



City Update May 2025 PTAC Meeting



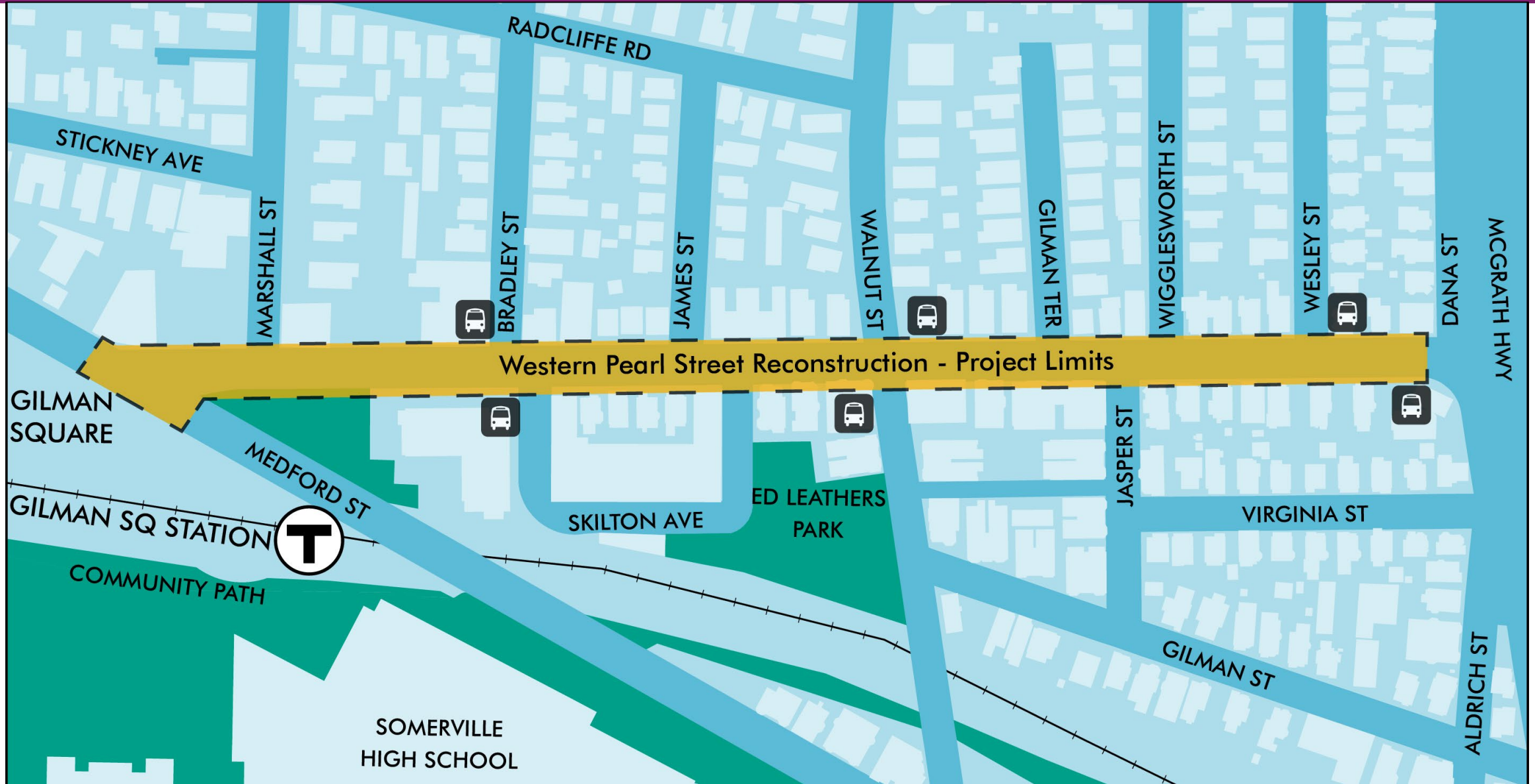
Agenda

- Western Pearl Street Reconstruction




Above: Pearl Street near Marshall St


Project Limits





What is included?


Included

 Reconstruction of sidewalks and curb ramps


 Repaving of street from curb to curb


 New tree plantings and landscaped areas


 New and raised crosswalks/intersections


 Traffic calming

 Traffic signal evaluation


 Designated bicycle facilities


 Bus stop changes

 Changes to lane widths


 Increased visibility at crossings

Under Consideration


 Parking regulation changes


 Traffic calming on nearby streets

Not Included

 Substantial utility work

 Street lighting

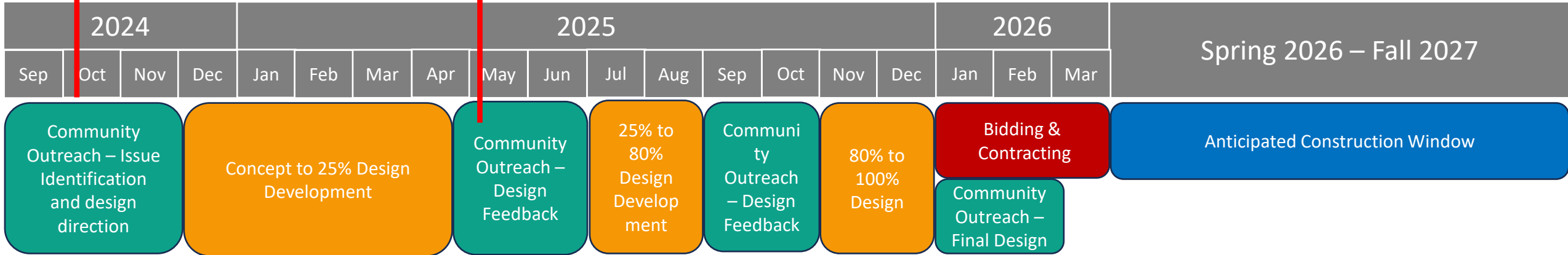
 Network redesign (one-waying of streets)

