

PREFERRED PLAN



3.1 Preferred Plan Summary

The Preferred Plan illustrates the recommended shared use paths connecting the NRG east to Blue Hill Avenue and west to the Readville Commuter Rail Station as well as expressing the character and amenities proposed (See Attachment A). Briefly, the proposed route start along Truman Parkway where the SUP will meander along the west side of the road which will be converted to an enlarged landscaped area created by having one south-bound and one-north bound lane on the eastern side of the median and removing the pavement on the western side for the SUP. Major changes to the Truman and Neponset Valley Parkways intersection will provide clear and safe crossings and connections leading in two directions, west and east.

East: After crossing the Truman and Neponset Valley Parkway (NVP) intersection, the SUP heading east will meander into Fowl Meadow with a new crossing over the Neponset River and connecting to the DCR Burma Road parking area. After crossing Brush Hill Road, the SUP will continue along the north side of NVP to its end at Blue Hill Avenue.

West: After crossing the Truman and NVP intersection the SUP heading west will run along the south side of NVP. It will first meander through an enlarged landscaped area and then follow the road more closely connecting into Wolcott Square, under the railroad overpass and terminate at the existing Readville Commuter Rail Station parking lot. The following narratives describe these routes in more detail.



Figure 42: Neponset River Greenway to Blue Hill Avenue and Readville Commuter Rail Station

3.2 Neponset River Greenway to Blue Hills: Recommendations

Recommended Shared-use Path

The recommended alignment for the shared-use path between the existing Neponset River Greenway and the Blue Hills Reservation Trailside Museum runs along Truman Parkway, crosses Neponset Valley Parkway to move south through Fowl Meadow and across the Neponset River to the Burma Road Trail Parking Area. Then it crosses the intersection of Brush Hill Road and Neponset Valley Parkway to continue along the Parkway to connect with Route 138.

In order to serve the greater community and important destinations, a shared-use path is also recommended to connect at Truman Parkway and run west along Neponset Valley Parkway to connect to Wolcott Square and the Readville MBTA stations. Below is a summary of the recommended shared-use paths.

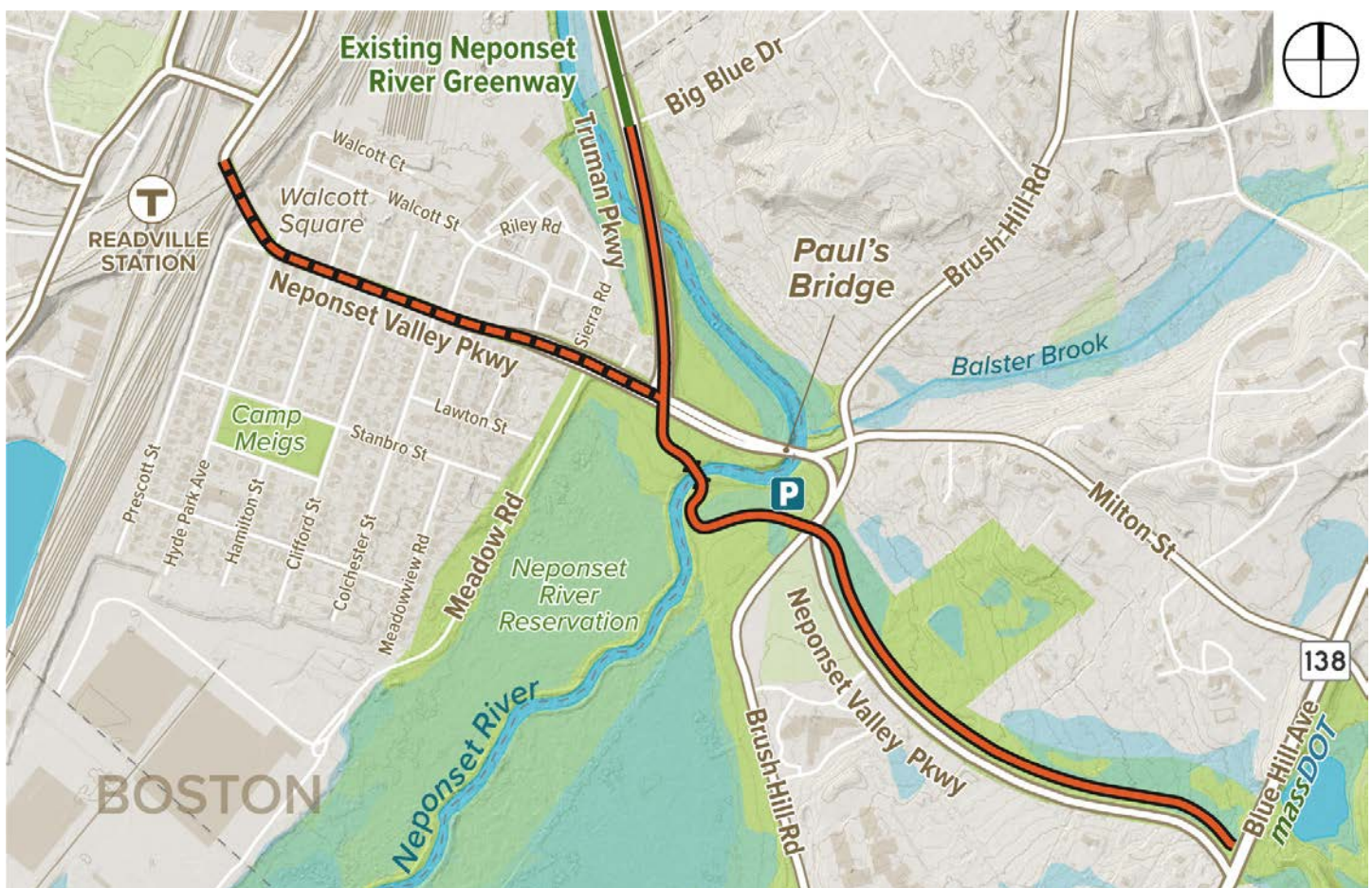
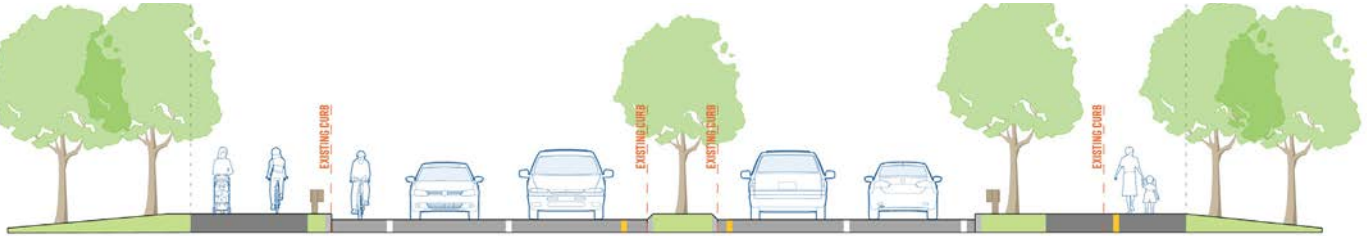


