



Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study Working Group Meeting #1

Study Kick-off

May 22, 2024 | 10:30 a.m.

Newton Free Library



Agenda

1 Welcome and Introductions

- Role of Working Group

2 Study Overview

- Study Process
- Public Involvement Plan
- Study Area

3 Goals and Objectives

4 Schedule and Next Steps

5 Open Discussion

- Working Group Discussion
- Public Comment Period
- Scheduling Future Meetings



NEWTON CORNER

LONG-TERM PLANNING STUDY

Study Team



Leading study



Overall project management, QA/QC, transportation planning, environmental, alternatives development, support services: GIS/visuals, funding



OD/modeling and
Land use/zoning



Environmental Justice,
Public outreach and
engagement



Inclusive design



Cost estimating

Meeting With You Today

- **MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning:**

- Patrick Snyder (Project Manager)
- Ethan Britland
- Rachel Kelly

- **Study Consultants:**

- Christine Trearchis (VHB)
- Niki Hastings (VHB)
- Matt Duranleau (VHB)
- Toni Pignatelli (FHI)



Invited Working Group Members

Introductions of each member and organization

Federal Elected Officials

- ▶ Office of U.S. Senator Edward Markey
- ▶ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren
- ▶ Office of U.S. Representative Jake Auchincloss
- ▶ Office of U.S. Representative Katherine Clark
- ▶ Office of U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley

State Elected Officials

- ▶ Office of State Senator William Brownsberger
- ▶ Office of State Senator Cynthia Creem
- ▶ Office of State Representative Kay Khan
- ▶ Office of State Representative John Lawn
- ▶ Office of State Representative Michael Moran
- ▶ Office of State Representative Steven Owens

Local Officials

- ▶ Newton City Council
- ▶ Watertown City Council
- ▶ Boston City Council
- ▶ City of Newton Mayor’s Office
- ▶ City of Boston Mayor’s Office
- ▶ City of Watertown City Manager’s Office
- ▶ Boston Transportation Department

State Representation

- ▶ MassDOT Highway Division
- ▶ MBTA
- ▶ MAPC

Advocacy Groups

- ▶ Newton Corner Neighborhood Association
- ▶ MassBike
- ▶ LiveableStreets Alliance
- ▶ WalkMassachusetts
- ▶ Bike Newton
- ▶ Newton Safe Routes to School Task Force
- ▶ Newton Transportation Advisory Committee

Other Stakeholders

- ▶ Perkins School for the Blind
- ▶ Newton Council on Aging
- ▶ Newton Commission on Disability
- ▶ Watertown TMA
- ▶ Allston/Brighton TMA

Role of Working Group

Working Group Purpose

- Provide local knowledge, perspective, and expertise
- Share information with communities and organizations represented
- Review information and find feedback

Working Group Logistics

- Meetings are to review approach, analysis, or findings, share resources and information, and give feedback
- Documents and resources will be periodically posted on the study website and email notifications of meetings will be sent out

Working Group Ground Rules

- All participants are requested to listen to the opinions of others in an effort to ensure a constructive and productive discussion.
- Members of the Working Group are asked to make every possible effort to attend the meetings consistently. However, if members are unable to attend, they should let the study team know if an alternate representative will participate on their behalf.
- All participants are asked to turn their computer notifications off and mute their cell phones and other electronic devices during meetings.
- For virtual meetings, Working Group members are allowed to show video and may keep their video on or off during the meeting. Meeting staff may mute you or turn off your video if the audio/video becomes distracting. All virtual Working Group meetings will be recorded.


Study Schedule




Note: Estimated Timeline that is subject to change.



