



# NEWTON CORNER

LONG-TERM PLANNING STUDY

## MassDOT Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study

### Working Group Meeting #4

Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 4:00 PM

Virtual on Zoom

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#### Summary:

On Tuesday, March 31, 2026, MassDOT held the fourth Working Group meeting for the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study. At this meeting, the Study Team introduced six Combined Alternative Concepts, asked the Working Group and members of the public for feedback and initial reactions to the Combined Alternative concepts, and presented a schedule and next steps.

#### Attendees:

Name	Title	Affiliation
Drashti Joshi	Civil Engineer	MassDOT
Melissa Santley	Assistant District Program Planner	MassDOT
Dan Fielding	Legislative Liaison	MassDOT Intergovernmental Affairs
Manuel Pires	Traffic Engineer	MassDOT Department of Conservation & Recreation
Sandy Johnston	Deputy Director of Regional Transit Planning	MBTA
David Loutzenheiser	Senior Transportation Planner	MAPC
Hattie Kerwin Derrick	Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion	City of Newton Mayor's Office
Dana Hanson	Chief of Staff	City of Newton Mayor's Office
Alison Leary	Councilor at Large	City of Newton City Council (Ward 1)
Julia Malakie	Ward Councilor	City of Newton City Council (Ward 3)
Amy Sangiolo	State Representative	State Representative Amy Sangiolo (11 <sup>th</sup> Middlesex – Newton)
Denise Chan	Legislative Aide	Office of State Representative Amy Sangiolo (11 <sup>th</sup> Middlesex – Newton)

Katherine Tolley	Legislative Aide	Office of State Representative Steven Owens (29 <sup>th</sup> Middlesex – Watertown)
Garrett Casey	Policy Director and Counsel	Office of State Senator Cynthia Creem (Norfolk and Middlesex)
Ned Codd	Director of Transportation	City of Newton Department of Public Works
Shawna Sullivan	Commissioner of Public Works	City of Newton Department of Public Works
Jenn Martin	Director of Transportation Planning	City of Newton Department of Planning and Development
Nora Masler Colello	Chief of Long Range Planning	City of Newton Department of Planning and Development
Jini Fairley	ADA Coordinator	City of Newton
Joan Belle Isle	Chair	City of Newton Council on Aging/Executive Committee
Michael Halle	Chair	City of Newton Transportation Advisory Group (TAG)
Lucia Dolan	Member	Safe Routes to School
Robin Boger	President	Newton Corner Neighborhood Association
Srdjan Nedeljkovic	Director, Policy Advisor	Bike Newton
Wenzheng Wang	Transportation Program Planner	City of Boston Department of Transportation
Zeke Mermell	Senior Transportation Planner	City of Watertown on behalf of the City Manager's Office
Sophia Galimore	Director	Watertown TMA
Nate Gibson	Resident	Resident
Hasmukh Patel	MassDOT Highway Division	Attendee
Andy Gluck	Not Listed	Attendee
Angeline Kounelis	Not Listed	Attendee
Anthony Caruso	Not Listed	Attendee
Aseem Deodhar	Not Listed	Attendee
Carl Pasquarosa	Not Listed	Attendee
Cyrus Dahmubed	Not Listed	Attendee
David Newman	Not Listed	Attendee
Dennis Rieske	Not Listed	Attendee
Doug Cornelius	Not Listed	Attendee
Ellen Swanson	Not Listed	Attendee

Emily Honig	Not Listed	Attendee
Emmett Greenberg	Not Listed	Attendee
Erica Schwartz	Not Listed	Attendee
Fritz Smith	Not Listed	Attendee
G Donald Ferree Jr	Not Listed	Attendee
Janet Rosen	Not Listed	Attendee
John Finnigan	Not Listed	Attendee
Lauren Clark	Not Listed	Attendee
Linda Norcross	Not Listed	Attendee
Maggie Holtzberg	Not Listed	Attendee
MaryJaye Simms	Not Listed	Attendee
Nancy Felts	Not Listed	Attendee
Nick Pappas	Not Listed	Attendee
Paul Fair	Not Listed	Attendee
Peter Brown	Not Listed	Attendee
Raymond Ethier	Not Listed	Attendee
Richard Morrill	Not Listed	Attendee
Richard I Belkin	Not Listed	Attendee
Robert Fizek	Not Listed	Attendee
Rosalind Williams	Not Listed	Attendee
Russell Beckler	Not Listed	Attendee
Seth Parker	Not Listed	Attendee
Shari Goldin	Not Listed	Attendee
Sheila Lenihan	Not Listed	Attendee
Steven Carter	Not Listed	Attendee
Thomas Coan	Not Listed	Attendee
Tova Greenberg	Not Listed	Attendee
Patrick L. Snyder	Study Project Manager	MassDOT
Zach Ward	Study Team Member	MassDOT
Christine Trearchis	Study Team Member	VHB

Niki Hastings	Study Team Member	VHB
Matt Duranleau	Study Team Member	VHB
Christine Yi	Study Team Member	IMEG

## Presentation

### Introduction

#### *Agenda*

1. Welcome
2. Study Overview
3. Alternatives Development
4. Combined Alternatives
5. Evaluation Criteria
6. Schedule and Next Steps
7. Open Discussion
  - Working Group Discussion
  - Public Comment Period

