



March 2021 PTAC Meeting: City Update

Tonight's Topics

- Mid-year Budget Request Update
- Project Evaluation / Post Treatment Discussion
- Bus Network Planning
- Holland/College Update
- Powder House Circle
- Powder House Boulevard at Route 16
- IAM Social Media
- Pearl St Resurfacing
- Other Construction Updates
 - Lower Medford
 - Somerville Avenue
 - Central Hill

Mid-Year Budget Request

- The Mayor's mid-year budget request was approved by City Council, including:
 - Three new Mobility staff positions
 - Senior Planners (2 positions)
 - Outreach Coordinator (1 position)
 - Operating funds to startup:
 - Bus Network Planning (\$20k)
 - Bike Network Planning (\$10k)
 - Municipal Workforce Mobility Management Planning (\$10k)
 - NACTO Organizational Design Planning (\$10k)
- Staff are scoping this work now and expect to fully expend these funds by the end of the fiscal year.
 - Our goal is for each of these funds to set up a larger process in the next fiscal year.
 - We want to build out pieces of an integrated multimodal mobility plan
 - Our plan is subject to council approval of future funding

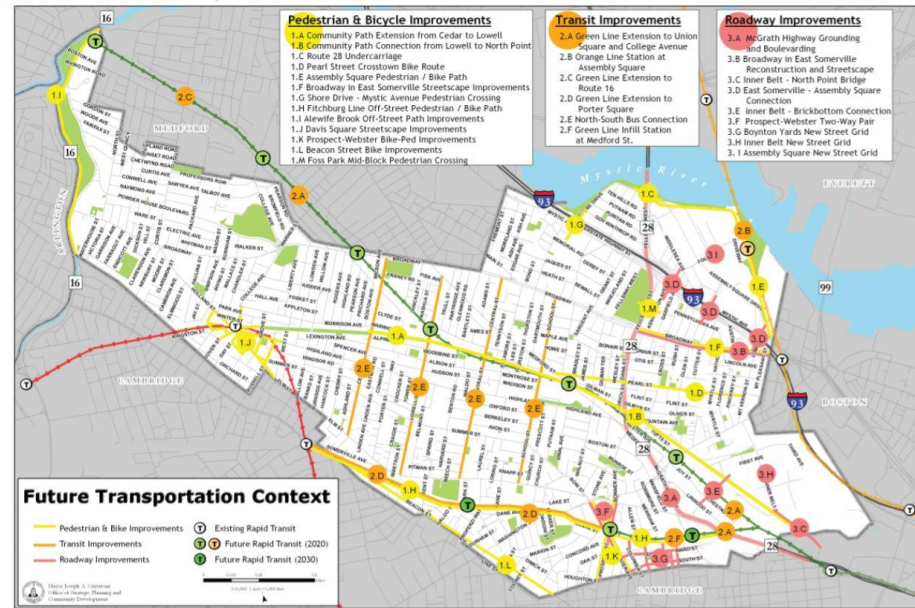
Post Project Evaluation

- Mobility working to standardize this process and develop guidelines.
 - Level and type of evaluation depends on project size, scope, context, modal elements, and funding availability
 - Example Evaluation Report: [Central Broadway Evaluation](#)
- [Key Performance Indicators slide deck](#) compiles a multi-year evaluation of the most essential analyses for many projects and treatments.
- **Most important analyses include:**
 - Traffic Data Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATR), Turning Movement Counts (TMC)
 - Bike and Ped Counts (either in person or computerized by Turning Movement Counts)
 - Parking utilization, accumulation, and turnover
- **Some projects may also include:**
 - MBTA Bus Data, including:
 - Bus travel time metrics – time measured between stops
 - Degree of Reliability
 - Frequent buses (bus scheduled every 15 minutes or less) are reliable when buses leave stop within 3 minutes of the scheduled time.
 - Infrequent buses (bus scheduled less often than every 15 minutes) are reliable when buses leave stop within 1 minute before or 6 minutes after scheduled time.
 - Ridership – from Automated Passenger Counters on board the bus
 - BlueBikes ridership data
 - Anonymized cell phone location data (very expensive)
 - Post project in person outreach and surveys
 - Crosswalk compliance studies
 - Air quality monitoring

Bus Network Planning (1 of 9)

Public process in Somerville has documented our desire for a more useful, equitable, and reliable bus network.

Appendix 2 The Maps: Future Transportation Context Map



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SomerVision - Somerville's Comprehensive Plan

2010 Example: SomerVision map identifies Cedar, Lowell, Central, School as candidates for north-south service

<https://www.somervision2040.com/somervision2030/>

Winter Hill A Vision

IMPROVING TRANSIT

Bus Transit the Complements Train Service

The opening of the Green Line Extension will improve transit access and give a one seat ride to downtown Boston (Park Street station) in 34 minutes. Roughly half of the Winter Hill plan area is within a half-mile walkshed of the station. Research shows that within this distance that commuters will likely choose this mode.

The opening of the station is also an opportunity to review the bus services in the area to make sure the network is providing useful, efficient, and adequate service because the Green Line Extension will be providing faster service, not hindered by traffic, from Lechmere Station to College Avenue, running along the southern edge of the plan area.

The Division of Transportation & Infrastructure, in collaboration with the MBTA, should review the bus service in the area. Upon a quick visual investigation, the 80 bus service runs a very similar route to the Green Line Extension and could be either removed or reconfigured. Buses currently dedicated to this service should either service a new bus line or provide additional service to an

existing line in the Winter Hill neighborhood. New transit access in Winter Hill needs to connect via north-south routes. The entire MBTA system primarily functions as an 'inbound and outbound' approach but planning efforts in Somerville, and other cities, are creating new job centers outside of the historic centers of the Financial District and Back Bay. Winter Hill sits between two future job centers in Somerville, Union and Assembly Squares, and rail stops on the Orange and Green Line. Future service needs to connect these neighborhoods.

Adding transit service, particularly in the north-south direction, is more difficult than other routes because of the narrow streets. A standard MBTA bus cannot fit (or possibly fits but cannot make turns) on some of these roads. However, the future of transit is a partnership with public and private agencies. Private shuttles, like Bridg, and neighborhood shuttles, like the Longwood Medical Area shuttles, are more nimble than public agencies and could provide similar services. Bridg's goal is to provide service in areas that is twice as fast as public transit at



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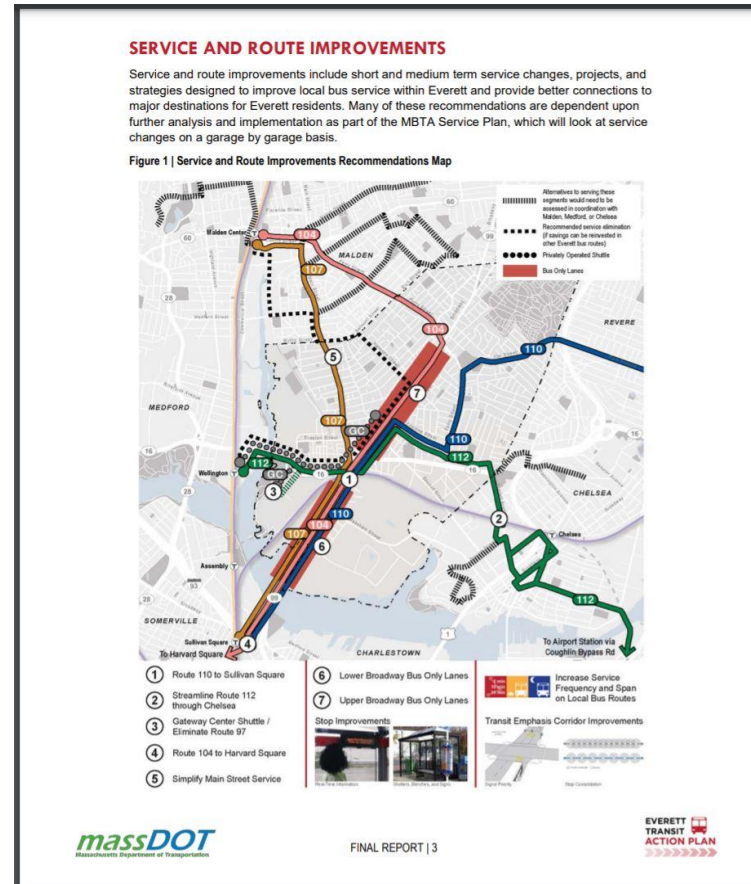
Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan

2015 Example: Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan envisions School and Temple bus routing

<https://www.somervillebydesign.com/neighborhoods/winter-hill/>

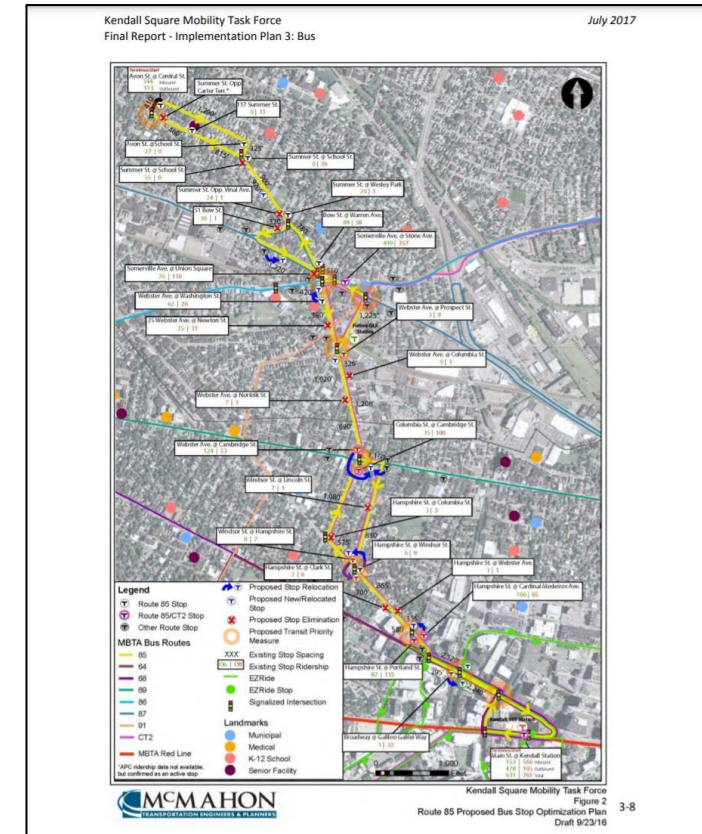
Bus Network Planning (2 of 9)

Neighboring communities have also prepared transit plans to build the case for redesigned bus networks



2016 Example: Everett Transit Action Plan map identifies extended Route 104 service from Sullivan to Harvard via Union

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/everett-transit-action-plan-final-report/download>

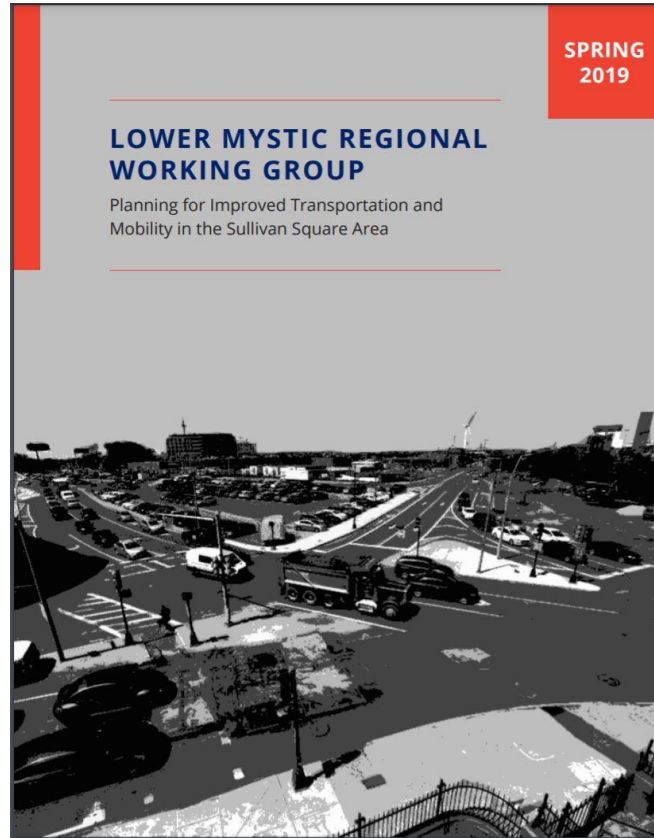


2017 Example: Kendall Square Task Force map explores modified Route 87 / 88 to Kendall vs Lechmere (post-GLX)

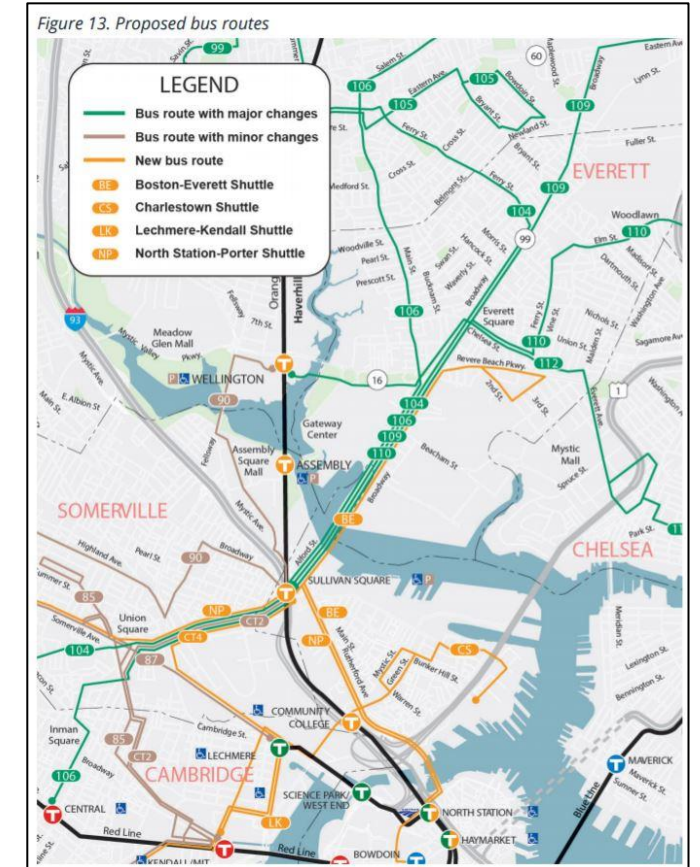
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Transportation/-/media/Files/CDD/Transportation/Projects/KSMTF/ksmtffinalreport201708final.pdf>

Bus Network Planning (3 of 9)

Regional policy plans have called for more transit service, including modifications to existing bus routes.



