



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

James Freas  
Acting Director

**CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 23, 2015  
**MEETING DATE:** October 29, 2015  
**TO:** Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen  
**FROM:** Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning  
**CC:** Austin Street Partners  
City Clerk  
Law Department  
Executive Department

**PETITION #119-15**

**28 AUSTIN STREET**

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to redevelop a municipal parking lot with a mixed-use building and 127 public parking stalls

The Land Use Committee (the "Committee") held public hearings on this project on June 2, June 9, July 21, September 24, and October 6, 2015, which were held open to be continued. In response to questions raised at the public hearings by Aldermen, the public and/or staff technical reviews, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at prior public hearings. Additional public hearings will be scheduled as necessary, but are anticipated for November 10 and November 12, 2015.

The topic for the October 29 continued public hearing will be to provide final responses to unanswered questions that have been asked over the past few months. The City's Consultant for the fiscal and economic impact is expected to be at this meeting and will be available to answer questions. This meeting may conclude the applicant and the City's presentations on this project. If presentations are wrapped up on this night subsequent public hearings will focus on drafting a Board Order.

The applicant has responded to many questions in their submission dated October 23, 2015, and available here [http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/aldermen/special\\_permits/special\\_permits\\_2015.asp](http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/aldermen/special_permits/special_permits_2015.asp), including:

- A revised set of Project Plans and cut sheets (also posted on the City's website)
- Photos of neighboring buildings with their respective heights
- Plans for the hypothetical subdivision of the retail space
- Photos of Oaktree's mixed-use development in Reading, MA
- Additional parking counts for the Austin Street municipal parking lot
- Clarification on how any shared parking will operate in the underground garage
- A summary of the dimensions of the proposed parking spaces and a comparison to other parking facilities
- A draft Transportation Demand Management Plan
- A Business Engagement Plan
- An outline Construction Management Plan
- The Project's pro-forma and the applicant's summary of financial benefits to the City
- Clarification of what utility lines the applicant is proposing to underground
- A list of new apartment buildings currently under construction in Waltham and Watertown
- A summary of the affordability component of the project

The Planning Department and the applicant will be prepared to answer further questions that the Committee may have. Additionally, on October 29, the City will present:

- The plan for parking during construction
- Walnut Street Corridor Concept Plan
- Walnut Street Intersection Concept Plan

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A:** Proposed Parking Changes in Newtonville During Construction  
**Attachment B:** Evaluation of Walnut Street (Provided by WorldTech, City's On-Call Transportation Engineer)  
**Attachment C:** Walnut Street Corridor Concept Plan  
**Attachment D:** Walnut Street Intersection Concept Plan  
**Attachment E:** Letter of support from the Economic Development Commission  
**Attachment F:** Letter of support from the Urban Design Commission  
**Attachment G:** Letter of support from the Council on Aging

