



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Memorandum

To: The Natick Select Board

From: Morgan Griffiths, Transportation & Economic Development Planner

CC: Bill McDowell and John Digiacommo, Natick DPW

Date: May 30th, 2025

RE: Main Street Improvement Project in Natick Center

Staff seek guidance from the Select Board on the direction of the Main Street Project as it transitions from planning into design, and support for a grant that will fund this work. This memo and its accompanying packet aim to provide the Board with background information on the project in advance of its meeting on 6/3.

Project Summary

Since 2023, CED and DPW have worked with the firm McFarland Johnson to study possible improvements for pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility, wayfinding, lighting, and streetscape design along Main Street in Natick Center from Cottage Street to South Avenue.

This is a three-phase project, including planning, design, and construction. We are currently wrapping up the first phase, during which we are analyzing existing conditions and conducting outreach to create a preferred design concept for the study corridor. We hope to turn this concept into a full design during Phase Two, and construct it in Phase Three.

While community feedback has been varied, folks have generally agreed that they would like to see pedestrian improvements along the corridor. There has been disagreement, however, regarding parking and bicycle infrastructure, with some people calling for less space dedicated to cars and more to bike lanes and others advocating for the opposite.

The project team used this information to create several potential design concepts for the corridor. While we wanted public feedback, we determined that it would be too confusing to show all these possibilities, so we narrowed the alternatives down to two concepts on opposite ends of the design spectrum. Both included pedestrian and congestion improvements, but one included limited bike accommodations, while the other included enhanced bike accommodations. We hoped that these options would illustrate the trade-offs involved in different space allocations and that, at the end of the public process, we could select one option as a guiding concept for the corridor, which we could modify as needed once we started full design.

We have presented these two concepts to the community on four occasions: at a public meeting in late 2024, and to the Transportation Advisory Committee, Safety Committee, and Economic Development Committee this spring. Given feedback at these meetings, we also began work on a third, hybrid concept that blends the two original concepts together.



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As we wrap up the planning phase, we would like to discuss the project with the Select Board and ask for direction on the general concept that it would like us to pursue during the full design process in Phase Two.

Our consultant estimates that Phase Two will cost us around \$500,000. Once Phase One ends, we will have \$240,070 remaining from our project earmarks, so we'll need an additional \$259,930 to get through design. On 6/4, we will be applying to the state's MassWorks Infrastructure Program to cover design costs. We seek support from the Board on this application and will ensure that it is consistent with the feedback and guidance we receive from Board members on 6/3.

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Appendix 1 – Additional Project Information

Project Description

This project aims to study, design, and construct improvements for pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility, as well as general wayfinding, lighting, and streetscape design along Main Street in Natick Center from Cottage Street to South Avenue. This will bring increased placemaking opportunities to Natick Center, enhance safe access to Natick Center Station, the Cochituate Rail Trail, and Natick's downtown core, and close the gap in multimodal accommodation between the Town's [S. Main Street Reconstruction Project](#) and MassDOT's reconstruction of N. Main Street.

Project Non-negotiables

- No taking of private property
- No change to Main Street's overall right of way

Links to Town Planning Documents

- [Natick 2030+ \(2019\)](#)
 - **Transportation Goal 1:** “Improve safety in all travel modes through the implementation of a Complete Streets design approach, roadway and intersection improvements, and proven safety countermeasures.” (4.48)
 - **Transportation Goal 2:** “Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by improving multi-modal access, including vehicular access, public transit, walking, bicycling and ridesharing.” (4.50)
 - “Encourage walking and bicycling as modes of travel and exercise through improved pedestrian access and environment, an expanded pedestrian and bicycle network, and improved pedestrian and bicycle safety” (4.65)
 - **Land Use, Zoning, Community Character Goal 4:** “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” (3.35)
- [Net Zero Plan \(2021\)](#)
 - **“Make walking, biking, and public transit the best way to get around:** By 2050, nearly every Natick home and business is accessible by biking or walking or connected to public transit” (35)
- [Natick Complete Streets Policy \(2015\)](#)
 - “The Town of Natick recognizes that users of various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, cyclists, transit and school bus riders, motorists, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders, are legitimate users of streets and deserve safe facilities.” (1)
 - “The Town will, to the maximum extent practical, design, construct, maintain, and operate all streets to provide for a comprehensive and integrated street network of facilities for people of all ages and abilities.” (1)

Nearby Multimodal Projects

- South Main Street (Sherborn Town Line to Cottage Street)
 - New sidewalks, 4-foot shoulders, enhanced crosswalks, bike markings
- Natick Center Station
 - Accessibility Improvements, extension of Cochituate Rail Trail into Natick Center
- North Main Street (North Ave to Wayland Town Line)
 - New sidewalks and unbuffered bike lanes
- 9/27 Project
 - Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the intersection of Route 9 & 27

Funding

Phase 1 – Planning

- Total Funding Available for Phase 1 (Earmarks and Town Funds): \$400,000
- Total Funding Used for Phase 1: \$159,930
- Total Funding Remaining: \$240,070

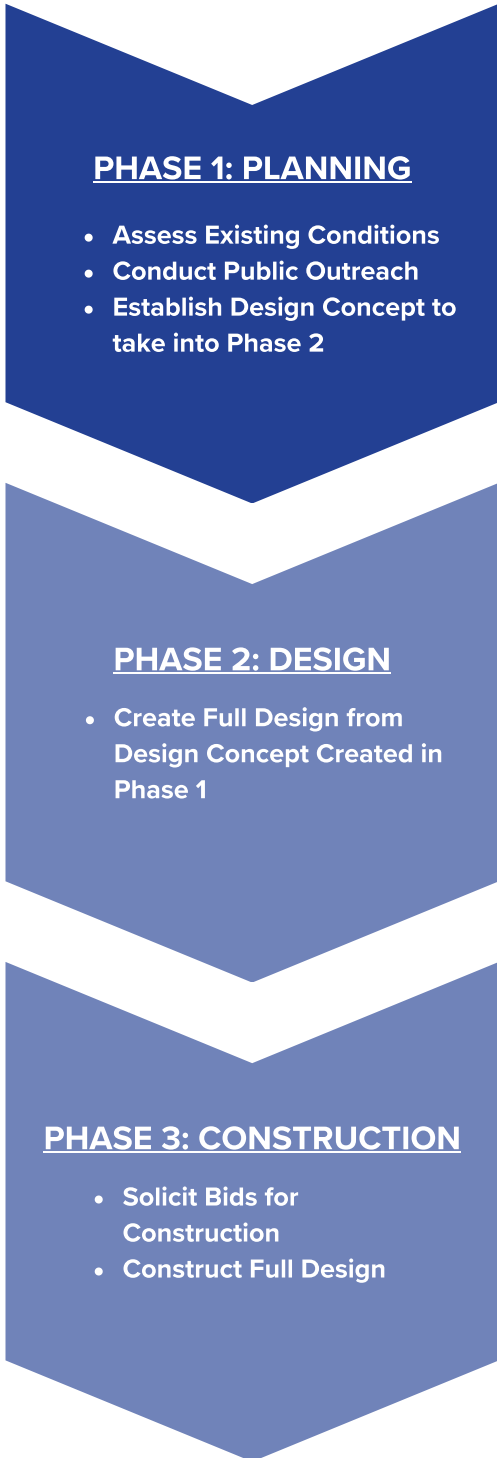
Phase 2 – Design

- Total Estimated Design Cost: \$500,000
- Total Additional Funds Needed: \$259,930
- Possible Additional Funding Sources:
 - MassWorks for pre-construction: Up to \$500,000. Applying for this - Due 6/4/25
 - TIP Design?
 - Federal Grant?

Phase 3 – Construction

- Rough construction estimates:
 - Concept 1 (Limited Bike Accommodation): ~\$10 million
 - Concept 2 (Enhanced Bike Accommodation): ~\$12 million
- Possible Funding Sources:
 - MassWorks for construction?
 - MPO TIP?
 - Difficult if pursuing Concept 1 or other limited bike accommodation: “As far as sharrows go, that's generally a no-go not only for MPO funding on the TIP but also on MassDOT's statewide program. My guess is that MassDOT would require parking concessions and a parking utilization study before considering retaining street parking in favor of a painted bike lane or sidewalk level cycle track.” – Ethan LaPointe, TIP Manager for the Boston Region MPO
 - Federal Grant?