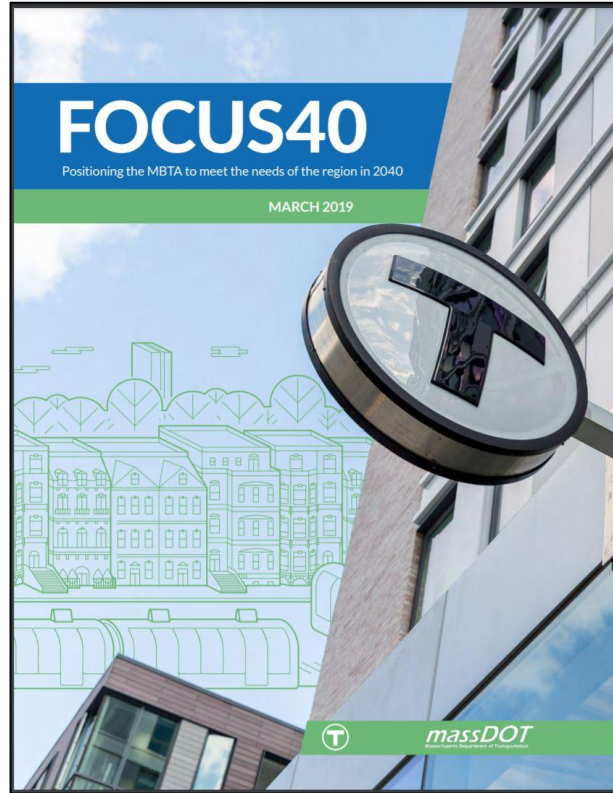
Example: MassDOT Lower Mystic Regional Working Group (2016-18) calls for tripling of local bus service coupled with parking reform



Preferred scenario includes numerous bus route changes and Silver Line Extension

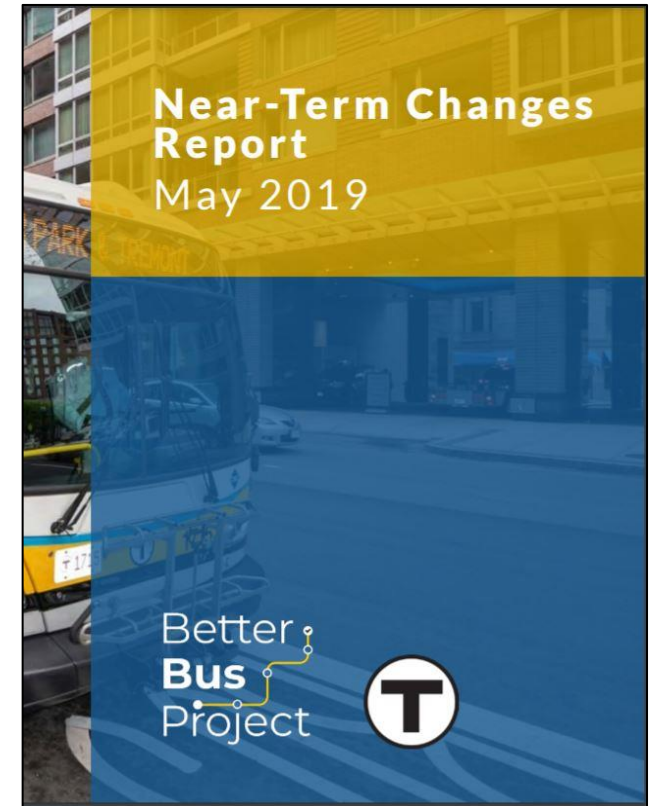
Bus Network Planning (4 of 9)

MBTA strategic planning has launched formal Bus Network Redesign process with key decision points anticipated in mid-late 2021.



Example: MBTA Focus 40 calls for Bus Network Redesign to serve changing regional mobility needs.

<https://www.mbtafocus40.com/focus40theplan>

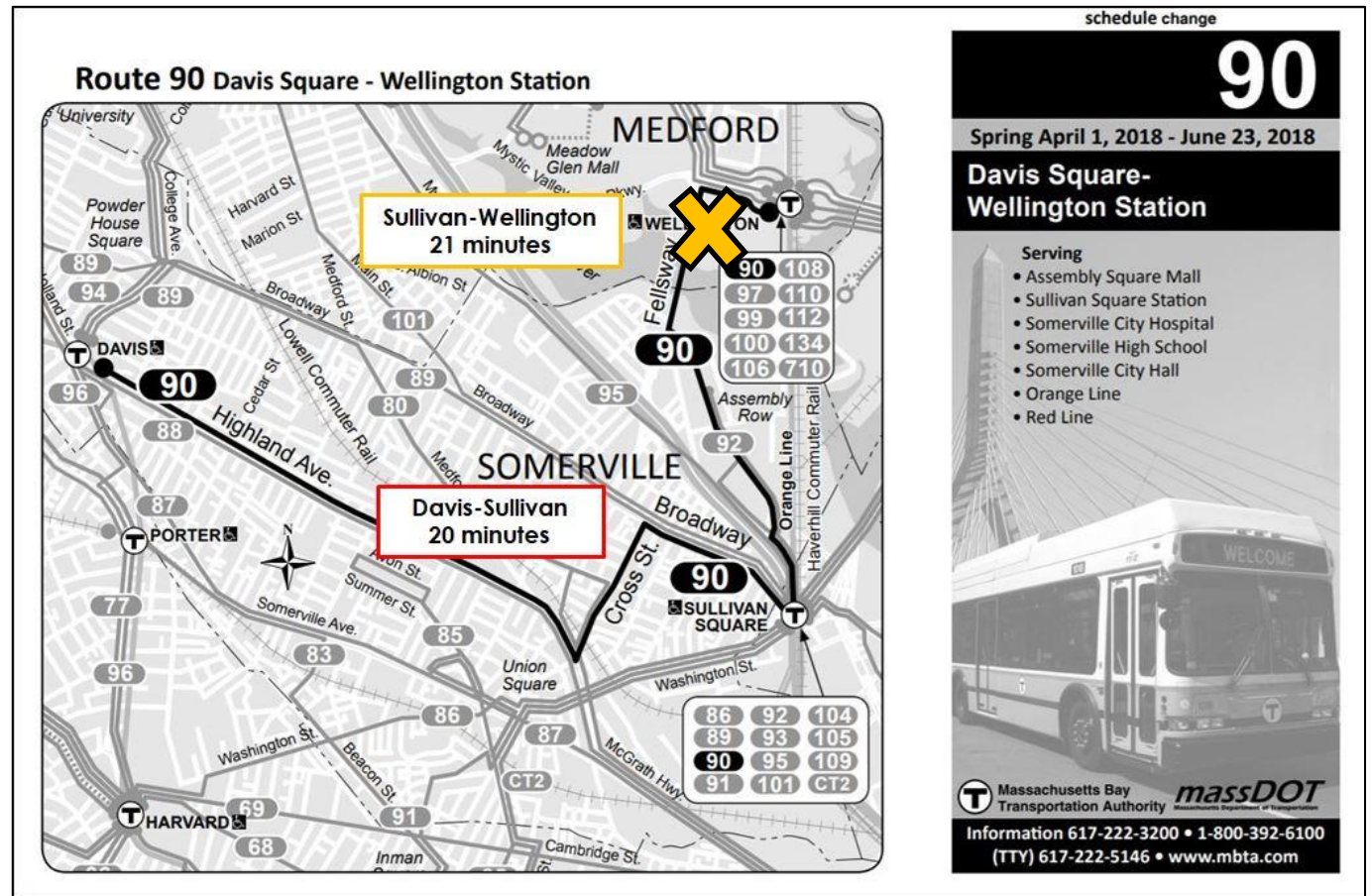


Example: Better Bus Project Phase 1 changes begin testing new route & service options (including 5 in Somerville).

<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/projects/betterbus/documents/2019-05-betterbus-near-term-changes-report-accessible.pdf>

Bus Network Planning (5 of 9)

Better Bus Project Phase 1 began testing of low-cost route / service changes to help inform the larger Bus Network Redesign.



Example: City proposed shortening Route 90 to achieve higher frequency on main service corridor of Highland-Cross-Broadway using same number of daily bus trips.

