



River Street Reconstruction



Working Group # 7

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

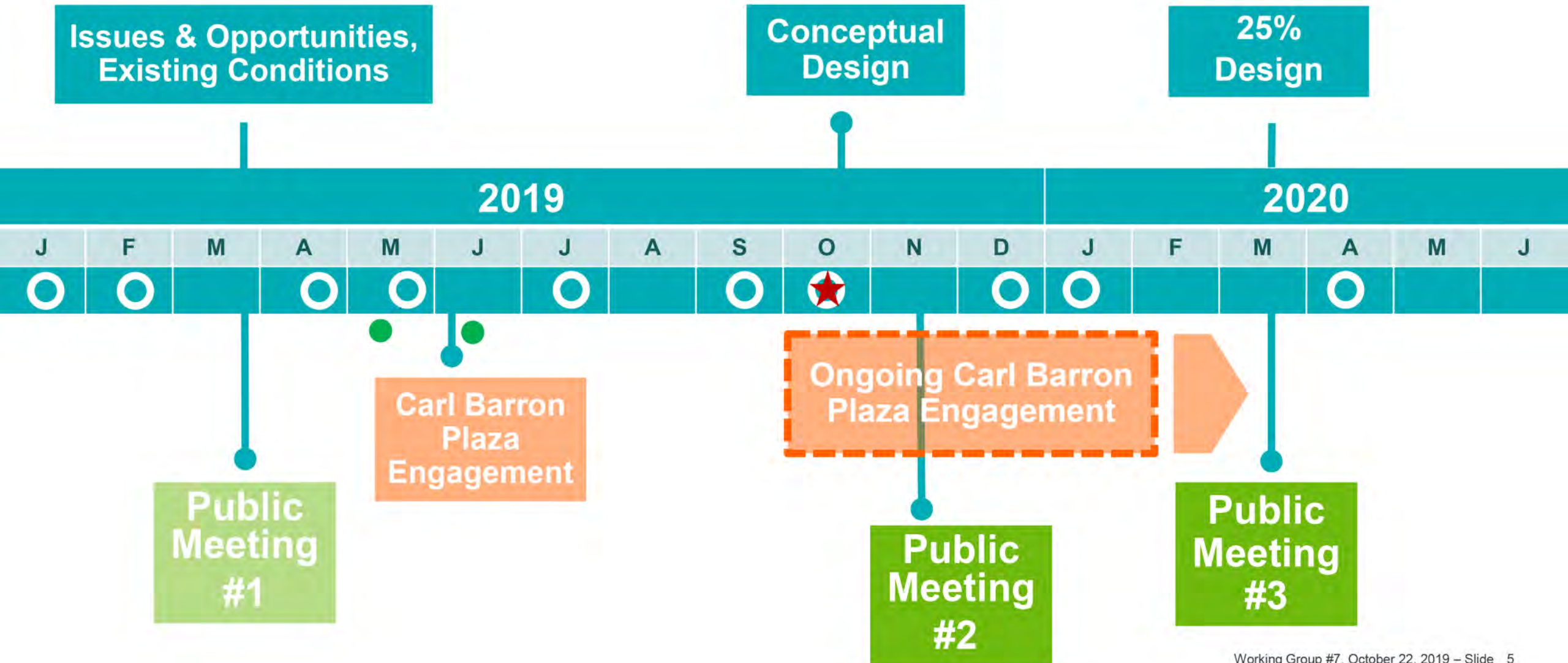
Today's Agenda

- **Welcome and Reminder of Corridor Concept** **10 minutes**
- **Break-out for Comments on Draft Concepts** **40 minutes**
- **Review of Carl Barron Public Input & Observations** **15 minutes**
- **Bus Terminal Area Update and Discussion** **45 minutes**
- **Next Steps** **5 minutes**
- **Public Comment** **5 minutes**

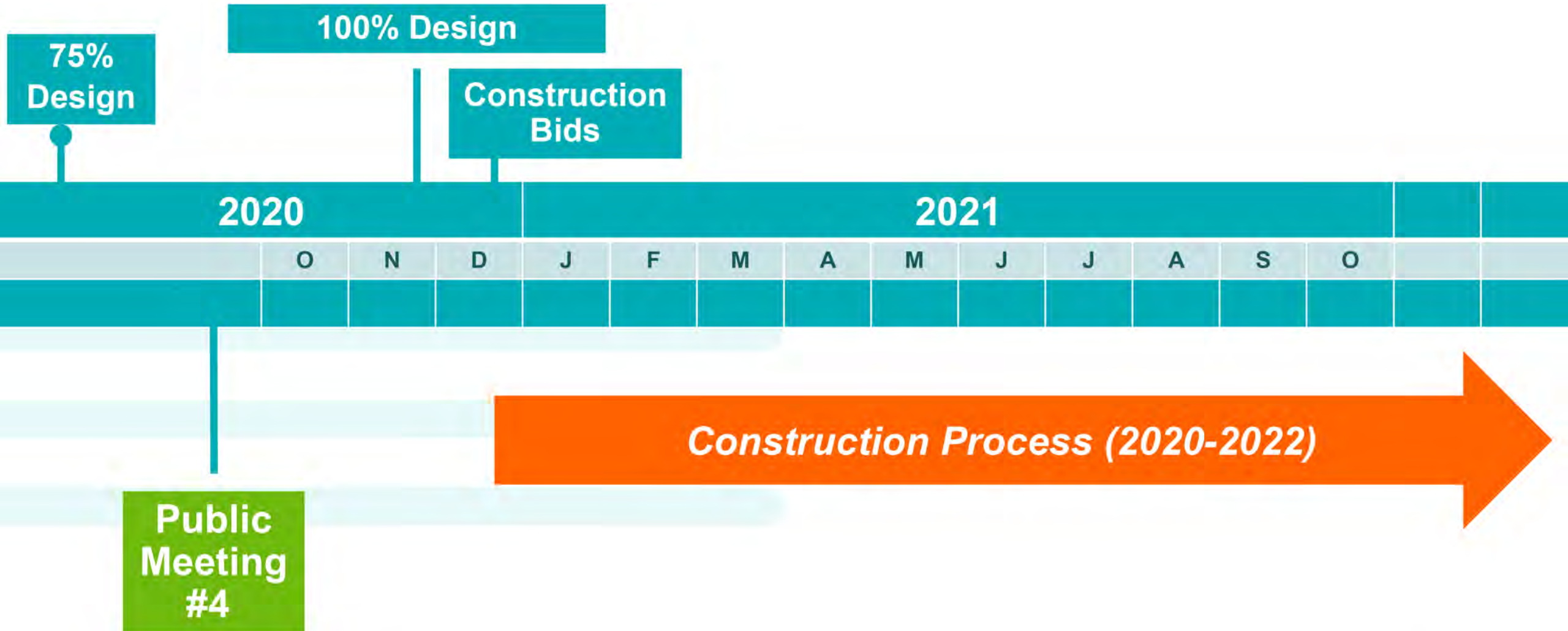
Welcome and Overview

NEW Expected Timeline

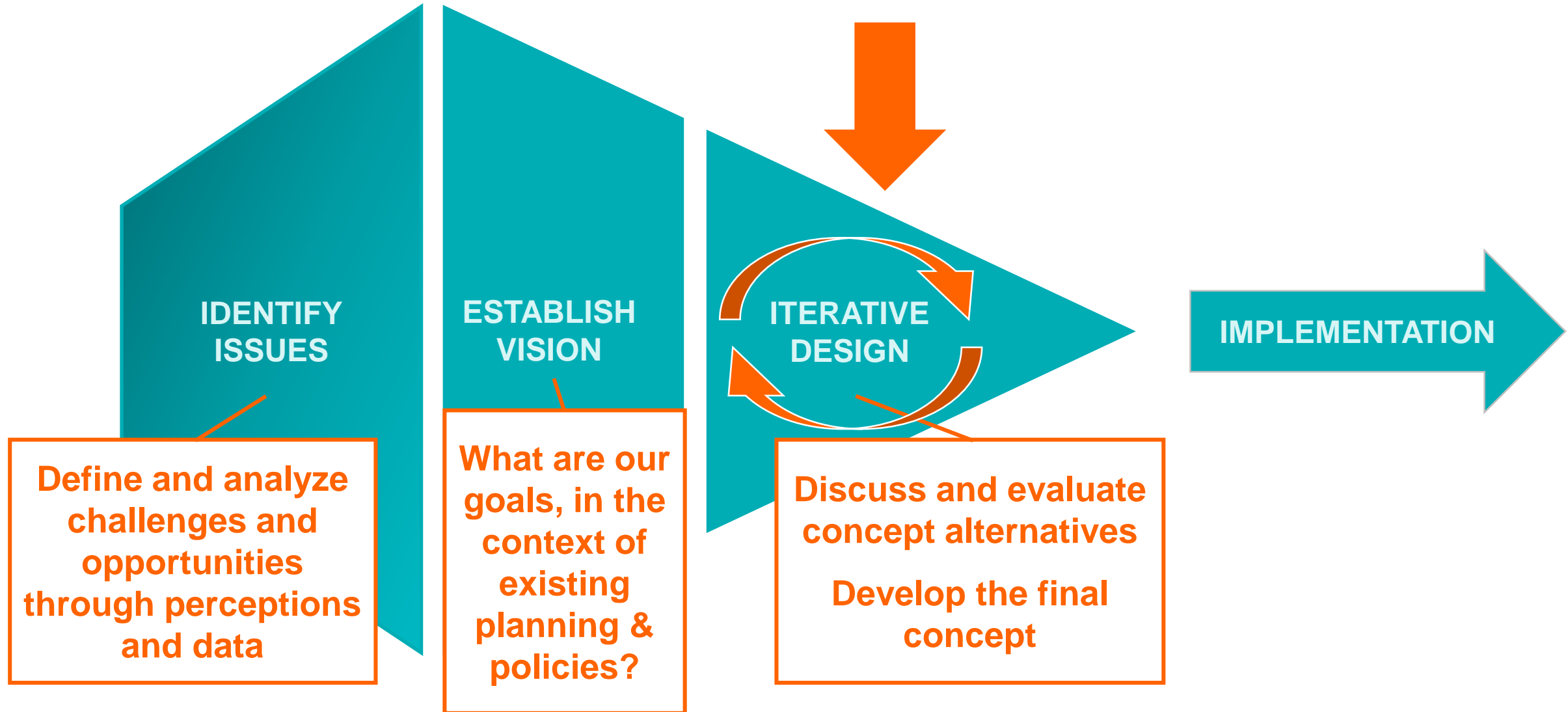
-  Working Group
-  Public Walks
-  Today



Expected Timeline



Iterative Design Stage



Guidance for Our Designers: Shared Design Goals

- Safe
- Inclusive
- Human Scale
- Ecological
- Multimodal
- Activated
- Resilient



Western Avenue

Draft Corridor Concept Reminder (of last working group presentation)

Many Ideas from the Public Process to Explore, Including:

