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NEWTON CORNER
LONG-TERM PLANNING STUDY

Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study Public Meeting #2

Future Conditions & Alternatives Development

February 25, 2025 | 6:30 p.m.

Virtual

Zoom meeting controls

- Ask a question and share comments
- Drop down menu to check microphone and speakers
- 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], Webinar ID: [816 8747 6468], Passcode: [267240]
- Use the View button in the upper right-hand corner to adjust the meeting view settings to your preference
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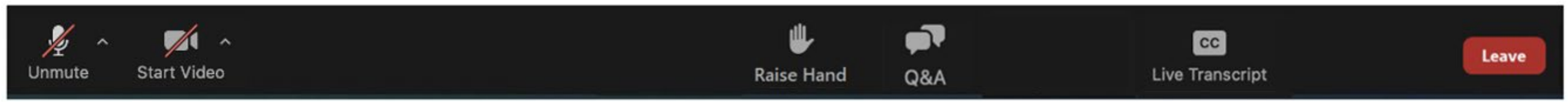
[1.888.799.9666]



Public meeting notes and procedures

Notification of video recording

- This virtual public meeting will be recorded. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation may choose to retain and distribute the video, images, audio, and/or chat transcript.
- All parts of this meeting are considered public record.
- By continuing attendance with this virtual public meeting, you are consenting to participate in a recorded event.
- If you are not comfortable being recorded, please turn off your camera and keep your microphone muted, or you may choose to excuse yourself from the meeting.

Important notes for public attendees:

- The meeting will be open to questions and answers at the end of the formal presentation.

All questions and comments are welcome and appreciated, however we do request that you refrain from any disrespectful comments.

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Public Information Meeting #1 Summary
3. Future Conditions
4. Issues, Opportunities & Constraints
5. Alternatives Development
6. Schedule and Next Steps
7. Open Discussion

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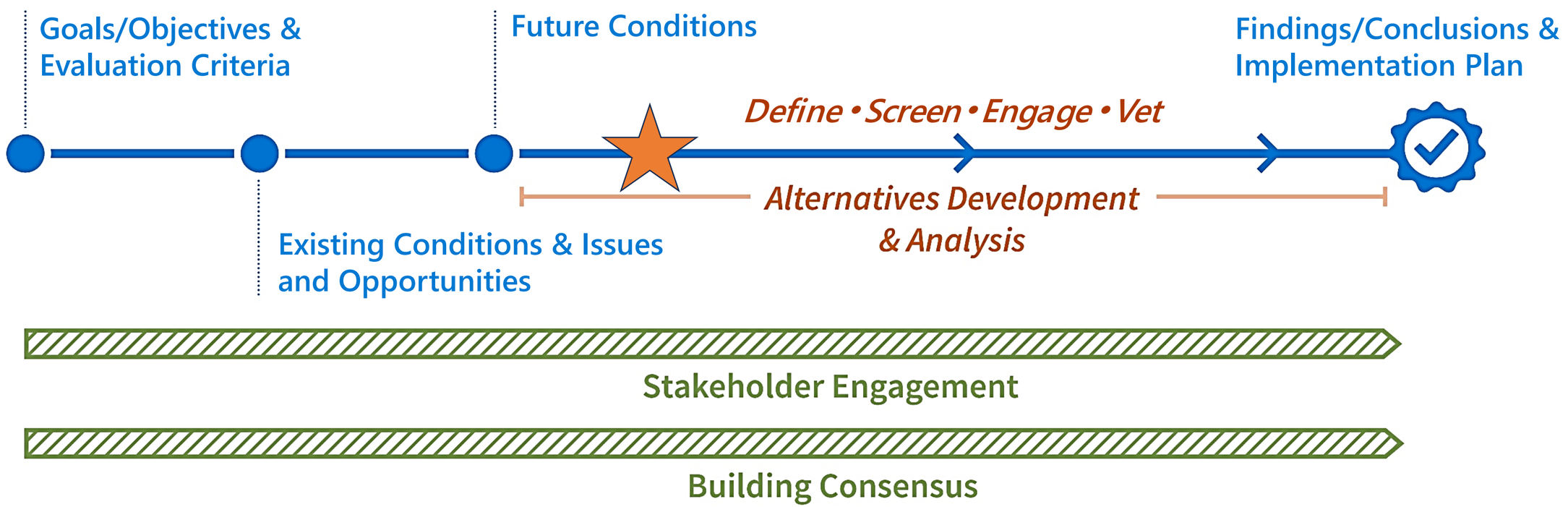
Previous and Ongoing Projects / Studies

- This meeting is for the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study
- MassDOT Short- to Mid-term Improvements project (DOT #609288)
  - Focused on operational and safety improvements within a 10-year horizon
  - Immediate safety improvements implemented in Fall 2024
  - Final Report published in December 2024
  - Project Website: https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-improvements-project
  - For feedback on Short- to Mid-term Improvements project, reach out to MassDOT District 6 at: https://www.mass.gov/forms/contact-massdot

Study Goals

- Improve access, safety, and mobility for all
- Reconnect Newton's neighborhoods
- Enhance quality of life
- Promote sustainable transportation solutions
- Develop actionable recommendations

Study Process



Public Meeting #1 Feedback Summary

Public Meeting #1 Summary

- Over 50 attendees
- Audience asked poll question:
  - If you could envision the future of Newton Corner, what word would you use to describe it?
- Nearly 30 questions and comments during the Q&A with common themes:
  - Traffic and Infrastructure Improvements
  - Accessibility and Connectivity
  - Environmental and Social Impacts
  - Economic Development

Word Cloud of public responses to: "If you could envision the future of Newton Corner, what word would you use to describe it?"

Future Conditions

Future Mobility: Growth & Land Use Changes

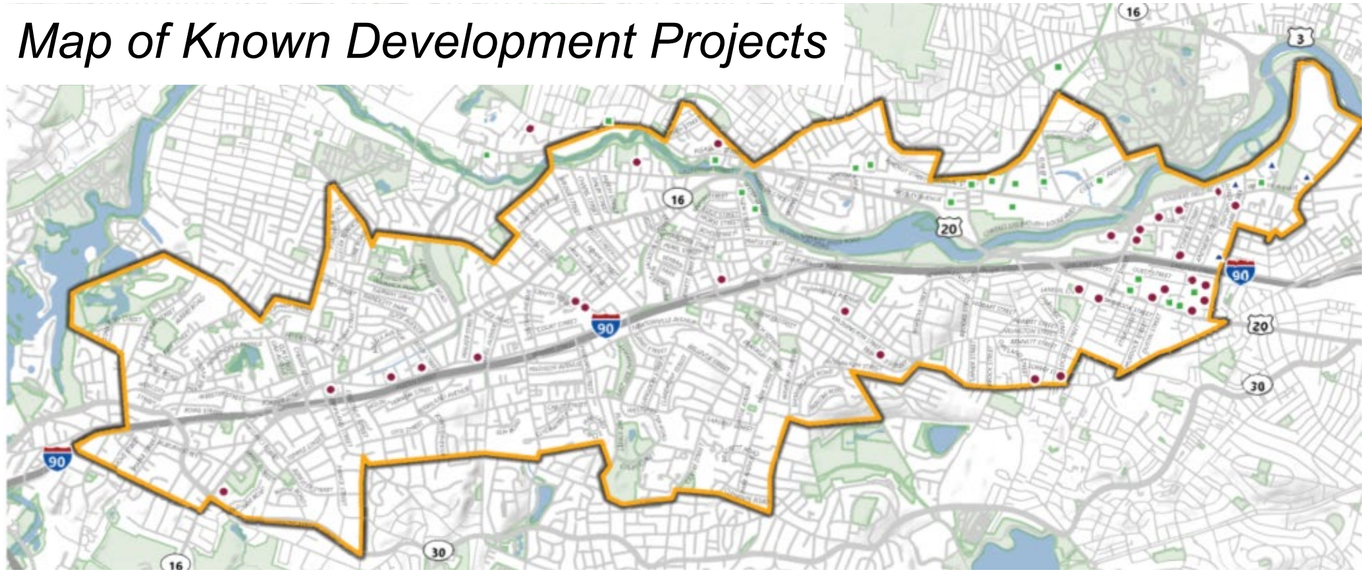
- Growth based on both CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model and pipeline development projects.
- There are currently 56 known development projects in the local study area, including over 5,000 residential units and 6.3 million square feet of office, lab, and retail space.

Total Demographic Changes between 2019 and 2050

	Population Growth	Employment Growth
Newton	+ 5.5%	+ 0.4%
Watertown	+ 10.1%	+ 15.9%
Allston/Brighton	+ 20.5%	+ 14.8%
Total	**+ 10.5%**	**+ 10.6%**

Source: CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model.
Only includes portion of each municipality within the local study area.

Map of Known Development Projects



Future Mobility: Transit

- Planned transit improvements include:
  - Newton Commuter Rail Stations Accessibility Improvements (funding for Newtonville awarded in late 2024)
  - Bus Network Redesign
  - Rail Modernization
- Up to 42 MBTA buses per hour may serve Newton Corner in the future with Bus Network Redesign.
- Transit will play an important future role in moving new residents and workers in and around the local study area

Rendering of Future Newtonville Station

Source: MBTA: October 13, 2021, public meeting.

Future Mobility: Infrastructure Investments

- Planned roadway improvements include:
  - Newton Corner short-term improvements (implemented in Fall 2024)
  - Leo Birmingham Parkway Reconstruction
  - North Beacon Street at Soldier's Field Road Roadway Realignment
  - Washington Street Pilot
  - Watertown Square Area Plan
  - Allston Multimodal Project
- Proposed roadway investments primarily focus on safety and improving multimodal accommodations.

DCR Roadway Area Conceptual Improvements

Source: DCR; Allston-Brighton Recreation Facility Public Meeting; May 25, 2023.

Washington Street Pilot Concept Design

Source: City of Newton Washington Street Pilot website.

