



Public Facilities Committee Report City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Leary, Norton, Kelley, Gentile, Danberg, Laredo, Lappin, Auchincloss, Cote, Grossman, Lipof

City staff Present: Commissioner of Public Works Jim McGonagle, City Engineer Lou Taverna, Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Planning Director of Transportation Nicole Freedman, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, ADA Coordinator Jini Fairley, Community Engagement Manager Lily Canan Reynolds, Long Range Planner Rachel Nadkarni

#386-18 National Grid Grant of Location for Gay Street

NATIONAL GRID petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain 230' ± of 6" gas main in GAY STREET from the existing 4" gas main at the intersection of Cabot Street to just past the intersection of Clyde Street and 60' ± of 6" gas main in Clyde Street from the new 6" gas main in Gay Street to 10 Clyde Street. (Ward 2)

Action: Public Facilities Approved 5-0 (Leary, Norton, Gentile not Voting)

Note: National Grid Permit representative Barbara Kelleher presented the request to install 230' of 6" gas main in Gay Street from Cabot Street to the intersection of Clyde Street in addition to 660' of 6" gas main to number 10 Clyde in order to allow abandonment of the existing service. Ms. Kelleher noted that the abandoning the existing mains allows the installation of updated equipment.

The Public Hearing was opened and Closed with no member of the public wishing to Speak. Committee members expressed no concerns relative to the petition for grant of location. Councilor Danberg moved approval of the item which carried unanimously.

#387-18 National Grid Grant of Location on California Street

NATIONAL GRID petitioning for a grant of location to install and maintain a new regulator traffic control box in the grassy area across from the existing regulator at 367 California Street with a 4" conduit and a 1 ½" conduit crossing California Street to an existing pole to provide electricity to the proposed regulator.

Action: Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Gentile, Norton not Voting)

Note: National Grid Permit Representative Barbara Kelleher presented the request for a grant of location to install and maintain a new regulator traffic control box and conduit to an existing pole. The new regulator box will replace the existing regulator. Ms. Kelleher stated that the regulator will be located below grade. City Engineer Lou Taverna confirmed that the regulator is flush with the sidewalk and located entirely on City property. Mr. Taverna also noted that National Grid will be required to mill

and overlay, curb to curb and 25' in either direction according to the City's Ordinance for street paving (5-year moratorium)

The Public Hearing was Opened and Closed with no member of the Public who wished to speak. Committee members expressed no concerns relative to the petition. A motion from Councilor Leary to approve carried unanimously.

#325-18 President Laredo's appointment of Amy MacKrell to the Designer Selection Committee

Amy MacKrell, 12 Dexter Road, Newtonville, appointed as a member of the DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE for a term to expire December 31, 2021.

Action: Public Facilities Approved 6-0 (Norton, Gentile not Voting)

Note: Committee members discussed the appointment of Amy MacKrell to the Designer Selection Committee. The Committee had a previous opportunity to meet Ms. MacKrell during her appointment to the Design Review Committee. Committee members were supportive of appointing Ms. MacKrell. Councilor Danberg motioned to approve the appointment. Committee members voted unanimously in favor of the motion to approve.

#324-18 President Laredo's appointment of Robert Hnasko to the Design Review Committee

Robert Hnasko, 49 Miller Road, Newton Centre, appointed as a member of the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE for a term to expire December 31, 2021.

Action: Public Facilities Held 7-0 (Gentile not Voting)

#384-18 Appointment of Puja Vohra to the Citizens Commission on Energy

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing PUJA VOHRA, 130 Day Street, Newton, as a member of the CITIZENS COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire June 15, 2021. (60 days: 8/17/18)

Action: Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Norton, Gentile not Voting)

#385-18 Appointment of Jonathan Klein to the Citizens Commission on Energy

PRESIDENT LAREDO appointing JONATHAN KLEIN, 107 Woodward Street, Newton Highlands, as a member of the CITIZENS COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire June 30, 2021. (60 days: 8/17/18)

Action: Public Facilities Held 6-0 (Norton, Gentile not Voting)

Note: Appointees Jonathan Klein, Puja Vohra and Robert Hnasko were not available to meet with the Committee on Wednesday, June 20, 2018. Committee members agreed to hold the appointments to allow them to attend the next Committee meeting. With a motion from Councilor Danberg to hold items #384-18, #324-18 and #385-18, Committee members voted unanimously in favor.

Referred to Public Facilities and Public Safety and Transportation Committees

#52-18 Discussion/ Review on the Street Design Guide

COUNCILORS CROSSLEY AND ALBRIGHT requesting a discussion and review of the Street Design Guide, and how it will inform the Accelerated Roads Program.

Action: Public Facilities Held 8-0

Note: Planning Director of Transportation Nicole Freedman presented an overview of the Street Design Guide with Toole Design Group Vice President Nick Jackson and Toole Design Group Senior Planner/Project Manager Nick Schmidt. Her presentation is attached at the end of this report. Ms. Freedman noted that the Street Design Guide is a guide for implementation of Complete Streets strategies for use by staff, contractors and private developers. The Street Design Guide includes design and engineering guidelines but maintains flexibility to allow variances in different parts of the City. Ms. Freedman stated that the development of the Street Design Guide has been an interdepartmental collaboration resulting in consensus among the various City departments that influence the City's streetscape. She noted that the Street Design Guide includes best practices from around the country and will be a living document that can evolve and incorporate new information, as needed. It is the department's intent to present to the Public Facilities Committee every six months. The Street Design Guide provides details of ideal treatments in various parts of the City. Each City road is categorized into a type of street which informs the preferred type of treatment for that road. Ms. Freedman provided examples of the options for the following categories:

Storm Water/Tree Treatment – infrastructure for storm water treatment, use of structural soil, distance between trees, use of permeable pavers. Commissioner McGonagle confirmed that all work relative to trees is being coordinated with Tree Warden Marc Welch.

Councilors questioned where DPW anticipates installing permeable pavers, as they are known to be very high maintenance. Commissioner McGonagle reiterated that the permeable pavers are high maintenance. He stated that the department will be purchasing a small vacuum to maintain the pavers, which will be located around some trees in West Newton.

Lighting – design standards for lighting fixture height and lighting levels. Ms. Freedman noted that the department has designed a family of lights for aesthetic consistency among village centers.

Travel Lane Widths – the reduction in travel lanes causes a reduction in speed, creating safer conditions and additional spaces for bike lanes and/or outdoor cafes/sidewalk space.

A Councilor questioned how traffic is impacted when the roads are narrowed and how the City plans to address the traffic impacts. Ms. Freedman noted that there will be trade-offs when narrowing the roads, which could include traffic impacts. She stated that the City must determine which trade-offs are acceptable due to the positive benefits.

Bike Lanes – the width of the street helps to determine where the various facilities can be located. The Street Design Guide includes a full complement of bicycle facilities.

Traffic Calming – realignment of roadways to create lateral shifts helps to slow cars by eliminating a direct line of sight.

Vertical Traffic Calming – when correctly installed, newer vertical traffic calming measures can be useful tools to slow cars. There are options that will not interfere with public safety. Committee members asked that the Street Design team ensure that the Police and Fire Departments are satisfied with implementation of the speed tables, prior to installation.

Crosswalks – shortened crossing times is preferred. The Planning Department is reviewing options for decorative details in crosswalks.

Signal Phasing - Rectangular Flashing Beacons, pedestrian refuge islands, Pedestrian Signal Timing (concurrent, exclusive and hybrid crossings). It was noted that concurrent crossings typically reduce the wait time for pedestrians, decreasing the likelihood that the pedestrian will engage in riskier behaviors. It was noted that education is recommended when implementing a concurrent crossing. Additionally, it was noted that a “pedestrian lead time” helps to increase visibility of pedestrians in concurrent crossings.

