



Western Pearl Street Reconstruction

Traffic Commission – Information Presentation

January 15, 2026

Project website: www.somervillema.gov/westernpearl

Mayor Jake Wilson

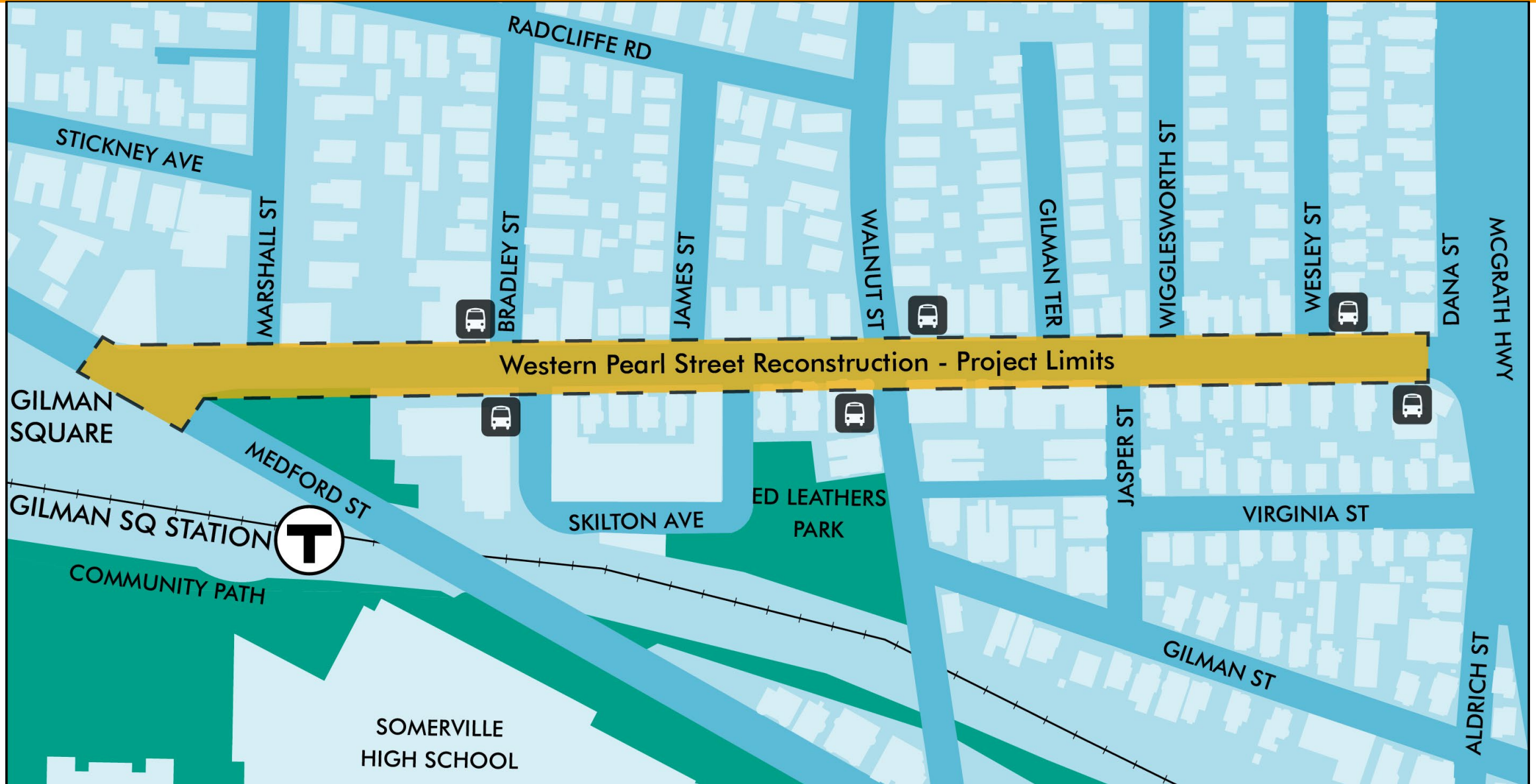
Mobility Division | Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development | City of Somerville

Ward 4 Councilor Jesse Clingan | Ward 1 Councilor Matt McLaughlin

Project Background



Limit of Work



Project Foundations

Guiding values:

- Keeping people safe on our streets
- Improving access to public transit
- Creating more sustainable transportation options for people

Guiding plans:

