

Natick Main Street Corridor Improvement Study



November 18, 2024

Morse Institute Library, Lebowitz Room

Zoom Meeting ID: 868 7279 2528, Passcode: 084540024



Morgan Griffiths – Transportation & Economic Development Planner

John Westerling, PE – Director of Public Works

William McDowell, PE – Town Engineer

John Digiacomo, PE – Assistant Town Engineer



Erik Atkins, PE – McFarland Johnson, Inc.

Wing Wong, PE, PTOE – McFarland Johnson, Inc.

Bo Conley – McFarland Johnson, Inc.



Nichol Figueiredo – Capital Strategic Solutions

Mike Tusino – Capital Strategic Solutions



Poll Question 1



How do you feel about Main Street?

How do you feel about Main Street?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



How do you use Main Street?

How do you use Main Street?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



We are here

PHASE 1:

- Assess existing conditions
- Conduct public outreach
- Establish preferred design

SUMMER '23 - FALL '24

PHASE 2:

- Procure full design services for the preferred design

PHASE 3:

- Solicit bids for construction
- Construct preferred design

Project Background

1. Reconstruction of Route 27 from Cottage Street to the Sherborn Town Line

New sidewalks and 4' shoulders. Enhanced crosswalks and bike markings



3. Cochituate Rail Trail Construction

New bike path to downtown Natick

5. Bridge Replacement, N-03-020, Route 27 over Route 9 and Interchange Improvements

4. Reconstruction of Route 27 from North Avenue to the Wayland Town Line.

New sidewalks and bike lanes

2. Natick Center Station Accessibility Improvements

6. Downtown Main Street Improvements

Segment Layout





“Improve safety in all travel modes through the implementation of a Complete Streets design approach, roadway and intersection improvements, and proven safety counter-measures.”



“Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by improving multi-modal access, including vehicular access, public transit, walking, bicycling, and ride-sharing.”



“Support a safe and active street life in Natick Center by investing in sidewalks, crosswalks, bike facilities, signage improvements and promoting sidewalk cafes and outdoor spaces.”

Key Project Goals



Improve safety for all road users



Improve/expand pedestrian spaces



Mitigate traffic congestion

Based on recent crash data....

Pedestrian crashes occur along the entire project.

There was one pedestrian fatality at Whalen Street.

The Downtown is in the top 5% for pedestrian crashes in the state.

Many rear-end crashes are noted to be due to pedestrians crossing unexpectedly.

Importance of Multi-Modal Access

“In cities that are building protected bike lane networks, cycling is increasing, and the **risk of injury or death is decreasing**. Pairing appropriately-scaled bike share with protected bike lanes increases ridership and is **essential to equity and mobility efforts**.” – NACTO

Bicyclists riding in areas **without bike paths or lanes are nearly twice as likely to feel endangered** (mostly by motorists) as bicyclists with paths or lanes, and more than **four times as likely to be dissatisfied with how their community is designed** for making biking safe. - USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics

“Streets that accommodate all users — including cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders — mean **less traffic congestion** and **better quality of life**. Not surprisingly, then, they are also linked to **higher commercial property values** and **lower vacancy rates**.” – Streetsblog



Walnut Street Newtonville

Bicycle Lane Additions can reduce crashes up to:


49%

for total crashes on urban 4-lane undivided collectors and local roads.⁷

30%

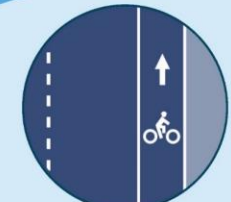
for total crashes on urban 2-lane undivided collectors and local roads.⁷

Source: <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

OFFICE OF SAFETY
Proven Safety Countermeasures



Safety Benefits:
Converting traditional or flush buffered bicycle lanes to a separated bicycle lane with flexible delineator posts can reduce crashes up to:

53%
of bicycle/vehicle crashes.¹

Bicycle Lane Additions can reduce crashes up to:

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for total crashes on urban 4-lane undivided collectors and local roads.⁷

30%
for total crashes on urban 2-lane undivided collectors and local roads.⁷

For more information on this and other FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, please visit <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures> and <https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/2022-07/fhwas18077.pdf>.

FHWA-SA-21-051

Bicycle Lanes

Most fatal and serious injury bicyclist crashes occur at non-intersection locations. Nearly one-third of these crashes occur when motorists are overtaking bicyclists¹ because the speed and size differential between vehicles and bicycles can lead to severe injury. Many people are not comfortable riding a bicycle because of their fear that this type of crash may occur. To make bicycling safer and more comfortable for most types of bicyclists, State and local agencies should consider installing bicycle lanes. Providing bicycle facilities can mitigate or prevent interactions, conflicts, and crashes between bicyclists and motor vehicles, and create a network of safer roadways for bicycling. Bicycle Lanes align with the Safe System Approach principle of recognizing human vulnerability—where separating users in space can enhance safety for all road users.

Applications

The FHWA's [Bikeway Selection Guide](#) and [Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects](#) assist agencies in determining which facilities provide the most benefit in various contexts. Bicycle lanes can be included on new roadways or created on existing roads by reallocating space in the right-of-way through [Road Diets](#). Separated bicycle lanes, which use vertical elements—such as flexible delineator posts, curbs, or vegetation—between the bicycle lane and motorized traffic lanes provide additional safety benefits.^{2,3} For a marked bike lane without vertical elements, a lateral offset with marked buffer can help to further separate bicyclists from vehicle traffic.

Considerations

In order to maximize a roadway's suitability for riders of all ages and abilities, bicycle lane design should vary according to roadway characteristics (number of lanes, motor vehicle and truck volumes, speed, presence of transit), user needs (current and forecasted ridership, types of bicycles and micromobility devices in use within the community, role within the bicycling network), and land-use context (adjacent land uses, types and intensity of conflicting uses, demands from other users for curbside access). Separated bicycle lanes are recommended on roadways with higher vehicle volumes and speeds, such as arterials.

• City and State policies may require minimum bicycle lane widths, although desirable bicycle lane widths

can differ by agency and functional classification of the road, current and forecasted bicycle volumes, and contextual attributes such as topography.

- Studies have found that roadways did not experience an increase in crashes or congestion when travel lane widths were decreased to add a bicycle lane.⁴
- Studies and experience in U.S. cities show that bicycle lanes increase ridership and may help jurisdictions better manage roadway capacity.
- In rural areas, rumble strips can negatively impact bicyclists' ability to ride if not properly installed. Agencies should consider the dimensions, placement, and offset of rumble strips when adding a bicycle lane.⁵
- Bicycle lanes should be considered on roadways where adjacent land use suggests that trips could be served by varied modes, particularly to meet the safety and travel needs of low-income populations likely to use bicycles to reach essential destinations.⁶

¹ Thomas et al. Bicyclist Crash Types on National, State, and Local Levels: A New Look. Transportation Research Record 673(6), 664-676, (2019).
² Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide. FHWA-HEP-15-025, (2015).
³ (CMR ID: 1126) Developing CUES for Separated Bicycle Lanes. FHWA-HEP-20-025, (2020).
⁴ Park and Abdel-Aty. Evaluation of safety effectiveness of multiple cross-sectional features on urban arterials. Accident Analysis and Prevention, Vol. 92, pp. 245-255, (2016).
⁵ FHWA Tech Advisory Shoulder and Edge Line Rumble Strips. (2011).
⁶ Sandt et al. Pursuing Safety in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning. FHWA, (2016).
⁷ (CMR ID: 10736) 10736 Development of Crash Modification Factors for Bicycle Lane Additions While Reducing Lane and Shoulder Widths. FHWA-HEP-21-012, (2021).

Importance of Multi-Modal Access

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Bicycle Lanes

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³ (CMR ID: 1126) Developing CUES for Separated Bicycle Lanes. FHWA-HEP-23-025, (2023).

⁴ Park and Abdel-Aty. Evaluation of safety effectiveness of multiple cross-sectional features on urban arterials. Accident Analysis and Prevention, Vol. 92, pp. 245-255, (2016).

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⁶ Sandt et al. Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning. FHWA, (2016).

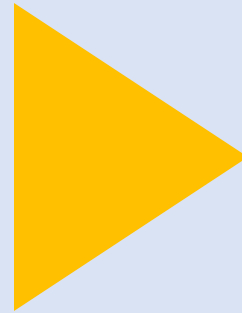
⁷ (CMR ID: 10736) 10736 Development of Crash Modification Factors for Bicycle Lane Additions While Reducing Lane and Shoulder Widths. FHWA-HEP-21-012, (2021).

FHWA-SA-21-051

2023

Met with the Town
twice

Held listening session
with businesses



2024

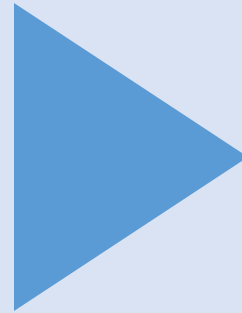
Met with property
owners

Online survey

Developed
Alternatives

Tonight's presentation

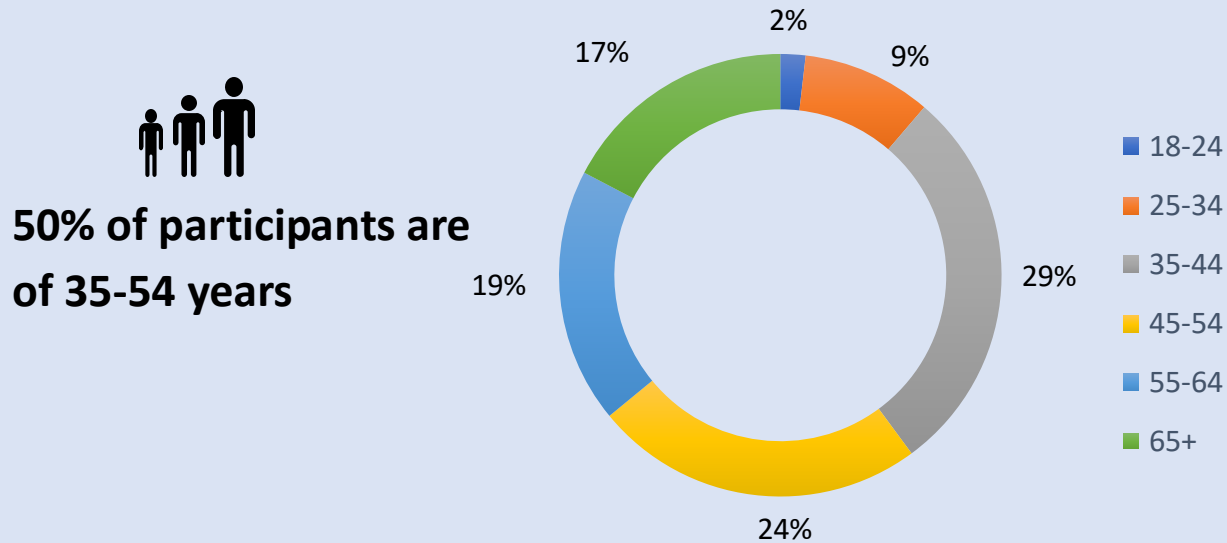
Conducted
between
May and
June 2024



There were
418
participants

Summary of Survey Results

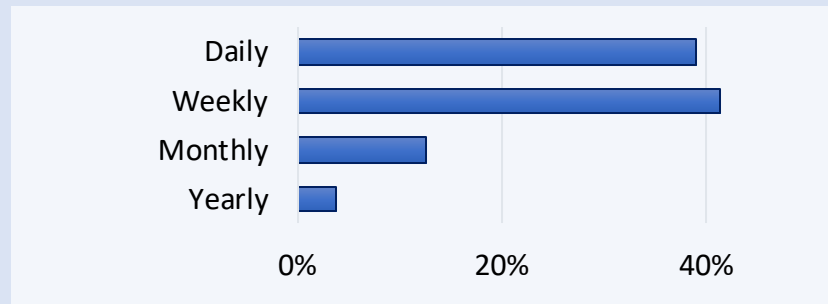
Who participated?








Of participants residing within ½ miles of Main Street, 87% own their residence.

Summary of Survey Results

How frequently do participants visit?







For what reasons?

-  Shopping or Restaurants – 66%
-  Library – 63%
-  Commuting or **Other** – 40%
-  Doctor – 14%
-  School or Religious Services – 8%

Other: Recreation, leisure, bank, post office, town hall, residence, walking, social, farmers market, civic participation, gas, dry cleaning etc.

How do they get there

-  90% - Drive alone
-  63% - Walk
-  19% - Carpool/Vanpool
-  19% - Bicycle/E-Scooter

Comments Received from Community Survey and Feedback from Property Owners

Get rid of angled parking, it's hard to see pedestrians or bikes, too much traffic

More parking, better pedestrian accommodations and visibility

Improve visibility at mid-block crossings

More trees!

Mitigate gridlock from southbound cars turning left onto Common Street.

Improve ADA accessibility for pedestrians

Concerned for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists and would like to see more accommodations made

Consider installing a crosswalk at South Main Street and Pond Street

Allow right turn on red!

Reduce traffic near Pond Street and Route 135 intersections

Better and more sidewalks with flashing crosswalk lights

Outdoor seating, more benches and planters

Would prefer sidewalk widths to not be reduced

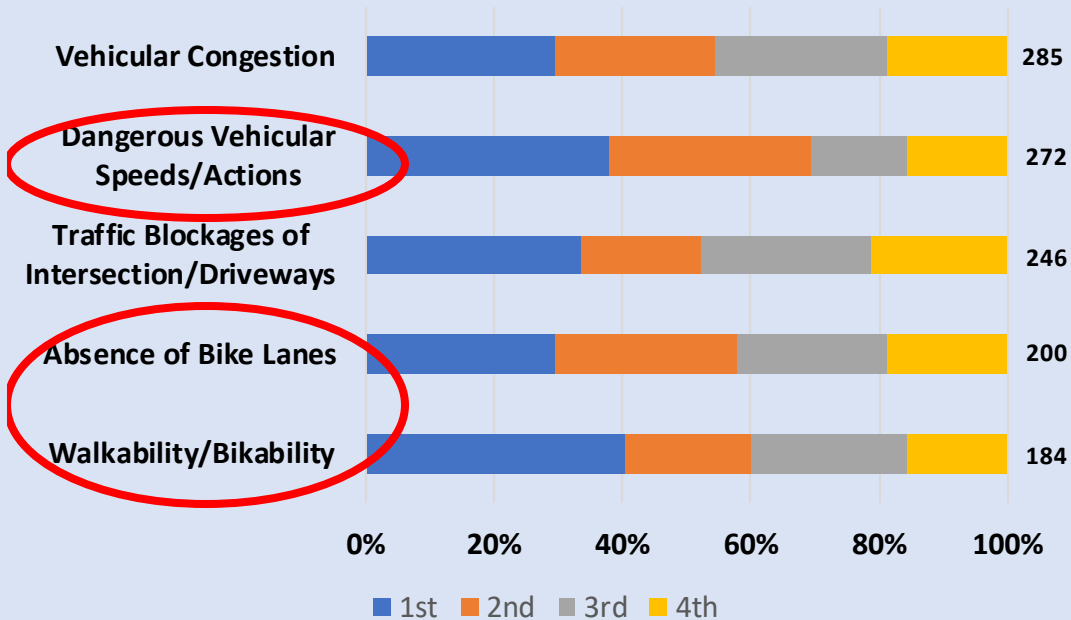
Need more public, accessible parking

Improve visibility at Cottage Street and Pond Street

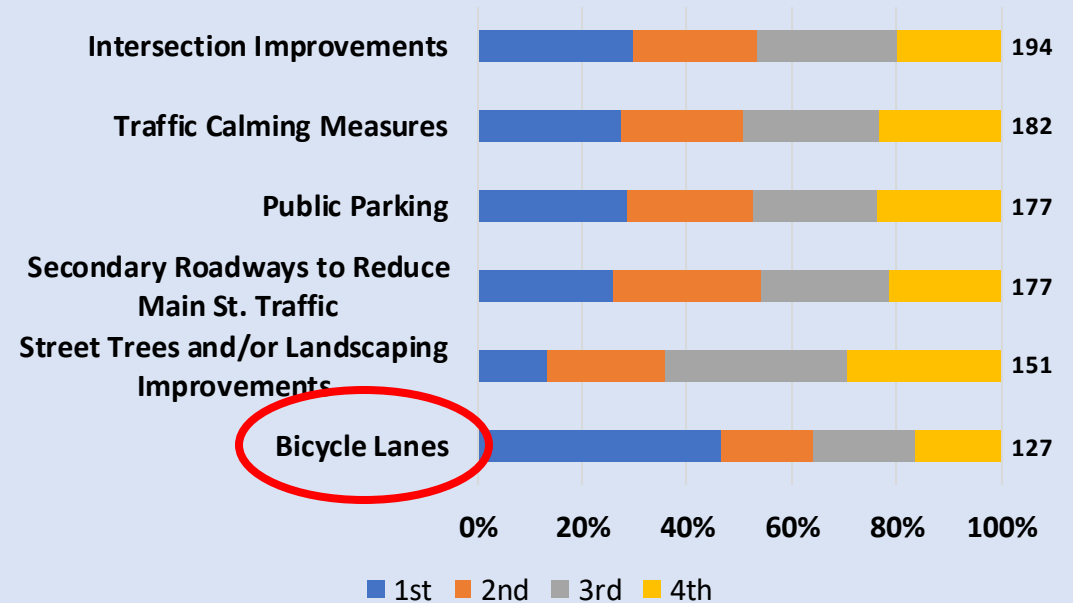
Remove parking by Pond Street, it's too narrow

