

Zoom meeting controls



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Raise your hand - *9 for users dialing in and Alt + Y to raise your hand

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• 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: [811 9891 8884], Passcode: [733794]

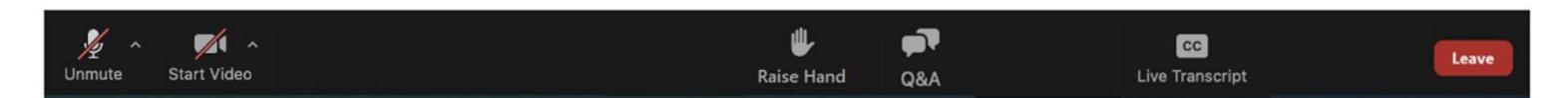


 Use the View button in the upper right-hand corner to adjust the meeting view settings to your preference



Closed captioning automatically generated by Zoom





Public meeting notes and procedures

Notification of video recording

- This virtual Working Group 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 Working Group 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:

- Your microphone and webcam are automatically disabled upon entering the meeting.
- 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.





Newton Corner Immediate Improvements

- Highway Division Public Information
 Meeting to present immediate safety
 improvements.
- September 25th | 6:30 p.m.

For event info visit:

https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highwaydivision/events? page=1



PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

IMMEDIATE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT INTERCHANGE 127 (NEWTON CORNER)

NEWTON, MA

What is happening?

A Live Virtual Public Information Meeting will be hosted on the MassDOT website below to provide the public the work schedule, anticipated impacts, and how to most efficiently use the new configuration of the intersection.

How will this affect you?

MassDOT is implementing various immediate safety improvements to the I-90EB off-ramp and Washington Street/Central Street area in Newton. These immediate improvements will lead to a safer intersection by preventing dangerous weaves and will eliminate the backup down the ramp onto I-90EB.

When

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 6:30PM to 7:30PM

Attend

www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events



Visit https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-improvements-project for more information



To ensure its meetings are accessible, MassDOT reasonably provides: translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, and auxiliary aids and services. To request such services, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer at 857-368-8580 or MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us. For adequate time to process such request, please make them as early as possible, ideally 10-15 days prior to the event

Project inquiries may also be emailed to massdotprojectmanagement@dot.state.ma.us. Please submit any written statements regarding the proposed undertaking to: Carrie A. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT,





Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Study Framework
- 3 Working Group #1 Feedback Summary
- **4** Existing Conditions
 - Planning Context
 - Multimodal Mobility Conditions
- 5 Schedule and Next Steps
- 6 Open Discussion
 - Working Group Discussion
 - Public Comment Period







Existing Conditions Review

Previous Planning Efforts

Relevant Documents

Planning Context

- Land Use/Economic Conditions
- Zoning
- Demographics/Population
- Environmental Justice
- Employment
- Public Health
- Environmental

Multimodal Mobility Conditions

- Mode Share/Vehicle Ownership
- Existing Travel Patterns (Origin-Destination Data)
- Active Transportation
- Transit
- I-90 Traffic Volumes
- Intersections
- Safety





Meeting With You Today

- MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning:
 - Patrick Snyder (Project Manager)
 - Rachel Kelly
- Study Consultants:
 - Christine Trearchis (VHB)
 - Niki Hastings (VHB)
 - Matt Duranleau (VHB)
 - Christine Yi (FHI)







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.





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





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 approach for potential implementation.









Study Framework

Study Goals

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







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 have been posted on study website for review.

Link to Evaluation Criteria:

Goals / Objectives	Evaluation Criteria ^a
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.
	Reduction in conflict points
> Facilitate access to transit options.	Accessible, safe, and direct access within ¼- mile of existing or potential relocated transit options.
 Balance travel delays for all roadway users, prioritizing non- auto modes. 	 Shortens vehicle, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel times and improve reliability/operations.
 Protect the integrity of the I-90 corridor and parallel railroad tracks as major east-west regional connections. 	 Maintains or improves operations and capacity on I-90 and the parallel railroad right of way.
 Leverage and improve upon the transportation system to close social and economic equity gaps. 	 Provides equal or improved access, safety, and mobility to environmental justice (EJ) populations relative to public at large.
Reconnect Newton's Neighborhoods	
 Reconnect neighborhoods currently isolated by the Newton Corner interchange. 	New multimodal connections created across Newton Corner and the I-90 corridor and increased placemaking and cohesion with the urban landscape.
 Improve travel experience for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. 	 Quality, location, comfort, safety, and connectivity of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations.
 Capitalize on the presence of existing regional pedestrian and bicycle facilities and recreational resources. 	 New and improved safe and comfortable connections to existing regional facilities and resources.
> Create direct 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 opportunities for public open space, green space or public art in locations benefiting EJ and/or Title VI populations.

https://www.mass.gov/doc/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study-draft-evaluation-criteria/download







Working Group #1 Feedback Summary

WG#1 Feedback - Newton Corner Area: Challenges Identified



Inadequate ped/bike infrastructure

Concerns for safety and accessibility for children, people with disabilities, transit users, and bikers.



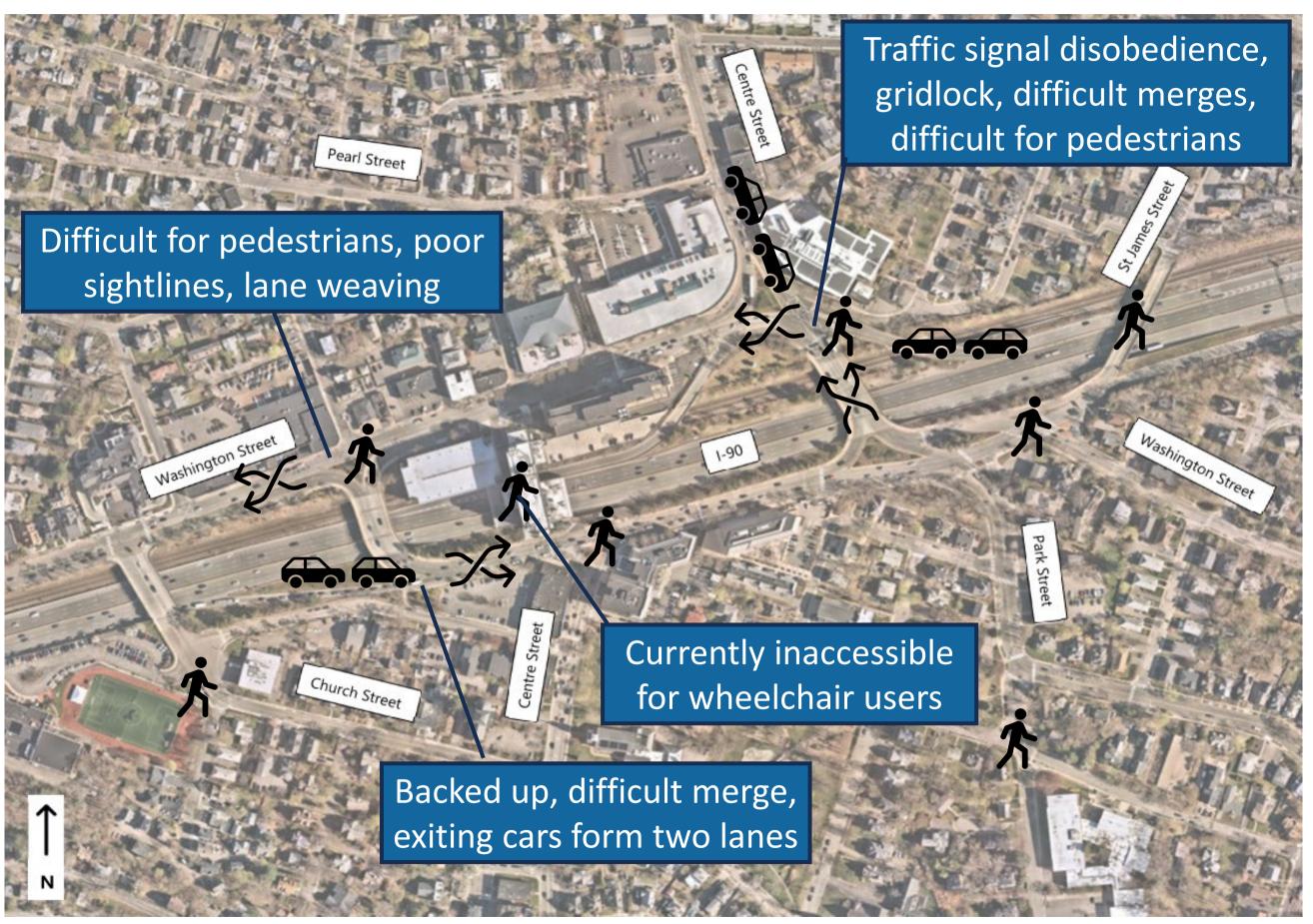
Merge conflicts

Areas with confusing geometry that require difficult maneuvers.



Ramp traffic backing up onto I-90

Congestion, gridlock, and ramps backing up onto the mainline.