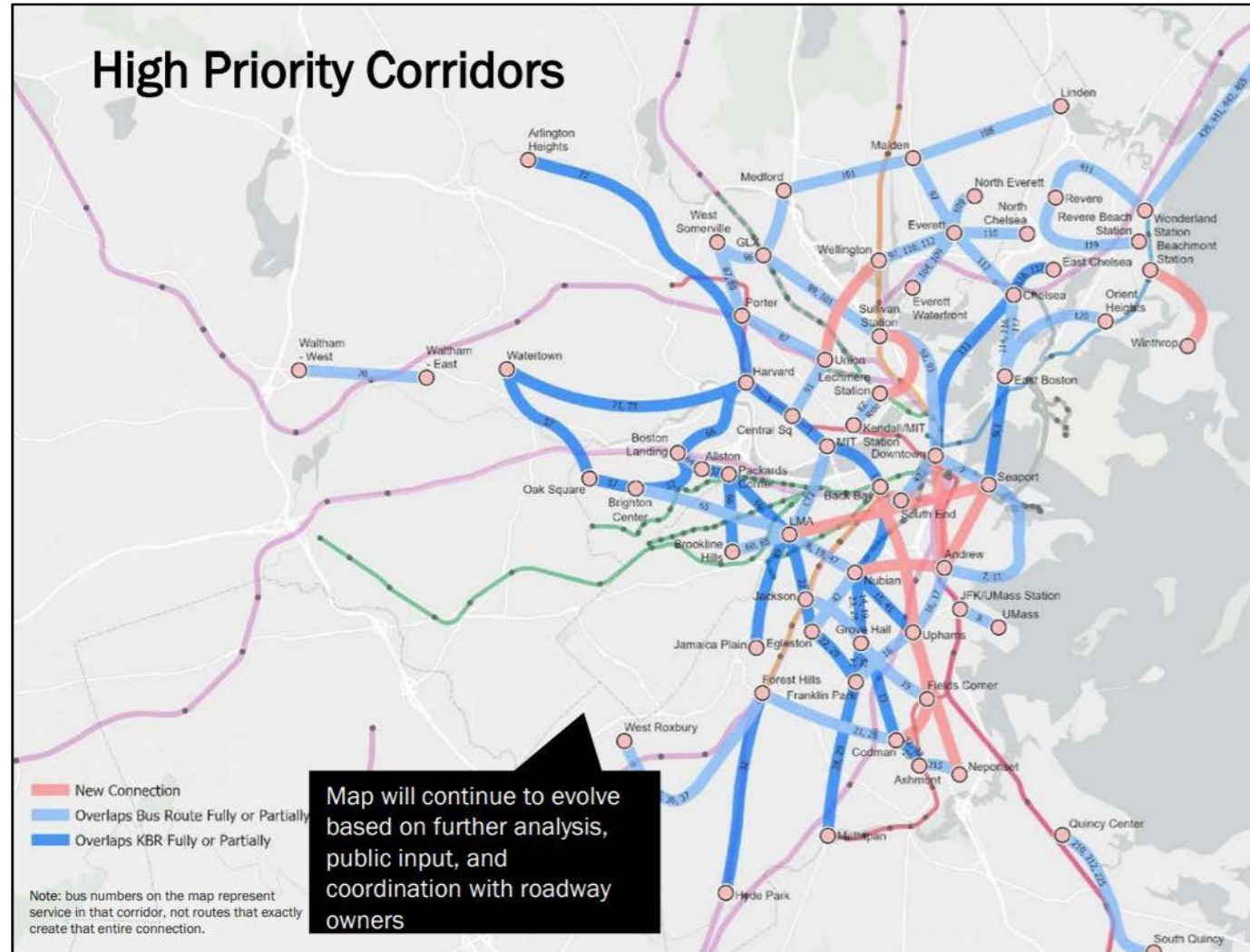
<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/projects/betterbus/documents/mbta-better-bus-project-state-of-the-bus-system-2018-v2.pdf>

<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/projects/betterbus/documents/mbta-better-bus-project-market-analysis-2018.pdf>

<https://www.mbta.com/projects/better-bus-project/update/bus-route-profiles-now-available>

Bus Network Planning (6 of 9)

Bus Network Redesign is currently focused on "high-priority corridors" (which may or may not have current bus transit).



The High Priority Corridors help prioritize investments

- These would not all be implemented at once, and we can prioritize based on value (cost/benefit) of each corridor to the network
- These corridors would provide better service for transit critical populations since the analysis prioritizes travel made by communities of color and low-income populations
- Many of the corridors that show up here are corridors that have retained ridership during COVID and are part of the service being preserved (79% of essential service routes)
- The current transit priority work supports build out of this vision

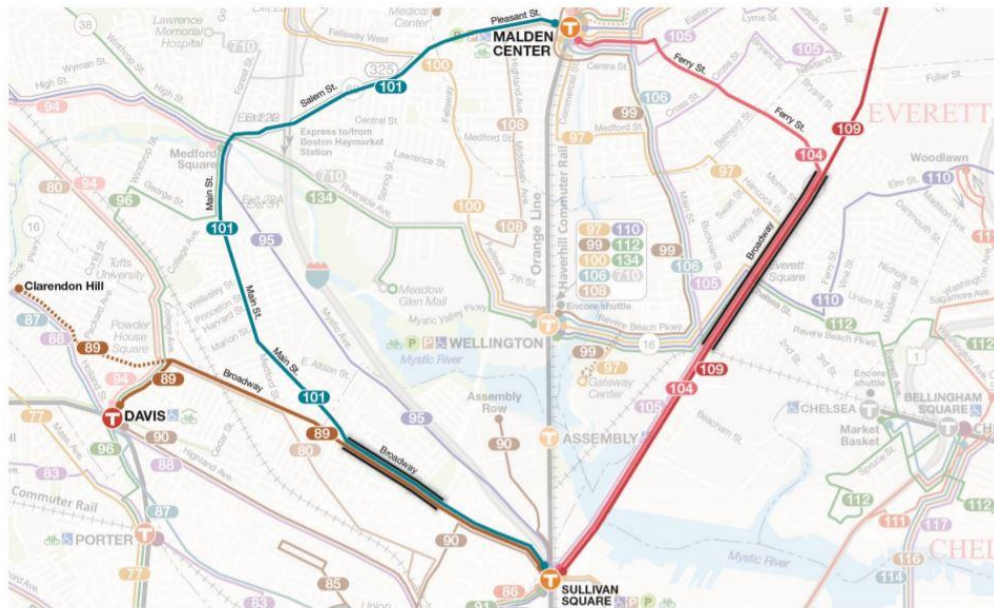
Bus Network Planning (7 of 9)

Pre-pandemic, MBTA had proposed a \$1m+ investment in Somerville's Broadway corridor to leverage our all-day bus lane.

Bus Network Redesign

PROJECT 2

Demonstration Project Proposal: Broadway High Frequency Corridors



Purpose and Need

- **89/101** and **104/109** both have bus lanes on major sections of Broadway (Somerville and Everett, respectively), which have sped up buses for riders
- Opportunity to create rapid transit-like experience along major corridors by actively regulating headways along trunk section of routes with bus lanes
- These strategies help us test operational feasibility, technical tools (such as the bus dispatch tool), cost, and impacts of strategies which could be scaled up to other parts of the network
- Opportunity to show commitment from the MBTA to improve service where city partners have made transit priority investments

Project Idea

All day frequency on Broadway bus lanes (in Everett and Somerville)

- “KBR” frequency on trunk sections of Broadway in Somerville and Everett where there is a bus lane
- Hire inspectors to manage more even headways and use newly developed dispatching software
- Improve bus stop amenities

Benefits

- **10 min peak frequency** on Broadway trunks
- **15-20 min off-peak frequency** on Broadway trunks
- Improves trip time, reliability, frequency, and span
- Use new dispatching software and strategies

<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/2019-12/2019-12-09-fmcb-l-bus-network-redesign-accessible.pdf>

Bus Network Planning (8 of 9)

MBTA "Forging Ahead" budget cuts proposed to short-circuit the Bus Network Redesign process (community advocacy helped avoid this for now).

Appendix: All bus routes with major structural changes or eliminations

Consolidated Routes	Restructured routes (shortened)	Eliminated routes			
		Within ¼ mile of bus or rapid transit	High transit critical, very low ridership, redundant options available on portion of most routes	Low transit critical, low ridership)	
62 & 76	553	43	18	52	505
84 & 78	554	55	170	72	710
88 & 90 (w/ GLX)	556	68	221	79	714
214 & 216	558	80 (w/ GLX)	428	131	Suburban subsidies
352 & 354	230	325	434	136	
501 & 503		326	716	212	
502 & 504		456		351	
Restructured & consolidated routes will continue to operate, but stop at midnight and with lower frequency				451	
				465	



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

November 23, 2020

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
Fiscal and Management Control Board
10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA

Mr. Chairman, Madame Secretary, honorable members of the Board and staff,

My name is Joe Curtatone, and I serve as Mayor of the City of Somerville.