Separated Bicycle Facilities

- Left side cycle track
- Two-way cycle track
- One lane cycle track

Traffic Operations

- Reduce travel lanes to one lane
- Signal timing changes
- Bus only lane

Pedestrian Facilities

- Safer and additional pedestrian crossings

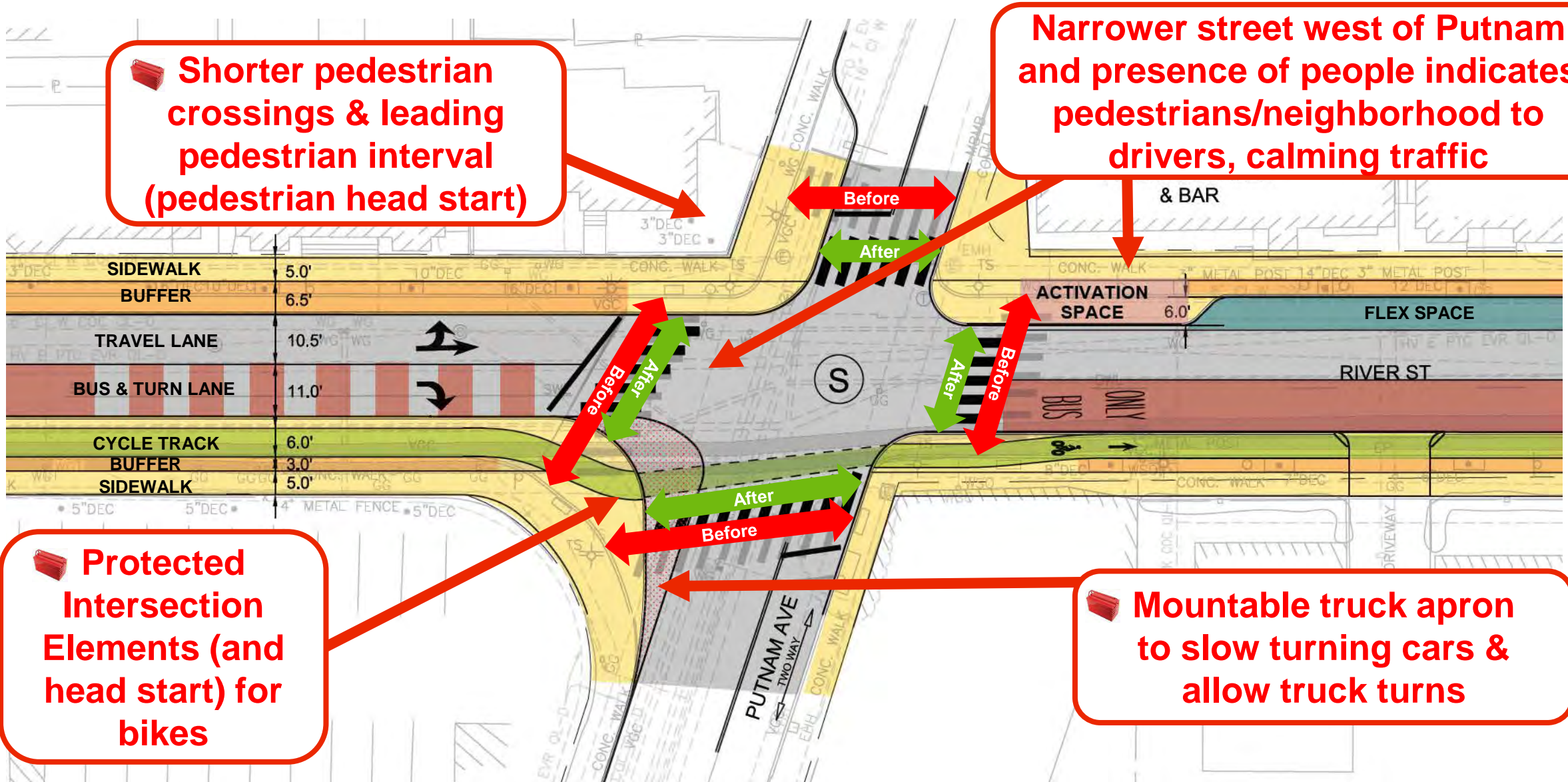
Placemaking and Green Infrastructure

- Gateway treatments
- Repurposing curb space for green infrastructure, seating for businesses, etc.
- Creating places to be

Intersection with Putnam Avenue

Shorter pedestrian crossings & leading pedestrian interval (pedestrian head start)

Narrower street west of Putnam and presence of people indicates pedestrians/neighborhood to drivers, calming traffic

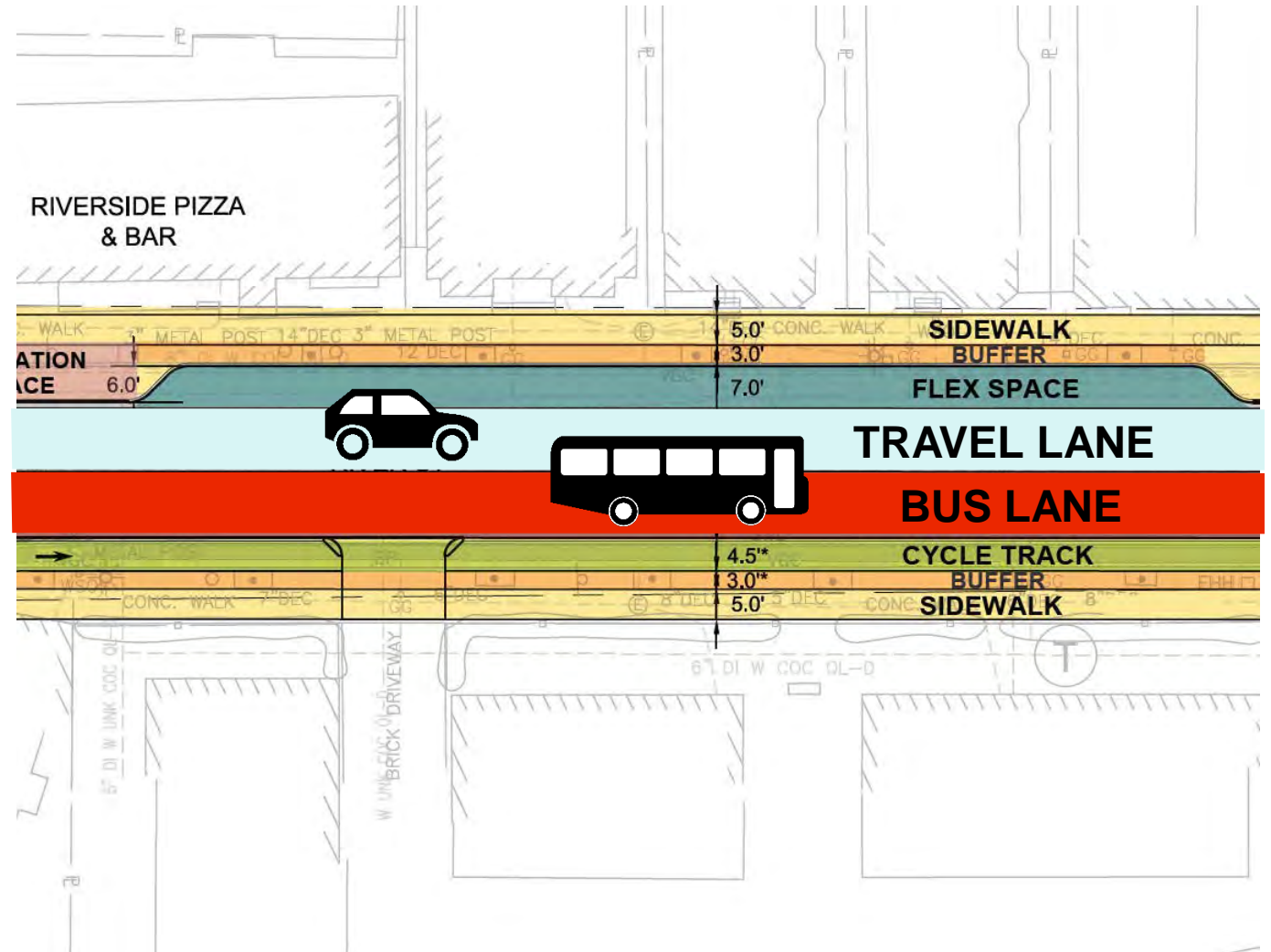


Protected Intersection Elements (and head start) for bikes

Mountable truck apron to slow turning cars & allow truck turns

East of Putnam Avenue to Franklin Street – No Signals

- One general use lane handles existing traffic (encouraging slower speeds)
- No queuing/spill back from Howard Street signal
- Transit lane – improves bus reliability and reduces delay
- The bus lane provides flexibility when there is construction, maintenance, trash operations, etc.



Putnam Avenue to Kelly/Howard Streets

Activation zones supporting local businesses

Vehicle storage in flex space also provides friction to calm traffic

One bus stop could be removed (26 people per day, 2-3.5 min walk to next stop)

Enhanced entrance to Hoyt Field (in development)

Activation zone on Kelly/Howard intersection's south side (with bus stop)

Coast Café area today





BUMP OUT AT
CROSSWALK
& COAST CAFE
(BEYOND)
ACTIVATION AREA

50'-0"
R.O.W.

APPROX. LIMIT OF WORK

APPROX. LIMIT OF WORK

ONE WAY
PARKVIEW ST

EXISTING GAS
TRANSMISSION LINE

VARIES

5'-0"

SIDEWALK

3'-0"

BUFFER

VARIES

7'-0"

FLEX ZONE
(CURB
EXTENSIONS)
VARIES

10'-6"

TRAVEL LANE

11'-0"

BUS LANE

5'-0"

CYCLE
TRACK

2'-0"

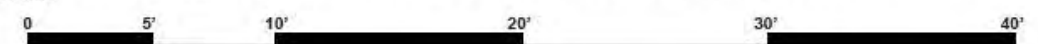
BUFFER (@ INTERSECTION ONLY, BUFFER W/ TREE PITS IS 2'-6" TYP.)

5'-6"

SIDEWALK

(* SIDEWALK IS 5'-0" IN MOST LOCATIONS)

-
 SIDEWALK
-
 TRAVEL LANE
-
 BIKE LANE
-
 BUFFER
-
 BUS LANE
-
 FLEX ZONE



Summary of Pedestrian Safety and Comfort Features

- Raises all side-street crossings
- Narrows turning radii on most intersections to slow down turns
- Improves visibility at intersections
- Increases vertical elements (trees)
- Moves general traffic in a single lane
- Adds two new crosswalks
- Provides an increased buffer between traffic and people walking and biking (except buses and right-hand turns)
- Simplifies ADA compliant crossings
- Provides more space for people to sit, providing a more neighborhood feeling

Ask questions and use sticky notes to tell us what you **like/don't like** about the draft concepts



Share additional ideas that you think are still missing

Review of Carl Barron Public Input & Observations

Carl Barron Plaza: a process within the River Street process

River Street Outreach

- 6 Working Group Meetings
- 1 Public Meeting
- Online Public Input Map
- River Street pre-construction survey
- Site Walks
- Special Outreach (businesses, DCR, MassDOT, etc)
- Other events

Carl Barron Outreach (# of ppl)

- Existing Conditions Open House (20)
- Day of Engagement (over 120)
- In-person Interviews (17)
- Online Carl Barron Survey (32)
- MBTA Coordination Meetings (4)

Existing Conditions Open House



Outdoor Day of Engagement



Interviewees

Tasha Williams, Cambridge Housing, Manning Building

Ethel Delgado - Tenant Council President, Manning Building

Susan Pacheco - Executive Director, Cambridge Council on Aging

Michael Monestime and **Sai Boddupalli** - CSQ Business Association

Kaitlyn Kelly - Youth Center Program Director, Moore Youth Center

Hitomi Abe and others - CDD Community Engagement

Jason Yee - Cambridge Public Library

Diane Fluet and **Stu Pratt** - Hunneman Real Estate, Holmes Building

Meghan Hynes, Director of Drug User Health Programs, AIDS Action + 3 constituents

Maria Melo - Multi Service Center

Online Public Input Map



Where do you see issues and opportunities for change on River Street?