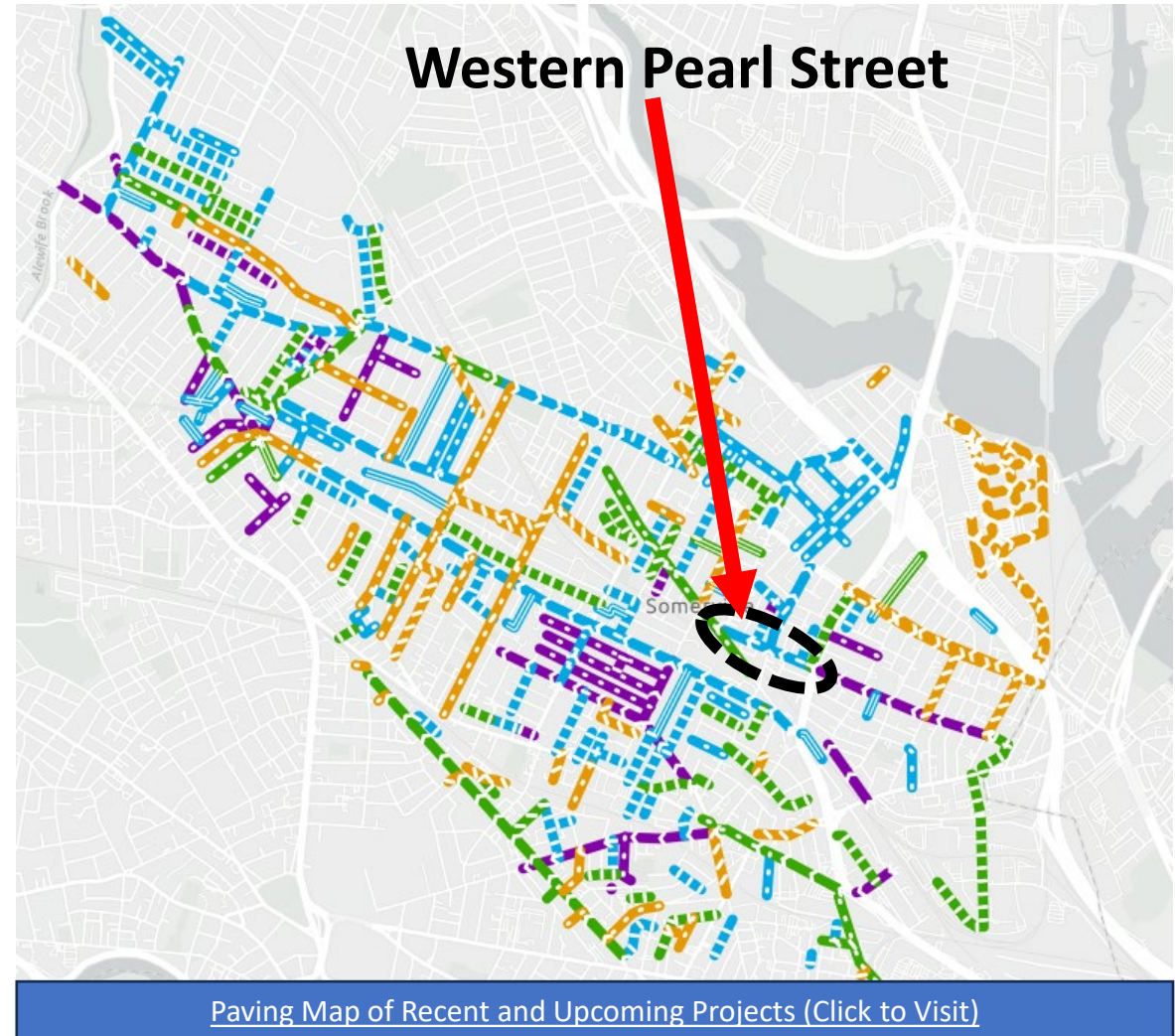
- SomerVision (2021) - Somerville's comprehensive plan for community development
- Climate Forward (2024) - Decarbonizing our transportation system
- ADA Transition Plan (2013) - Making our streets accessible to everyone
- Bicycle Network Plan (2023) - Enabling people to get around safely by bike
- Vision Zero Action Plan (2022) - Preventing death and serious injury on our streets

These plans and values are further codified by the Complete Streets Ordinance (2014) and Safe Streets Ordinance (2024)



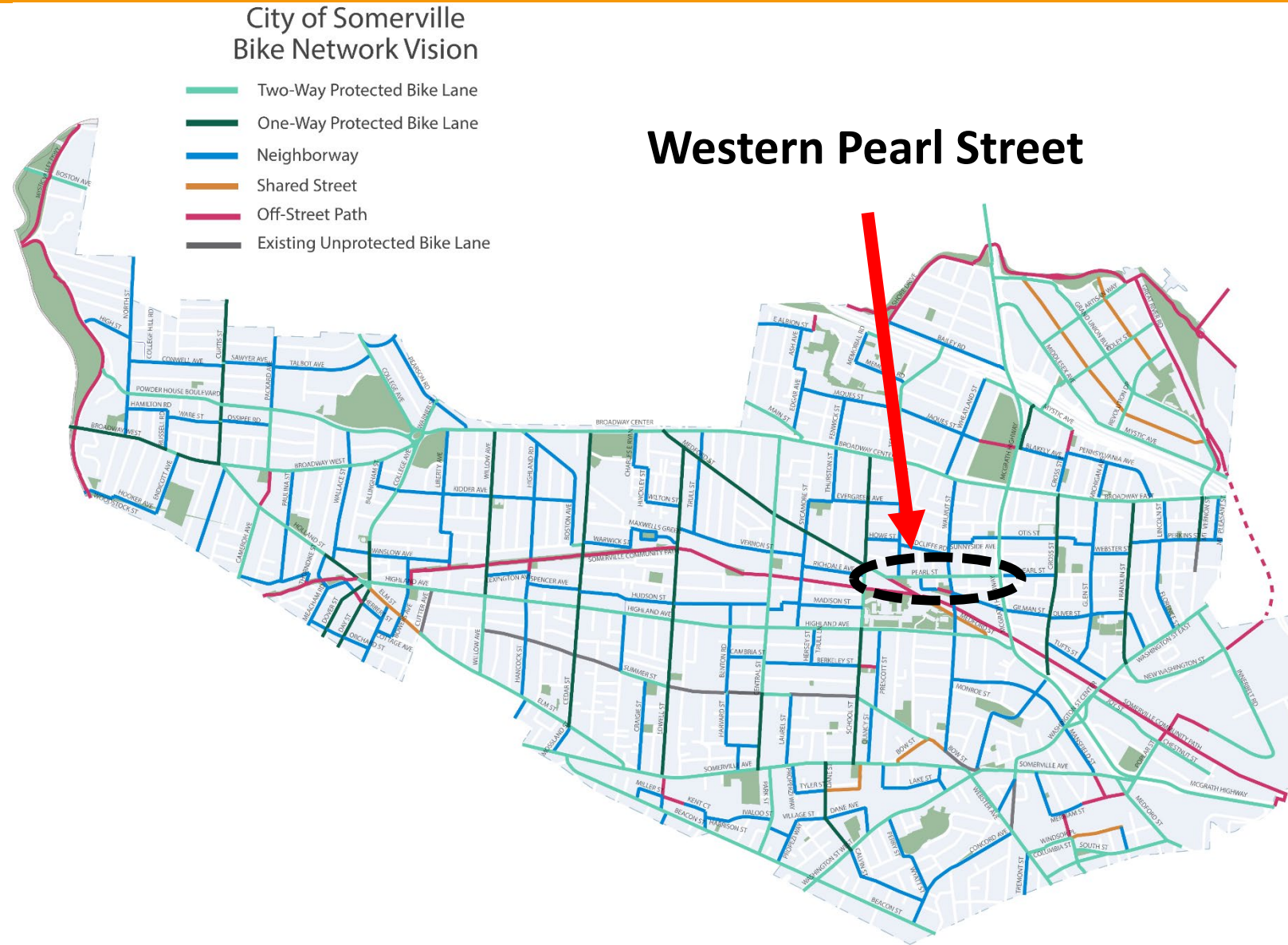
Pavement and Sidewalk Management Program