Commissioner McGonagle noted that new traffic signals in the City will be adaptive and the City is using Opticom technology to enhance signalization for public safety officials. A Committee member noted that there are some intersections in the City where changes to signalization might be beneficial to improving the user experience.

Intersections and Corners: Because accidents tend to happen at intersections, the correct corner radius is essential to ensuring that safety is maximized. On each road they evaluate what type of vehicle is accessing the road to determine appropriate turning widths.

Committee members questioned whether the Street Design Guide has been presented to the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG). Ms. Freedman confirmed the Street Design Guide team has been working with TAG and a final draft will be presented on July 11. A Councilor noted that there may have been some lack of coordination with TAG and the Police Department and urged the team to ensure that TAG and the Police Department remain involved.

A Committee member expressed concern that there is no street category between “arterial” and “collector”, noting that some streets (i.e. Chestnut Street) is categorized as an arterial, but remains small and unable to sustain large trucks.

Councilors expressed appreciation for the quality of the Street Design Guide and the efforts made by City staff to develop the document. Councilors were in agreement that a post construction review/presentation would be beneficial after the Street Design Guide has been used to influence projects in the City. Committee members questioned how the Complete Streets approach is impacting the Accelerated Roads Program. The Commissioner noted that it is the goal to take a Complete Streets approach for streets under construction or when there is a safety issue in the area. He noted that the expense of the Complete Streets approach can be three times the expense of reconstructing only the street. Councilors questioned whether the City might want to consider slowing the Accelerated Roads Program to ensure that each roadway is constructed according to the Complete Streets guidelines, acknowledging that the Accelerated Roads Program would become much longer by doing so. Councilors

were in agreement that the City should evaluate the cost of Complete Streets in the context of the Accelerated Roads Program. The Chair suggested that the proposed prioritization of streets and storm water investments should be considered as part of that discussion. With a motion from Councilor Kelley to hold in Public Facilities, Committee members voted unanimously. Councilor Grossman motioned to hold the item in Public Safety and Transportation which also carried unanimously.

Referred to Public Safety and Transportation and Public Facilities Committees

#381-18 Walnut Street Newtonville Enhancements Project

HER HONOR THE MAYOR, COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, and COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, AUCHINCLOSS & NORTON requesting approval pursuant to §26-51 of the City of Newton Ordinances for the Walnut Street Newtonville Enhancements Project on Walnut Street from approximately the northerly bridge abutment of the Massachusetts Turnpike Bridge to the intersection of Elm Road; Highland Avenue from Walnut Street to Bram Way; Austin Street from Walnut Street to the westerly end of the 28 Austin Street project; and the east sidewalk of Bram Way.

Action: **Public Facilities Approved 6-1-1 (Gentile Opposed, Laredo abstaining)**

Note: City Engineer Lou Taverna and Planning Department Community Engagement Manager Lily Canan Reynolds presented updates to the Walnut Street Newtonville Enhancements Project. Previously approved by the Council for design funds, the project is almost at full design and the Engineering and Planning Departments are seeking Council approval to proceed with final design. It is anticipated that the proposed construction can be bid in winter 2018 for construction during the 2019 construction season. The Planning Department Memo for the Enhancement Project is attached to the Public Facilities Committee Memo for June 20, 2018 and can be found at the following address: <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/aldermen/committees/facilities/2018.asp>

Environmental Partners Director of Transportation Jim Fitzgerald presented an overview of the design (shown on the attached PowerPoint). Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the intent of the design is to balance the needs for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, while improving safety and aesthetics of the village center. When designing the project, the City is applying the Complete Streets approach and includes ADA compliant upgrades. It was noted that several engagements were held to solicit feedback from the public. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that during the public engagement events, it was evident that residents were supportive of wider sidewalks. Mr. Fitzgerald demonstrated the proposed design, including the realignment of two major pedestrian crossings (Newtonville Ave/Walnut Street and Cabot Street/Walnut Street). Colored pavement will be used to help emphasize the pedestrian crossings as well as provide a “gateway treatment”, specifying when a driver has entered a village center and encouraging a change in driver behavior.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the intersection at Newtonville Ave/Walnut Street is approximately 75’ wide and 6 lanes. He noted that this intersection is in the top 5% of crash hotspots in the Greater Boston area. The intersection is not pedestrian friendly and allows difficult maneuvering from Newtonville Avenue to Austin Street and left onto Walnut Street. The proposed changes to this intersection include changing the exclusive right turn headed southbound on Walnut Street onto Austin Street to allow an

isolated bus lane. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the right turn lane is not utilized enough to warrant an exclusive right turn. Additionally, the space will accommodate a bicycle lane. The left turn from westbound Newtonville Avenue onto Walnut Street will be prohibited, as will cutting across to Austin Street, with a new traffic island design. As a result of the intersection reconfiguration, crosswalk lengths can be shortened and current vehicular movements that contribute to higher degree of crashes will be eliminated. Throughout the project, there will be varied bicycle accommodations and there will be an average increase of 7' in sidewalk space resulting in 15' sidewalk widths on average. Bump outs and curb extensions will enhance visibility for pedestrians. On Austin Street, some street parking will be relocated to the south side of the street. Loading/Unloading spaces for commercial entities are shown on the attached presentation. The proposed project design includes a total net loss of 7 parking spaces. Enhancements to the project include installation of streetscape amenities in line with the character of the village. It was noted that they hope to include ornamental trees, canopy trees and plantings around the tree bases. Some of the sidewalk space may be used to accommodate sidewalk furniture and additional plantings. On the Walnut Street Bridge (owned by MASS DOT), the Planning Department hopes to install some light weight art.

Some Committee members expressed concerns that the elimination of access to Austin Street and southbound Walnut Street from Newtonville Avenue will cause overburdening and detrimental traffic impacts on side streets including Madison Ave. and Washington Park. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that approximately 1 car per minute accesses southbound Walnut Street or Austin Street from Newtonville Ave. He noted that it is anticipated that the cars will disperse to different side streets or Washington Street, depending on the final destination of the driver. Committee members questioned whether the residents on the side streets were made aware of the proposed redesign. Mr. Taverna confirmed that the residents on the side streets are aware of the proposed redesign and were not supportive during early discussions to make the side streets one-way. Ms. Canan-Reynolds noted that while there is a trade-off to the proposed intersection reconfiguration, residents in the neighborhood understand that the current configuration is unsafe. Committee members questioned when the traffic data was taken. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that manual counts of traffic data were taken on one day and automatic traffic counts were taken on separate days. Committee members expressed concern that the traffic data is insufficient and could result in irreversible traffic impacts. Committee members asked that the traffic data be submitted for further review.

One Councilor questioned whether a standard bike lane could have been incorporated throughout the project. Ms. Canan-Reynolds noted that as part of the project design, various bicycle facilities were reviewed. She stated that there is insufficient space to allow a standard bike lane but noted that the bicycle facilities are part of a larger network and shared bike lanes minimize opportunities for "dooring", a common bicycle incident. Mr. Taverna confirmed that the Fire Department is supportive of the proposed design. Committee members questioned what the impact of the reduced road width on traffic would be. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the estimated impact in peak travel time is approximately 20 additional seconds when driving from one end of Walnut Street to the other.