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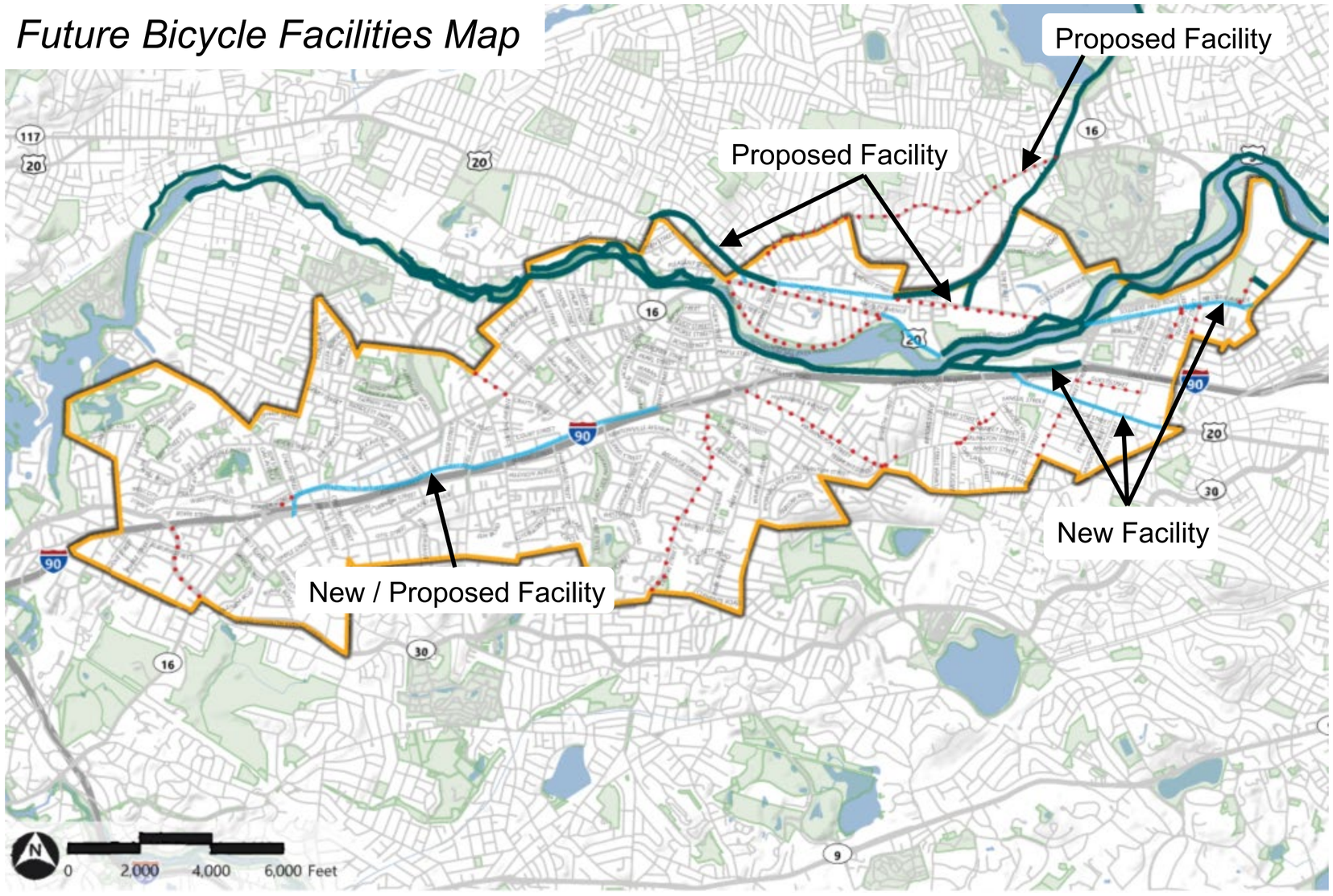
Future Mobility: Active Transportation

- Proposed/planned bicycle facilities will add new east/west routes on Washington Street, Mt. Auburn Street, Birmingham Parkway, and the Watertown Greenway.
- In the future, gaps may remain in the network, including a lack of north-south connections across I-90 and connections to the Charles River pathways.

Future Bicycle Facilities Map



Future Mobility: Volume Growth

- CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model used to estimate volume growth between 2019 and 2050.
- The 2050 model includes known transit and roadway infrastructure projects and projected land use growth.
- Output from the model was calibrated based on known development projects.
- Transit volumes are anticipated to grow quicker than vehicle volumes due improved transit infrastructure and limited capacity on roadway network for additional demand.

Total Vehicle and Transit Volume Increases between 2019 and 2050

	Transit Volumes	Vehicle Volume
Newton	+ 12%	+ 6%
Watertown	+ 20%	+ 13%
Allston/Brighton	+ 28%	+ 16%

Source: CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model output, calibrated based on known developments. Only includes portion of each municipality within the local study area.

Study Area Mode Shares

	2019 Existing	2050 Future
Vehicle	83.7%	82.3%
Transit	4.8%	5.2%
Walk/Bike	11.5%	12.6%

Source: CTPS Statewide Travel Demand Model output for the local study area. Mode share data from model output may not align with US census data.

Future Mobility: Volumes / Intersections

- Future vehicular volume projections have been incorporated into the 2050 mobility analysis models.
- Known infrastructure projects have been incorporated into the analysis models.
- By 2050, vehicle operations in the local study area are expected to deteriorate due to projected increases in population and employment.
- If left unaddressed, this growth will impact reliability potentially leading to increased congestion or further extending commuter peak periods.

Washington Street Eastbound Bridge (Newton Corner)

Future Environmental Considerations

- Newton Corner faces significant risks from extreme temperature fluctuations, increased precipitation, and flooding along the Charles River.
- By 2050, the area will see significant temperature increases with fewer cold days and more hot days, and rising precipitation levels.
- Resilience and Mitigation Strategies:
  - Enhance infrastructure with heat-resistant materials.
  - Integrate green infrastructure to manage stormwater.

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Issues, Opportunities & Constraints

Sources

- Based on a review of:
  - Data
  - Previous studies
  - Input from Working Group
  - Public outreach process
  - Online mapping tool
- Summarized in site-specific and general themes.

Source: Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study Interactive Virtual Meeting Room

Survey available in our Virtual Meeting Room

Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints Key Takeaways

Roadway Geometry & Safety Issue: Confusing travel patterns with difficult merges and weaves

Climate Issue: Study area is likely to face significant climate risks, including extreme temperatures and flooding

Accessibility Issue: Several intersections are lacking crosswalks or do not meet accessibility requirements

Transit Opportunity: Leverage existing and future MBTA transit services (bus and Commuter Rail).

Active Transportation Opportunity: Connect to existing Charles River pathways – 10 minute walk or 5 minute bike ride

Environmental Opportunity: Expanding green infrastructure can help manage stormwater, reduce heat island effects, and improve public health

Natural & Historic Resources Constraint: Historic districts are located just south of Newton Corner

Vehicle Network Constraint: Lack of access points along I-90 required vehicles to funnel through Newton Corner

Transportation Infrastructure Constraint: I-90 and the MBTA rail line act as a barrier for north-south mobility

Alternatives Development

Preliminary Alternatives Development

Three levels of alternative development

1. Supportive Elements
   - Supportive elements that should be considered under all alternatives
   - Examples of Supportive Elements are categorized by Pedestrian / Bicycle, Transit, and Safety
2. Alternative Components
   - Individual alternative components that can be layered upon each other to develop full concepts
   - First-level screening will be applied to alternative components
   - Alternative components relate to vehicular, transit, and ped/bike infrastructure
3. Combined Examples
   - Examples of combined alternatives with different alternative components layered together
   - There can be many different combined alternatives depending on which alternative components are layered together

Supportive Elements
Pedestrian / Bicycles

- Supportive elements are design features that should be considered in all alternatives
- Pedestrians / Bicycles
  - Identify opportunities for separated bicycle lanes
  - Create ped/bike connections on Centre Street and Galen Street
  - Develop new connections to the Charles River pathways
  - Explore bicycle infrastructure that could bypass Newton Corner, such as on Church Street
- Placemaking
  - Create a pedestrian environment that emphasizes Newton Corner as a destination and encourages community gathering and support of small businesses

Separated bicycle lanes on Washington Street in West Newton, MA – Source: Google Maps

Shared-use Path along Nonantum Road in Newton, MA – Source: Google Maps

Supportive Elements
Transit

- Supportive elements are design features that should be considered in all alternatives

- Transit
  - Implement transit signal priority at signalized intersections
  - Enhance connections to existing bus services
  - Create dedicated bus lanes
  - Consider creating contraflow bus-only lanes
  - Install wayfinding / signage

Example of Transit Priority Signal – Source: Boston Transportation Department

Example of a contraflow bus-only lane on Washington Street over I-90 in Boston, MA – Source: Google Maps

Supportive Elements
Safety

- Supportive elements are design features that should be considered in all alternatives

- Safety
  - Employ conventional intersection designs to reduce driver confusion
  - Consider installing roundabouts to reduce the number of conflict points
  - Construct accessible pedestrian accommodations
  - Improve lighting to increase visibility at night

- These supportive elements were identified as part of Road Safety Audits (RSAs) conducted in the study area

Pedestrian Curb Ramp at Centre Street in Newton Corner – Source: VHB

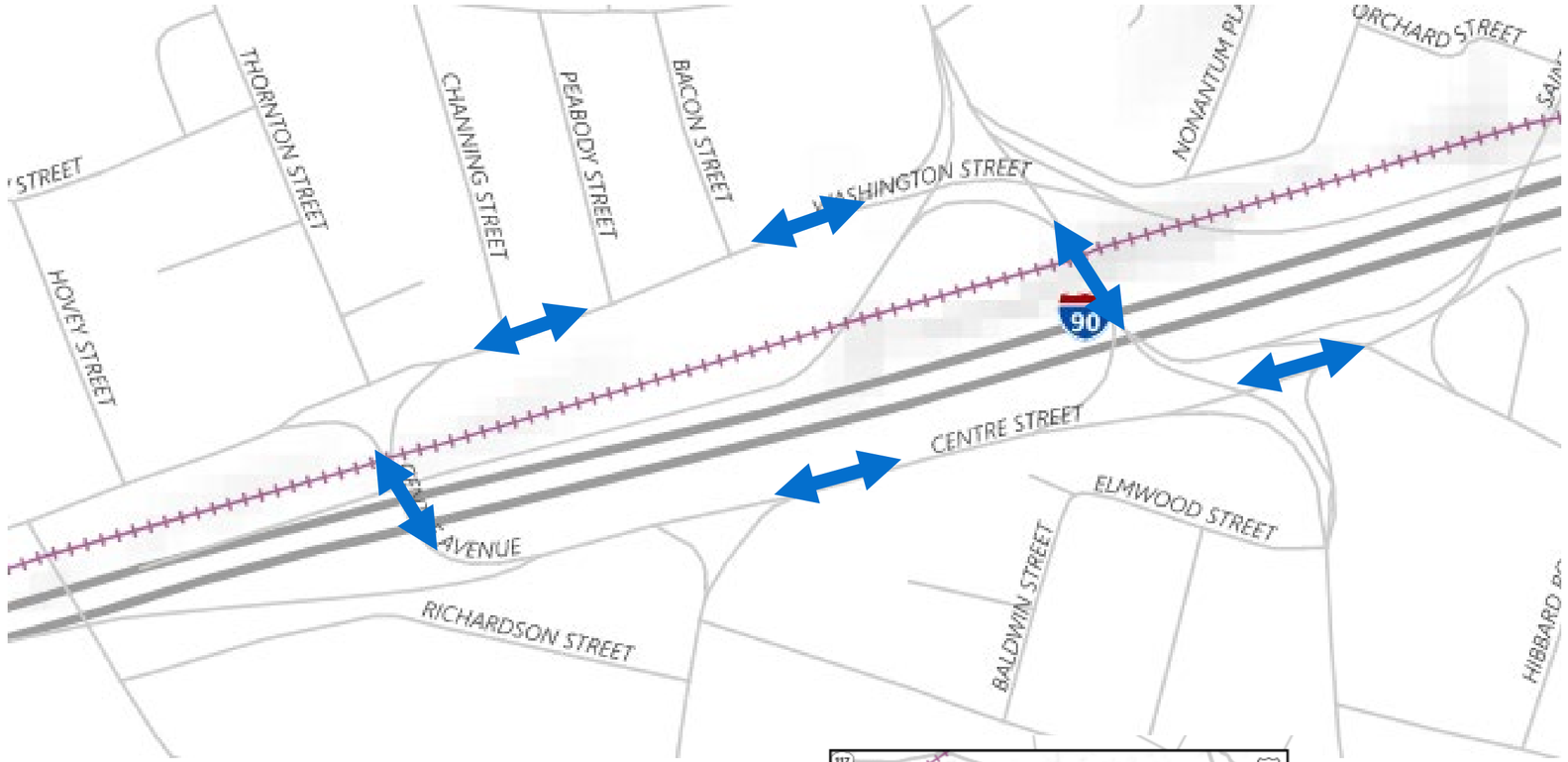
Example of a single-lane roundabout – Source: FHWA