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


WG

Working Group Meeting


Public

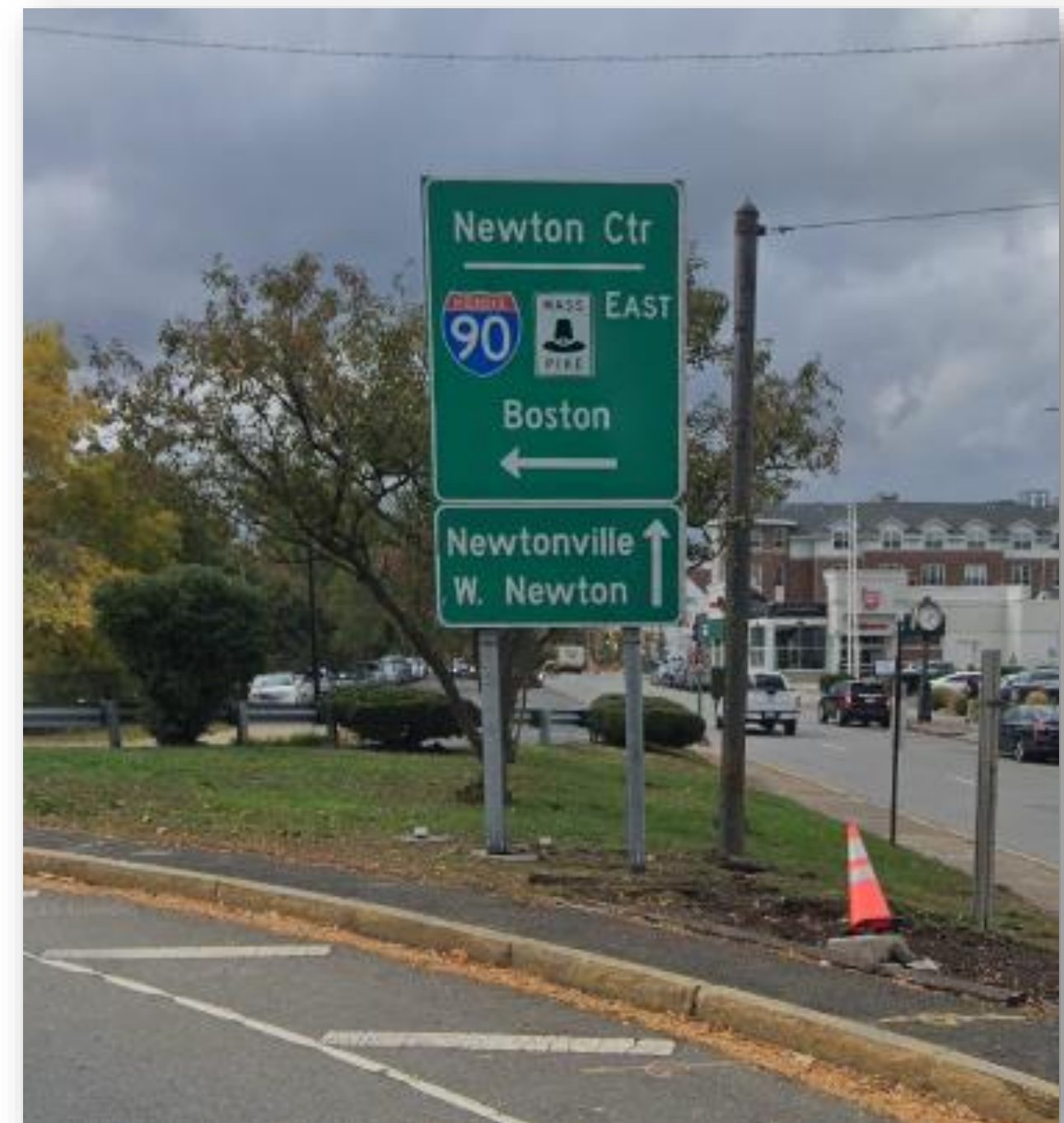
Public Meeting



Study Overview

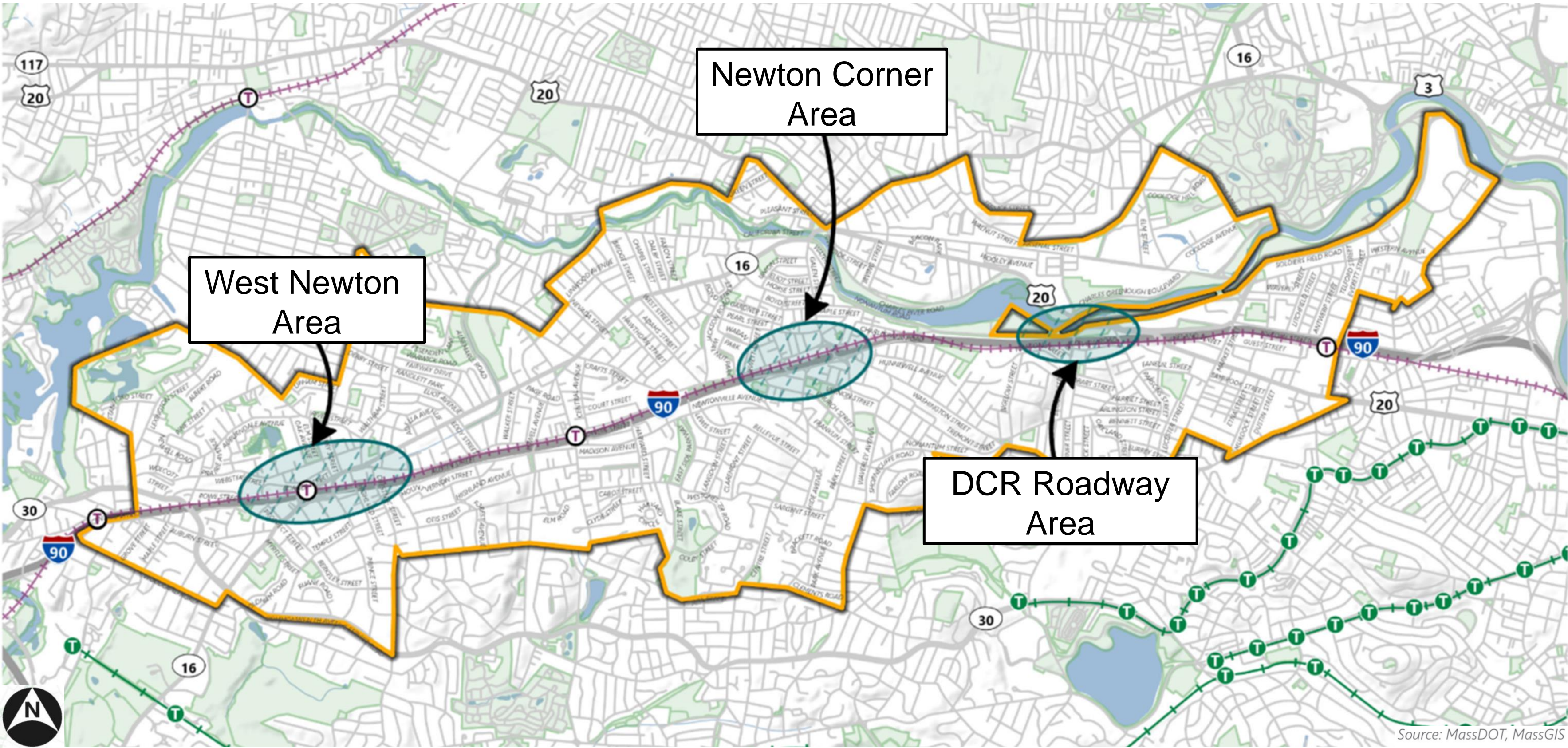
Study Overview

- The Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study will develop **long-term multimodal transportation solutions and safety improvements** to the Newton Corner I-90 Exit 127 interchange.
- The study areas include the Newton Corner, West Newton, and DCR Roadway areas in Newton, Brighton, and Watertown.
- The study will develop and analyze alternatives, present recommendations, and develop an implementation plan.