#### *Working Group Ground Rules*

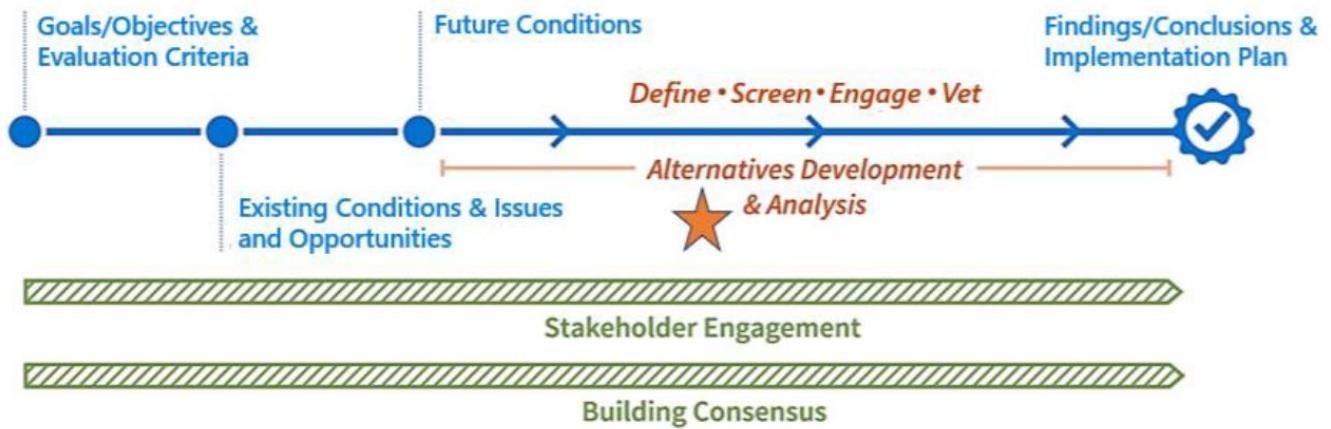
- ▶ All participants are requested to listen to the opinions of others in an effort to ensure a constructive and productive discussion.
- ▶ Members of the Working Group are asked to make every possible effort to attend the meetings consistently. However, if members are unable to attend, they should let 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 Overview

#### *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



## Alternatives Development

### Alternatives Development Process

- ▶ The Study Team started with 16 potential Alternative Components. This initial list was based on feedback received during previous Working Group and public meetings. These 16 Alternative Components could then be layered upon each other to develop full concepts for possible Alternative scenarios.
- ▶ The potential Alternative Components include:
  - Two-Directional Travel in Newton Corner
  - Installation of Roundabouts
  - New Bridge Connecting Centre St
  - Relocated I-90 Westbound On-Ramp
  - Relocated I-90 Eastbound Off-Ramp
  - Extension of Existing I-90 Eastbound Off-Ramp
  - Closing or repurposing Washington Street Westbound Bridge
  - Bus Transit Hub in Newton Corner
  - Potential Commuter Rail Station in Newton Corner
  - Air-Rights/Decking Over I-90
  - Closing or Repurposing Washington Street Eastbound Bridge
  - Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge over I-90 in Newton Corner
  - Neighborhood Greenway on Charlesbank Road
  - Shared-Use Path on St James Street
  - Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to Charles River
  - Full interstate access at West Newton

- New interstate access in Brighton (at DCR Roadway area)
- ▶ The Study Team performed a first level screening. The screening considered feedback from the Working Group, the City of Newton, members of the public, agency input (including DCR, MBTA, and MassDOT) on how well individual component met the goals of the study. The screening also considered if there were any “fatal flaws”, such as operations or right-of-way (ROW) impacts. The first screening ruled out some of the components (such as a direct pedestrian and bicycle path to the Charles River and interstate access in Brighton). The components related to I-90 (i.e., relocated I-90 eastbound off-ramp and extending the existing I-90 eastbound off-ramp) were included in the potential concepts presented in today’s meeting, but have been revised since the last presentation. While the Study Team has not ruled out the roundabout option, to handle the expected traffic volumes the roundabouts would require a substantial amount of space and result in significant right-of-way impacts.
- ▶ In today’s meeting, the Study Team will introduce the six Combined Alternatives and provide the opportunity for the Working Group and members of the public to provide feedback prior to advancing the potential Combined Alternatives to the Alternatives Analysis phase.

## Combined Alternatives

### *Alternatives to Advance*

- ▶ Alternative 1: Neighborhood Connections (Limited ROW Impact with Ped and Bike Bridge)
- ▶ Alternative 2: New Centre-to-Centre Bridge
- ▶ Alternative 3: New Center-to-Centre Bridge, Rail Station, and Expanded Ramps
- ▶ Alternative 4: Streamlined Ramp Access
- ▶ Alternative 5: Park and Transit Hub
- ▶ Alternative 6: West Newton Full Access
- ▶ Concept Alternatives available on Study website: <https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study>
- ▶ Note these concept-level alternatives are preliminary and intended to illustrate intent rather than detailed design. Further refinement will occur through the Alternatives Analysis phase and coordination with the City of Newton, MassDOT, the Working Group, and ongoing public engagement.

### *Alternative 1: Neighborhood Connections (Limited ROW Impact with Ped and Bike Bridge)*

- ▶ Alternative 1 would propose to enhance neighborhood connections for all users while minimizing right-of-way impacts and maintaining the existing bridges. This alternative includes the addition of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across I-90, would maintain the existing vehicular bridges, and would have limited right of way impact. .
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
  - Maintain one-way travel on west bridge.
  - Extend the second lane on I-90 eastbound off-ramp (~400 feet).
  - New Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge across I-90.
  - Extend the second lane on I-90 westbound off-ramp (~500 feet).
  - Two-way travel on Washington Street north and east.
  - Neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle connections. (Charlesbank Road and St. James Street)

- One-way northbound travel on St James Street.
- ▶ Vehicle Circulation Patterns
  - Addition of an eastbound travel lane allowing for two-way vehicle traffic on Washington Street north of I-90 and on the east bridge.
  - Maintain of one-way travel on Washington Street south of I-90 and on the west bridge.
  - Convert St James Street to one-way travel northbound (in order to accommodate the new shared-use path).
  - The goal of these revised circulation patterns is to reduce driver confusion by providing more direct travel paths.
- ▶ Travel Paths
  - For vehicles traveling on Washington Street from the west towards I-90 westbound, drivers will be able to stay on the north side of I-90 and will no longer need to circulate over I-90 and around the south side of Newton Corner to access the ramp.
  - For vehicles traveling from Centre Street north of I-90 to Park Street south of I-90, drivers will be able to travel southbound on the existing east bridge. This would provide a direct route and reduce vehicle trips circulating around Newton Corner.
- ▶ Active Transportation Features
  - A mix of shared-use paths and bicycle lanes would be provided on nearly all roadways through Newton Corner.
  - The proposed pedestrian and Bicycle bridge would provide a north-south connection over I-90 allowing pedestrian and bicycle traffic to complete trips along Centre Street.
  - New shared-use paths, proposed on St James Street and Charlesbank Road, connecting to the Charles River via a new connection off of Russell Road.
  - Sidewalks proposed along all roadways without shared-use paths.
  - Signalized crosswalks proposed in all quadrants of Newton Corner.