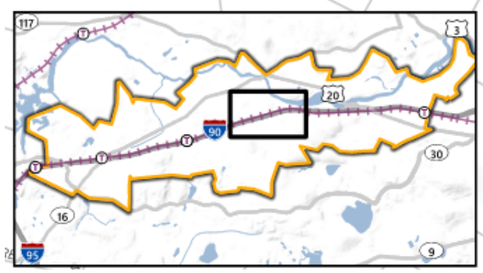
Alternative Components

- 16 potential Alternative Components are shown for reference
- Additional Alternative Components are likely to be developed based on feedback from the Working Group and the public
- Individual alternative components that can be layered upon each other to develop full concepts will be presented at the next meeting

Alternative Components

1: Two-Directional Travel in Newton Corner





To minimize weaving and increase safety:

1. Consider providing bi-directional vehicular travel on roads in Newton Corner
2. Maintain the current bridge locations

Potential Two-Way Travel

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Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only.
More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

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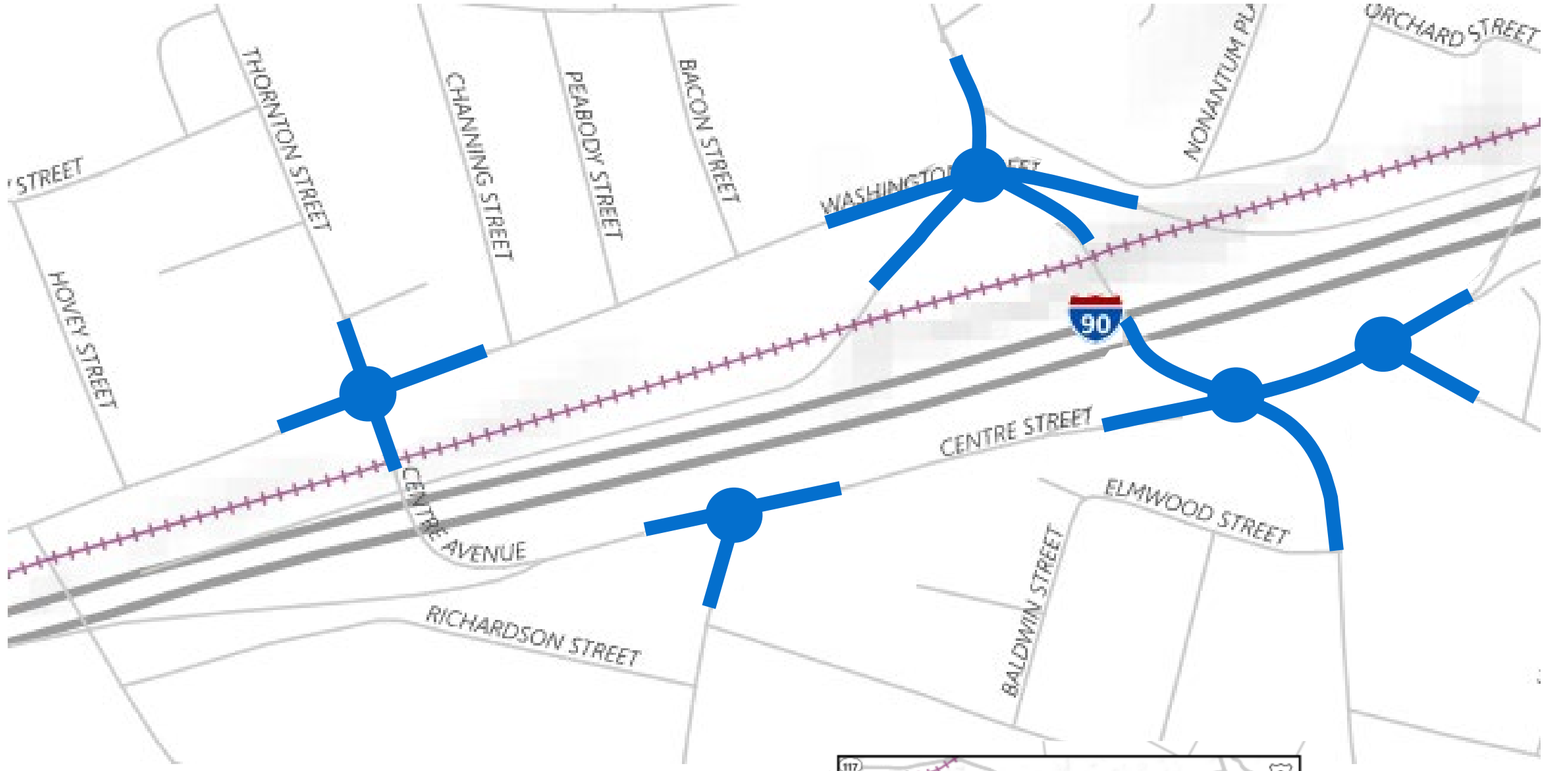
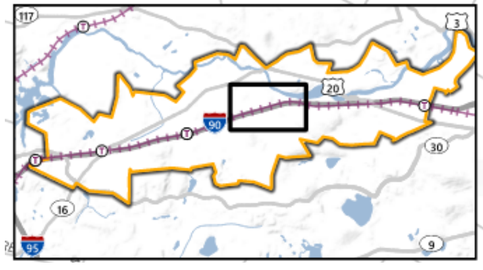
Alternative Components
2: Install Roundabouts





1. Convert existing intersections to roundabout control
2. Seek opportunities to minimize weaving, increase safety, and simplify intersection operations

Potential Roundabout Location

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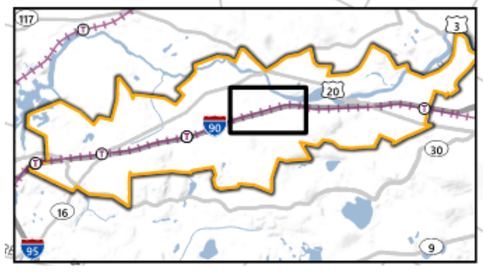
Alternative Components

3: New Bridge Connecting Centre Street



1 New bridge with bi-directional travel connecting Centre Street north and south of I-90

2 Can provide multimodal accommodations on the new bridge for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists

3 Restore historical roadway network of Newton Corner

Potential New Roadway Network

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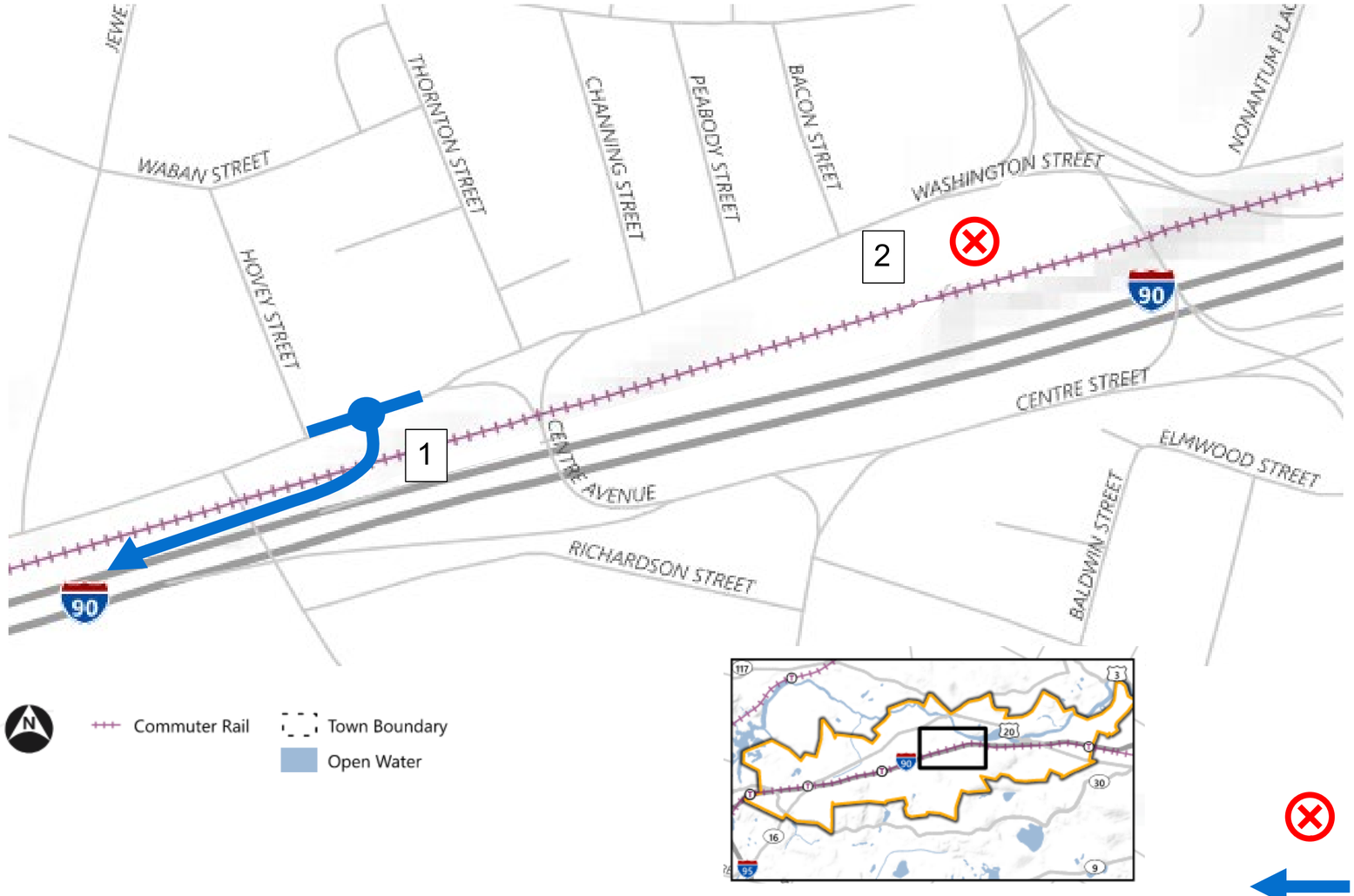
Alternative Components

4: Relocated I-90 Westbound On-Ramp



1 Construct new I-90 Westbound On-Ramp west of Newton Corner

2 Close the current On-Ramp in Newton Corner, simplifying intersection operations

Note: location of new on-ramp shown for graphical purposes. Preferred location could be shifted east or west of location shown

