



PALMER STATION

PLANNING + DESIGN

Public Meeting #1

December 16, 2024

Agenda

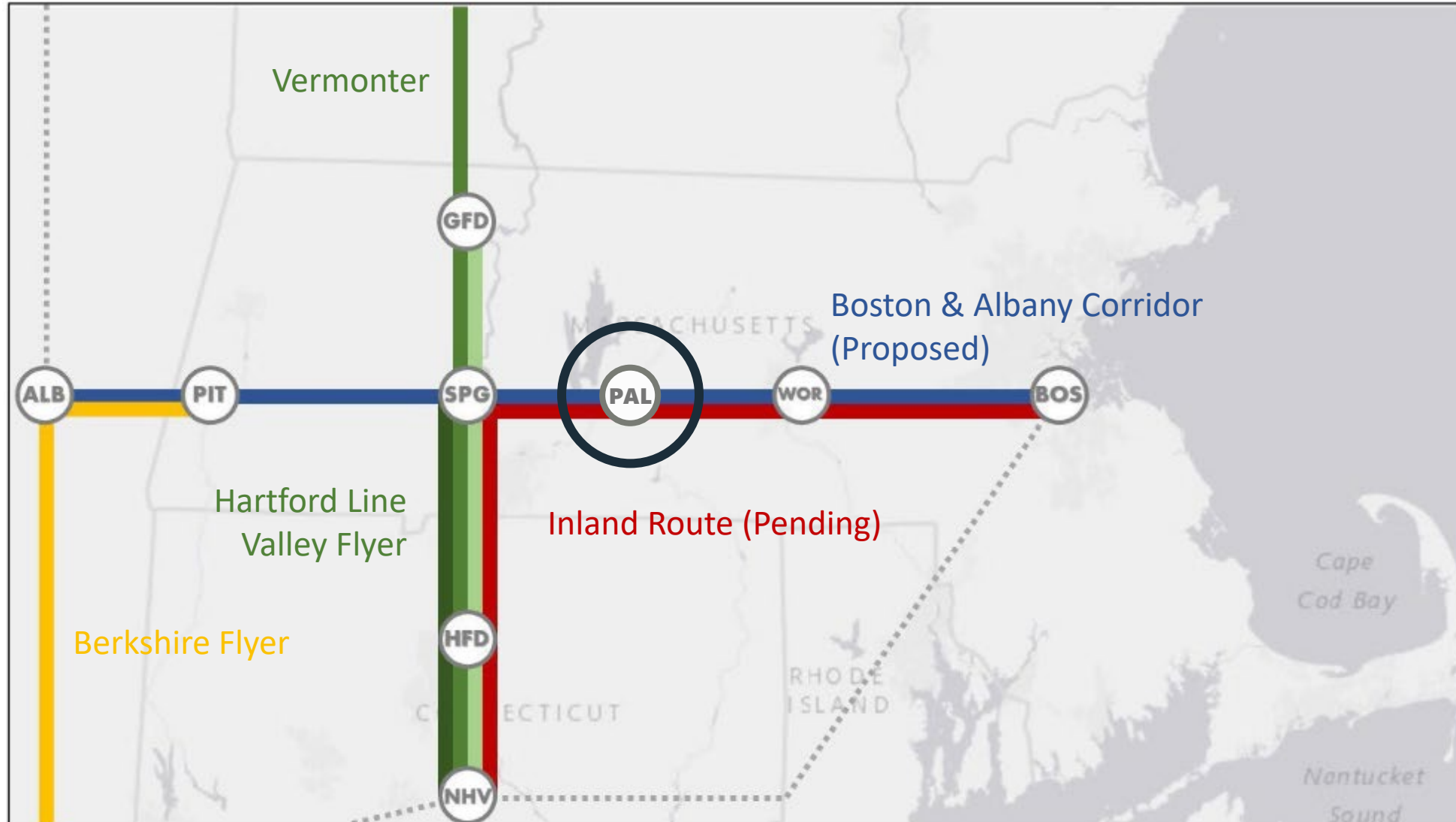
1. Introduction & Background
2. Site Identification & Evaluation
3. Station Design Considerations
4. Next Steps





Compass Rail

Compass Rail, Passenger Rail for the Commonwealth, is Massachusetts' vision for Amtrak-operated intercity passenger rail.



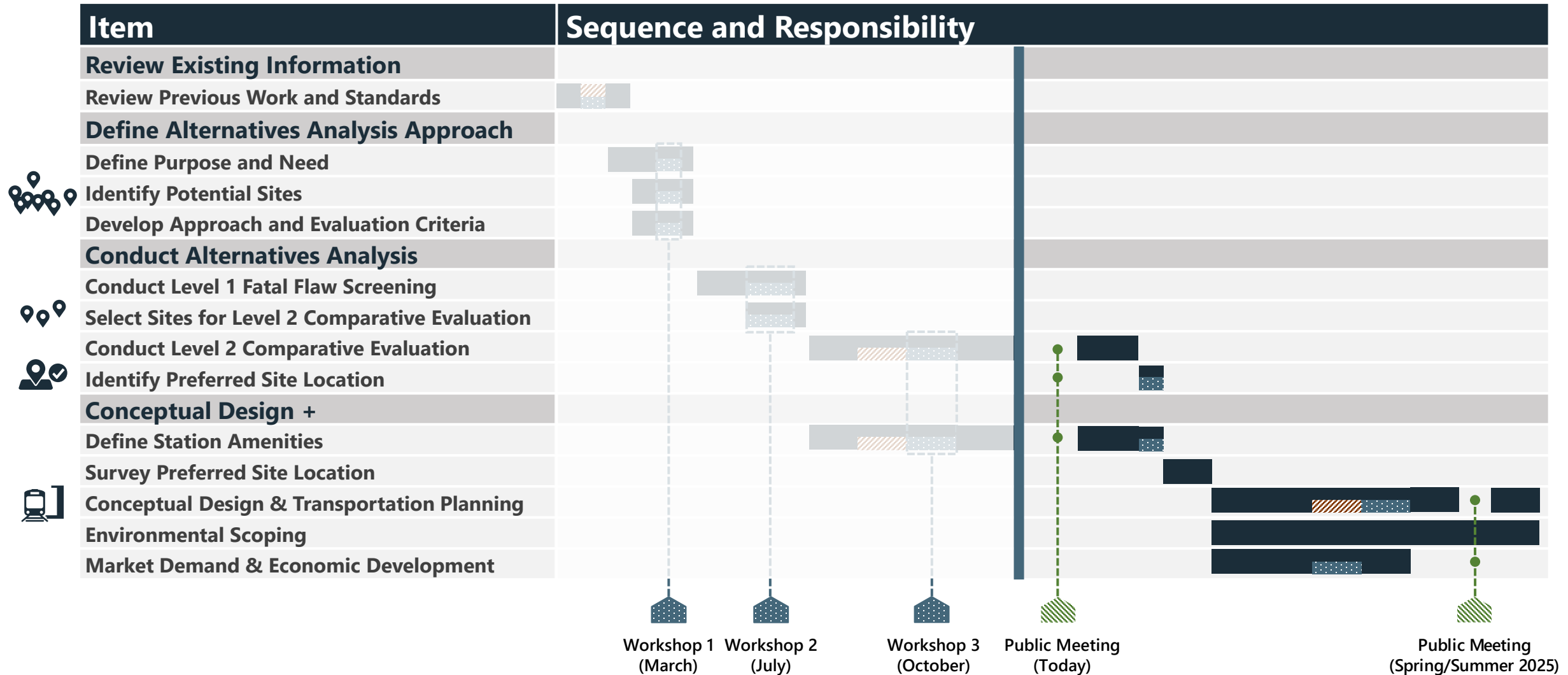
Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to identify a new passenger rail station along the proposed Compass Rail Corridor serving the Town of Palmer and surrounding communities that will enhance mobility and connectivity, support local planning goals, and drive economic development.

