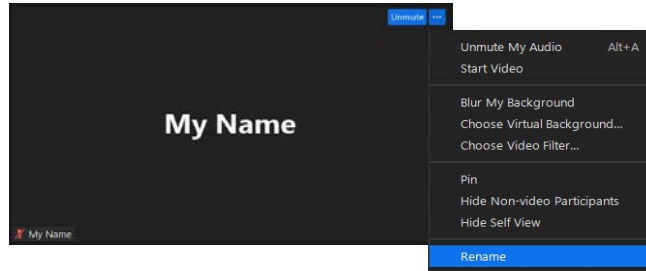


Congress Street Reconstruction

*Thursday, May 26, 2022
via Zoom*

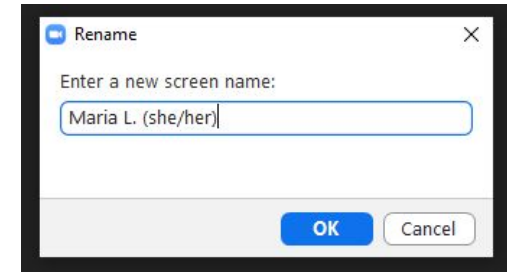
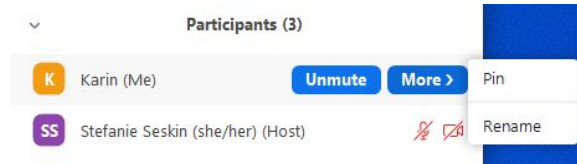
Welcome!

- ▶ This meeting will be recorded.
 - We will share the recording online.
- ▶ Please update your name in Zoom to your preferred name and include your pronouns.



Click the three dots in the top right of your video

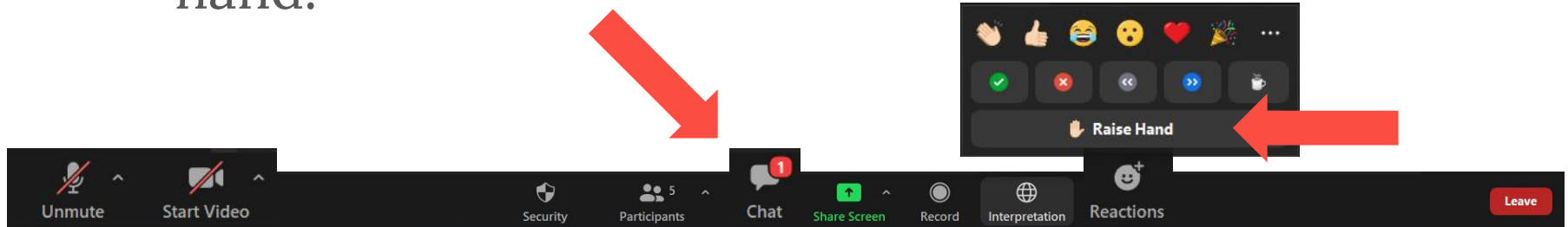
OR next to your name in the "participants" list



Add your pronouns after your name

Welcome!

- ▶ Your microphones are turned off. You will need to unmute to speak.
 - Joining via phone? Press ***6** to unmute.
- ▶ To ask a question, raise your hand in the “Reactions” menu, or leave a message in the chat box.
 - If you called into the meeting, use ***9** to raise your hand.



Hi!



Jeffrey Alexis

Principal Civil Engineer,
Public Works Department



Pat Hoey

Sr. Transportation Planner,
Transportation Department



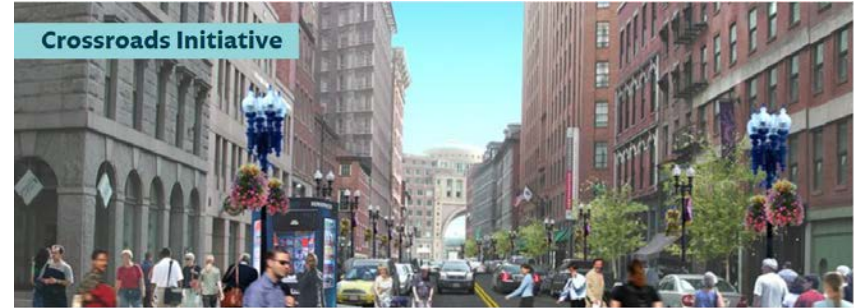
Stefanie Seskin

Active Transportation,
Transportation Department

Why are we looking at Congress Street?

When the Central Artery project (“Big Dig”) was completed, the City shifted gears to look at important neighborhood connector streets:

- ▶ Broad Street
- ▶ Causeway
- ▶ Summer Street
- ▶ Congress Street



The Crossroads Initiative selects a handful of streets that, with the creation of the Greenway, have the potential to form vital connections between districts—districts such as the West End and the North End, as well as South Boston and Chinatown. At the same time, the network these improved streets and the Greenway will form, will create new ways of looking at and understanding the City. Targeted improvements to these Crossroads streets will:

- Make inviting connections between the Greenway parks, neighborhoods, and cultural destinations,
- Celebrate gateways—at the water’s edge, at South Bay, North Station, South Station and Long Wharf, and
- Introduce the Greenway as a new “Common Ground”—another, year-round center for Boston’s social life that highlights the distinctive character of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway and its districts.

STAY CONNECTED

Sign up for Neighborhood Email Updates!



NEIGHBORHOOD

Downtown

EVENTS

Visit our [Calendar](#) section for more events.

Join our live polling tonight:

Please go to
www.menti.com
and enter code
5112 6193



How we've been engaging the public

- ▶ **2016 and earlier:** Design meetings with neighbors, institutions, and Fort Point Channel Landmark District
- ▶ **2017:** New signalized crosswalk at Children's Museum
- ▶ **2022:** Public meeting on February 28; online feedback form through March 21; business outreach through April

At our last meeting, we heard:

How do you use Congress Street?



Enjoy as a place



Dining



Going to cultural destinations

Going to cultural destinations



Passing through somewhere else

Passing through to
somewhere else



I work on Congress Street



I live on Congress Street



Another reason

How do you want to use Congress Street in the future?



