



PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023



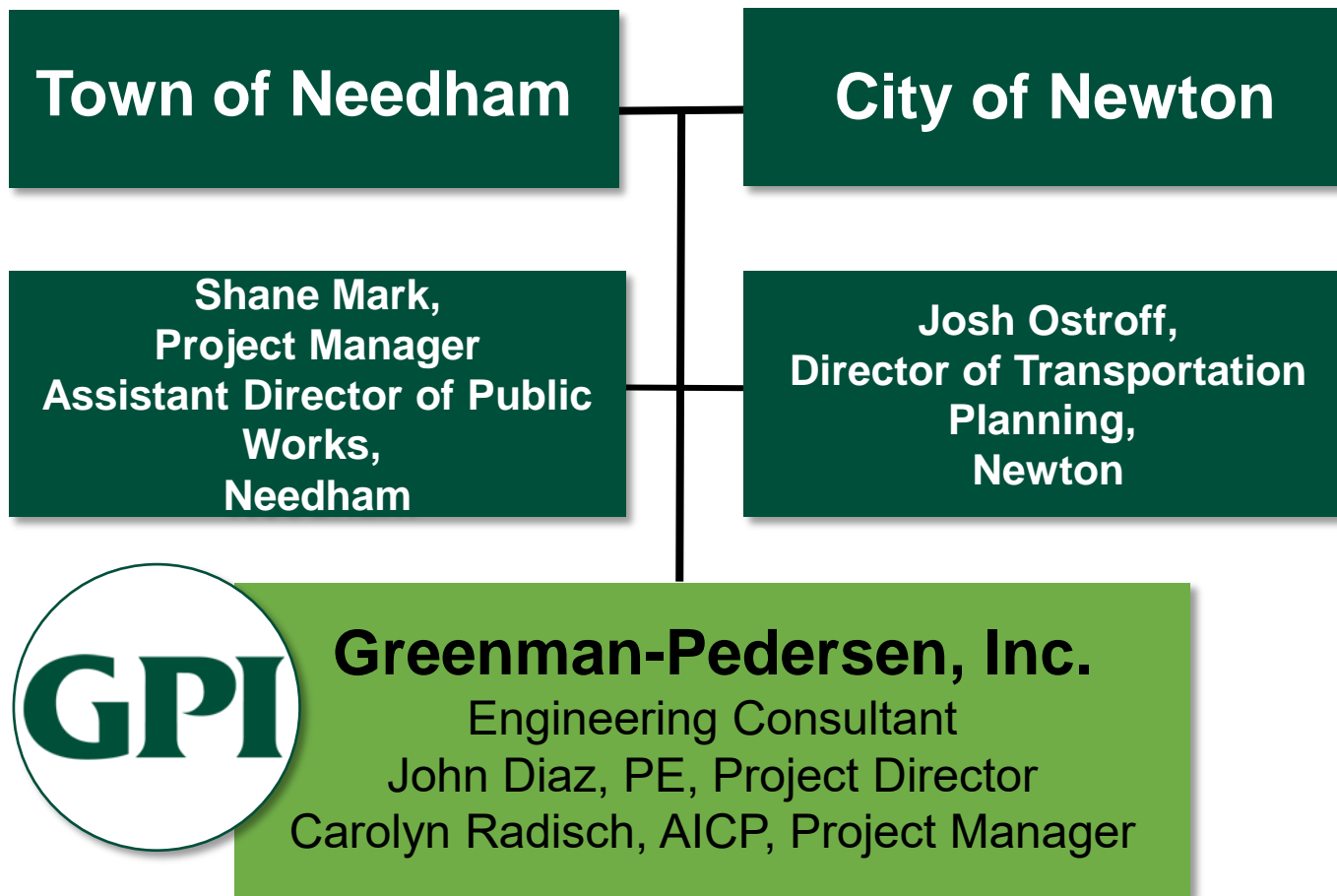
Engineering | Design | Planning | Construction Management

# WELCOME!

This meeting is being recorded. By continuing to be in the meeting you are consenting to be recorded. The recording will be posted on the Town of Needham and City of Newton websites:

<http://needhamma.gov/communityway>

<https://newtonma.gov/communityway>



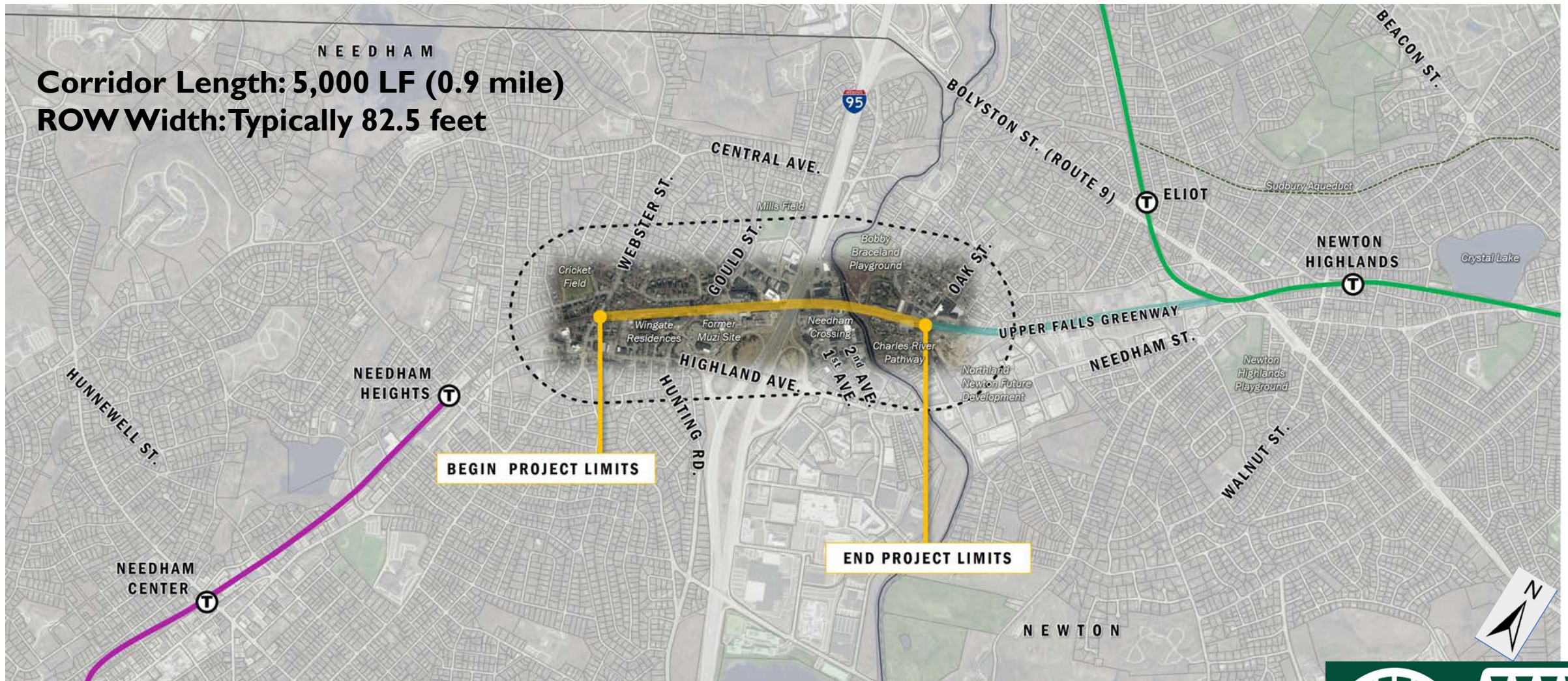
1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Study Scope and Area Overview
3. What We Heard from the Community
4. Community Way Design Alternatives and Costs
5. Next Steps
6. Questions And Comments

The **purpose** of this meeting is two-fold:

- to **inform the public** about the findings of the feasibility study; and
- to **collect public input**.