Goals and Objectives for Palmer Station

- Provide and create an **intercity rail stop** on the proposed Compass Rail corridor while meeting **operational requirements** for Amtrak, CSX, and other freight operators and **minimizing freight operations impacts**
- **Enhance passenger mobility and connectivity** for local and regional growth and to support access to the Five College Consortium
- Improve local and regional **economy and livability**
- Support local and regional goals to **reduce dependency on auto transportation** by offering an alternative choice for travelers and providing opportunities for multimodal station access
- **Avoid and minimize** social, cultural, and natural **environmental impacts**

Project Schedule



Purpose of Today's Meeting

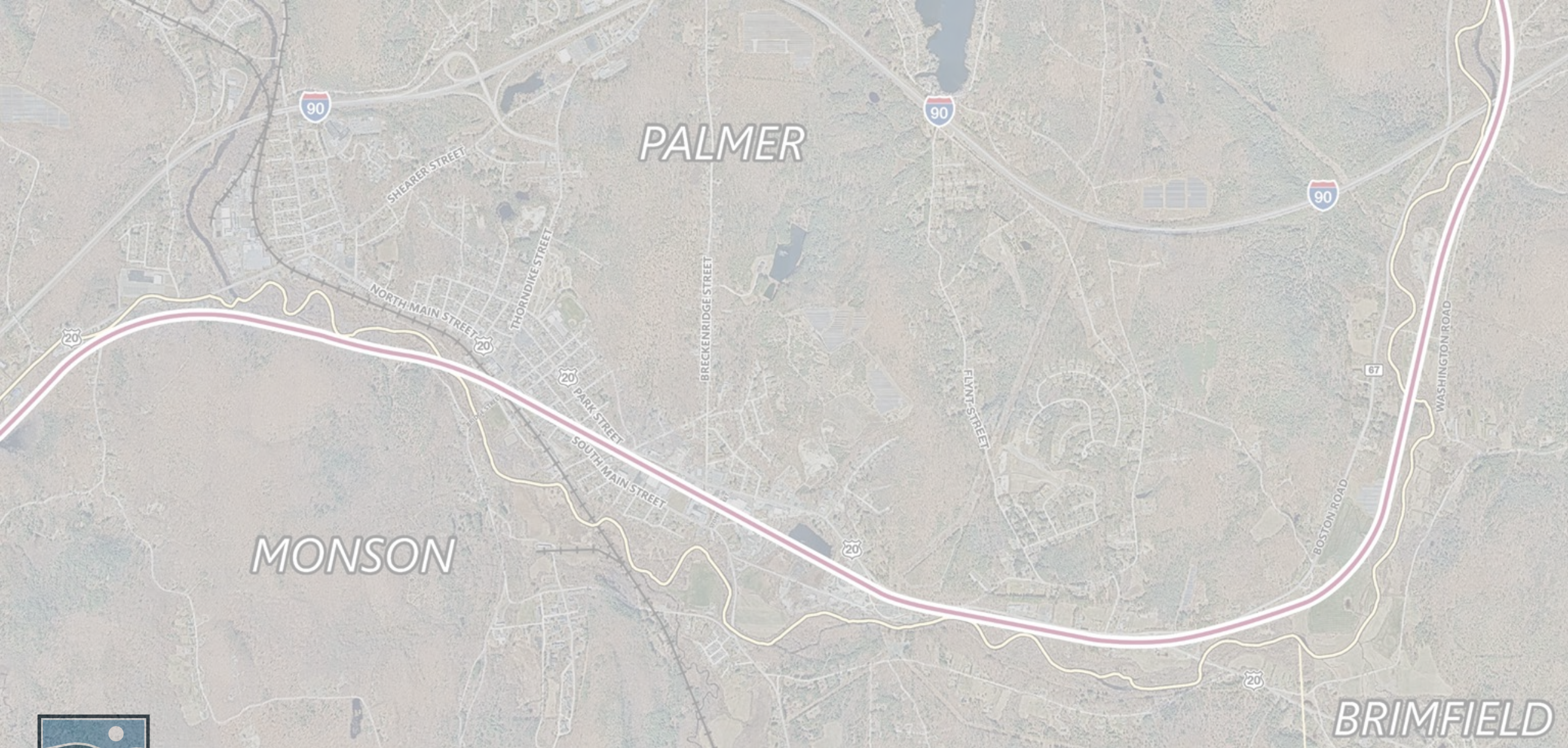
1. Describe site identification and evaluation (alternatives analysis)
2. Share preliminary results
3. **Collect feedback/input on:**
 -  **Alternatives analysis**
 -  **Station design features**



Steering Committee

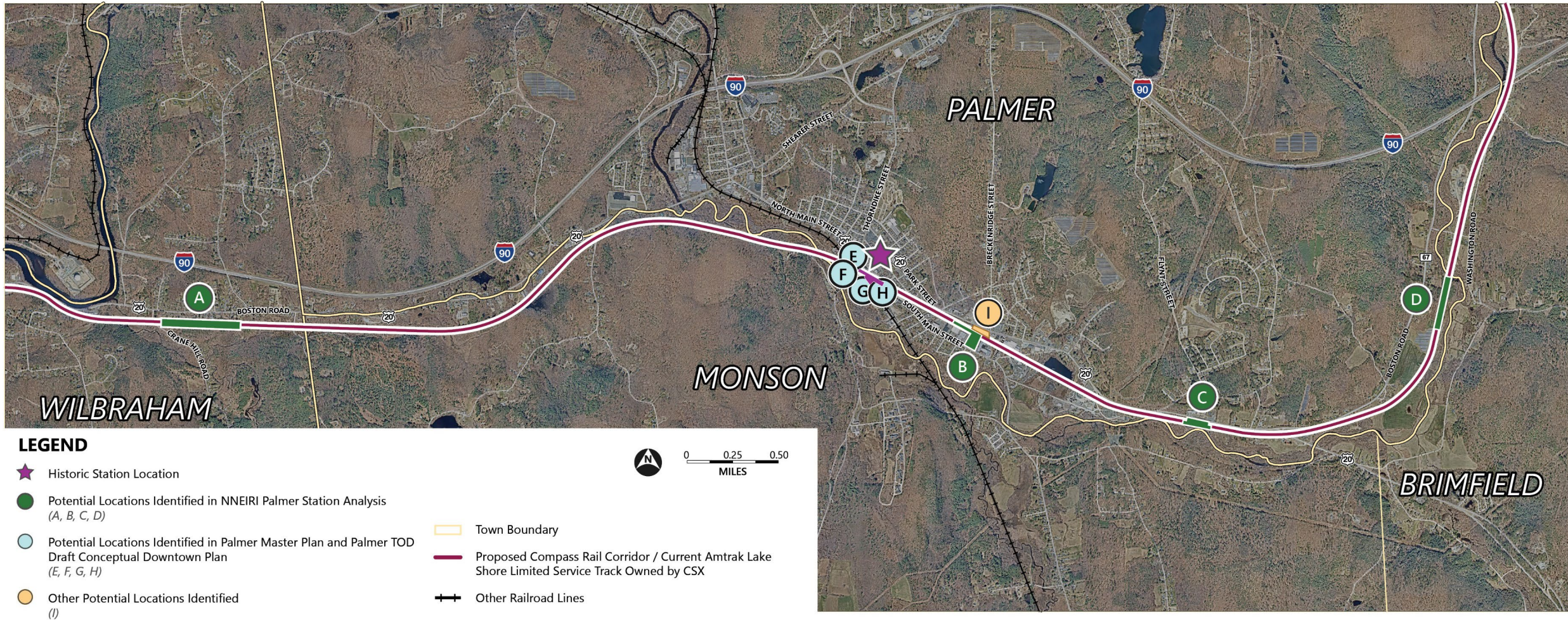
- Provide guiding input throughout the project
- Have held 3 meetings to date (March, July, October), with input focused on:
 - Project Purpose
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Site Selection
 - Evaluation Approach
 - Preliminary Results