Click **"Add Points"** to add to the map.

ADD AS MANY POINTS AS YOU WOULD LIKE



Instructions & Help Add Points Project Website

A screenshot of the online public input map interface. The map shows a street grid with several points added. A callout box points to a point on Western Ave near the India Pavilion and Aleppo's Palace. The callout text reads: "Comment It would be lovely to have some space for outdoor seating for India Pavilion or Aleppo's Palace. It doesn't have to be much. I think Aleppo's usually has a few tiny tables for eating outdoors." The interface includes a navigation bar at the top with 'Map' and 'Satellite' options, a search bar, and a 'View Options' panel on the right with checkboxes for various categories. The Google logo is visible in the bottom left corner.

Online Carl Barron Survey (32 respondents)

- The future Carl Barron Plaza:



What we heard: social environment

- Outdoor living room for the vulnerable
- Social life around drug/alcohol use
- Unfriendly to families
- Uses perpetuating income inequity
- Mental health issues
- Crime prevention
- Fear of displacement
- Busy and loud
- Deters positive mixing of diverse individuals
- Unique and dynamic space
- Violence in the space
- Safety for women

What we heard: physical environment

- Retail: lack of variety
- Appreciation for shade trees
- Pedestrian circulation issues
- Unwelcoming/uninviting space:
- Current seating arrangement not appropriate for public life
- Bricks are a problem
- Dark and uninviting at night
- Location and usability of the Portland Loo
- Unclear automobile circulation
- Access to public transit is crucial
- Amenities availability, location, and use
- Public art relevance and placement
- Overall layout—lack of central space
- Cleanliness issues
- Safety for people on bikes

Carl Barron Plaza Shared Design Goals

Inclusive	Attract a wide range of users while preserving usability for the existing regulars
Activated	Create a vibrant space through everyday activities and special programming
Safe	Create a feeling of safety for everyone
Flexible	Allow for a wide range of uses and activities that can evolve over time
Attractive	Improve the perception of the space
Comfortable	Provide seating, lighting and amenities that promote short- and long-term lingering
Multimodal	Ensure pedestrian and bicyclist flow, and coordinate with transit users' needs
Functional	Provide materials and amenities that are functional and easily maintained
All-Season	Provide comfortable year-round use and reduce microclimate influence

Observations

On Massachusetts Avenue between River Street and Cambridge City Hall small groups of a wide diversity of people were observed, often having positive interactions between all groups.

‘Regulars’ hang out for a long time and tend to know each other.



**Regulars sometimes
congregate in larger
numbers in The Circle
(aka the area inside the
two large planters at Carl
Barron Plaza).**



The Circle hosts a wide diversity of people, including regulars and others, however it has a lower proportion of women and young children compared to other public spaces in Central Square.



Women and young children are seen in much higher numbers on the City Hall lawn...



...and in flexible seating areas.



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- Take pride in your work
- Are long-term growth-minded
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- Know FOOD is ART is LOVE is LIFE
- Have full or part-time & weekend availability

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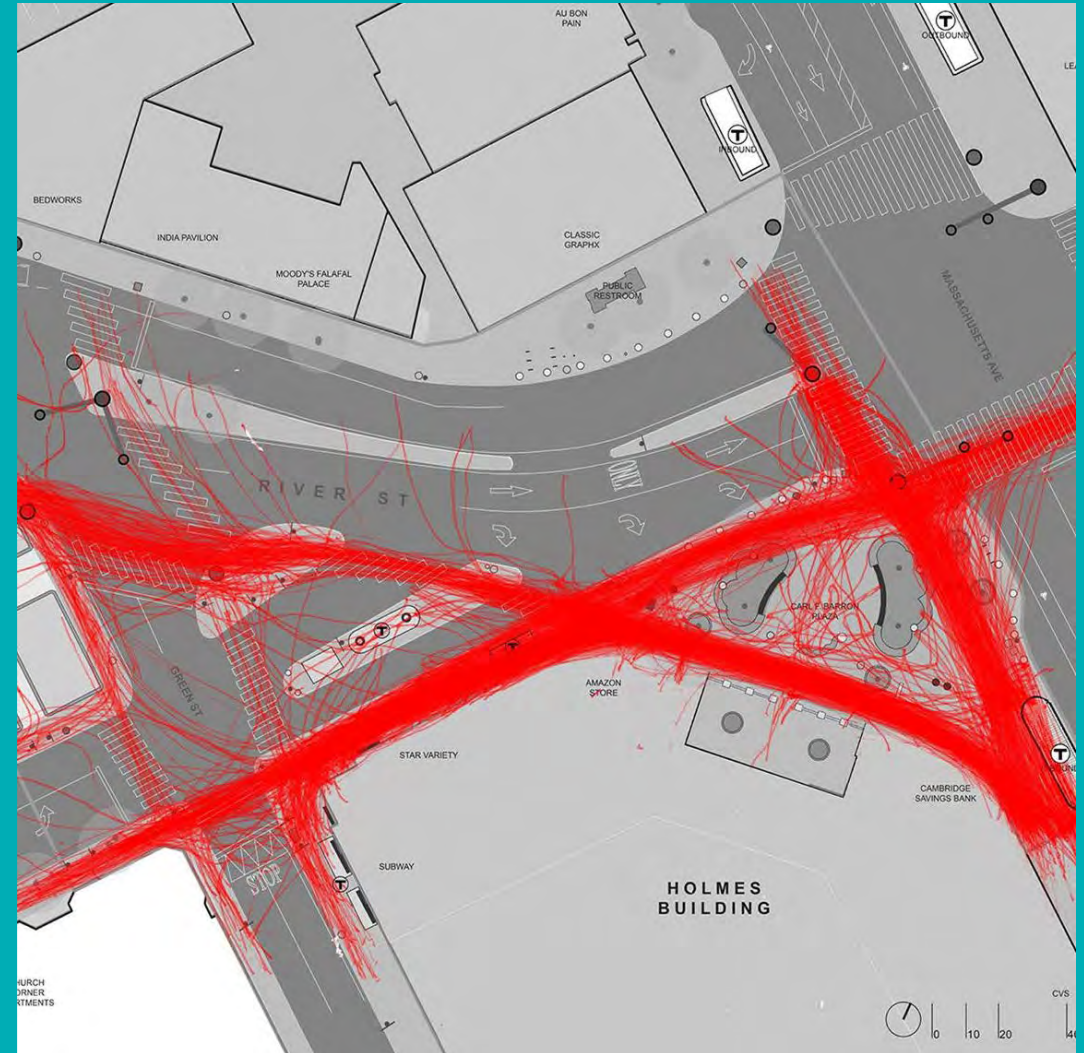
Children are often keenly interested in climbing on walls and stairs at City Hall and near the Post Office across the street.



The design of The Circle also discourages walk-through traffic.

Diagram represents movement tracking in three 15-minute segments (AM rush hour, PM rush hour, and at noon) for one weekday.

This is a visual representation of volume and general path of travel, and is not exact.



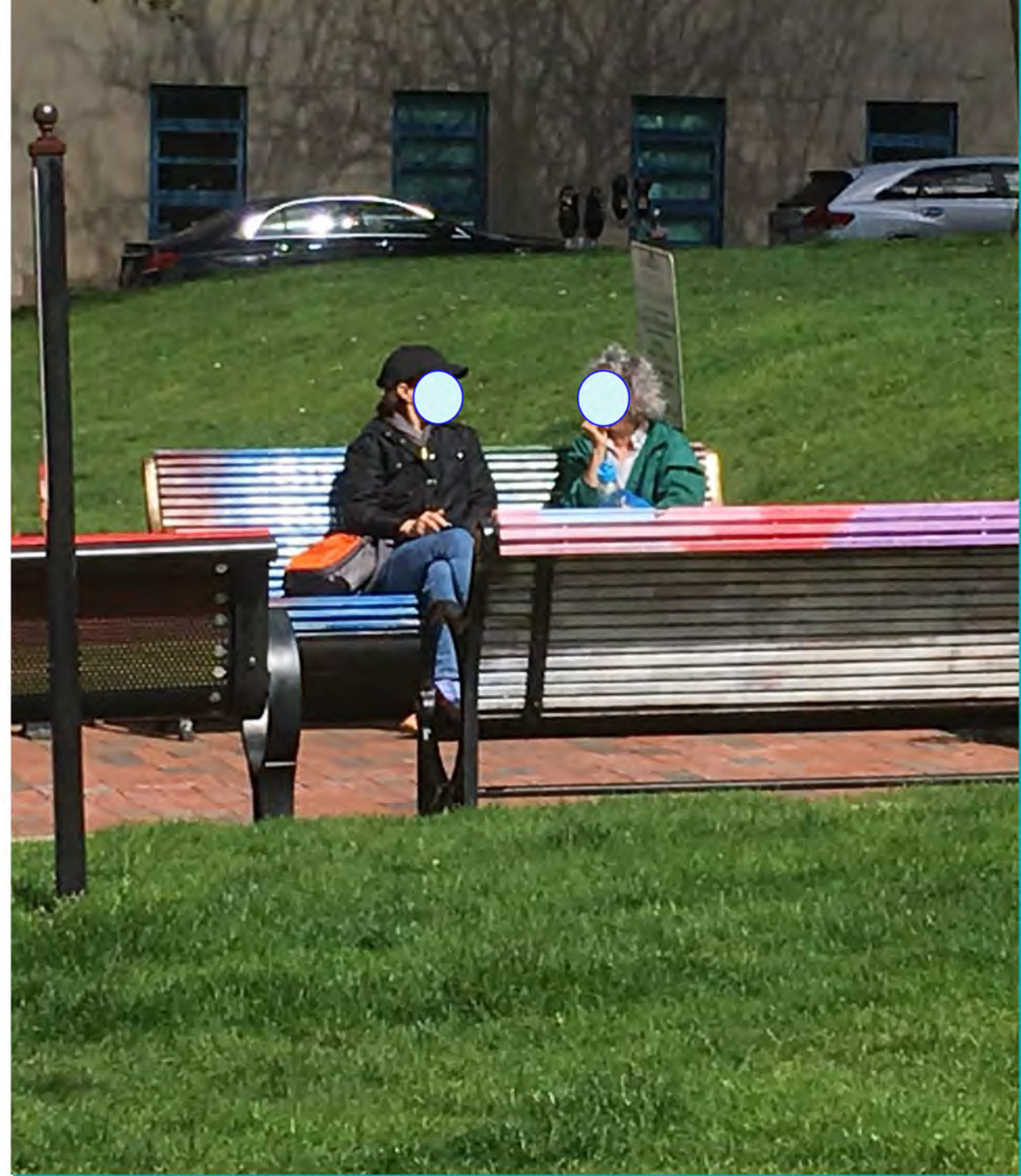
The Circle was designed as an amphitheatre, but musicians tend to hang out on the edges of busy sidewalks where there are more passers-by.