 Green stormwater infrastructure

Anticipated Project Timeline

Kickoff Community Meeting, Oct. 9

We are here



Intersection Specific Feedback



Pearl Street at Medford Street

- Reduce frequent speeding.
- Increase stop sign compliance.
- Create a safe crossing across Medford Street as its a common desired crossing.
- Low crosswalk yielding compliance across Pearl Street.
- Low visibility for people driving.
- Requests for a flashing crosswalk sign (rectangular rapid flashing beacon) or traffic light.



Pearl Street at Walnut Street


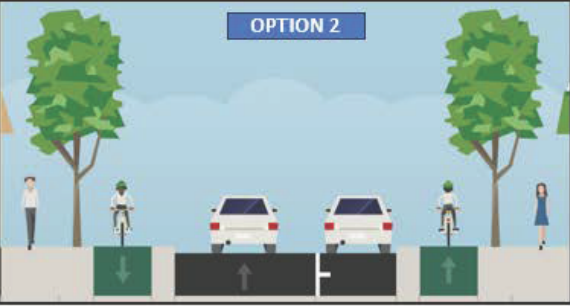
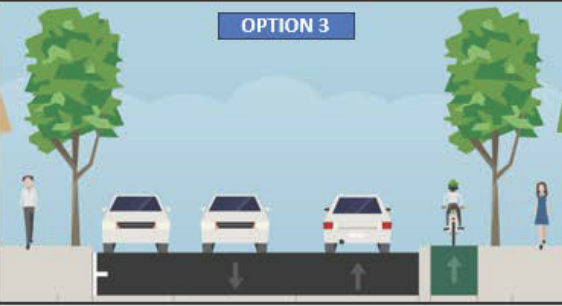
- Request to move crossings closer to the desired path. Currently set back out of desired path.
- Request for a raised intersection.
- Concern about aggressive driving behavior at this location and lots of red light running.
- Desire to maintain traffic signal as they feel more comfortable having children cross at signalized crosswalk.



Pearl Street at Marshall Street

- Concern about vehicles not yielding to pedestrians in crossing across Pearl Street.
- Concern about motor vehicles sitting on crosswalk across Marshall Street paying more attention to oncoming vehicles than pedestrians.
- Requests for flashing crosswalk sign.
- Requests for raised crosswalk.
- Visibility concerns for all users of the street.
- Critical crossing used by High School Students

Design Direction Feedback

OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advantages<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides safe bike options in both directions• Meets the Bike Network Plan vision• Maintains the opportunity to explore longer term Medford Street bridge closure to vehicles as referred to in the Gilman Square Plan implementation• Drawbacks<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No curbside parking or loading zones• No opportunity for expanded sidewalks, curb extensions, tree bump-outs or floating bus stops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advantages<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides safe bike options in both directions• Provides opportunity for a flexible zone to construct expanded sidewalks, curb extensions, tree bump-outs, or floating bus stops, and provide some parking• Meets Bike Network Plan vision• Drawbacks<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medford Street bridge closure to vehicles likely no longer possible• Requires a detailed traffic analysis which could recommend needed changes at adjacent streets potentially extending the timeframe for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advantages<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunity for a flexible zone to construct expanded sidewalks, curb extensions, tree bump-outs, or floating bus stops, and provide some parking• Maintains opportunity to explore longer term Medford Street bridge closure for vehicles as referred to in the Gilman Square Plan implementation• Drawbacks<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not meet Bike Network Plan vision• In one direction, there will likely be a longer (maximum of 5 minutes) alternative bike route

We heard support, concerns and questions for each option. In the survey, we had slightly more preference for Option 3. In direct outreach, we tended to hear more support for Option 3 but also advocacy for Option 1.

For more details, check out our Pre-Concept Design Community Engagement Report available at somerlevillema.gov/westernpearl.