Name	Affiliation
Brad Brothers	Town of Palmer, Town Manager
Heidi Mannarino	Town of Palmer, Town Planner
Michael Marciniac	Town of Palmer, Planning Board Chairman
John Latour	Town of Palmer, Community Development Director
Matthew Morse	Town of Palmer, Department of Public Works Director
Karl Williams	Town of Palmer, Town Councilor (District 3)
Dave Golden	Town of Palmer, Master Plan Implementation Committee
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Principal Planner / Transportation Manager
Ben Hood	Palmer Redevelopment Authority



Site Identification and Evaluation

Sites Evaluated in Alternatives Analysis



Level 1 Fatal Flaw Screening

Focused on **operational feasibility** based on high-level sketches:



Operational Compatibility

Is the site on the Compass Rail Corridor?



Track Geometry and Right-of-Way (ROW) Limits

Does sufficient space exist to accommodate station on a siding track with associated track and signal infrastructure meeting minimum standards?

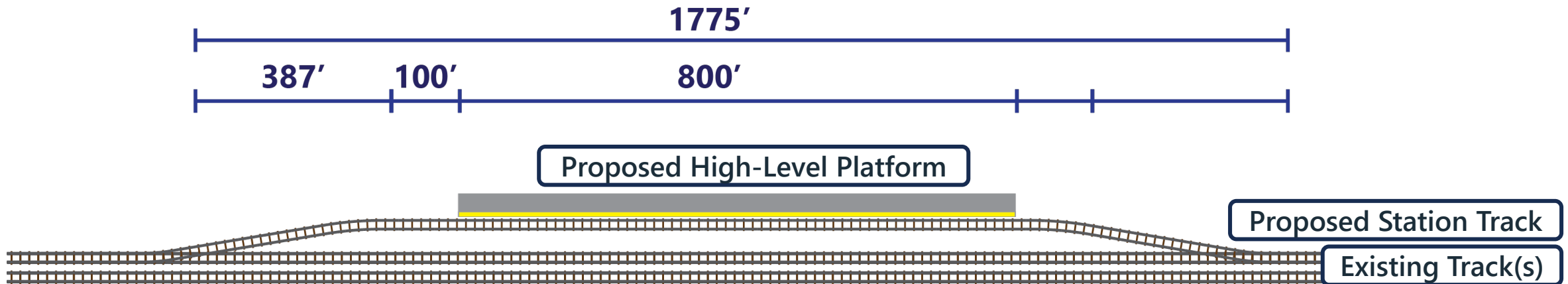


Freight Operations Impacts

Does the site interfere with the diamond junction (CP-83, between CSX and NECR) or the CSX Palmer Yard?

Track Infrastructure Required

Minimum Distance (Typical)

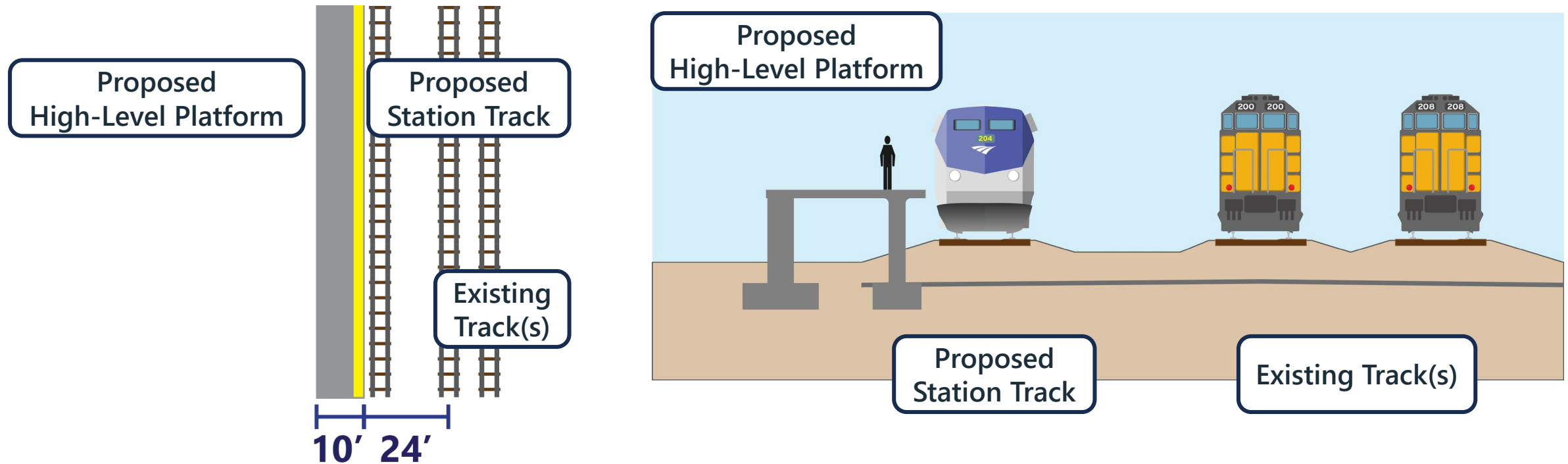


NOTES:

1. All distances are rounded to the nearest foot.
2. The platform is assumed to be 800' in length, with 100' of tangent track and #15 turnouts on each side of the platform.

Track/Platform Infrastructure Required

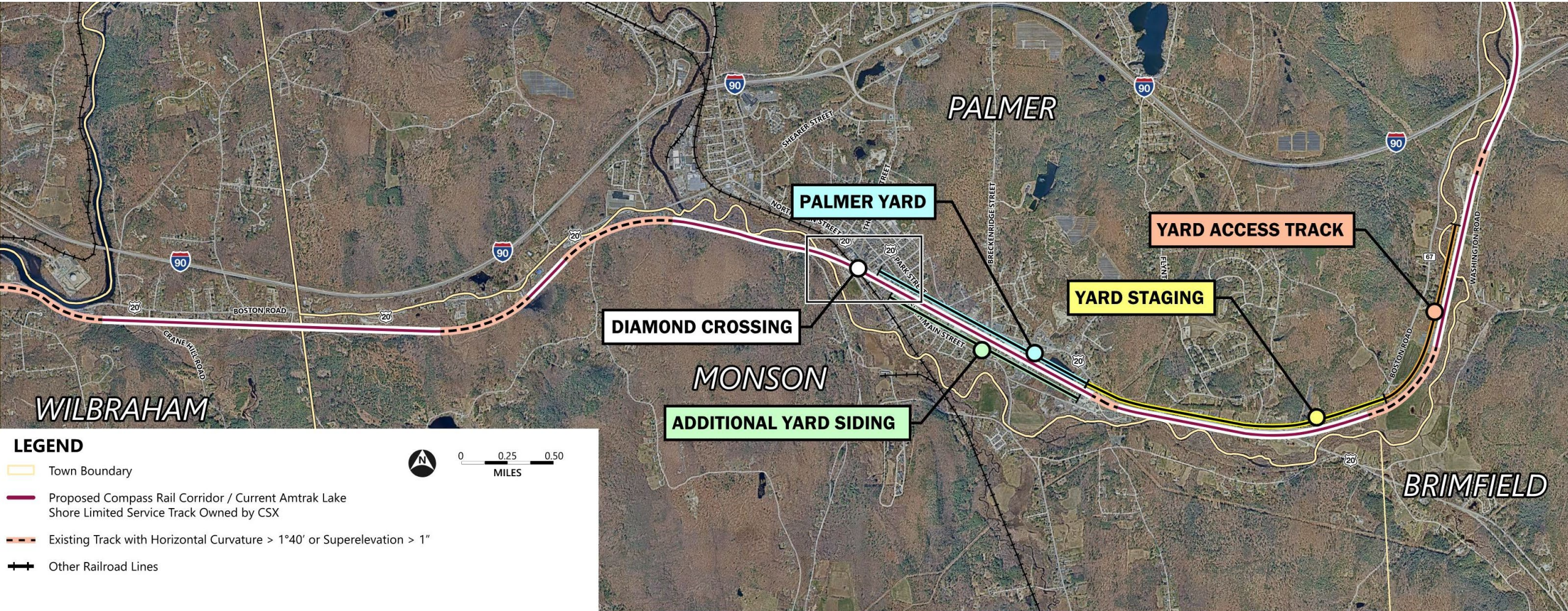
Minimum Clearance (Typical)