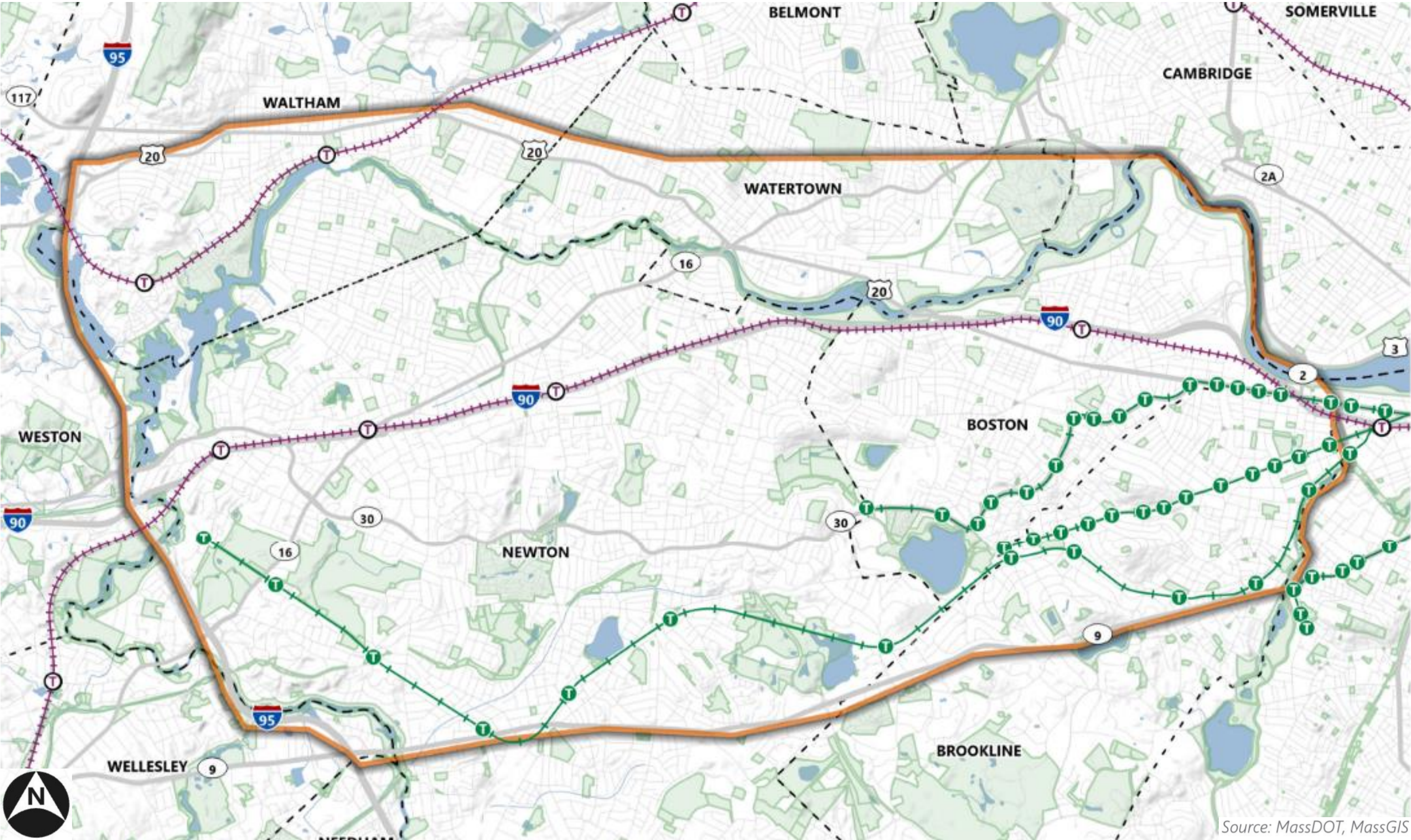
Local Study Area

Mobility, Land Use, and Environmental

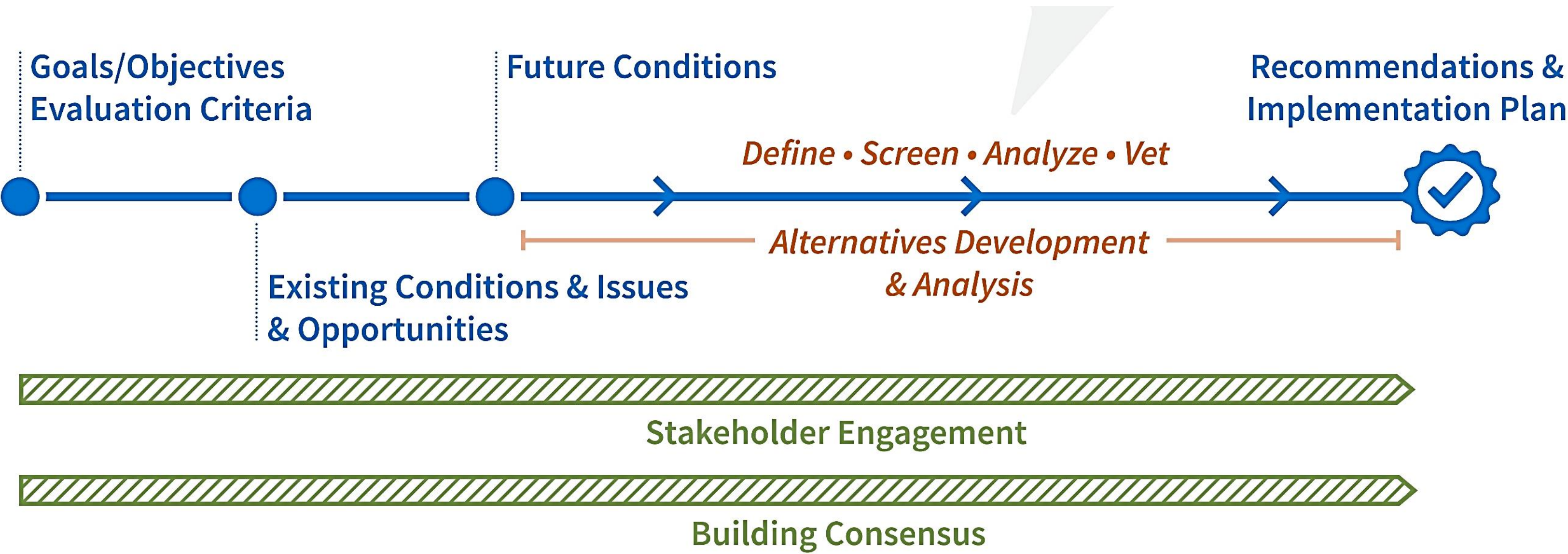


Regional Study Area

Mobility



Study Process



Public Involvement Plan

- Outreach Approach and Methods
- Outreach Team
- Working Group meetings (6)
- Public Information Meetings (4)
- Online engagement