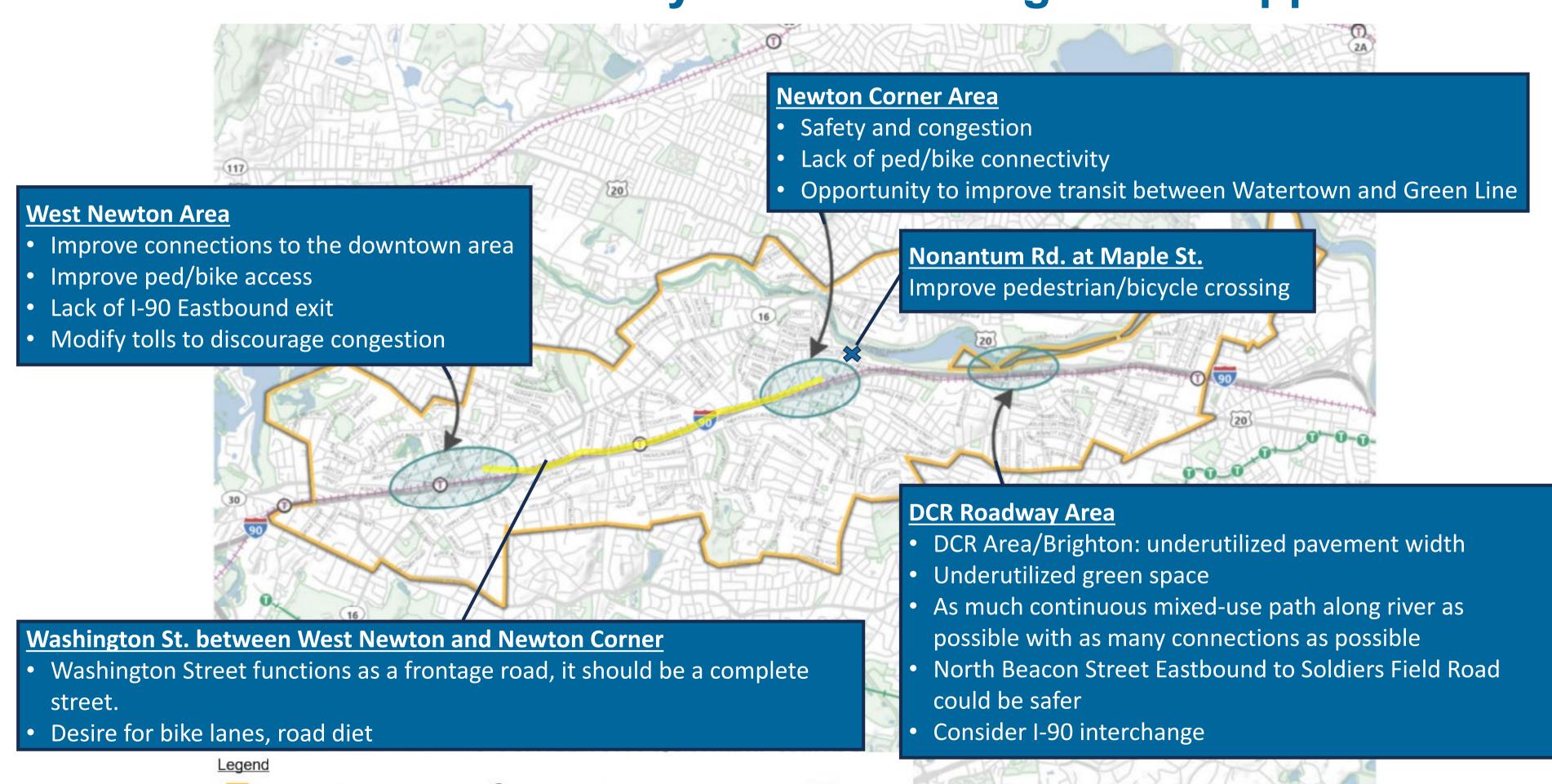


Local Land Use/Environmental Study Area

Green Line Station

Local Transportation Study Areas

WG#1 Feedback - Local Study Area: Challenges and Opportunities



MBTA Green Line

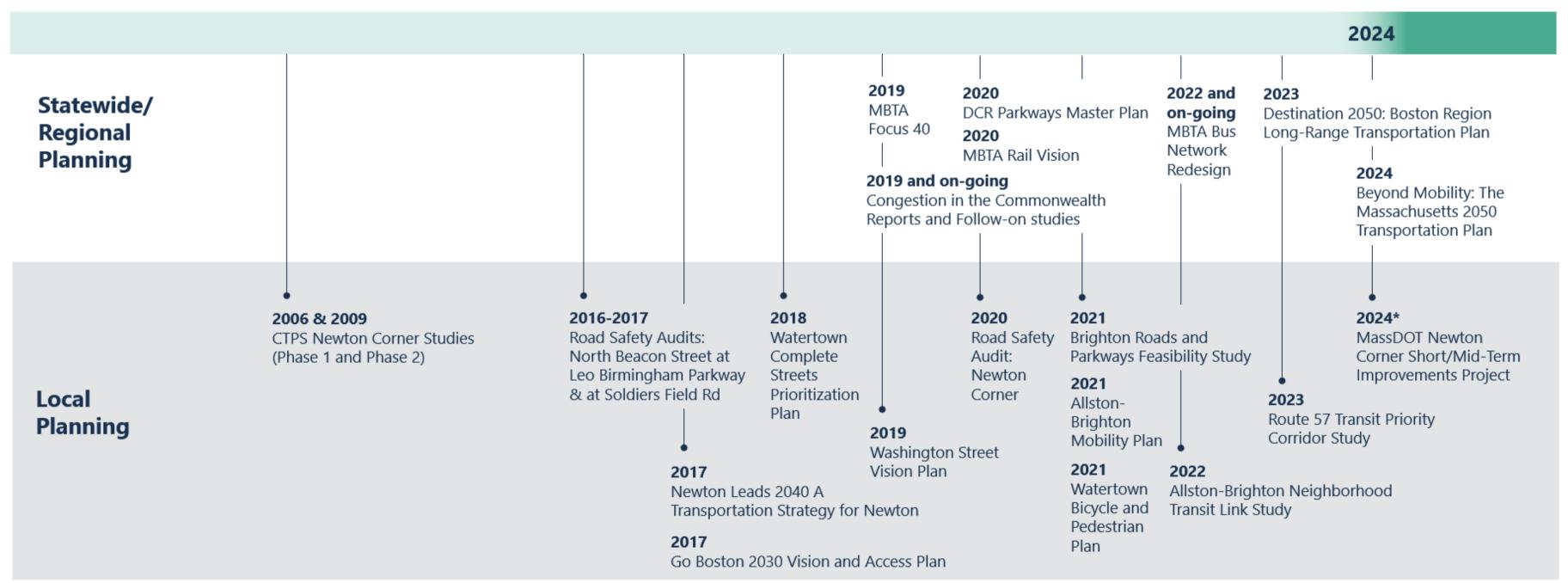


Existing Conditions

Previous Planning Efforts

Relevant Documents Timeline

Mobility Planning Documents



^{*} Expected completion date for Highway Division effort of short and medium-term concepts.





Previous Planning Efforts

Relevant Documents Key Takeaways

Mobility

- Several recommendations to improve the local and regional study area, including reconfiguring roadways and installing new pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.
- Enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations needs to be a critical component of all local and statewide infrastructure projects.
- Improving roadway safety and reducing the number of collisions needs to be a key objective of infrastructure projects.

Environmental

- There needs to be a change in policies and procedures to make the area more resilient to climate change.
- Increasing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks will be a key component to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to help enhance climate resilience efforts.

Land Use / Economic

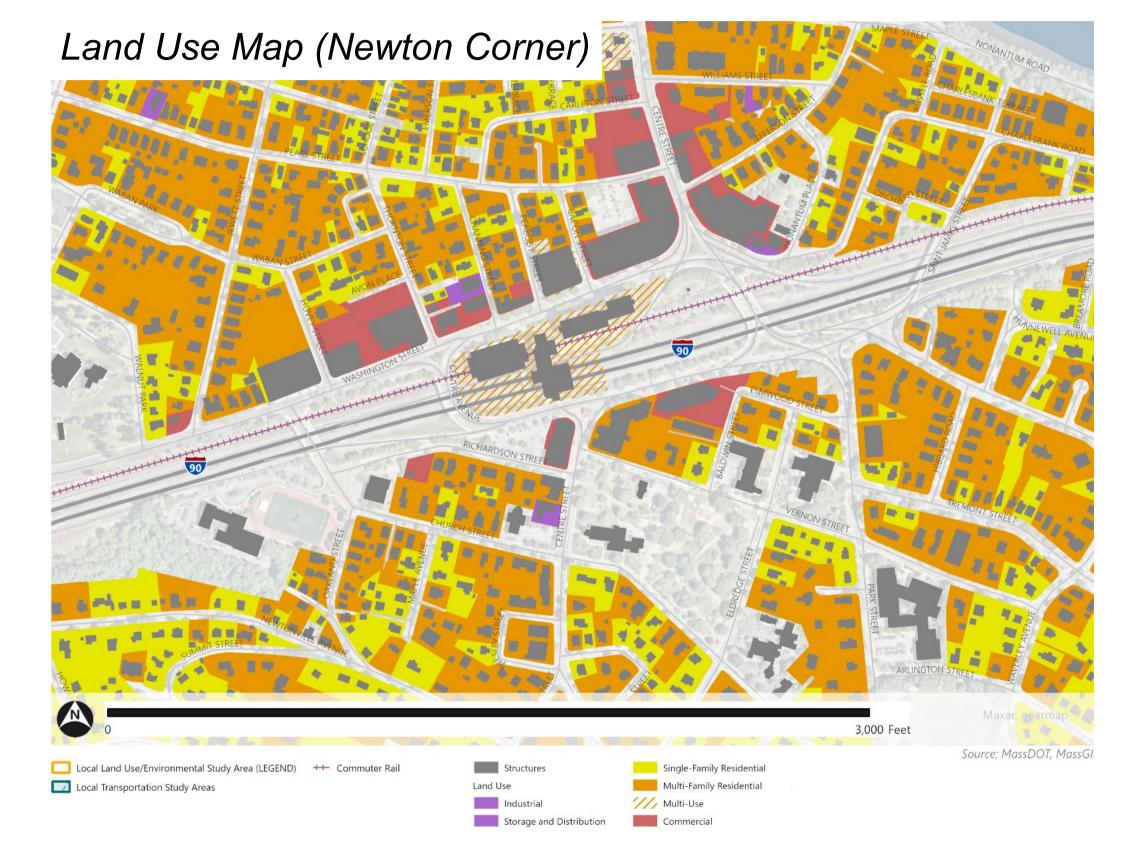
• Housing supply in Newton is limited with few undeveloped parcels available for new development.





Land Use / Economic Conditions

- Residential districts are spread throughout the study area, with multi-family in the east and single-family in the west.
- Commercial and mixed-use areas are focused in village centers and along key corridors.
- There is a significant amount of office inventory. Office space has increased by 38% over the past decade, while vacancy rates increased by 10.7%.
- The largest industrial zone is in Watertown's Arsenal Street area, with smaller zones near I-90.