*Alternative 2: New Centre-to-Centre Bridge*

- ▶ Alternative 2 proposes improvements to north-south connectivity with a new Centre-to-Centre bridge while also maintaining the existing bridges. The new Centre-to-Centre bridge would carry two-way traffic for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and could lead to improved connectivity across the study area.
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
  - Relocation of the I-90 westbound on-ramp.
  - The addition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and northbound vehicle traffic to the west bridge.
  - Extension of the second lane on I-90 eastbound off-ramp by ~400 feet.
  - The construction of a new Centre-to-Centre Bridge.
  - Two-way travel on Washington Street north and south.
  - Extension of the second lane on I-90 westbound off-ramp by ~500 feet.
  - Reconfiguring the east bridge to include a two-way transit way and southbound vehicular traffic.
  - Neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- ▶ Vehicle Circulation Patterns

- Washington Street (north and south of I-90) and the new Centre-to-Centre bridge would have two-way traffic.
  - The two existing bridges would flip traffic flow direction. The west bridge would carry westbound traffic while the east bridge would carry eastbound traffic. This alignment could improve traffic flow on both bridges and better align with existing travel patterns.
- ▶ Travel Paths
- For vehicles traveling from Park Street towards the I-90 westbound on-ramp, drivers will travel westbound on the south side of I-90, cross I-90 on the west bridge, and turn left onto Washington Street to access the relocated I-90 westbound on-ramp located west of Newton Corner.
  - For vehicles traveling southbound from Centre Street north to Centre Street south, drivers will use the new two-way Centre-to-Centre bridge. This would eliminate the need to circulate around Newton Corner.
- ▶ Active Transportation Features
- Shared-use paths and bicycle lanes on nearly all roadways through Newton Corner.
  - Bicycle lanes in each direction on the proposed new Centre-to-Centre bridge.
  - A new shared-use path on Charlesbank Road, connecting to the Charles River via a new connection off Russell Road.
  - Sidewalks along all roadways without shared-use paths.
  - Signalized crosswalks proposed for all quadrants of Newton Corner.

*Alternative 3: New Center-to-Centre Bridge, Rail Station, and Expanded Ramps*

- ▶ Alternative 3 builds upon the newly built Centre-to-Centre bridge proposed in Alternative 2 and would also introduce a new MBTA Commuter Rail station and enhanced ramps to and from I-90 West. To accommodate the reconstructed I-90 eastbound off-ramp and the I-90 westbound on-ramp, the Church Street bridge would need to be widened and replaced to accommodate the widened ramps.
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
- Expanded two lane I-90 eastbound off-ramp.
  - Relocation of I-90 westbound on-ramp.
  - New MBTA Commuter Rail station.
  - All other components as shown in Alternative 2.
- ▶ Travel Paths
- For vehicles traveling from I-90 eastbound off-ramp to Centre Street north, drivers will be able to turn left from the I-90 eastbound off-ramp onto the new Centre-to-Centre bridge to travel north.
  - For vehicles traveling from Centre Street north to the I-90 westbound on-ramp, drivers will turn right onto Washington Street and then make a left turn at the relocated on-ramp that ties in at the intersection with the existing west bridge.
- ▶ Active Transportation Features
- Shared-use paths and bicycle lanes on nearly all roadways through Newton Corner.
  - Bicycle lanes in each direction on the proposed new Centre-to-Centre bridge.
  - A new shared-use path on Charlesbank Road, connecting to the Charles River via a new connection off of Russell Road.

- Sidewalks along all roadways without shared-use paths.
- Signalized crosswalks located in all quadrants of Newton Corner.

#### *Alternative 4: Streamlined Ramp Access*

- ▶ Alternative 4 seeks to simplify circulation patterns and improve connectivity with new bi-directional bridges across I-90 through Newton Corner. This would also create a direct connection from I-90 eastbound to Centre Street northbound. This Combined Alternative was developed based on coordination with the MassDOT Highway Division to try to find ways to increase capacity on the ramp system and reduce spillback onto the mainline, while still promoting the study's goals and objectives.
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
  - New two-way Centre Street to Peabody Street bridge.
  - Reconstructed and extended I-90 eastbound off-ramp.
  - New MBTA Commuter Rail station.
  - Two-way travel on Washington Street north and south sides of I-90.
  - A reconstructed east bridge that would include two-way vehicle/bicycle/pedestrian traffic. New direct I-90 eastbound off-ramp access.
  - Extend second lane of the I-90 westbound off-ramp by ~500 feet.
  - Extend the I-90 eastbound off-ramp by ~1200 feet.
  - Neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- ▶ Vehicular Circulation Patterns
  - Two-way traffic would be provided on nearly all local roadways traveling through Newton Corner.
  - Washington Street and both bridges would provide two-way travel, while St James Street would be converted to one-way travel northbound in order to accommodate the proposed new shared-use path.
- ▶ Travel Paths
  - For vehicles traveling from I-90 eastbound to Centre Street north, drivers will now have a new direct connection. The existing off-ramp will split into two directions, with drivers on this ramp traveling under the new west bridge before intersecting with the new east bridge. At the end of the ramp, drivers will turn left onto the new west bridge and then travel straight onto Centre Street north.
  - For vehicles traveling north through Newton Corner from Park Street to Washington Street west, drivers will travel around the south and west sides of Newton Corner before turning left onto Washington Street. Left turns will be prohibited at certain intersections, such as the intersection in the northwest corner, to minimize travel conflicts and to better assign vehicles through Newton Corner
- ▶ Active Transportation Features
  - Bidirectional bicycle lanes on all local roadways through Newton Corner, including on the Centre street and Washington Street bridges.
  - A shared-use path on St James Street connecting to the Charles River via a new connection off of Russell Road.
  - Sidewalks along all roadways without shared-use paths.
  - Signalized crosswalks located in all quadrants of Newton Corner.