Figure 43: Recommended Shared-use Path Truman Parkway to Blue Hill Avenue

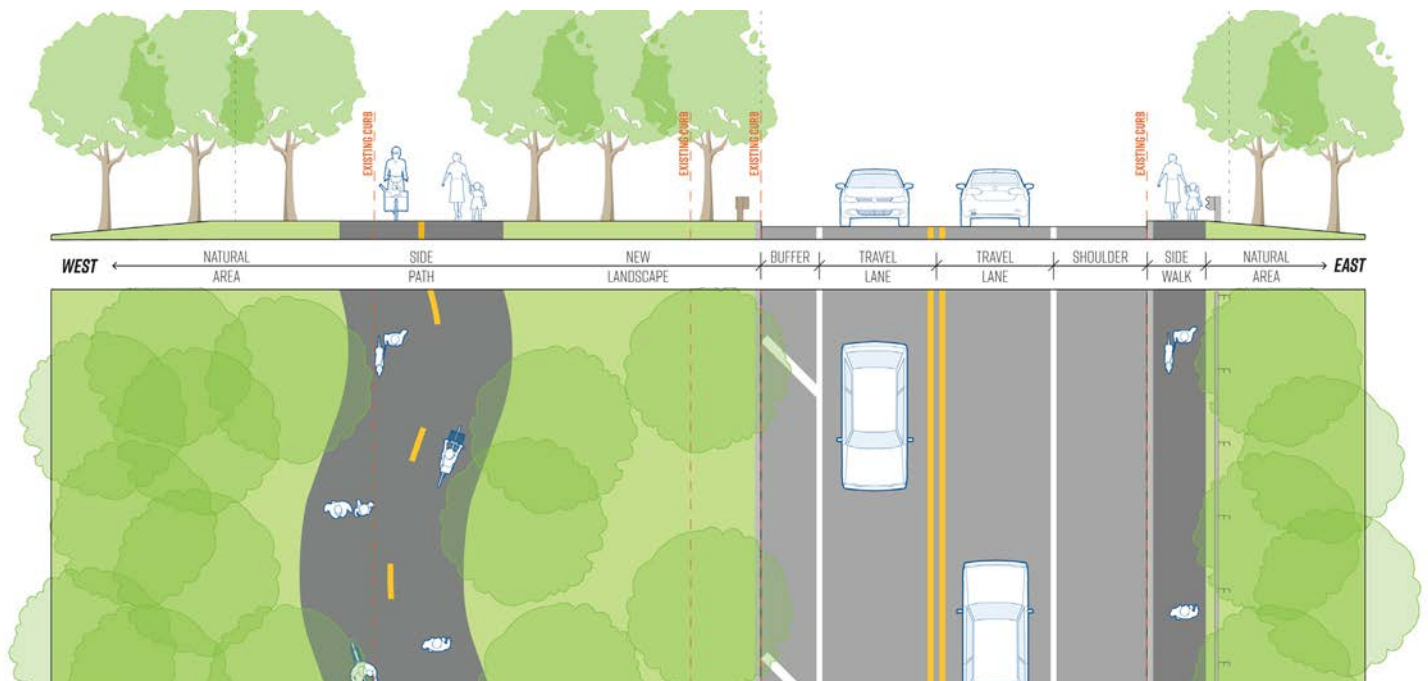
Truman Parkway

There are several options for a shared-use path along Truman Parkway. The existing path can be maintained in its current condition: 10' wide with no buffer. Another option was described previously: removing pavement in the over-sized road shoulders, adding a 12' shared-use path with an 8' landscape buffer that includes a guard rail, shade trees and potentially green infrastructure to handle stormwater run-off. This option can be located on either the east or west side of Truman Parkway, as shown below.



Section - Truman Parkway - Shared-use Path Option 1

A third option removes all pavement in the area of the two south-bound vehicle travel lanes. The travel lanes on the east side of Truman Parkway become one south-bound and one north-bound lane, maintaining the over-sized shoulders for breakdown lanes and emergency response. The west side of Truman Parkway is a wide landscaped area with a wood guardrail to reinforce a consistent character of the DCR parkways. The shared-use path meanders through the expanded green space, as shown below, with shade trees and amenities such as benches, interpretive signage, water bottle fillers or others. A significant improvement in this area is the reduction of impervious surface which allows for more stormwater infiltration, the integration of green infrastructure and thus an overall improvement of water quality.