The screenshot shows a virtual meeting room interface for the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study. At the top left is the logo, which consists of a stylized green and blue oval with a white swoosh, followed by the text "NEWTON CORNER" and "LONG-TERM PLANNING STUDY" below it. The main heading reads "Welcome to our 360° Virtual Meeting Room!". Below this, a paragraph says: "Thank you for joining us to learn more information and to provide your input on the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study." Another paragraph follows: "Please take some time to explore this virtual room and provide your feedback on the Comment Form and the Interactive Map. If you have any additional questions, please contact _____ whose information can be found on the front desk." To the right, there is a section titled "Your feedback is important!" with two speech bubble icons. It states: "We value your feedback as we continue planning our long-term transportation needs. This room has two opportunities for public feedback: 1) The **Survey** board 2) The **Interactive Map**". Below this, a green bar contains the heading "Virtual public meeting room instructions:". It includes two instructions: "Hold down the **left mouse button** and **drag** to pan around the virtual room" (accompanied by a mouse icon) and "Click the **boards and surveys** to view project information and provide feedback" (accompanied by a hand clicking a screen icon). At the bottom, a blue bar contains the text "Click here to begin your tour" and the "massDOT" logo on the right.

Study Website / Contact Information:

<https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study>

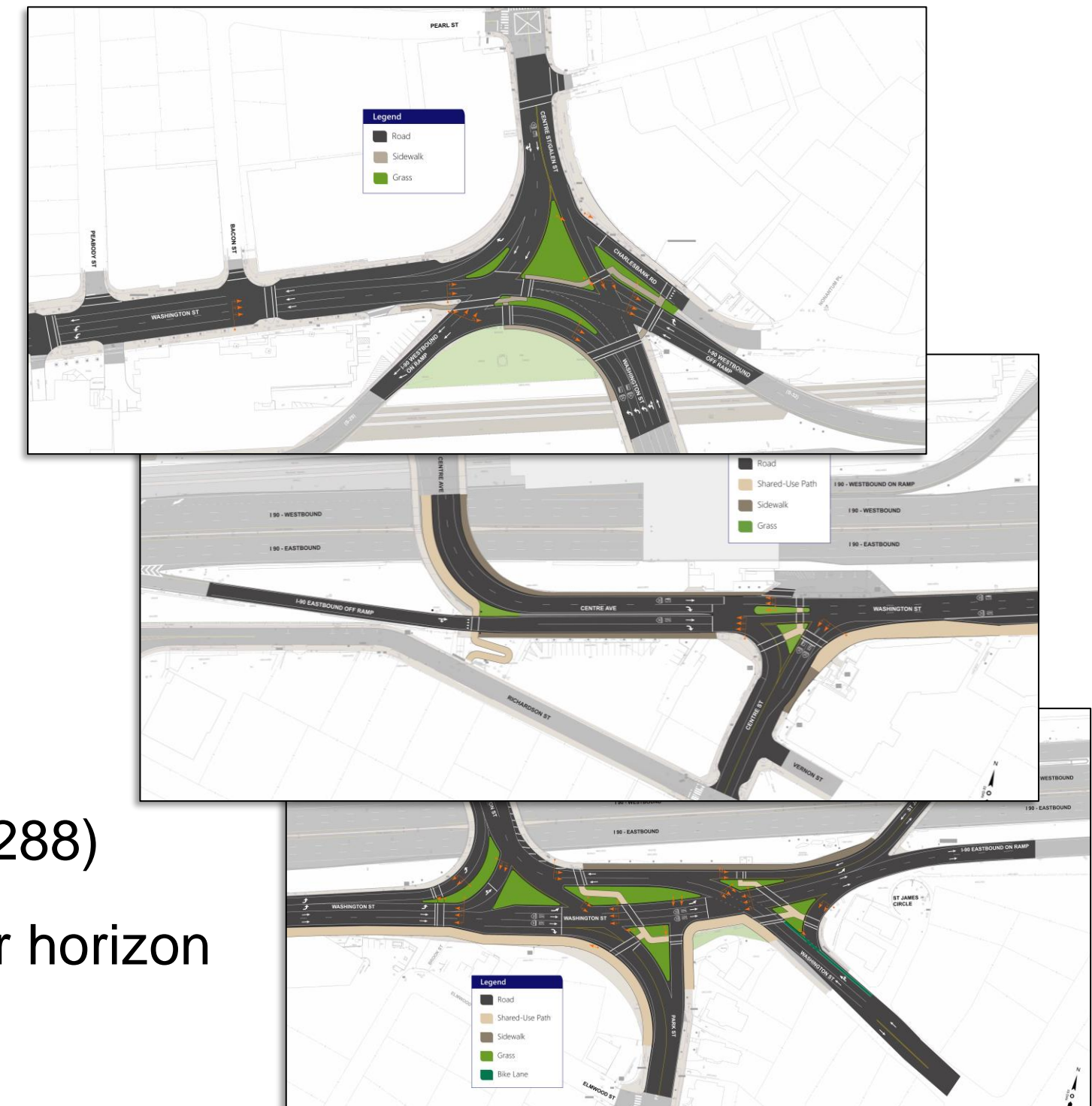
Other Newton Corner Efforts

Previous Studies

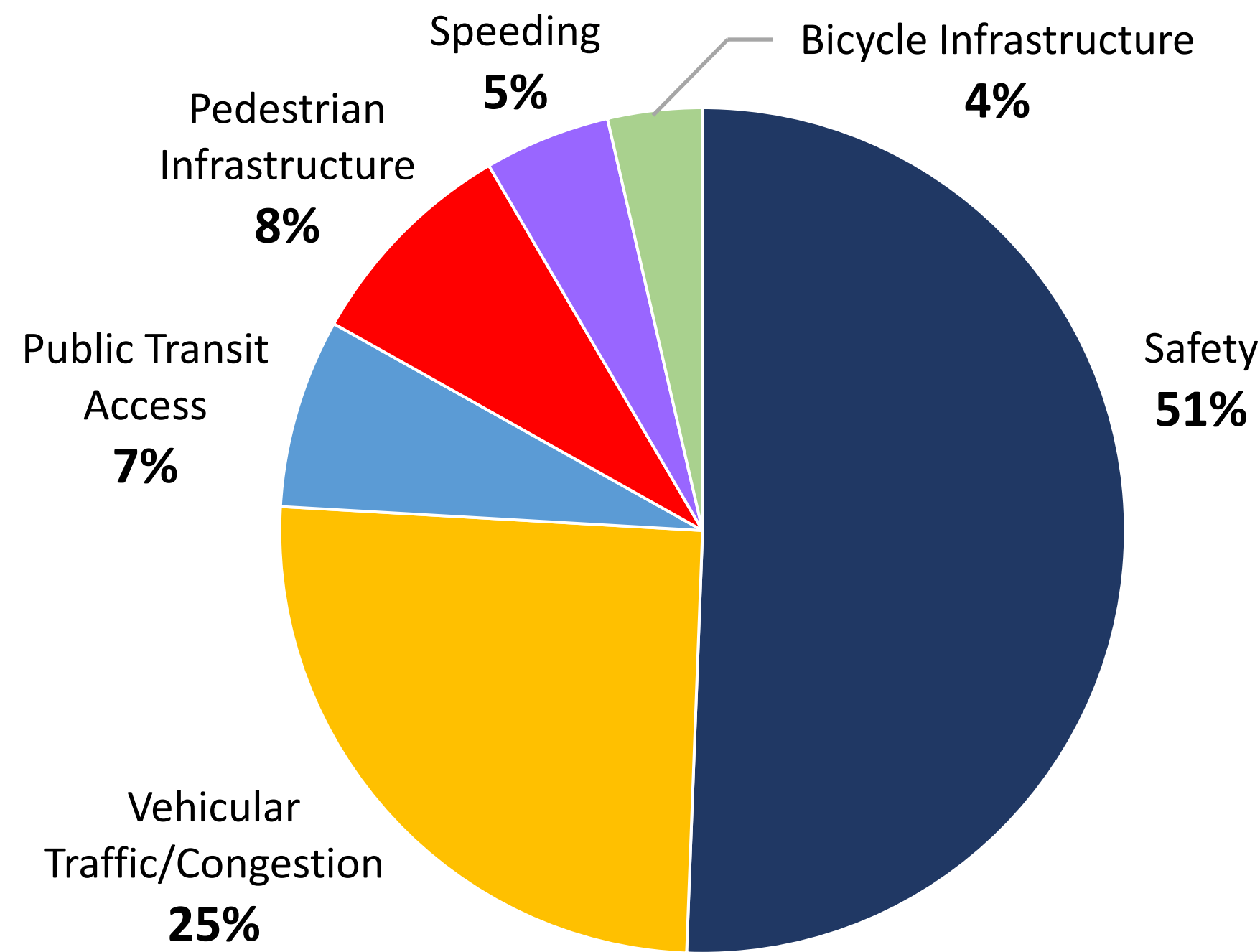
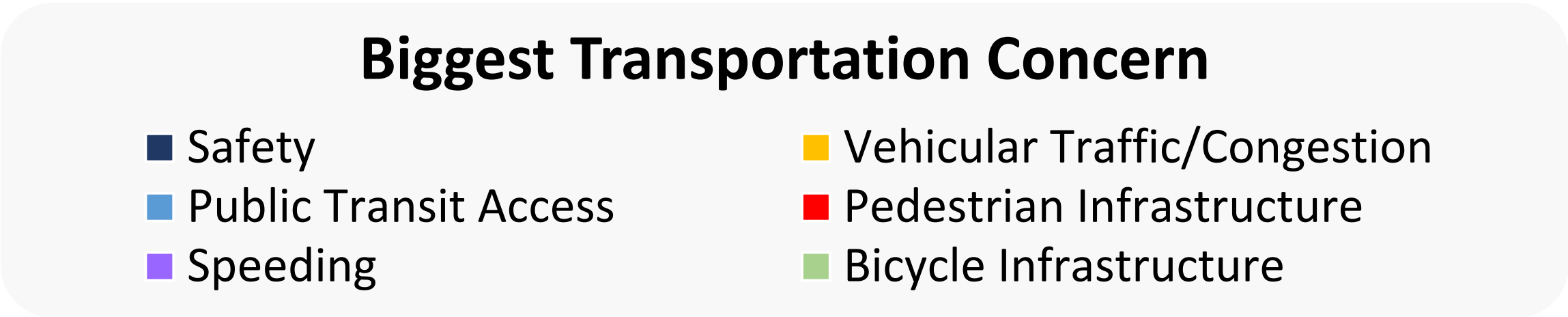
- Will leverage previous studies that have occurred, including:
 - Newton Corner Road Safety Audit (2020)
 - CTPS Newton Corner Studies (2006 / 2009)
 - Local and state planning documents