Roadway Closed

Potential New Connection Point

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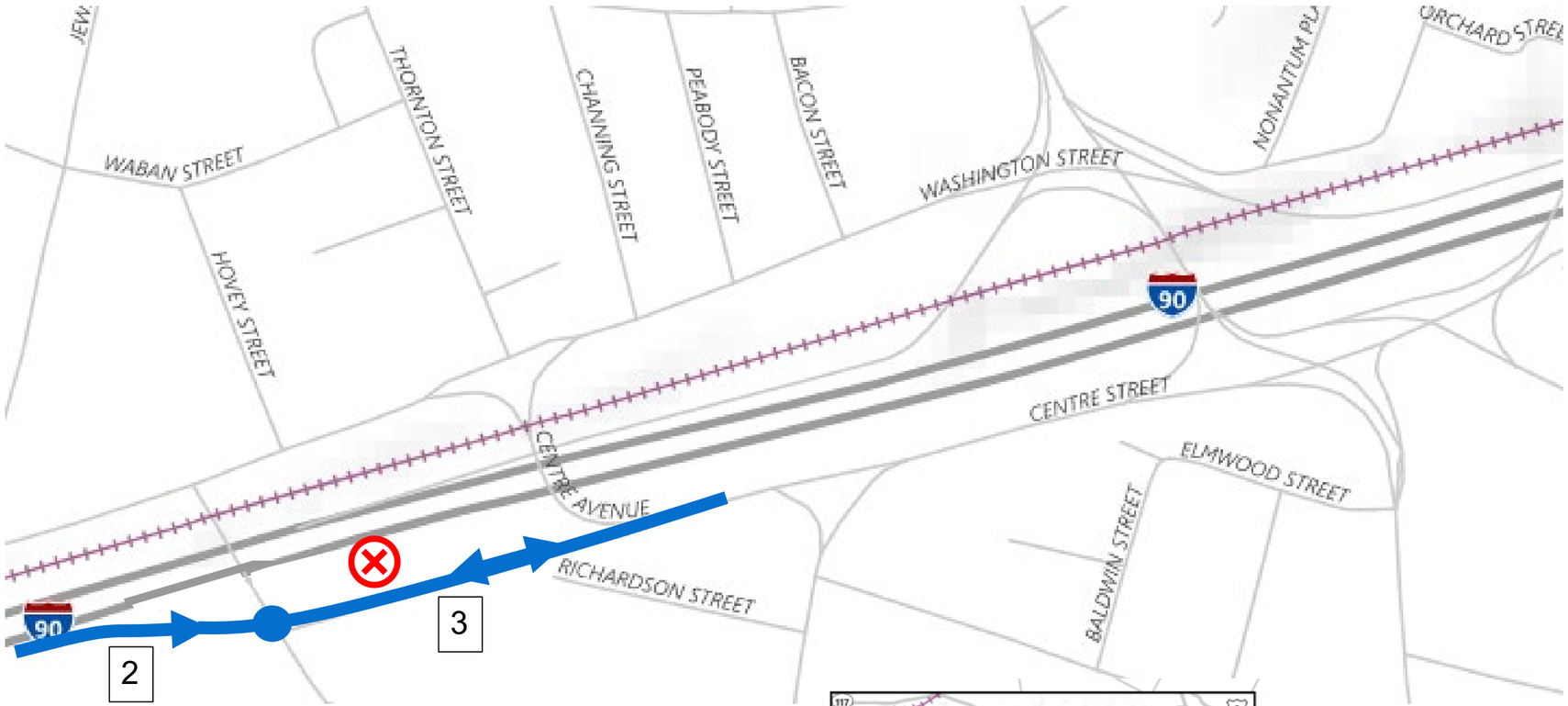
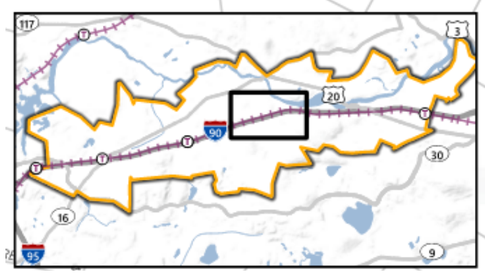
Alternative Components

5: Relocated I-90 Eastbound Off-Ramp





1 Construct new I-90 Eastbound Off-Ramp west of Newton Corner, providing longer queueing space on the ramp

2 Close the current Off-Ramp in Newton Corner, simplifying intersection operations

3 Realign Richardson Street to connect through to Centre Avenue

4 Any potential right-of-way impacts will be evaluated

Note: location of new on-ramp shown for graphical purposes. Preferred location could be shifted east or west of location shown.

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More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

Roadway Closed

Potential New Connection Point

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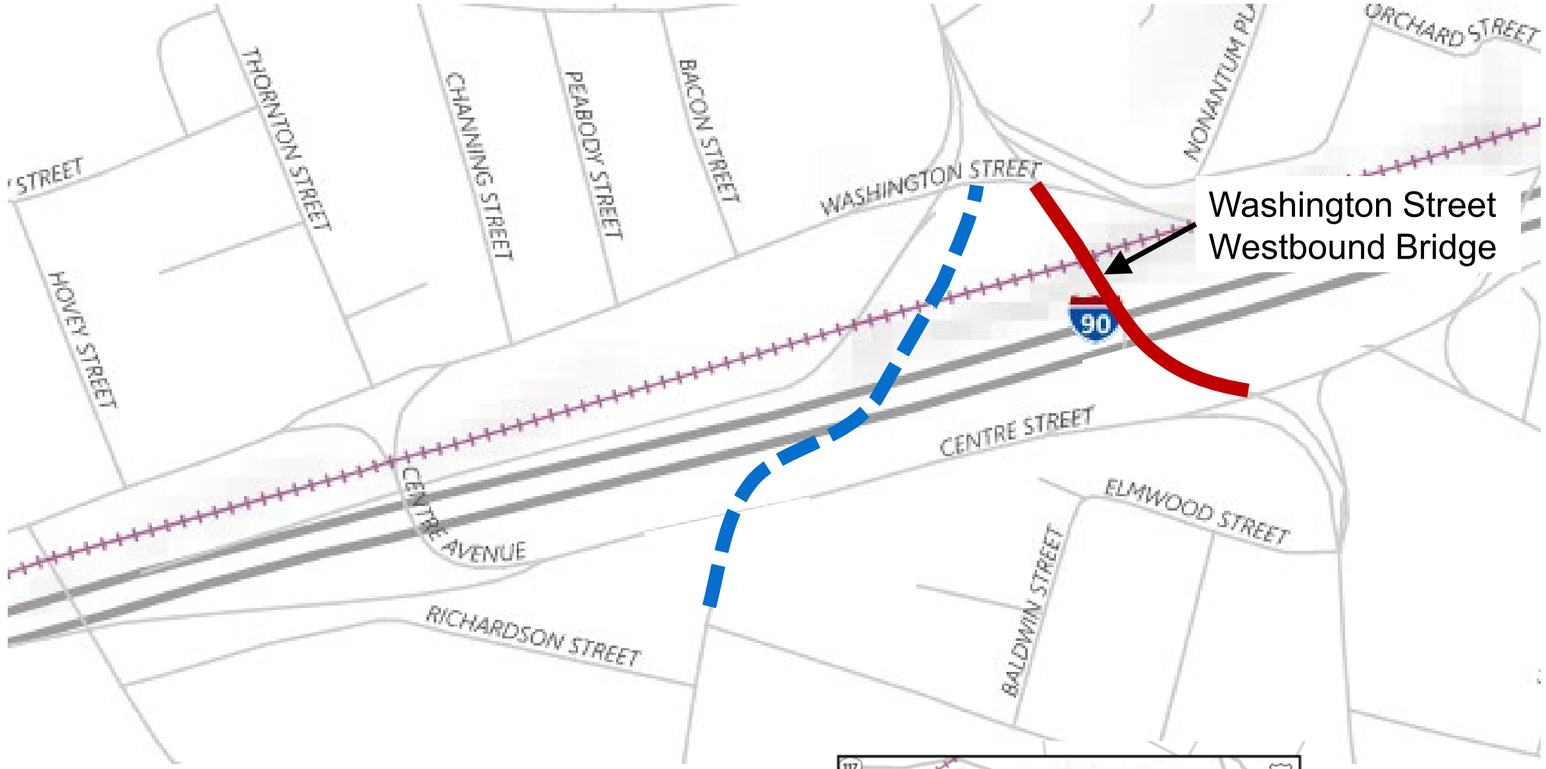
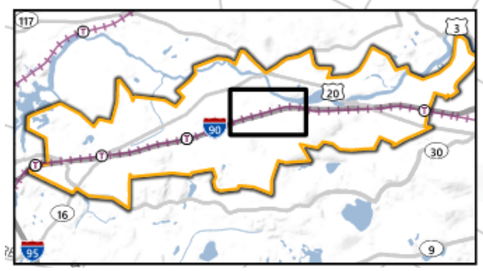
Alternative Components

6: Close or Repurpose Washington Street Westbound Bridge





1. Close or repurpose the existing Washington Street westbound bridge
2. Simplify operations at the intersections north and south of the existing bridge
3. Potential repurposing could include dedicated transitway or ped/bike bridge
4. Likely would need to implement this component with a new bridge connecting Centre Street

Potential Transitway and Bus Hub

Potential New Centre Street Bridge Connection

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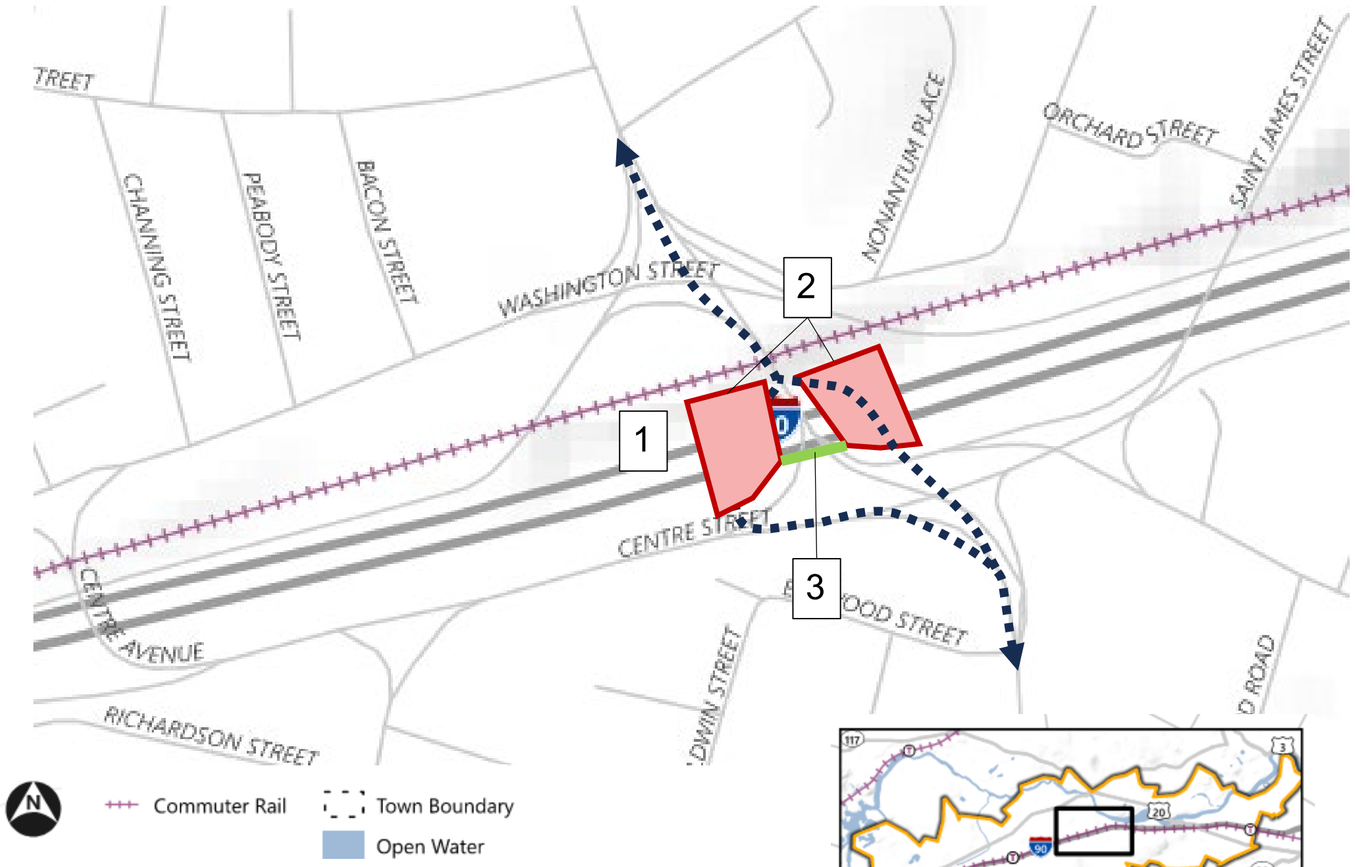
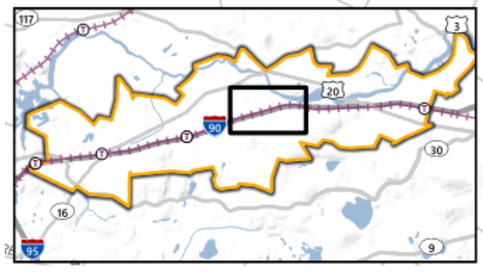
Alternative Components