Section - Truman Parkway - Shared-use Path Option 2

Truman Parkway at Neponset Valley Parkway

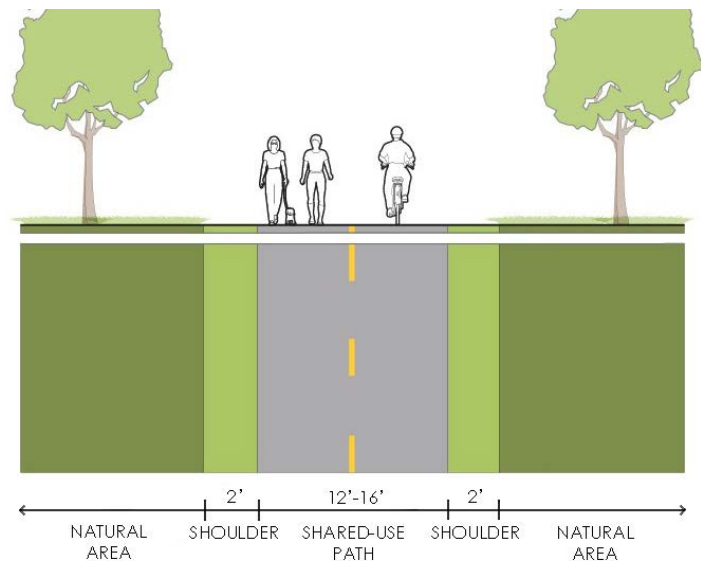
For the preferred alignment, the path continues south on Truman Parkway and across Neponset Valley Parkway before entering the wooded area of Fowl Meadow. At the intersection, the channelized right turn lane from Truman Parkway southbound onto Neponset Valley Parkway westbound is removed as a vehicle lane and utilized as expanded sidewalk or path space, allowing for a more comfortable place to wait to cross the street. A crosswalk is added to the western leg of the intersection and the existing crosswalks are realigned to offer a shorter crossing distance. As the intersection is currently signalized with an exclusive pedestrian phase, proposed modifications are not expected to alter vehicle operations.



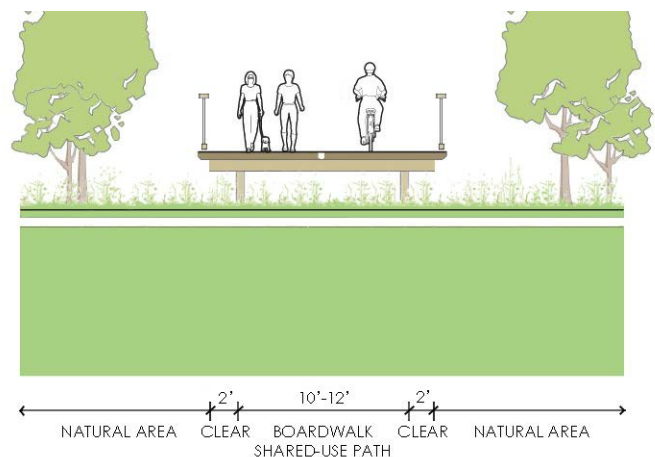
Intersection - Potential Configuration of Truman Parkway at Neponset Valley Parkway

Fowl Meadow

A meandering shared-use path in this area would be sited to avoid environmentally and archaeologically sensitive areas to the greatest extent possible. At the same time, path users will have the unique opportunity to experience this beautiful natural environment and learn about what makes it so. Interpretive signage can capture that knowledge as well as the significant historical context within which it passes.