# STUDY SCOPE + AREA OVERVIEW

# STUDY AREA



Determine the **feasibility of:**

- providing a community 'way' **between Needham Heights and the Upper Falls Greenway in Newton**
- that will consider a **shared-use path** designed to accommodate:
  - **only bicycles and pedestrians** and
  - **bicycles, pedestrians & electric shuttle buses**

*Recommendations for design and construction are based on feasibility.*

*Planning and selection of the preferred alternative will be undertaken by Needham and Newton.*





Corridor Conditions - Needham



NO  
PARKING  
NO  
TRESPASSING  
NO  
DUMPING  
222-1212

Corridor Conditions - Needham



Right of Way at I-95 / Route 128



Newton

Bridge over Charles River



Upper Falls Greenway - Newton

**WHAT WE HEARD THROUGH THE  
APRIL 2023  
ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY**

# WHAT WE HEARD — WHO RESPONDED TO THE ONLINE SURVEY

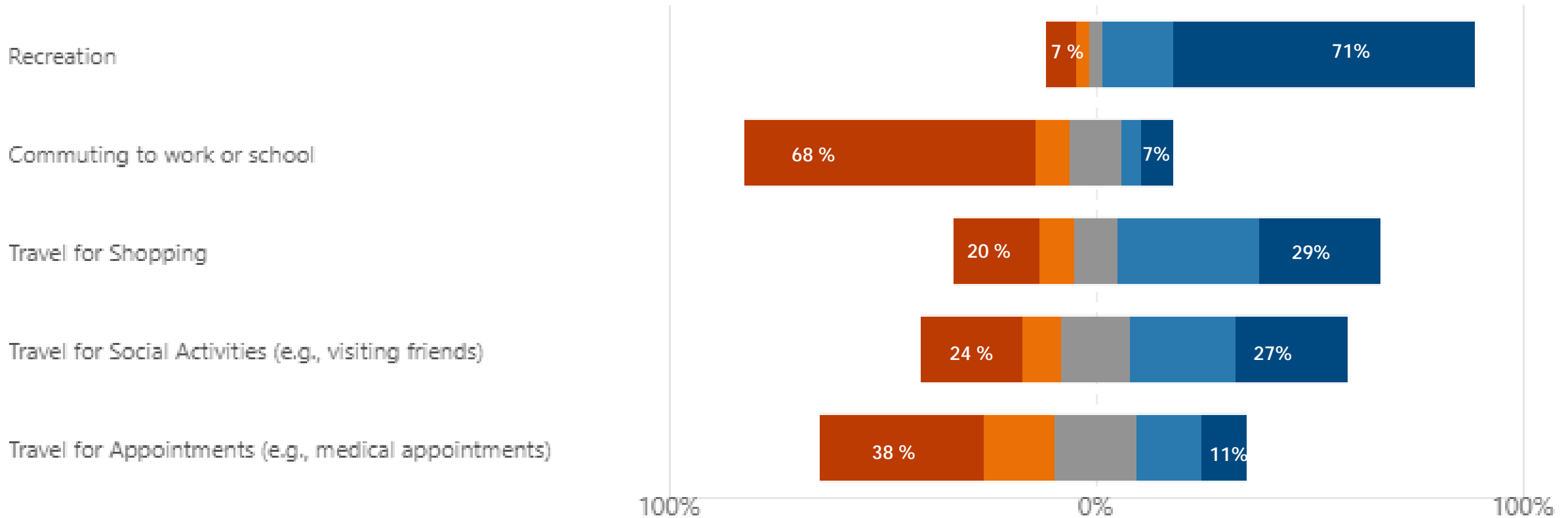


Total Responses	445
Needham Residents	46%
Newton Residents	52%
Residents who reside near the Community Way or Upper Falls Greenway	48%
Respondents who attended public informational meetings	14%

# WHAT WE HEARD — TRAVEL PURPOSE

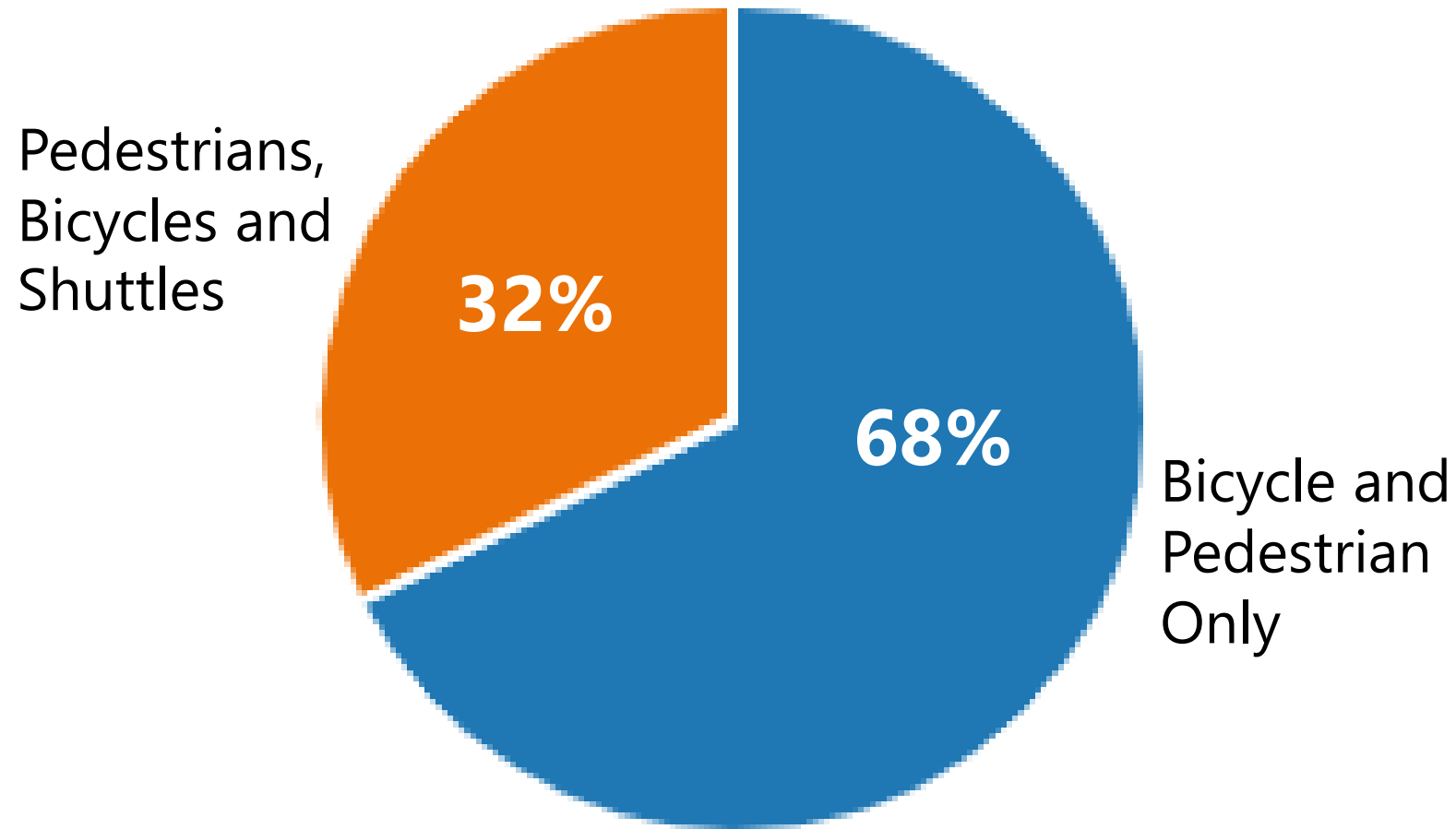
If the Community Way was created how likely would you be to use the path for each of the following?