7: Bus Transit Hub in Newton Corner





Potential MTBA 57 Bus Routing

Potential Transit Hub Location

1 New mobility hub providing passengers with a comfortable place to wait and connecting bus service with additional mobility elements (i.e. Bluebikes station, bike parking)

2 Provide hubs in each direction by decking over I-90

3 Create a safe pedestrian crossing to connect inbound and outbound platforms

Note: This concept shows one potential alternative for a transit hub. There are different layers of options for transit hubs depending on other alternative components.

Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only. More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

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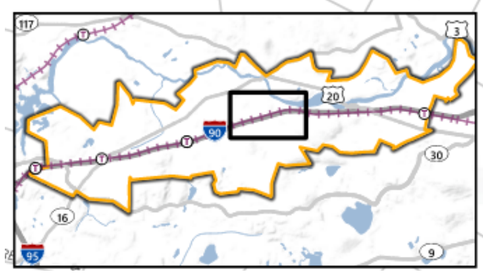
Alternative Components

8: Potential Commuter Rail Station in Newton Corner



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1 Potential new Commuter Rail station in Newton Corner

2 Access could be provided on both sides of Newton Corner, with pedestrian and bicycle connections to the neighborhoods north and south of I-90

3 Connections could be provided to local MBTA bus routes

Note: location of potential future Commuter Rail station shown for graphical purposes. Preferred potential location could be shifted east or west of location shown

Potential Future Station Location

Passenger Access to Potential Station

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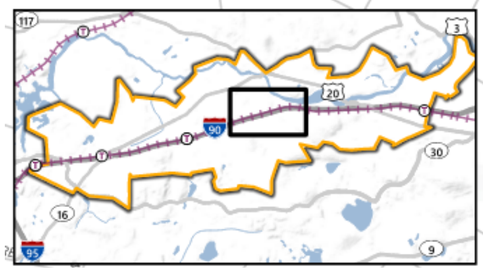
Alternative Components

9: Air-rights / Decking over I-90

1 Deck over I-90 to provide space for multimodal uses, bike path, transit bus stop, mobility hub, additional green space, and/or community space

2 Create a Village Center in Newton Corner and provide a more welcoming environment for small businesses



Potential Decking Areas

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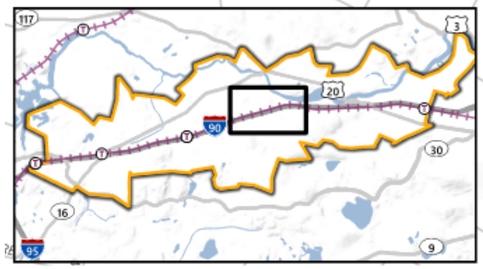
Alternative Components

10: Close or Repurpose Washington Street Eastbound Bridge



1. Close or repurpose the existing Washington Street eastbound bridge
2. Removes vehicular weaving and conflict between Washington Street and I-90 Eastbound Off-Ramp
3. Potential repurposing could include ped/bike bridge or dedicated transitway
4. Likely would need to implement this component with a new bridge connecting Centre Street

Potential Ped/Bike Bridge

Potential New Centre Street Bridge Connection

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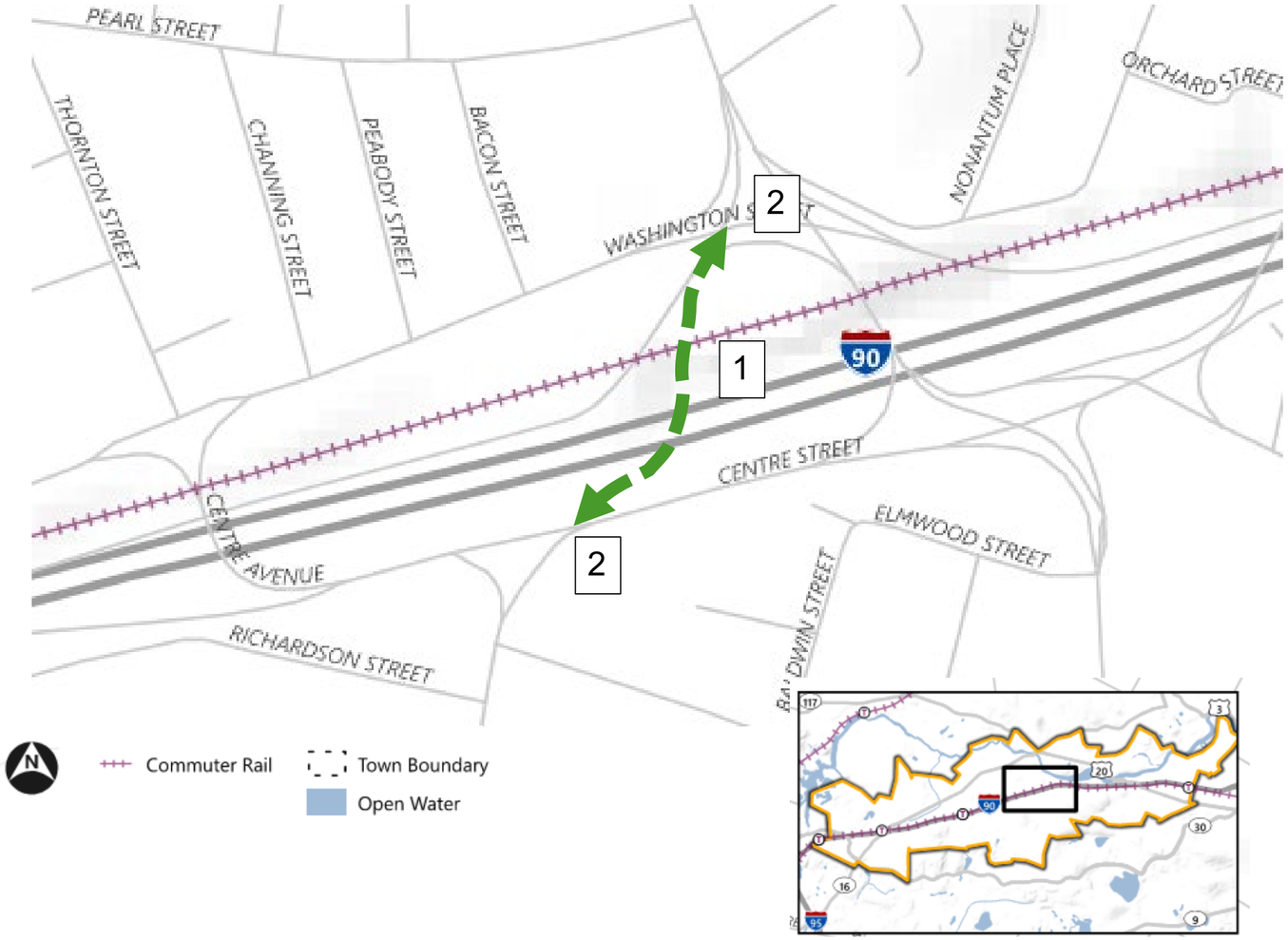
Alternative Components

11: Pedestrian / Bicycle Bridge over I-90 in Newton Corner



1 New pedestrian and bicycle bridge over I-90 providing a separated facility connecting the north and south sides of Newton Corner

2 New signalized crosswalks across Washington Street connecting to Centre Street north and south

Example of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Route 2 in Concord, MA – Source: Belmont Citizens Forum

Potential New Ped/Bike Bridge Location

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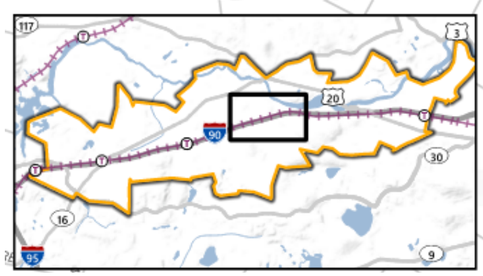
Alternative Components

12: Neighborhood Greenway on Charlesbank Road



1 Create a neighborhood greenway along Charlesbank Road connecting Newton Corner to the Charles River, in close walking and biking distance.

Potential Neighborhood Greenway

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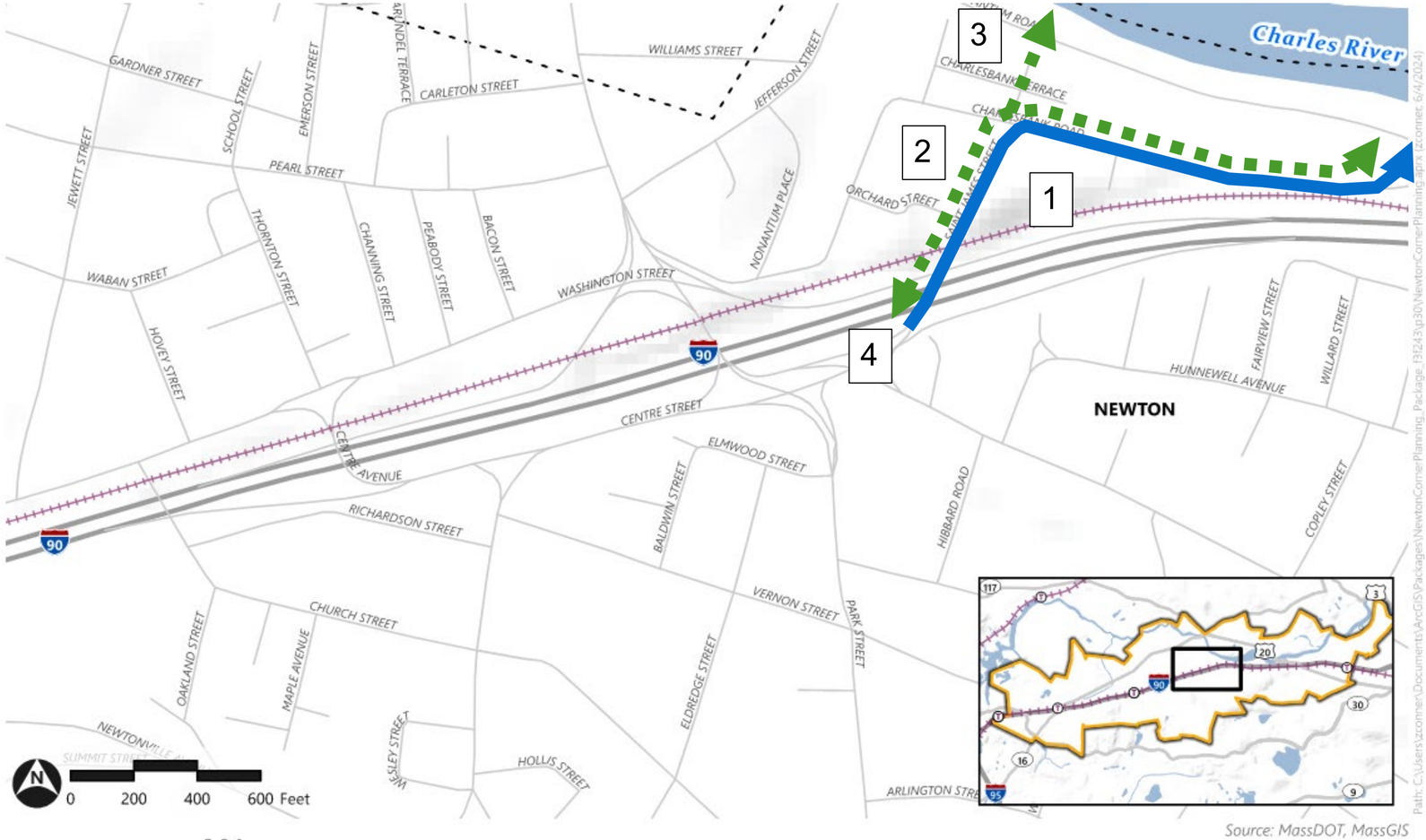
Alternative Components