Section - Segment 2 - Typical Shared-use Path at grade



Section - Segment 2 - Typical Shared-use Path as Boardwalk

As the design develops further, more specific information will be gathered about this area including, but limited to wetland delineation and resource mapping. And an intensive (locational) archaeological survey will be conducted in this area because of the potentially high archaeologically sensitive environment.

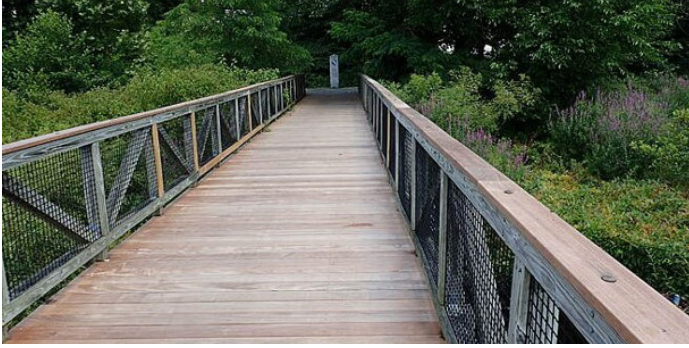


Photo: Segment 3 - Example DCR Charles River Bike Path Bridges

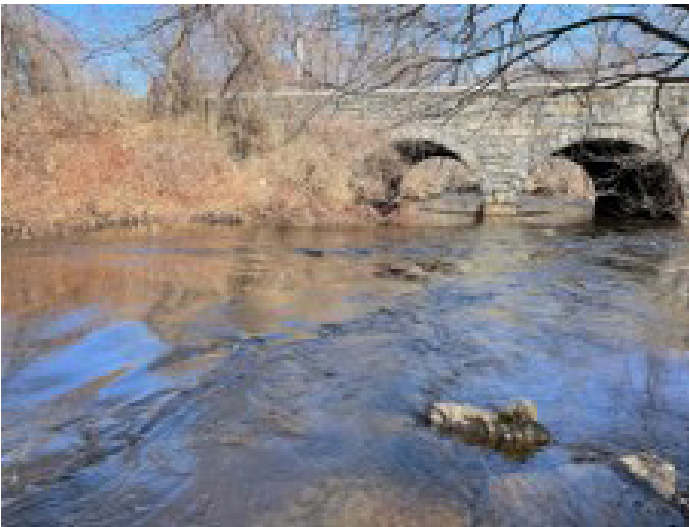


Photo: Looking north at Paul's Bridge

Path amenities can be incorporated including shade, seating areas, bicycle parking, and the like. The new bridge is located out of the viewshed from Paul's Bridge and does not interfere with views of Paul's Bridge from other locations. The bridge design is another opportunity to infuse the path with the DCR park character. And it will be sited with consideration of the existing kayak launch site.

There are two options for a welcome trailhead in this area. The first option is where the shared-use path leads to the area of the existing Burma Road Parking and the start of the Burma Road Trail. Wayside and wayfinding elements can be incorporated here, such as an informational kiosk with trail maps, bicycle parking, seating, directional signage, water bottle filler and a bicycle fixing station.

Another option for a welcome trailhead for this area is to move the parking away from the sensitive adjacent wetlands, and relocate it at the intersection of Truman Parkway and Neponset Valley Parkway which is further from existing wetlands. This location can accommodate more clearly defined and safer vehicular movements. There is room for the welcome trailhead amenities and the kayak launch can be moved to the north side of the Neponset River towards the trailhead.

Another advantage of moving the parking area is that it provides more room to reconfigure the intersection of Brush Hill Road and Neponset Valley Parkway for greatly improved vehicular circulation and thereby a safer crossing for the shared-use path.

Neponset Valley Parkway at Brush Hill Road

After the path crosses the Neponset River it intersects with Neponset Valley Parkway at Brush Hill Road. Given the volume of vehicles and trucks on Neponset Valley Parkway and high speeds, this crossing should include additional safety features, such as high visibility crosswalk markings, increased nighttime lighting levels, crossing warning signs, a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB), or a crossing island.