- [Data-driven pavement management program](#) to maintain and improve our roadways and sidewalks managed by Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM)
- Selected streets are categorized by project type:
 - Complete Street and Intersection Projects
 - Full Street Projects
 - Sidewalk Only Projects
 - Curb to Curb Paving Projects
 - Partial Paving Projects
- **Western Pearl Street is designated in the paving program to be reconstructed as a Complete Street.**



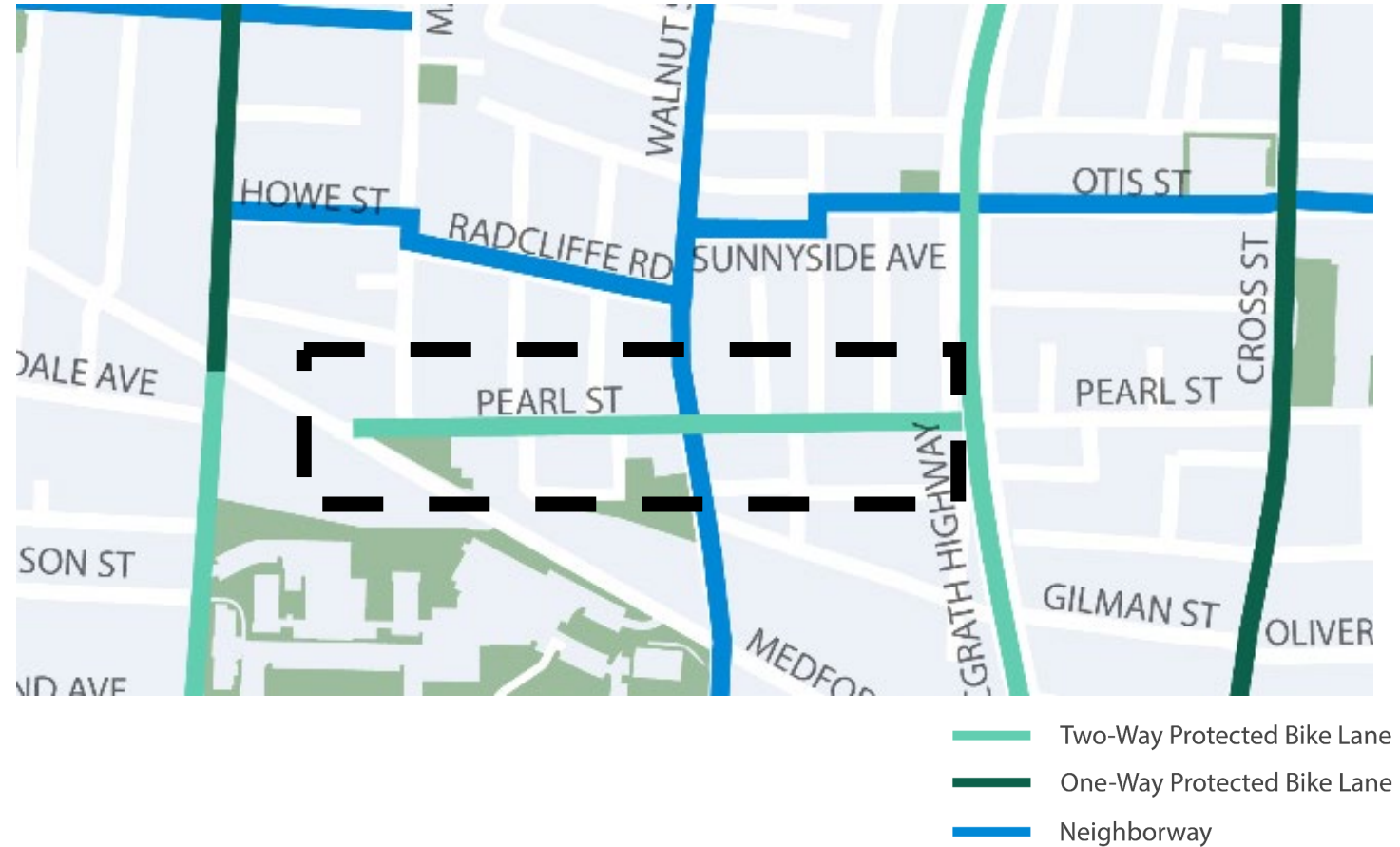
Somerville Bicycle Network Plan

- The plan aims to provide a connected network for people of all ages and abilities to bike safely and comfortably across the City.
- The plan was further codified by the City Council's recent Safe Streets Ordinance in 2024.
- The Bicycle Network Plan designates Western Pearl St for protected bike lanes in both directions and to be implemented by 2030.
- Due to the narrow width of this segment of Pearl Street, providing two-way bike lanes would either require removing all parking or one-waying the street.