Main Street Project All Phases Timeline



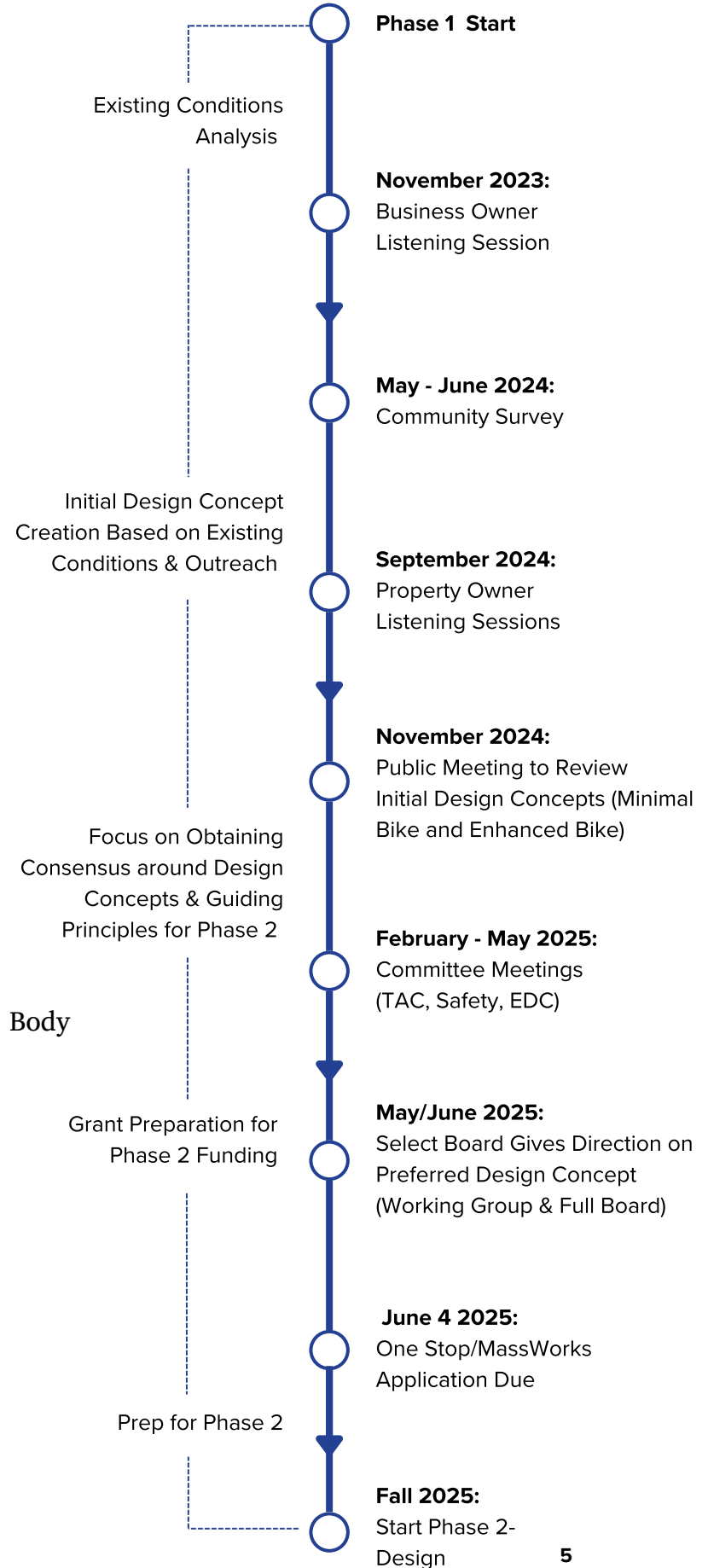
Summer 2023 - Spring 2025

~ Fall 2025 - Early 2027*

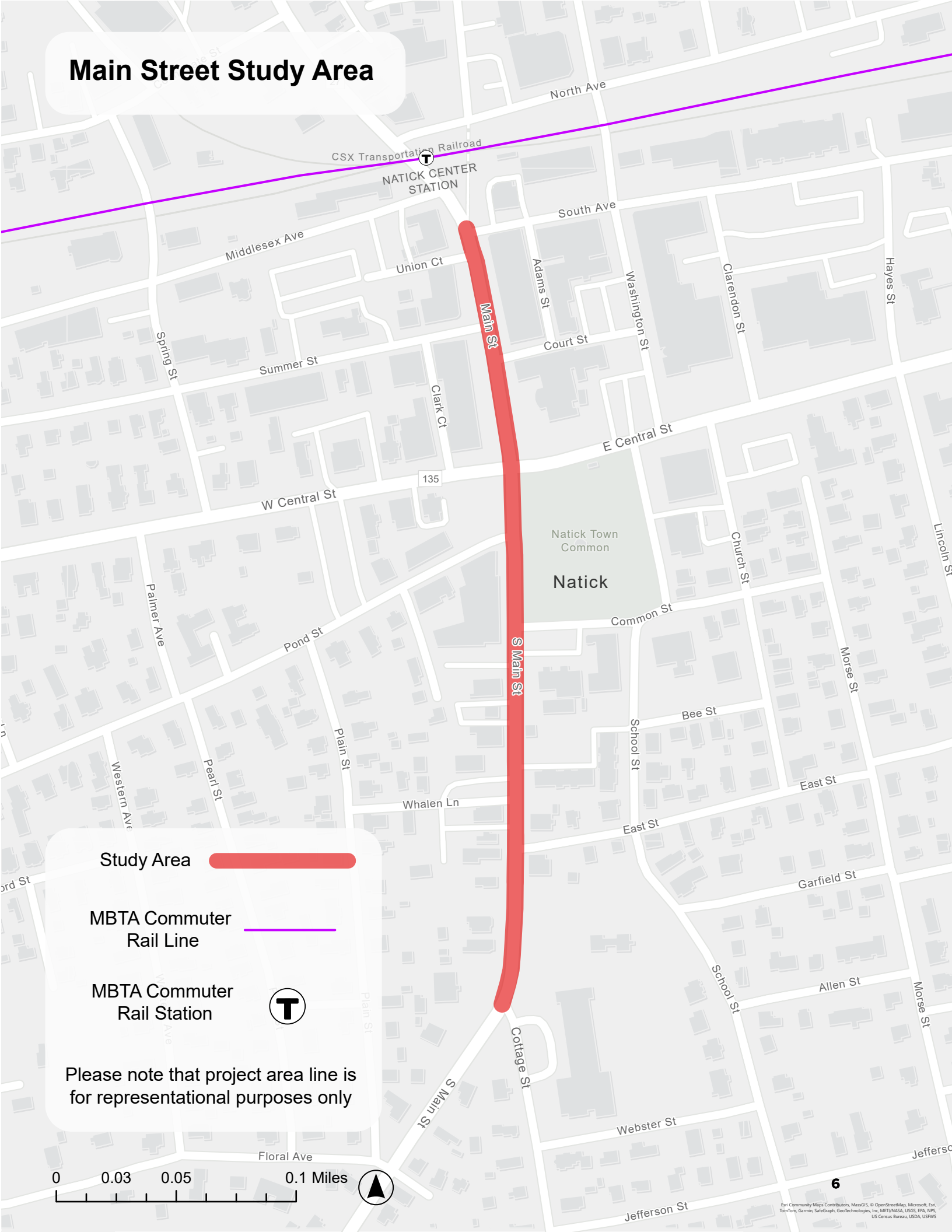
~ Late 2020s - Early 2030s*

*Time periods for Phases 2 & 3 are estimates and subject to change


Main Street Project Phase 1 Timeline




Main Street Study Area

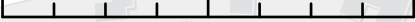


Study Area 

MBTA Commuter Rail Line 

MBTA Commuter Rail Station 

Please note that project area line is for representational purposes only

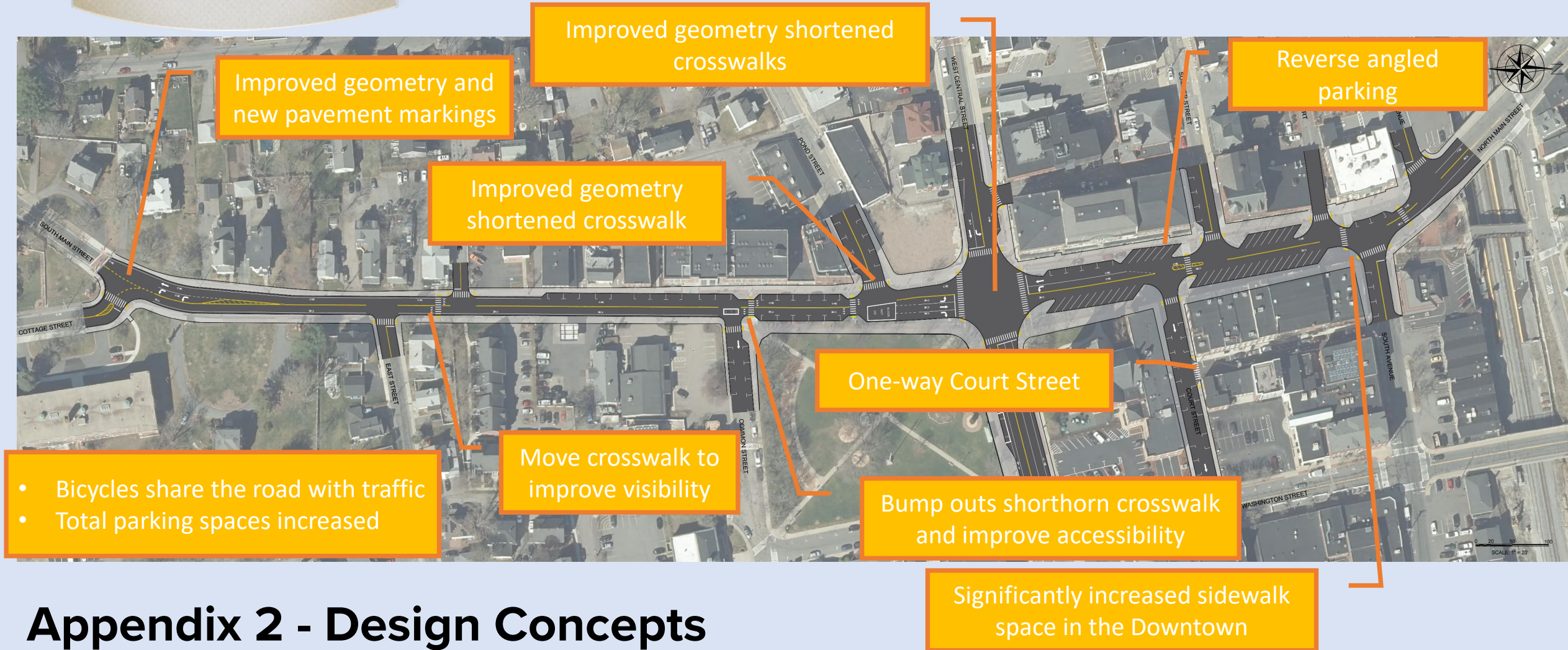
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Segment Layout



Concept 1 Limited Bicycle Accommodation



Appendix 2 - Design Concepts

Design Concept 1: Limited Bike Accommodation Pros and Cons

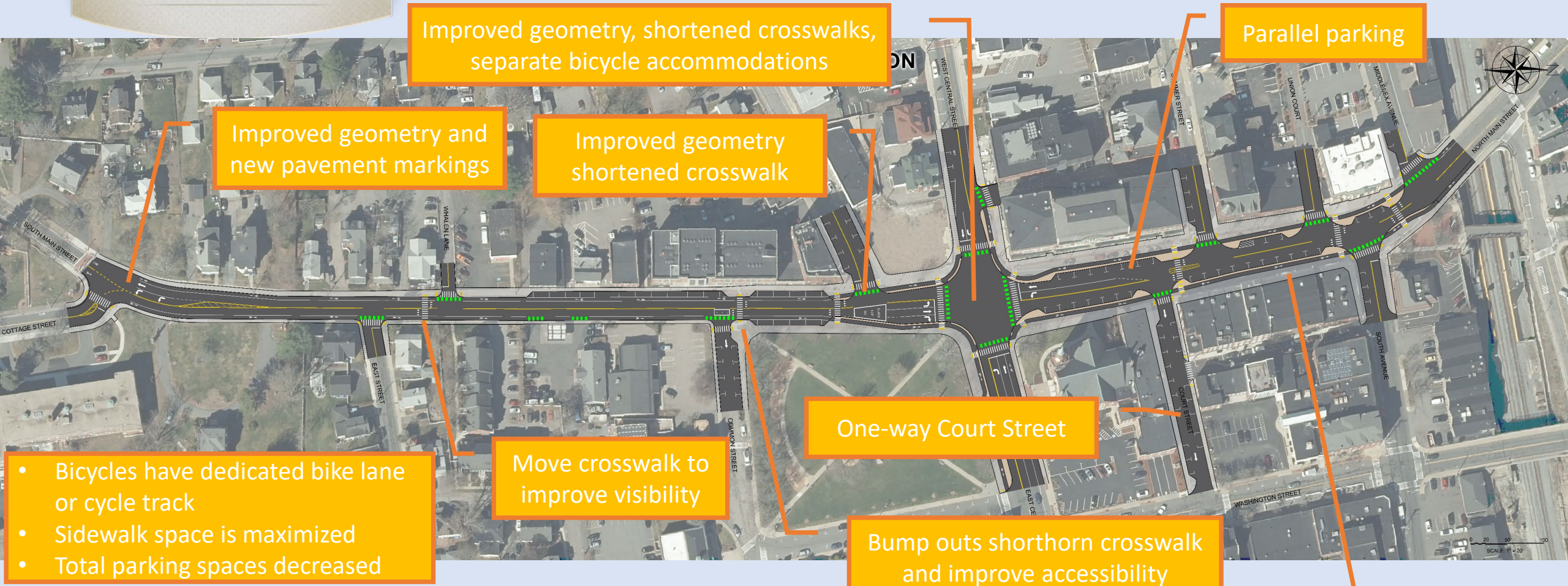
Pros

- Pedestrian safety improvements (shortened and improved crosswalks, bump outs, net increase in sidewalk space)
- Congestion mitigation measures: “Do Not Block the Box” markings, signal timing optimization and “No Turn on Red” blank out signs at the Route 27/135 intersection
 - Level of Service (LOS) at the Route 27/135 intersection is projected to be the same in 10 years as it is today (with no intervention, LOS is projected to get worse)
- Net increase in parking spaces from 93 to 101 across the entire corridor
- Will maintain 2 parking spaces in front of MutualOne, as stipulated in easement requirements
- Cheaper estimated construction cost
- Reverse-angled parking can help reduce crashes with other vehicles and cyclists

Cons

- Bicycles share the road with traffic (sharrows) – less safe and less likely to attract diverse mix of riders
- Doesn’t provide separated bike accommodations, [as recommended by MassDOT](#), making it harder to obtain state/federal funding via the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Utility relocation/burial likely required
- Reverse-angled parking will require education/learning curve
- Easement restrictions for Clark’s Block and Debsan Building require that any parking removed in front of the easement be replaced on a 2:1 basis within 500 feet of the easement. This concept will result in a loss of 1 space in front of the Clark’s Block and 1 Space in front of the Debsan Building, meaning that we would need to create 4 additional spaces. The concept includes the creation of 5 new on-street parking spaces by turning Court Street into a one-way, which would allow us to make up the 4.