NOTES:

1. All distances are rounded to the nearest foot.
2. The platform is spaced 5'-7" from the centerline of the station track, based on Amtrak Plan 70050G.
3. The centerline of the station track is located 18'-6" from the centerline of the nearest active CSX freight track, based on CSX Plan 2611.
4. The proposed high-level platform is assumed to be 10' wide, based on Amtrak Station Planning and Development Guidelines.

Freight Operations Constraints



Subject to change upon additional coordination with CSX.

Level 1 Fatal Flaw Screening

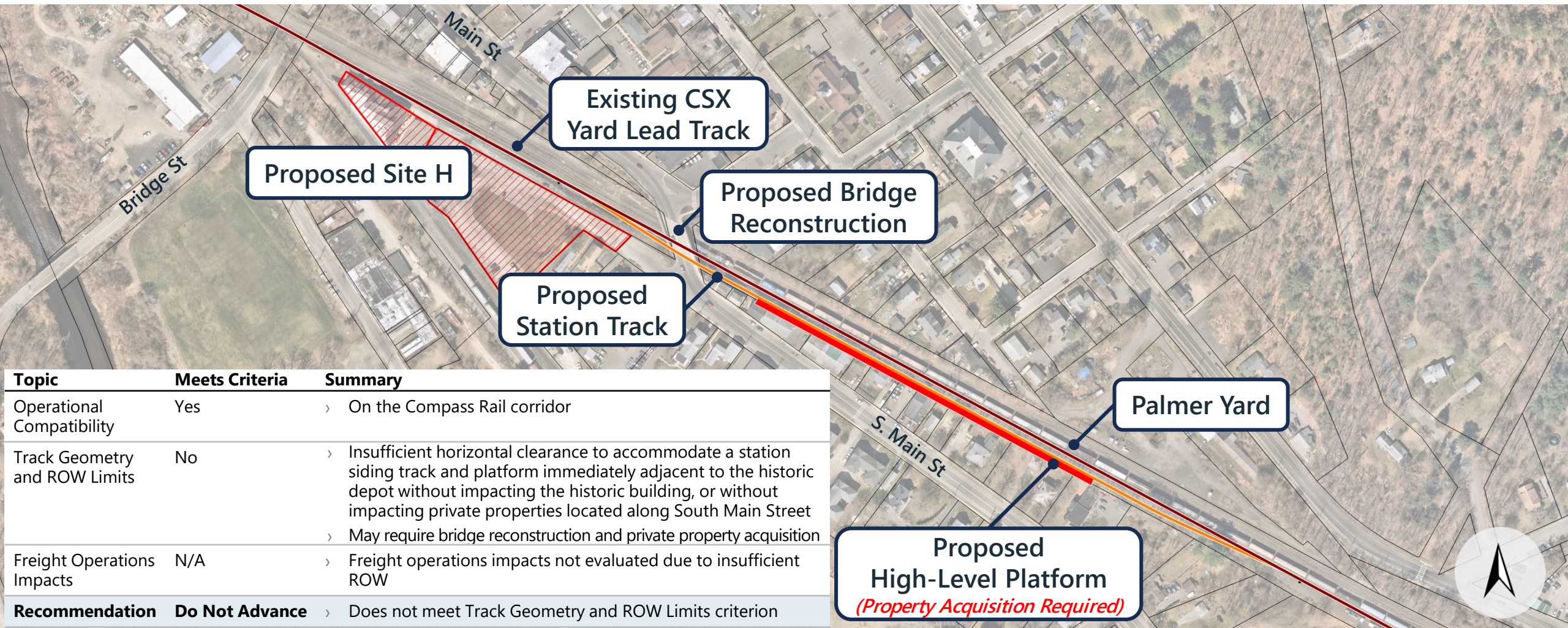
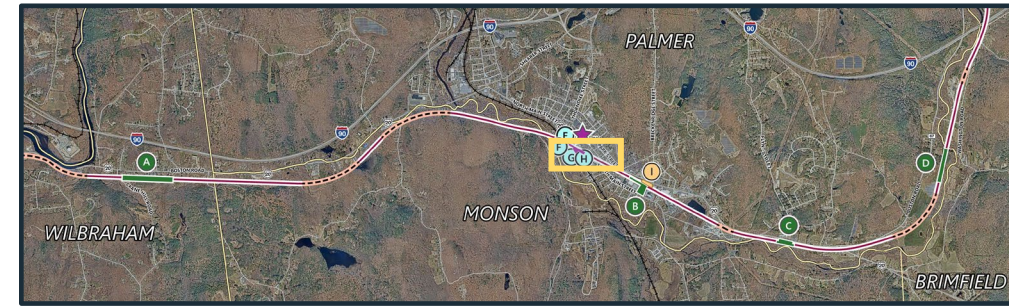
Summary of Preliminary Level 1 Fatal Flaw Screening Results

Site	Description	Meets Criteria			Recommendation to Advance to Level 2 Evaluation
		Operational Compatibility	Track Geometry and ROW Limits	Freight Operations	
Site A	East of Crane Hill Road (Wilbraham)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Advance
Site E	Palmer Redevelopment Authority (PRA) Lot	No	N/A	N/A	Do Not Advance
Site F	Palmer Department of Public Works (DPW) Lot	Yes	Yes	Yes (Potential)*	Advance
Site G	Water Street Fields	No	N/A	N/A	Do Not Advance
Site H	Historic Location	Yes	No	N/A	Do Not Advance
Site B	South of Palmer Yard	Yes	Yes	Yes (Potential)*	Advance
Site I	North of Palmer Yard	Yes	Yes	Yes (Potential)*	Advance
Site C	US-20, East of Nipmuck Street (North Side of Track)	Yes	Yes	No	Do Not Advance
Site C	US-20, East of Nipmuck Street (South Side of Track)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Advance
Site D	Boston Road (North Side of Track)	Yes	Yes	No	Do Not Advance
Site D	Boston Road (South Side of Track)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Advance