Summary of Survey Results

Critical Issues



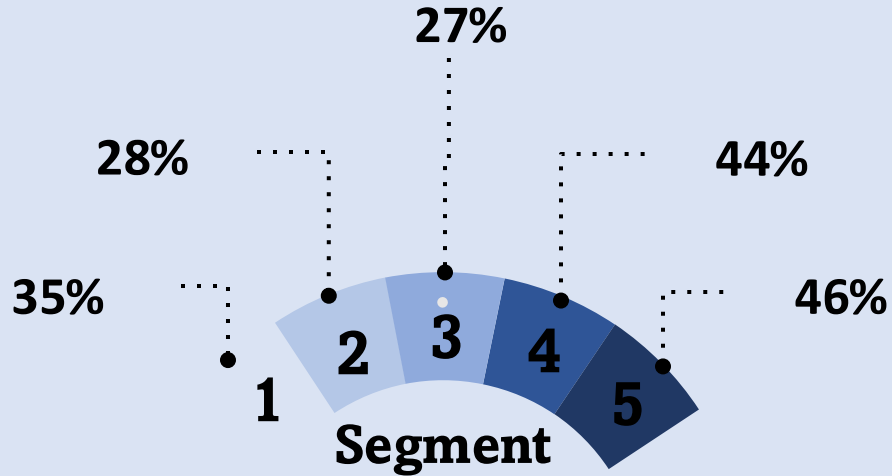
Project Type Ranked by Importance



Participants believe that by prioritizing these project types the major critical issues will be mitigated allowing Main Street Corridor to achieve its greatest potential while encouraging a greater sense of community and vibrancy within the town of Natick.

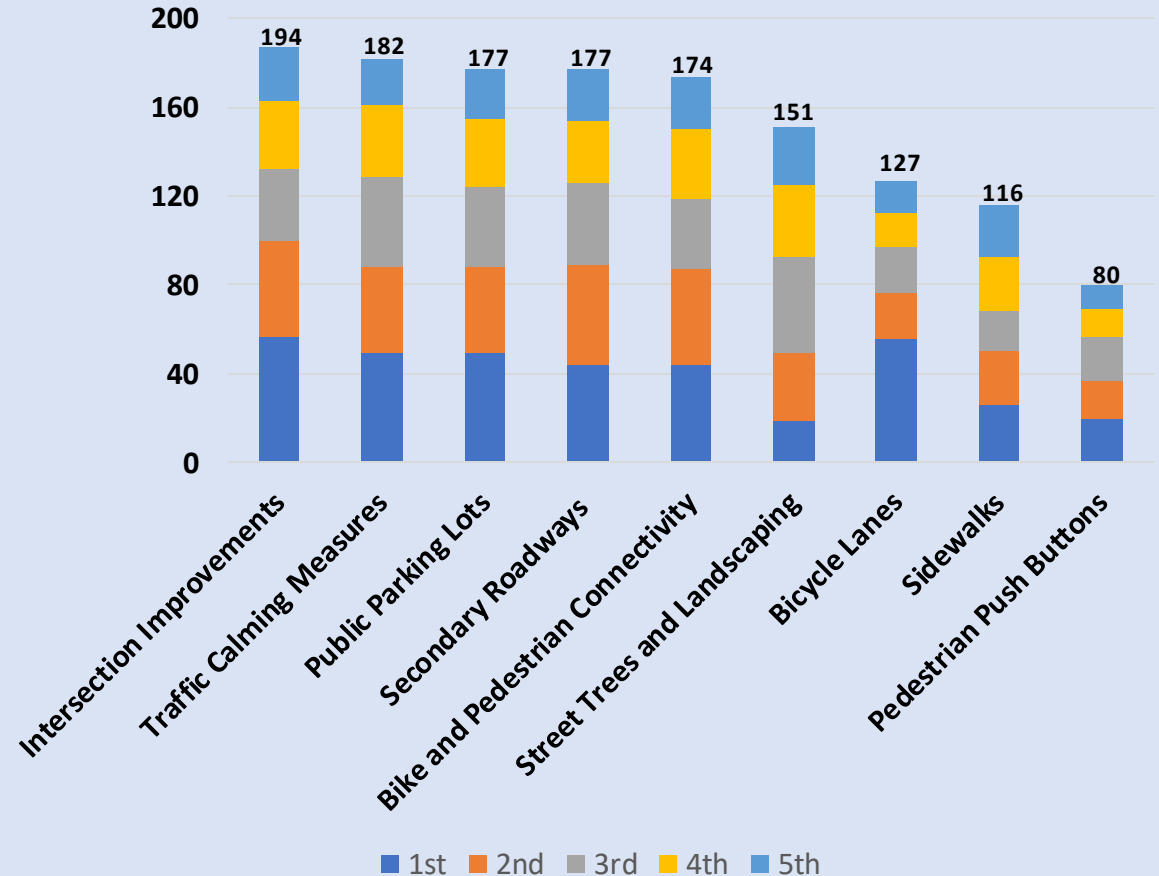
Summary of Survey Results

What type of projects should the Town invest in to improve the Main Street Corridor?
Select your top 5 issues, 1 being the most important & 5 being the least important.



- Segment 1 [Cottage Street to Family Farms Convenience Store]
- Segment 2 [Family Farms Convenience Store to Common Street]
- Segment 3 [Common Street to Pond Street]
- Segment 4 [Pond Street to East Central Street]
- Segment 5 [East Central Street to South Avenue]

What Segment(s) Need Most Attention



What future opportunities do you see along the Main Street Corridor?



Green Space
Trees
Park Benches



Restaurants
Cafes
Fine Dining



Luxury Shopping
Small Businesses



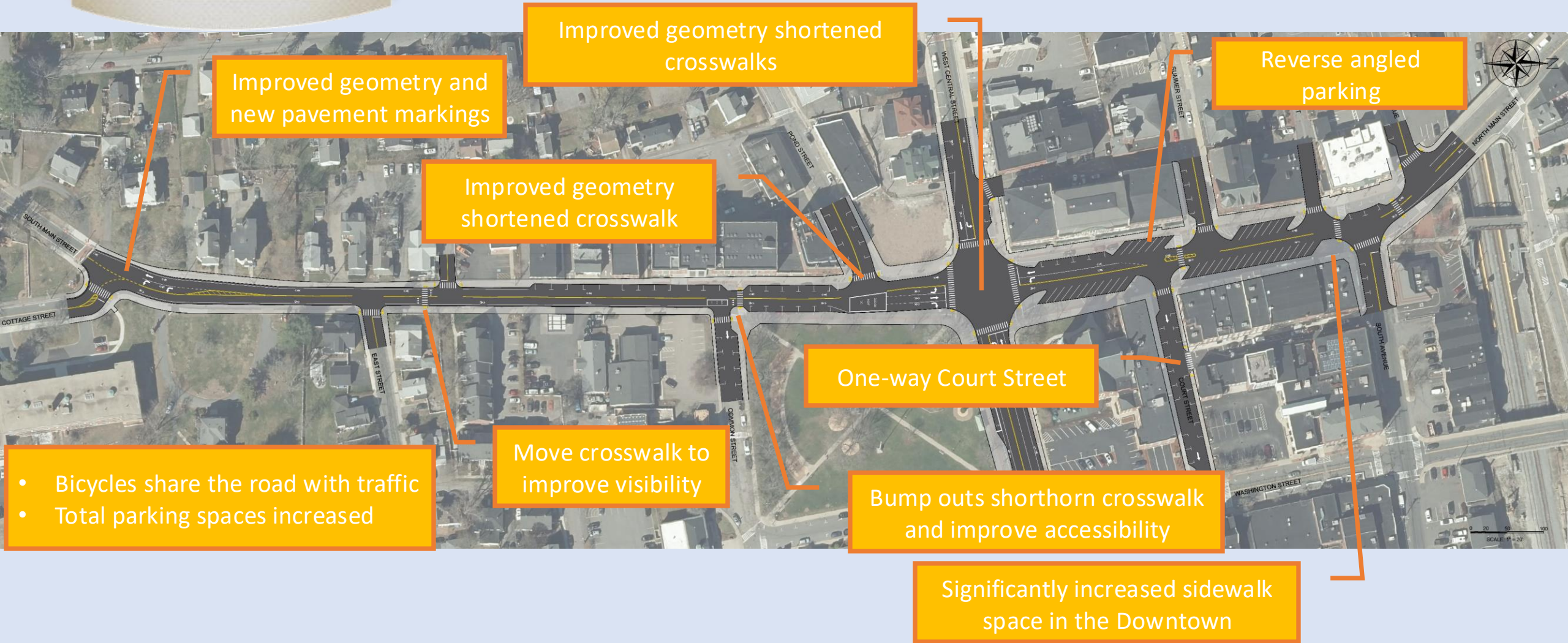
Grocery Stores
Hardware Stores

Participants believe that Main Street Corridor can restore its vibrance and community-oriented atmosphere by prioritizing safety measures for roadway users and by investing in the quality of downtown destinations.

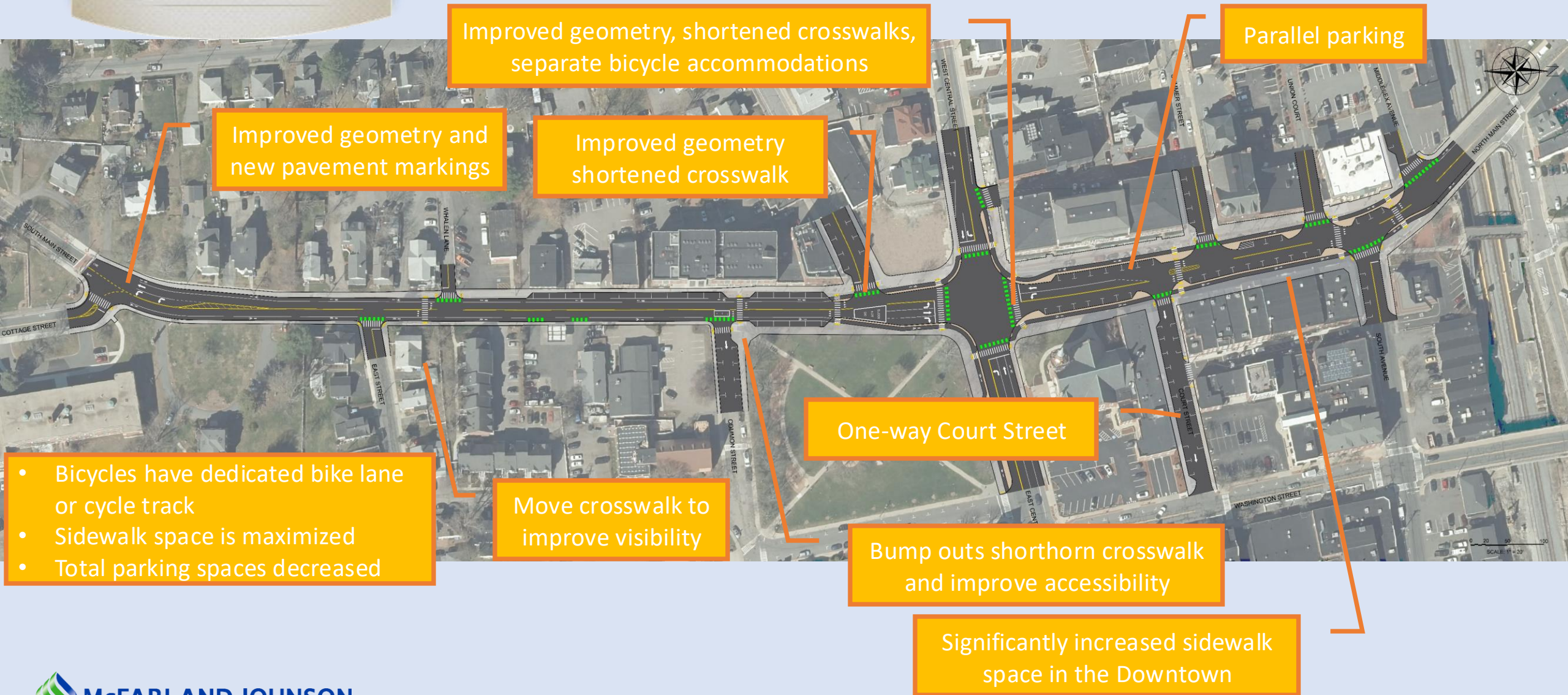


- Main Street has a “Medium Potential for Everyday Biking” according to MassDOT 2022 data
- Anticipated to increase to “High Potential for Everyday Biking” when Rail Trail is complete and North Main Street added