Design Direction Feedback

Option 1 Reasons

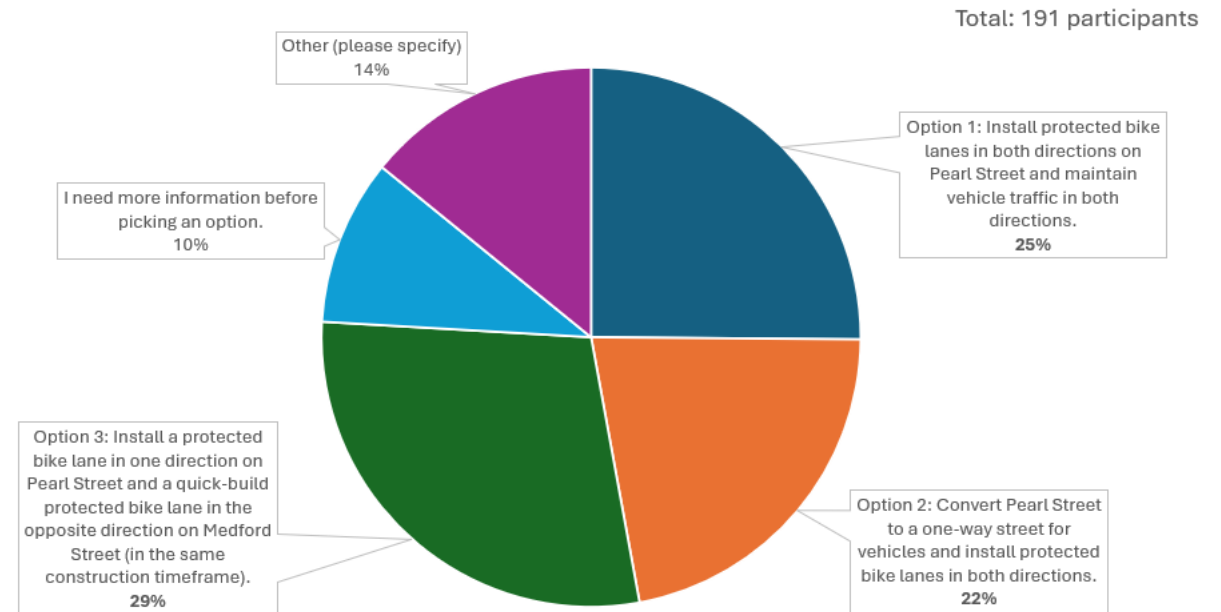
- Fulfilling the commitment in the Bicycle Network Plan and Safe Streets Ordinance.
- Providing bike facilities that ease some of the demand on the community path and connect to future McGrath Boulevard lanes.
- Not wanting to prioritize parking over safety.
- Concern about one-waying the street or removing the option to close Medford Street bridge.

Option 2 Reasons

- Support for one-waying the street to reduce motor vehicle volume
- Being able to have both protected bike lanes and flexible space for curb extensions, bigger bus stops, parking and greenery.
- Support for making the street feel more like a residential street.

Option 3 Reasons

- Concern about no pull over space for deliveries and rideshares encouraging people driving to park on protected bike lanes or block traffic.
- Satisfaction with existing Gilman Street Neighborway biking connection to travel under McGrath Highway so more interested in strengthening that connection.
- Desire to focus on pedestrian improvements with curb extensions and creating more space for plant life.
- Request to maintain parking options for residents, home healthcare workers, and deliveries.
- Wish to maintain two-way motor vehicle traffic to not impede access to homes and emergency services.
- Request for more traffic calming on nearby streets like Marshall Street to increase safety and support bike connectivity.



Design Direction Decision

- We didn't hear a clear consensus or outcry about any of the options.
- Over the past couple of years, we have been able to learn more from other projects where we've removed all parking. We eliminated Option 1 because we feel that providing no curb access on this street creates significant safety issues.
- Regarding one-waying the street, there are many one-ways currently in the neighborhood and we were concerned about residents and service providers being able to access homes without being forced on to McGrath Highway.
- We also want to meet our goals of improving the experience for all vulnerable road users, people walking, wheeling, and biking. In Option 3, we can achieve better pedestrian experiences and maintain bicycle circulation options using nearby streets.
- **We moved forward with a variation of Option 3 and Option 1, creating two concept designs that include segments of protected bike lanes in one direction and in two directions and parking options.**

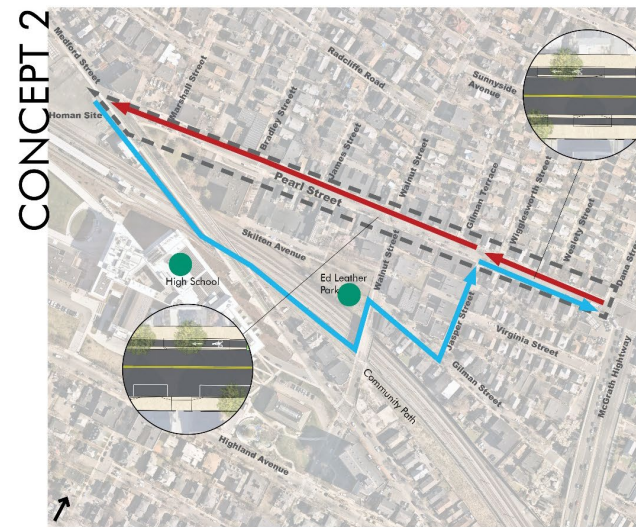
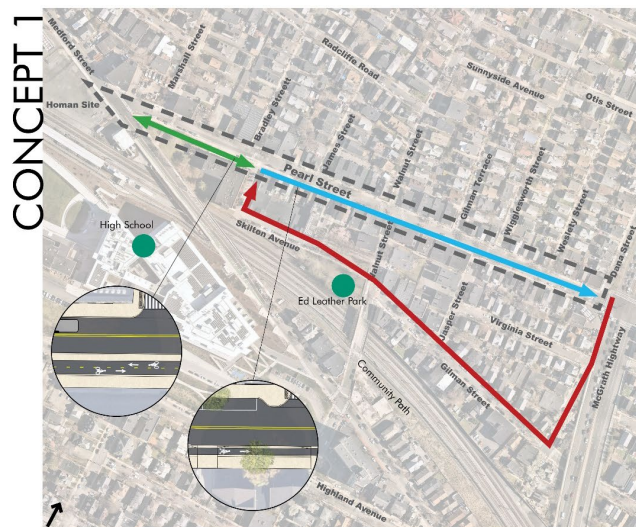