New! Proposed bus network redesign

The MBTA is proposing changes to its bus network across the region.

- ▶ 25% more bus service
- ▶ 70% more weekend service
- ▶ 275,000 more residents would be near high-frequency service (buses running every 15 minutes or better, 5 AM – 1 AM, seven days a week)
- ▶ 115,000 residents of color and 40,000 low-income households would gain access to high-frequency service



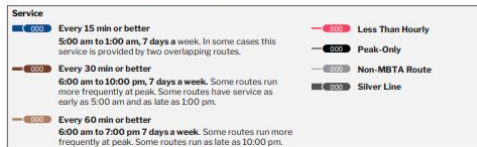
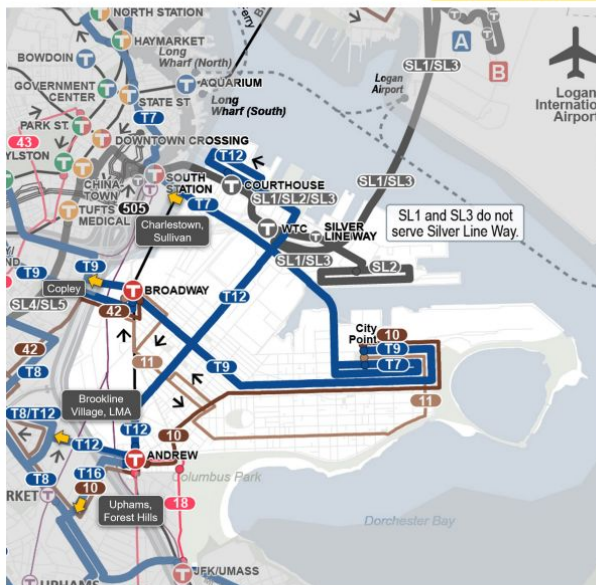
Learn about the proposed changes:
mbta.com/bnrd

Proposed changes in South Boston

- ▶ Consistent with South Boston Strategic Transit Plan
- ▶ Many opportunities for you to provide feedback!

Our proposal

All details and full-sized maps are available at:
mbta.com/bnrd



What this means for you

More high-frequency service.

Today
0
of routes with service every 15 min or better

Proposed
4

- Four new high-frequency routes connect:
- South Boston, the Seaport, Downtown, Charlestown, all rapid transit lines, and Commuter Rail.
 - South Boston, Broadway, and Copley.
 - The Seaport, D Street, and Longwood Medical Area (LMA).
 - Andrew and Columbia Road.

More service. Period.

Proposed
15%
% increase in service (revenue vehicle miles)

More **midday, evening, and weekend** service.

Better access to major destinations.

Proposed
26K
More residents with faster, frequent service to LMA

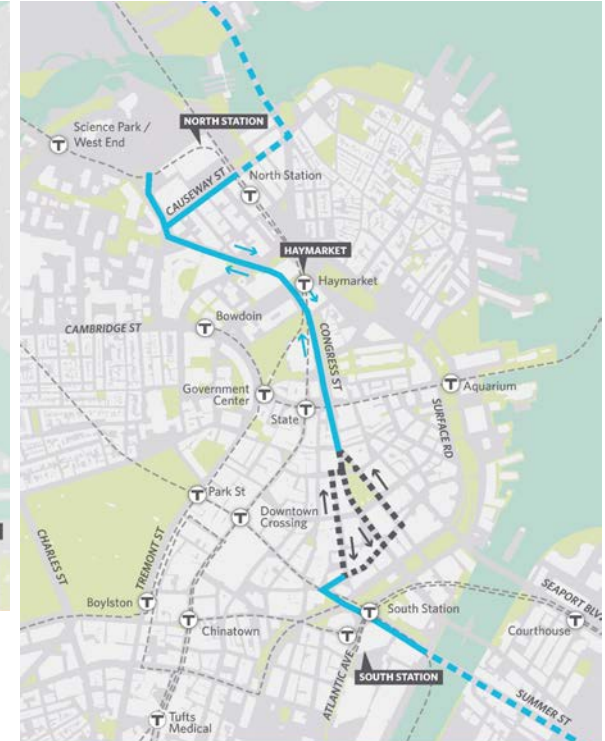
Better service and connections to the places you want to go: **LMA, Nubian Square/Roxbury, Downtown Boston, Charlestown, Dorchester, and the South End/BMC.**

- But we can't do this without you.
- Tell us what you think at mbta.com/bnrd

Better
Bus
Project

North Station to South Boston Waterfront

- ▶ The MBTA has proposed a new high-frequency route through Downtown.
- ▶ The City of Boston is designing streets to facilitate that connection.
- ▶ The new route will continue down Summer Street in the Fort Point neighborhood.



Learn more:

boston.gov/nssp

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, viewed from a high angle. The image is tinted with a blue color. The text "Street design elements" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image. The street grid is clearly visible, with buildings and parking lots interspersed between the roads. The text is centered horizontally and vertically.

Street design elements

An aerial photograph of a city street, Congress Street, showing traffic flow and surrounding buildings. The street runs diagonally from the top left to the bottom right. On the left side of the street, there is a body of water. On the right side, there are various buildings, including a large industrial-looking structure with a flat roof and a construction site with scaffolding. Two sets of arrows point in opposite directions along the street, each with a vehicle count. A large white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

448 vehicles

472 vehicles

The busiest time on Congress Street (pre-pandemic) was the evening peak.