# Proposed Parking Changes in Newtonville During Austin St Lot Construction

City of Newton

# Free Shuttle Parking in the Aquinas Lot During Construction



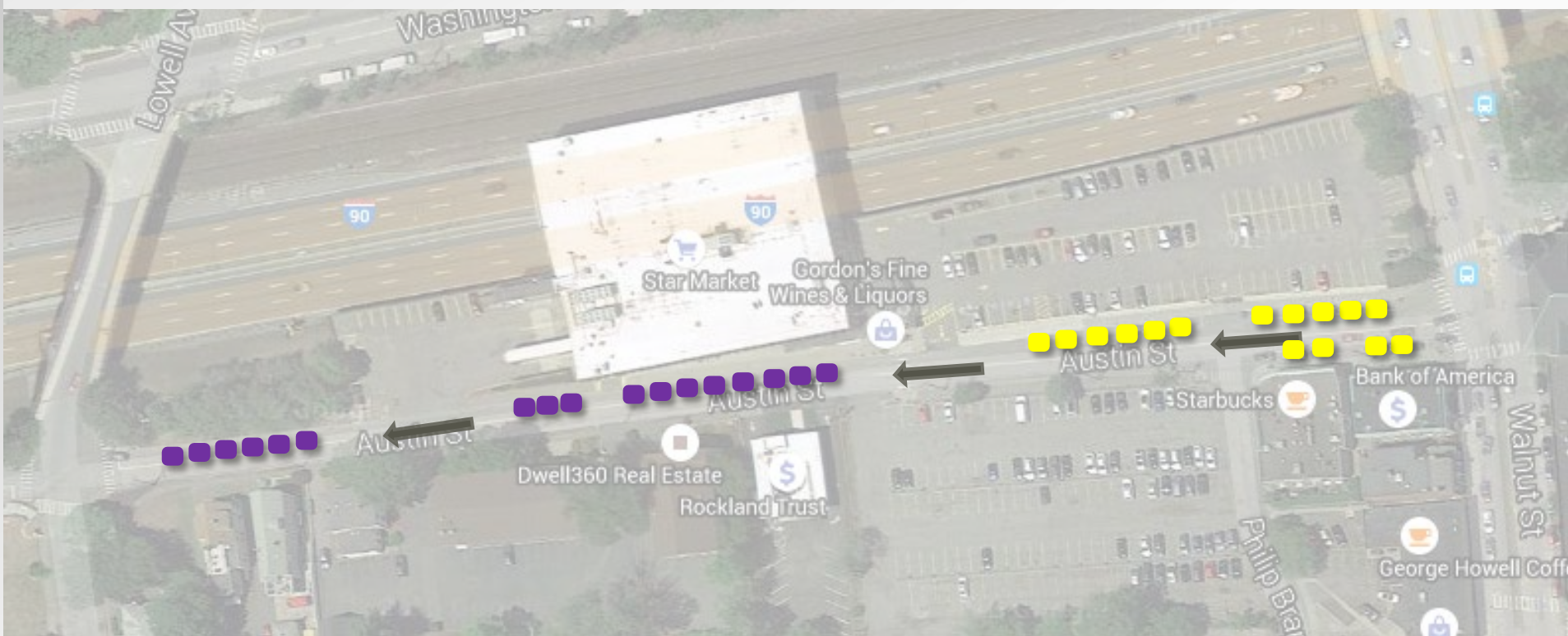
**Aquinas Parking Lot (100 spaces)**

**Shuttle between Aquinas Lot and Newtonville**

**Newtonville**

**SHUTTLE FREQUENCY**  
Every 20 min  
M-F 7am-7pm  
Sat. 9am-3pm

# Proposed Parking Spaces on Austin Street



## LEGEND

- Existing 1-hour metered parallel parking spaces (15)
- Proposed 2-hour metered parallel parking spaces (17)

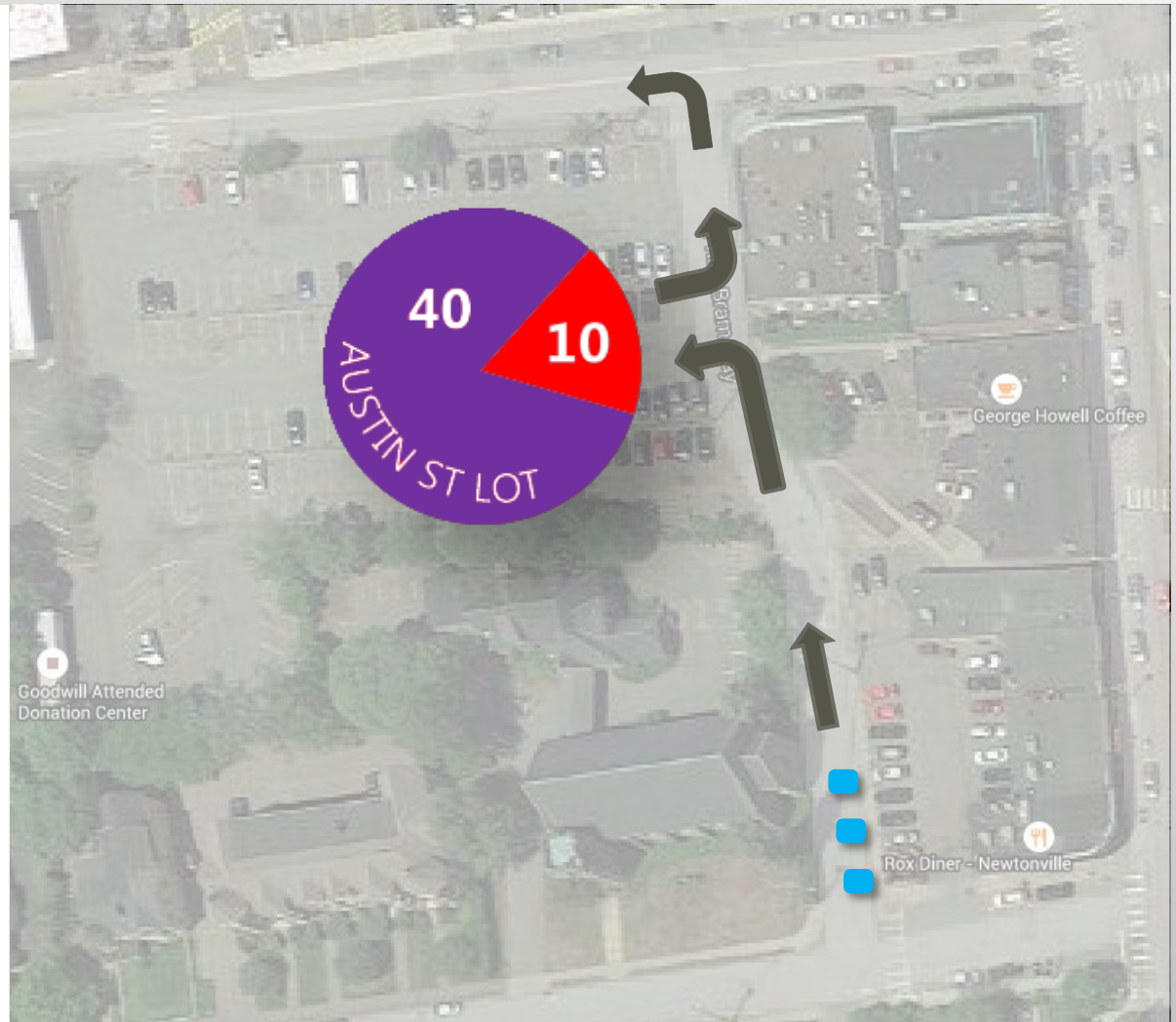
TOTAL PROPOSED SHORT-TERM METERED PARKING ON AUSTIN STREET, WALNUT TO LOWELL = **32 spaces**  
Austin Street is proposed to be one-way Westbound, with parking on the North side

# Proposed Parking Spaces in Austin Street Lot and along Philip Bram Way

- Proposed 2-hour metered parking spaces (40)
- Proposed 30-minute metered parking spaces (10)
- Proposed free 30-minute spaces (3)

TOTAL PROPOSED SHORT-TERM PARKING SPACES IN AUSTIN STREET LOT or on PHILIP BRAM WAY = 53.

Philip Bram Way is proposed to be one-way Northbound, with parking on the East side.



