



# Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning

## Transportation and Multi-Modal Improvements

April 13, 2021

# Agenda

1. Housekeeping
2. Background
3. Transportation Analysis
4. Multimodal Improvements
5. Feedback Exercise: Poll
6. Discussion and Q&A



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**Housekeeping**

# Project Website

[bit.ly/westerncorridor](https://bit.ly/westerncorridor)

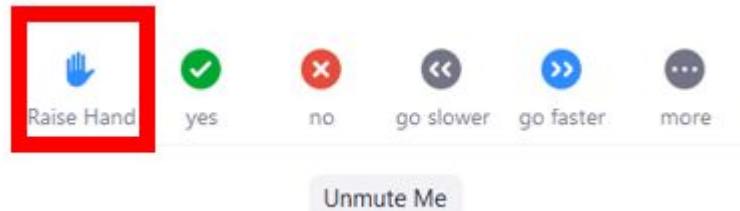
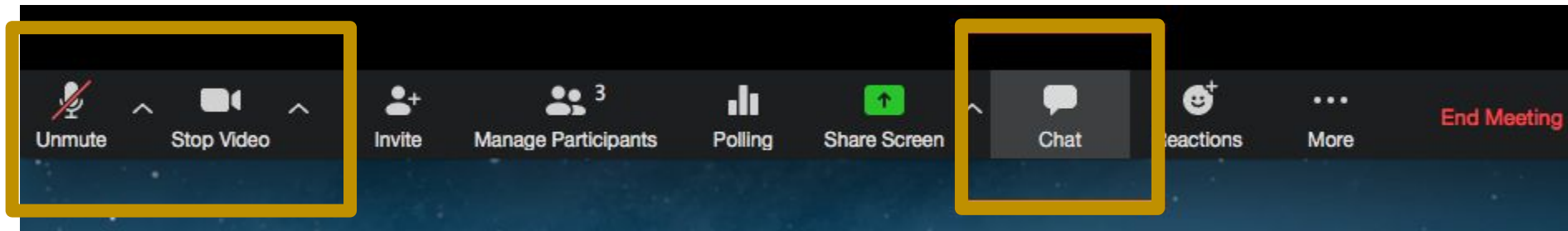
- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Project documents (e.g. Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit)



# Zoom Tips

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

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



# Virtual Meeting Protocols

- During the presentation you can ask questions through the chat feature. Depending on the question, we will answer it in writing in the chat box, verbally, or wait until the Q&A period.
- 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 Gerald Autler, [Gerald.Autler@boston.gov](mailto:Gerald.Autler@boston.gov).



# Meeting Recording

- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at [bit.ly/WesternCorridor](https://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.



# Neighborhood Planning and Development Updates

- [1170 Soldiers Field Road](#) (Phase 1)\*
- 1170 Soldiers Field Road (Phase 2)
- [1234-1240 Soldiers Field Road](#)\*
- [176 Lincoln Street](#)\*
- [NEXUS](#)\*
- [Harvard Task Force](#)
  - [Enterprise Research Campus](#)
  - [180 Western Avenue](#)\*
- [Allston-Brighton Mobility Study](#)

\* Within Study Area





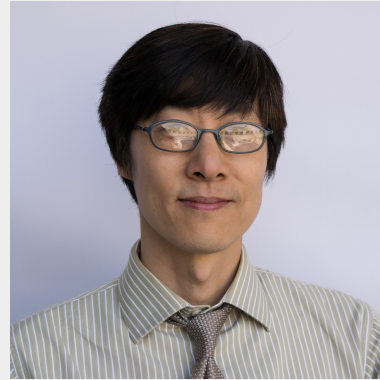
# Core BPDA Team (Transportation)



Joe Blankenship  
Transportation &  
Infrastructure Planning



Jack Halverson  
Transportation &  
Infrastructure Planning



Jeong-Jun Ju  
Urban Design



Tad Read  
Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
Planning

Additional Boston Transportation Department staff include: Amy Cording, Ghulam Bham, Vineet Gupta, John Monacelli, Matt Moran, Stefanie Seskin

# 2

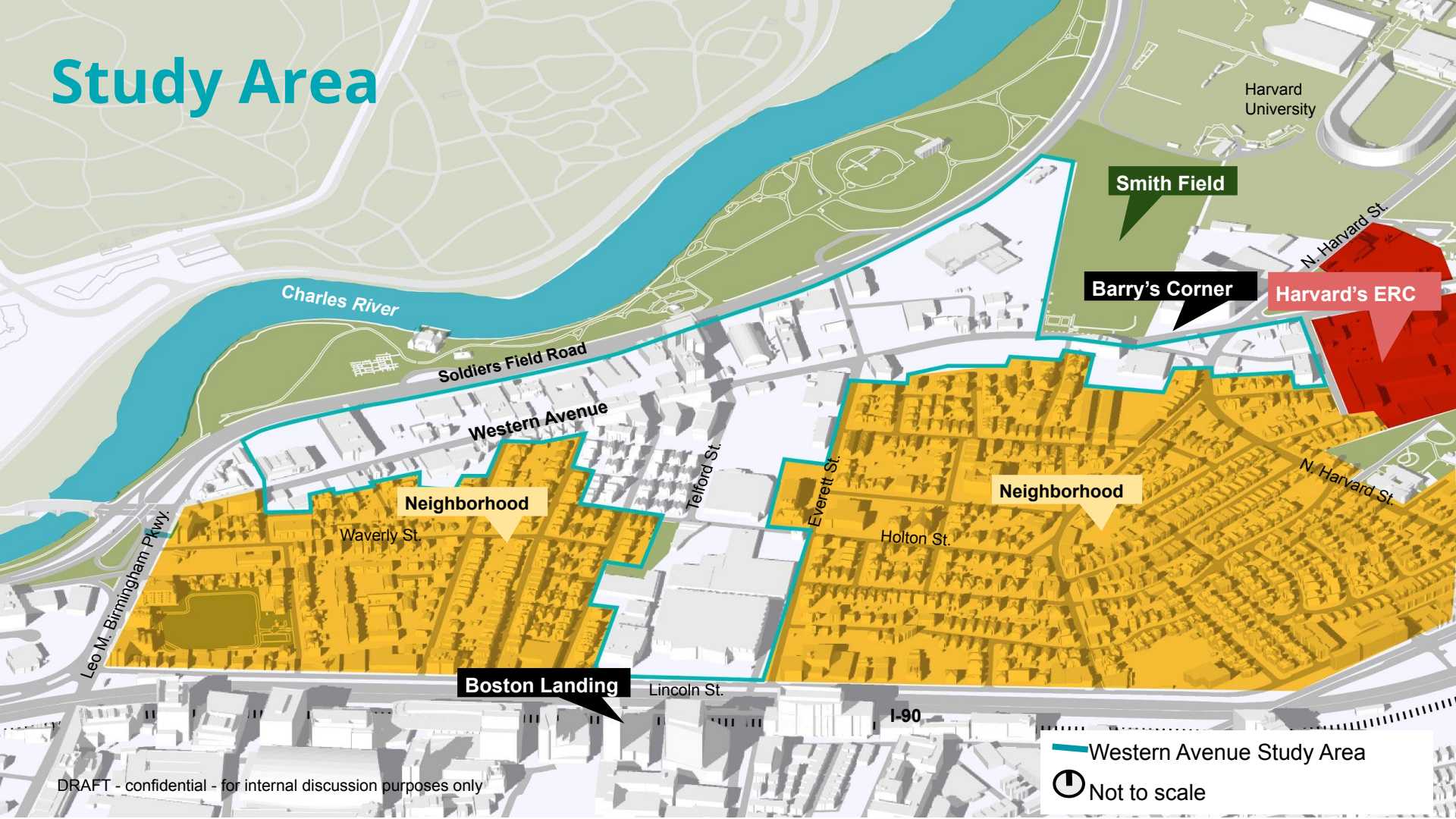
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## Background