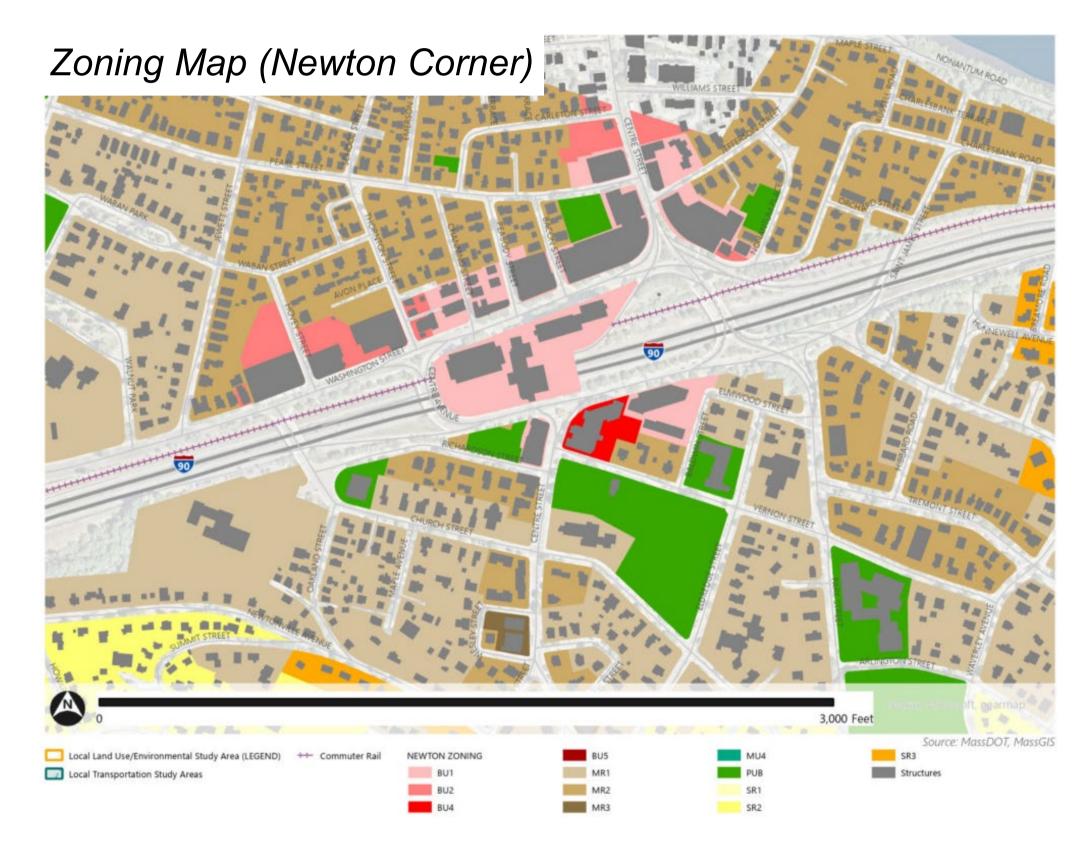






Zoning

- Most of the Study Area is zoned for residential (single or multifamily)
- Business zones concentrated in village centers
- Overlay districts include:
 - Village Center Overlay Districts in West Newton, Newtonville, Auburndale
 - Arsenal Overlay Development District in Watertown
 - Planned Development Areas in Boston for Western Avenue, Guest Street







Demographics / Population

- Newton has a lower population and employment density relative to Watertown, Cambridge, and Boston.
- Newton has a higher youth and senior population relative to neighbors.
- Minority populations in Newton (27%) and Watertown (26%) are slightly below the statewide average.
- Asian and two or more races make up over half of Newton's minority populations, with the most prevalent Asian ethnicities being: Chinese, Asian Indian, and Korean.

Resident Demographics Characteristics

	Total Population	Youth	65+	People with Disabilities	Minority
Newton	88,453	20.8%	18.7%	7.5%	26.6%
Watertown	35,181	14.7%	17.6%	11.2%	29.1%
Cambridge	117,962	12.2%	11.9%	6.9%	44.0%
Boston	665,945	15.7%	12.3%	12%	55.8%
State	6,984,205	19.6%	17.1%	11.9%	31.1%

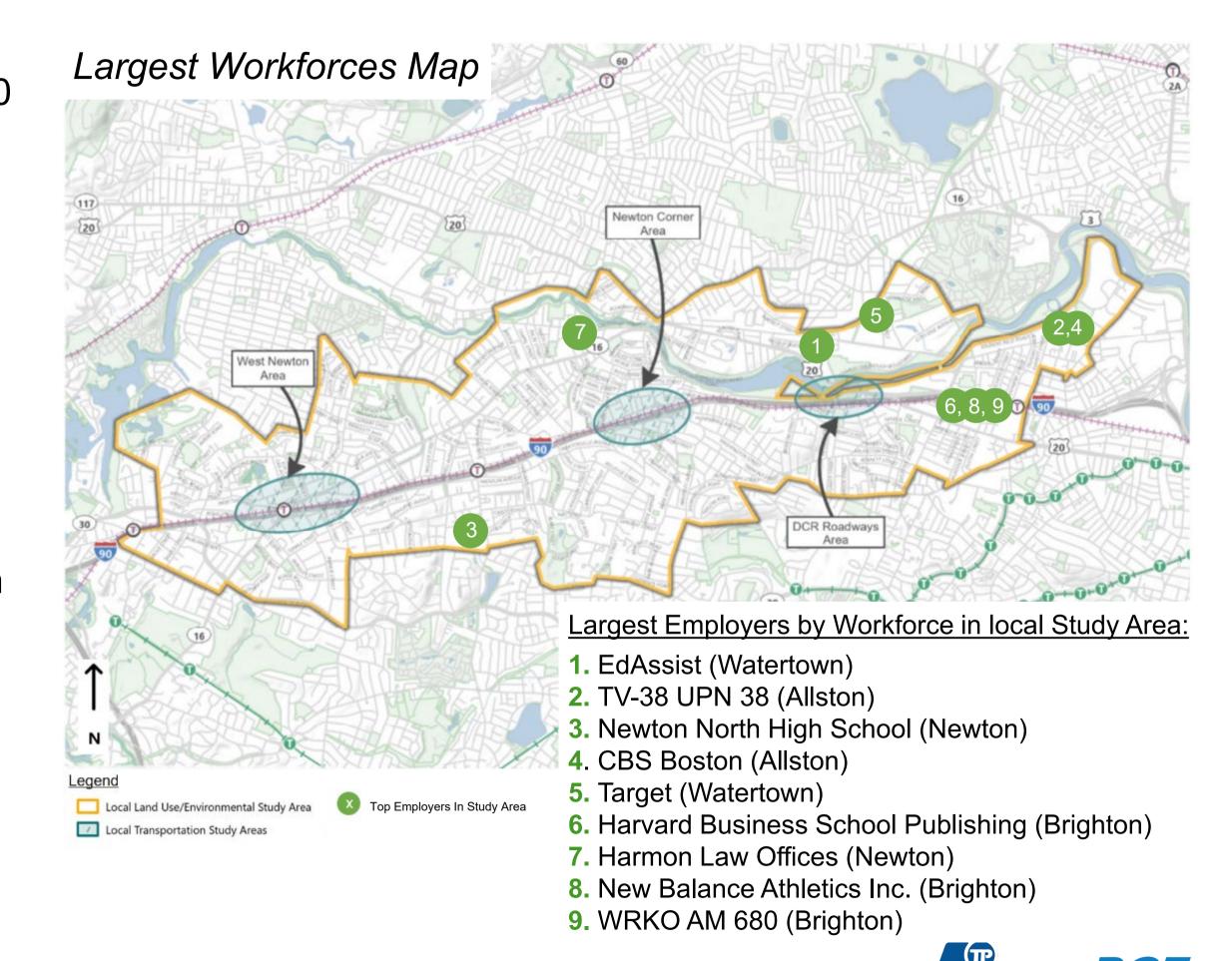
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2022)





Employment

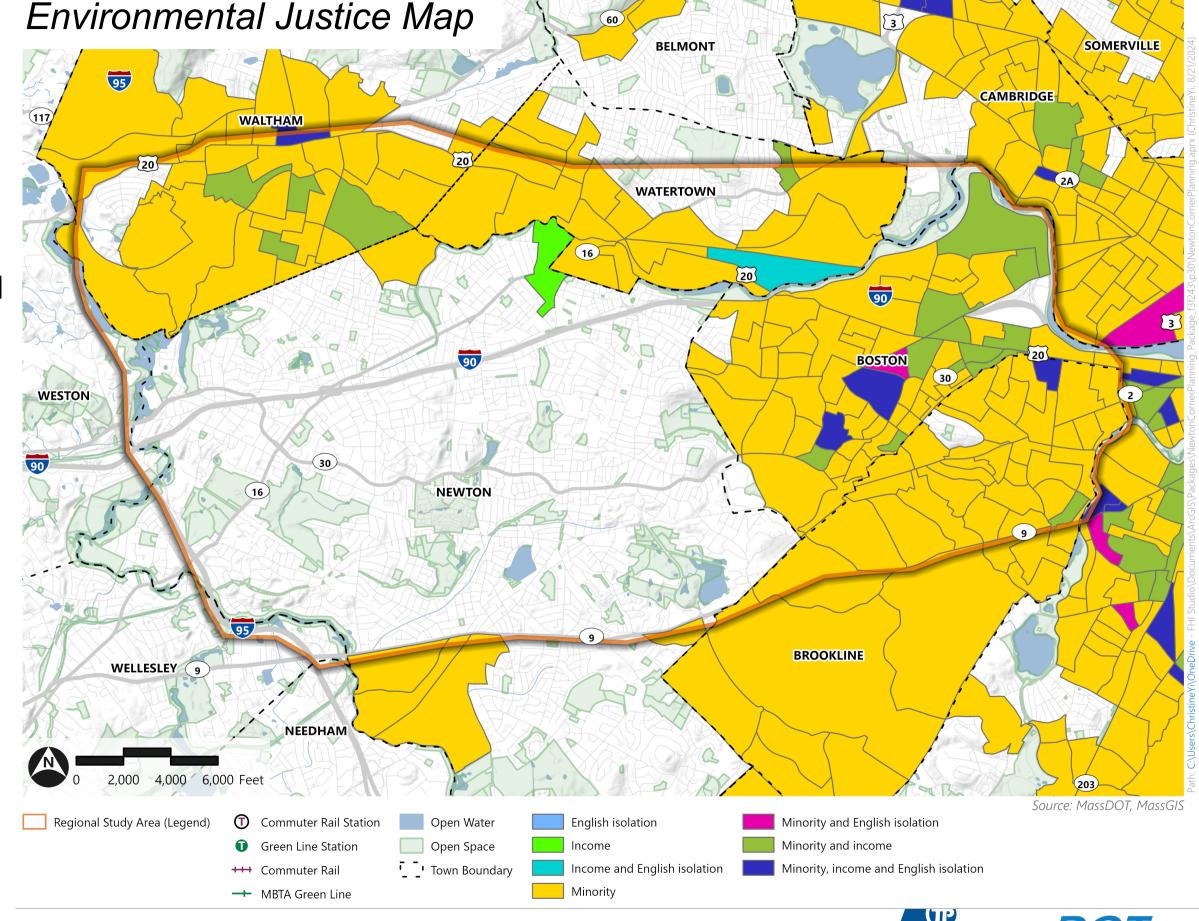
- The local study area hosts over 3,000 businesses and nearly 40,000 employees.
- Approximately 6% of employees in the local study area also live in the local study area
- The Boston Landing development is a significant employment hub, housing three of the top employers in the area.
- Large employers host their own private transit shuttles, providing access to public transit stations.