Concept 2 Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation



Design Concept 2: Enhanced Bike Accommodation Pros and Cons

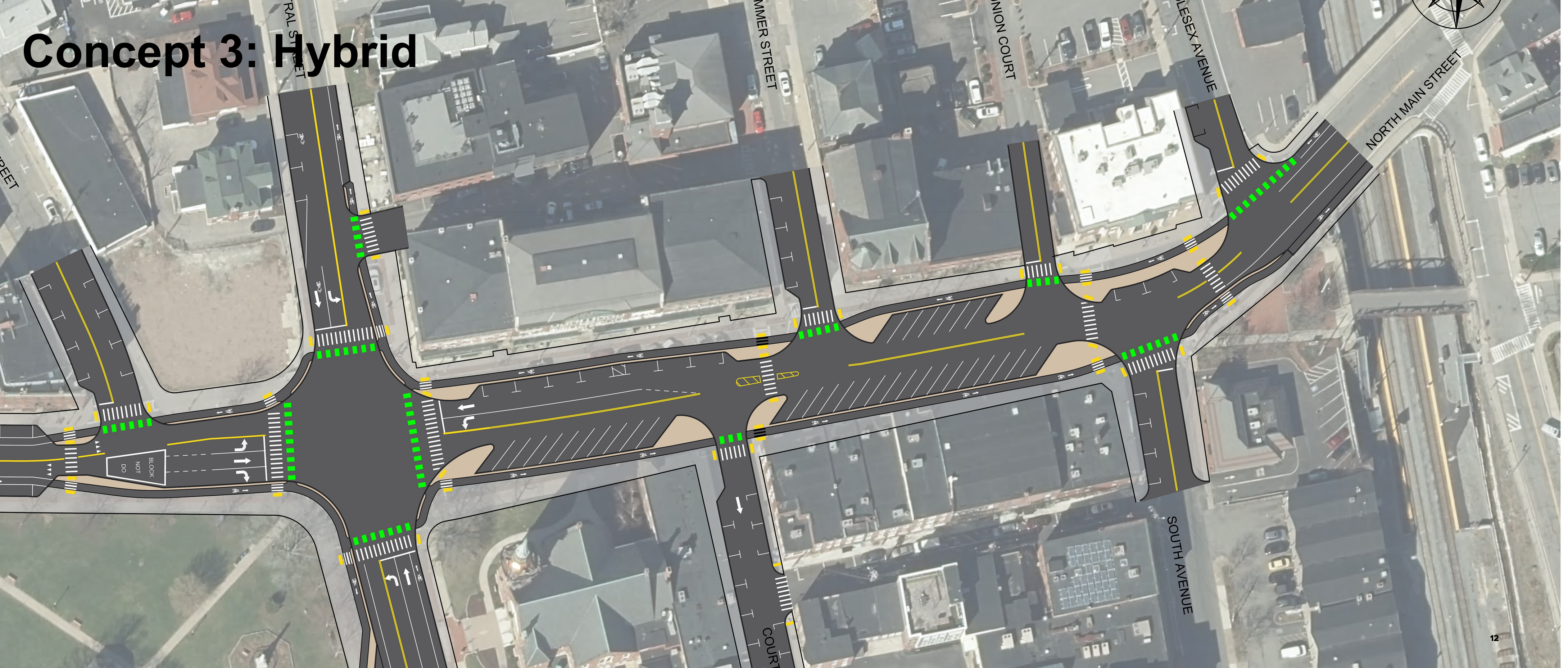
Pros

- Pedestrian safety improvements (shortened and improved crosswalks, bump outs, net increase in sidewalk space)
- Provides separated bike accommodations, [as recommended by MassDOT](#), for part of the corridor, making it easier to obtain state/federal funding via the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Provides a more complete link between existing and planned multimodal infrastructure along Main Street. Connected and protected multimodal networks are both [safer and more likely to be used](#) by a wider variety of folks
- Adheres more closely to Natick's Complete Streets Policy, Natick's Net Zero Action Plan, & Natick 2030+
- Congestion mitigation measures: "Do Not Block the Box" markings, signal timing optimization and "No Turn on Red" blank out signs at the Route 27/135 intersection
 - Level of Service (LOS) at the Route 27/135 intersection is projected to be the same in 10 years as it is today (with no intervention, LOS is projected to get worse)
- Will maintain 2 parking spaces in front of MutualOne, as stipulated in easement requirements

Cons

- Utility relocation/burial required
- May impact sidewalk trees
- Portions of sidewalk width reduced south of 135 (though will still meet ADA requirements)
- Net decrease in parking from 93 to 77 across the corridor
 - Easement restrictions for Clark's Block and Debsan Building require that any parking removed in front of the easement be replaced on a 2:1 basis within 500 feet of the easement. This concept will result in a loss of 6 spaces for the Clark's Block, and 6 for the Debsan Building, meaning that we would need to create 24 additional spaces. The plan includes the creation of 5 new on-street parking spaces by turning Court Street into a one-way, which would reduce the additional number we'd need to create to 19. Further analysis is needed to determine if we can actually do this
- More expensive estimated construction cost

Concept 3: Hybrid



Design Concept 3: Hybrid through the Downtown Core (Segment 5) Pros and Cons

Pros

- Blends the two original concepts along Segment 5 to maintain as many of the existing angled parking spaces within the downtown core as possible while also providing separated bike lanes in both directions
- Pedestrian safety improvements (shortened and improved crosswalks, bump outs, increase in sidewalk space on western side of the downtown core)
- Provides separated bike accommodations, [as recommended by MassDOT](#), for part of the corridor, making it easier to obtain state/federal funding via the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Provides a more complete link between existing and planned multimodal infrastructure along Main Street. Connected and protected multimodal networks are both [safer and more likely to be used](#) by a wider variety of folks
- Adheres more closely to Natick's Complete Streets Policy, Natick's Net Zero Action Plan, & Natick 2030+
- Congestion mitigation measures: "Do Not Block the Box" markings, signal timing optimization and "No Turn on Red" blank out signs at the Route 27/135 intersection
 - Level of Service (LOS) at the Route 27/135 intersection is projected to be the same in 10 years as it is today (with no intervention, LOS is projected to get worse)
- Will maintain 2 parking spaces in front of MutualOne, as stipulated in easement requirements
- Expected increase in total parking spaces across the corridor

Cons

- Not yet as fleshed out as Concepts 1 and 2
- Reduces eastern sidewalk in the downtown core by 3.5 feet
- Likely requires light poles on the eastern side of the downtown core to be moved
- Requires reconstruction to utility relocation/burial required
- May impact sidewalk trees
- Easement restrictions for Clark's Block and Debsan Building require that any parking removed in front of the easement be replaced on a 2:1 basis within 500 feet of the easement. This concept will result in a loss of 5 spaces in front of the Clark's Block and 1 Space in front of the Debsan Building, meaning that we would need to create 12 additional spaces. The concept includes the creation of 5 new on-street parking spaces by turning Court Street into a one-way, which would reduce the additional number we'd need to create to 7. Further analysis is needed to determine if we can do this

Appendix 3 – Community Engagement Results

This section provides records of the project’s community engagement. These include:

Business Owner Listening Session

On November 3, 2023, the Main Street project team hosted a listening session at the Community Senior Center with Natick’s Business Community. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the Main Street project with attendees and get an understanding of the challenges and opportunities they saw along the Main Street Corridor. This feedback was folded into the project team’s creation and selection of potential design options for the corridor. Fifteen business owners and community members attended the meeting. Pages 15-20 contain a summary of their feedback.

Community Survey

In the spring of 2024, the project team launched a 16-question digital survey to understand how the Natick Community at large viewed the Main Street Corridor in Natick Center. The survey was open for approximately one month and garnered 418 responses, which were also folded into the project team’s creation and selection of potential design options for the corridor. Attached on pages 21-37 is a blank copy of the survey and a summary of the responses to both closed and open response questions. The raw results for the survey can be found [here](#).

Property Owner Meetings

The project team invited residential and commercial property owners along the study corridor to participate in virtual listening sessions to discuss the project and their concerns and ideas about it. The project team held three virtual sessions, split up by study corridor segments and talked with 5 property owners. The feedback we received also informed the creation and selection of potential design options for the corridor. A summary of this feedback can be found on page 38.

Public Meeting

Once the project team had created two possible design options for the corridor, it held a hybrid public meeting on November 18th, 2024, at the Morse Institute Library. The meeting was attended by approximately 60 people. During the meeting, we polled attendees on their preferred design option. Due to errors in the polling software, we were only able to record the responses to the latter half of the questions we asked. We sent out a digital poll with the same questions to all meeting participants on November 22nd to ensure that we could record all responses from those interested in giving them. Responses to both polls are included on pages 39-43, and a link to the meeting recording can be found [here](#).

Board and Committee Presentations

During spring 2025, we presented the two design options to the Transportation Advisory Committee, Safety Committee, and Economic Development Committee. Feedback from these committees can be found in a separate attachment on the Select Board’s agenda document.

Comment Letters

A few residents have also sent in comment letters about the project, included on pages 44-49.

Meeting Minutes:

PROJECT TITLE: Downtown Main Street Study and Concepts Alternatives

Client Project No: -
Minutes Dated: 11/3/2023

MJ Project No: 19126.00
Meeting Date: 11/3/2023
Meeting Time: 8:30 AM

SUBJECT: Business Listening Session

A. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

1. This business listening session took place at the Natick Community Senior Center where consultants, town officials, and local business owners met to discuss the upcoming Downtown Main Street project. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from the business owners on what they see are existing problems and challenges and what they feel are potential opportunities for improvement.
2. The Town and McFarland Johnson, Inc. (MJ) provided an overview of the existing roadway conditions at each segment. From there, the room broke out into three groups of 5 to 6 people. Each group had 30 minutes to discuss existing problems and challenges, then later presented those findings to the entire group. The same groups were provided 30 minutes to discuss potential opportunities for improvements. Each group reported their findings to the entire group.
3. MJ aggregated the responses from each group and the following are the results of the two breakout sessions where each topic was scored from 1 - 3 on a scale of how important that topic is. 3 being the most important and 1 being the least important. These scores are based on the number of groups that had the same or similar item.