# 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

# Study Area



Charles River

Harvard University

Smith Field

Barry's Corner

Harvard's ERC

Soldiers Field Road

Western Avenue

Neighborhood

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Neighborhood

Everett St.

Holton St.

N. Harvard St.

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy.

Boston Landing

Lincoln St.

I-90

Western Avenue Study Area

Not to scale

# Objectives of Corridor Study

Planning Principles Confirmed in Fall 2019 Meetings/Workshop:

1. Open Space, Public Realm, and Placemaking
2. Connections
- 3. Western Avenue Character**
4. Land Use
5. Building Dimensions and Character

*\* See presentation from December 19, 2019 for more detail*



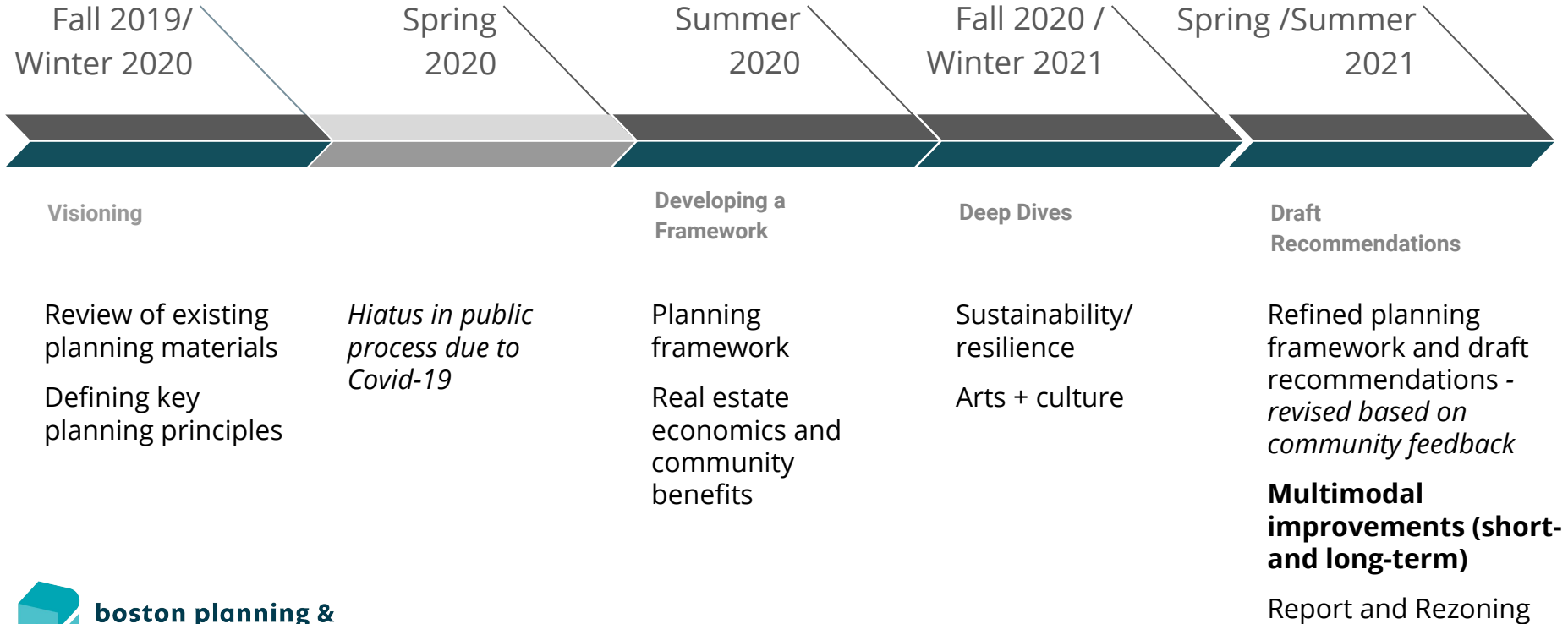
# Objectives of Corridor Study

Western Avenue Character:

1. Create a **safe multi-modal complete street**
2. **Set new development back** from Western Ave
3. Encourage a **mix of land uses** and **enough density** to support an **active streetscape**
4. Encourage **affordable retail spaces** that serve the neighborhood
5. Leverage development to create **great public realm**



# Where We're Going



# 3

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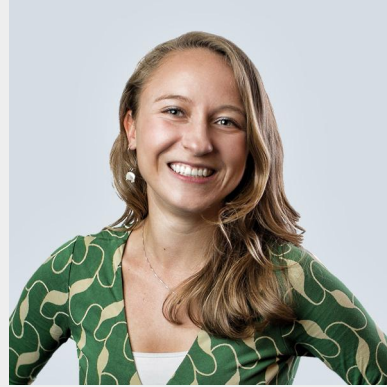
## Transportation Analysis



# Consultant Team (Transportation)



Conor Semler  
Project Manager



Meredyth Sanders  
Senior Planner



# Transportation Analysis

- Informed the **Zoning Strategy** and **Long-Term buildout** for the Study Area by:
  - Measuring how different zoning strategies could change the number and type of trips on Study Area streets
  - Testing how variations in number and type of trips could impact the street network
  - Identifying and testing changes to the street network

