



Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning

Transportation and Multi-Modal Improvements

January 27, 2022

Staff Introductions & New Key Contacts

Joe Blankenship: BPDA Transportation - joseph.blankenship@boston.gov

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Welcome Partner Agencies & Electeds

Local Electeds

MBTA Staff

DCR



Agenda

1. Introduction & Housekeeping
2. Review: Transportation Planning Context & Previous Concepts
3. **Western Ave Transitway**
4. **Curbside Management Strategies & TDM Measures**
5. Next Steps & Discussion



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Introductions & Housekeeping

Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

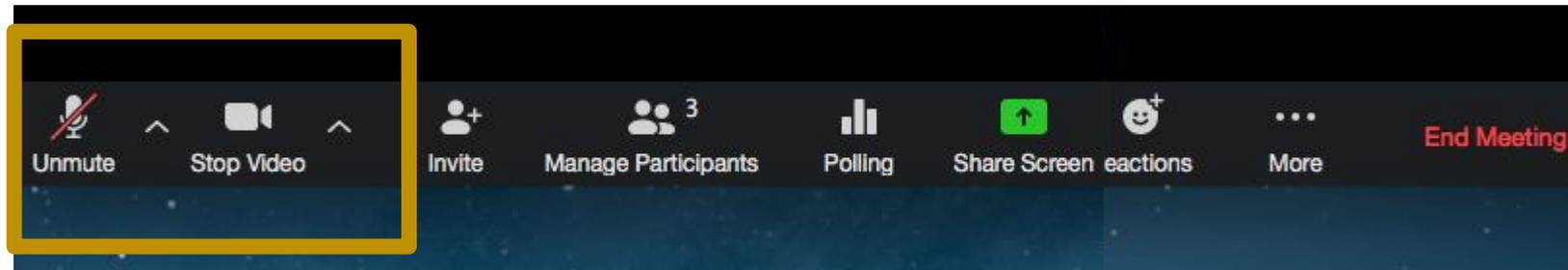
- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Project documents (e.g. Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit)



Zoom Tips

Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen.

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



Virtual Meeting Protocols

- Following the presentation there will be time for verbal Q&A. Please be respectful of each other's time so that all may participate in the discussion.
- You can always set up a conversation with the project team through Joe Blankenship, joseph.blankenship@boston.gov.



Meeting Recording

- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices.
- If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.



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Transportation Planning Context & Previous Concepts

Objectives of Corridor Study

- Create a **compelling vision** for the Study Area
- **Recommend zoning** informed by that vision (and grounded in financial analysis and transportation modeling)
- Propose **multimodal improvements** to Western Avenue and other transportation enhancements

Go Boston 2030

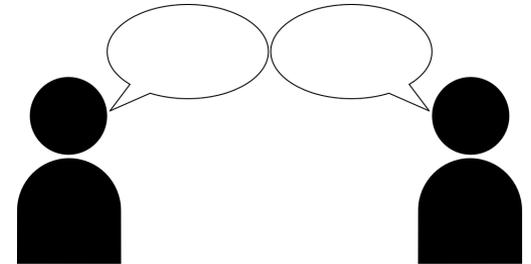
- Go Boston 2030 - Citywide long-term plan
- A primary objective is mode shift
- Reduction of SOV driving and increase in transit, walking & biking are key

Mode for Bostonian Commutes	Today*	2030 Aspirational
Public Transit	34%	↑ Up by a third
Walk	14%	↑ Up by almost a half
Bike	2%	↑ Increases fourfold
Carpool	6%	↓ Declines marginally
Drive Alone	39%	↓ Down by half
Other/Work from Home	5%	↑ Slight increase in Work from Home



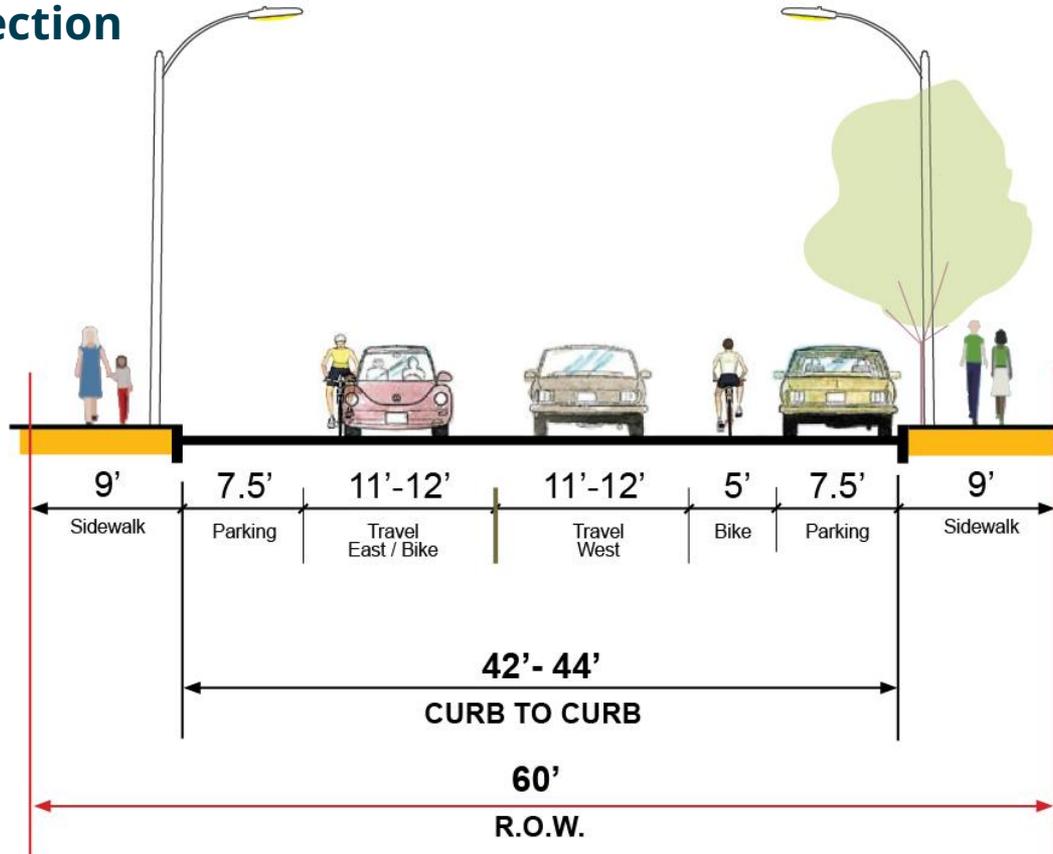
More Planning Context

- Western Ave identified in Go Boston 2030 as a priority Better Bike Corridor
- MBTA Bus Network Redesign - Western Ave as priority transit corridor
- Community Feedback - bold transit paramount



Existing Right-of-Way

Typical Cross-Section



Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only

Public Process To Date - What We Heard



Workshop, October 30, 2019

Results from 2019 Workshop:

1. Buffered/Protected bike lane
2. Bus lane
3. Bike lane
4. Planting zone

Highest
Priorities

April/May 2021 Public Feedback:

1. Bolder Transit Vision
2. Impacts of larger development area

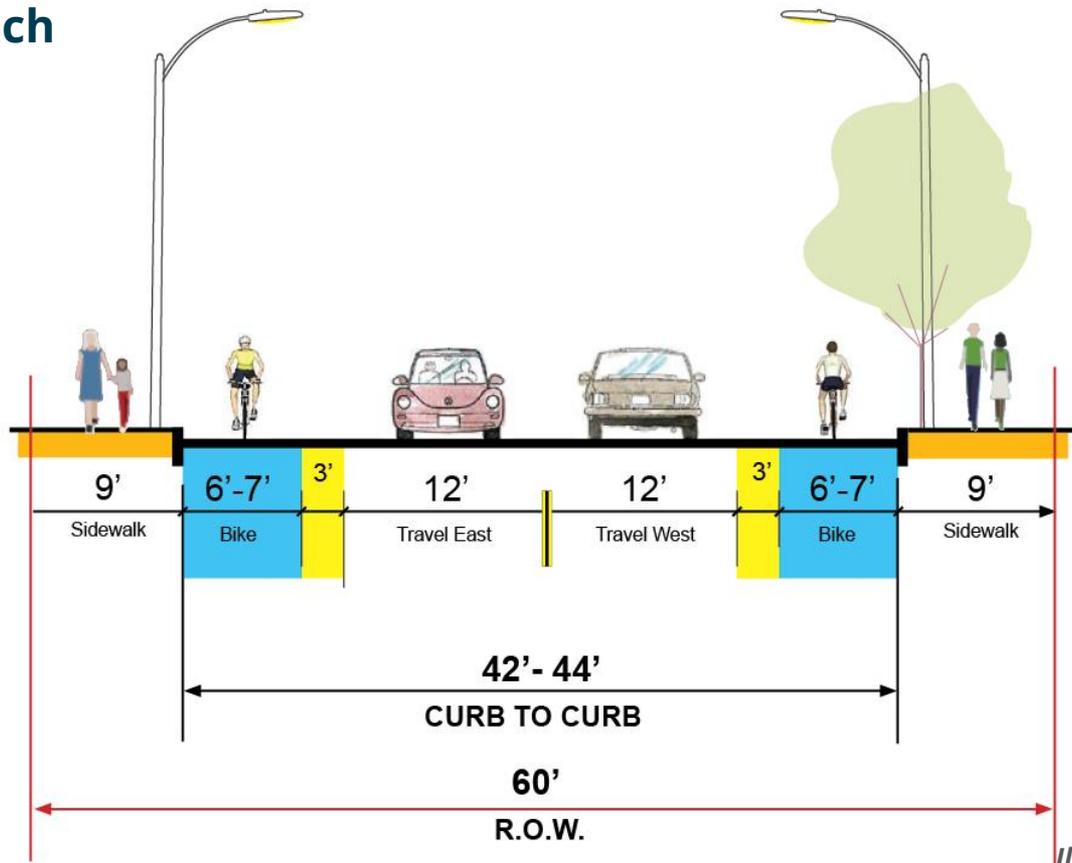
Concept 1: Protected Bike Lanes

- Implementation within ~2 years
- Lifespan 5-15 years
- Reallocate **existing right-of-way**:
 - **Strategic bus improvements**, e.g. stop & accessibility improvements, queue jumps, transit signal priority
 - **Low stress bicycle facilities**
 - **Pedestrian improvements**, e.g. new or improved crosswalks