Above: Pearl Street near Bradley Street

Proposed Changes – Big Picture

- Safer intersections and crosswalks
 - Curb extensions for shorter crossing distances
 - Raised crosswalks across side streets
 - Raised crosswalks/intersections across Pearl St at non-signalized locations
- Improved bus stops
 - Removing conflicts with bike lanes at some bus stops
 - Eliminating the need for the bus to pull in and out of the travel lane at some bus stops
- One continuous direction of protected bike lane with some sections of two directions.
 - Nearby streets used to provide safe two-way bike circulation
- One side of on-street parking, similar to existing conditions
 - Curb extensions prevents parking too close to crosswalks intersections
 - Clear corners on side streets preventing parking too close to crosswalks

Bike facilities configuration / circulation



- Legend:
- ← Bicycle Route - Westbound
 - Bicycle Route - Eastbound
 - ↔ Bicycle Route - West- and Eastbound
 - Destinations
 - Limit of Work

Route Comparison

On Pearl Street

Bike Lane Direction

Between Medford Street and Skilton Ave:

two-way on south side

Between Skilton Avenue and McGrath Highway:

one-way eastbound on south side

Street Crossings

4 (Skilton Avenue 2x, Walnut Street, Jasper Street)

Between Jasper Street and McGrath Highway:

one-way eastbound (southside)

one-way westbound (northside)

Between Medford Street and Jasper Street:

one-way westbound on north side

7 (Wesley Street, Wigglesworth Street, Gilman Terrace, Walnut Street, James Street, Bradley Street, Marshall Street)

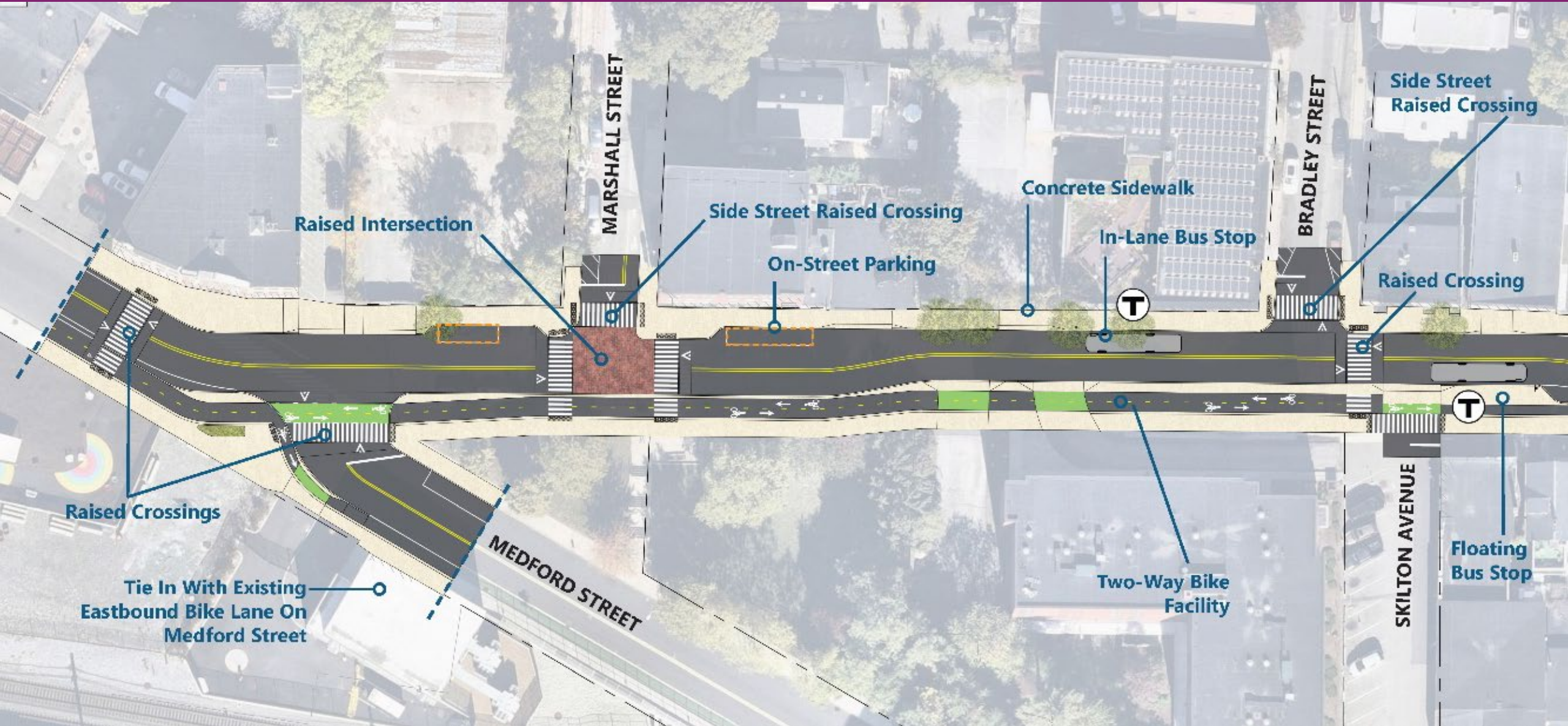
One-Way Non-Pearl Street Alternative Route