# Identifying Zoning Strategies

- We developed different zoning strategies to see how they could change the number and type of trips on Study Area streets
- These zoning strategies varied based on three key characteristics:



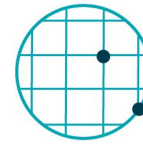
## Land Use Type

(E.g., residential vs. commercial)



## Land Use Quantity

(i.e., total amount of development allowed)



## Land Use Location

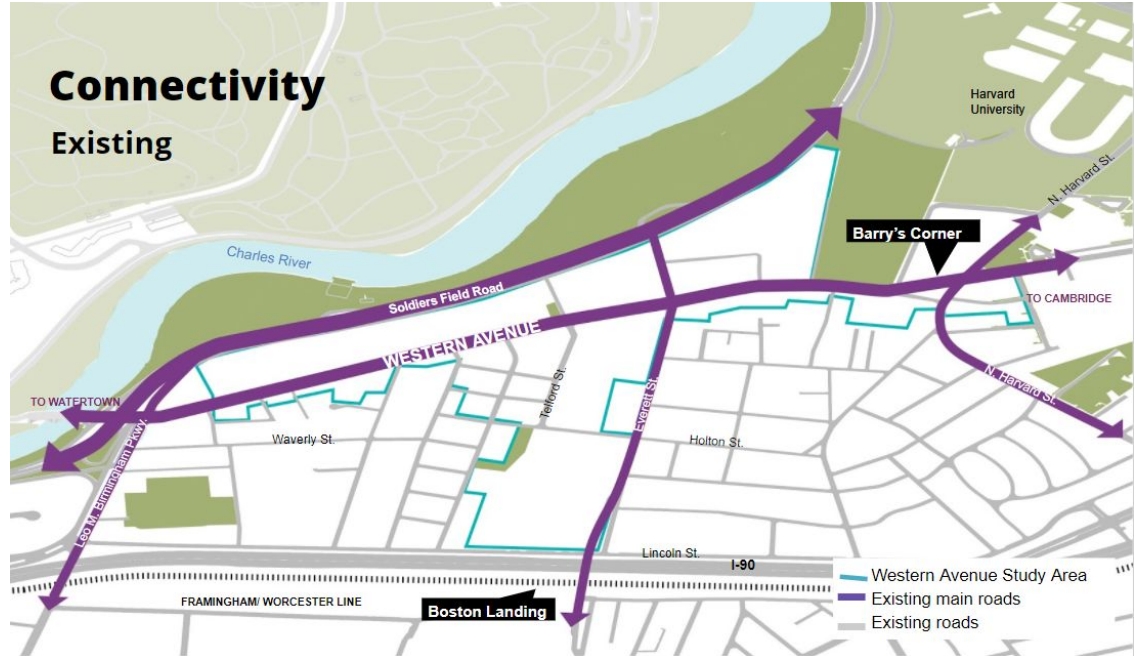
(e.g., center vs. edge of the street network)

Change the number of trips and times of day that trips take place

Changes how trips move through the street network

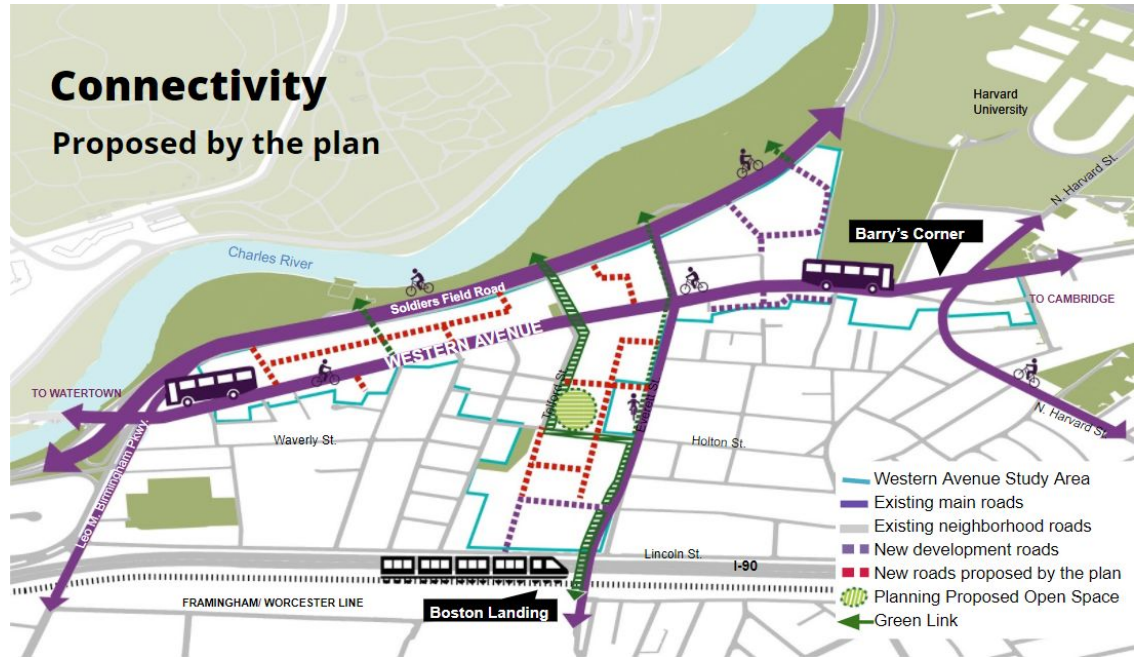
# Modeling Assumptions

- Other transportation and land use changes will occur in or near the study area.
- These background changes were included in the analysis:
  - New streets
  - Approved developments