Concept 1: Proposed Cross-Section

General Approach



Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only

Concept 1: Plan View

General Approach

Mahoney's Garden - Antwerp St



Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes & Protected Bike Lanes

- Timeframe: 5-15+ years
- Bike lanes stay
- Additional 15 foot setbacks with new development
- Northern curb moves by 3 feet

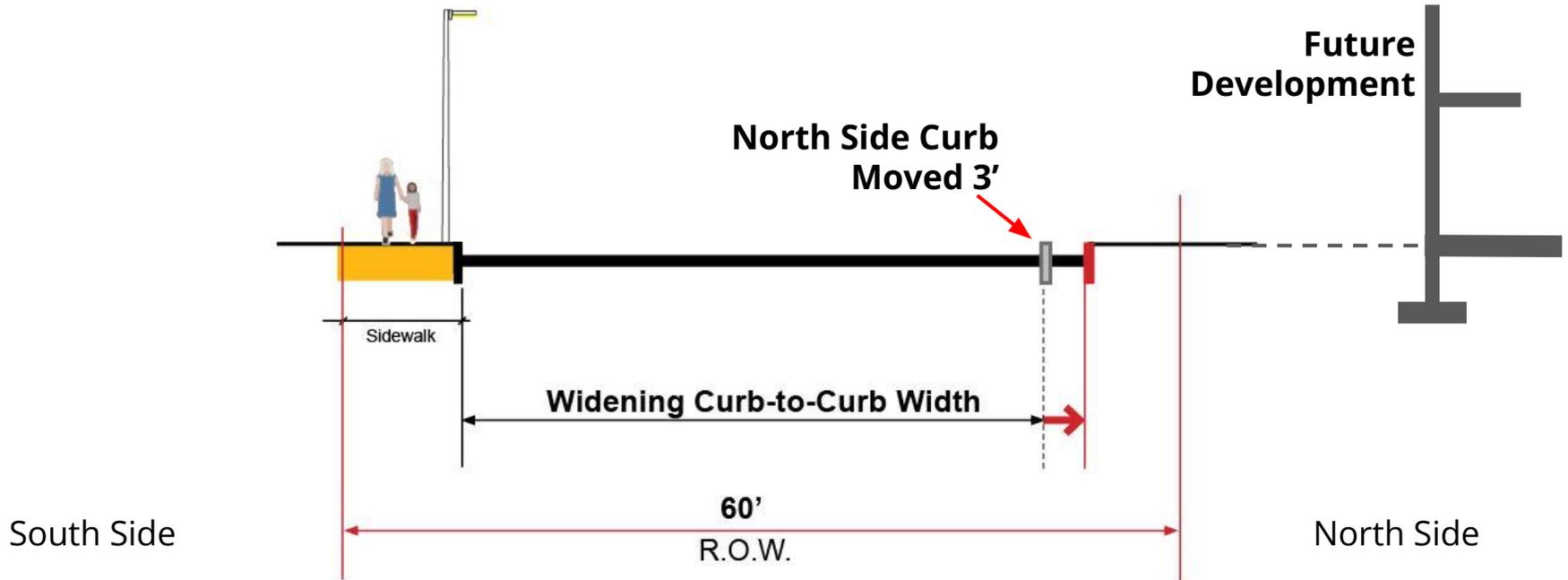


Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes



Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- Opportunity comes with future development on north side
- South side curb held constant
- North side curb moved approx. 3 feet