Commissioner McGonagle confirmed that it is anticipated that some of the project will be funded with the Austin Street mitigation funds. The estimated total cost of the project is approximately \$4

million dollars. During the bidding process, the “luxury” details of the project will be considered as “add alternates” and will be included pending availability of funds. Committee members asked that the department provide a list of what details will be considered “luxury items”. The Commissioner confirmed that DPW is not anticipating any exacerbating conditions with regard to snow removal. He also noted that the Newtonville Area Council has been very helpful with input on the project and it is anticipated that they will be instrumental with some maintenance and coordination with the local businesses. Councilor Norton motioned to approve the item which carried 6-1-1 (Gentile Opposed, Laredo abstaining). Councilor Cote motioned to approve the item in Public Safety and Transportation which carried unanimously.

#323-18 **President Laredo’s reappointment of Peter Barrer to the Design Review Committee**
Peter Barrer, 24 Hazelton Road, Newton Centre, reappointed as a member of the DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE for a term to expire December 31, 2021.

Action: **Public Facilities**

Note: Committee members discussed the reappointment of Peter Barrer to the Design Review Committee. Committee members were supportive of Mr. Barrer’s appointment and noted that he has served the City for many years. Councilor Danberg moved approval which carried unanimously.

#382-18 **Re-appointment of Halina Brown to the Citizens Commission on Energy**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR re-appointing HALINA BROWN, 56 Cloverdale Road, Newton Highlands, as a member of the CITIZENS COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire April 15, 2020. (60 days: 8/17/18)324

Action: **Public Facilities**

Note: Committee members reviewed the appointment of Halina Brown to the Citizens Commission on Energy. A Committee member noted that Ms. Brown has been a contributing member of the Commission on Energy for many years and is also working with the City on the Newton Power Choice Program. Committee members expressed gratitude for Ms. Brown’s service and were supportive of her appointment. Councilor Danberg moved approval of the appointment which carried unanimously.

#383-18 **Re-appointment of Jonathan Kantar to the Citizens Commission on Energy**
HER HONOR THE MAYOR re-appointing JONATHAN KANTAR, 672 Chestnut Street, Waban, as a member of the CITIZENS COMMISSION ON ENERGY for a term to expire June 15, 2020. (60 days: 8/17/18)

Action: **Public Facilities Approved**

Note: Committee members reviewed the reappointment of Jonathan Kantar to the Citizens Commission on energy. Committee members were supportive of Mr. Kantar’s appointment and continued service. Councilor Leary moved approval of the appointment which carried unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 10:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Deborah Crossley

Walnut Street Enhancements Project

Public Facilities & Public Safety and Transportation
June 20, 2018



What is the Walnut Streets Enhancement Project?



What is the Walnut Streets Enhancement Project?



Project Goals & Approach

- **Improve safety for all users** in one of the worst crash hotspots in the region
- **Beautify Walnut Street** in the heart of Newtonville Village by building on ideas from the community
- **Meet the needs of people** visiting the Newtonville and those passing through
- **Apply a "Complete Streets" approach** to the core area on Walnut Street and maximize benefits including ADA-compliant accessibility

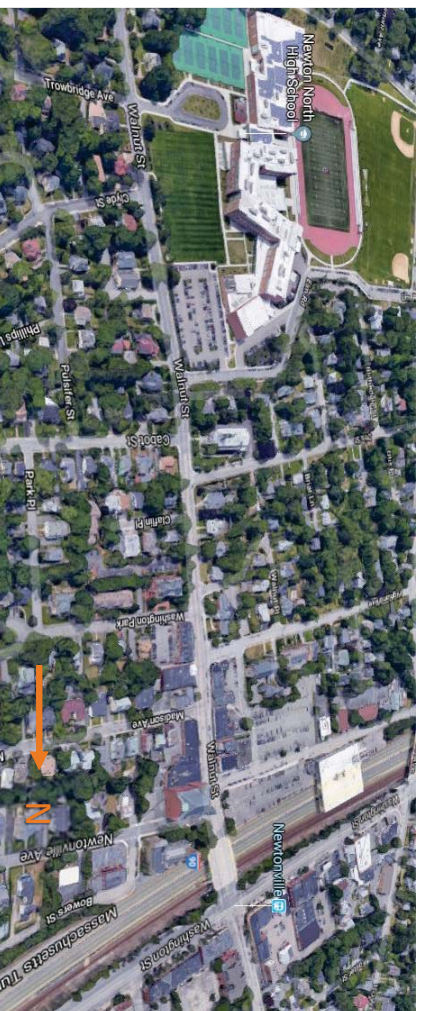
Community Engagement

- **Community meetings**
 - January 30, 2017
“Project Kickoff and Brainstorm”
 - May 1, 2017
“Concept Options”
 - June 22, 2017
“Moving Toward a Preferred Concept”
 - May 8, 2018
“Detailed Design”



Introduction

Project Area



Roadway

Community Engagement

- Community site walk
- Business outreach
- Abutter mailing
- Email & online engagement
- Newtonville Area Council
- Beautiful Newtonville
- Senior Center
- Masons
- TAG
- Newtonville Village Day