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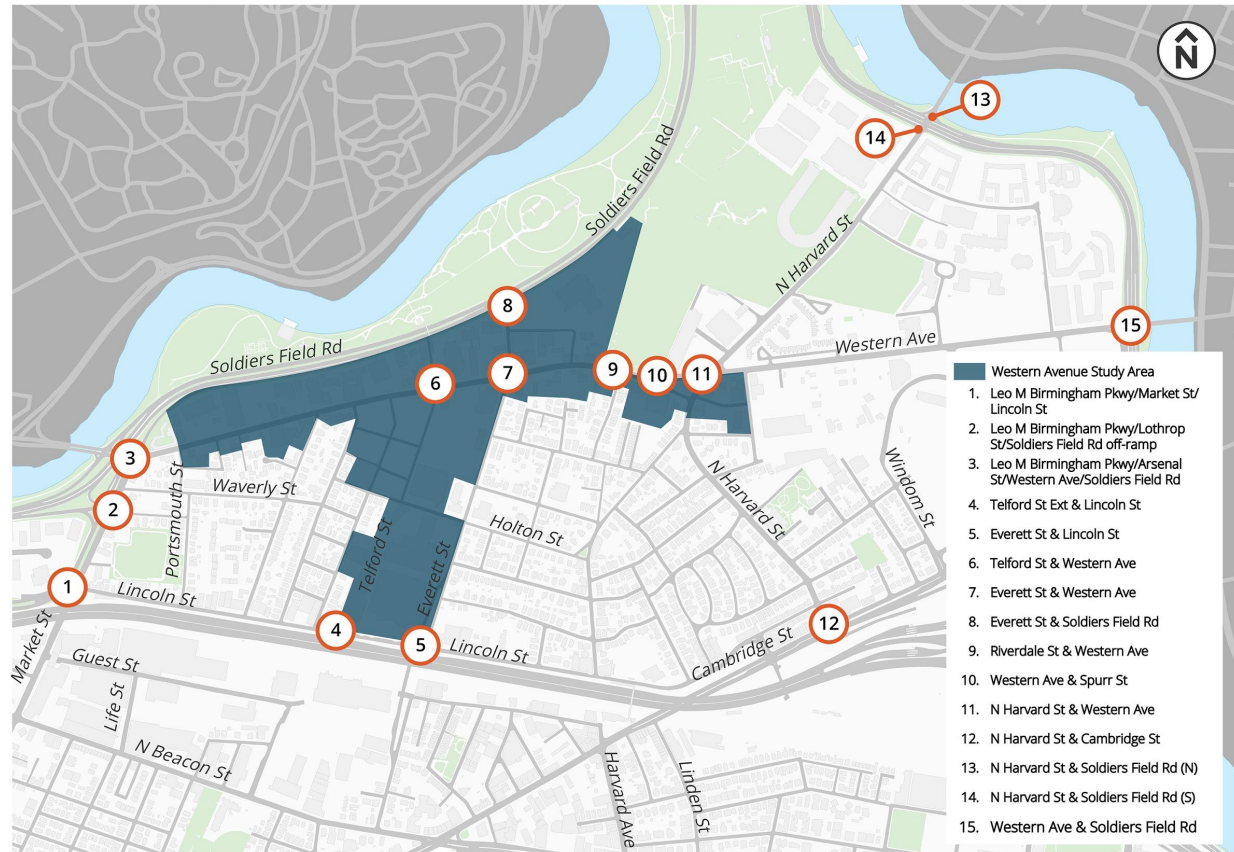
# Modeling Assumptions

- Approved Developments
  - Harvard Enterprise Research Campus (ERC)
  - Harvard Business School Faculty & Admin
  - Harvard Mixed Use Project
  - Harvard Gateway
  - Harvard Hotel/Conference Center
  - Science and Engineering Complex (SEC)



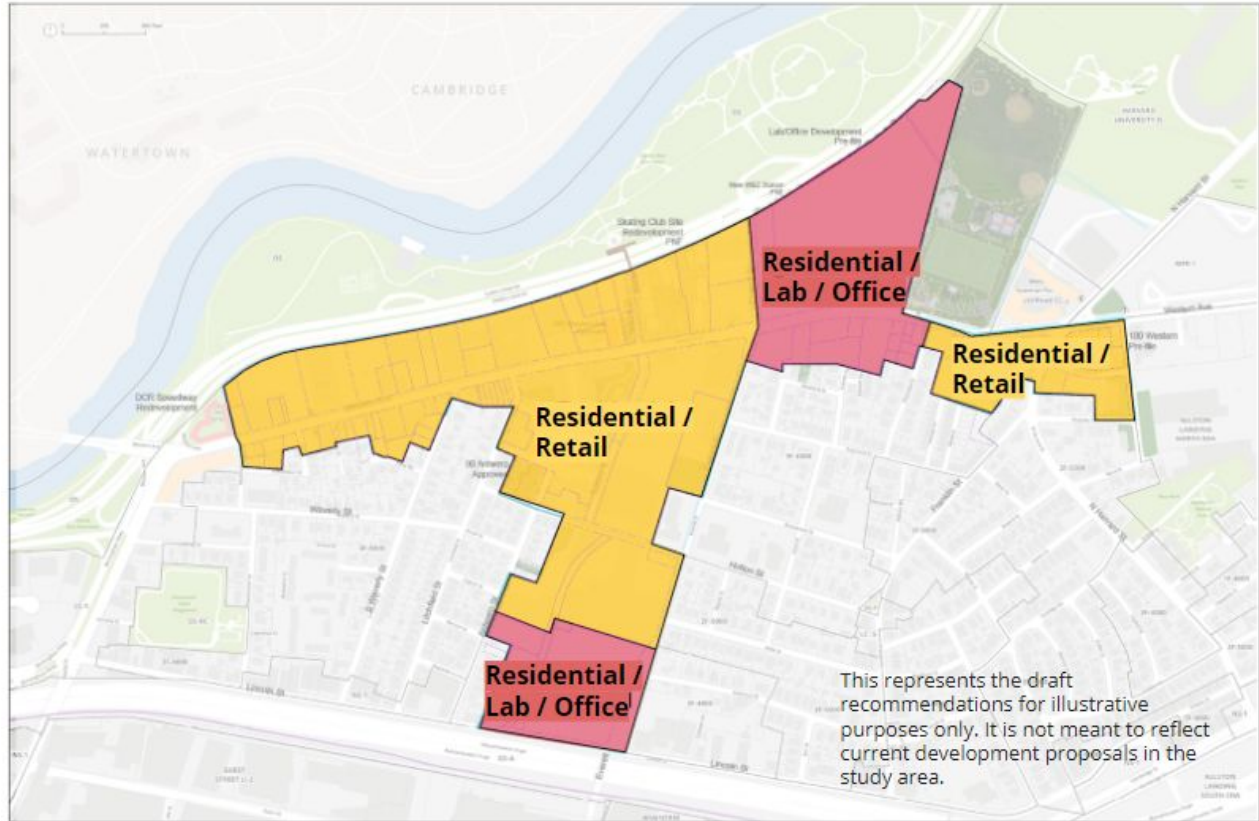
# Measuring Impacts at Key Intersections

- We tested the effects of different zoning strategies on 15 intersections



# Informing the Zoning Strategy

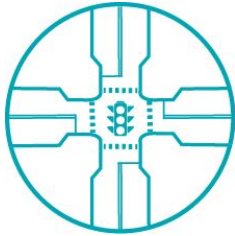
- The draft zoning strategy selected was directly informed by the results of the transportation analysis