My comments on your financial crisis to date have focused on regional solidarity, and I will continue to work on behalf of my peers and neighbors.

Because Chelsea's success is Somerville's success.

Quincy's need is Somerville's need.

It remains the City's position that MassDOT and the MBTA are being forced into premature, damaging and unique austerity measures compared with other state agencies and other essential public services.

We reiterate our call for the Massachusetts Legislature to deliver emergency funding to the T to address the urgent and overlapping crises of public health, social equity, economic recovery and climate change.

But today my comments primarily address local issues in my city.

Somerville has embodied the municipal partnership this Board describes as essential to success at the T.

The City began delivering dedicated bus lanes on local streets in 2017.

In 2018 Somerville supported the MBTA to implement the highest number of Better Bus Phase 1 service changes of any municipality.



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Bus Network Planning – Ideas for Next Steps (9 of 9)

Spring 2021: City will begin preparing data / analysis to inform local community outreach & planning

Spring 2021: Recommend follow-up discussion with PTAC (potentially inviting MBTA program staff to participate)

Summer 2021: Deliver more bus priority projects!

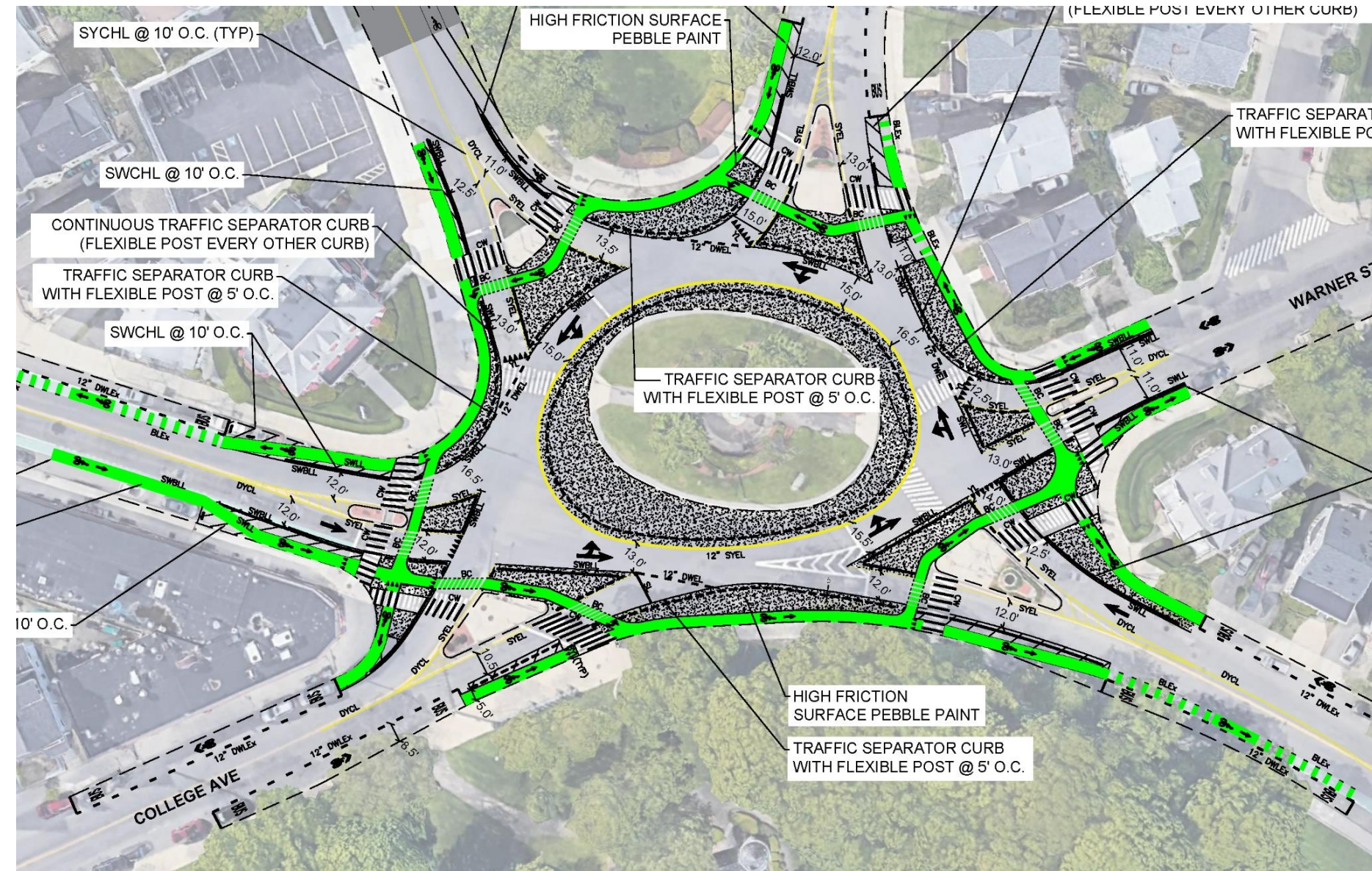
Summer/Fall 2021: Outreach, engagement, and scenario planning

Fall 2021: Formal push on public comment and advocacy to MBTA

Holland/College Update

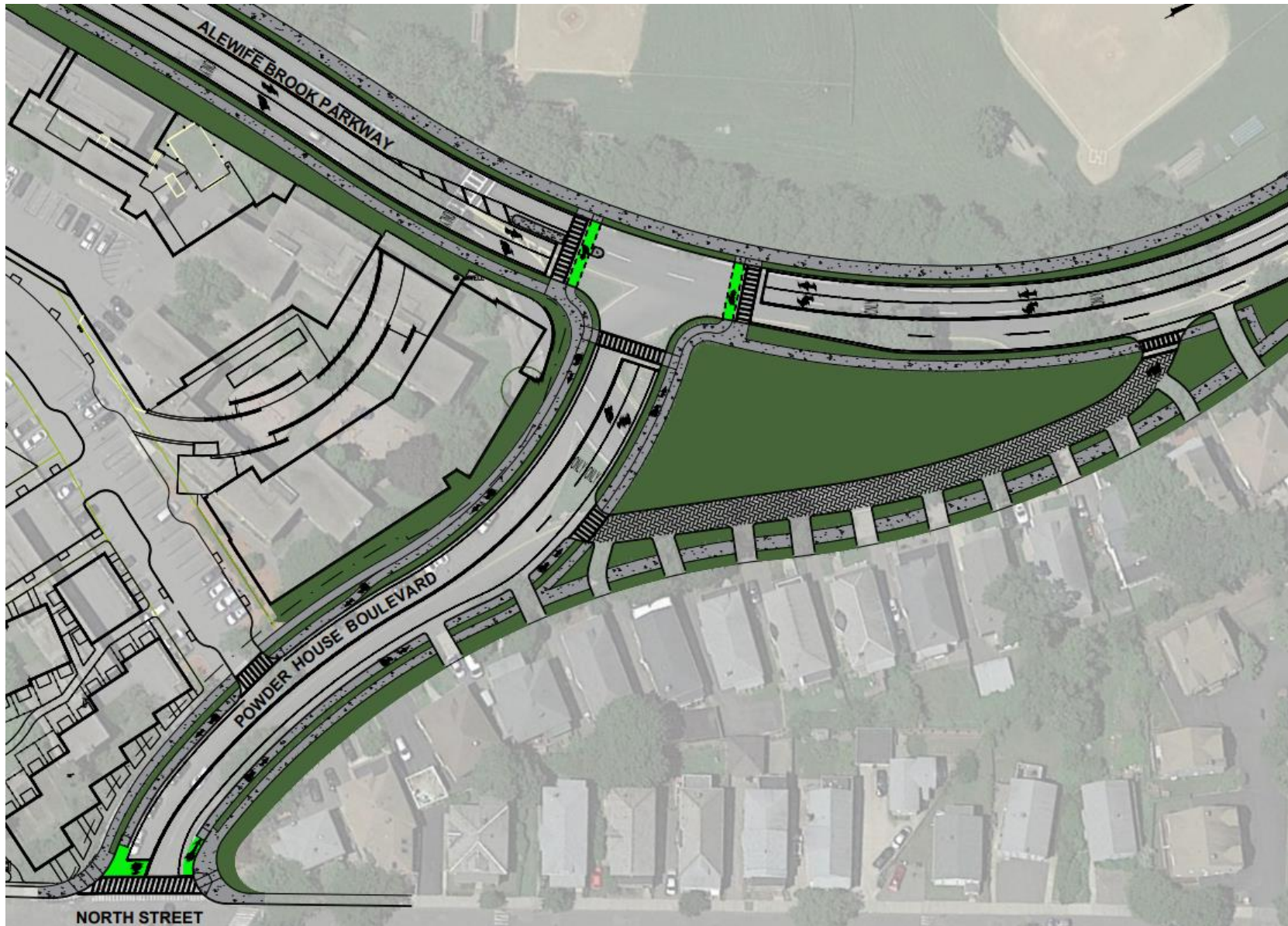
- The bidding of CY2021 resurfacing contract has ended; bids are under evaluation by the Engineering Division.
- Construction expected to begin at end of April / early May at Powder House, move toward Davis, and then toward Teele. Phase 1 avoids sidewalk reconstruction abutting most businesses.
- While College Ave will be under full scale resurfacing this year, start of construction on Holland St in 2021 is dependent on pace of contractor, weather, and other constraints. There is potential for late 2021 or early 2022 start on Holland.
- Focus now is finalizing pedestrian improvements added to scope so they can reach completion with the onset of construction. Review by PTAC Engineering Committee will need to be especially swift, toward the end of March.
- Continuing stakeholder conversations on final pavement markings and curbside parking regulations.