There are many places in Central Square where people hang out for a long time.

These spaces are often protected from the friction of passersby, such as a bench perpendicular to pedestrian traffic.

Typically groups in these spaces number 2, 3, or 4.



Many groups that sit in the Circle (also separated from passersby) tend to stay for a long time, and it can feel like they “own” the entire space.

Here, groups can number 7, 8, 9 people or many more.



There is also visible demand for seating and lingering outside of the Circle...

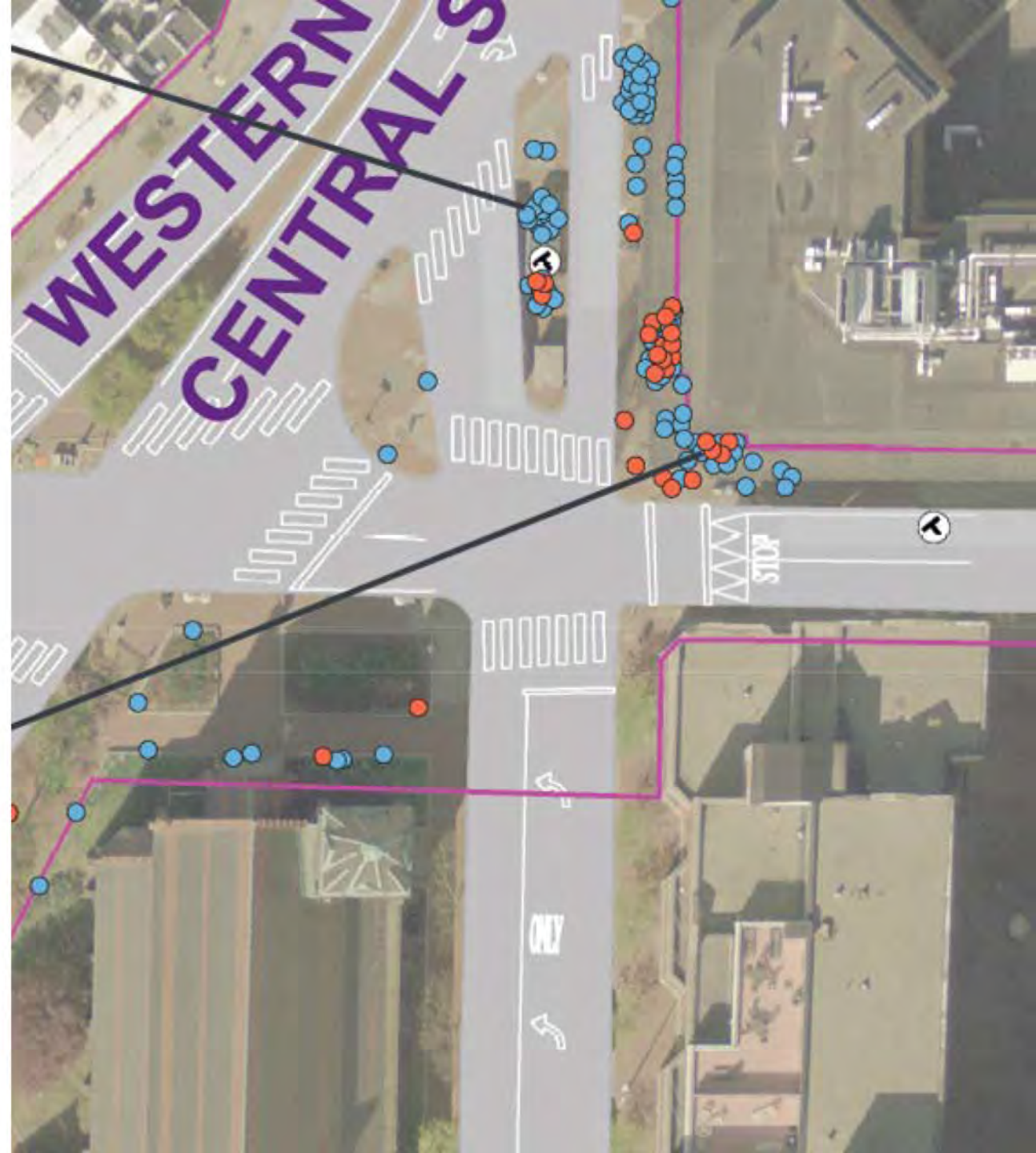


...often looking in.



One of the most sociable locations outside of the main plaza (shown in red) is at the Star Variety Convenience Store benches.

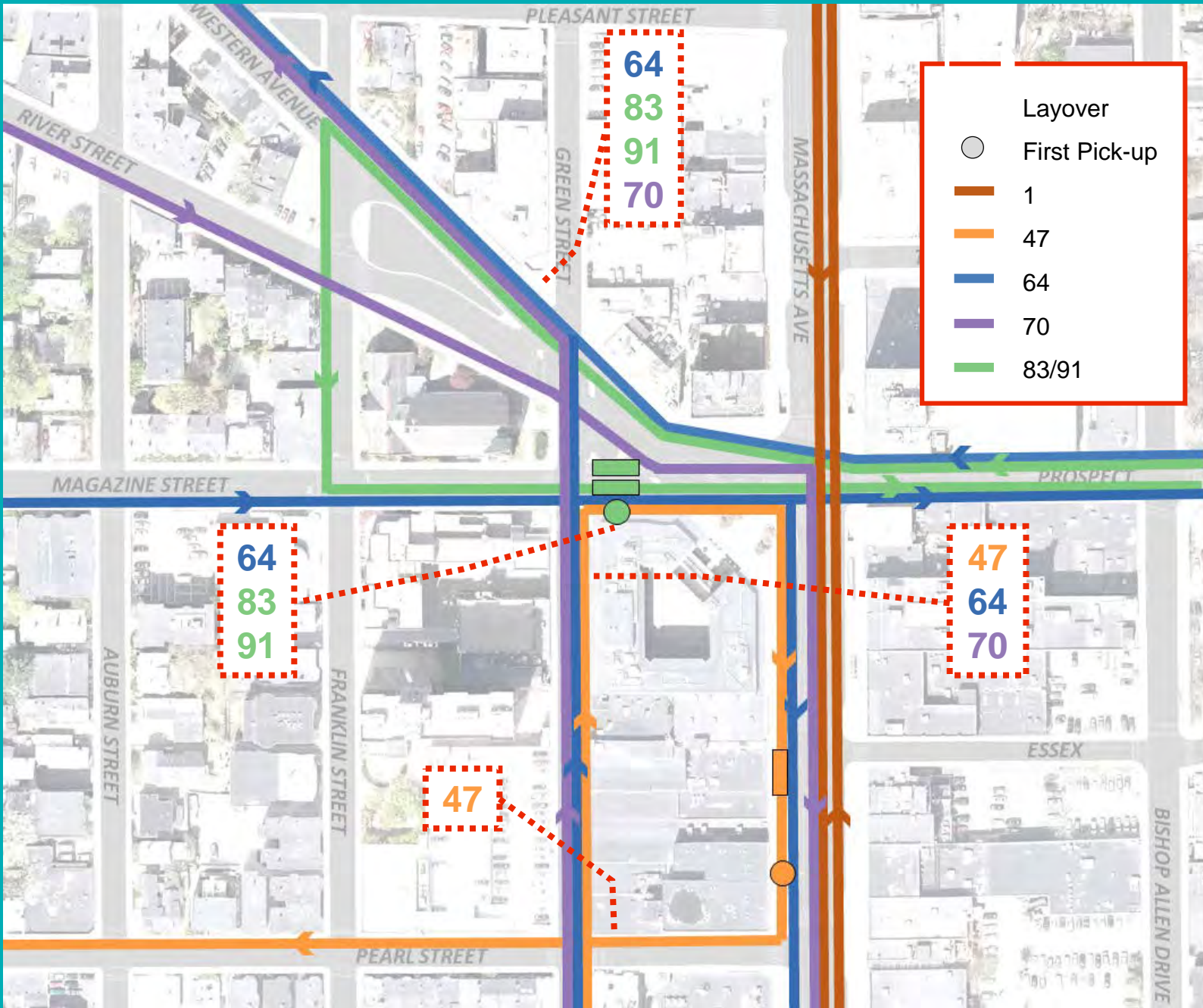
- *Socializing*
- *Not-socializing*



Bus Terminal Area Update and Discussion

Givens

- Use smooth surfaces for accessibility
- *Improve the public realm & make it more inclusive*
- Do not displace current users
- Widen the sidewalk alongside the busway (near Star Variety store)
- *Include separated bike lane*
- Allow for programming (flexibility)
- Maintain existing right and through traffic lanes from River Street (at Massachusetts Avenue) to prioritize pedestrian crossings
- Make it easier to understand for bus riders
- Reduce bus delays and improve service (do not increase travel times)
- Try to alleviate bus stop crowding
- ***Maintain MBTA layovers for the 83 and 91 buses***
- ***Find a new layover space for the 47 that is not on Massachusetts Avenue***



Existing Bus Operations

Better Bus Project changes:

- Route CT1 eliminated in September
- Route 64 to change to Kendall Square/MIT terminus all-day in December

Bus ops toolbox item 1: distribute bus layover locations

- Buses park 5-10 minutes to give drivers a break and have a buffer between the end of one trip and the start of the next
- Removing layovers from the busway simplifies operations and creates space
- Layover need to be:
 - Designed so that buses can pass and get around each other for independent operations
 - Close to facilities and services for drivers
 - Out of the way of other traffic and operations