Very unlikely    Somewhat unlikely    Neither likely nor unlikely    Somewhat likely    Very likely



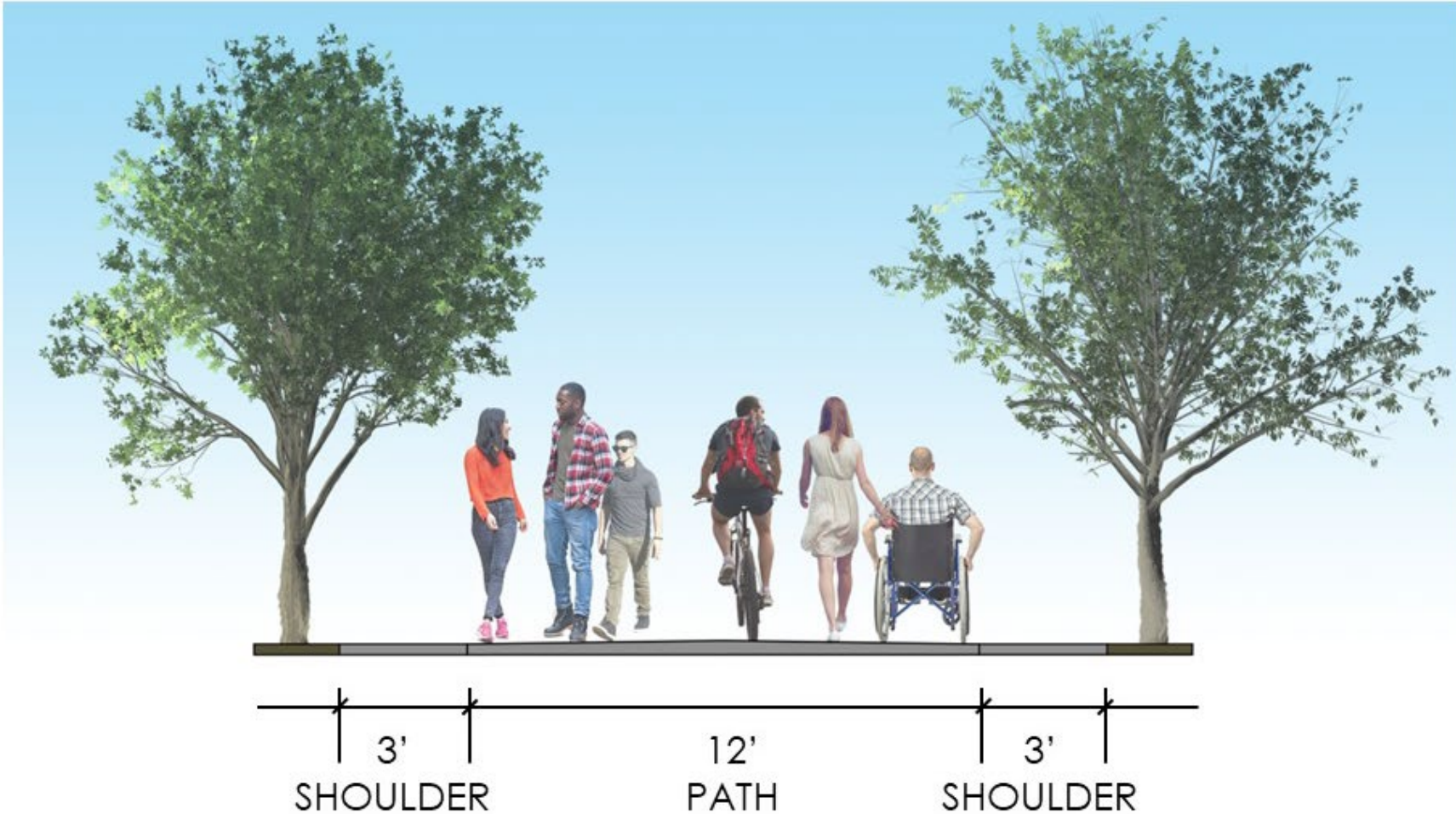


# WHAT WE HEARD — PREFERENCE for BIKE/PED ONLY VS. BIKE/PED/SHUTTLE USE

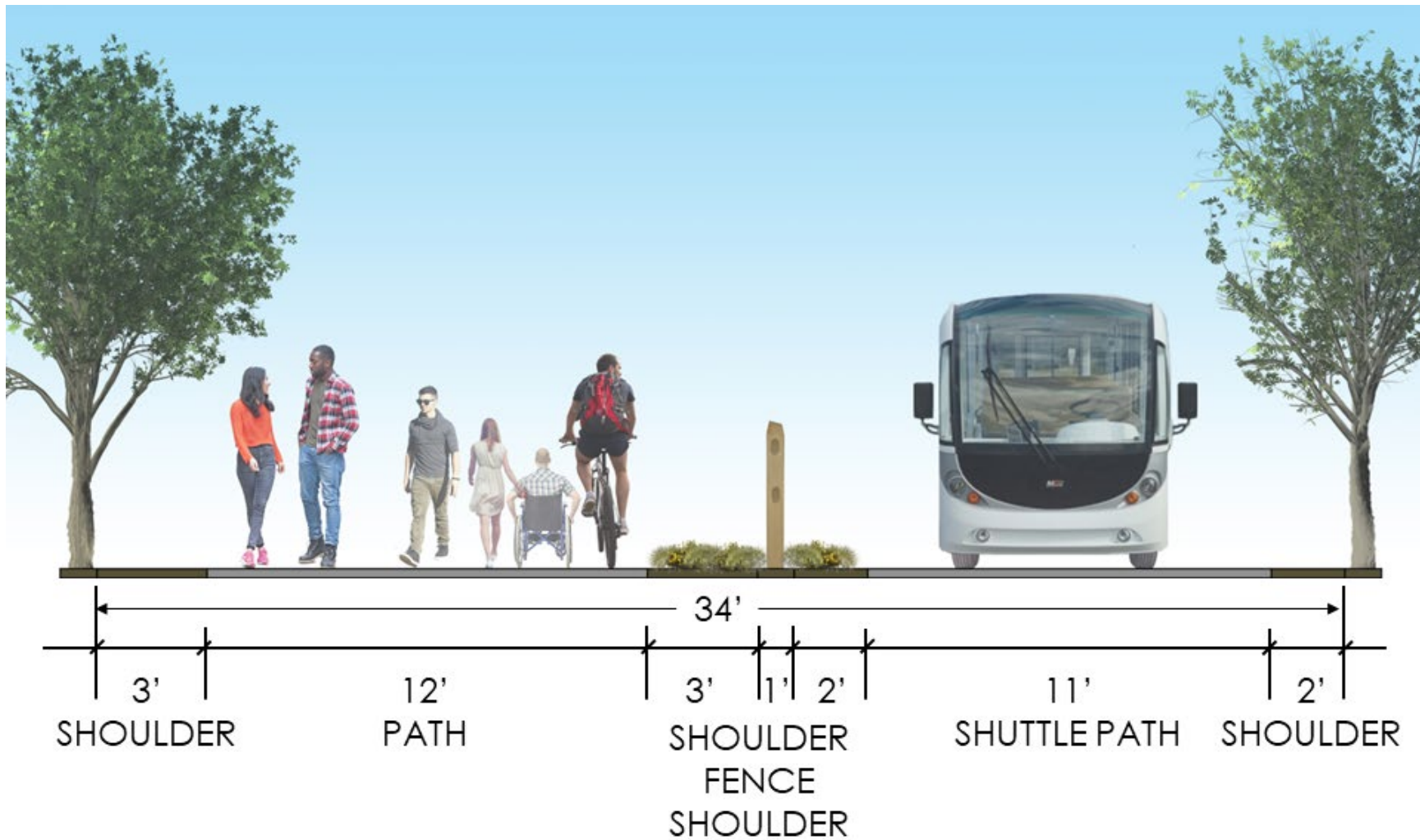


# STUDY ALTERNATIVES

# ALTERNATIVE 1: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST SHARED USE PATH - 18-FEET



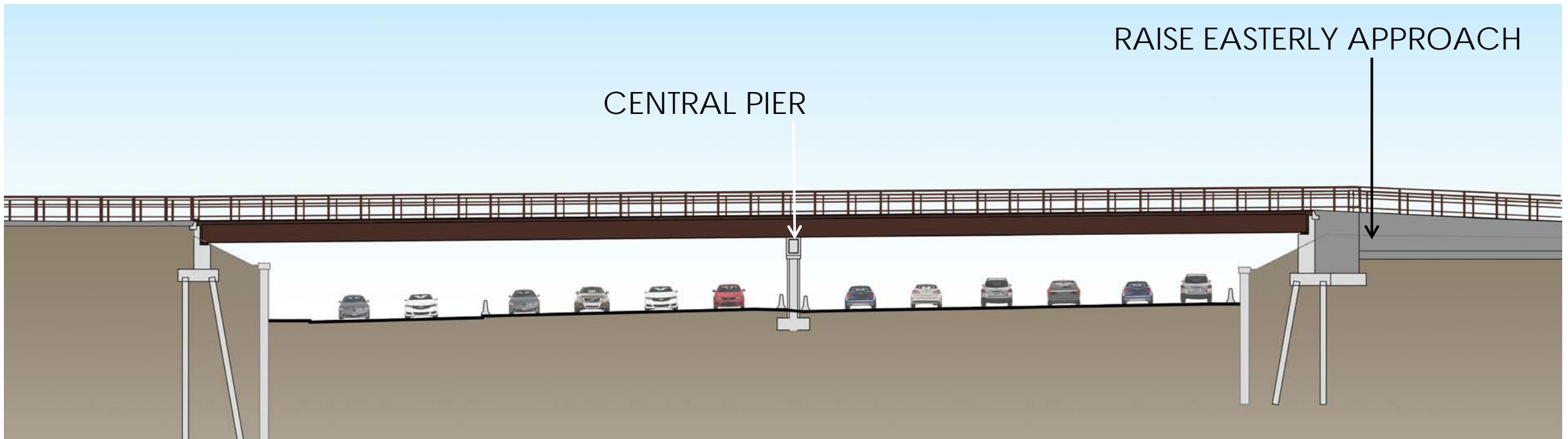
# ALTERNATIVE 2: SHUTTLE INCLUSIVE PATH - 34-FEET



NOTE: Variations on Alternative 2 were developed for the Charles River Bridge crossing

# DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

# I-95 / ROUTE 128 BRIDGE



**Easterly approach** would need to be **raised** to meet vertical clearance standards for I-95 / Route 128.

**Central pier** for a two-span bridge structure would require MassDOT / FHWA approval.

# CHARLES RIVER BRIDGE



Newton

Needham

# CHARLES RIVER BRIDGE

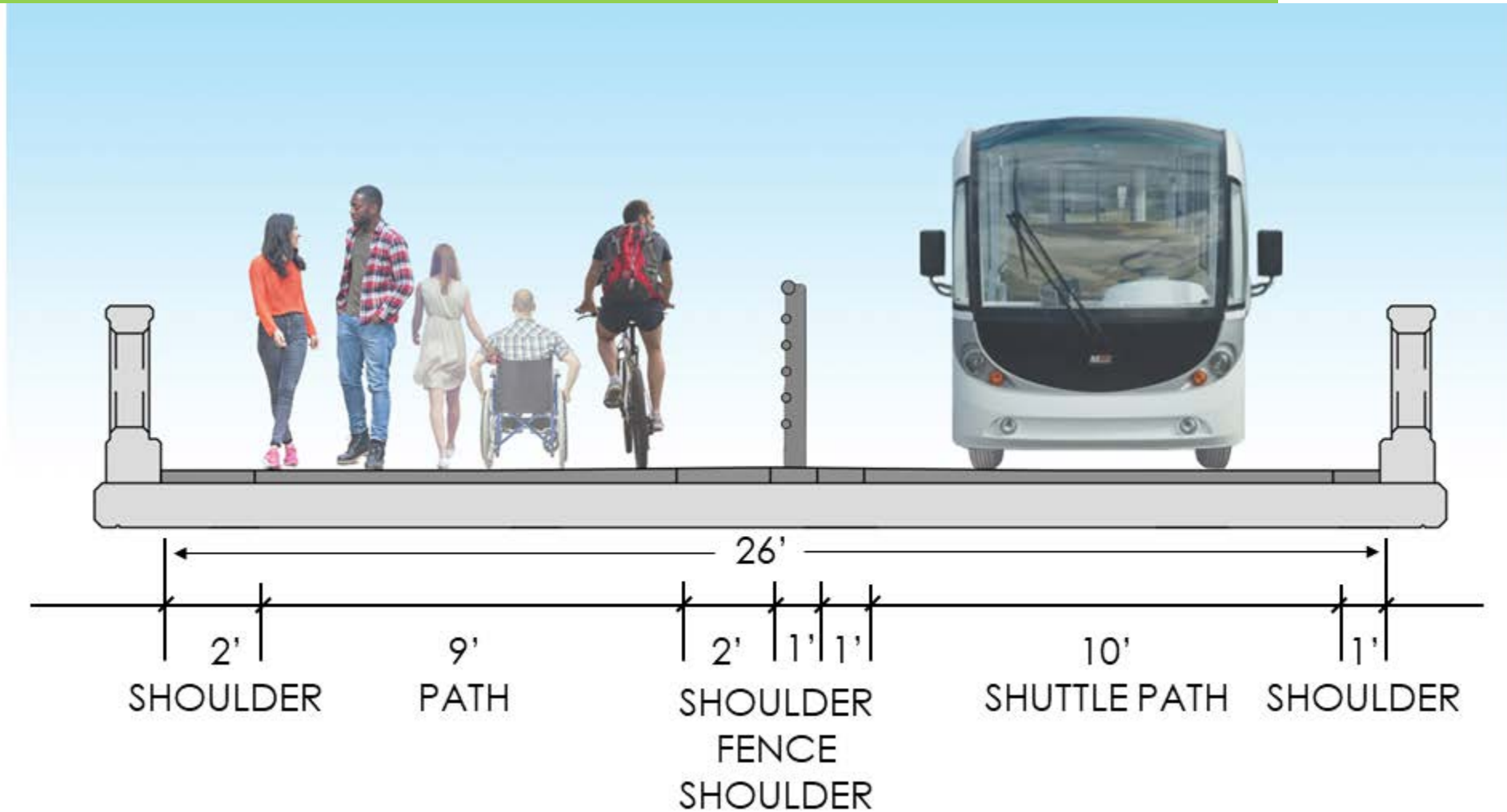
- Existing structure is in **satisfactory** condition
  - steel stringers/beams
  - concrete abutments
- Existing deck needs **replacement**
  - must be concrete for a Shared Use Path
- Existing beams **satisfactory for bike/ped path**
  - 18-foot maximum useable width
- **Wider path (>18 feet) would require new or modified abutments and beams**