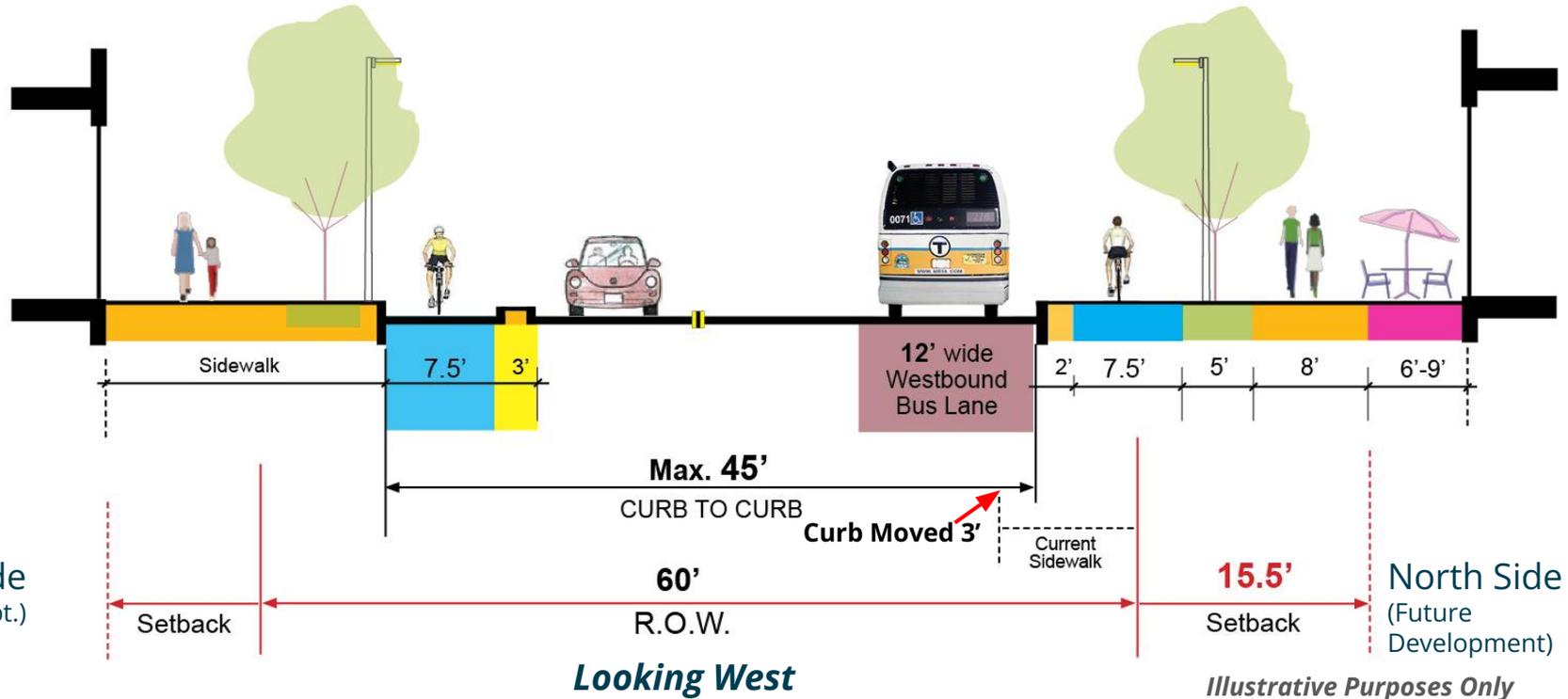


Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only

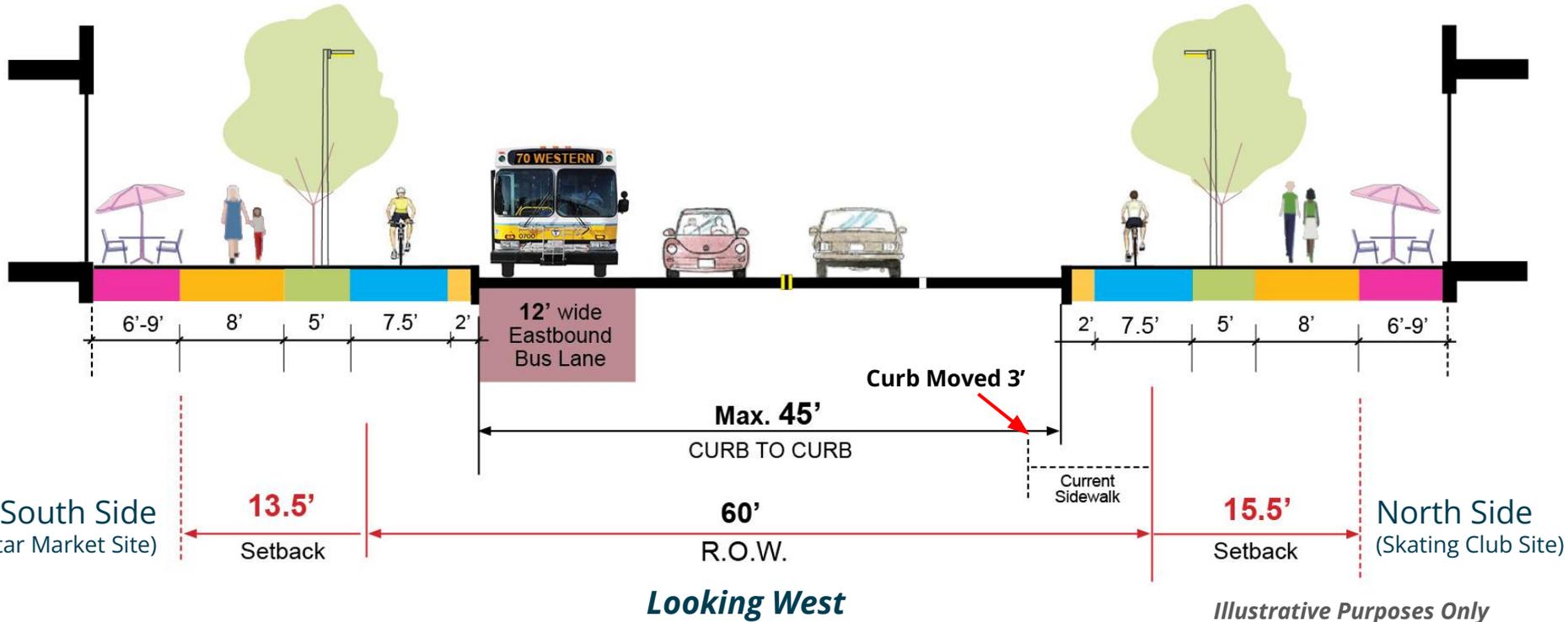
Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- 12' wide Westbound bus lane along the southern side curb
- Sidewalk-level bike lane & Enhanced streetscape design w/ landscape & cafe zones



Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

- 12' wide Eastbound bus lane along the southern side curb
- Sidewalk-level bike lane on both sides & Enhanced streetscape design w/ landscape & cafe zones



Concept 2: Alternating Bus Lanes

Everett - Antwerp Streets



-  BUS LANE
-  BUFFERED BIKE LANE
-  SIDEWALK-LEVEL BIKE LANE
-  PLANTING ZONE
-  SIDEWALK
-  CAFE ZONE / LANDSCAPE

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Western Ave Transitway

Why a Transitway?

Community Conversations

- Community desire for better transit service on Western Ave - *along with other multimodal street improvements*

Fits with City Goals

- Works with existing streets and utilizes existing infrastructure more effectively
- Reduces transit delay, improves reliability, increases person throughput & improves safety on city streets

Design Context

- Works with other multimodal improvements - like better bike infrastructure, pedestrian facilities, and open space
- Similar designs have worked in other American and Canadian Cities



Transitway Process

- Initial Community Feedback
 - *We heard you wanted better biking connections, transit, walking, and open space*
- **Proof of Concept for Transitway - we are here**
 - ***Community conversation about this concept, benefits, and potential next steps***
- Refine Concept Design for Transitway
 - *Community conversation around design elements and additional transportation analysis*
- Detailed Design for Transitway
 - *Detailed design with community & stakeholder discussions*
- Implementation - *likely in a Phased Process*



What is a Transitway?

- **Dedicated bus lanes** which are separated from general purpose traffic
- **Enhanced transit stations** with real time arrival information, improved shelters, benches, and bus boarding areas
- Complementary **bike and pedestrian improvements and accommodates loading needs**
- Redirects some drivers due to roadway space constraints



Image: NYC 14th Street Transitway

Source: BPDA Staff



Transitway Example

Market Street, San Francisco

- Prioritizes buses, trolleys, bikes, & local deliveries
- Works with parallel roads for through traffic
- Trucks and deliveries are managed through use of series of intersecting streets
- Quick build implementation resulted in 25% increase in cycling and transit times improved by up to 12% in first two months alone according to the City of SF
- SF is now working on a permanent design incorporating these improvements

Market Street BEFORE



Market Street AFTER



What does this mean for Western Ave?

Prioritize transit movements on Western Ave

- **Congestion-free transit** on Western Ave for Routes 70 & 86, improving the connection to the Red Line, Cambridge, and Watertown
- **Predictable travel times for buses** - consistent travel times with less variation
- **Plans for the Future** - accommodate population/job growth in Allston/Brighton through a high-capacity transit connection and upcoming MBTA's Bus Network Redesign



boston planning &
development agency

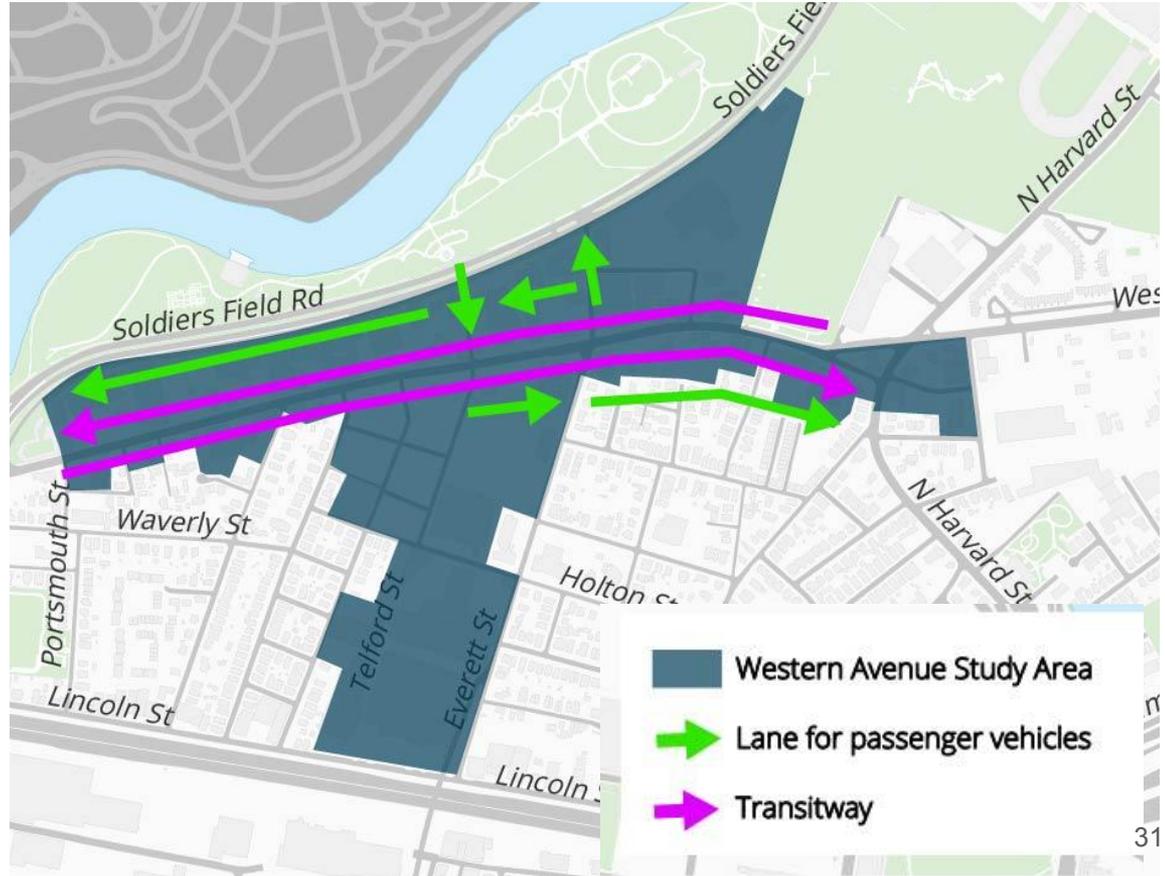


Image Source: Google

Transitway Routing Concept

Two-way travel for transit, school buses, & emergency vehicles

One-way travel for passenger vehicles with connections from Telford and Everett Streets to enable access to Western Ave