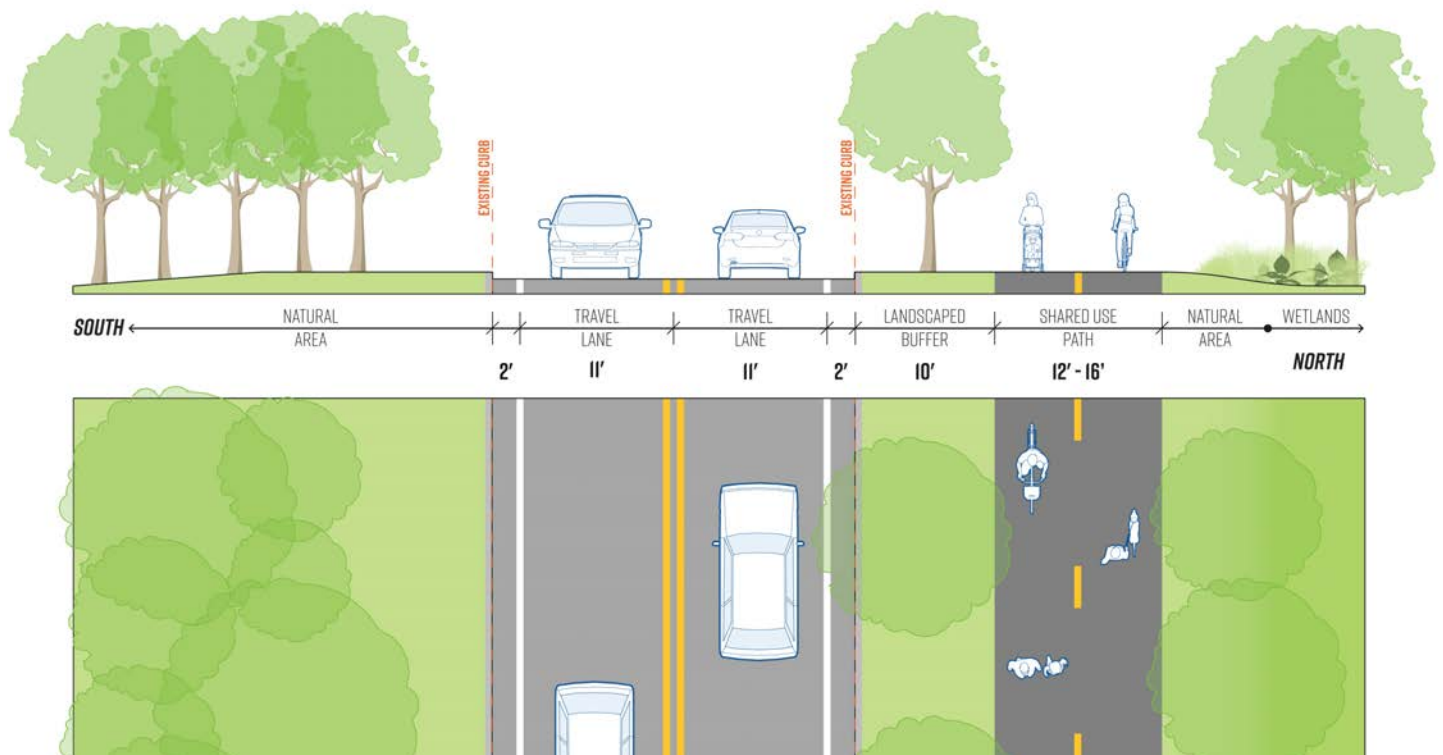
As the design progresses in the next phase, several options for this crossing will be developed and evaluated for the best vehicular movements, and a significantly safer crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.



Segment 3 - Example Intersection Location at Brush Hill Road and Neponset Valley Parkway

Neponset Valley Parkway

Since there is an existing walkway along the northern side of this section of Neponset Valley Parkway it will be relatively easy to upgrade the conditions to accommodate a shared-use path. There are several existing shade trees along this stretch to preserve as possible and augment with additional shade trees and a wood guardrail along the roadway to reinforce the DCR parkway character.



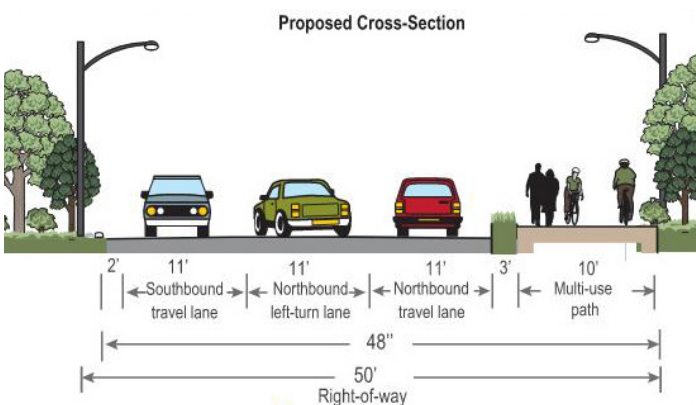
Section - Segment 5 - Neponset Valley Parkway Shared-use Path