Introduction

Proposed Concept

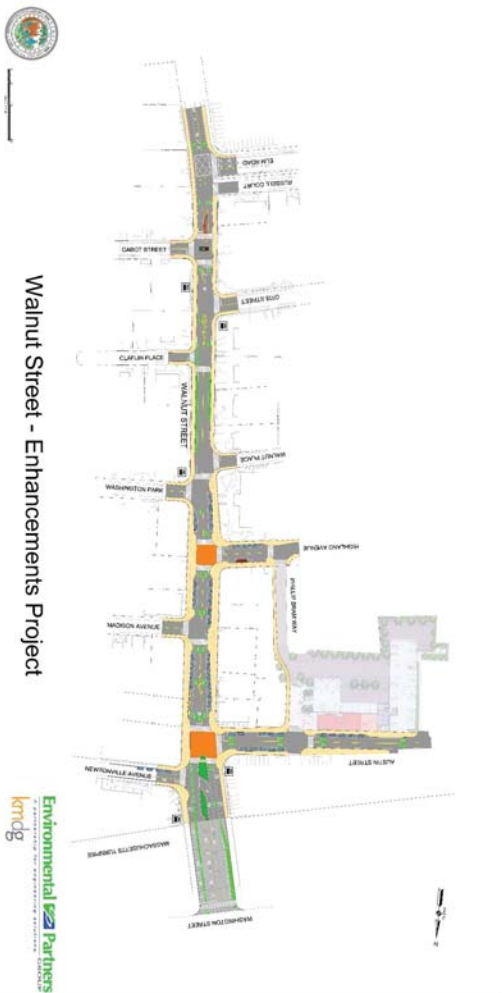


Walnut Street - Enhancements Project



Roadway

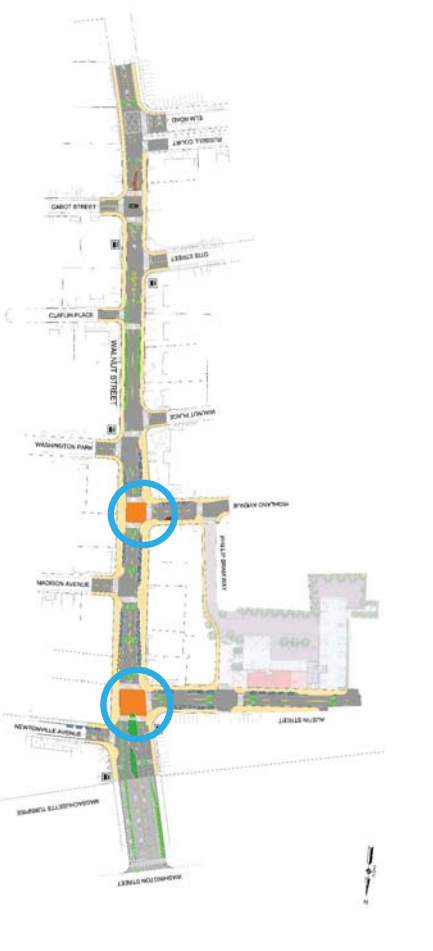
Proposed Concept



Roadway

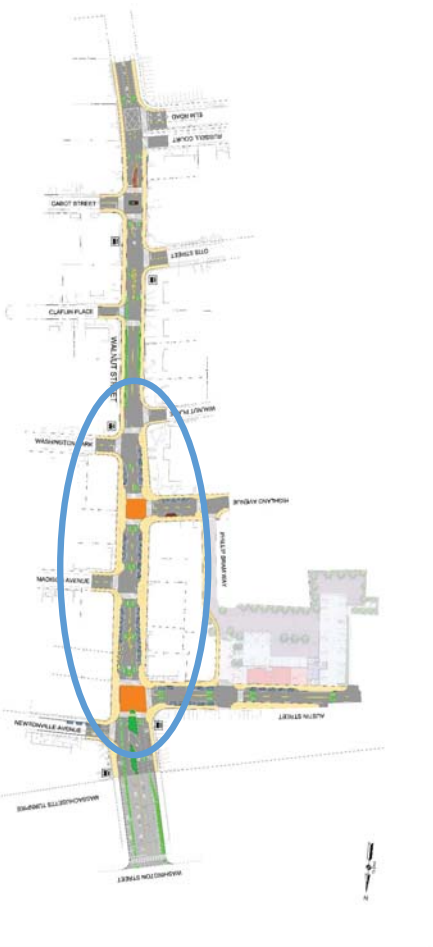
Proposed Concept

- Widest possible sidewalks in the Village Center
- 2 major crossings
- Safer, simplified intersection at Walnut/Austin/Newtonville



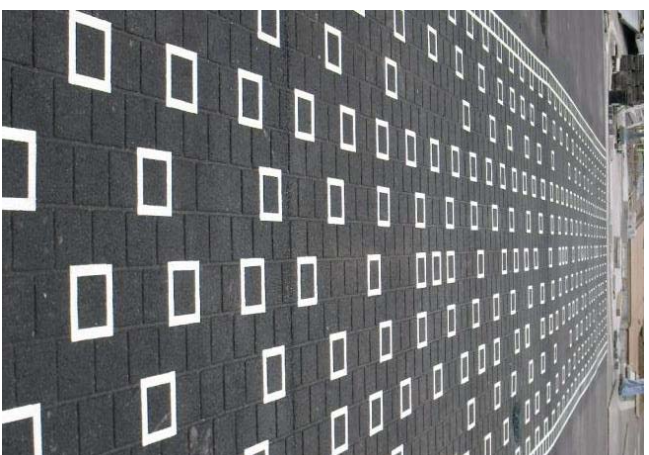
Roadway

Proposed Concept



- Widest possible sidewalks in the Village Center
- 2 major crossings
- Safer, simplified intersection at Walnut/Austin/Newtonville

Roadway



Roadway Treatment at Highland, Austin

Proposed Concept

- Widest possible sidewalks in the Village Center
- 2 major crossings
- Safer, simplified intersection at Walnut/Austin/Newtonville



Roadway

Proposed Concept

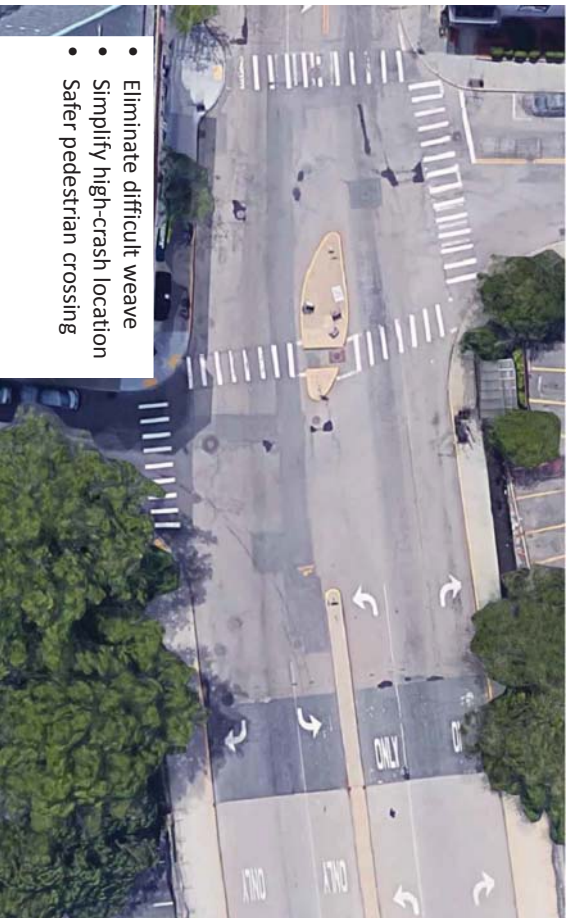
- Eliminate difficult weave
- Simplify high-crash location
- Safer pedestrian crossing
- Minimal traffic volumes impacted (26 vp.h. max.)



Roadway

Proposed Concept

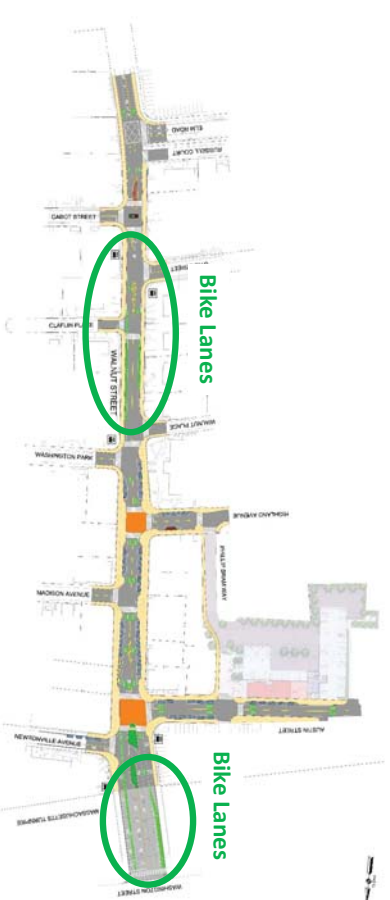
- Eliminate difficult weave
- Simplify high-crash location
- Safer pedestrian crossing



Roadway

Proposed Concept

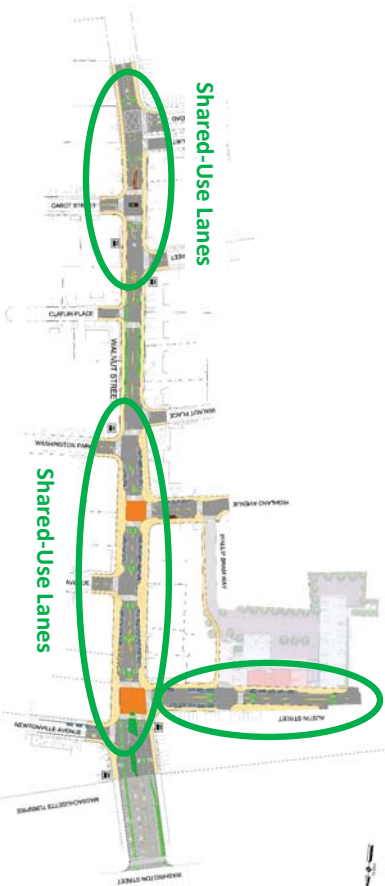
- Bike lanes and shared use lanes on key north-south bike connection