Western Ave Traffic Access

Redirect some vehicular traffic

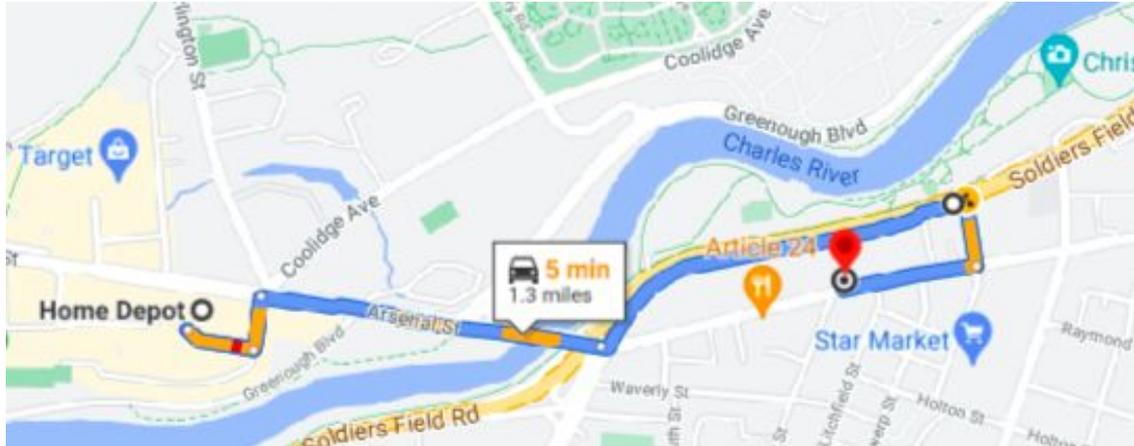
- Local vehicle traffic may utilize Soldiers Field Road to reach destinations on Western Ave
- Some “regional” vehicle traffic may divert to other corridors such as the Mass Pike, Soldiers Field Road, Greenough Boulevard to rather than using Western Ave
- Further design refinement would detail access to specific buildings and streets in collaboration with stakeholders
- Additional coordination occurring with DCR around Soldiers Field Road

Western Ave Local Traffic Example

A car trip from Watertown Home Depot to Pavement Coffeehouse today takes **4 minutes** according to Google Maps



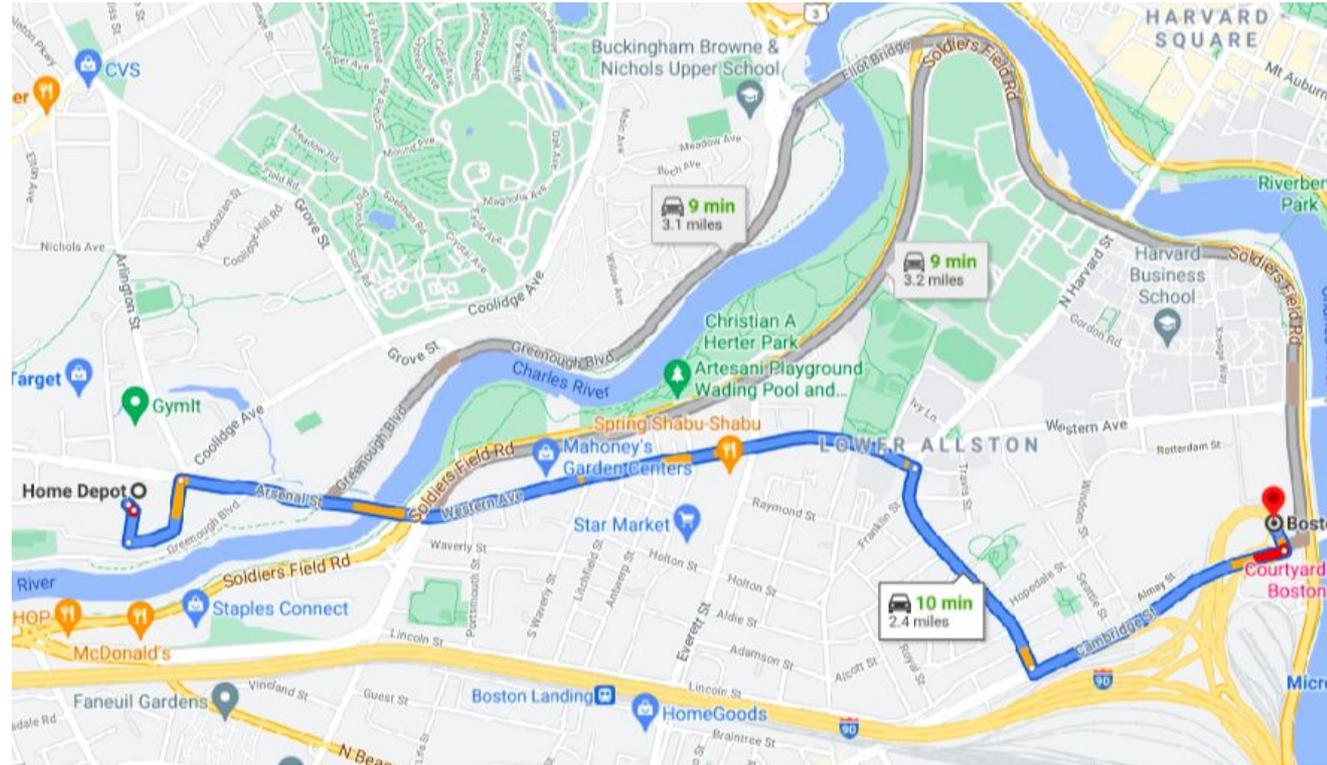
With a diversion to Soldiers Field Road, this trip would take **1 minute longer**



Western Ave Regional Traffic Example

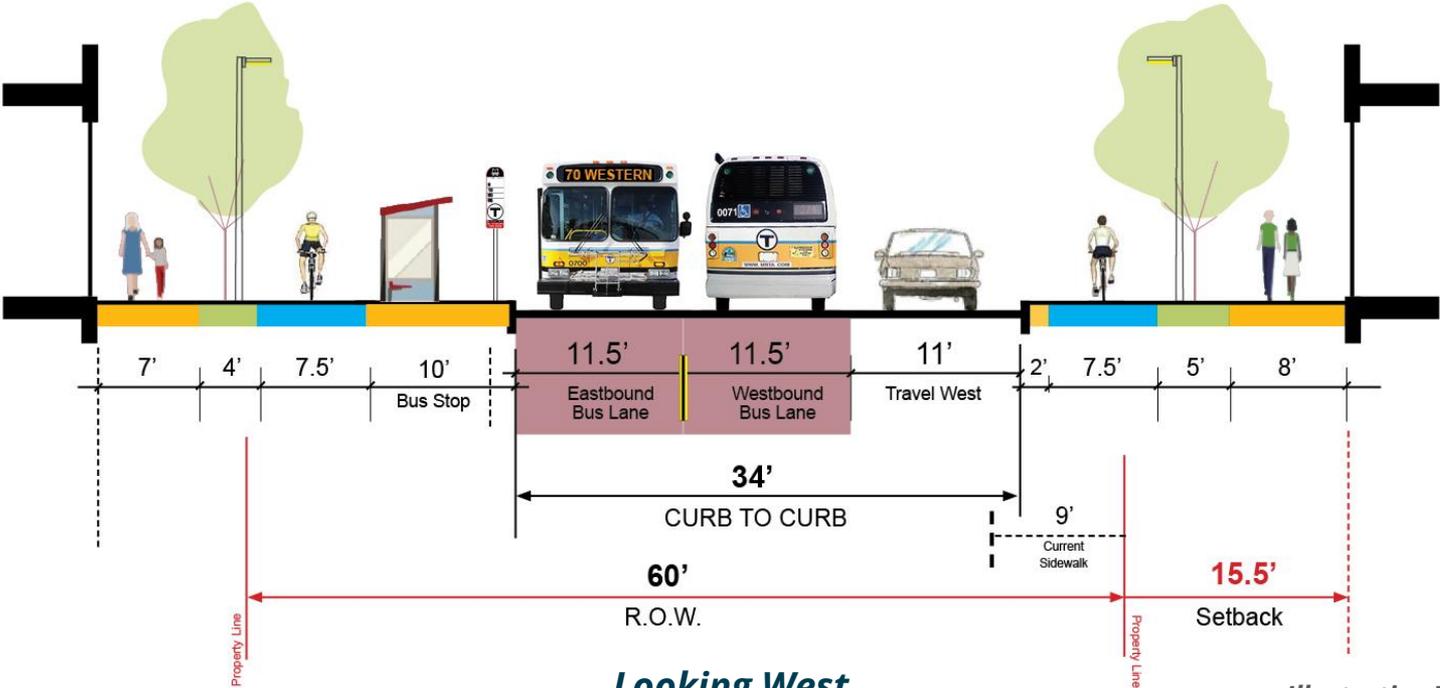
A car trip from Watertown Home Depot to the Mass Pike Onramp in Allston has multiple alternative options according to Google Maps

