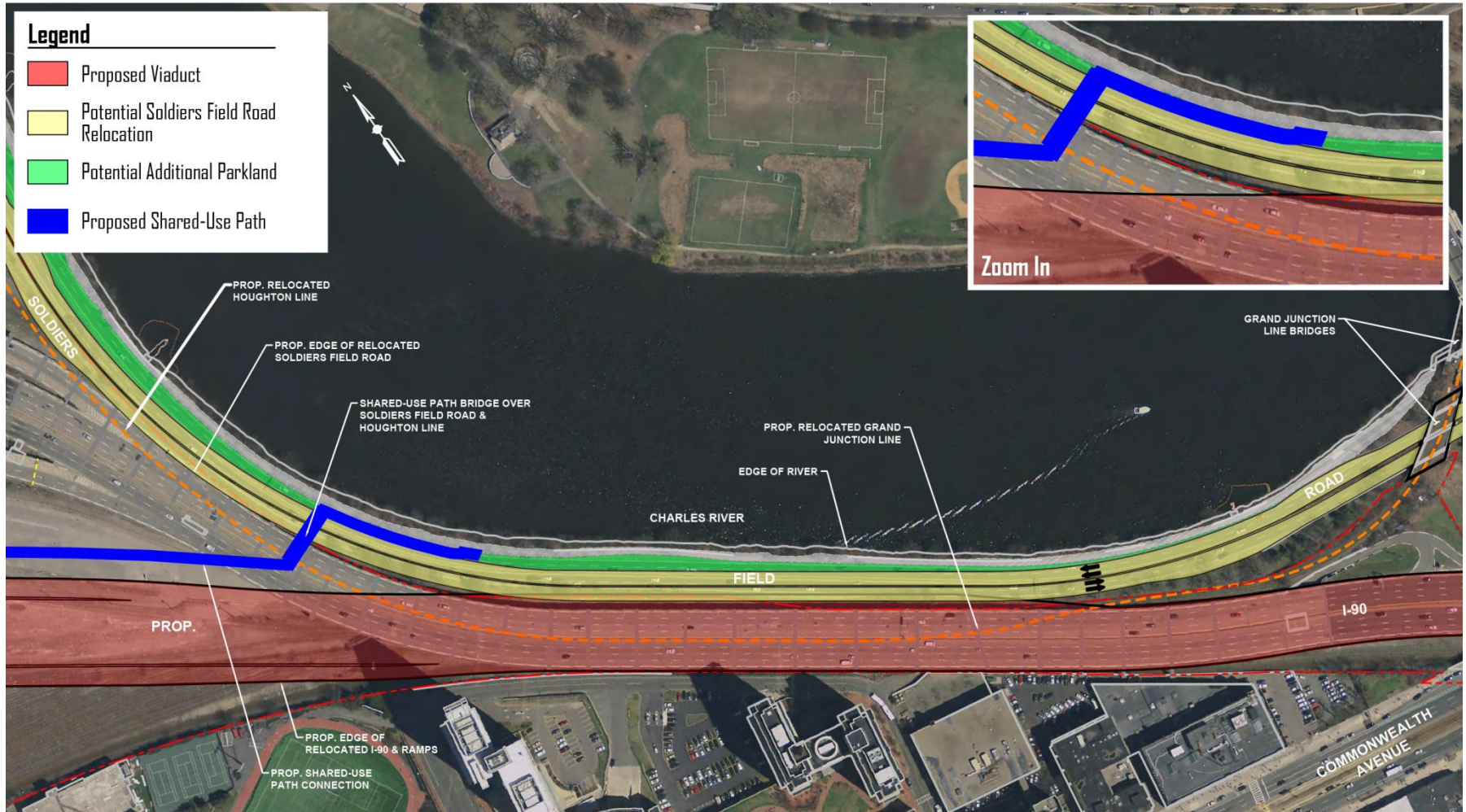


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Option 3J-3

FIGURE
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Soldiers Field Road - Relocation



