# RUTHERFORD AVENUE & SULLIVAN SQUARE

*Community Meeting and Project Update*

*May 6, 2026*

# AGENDA

1. SCHEDULE AND PROCESS OVERVIEW
2. CONTEXT, VISION, AND GOALS
3. DESIGN AND ANALYSIS WALKTHROUGH
4. NEXT STEPS
5. Q&A / DISCUSSION

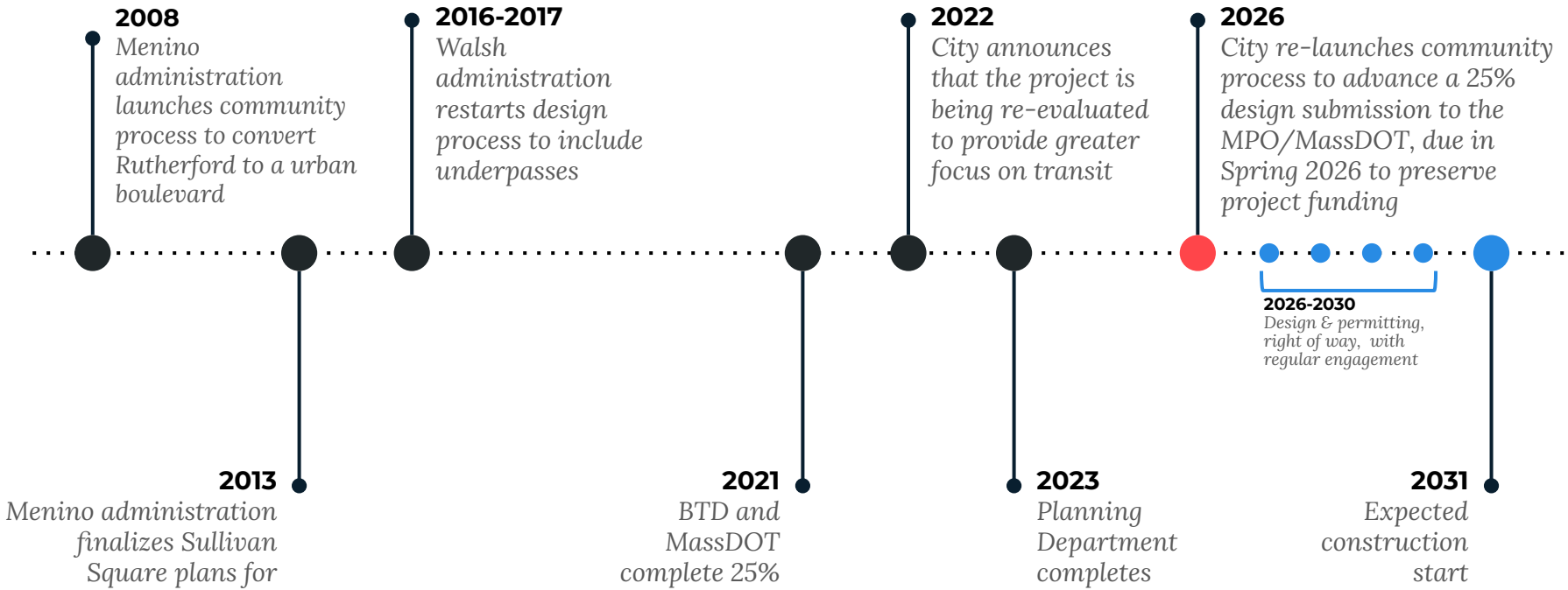
# SCHEDULE & PROCESS OVERVIEW

*Where we've been and where we're going*

# PROJECT VISION & GOALS

The **Rutherford Ave and Sullivan Square Design Project** is a **$200M** Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project that will **reconstruct Sullivan Square** and convert **Rutherford Avenue into a multimodal boulevard and linear park.** It is the largest, fully-funded, municipally-led roadway project in the Commonwealth.

# PROJECT HISTORY & TIMELINE



# TONIGHT'S MEETING

Tonight's meeting is a report out and wrap up meeting before submitting 25% plans to MassDOT later this month.

We will walk through the project design and analysis, and review the project timeline and next steps.

To maintain funding for the project, we will submit 25% design set to MassDOT by May 21, 2026.

| | |
|---|---|
| FEB 03 | Charlestown Neighborhood Council Update |
| **FEB 11** | **Community meeting #1**<br>General Project Update |
| **MAR 31** | **Community meeting #2**<br>Public Realm & Open Space |
| APR 4 | Pop-up @ Charlestown Easter Egg Hunt<br>Public Realm Workshopping |
| APR 29 | Pop-up @ Sullivan Square Station<br>Public Realm Workshopping |
| MAY 2 | Pop-up @ Boston Public Library<br>Public Realm Workshopping |
| MAY 5 | Pop-up @ Charlestown Neighborhood Council<br>Public Realm Workshopping |
| **MAY 6** | **Community meeting #3**<br>Pre 25% Submittal Meeting |

# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SO FAR

Major engagement themes from throughout the winter/spring are summarized below:

## RESILIENCE

People emphasized the importance of incorporating Charlestown's climate resilience needs into the project

Tonight we will discuss the project's:

- Tree canopy
- Heat mitigation
- Stormwater runoff prevention

## OPEN SPACE

People shared their ideas for how the project's linear park and open spaces should be designed and asked about maintenance

Tonight we will discuss the project's:

- 5+ acres of new open space
- Continued opportunities to refine open space design

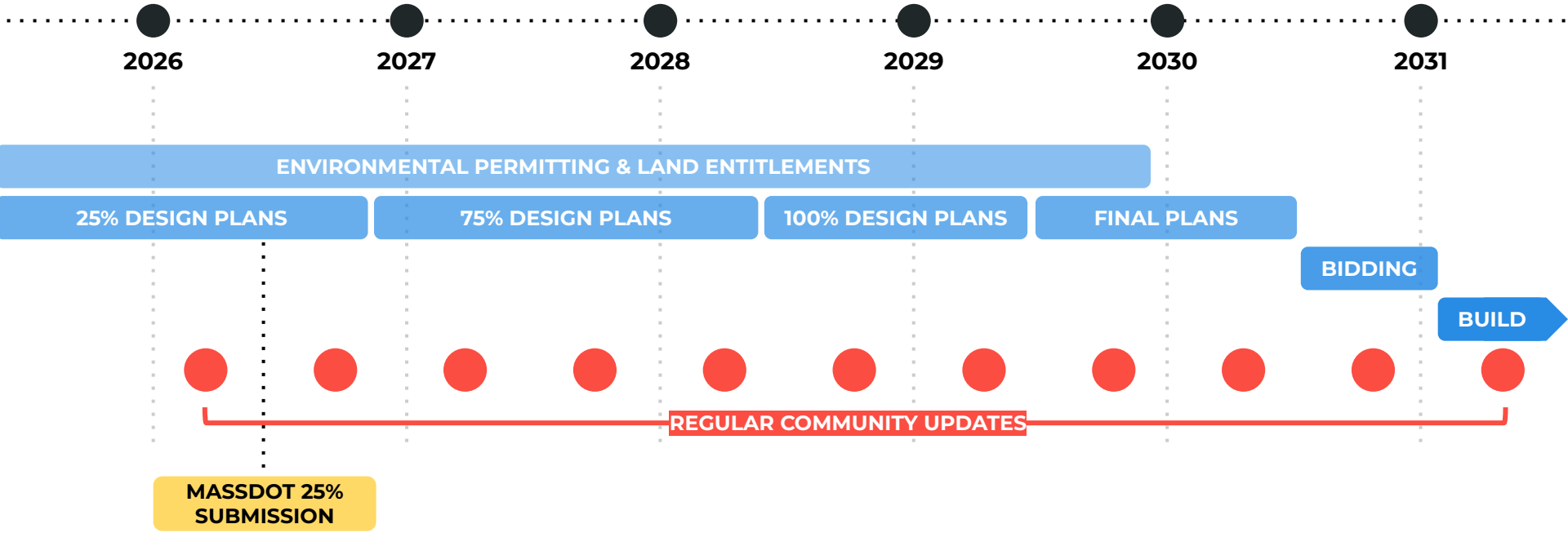
## TRAFFIC CONFIGURATION

People expressed a mix of excitement and questions about a new traffic configuration in the project area

Tonight we will discuss the project's:

- Segment -by-segment design and configuration
- Approach to traffic modeling and iteration

# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HERE ON OUT



# VISION, CONTEXT, AND GOALS

*The history, context, and and community vision that inform design decisions*

# PROJECT VISION & GOALS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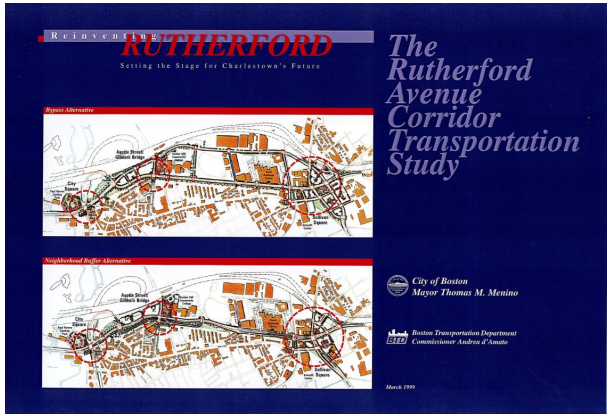


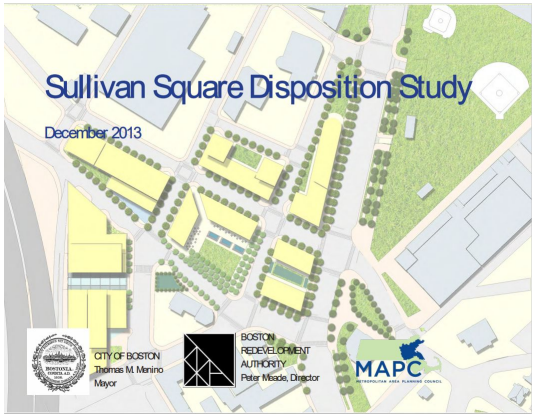


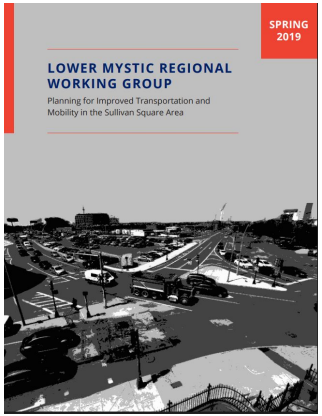


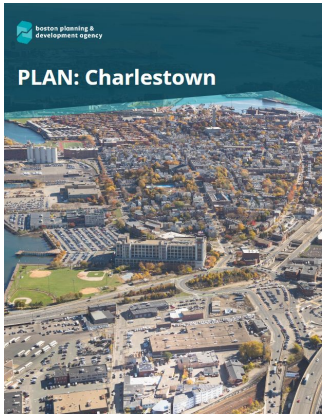


"A ***unique opportunity to imagine a changed environment within the Rutherford Avenue corridor*** *is provided by the prospect of the completion of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project and the community's strong and abiding interest in such change.*"

*"Only the name Sullivan Square is left to remind us of the park.* ***The opportunity to develop a new mixed-use neighborhood at Sullivan Square and re-establish a public open space at its center is compelling.***"

"***The time has come to tackle the transportation crisis in Sullivan Square*** *and its vicinity. Whether one is a resident or visitor, driver, biker, or pedestrian, bus rider or Orange Line commuter, traveling to and through the area is frequently congested, chaotic, and frustratingly unreliable.*"

# PROJECT VISION & GOALS

- **Create Safe Travel for All:** Directly address known and long-standing traffic safety issues impacting all users
- **Balance Local and Regional Need:** Maintain regional connections and access for all modes, while giving priority to the quality of life of Charlestown residents
- **Enable Quick and Reliable Transit:** Provide transit riders coming to and from this regionally-significant transit hub with a fast and comfortable ride
- **Invest for Generations:** Build a street that is reflects the transportation, land use, and climate resilience needs of our families and the next generation

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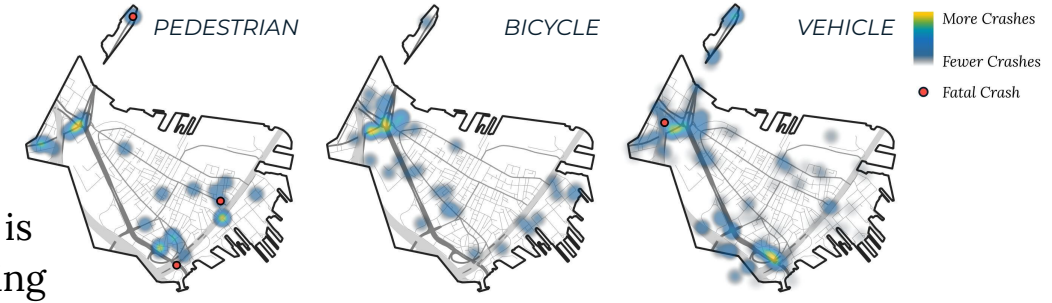
# CREATING A SAFER STREET & SQUARE

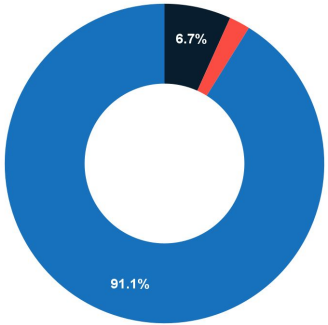
Over three years (2021-2023), data show:

- There were 282 total crashes in the project area, or ***one crash every 4 days.***
- The existing traffic circle at Sullivan Sq is a crash hot spot for all modes, accounting for 28% of all project area crashes.
- People walking or biking are especially exposed. 85% of pedestrian crashes and 100% of bike crashes led to serious injury.
- The average speeds on Rutherford today are roughly 45 mph, with max speeds over 70 mph recorded.

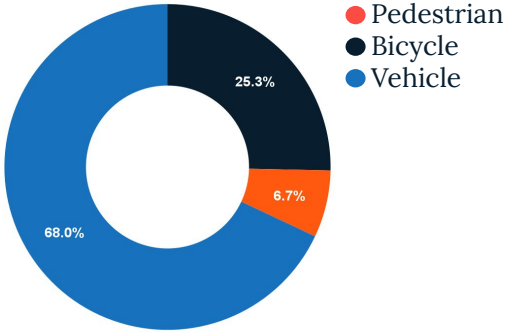
**HEAT MAP OF CRASHES IN CHARLESTOWN BY MODE**




**TOTAL CRASHES BY MODE** (2021-2023)




**INJURY CRASHES BY MODE** (2021-2023)



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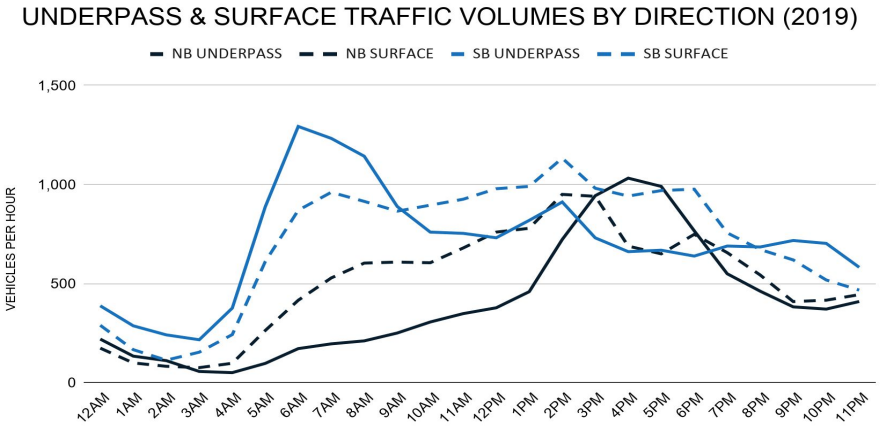
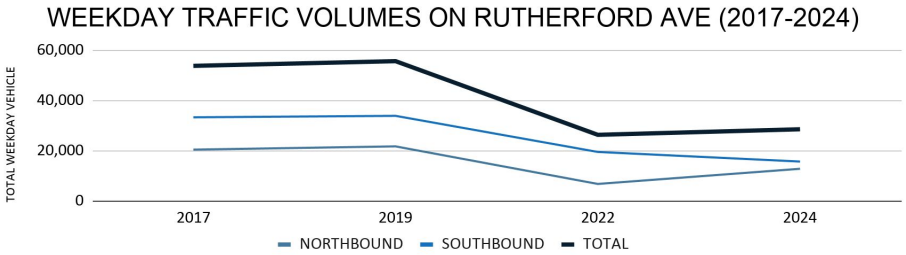
# BALANCING LOCAL & REGIONAL NEED

- Despite traffic projections in the 1960s that traffic would reach nearly 80,000 vehicles a day on Rutherford Avenue by the 1980s, volumes maxed out around 55,000 in the 2010s.
- From 2017 to 2024, traffic volumes in the study area decreased by ~32%, even as more jobs and housing were created.
- The existing design of the roadway still reflects a highway that prioritizes regional, peak hour vehicle throughput at the expense of all day local access and regional connectivity for other modes.