Direction	Westbound	Eastbound
Length	0.34 miles	0.34 miles
Slope	fairly flat (2.8% maximum) throughout the entire route	two steep sections: 5.3% up for about 280 ft and 10.6% down for about 185 ft
Number of Crossings	2 Major (McGrath Highway, Walnut Street)	2 Major (Medford Street, Walnut Street)
Number of Turns	4 (McGrath Highway, Gilman Street, Skilton Avenue, Pearl Street)	5 (Community Path, Walnut Street, Gilman Street, Jasper Street, Pearl Street)
Key Connections	1 (Ed Leather Park)	2 (High School - Community Path, Ed Leather Park)

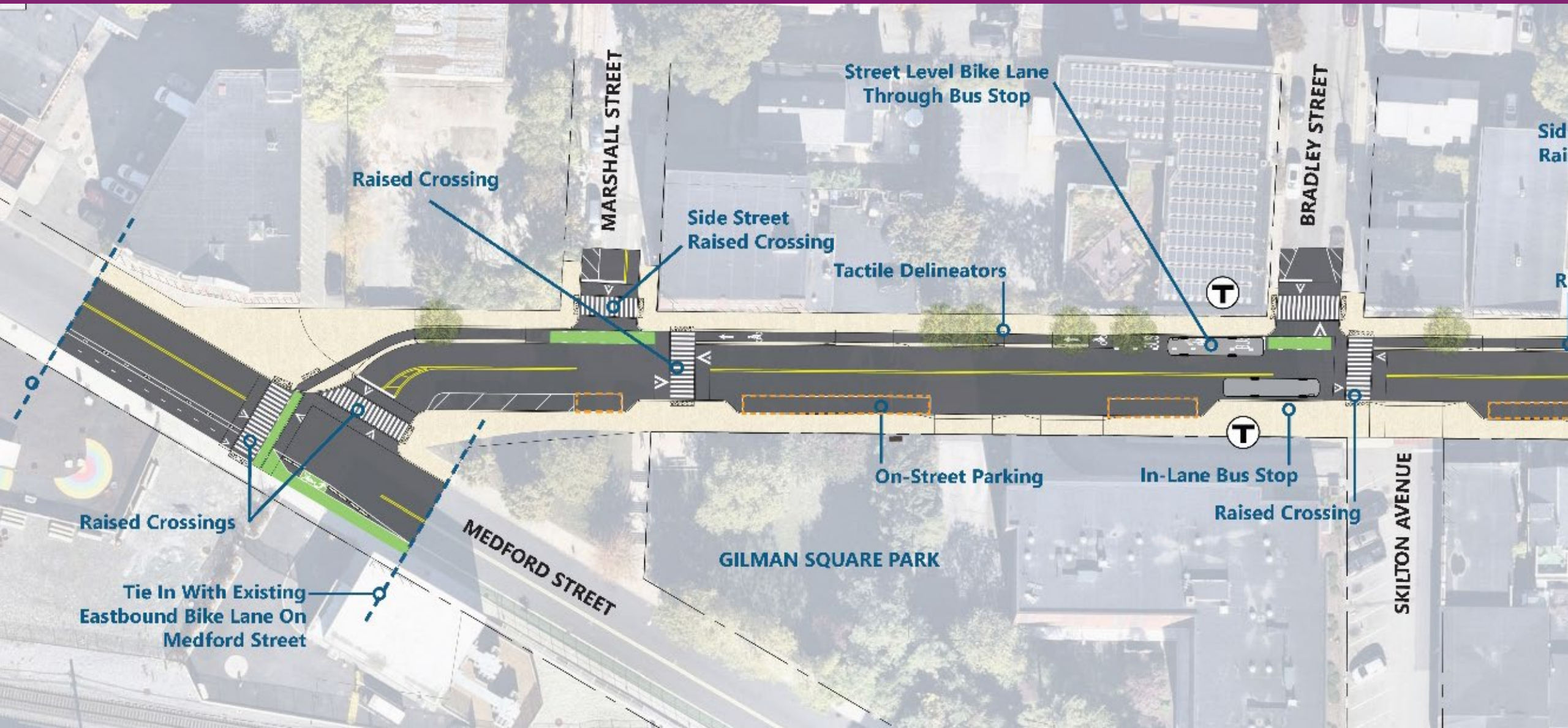
Medford Street to Skilton Avenue - Existing