Existing West Substructure

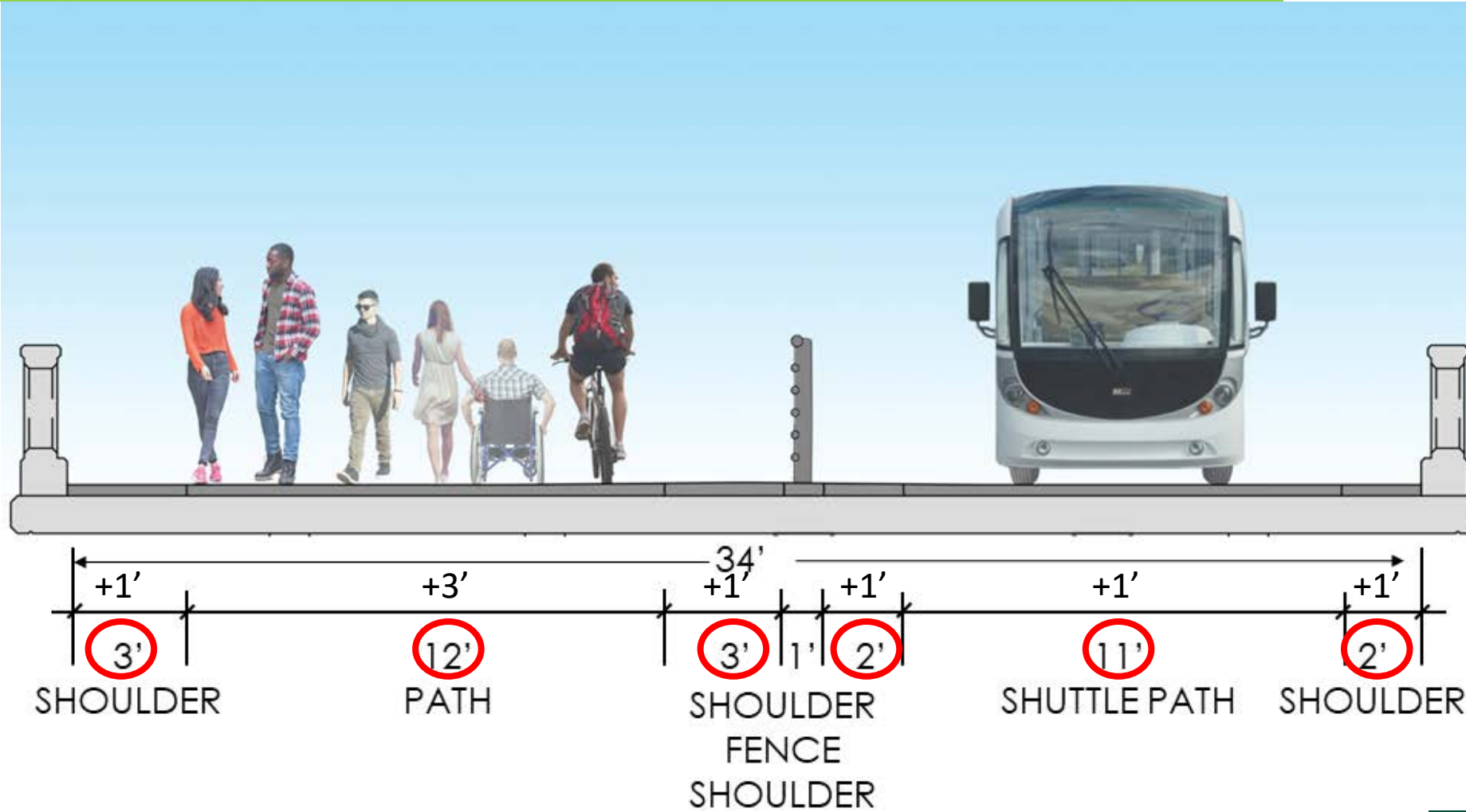


# CHARLES RIVER BRIDGE: ALTERNATIVE 2A – 26-FEET



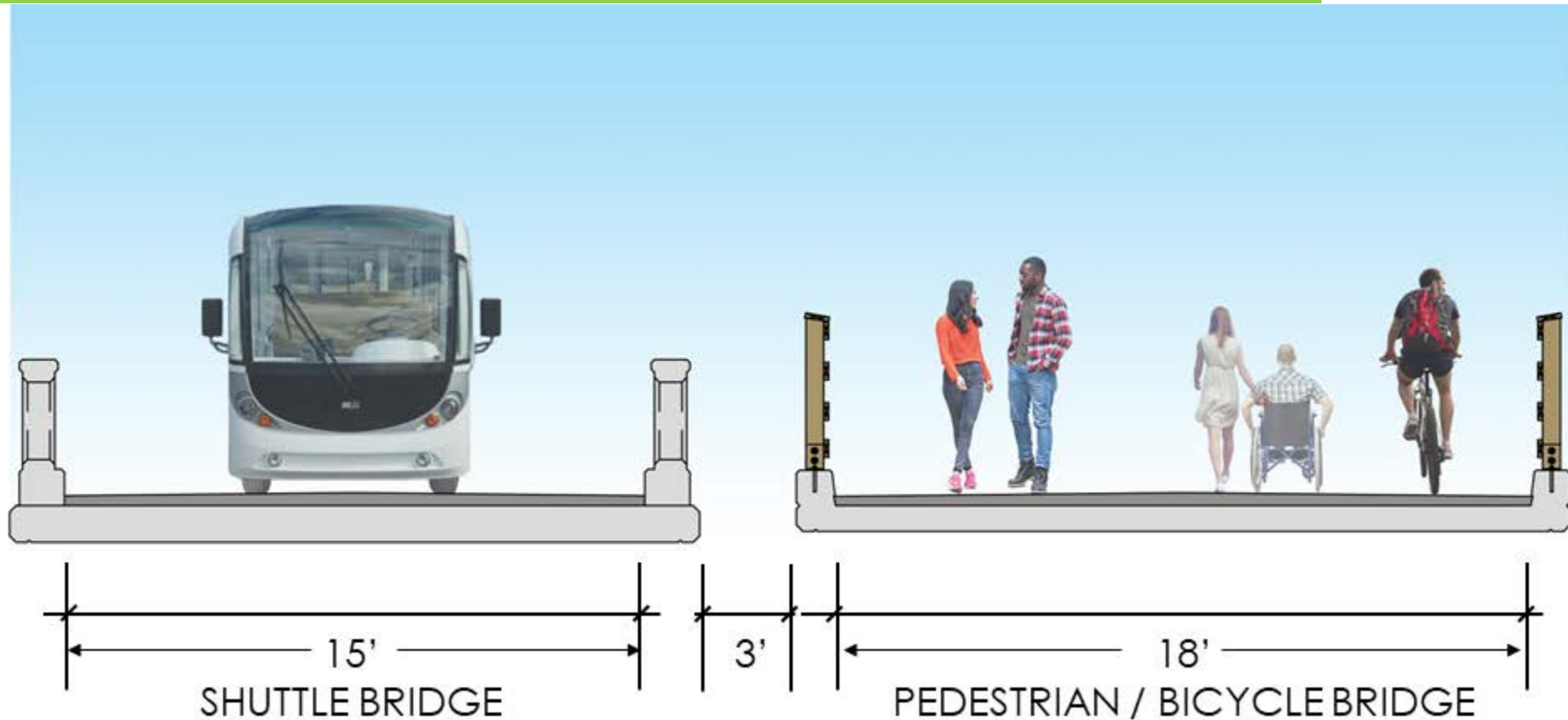
**GPI** Would require new abutments for the bridge over the Charles and design