Figure 44: Neponset Valley Parkway - Proposed Shared-use Path

Neponset Valley Parkway at Blue Hill Avenue / Route 138

The shared-use path crosses the intersection of Neponset Valley Parkway and Blue Hill Avenue / Route 138. As identified in the (MassDOT) Route 138 Priority Corridor Study conducted in 2018 by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, complete streets improvements are planned which will include signalization of this intersection with new crosswalks and curb ramps. At this point the shared-use path of this project meets the proposed shared-use path planned along Blue Hill Avenue /Route 138 (one of two options for the corridor).



Section - MassDOT Proposed Shared-use Path on Route 138 (Alternative 1)

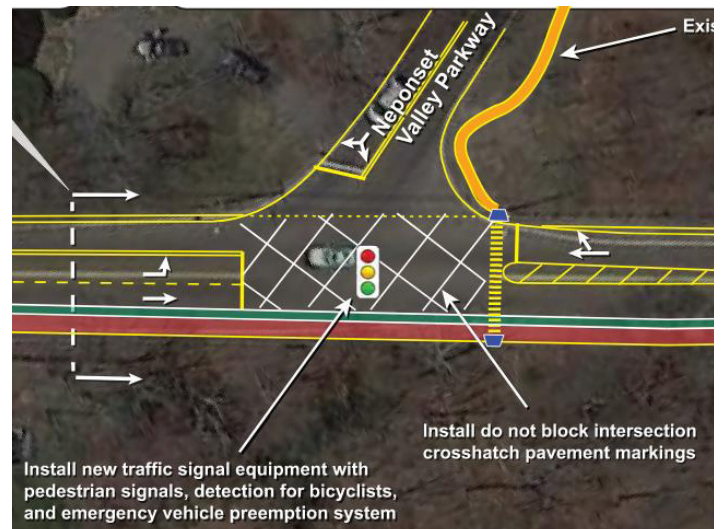


Figure 45: MassDOT Proposed Intersection at Neponset Valley Parkway and Route 138 / Blue Hill Avenue (Alternative 1)

3.3 Neponset River Greenway to Readville: Recommendations

Recommended Shared-use Path

The recommended route for the shared-use path between the existing Neponset River Greenway and Readville Station crosses Neponset Valley parkway at Truman Parkway and runs along the southern side of the roadway, connecting to Wolcott Square and Readville Station.

Truman Parkway at Neponset Valley Parkway

For the preferred Route, all vehicle traffic on Neponset Valley Parkway is moved north of the existing median, similar to Truman Parkway in the preferred alignment to Blue Hills Trailside Museum. This greatly reduces the amount of impervious surface within the study area while creating shorter crossings for trail users and space for trail amenities, green infrastructure, and landscaping. At the intersection, the channelized right turn lanes from Truman Parkway southbound onto Neponset Valley Parkway westbound is removed as a vehicle lane and utilized as expanded sidewalk or path space. A crosswalk is added to the western leg of the intersection and the existing crosswalks are realigned. The current exclusive pedestrian phase will be maintained. Path amenities can be incorporated including seating, bicycle parking, and wayfinding signage. Parking to access Fowl Meadow and Burma Road Trail may be provided in the space south of the existing median.

Orange Section O-O'

With the reallocation of vehicle traffic to north of the existing median, there is ample space to accommodate a shared use path. The existing sidewalk and median will be expanded, preserving all shade trees, while adding an additional landscapes buffer between the sidewalk and the new shared-use path. Wooden guardrails will reinforce the DCR parkway character, with wayfinding signage to connect trail users to Meadow Road and the neighborhood via Stanbro Street. The Meadow Road crossing can be raised to elevate the positioning of path users, making them easier for turning vehicles to see them, while also slowing turning vehicles, creating a safe environment for all roadway users.

Orange Section P-P'

The narrowing of vehicle travel lanes provides space for the path and a landscaped buffer, providing opportunity for additional shade trees. Existing sidewalks and shade trees are preserved.

Orange Section Q-Q'

Similar to the previous section, narrowing vehicle travel lanes and reallocating one eastbound travel lane accommodates a separate shared-use path and landscape buffer. Shade trees and green infrastructure can be provided in the buffer space.

Wolcott Square

The shared-use path would navigate Wolcott Square south of Neponset Valley Parkway, crossing the southern leg of Hyde Park Avenue and the western leg of Wolcott Square. This intersection is signalized with concurrent pedestrian phasing, which can be maintained given the low volume of turning movements onto Hyde Park Avenue and the one-way nature of Wolcott Square.