Potential impacts at layover locations

- Noise from buses
- May require changes to curb lines or parking regulations





Potential Magazine Street bus layover space

Any changes would require community and rider input




Estimated bus layover location



Potential River Street bus layover space

Any changes would require community and rider input

 Estimated bus layover location

Bus ops toolbox item 2: bus route changes



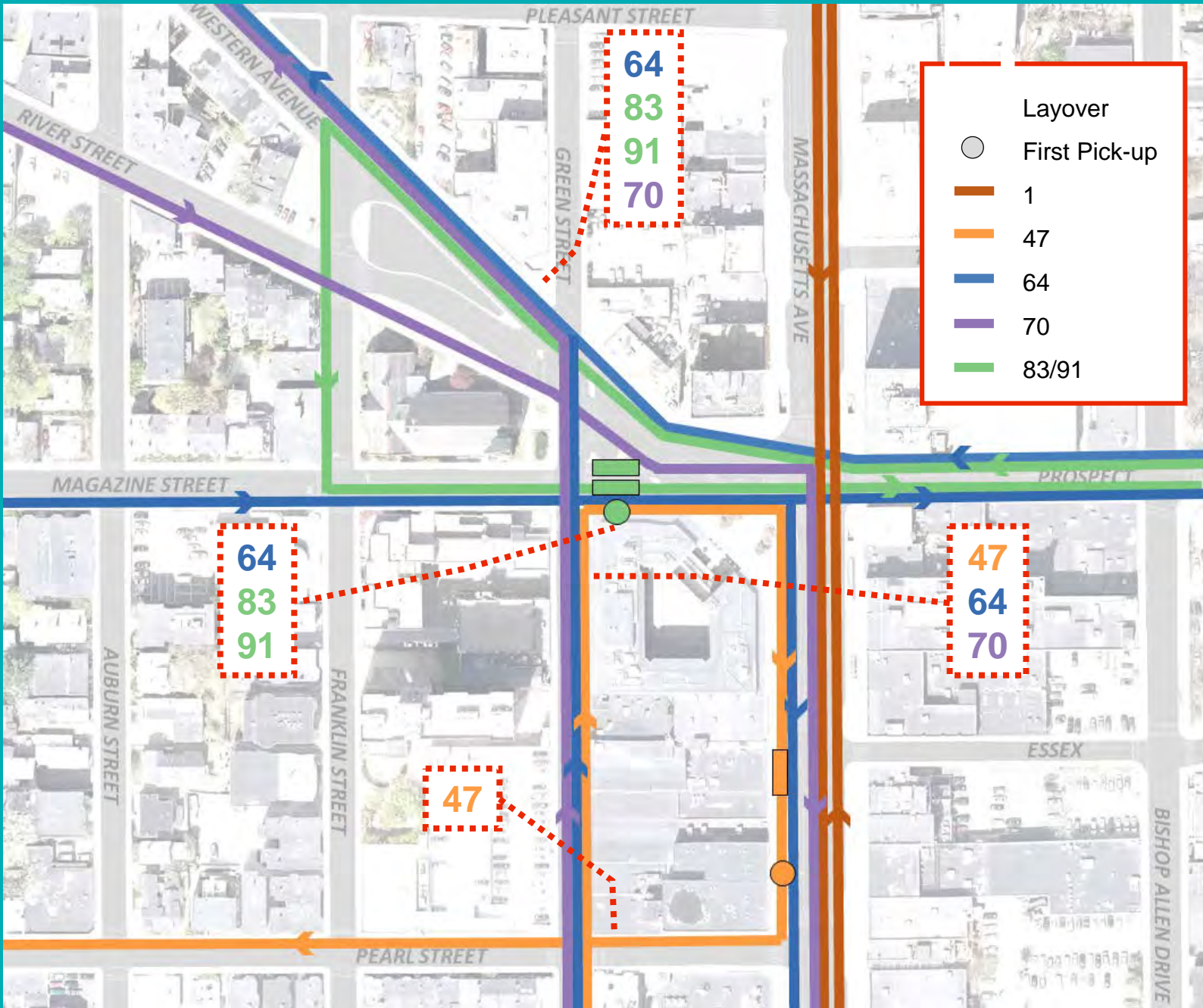
- Bus routing impacts how much space is needed for bus operations in the area
- Subtle alterations to routes can result in improvements or expansion to the public space, including bus stop zones:
- The MBTA prefers route changes that:
 - Include bus stops that are accessible to people with disabilities
 - Are as fast or faster than current routes
 - Have stops that optimize potential transfers (bus-to-bus or bus-to-subway)



Potential impacts from bus route changes

- Bus-to-subway or bus-to-bus transfer connections distances or times could decrease or increase
- New stop locations can be impactful to abutters
- Some streets may see buses that haven't had them before

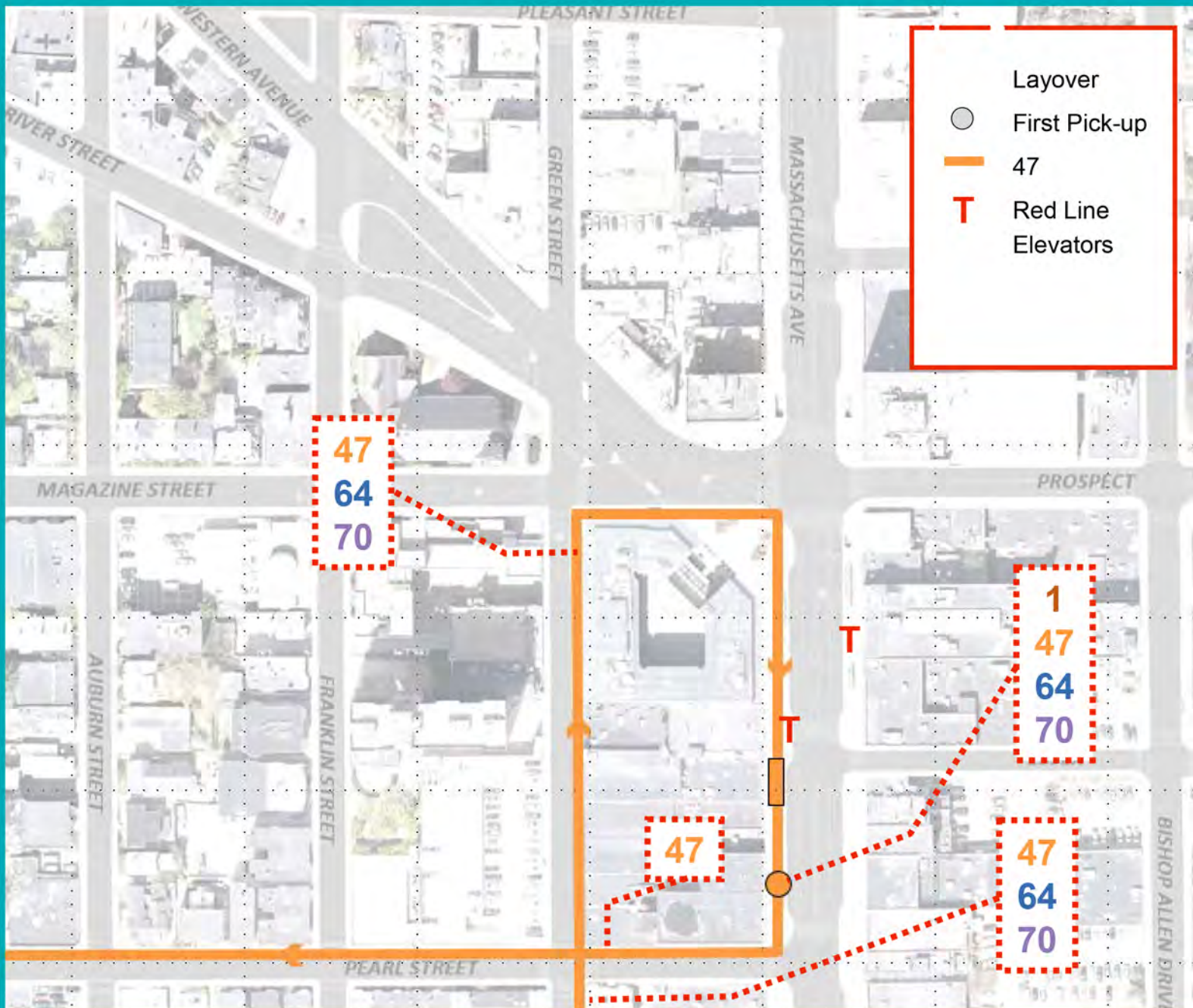




Existing Bus Operations

Better Bus Project changes:

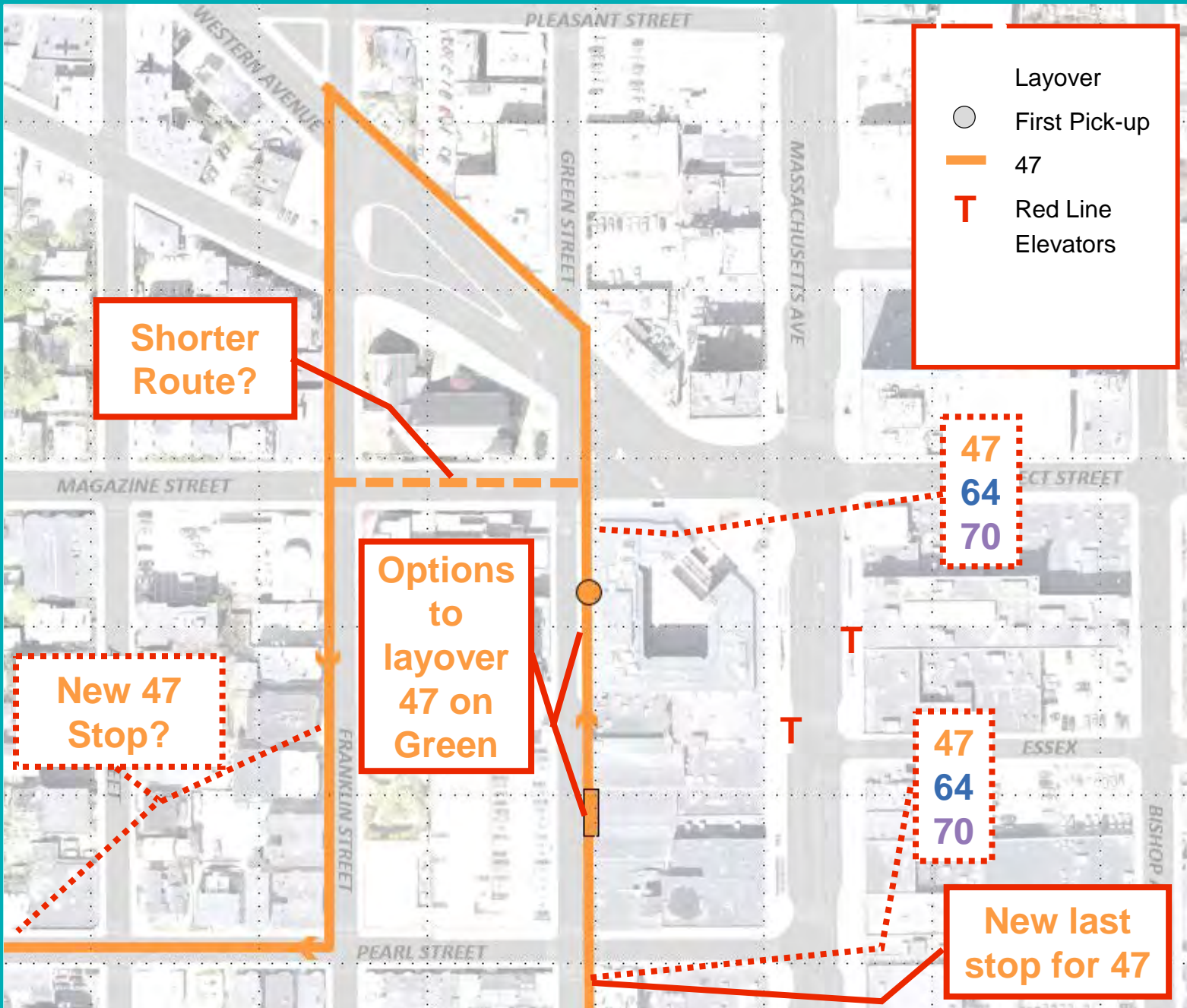
- Route CT1 eliminated in September
- Route 64 to change to Kendall Square/MIT terminus all-day in December