Or, a driver could decide to enter the Pike in Newton



Western Ave Transitway Concept

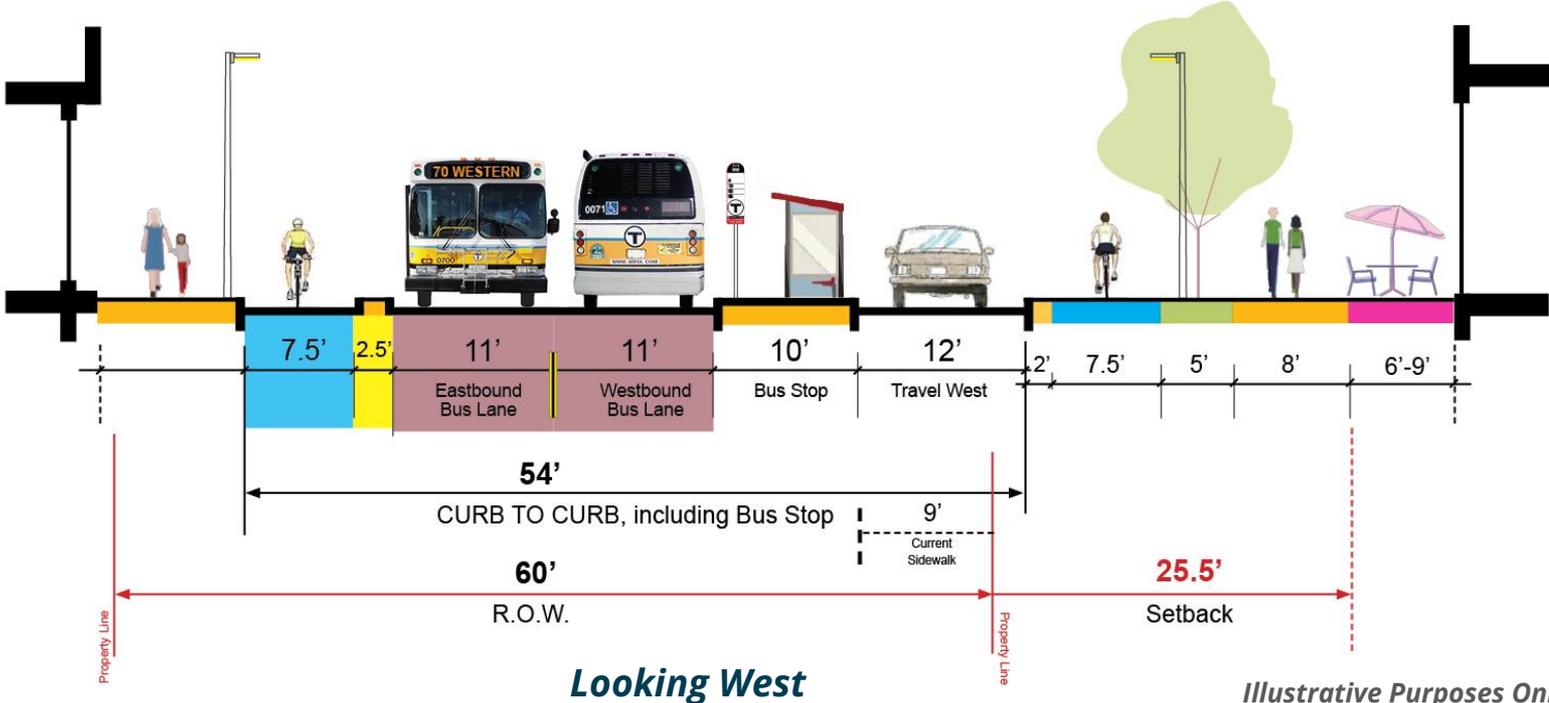
Eastbound Curb-Extended Bus Stop @Charlesview Residences