Attachments:

- Table of Existing Problems and Challenges
- Table of Potential Opportunities and Solutions

These minutes dated 11/3/2023 have been prepared by McFarland Johnson, to provide a summary of the discussions held on 11/3/2023. These meeting minutes will be recorded as correct and considered accurate and complete unless written notice of exceptions to these minutes is provided to the office of the Engineer within two (2) weeks of the date of issuance.

Existing Problems and Challenges

Theme	Problems/Challenges	Score	Comments
Aesthetics	Insufficient Lighting	2	Many side streets and back alleys were not well lit. There was also a concern of the lighting not being consistent.
Aesthetics	Lack of gateway into town	1	See also discussion about speeds and blind crosswalk at South Avenue. There was a feeling that there is no clear transition into the Downtown area for motor vehicles.
Aesthetics	Poor downtown aesthetics	1	Many owners complained about the lack of consistency with the aesthetics in downtown.
Total Aesthetics Score		4	
Bicycle Accessibility	Lack of bicycle accommodation project wide	3	Many owners believed improving bicycle accommodation is a priority.
Total Bicycle Accessibility Score		3	
Parking	Parking Capacity	2	Insufficient parking capacity in the downtown.
Parking	Lack of free short-term parking	2	Many customers need parking for quick errands and there are no short term parking spaces available.
Parking	Lack of long-term parking nearby	1	There are several people who need to park downtown for 8 hours, and there is nowhere for them to park.
Parking	There should be a better location for deliveries in downtown segment.	1	A business owner felt that Adams Street did not provide parking for delivery trucks.
Parking	Too many parking spaces around the common.	1	A business owner would prefer if the parking spaces were gone, and there was a crosswalk added at this location.
Total Parking Score		7	
Pedestrian Accessibility	Blind Crosswalk at South Avenue	3	Many drivers cannot see pedestrians who are trying to cross due to curvature of roadway and parking. See also speeding.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Sidewalk too narrow on segments 2,3, and 5	2	
Pedestrian Accessibility	Many pedestrians do not use crosswalk in segment 3.	2	Many pedestrians cross at Pond Street and do not use the crosswalk at Central or the mid-block crossing south of Pond Street.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Lack of ADA compliant and smooth sidewalks within the study area	1	
Total Pedestrian Accessibility Score		8	

Existing Problems and Challenges

Theme	Problems/Challenges	Score	Comments
Safety	Insufficient Lighting	2	Many side streets and back alleys were not well lit. There was also a concern of the lighting not being consistent.
Safety	Speeding vehicles	2	The area of concern is vehicles coming from the north into the downtown. See also the discussion about the blind crosswalk at South Avenue and lack of transition to the downtown area.
Safety	Blind Crosswalk at South Avenue	1	Many drivers cannot see pedestrians who are trying to cross due to curvature of roadway and parking. See also speeding.
Safety	Lack of gateway into town	1	See also discussion about speeds and blind crosswalk at South Avenue. There was a feeling that there is no clear transition into the Downtown area for motor vehicles.
Safety	Angled parking	1	Some business owners believed backing out of the head-on parking was unsafe.
Safety	Too many driveways onto South Main Street on segment 2	1	Business owners complained about safety while exiting driveways directly onto South Main Street. Some suggested having driveways that connect to Kimball Court.
Total Safety Score		8	
Traffic Operations	Traffic backups for right turn movements/lack of right turn lanes	2	There were many discussions regarding traffic build up downtown. Right-turns at Main and Central came up often.
Traffic Operations	Traffic Operation	2	Heavy traffic through downtown and at the intersection with East Central
Traffic Operations	Pond street traffic blocks South Main Street	2	Vehicles taking left turns out of Pond Street block South Main Street.
Traffic Operations	Left turns out of side street cause traffic build up.	1	It is difficult to take left turns off side streets and that backs up the side street traffic.
Total Traffic Operations Score		7	
Wayfinding	Wayfinding to parking and amenities	3	Some business owners did not believe parking capacity was an issue, but finding the parking was the issue. There is a lack of clear wayfinding to available parking.
Total Wayfinding Score		3	

Potential Opportunities and/or Solutions

Theme	Opportunities/Solutions	Score	Comments
Aesthetics	Improve aesthetics (make it historical and consistent)	2	General agreement that the aesthetic should incorporate the history of the town. Lighting, trash bins, furniture, and keeping the brick were examples of what owners wanted.
Aesthetics	Allow outdoor dining/markets	2	Owners think outdoor dining would make downtown Natick more appealing.
Aesthetics	Lighting (welcoming/inviting)	2	Business owners wish the street lighting was more aesthetically pleasing.
Aesthetics	Well thought out street furniture placement	2	Placement of streetscape elements should consider aesthetics and functionality. For example, the current benches are placed in non desirable locations. Owners would like to see them facing the businesses, or looking up/down the street.
Aesthetics	More space for art/sculptures (parklets/common area)	2	There is currently no specific place for art, but making it available is important for some owners. They brought up an idea of using students' art.
Aesthetics	Landscape, softscape, plantings	1	More green landscaping and providing a variety of different types of plantings
Aesthetics	Banners	1	For example, banners on light poles and larger banners spanning the width of the road
Aesthetics	Underground utilities	1	Placing utilities underground along the project will help with aesthetics and provide more space for pedestrians and bicycles
Bicycle Accessibility	Bicycle bypass	2	Can a bypass for through bicyclists be developed so that they can avoid having to bicycle through the downtown?
Bicycle Accessibility	Bike lane from Central Street to South Avenue.	1	
Bicycle Accessibility	Bike racks downtown	1	Providing bike racks would promote more bicycle use and traffic into the downtown which could help support local businesses.
Other	Identify other towns with similar situations and concepts	2	Hudson, Salem, Westborough, Amherst, Arlington and Concord were mentioned as examples of downtowns to look at as examples. This will help with ideas for what can be done in Natick.
Other	More seating at the common	1	Some owners believed there was not enough seating at the Common.
Other	Close segments 2 and 3 for farmers market	2	Street closing on weekends was a suggestion from several owners. There can be signage for parking located across the downtown area.

Potential Opportunities and/or Solutions

Theme	Opportunities/Solutions	Score	Comments
Parking	Replace angled parking spaces with parallel parking spaces	1	This would help with <u>perceived</u> improved safety and ease of use.
Parking	Add more parking at the library (specifically for library users)	1	A business owner did not appreciate that the library parking was used up by police cars and other vehicles that are not involved with the library.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Flashing crosswalk at South Avenue	3	Having a flashing crosswalk would slow down traffic coming from north and help the pedestrians crossing.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Relocated crosswalk at South Avenue	3	Consider moving the crosswalk to the south side of Union Court.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Wider sidewalks/ bump outs	3	Many business owners wish there were opportunities for outdoor dining, and wider sidewalks would allow this.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Raised crosswalks/speed humps	2	A business owner preferred if there were raised crosswalks at some of the busy crossings. Another owner mentioned having speed bumps.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Transit integration	1	Business owners want to integrate the ongoing MBTA project with the downtown project.
Pedestrian Accessibility	Add a perpendicular crosswalk at Pond Street.	1	This will help with people randomly crossing Main Street in Segment 3.
Safety	More signage for drivers to slow down as they enter downtown segment.	2	Add speed limit signs or add signs that say "Historical Natick Downtown" to influence drivers to slow down.
Safety	Reduce the number of driveways in Segment 3 and 4	1	Safety for business owners leaving their business a concern. A couple business owners suggested having the driveways exit to Kimball Court instead right on to Main Street.
Safety	Improve Kimball Court to provide access to commercial properties on South Main	1	This would help reduce driveway openings onto South Main Street
Safety	Add a perpendicular crosswalk at Pond Street.	1	This will help with people randomly crossing Main Street in Segment 3.
Safety	Replace angled parking spaces with parallel parking spaces	1	A business owner would prefer this alternative. However, this may not improve safety.

Potential Opportunities and/or Solutions

Theme	Opportunities/Solutions	Score	Comments
Traffic Operations	Bypass traffic (Washington Street and East Street) with proper signage	2	Some business owners wish there was alternate routes to reduce traffic. Include informational signage for drivers.
Traffic Operations	Increased right-turn accessibility at Central Street intersection	2	Some business owners would like to be able to make right turns on red.
Traffic Operations	"Don't Block the Box" at Main Street and Pond Street intersection.	2	Many owners believed that drivers did not stop at the current stop line that is located in that location now. They believe this will give Pond Street drivers easier accessibility.
Traffic Operations	More signage for drivers to slow down as they enter downtown segment.	2	Add speed limit signs or add signs that say "Historical Natick Downtown" to influence drivers to slow down.
Traffic Operations	Reduce driveways	1	Safety for business owners leaving their business a concern. A couple business owners suggested having the driveways exit to Kimball Court instead right on to Main Street.
Traffic Operations	Improve traffic flow	1	Many complaints of congestion trying to get through downtown.
Traffic Operations	Transit integration	1	Business owners want to integrate MBTA project with the downtown project.
Wayfinding	Improved wayfinding	3	This includes for parking, pedestrians, and general signage.
Wayfinding	Parking information signs	1	There would be information on parking displayed somewhere, to help route drivers to one of the parking lots near downtown.
Wayfinding	Signage guidelines downtown (zoning for business signs)	1	Business owners want the signs to be consistent. Also would like business signs to be allowed to be mounted perpendicular to building face to improve visibility.
Wayfinding	Traffic wayfinding	1	Business owners want better signage for vehicles.



Main Street Improvement Project Survey

Overview

The Town of Natick is working with the engineering firm *McFarland Johnson* to study possible improvements for pedestrian and bicycle safety and mobility, as well as general wayfinding, lighting, and streetscape design along Main Street (Route 27) in Natick Center from Cottage Street to South Avenue (**see map above**). Public input is a critical component of this project – with this survey, the Town is soliciting feedback to help it create a set of possible design alternatives for the corridor.

1. How often do you visit the Main Street Corridor with an intended destination?

- Daily
- Once a week or more often
- More than once a month
- About once a month
- Several times a year
- Never

2. What reasons do you visit the Main Street Corridor?

- Going to work
- Shopping
- Commuting
- Eating at restaurants
- Going to school
- Going to religious services
- Going to the doctor
- Going to the library
- Other (please specify)

3. How do you typically travel to and around the Main Street Corridor? (Choose all that apply)

- Public Transportation (bus)
- Public Transportation (train)
- Drive alone
- Carpool or vanpool
- Taxi, Uber, or Lyft
- Bicycle or E-Scooter
- Wheelchair or ADA Motorized Scooter
- Walk

4. What are the most critical issues that prevent you from walking or biking the Main Street Corridor frequently? (Select your top 5 issues - 1 being the most important & 5 being the least important.)