Environmental Justice (EJ)

- Environmental justice populations are defined by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Environmental Justice Policy.
- Numerous block groups meet minority and income thresholds adjacent to and within regional study area.
- One Watertown block group meets both income and limited English proficiency thresholds.
- REJ+ expanded definition to be used as an overlay to review regionally based equity.







Public Health

- Compared to the U.S. and the Boston
 Metro Area, the local and regional study
 areas display a lower prevalence of all
 chronic diseases, except for asthma.
- Asthma prevalence in the local study area is **higher** than the national average and is strongly correlated with airborne particulate matter (PM2.5).
- Project alternatives will consider nonsingle occupancy vehicle (SOV) modes, access to green space, and incorporate strategies that would otherwise reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Average Prevalence (%) of Chronic Diseases

	United States	Metro Area	Regional Study Area	Local Study Area
Coronary Heart Disease	6	4.5	3.5	3.5
Asthma	9	11	10	10
High Blood Pressure	32.5	26	20.5	21
Diabetes	11	8	5.5	6
Obesity	31.5	25.5	20.5	21
High Cholesterol	33.5	32.5	28	28

Source: Health data from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) is used for the basis of the analysis. This data combines CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data with 2020 Census population data and 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year demographic and socioeconomic estimates.





Environmental

- Natural Resources
 - Charles River, Edmands Brook, Cheese Cake Brook, Brunnen Brook,
 and Dolan Brook; Adjacent Core Habitat and Associated Floodplain
 - Wetland Resources
 - Threatened & Endangered Species
 - Numerous protected and recreational open spaces
- Historic and Archaeological Resources
 - 61 National Register-listed properties, 17 National Register-listed districts, 2,056 inventoried properties, and 64 inventoried areas
 - 23 previously recorded archaeological sites
- Oil and Hazardous Materials
 - o 442 state-listed disposal sites and 1 U.S. EPA Superfund Site



First Unitarian Society of Newton Source: MACRIS



Charles River Speedway
Source: Architectural Heritage Foundation Boston



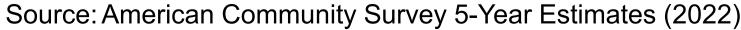


Mobility: Mode Share / Vehicle Ownership

- 52% of commuters who live in Newton drive alone.
- Less than 10% of commuters who live in Newton take public transit.
- Zero-car households make up less than 6% of the population of Newton.

Resident Commuting Characteristics

	Newton	Watertown	Cambridge	Boston	Statewide
Mode Share					
Drive Alone	52%	53%	22%	35%	64%
Carpool	6%	6%	4%	5%	7%
Transit	7%	8%	21%	24%	6%
Bicycle	1%	2%	7%	2%	1%
Walk	5%	5%	20%	14%	4%
Telecommute	26%	23%	25%	16%	15%
Other	3%	3%	1%	4%	3%
Zero Car Households					
Percent	6%	11%	34%	34%	12%

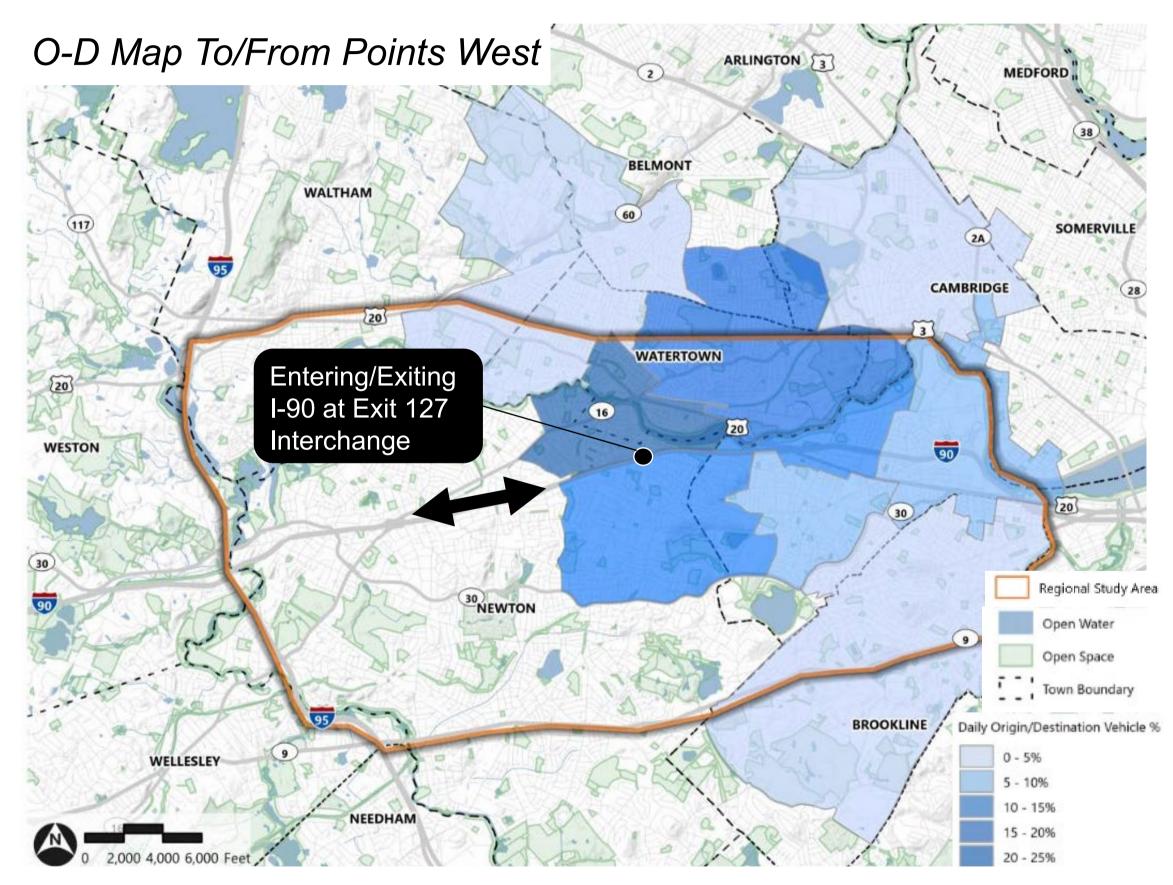




Mobility: Existing Travel Patterns (Origin-Destination Data)

To/From Points West

- For all trips that exit I-90 eastbound at Newton Corner:
 - ~40% have destinations in Newton Corner
 - ~40% have destinations in East Watertown / Brighton
 - ~20% have destinations in Other
 Areas



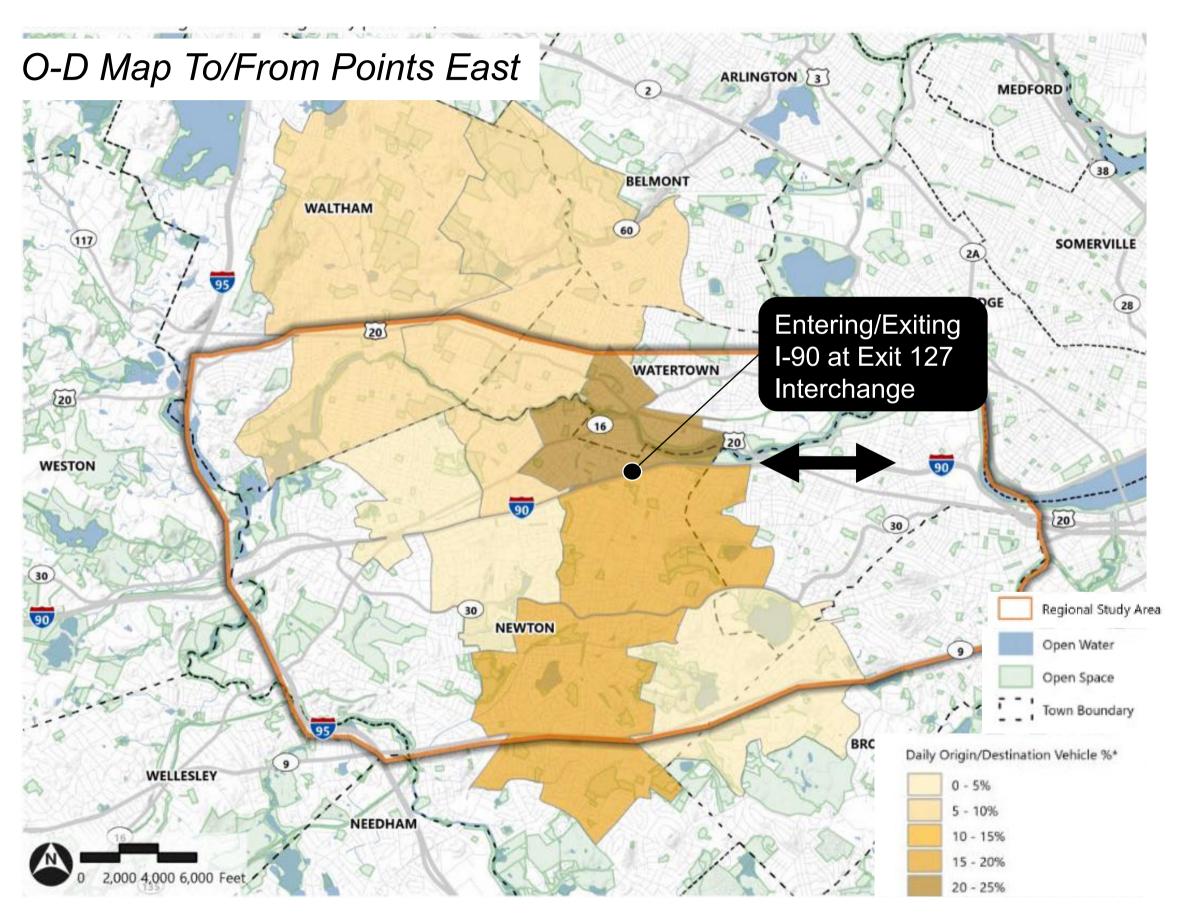




Mobility: Existing Travel Patterns (Origin-Destination Data)