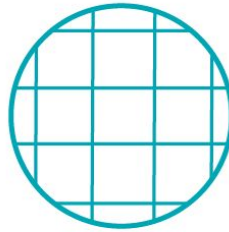
# Next Steps: Testing Additional Changes

- Identify and test additional changes to the street network to support all future users and uses



## Intersection Changes

- Signal timing modifications
- Lane geometry adjustments



## Network Changes

- New streets
- Space for biking and transit



## Transportation Demand Management

- Strategies that enable people to walk, bike, and take transit instead of drive

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## Multimodal Improvements

# 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
  - Short-term design
  - Long-term design

# Public Process to Date

- Workshop October 2019
- Survey conducted winter/spring 2021:
  - 19 businesses/organizations contacted
  - Including health center, Charlesview, Speedway Headquarters, Big Daddy's, Pavement



*Workshop, October 30, 2019*

# Public Process To Date

Results from 2019 Workshop:

**1. Buffered/Protected bike lane**

**2. Bus lane**

**3. Bike lane**

4. Planting zone

5. On-street parking

6. Bus/Bike lane

7. *Street furnishing zone*

8. *Cafe seating zone*

Highest Priorities

# Short-Term Design

- Implementation within ~2 years
- Lifespan 5-15 years depending on segment of roadway in question
- Reallocate **existing right-of-way**:
  - **Strategic bus improvements**, e.g. consolidation of stops, more accessible stops, queue jumps at signals, transit signal priority
  - **Better bicycle facilities**
  - **Pedestrian improvements**, e.g. new or improved crosswalks



# Long-Term Design

- Timeframe depends on redevelopment: 5-15+ years
- Setbacks to widen right-of-way along ~two thirds of corridor
  - Up to 15-18' on north side
  - **Bus priority lane** in key areas
  - Additional **bicycle and pedestrian** improvements
  - Wider sidewalks, cafe and planting zones
- Coordination with MBTA to improve service

Potential for other bus improvements, e.g. transit signal priority, queue jump lanes, off-board fare collection

# Existing Conditions

- Western Avenue is a significant bicycle corridor but not safe for users of any mode. It was identified as a priority in Go Boston 2030.



