

# STRAWBERRY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

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Mount Auburn Street Bus Priority Pilot

March 27, 2018



# Meeting Overview

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- Introductions and opening remarks
- Presentation (approx. 30 min)
- Questions and Answers (approx. 30 min)
- Proposed end at 7:15 with time for additional conversation

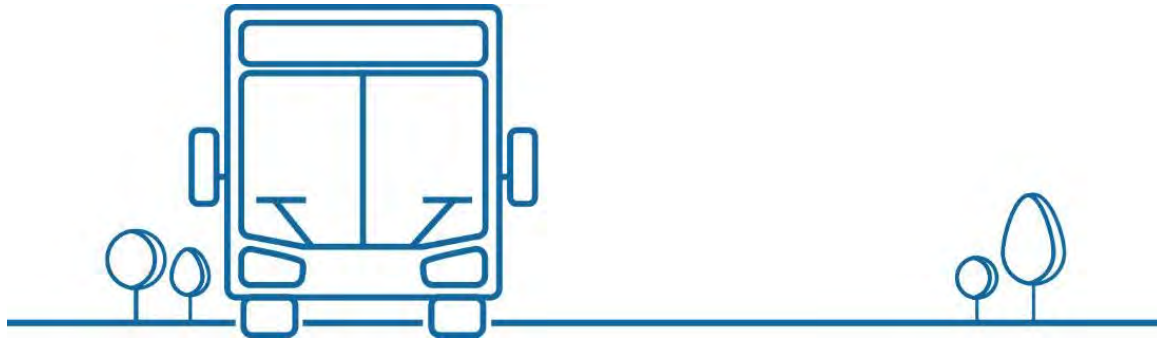
## Purpose of meeting:

*to provide an update to Strawberry Hill residents and hear comments and concerns about neighborhood needs before a larger public meeting to discuss the Mt Auburn Bus Priority pilot in more detail (scheduled for May 1).*

# Presentation Contents

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- Overview of planning projects
- Mt Auburn Street Bus Priority pilot
  - Purpose and context
  - Conceptual layout
  - Public process and evaluation timeline
  - Additional neighborhood concerns
- Next steps



# OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROJECTS

# PROJECTS

DCR Mt. Auburn St. Corridor Study  
2016 - 2017

DCR Short Term Design  
Implementation  
2018

BostonBRT  
Mt. Auburn St.  
Bus Priority Pilot  
2018

Belmont St. Design  
and Construction  
2018 - 2021



# DCR Mt. Auburn Corridor Study

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## Goals:

- Slow traffic speeds, provide clarity, reduce crashes and severity of crashes
- Measure people, reduce transit delays
- Address cut-through traffic
- Offer short-term and long-term solutions
- Acknowledge enforcement and special uses  
(BB&N, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Mt. Auburn, Shady Hill, and Tufts Health Plan)

## Process:

- 7 stakeholder meetings, 3 public meetings (final public meeting December 13th, 2017)
- City-organized Strawberry Hill neighborhood meeting May 8, 2017

# Mt. Auburn St. Bus Priority Pilot

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- Implement some recommendations from the DCR Study
- Test and refine a design that makes bus travel more reliable, predictable, faster
- Enhance safety for people walking and cycling on the corridor
- Keep driving travel time similar overall and improve safety
- Inform the upcoming Belmont St. design

# Belmont Street Design/Construction

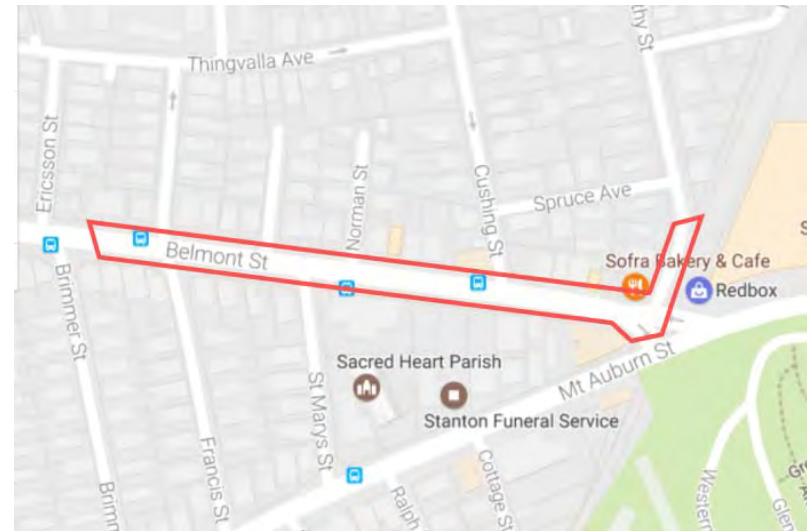
- New sidewalks and paving, improve accessibility, make improvements for all users
- Belmont St and Holworthy St (up to #37-39)

## Schedule

- Design: 2018 – early 2019
- Bid: July 2019
- Construction: summer 2019 – 2021

## Contact

- Melissa A. Miguel, P.E., Supervising Engineer  
617-349-9351, [mmiguel@cambridgema.gov](mailto:mmiguel@cambridgema.gov)
- Daniel Vallee, P.E., Project Manager  
617-349-4813, [dvallee@cambridgema.gov](mailto:dvallee@cambridgema.gov)





# PROJECTS

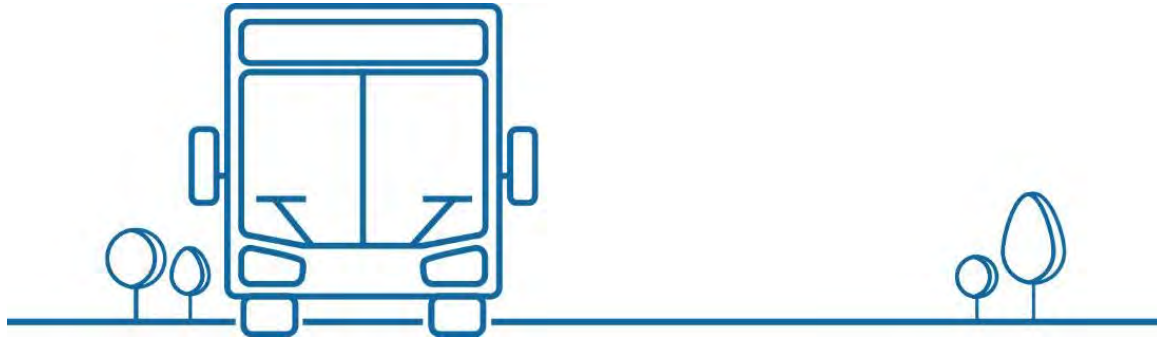
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# MOUNT AUBURN STREET BUS PRIORITY PILOT

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Purpose and Context

# Policies

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***2016 Cambridge Complete Streets policy:***

Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for *all* users – regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation.