Ongoing Projects/Studies

- MassDOT Short- to Mid-term Improvements project (DOT #609288)
 - Focused on operational / safety improvements on a 10-year horizon
 - Final Public Informational Meeting will be on June 6, 2024
 - Publication of Final Report expected in Summer 2024



Previous Themes

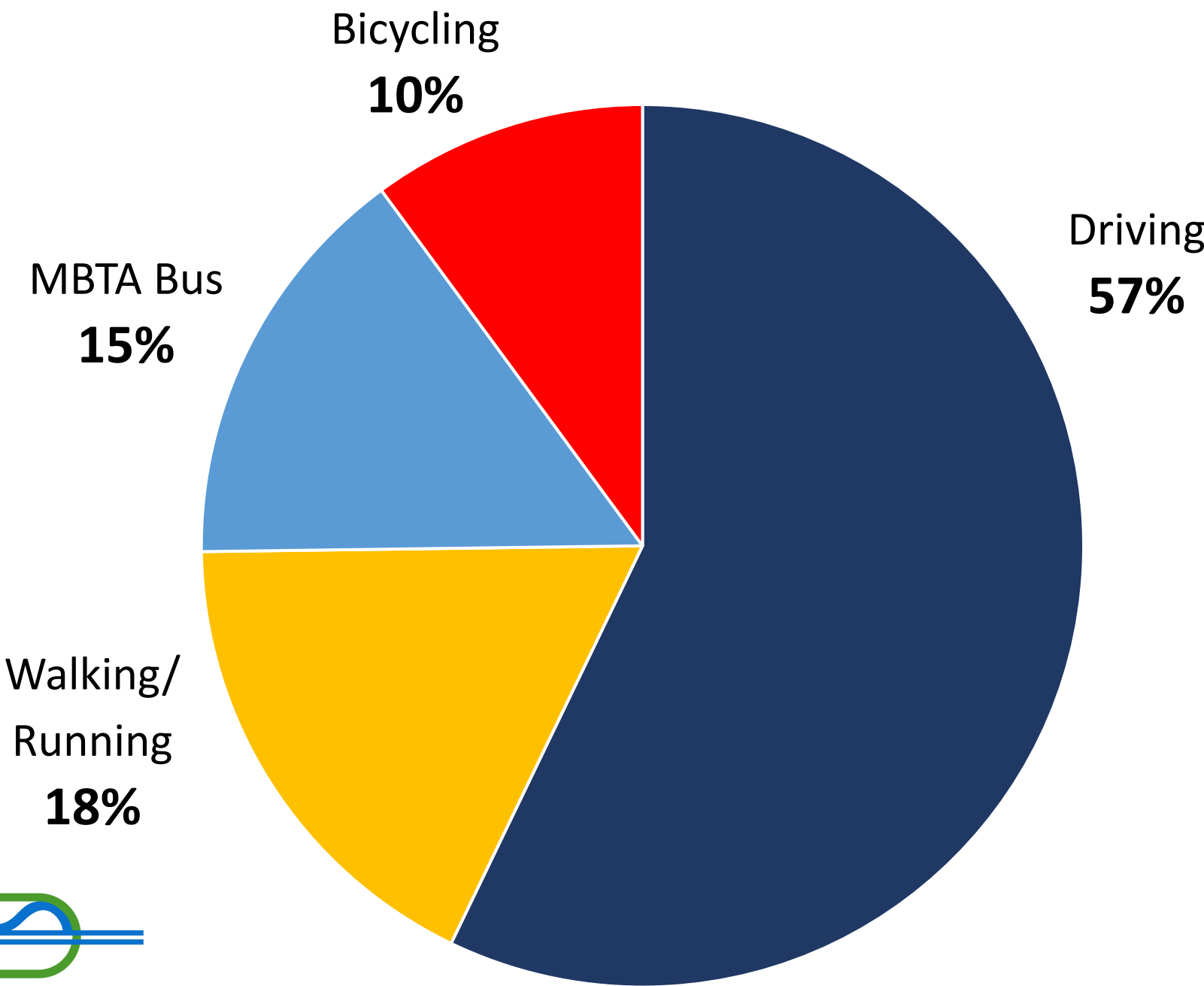


*From Newton Corner Short/Mid-Term Improvements Project
Public Information Meeting #1
(September 2022)*

Previous Themes

Modes of Travel Through Newton Corner

- Driving
- Walking/Running
- MBTA Bus
- Bicycling



"As a pedestrian, this is a nightmare. As a driver, there is not enough distance to merge (especially for visitors)."

"Despite being a confident bicyclist, this is not a safe connection."

"Lack of clarity and channelization"

*From Newton Corner Short/Mid-Term Improvements Project
Public Information Meeting #1
(September 2022)*

Previous Themes

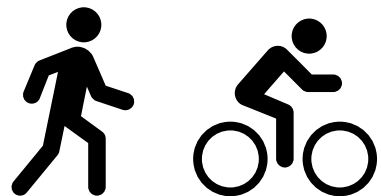
General Comments on Mobility



- Vehicles:
 - Backups and queue lengths are an issue
 - Traffic and congestion should be improved



- Transit
 - Need for increased reliability and access to transit
 - Bus stops should be more efficiently organized to improve transfers between routes



- Walking/Bicycling
 - Newton Corner is unfriendly to walking and biking
 - Current layout is inclined toward automobile use

Discussion / Mapping Exercise

Map Your Comments

» Mark up the printed maps with your comments and ideas

Thoughts to Consider

» What are the challenges to traveling in the area?

» What opportunities exist to improve mobility and safety?