### *Alternative 5: Park and Transit Hub*

- ▶ Alternative 5 proposes utilizing decking to create a park and transit hub in the center of Newton Corner while enhancing connectivity for all users. This Combined Alternative includes many of the elements included in the previous alternatives, including a Commuter Rail station, the expanded ramps to/from I-90 west, a new Centre-to-Centre bridge, as well as a new element of decking over I-90.
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
  - Relocated I-90 westbound on-ramp to where the current west bridge meets Washington Street.
  - Reconstructed I-90 eastbound off-ramp extended upstream.
  - New MBTA Commuter Rail station.
  - New Centre-to-Centre bridge with one-way southbound vehicle traffic and two-way transit traffic.
  - Two-way travel on Washington Street north.
  - Decking over I-90 including a park and pedestrian and bicycle connections.
  - Extend 2nd lane on I-90 westbound off-ramp ~500 feet.
  - Reconstructed east bridge with northbound vehicle traffic.
  - New pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- ▶ Vehicular Circulation Patterns
  - This Combined Alternative proposes to have one-way travel on new bridges surrounding the new decking.
  - Washington Street north of I-90 will accommodate two-way travel, while St James Street will be converted to one-way travel northbound to accommodate the new shared-use path.
- ▶ Travel Paths
  - For vehicles traveling from I-90 eastbound off-ramp to Centre Street north, drivers will travel around the south and east sides of the decking area.
  - For vehicles traveling from Centre Street north to Centre Street south, drivers will now use the new Centre-to-Centre bridge on the west side of the decking area.
- ▶ Active Transportation Features
  - Bidirectional bicycle lanes on all local roadways through Newton Corner with a new shared-use path on St James Street connecting to the Charles River via a new connection off of Russell Road
  - Proposed decking over I-90 would allow for pedestrian and bicycle connections.
  - Sidewalks along all roadways without shared-use paths
  - Signalized crosswalks will be located in all quadrants of Newton Corner

### *Alternative 6: West Newton Full Access*

- ▶ Alternative 6 analyzes full interstate access at West Newton. This alternative is intended to be combined with all the proposed improvements to Newton Corner in Alternative 5.
- ▶ Key Features of this Alternative
  - Layered with all the proposed improvements at Newton Corner in Alternative 5
  - The new eastbound off-ramp is proposed to tie into the existing traffic signal of Washington Street at Perkins Street, and the off-ramp will travel behind the existing buildings on Simms Court.

- The new I-90 westbound on-ramp would utilize part of the existing off-ramp, which would be reduced from two lanes to one lane. It would tie into Washington Street at the existing traffic signal with the westbound off-ramp.
- ▶ Vehicular Circulation Patterns
  - New ramps will provide full circulation to and from I-90 eastbound and westbound.
  - No changes are proposed to the local roadways. The changes at West Newton are limited to vehicle connections only, with no proposed changes to existing pedestrian or bicycle facilities. However, crosswalk and signal upgrades would be included in this alternative.
  - When this was presented previously, the Study Team heard feedback that it was not desirable, in part due to right-of-way impacts. The concept for full access in West Newton predates this effort and was discussed as part of the prior studies in this area.
  - As this project moves into the Alternatives Analysis stage, it will provide an opportunity for a more in-depth traffic analysis, in order to better to understand the vehicle flow and use of potentially relocated ramps.
  - Constructing full interstate access in West Newton would have significant community impacts, and the Study Team continues to bear that in mind, especially through community feedback.

### Alternatives Analysis Preview

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

- ▶ Evaluation criteria are the standards by which the goals and objectives will be measured
- ▶ Criteria for each goal and objective will be used to analyze the different alternatives
- ▶ Evaluation criteria are posted on the study website: <https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study>

### Schedule and Next Steps

#### *Study Schedule*

# Study Schedule



- ▶ There have been changes to the overall study timeline. The Study Team hoped to complete the study this winter, but Alternatives Development took longer than expected to ensure due diligence to community feedback.
- ▶ Currently, the project is at the end of Alternatives Development and will transition to Alternatives Analysis.
- ▶ The Study Team hopes to reconvene with the Working Group in several months and currently aims to have a draft report in the fall, with the study wrapping up late this year or over the winter.

## Working Group Questions and Discussion

- ▶ Following the presentation, Patrick Snyder asked members of the Working Group to share their feedback.
- ▶ Ned Codd thanked the Study Team for the thoughtful alternatives that were developed. He emphasized that it's important to note that all the alternatives enhance the Newton Corner Village. He also shared that it's important to recognize the history of having the Massachusetts Turnpike extension come through Newton Corner Village and the challenges it has with local access today. Ned also wanted to note that local access and neighborhood circulation around Newton Corner has evolved to have a delicate balance to enable vehicle access while managing local impacts of regional traffic. This balance may be impacted by any changes to moving roadways such as highway ramps. He also questioned whether the proposal for additional ramps in West Newton and improved access to the highway system would be worth the additional traffic it would bring. He thinks there are some interesting ideas for improved connections, in particular to multimodal connections and safety and access, but he will follow up with more detail.
  - Patrick Snyder thanked Ned and stated that he mentioned a lot of good points. He also pointed out that one of the study goals is to reconnect neighborhoods and acknowledged that an inherent

community characteristic of Newton Corner is that it's a highway interchange in the middle of neighborhoods. He stated the difficulty in striking the right balance between the neighborhood and regional traffic. The Study Team is bearing this balance in mind for Newton Corner and West Newton as the study continues to the Alternatives Analysis.

Nate Gibson appreciated having the alternatives slides in advance, which helped him process the large amount of information presented in the meeting. He asked whether there would be other opportunities for feedback and what kind of feedback the Study Team was looking for.