472 vehicles

630 vehicles

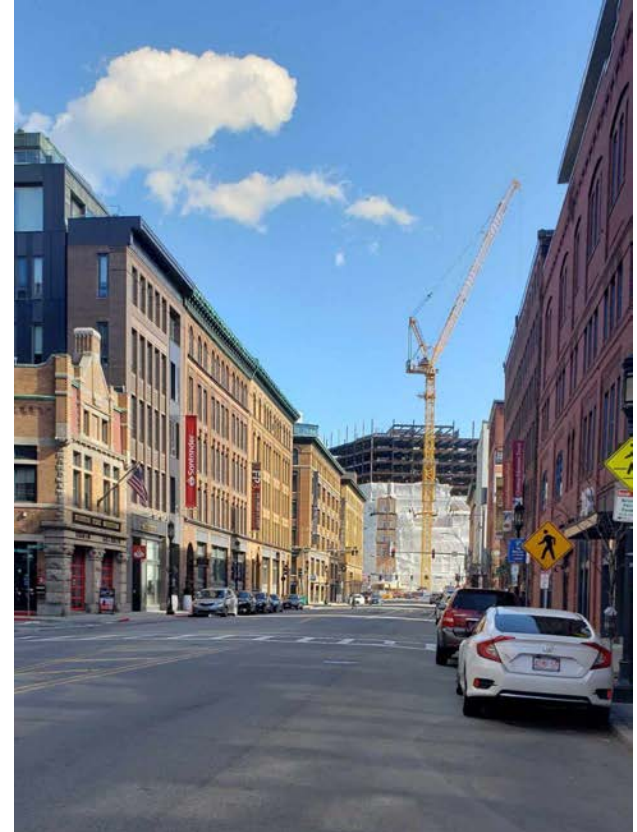
When we design intersections...

We need to consider:

- ▶ Number of people using the intersection
- ▶ Past history of crashes and near-misses
- ▶ Nearby places, like parks, schools, bus stops, elder housing
- ▶ Sightlines and visibility
- ▶ Managing interactions/conflicts and movements
- ▶ Best use of limited street space
- ▶ Research and latest guidance

We design for a “normal” day

- ▶ We design signalized intersections to function during busy times of days, like during morning and evening commute.
- ▶ We must be careful not to overbuild our streets.
 - Excess space within the roadway accommodates speeding and prevents us from achieving other goals like adding more street trees.



We change the length of the signal cycle

- ▶ Each cycle serves all of the different people at an intersection.
- ▶ During busier times (peak hours), we can make the cycle longer to process more people. Bigger pizza!
- ▶ During quieter times (off-peak), we can make the cycle shorter to reduce wait time. Smaller pizza!
- ▶ While we can change the cycle length throughout the day, we cannot change the physical design of the street.



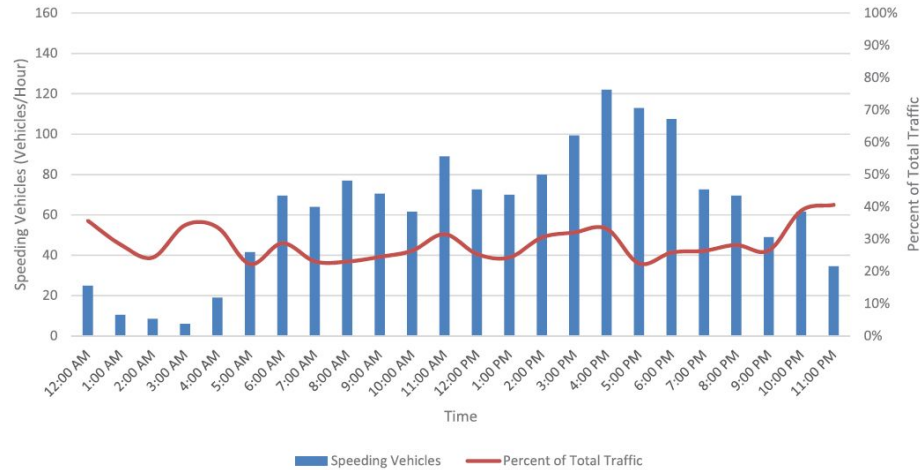
Photo: Dale Cruse on Flickr.com

We need to build the right number of travel lanes

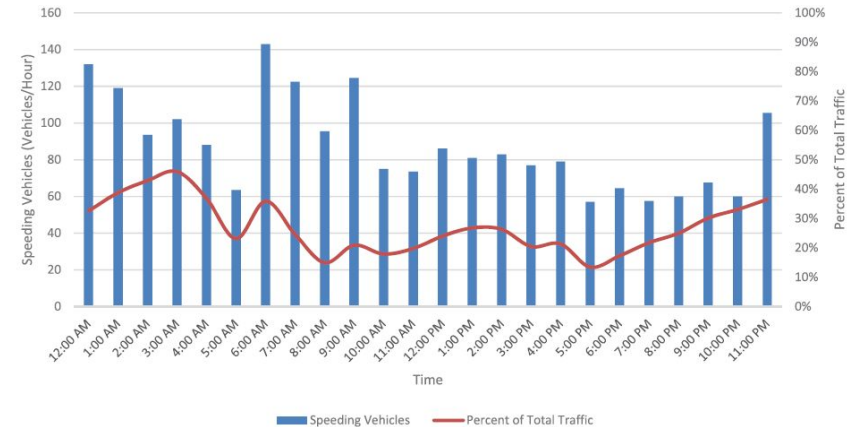
- ▶ In the middle of a block, we don't need as many travel lanes.
 - More continuous flow along block(s)
 - Less formal control from traffic signals
 - Less conflicting interaction with large intersections
- ▶ We can add more lanes at intersections
 - A turn-only lane, a through lane, or a through-turn lane
 - Might improve operations because it helps to compensate for a limited amount of time that drivers are given a green light within the overall cycle