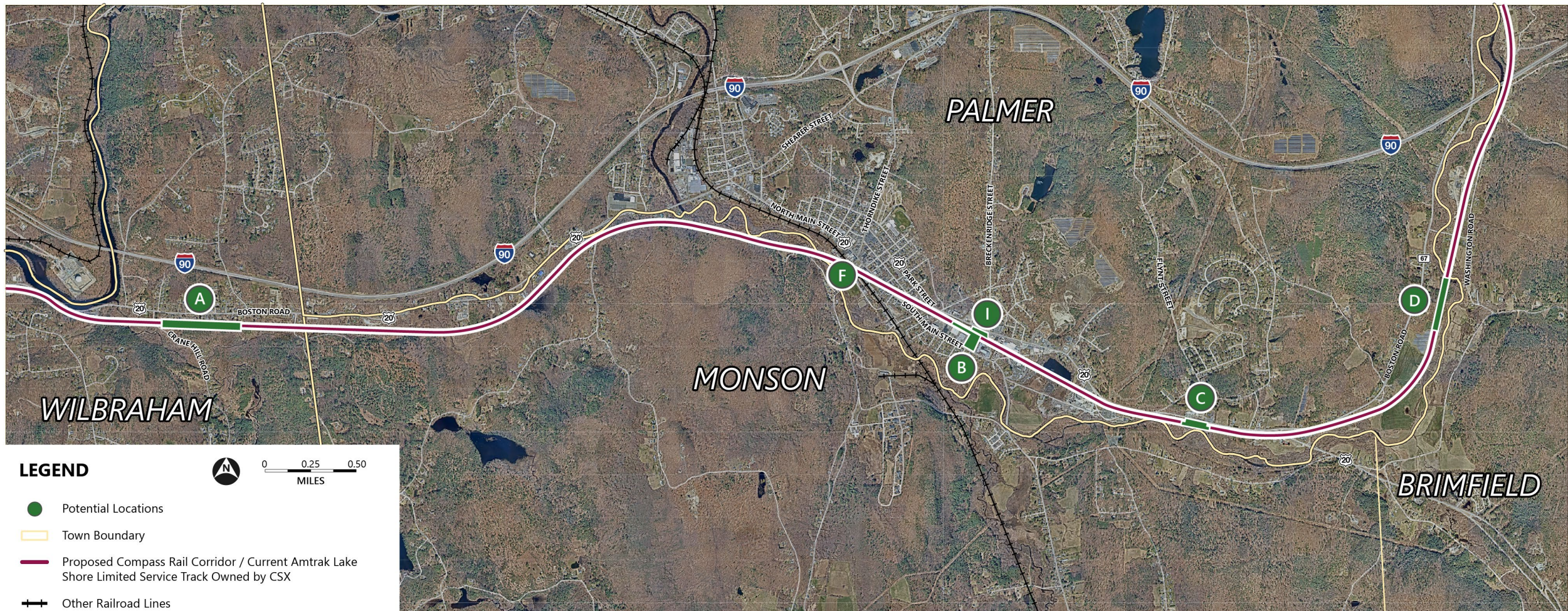
**Subject to further coordination with CSX to evaluate operational impacts of geometric changes/siding relocation.*

Level 1 Fatal Flaw Screening

Site H: Historic Location



Sites Advanced to Level 2 Comparative Evaluation



Level 2 Comparative Evaluation

Proposed criteria (Favorable/Neutral/Unfavorable):



Engineering and Operations



Mobility



Environment



Economic Development



Implementation

Level 2 Comparative Evaluation

Design Considerations

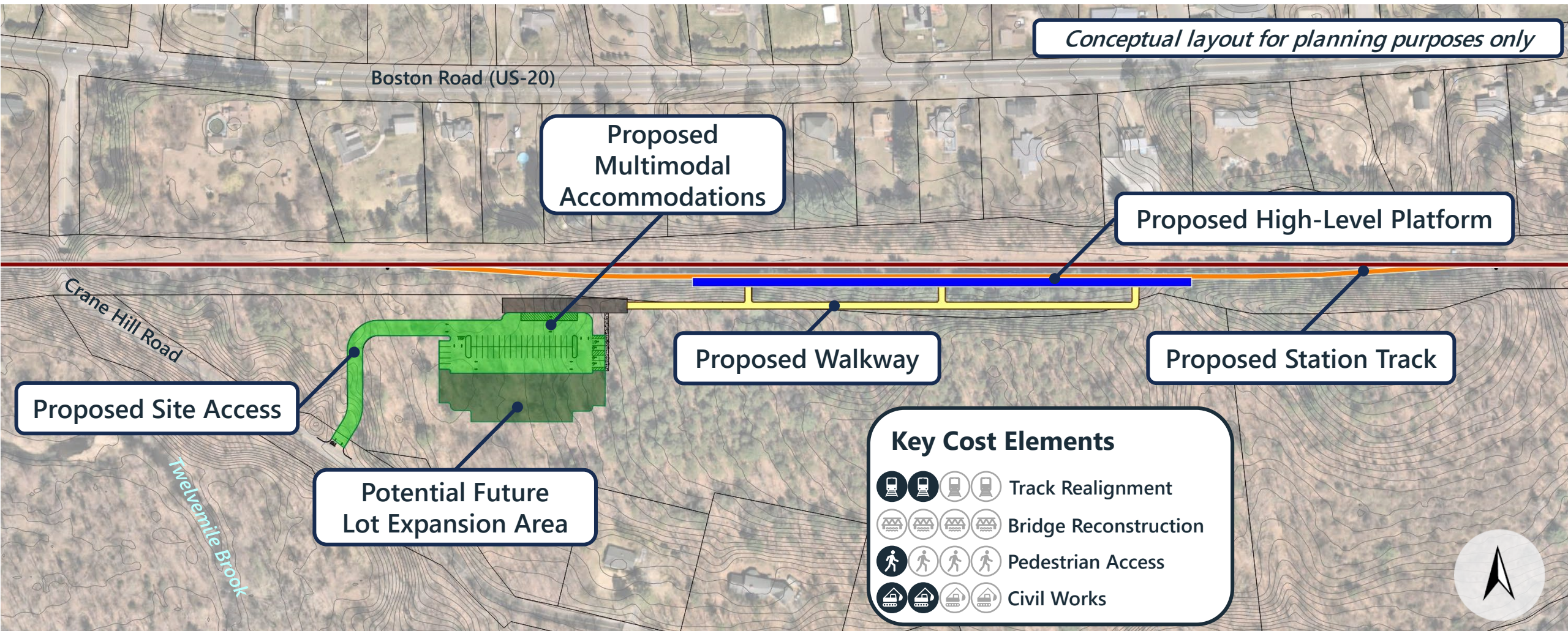
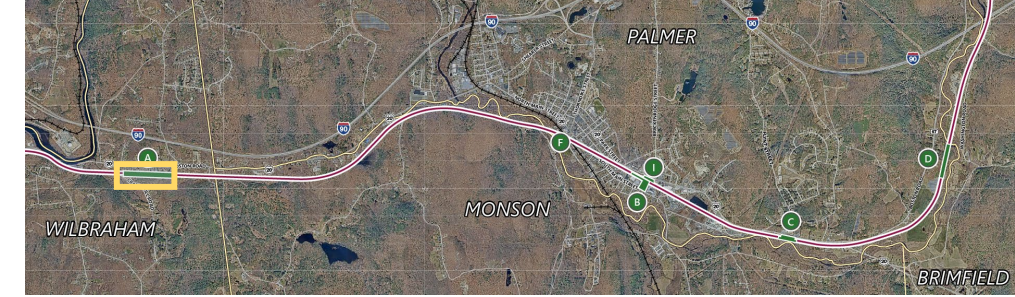
- Category 4 – Shelter Station
 - Anticipated ridership < 20,000/year
 - Emphasizes connectivity
- Category 4 station features include:
 - Side platform configuration
 - Canopy and/or small shelter
 - Signage and lighting
 - Train information and self-service ticketing
 - Unstaffed, without restrooms
- Accommodates anticipated user base – including occasional travelers, students, commuters, and tourists