- Lack of transit options such as bus or train stops
- There are too many cars
- Cars are traveling too fast and/or driver behavior makes it feel unsafe
- Destinations are too far (not convenient)
- There aren't sidewalks
- There aren't bicycle lanes
- Sidewalks are in poor condition
- Too much to carry after running my errands
- Curb ramps are in poor condition or nonexistent
- Crosswalks are not located in convenient place
- No place to safely store my bicycle
- Too dark at night/unsafe at night
- Other (please specify)

**5. What is the most critical transportation issue in the Main Street Corridor?
(Select your top 5 issues - 1 being the most important & 5 being the least important.)**

- Lack of bicycle lanes
- Lack of sidewalks/walking paths
- Lack of separation between vehicles and sidewalks
- Lack of pedestrian push button/signals
- Lack of accommodations for people with a disability
- Width of the sidewalks is narrow
- Cannot find parking due to limited capacity on Main Street
- Difficulty parking on Main Street due to the flow of traffic
- Lack of parking signage makes locating parking difficult
- Lack of knowledge of location of bus stops from where I live
- Poor transit service to Town Center
- Traffic moves too fast
- Traffic becomes backed up and blocks driveway/intersection
- Difficulty walking/biking crossing Main Street
- Other (please specify)

6. 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.)

- Bicycle lanes
- Sidewalks/walking paths
- Landscape/separation between vehicles and sidewalk
- Wider sidewalk
- Intersection improvements
- Greater pedestrian and bike connectivity to the Main Street from adjacent neighborhoods
- Traffic calming measures to discourage speeding
- Change certain bi-directional streets to one-way
- More bus stops
- Install pedestrian push buttons/signals
- Develop improved secondary roadways to reduce traffic that passes through the Main Street
- More public parking lots
- Street trees or landscaping
- Street lighting
- Open space/parklets

7. Do you feel that there is an adequate amount of street furniture such as benches, planters and urban trees along the study corridor?

- Yes
- No
- If not, where, and how would you like to see it improved?

(Please provide additional information below).

8. Is there a segment within the project area above that you feel needs improvement?

- 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]

OPTIONAL: Please provide additional information about the improvements you'd like to see implemented in this area.

Optional Questions

If you have a few more minutes to spare, we invite you to answer some optional questions. Your insights on these additional topics would be extremely valuable and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and contribution!

9. If you live within a half a mile of Main Street, do you own or rent your primary residence?

- I own my own home.
- I rent my home.

10. What age group most closely describes you?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to answer.

11. Do you have any of the following disabilities that affects your mobility or ability to safely use Main Street or access the Downtown?

- Cognitive/mental disability
- Mobility disability
- Vision disability
- Hearing disability
- Other disability

12. If you do have a mobility or disability issue that prevents you from safely accessing downtown, do you have a suggestion on what improvements could be made?

13. What problems and challenges do you see along the Main Street Corridor?

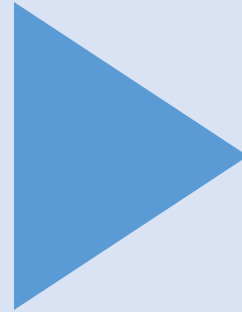
14. What opportunities do you see along the Main Street Corridor?

15. If you could change anything about the Main Street Corridor, what would it be?

16. Do you feel safe driving, walking, or biking along the Main Street corridor?

- Yes
- No
- If not, in what areas do you not feel safe and why?

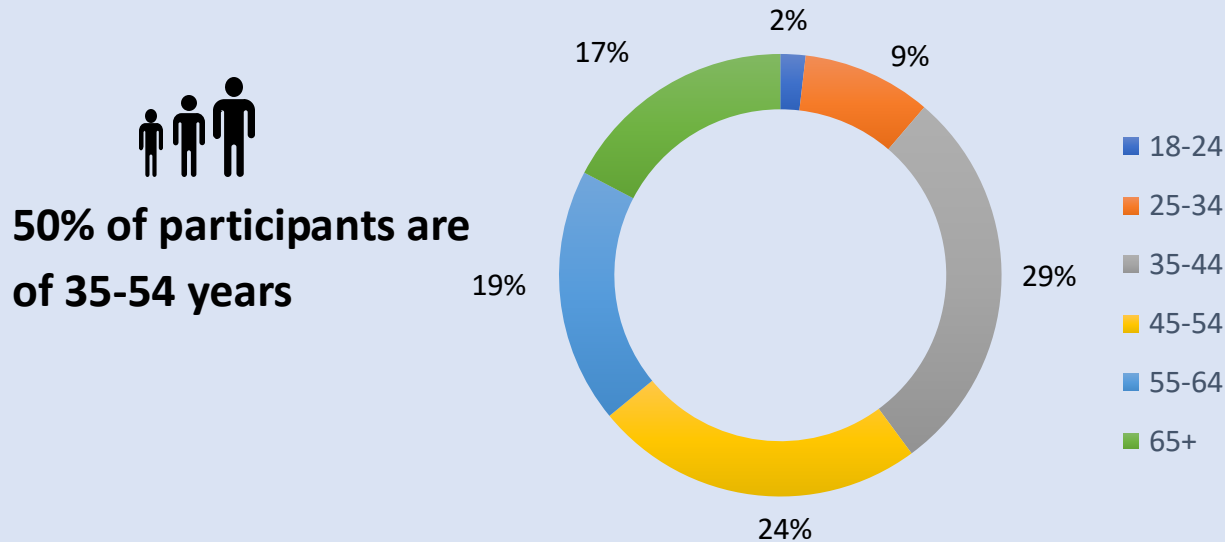
Conducted
between
May and
June 2024



There were
418
participants

Summary of Survey Results

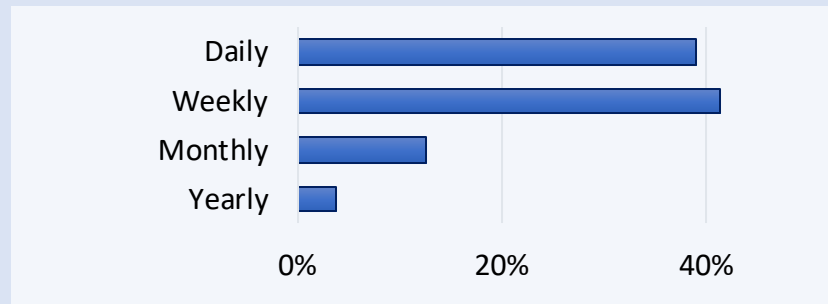
Who participated?








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%

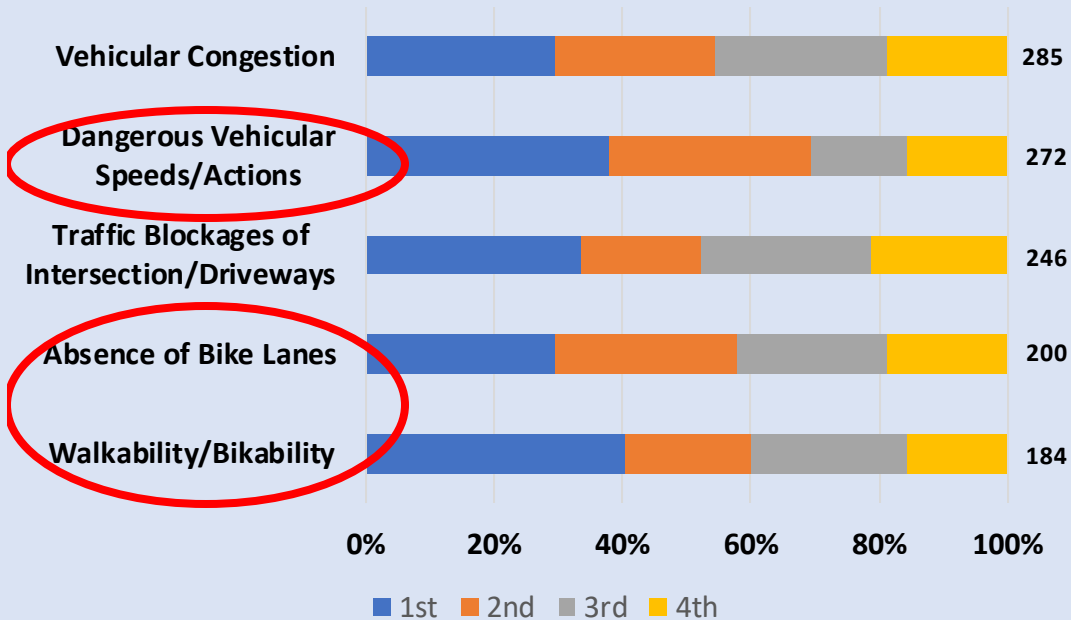
Other: Recreation, leisure, bank, post office, town hall, residence, walking, social, farmers market, civic participation, gas, dry cleaning etc.

How do they get there

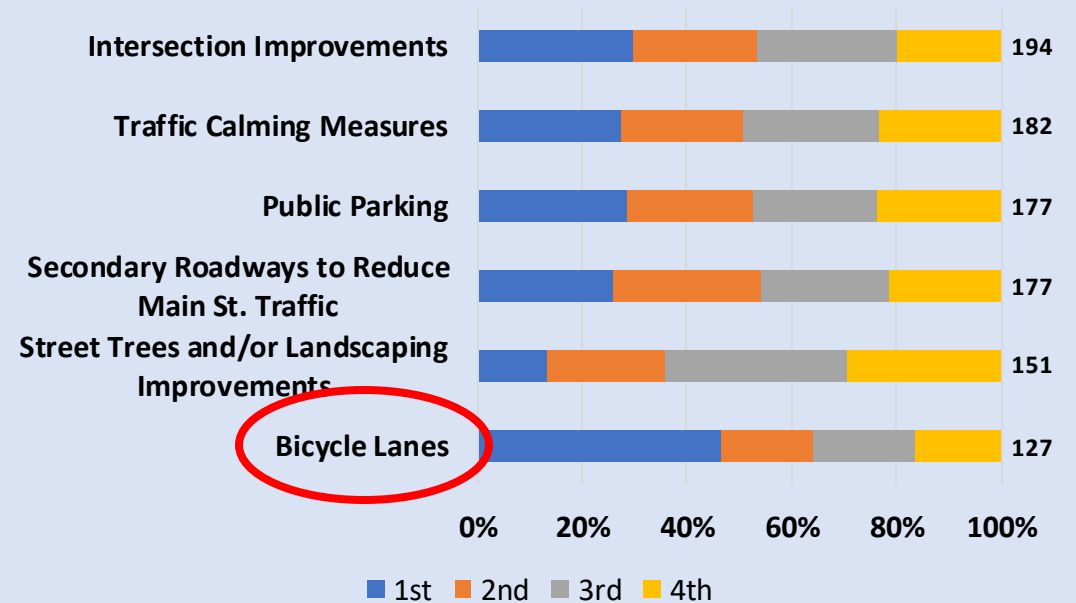
-  90% - Drive alone
-  63% - Walk
-  19% - Carpool/Vanpool
-  19% - Bicycle/E-Scooter

Summary of Survey Results

Critical Issues



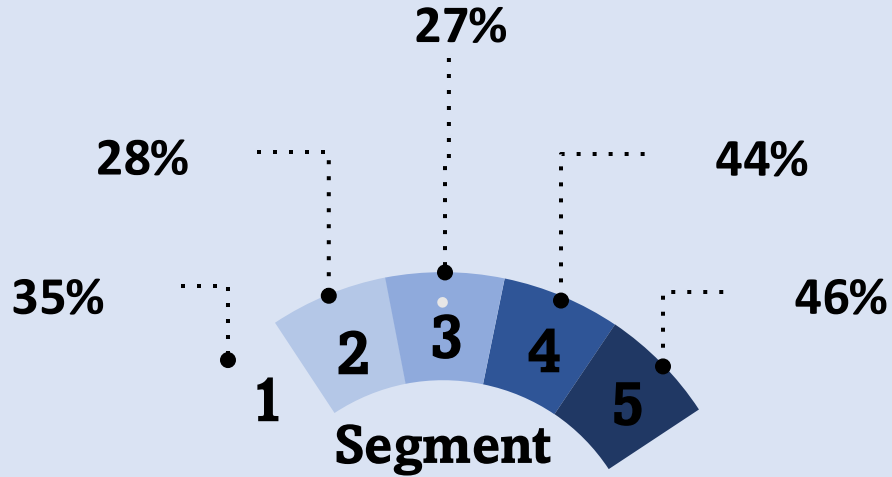
Project Type Ranked by Importance



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.