Roadway

Proposed Concept

- Bike lanes and shared use lanes on key north-south bike connection



Roadway

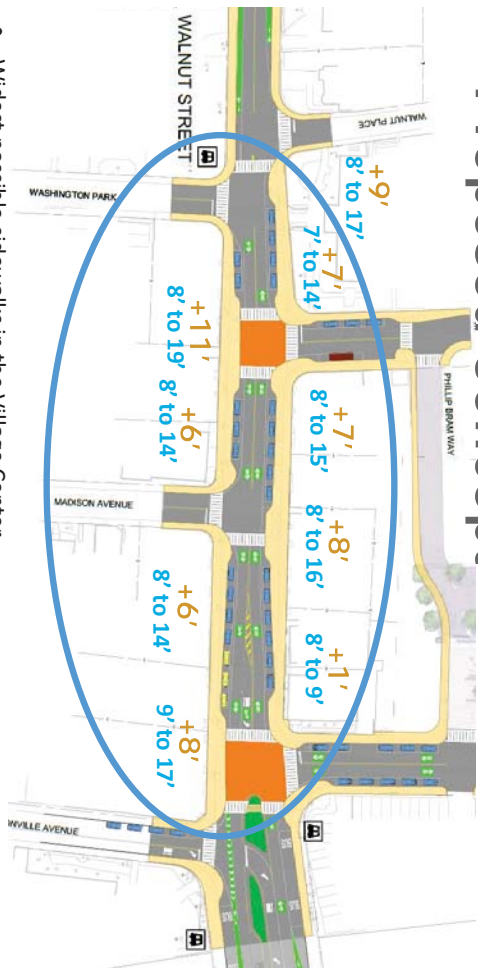
Proposed Concept



Roadway

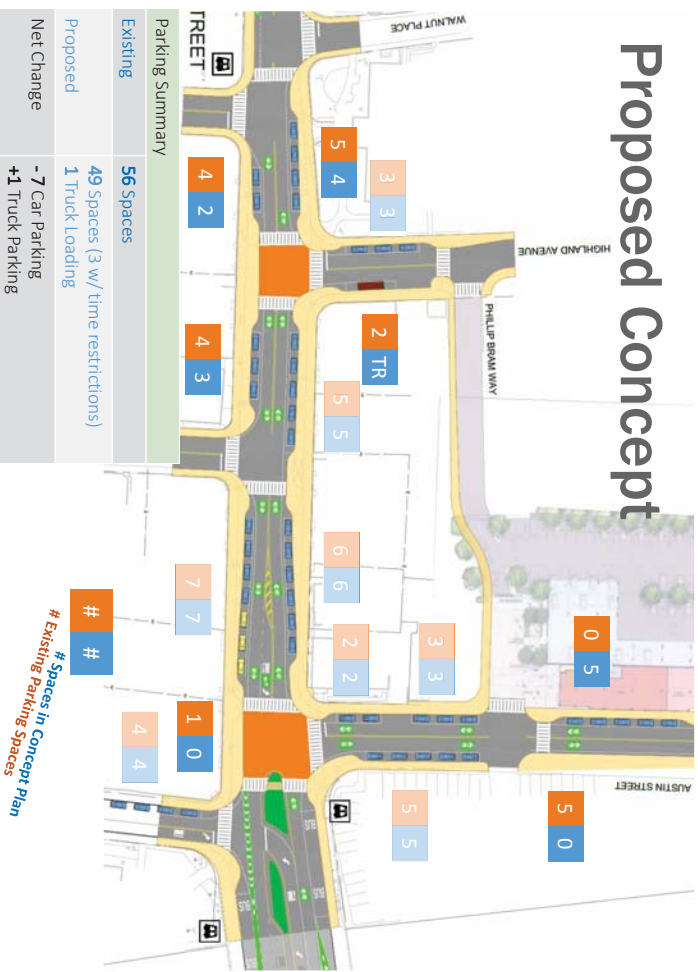
Proposed Concept

- Widest possible sidewalks in the Village Center

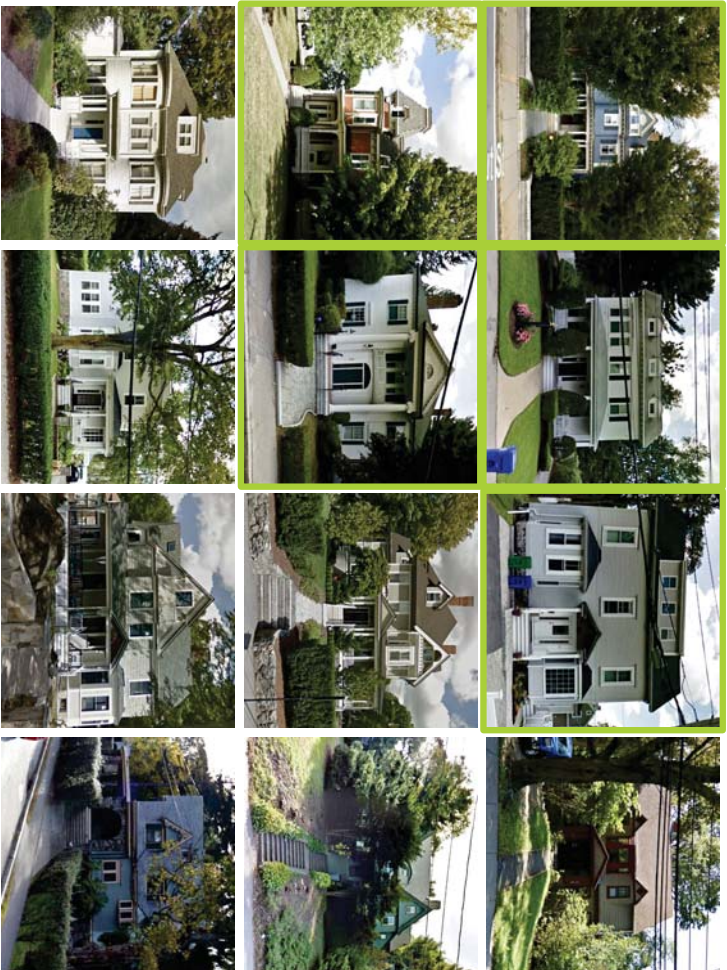
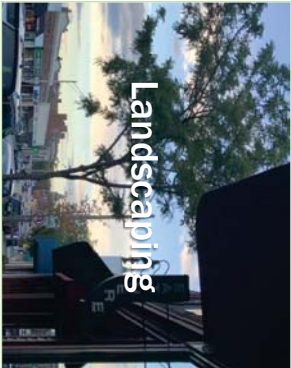