exceptions for the path, path shoulders and narrow bridge<sup>25</sup>

# CHARLES RIVER BRIDGE: ALTERNATIVE 2B — 34-FEET



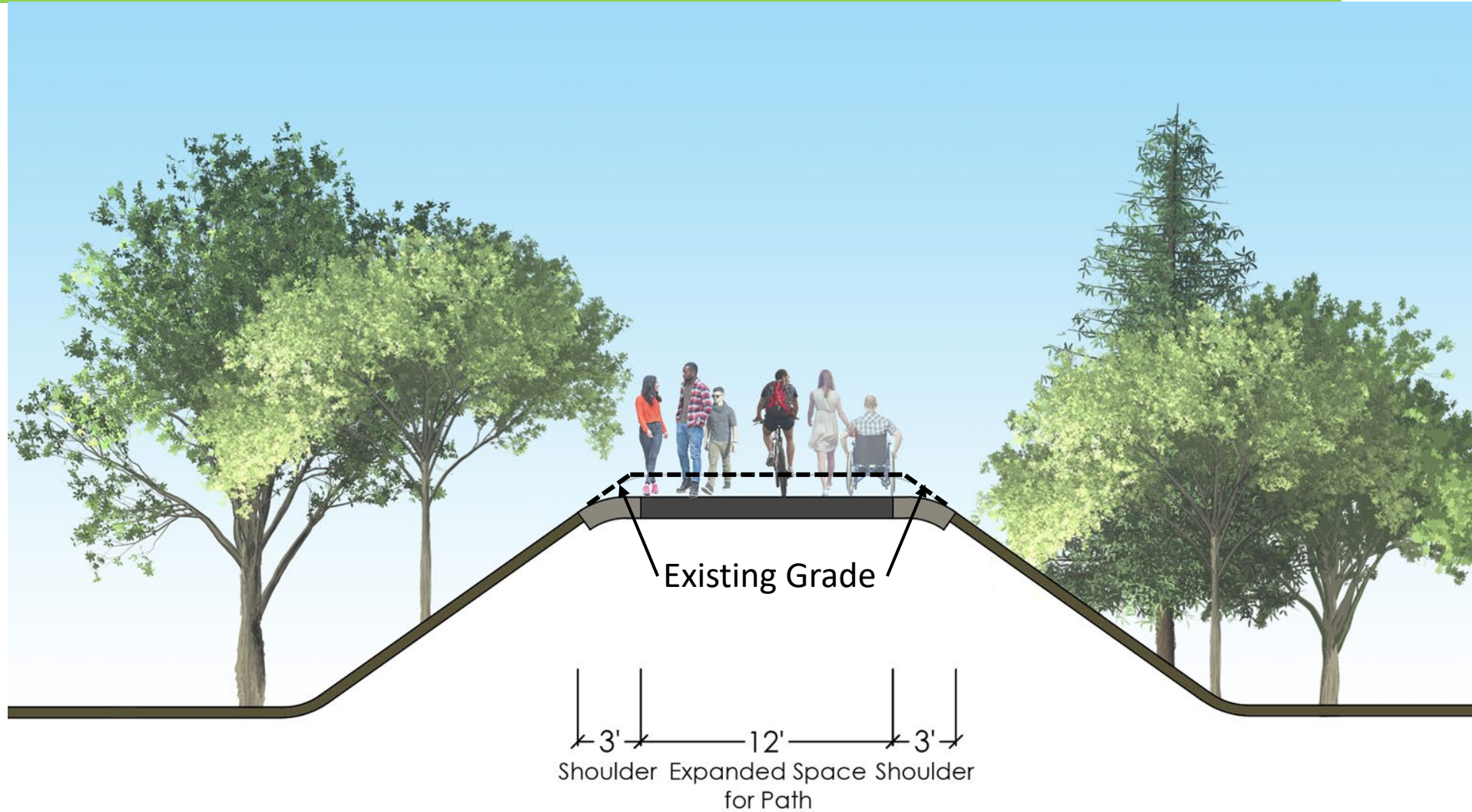
**GPI** Would require new abutments for the bridge over the Charles. 26