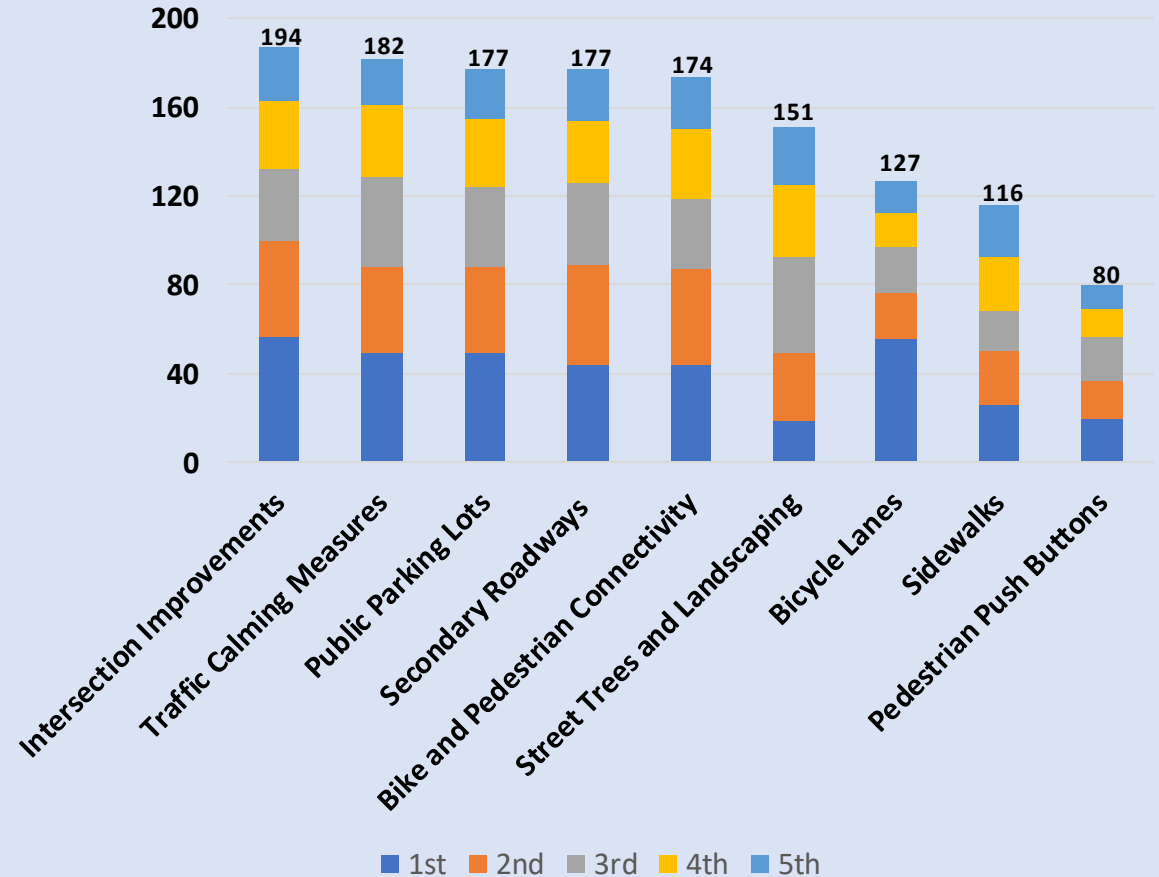
Summary of Survey Results

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.

Survey: Open Response Question Summaries (Qs 12-16)

The responses for each open-ended question were given to ChatGPT with the following instructions: “Please summarize the main themes of the list below. Consider only themes with greater than 5 responses. List the count of responses that each theme contained, as a numeral in parentheses. Write each theme in simple language suited for a 4th-grade reading level.”

The summary results are below. Raw survey results can be found [here](#).

Question 12: If you do have a mobility or disability issue that prevents you from safely accessing the downtown, do you have a suggestion on what improvements could be made? (36 responses summarized via [ChatGPT](#))

- 1. Fix Sidewalks (14):** People want sidewalks that are smooth, flat, and easy to walk or roll on. Broken sidewalks make it hard for people who use wheelchairs, walkers, or have trouble walking.
- 2. More and Better Parking (6):** Many people asked for more parking spaces, especially near places like the library. Some want special parking for people with disabilities or parents with young kids.
- 3. Make Crosswalks Safer (5):** People want better crosswalks with lights or buttons, and safer ways to cross busy streets.
- 4. Keep Sidewalks Clear (4):** Trash bins and snow should not block the sidewalks. It makes it hard for people to get by, especially those using wheelchairs or pushing strollers.
- 5. Slow Down Traffic (2):** Some people are worried about cars going too fast and want things done to make roads safer.
- 6. Better Help for People with Disabilities (3):** There were requests to help people with vision, hearing, or movement problems. This includes signs, sounds, and more space on sidewalks.
- 7. Add Benches and Shade (2):** People want more places to sit and rest when walking around town.
- 8. Better Buses and Stops (1):** Someone asked for better bus service and stops closer to where people live.
- 9. Everything is Fine (3):** A few people said they have no problems or didn't leave a response.

Question 13: What problems and challenges do you see along the Main Street Corridor? (205 responses summarized via [ChatGPT](#))

- 1. Too Much Traffic (84):** People say there are too many cars, which causes backups and makes it hard to enjoy or move through downtown.
- 2. Parking is a Problem (52):** It's hard to find parking. People are frustrated with angled parking, lack of public lots, and police vehicles taking up spots.
- 3. Unsafe for Walkers and Bikers (49):** Sidewalks are too narrow or uneven, and there are not enough bike lanes or safe crosswalks.
- 4. Drivers are Dangerous (41):** Speeding, illegal turns, not stopping at crosswalks, and aggressive behavior make people feel unsafe.
- 5. Area Feels Unwelcoming (24):** Benches, lighting, greenery, and the look of buildings could be better. The space feels loud, hot, or unattractive.
- 6. Not Enough Shops or Food (19):** People want more restaurants, casual spots, and stores that make them want to visit and stay longer.
- 7. Construction and Overbuilding (17):** Ongoing building projects and too much new housing add to the traffic and make the area feel crowded or messy.
- 8. Poor Street Design (16):** Some say road layouts, intersections (like at Cottage Street), and signs are confusing or unsafe.
- 9. No Room for Bicycles (12):** People feel unsafe biking because there are no bike lanes or places to lock bikes downtown.
- 10. Natick Center Needs a Clearer Vision (8):** People feel there's no big-picture plan to improve the downtown and balance cars, walkers, and businesses.

Question 14: What opportunities do you see along the Main Street Corridor? (177 responses summarized via [ChatGPT](#))

1. More Restaurants and Places to Eat (42): People want more places to eat, like restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and places with outdoor seating. They'd love more food choices too, like different types of world food and places to eat at night.

2. Better Walking and Biking (36): Many people want safer sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and places to cross the street easily. They want the area to feel safer and easier to walk or bike around.

3. Make the Area Prettier (Beautification) (33): Lots of people asked for more trees, plants, flowers, and benches. They want cleaner streets, nice shop fronts, and green spaces to enjoy.

4. Less Traffic and Better Driving Flow (30): People are worried about car traffic and tricky intersections. They want changes to help traffic move better and make the area safer for everyone.

5. More Community Places and Events (25): People want spots where neighbors can gather—like parks, markets, music shows, and fun events for all ages.

6. Support Local Businesses and Add More Shops (24): Many folks want to help small stores succeed. They hope for more fun shops, fewer empty buildings, and a better mix of places to visit.

7. Add Public Seating and Outdoor Spaces (20): There were lots of ideas about adding tables, benches, and parklets so people can sit and enjoy the area, especially after getting a snack or drink.

8. More Green Space and Shade (17): People want grassy areas, big trees for shade, and safe places to enjoy nature in town.

9. More Parking and Better Use of Space (12): Some asked for better parking and suggested smarter ways to use space—like building parking garages or using upper floors for offices or homes.

10. Make It More Fun and Active at Night (11): People said downtown feels too quiet at night. They want things like music, bars, or events that keep the town fun after dark.

Question 15: If you could change anything about the Main Street Corridor, what would it be?
(192 responses summarized via [ChatGPT](#))

1. Less Car Traffic and Slower Speeds (44): People want fewer cars downtown. They want cars to go slower so it's safer and quieter for everyone.

2. Safer and Better Walking (38): Many said walking downtown should feel safer and easier. This means fixing sidewalks, making crosswalks more visible, and giving people more space to walk.

3. Bike Lanes and Bike Safety (24): Lots of people want more and better bike lanes so they can ride safely, especially kids and families.

4. More Trees, Flowers, and Green Spaces (22): People want downtown to have more trees, benches, flowers, and places to sit so it feels nice to walk around.

5. More and Better Restaurants (22): Many wish there were more places to eat, especially fun, unique, or casual restaurants and cafés.

6. Better Parking (21): Parking was a big concern. Some want more of it (like a garage), while others want to move it or make it safer (like changing the angled spots).

7. More Shops and Useful Businesses (17): People want more places to shop for everyday things like groceries, hardware, or unique local stores—not just banks and offices.

8. More Things To Do Downtown (15): Many asked for more fun events, music, nightlife, and reasons to come downtown and hang out with friends or family.

9. Better Traffic Flow and Intersections (14): Some said the lights, turns, and road layout should work better so cars and people can get through safely and easily.

10. Fix Empty or Run-Down Areas (11): People mentioned some buildings or lots that look old, broken, or empty and said they should be cleaned up or rebuilt.

11. Accessibility for All Abilities (9): A number of people want the town to be easier for people with wheelchairs, strollers, or other needs to get around safely.

12. Improved Lighting (7): Better lighting, especially at night or in dark areas, would help people feel safer and make downtown more inviting.

Question 16: Do you feel safe driving, walking, or biking along the Main Street Corridor?