- Patrick Snyder stated that the slides were posted on Sunday, so Working Group members had time to view them. He also shared that the Study Team was looking for initial reactions in this meeting and that next steps for the study will be the Alternatives Analysis. Following Alternatives Analysis another Working Group meeting and a Public Meeting will be held before developing and releasing a draft final report. Comments can also be submitted via email. He also stated that the recording and presentation slides will be posted online within a week.
- ▶ Robin Boger conveyed gratitude for the Study Team in keeping focus on the study goals that were previously decided and for presenting so many alternatives. She wanted to understand what these alternatives mean for traffic coming through Newton Corner and which models will be more efficient for different purposes. She also mentioned that it would be helpful to have an overlay of the efficiency when looking at the geometry that is presented, as she is unable to extrapolate from structure to process. Additional questions Robin asked include which alternatives would provide the fastest routes from the Massachusetts Turnpike westbound to north or south, and how travel times compare under typical and heavy traffic conditions. She was curious about trade-offs (e.g., if we want to have better traffic flows to the west, what is being sacrificed going to the east?).

Another concern she had was the potential cost: are some of these alternatives more expensive than others and to what extent are these alternatives cost-dependent? She was also curious about broader transit circulation issues and how each of these sectors respond to the structural changes. She wondered if some of these changes reduce the number of cars traveling through Newton Corner, and if so, what the changes were.

She also voiced concern at Church Street and wanted to mention that the Working Group had previously asked for data on what the impacts would be at Church Street and that the Working Group has been unable to gather this data. She also asked if the Study Team could parse out the impacts of each of these alternatives on the intersection at the YMCA between the bridge and Church Street.

Robin wanted to ask how these proposed alternatives will manifest in flows for pedestrians, traffic, and bicycles. She requested that the Study Team provide as much data on time-related data, car-related data, and impacts on surrounding streets.

- Patrick Snyder thanked Robin for her questions and remarked that they were timely questions as they will be next as part of the Alternatives Analysis. He also provided a snapshot of the study and stated that the alternatives were put together based on the feedback the Study Team received on the components. He remarked that the meeting is meant to present the alternatives and provide an early opportunity before the Alternatives Analysis to gain initial reactions on these alternatives but understands that the Working Group needs additional supplemental information to take further decision. Patrick also responded to the Church Street question, stating that the Study Team will keep this in mind as the Study enters the Alternatives Analysis and the alternatives continue to get refined. For the data, Patrick will get in touch with the City of Newton and District 6 because this is more involved with the short-term improvements happening in Newton Corner that aren't directly related to this long-range Newton Corner Study. There is sketch-level data available on the study website. He

stated that Robin is welcome to reach out to Patrick separately for the more specific ask and would connect Robin to the right contacts.

- Christine Trearchis responded, stating that the Alternatives Analysis will start after this meeting, wherein the Study Team will analyze the six alternatives in depth. The Study Team will be looking at operations at all the intersections within the Study Area and comparing them across alternatives and No-Build Conditions. The Study Team will also be looking at safety measures, access to transit, travel times for all users, and high-level cost analysis for each of these alternatives. The Alternatives Analysis has been designed to address the evaluation criteria tied to each of the study goals and objectives.
- ▶ Robert Fizek asked for a description of how westbound Charles River traffic would get to Newton Corner. An anonymous attendee also asked if the existing/interim traffic light configuration had been analyzed, as it has been an improvement. The anonymous attendee also asked if maintaining this configuration could be an option compared to these significant capital changes.
  - Patrick stated that there have been several general questions and comments on the more recent changes implemented in the past couple of years, notably at the eastbound off-ramp. MassDOT has seen a notable difference in the traffic flow at this location, including with weaving movements. He acknowledged the area is consistently congested with no immediate fix, but noted recent improvements and ongoing monitoring by MassDOT Highway District 6 and the City of Newton.
- ▶ Councilor Alison Leary expressed appreciation for the MBTA Commuter Rail station idea and asked if new commuter parking would be created.
  - Patrick Snyder replied stating that as it is currently outlined in the alternatives, parking is not envisioned. However, he acknowledged the existing high demand for parking at the existing Commuter Rail stations and stated that parking would have to be a conversation to be had with the MBTA as the study progresses. Currently all alternatives are at the sketch level.
- ▶ David Loutzenheiser expressed his disagreement with Alternative 1 and wanted to point out Alternatives 2 and 4 in their abilities to meet the goals of the project, one of which is to repair the connectivity of neighborhoods which the Massachusetts Turnpike broke. Alternative 2 has a direct connection between Centre Street and Centre Street whereas Alternative 4 has a direct connection between Centre Street and Park Street. David believes that encouraging the two-way streets is a good direction to move in, which Alternatives 2 and 4 do, and he encourages it to be refined further. David also stated that there are benefits to the West Newton off-ramps because that disperses traffic off the Massachusetts Turnpike and could be something the project team thinks about further. David also shares that he appreciates the pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the project. He also thinks that going through the back streets south of Washington Street are better travel paths rather than riding along Washington Street. However, he stated that the two-way connectivity between North and South is the priority. David also mentioned that in Alternative 5, the park is not a priority due to the proximity of the park south of it. He suggested that it could be the site of an air rights development site to further connect the community.
  - Patrick Snyder thanked David for his comments and mentioned the common goals of reconnecting community and north-south connectivity for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles.
- ▶ Zeke Mermell stated that the City of Watertown appreciates being at the Working Group meeting as a neighboring municipality and thanked any Watertown residents and colleagues who joined as well. He stated that the City of Watertown completed a mobility study for Supported Mobility and that this study is a great way to tie into it. He is curious about the connection with Galen Street (which becomes Centre Street) and about ways to improve transit connections for commuters and residents in Watertown in the form of high frequency and express routes. Zeke is also interested in how each alternative eliminates

circuitous flows. He is also interested in consolidating ease of access for bus transfers, especially aligning the potential Commuter Rail station with the Galen Street corridor, but acknowledged this is a design detail that will be fleshed out in future iterations. He expressed interest in easier bus transfers, including aligning a potential Commuter Rail station with the Galen Street corridor, while noting details will be refined later in the process. Zeke also stated that it was good to see infrastructure as a way to make streets less stressful for all users. He offered to convey any lessons from projects like Watertown Square and the park deck but defers to the MBTA in using tools like bus lanes and how that connects to Watertown Yards to the Study Area.