Roadway

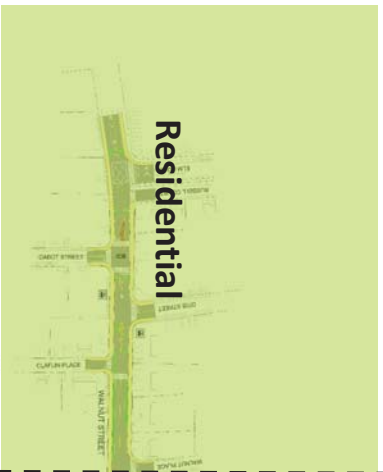
Proposed Concept



Roadway



Residential Zone: Existing Conditions

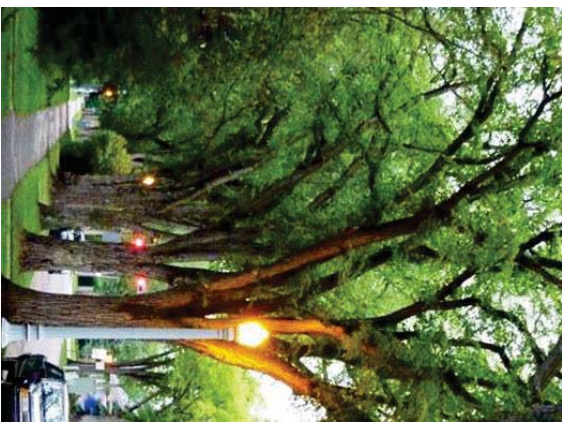


Residential Zone: Preferred Concept



Residential Zone

Tree Planting: Mix of Canopy + Ornamental

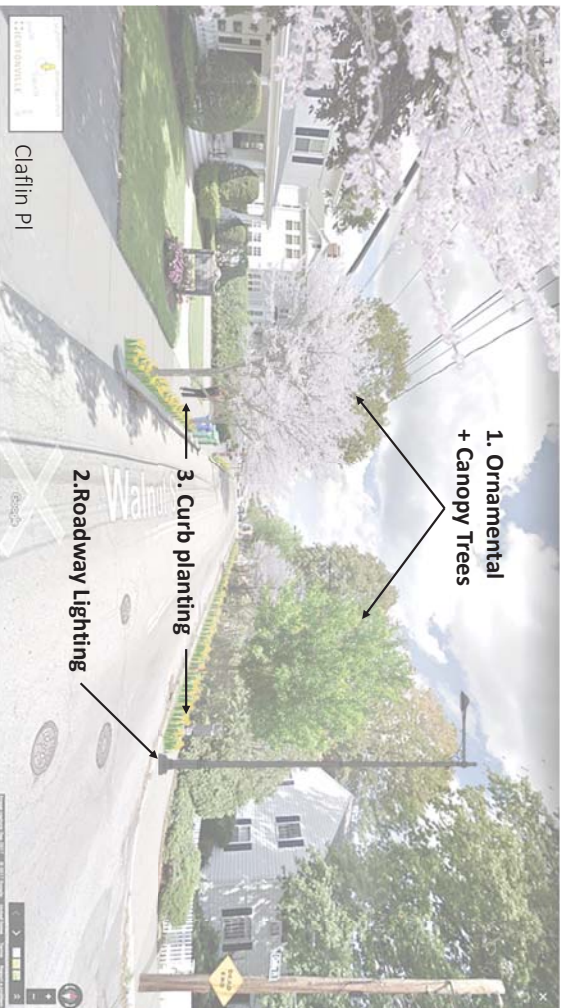


American Elm



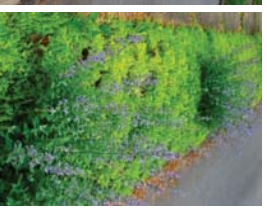
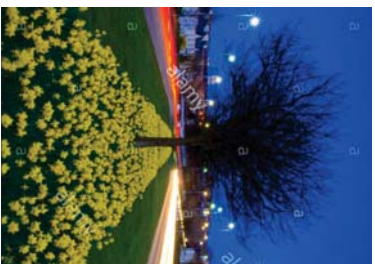
Kwanzan Cherry

Residential Zone: Preferred Concept

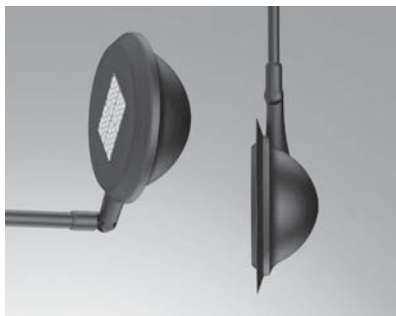
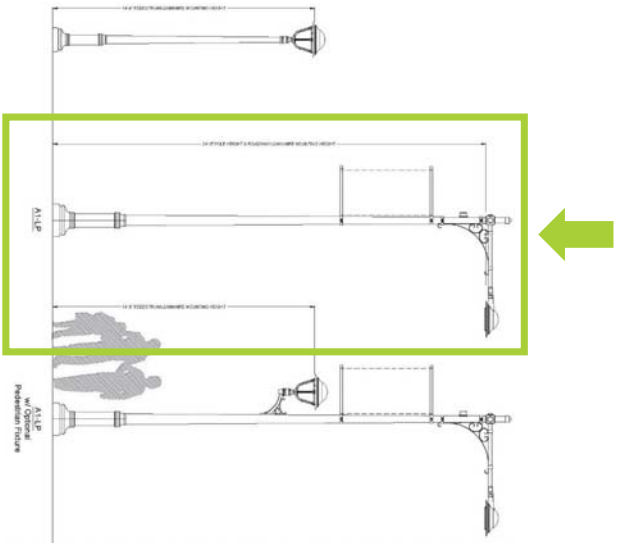


Residential Zone

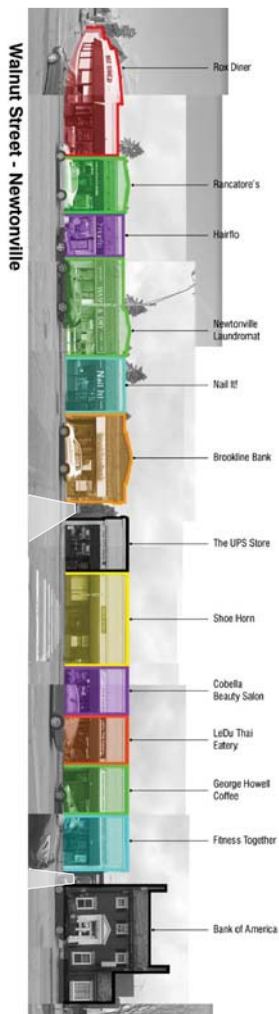
Curb Planting: Mix of Bulbs + Tough Perennials