Somerville Bicycle Network Plan

- In the Fall of 2024, we asked community members to share their thoughts on either of these options (removing all parking or one-waying the street), or consider a third, where we provide only one direction of protected bike lane and maintain two-way travel and one side of parking.
- In the Spring of 2025, we presented two design options with
 - One continuous direction of protected bike lane with some sections of two directions
 - Two different options for two-way bike circulation using other neighborhood streets.
- In the fall of 2026, we presented an updated design:
 - one continuous direction of protected bike lane with some sections of two directions
 - A neighborway connection to enable two way circulation



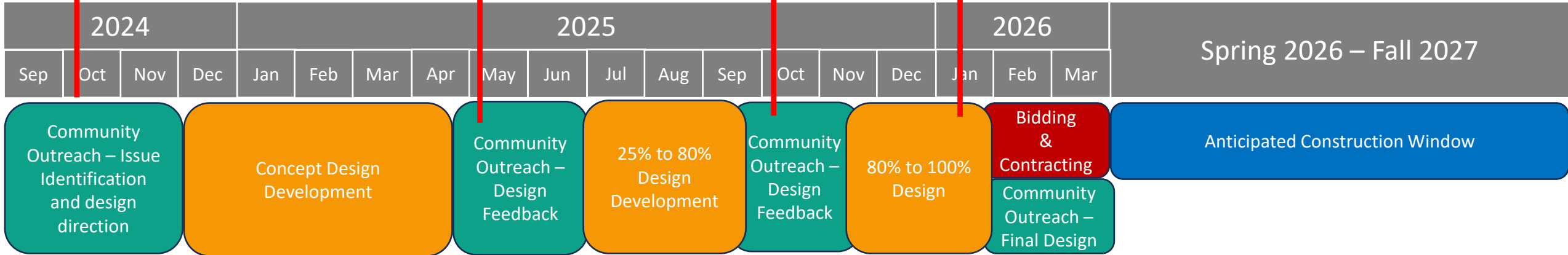
Anticipated Project Timeline

Kickoff Community Meeting, Oct. 9

Concept Designs Open House, May 13

Updated Design Open House, Oct 4

We are here



Summary of Community Engagement



Pre-Concept Design Engagement Activities (Spring 2025)



Virtual Community Meeting & Office Hours

- Launched project webpage, September 4
- Promoted in Mobility Newsletter, September 4
- Flyered neighborhood, October 3
- Emailed City Alert subscriber list, October 3
- Hosted Virtual Community Meeting, October 9
- Hosted Virtual Office Hour, November 19

48 participants



Dedicated Outreach

- Hosted Pearl Street and Medford Street Pop-up, October 15
- Met with Gilman Square Neighborhood Council Board, October 21
- Hosted Pearl Street Park residents meeting, November 12
- Visited small businesses, November 14
- Met with Somerville Bike Safety, November 18

Over 73 participants



Larger Citywide Events

- Tabled at Mayor's Senior Picnic, September 12
- Tabled at Gilman Square Arts Festival, September 14
- Tabled at SomerStreets Monster Mash, October 20

Over 100 participants



City Committee Feedback

- Attending the PTAC & SBAC Community Walk on Pearl Street, October 21
- Collected feedback at the Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting, November 7
- Collected feedback at the Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee Meeting, November 14

Over 24 participants



Online Surveys

- Conducted Safety Concerns & Priorities Feedback Survey from October 11 to November 20
- Hosted a Public Input Map from October 11 30 to November 20

206 participants



Youth Engagement

- Facilitated 3 workshops with Groundwork Green Team, July – August
- Facilitated Pearl Street design workshop with Mayor's Climate Justice Summer Program

Over 34 participants

July 19, 2024

November 20, 2024

Concept Design Options Engagement Activities (Spring 2025)



Outdoor Open House

- Hosted on May 13.
- Promoted event information prior through direct email, City Newsletter, flyers on door, City Alert, and social media posts.

Over 95 participants



In-Person Outreach

- Conducted Pop-Up at Intersection of Medford St. & Pearl St., May 19.
- Hosted dedicated Pearl Street Park residents meeting, June 12.
- Blocked walked to small business visits, June 11.
- Tabled at Carnaval, June 1.

89 participants



Committee, Council & Community Groups

- Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee, June 12.
- Bicycle Advisory Committee, June 5.
- Gilman Square Neighborhood Council, May 28.
- Groundworks Spring Green Team Workshop, May 21.

38 participants



Online Opportunities

- Conducted an online survey from May 13 to June 16.
- Hosted Virtual Office Hours on May 22 and June 11.

61 participants

April 11, 2025

June 16, 2025

Updated Design Engagement Activities (Fall 2025)



Outdoor Open House

- Hosted on October 4.
- Posted flyers on over 375 homes to promote meeting, September 17.
- Promoted event information prior through direct email, City Newsletter, City Alert, and social media posts.

Over 26 attendees



Direct Outreach

- Conducted Pop-Up at Intersection of Medford St. & Pearl St., October 7.
- Hosted dedicated Pearl Street Park residents meeting, October 23.
- Small business outreach on October 27.

Over 64 participants



Community Events

- Mayor's Senior Picnic, September 9
- Gilman Square Festival, September 13
- Groundwork Fall Festival, October 4.
- Union Square Farmers' Market, October 4.
- Latin & Caribbean Heritage, October 18
- SomerStreets Monster Mash, October 19.

Over 50 participants



Committee, Council & Community Groups

- Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee, October 16.
- Gilman Square Neighborhood Council, October 29.
- Bicycle Advisory Committee, November 6.

Over 28 participants



Online Opportunities

- Conducted an online survey from October 4 to November 1.
- Hosted Virtual Office Hours on October 17 and October 27.
- Logged and responded to emails received.

32 participants

September 8, 2025

October 31, 2025

What did we hear in outreach?

- **Increase crosswalk safety**

- Low-yield rates
- Poor visibility
- Speeding vehicles not paying attention
- Focus on Marshall Street & Medford Street

- **Create new crosswalk options**

- Focus on new option across Medford Street towards Green Line station

- **Fix poor sidewalk quality**

- Increase accessibility
- Widen sidewalks where possible
- Support existing trees while maintaining easy to traverse sidewalk

- **Enhance Greenery**

- Increase the number of trees for shade and environmental vitality
- Consider options to help manage drainage through plantings

- **Support existing public transit**

- Improve bus stop and enhance bus rider waiting experience

- **Provide safe bike options for people of all ages and abilities**

- Some advocated for protected bike lanes on both sides while some advocated for trying to balance bike options with some curbside access.
- Support for using the Neighborway option through Ed Leathers park to connect to and from East Somerville and Community Path

- **Provide options for parking**

- Maintain some space for safe pickup/drop-off and delivery
- Provide some parking options for residents, visitors, customers, and homecare workers.

For more details check out the **Pre-Concept, Concept Options, and Updated Design Community Engagement Reports** available at somervillema.gov/westernpearl

What is the design?