High-Level Example of Typical Category 4 Station

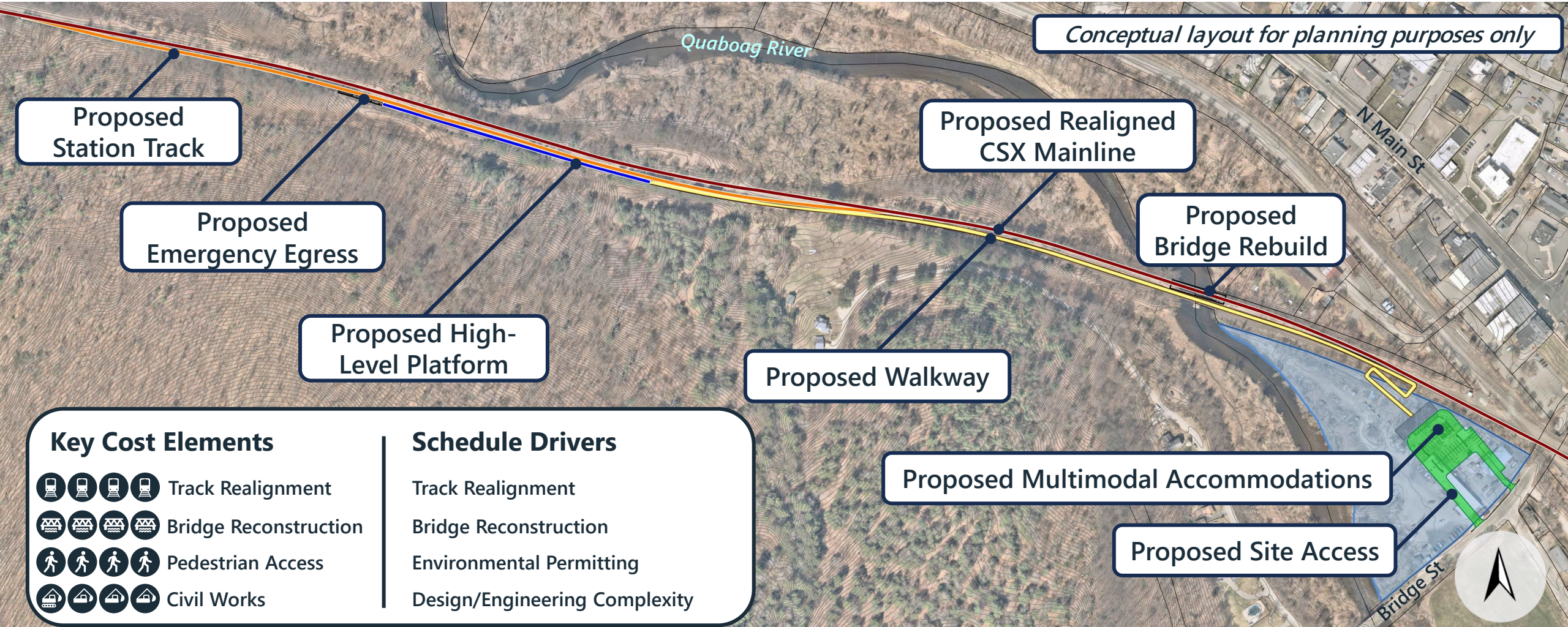
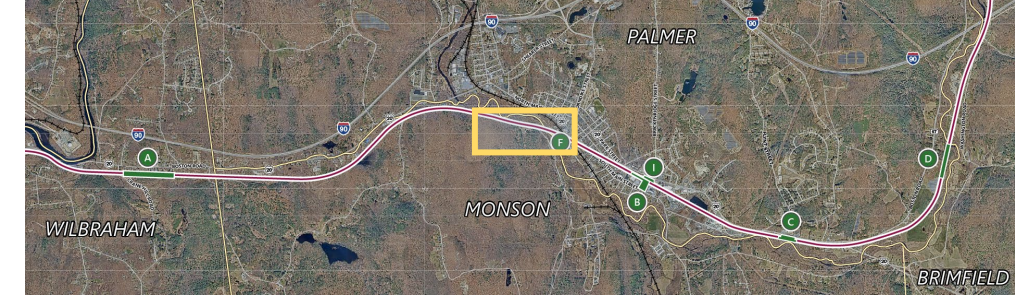
Level 2 Evaluation

Site A: East of Crane Hill Road (Wilbraham)



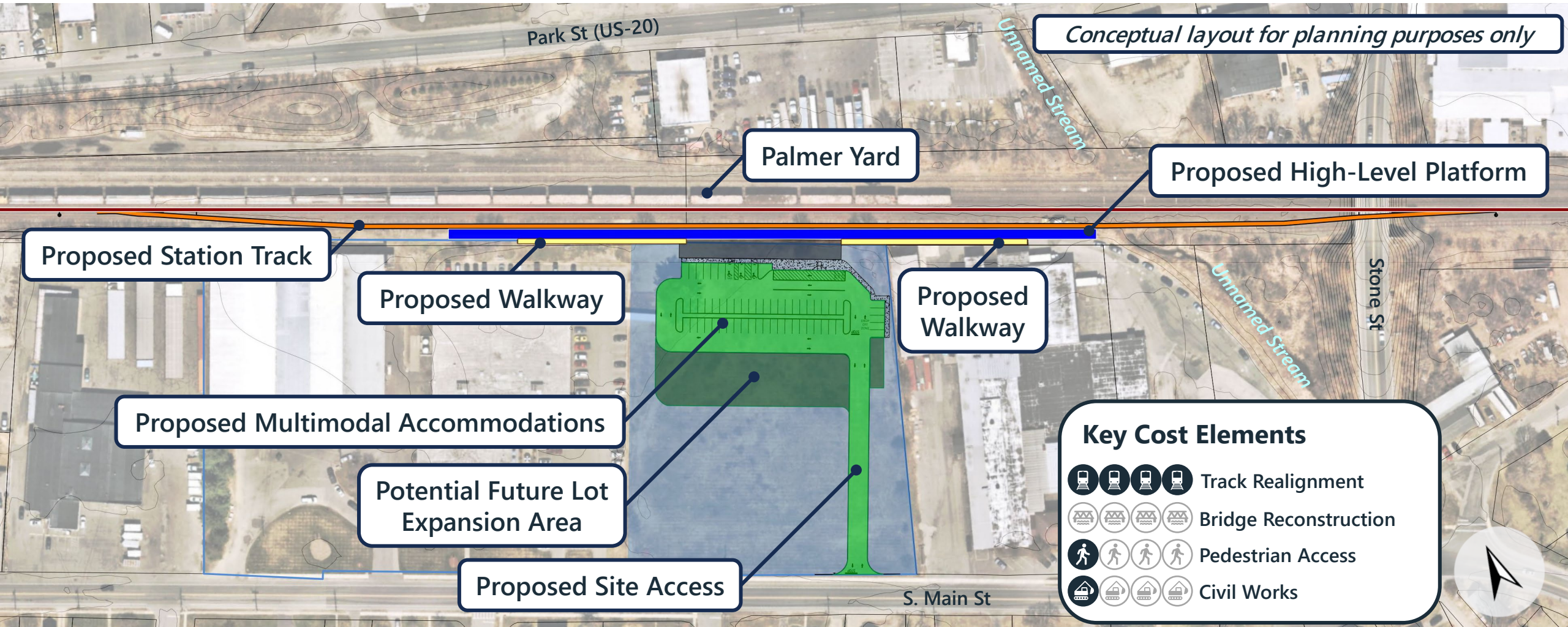
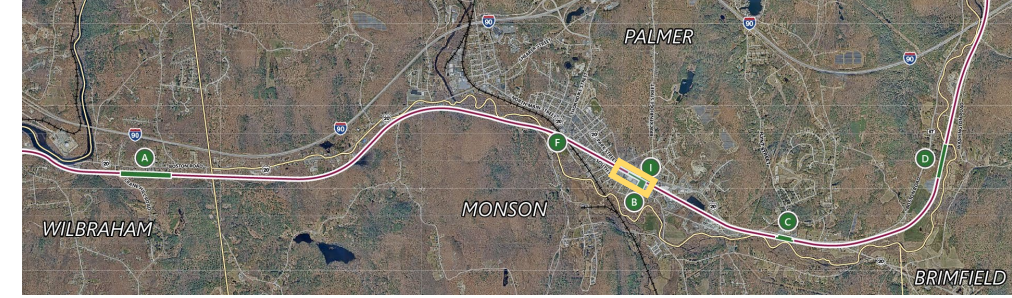
Level 2 Evaluation