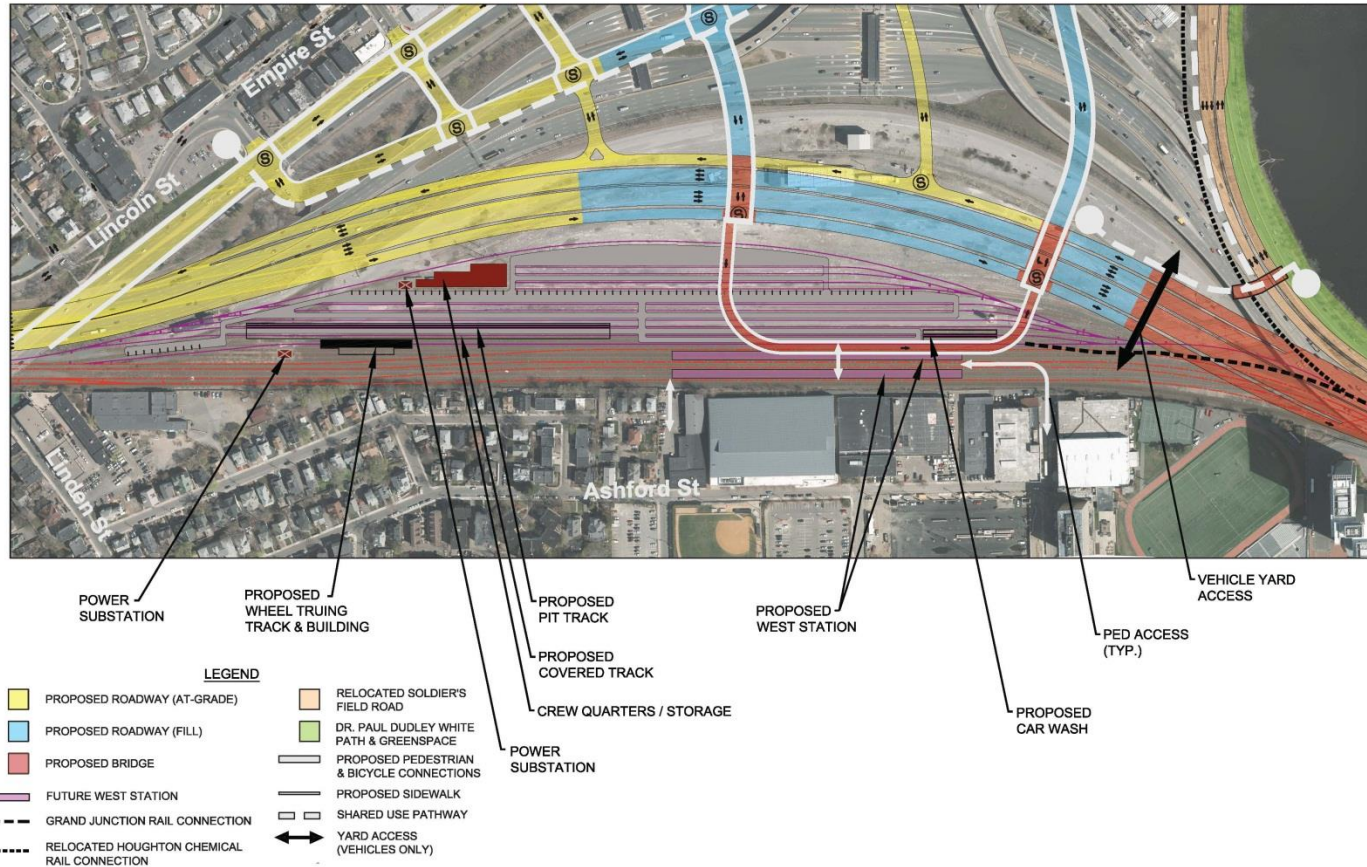
West Station

- **West Station Conceptual Design**
 - Two tracks with four platforms
 - Bus loop on viaduct accessing mezzanine level of station
 - Bicycle/pedestrian access from north and south with continuous bicycle/pedestrian access across RR without entering station
 - Bicycle/pedestrian connection from Babcock Street access point to the Paul Dudley White Bicycle Path
 - Design development to consider feasibility of two-way bus loop, “kiss and ride” and provisions for shuttles and taxis
 - Accommodate potential future DMU service to North Station via Grand Junction Line

Commuter Rail Layover Yard

- **Commuter rail layover and support facilities –
South Station Expansion Draft Environmental Impact Report**
 - Need for layover capacity for commuter rail operations to the west of South Station to provide a more-balanced mix of layover sites
 - Operational support functions - covered pit track, wheel truing facility, train car wash, power substation, and crew quarters
 - Noise barrier along south side of RR tracks adjacent to residential neighborhood