Looking West

Western Ave Transitway Concept

Westbound Floating Bus Stop @Mahoney's

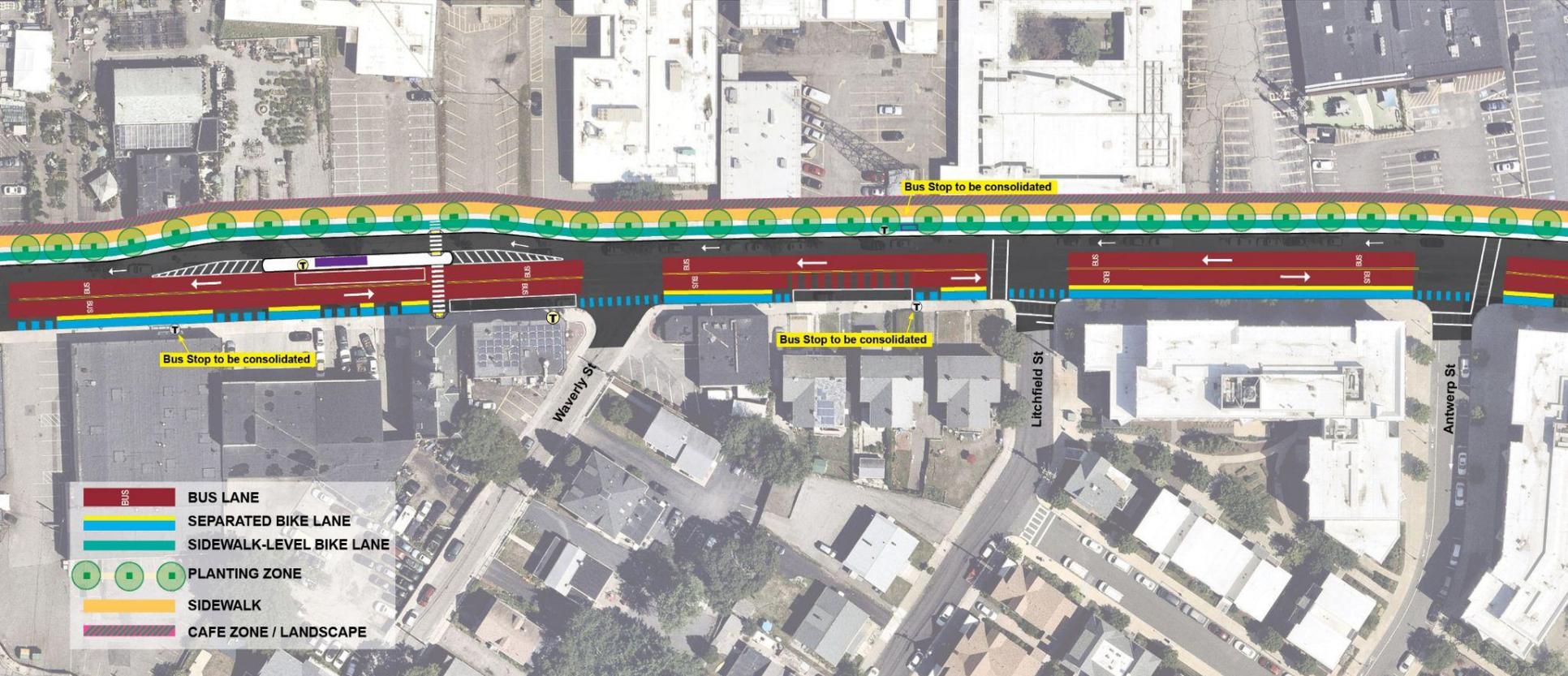


Looking West

Illustrative Purposes Only

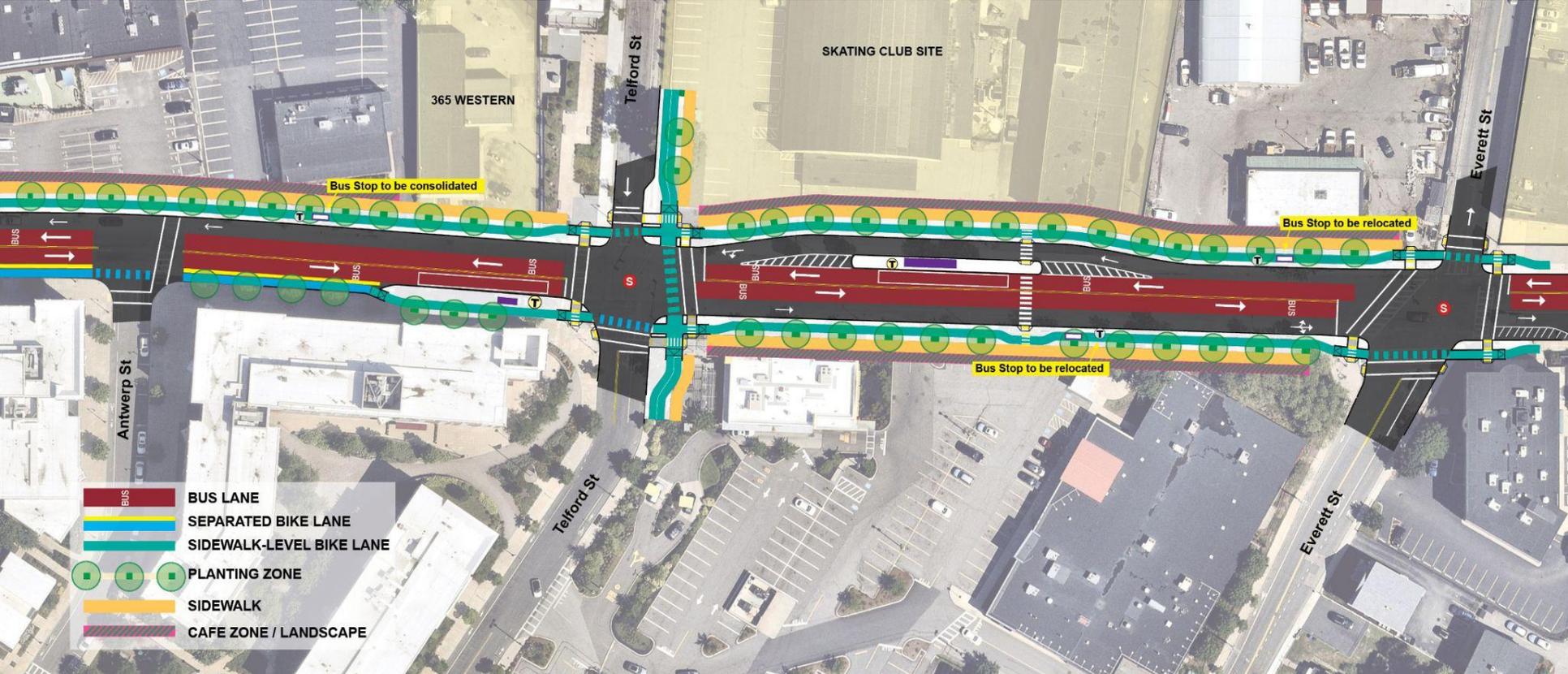
Western Ave Transitway Concept

Mahoney's to Antwerp St



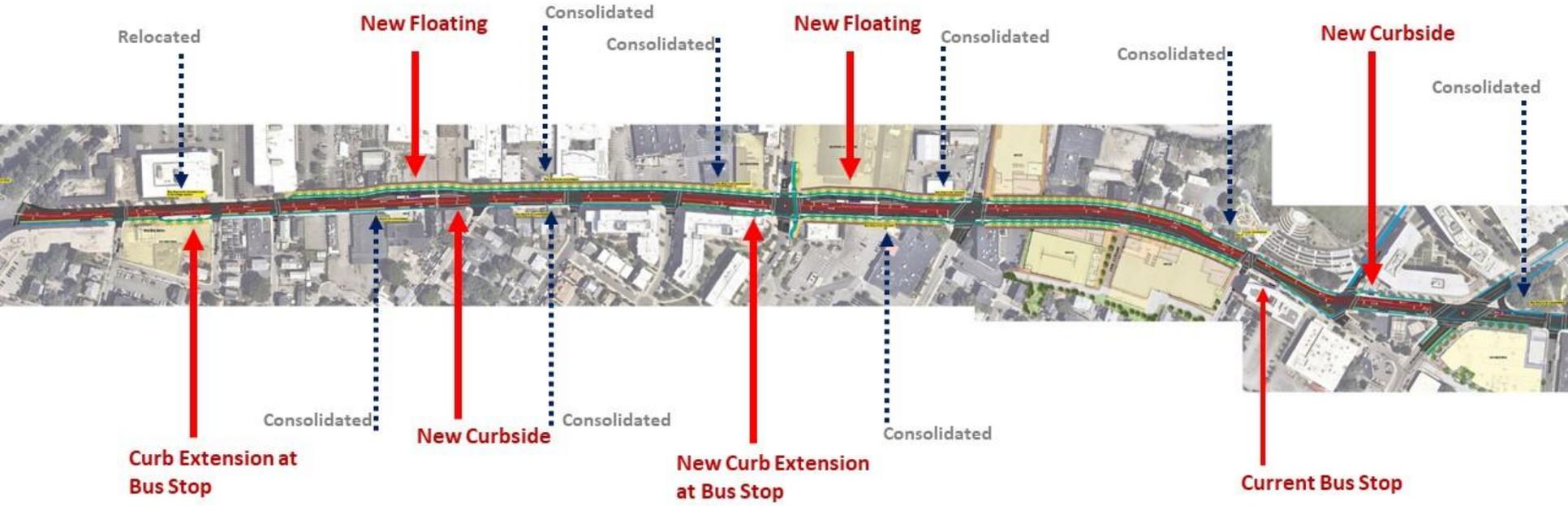
Western Ave Transitway Concept

Antwerp St to Everett St

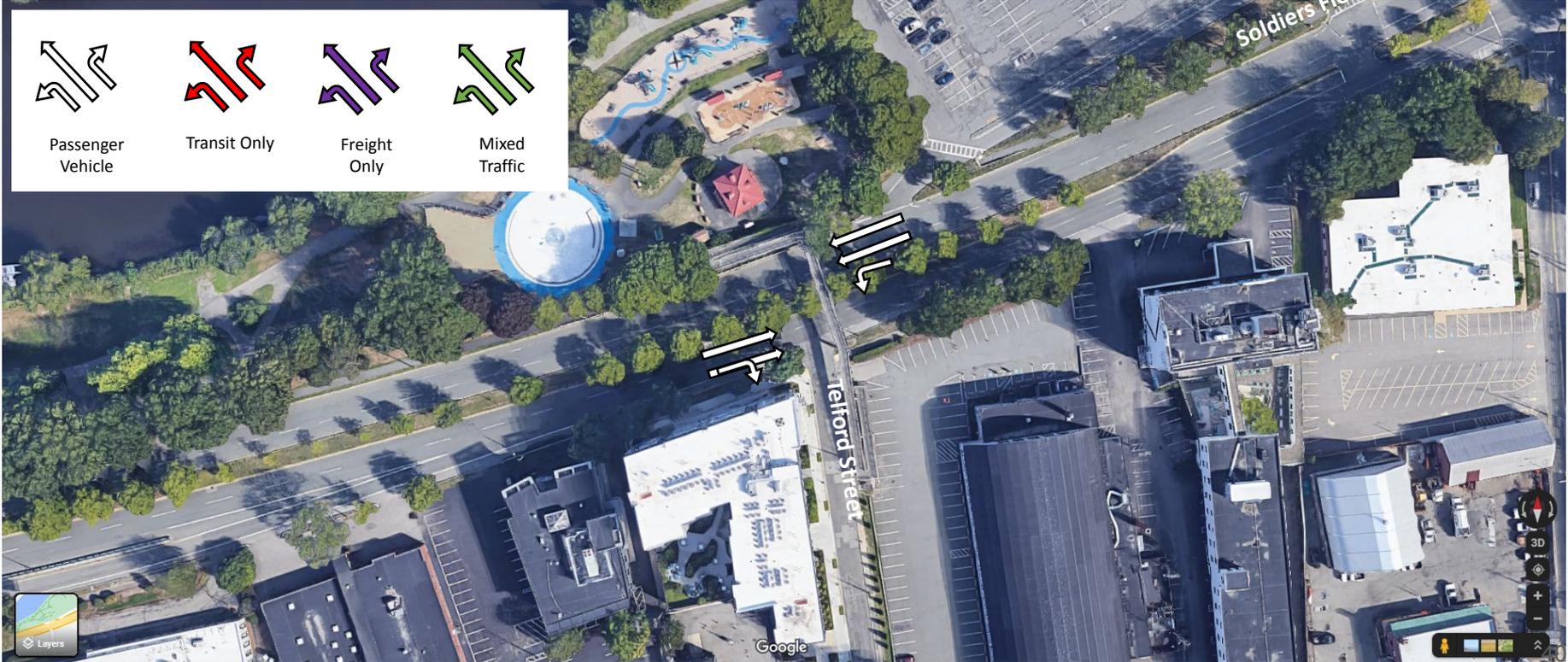


Western Ave Transitway

Concept Bus Stop Locations



Concept Example: Intersection Change – SFR and Telford St



Western Ave Transitway - Stress Test Analysis

- Traffic Computer Model (Synchro)
- Assumptions for Traffic Analysis:
 - Street direction changes
 - Modified intersections
 - Mode shift scenarios tested
 - 50% reduced SOV mode shift - Go Boston 2030
 - 20% reduced SOV mode shift - Local examples
 - Passenger vehicle diversion
 - Additional development activity in Allston/Brighton and Watertown