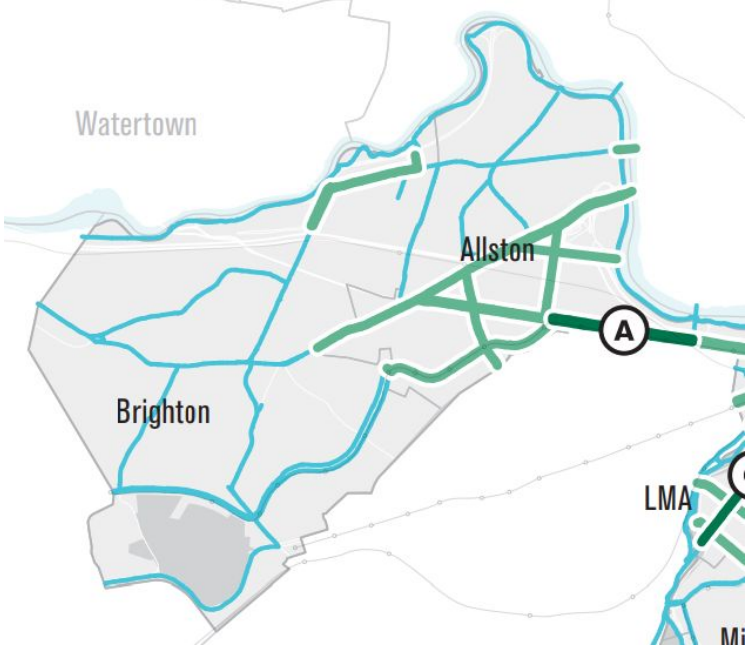


# Existing Conditions

## Go Boston 2030 Bike Network Plan

### Boston Bike Network

- Phase
- Priority Projects
  - 15 Years
  - Existing Bike Network

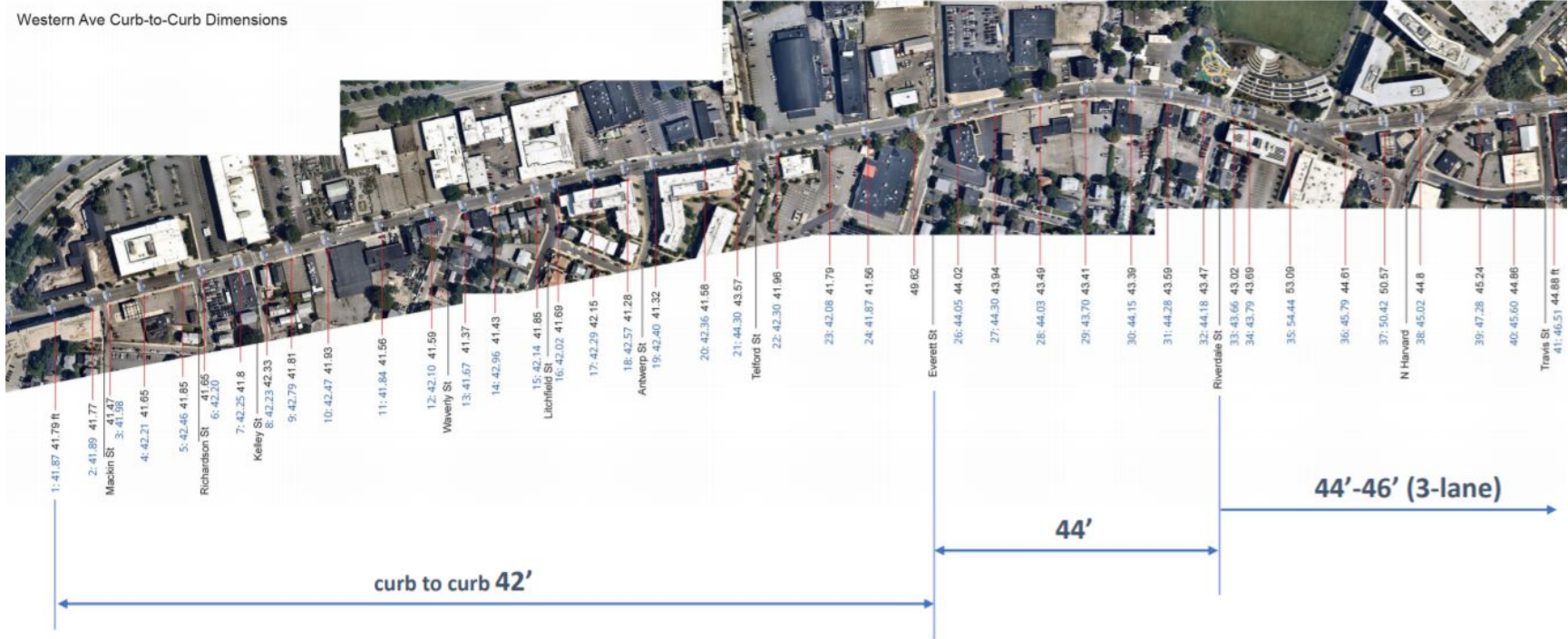


# Existing Conditions

- Western Avenue is a significant bicycle corridor but not safe for users of any mode. It was identified as a priority in Go Boston 2030.
- **Current right-of-way provides space only for travel lanes, parking, and inconsistent bicycle lane**