Excess space leads to speeding

Congress Street eastbound

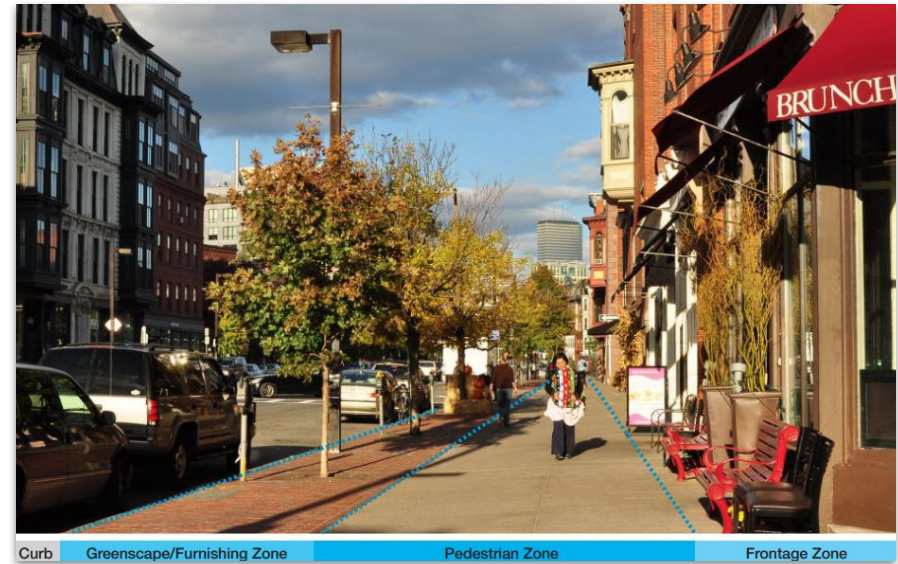


Congress Street westbound



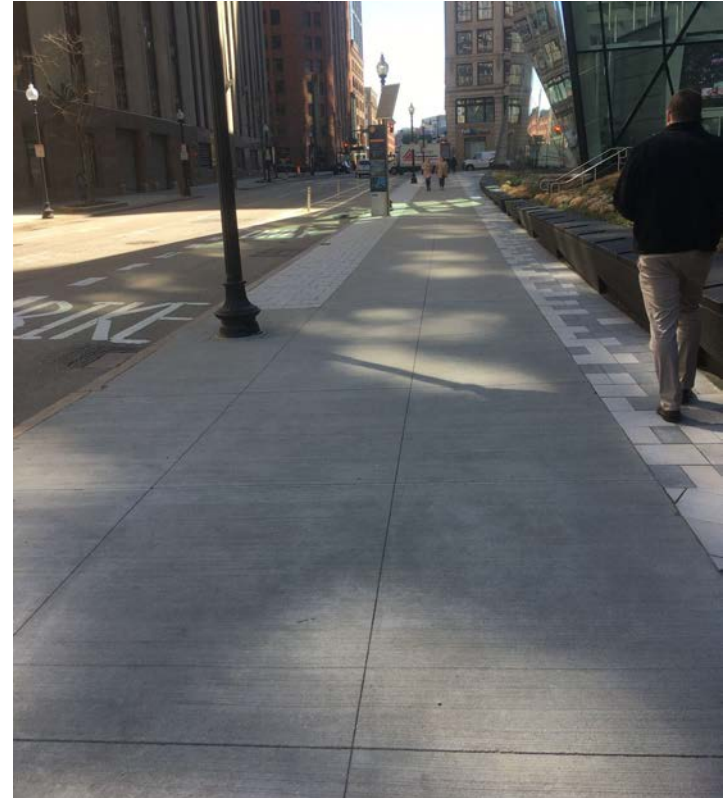
Systemic accessibility in street design

- ▶ We to create ideal disability access, rather than just to meet minimum requirements
- ▶ Wider sidewalks and ramps make it easier *for everyone* to walk and roll
- ▶ Designing for people with disabilities first



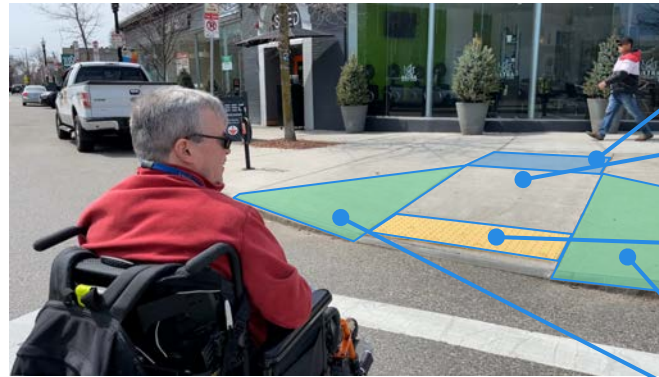
Smooth sidewalks are important

- ▶ Avoid patterns
- ▶ Prefer concrete
 - Easiest to maintain
 - Doesn't get slippery
 - Saw-cut joints



Curb ramp configuration

- ▶ We follow state and national requirements for curb ramp design.
- ▶ These documents tell us things like:
 - Maximum angle of ramps
 - Minimum size of ramps
 - Minimum area for the level landing



Level landing

Ramp

Detectable
warning strip

Flares

Detectable warnings when entering traffic

- ▶ We need to help people identify the difference between the curb ramp and the street
- ▶ We place these at crosswalks to help people understand that they are entering or exiting an area with vehicular and/or bicycle traffic.



Separation along the bikeway

We require visual contrast and detectible edges.

- ▶ Bike lanes are dark to contrast with light-colored sidewalks
- ▶ We are looking at multiple ways to create detectable edges, including:
 - Putting trees, street lights, and/or benches between the walkway and bikeway
 - Building rows of rough pavers
 - Building the bikeway slightly lower than the sidewalk



Bikeway design

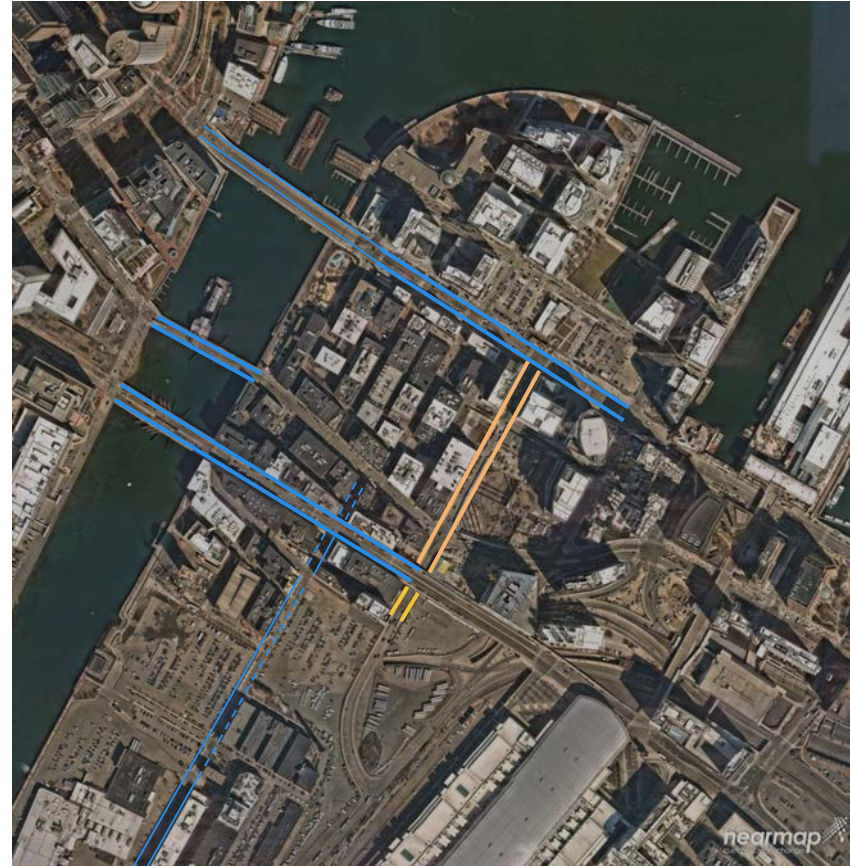
- ▶ Our citywide goal is to quadruple the number of people who bike
- ▶ Surveys and research show that people are willing to bike where they feel safe and comfortable