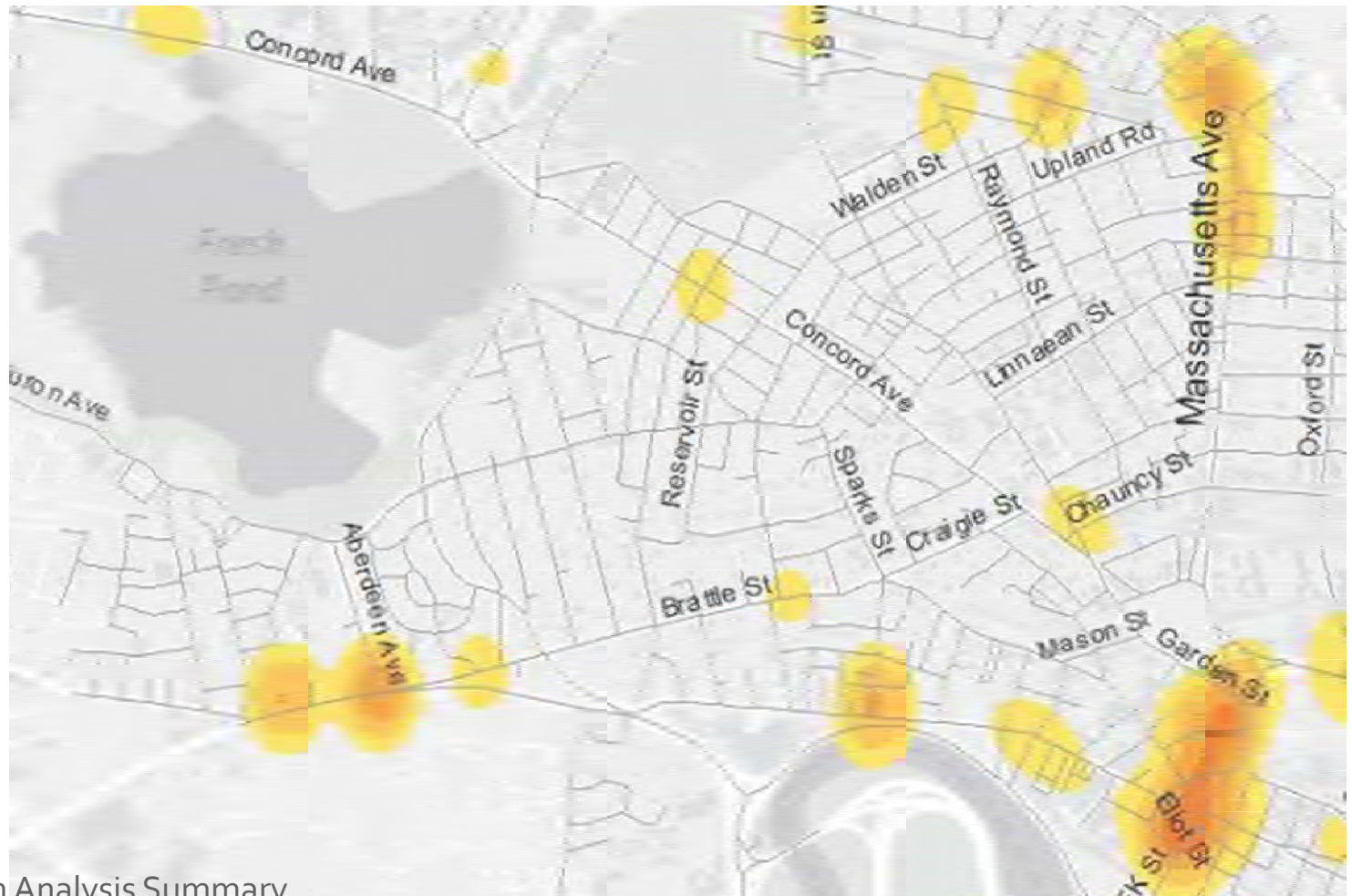
***2016 Vision Zero policy:***

Calls for the elimination of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes, and emphasizes that they can and should be prevented.



Density map of crashes requiring EMS transport to a hospital as reported by responding officer