Background Development

Western Avenue Rezoning

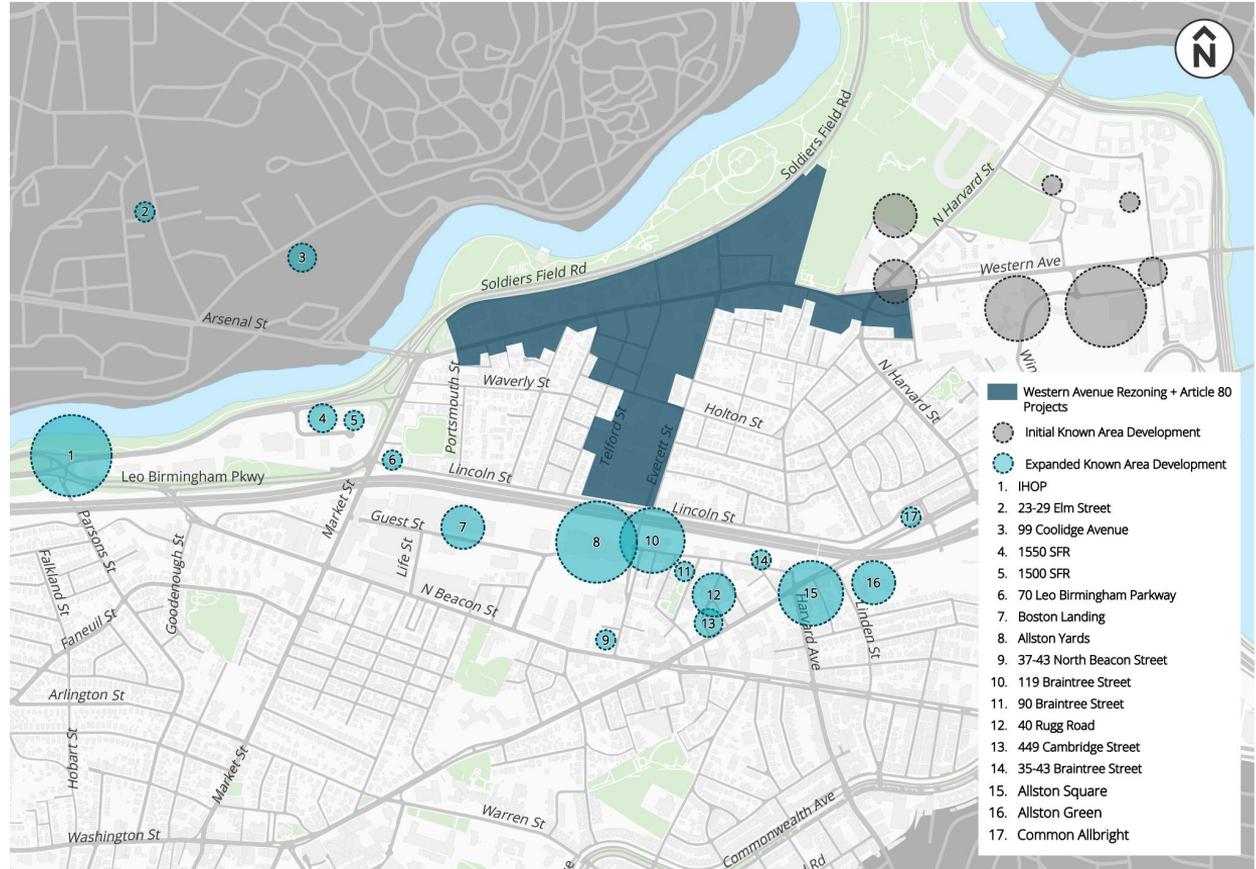
6.6M Square Feet

Initial Known Area Development

3.4M Square Feet

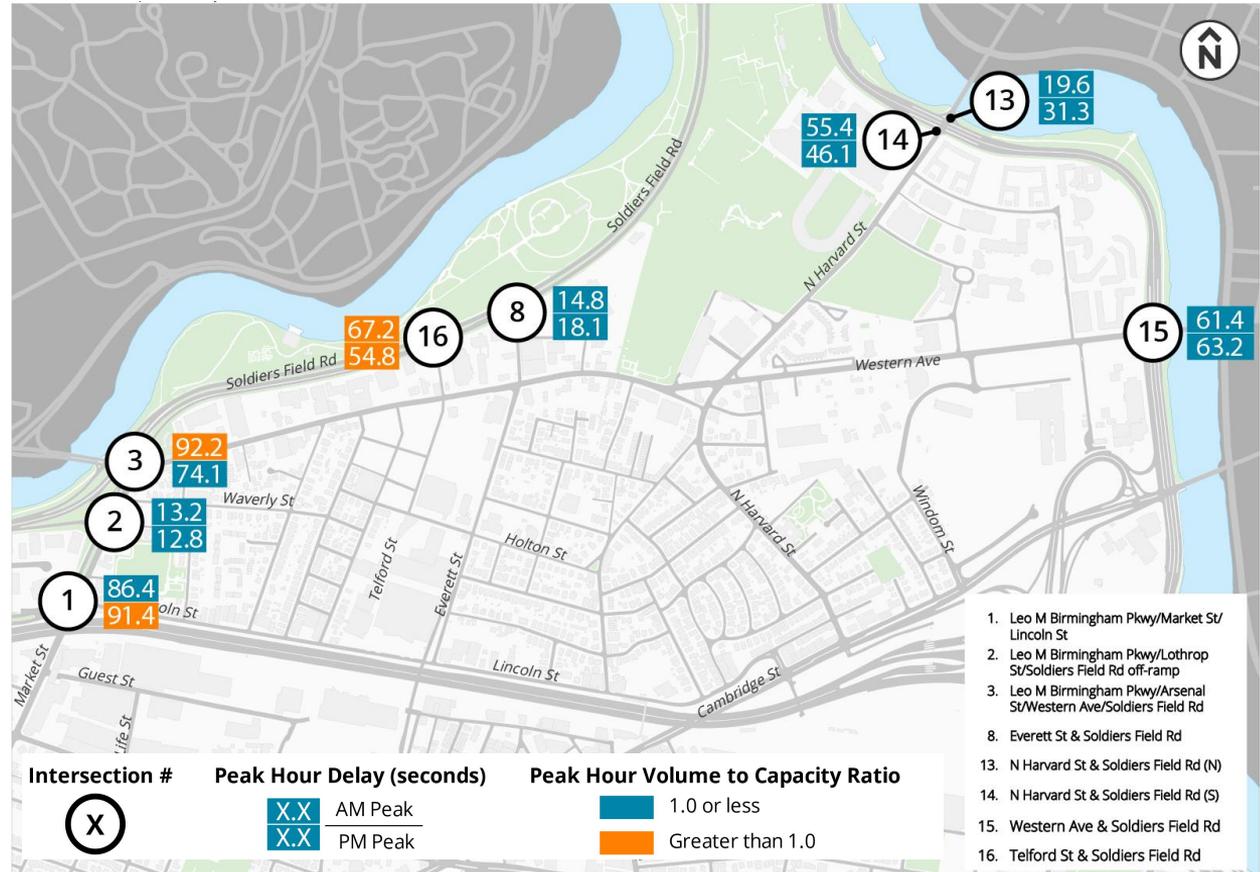
Expanded Known Area Development

7.4M Square Feet



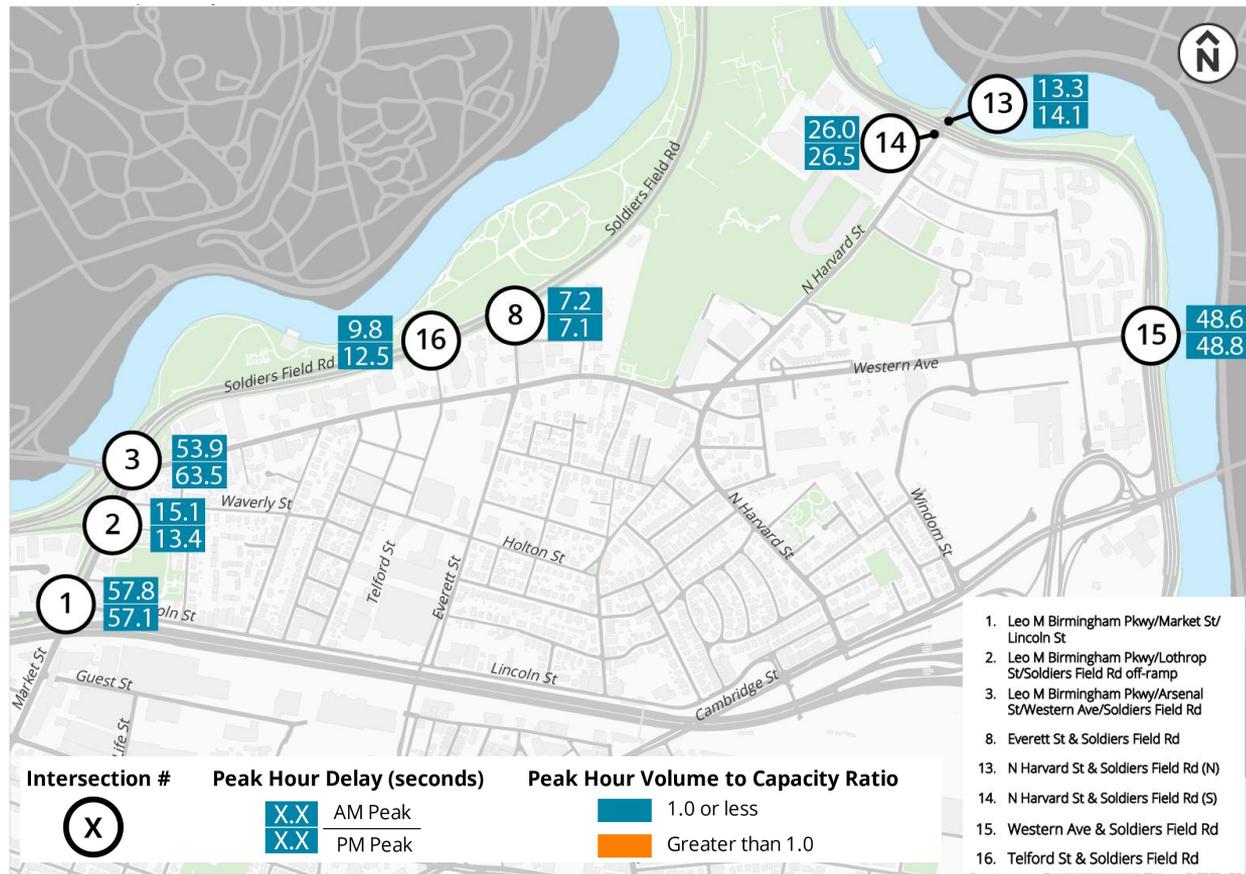
Traffic Analysis - 20% Mode Shift

- 20% is a recent mode shift seen on Brighton Ave bus lanes & intersections near Boston Landing Station
- Some congestion may occur during peak traffic conditions