We plan and design for comfortable biking in street design projects citywide.



Emerging bike network

- ▶ A Street links Fort Point and Broadway neighborhoods
- ▶ New separated bike lanes coming to Boston Wharf Road
- ▶ Congress Street provides meaningful network connection



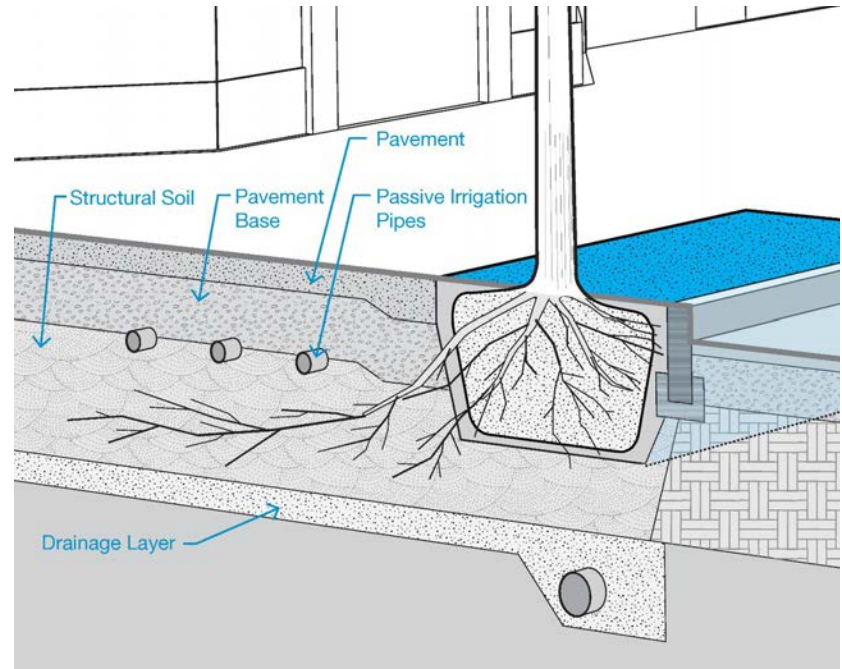
Neighborhood access by bike share

- ▶ Seasonal station removed in winter for snow plowing
- ▶ Between March and November, more than **64 trips per day** start or end here
 - More than 76 trips per day July–September



Designing for new street trees

- ▶ We do not yet know how many new trees we will add
- ▶ Every new tree pit will use structural soil:
 - Prevents soil compaction
 - Gives tree roots room to expand
 - Keeps soils oxygenated
 - Allows for water drainage



Selecting types of trees

Generally, we want trees that:

- ▶ Provide shade
- ▶ Lose their leaves in the winter
- ▶ Tolerate conditions on an urban street (drought, heat, salt, etc.)
- ▶ Thrive in Boston's climate now and in the future

We will:

- ▶ Include diverse tree types to mitigate risk from pests and disease
- ▶ Pick the right tree for the right location
- ▶ Select trees that will thrive based on the season they are planted

We aim to protect existing trees

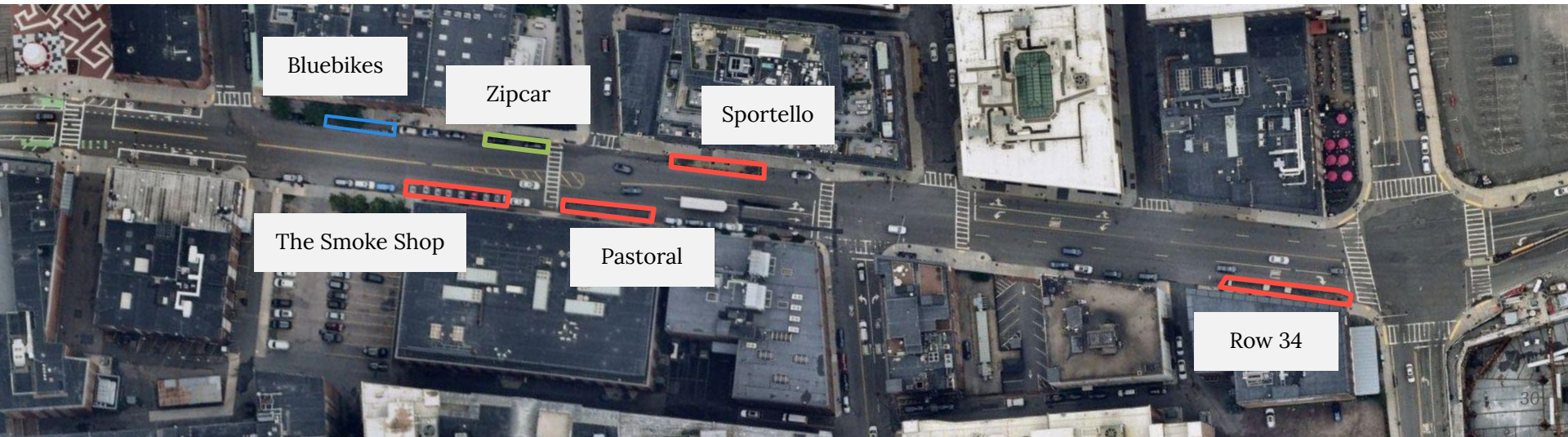
- ▶ 11 trees on Congress Street, all west of A Street
 - 3 honey locust
 - 4 elm
 - 4 pear
 - 0 partridges
- ▶ Protective fences and other techniques as needed per final design