Medford Street to Skilton Avenue – Proposed Concept 1



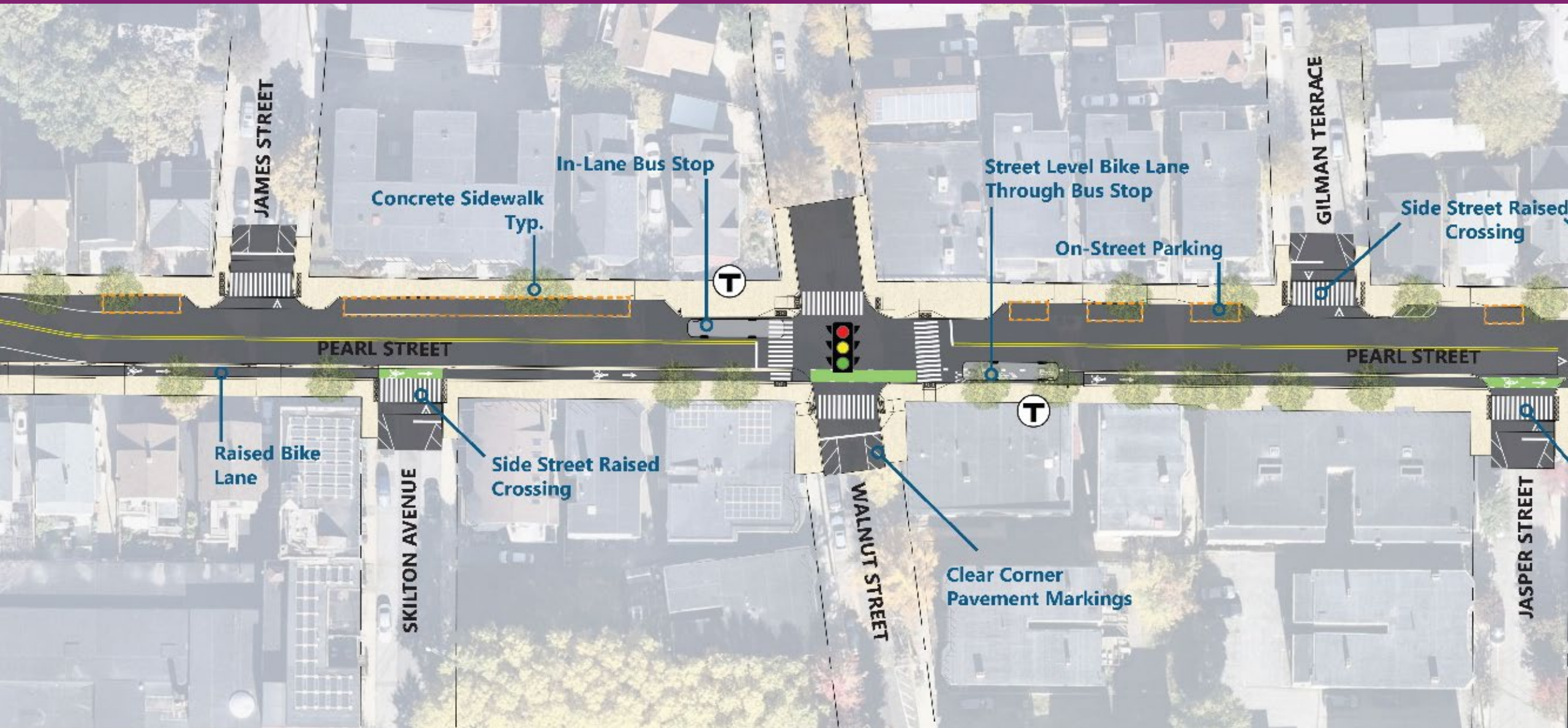
Medford Street to Skilton Avenue – Proposed Concept 2



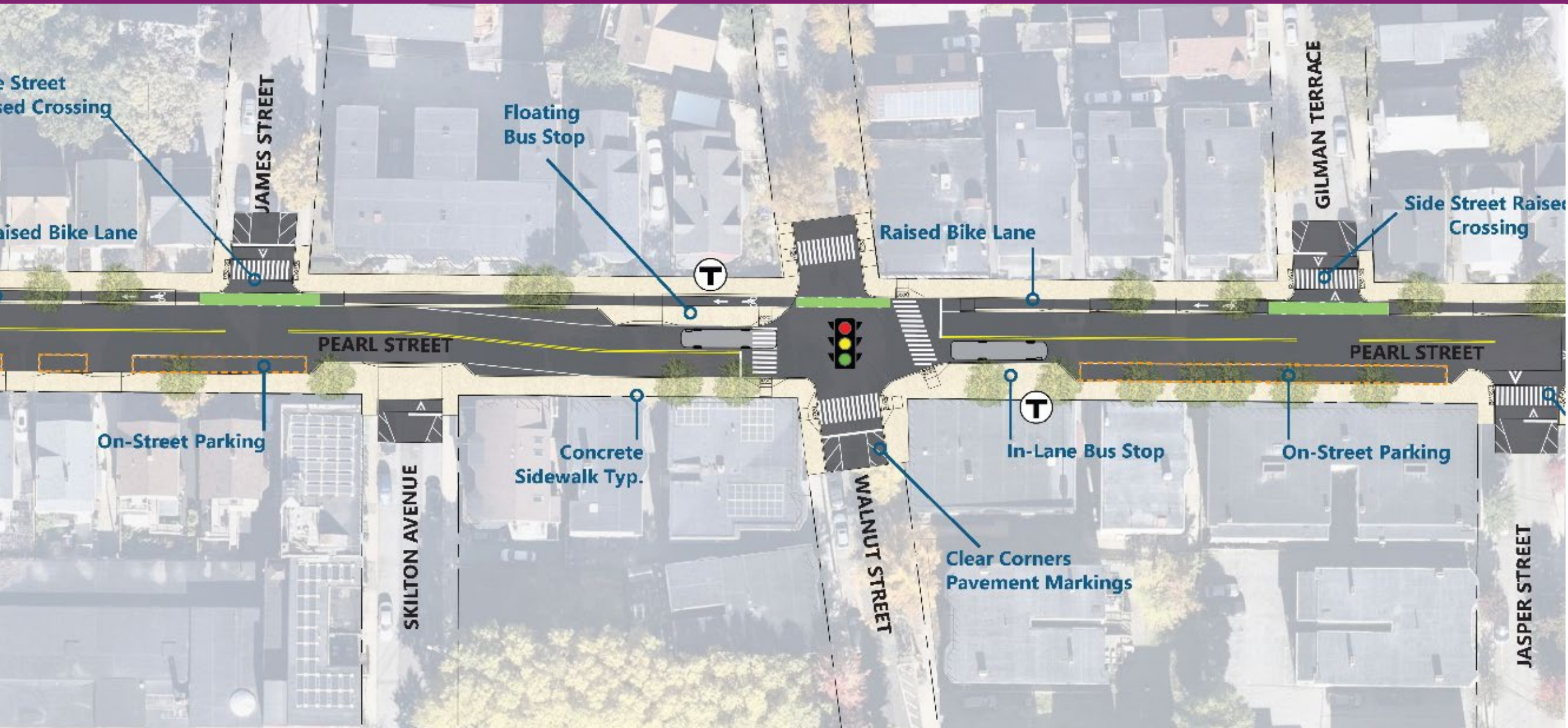
Skilton Avenue to Jasper Street - Existing