Existing 47 Route

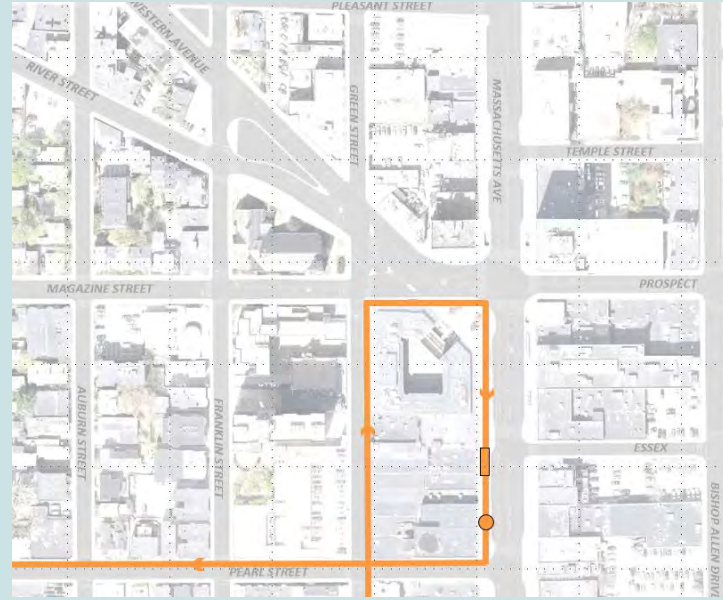
- Today's layover location on Massachusetts Avenue has some difficulties:
 - Conflicts with Route 1 pick-up/drop-off
 - Conflicts with bicycle lane
 - Impacted by commercial loading and ride-hailing services

Example: Potential 47 Route Change



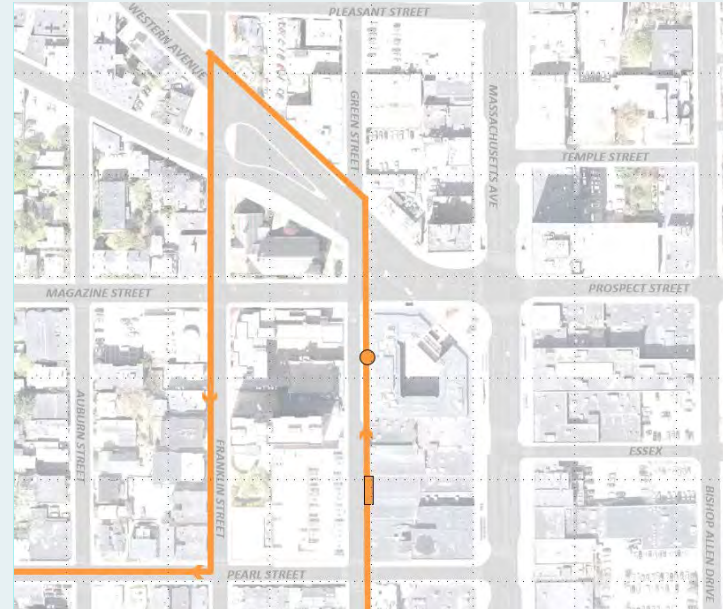
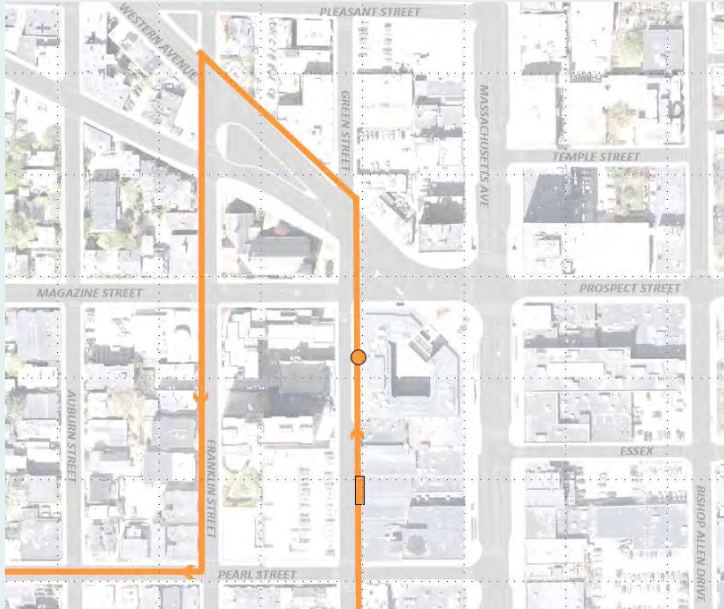
- Slightly longer distance to Red Line from new stop
- Any changes would require further community and rider input

Without 47 Route Change



Now, let's overlay the the choice of whether or not to change the route of the Route 47 Bus with...

With 47 Route Change



Magazine Street Layover



River Street Layover



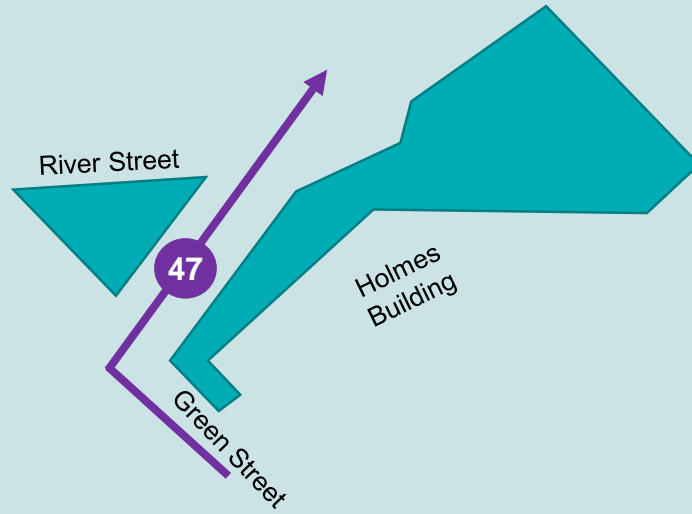
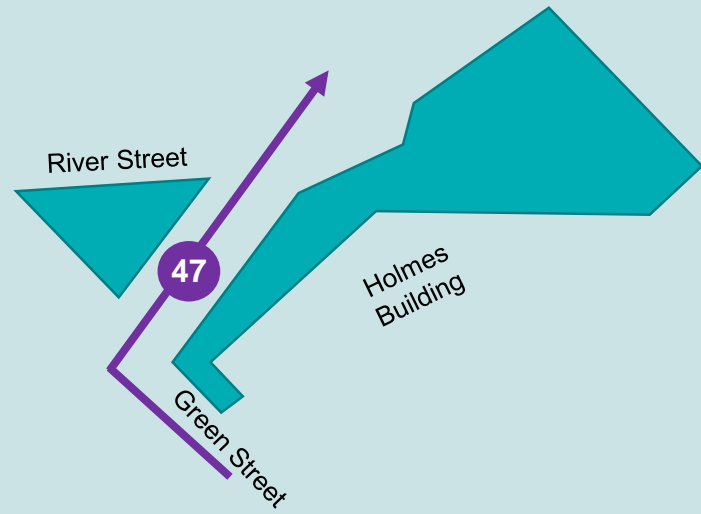
...the choice of where to layover the 83 and 91 buses, so that we can visualize....



Magazine Street Layover

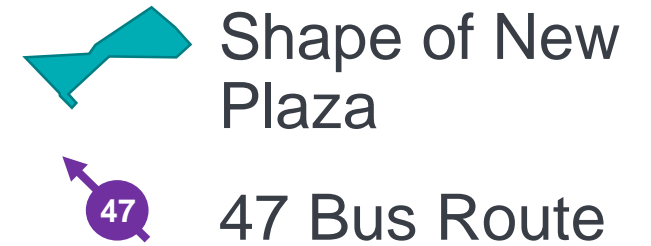
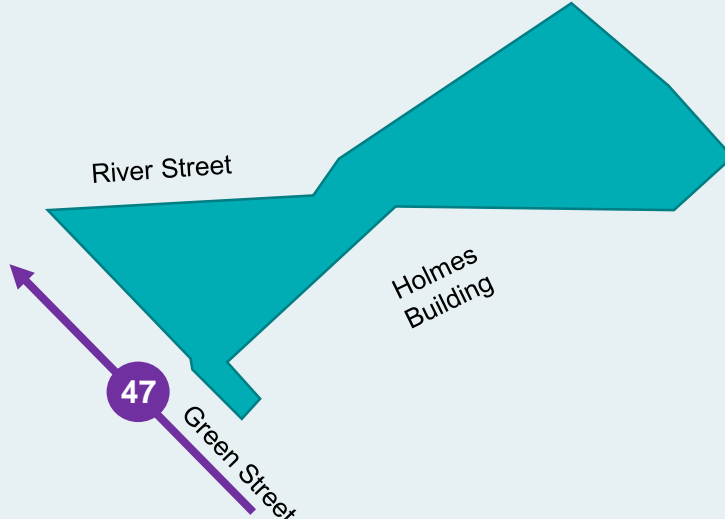
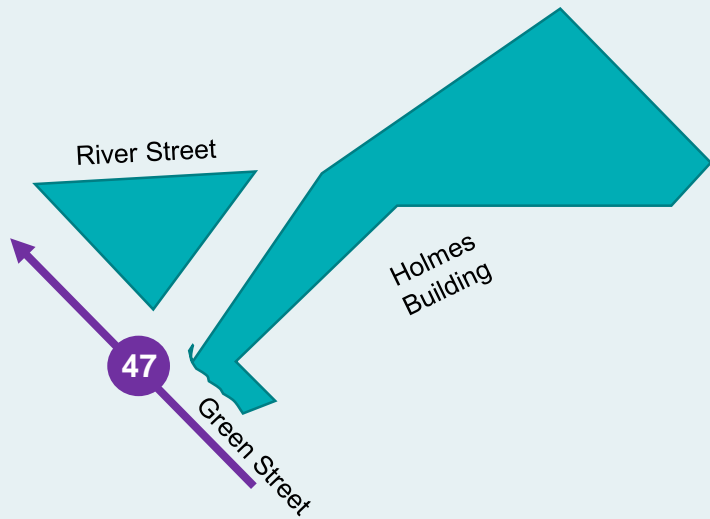
River Street Layover