Tree protection on Tremont Street,
South End

Today's curbside uses

- ▶ Metered parking: 3
- ▶ Metered until valet (5 p.m. to 1 a.m.): 1
- ▶ Metered to resident-only (5 p.m. to 9 a.m.): 9
- ▶ Commercial loading: 2



Citywide challenge: managing the curb

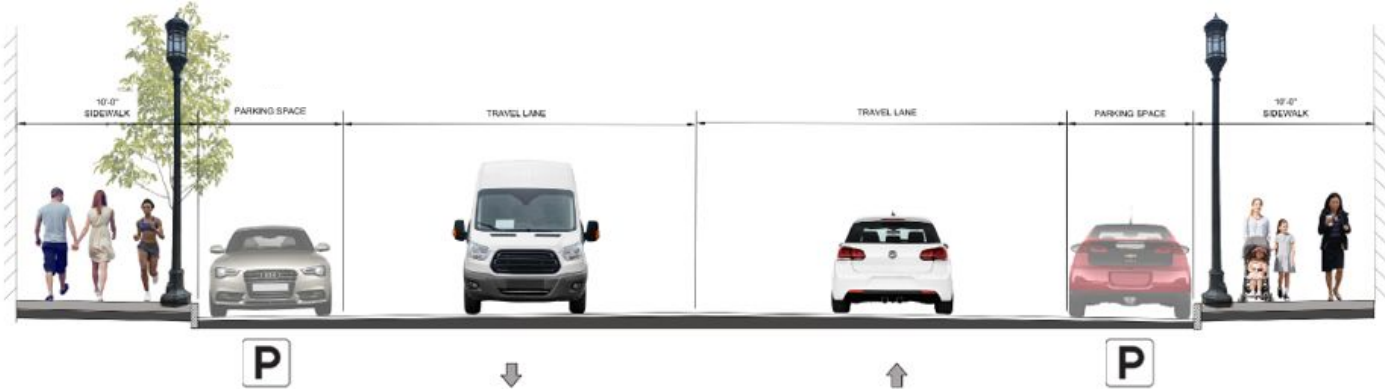
- ▶ Emerging best practices
 - Accept that this change in use is happening
 - Creating dedicated spaces for 5-minute to 15-minute stopping
 - Typically placed far-side of intersections
 - Easier to pull in, reduce need for parallel parking

An aerial photograph of a city street grid, likely in Los Angeles, showing a dense arrangement of buildings and streets. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the entire image. Centered over the image is the text "Proposed design for Congress Street" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The text is split across two lines. The background shows various urban features, including parking lots, building footprints, and street layouts.

Proposed design for Congress Street

Congress Street today

*West of
A Street*

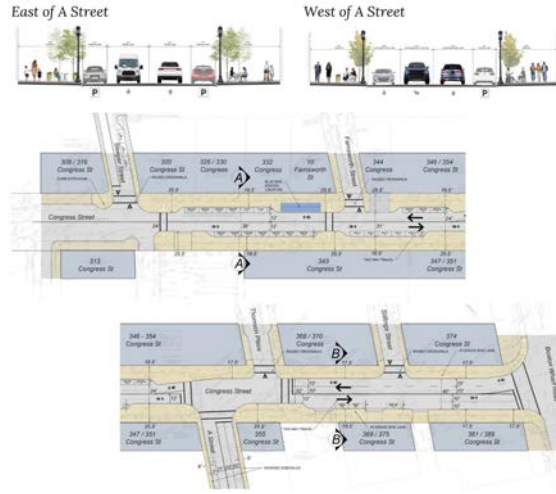


*East of
A Street*



Options shared last meeting:

OPTION A



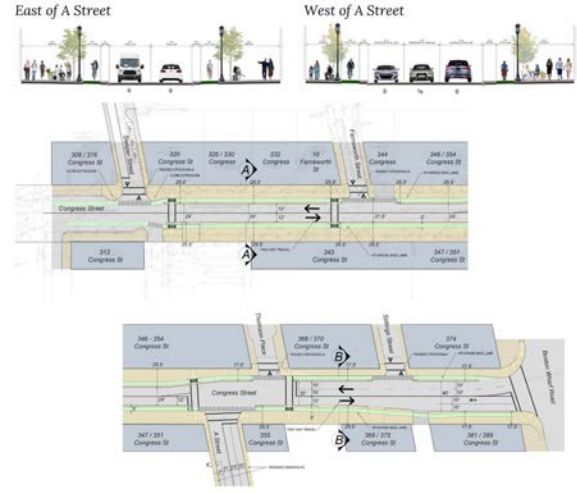
- ▶ Raised crosswalks over the side streets
- ▶ Wider sidewalks with room for street trees and some outdoor dining
- ▶ On-street parking and deliveries

OPTION B



- ▶ Raised crosswalks over the side streets
- ▶ Maximized sidewalk widths with lots of space for street trees, outdoor dining, and other street furniture

OPTION C



- ▶ Raised crosswalks over the side streets
- ▶ Wider sidewalks with room for street trees and some outdoor dining
- ▶ Separated bike lanes

What we heard at the last meeting:

- ▶ Preference for option with separated bike lanes
- ▶ Questions about business needs and short-term stopping for pick-up/drop-off

How do you feel about the possible options for Congress Street?