# Existing Right-of-Way

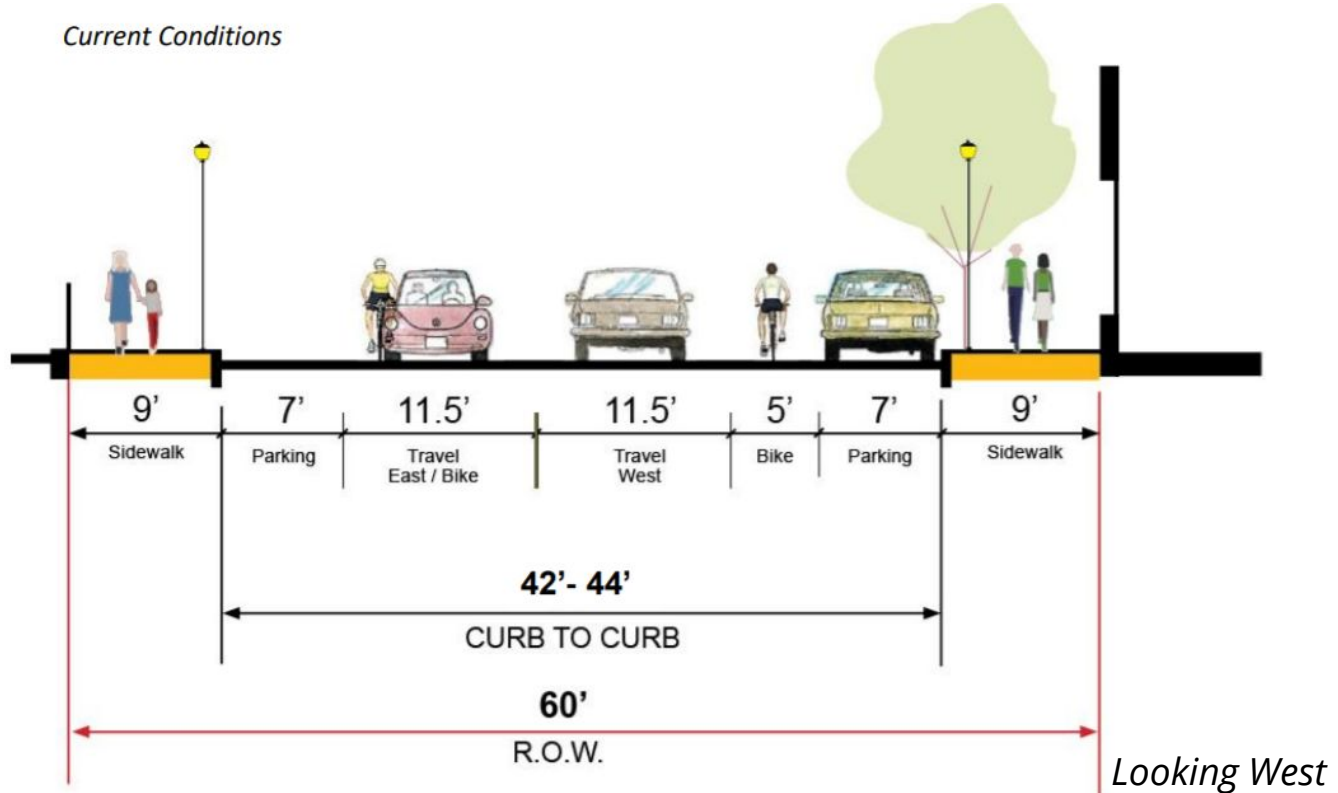
Western Ave Curb-to-Curb Dimensions



# Existing Right-of-Way

## Typical Cross-Section

*Current Conditions*

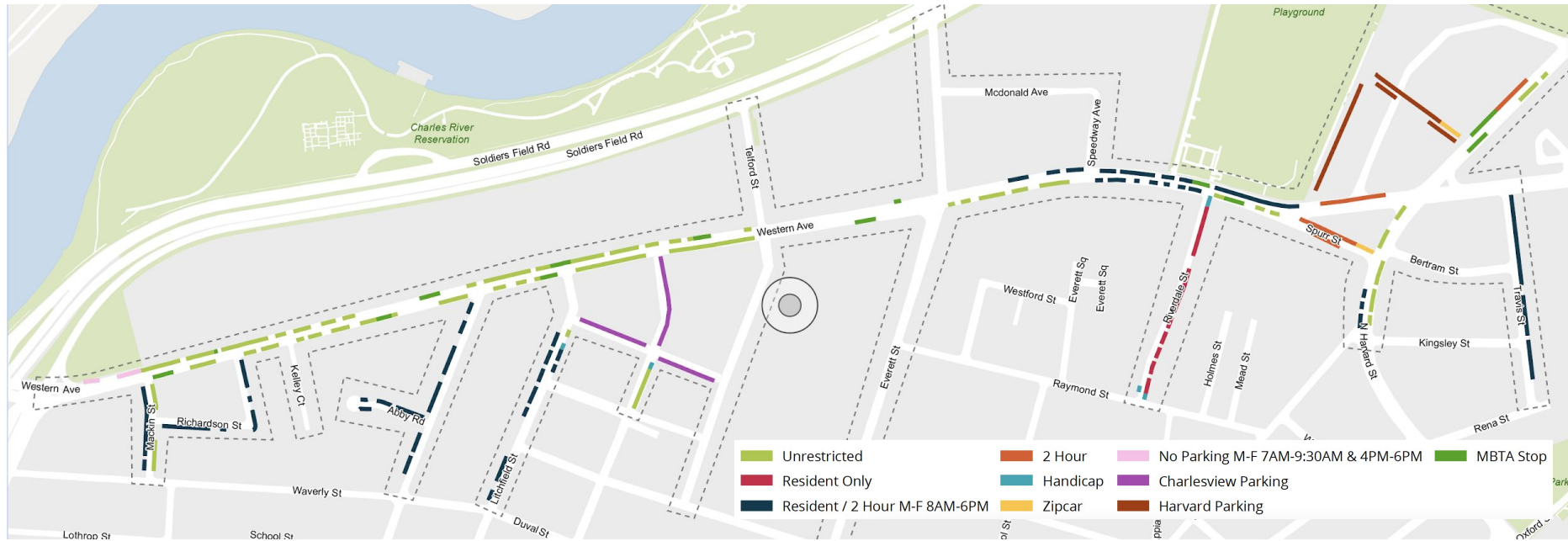


# Existing Conditions

- Western Avenue is a significant bicycle corridor but not safe for users of any mode. It was identified as a priority in Go Boston 2030.
- Current right-of-way provides space only for travel lanes, parking, and inconsistent bicycle lane
- **Significant on-street and off-street parking resources**

# Existing On-Street Parking

- ~459 on-street parking spaces (~181 spaces on Western Avenue)
- Western Avenue has mostly unrestricted parking to the west and Resident / 2-hour parking to the east



# Existing Off-Street Parking

- ~3,200 off-street parking spaces
  - ~1,100 customer/patron spaces
  - ~2,100 resident/employee spaces





# Existing Conditions

- Western Avenue is a significant bicycle corridor but not safe for users of any mode. It was identified as a priority in Go Boston 2030.
- Current right-of-way provides space only for travel lanes, parking, and inconsistent bicycle lane
- **Significant on-street and off-street parking resources**
  - ~180 spaces on Western Avenue represent ~5% of total on- and off-street parking supply
  - NEXUS and other projects would add parking with availability to meet community needs

# Parking Resources

- Many businesses have dedicated off-street parking for employees and customers/visitors
- Some require short-term parking for customers



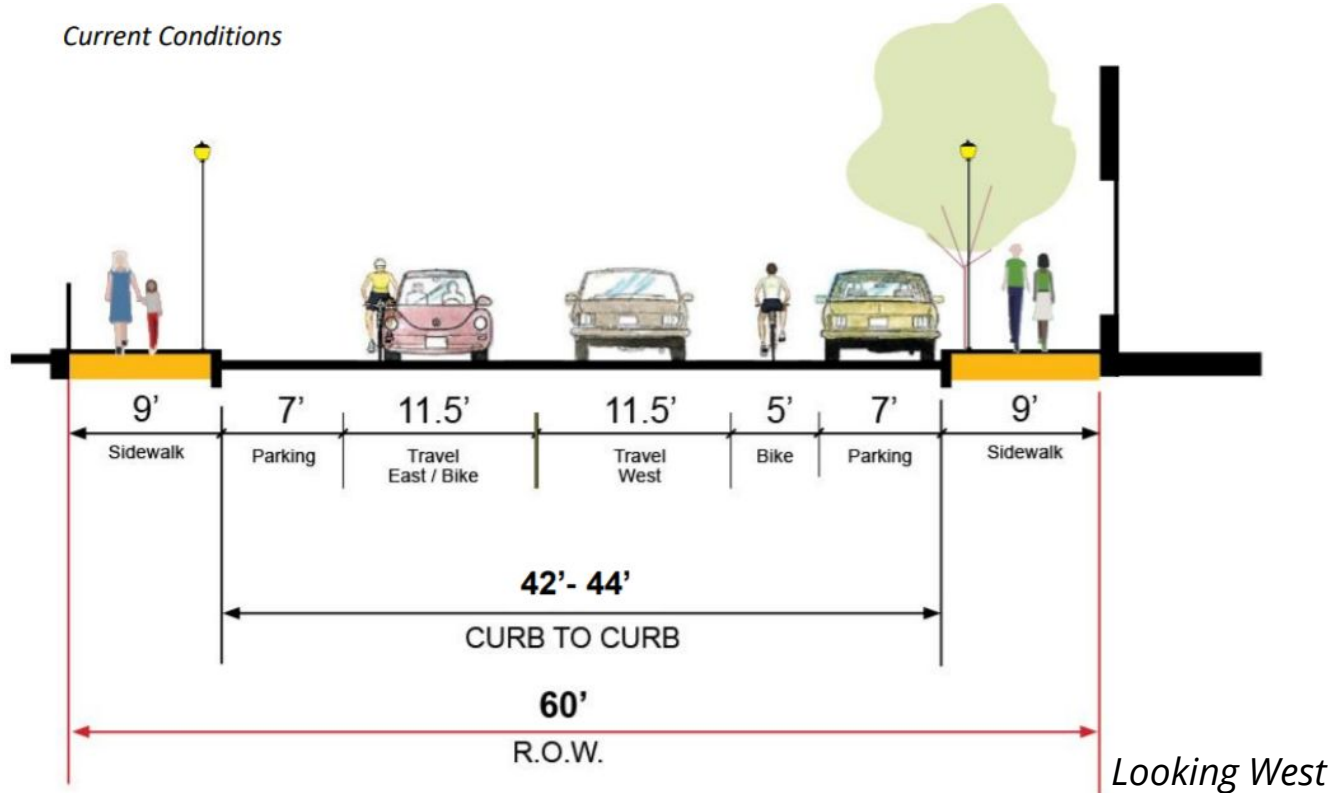
# Sample Survey Feedback

- “We would have more bike riders but people are very scared of the Harvard/Western Avenue intersection”
- “Public transporting is something that would help us since there are no train line [sic].”
- “Bike racks bike racks!”