Without 47 Route Change

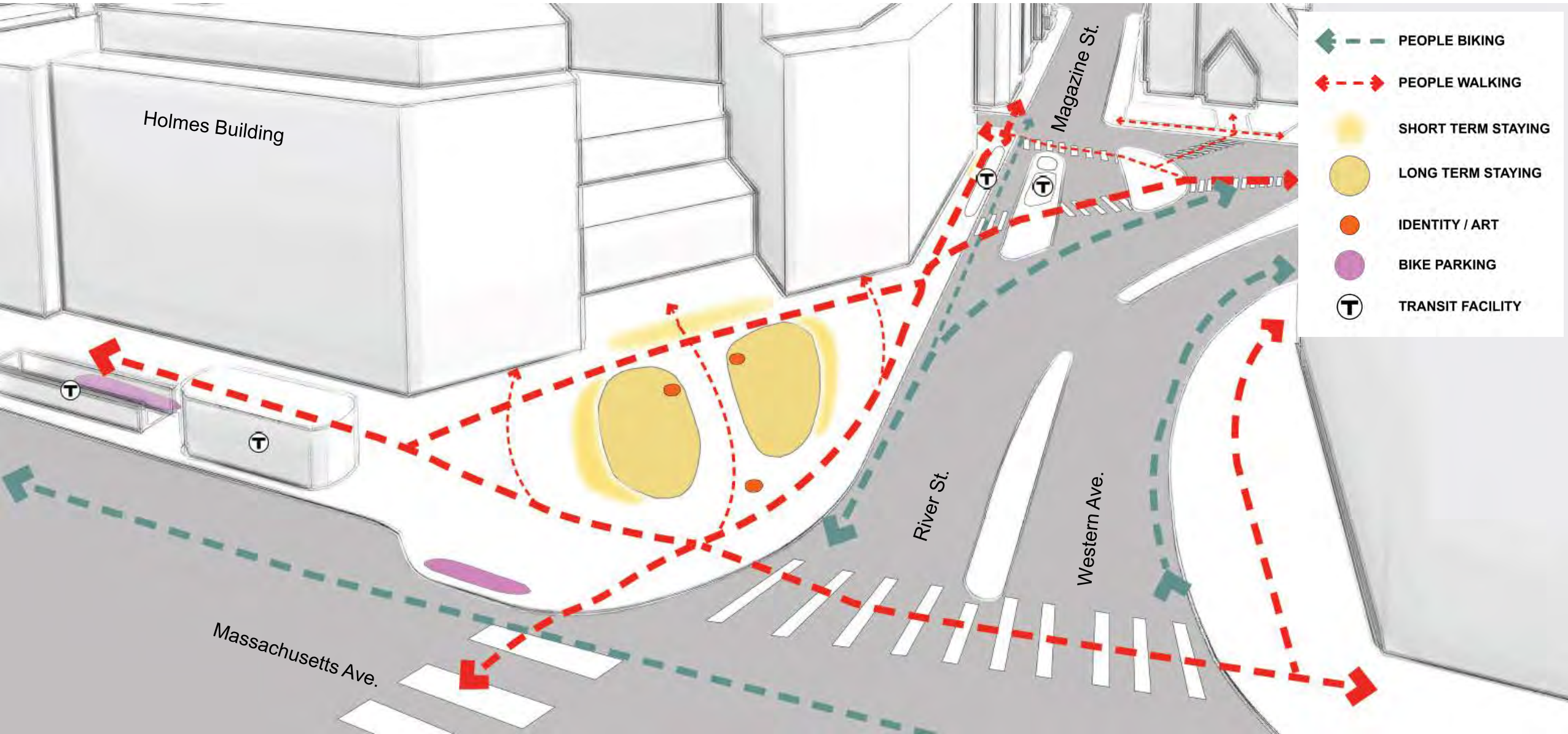


...what these changes together can make possible for the plaza.

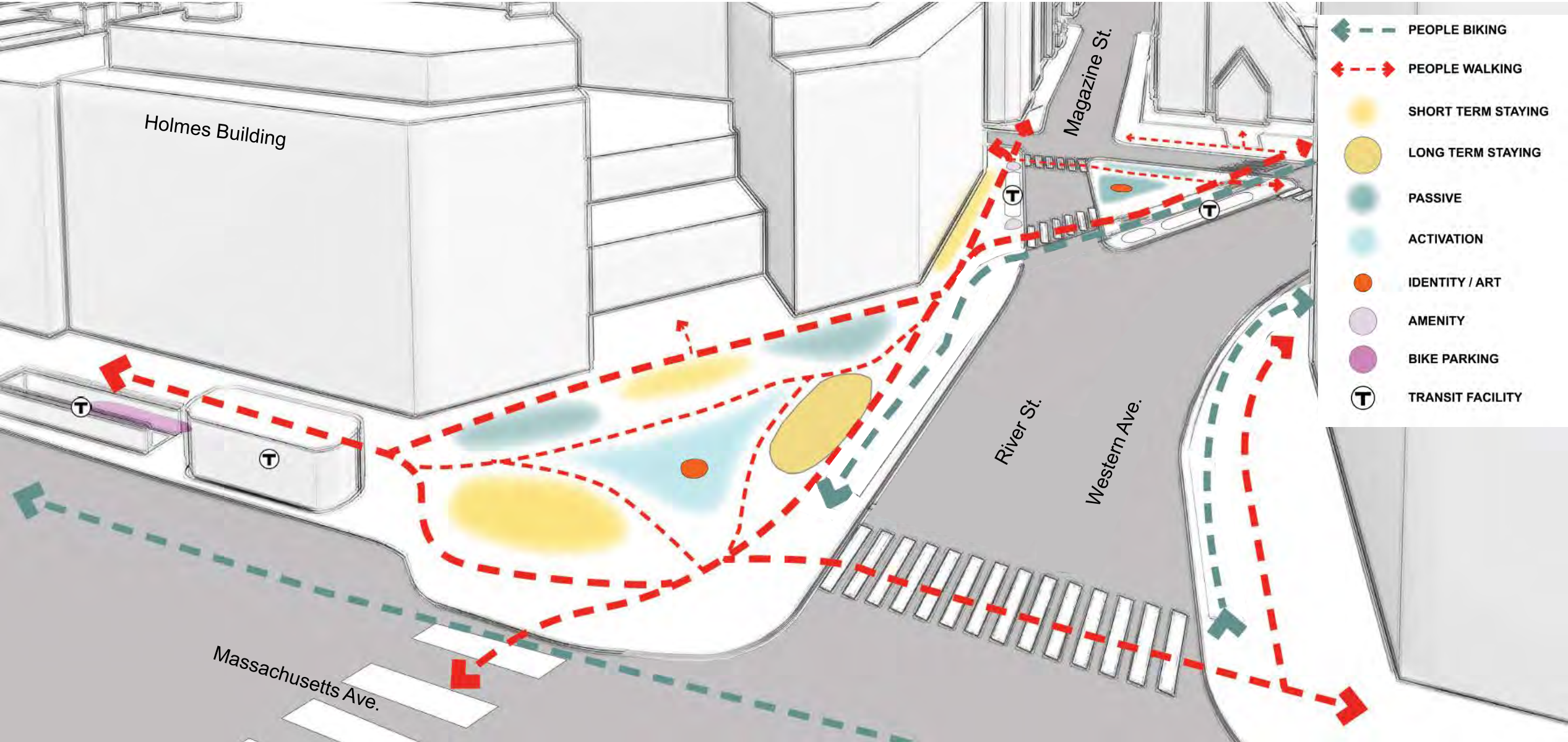
With 47 Route Change



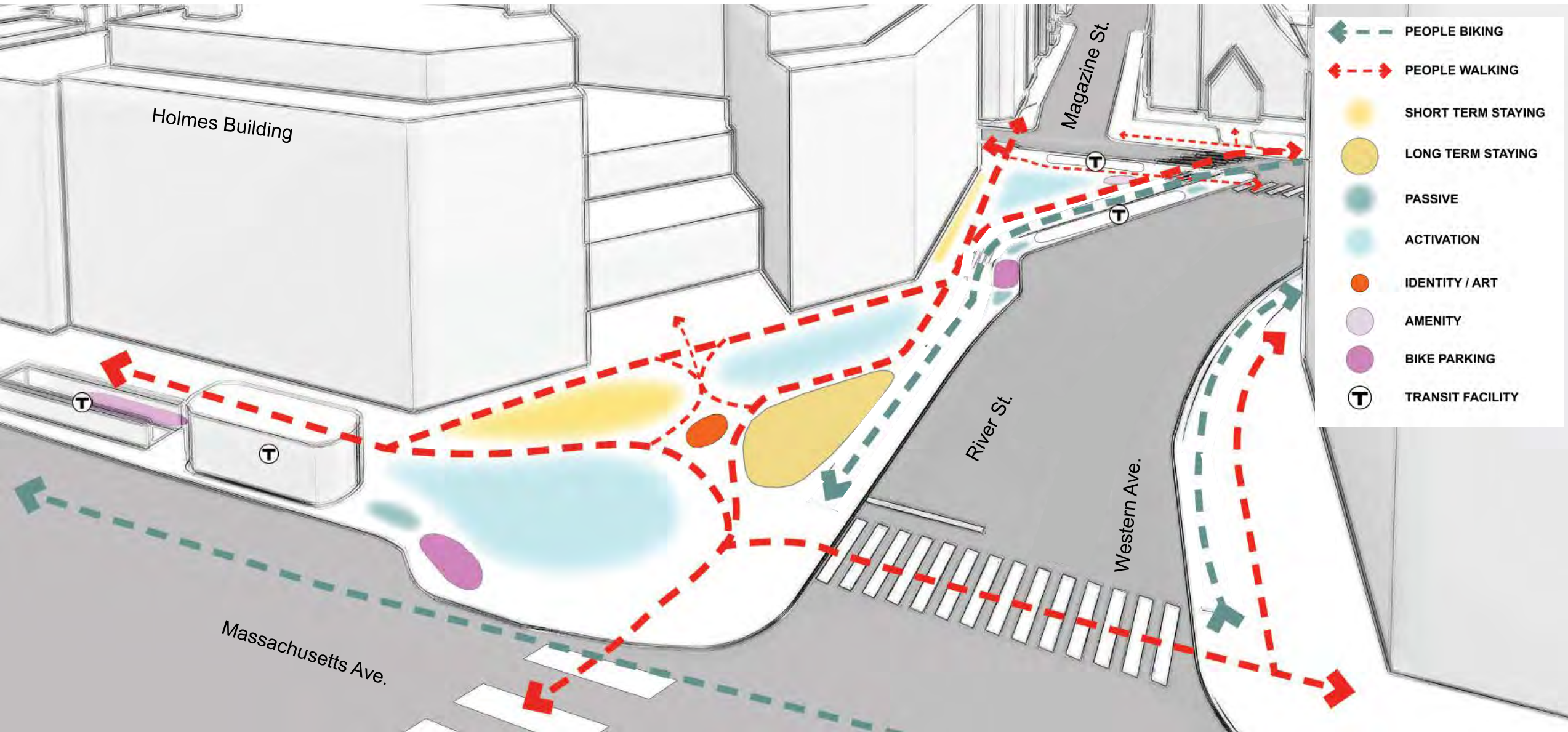
Observed uses of the plaza (simplified)