- Patrick Snyder thanked Zeke for his comments and responded that transit access and efficiency for buses is a part of the reason for bus lanes existing in Alternatives 3 and 5. The Study Team would need to coordinate with the MBTA on how buses would get rerouted through these alternatives and explore the possibility of bus stop consolidation. One of the alternatives proposes a transit hub with bus stops falling alongside the Commuter Rail station. In the alternatives, the bus lane also envisions a more efficient route for buses. However, these options would be fleshed out alongside the MBTA Bus Operations team and as a result of some of the traffic modeling.
- ▶ Councilor Alison Leary expressed gratitude to Patrick as the Study Team had been really listening to the concerns of the neighborhood. She expressed that Patrick expanded on points of interest such as improving connectivity in the neighborhood and connecting the neighborhood to increase access for all users. She stated appreciation for the MBTA Commuter Rail station, as it would be convenient and that the neighborhood is dense enough to support it. It would strengthen the transit options in this community. She noted that she has not heard about sustainability goals, as Newton Corner is a heat island. She would be interested in hearing more about public green space and places where there are less asphalt and more green spaces. She also stated that there are many good alternatives, and that it is nice to have a variety of choices and looks forward to future meetings. Councilor Alison Leary also mentioned cost estimates and that she hopes long-term improvements will be implemented soon. She wonders if any alternatives would be so cost-prohibitive that a project may not proceed within a timely manner. She expressed further appreciation for the alternatives with the Commuter Rail station, connectivity, pedestrian safety, bike lanes, and shared-use lanes.
- Patrick Snyder thanked the Councilor for her comments. He responded to the cost-estimate and timeline comments by stating that they will continue to be fleshed out and acknowledged that conversations about this area have been occurring for a very long time. He noted that the study is part of a broader effort to advance the conversation and will conclude with timeline and cost estimates to guide MassDOT's next steps for project development in the area.
- ▶ Councilor Julia Malaki stated that she received unfavorable reactions from constituents about the idea of a West Newton Full Access. Many constituents are concerned about what the collateral impact would be. She continued stating that some people may want an easier way to get on the Massachusetts Turnpike but emphasized that the greater concern is what this would do to an already congested West Newton Square (Washington Street is the main thoroughfare for traffic and volume in competing directions is still an issue). She also shared questions she received:
  - How many additional cars will be projected to be in West Newton each day?
  - What do the projected backups at Washington Street and Perkins and Washington Street and Chestnut Street look like at peak hours?
  - How does it affect the existing eastbound flow from Route 16 onto Washington Street, which is already backed up?
  - What is the expected impact on nearby streets (e.g., Waltham, Cherry, and Chestnut Street)?

She also noted that Alternatives 3, 4, and 5 appear to be taking a big part of the YMCA parking lot. She stated the YMCA is a big institution in Newton, and the parking lot is already full as it is. She was wondering if there have been any discussions with the YMCA on the potential effects.

- Patrick Snyder thanked the Councilor for the questions. He first stated that the team had not yet had the mentioned discussion with the YMCA. Right of way impacts have not yet been evaluated in detail. Right of way is discussed as part of the project development process and is not part of this planning effort. Patrick then thanked the Councilor for bringing up West Newton as it was a big part of conversations at previous Working Group and Public Meetings. He continued by stating that the Study Team understands that this is not a desirable location for a new on/off-ramp for the community. In addition, he remarked that the questions she shared are questions the Study Team wants to provide answers to, but in order to provide those answers, this alternative needs to be brought into the Alternatives Analysis. He cautioned that inclusion in the Alternatives Analysis does not guarantee that an alternative will be recommended, but it is necessary to evaluate and answer key questions.
- ▶ Patrick Snyder conveyed his appreciation for participants' patience and interest in this study. He stated that the conversation does not end with this meeting. He also shared that if there is not enough time to answer all questions, anyone can send him an email or a letter following the meeting.
- ▶ Representative Amy Sangiolo asked if there would be additional traffic data collected for the Alternatives Analysis.
  - Patrick responded stating that there has been a lot of traffic data gathered over the years as part of the short/mid-term effort. Some data was collected during the study kick-off in 2024. Part of the Alternatives Analysis will include projecting that data to a future year and analyzing the future year impacts of that traffic data. There is a lot of robust traffic data that will be incorporated into the traffic model.
  - Christine Trearchis also stated that there has been a lot of traffic data collected over the years as part of the short-, mid-, and long-term planning studies. As part of the study, the Study Team reestablished an existing conditions status quo of traffic volumes and patterns and then projected it out to the future (2050), which has established the baseline of future conditions. All Alternatives will be evaluated on the baseline of future conditions and would be compared to the no-build condition and in each of the six alternatives.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee asked where additional traffic from St James Street and Charlesbank Road would end up if St James Street becomes a one-way street.
  - Patrick stated that this question is correct in that some alternatives proposed converting travel on St James Street from one-way.
  - Matt Duranleau noted that preliminary origin-destination analysis found significant traffic on St James Street coming from outside the Newton area, suggesting some of the traffic would avoid Newton Corner all together and go on I-90 at the Allston-Brighton Interchange. This will be fleshed out more as the study goes into the Alternatives Analysis phase.
- ▶ Lauren Clark asked how much weight the level of service will be given compared to bike travel times.
  - Patrick Snyder responded stating that individual metrics will not be weighed more than other metrics.
  - Matt Duranleau also stated that there is evaluation criteria based on study goals. He also stated that level of service will be considered, but it will not be the Study Team's sole consideration. The Study Team will be considering bicycle facilities, bicycle connectivity, pedestrian connectivity, and other goals and objectives. The Study Team will be taking a holistic approach looking at the objectives and the criteria tied to those objectives.

- ▶ Srdjan Nedeljkovic thanked the Study Team for their efforts on the study. He conveyed his gratitude to the Study Team for seriously considering the study goals of the project (e.g., improving safety, mobility, and access for all; reconnecting quality of life; and connecting neighborhoods).