West Station & Layover Yard Conceptual Plan



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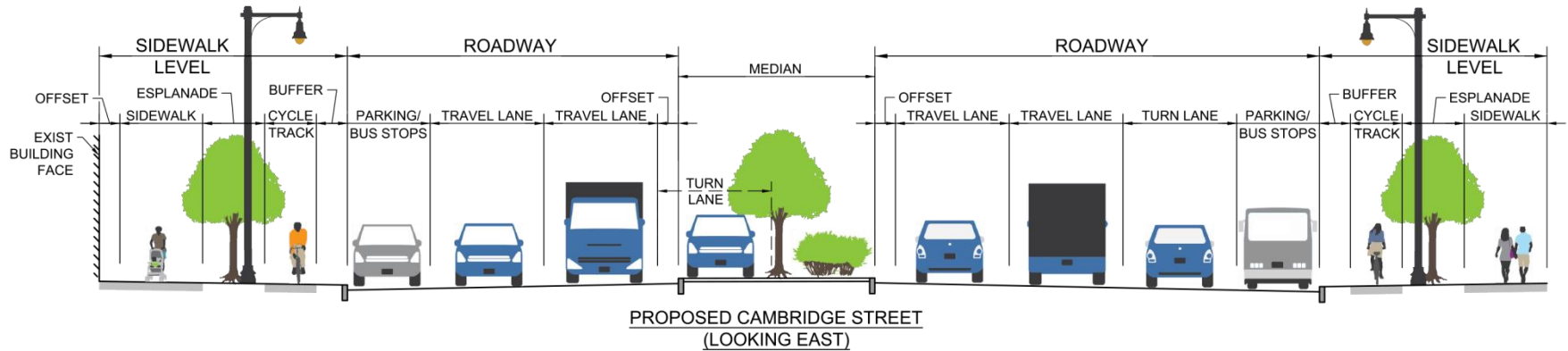
West Station and
 Layover Yard

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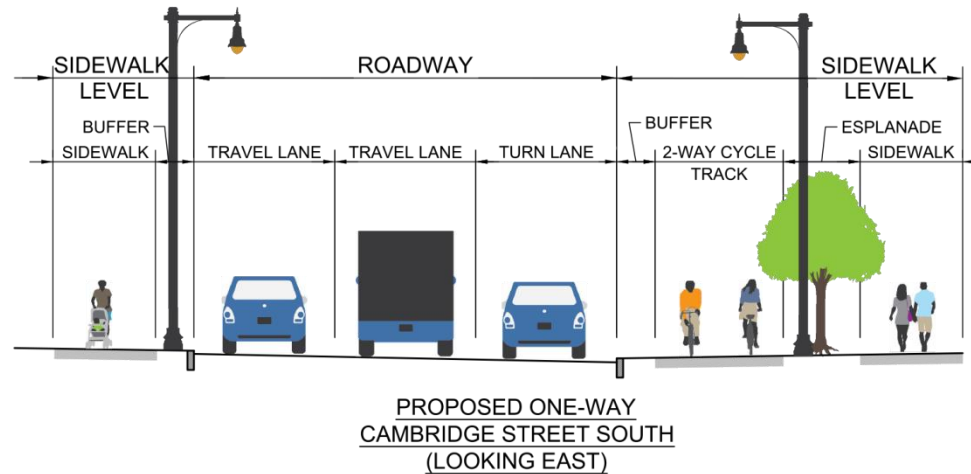
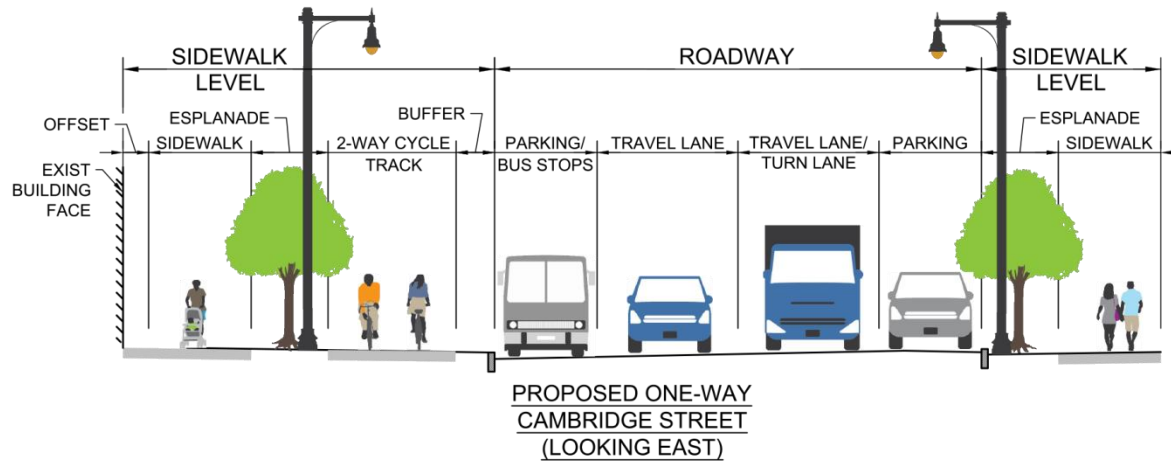
Cambridge Street Design