Alternative 1 Limited Bicycle Accommodation

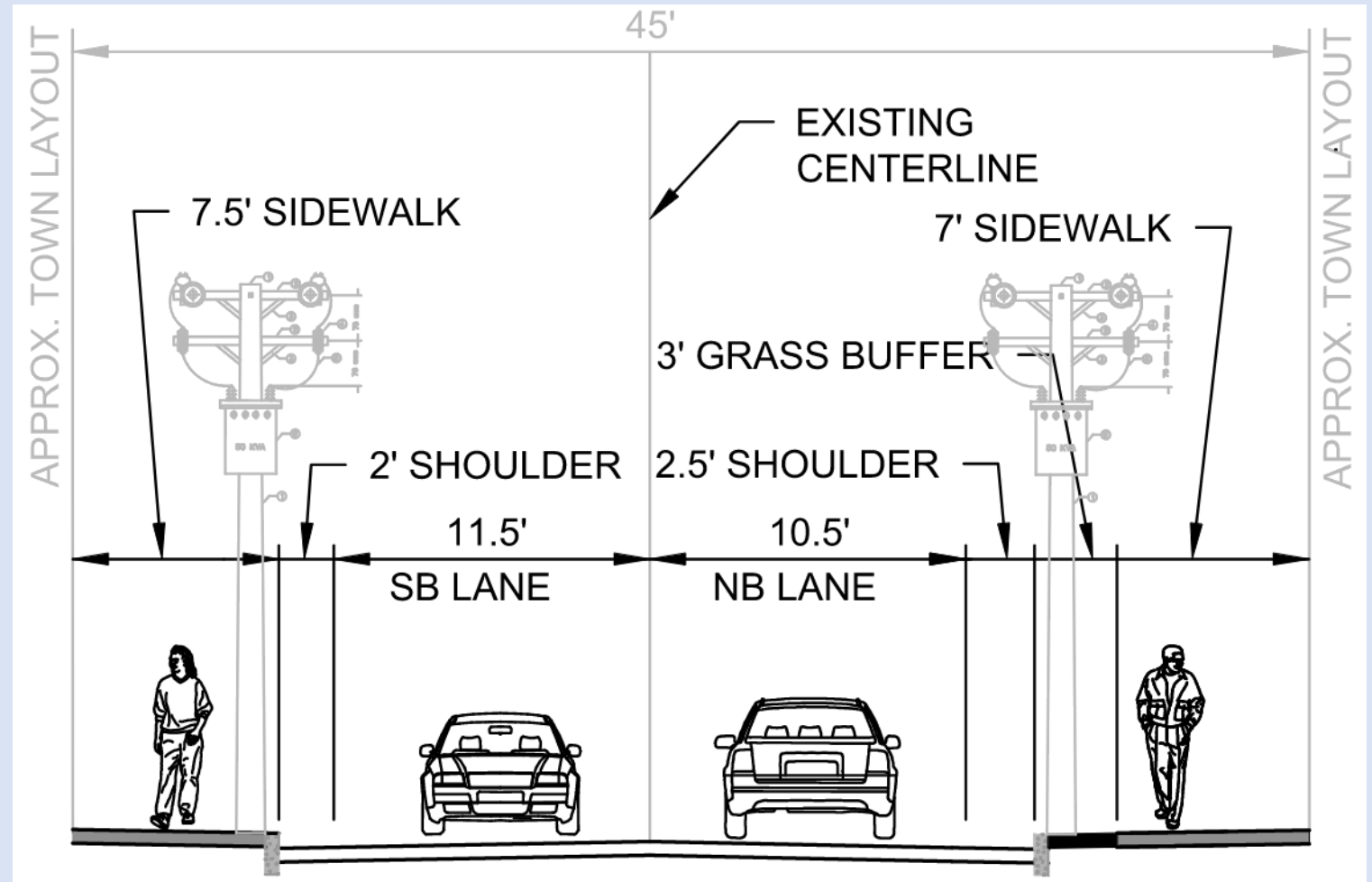


Alternative 1 Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 1 – Cottage Street to Gas Station Existing Condition

- Overhead utilities
- Sidewalks on each side
- No on-street parking
- No dedicated bicycle accommodations
- Unsignalized crosswalks



Segment 1 – Cottage Street to Gas Station Limited Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

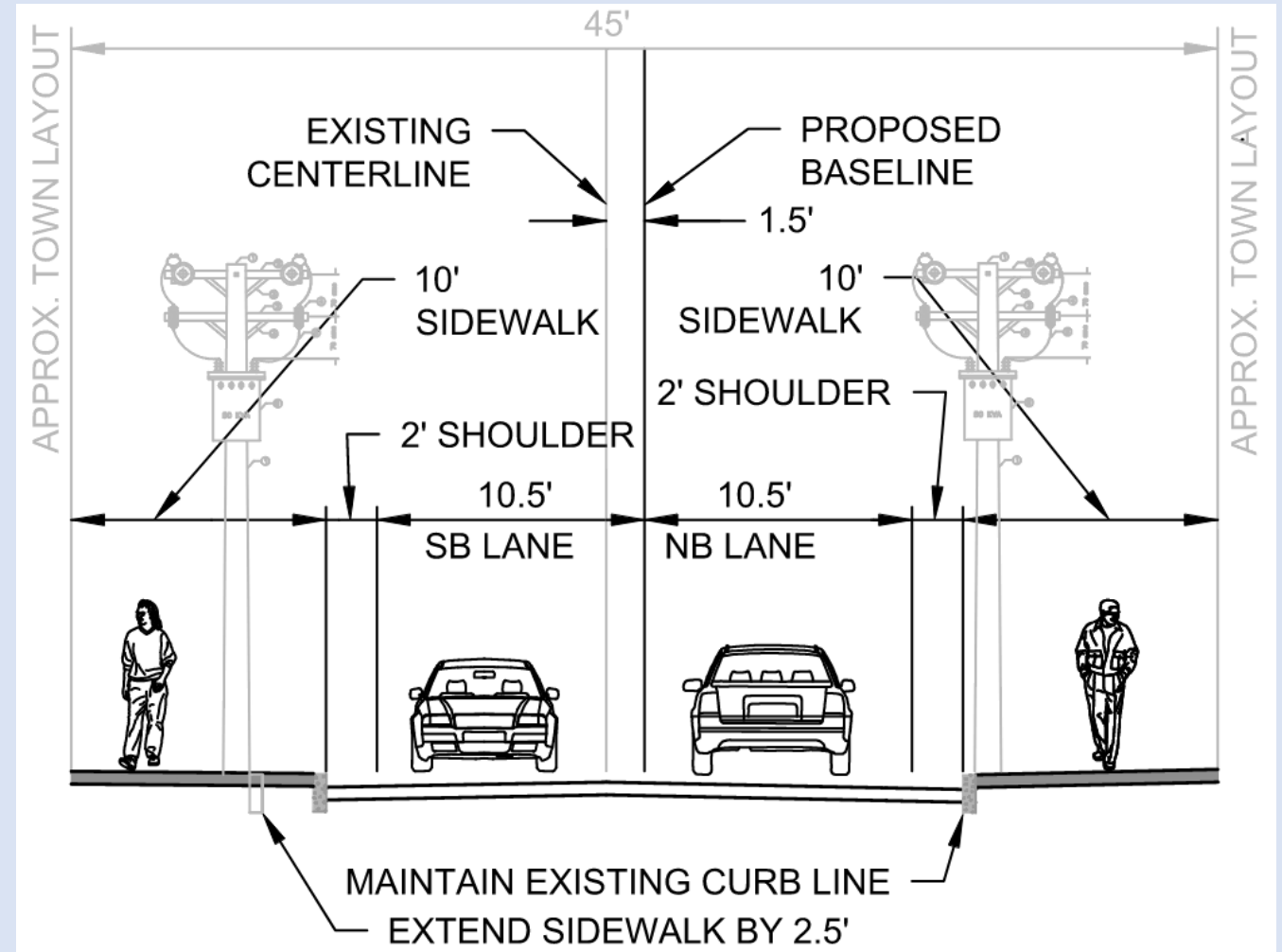
Bikes and cars share the road
Reduce travel lanes
Maintain 2' shoulders
Remove grass strip

PROS:

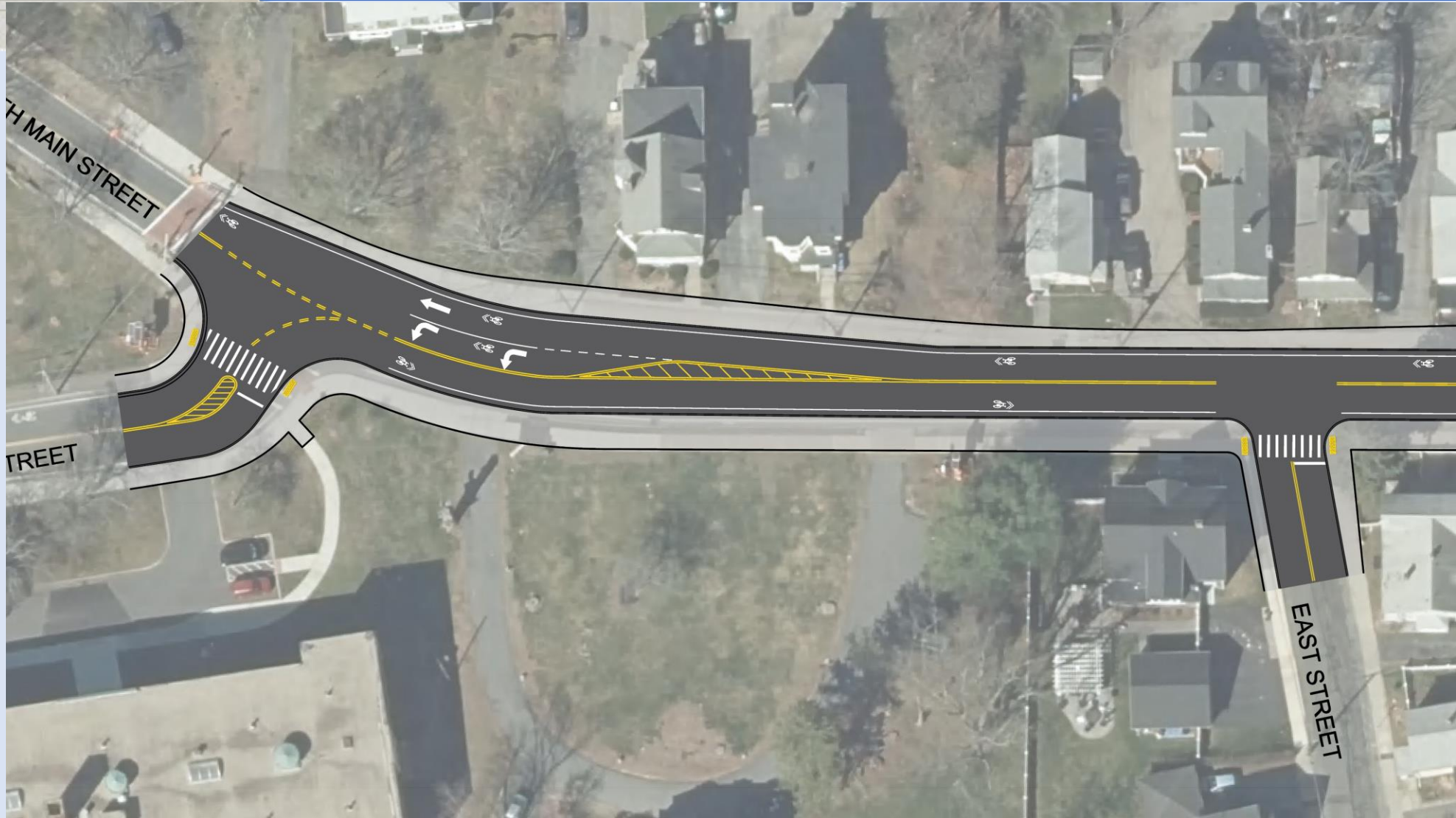
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Sidewalk widths increased on the west side
- 👍 Maintains existing curb line on the east side
- 👍 Improved crosswalks

CONS:

- 👎 Does not include a dedicated bike lane
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking
- 👎 Utility relocation likely required



Segment 1 – Cottage Street to Gas Station Limited Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 1 – Cottage Street to Gas Station Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

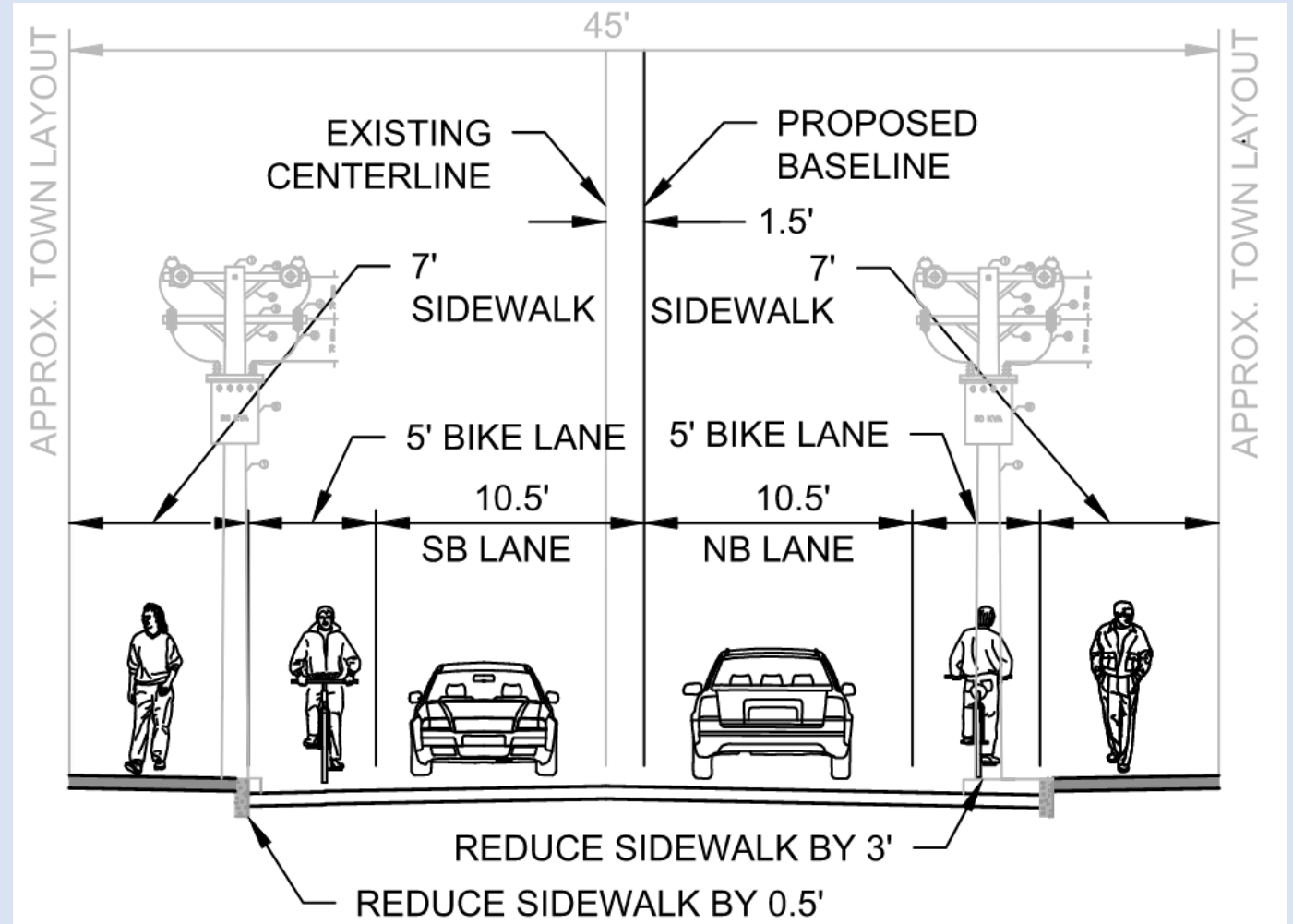
Bikes are separated from cars
Reduce travel lanes
Remove grass strip
Utilities need to be relocated

PROS:

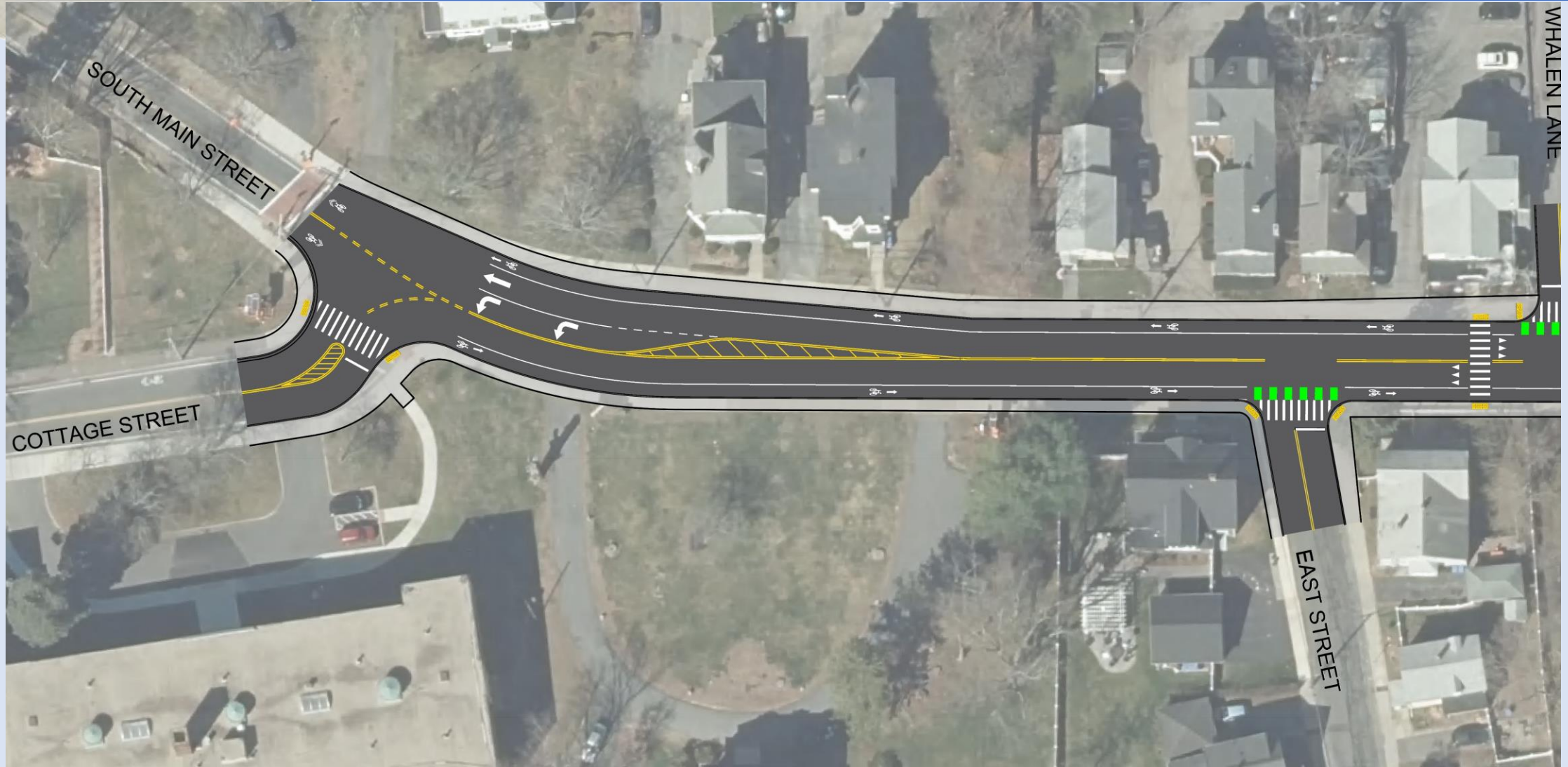
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Provides full 5' bike lane (unbuffered)
- 👍 Improved crosswalks

CONS:

- 👎 Reduces sidewalk width on both sides
- 👎 Utility pole relocation required for both sides
- 👎 Does not meet Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking

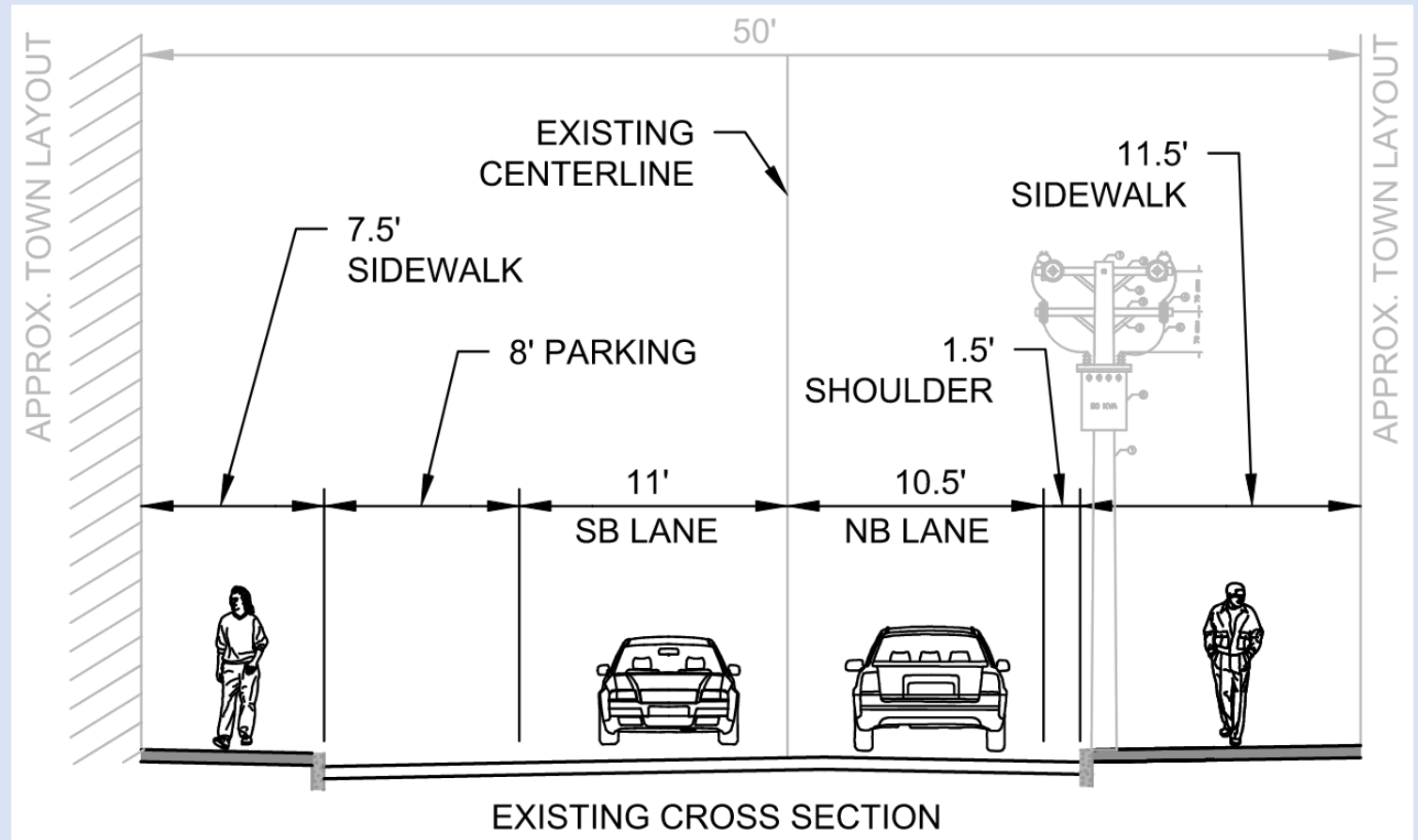


Segment 1 – Cottage Street to Gas Station Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 2 – Gas Station to Common Street Existing Condition

- Overhead utilities
- Sidewalks on each side
- On-street parallel parking on the west
- No dedicated bicycle accommodations
- Gas station pumps are close to road



Segment 2 – Gas Station to Common Street Limited Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

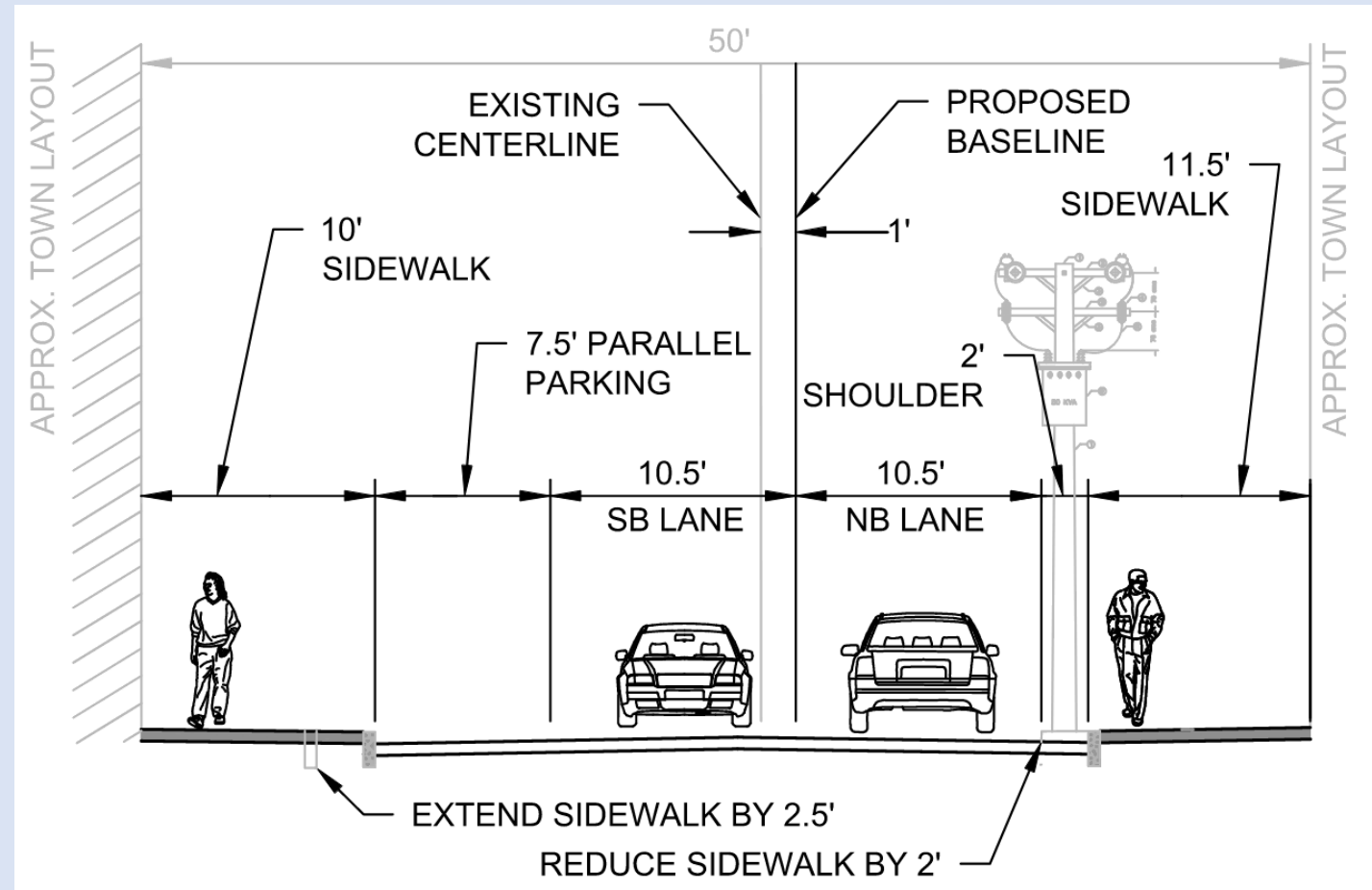
Bikes and cars share the road
Reduce travel lanes
Maintain 2' shoulders

PROS:

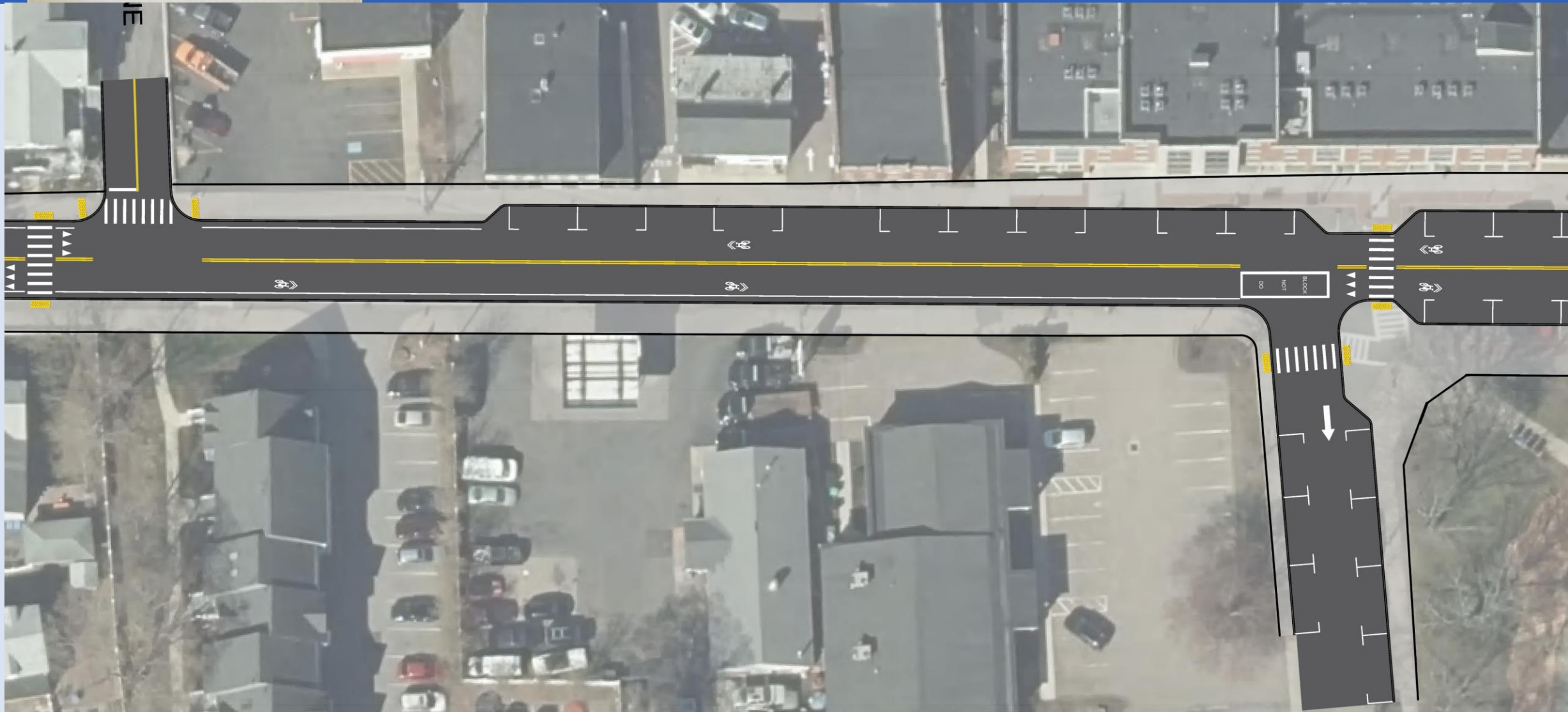
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Sidewalk widths increased on the west side
- 👍 Improved crosswalks with bump-outs
- 👍 Maintains parallel parking

CONS:

- 👎 Does not include a dedicated bike lane
- 👎 Sidewalk width decreased on the east side
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking
- 👎 Utility relocation required



Segment 2 – Gas Station to Common Street Limited Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 2 – Gas Station to Common Street Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