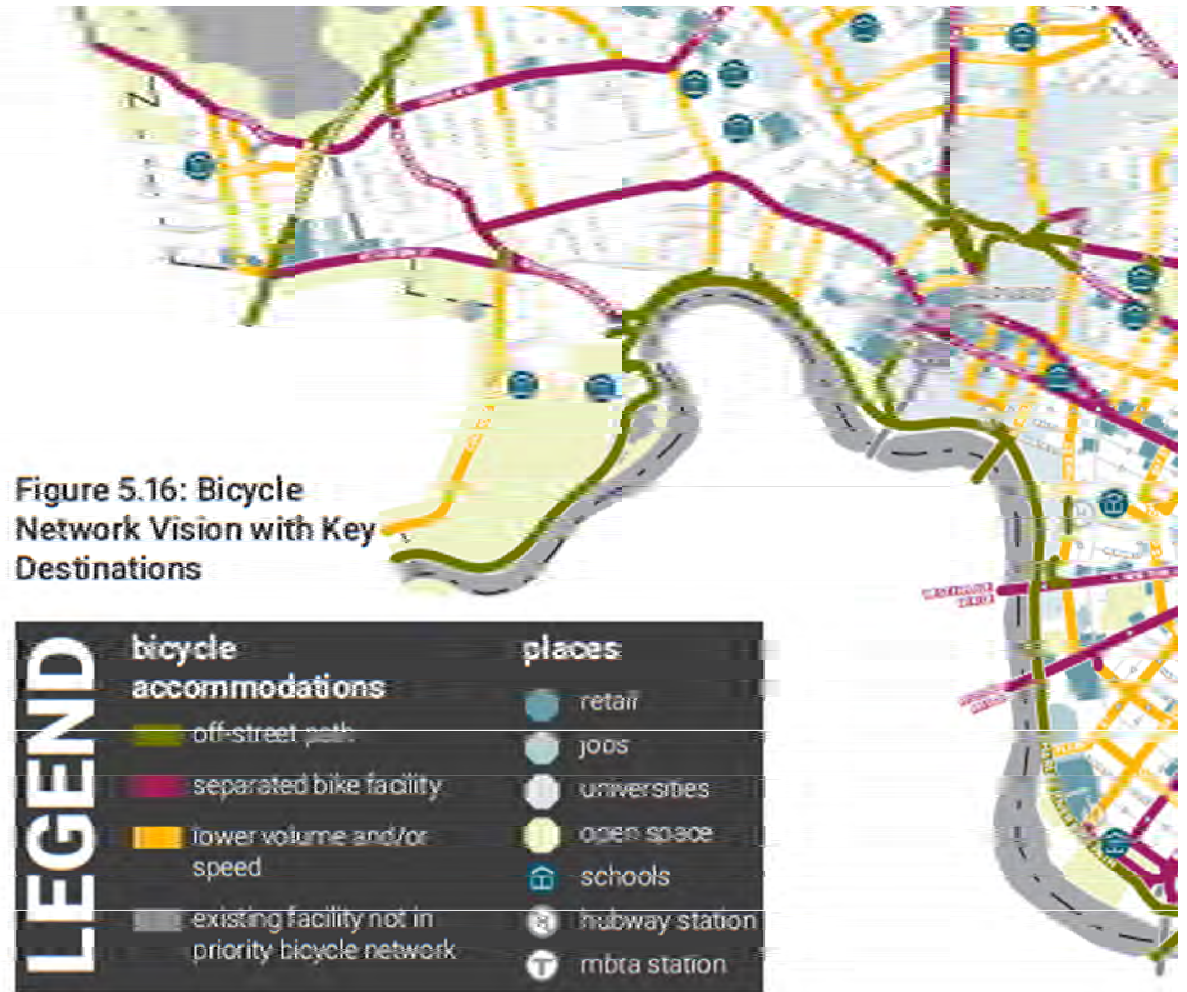
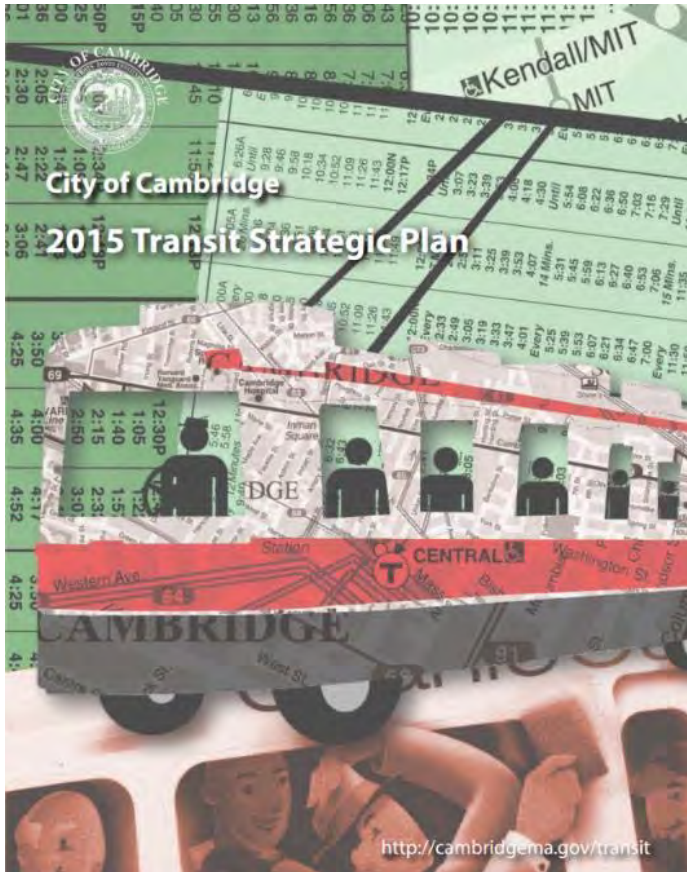
2015 and 2016



See City of Cambridge Crash Analysis Summary, <http://www.cambridgema.gov/cpd/Publications/2017/05/cityofcambridgecrashanalysissummary>



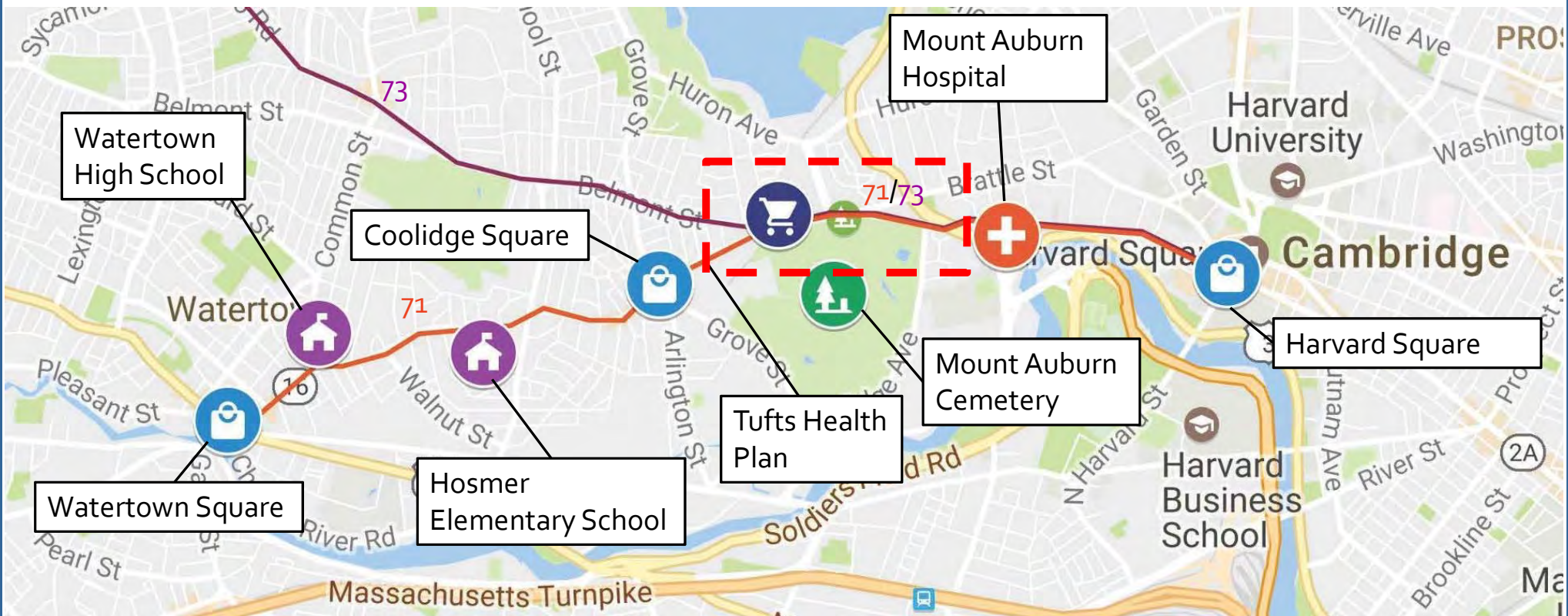
# Plans



# Context

MBTA Route 73 (Harvard to Waverly Square)