- **Redesigned in accordance with MassDOT and City of Boston Complete Streets design guidelines**
- **Sidewalks on either side of the street separated from a cycle track by a planted buffer**
- **Separate parking lane with bus stops at intervals**
- **Travel and/or turning lanes – number varied by design alternative**
- **Bicycle/pedestrian accommodations included in all design alternatives**

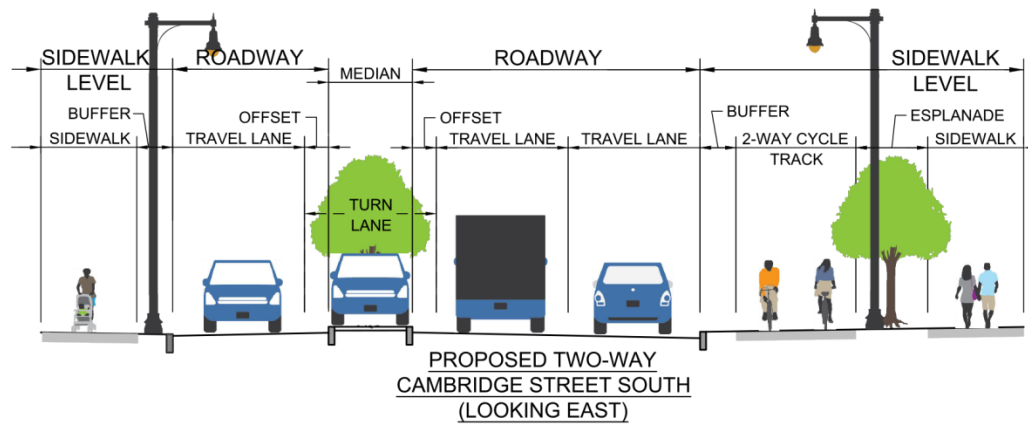
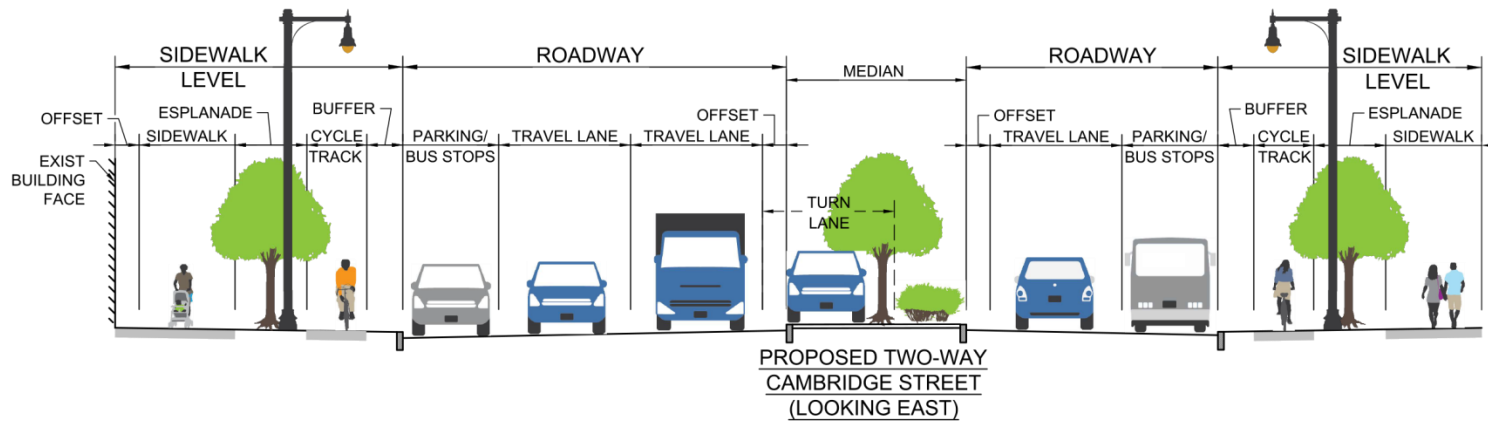
Cambridge Street Design – Typical Section (Alternative 3J-1)