- 344 total responses
- 174 said “Yes”
- 30 said “No”
- 140 chose “If not, in what areas do you not feel safe and why?” (answers provided below)

Question 16B. If not, in what areas do you not feel safe and why? (140 responses summarized via [ChatGPT](#))

1. Biking Feels Unsafe (93): Many people said riding a bike in town feels scary and dangerous. There are no bike lanes, roads are too narrow, and drivers don't pay attention to bikes.

2. Crossing Streets Feels Dangerous (51): A lot of people don't feel safe crossing the street. Cars don't always stop for walkers, some crosswalks are hard to see, and the lights don't give enough time to cross.

3. Too Much Traffic and Congestion (33): People said there are too many cars on the roads, which makes driving, walking, and biking harder and more stressful.

4. Angled and Street Parking Feels Unsafe (17): Backing out of angled parking spots makes it hard to see other cars or people. This makes people feel nervous and unsafe.

5. Poor Lighting at Night (10): Several people said the streets are too dark at night. They wish there were more lights to help them feel safer when walking or biking.

6. Blocked or Broken Sidewalks (9): Some sidewalks are blocked by construction or planters, and some are too narrow or bumpy. This makes it hard for people, especially older folks or kids, to walk safely.

7. Construction and Street Work Cause Problems (7): Ongoing road work makes it harder to move around town. It slows traffic and creates more chances for accidents.

Property Owner Listening Sessions September 11-13, 2024: Summary Notes

Segment 1 (Cottage Street to Family Farms Convenience Store) - 11/11/24

- 2 attendees
- Cars often blow through crosswalks - it would be nice to make them stand out a bit more and get more pedestrian improvements in general
- While the Cottage/Main intersection looks better than it used to, it could still be improved
 - More lighting at night
 - The crosswalk is placed a bit too far back along Cottage Street - makes folks feel vulnerable
- Drainage issue at crosswalk at Main/East Street - dips down so deeply that it fills with snow, ice, and water

Segments 2-3 (Family Farms Convenience Store to Pond Street) - 11/12/24

- 1 attendee
- It gets very congested along this stretch of Main Street
- Tenants always want designated parking
 - Typically point them to Pond Street lot
 - Challenges with dropping folks off at the area around Main/Pond intersection
- Pond Street Crosswalk a huge concern - people fly down Pond and block the crosswalk/intersection of Pond and Main
- Generally excited about bike lanes and foot traffic - the more people congregating in center of Natick the better - this will help draw in younger business crowd

Segments 4-5 (Pond Street to South Avenue) - 11/13/24

- No attendees
- Did get some pre-meeting feedback from owners along segment:
 - “Please do NOT erode on-street parking for the benefit of pedestrian and bike lanes. Cambridge did this and the business environment has not recovered. There must be a sensible balance between pedestrian-friendly lanes and business community.”
 - “My concern is that we seem to spend a lot of time on meetings and 'listening' sessions, but is anything really going to happen? Personally, I don't think there are any major improvements I would recommend.”

Main Street Public Meeting 11/18/24 HYBRID at Morse Institute Library - In-Meeting Poll Questions and Resposes

How do you feel about Main Street?

How do you use Main Street?

For Segments 1, 2 & 3, what is your preferred option and why? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

For segments 1, 2 & 3, what is your concern with each option? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout AND/OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

For segments 1, 2 & 3, what enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

****Polling Error - Responses to Questions in Red Above Not Recorded - see poll sent 11/22/24****

For segments 4 & 5, what is your preferred option and why? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

Angled parking

1; best parking option; most bang for least negative impact

Limited bike option.

Option 1 does not reduce parking , which is preferable to me

Either no Chang or limited option

2 for bike and scooter safety and better circulation and use of alternative transportation options

Sidewalk wide enough for activity

Very concerned for merchants while this and the 9/27 Greenways is erected

The option with enhanced bike lanes. We can replicate parking nearby and this will provide much safer conditions for everyone. Safety is the priority

Bike lane and parallel parking. Presumes commitment to parking capacity expanding around natick ctr and improved wayfinding

1 - more parking. Less construction

Enhanced bike lanes

Bicycle enhanced option as I could then stop driving a car for all my trips to Natick Center businesses and the library

Enhanced biking seems better as protected bike lanes are safer

enhanced bike access

Has to be Option 1 unless or until more parking can be provisioned

For segments 4 & 5 bike lanes are definitely needed. It is currently very scary to bike to the retail shops there and dedicated lanes would help increase business, and would decrease car traffic

If cyclists and pedestrians could feel safe navigating downtown by lane separation, other traffic calming measures, these would be used more to access do

For segments 4 & 5, what is your concern with each option? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout AND/OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

Put a parking lot on west main 3 story then you can do whatever you want

Practicality; most of traffic is THROUGH traffic, not nearby residents shopping downtown

Reverse angle parking will confuse a lot of people. I can imagine drivers making a wide turn to allow them to pull in facing forward

How to slow southbound traffic into downtown

Sharrows are dangerous

Both options eliminate parking in to e busiest areas of the downtown where the businesses are.

Option 1 is still dangerous for bikers, especially when it's dark outside

Crosswalks at main and central are too long

Need clear signage
Not enough roundabouts. We need to increase safety for left turns
No concerns. We need more space for pedestrians and cycling.
Parking management needs an upgrade
How will we slow traffic coming into downtown from north
Pedestrian safety and cyclist safety are top concerns along with not harming Natick businesses during construction or parking availability
Both:excessive concern for minor usage
Parking has to be the priority! Majority of people will still drive
Parking! Safety. Having the bike lanes outside of the parking seems dangerous
I don't like biking in mixed traffic where it's so busy.
Parking and vehicle safety
can't support enhanced bike access in absence of parking plan
I like the bump outs
Reverse angle parking will require lots of education
Option 2 - loss of parking
Not safe
I like the reverse parking
Not enough parking spaces
No concern with option 1
Very concerned for merchants while this and the 9/27 Greenways is erected
For segments 4 & 5, what enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)
In winter time, what happens to the snow that is plowed?? Onto he bike lanes, onto sidewalks
This proposal is waaaay too premature to implement at this time. There are 4 new construction projects in process that will bring new residents and businesses and increased traffic to the downtown. It may be more prudent to wait until these projects are completed to then study the how the traffic impacts the downtown area.
Thank you for exploring making Summer Street, and potential Pond Street one way at certain places to decreases vehicular crashes, improve parking (if possible), and improve pedestrian safety and potentially bike safety also
Are raised crosswalks an option at a few laces?
Parklets for dining
Cars will ignore the no right on red sign as they already do at General Greene and Main. Thinking it will work at Main and 135 is unlikely. A right hand turn green arrow or flashing yellow may be a safer option if research agrees with my guess
Raised crosswalks or intersection tables at the entrances to downtown
Reflective posts on bike lane lines
Look at Boylston St issues that have arisen
And yes, right on red is unsafe for pedestrians
Bike and pedestrian delineation is feasible but needs separation
Please no right on red as it's not safe. People do it anyway when it's not allowed and pedestrians are crossing.
Some improvements could be done now like adjusting the light timing and the do not block.
Take into consideration additional businesses planned for the Main/Pond St. corner as well as additional traffic as a result of new housing being built downtown and and RT. 135
How do we better accommodate delivery services?
Some improvements (eg, Pond St Do Not Block) can be done immediately.
A parking garage would be ideal
Protect room for sidewalk dining, popup vendors, buskars
Main and south needs to be a circle.
And yes to making Pond street one way that someone else suggested! People don't always stop left turns even if signage says they can't and it is unsafe
Better signage for pedestrians

Building a multi-story car park!
Parking garage
Space for benches and art
Street furniture
Space for art, sculpture, gathering, seating
Consider how to mitigate heat islands
Make pond street one way
More parking
Business owners also stressed the adverse impact that the construction process itself could have on their businesses

Main Street Public Meeting 11/18 Follow-Up Poll - Sent 11/22

How do you feel about Main Street?

TEST
I like that Natick has an active downtown along its main streets. I am concerned with the level of traffic that passes through and the rate of speed through the Rt. 135 to North Main Street bridge. I also have concerns that people not using the crosswalks presents real danger and an pedestrian accident waiting to happen.
Concern over congestion and accessibility
I think it's very dangerous for driving, parking, and biking
I love Main Street with its historic buildings and the lack of chain stores. We enjoy a hometown feel because our businesses are owned by individuals.

How do you use Main Street?

TEST
I use Rt. 27 and Rt. 135 to access downtown banks, stores and restaurants. i also use it access points north such as Rt. 9, the Rail Trail, other destinations. I have my alternate routes that avoid Natick center depending on the time of day.
I work at 20 Main and do most of my shopping on main
I mostly drive through it and walk to businesses. I live fairly close and often walk there with my kids. I drive through it 2x a day.
I am on Main Street 5 days a week at the minimum. I bank and own a business on Main Street as well as doing much of my shopping here. In the past I have been in an art studio on Main Street so I have held a business on or just off Main Street for 25 years.

For Segments 1, 2 & 3, what is your preferred option and why? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
multi-modal. the road is wider here and an it appears it can accommodate bikes in the road. 3
Definitely enhanced multi-modal. I live off of East St. and would LOVE a bike lane to the center of town. If I felt comfortable biking through main street I would go more often and it would reduce my trips using my car and therefore reduce traffic. The dangers of biking through main street reduce my ability to bike to the bike trail, the surrounding playgrounds and businesses.
I prefer the Enhanced Multi-Modal Accommodation because I see walking and biking as the future of transportation in Natick Center. I do think it is critical that whatever is decided for the final design that it is consistent. I think, for safety, the order of lanes should be Sidewalk - Bike Lane - Parking - Travel. Having a bike lane in-between travel and parking is extremely dangerous. In these sections I understand that the bikes are at road level.

For segments 1, 2 & 3, what is your concern with each option? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout AND/OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
I don't think bikes at the same level as pedestrians walking on the sidewalk is safe or a good idea. Bike lanes next to parallel parked cards is a safety concern.
Bottom line, move bike lanes out of downtown. 1. Safety issue to bikers with people not seeing them when pulling in/out of the spaces and to avoid ongoing congestion. Bikers find rules do not apply to them and parking people are consistently irritated with the bikers. It's not a happy time and there is no amount of education that will fix it. 2. Do not remove trees. Reduce congestion by having sign for right turn only at pond and 27 is an easy fix.
The enhanced multi-model could consider reflective posts on the margins of the bike lanes. The reduced bike layout shouldn't even be considered. Every new street project should accommodate bikes.
Again, with final design there will need to be a great deal of driver education. Also, through the area of this entire project cars currently travel too fast. I think that by prioritizing bikes and pedestrians cars may be forced to slow down.

For segments 1, 2 & 3, what enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
Reduce sidewalk width to accommodate a street level bike lane.
Same as above, please try and actively explore the rerouting of bike traffic out of downtown and some investigation to a parking building on west central. I think with those in place anything after that will be an easy approval.
See previous response: The enhanced multi-model should have bike lines through the intersections and maybe even dedicated bike lights.
As I mentioned above changing the order of the lanes will make it safer for bikers.