Srdjan noted that Alternative 1 is not favorable, as it maintains the status quo and fails to improve connectivity, instead preserving an unwelcoming rotary-style interchange. He states that the circle of death should not be upheld anymore.

Srdjan stated that Alternative 4 has too many turns and with the short intersections and traffic lights, it would increase traffic jams. He stated that the ultimate problem would be the ramps. The extension of these ramps would bring more traffic into the community. This alternative calls for a major extension of the ramps. For this alternative, he is curious as to how this enhances the study goals and quality of life for people who live there. He would like to see alternatives planned on design and on different levels of traffic demand. While there is a concept of induced demand, there is a concept of traffic evaporation, which is happening on Washington Street since it has been reduced to one lane between Newtonville and West Newton.

Srdjan stated that Alternative 5's transit hub creates a uni-directional rotatory flow around this park. However, he questioned whether anyone would want to be in a park surrounded by one lane of travel. This alternative also consists of a reconstructed eastbound ramp extending upstream and potentially bringing more traffic.

He stated that any of the alternatives blocking traffic going southbound from St James Street are undesirable. He remarked that for those who live in the south side of Newton, drivers take St James Street to cross over to get to Centre Street and go to Newton Center, so that would divert drivers to go to the Massachusetts Turnpike, increasing traffic and congestion on the Massachusetts Turnpike, or into Watertown Square, which is also congested. He stated that alternatives involving eliminating southbound flow on St James seem like bad options.

Srdjan positively reviewed Alternatives 2 and 3, as the MBTA station is crucial. When he thinks about the future, he believes this Newton Corner MBTA station will be a key element in an overall transportation plan for the future. He suggests merging elements of Alternatives 2 and 3. Alternatives 2 and 3 both include the bidirectional flow and Centre Street bridge, which are crucial. For Alternative 3, he wondered if there could be another option that does not extend the ramps. He remarked that if elements of Alternatives 2 and 3 are merged, there could be a plan that is appreciated by all.

- Patrick Snyder stated his appreciation for Srdjan's thoughts. He then stated that if Srdjan, or other attendees, had additional thoughts, they can be shared after this meeting.
- ▶ Sandy Johnston conveyed his gratitude to the Study Team for advancing this. He expressed looking forward to working with the Study Team on fleshing out key transit details such as bus circulation and stops. He stated that he was glad to see the bus priority lanes in the alternatives, especially with the express buses and 57 bus traveling in the area. He emphasized that bus delays come from the approaches to the area, not just the bridge over the Massachusetts Turnpike, so it would be nice to consider priority there in addition to the bridge over the Massachusetts Turnpike. He would be interested in sharing data on where transit priority measures would be most impactful in order to find the best allocation of road space to maximize throughput of people, rather than just cars. He is also interested in coordinating on safe pedestrian and bicycle access to transit in this area, which was brought up in prior meetings.
- ▶ Sandy also shared a statement from the MBTA on the proposed Commuter Rail station in multiple proposed alternatives: "We hear that folks are excited by the prospect of a Commuter Rail station. At the T, we're in the analysis stage on this, but glad that the study is taking a feasibility look at the station. However, we need to make sure this makes sense in the context of operations and rider needs on the full

Framingham/Worcester line. As you know, the distance between stops in Newton is already very close, and we need to make sure that net rider benefits would exceed cost. Announced at the February 15 Board Meeting, the MBTA is working on a rail modernization plan, which is an opportunity where people can advocate for improvements to the Framingham-Worcester line that would happen 5-15-years in the future. . We would also want to look at any station multi-modally. Newton Corner offers wonderful bus transfer opportunities, and we will be looking at how train service would fit in the context of those bus options, especially the express busses.”

Sandy also asked a question on whether the Commuter Rail station is in a certain location in the alternative concepts because of the results of a feasibility analysis or if it was representative of a general area.

- Patrick thanked Sandy for his comments. He stated that the Study Team had a lot of conversations on this, as the Commuter Rail has been brought up at every Study meeting. The community has shown strong interest in adding a Commuter Rail station, and the Study Team is continuing to explore its feasibility, particularly regarding multimodal connections. The location of the Commuter Rail station is generally based on the potential of the transit hub and constraints of the Massachusetts Turnpike. Patrick also offered to meet with Sandy separately to have a more detailed answer for the Working Group.
- Christine Trearchis stated that the transit and rail team at VHB has coordinated with the MBTA and has been involved in the design of other stations. The team took a look at the minimum size envelope for the station and the location in the concepts is where the station would best fit with the least amount of right of way impacts. There were a lot of physical barriers to work around, and this was determined as the best location. However, this is very preliminary as this is conceptual, not in the design phase.
- ▶ Michael Halle thanked the Study Team for their work. He emphasized that stitching Newton together means that Newton is a place where people could go to, not through. Newton Corner is a “go-through” place that has suffered historically. He urges others to consider what the cost would be for people traveling on any mode to go to a destination in Newton Corner and return. He believes that success can be achieved if local trips are more convenient. Michael also stated that closing the gap to the river will be a huge quality of life improvement. He also stated that the concern about induced demand is so high because no one wants to construct a second miniature circle of death. In addition, he conveyed gratitude to the Study Team for listening to the community when this was mentioned multiple times in meetings.
  - Patrick Snyder stated that he appreciated the feedback on West Newton and hearing community voices on induced demand. Long-term planning provides a proactive, transformative look at this area and values integrated connection to local neighborhoods.
- ▶ David Loutzenheiser stated that while space should be reserved for a future Commuter Rail station, accessible stations at the other three Newton stations should be prioritized.
- ▶ Michael Halle asked if bus (including express bus) circulation could be explained.
  - Patrick Snyder stated that the Study Team can touch on bus routes during the Working Group discussion, as this requires coordination with the MBTA.

### Public Comment Period

- ▶ Following the Working Group Discussion, Patrick Snyder asked members of the public to share their feedback.