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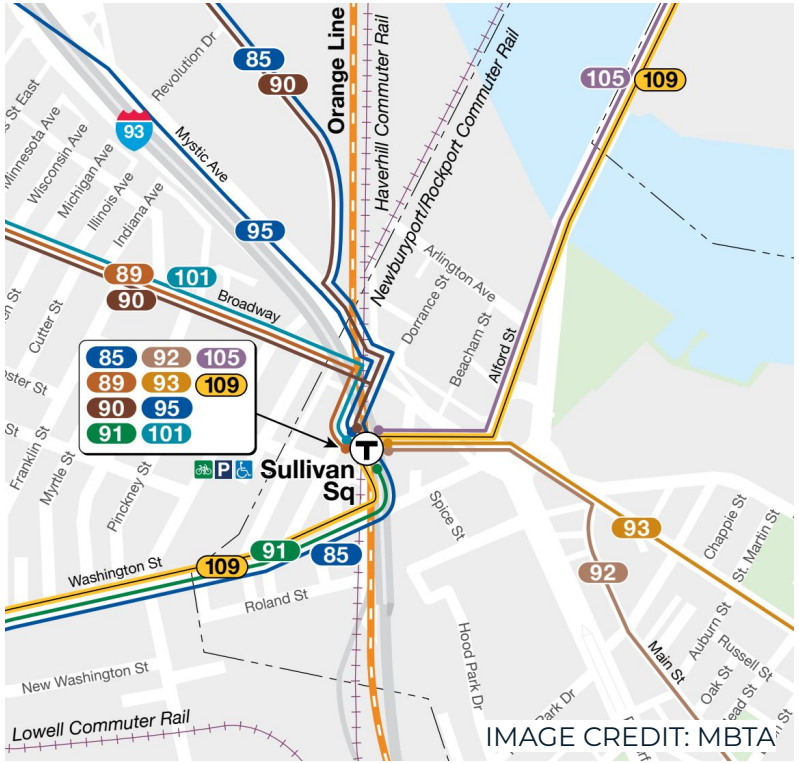
# ENABLING QUICK & RELIABLE TRANSIT

- Sullivan Square serves **10** existing bus routes with an average of over **11,600** daily bus riders traveling through the station.
- With Bus Network Redesign and the future Silver Line Extension, the number and frequency of bus services will increase.
  - *Route approaches at Sullivan will see a 35% increase in trips after Bus Network Redesign.*
  - *Silver Line projected to increase by ~15k riders a day with Silver Line Extension.*



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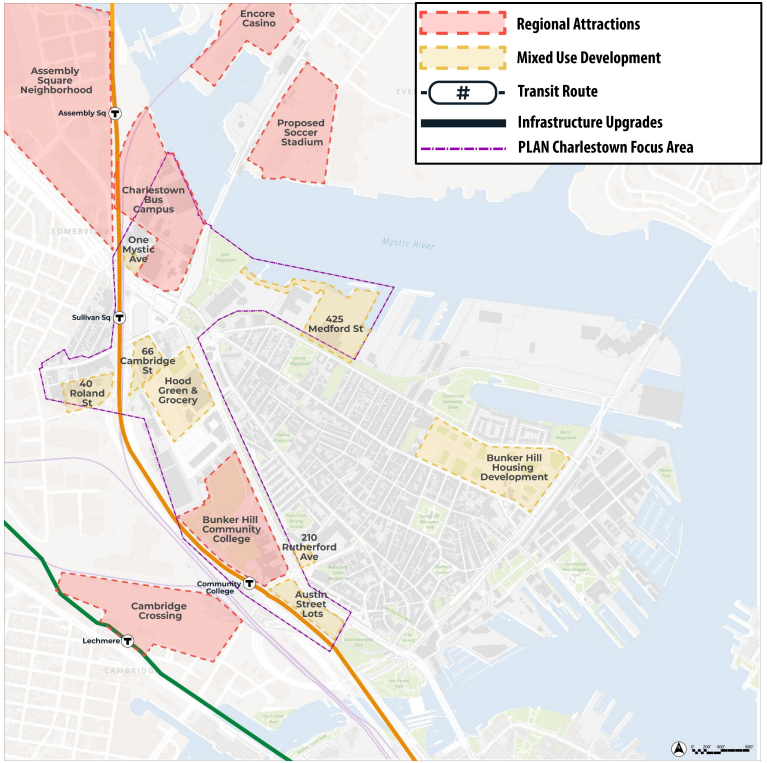
# INVESTING IN A FUTURE THAT SUPPORTS...

## FUTURE LAND USES

- PLAN: Charlestown provides a vision and ceiling for growth, but an uncertain timeline
- Approved and in-progress development
- Completed and planned regional attractors (e.g, Everett Stadium)
- Increasing demand for parks and open spaces



# INVESTING IN A FUTURE THAT SUPPORTS...

## TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Recently/Substantially Completed

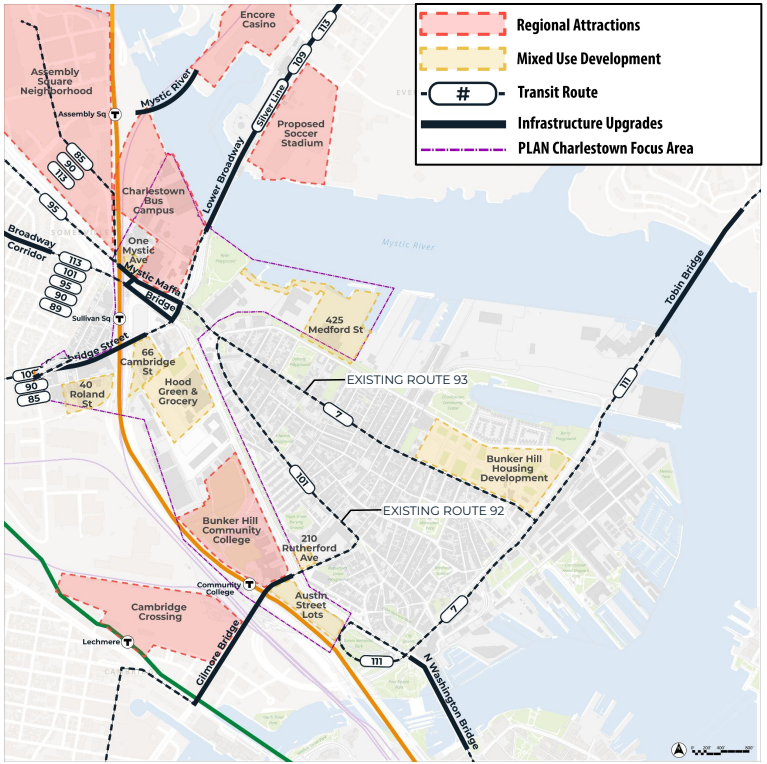
- Bill Russell Bridge
- Mystic and Maffa Bridges

Near- to mid- term

- Lost Village Safety Improvements
- Cambridge Street Bridge
- Better Bus Network (MBTA)
- Lower Broadway - Alford St (MBTA)
- Mystic River Ped Bridge (MassDOT)

Long-term

- MassDOT Gilmore Bridge
- Possible future transit service expansions



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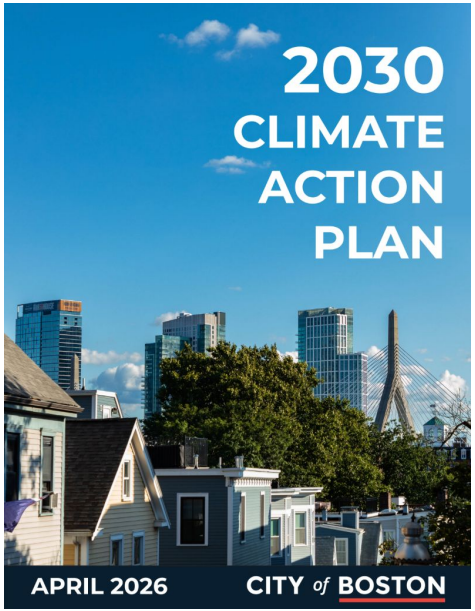
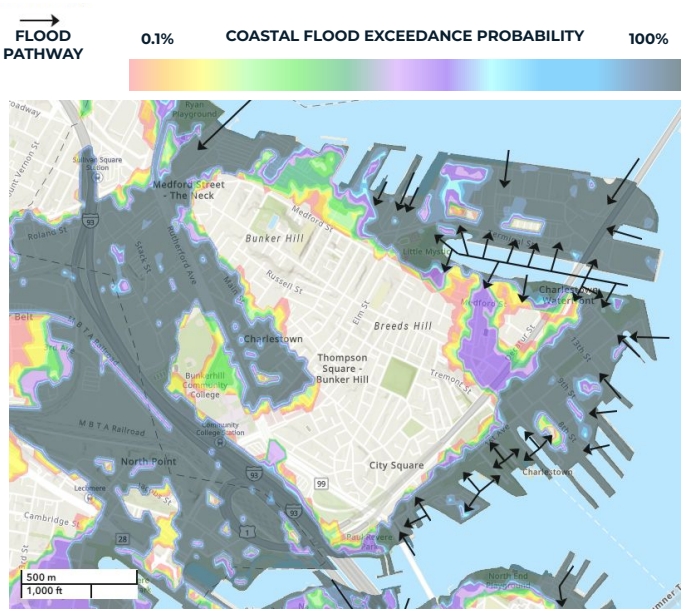
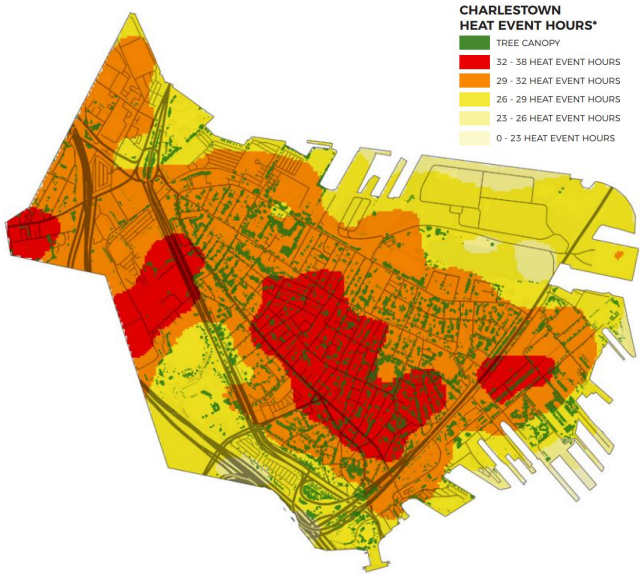