13: Shared-Use Path on St. James Street



1 Convert St. James Street to one-way

2 Construct a shared-use path along St. James Street to connect Newton Corner to the Charles River

3 Alternative: provide a ped/bike connection through St. James Terrace to Nonantum Road

4 Reconstruct intersection of St. James Street at Washington Street with new signalized crossings

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More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

Potential New Shared-Use Path

One-Way Travel

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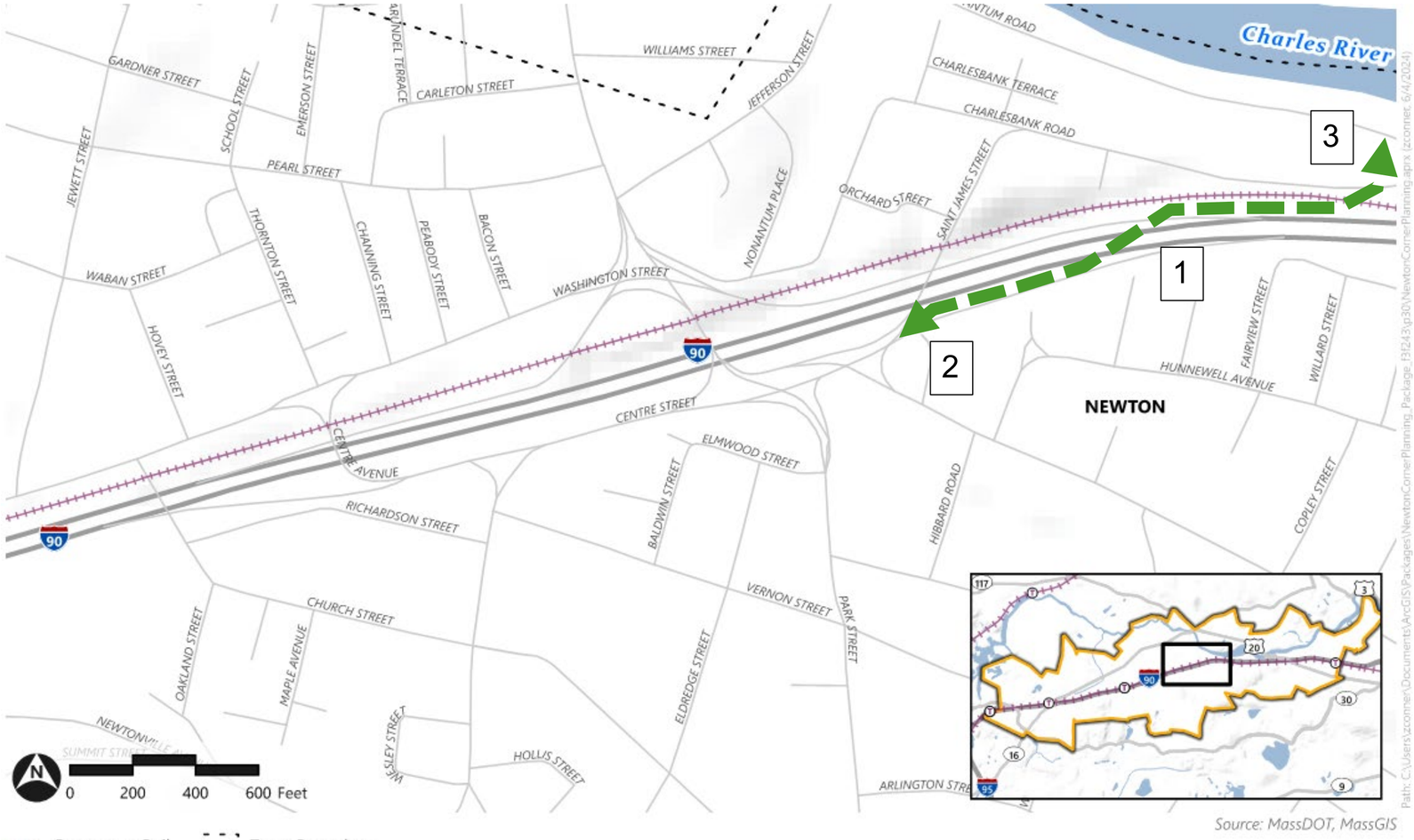
14: Pedestrian / Bicycle Bridge to Charles River



1 New pedestrian and bicycle bridge approximately 1/3 mile in length connecting Newton Corner to the Charles River

2 Western end of bridge connect to reconstructed intersection of St. James Street at Washington Street with new signalized crossings

3 Eastern end of bridge connect to Nonantum Road west of Charlesbank Road

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More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

Potential New Ped/Bike Bridge Location

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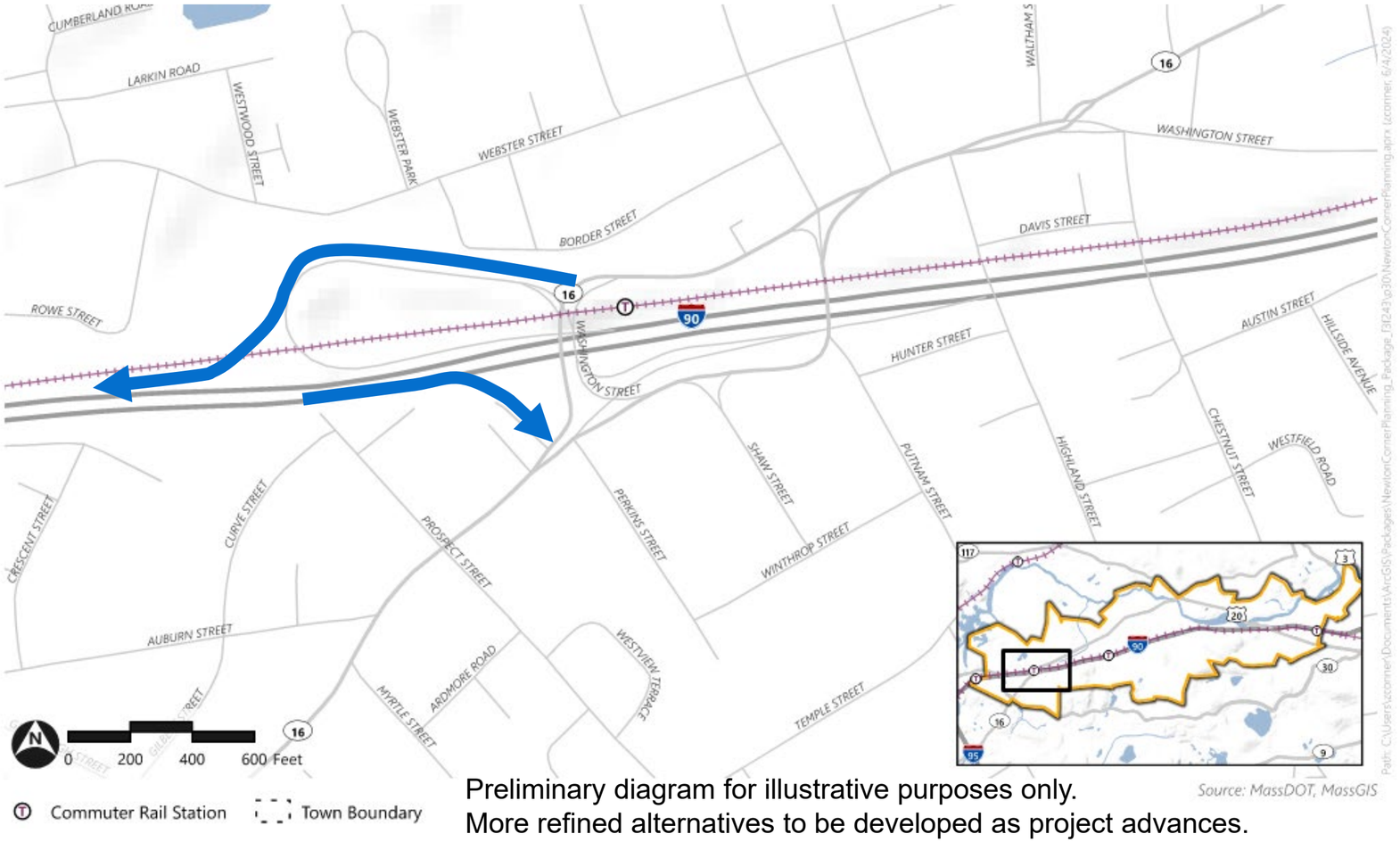
15: Full interstate access at West Newton



1. Construct full interstate access at West Newton (Eastbound Off-Ramp and Westbound On-Ramp)
2. Provides additional access to/from the west relieving reliance on Newton Corner interchange

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More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