To/From Points East

- For all trips that exit I-90 westbound at Newton Corner:
 - ~40% have destinations in Newton Corner
 - ~40% have destinations in Other
 Areas in Newton
 - ~20% have destinations in Other Areas beyond Newton



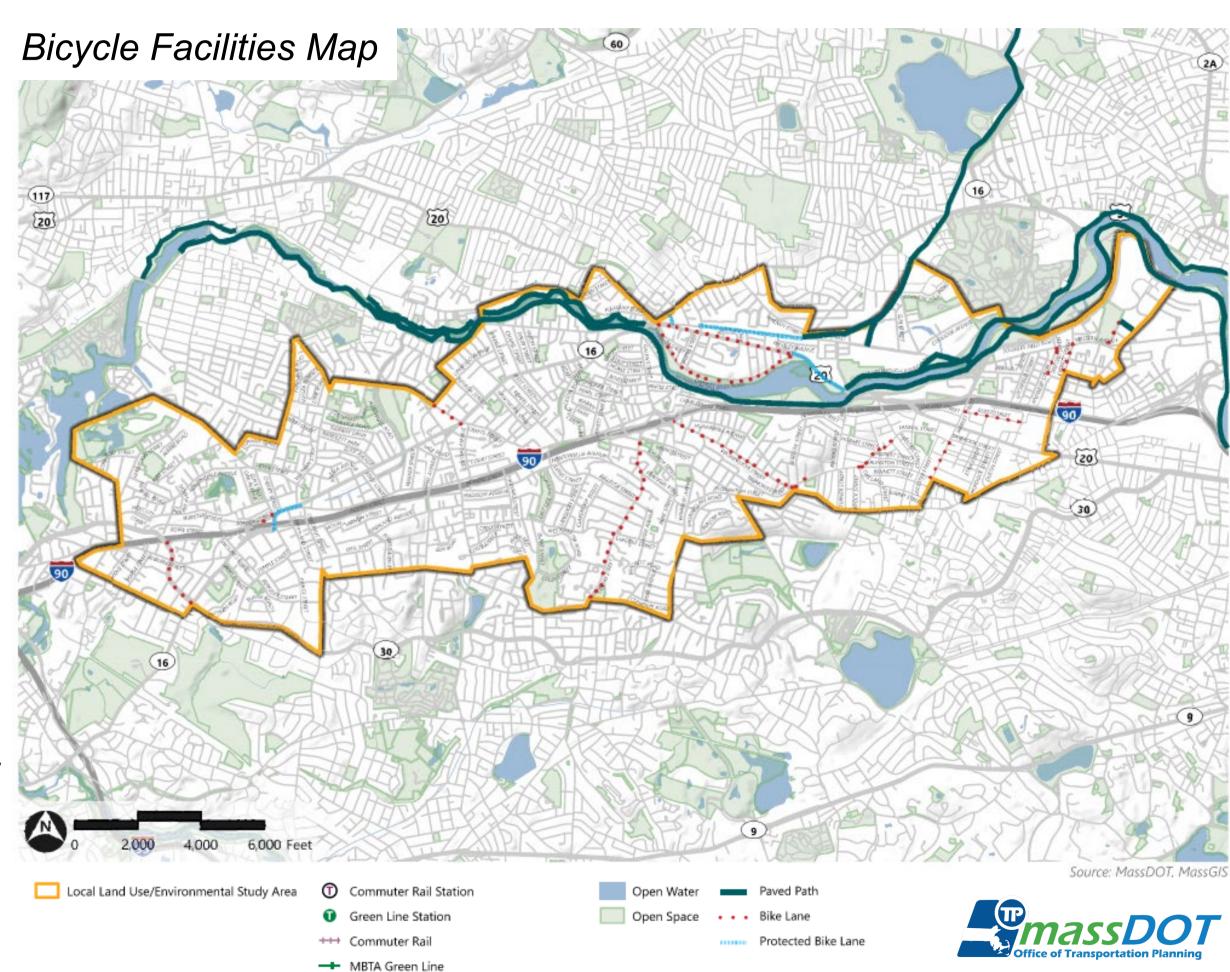




Mobility: Active Transportation

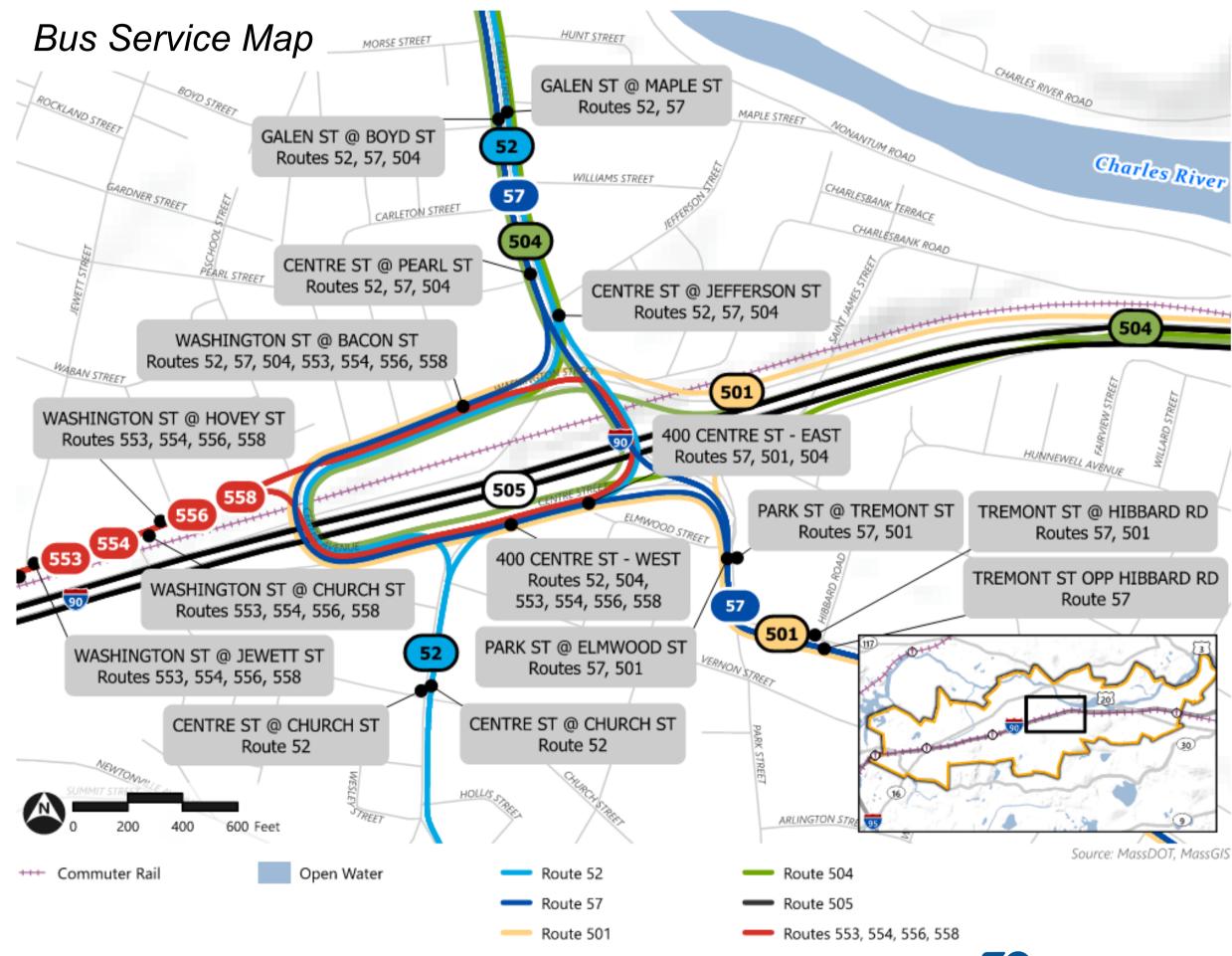
- Dedicated bicycle facilities are limited and those that exist are disconnected
- The Charles River pathways are a key east-west bike route, but lack neighborhood connections
- I-90 serves as a barrier for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Pedestrians and bicyclists
 traveling on most main
 roadways in the local study
 areas experience a high level of
 traffic stress





Mobility: Transit

- Newton Corner area is served by 8 bus routes
- Washington St @ Bacon St bus stop sees over 600 boardings / alightings per day (busiest in study area)
- Study area also served by Worcester / Framingham Line with 3 stops in Newton and 1 stop in Brighton
- Private transit is also provided in study area by local colleges, on-demand services, and TMAs