# DESIGN AND ANALYSIS WALK-THROUGH

*Segment-by-segment overview*

# CONNECTING GOALS & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## CREATE SAFE TRAVEL FOR ALL

- Safe speeds, whether during rush hour or off-peak
- Separate spaces for separate types of travel
- Shorter crosswalks
- Signals that give pedestrians and vehicles their own time to cross

## BALANCE LOCAL & REGIONAL NEED

- Emphasis on local connections, more intersections
- Accommodates regional traffic, but at slower speeds
- Charlestown gains 5+ acres open space
- Close regional trail network gaps
- Bus priority for regional transit hub

## ENABLE QUICK & RELIABLE TRANSIT

- Bus priority lanes and signals for existing and future bus service
- Bus stops on Rutherford to serve local connections
- Safer crossings to MBTA Orange Line stations

## INVEST FOR GENERATIONS

- Over 500 new trees
- Eliminating flood-prone underpasses
- Travel options that support sustainable growth
- Space for new transit-oriented housing
- Reducing paved area by over 20%

# RUTHERFORD AVE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

## SIDE RUNNING

CREDIT: BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

## CENTER RUNNING

CREDIT: MBTA

**PROS**

- Greater design and phasing flexibility
- Shorter total crossing distance
- More space for linear park and turn lanes

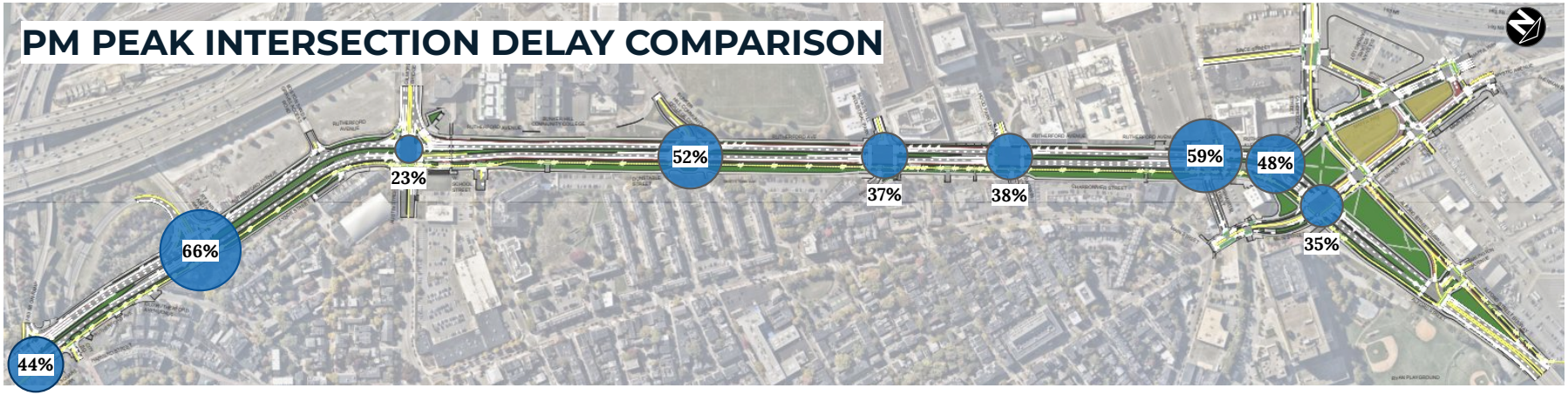
- Buses operate in a protected transitway like the Green Line, reducing enforcement needs
- Each crosswalk leg is shorter

**CONS**

- Have to manage right turn and curbside uses with enforcement or specific design features
- Each crosswalk leg is longer

- More limited design and phasing flexibility
- Longer total crossing distance
- Requires more space for bus platforms
- Less space for linear park and turn lanes

# SIDE VS CENTER RUNNING BUS PRIORITY




**Delay Difference: Side vs Center Running**

Performance Improved

We ran a comparative analysis of traffic operations, which showed significantly better results for the side-running approach at all nine intersections along Rutherford Ave.

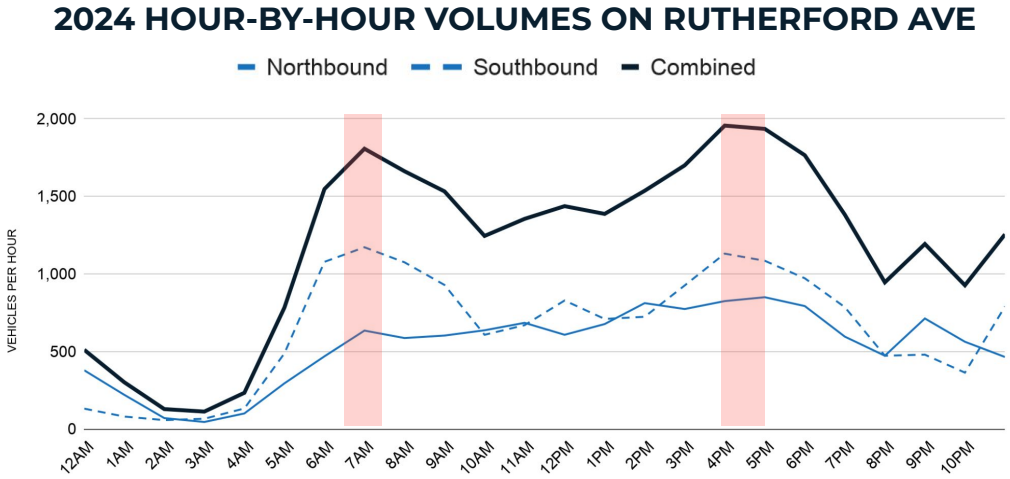
# TRAFFIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

We used several traffic models to understand and fine tune the project design. A fully loaded model projects traffic patterns out to 2044 and includes:

- Projected trips from tens of millions of sf from local/regional development
- Future transportation infrastructure projects that impact travel patterns

These assumptions lead to projected vehicle volumes 24% - 44% higher than today.

Traffic trends have been decreasing over time. We also used a model with existing volumes to establish a range of outcomes.



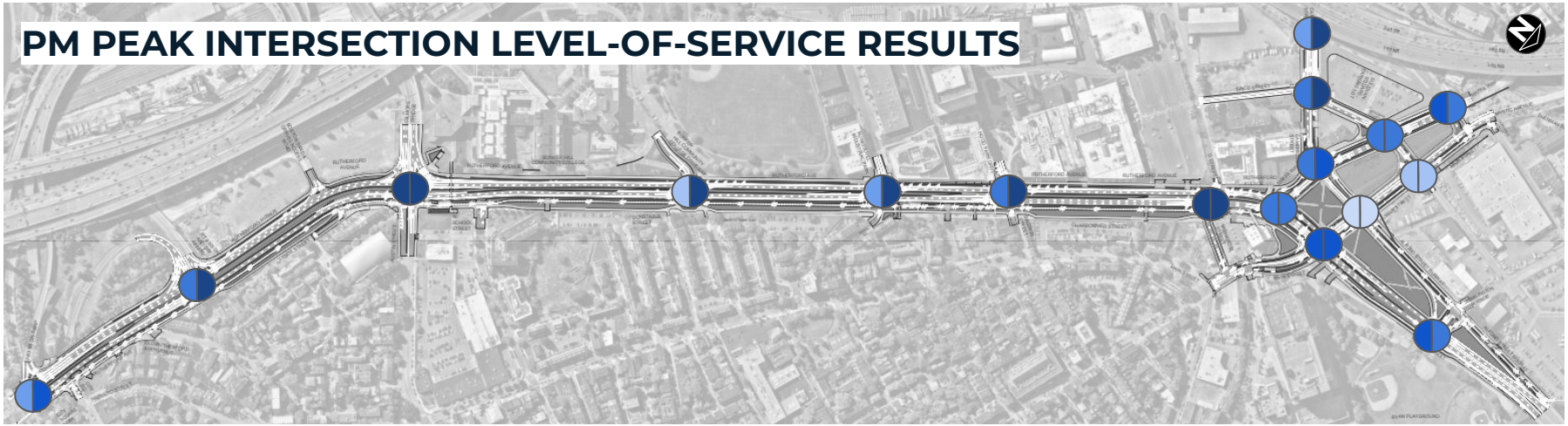

*We simulate AM and PM **peak hours only** for a typical weekday. For 18 out of 24 hours in the day, traffic volumes are least 20% lower than the highest peak (PM).*

# TRAFFIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

Using modeled outputs, we took an intersection-by-intersection approach to design iteration. Types of changes we made include:

- Establishing strong one-way pairs in Sullivan Square to make use of efficient signal operations
- Simplifying the number of movements at each intersection to reduce overall signal cycle lengths and provide more time to major movements
- Ensuring there is adequate time and protection for pedestrians crossing the street
- Applying signal phasing and lane assignment changes as recommended by the City's Signal Operations Design Policy.

# SIMULATED TRAFFIC ANALYSIS RESULTS




**WHAT IS LEVEL OF SERVICE?**

Level of Service (LOS) is a delay-based metric to categorize traffic operations. It mainly measures how long vehicles have to wait at a light.