Powder House Circle



- Key project elements:
 - Single circulating travel lane
 - Traffic signals turned off (no center crossing)
 - Continuous protected bike lanes around circle
 - Significantly shorter pedestrian crossings
- Implementation planned for July
 - Procurement and bid planning underway

Powder House Blvd at Route 16 (Conceptual Design)



- **3 lane cross section on Alewife Brook Pkwy**
- **Large new green space**
- **Powder House Blvd**
 - Protected bike lanes
 - Vertical traffic calming
 - Shortened crossing distances
- **Residential access road**
 - Raised crosswalks
 - Narrow, shared residential street design - 'woonerf'

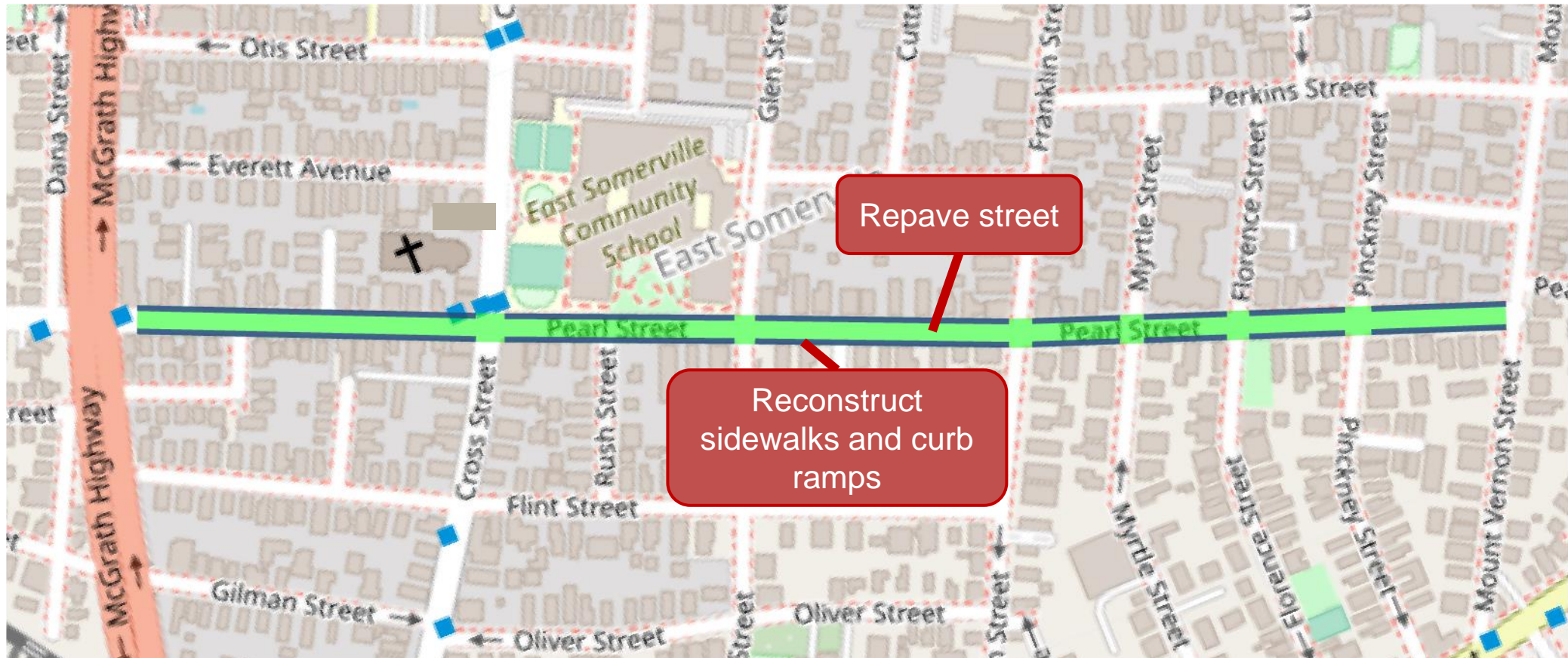
City Social Media: IAM (Infrastructure & Asset Mgt)

- IAM: Engineering is now posting updates on Twitter: **@SomervilleInfr1**
- Direct link: <https://twitter.com/SomervilleInfr1>
- On the ground updates, progress photos, ribbon cuttings, and more!



Pearl St Reconstruction - Project Overview

Project Scope:



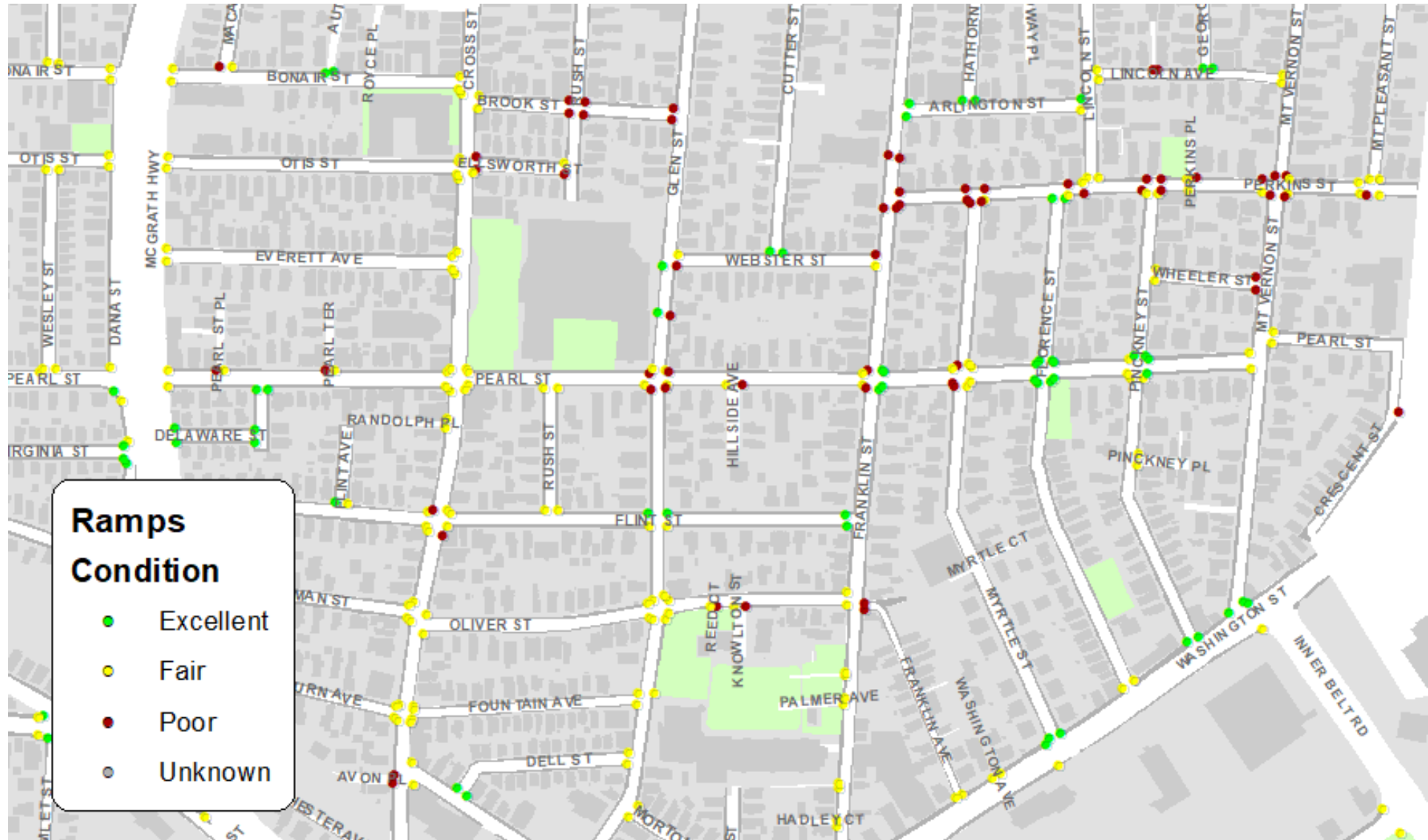
- **Limit of Work:** Pearl St from McGrath Hwy to Mt Vernon St
- **IAM Scope:** Construct accessible sidewalks/ramps, repave street (seen above)
- **Mobility Scope:** Traffic calming, pedestrian & bike safety improvements (TBD)

Previous Work / Project Impetus

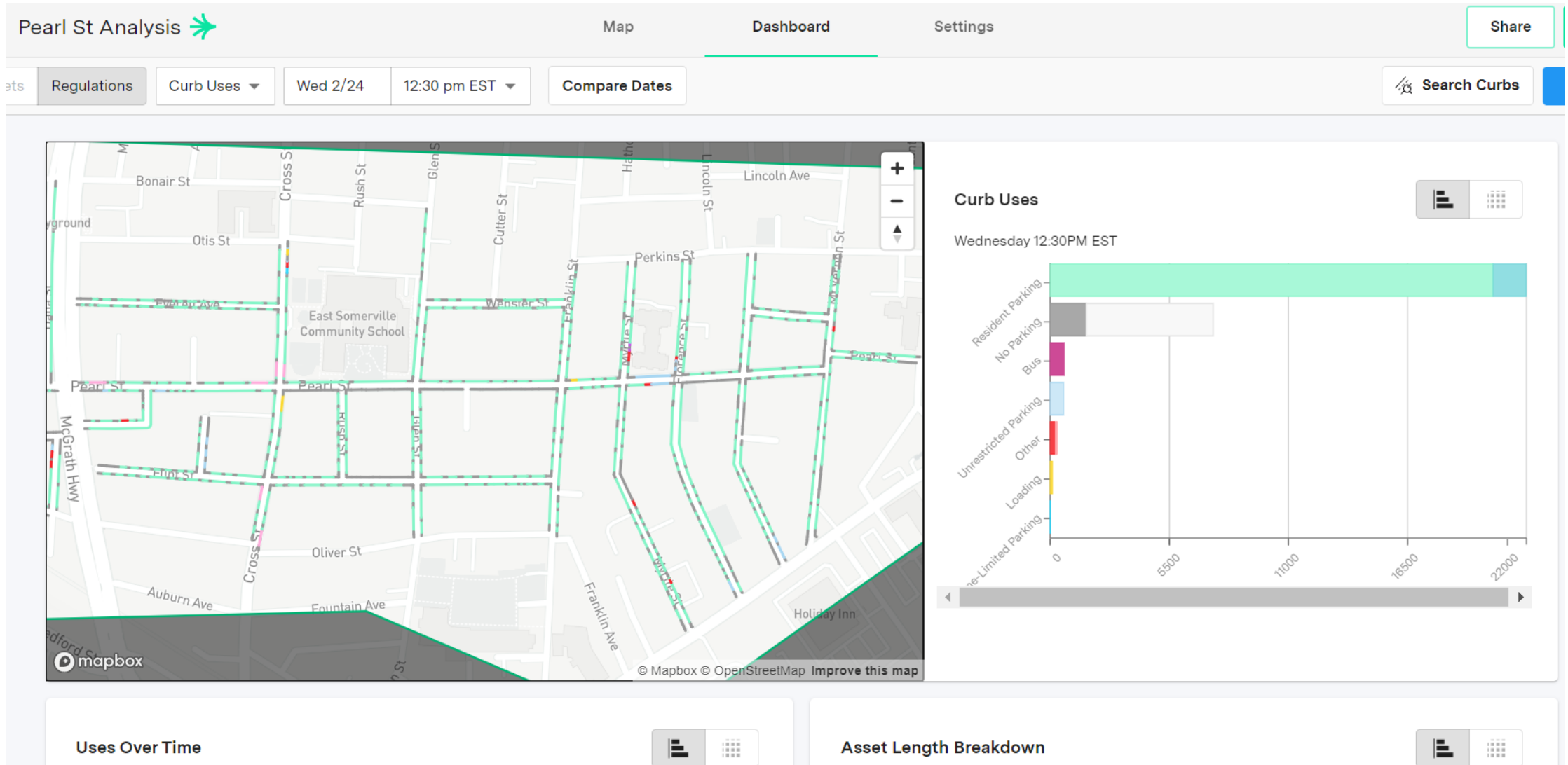
- Thanks to improved coordination with private utility companies and better internal workflows, the city can more closely follow the “dig once” philosophy.
- In the context of Pearl St, this means that necessary gas and water main upgrades have been made in advance of final paving to allow the new concrete sidewalks and asphalt roadway to remain untouched for as long as possible