# Existing Right-of-Way

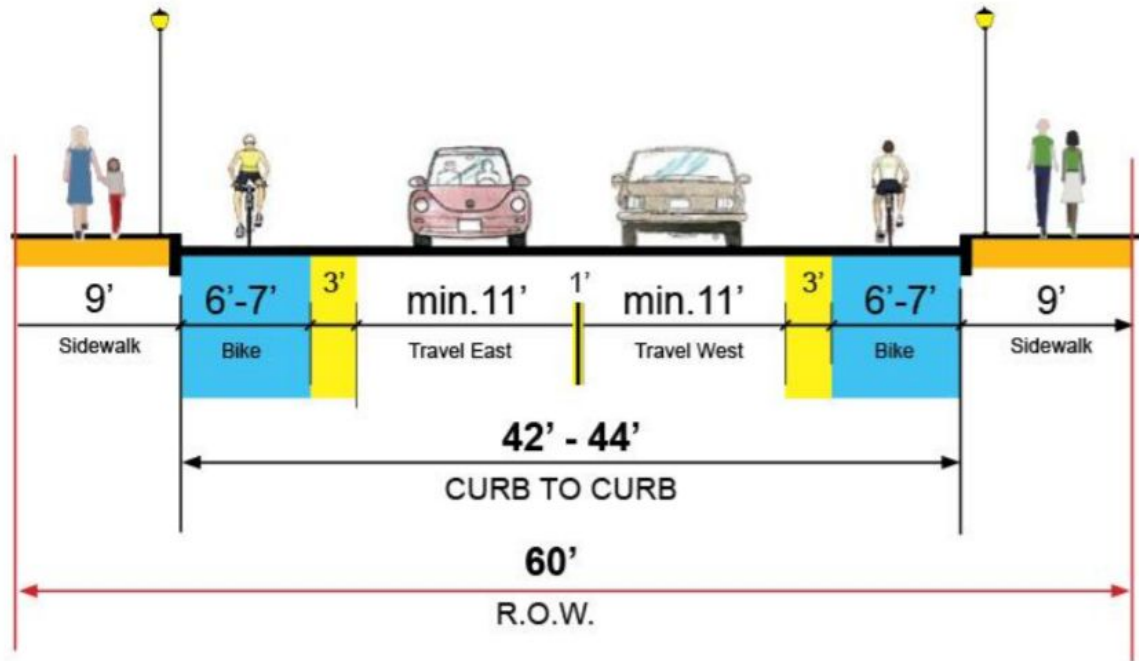
## Typical Cross-Section

*Current Conditions*



# Proposed Cross-Section

## General Approach



*Looking West*

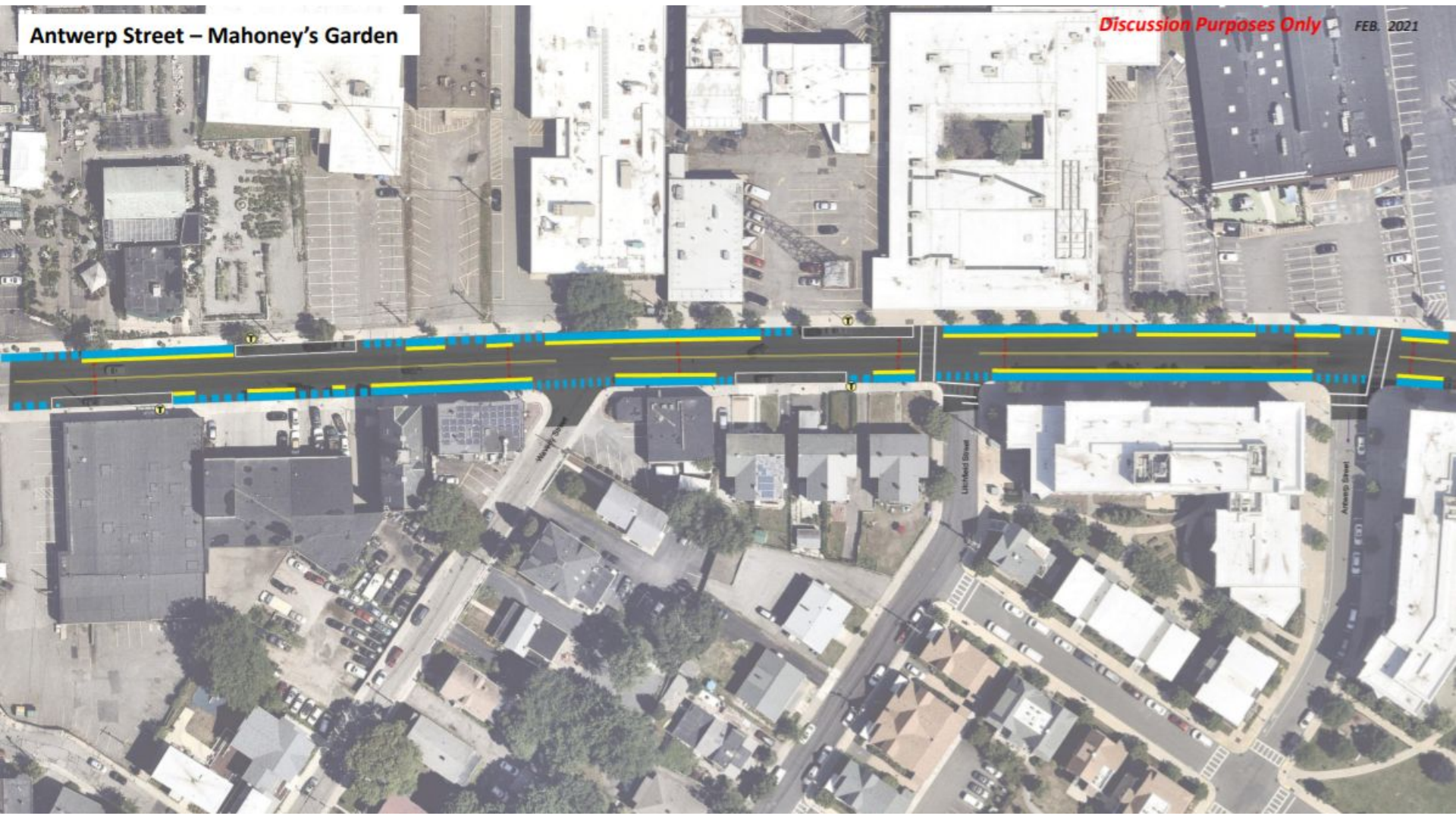
Antwerp Street – Mahoney's Garden

Discussion Purposes Only FEB. 2021



**Antwerp Street – Mahoney's Garden**

*Discussion Purposes Only* FEB. 2021



Everett Street – Antwerp Street

Discussion Purposes Only

FEB. 2021





Everett Street – Antwerp Street

Discussion Purposes Only FEB. 2021



365 WESTERN

SKATING CLUB SITE

Antwerp Street

Theford Street

# 5

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## Feedback Exercise: Poll

# Poll Question #1

- Indicate your reaction to the statement: “The overall short-term design concept makes the right trade-offs.”
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree



## Poll Question #2

- Indicate your reaction to the statement: “Safe and efficient multimodal transportation (transit and bicycles) are a higher priority than on-street parking.”
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree



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## Discussion and Q&A