**LEVEL-OF-SERVICE**

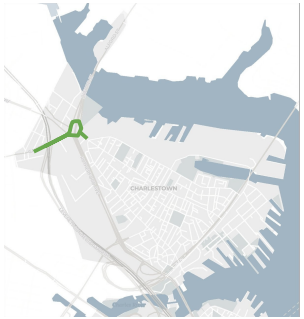
A B C D E F

2024 EXISTING VOLUMES

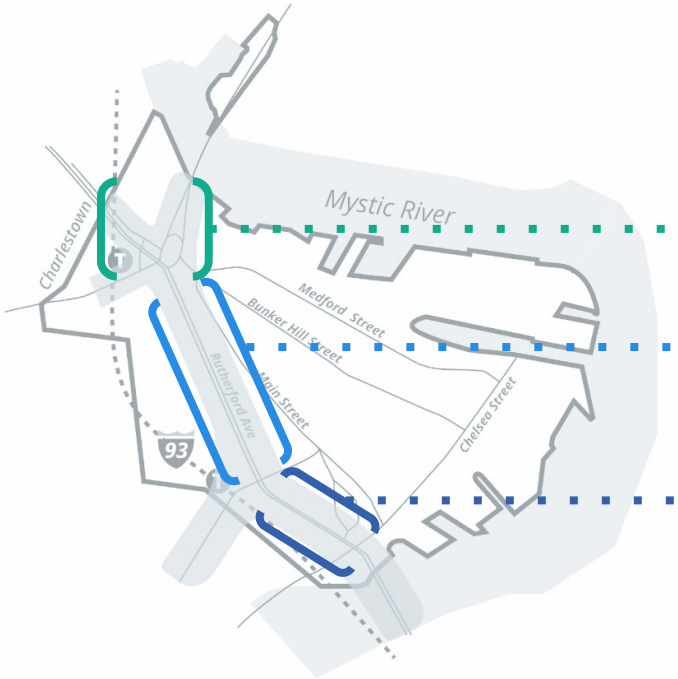
2044 PROJECTED VOLUMES (+40%)

| LOS | CONTROL DELAY (S/VEH) |
|---|---|
| A | 10 OR LESS |
| B | >10-20 |
| C | >20-35 |
| D | >35-55 |
| E | >55-80 |
| F | >80 |

# PM PEAK TRAVEL TIME COMPARISON

| MAFFA BRIDGE TO SCHRAFFT'S VIA MAFFA | SCHRAFFT'S TO MYSTIC BRIDGE VIA MAIN | BRIGHTON STREET TO SCHRAFFTS VIA CAMBRIDGE ST | CHELSEA ST TO SULLIVAN SQ VIA RUTHERFORD AVE | MAIN ST TO GILMORE BRIDGE VIA AUSTIN ST | SCHRAFFTS TO DEXTER ST VIA ALFORD ST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **EXISTING PM PEAK TRAVEL TIME** | | | | | |
| 4-6 MINS | 3-7 MINS | EB: 3-9 MINS<br>WB: 2-7 MINS | NB: 3-5 MINS<br>SB: 3-6 MINS | EB: 1-2 MINS<br>WB: 1-3 MINS | NB: 2-5 MINS<br>SB: 3-5 MINS |
| **SIMULATED PM PEAK TRAVEL TIME** | | | | | |
| 4 MINS | 4-5 MINS | EB: 5-16 MINS<br>WB: 6 MINS | NB: 9-21 MINS<br>SB: 6-8 MINS | EB: 4-6 MINS<br>WB: 2 MINS | NB: 4-5 MINS<br>SB: 9 MINS |

# DESIGN & ANALYSIS WALKTHROUGH




**AREA 3: SULLIVAN SQUARE**

**AREA 2: AUSTIN STREET TO SULLIVAN SQUARE**

**AREA 1: BILL RUSSELL BRIDGE TO AUSTIN STREET**

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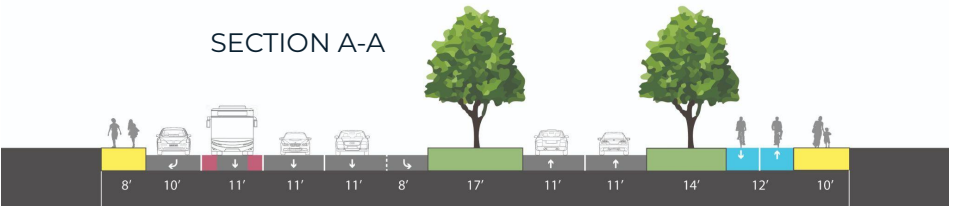


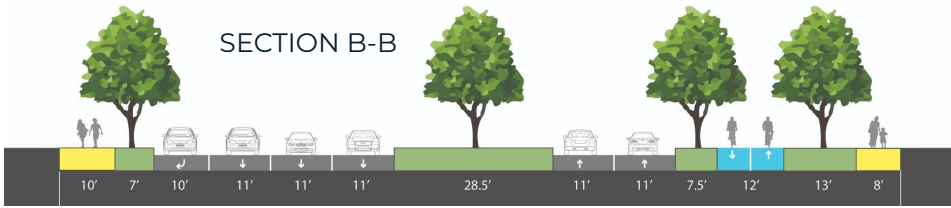

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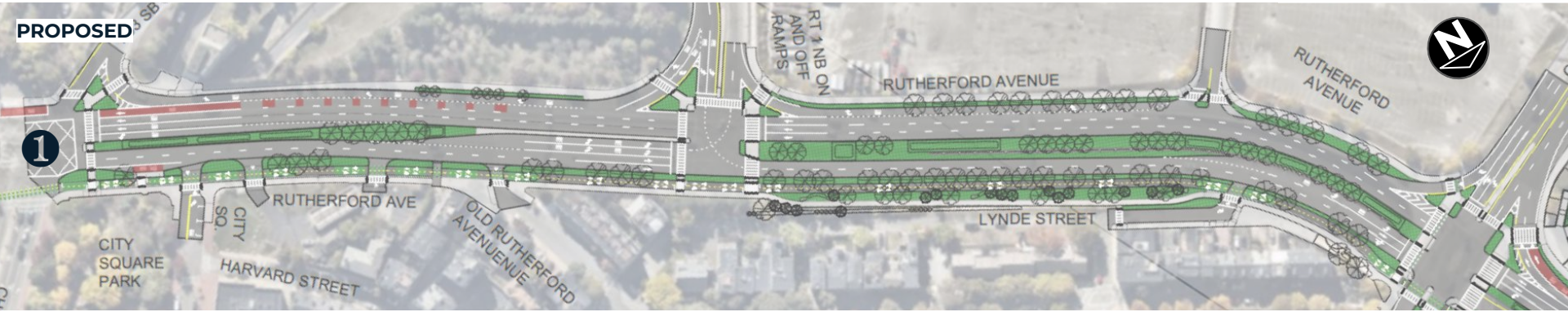


1. **Ties into Bill Russell Bridge design**
2. **New crosswalks** expand pedestrian access
3. **New bus stops** serve City Sq and Paul Revere Parks (existing Route 111)
4. Proposed planting of **up to 100 street trees**
5. **Up to 45' linear park** includes separate walking and biking paths, as well as park elements
6. **Maintains existing on and off ramp lanes**

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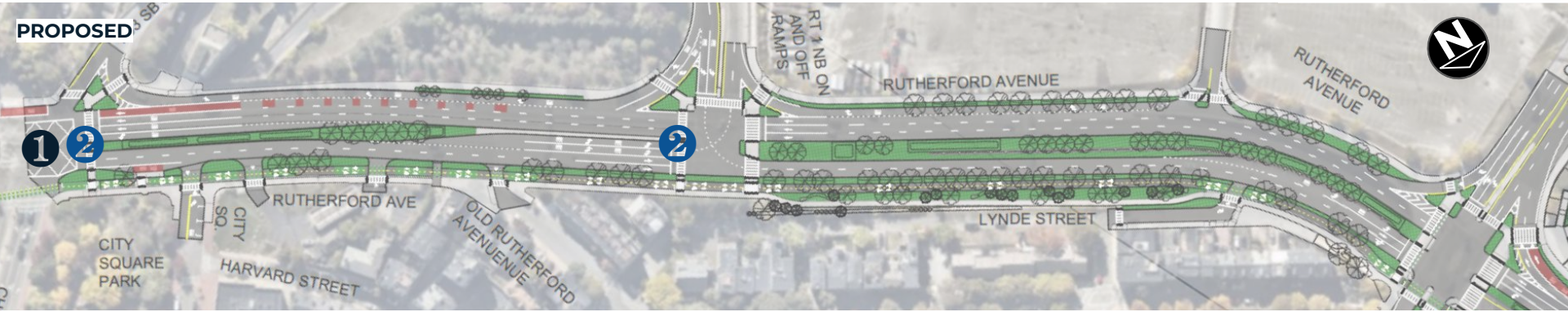