# Proposed Changes to Parking in Newtonville During Construction

## Summary of Proposed Changes *(170 spaces)*

### Medium/Long-term Parking

- ❖ New satellite parking at Aquinas School
  - **100** parking spaces without time limits (non-metered/free)
  - Connected via free frequent shuttle with stops at: Walnut @ Austin and Walnut @ Highland

### Short-term Parking

- ❖ Expanded Parking along Austin Street (one way Westbound)\*
  - **17** new 2-hour metered parking spaces (via pay station)
- ❖ New Parking along Philip Bram Way (one way Northbound)\*
  - **3** new 30-minute spaces (non-metered-/free)
- ❖ Retained Parking within the Austin Street Lot\*
  - **40** 2-hour metered parking spaces
  - **10** 30-minute metered parking spaces
  - Pricing to remain as currently provided (Metered M-F/Free on Sat.)

*All current metered & limited-time parking spaces in the Village remain unchanged*

*\* Subject to Approval by Traffic Council*

October 22, 2015

Mr. William G. Paille, P.E.  
Director, Transportation Division  
City of Newton Department of Public Works  
110 Crafts Street  
Newton, MA 02459

Reference: Newtonville Square Conceptual Improvement Plan  
Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations

Dear Mr. Paille:

As requested, WorldTech performed an evaluation of potential improvement concepts for the reconstruction of Walnut Street in the Village of Newtonville. Our recommendations focus on providing optimal safety and operations for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic in the Village center, as well as improvements to aesthetics to create a pedestrian-oriented Village Center context.

#### **Data Collection and Traffic Volumes**

WorldTech performed preliminary analysis based on peak hour traffic volumes collected by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. as part of the Transportation Impact Study for the 28 Austin Street development. Traffic volumes, including pedestrians and bicycles, were collected during the morning (7:00 to 9:00 a.m.) and evening (4:00 to 6:00 p.m.) peak periods on Thursday, April 16, 2015, and during the midday (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) peak period on Saturday, May 2, 2015. Additional Automatic Traffic Recorder counts were collected along Austin Street east of Lowell Avenue from Tuesday, October 13 to Monday, October 19, 2015 by the City of Newton.

Crash data for the intersection of Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue were obtained from MassDOT for 2009 to 2013, the most recent five years of data available.

#### **Existing Geometry**

Walnut Street, Austin Street, and Newtonville Avenue are each classified as an Urban Minor Arterial. Austin Street meets Walnut Street from the west and Newtonville Avenue meets Walnut Street from the east to form two offset "T" intersections, with stop sign control on the Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue approaches and no control on the Walnut Street approaches. Marked crosswalks are provided across the Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue legs of the intersection, and across Walnut Street south of Austin Street and between Newtonville Avenue and Austin Street. There is no marked crosswalk across Walnut Street on the north side of Newtonville Avenue. The intersection is located approximately 250 feet south of the signalized intersection of Walnut Street at Washington Street, on the opposite side of the bridge over I-90.



South of Austin Street, Walnut Street is approximately 54 feet wide, with one travel lane and one parking lane in each direction and a striped center island. At the Austin Street intersection, the center island becomes an exclusive left turn lane with 100 feet of storage. North of Newtonville Avenue, Walnut Street crosses I-90. Six travel lanes – three in each direction – are provided across the bridge, separated by a four foot wide concrete median. In the northbound direction, the left and right lanes become exclusive turn lanes at the Washington Street intersection. Similarly, in the southbound direction, the left and right lanes become exclusive turn lanes onto Newtonville Avenue and Austin Street, respectively.

Pedestrian traffic is very heavy at this location, particularly during evenings and weekends. 137 pedestrians were counted crossing Walnut Street during the weekday evening peak hour, and 193 pedestrians crossed Walnut Street during the Saturday midday peak hour.

### **Crash Analysis**

The segment of Walnut Street from Washington Street to Otis Street, which includes this intersection, is identified by MassDOT as a Pedestrian and Bicycle High Crash Cluster, with 18 crashes involving pedestrians (14 resulting in personal injury) and 8 crashes involving bicycles (7 resulting in personal injury) occurring from 2002 to 2012. Additionally, the segment of Walnut Street south of the intersection, from Madison Street to Washington Park, is identified by MassDOT as a High Crash Location, with 22 crashes (10 resulting in personal injury) and an EPDO value of 62 based on 2009 to 2012 MassDOT data.

To identify appropriate safety countermeasures at the Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue intersection, five years of crash data were obtained from MassDOT and analyzed to identify trends at the intersection. Based on the data obtained, 25 crashes were reported at the intersection from 2009 to 2013, the most recent five years of data available. Of these, 6 crashes (24 percent) involved collisions with pedestrians, with injuries resulting in 4 of the 6 crashes. One crash (4 percent) involved a collision with a bicyclist, with injury resulting. Right angle crashes accounted for 5 of the 25 crashes (20 percent), with three occurring at the Newtonville Avenue intersection and two occurring at the Austin Street intersection. Three crashes (12 percent) were rear-end, with one each occurring on the southbound, eastbound, and northbound approaches. None of the right angle or rear end crashes resulted in personal injury, and no single location was identified where the same type of crash is occurring repeatedly.

### **Traffic Operational Analysis**

Traffic operational analysis focused on operations for the stop-sign controlled eastbound Austin Street approach at the Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue intersection. Based on the analysis provided in the 28 Austin Street Transportation Impact Study dated May 12, 2015 and Supplemental Analyses dated October 2, 2015, the eastbound Austin Street approach currently operates at Level of Service (LOS) D during the weekday morning and evening peak hours, and LOS E during the Saturday midday peak hour. 95<sup>th</sup> percentile queues extend approximately 3 vehicles during the weekday morning peak hour, 4 vehicles during the weekday evening peak hour, and 5 vehicles during the Saturday midday peak hour.