Potential New Connection Points

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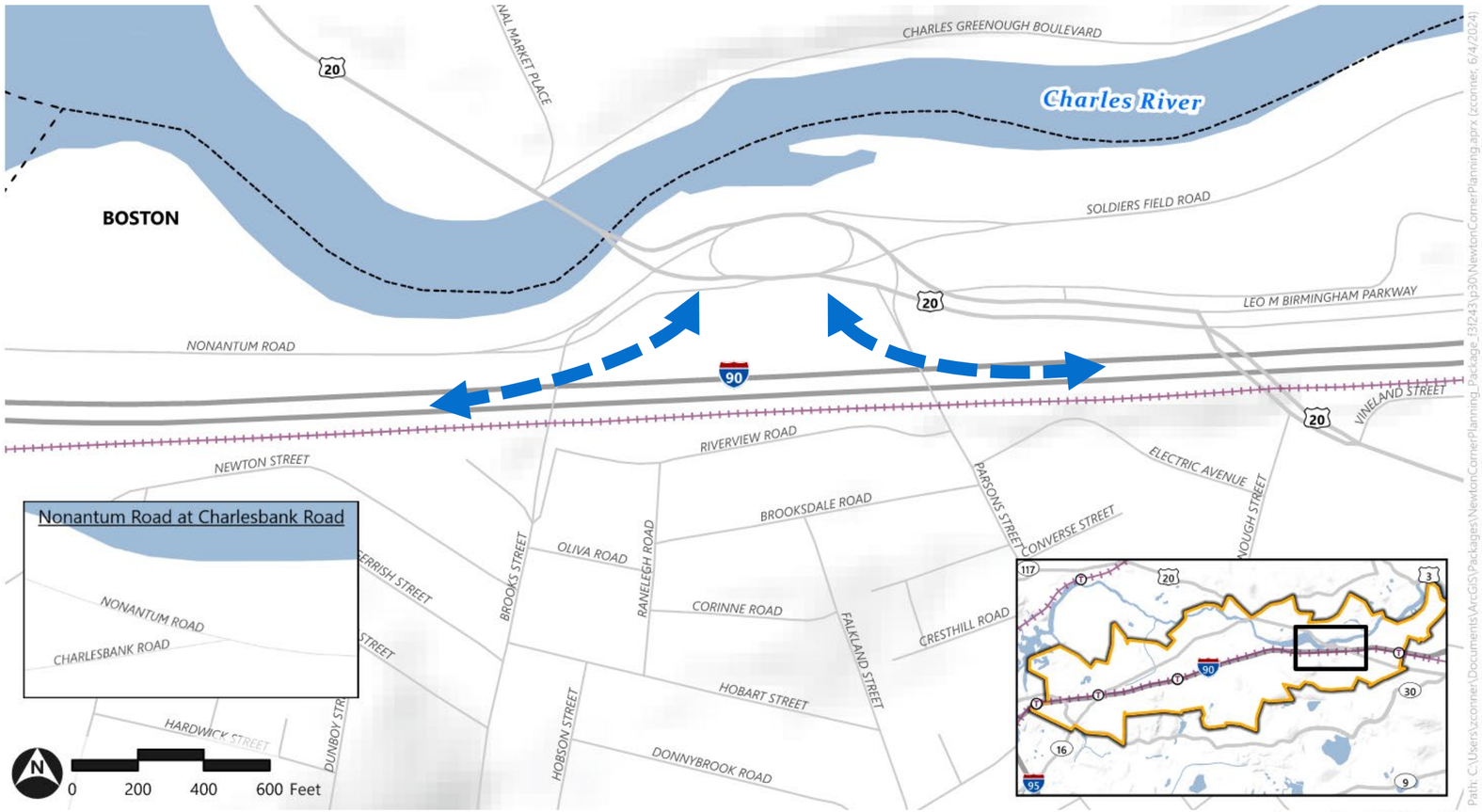
Alternative Components

16: New interstate access in Brighton (at DCR Roadway area)



Commuter Rail Town Boundary

Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only.
More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

1 Construct interstate access at DCR Roadway Area to relieve reliance on Newton Corner interchange

2 Could include full interstate access or partial interstate access

3 Would result in additional traffic on DCR parkways which does not align with DCR's vision for the region's parkways

4 Potential impact to DCR property including protected parkland.

Potential New Connection Points

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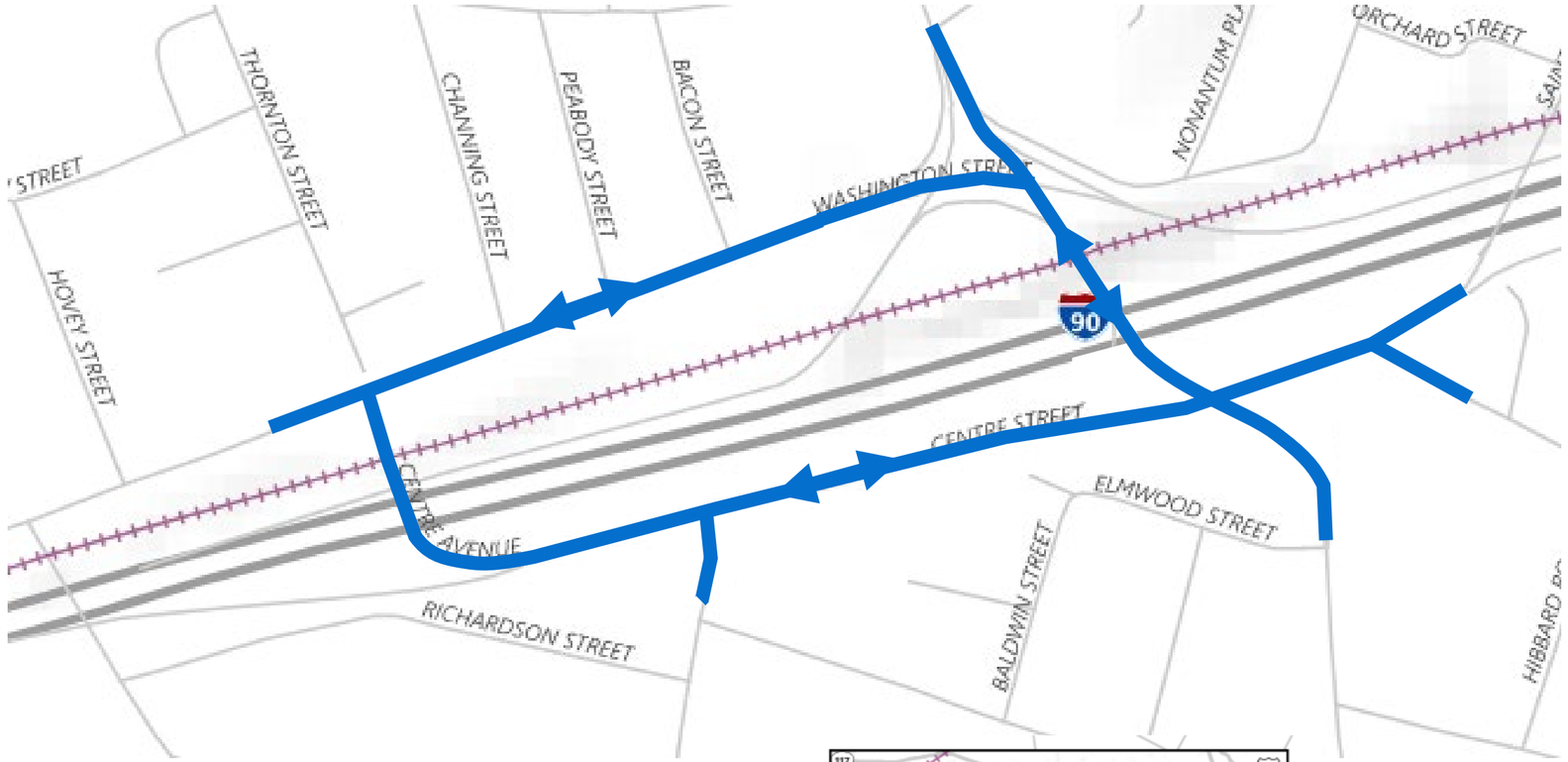
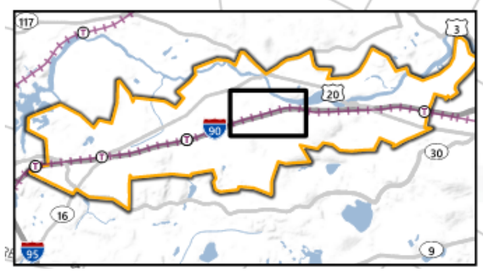
Combined Examples

- 3 potential Combined Examples are shown for reference
- Additional Combined Examples can be developed layering together different Alternative Components

Preliminary Combined Examples

A: Two-Directional Travel on Existing Roadway Network with Roundabouts





1. Provide bi-directional travel on all roads in Newton Corner
2. Maintain the current bridge locations
3. Consider roundabouts to minimize weaving, increase safety, and simplify intersection configuration
4. Consider reallocating right of way for non-vehicular modes

Two-Way Travel

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Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only.
More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

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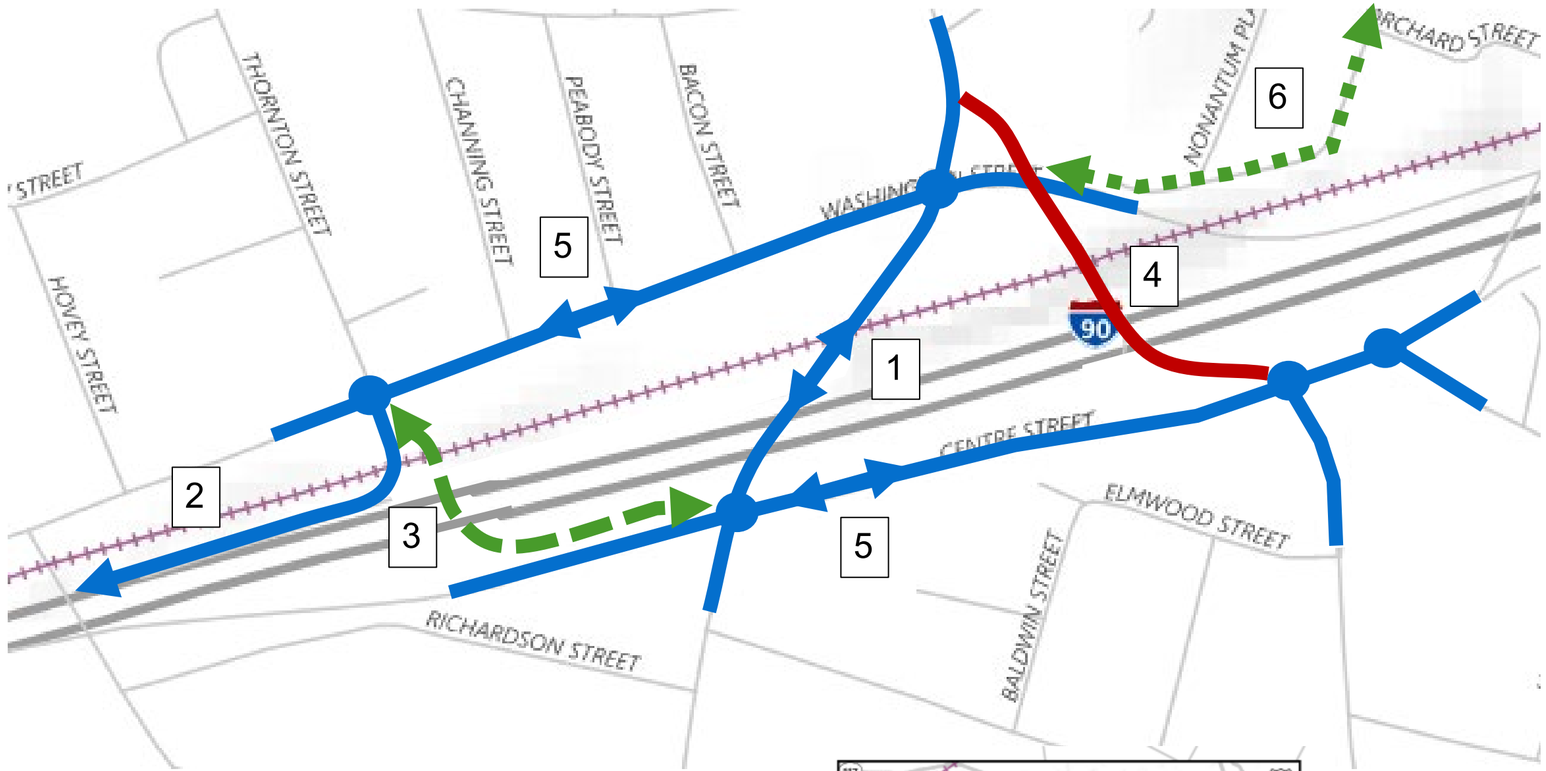
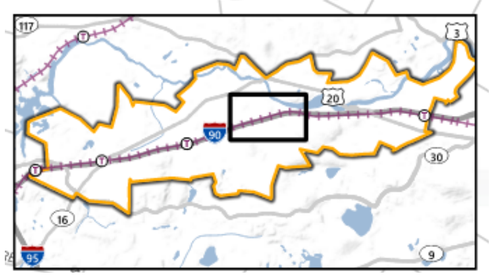
Preliminary Combined Examples