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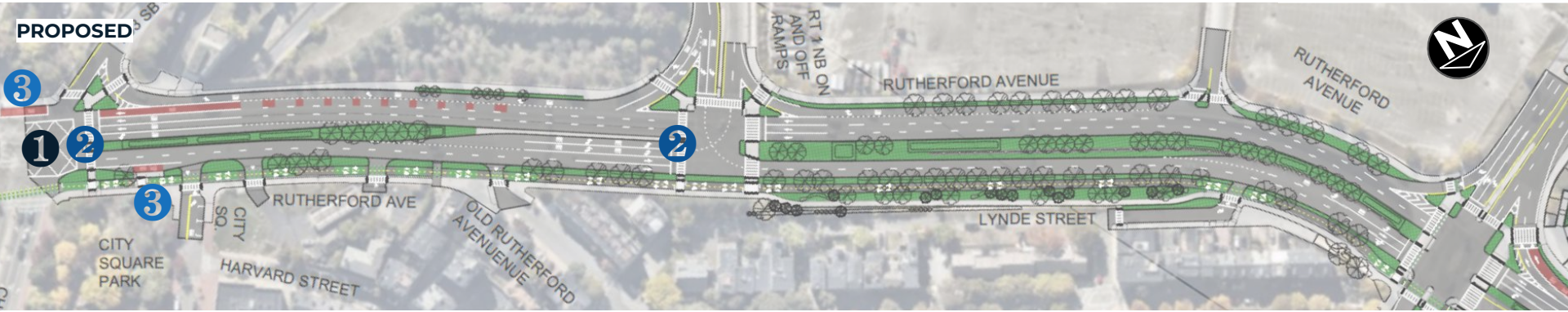


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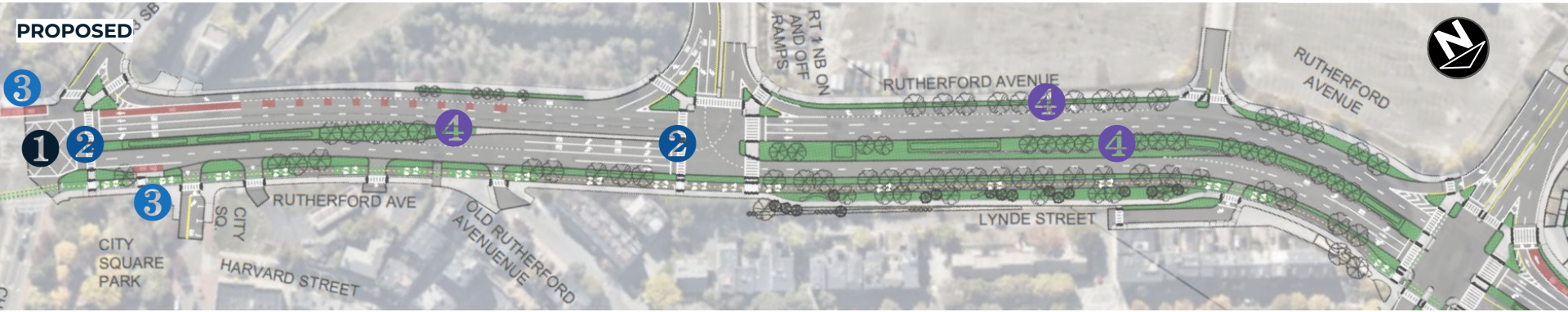


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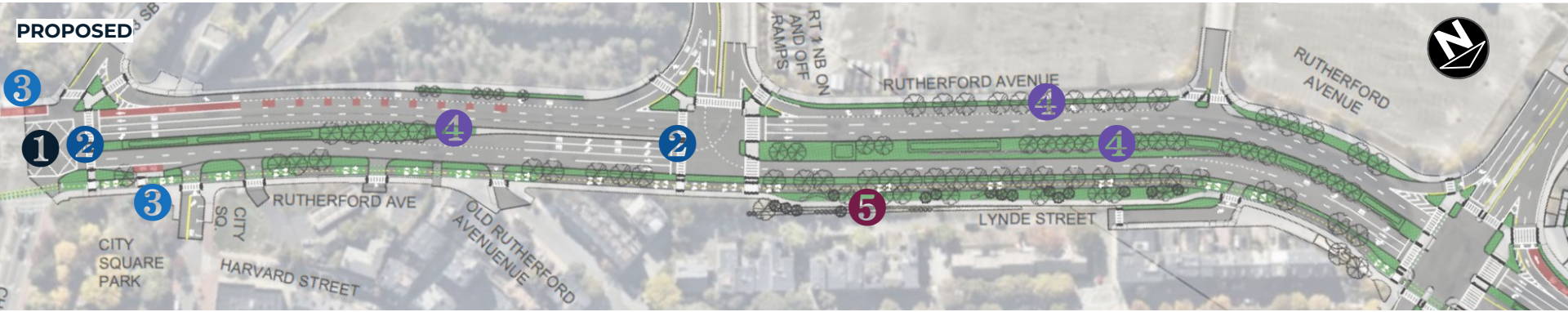


1. **Ties into Bill Russell Bridge design**
2. **New crosswalks** expand pedestrian access
3. **New bus stops** serve City Sq and Paul Revere Parks (existing Route 111)
4. Proposed planting of **up to 100 street trees**
5. **Up to 45' linear park** includes separate walking and biking paths, as well as park elements
6. **Maintains existing on and off ramp lanes**

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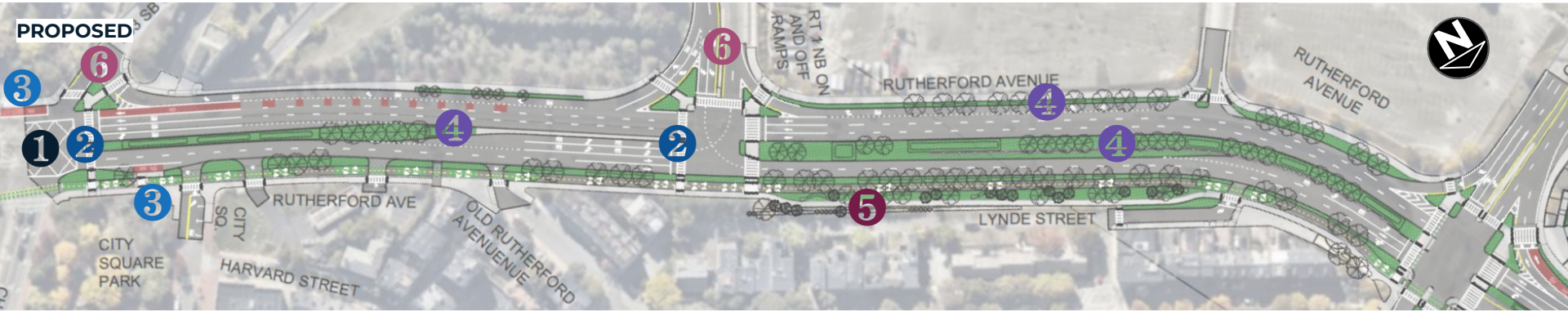


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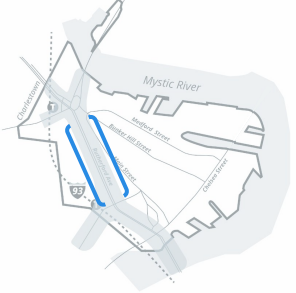


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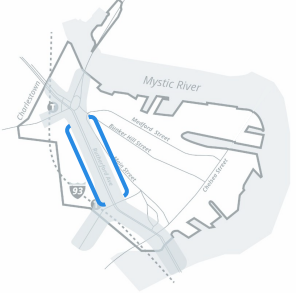