Skilton Avenue to Jasper Street – Proposed Concept 1



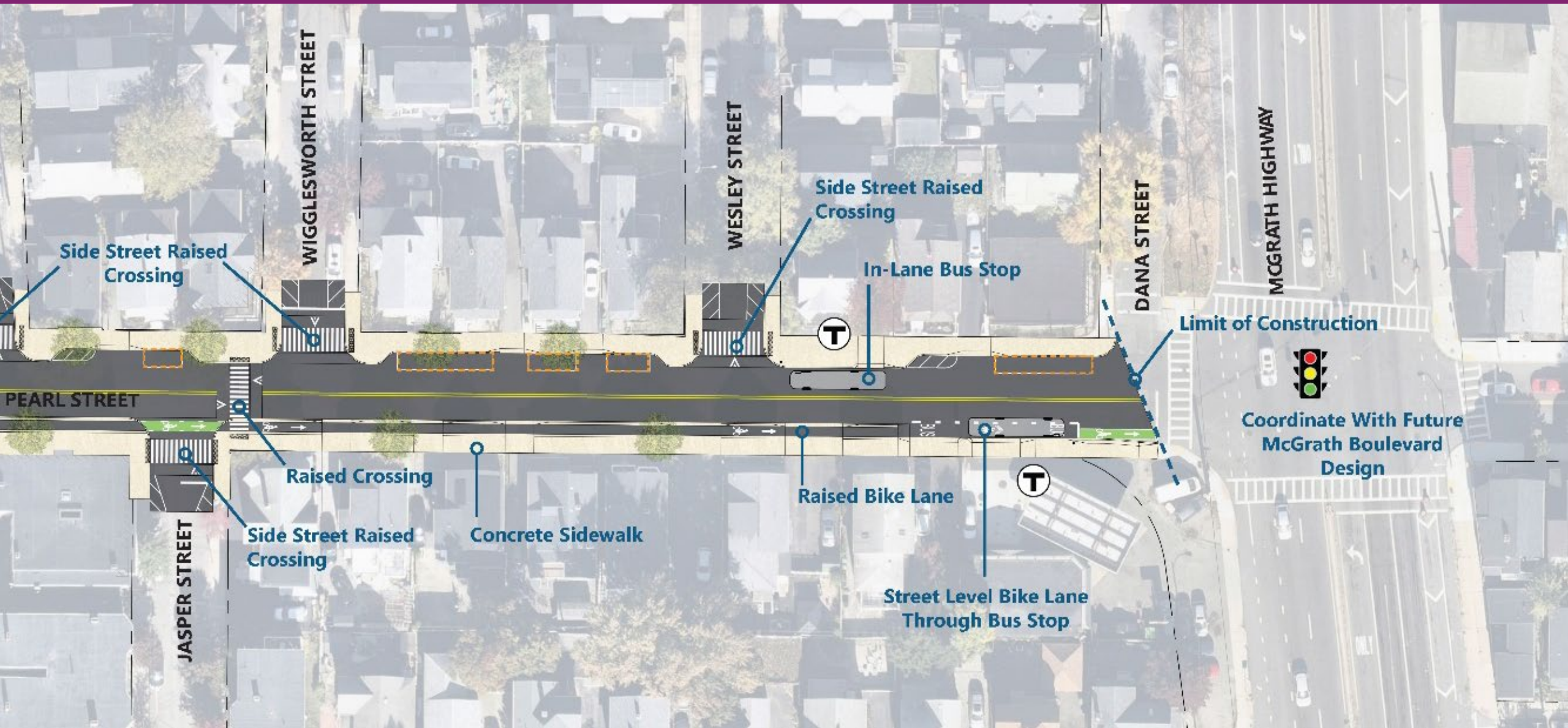
Skilton Avenue to Jasper Street – Proposed Concept 2