MBTA Route 71 (Harvard to Watertown Square)

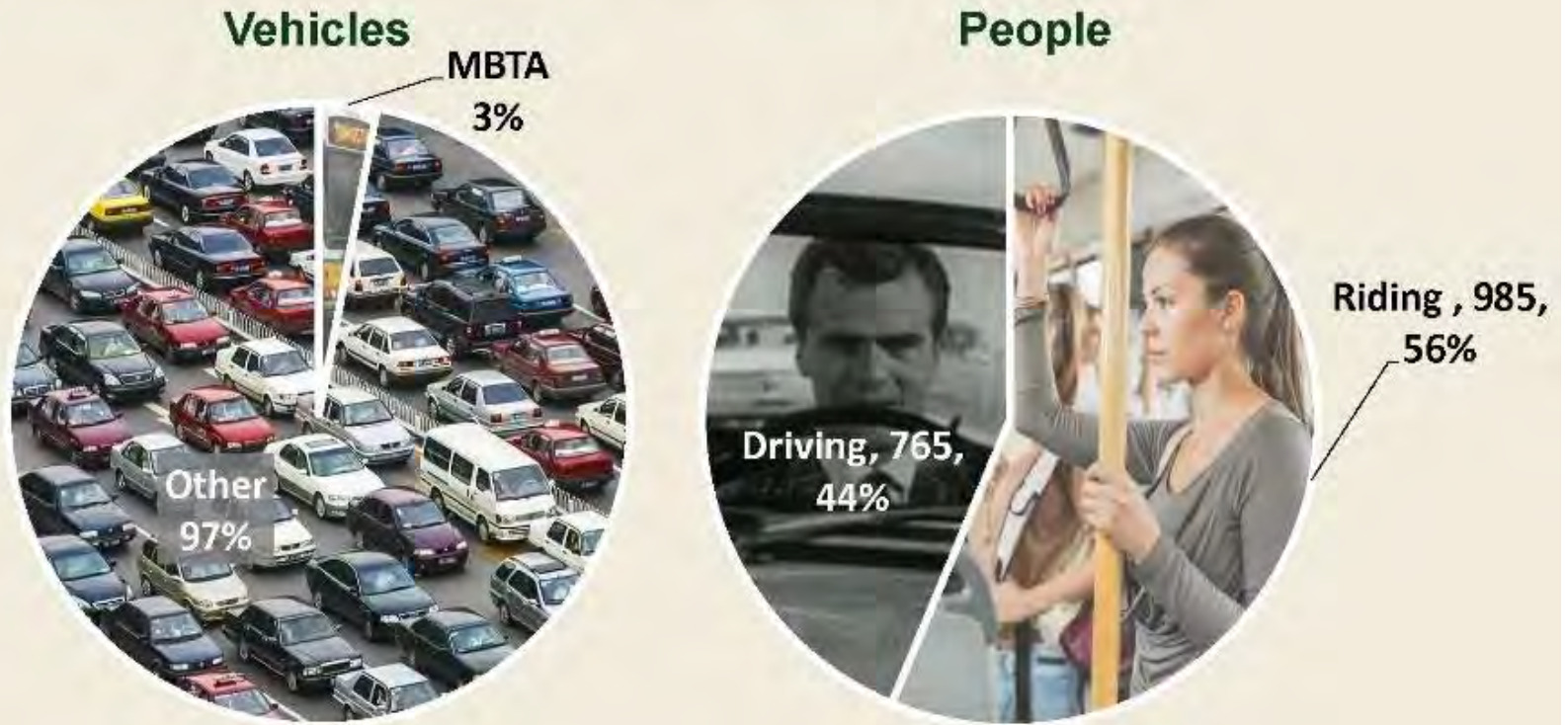


Mount Auburn Street: typically two travel lanes in each direction and carries approximately 19,000 vehicles per day  
**Route 71 and 73: 12,000 weekday daily passenger trips combined**  
**Shuttles: Mt. Auburn Hospital, athenahealth, Bentley, etc.**



*Vehicle Volumes  
vs. People  
Volumes on Mt.  
Auburn St.  
Between Brattle  
Street and  
Coolidge Avenue*

## Brattle St. to Coolidge Ave. (AM Peak)



*(Source: DCR Public Presentation, January 10, 2016, Slide 70)*

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/planning-and-resource-protection/projects/mount-auburn-street-corridor-study.html>

# Analysis of Transit Reliability and Delay (2014)

(Data for Route 73, morning peak rush hour)





# BostonBRT Bus Priority Pilot Project

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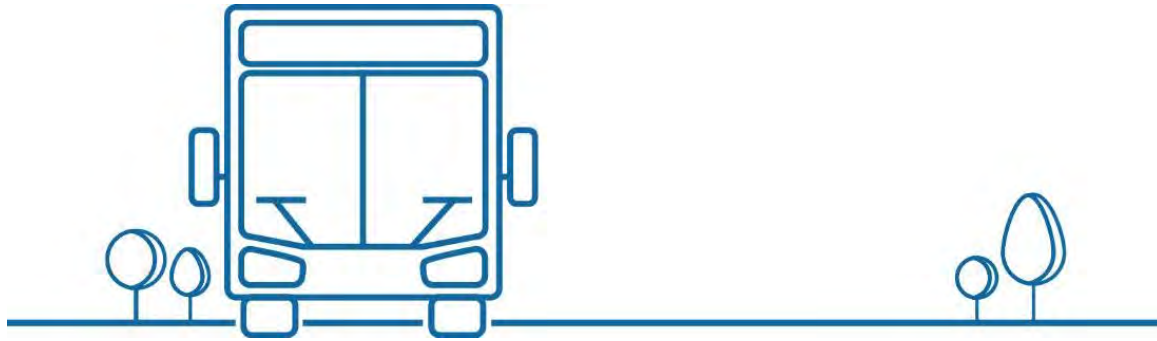
- Cambridge and Watertown Barr Foundation grant
- Bus priority Mt. Auburn Street west of Fresh Pond Parkway:
  - Bus-only lanes and signal priority eastbound (toward Harvard)
  - Bike lanes westbound (toward Watertown)
- “Pilot” with minimal or no construction, intended to test and evaluate
  - Materials: Paint, signal changes, signs, education and enforcement
- *MUST* be implemented in conjunction with DCR’s short-term design:
  - Minor construction and signal improvements at Coolidge Ave and Fresh Pond Pkwy
  - Improve traffic flow and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety

# DCR Short-term Design

Design in progress. Existing conditions shown.