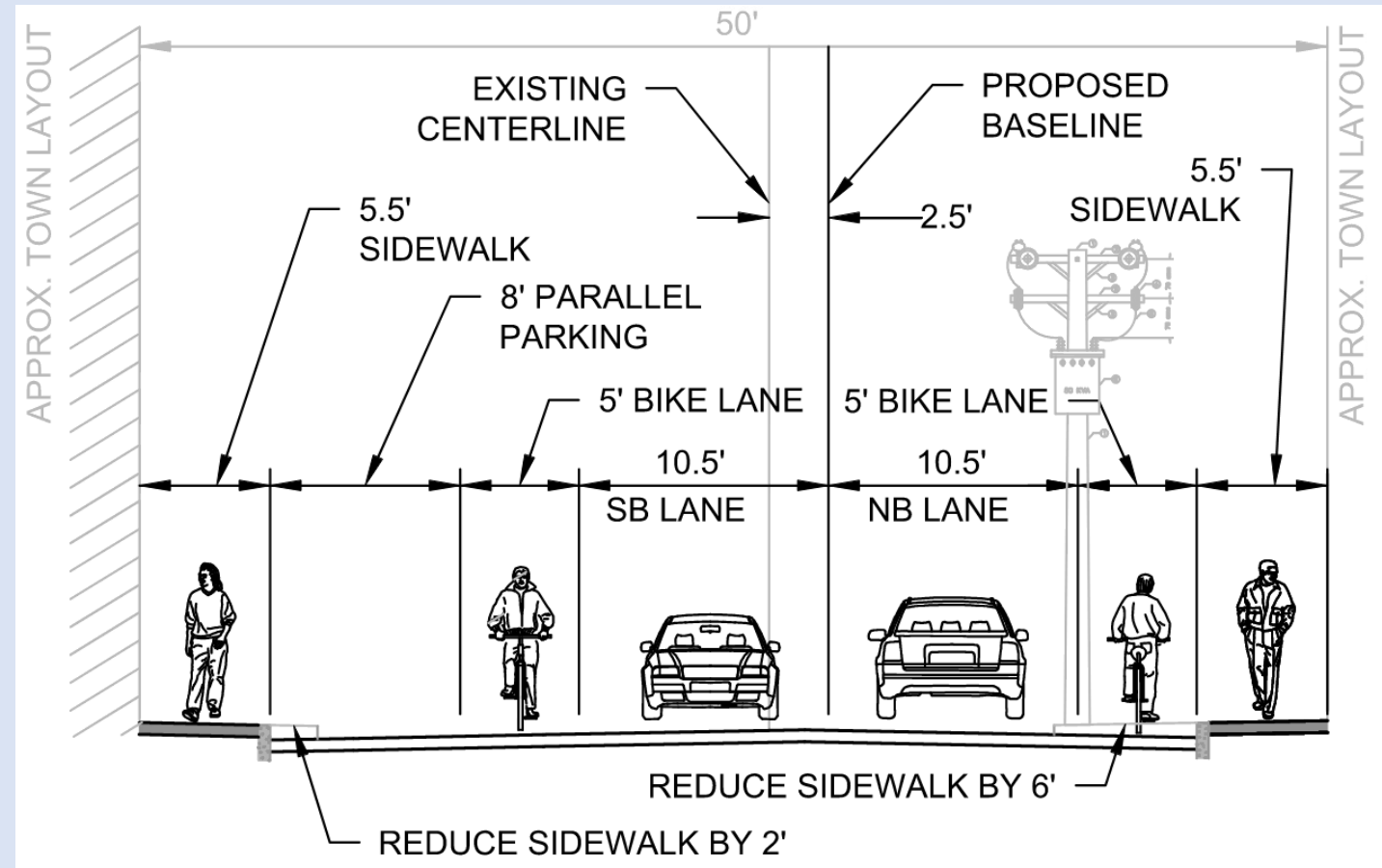
Bikes are separated from cars
Reduce travel lanes
Utilities need to be relocated

PROS:

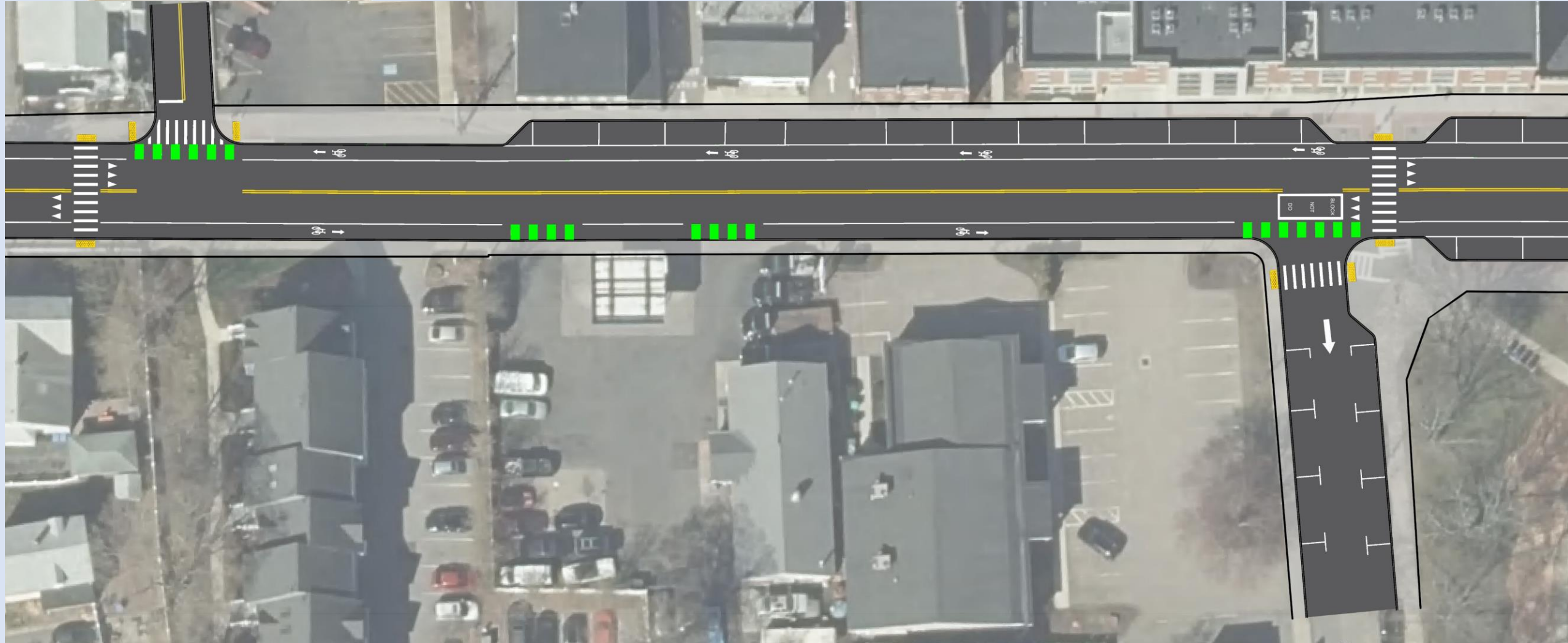
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Provides full 5' bike lane (unbuffered)
- 👍 Improved crosswalks with bump-outs
- 👍 Portions of sidewalk widened on west
- 👍 Maintains parallel parking

CONS:

- 👎 Reduces sidewalk on both sides
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking
- 👎 Utility relocation required

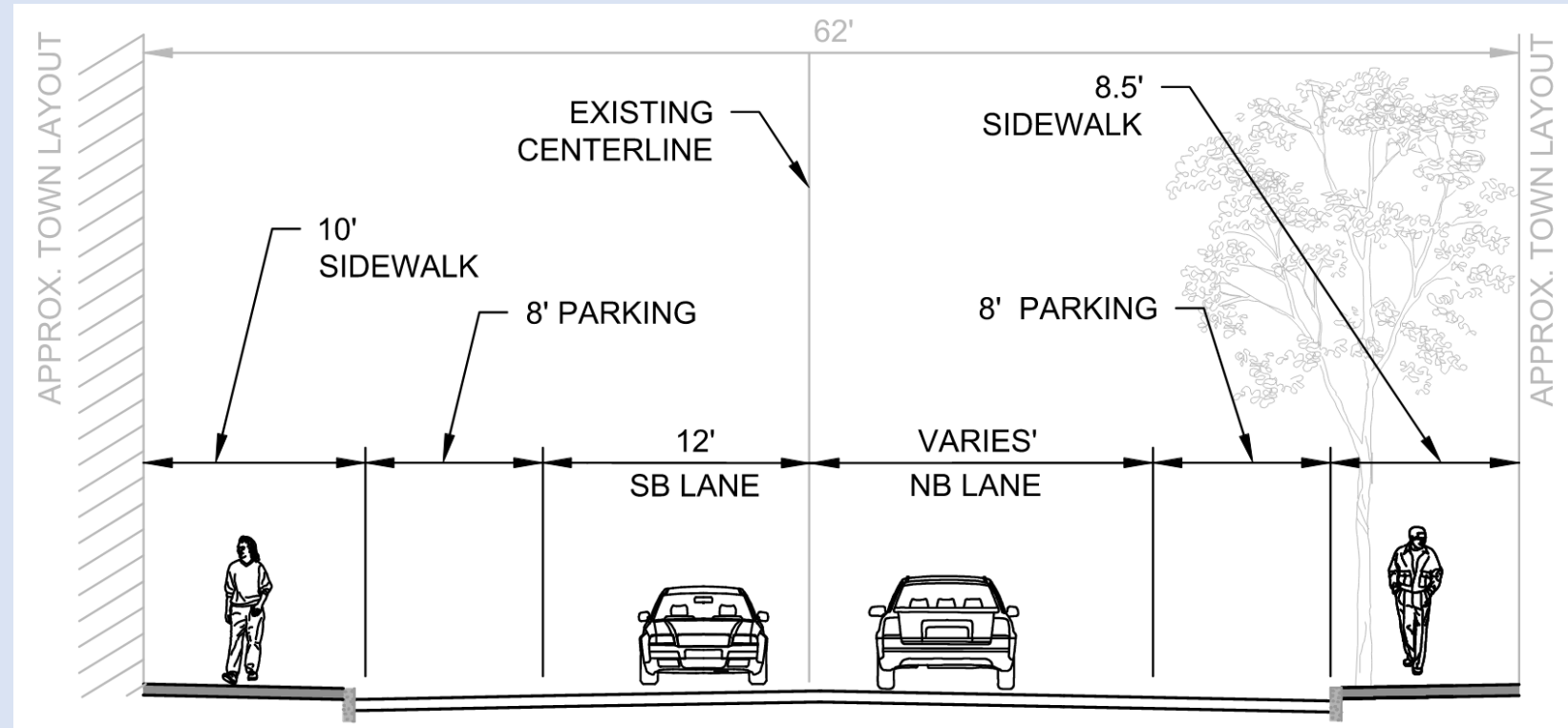


Segment 2 – Gas Station to Common Street Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 3 – Common Street to Pond Street Existing Condition

- Street trees both sides
- Sidewalks on each side
- Wide travel lanes
- Parallel parking on each side
- No dedicated bicycle accommodations
- Long, unsignalized crosswalks



Segment 3 – Common Street to Pond Street Limited Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

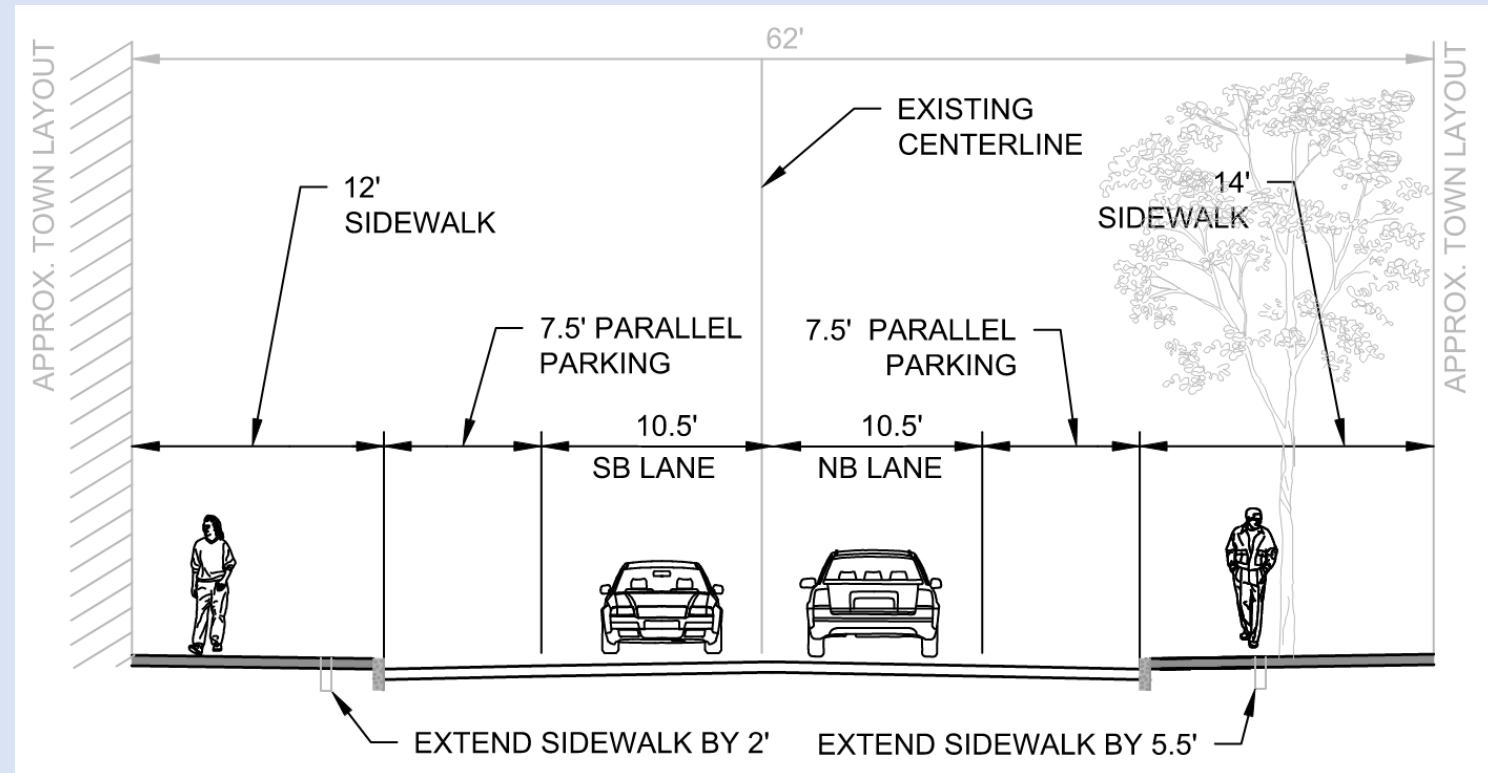
Bikes and cars share the road
Reduce travel lanes

PROS:

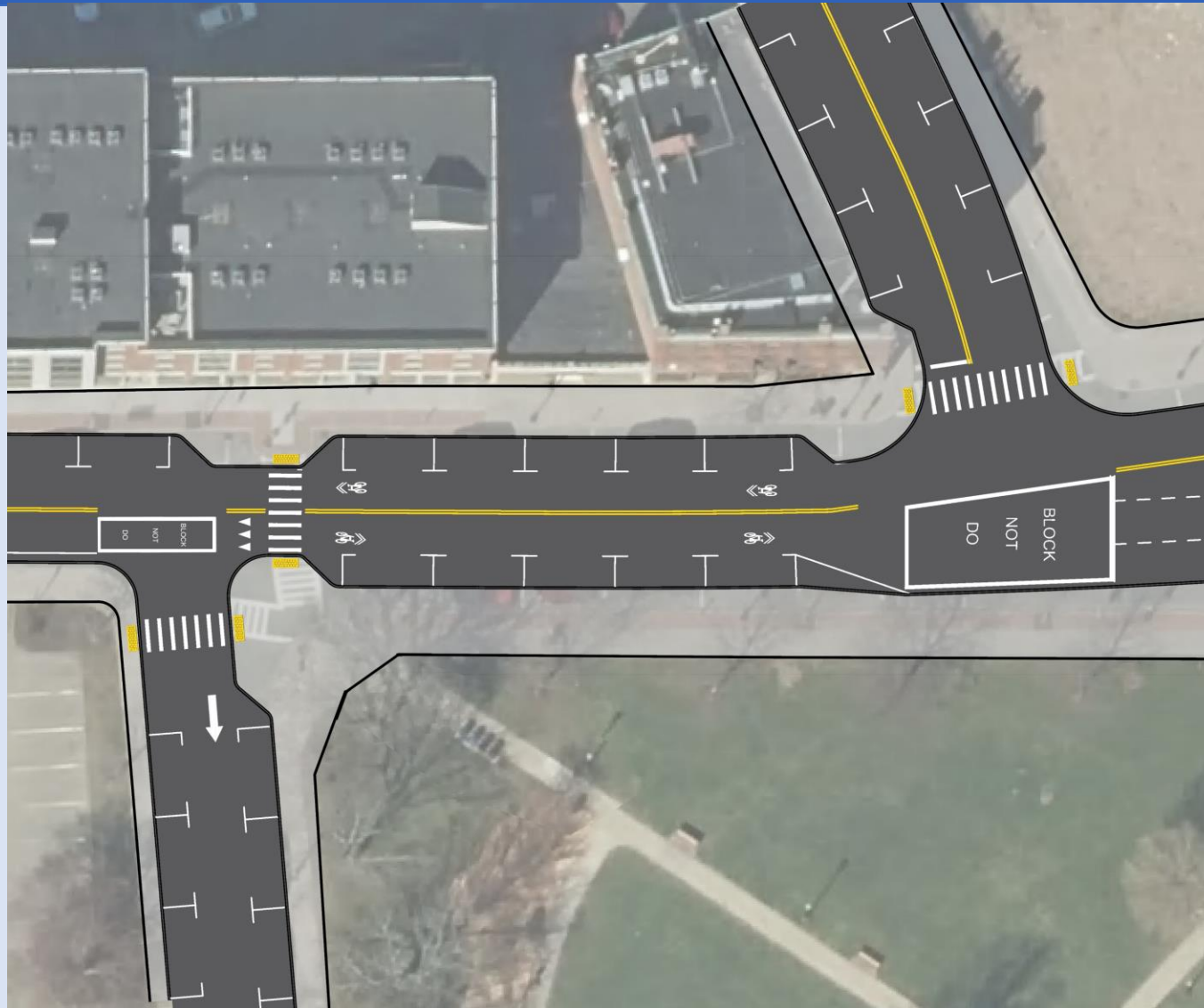
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Sidewalk widths increased on both sides.
- 👍 Improved crosswalks with bump-outs
- 👍 No tree removal anticipated
- 👍 Maintains parallel parking

CONS:

- 👎 Does not include a dedicated bike lane
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking



Segment 3 – Common Street to Pond Street Limited Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 3 – Common Street to Pond Street Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

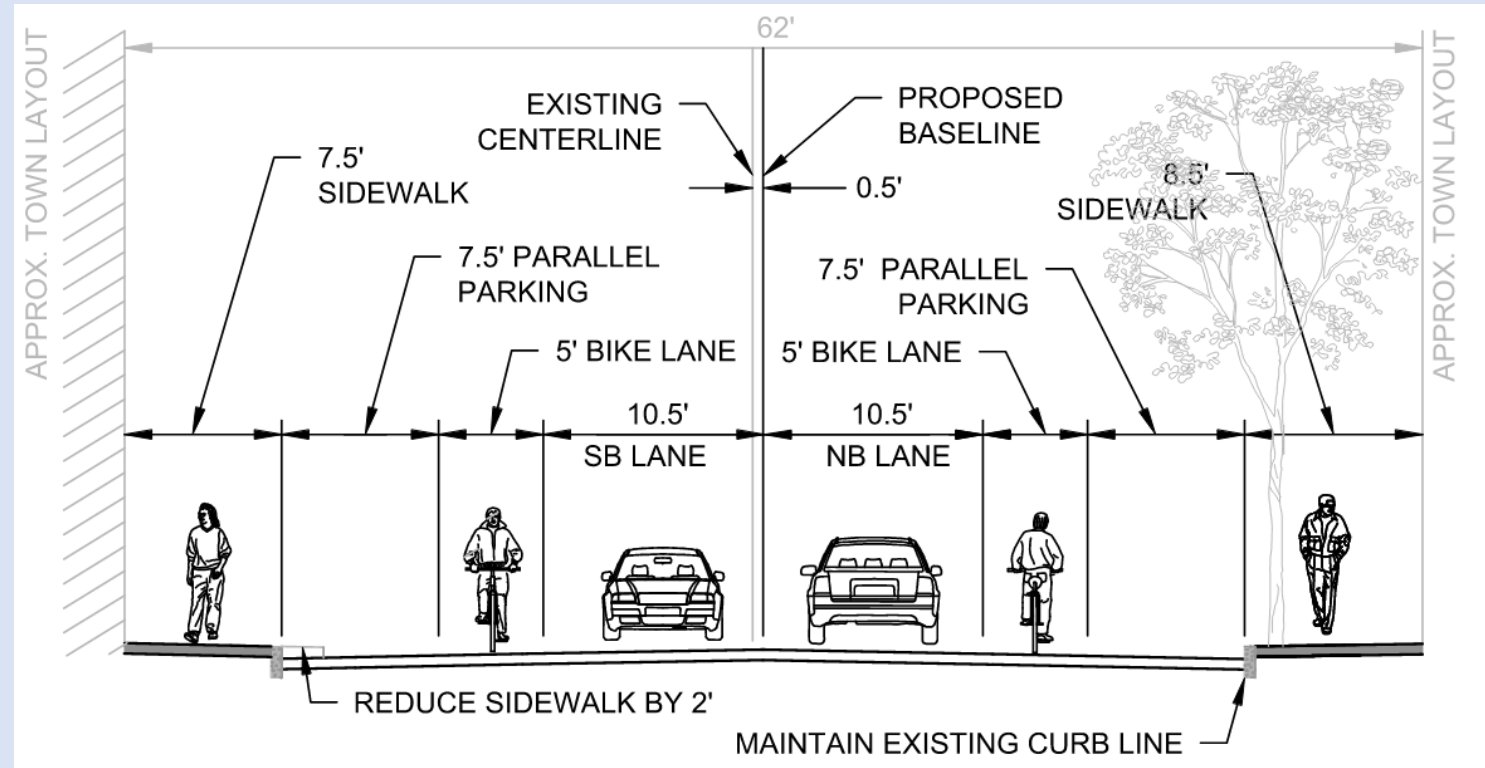
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PROS:

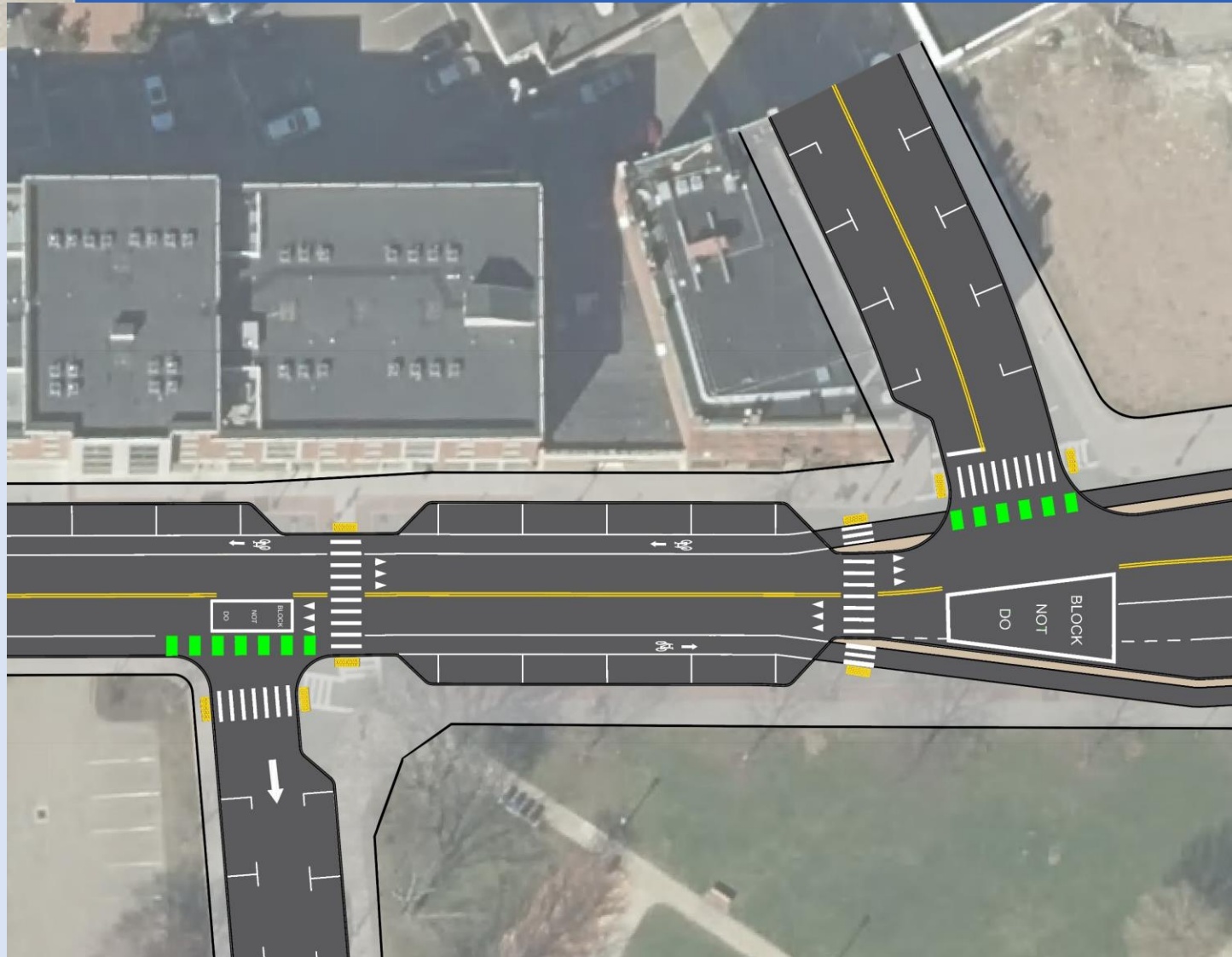
- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Provides full 5' bike lane (unbuffered)
- 👍 Trees on east are not impacted
- 👍 Improved crosswalks with bump-outs
- 👍 Maintains parallel parking

CONS:

- 👎 Reduces sidewalk on west side.
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking



Segment 3 – Common Street to Pond Street Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation





What is your preferred option and why?

What is your preferred option and why?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



What is your concern with each option?

What is your concern with each option?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



What enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative?

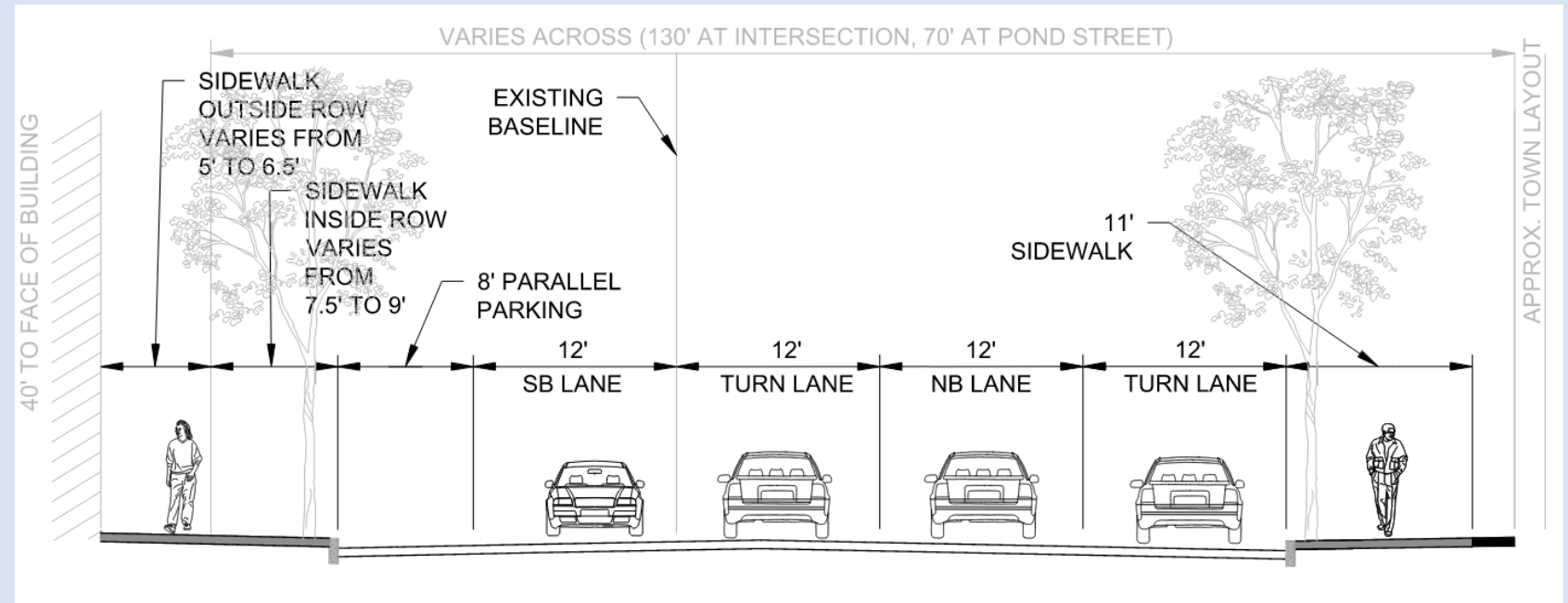
What enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Segment 4 – Pond Street to Route 135 Existing Condition

- Congestion at Pond Street
- High crash rate
- Sidewalks on each side
- Wide travel lanes
- 2 parallel spaces on west
- No dedicated bicycle accommodations
- Long crosswalks



Segment 4 – Pond Street to Route 135 Limited Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