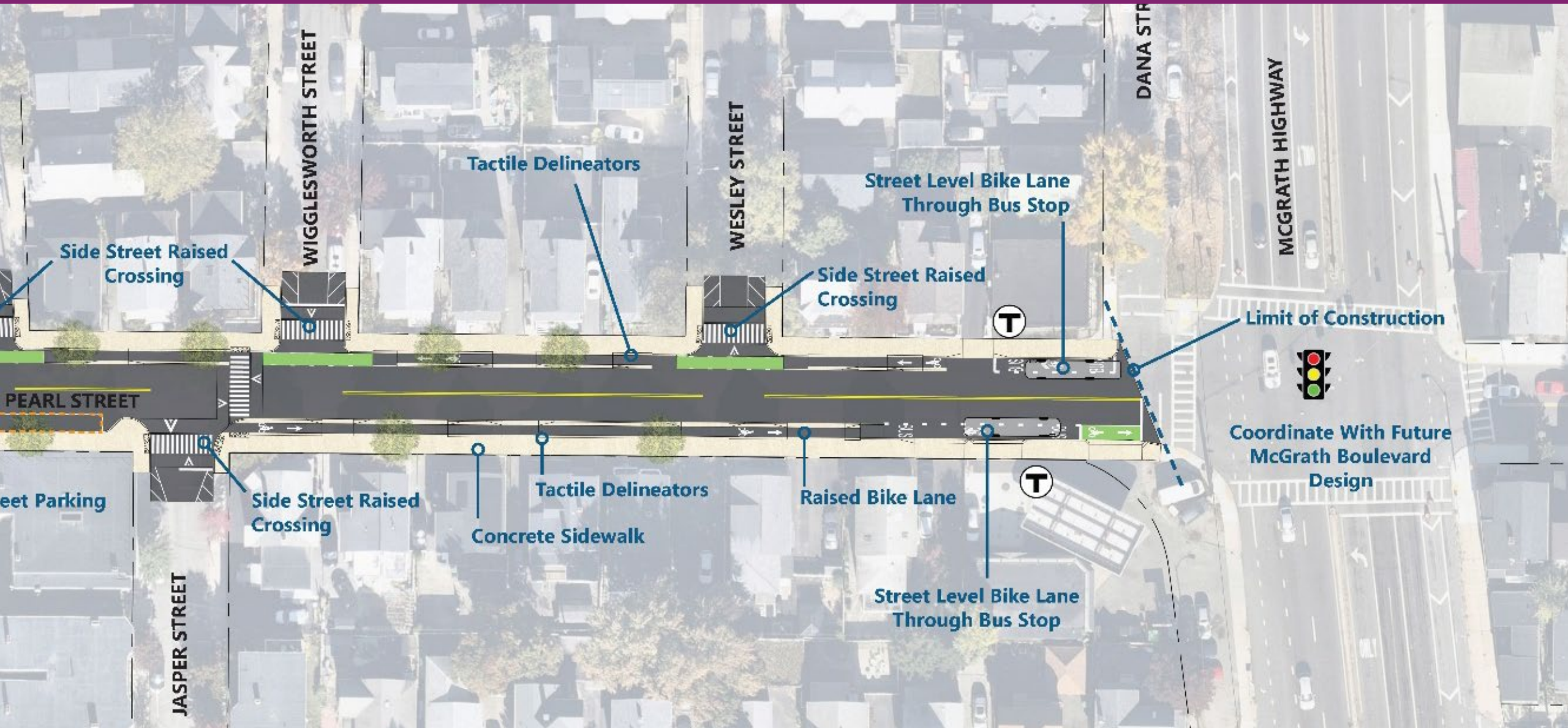
Jasper Street to McGrath Highway - Existing



Jasper Street to McGrath Highway – Proposed Concept 1



Jasper Street to McGrath Highway – Proposed Concept 2



Concept Comparison – Major differences

Concept 1

- One-way **eastbound** bike facility
 - Two-way from Medford Street to Skilton Avenue (two-way on one side)
 - Westbound bike route uses a short section of McGrath Highway, Aldrich Street, and the Gilman Street/Skilton Ave Neighborway to connect to two-way facility on Pearl Street
- Parking located on the **westbound** (north) side.
- Pearl Street at Walnut Street
 - Curb extensions on northwest and northeast side
- Pearl Street at Marshall Street
 - Raised Intersection
- Pearl Street at Medford Street –
 - Medford Street southern block coming from the bridge squared off to intersect with Pearl Street
 - Medford Street northern block coming from Magoun Sq connected to flow into Pearl Street

Concept 2

- One-way **westbound** bike facility
 - Two-way from Jasper Street McGrath Highway (one on each side)
 - Eastbound bike route uses Medford Street, Community Path, Walnut Street, Gilman Street, and Jasper Street to connect to two-way facility on Pearl Street
- Parking located on the **eastbound** (south) side.
- Pearl Street at Walnut Street
 - Curb extensions on northwest and southeast side
- Pearl Street at Marshall Street
 - Raised Crosswalks
- Pearl Street at Medford Street –
 - Pearl Street squared off to intersect with Medford Street

Additional Engagement Opportunities



- Concept design feedback survey:
 - Available on the project webpage at www.somervillema.gov/westernpearl and in English, Spanish, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese.
 - If you prefer to take it over the phone, please call 311 (617-666-3311) to submit a request and we will call you back.
- Events:
 - Visit our street outreach pop-up on May 19 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the intersection of Pearl Street and Medford Street.
 - Visit our table at Carnaval on June 1 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Virtual office hours:
 - Available via zoom on May 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and June 11 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.