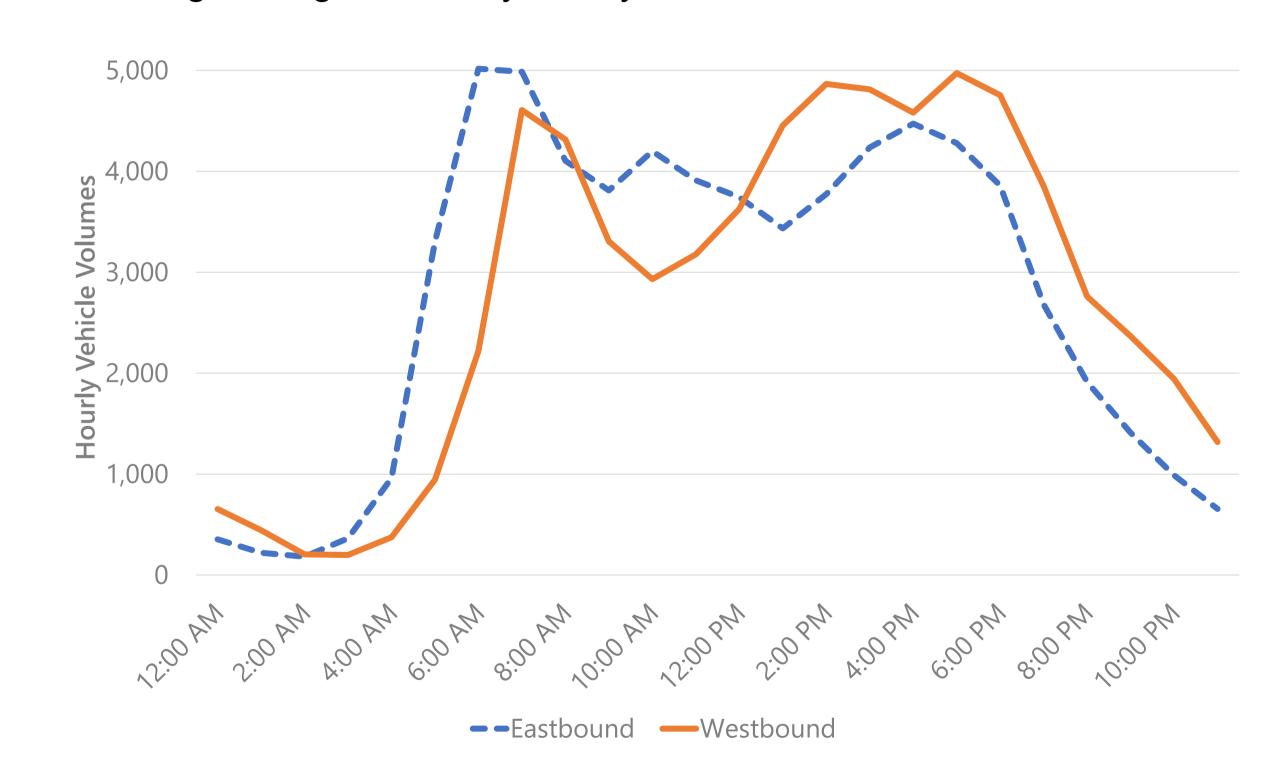






Mobility: Interstate-90 Traffic Volumes

Existing Average Weekday Hourly Traffic on I-90 West of Newton Corner



Average Weekday Daily Traffic

Roadway	Daily Volume ¹
I-90: West of Newton Corner	
I-90 Eastbound (EB)	67,000
I-90 Westbound (WB)	68,000
West Newton Interchange	
I-90 WB Exit 125 Off-Ramp	11,000
I-90 EB Exit 125 On-Ramp	11,000
Newton Corner Interchange	
I-90 EB Exit 127 Off-Ramp	12,000
I-90 WB Exit 127 On-Ramp	10,000
I-90 WB Exit 127 Off-Ramp	18,000
I-90 EB Exit 127 On-Ramp	13,000

Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes (vehicles per day).





Mobility: Intersections

- Several intersections in the study areas operate at level of service (LOS) E or F
- High volume demand and limited capacity contribute to poor operations
- At I-90 eastbound Exit 127
 Off-Ramp, queues can
 extend to nearly half a mile
 due to stop control and
 limited capacity
- I-90 eastbound mainline operates at LOS E during weekday morning peak hour

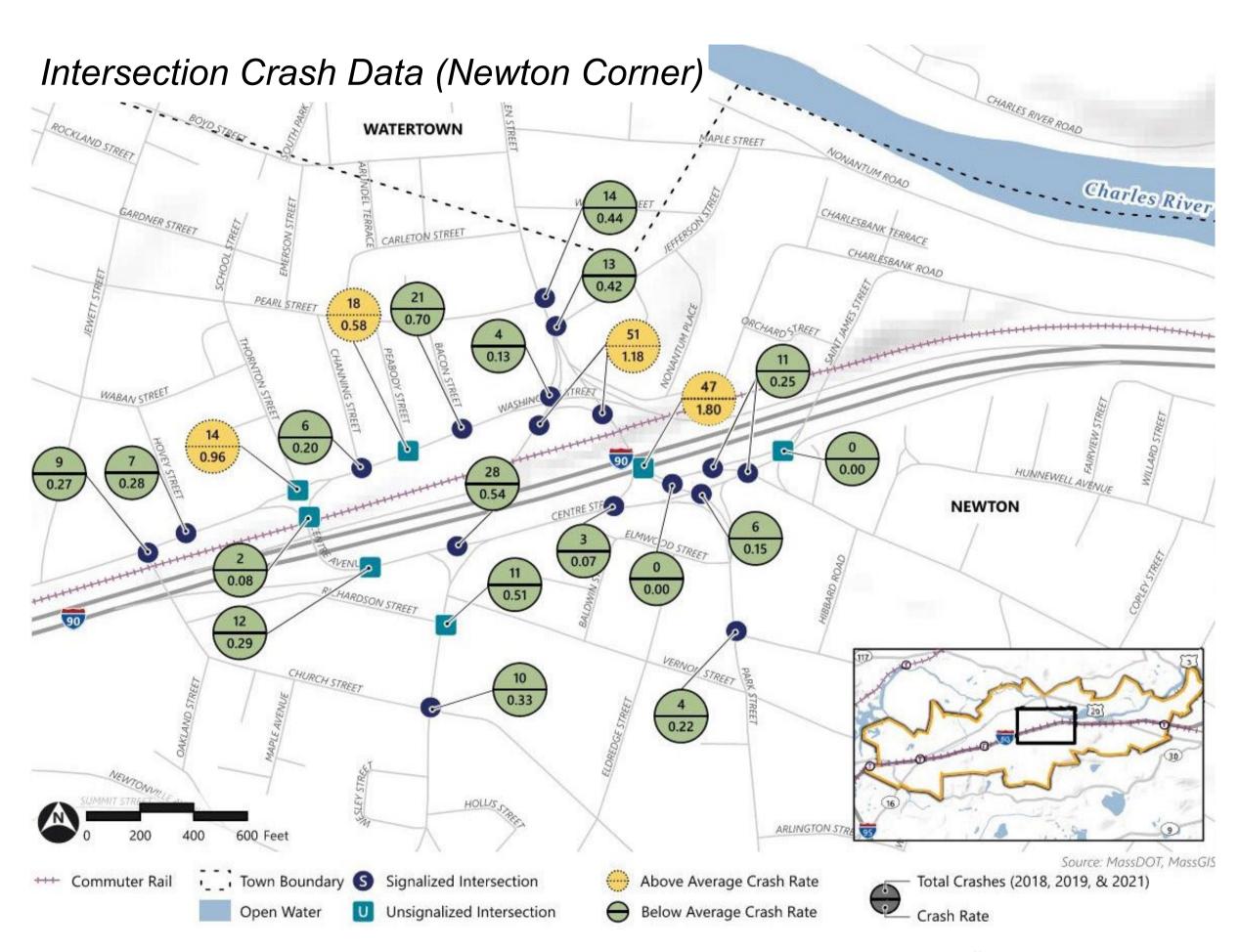




Safety: Crash Data

- Existing roadway geometry and congestion linked to safety issues, especially in Newton Corner
- Between 2017 and 2019, there were 64 rear-end crashes around the I-90 eastbound Exit 127 Off-Ramp
- 7 of the 48 study area intersections are above the MassDOT district average crash rate

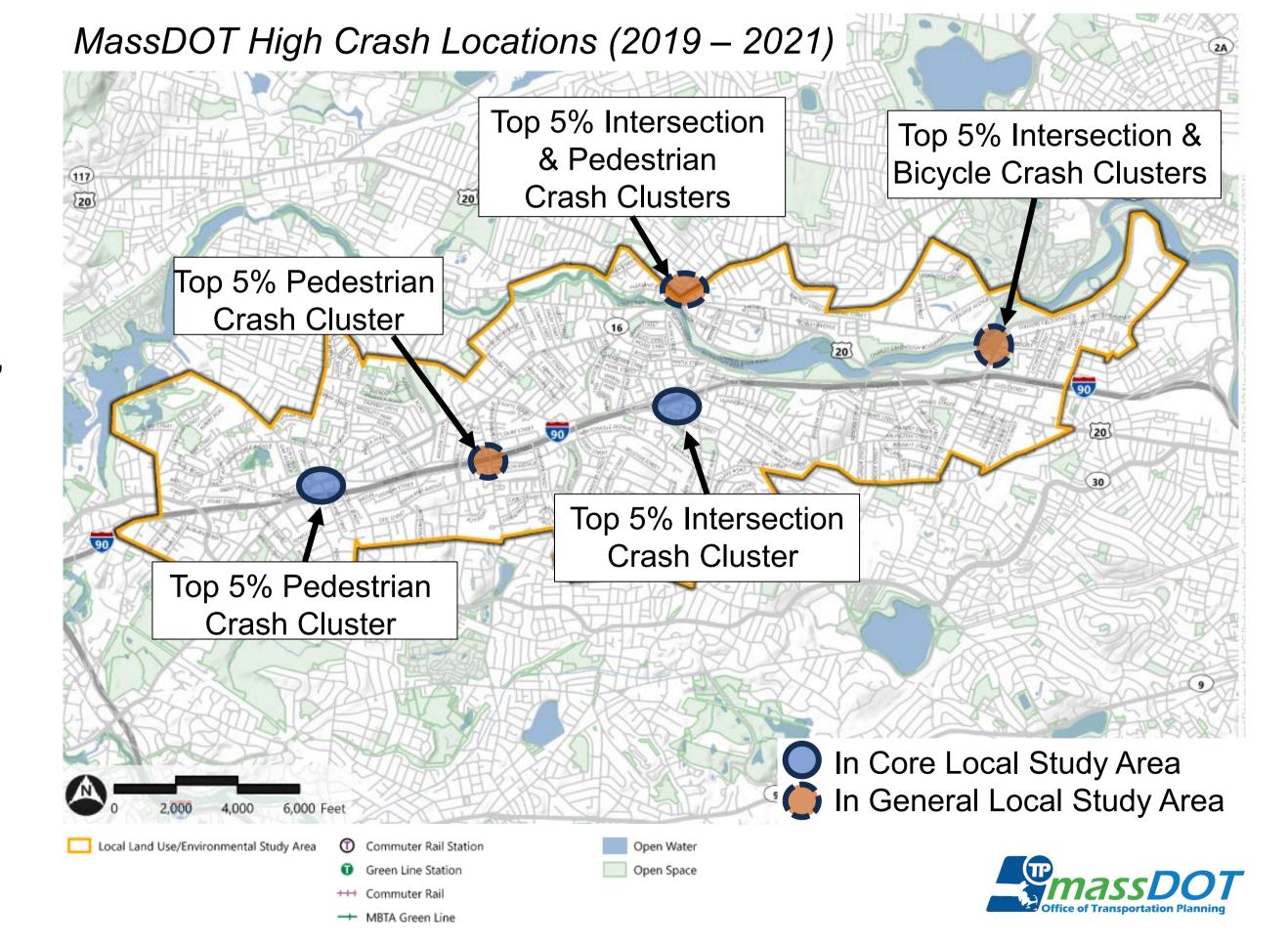






Safety: High Crash Locations

- There are several MassDOTidentified High-Crash clusters within the study area
- Road Safety Audits were conducted in Newton Corner and at the DCR Roadway area, identifying safety issues and potential enhancements
- West Newton village was reconstructed in 2021 with improved pedestrian / bicyclist infrastructure





Preliminary Existing Conditions Issues, Opportunities & Constraints

- Existing roadway geometry and congestion linked to safety issues.
- Transportation infrastructure (MBTA rail line and I-90) is a barrier for north-south pedestrian/bicycle mobility and is a constraint to alternatives development.
- The lack of full-service interchanges along I-90 between Route 128 and Boston leads to increased reliance on Exit 127.
- Nearly 60% of Newton residents commute via automobile modes, illustrating a potential for significant mode shift.
- With 93.5% of the workforce commuting from outside the area, there is a significant reliance on non-resident employees. This could lead to issues such as congestion; increased demand on transportation infrastructure; and higher environmental impacts.
- The local study area is home to many natural, historic and archeological resources that may serve as constraints for future alternatives.
- The three study area communities have all identified extreme heat as a pressing and significant concern in their climate vulnerability and resiliency plans.