# ALTERNATIVE 2C: TWO BRIDGES ON EXISTING AND NEW ABUTMENTS



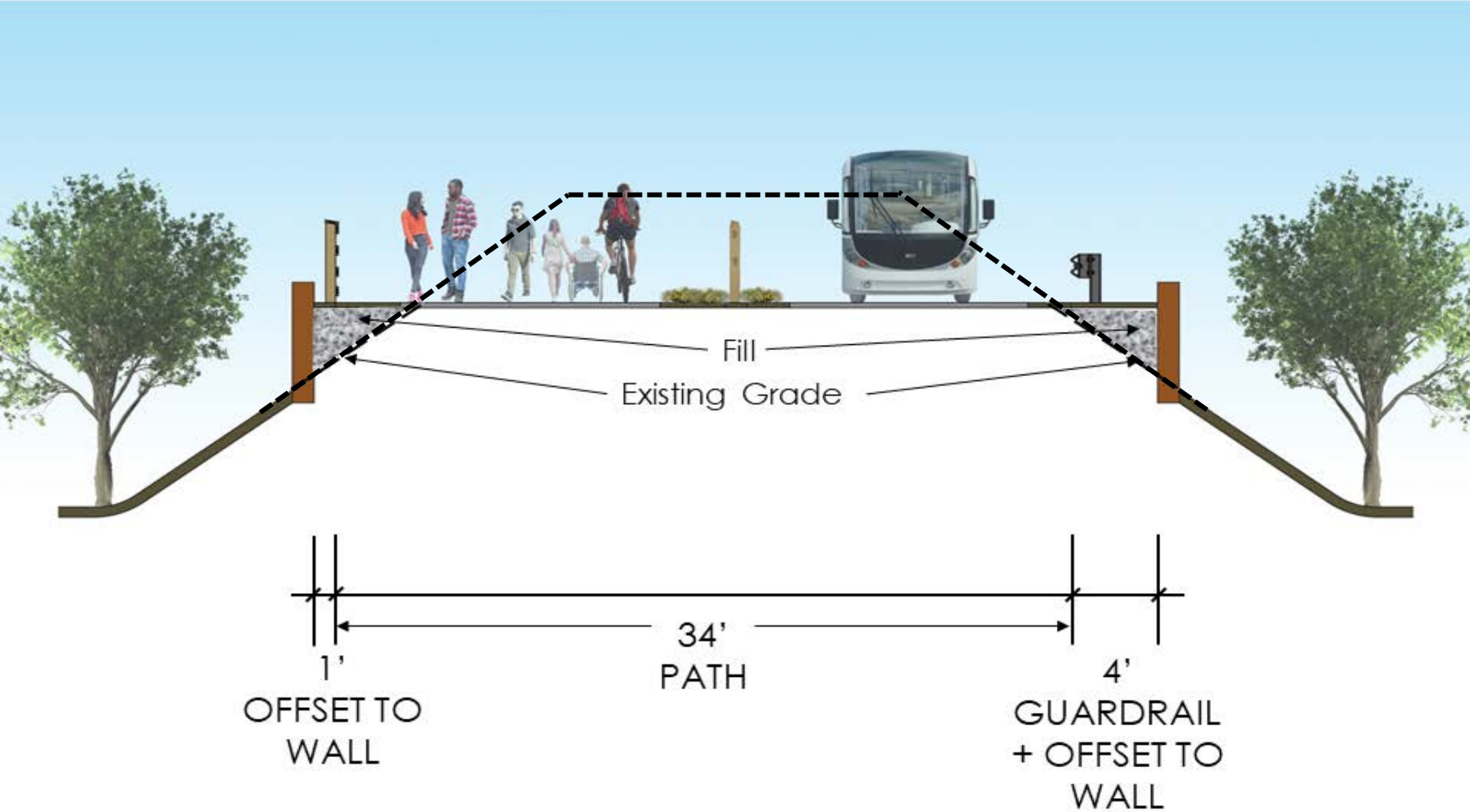
Would require new abutments for a second bridge over the Charles to the north of the bike/ped bridge. Existing beam could be used for bike/ped path.

# PATH: WIDENING CONSIDERATIONS — ALTERNATIVE I



Illustrative Section – For Illustration Only  
2,140 LF of Retaining Walls

# PATH: WIDENING CONSIDERATIONS – ALTERNATIVE 2



Illustrative Section – For Illustration Only

3,700 LF of Retaining Walls

# PATH: ROW LICENSES AND ENCROACHMENTS

The MBTA issues licenses for citizens, municipalities or companies that wish to access or lease MBTA property. Within the project area licensees include utility companies as well as WCVB TV.

Based on review of the 2023 aerial mapping of the right of way and field reconnaissance it appears that there may be encroachments along the right of way at the following locations:

## **Encroachment Description**

## **Location**

Material and Equipment Storage  
Landscaping  
Material and Equipment Storage

Arbor Road businesses  
Wingate Residences, 235 Gould Road  
Fremont Street businesses

Based on review of aerial photos, only the landscaping at the Wingate Residences conflicts with the proposed path.

# ALTERNATIVE 1 GRADE CROSSINGS – WEBSTER, GOULD AND OAK STREETS



Crossings include high visibility crosswalks, path median islands, pavement markings, RRFBs, detectable warning panels  
Alternative 2 would include a shuttle lane

# VEGETATION REMOVAL



Existing Conditions at Webster St.



# VEGETATION REMOVAL



Example of 12' Path with 2' Shoulders

**Alternative 1:**  
18' path within  
an 82.5' ROW =  
64.5' open  
within the ROW

**Alternative 2:**  
34' way within  
an 82.5' ROW =  
48.5' open  
within the ROW

# NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



## OPEN SPACE

Open Space

## WETLANDS

Open Water

Wooded Swamp

## FEMA FLOOD HAZARD

1% Annual Chance of Flooding

0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

## NHESP

Certified Vernal Pools

Potential Vernal Pools

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

AUL Sites

Chapter 21E Tier I Classified Sites

Chapter 21E Tier II Classified Sites

## MASS HISTORIC INVENTORY

National Register of Historic Places

National Register of Historic Places & Local Historic District

Inventoried Property

National Register of Historic Places

Local Historic District

Inventoried Property

Study Corridor

Existing Upper Falls Greenway

At-Grade Crossing

Missing Bridge

Existing Bridge



# ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING SUMMARY

Environmental Permit Requirements	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
MEPA ENF/EIR Filing	No	Maybe
Notice of Intent Application (Needham and Newton)	Yes	Yes
MassDEP Water Quality Certification	No	No
MassDEP Chapter 91 Waterways License	Maybe	Yes
Department of the Army Permit	No	Yes (SVN or PCN)
EPA NPDES Construction General Permit	Yes	Yes