Cambridge Street Design – Typical Section (Alternative 3J-2)



Cambridge Street Design – Typical Section (Alternative 3J-3)



Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations

- Cambridge Street
- Segments south of Cambridge Street
- Connections to West Station
- West Station to area near Ashford Street
- Shared-use Pathway (“People’s Pike”) – more direct connection from Cambridge/Lincoln Streets to Charles River and Paul Dudley White Bicycle path
- New bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Soldiers Field Road
- Final alignment of Shared-use Pathway and location of bicycle/pedestrian bridge to be determined
- Replacement of Lincoln Street pedestrian bridge over I-90

Project Alternatives

- Sixteen interchange alternatives identified including suburban and urban type interchanges
- Three Cambridge Street design alternatives:
 - Two-way Cambridge Street with parking/bus stop lane and turning lanes at I-90 connecting roadway intersections (3J-1)
 - One-way pair with narrower Cambridge Street for WB traffic and parallel roadway south of Cambridge Street for EB traffic (3J-2)
 - Two-way pair with two-way traffic on Cambridge Street and parallel roadway south of Cambridge Street (3J-3)

No Build Alternative

- No Build alternative serves as future baseline to compare impacts of project
- No Build alternative includes:
 - Toll plaza removed and all electronic tolling gantries installed
 - Barriers installed in area of toll plaza to narrow I-90 to four lanes in each direction
 - No modifications to existing interchange ramps
 - No changes to Cambridge Street
 - No changes to the intersection of Cambridge Street/River Street with Soldiers Field Road
 - West Station will not be constructed

No Build Alternative (cont.)

- Accommodation of second track for future DMU service on GJ will not be made
- No Shared-use Pathway, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations and other multi-modal improvements
- Stadium Way constructed by others
- Soldiers Field Road will not be relocated and no additional parkland will be created
- No improvements to stormwater runoff water quality will be made
- Highway noise mitigation will not be implemented
- Commuter rail layover yard will be constructed

Additional Design Elements to be Analyzed

- Shared-use Pathway location, width, features, etc.
- Replacement of pedestrian bridge over I-90
- Sidewalk and cycle track treatment along Cambridge Street and other roadways
- Travel lanes/intersection layout for Cambridge Street
- Other roadways including parallel roadways north and south of Cambridge Street
- Location of bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Soldiers Field Road
- Extent of the relocation of Soldiers Field Road
- Allocation of open space within the area of relocated Soldiers Field Road

Additional Design Elements to be Analyzed (cont.)

- **West Station including connections to the north and south**
- **Rail layover yard configuration and operations**
- **Viaduct configuration**
- **Approach roadways to West Station**
- **Incorporate Central Transportation Planning Staff Regional Traffic Study**
- **Noise, vibration and air quality analysis – combined transit and highway impacts and mitigation**
- **Providing a project design that would not preclude a future two-track Grand Junction Railroad crossing**

Public Involvement to Date

- **April 10 - Public Information Meeting in Allston**
- **May 1 - Cambridge City Council Briefing**
- **September 18 - Public Information Meeting**
- **September 23 - Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association Briefing**

Design Phase Public Involvement

- Quarterly public information meetings to keep community updated
- Public information meeting “road show” in Metrowest for I-90 commuters
- Briefings to community groups upon request
- Continued presence of dedicated public involvement team member to document meetings, answer email questions, etc.
- Continued upkeep of the MassDOT project website

Public Comment

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