Schedule and Next Steps

Study Schedule

We are here











Study Framework

Winter / Spring 2024



Spring / Summer 2024

Future Conditions

Fall 2024

Alternatives Development

Winter 2024 / 2025

Alternatives Analysis

Spring 2025





WG 1





Public Draft and Final

Fall 2025

Report

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



Note: Estimated Timeline that is subject to change.

Working Group Meeting



Public Meeting



Findings /

Summer 2025





Our Next Steps

- Incorporate Working Group input on Draft Evaluation Criteria
- Finalize Existing Conditions Documentation
- Kick-off Future Conditions Analysis
- Working Group Meeting #3: Future Conditions & Alternative Development (Early Winter 2024)
- Public Meeting #1 (October 8, 2024, 6:30 p.m.)





Future Conditions Analysis (For Next Meeting)

- Study Team has kicked off Future Conditions analysis and summary of Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints
- Once Future Conditions are complete, Study Team will begin initial alternatives development phase
- Next Working Group Meeting will present:
 - Recap of Public Informational Meeting #1 (scheduled for October 8, 2024)
 - Overview of Future Conditions
 - Issues / Opportunities / Constraints
 - Initial Alternatives Development



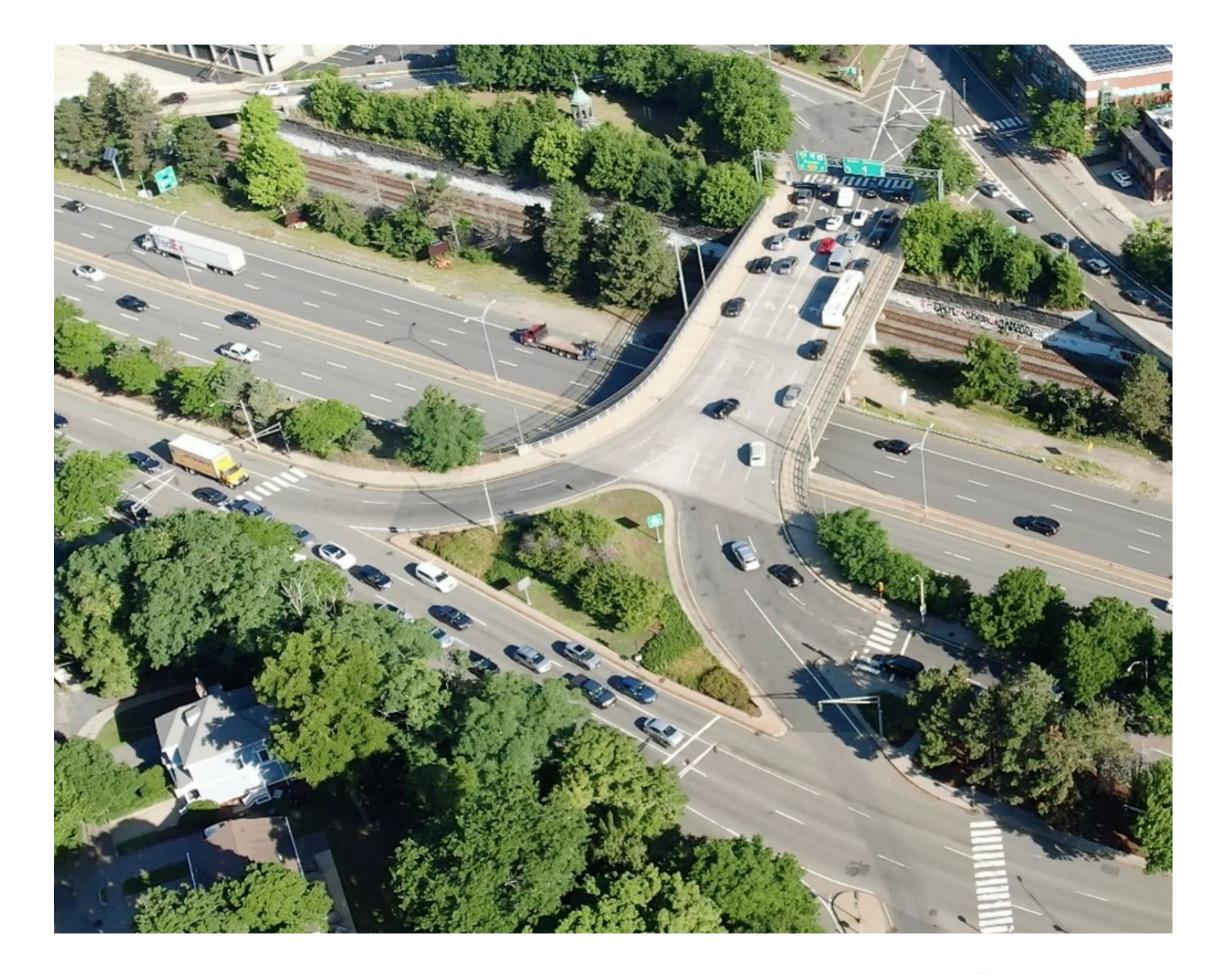




Working Group Questions and Discussion

Discussion Pause

- How does this summary align with your experience in Newton Corner?
- Do you have ideas about how this information relates to potential long-term solutions?









Public Comment Period

Questions and answers



• "Raise your hand" to be unmuted for verbal questions (Alt + Y 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:

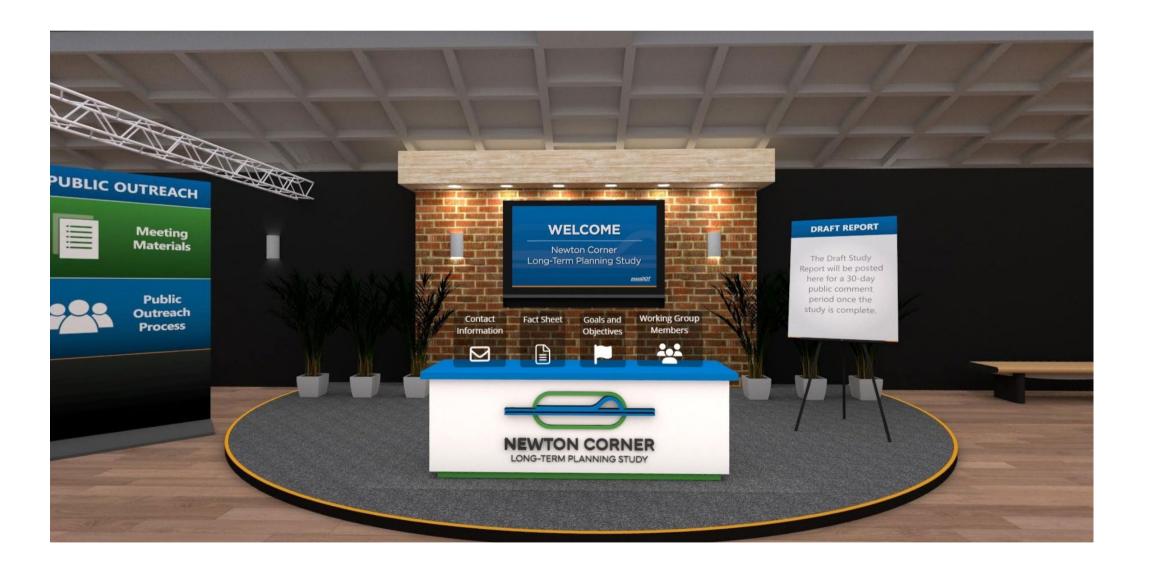
https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study

Virtual Meeting Room:

https://vmr.vhb.com/v/EI18wZWNqOB

Patrick Snyder, Project Manager

patrick.l.snyder@dot.state.ma.us









Appendix Material





Roadway Volumes

	Weekday Volume		
Roadway	Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
West Newton Area			
Washington Street WB: Western Bridge over I-90	20,500	1,350	1,650
Washington Street EB: Eastern Bridge over I-90	10,700	835	855
Newtonville Area			
Lowell Avenue: <i>Bridge over I-90</i>	11,100	985	1,035
Walnut Street: <i>Bridge over 1-90</i>	14,800	1,165	1,175
Newton Corner Area			
Washington Street: west of Thornton Street	22,500	1,740	1,730
Washington Street EB: Western Bridge over I-90	24,800	1,965	1,805
Washington Street WB: Eastern Bridge over I-90	29,500	1,900	2,165
St. James Street: Bridge over I-90	12,300	680	1,155