In the year 2022 without the proposed 28 Austin Street development, the eastbound Austin Street approach would continue to operate at LOS D during the weekday morning and evening peak periods, with 95<sup>th</sup> percentile queues increasing by one vehicle to 4 and 5, respectively. Operations are projected to degrade to LOS F during the Saturday midday peak period, with queues similarly increasing by one vehicle, to 6.

With the addition of project generated traffic, the Transportation Impact Study predicts that the stop-sign controlled eastbound Austin Street approach at Walnut would degrade from LOS C to D during the weekday morning peak hour with a 3.7 second increase in delay, and from LOS D to E during the weekday evening peak hour with a 7.3 second increase in delay. Queues are projected to increase by one vehicle in each peak hour. During the Saturday midday peak hour, which is projected to operate at LOS F under No-Build conditions, delay would increase by 19.2 seconds (from 56.8 seconds to 76.0 seconds), with 95<sup>th</sup> percentile queues increasing by two vehicles (from 6 to 8). However, based on traffic count data provided in the study, traffic volumes on eastbound Highland Avenue are lower than on Austin Street, and through traffic volumes on Walnut Street is also lower at the Highland Avenue intersection than at Walnut Street (i.e., more gaps in Walnut Street traffic). Therefore, it is likely that traffic exiting the site would “balance out,” leaving the site via Bram Way to Highland Avenue and taking advantage of extra capacity at the Highland Avenue intersection, lessening the impact at Austin Street.

### **Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis**

MUTCD Traffic Signal Needs analyses were performed for the Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue intersection based on the peak hour data included in the 28 Austin Street Transportation Impact Study and ATR counts collected by the City of Newton. Based on the data provided, the intersection meets the MUTCD thresholds to warrant installation of a traffic signal.

### **Recommended Improvements**

Although a traffic signal appears to be warranted at the Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue intersection, it may not be the preferred alternative for improving the intersection and accommodating future traffic. As indicated herein, the impact the proposed 28 Austin Street development is projected to have on the eastbound Austin Street approach is not excessive, and traffic assigned to Austin Street in the Nelson\Nygaard study will potentially use more lightly traveled Highland Avenue instead, balancing out delays. In addition, signalization of the Walnut Street at Austin Street intersection may encourage additional traffic to use Austin Street as a cut-through route. There was also crash trends identified that would be effectively mitigated by signalization.

Preliminary analysis of a fully actuated traffic signal was performed using Synchro software. Due to the offset-T configuration of the intersection, the Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue approaches require split phasing. Signalizing the Walnut Street at Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue intersection would result in an overall LOS C during each peak hour. However, the introduction of a stop condition along Walnut Street would cause queues to extend 400 to 600 feet along the northbound and southbound approaches, requiring coordination with the intersection of Walnut Street at Washington Street to the north to manage traffic coming over the I-90 overpass. Additionally, turn lanes would be required at the intersection to provide adequate operations, limiting the extent of sidewalks could be widened at the intersection.

As an alternative to installing a traffic signal, geometric improvements at the intersection would serve better to channelize traffic, shorten pedestrian crossings, improve sight distance for vehicles exiting the Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue approaches, and enhance the overall aesthetics and context of the intersection. These improvements would be constructed in conjunction with the City’s reconstruction of Walnut Street through the village center, which seeks to eliminate the existing striped median along Walnut Street, reduce the roadway width, and widen sidewalks. These improvements may include the following:

- Wider sidewalks along Walnut Street and Austin Street
- Curb extensions at corners to shorten pedestrian crossings and prevent illegal parking
- Reconfiguration or removal of the existing median island on Walnut Street between Austin Street and Newtonville Avenue to better channelize traffic and facilitate eastbound and westbound “through” movements
- Reduction in the number of lanes on Walnut Street over the I-90 overpass
- Improved lighting in the village center
- Raised crosswalks and/or raised table intersections
- Add bicycle accommodations
- Add wayfinding signage

Two conceptual alternatives for the improvement of Walnut Street incorporating some of these features are attached. These concepts are shown both with and without a raised table at the Walnut Street at Austin Street intersection.

### **Road Safety Audit**

As part of the design process, it is recommended that the City perform a Road Safety Audit (RSA) for the project area. As the project location has been identified by MassDOT as a High Crash Location, improvements may be eligible for State and Federal funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). As part of program eligibility, MassDOT requires that a RSA be conducted. If the project is to be fully funded at the local level, an RSA is still a useful tool to identify safety countermeasures as part of the design process.

We thank you for consulting with the WorldTech team for this assignment, and we look forward to working with you in the future as this project advances. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact us directly at any time.