<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mount-auburn-street-corridor-study>



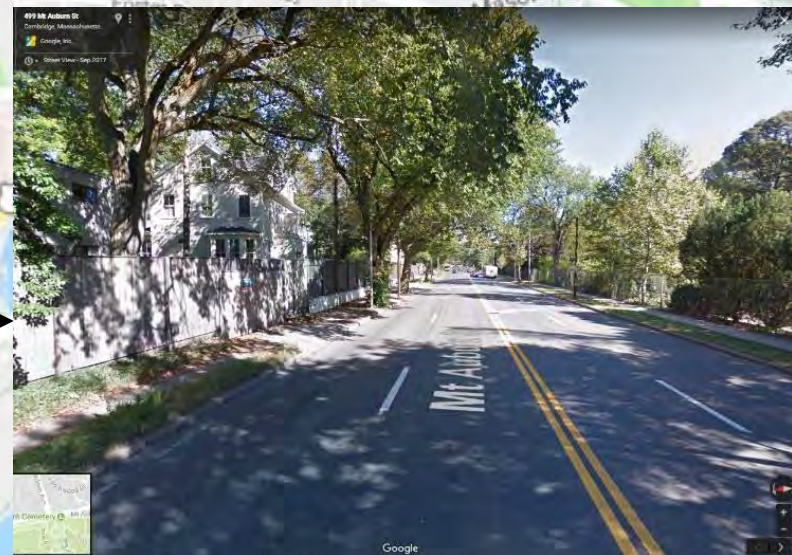
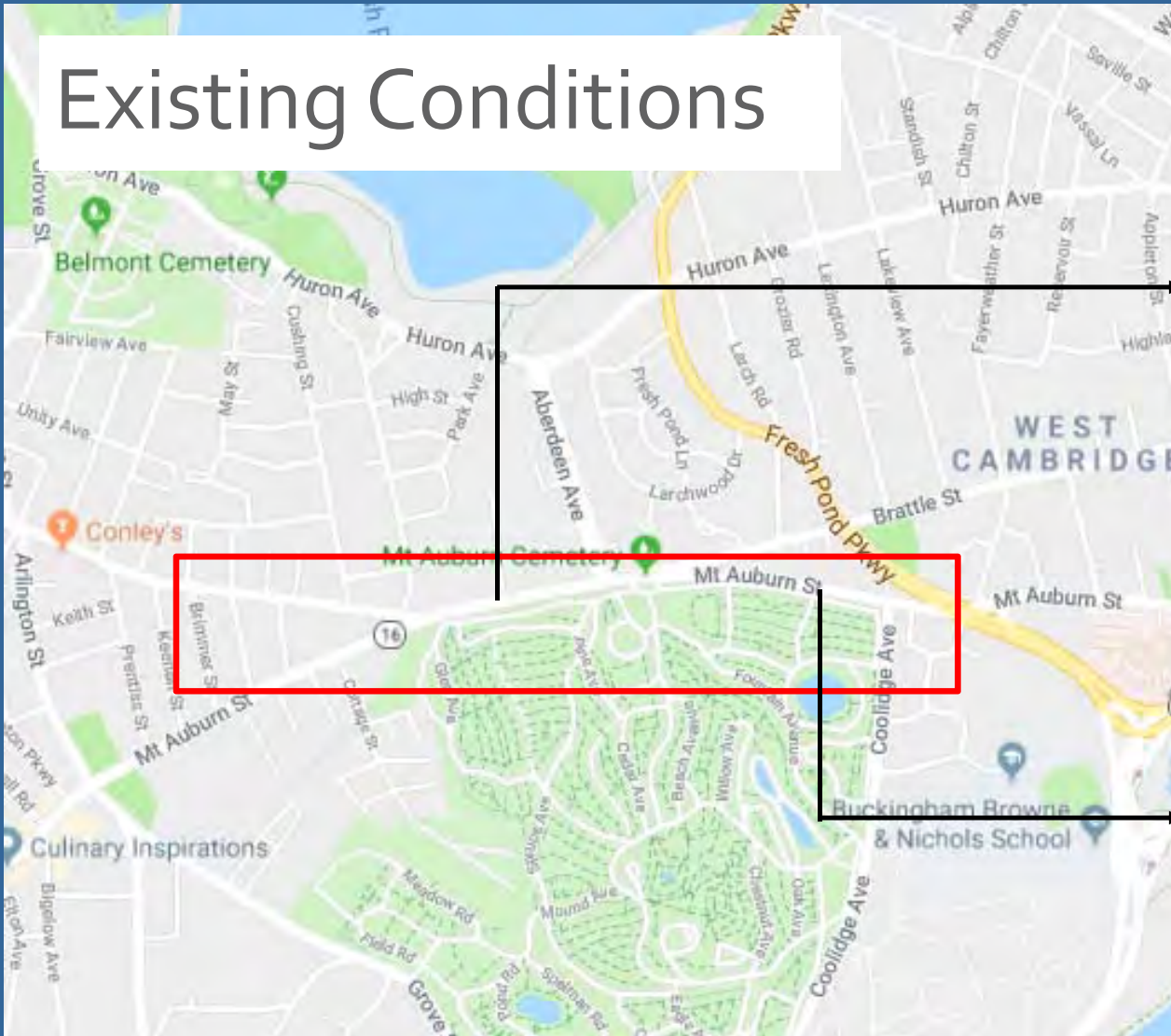
# MOUNT AUBURN STREET BUS PRIORITY PILOT