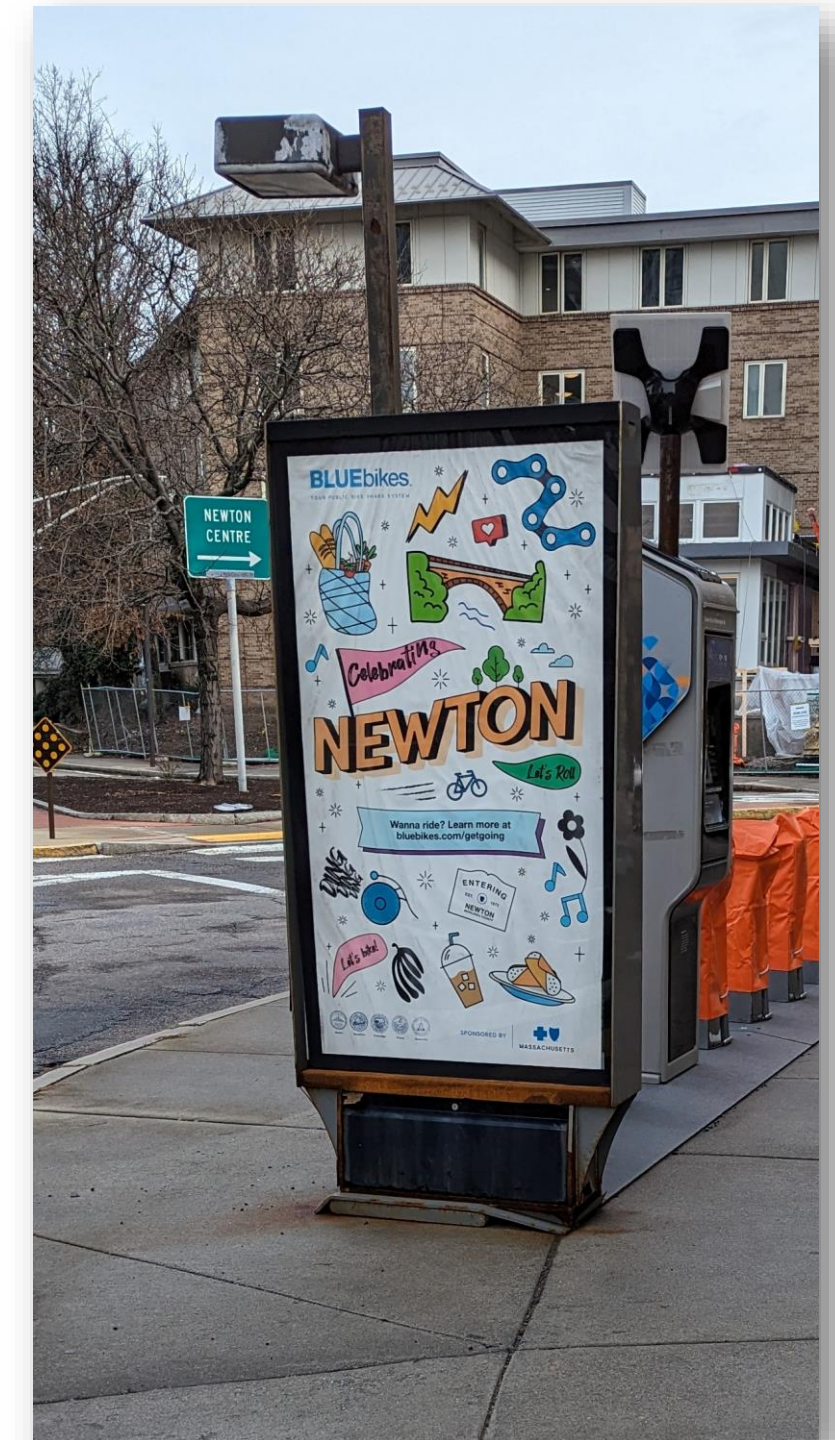




Draft Goals and Objectives

Draft Study Goals:

- Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All
- Reconnect Newton's Neighborhoods
- Enhance Quality of Life
- Promote Sustainable Transportation Solutions
- Develop Actionable Recommendations



Goal: Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All

Objectives:

- Enhance safety for all users
- Expand access to transit options
- Improve transit priority and reliability
- Reduce travel delays for all users
- Protect major east-west regional roadway and transit connections
- Close social and economic transportation equity gaps



Goal: Reconnect Newton's Neighborhoods

Objectives:

- Reconnect neighborhoods isolated by the Newton Corner interchange
- Improve safety, convenience, and comfort for all travel
- Capitalize on existing facilities
- Create enhanced regional north/south connections for all users
- Support a welcoming environment through the lens of equity



Goal: Enhance Quality of Life

Objectives:

- Ensure that benefits and resources are distributed equitably
- Minimize externalities of I-90 transportation demands
- Minimize public health and environmental impacts
- Enhance economic opportunities
- Support land use and open space plans



Goal: Promote Sustainable Transportation Solutions

Objectives:

- Create solutions that include climate change mitigation measures
- Identify and adapt to risks associated with impacts of climate change
- Further the transition to low- and zero-emission transportation modes
- Align the project with local climate mitigation measures



Goal: Develop Actionable Recommendations

Objectives:

- Create solutions that have support from the public and host communities
- Identify projects that are cost-effective based on return on investment
- Develop projects with tangible funding sources



Rank the Goals

We want to understand which of the goals are most important to you:

» Use the handouts to rank goals in order of importance to you (scale of 1 to 5)

» Provide Feedback





**Schedule and
Next Steps**


Study Schedule




Note: Estimated Timeline that is subject to change.