Sincerely,

WORLDTECH ENGINEERING, LLC

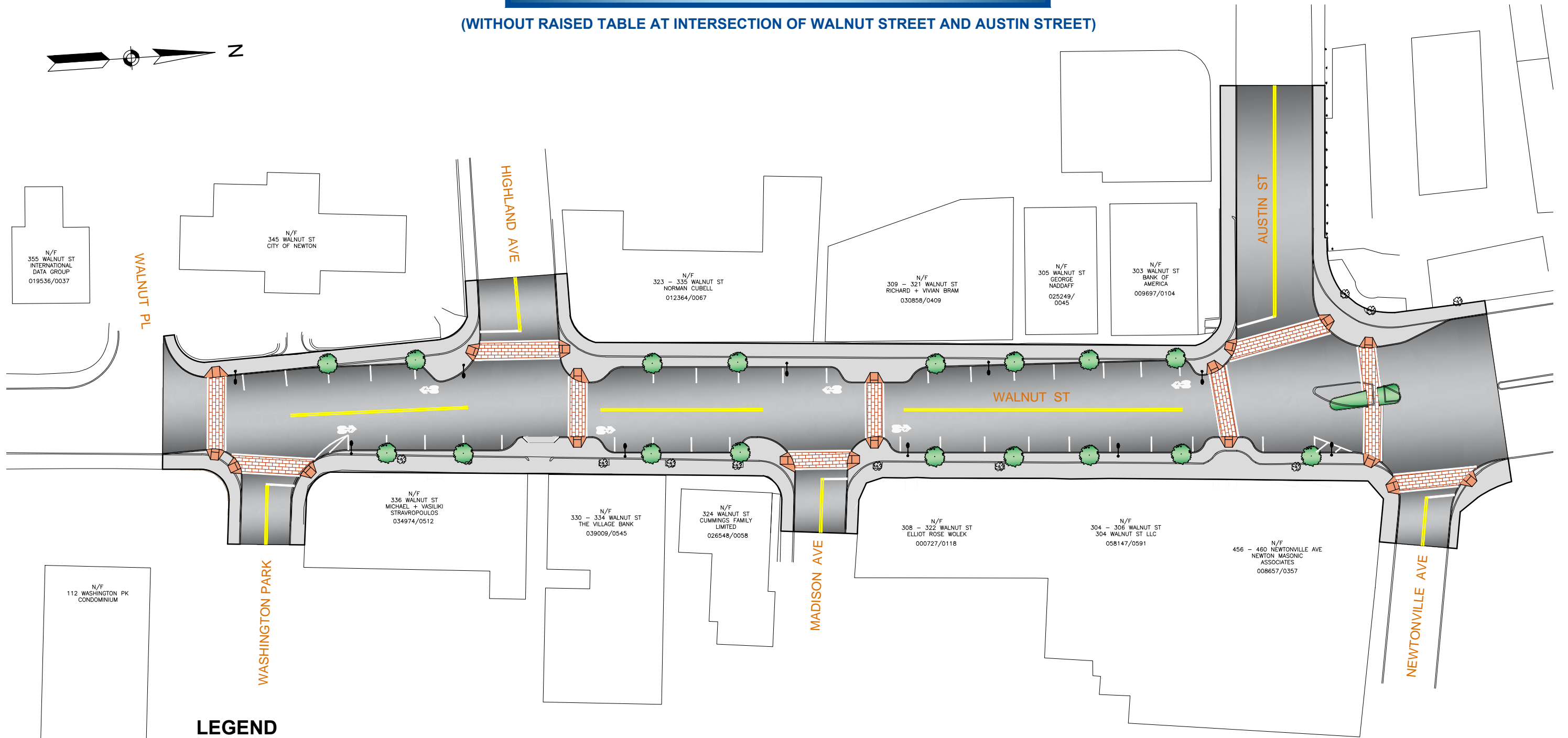
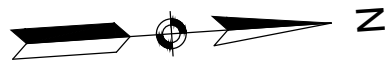


Michael Pompili  
Project Engineer

Attachments

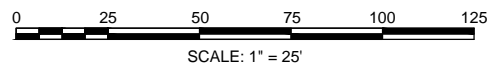
# PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF WALNUT STREET NEWTONVILLE (NEWTON), MASSACHUSETTS

(WITHOUT RAISED TABLE AT INTERSECTION OF WALNUT STREET AND AUSTIN STREET)



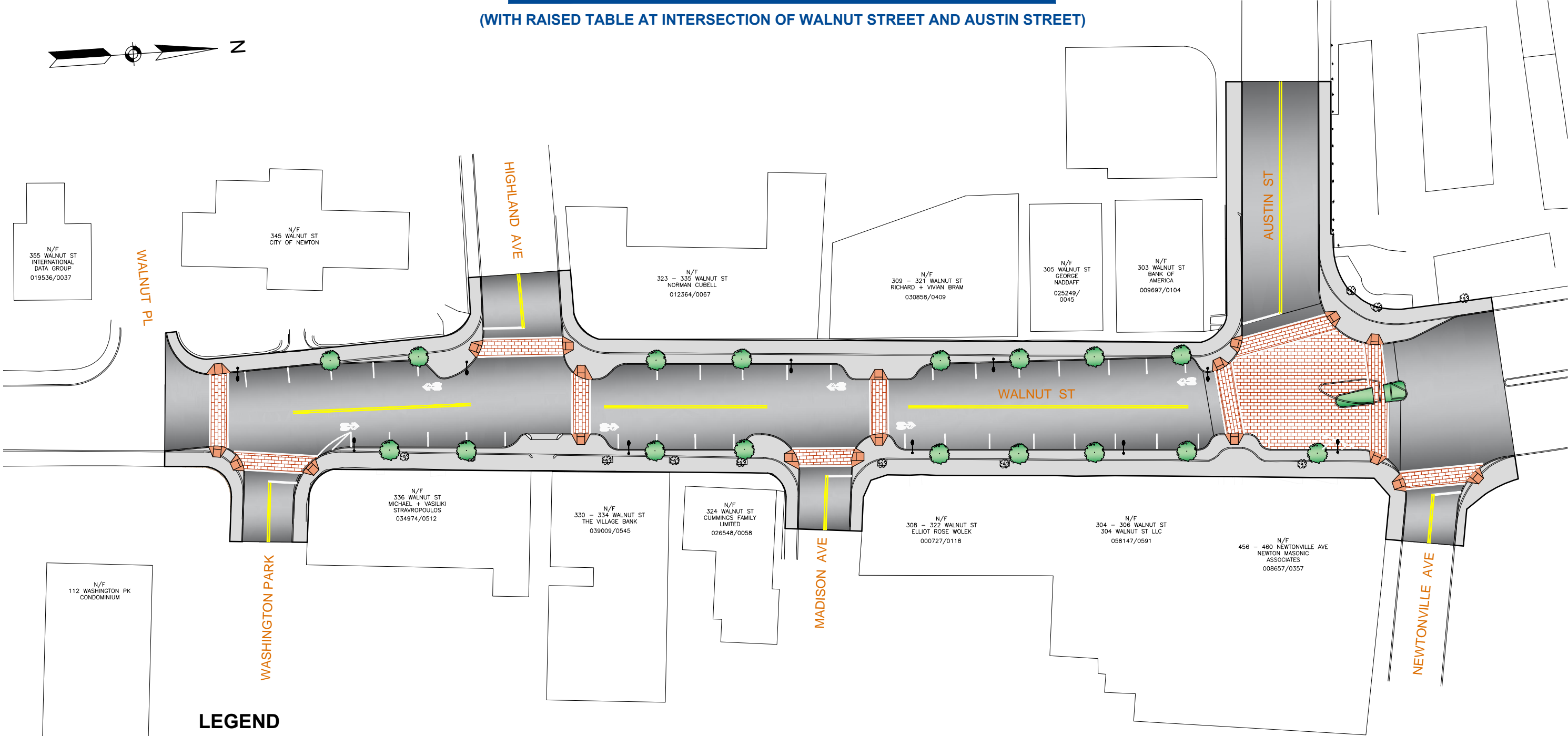
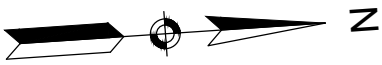
### LEGEND