Residential Zone

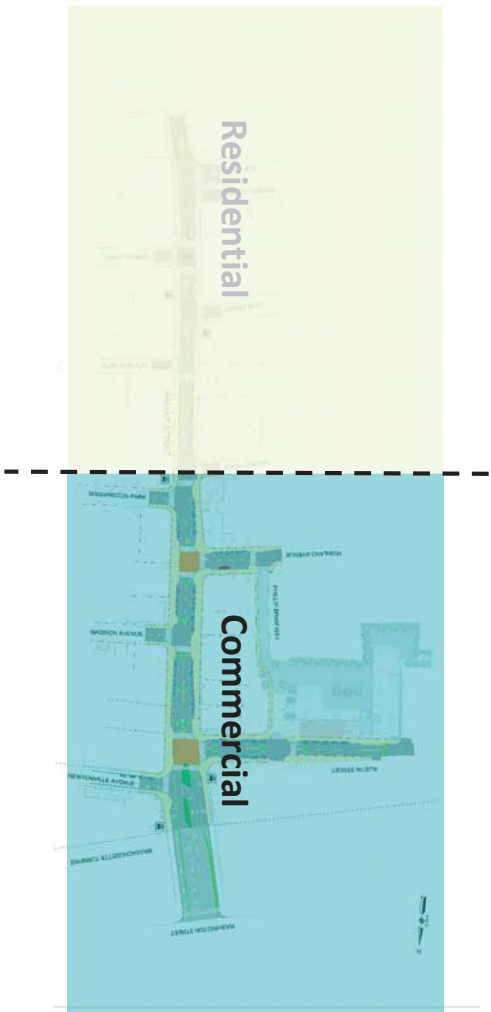


Residential Zone

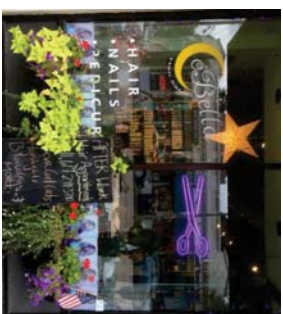


Walnut Street - Newtonville

Walnut Street Character



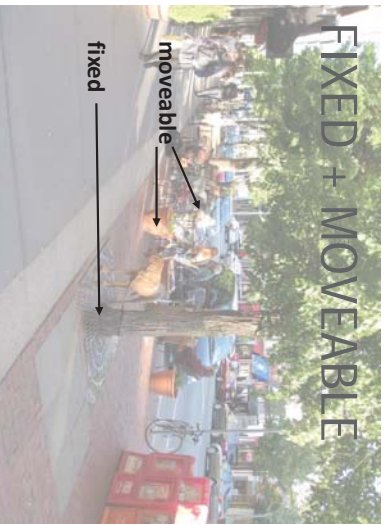
Commercial Zone



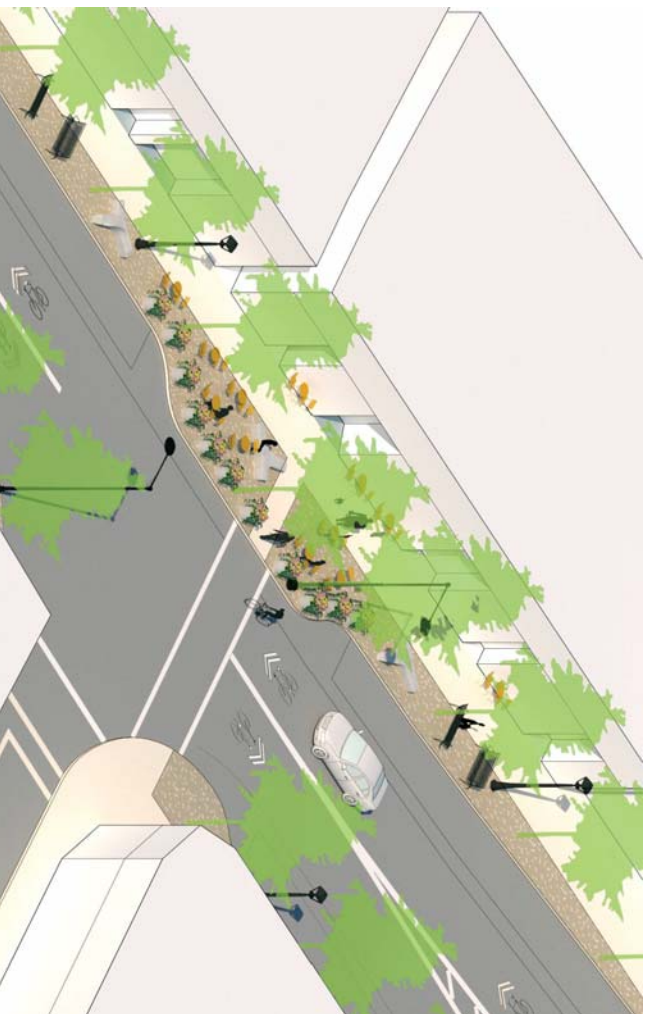
Walnut Street Character



Commercial Zone — flexible space



Preferred Concept Commercial



Commercial Zone Tree + Furniture Concepts

Preferred Concept Commercial



Commercial Zone Tree + Furniture Concepts

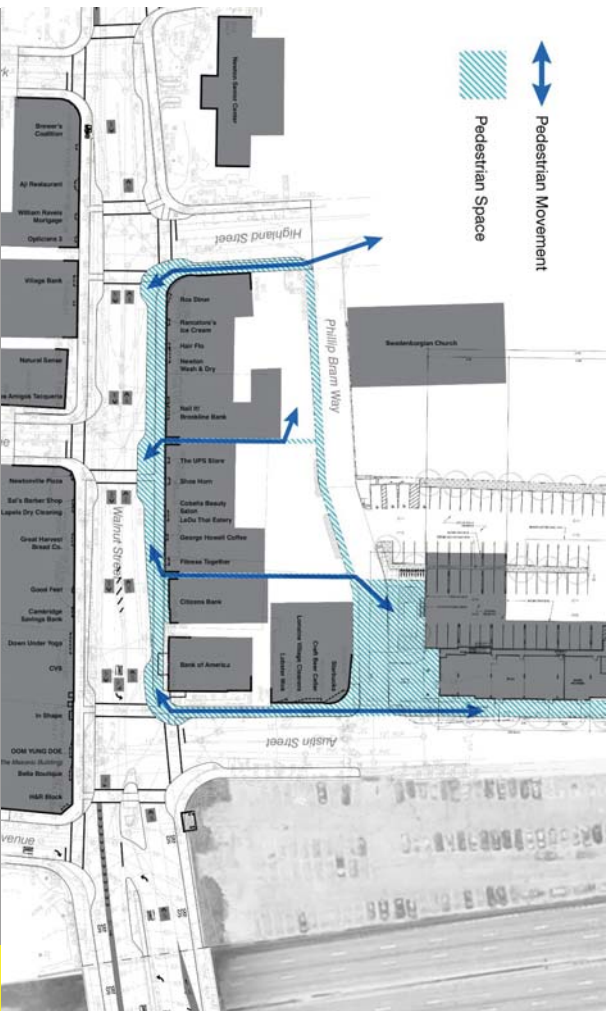


Blueback Square – West Hartford, Connecticut

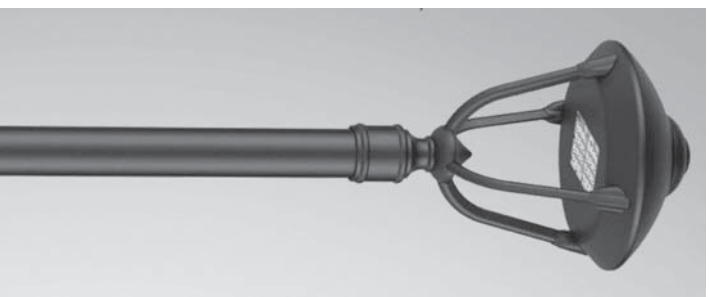
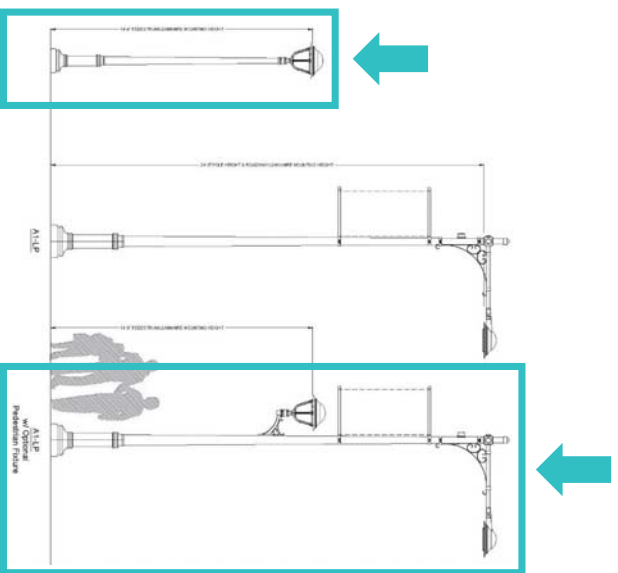


Commercial Zone - Trees & Storefront Signage

WALNUT ST PASSAGEWAYS



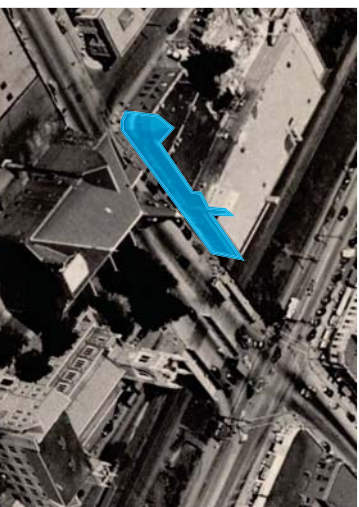
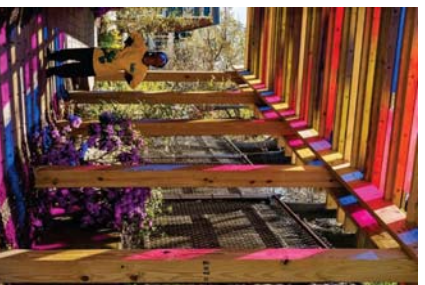
Commercial Zone – Alleyway Connections