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


WG

Working Group Meeting


Public

Public Meeting

Our Next Steps

- Incorporate Working Group input on Goals and Objectives
- Finalize Goals and Objectives
- Draft Evaluation Criteria
- Continue Existing Conditions Analysis and Documentation
- Working Group Meeting #2: Existing Conditions (Summer 2024)
- Public Meeting #1 (Summer / Fall 2024)

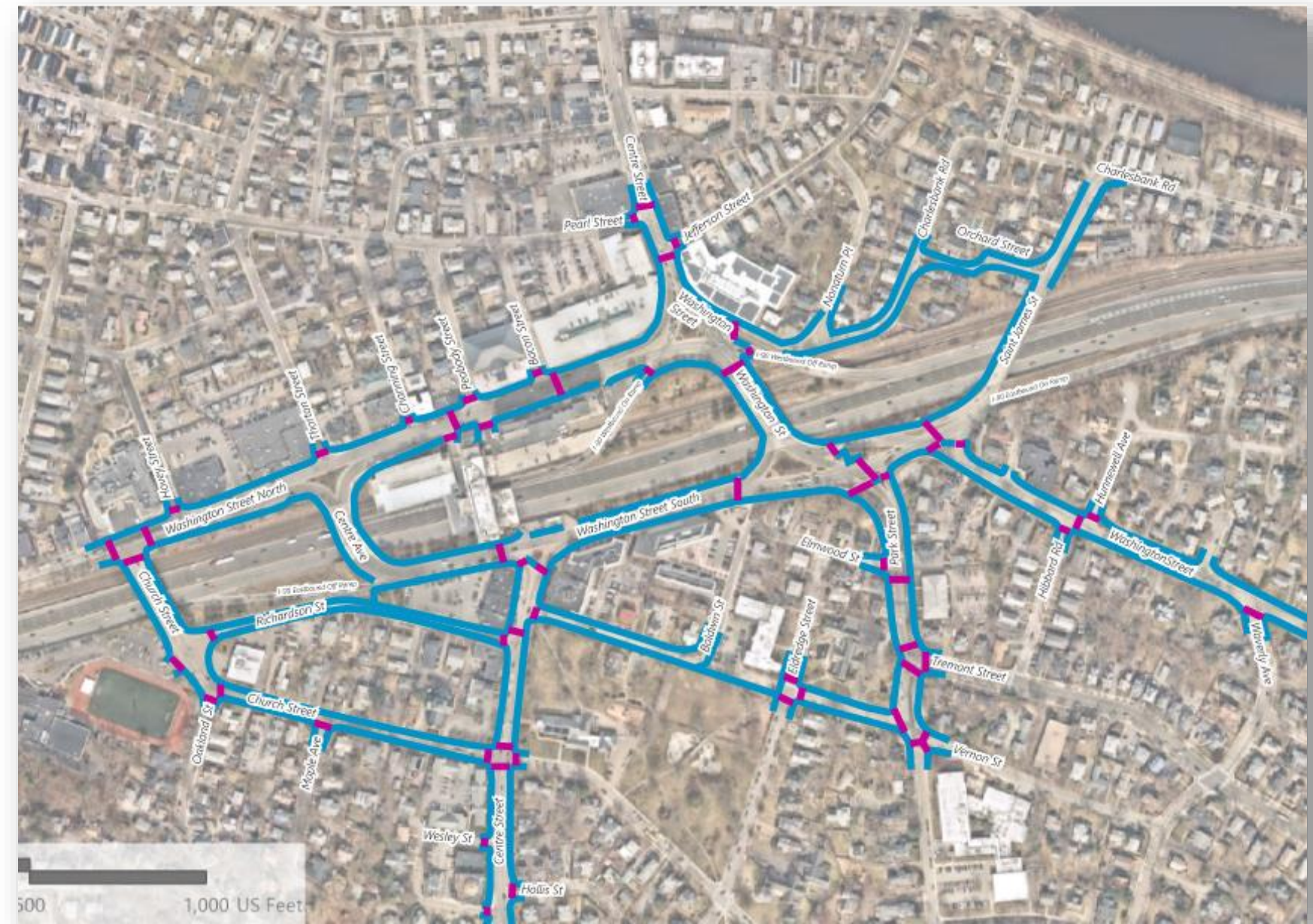
Evaluation Criteria

- Evaluation criteria are the standards by which the goals and objectives will be measured and evaluated.
- Criteria for each goal and objective are currently being developed and will be used to facilitate evaluating the different alternatives.
- Draft evaluation criteria will be posted on study website prior to next Working Group Meeting.

Goals / Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All	
› Enhance the safety of the transportation system for all users.	› Potential reduction in the frequency and severity of crashes.
› Expand access to transit options.	› Accessible, safe, and direct access within ¼-mile of existing or potential relocated transit options.
› Improve transit priority and reliability.	› Improves transit travel times and reliability.
› Reduce travel delays for all roadway users.	› Vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel times and operations. (Ped/Bike more qualitative)
› Protect the integrity of the I-90 corridor and parallel railroad tracks as major east-west regional connections.	› Maintains operations and capacity on I-90 and the parallel railroad tracks.
› Leverage and improve upon the transportation system to close social and economic equity gaps.	› Qualitatively meets other evaluation criteria under “Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All” within EJ communities, while not adversely impacting these criteria to the detriment of EJ populations.
Reconnect Newton’s Neighborhoods	
› Reconnect the northern and southern neighborhoods currently isolated by the Newton Corner interchange.	› New multimodal connections created across Newton Corner and the I-90 corridor.
› Improve safety, convenience, and comfort for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel.	› Quality, location, and connectivity of pedestrian/bicycle and transit accommodations.
› Capitalize on the presence of existing regional pedestrian and bicycle facilities and recreational resources.	› Safe and comfortable connections to existing regional facilities and resources.
› Create enhanced regional north/south connections for all users.	› More direct low-stress connections created.
› Promote placemaking/placekeeping opportunities and support a welcoming urban environment through the lens of equity.	› Increased surface area for public open space or public art in locations benefiting EJ and/or Title VI populations.

Existing Conditions (For Next Meeting)

- Study Team is actively working on Existing Conditions analysis
- Traffic counts have been conducted and modeling is kicking-off
- Next Working Group Meeting will present summary of existing conditions, including:
 - Mobility
 - Safety
 - Land Use
 - Environmental



Existing Newton Corner Pedestrian Infrastructure



Working Group Questions and Discussion



Public Comment Period

Future Meeting Timing / Schedule

What time and/or days works best for future Working Group meetings?





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