- ▶ Andy Gluck thanked the Study Team for their work. Andy shared that he is a transit user, biker, and pedestrian through this area. He agreed with the comments made by Srdjan, appreciated Alternative 2 and 3, and believed that a conglomeration of Alternatives 2 and 3 would be the best way forward. Andy also shares difficulty crossing Charlesbank Road to reach the bike lanes on the southbound side of the Charles River. He also stated that not a lot of people would use the Commuter Rail station, as the Commuter Rail exists today and that there is a need for better bus waiting areas. On a final note, Andy shared that he hopes that the study is implemented in a timely manner.
  - Patrick Snyder conveyed his appreciation for the comments, especially those related to the themes of connectivity, neighborhoods, and bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- ▶ Russell Beckler asked what the current plan to mitigate current congestion was. He remarked that the new traffic plan is an improvement but is bottlenecking at Centre Street and blocking off ramp traffic.
  - Patrick Snyder stated that MassDOT has completed a few short-term improvements with the introduction of a traffic signal and barrier at Newton Corner and continues to evaluate them and their impacts on congestion. At this time, this study is a long-term plan that looks for long-term solutions at Newton Corner.
- ▶ Dennis Rieseke asked if air-rights development at Newton Corner and West Newton on DOT land had been considered, as it could potentially provide housing and two new MBTA Commuter Rail stations. He also mentioned that he studied both Newton Corner and West Newton for air-rights development and shared findings with DOT and the Newton Planning Department.
  - Patrick Snyder stated that Dennis is welcome to send any supplemental comments via email and appreciates this comment. Air rights are not being evaluated as part of the study, as it focuses on Newton Corner through a lens of transportation. However, the study has called out existing air rights in the area and the Study Team has received inquiries about air rights.
- ▶ Robert Fizek asked where the “vision” that truly manifests a reconnection of the community across the wide gash created by the Massachusetts Turnpike was present in this study.
  - Patrick Snyder thanked Robert for his question and responded stating that the alternatives aim to connect the community in the lens of a transportation focus, as reflected in the park decking alternative. This is something that the Study Team will continue to evaluate as the study progresses. The Massachusetts Turnpike being built through this area fundamentally changed the neighborhoods that are in this area.
- ▶ Robert Fizek shared that understanding and comparing alternatives is difficult to do on screen. He asked whether the design team would be able to provide a physical exhibit of the presentation for public display. He continued stating that a set of drawings and documents at a table would be very useful, and allow for more and better-informed feedback. He also shared that the Study Team should be required to provide the City/community with presentation documents for public display and discussion.
  - Patrick Snyder thanked Robert for his question and stated that this will be considered by the Study Team. This will also be something that would have to be asked to the City of Newton.
- ▶ Dennis Rieseke stated that Alternatives 2 and 3 are the best options and that the westbound ramp in Alternative 6 should be developed further. He also proposed using the rotary concept first proposed in Central Transportation Planning Staff/Boston Region MPO study from 2008 to utilize the Church Street Bridge.
  - Patrick Snyder stated that if he misinterpreted the statement, Dennis could reach out to him with clarification.

- ▶ An anonymous attendee stated that they would like a new way for pedestrians and bicycles to get to the Charles River while maintaining traffic connections in both directions.
  - Patrick Snyder thanked the anonymous attendee for reiterating that. He also stated that he will take all the feedback from this meeting, reconvene as a Study Team, use the feedback to refine alternatives during the Alternatives Analysis. Alternatives may get tweaked based on feedback received today. At the next meeting, the Study Team will present the Alternatives Analysis results.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee asked for a detailed explanation of the vehicular connections from Newton Corner to Charles River Road in all the alternatives.
  - Patrick Snyder responded stating that this would be periodically touched upon during the presentation and that the Study Team can further elaborate following the presentation, if desired.
- ▶ Robert Fizek stated that it is difficult to understand the plans as the new roadways and connections are not distinguished from the existing roadways.
  - Patrick Snyder replied stating that key changes would be highlighted during the presentation and that if Robert required more detailed clarification, he would be welcome to ask during the comment period or to reach out following the meeting. He concluded by thanking Robert for his comment.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee asked if the Peabody bridge would cause the building near the hotel to be removed.
  - Christine Trearchis replied stating that right of way impacts will be evaluated as part of the Alternatives Analysis.
- ▶ Lauren Clark asked what prevents northbound drivers from taking the west bridge in Alternative 4.
  - Matt Duranleau stated that northbound drivers would be able to use either of the bridges in Alternative 4. He also shared that left turns would be restricted from certain movements to better assign vehicles through Newton Corner.
- ▶ Lauren Clark asked if the bike lanes in all the alternatives were protected.
  - Christine Trearchis stated that the bicycle lanes have been shown as protected in the draft concepts.
- ▶ Carl Pasquarosa asked what the issue would be for adding bike lanes that would negatively impact vehicle traffic.
  - Christine Trearchis replied stating that traffic operations will be evaluated during the Alternatives Analysis for all alternatives.
- ▶ Seth Parker stated that there was a lot of information to absorb in the presentation and asked where he could find the presentation and other information that can be reviewed.
  - Christine Trearchis stated that the draft alternatives have been posted to the study website, and the slides and meeting recording will be posted to the study website as well.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee stated that the presentation graphics could be more readable.
  - Christine Trearchis thanked the attendee for the feedback.
- ▶ Seth Parker stated that some changes (e.g., Centre Street bridge) seem expensive and asked which proposed changes would be very expensive and would save money if not implemented.
  - Christine Trearchis stated that cost estimates will be prepared for the alternatives as part of the Alternatives Analysis.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee asked if the hotel and other buildings adjacent to the Massachusetts Turnpike would need to be torn down in some of these alternatives.

- Christine Trearchis stated that the Study Team has not yet determined right of way impacts and that this will be evaluated as part of the Alternatives Analysis.
- ▶ Patrick Snyder concluded the discussion session and welcomed any additional questions or comments to his email.

## Conclusion

### *How to Reach Us*

- ▶ Study Website / Contact Information:
  - <https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study>
- ▶ Patrick Snyder, Project Manager
  - [patrick.l.snyder@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:patrick.l.snyder@dot.state.ma.us)

### *Thank You*

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