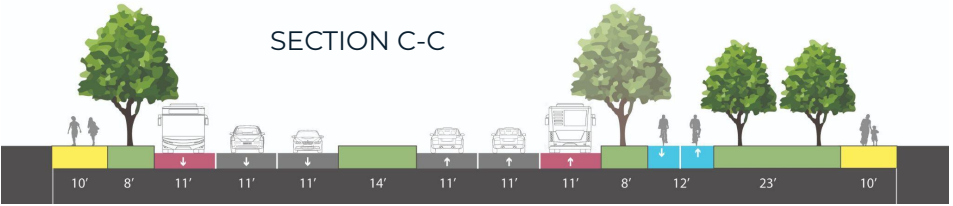


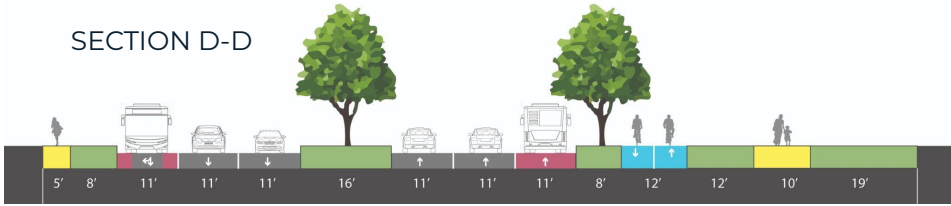

# DESIGN & ANALYSIS WALKTHROUGH

## AREA 2: AUSTIN STREET TO SULLIVAN SQUARE


1. **New crosswalks and intersections** expand local connections for all modes
2. **Side running bus lane** with connections to Gilmore Bridge
3. **Expanded surface level through and turn lanes** for local vehicle access
4. **58' linear park area** with space for shaded seating areas, playgrounds, and dog runs
5. **Raised crossings** at side streets to slow turning and improve accessibility
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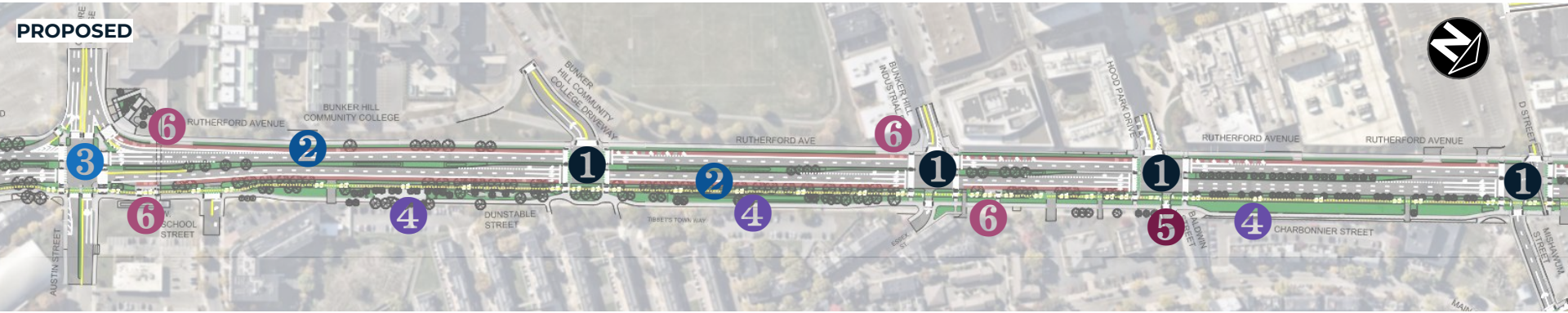


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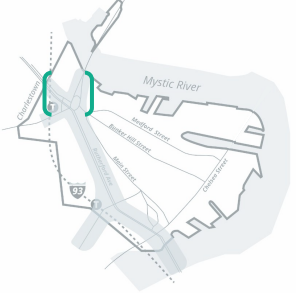

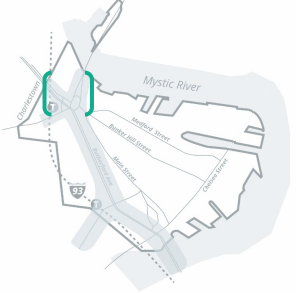


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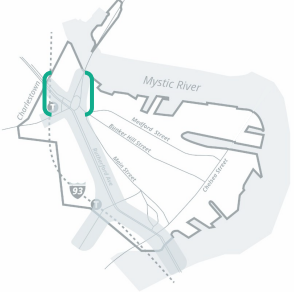


1. One ways (Mishawum & one way pairs in Sullivan Sq) improve signal efficiency and control cut throughs
2. New connected, protected bicycle paths in areas with highest bike crash rates in the City
3. Dedicated bus lanes carry routes to and from Sullivan Sq
4. Crosswalks aligned with desire lines and managed by signals with separate pedestrian phases
5. Ongoing coordination with MBTA on Lower Broadway/Alford St Bridge project design
6. Creates two large park spaces and development parcels

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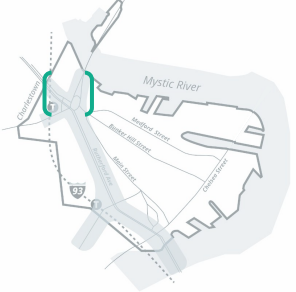


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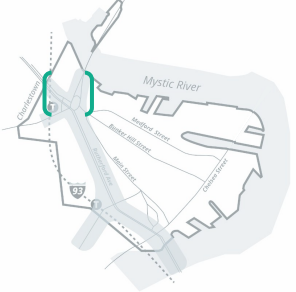


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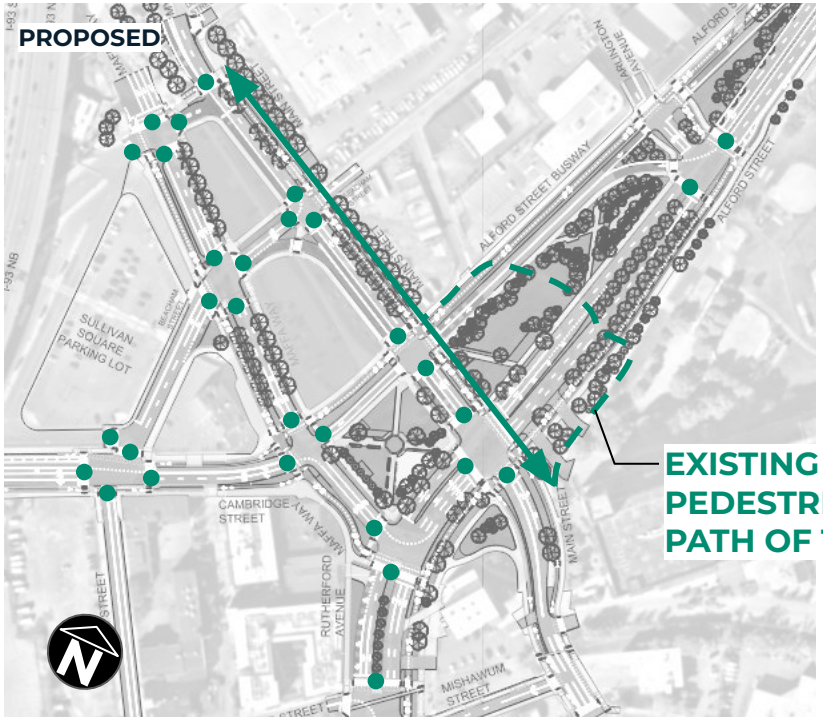


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- **On foot** - with crosswalks at virtually every corner, there will be many shorter, better-protected ways to cross the square

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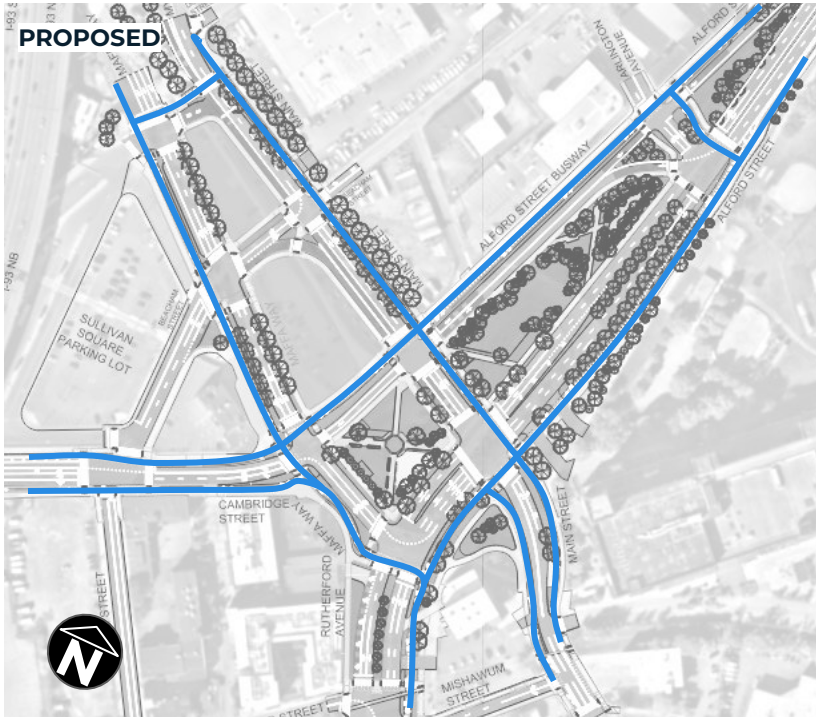


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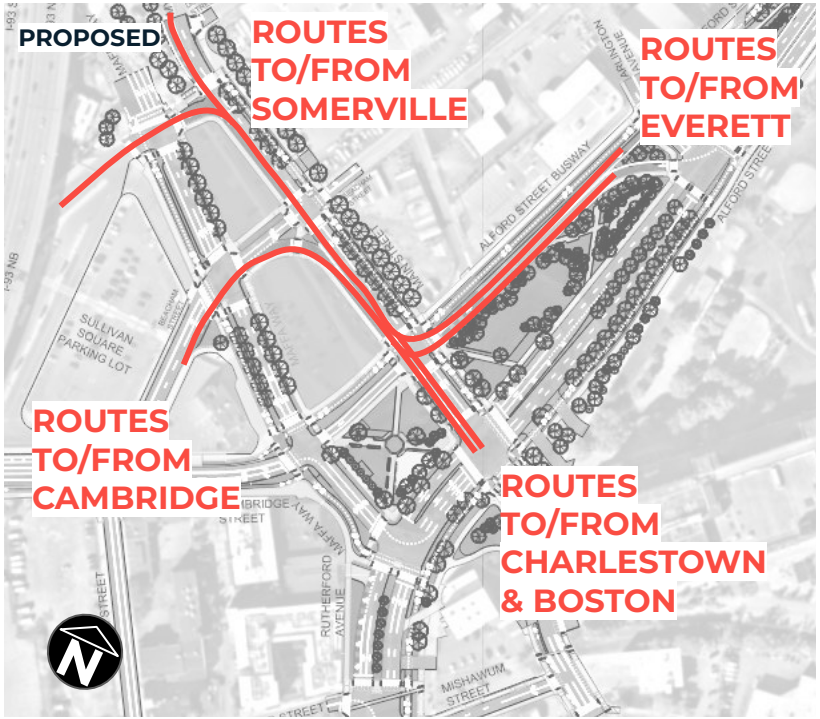