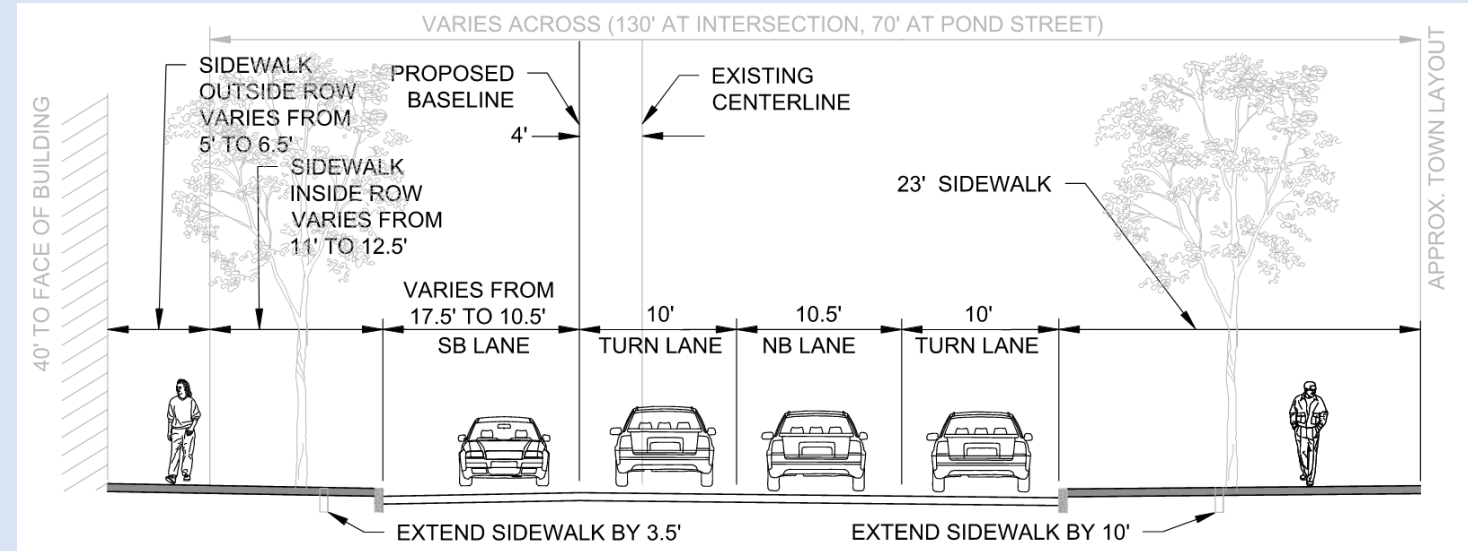
Bikes and cars share the road
Reduce travel lane widths

PROS:

- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Sidewalk widths increased on both sides. Provides opportunities for placemaking and streetscapes.
- 👍 Curb bump-outs at Pond and West Central improve pedestrian crossings
- 👍 Do Not Block Markings reduce gridlock at Pond
- 👍 Improved crosswalks

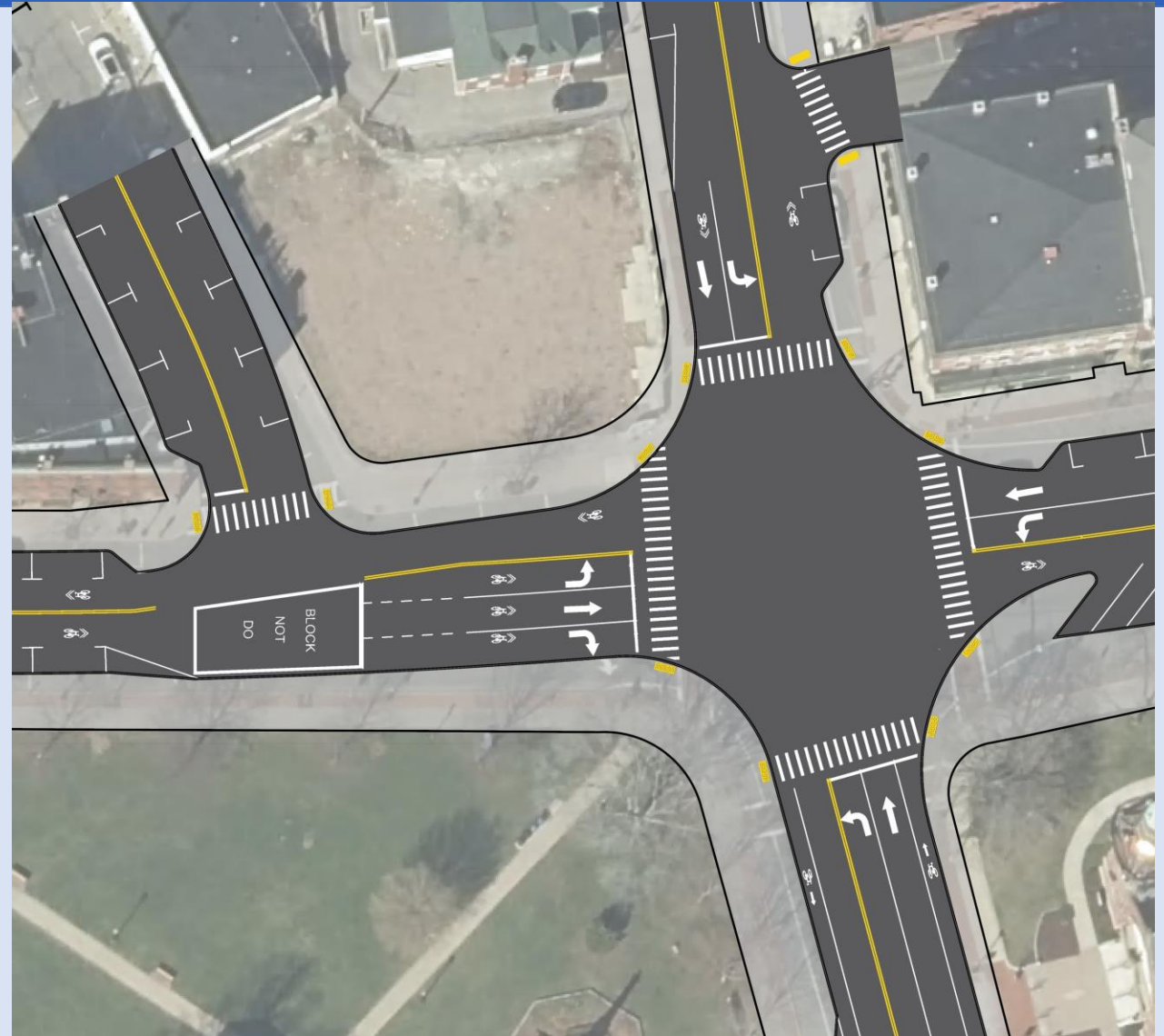
CONS:

- 👎 Does not include a dedicated bike lane
- 👎 Eliminates 2 parallel spaces
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking



Segment 4 – Pond Street to Route 135 Limited Bicycle Accommodation

- Reduce crosswalk lengths (improved safety and operations)
- Do Not Block
- Improved sight lines at Pond Street with parking changes
- NTOR Blank out signs
- Signal timing optimization
- Operations in 10 years are the same as they are today



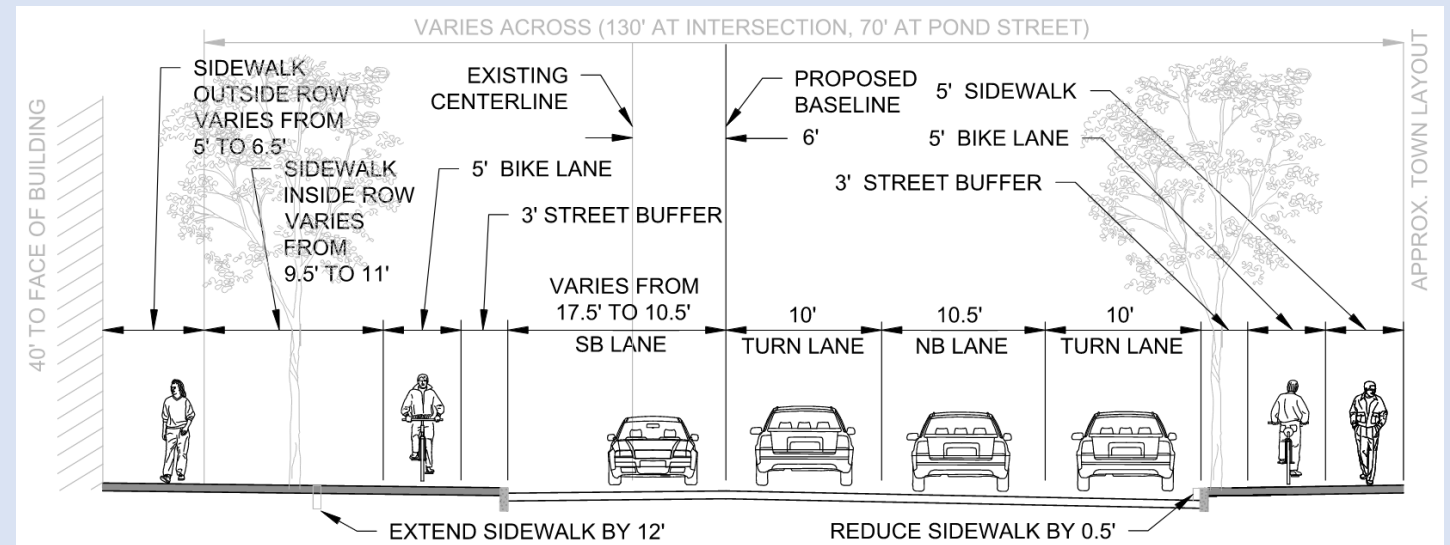
Segment 4 – Pond Street to Route 135 Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation

NOTES:

Bikes and cars are separated
Reduce travel lane widths

PROS:

- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Separated cycle track at sidewalk grades provide significant safety improvements.
- 👍 Follows Massachusetts guidance for streets with a high potential for everyday biking
- 👍 Provides opportunities for placemaking and streetscapes.
- 👍 Curb bump-outs at Pond and West Central improve pedestrian crossings
- 👍 Do Not Block Markings reduce gridlock at Pond

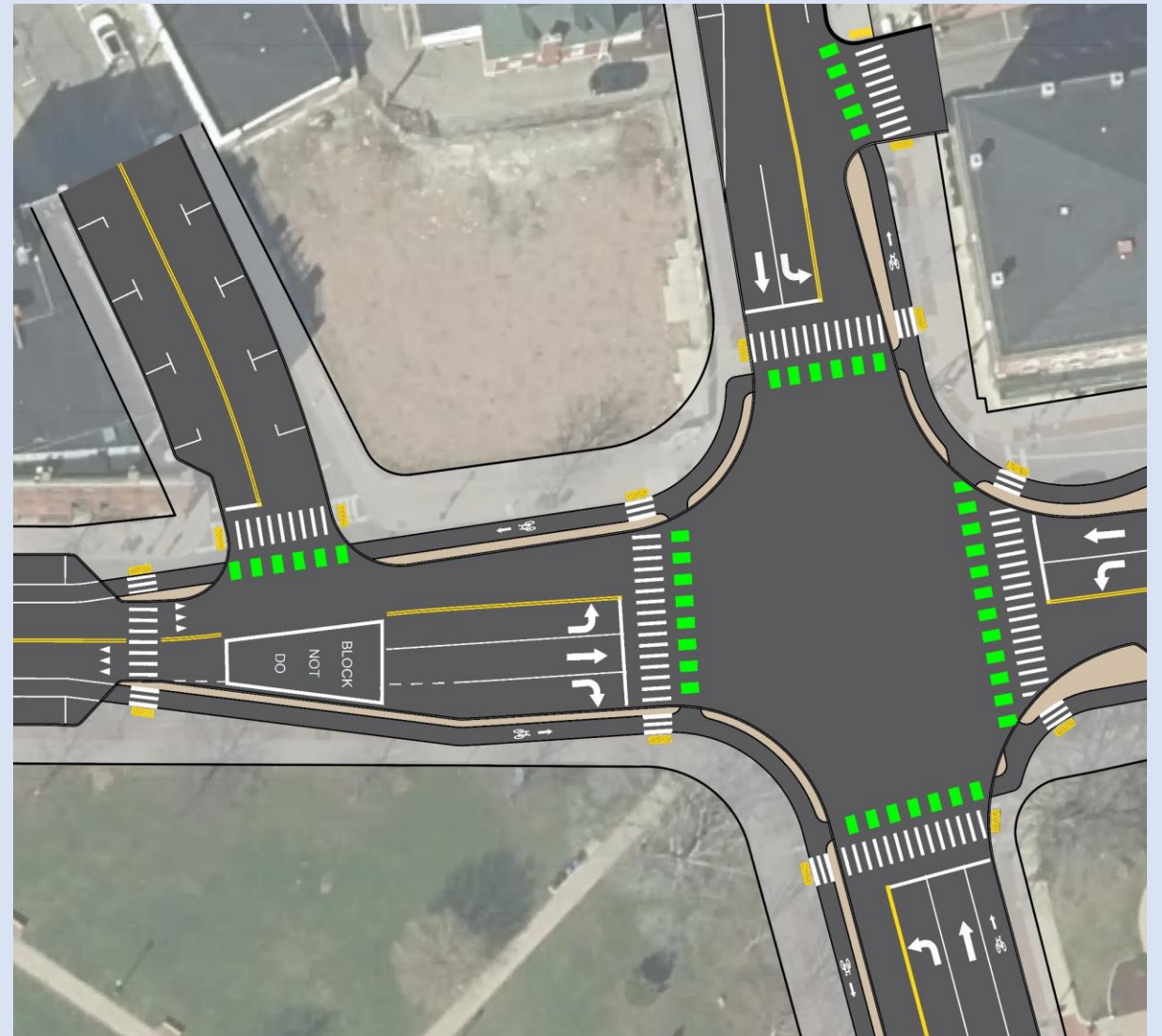


CONS:

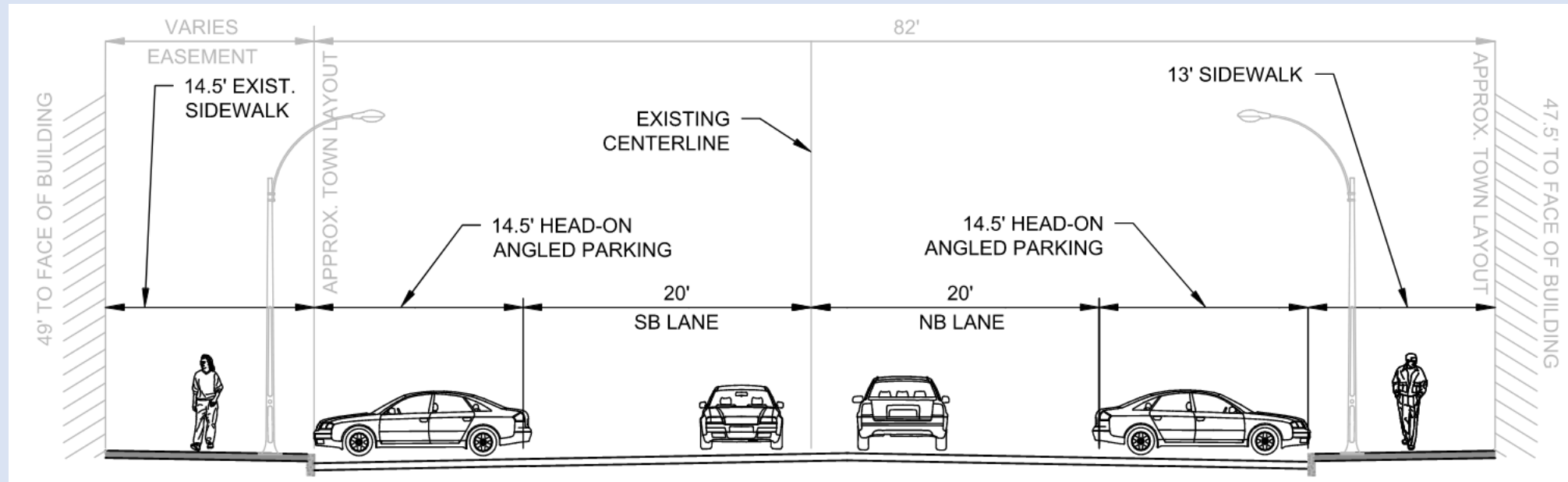
- 👎 Eliminates 2 parallel spaces.
- 👎 May impact trees on east. Further study is needed.