- HOT MIX ASPHALT ROADWAY
- PROPOSED CONCRETE SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED CEMENT CONCRETE WHEELCHAIR RAMP
- GRASS AREA
- PROPOSED DECORATIVE PAVEMENT
- PROPOSED STREET LIGHT
- PROPOSED TREE



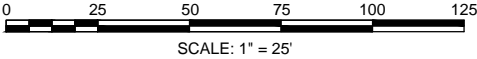
# PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF WALNUT STREET NEWTONVILLE (NEWTON), MASSACHUSETTS

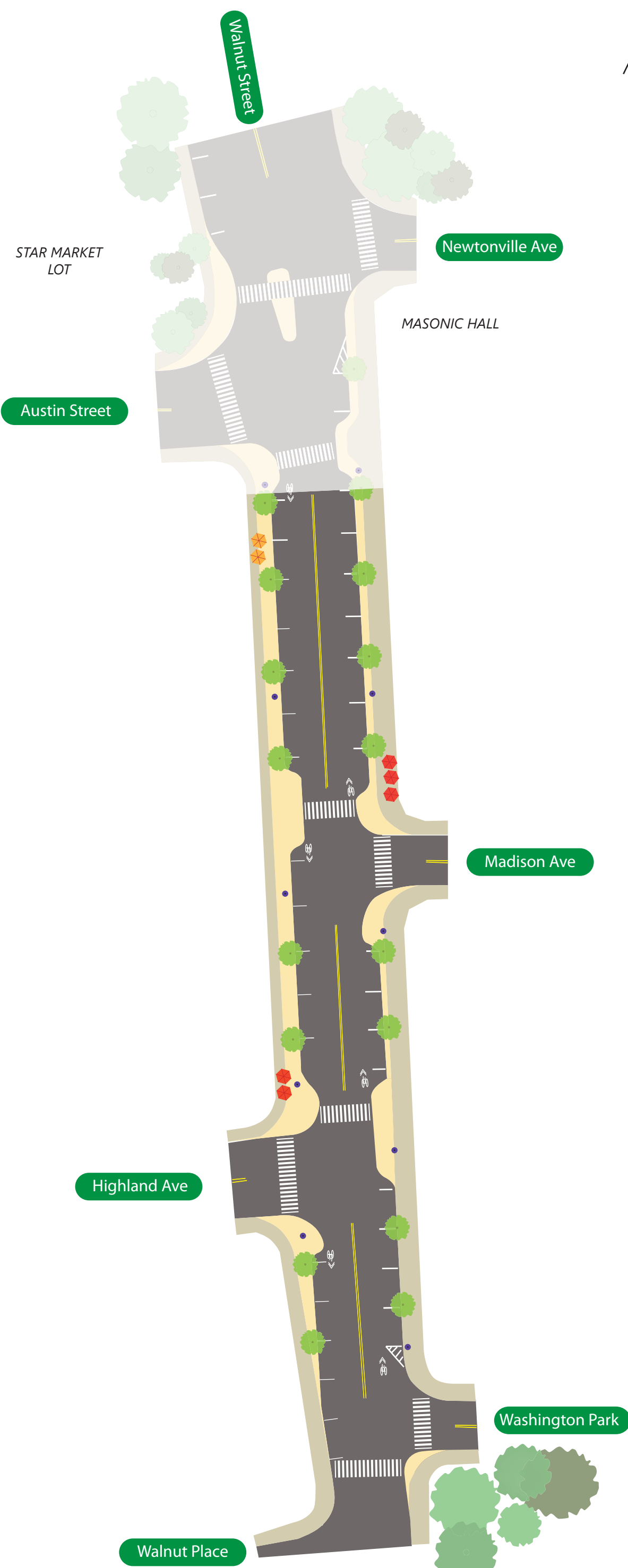
(WITH RAISED TABLE AT INTERSECTION OF WALNUT STREET AND AUSTIN STREET)



**LEGEND**

- HOT MIX ASPHALT ROADWAY
- PROPOSED CONCRETE SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED CEMENT CONCRETE WHEELCHAIR RAMP
- GRASS AREA
- PROPOSED DECORATIVE PAVEMENT
- PROPOSED STREET LIGHT
- PROPOSED TREE