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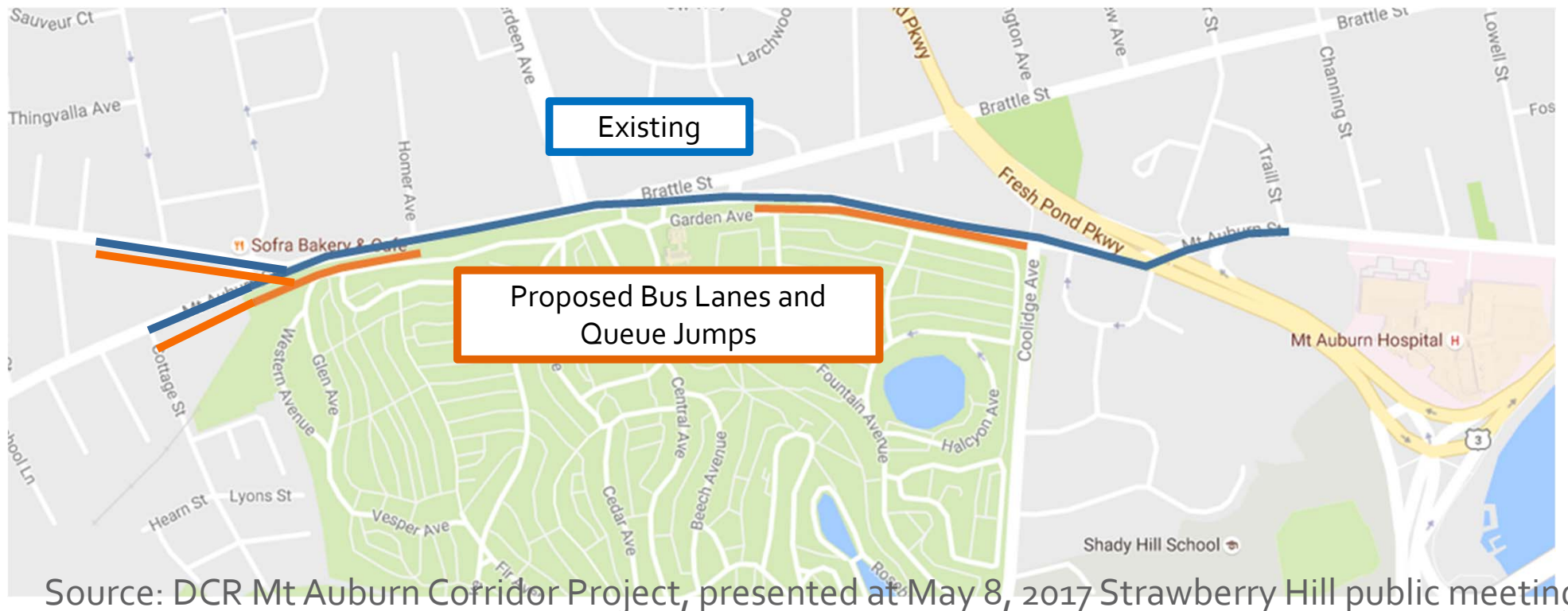
Conceptual Layout



# Existing Conditions



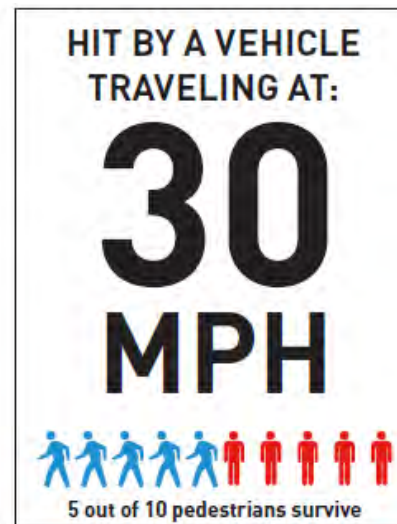
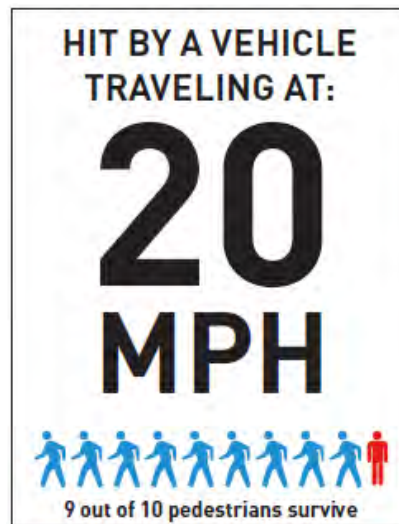
# Conceptual Layout – Bus Lanes



Source: DCR Mt Auburn Corridor Project, presented at May 8, 2017 Strawberry Hill public meeting

# Conceptual Layout – Narrower lanes

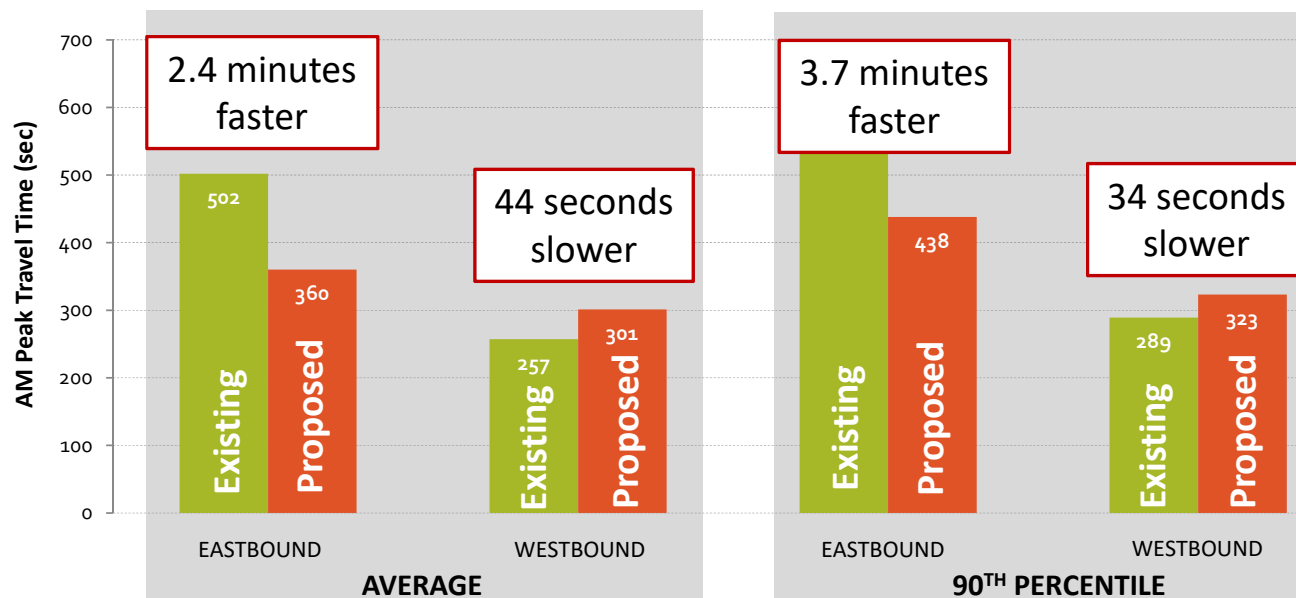
- Lanes will likely be narrowed slightly - widths will still accommodate buses / truck traffic
- Wide lanes encourage faster speeds