Site F: Palmer Department of Public Works Lot



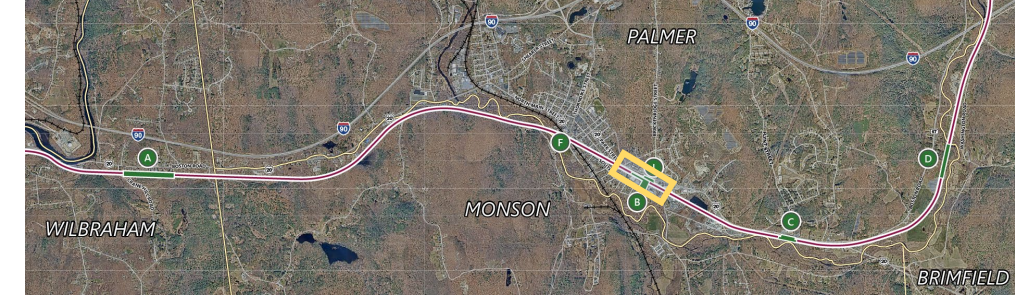
Level 2 Evaluation

Site B: South of Palmer Yard



Level 2 Evaluation

Site I: North of Palmer Yard



Key Cost Elements

-     Track Realignment
-     Bridge Reconstruction
-     Pedestrian Access
-     Civil Works

Schedule Drivers

Pedestrian Bridge

Conceptual layout for planning purposes only

Proposed Multimodal Accommodations

Palmer Yard

Proposed Accessible
Pedestrian Bridge

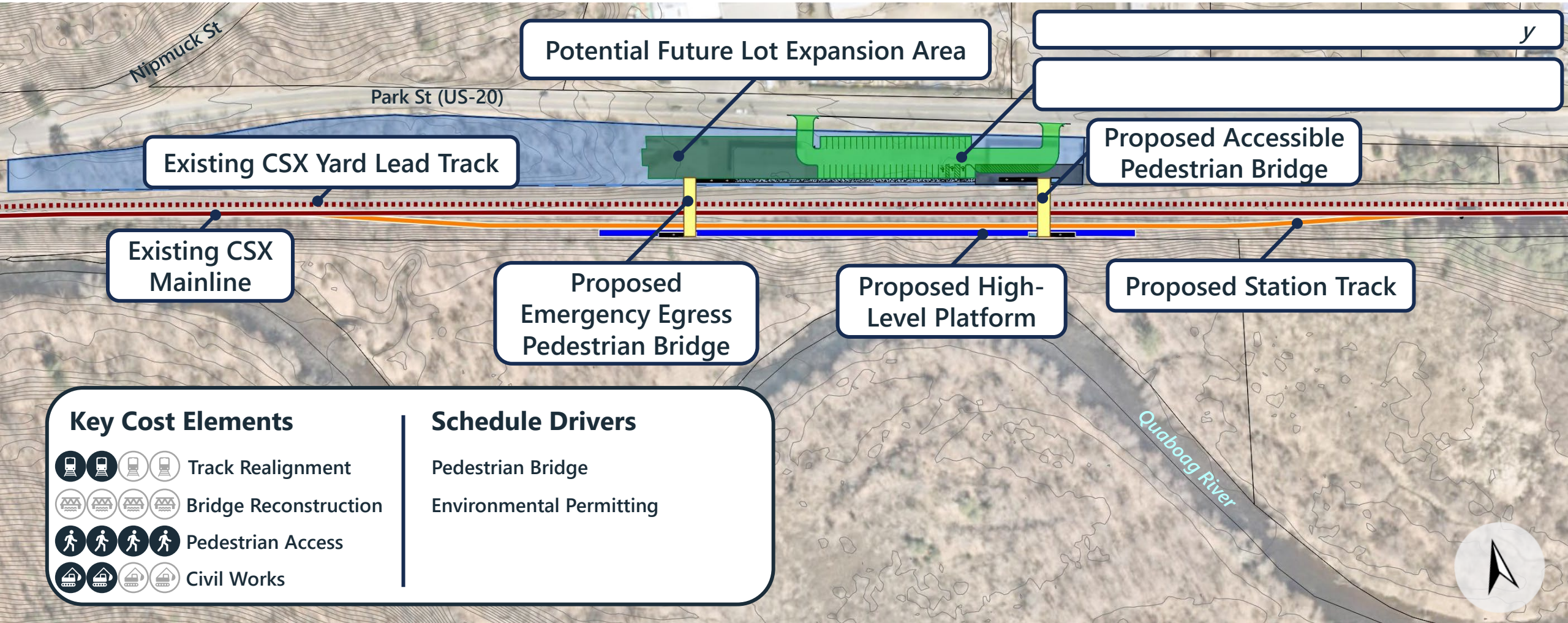
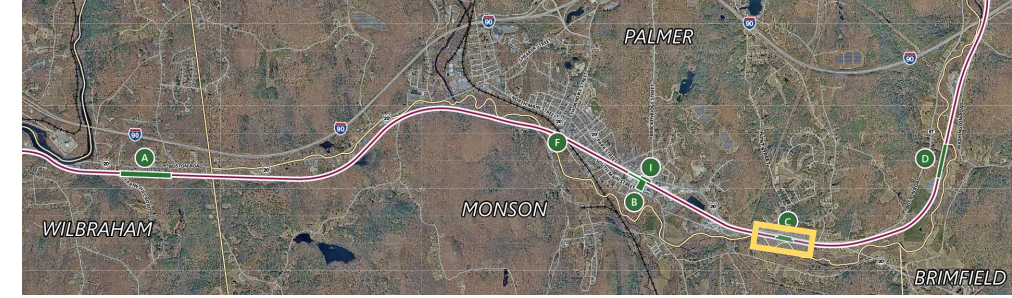
Proposed High-
Level Platform