# COSTS

# PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES\*

SEGMENT	ALT. 1 Bike/Ped 18'	ALT. 2A B/P/Shuttle 26'	ALT. 2B B/P/Shuttle 34'	ALT. 2C B/P/Shuttle 2 bridges
Trail Improvements	\$ 3.2 M	\$ 8.2 M	\$ 8.2 M	\$ 8.2 M
Bridge over I-95/Route 128	\$ 12.0 M	\$ 24.5 M	\$ 24.5 M	\$ 24.5 M
Bridge over Charles River	\$ 1.6 M	\$ 3.5 M	\$ 12.8 M	\$ 9.7 M
Probable Cost 2023 DOLLARS	\$ 16.8 M	\$ 36.2 M	\$ 45.5 M	\$ 42.4 M
<b>2030 PLANNING COST</b> with inflation (4% for 7 yrs.)	<b>\$ 22.2 M</b>	<b>\$ 47.7 M</b>	<b>\$ 59.9 M</b>	<b>\$ 55.8 M</b>

## \*Costs include:

Estimate Contingency	25% of construction cost
Construction Contingency	10% of construction cost
Construction Inspection	10% of construction cost
Utility Relocations	3% of construction cost
Traffic Management	2-5% of construction cost
Design Fee	15% of construction cost before contingencies

## \*Costs don't include:

Improvements to Upper Falls Greenway to accommodate shuttle service nor planning and construction costs to connect with Needham Heights and Newton Highlands Stations.

**FINDINGS,  
CONCLUSIONS,  
and  
NEXT STEPS**

# ENGINEERING ASSESSMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

## Path Improvements

- Alternative 2 requires more earthwork, retaining walls and vegetation removal due to greater width.
- Path would likely conflict with encroaching landscaping at Wingate Residences.

## Route 128 Bridge

- Need to raise the grade on the easterly side.
- Need to accommodate center pier in highway median for two-span bridge.
- Bridge design subject to review and approval by MassDOT and FHWA.

## Charles River Bridge

- Existing beam and abutments limit width to 18' path; shuttle path requires new and/or altered substructures.
- Permitting / impacts to wetlands of Alternative 2 would be greater than Alternative 1.

## MBTA Lease

- Upper Falls Greenway lease does not allow motorized use – would require amendment for Alternative 2.

# NEXT STEP: DETERMINE A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

1. Develop a process for Needham and Newton to jointly determine a preferred alternative
2. Determine the preferred alternative
  - 1) Alternative 1: A shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles only;
  - 2) Alternative 2: Further assessment for the shuttle inclusive option; or
  - 3) No development at this time



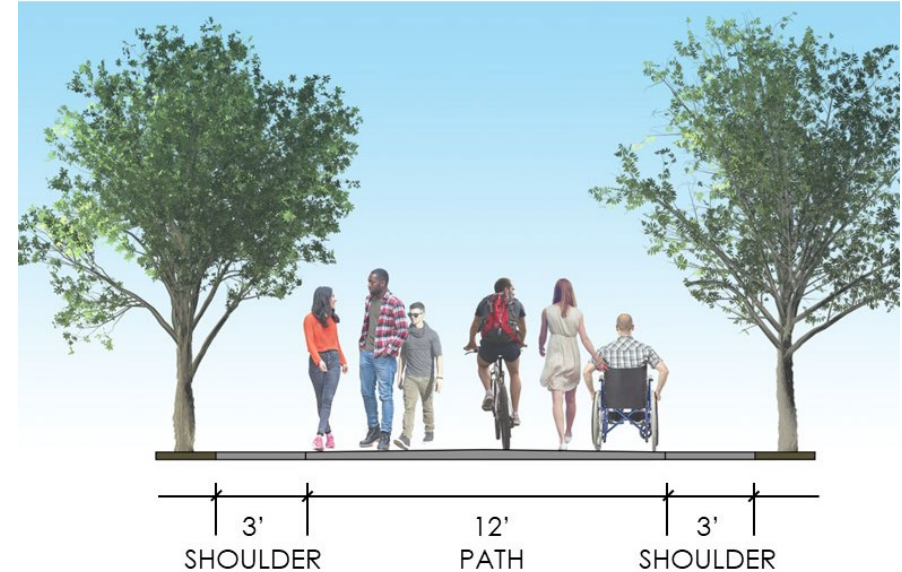
# PROCESS FOR ALTERNATIVE 1 – PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PATH

## Planning

- Negotiate lease agreement with MBTA (Needham).
- Connectivity planning at northern terminus of Upper Falls Greenway (Newton).
- Connectivity planning to link Community Way with the developing Bay Colony Rail Trail in Needham.
- Initiate Project Review process with MassDOT District 6.
- Foster partnerships with MassDOT and DCR (Dept. of Conservation and Recreation).

## Funding Options

- Design and Planning: MassTrails grants, local funding, developer contributions
- Construction: TIP (Transportation Improvement Program)



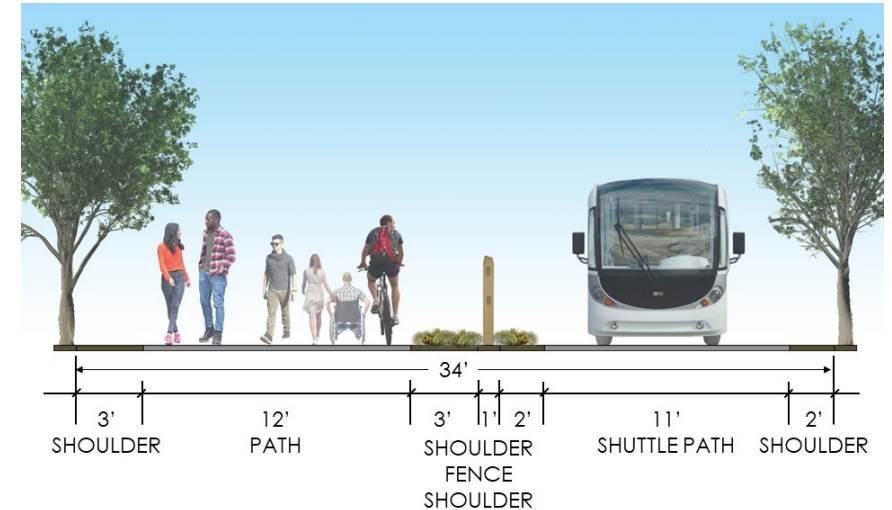
# PROCESS FOR ALTERNATIVE 2 – PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND SHUTTLE PATH

## Planning

- Engage in transit planning for the corridor:
  - In collaboration with the MBTA, the Boston MPO and stakeholders in both communities, assess transit demand and potential solutions along the Needham Street/Highland Avenue corridor.
  - Identify Shuttle Route and Update Ridership Estimates.
  - Update Cost Estimates.
  - Evaluate Alternatives for the Shuttle Route.
  - Identify Shuttle Service Provider – Must be PUBLIC Transit Service if public funding is used for improvements.
  - Negotiate lease agreements with MBTA allowing motorized use (Needham and Newton).

## Funding Options

- Planning: Local funding, grants
- Construction: TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) MassWorks, local funding, developer



**The Community Way Feasibility Study will  
be available September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

<http://needhamma.gov/communityway>

<http://newtonma.gov/communityway>



Thank You!

Questions and Comments

**GPI**