Mentimeter



Preferred design

West of A Street Typical



West of A Street Example with parking

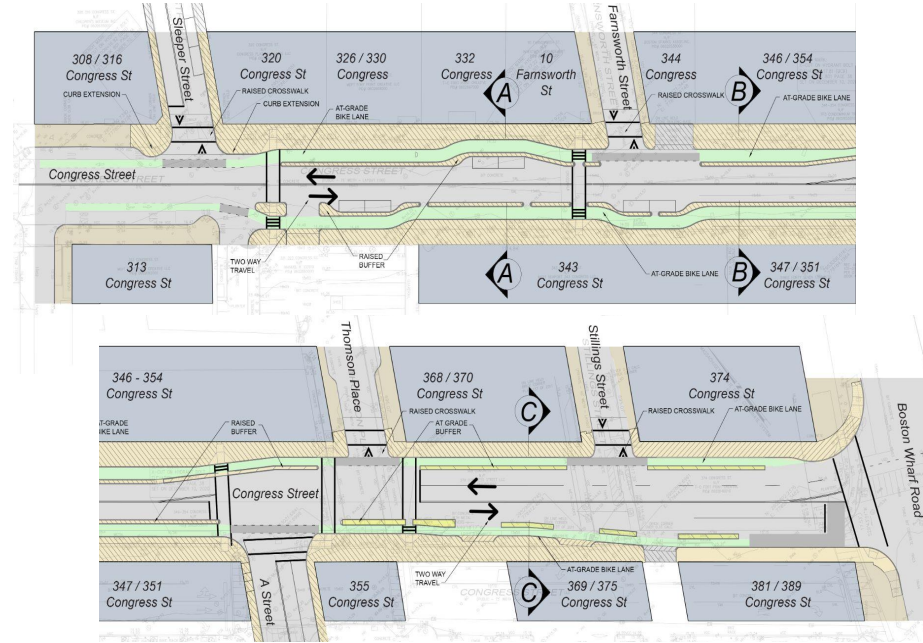


East of A Street

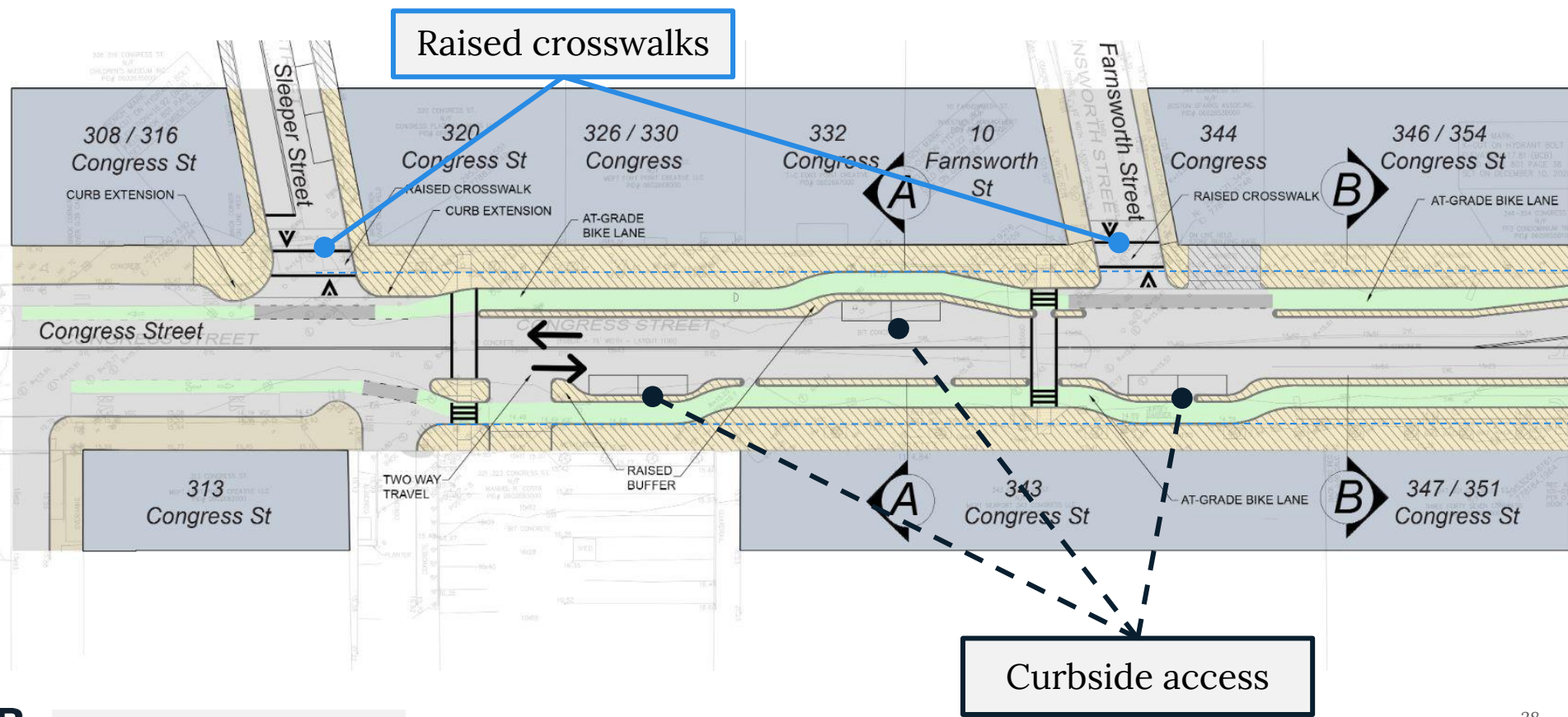


Preferred design: key points

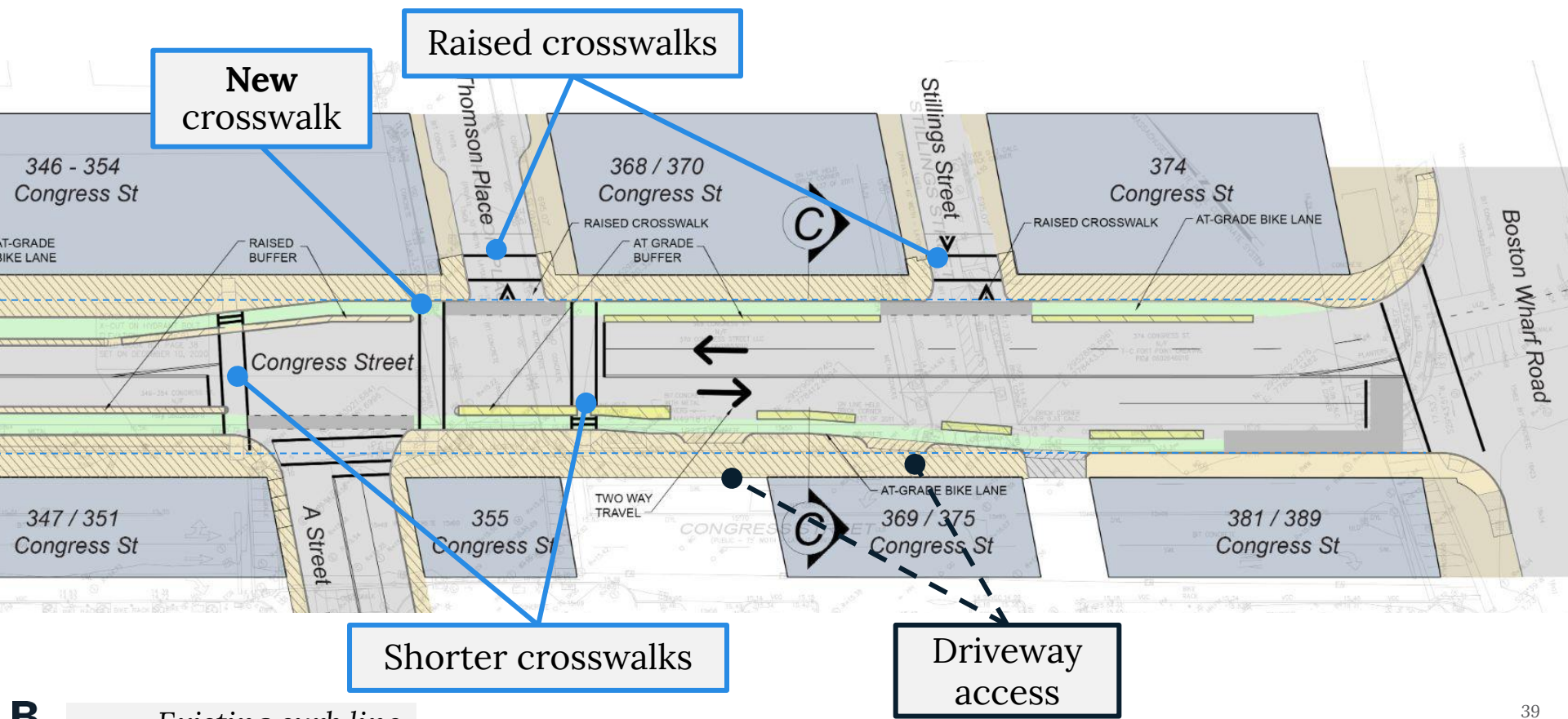
- ▶ Wider sidewalks throughout, with space for dining, greenery, bike share, etc.
- ▶ Raised crosswalks over unsignalized side streets
- ▶ Physically separated bike lanes
- ▶ Intermittent parking west of A Street
- ▶ Driveway access east of A Street



Preferred design - west of A Street

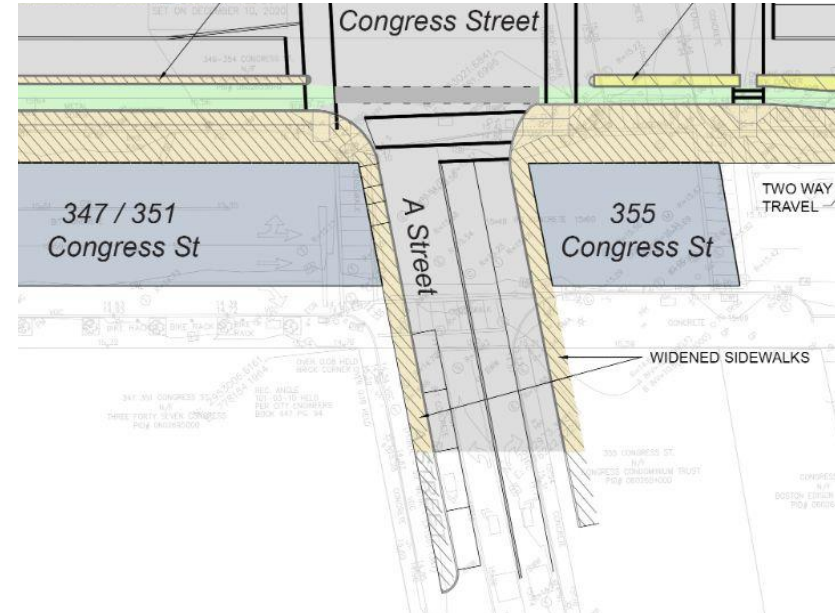


Preferred design - east of A Street



What about A Street?

- ▶ Within the limits of this project, we will widen the sidewalks slightly.
- ▶ Continue engaging area developers to update A Street between Congress and Melcher
 - Accessibility improvements on A Street (Melcher to Summer) in coordination with 51 Melcher
 - PWD replacing the staircase south of Summer, looking to widen sidewalk in that area



An aerial, top-down view of a city street grid. The image shows a dense arrangement of buildings, mostly with flat roofs, and streets filled with cars. The color palette is a monochromatic blue-grey. The text "What's next?" is centered in the upper half of the image.

What's next?

We want to hear from you!

- ▶ Send us your thoughts by **June 17**
 - PWD.Engineering@boston.gov
 - 617-635-2454
- ▶ Information will posted on our website:
boston.gov/congress-street-fort-point
 - Sign up for email updates about the project
 - Share your feedback online
- ▶ Let your neighbors know about the project

Project timeline

- ▶ **Fall 2022:** Final design meeting
- ▶ **Winter 2022:** Bid for construction with Sleeper Street
- ▶ **2023:** Aim to start construction



Discussion

- ▶ This is a space for respectful conversations.
- ▶ Give your facilitators the permission to facilitate.
- ▶ Share the mic. Give everyone who wishes to speak the opportunity to contribute.

Preferred design