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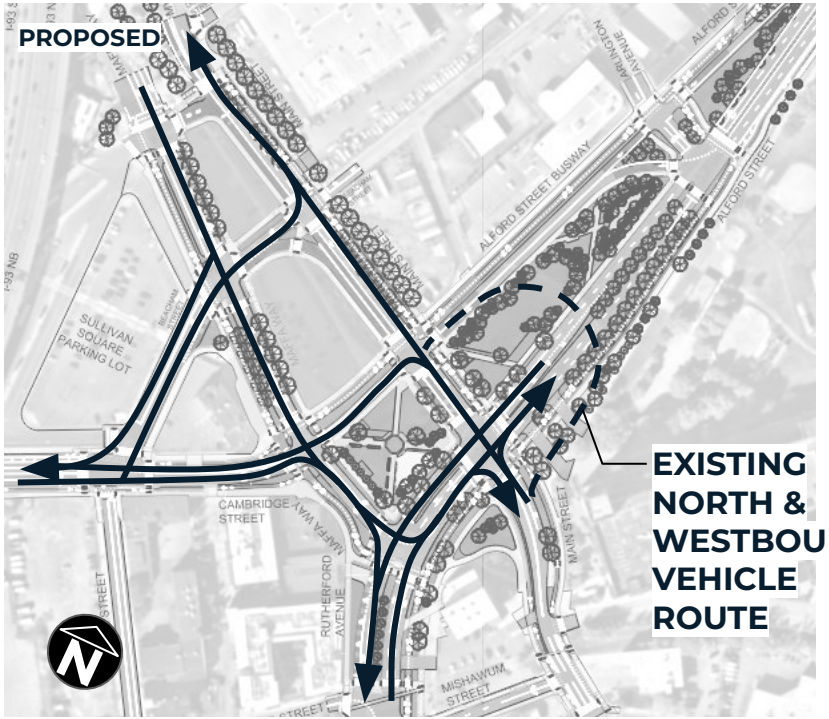


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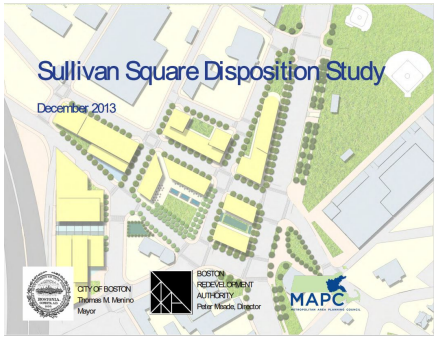
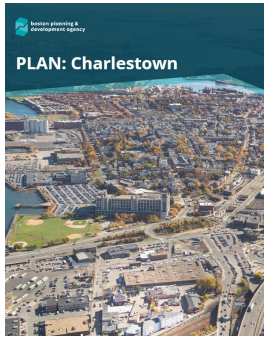
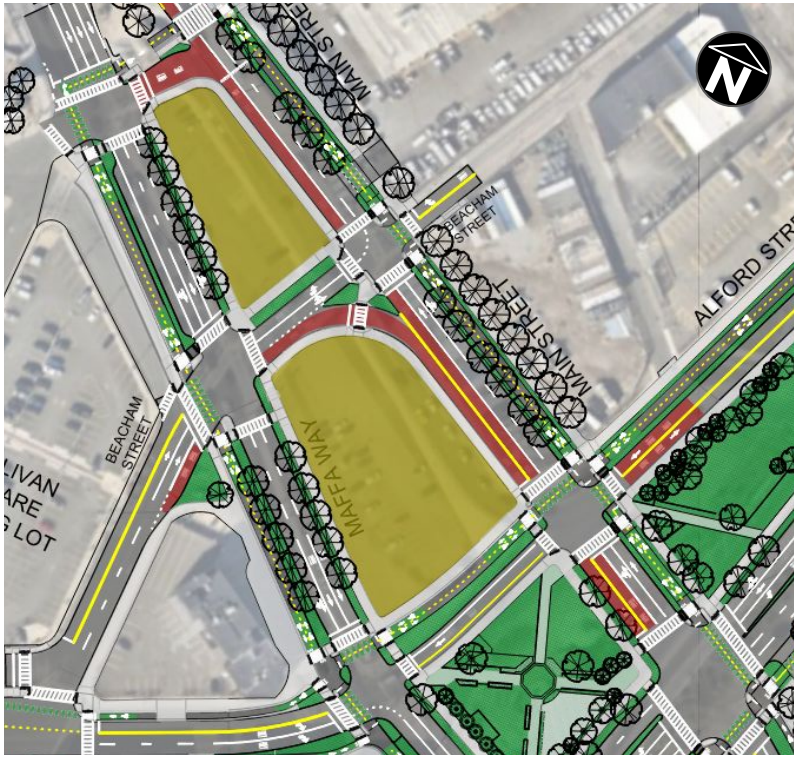
- **By car** - an street grid around a square allows vehicle movements in all directions while one-way streets reduce intersection conflicts

# TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PARCELS

- The realignment of the square creates two publicly-owned parcels to support housing and mixed uses directly adjacent to the MBTA
- Both the 2023 Disposition Study and PLAN: Charlestown provide an urban design and land use framework for a future public disposition process for these parcels

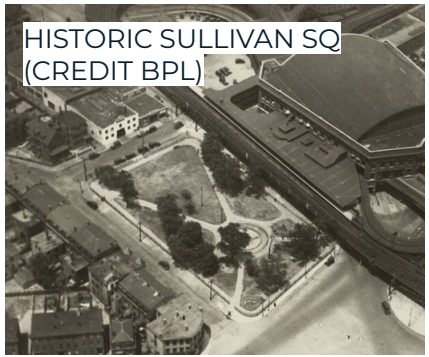


# SULLIVAN SQ PARK

- The new street grid creates space to restore a square similar to the historic Sullivan Square and roughly half the size of City Square Park
- Community feedback so far shows preference for the park to have performance and pop-up spaces, a pavilion, trees, and historical information


HISTORIC SULLIVAN SQ (CREDIT BPL)


HISTORIC SULLIVAN SQ PARK (CREDIT CPS)

# SULLIVAN SQ PARK

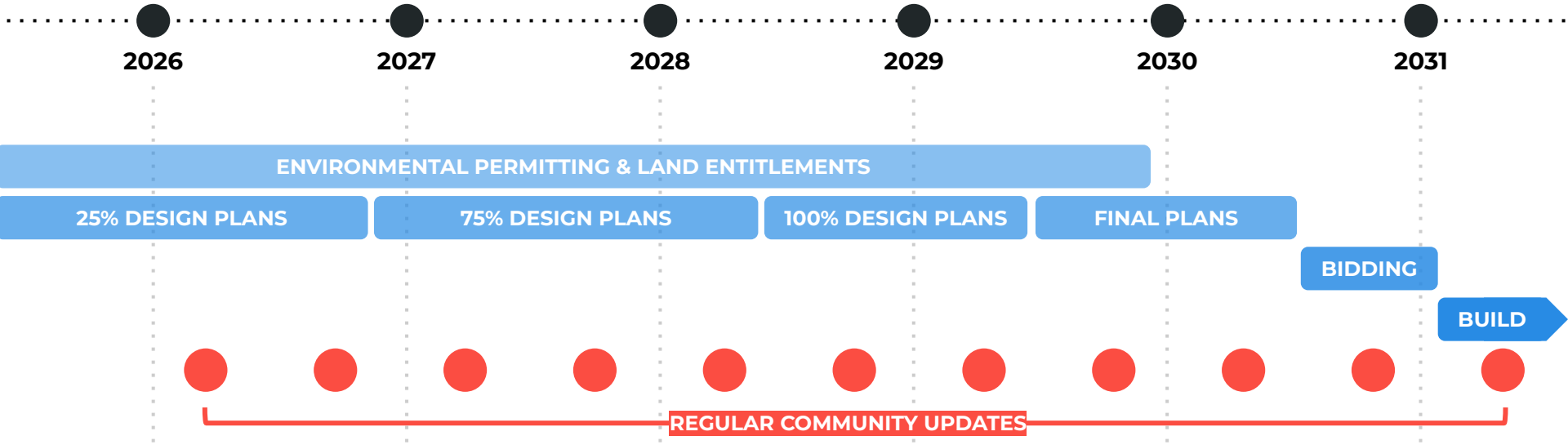
# ALFORD STREET PARK

- The project also creates a new 1.05 acre Alford Street Park, comparable in scale to two blocks of the Rose Kennedy Greenway
- Community feedback so far shows preference for the park to have tree groves, rain gardens, performance spaces, interactive instruments, and a gathering lawn.

# NEXT STEPS

*Upcoming process for engineering, permitting, and continued dialog*

# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HERE ON OUT



# GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Lost Village Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project** construction is underway & will be completed this year
- **Cambridge Street Bridge** 25% Design Public Hearing (virtual) for MPO-funded bridge rehabilitation project is next week 5/13 @ 7PM

MEDFORD ST SIDEWALK RECONSTRUCTION AS PART OF LOST VILLAGE PROJECT

# Q&A

*Thank you*

*www.boston.gov/rutherford*