For segments 4 & 5, what is your preferred option and why? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
I like the buffered bike lanes.
4- same reason as above
Enhanced multi-model because every new street project should have bike lanes. The new street work north of these segments has bike lanes now (even though they are super narrow and still quite dangerous) and we can't just cut the bike access off right before the town center where all the stores are.
To keep consistency I prefer the Enhanced Accommodation. If I could fulfill my dream for these sections I would eliminate parking. I realize this is not possible so this is a good alternative. I am still not convinced by the reverse parking but with education it may be a good idea. As I mentioned before traffic will have to be slowed.

For segments 4 & 5, what is your concern with each option? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout AND/OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
I want to keep bikes and walkers well separated.
As as before
The intersection with 135 needs bike guide-lanes. The option without bike lanes should not be considered. I would be very upset if my tax money went to a project that doesn't have bike lanes and therefore promotes more car use. Cars are dangerous and cause pollution.
My biggest concern is having bikes and pedestrians at the same level with no barrier. Watching the happenings on Main Street as I do daily there will be issues with walkers paying no attention to bikers and vice versa. I thinks that having consistent access to bike lanes is very important. Stopping and starting them would be very dangerous.

For segments 4 & 5, what enhancements can be made to your preferred alternative? (1: Reduced Bicycle Accomodation Layout OR 2: Enhanced Multi-modal Accomodation)

TEST
Not sure.
There is a concern that rt135 is also unwelcoming for bikers and it would be very helpful to at least have bike lanes on the parts of 135 near main street to increase bike traffic. Then have more bike signs and guides in the 135/27 intersection.
At this time Natick Center can not afford to lose parking spaces with parallel parking. Is there room to have perpendicular parking, drive or back in and a bike lane without losing the current sidewalk width? If the bike lane is at sidewalk height can there be a divider, a low narrow, trough-like strip where flowers or low shrubs could be planted? There could be cut throughs for pedestrians to get to their cars but a low physical barrier may discourage jay-walkers especially those with strollers! I would like to have the opportunity to discuss the current crosswalks and how they will change with the final design.

Main Street Improvement Study Meeting 11/18

Alexander Pennie <pennieav@gmail.com>
To: Morgan Griffiths <mgriffiths@natickma.org>
Cc: "Main St. Study (Town of Natick)" <mainststudy@natickma.org>

Fri, Nov 22, 2024 at 2:46 PM

Hey, Morgan.

Thanks for the follow-up!

I love that the town thinks of improving accessibility and safety for all. I think we need to double down on providing better infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to attract more residents to local businesses. (if I'm forced to drive, I would drive to Wellesley or Boston instead of Natick Center)

I was thinking a lot of what has been discussed during the meeting and drafted a proposal "Option 3" that incorporates feedback from the meeting's discussions.

Goals I kept in mind:

1. Increase business activity in Town center by allowing Natick residents to access local businesses easily without requiring them to drive
2. Increase safety for all traffic participants - especially children (who can't drive)
3. Keep as much of existing parking space as possible
4. DO NOT encourage more passing by motor traffic from other towns.

Option 3 - Protected Bike lanes:



Please reference the attached image for more context Sections 1-3:

- Build a two-way "Mixed use" bike road between Cottage and Main on the right side
 - "Mixed-use" allows for pedestrians and cyclists to share the road - the same way it's happening on the rail trail - it should keep us compliant with state requirements
 - Wide two-way cycling infrastructure allows for Emergency vehicles access when the road is blocked by cars during rush hour
- Keep the sidewalk on the left side to allow easy access to local businesses
- Add "Dutch-style roundabout" to Cottage & Main streets
 - Improves safety for cars and cyclists.
 - Left turn lane can be removed allowing enough space for the roundabout
 - Easy navigation for inbound and outbound cyclists
- Add roundabout to Pond & Main
 - Removes current conflict point for turning left traffic
 - Current left turn lane can be removed - no need for it with a roundabout
 - We would be able to incorporate suggested bump out to increase safety for pedestrians

Sections 4-5:

- Replace Main & Central with a Dutch-style roundabout
 - Keep dedicated Right Turn Lanes to allow traffic to turn without entering a roundabout
 - No need for left turn lanes as a circle will be used for straight and turning left traffic
 - This will allow to make pedestrian crossing shorter and safer
 - This would optimize traffic flow, reducing back-up traffic on Main, will keep road capacity
 - Decor in the center of the roundabout could be a new cool thing about Natick, improving the look of our downtown
- Add elevated bike lanes on both sides of the road (we can think "mixed-use" on the right side as a space-saving measure)
- At least maintain the existing sidewalk width
- Add the suggested in Option 1 "back up parking".
 - If there is not enough space to add it to both sides of the road - keep it at least on one side and add parallel parking on the other side
- Add parking on Court Street - specifically for deliveries and drop-offs
- Narrow Main & South intersection, consider adding a roundabout - it's very dangerous for pedestrians and drivers today

I also added a few images of Dutch-style roundabouts for reference in the attachments.

These roundabouts can be very compact - the same or smaller than what we have on Main & Pine.

I can look for more reference photos if needed - I did a bunch of them during my last trip to the Netherlands this Summer.

Thanks so much!

Best Regards,
Alexander Pennie
508-410-4170

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3 attachments



Screenshot 2024-11-19 at 4.33.10 AM.png
616K



Screenshot 2024-11-19 at 4.32.52 AM.png
765K



Screenshot 2024-11-19 at 4.24.19 AM.png
2110K

Main Street development that is to include Bike Lanes

2 messages

Kelly Mcpherson <quilterkel@yahoo.com>
To: mgriffiths@natickma.org

Tue, May 6, 2025 at 7:55 PM

Please include the content of this letter with your interested parties for adding bike lanes in downtown Natick. I attended the meeting last year at the library, was attended by some merchants in Downtown. Some of whom are my friends. I would like to add that in the fiscal situation this town is in at this time, it would be so irresponsible to proceed at this time. Not only have the merchants struggled since Covid but with the MBTA project, even my family is not using the trains in Natick at this time because of the unpredictability of which side or parking issues. We need to respond to the decades long problem of needing more parking before we embark on yet another project. Please act responsibly and wait a few years while our Town Government figures out how they will pay for the projects and salaries we currently have.

Thank you
Kelly McPherson
Town Meeting Member P5

Sent from my iPhone please pardon any mistakes

Morgan Griffiths <mgriffiths@natickma.org>
To: Kelly Mcpherson <quilterkel@yahoo.com>

Wed, May 7, 2025 at 8:31 AM

Hi Kelly,

Thank you for reaching out and for your feedback! I appreciate your concern about the Main Street Project and will make sure your feedback is shared with the project team and all project decision makers.

Morgan

[Quoted text hidden]

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MORGAN GRIFFITHS (He/Him/His)
Transportation & Economic Development Planner



mgriffiths@natickma.org
(508) 647-6400 ext. 6413
Natick Community & Economic Development
13 East Central St. ♦ Natick, MA ♦ 01760
<https://www.natickma.gov/162/Community-Economic-Development>

Please be advised that the Massachusetts Secretary of State considers e-mail to be a public record, and therefore subject to public access under the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66 § 10.

Comments regarding the Natick Main Street Corridor Improvement Study

2 messages

Bob Caplin <bobcaplin@gmail.com>

Sun, May 11, 2025 at 9:34 PM

To: "mgriffiths@natickma.org" <mgriffiths@natickma.org>

Morgan,

I would like to provide comments regarding the plans for Segment 5 – Route 135 to South Avenue as part of the Natick Main Street Corridor Improvement Study. The existing condition includes a mix of parallel and angled head on parking with 93 parking spaces and no dedicated bicycle accommodation. I have lived in Natick for over 30 years and find the existing condition unsafe for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The two options provided in the study for Segment 5 are limited bicycle accommodation and enhanced bicycle accommodation. The Limited Bicycle Accommodation option modifies the parking arrangement to back-in-angled parking, which very few drivers have experienced, expands the sidewalk width on both sides, and increases the number of parking spaces to 101. However, it does not include a dedicated bike lane. I fear that back-in-angled parking, which most drivers have never experienced, would be confusing and therefore unsafe for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, especially on a two-way street with heavy traffic.

The Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation option provides parallel parking, increases the sidewalk width on both sides, and includes a dedicated bicycle track but reduces the number of parking spaces to 77. The Town, state and federal government have made significant investments in improving Natick's transportation infrastructure including the Cochituate Rail Trail, Natick Center commuter rail station, Route 27 improvements and the 9/27 bridge. These initiatives are designed to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety. Segment 5 directly connects to these projects. The Enhanced Bicycle Accommodation option allows pedestrians and cyclists to safely navigate from the rail trail, commuter rail station or local neighborhoods through Natick Center. This option combined with the recent infrastructure improvements has the potential to make Main Street a destination for walkers and cyclists which can benefit local merchants.

Regards,
Bob Caplin
5 Crest Rd.

Morgan Griffiths <mgriffiths@natickma.org>

Tue, May 13, 2025 at 11:31 AM

To: Bob Caplin <bobcaplin@gmail.com>

Hi Bob,

Thank you for reaching out and for your feedback on the Main Street Project! I will make sure to share your comments with the project team and all project decision makers.

Best,

Morgan
[Quoted text hidden]

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MORGAN GRIFFITHS (He/Him/His)
Transportation & Economic Development Planner



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(508) 647-6400 ext. 6413
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Appendix 4 – Additional Information on Bike Lanes

Separated Bike Lanes – When Are They Recommended?

- [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#): “Protected bike lanes should be explored for all streets with daily traffic volumes over 6,000, where speeds are more than 25 mph (40 km/h), or where more than one travel lane is present in each direction”
- [MassDOT Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide](#): “On streets where operating speeds are **below** 25 mph and traffic volumes are **below** 6,000 vehicles per day, separated bike lanes are generally **not** necessary.” (12)
 - Recommended for multi-lane roadways, curbside conflicts (many parked or temporarily stopped cars), areas with large vehicles, areas with high concentrations of vulnerable populations (children, seniors), areas with gaps in a low stress cycling network, streets with unusually high peak hour traffic volumes (12)
 - Want to accommodate bicycle desire lines, provide direct transitions to existing or planned links of a low-stress bicycle network, provide convenient access to destinations, connect to the roadway network in a direct and intuitive manner (14)
- [MassDOT Engineering Directive E-20-001](#) requires shared use path, side path, separated bike lane, or buffered bike lane for all roadways classified as “High Potential for Everyday biking” (8)
 - This applies when MassDOT is the project proponent, controls the affected infrastructure, **or is responsible for project funding** (1)
 - Guidelines would likely apply if Natick seeks TIP funding but not necessarily if funding came from Chapter 90 or MassWorks
- Main Street Corridor Characteristics
 - Speed limit on corridor: 30 mph
 - AADT on corridor: 8,511-8,516 (2021)
 - Study corridor is [currently listed](#) as “Medium Potential for Everyday Biking”, though MassDOT expects it to rise to “High” when the CRT extension is complete.

Potential for Everyday Biking

- [MassDOT analysis](#) which predicts where people are reasonably expected to bike for everyday travel if safe, comfortable, and convenient bikeways are available
- Rooted in assumption that trip distances and social conditions are key determining factors in determining biking potential
- Data layer displays roads with latent demand for active-mode trip making
- Potential for Every Biking/Walking = $(.7 * Demand + .2 * Transportation Access) + (1 + Social Equity)$
 - [Methodology Details](#)