# WALNUT STREET CORRIDOR CONCEPT

**LEGEND**

- Existing Sidewalk
- Expanded Sidewalk
- New Tree
- New Ornamental Lighting
- New Sharrows
- Expanded Space for Outdoor Dining



Walnut Street

Newtonville Ave

STAR MARKET LOT

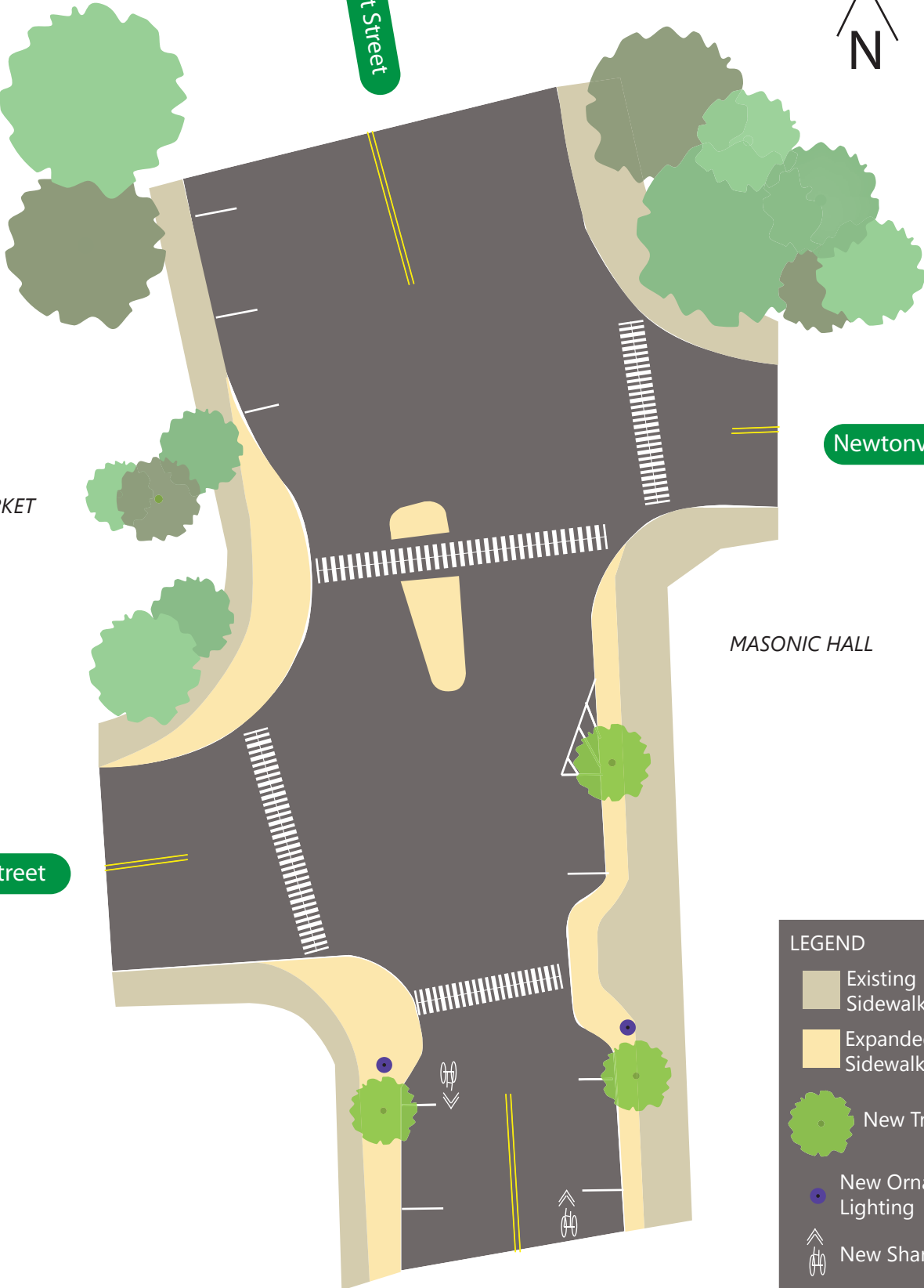
MASONIC HALL

Austin Street

LEGEND

- Existing Sidewalk
- Expanded Sidewalk
- New Tree
- New Ornamental Lighting
- New Sharrows

# WALNUT ST / AUSTIN ST INTERSECTION CONCEPT





October 2, 2015

The Honorable Marc Laredo, Chairman  
Aldermen of the Land Use Committee  
Board of Aldermen  
City of Newton  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

RE: Special Permit #119-15  
Austin Street, 28 Austin Street

James Freas  
Interim Director  
Planning & Development

Dear Alderman Laredo and Aldermen of the Land Use Committee:

Nancy Hyde  
Economic Development  
Director

The Economic Development Commission is pleased to report that at its September 10, 2015 meeting, we voted in favor of Austin Street Partner's plan to develop 28 Austin Street.