Residential Zone



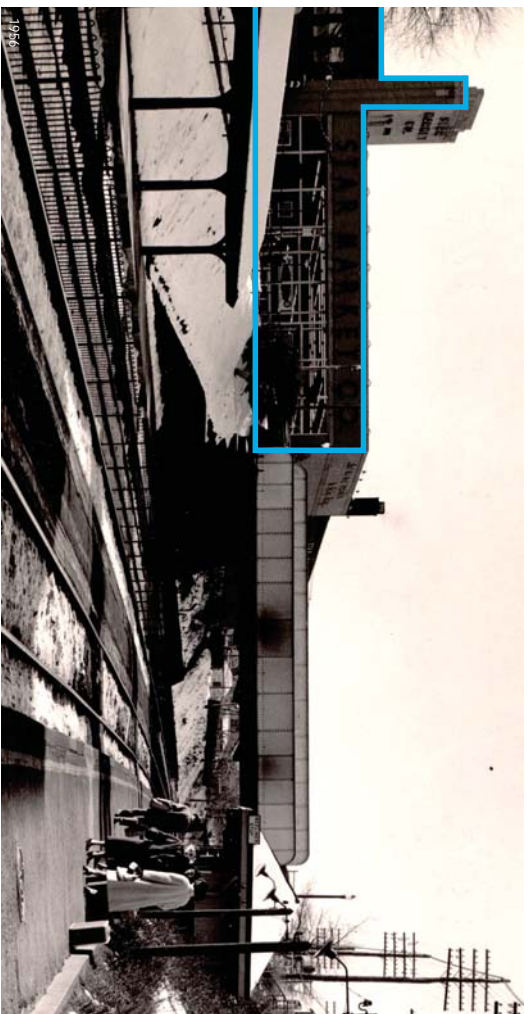
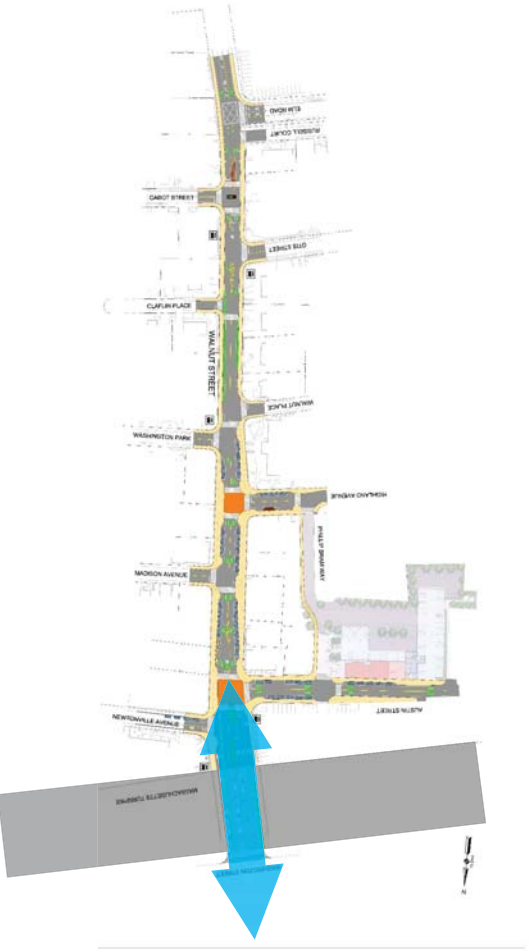
Commercial Zone – Alleyway Connections



Commercial Zone – Alleyway Connections

Bridge Connection – Interaction with Pike + Rail

Proposed Concept



Future Considerations: Bridge Connection

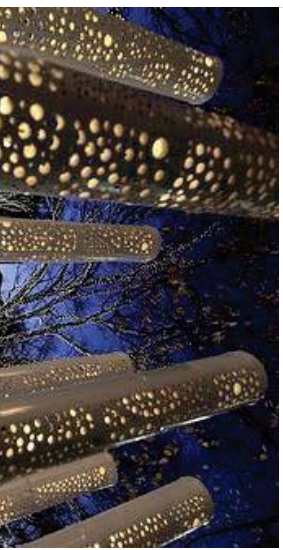
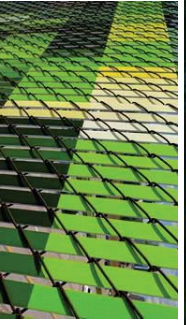
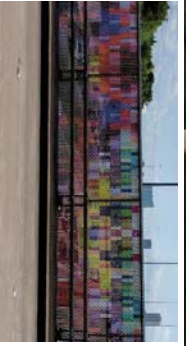
Bridge Connection – Interaction with Pike + Rail



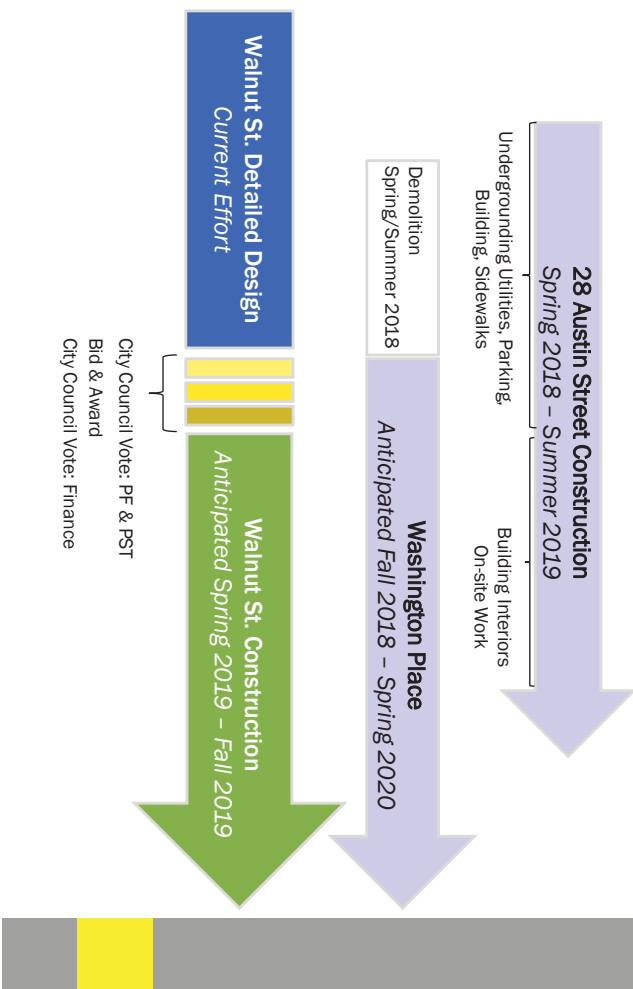
Bridge Connection



Bridge Connection



Construction Coordination



Next Steps

Vote by Council →
prepare construction documents

- Curb alignment
- Sidewalk widths
- Bumpouts
- Number of lanes
- Traffic circulation
- Bicycle infrastructure
- Parking changes

Future changes →
details, minor tweaks

- Parking regulations
- Final location of trees, lighting, furniture
- Tree species
- Streetscape details in alleyway
- Bridge fence treatment, per MassDOT requirements