B: New Roadway Network with Centre St Bridge + Relocated I-90 WB On-Ramp





1. New bridge with bi-directional travel reconnecting Centre Street
2. Close the existing I-90 westbound on-ramp and relocate to the west
3. Repurpose the existing Washington Street eastbound bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists only
4. Repurpose the existing Washington Street westbound bridge as a transitway and bus hub
5. Convert Washington Street north and south of I-90 to two-way travel
6. Create a neighborhood greenway connecting to the Charles River

Two-Way Travel

Transitway and Bus Hub

Ped/Bike Accommodation

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Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only.
More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

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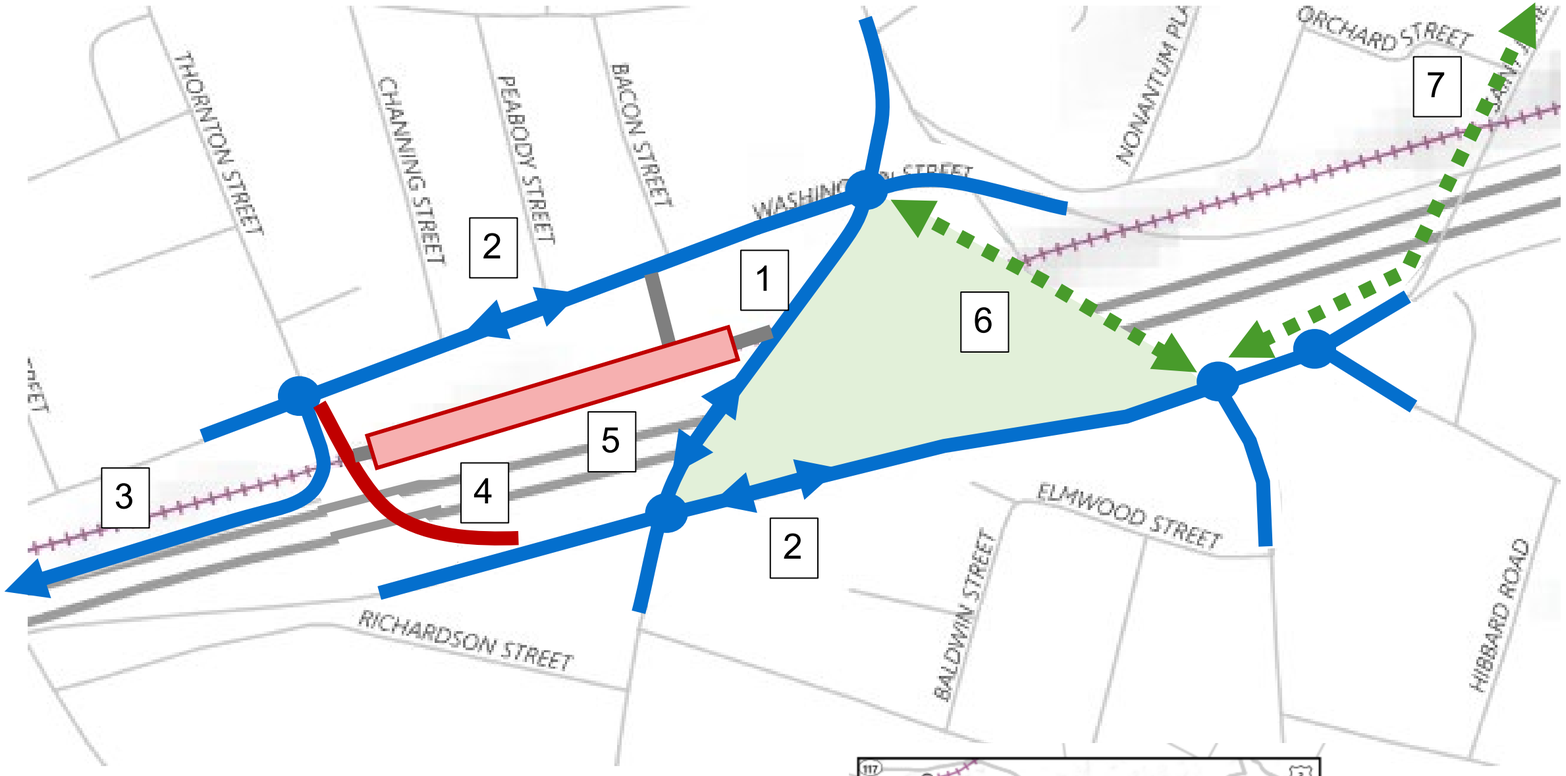
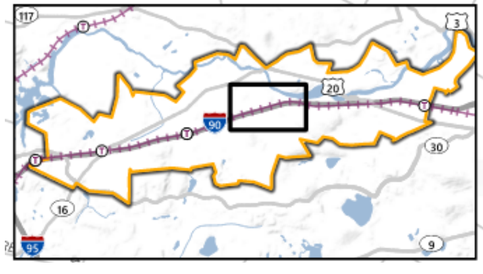
Preliminary Combined Examples

C: New Network with Centre St Bridge + Potential CR Station + Decking





1 New bridge with bi-directional travel reconnecting Centre Street

2 Convert Washington Street north and south of I-90 to two-way travel

3 Close the existing I-90 westbound on-ramp and relocate to the west

4 Repurpose the existing Washington Street eastbound bridge for buses

5 Potential new Commuter Rail station

6 Add decking over I-90 with a shared-use path and green space

7 Construct a shared-use path

Green space
Potential Commuter Rail Station Location
Two-Way Travel
Transitway and Bus Hub
Ped/Bike Accommodation

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Preliminary diagram for illustrative purposes only.
More refined alternatives to be developed as project advances.

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Breakout Session

- Attendees will be divided into breakout rooms with study team facilitators
- Each room will discuss the alternative ideas presented
- Facilitators will take notes
- Breakout rooms will last up to 30 minutes
- Everyone will be invited back to the main meeting to discuss work in progress and next steps

Breakout Room Discussion

- Do you have any additional examples from other communities or other Newton villages that you think we should consider?
- What innovative transportation solutions would you like to consider that we haven't discussed yet?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your vision or concerns regarding transportation improvements in Newton?

Schedule and Next Steps

Study Schedule

We are here

Study Framework
Winter / Spring 2024

Existing Conditions
Spring / Summer 2024

Future Conditions
Fall 2024

Alternatives Development
Winter – Spring 2025

Alternatives Analysis
Spring/Summer 2025

Note: Estimated Timeline that is subject to change.

Findings / Conclusions
Fall 2025

Draft and Final Report
Fall/Early Winter 2025

6 Working Group meetings and 4 Public meetings throughout duration of study

WG — *Working Group Meeting*

Public — *Public Meeting*

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Public Comment Period

Questions and answers

- “Raise your hand” to be unmuted for verbal questions (*9 if using a phone)

- Submit your questions and comments using the Q&A button

- Please state your name and affiliation 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

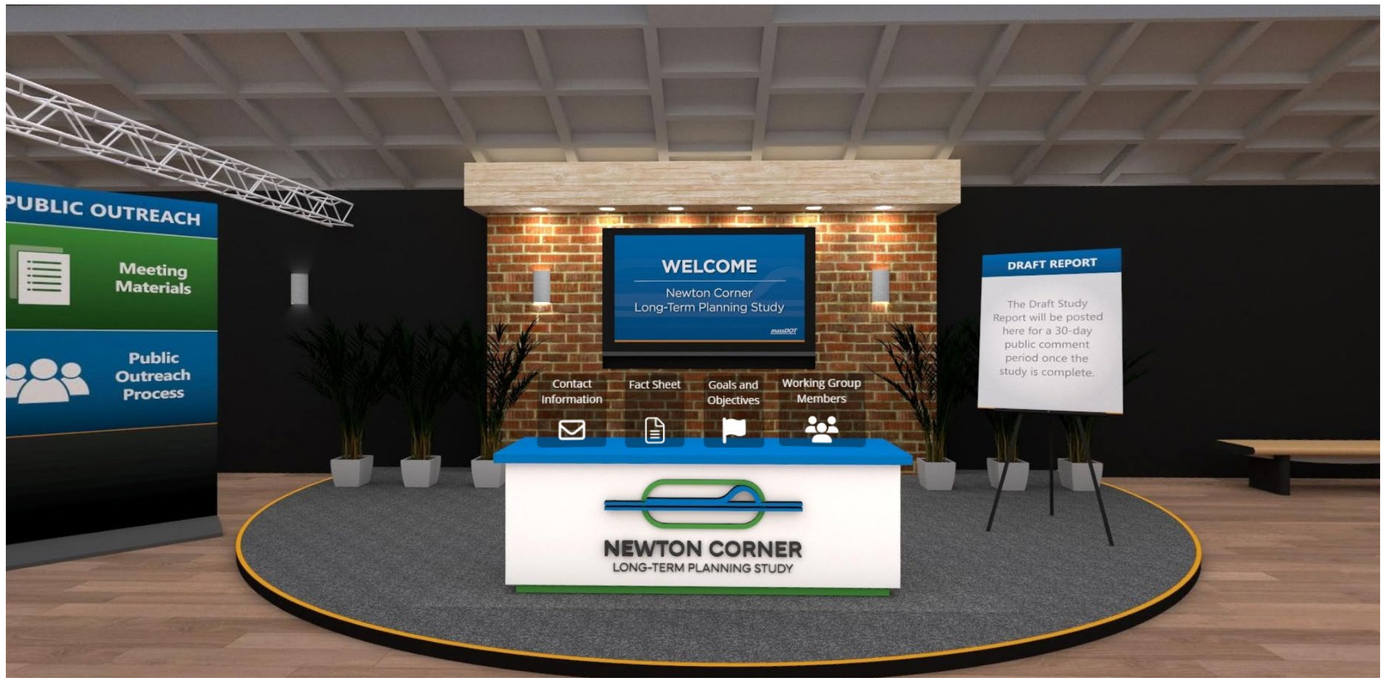
All questions and comments are subject to disclosure for public records. Please use these functions for project related business only.

How to Reach Us

Study Website / Contact Information:
https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study

Virtual Meeting Room:
https://vmr.vhb.com/v/EI18wZWNqOB

Via Email:
planning@dot.state.ma.us



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Thank You

Study Website:
https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study

Patrick Snyder, Project Manager
patrick.l.snyder@dot.state.ma.us