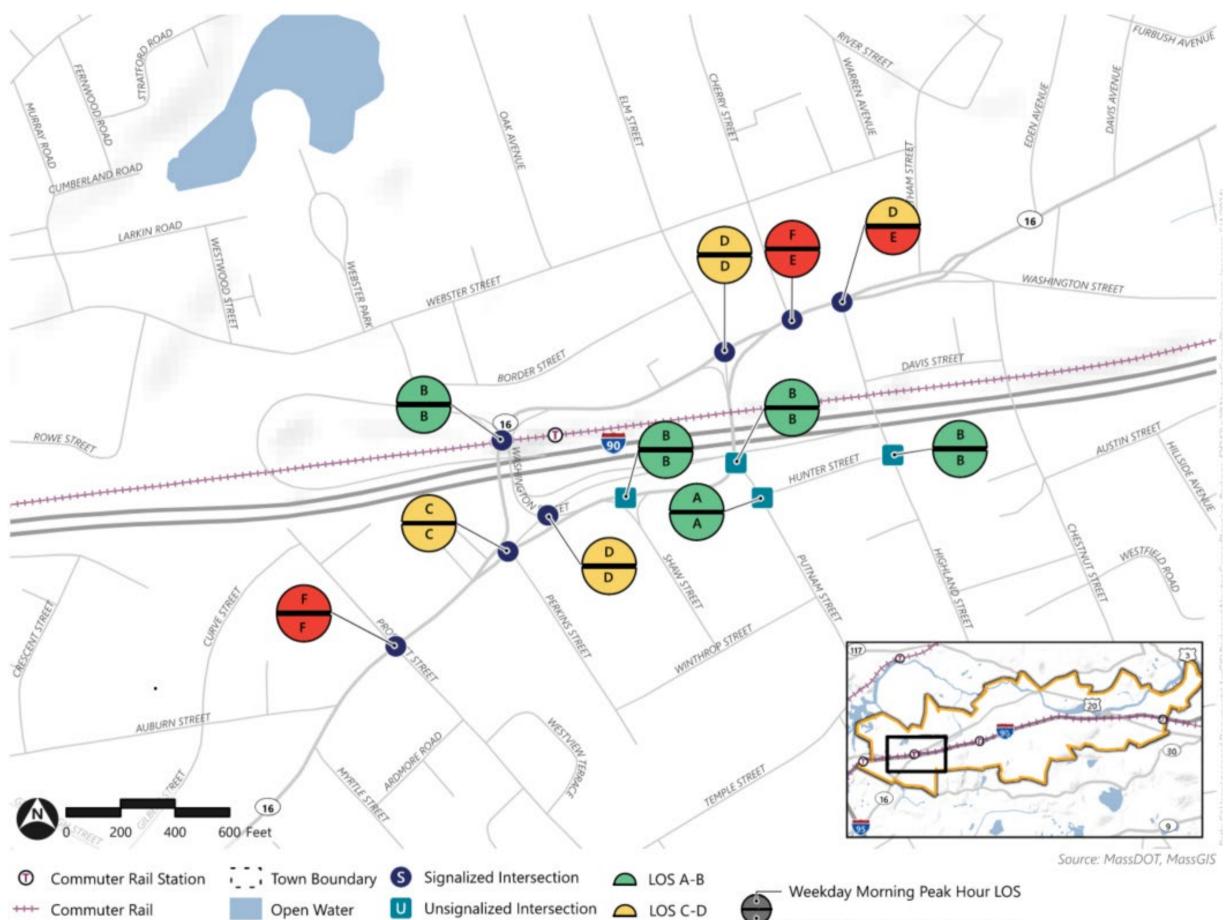
	Weekday Volume		
Roadway	Daily	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
DCR Roadway Area			
Nonantum Road: east of Charlesbank Street	23,500	1,405	2,010
North Beacon Street: Bridge over Charles River	17,700	1,245	1,615
Brooks Street: <i>Underpass under 1-90</i>	27,000	2,455	2,280
Parsons Street: Underpass under I-90	11,000	705	855
Soldiers Field Road: east of North Beacon Street	35,600	2,675	2,865

Source: Traffic volumes conducted by MassDOT in April/May 2024.



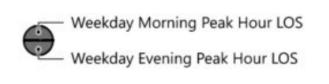


LOS Results – West Newton



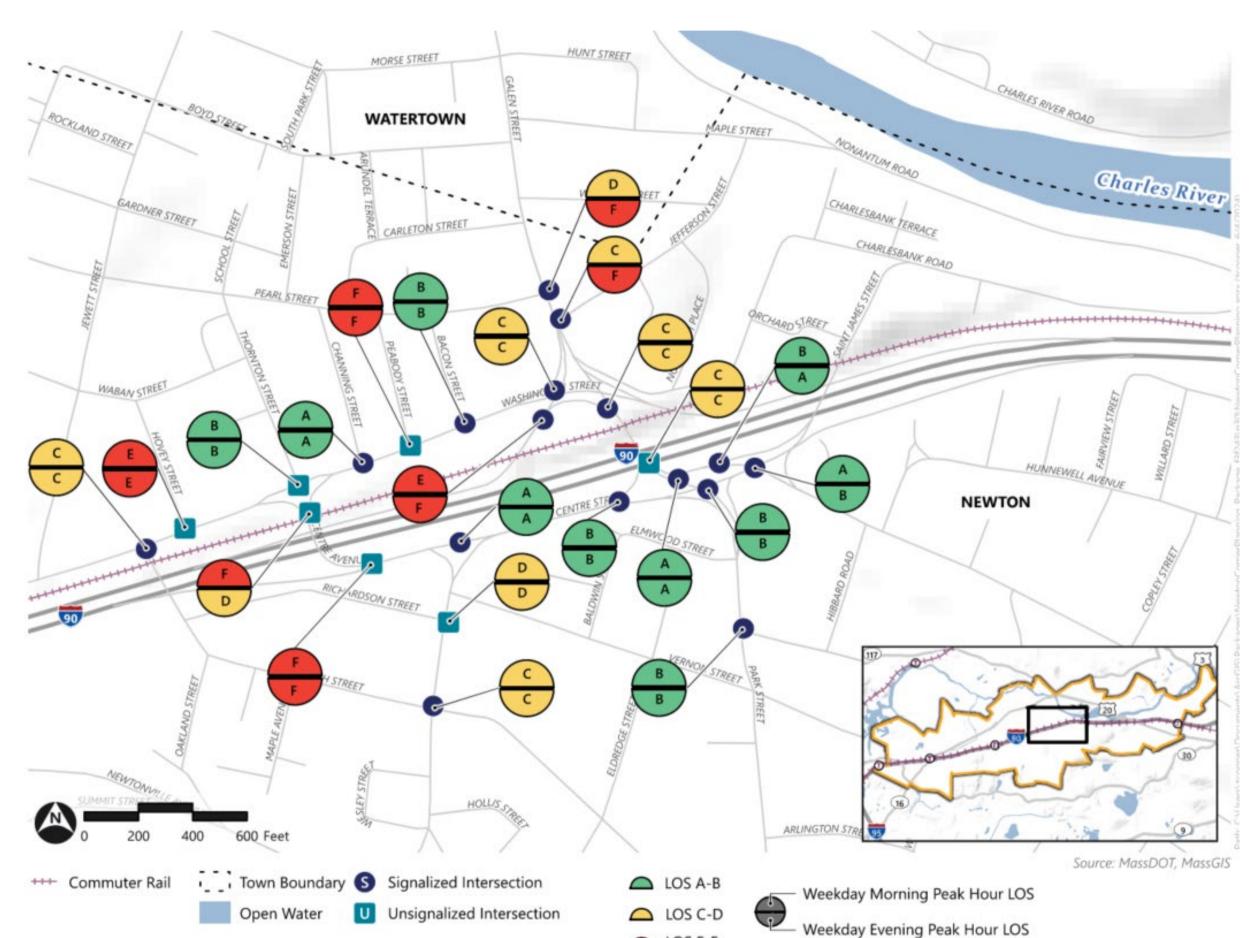
LOS E-F







LOS Results – Newton Corner

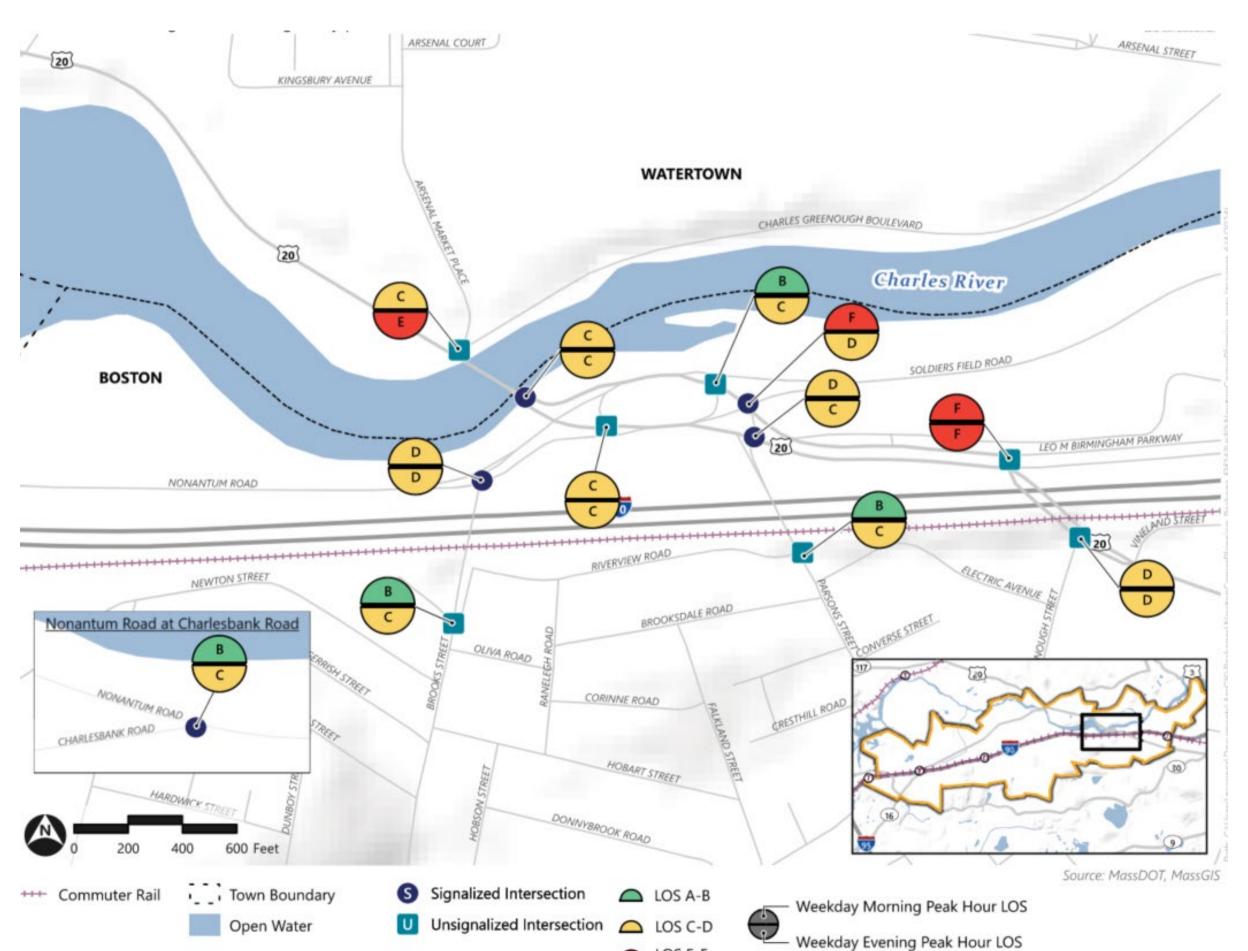


LOS E-F





LOS Results – DCR Roadway Area



LOS E-F