Figure 46: Wolcott Square

Orange Section R-R'

Between Wolcott Square and Readville Station, the shared-use path is primarily traveling through the underpass of an MBTA railroad bridge. The shared-use path has a buffer between the sidewalk and the vehicle travel lanes. Decorative pavers and wooden guardrails will be utilized to reinforce the DCR parkway character through the final length of trail.

3.4 Intersections

The preferred plan was developed with special attention to how the trail will travel through intersections, based on the proposed cross-sections from the feasibility study, the preferred alignment, public input, traffic volumes at the Triangle (intersection of Neponset Valley Parkway at Milton Street and Brush Hill Road) obtained by others in 2021 for a separate DCR project (see Attachment G for all traffic counts), traffic counts at Wolcott Square obtained as part of this project in 2023 (see attached) and the design guidelines described above. Raised crossings are proposed wherever possible to create a continuous path while improving the safety and visibility of trail users. Additionally, curb radii are tightened to the greatest extent possible to slow vehicle turning movements, making the corridor safer for all roadway users.

Wolcott Square

Wolcott Square is a signalized intersection where Neponset Valley Parkway meets Hyde Park Avenue and Wolcott Court. The preferred plan proposes the greenway extension to run on the southern side of Neponset Valley Parkway, necessitating the crossing of Hyde Park Avenue and Wolcott Square before terminating at the Readville Commuter Rail Station. Upgrades proposed for this intersection include traffic signal retiming, curb extensions, accessible curb ramps, and high visibility crosswalks. Parking is generally to be maintained, as is the ability for buses to layover in Wolcott Square.



Figure 47: Intersection of Hyde Park Avenue and Wolcott Square

Neponset Valley Parkway at Truman Parkway

The preferred plan for this intersection dramatically reduces the amount of impervious surface while still allowing large heavy vehicles to complete all turning movements. The SUP runs on the western side of Truman Parkway, crossing the western leg of Neponset Valley Parkway before turning west towards Readville or south through Fowl Meadow. Upgrades to this already signalized intersection include new mast arms, signal equipment, and signal retiming to account for the changed geometry, as well as ADA compliant curb ramps and high visibility crosswalks.



Figure 48: Truman and Neponset Valley Parkway Intersection

Neponset Valley Parkway at Brush Hill Road

This intersection is adjacent to the Burma Road Trail parking lot and is currently unsignalized, with a STOP sign on the Brush Hill Road approach. The SUP will approach the intersection from Fowl Meadow, cross Neponset Valley Parkway on the northern leg of the intersection, and continue along the northern side of Neponset Valley Parkway entirely with DCR right-of-way. Improvements to this intersection include 'T-ing-up' Brush Hill Road into Neponset Valley Parkway to improve sight lines, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, ADA compliant curb ramps, and high visibility crosswalks.



Figure 49: Neponset Valley Parkway at Brush Hill Road

3.5 Recommendations for Further Community Connectivity

The Feasibility Study proposes several other actions for further connectivity in and around the Project Area.

Increased Mobility

Figure 50, Figure 51, and Figure 52 show increased options for mobility. Transit stops and parking areas (existing and proposed) are indicated where people can transition from motorized transportation to non-motorized transportation. It also shows how both the preferred and the potential shared-use paths increase connectivity for non-motorized transportation options.

Footpaths

Potential new or improved footpaths can provide pedestrians different types of experiences in areas that cannot accommodate a wide paved path, but where there are opportunities for increased accessibility.

Street Network

Area roads lead to several DCR properties such as historic Camp Meigs and the trails at Little Blue Hill. Connections to these additional community assets can be illuminated with enhanced wayfinding with banded direction signs. Improved and new pedestrian road crossings can greatly improve safety for pedestrians trying to connect to other destinations.

Prescott Street (Section S-S')

Existing

Prescott Street runs from Wolcott Square south past Stanbro Street, terminating in a dead end just after Millstone Street. The sidewalk is located on the eastern sidewalk and is in poor condition compared to the sidewalks in the rest of the neighborhood. Prescott Street borders slightly elevated railroad tracks, necessitating a retaining wall and chain link fence.

Proposed

Reconstructed sidewalks on Prescott Street are proposed to meet accessibility requirements. A landscaped buffer with shade trees (appropriate for overhead wires) will be added to provide visual interest and comfort to residents and visitors. Parking on the residential side and both directions of travel will be maintained.

Wayfinding

Similarly navigating DCR trails and the shared-use paths can be improved with wayfinding kiosks and/or maps at welcome trailheads, the use of gateway markers, and trail directional signs.