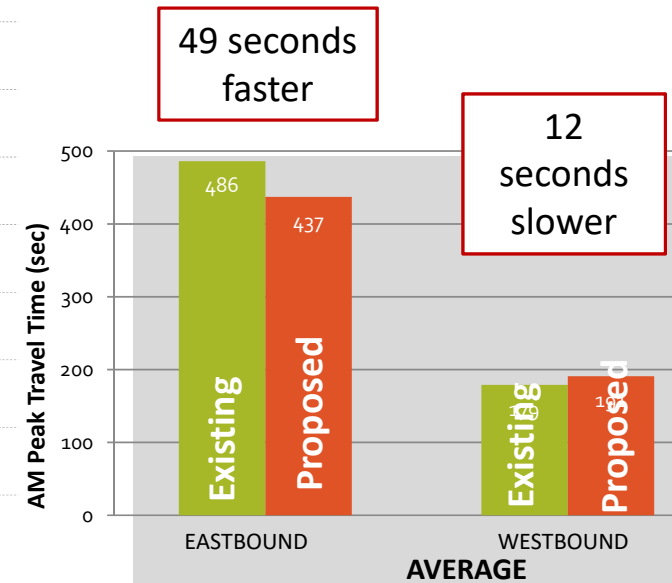


# Estimated Impacts, Morning Rush Hour

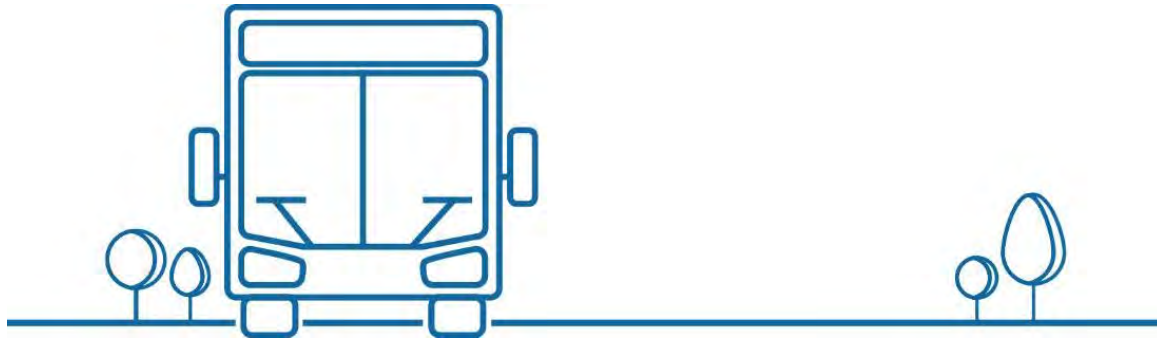
## Bus (AM Peak) – Passenger Travel Time Impacts



## Auto (AM Peak) – Travel Time Impacts



Source: DCR Mt Auburn Corridor Project, presented at May 8, 2017 Strawberry Hill public meeting



# MOUNT AUBURN STREET BUS PRIORITY PILOT

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Public Process and Evaluation



## Current Public Outreach / Evaluation Timeline

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- **Jan-March:** City Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Advisory Committees
- **February 15:** Watertown Mt. Auburn corridor transit meeting
- **March 27:** Strawberry Hill Neighborhood Meeting (TONIGHT)
- **March/April:** Outreach to stakeholders (businesses, institutions)
- **April/May:** **Gather additional data**
- **May 1:** Joint Watertown/Cambridge public meeting
- **May/June:** Street teams, implementation, education and enforcement
- **June:** Implementation
- **July/August:** **Evaluate and refine into the Fall**

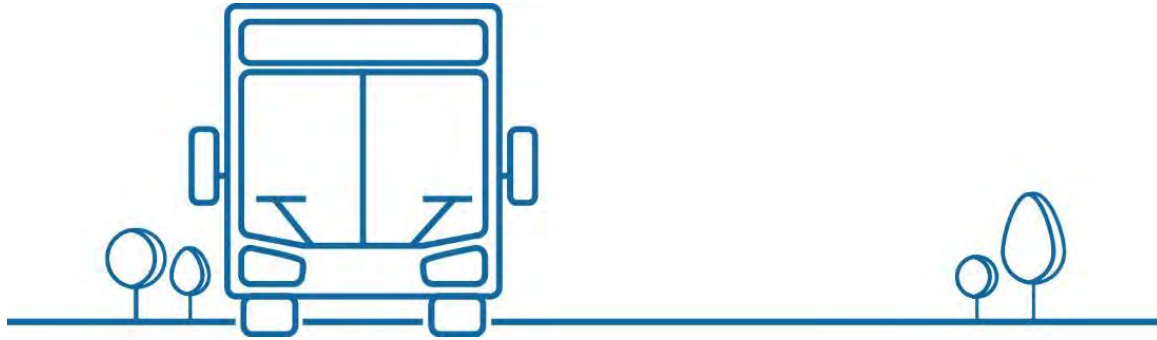
# Possible / Example Evaluation Measures

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- Speeds (main streets and side streets)
- Travel time (cars and buses)
- Turns onto / out of side streets
- Wait times / queues at side streets
- Number of people using each mode
- Surveys / perception (all users)
- Others?

2 expected evaluation phases:

1. Summer immediately after implementation (when traffic is lighter)
2. Fall (when traffic will be heavier)



# MOUNT AUBURN STREET BUS PRIORITY PILOT

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Neighborhood Concerns

# Additional Neighborhood Questions / Comments / Concerns

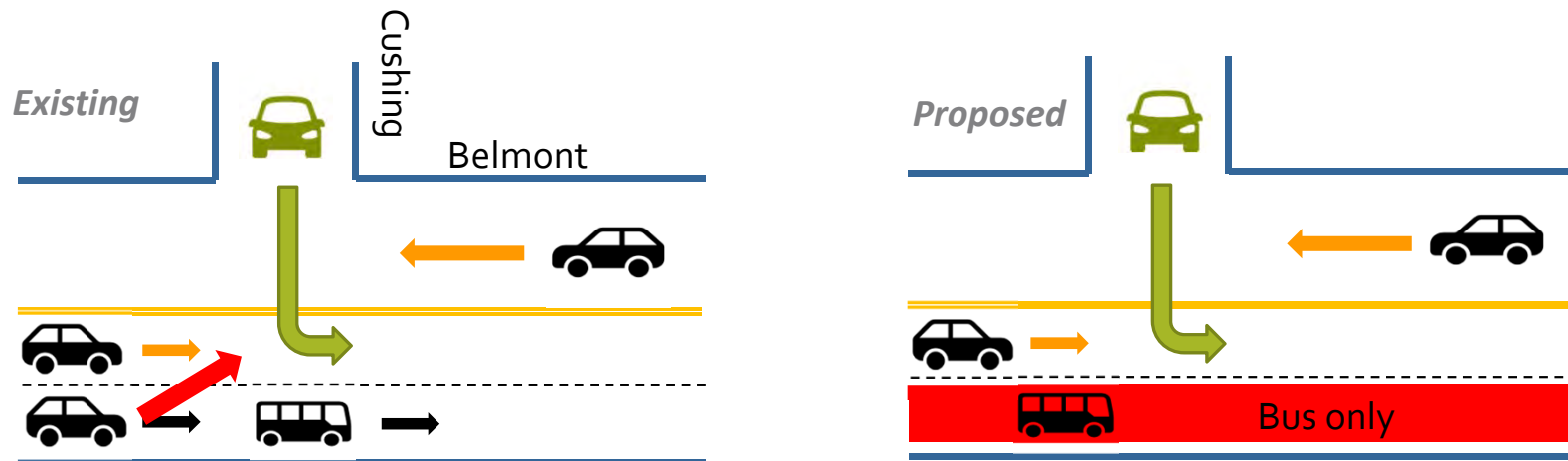
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Additional questions /comments received from neighbors:

- *"We can't all take the bus or ride a bike to work"*
  - Travel time by car should not be significantly affected
  - The region is growing economically and regional traffic is increasing
  - Encouraging use of transit is smart and efficient and can help reduce congestion, relieve parking pressure, for those who still want/need to drive
  - A goal to improve safety for EVERYONE, including drivers
- Maintaining access in and out of Cushing and Holworthy, without encouraging cut-through traffic
  - Proposed changes should make this less confusing

# Additional Neighborhood Questions / Comments / Concerns

Diagram of expected impact to exiting vehicles



# Additional Neighborhood Questions / Comments / Concerns

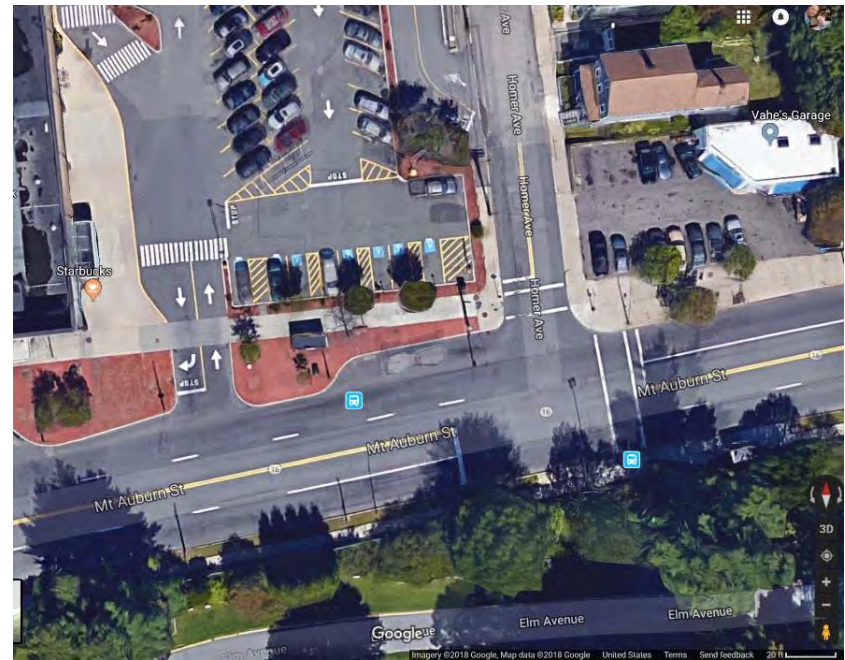
- Idea from the public: stripe a left and right turn lane at the end of Cushing





# Additional Neighborhood Questions / Comments / Concerns

- Access to Star Market parking – no decisions made in advance, ongoing discussion
- No changes to the “plaza”/parking are being proposed



# Additional Neighborhood Questions / Comments / Concerns

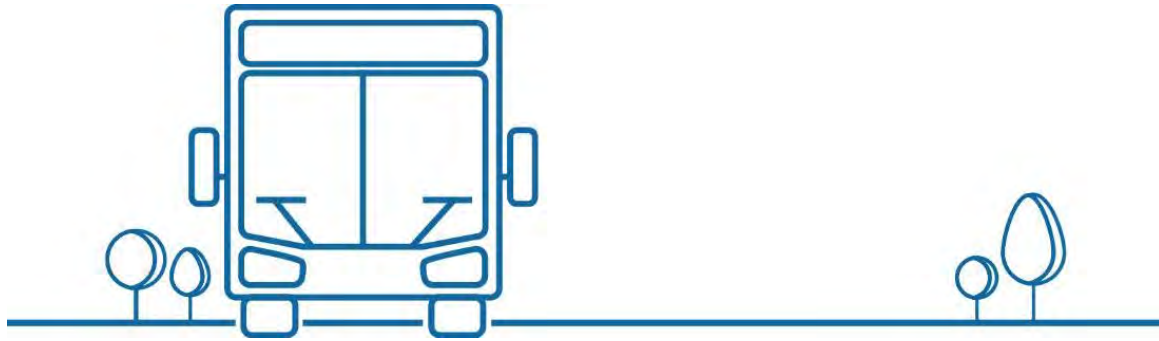
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## Additional ideas from the public:

- Remove parking on Belmont Street for a bus lane and/or neighborhood left turn “circulator lane” (Cushing to Belmont to Holworthy)
  - The City is NOT proposing removing parking on Belmont as part of the pilot project
  - More conversation with businesses would be needed regarding parking, loading
  - Consider possibility of attracting additional cut-through traffic
- Morning only bus only lanes, allow HOV vehicles, “smart lane” lane activated by bus
  - Other times of day, there is less congestion and drivers likely wouldn’t gain from the extra lane
  - Consider enforcement challenges

More concerns, ideas, questions?





## NEXT STEPS

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# Next Steps

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- Continue developing communications materials, outreach, and coordination
- Refine design through public process
- May 1 public meeting
- Implement in June with DCR
- July/August evaluate and refine
- Continue to evaluate throughout fall
- Fall/Winter 2018 begin Belmont Street design process

# Thank you!

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- Tegin Teich, [tteich@cambridgema.gov](mailto:tteich@cambridgema.gov), 617-349-4615
- Website: [cambridgema.gov/MtAuburnBusPriority](http://cambridgema.gov/MtAuburnBusPriority)