Big Picture – What is the design?

- **Safer & Slower Intersections and Crosswalks**

- Six raised features (crosswalks or intersections) along either Pearl Street or Medford Street as well as eleven raised crosswalks across every side street.
- These elements are intended to reduce speeds, increase yielding behaviors, and make crossing the street or pulling out of side streets easier, safer, and more comfortable for all users



Big Picture – What is the design?

- **One side of on-street parking**
 - Switched to north side of the street
 - Added Dedicated loading zones
 - Added accessible parking spaces
- **In lane and floating bus stops**
 - Added in where space permits
- **Approximately sixteen new street trees**
 - Plus expanded tree wells at existing trees



Big Picture – What is the design?

- **Protected Bike Lanes & Enhances Neighborways**

- A two-way curb separated bike lane from Medford Street to Skilton Avenue.
- A one-way sidewalk level eastbound protected bike lane between Skilton Avenue and McGrath Highway.
- An enhanced Neighborway connection for westbound travel that utilizes the Gilman St Neighborway and an improved pathway in Ed Leather's Park.

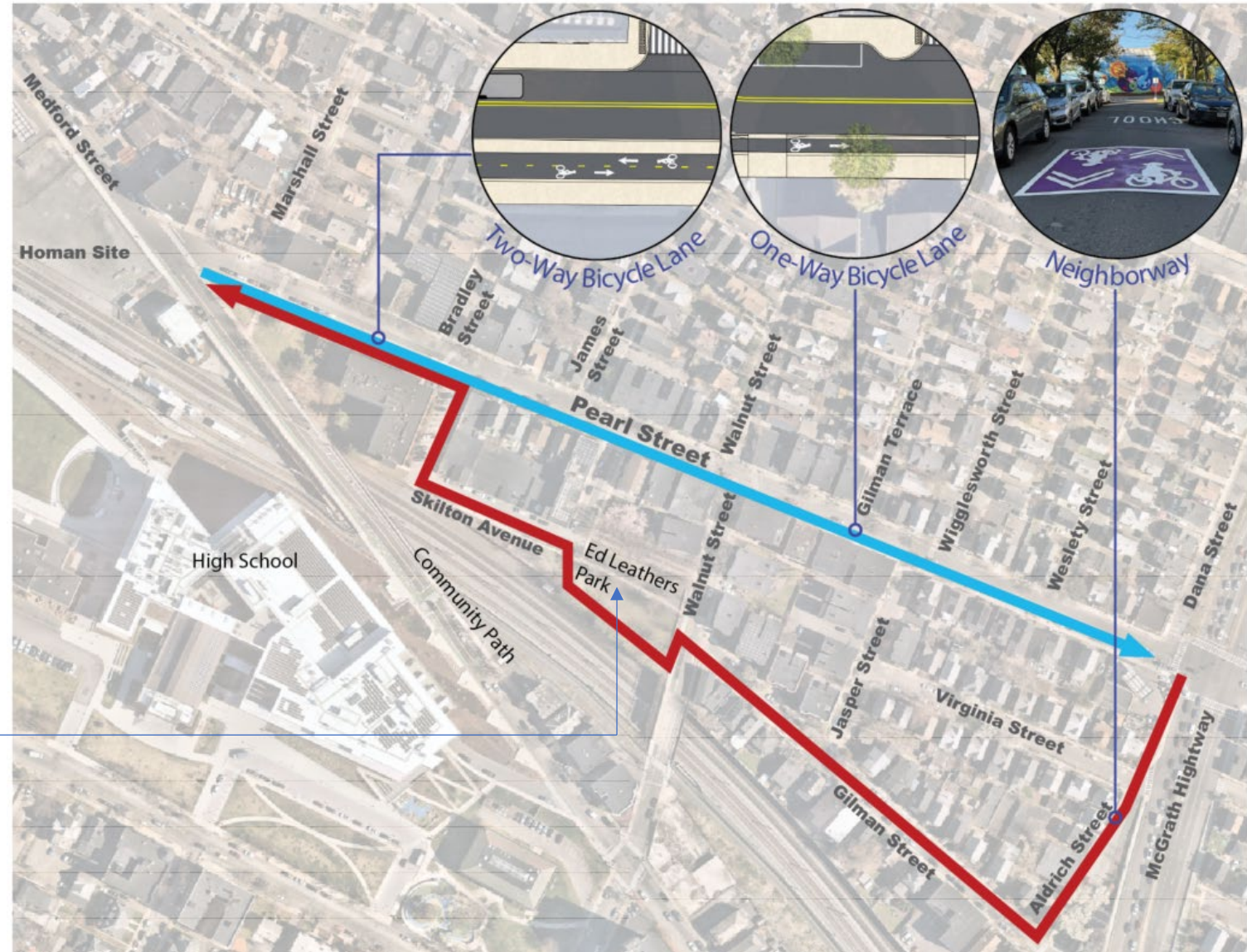
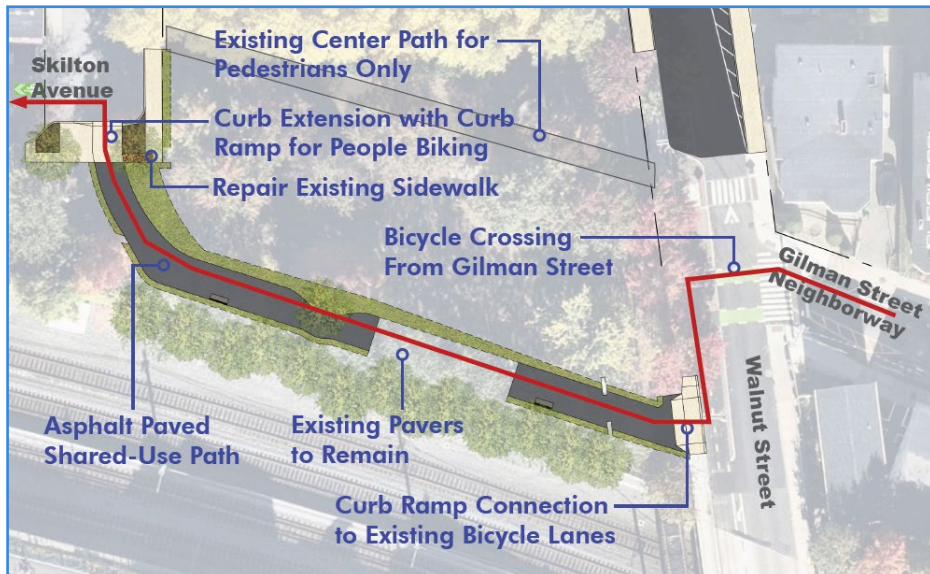