LEGEND

	MBTA Station		Community Connection
	Bus Station		New/Improved Crossing
	Exist. Parking		Welcome Trailhead
	Canoe Launch		Gateway Marker
	Preferred SUP Alignment		Directional Banding Sign
	Potential SUP		Trail Directional Sign
	Potential New or Improved Footpath		Proposed Parking



Figure 50: Potential Further Community Connectivity



Figure 51: Potential Further Community Connectivity - Northern Project Area

LEGEND

	MBTA Station		Community Connection
	Bus Station		New/Improved Crossing
	Exist. Parking		Welcome Trailhead
	Canoe Launch		Gateway Marker
	Preferred SUP Alignment		Directional Banding Sign
	Potential SUP		Trail Directional Sign
	Potential New or Improved Footpath		Proposed Parking

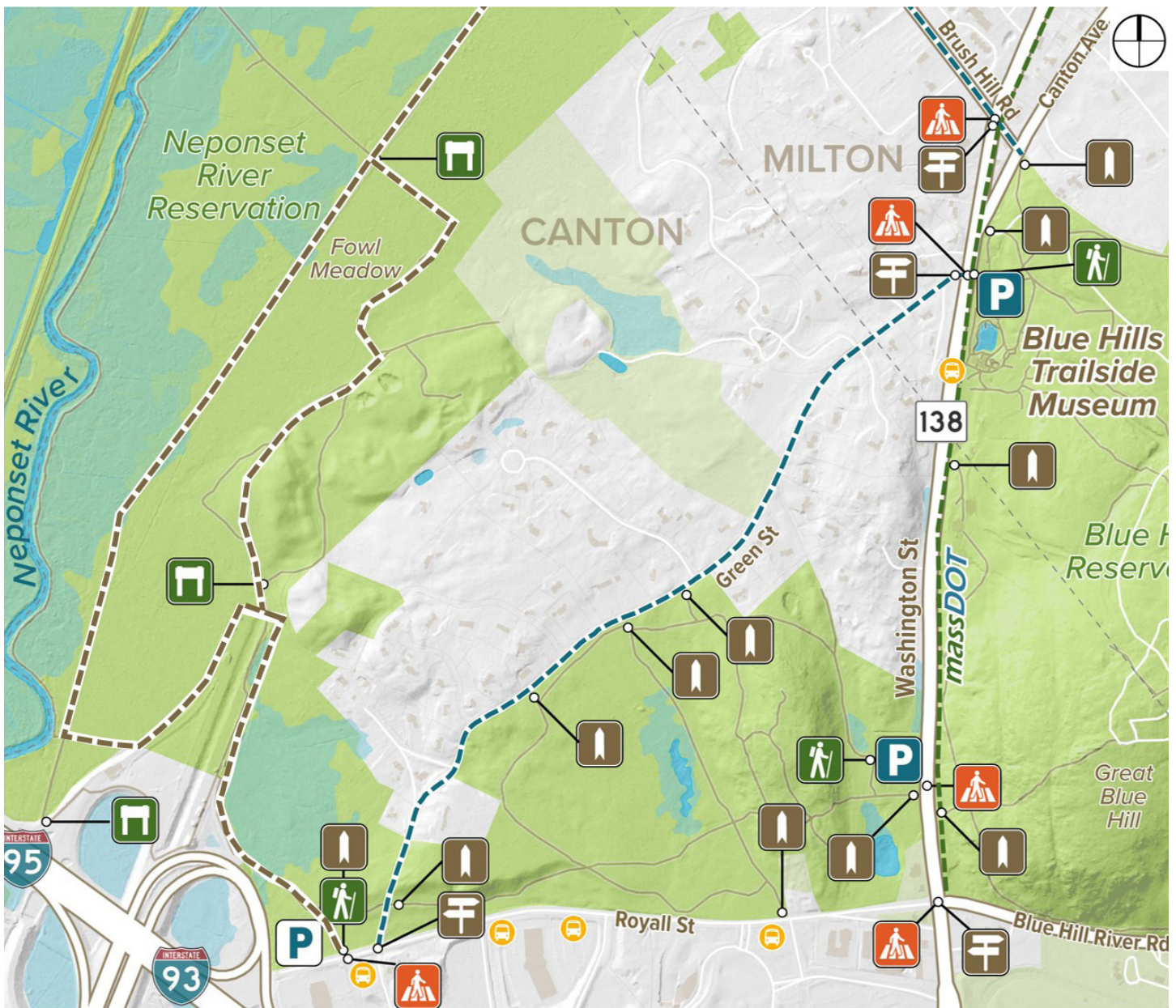


Figure 52: Potential Further Community Connectivity - Southern Project Area

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | MBTA Station |  | Community Connection |
|  | Bus Station |  | New/Improved Crossing |
|  | Exist. Parking |  | Welcome Trailhead |
|  | Canoe Launch |  | Gateway Marker |
|  | Preferred SUP Alignment |  | Directional Banding Sign |
|  | Potential SUP |  | Trail Directional Sign |
|  | Potential New or Improved Footpath |  | Proposed Parking |