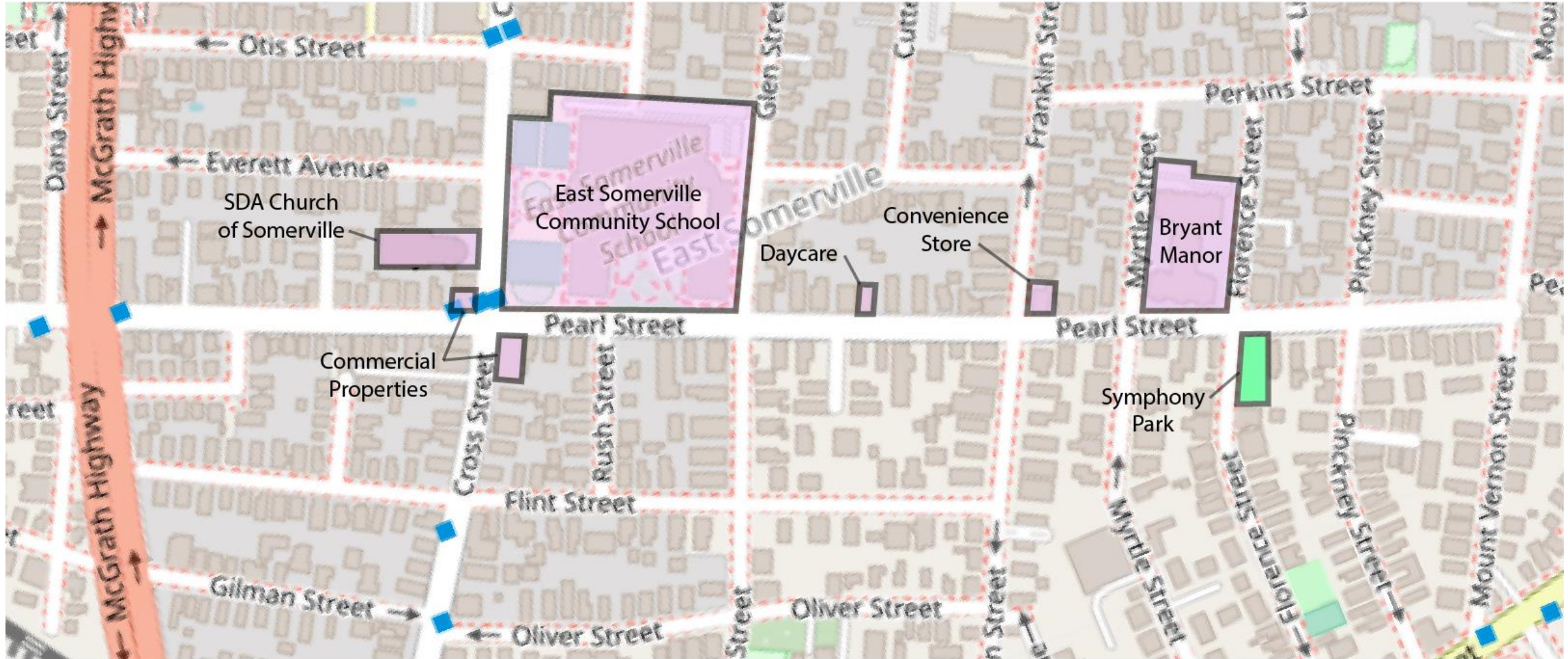
Existing Conditions: Curb Ramp Inventory



Existing Conditions: Curb Use Inventory



Existing Conditions: Notable Neighborhood Land Uses



Existing Conditions: Corridor Map



Proposed Conditions: Option A



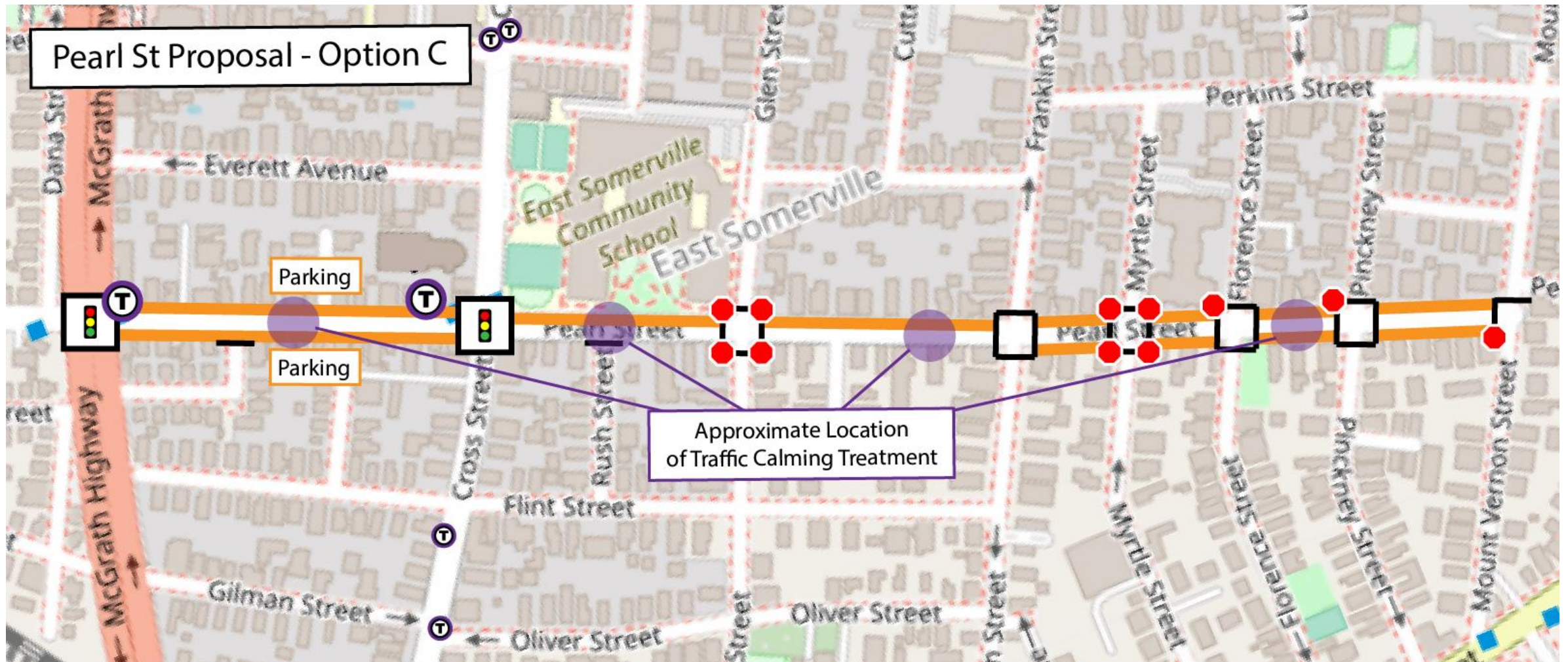
- Traffic calming along full length of corridor
- Protected bike lanes in both directions between McGrath Hwy and Cross St
- Curbside parking restricted on both sides of street between McGrath Hwy and Cross St

Proposed Conditions: Option B



- Traffic calming along full length of corridor
- Protected bike lane in one direction between McGrath Hwy and Cross St
- Curbside parking restricted on one side of street between McGrath Hwy and Cross St

Proposed Conditions: Option C



- Traffic calming along full length of corridor
- No bike lanes between McGrath Hwy and Cross St
- No curbside parking restrictions between McGrath Hwy and Cross St

Additional Considerations

- The proposed options shown do not represent the full spectrum of potential improvements along this corridor, and feedback from stakeholders this month will help inform additional options to consider as we work towards a preferred concept.
- Conversations around specific changes to curb regulations, such as adding more loading zones or accessible spaces, have not begun yet. However, preferences for what those regulations should accommodate are welcome now and will be considered as design progresses.
- McGrath Highway between Broadway and Third St is expected to be resurfaced and have curb ramps upgraded this summer, which will improve both the safety and accessibility at the McGrath/Pearl St intersection.

Next Steps

- Outreach
 - Expecting to launch a SomerVoice page with project info and feedback tools
 - Engaging key stakeholders such as PTAC, Disability Commission, SBAC, MBTA, and School Dept. on design preferences and project opportunities over next few weeks
 - Community meeting currently planned for end of March or early April
- Construction
 - Sidewalk reconstruction is currently expected to begin in late summer or early fall of 2021 and will finish in 2022
 - Repaving will take place in 2022

Other Construction Updates

- Lower Medford
 - Final paving expected mid to late April
 - Pavement markings to follow a few weeks later
 - All curbside parking was reprioritized for street safety (PBL's)
- Somerville Avenue (SAUSI)
 - Construction has now restarted
 - Contractor working on final curb realignments and some repairs
 - Substantial completion of Prospect to Webster portion possible this spring
- Central Hill Construction
 - Somerville High School officially opened to some students on 3/4. Construction continues on the auditorium and Central Hill Park, expected completion and on the athletic field, expected completion spring 2022.
 - Central Hill Playground construction began 3/15, expected completion Fall 2021. The Park and Playground are the site of Somerville's [first public park](#).
 - Phase 1 Central Hill Campus construction is on hold until further notice and Phase 2 Central Hill Campus technical design is not scheduled at the moment, but will work in tandem with the renovations to City Hall and the 1895 building projects. [More background is available on the project website.](#)