Bicycle Circulation

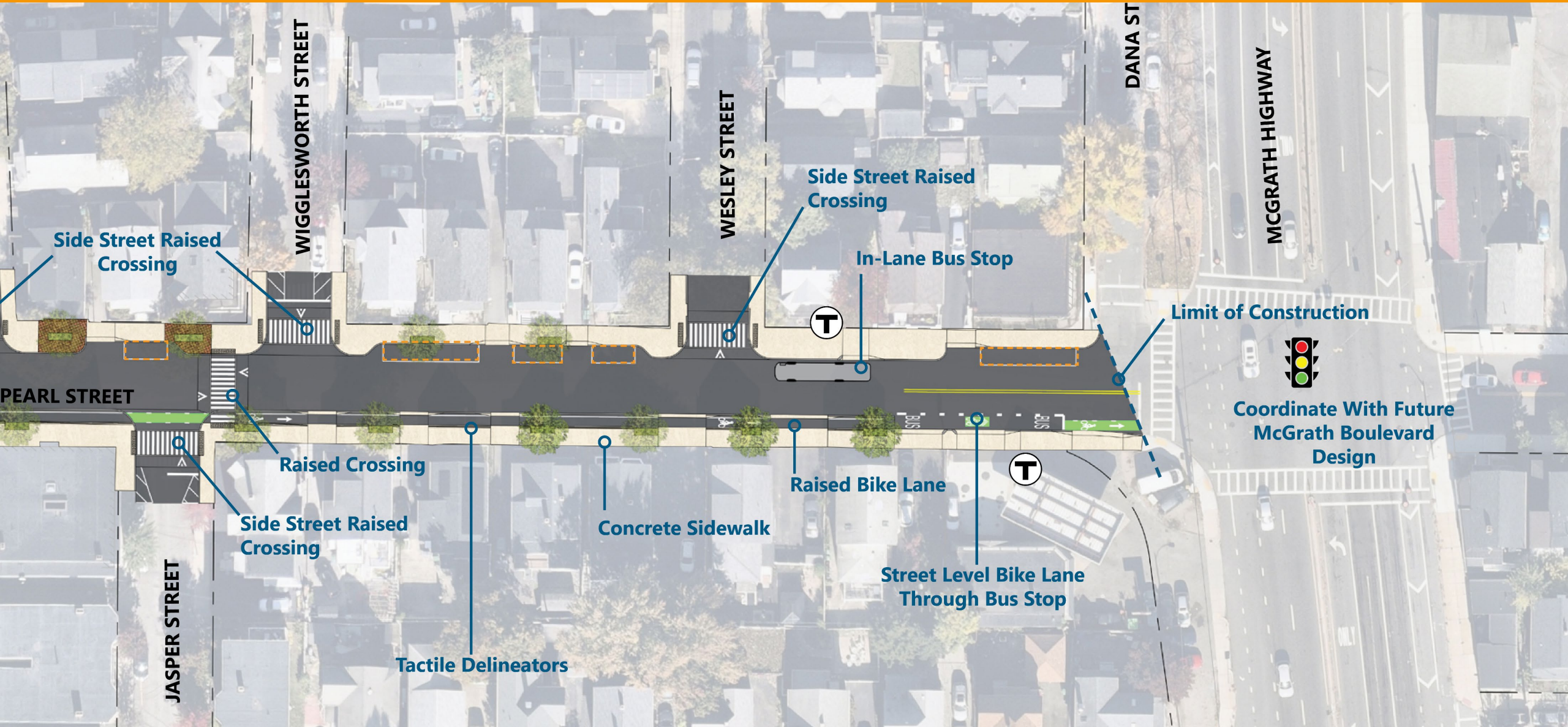
The updated 80% design lets people biking

- ➡ eastbound ride on a protected bicycle lane from Medford Street to McGrath Highway.
- ➡ westbound ride on a Neighborway route (bicycle friendly residential street) onto Aldrich Street, turning onto Gilman Street, crossing Walnut Street, going through Ed Leathers park and Skilton Avenue, to then turn left onto a short stretch of protected bicycle lane on Pearl Street all the way to Medford Street.