Segment 4 – Pond Street to Route 135 Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation

- Reduce crosswalk lengths (improved safety and operations)
- Do Not Block
- Improved sight lines at Pond Street with parking changes
- NTOR Blank out signs
- Signal timing optimization
- Operations in 10 years are the same as they are today



Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue Existing Condition

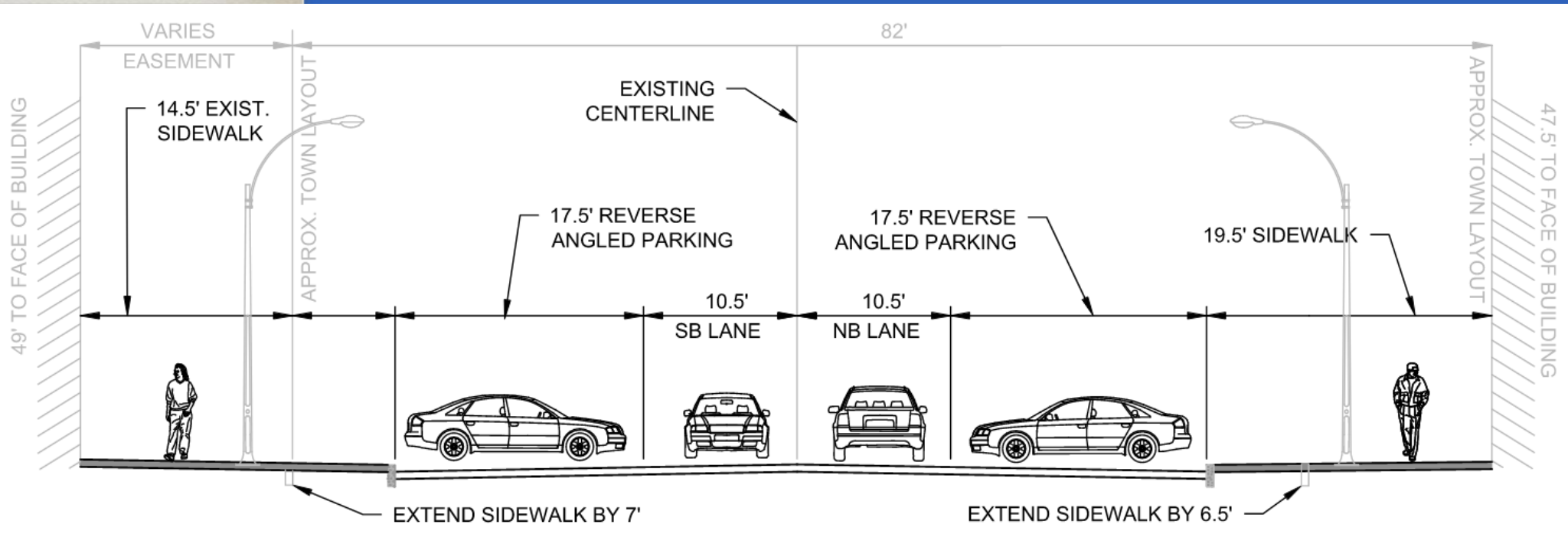


- Commercial/retail
- Brick border with street trees
- Very long crosswalks at intersection
- High crash rate

- Mix of parallel and angled head on parking
- Wide travel lanes
- No dedicated bicycle accommodations

- Unsignalized long mid-block crosswalks
- 93 parking spaces (few accessible spaces)
- Court Street is 2-way

Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue Limited Bicycle Accommodation



NOTES:

- ❖ Bikes and cars share the road
- ❖ Reduce travel lane widths
- ❖ Increases available sidewalk space
- ❖ Back in angled parking
- ❖ Makes Court Street one-way

PROS:

- 👍 New ADA-compliant sidewalks
- 👍 Sidewalk widths increased on both sides.
- 👍 Curb bump-outs at each intersection calm traffic and improve pedestrian crossings
- 👍 The number of parking spots has increased from 93 to 101

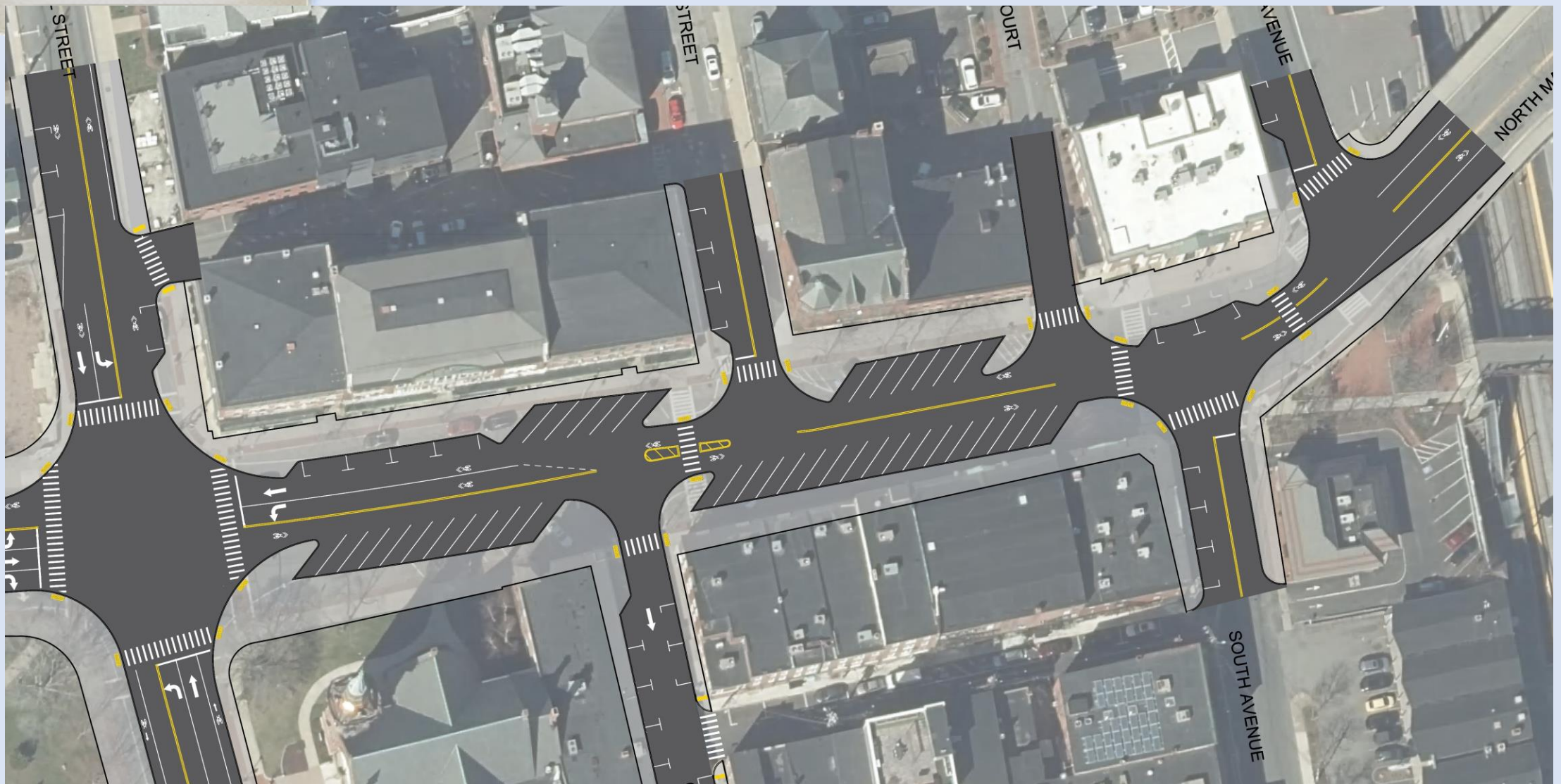
PROS:

- 👍 Back in angled parking reduces crashes with other vehicles and bicycles

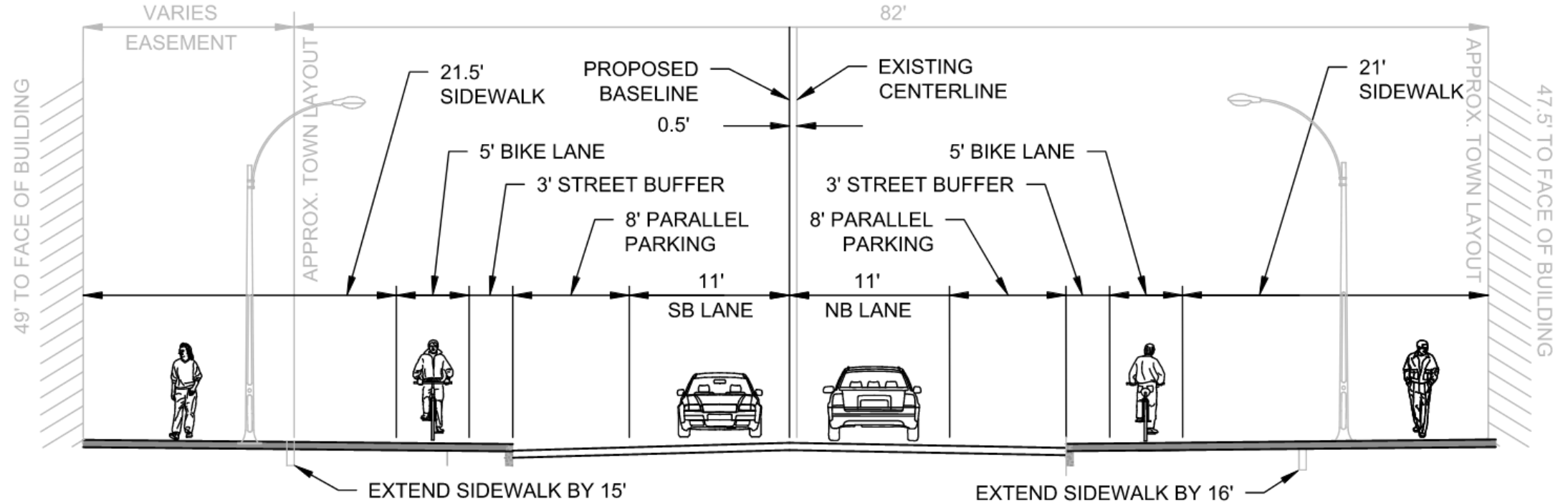
CONS:

- 👎 Does not include a dedicated bike lane
- 👎 Does not follow Massachusetts guidance for streets with a High Potential for Everyday Biking

Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue Limited Bicycle Accommodation



Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation



NOTES:

- ❖ Cycle track for bicycles
- ❖ Reduce travel lane widths
- ❖ Maximizes available sidewalk space

PROS

- 👍 Provides full 5' cycle track, maximizes safety
- 👍 Sidewalk widths are maximized for placemaking, outdoor dining, etc.
- 👍 Meets Massachusetts guidance for streets with a high potential for everyday biking
- 👍 Parallel parking is easy to use and reduces crash potential

CONS

- 👎 Number of parking spaces is reduced from 93 to 77

Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation





For Segments 4 and 5, which is your preferred option and why?

What is your preferred option and why?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



What are your concerns with each option?

What is your concern with each option?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



What enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative?

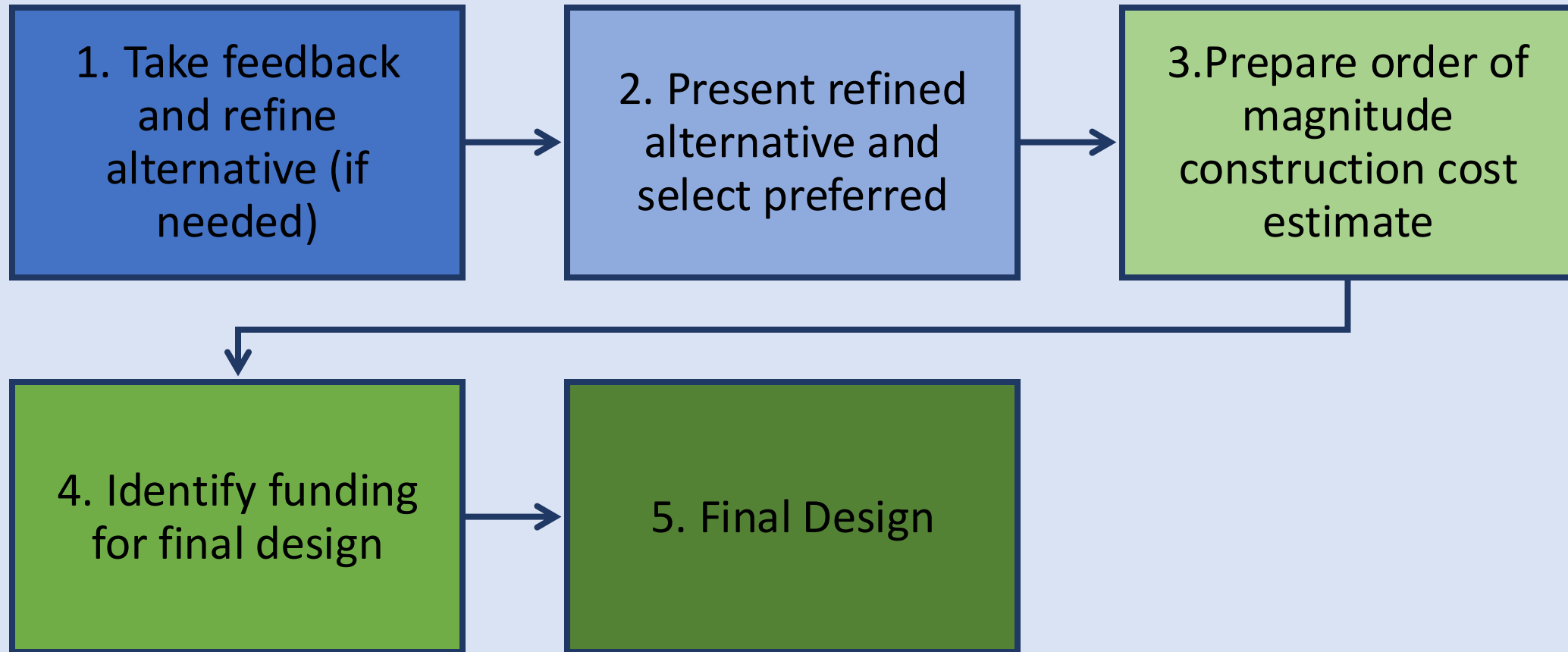
What enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Open Discussion and Q&A





The screenshot shows the Town of Natick website. At the top, there is an emergency alert banner for an outdoor fire ban. Below the banner is a navigation bar with the town logo and menu items: Government, Departments, Community, and I Want To... A search bar is also present. The main content area features a sidebar with icons for Alerts, Permits & Licenses, Natick Public Schools, and Contact Us. The main article is titled 'PROJECT: Main Street Improvements in Natick Center' and includes a 'Project Description' section. The description states that the town is working with engineering firm McFarland Johnson to study improvements for pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility along Main Street (Route 27) in Natick Center from Cottage Street to South Avenue.

- Get project updates
- Sign up for email alerts
- Learn more about the project
- Other useful information

www.natickma.gov/main-st-study

To submit a question, comment, or concern use the contact information below:

Morgan Griffiths

Transportation & Economic Development Planner

Natick Community and Economic Development

mainststudy@natickma.org

(508) 647-6400 ext. 6413

www.natickma.gov/main-st-study

Thank you!