Traffic Analysis - 50% Mode Shift

- Matches Go Boston 2030 Goals
- No major delays for cars at DCR intersections as roadway network exists today
- We are aware of DRC's potential road diet for Soldiers Field Road - we will continue to coordinate w/ DCR on SFR



Agency Coordination To-Date

Concept Coordination & Review led by BPDA & BTDA

- Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)
- MBTA & MassDOT
- City of Cambridge Planning & Transportation Staff
- City of Watertown Planning & Transportation Staff
- Harvard University Planning Staff



Image: Columbus Ave, Boston
Source: MBTA

Western Ave Transitway - Next Steps

- Evaluate Community Feedback
- Refine Concept Design and Examine full extent of Western Ave in Boston
- Discuss neighborhood roads and vehicle access
- Coordinate on Soldiers Field Road, area development projects, other area transportation projects



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Curbside Management & TDM Measures

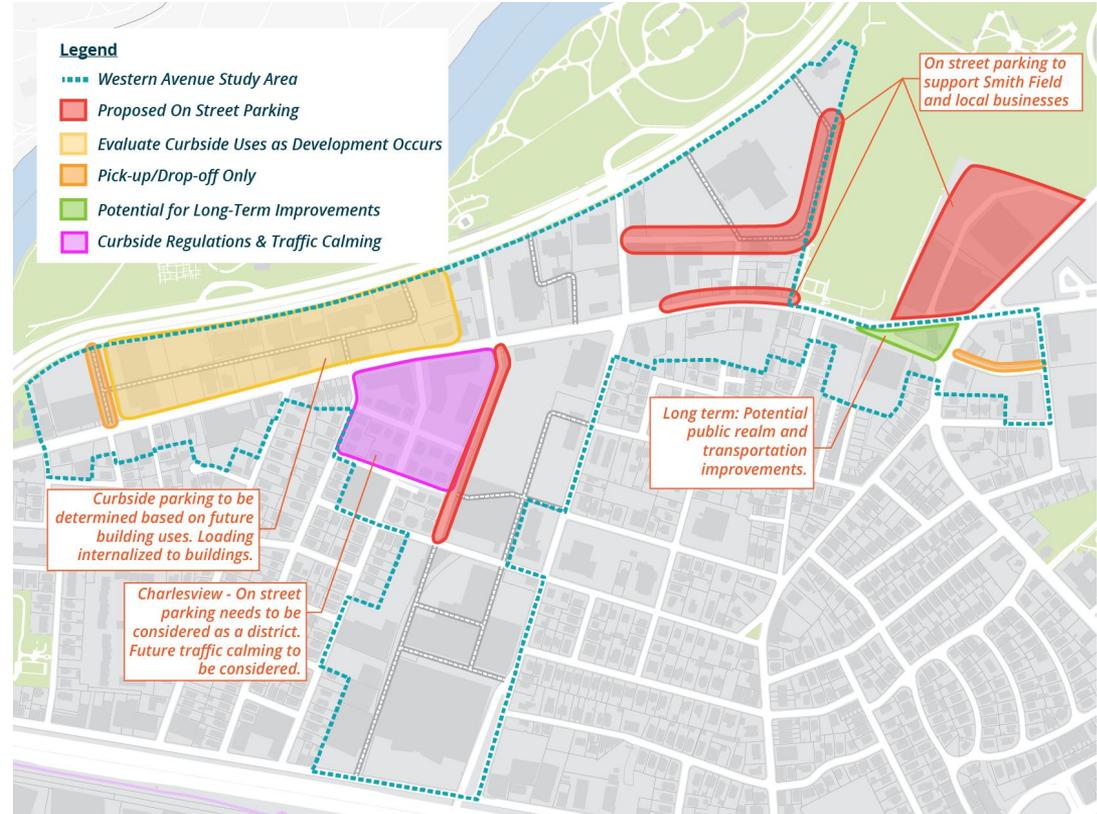
WACRZ - Curbside Management Strategies

Area wide strategies

- Parking Ratios in line w/ Citywide maximums
- Pickup/Dropoff discouraged on Western Ave
- Internalize loading & locate entrances off of side streets
- Discourage new curb cuts on Western Ave

WACRZ - Curbside Management Strategies

- Location specific strategies
- Develop curbside management & traffic calming plan around Charlesview
- Work w/ WBZ development to utilize South Campus Drive for public parking
- Consider on-site public parking during Article 80 Review
- Curbside management & traffic calming plans as part of Article 80 review



WACRZ - TDM Measures

- Amount of parking & pricing parking are essential

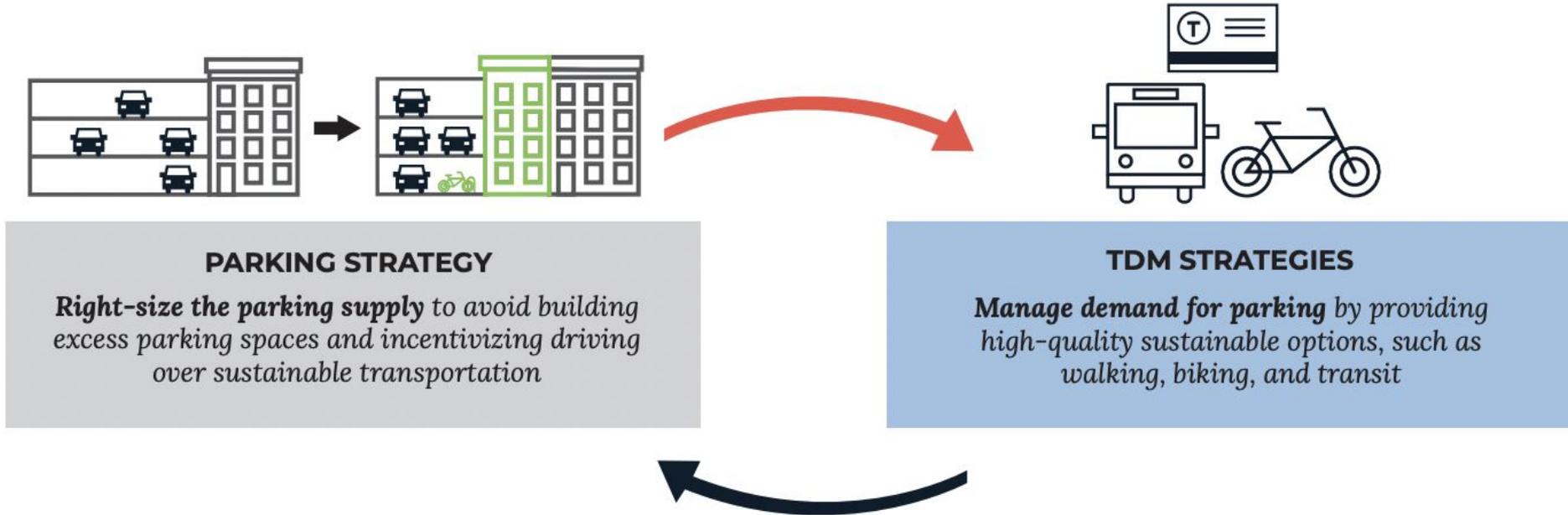


Figure 1: TDM plans and right-sizing parking supply feed into each other.

WACRZ - TDM Measures

- Western Ave Parking Ratio Maximums:
 - **Office:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
 - **Institutions:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
 - **R&D / Lab:** 0.8 per 1,000 sq/ft
 - **Residential:** 0.5 per unit for rental projects; 1.0 per unit for condominiums
 - **Retail:** 0.45 per 1,000 sq/ft or 5,000 sq/ft; 0.75 per sq/ft based on project

WACRZ - TDM Measures

- Percentages represent trips that shift away from vehicle to other modes of travel
- Managing volume & pricing of parking is key
- Increased work from home & 100% transit subsidy are important

TDM Strategy	Replacement Travel Mode	Vehicle Trip Reduction			
		Ring 1 (0-3 miles)	Ring 2 (3-6 miles)	Ring 3 (Greater than 6 miles)	Total
Strategies to be Implemented through Development¹					
Reduce parking supply (25% less than the parking ratio guidelines in the Corridor)	All	9%	6%	2%	5%
Provide market-rate parking	All	8%	6%	1%	5%
Provide increased work from home flexibility	None	2%	4%	6%	4%
Provide 100% transit subsidy	Transit	4%	6%	2%	4%
Unbundled parking	All	4%	3%	1%	2%

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Next Steps

WACRZ - Next Steps

- Finalize recommendations & WACRZ planning document based on feedback received
- Public meeting to review & release full WACRZ draft report targeted for late March
- 30 day public review & comment period on full report
- Broader examination of Western Ave transitway & coordination with DCR & MBTA

Thank you

Discussion