Ed Leathers Park

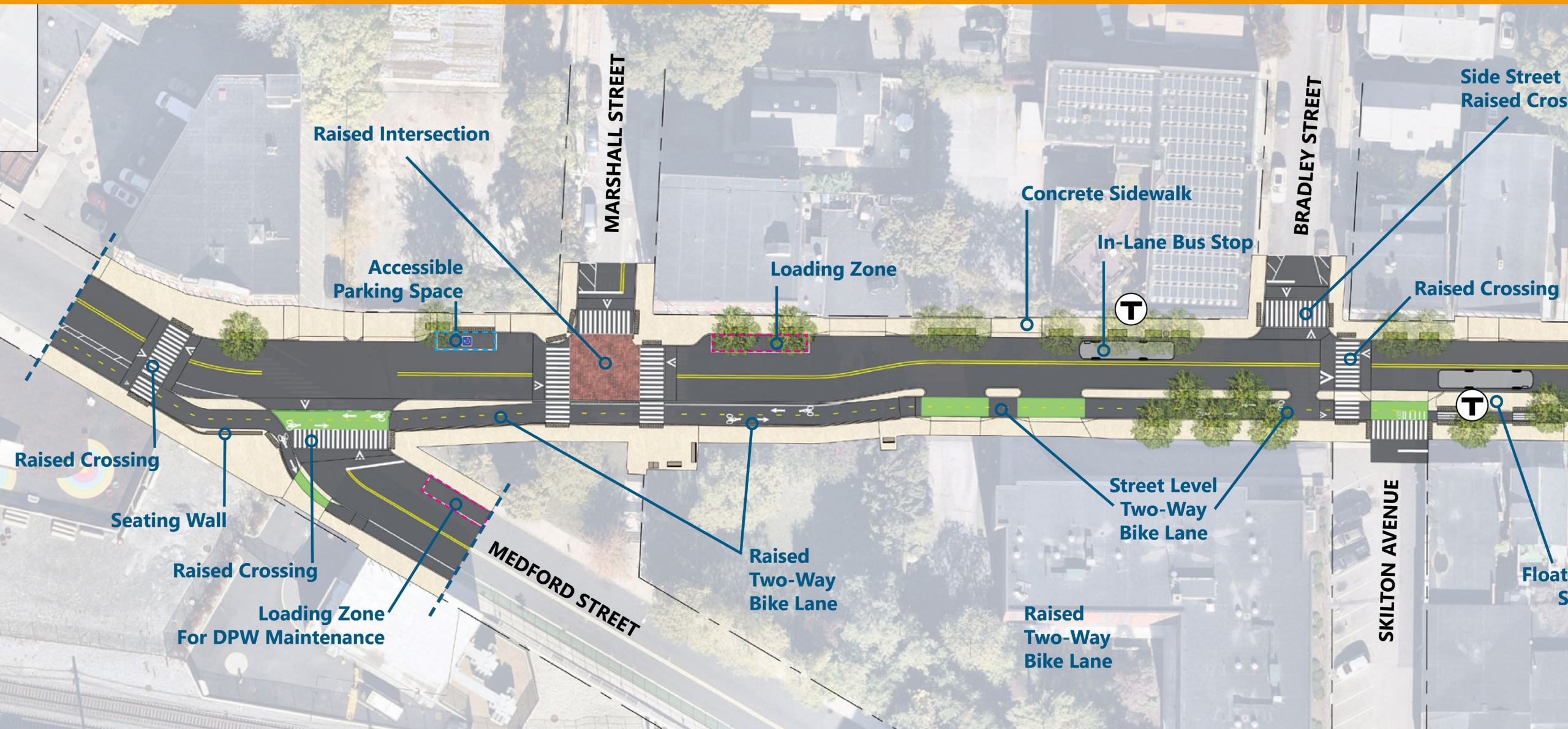


Jasper Street to McGrath Highway – Proposed

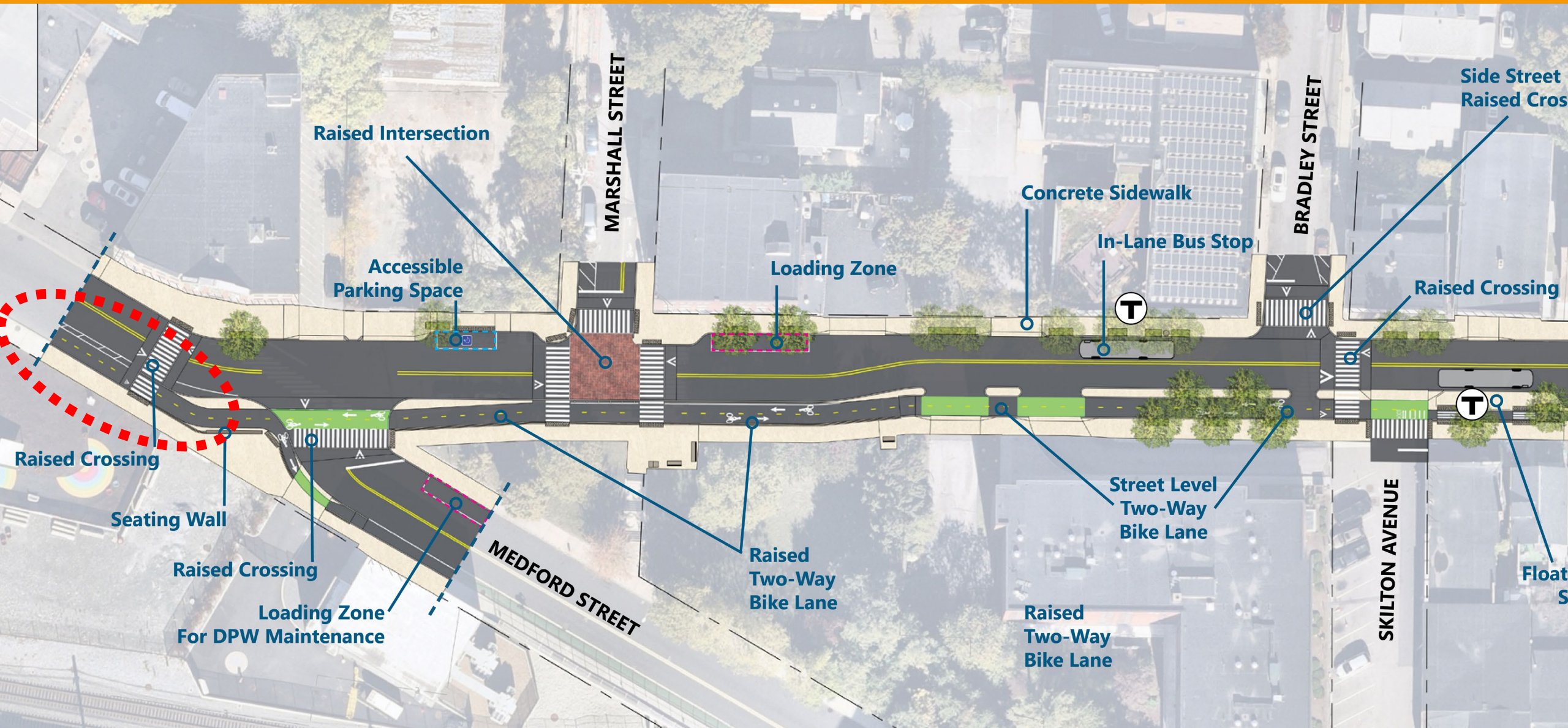


This aerial view illustrates a proposed urban street design at a central intersection. The main thoroughfare is Pearl Street, which runs horizontally across the image. A vertical street, Walnut Street, intersects Pearl Street at the center, featuring a traffic light. To the left of Walnut Street, James Street and Skilton Avenue intersect Pearl Street. To the right, Gilman Terrace and Jasper Street intersect Pearl Street. The design includes several key features: a 'Raised Bike Lane' on the left side of Pearl Street; 'Porous Pavement' and 'Concrete Sidewalk' along the left curb; an 'In-Lane Bus Stop' marked with a 'T' symbol on the left side of Pearl Street; 'Accessible Parking Space' marked with a blue 'P' and wheelchair icon near Walnut Street; 'On-Street Parking' spaces marked with orange dashed lines on the right side of Pearl Street; a 'Loading Zone' marked with a pink dashed line on the right side of Pearl Street; 'Side Street Raised Crossing' at Skilton Avenue and Jasper Street; and 'Clear Corner Pavement Markings' at the intersection of Walnut Street and Pearl Street. A 'Street Level Bike Lane Through Bus Stop' is also indicated on the right side of Pearl Street. The background shows residential buildings and trees.