The EDC's support for the development of 28 Austin Street is based on:

Commissioners

Stephen Feller, Chair  
Christopher Steele, Vice  
Chair  
Janice Caillet, Secretary

Howard Barnstone  
Daphne Collins  
Barbara Couturtier  
Robert Finkel  
Jane Ives  
Jack Leader  
Peter Kai Jung Lew  
John Pears  
Joyce Plotkin  
Philip Plottel

1000 Commonwealth Ave.  
Newton, MA 02459  
T 617/796-1120  
F 617/796-1142

<http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/lrplan/econdev/commission.asp>

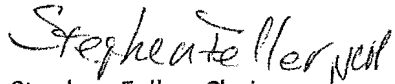
- Consistency with the Economic Development Goals and Strategies identified in Newton's Comprehensive Plan (NCP), specifically -  
Section IV.1. Village Center Development
  - *Encourage mixed use in the village centers by promoting housing above retail. Increasing density allowing mixed-use development in the village centers would increase the population within walking distance and as a result would likely expand the available range of goods and services offered there. It would also increase the stock of affordable housing located close to employment centers and public transportation.*
- Adoption of the Board of Alderman's creation of a Mixed Use 4 (MU4) Zone
- Selection of Austin Street Partners in May 2014 based on the criteria established for the 2013 RFP
- Responsiveness to community feedback including
  - Reduction in number of total apartments from 80 to 68
  - Increased public parking on the ground level from 85 to 127 public parking spaces
  - Increasing below grade parking for the apartments from 1.0 to 1.25 and the addition of 5 employee parking spacing for retail tenants for a total of 90 below grade spaces
  - Retention of 25% affordable housing units while reducing total apartment units to 68; and
  - entering into a lease arrangement for the land, and



- Redevelopment of a single purpose parking lot into a multi-use building while retaining 127 public parking spaces.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Stephen Feller, Chairman  
Newton Economic Development Commission

cc: Mayor Setti D. Warren  
Board of Aldermen Chair, Scott Lennon  
Acting Planning and Development Director, James Freas



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Attachment F

Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

James Freas  
Acting Director

**DATE:** September 16, 2015  
**TO:** James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development  
**FROM:** Urban Design Commission  
**RE:** Conceptual Review of the Austin Street Project  
**CC:** Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen  
Petitioner

At the request of the Department of Planning and Development, the Urban Design Commission has reviewed and provides the following revised comments to the Department of Planning and Development and the Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen regarding the proposed special permit project at 28 Austin Street. The following information is intended to give advice on specific matters affecting urban design and beautification for the project.

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**PETITION #119-15**

**28 Austin Street**

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to redevelop an existing municipal parking lot, declared surplus by the Board of Aldermen on February 6, 2012, into a mixed-use residential building providing 68 units of housing, approximately 5,000 square feet of commercial space, and approximately 90 underground parking spaces and 127 public parking spaces at-grade.

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) held public meetings on May 20, 2015 and September 16, 2015 to review the proposed special permit project at 28 Austin Street (Austin Street). Based on the plans submitted and the presentations by the petitioner's design team, the Urban Design Commission offers a **formal recommendation of this proposal**.

The UDC appreciated that the petitioner had **addressed almost all of the design concerns** outlined in the previous comments, either by providing the additional information requested or adjusting the design. The UDC felt that the design has improved. Particularly welcome changes included the massing of the columns, the simplified palette, and the overall proportions.

The comments not yet addressed relate to **signage and lighting**. The UDC understands that these aspects of the project are not fully developed at this stage, and would like to engage with the petitioner on these topics at the appropriate time. A night-time rendering of the project would be appreciated during such a discussion. The Commission encourages the petitioner to keep lighting to a minimal level necessary to create an inviting evening atmosphere.

The Commission continues to recommend one functional change in the proposal – the inclusion of a **full staircase in the lobby**. The UDC feels that a staircase in the lobby connecting to all floors would encourage active use of stairs and make routes through the building clearer and simpler for residents and visitors.

The UDC commends the petitioner for reviewing the cladding material choices and looking to the neighborhood for inspiration. The use of brick referencing the Masonic Hall is appreciated. The **mix of materials and textures was found acceptable** and the UDC encourages the petitioner to continue to incorporate vents and other infrastructure elements into the façade in an intentional and thoughtful manner as was presented during the September 16th meeting.

Finally, the UDC is in favor of the public amenity features described by the petitioner. The **plaza design was found to be a positive addition to the streetscape**. The UDC encourages the petitioner to underground all utilities related to the project, to continue the streetscape improvements. The UDC would encourage the Board of Aldermen to **coordinate similar improvements in the vicinity** of the Austin Street project, especially across Austin Street from the project.

To: Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen, City of Newton  
From: Marian L. Knapp, Chair, Newton Council on Aging  
Date: June 2, 2015  
Re: Austin Street Development Proposal

On Tuesday, May 26, 2015 the Council on Aging with agreement of the COA Advisory Board voted to endorse the Austin Street Development Proposal that was submitted for the Special Permit Process to the Board of Aldermen on May 12, 2015.

A majority of COA commissioners – the voting body - were present at this meeting and all voted yes for the proposal. A majority of Advisory Board Members were present and the majority agreed with the Commissioners' decision. There were no "no" votes.

The Newton Council on Aging (NCOA) is a nine-member commission that is appointed by you, the Board of Aldermen, and the Mayor to raise awareness about senior issues and be advocates, and activists on behalf of all Newton's seniors. We take our responsibility very seriously.

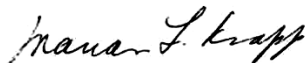
Our meetings are open to the public, according to open meeting laws, and our minutes reflect the vote to support the Austin Street project.

We strongly and enthusiastically endorse the Austin Street proposal because it supports the Mayor's commitment to increase Newton housing options for people of all ages and diverse financial status, and because it meets age-friendly Housing Criteria developed by the COA Housing Sub-group.

As you know, seniors will represent close to one-third of our population by 2030. Specifically, the Austin Street Proposal responds to the documented needs and wishes of current Newton residents age 50 and over, the vast majority of whom wish to remain in Newton as they age, but who lack down-sizing options.

I, as Chair of the Council on Aging, am formally reporting this decision to you - the Board of Aldermen, Land Use Committee - as the delegated voice of the COA/AB.

Thank you,



Marian L. Knapp, Chair, Newton Council on Aging

*(Note: This statement was presented verbally by Marian Knapp, Chair, Newton Council on Aging to the Land Use Committee on June 2, 2015.)*