Proposed
Emergency Egress

Proposed Station Track

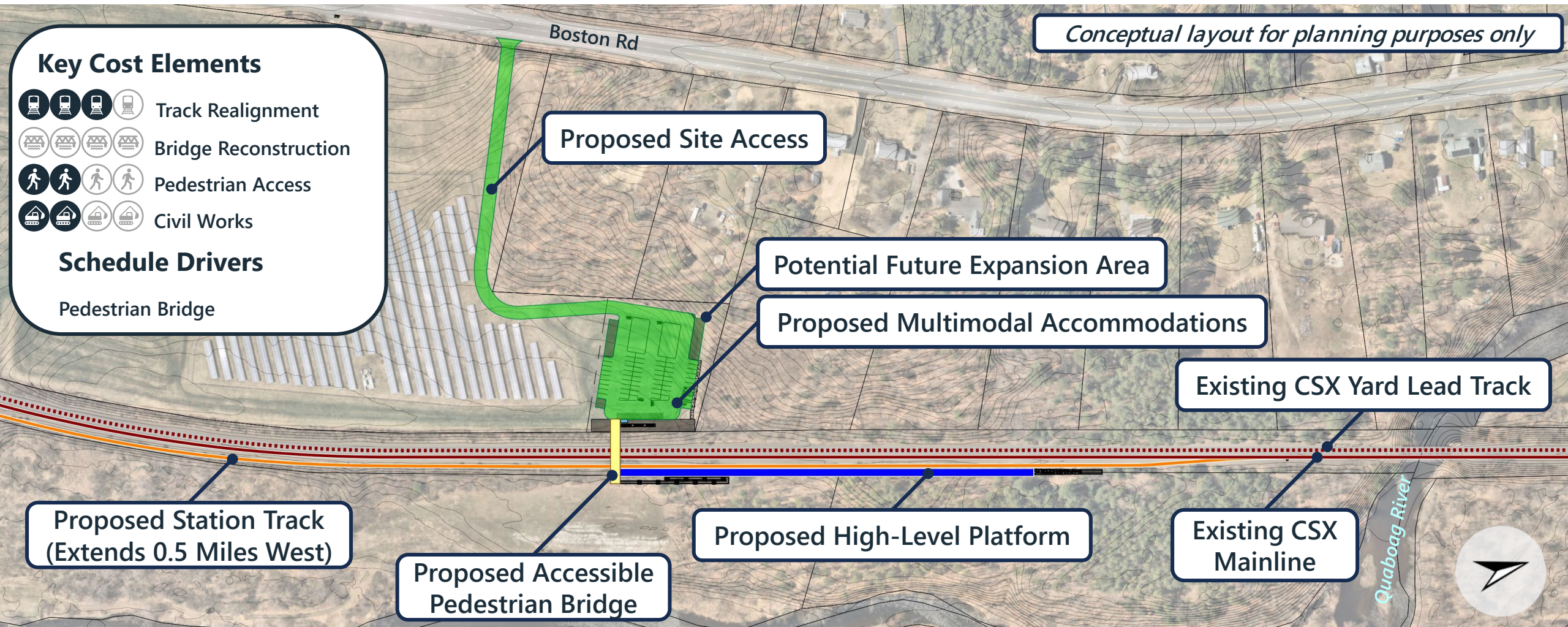
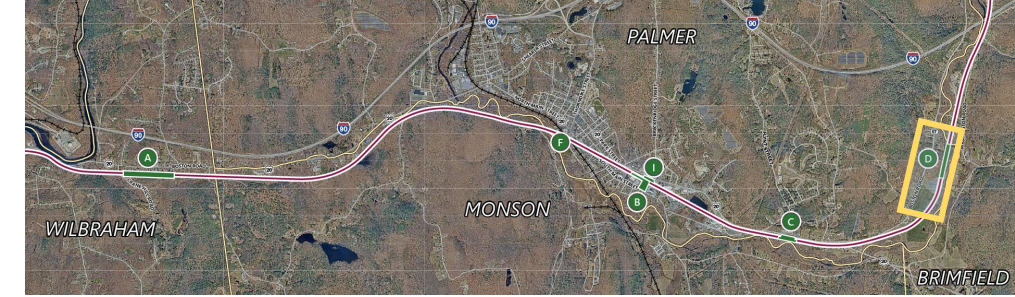
Level 2 Evaluation

Site C: US-20, East of Nipmuck Street (S. of Track)



Level 2 Evaluation

Site D: Boston Road (S. of Track)



Level 2 Comparative Evaluation

Summary of Level 2 Comparative Evaluation Results

Item		Site A	Site F	Site B	Site I	Site C	Site D
	Anticipated Horizontal Curvature						
	Anticipated Grade through Station Platform Area						
	High-level Assessment of Freight Operations Impacts						
	Non-Motorized Travel (Walk and Bike Access)						
	Motorized Travel (Drive Access)						
	Ability to Accommodate Vehicular Access Needs (Passenger Cars)						
	Ability to Accommodate Vehicular Access Needs (Transit Shuttles)						
	Ability to Accommodate Pedestrian Access Needs (Walking, ADA)						
	Within WPA Wetland Resource Area						
	Proximal or Within Endangered Species Habitats						
	Potential "Use" of Publicly-owned/Accessible Park, Open Space, Recreation Resources						
	Potential Impacts to Nationally-Listed or Known Eligible Historic Resources						
	Within or Immediately Adjacent to Environmental Justice Populations						
	Proximal to Sensitive Noise and Vibration Receptors						
	Conditions Supportive of Transit Oriented Development						
	Conditions Supportive of Revitalization of Existing Uses						
	Consistency with Local Planning Goals						
	Consistency with Local Zoning						

 Favorable
  Neutral
  Unfavorable

Level 2 Comparative Evaluation

Summary of Level 2 Comparative Evaluation Results

Item		Site A	Site F	Site B	Site I	Site C	Site D
	Anticipated Horizontal Curvature	●	○	●	●	●	●
	Anticipated Grade through Station Platform Area	○	○	○	○	●	○
	High-level Assessment of Freight Operations Impacts	●	○	○	○	●	●
	Non-Motorized Travel (Walk and Bike Access)	○	●	●	●	○	○
	Motorized Travel (Drive Access)	●	●	●	●	●	○
	Ability to Accommodate Vehicular Access Needs (Passenger Cars)	●	●	●	○	●	●
	Ability to Accommodate Vehicular Access Needs (Transit Shuttles)	○	○	●	●	●	●
	Ability to Accommodate Pedestrian Access Needs (Walking, ADA)	●	○	●	○	○	○
	Within WPA Wetland Resource Area	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Proximal or Within Endangered Species Habitats	○	●	●	●	●	●
	Potential "Use" of Publicly-owned/Accessible Park, Open Space, Recreation Resources	●	●	○	○	●	●
	Potential Impacts to Nationally-Listed or Known Eligible Historic Resources	○	○	○	○	○	●
	Within or Immediately Adjacent to Environmental Justice Populations	●	○	●	●	●	●
	Proximal to Sensitive Noise and Vibration Receptors	○	○	●	●	●	○
	Conditions Supportive of Transit Oriented Development	○	○	●	●	○	○
	Conditions Supportive of Revitalization of Existing Uses	○	●	○	○	○	○
Consistency with Local Planning Goals		○	●	○	○	○	○
Consistency with Local Zoning		○	○	○	●	●	○

● Favorable
○ Neutral
○ Unfavorable

Level 2 Comparative Evaluation



Summary of Level 2 Comparative Evaluation Results

Item	Site A	Site F	Site B	Site I	Site C	Site D
Key Cost Elements						
Trackwork						
Railroad Bridge Construction						
Pedestrian Access						
Civil Works						
Major Schedule Drivers						
CSX Mainline Realignment						
Railroad or Pedestrian Bridge Construction						
Design and Engineering Complexity						
Land Acquisition						
Construction in Municipalities Outside of Palmer						
Anticipated Permitting						
Wetlands Notice of Intent						
Wetlands Variance						
Section 401/404						
Chapter 91						
USACE Approval/Section 10						
Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) Regulatory Review						
Archaeological Study						
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)						
FRA NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion/Section 106						



Next Steps

Progress & Next Steps

-  ✓ Review Existing Information
-  ✓ Define Purpose and Need and Project Goals and Objectives
-  ✓ Define Alternatives Analysis Approach
-  ☒ **Public Meeting (Today)**
-  ☐ Complete Alternatives Analysis (Ongoing)
-  ☐ Advance to Conceptual Design (Winter/Spring/Summer 2025)
-  ☐ Next Public Meeting (Spring/Summer 2025)

Discussion Stations

Alternatives Analysis

- Are there site-specific considerations that we should be aware of?
- Are any of the metrics or ratings more important than others?

Station Design

- Station Character & Aesthetics
- Local Elements
- Supplemental Station Elements