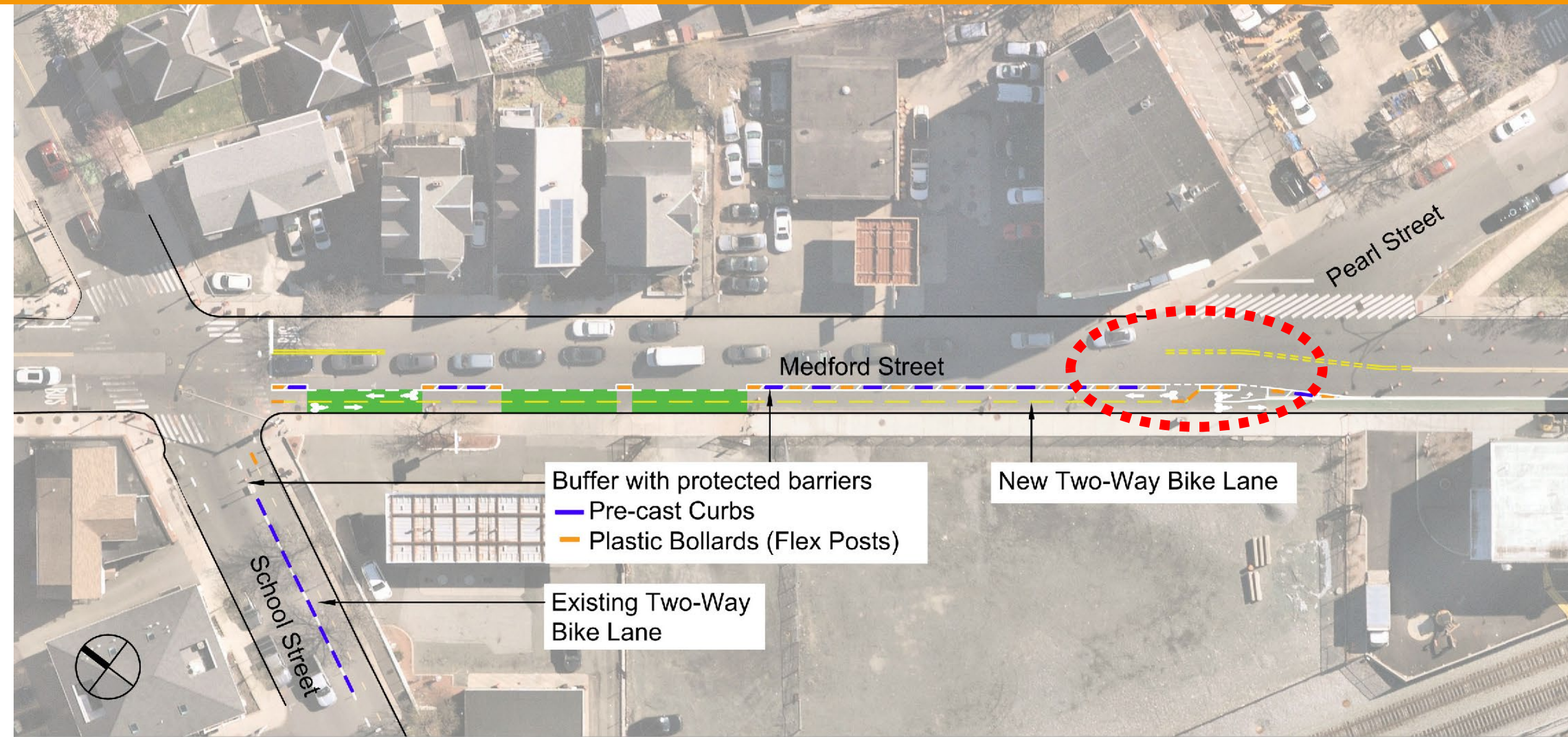
Medford Street to Skilton Avenue – Proposed



Medford Street to Skilton Avenue – Proposed



Proposed Connection to Medford Street & School Street



Parking Regulations

• What we heard

- Requests to limit parking reduction
- Concerns about parking inhibiting visibility
- Requests for spaces for visitors, customers, and home health workers
- Requests for commercial loading or rideshare drop-off

• What we decided and why

- We added two new accessible parking spaces with integrated ramps
- We added new two multi-purpose loading zones
- We are proposing two-hour parking except by permit on Pearl Street
- We worked to maintain as much parking as possible –
 - **We anticipate that the final design will reduce parking on Pearl Street by approximately 9 spaces (from 33 to 24).**
 - **An additional 3 parking spaces are expected to be restricted on side streets to allow for large vehicle turning movements with the new design.**
 - **The changes on Medford Street will reduce parking by an additional 4 spaces.**



Proposed Parking Regulations



Two-Hour Parking
(Except by Permit)



Multi-Purpose
Loading Zones



Accessible Parking Spaces



Clear Corners



Thank You!