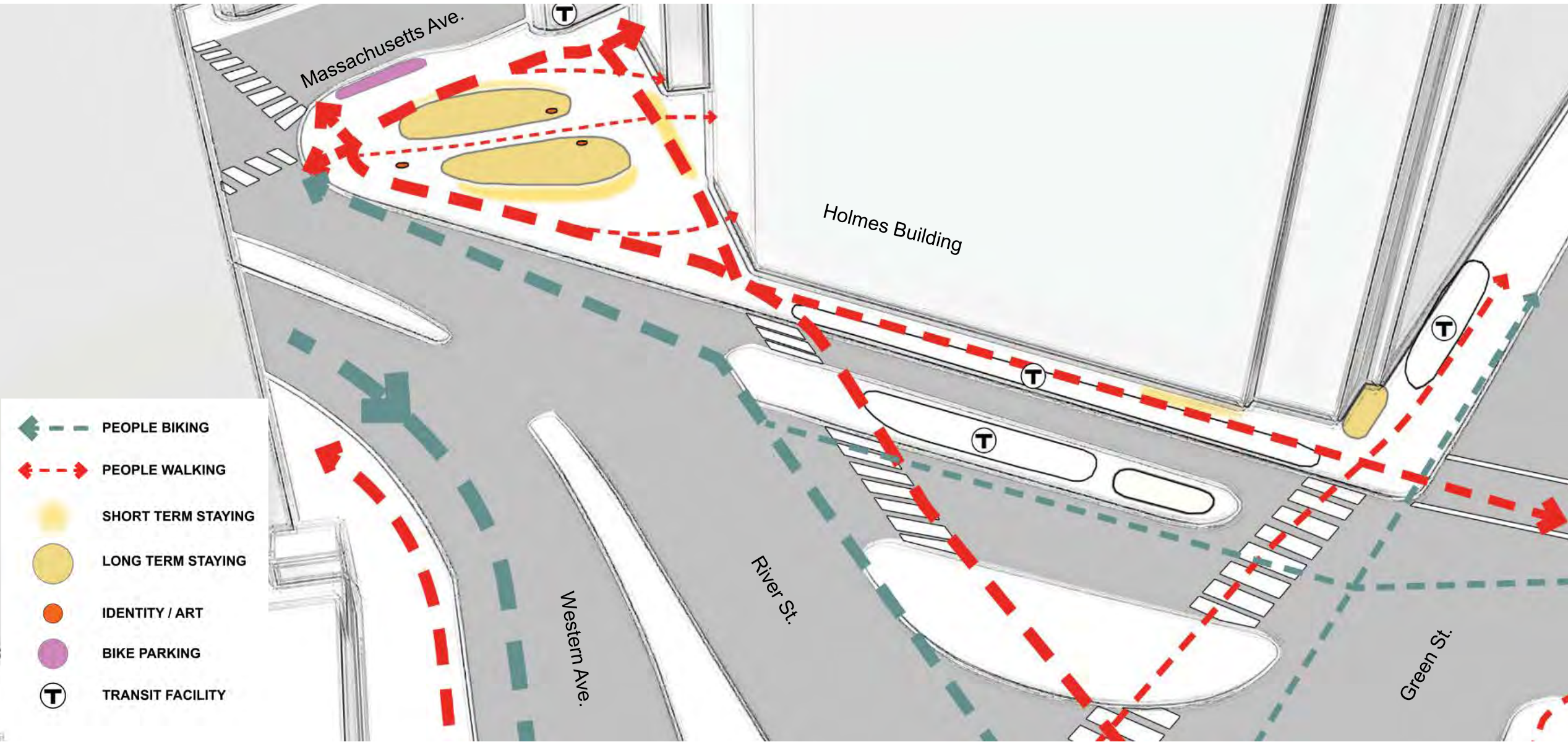
Potential uses of plaza with busway



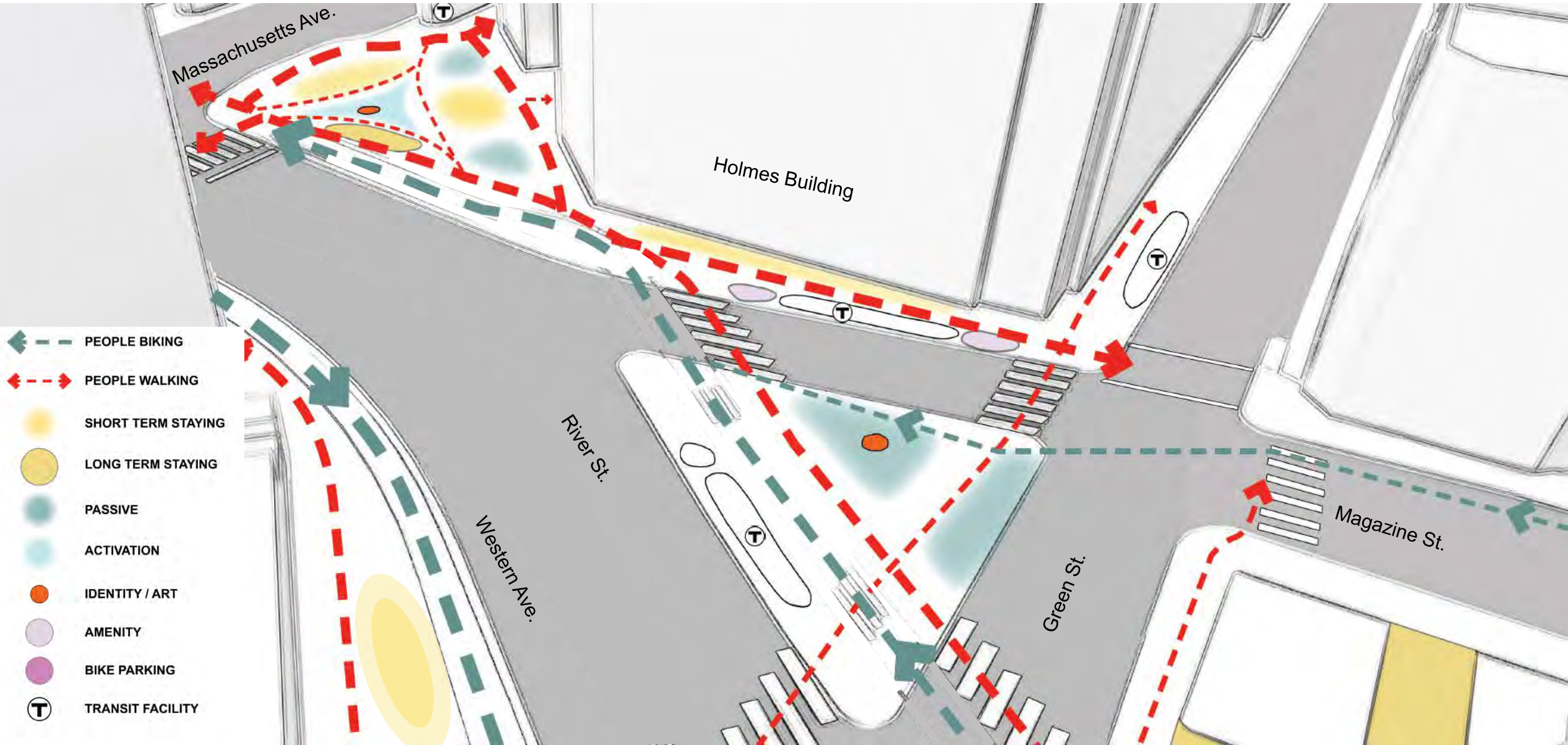
Potential uses of plaza w/o busway



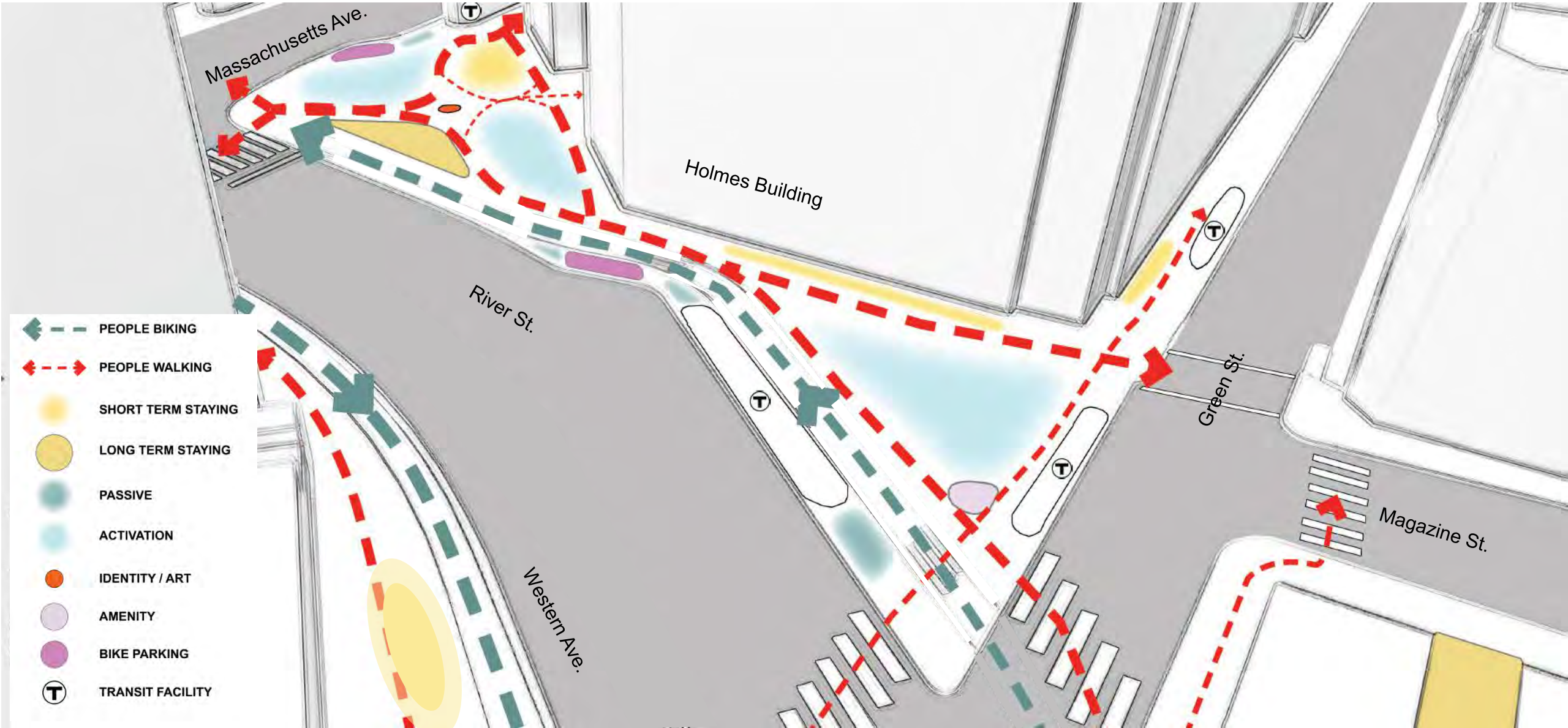
Observed uses of the busway



Potential uses of plaza with busway



Potential uses of plaza w/o busway



Challenges at Green Street Intersection

- Vehicles often block Green Street traffic because there is minimal room to wait on Green Street between Magazine and River Streets
- Stop sign at Magazine Street often ignored
- Competition between buses, shuttles, delivery trucks, and motor vehicles for the same small space
- Difficult right hand turn from Green Street to River Street for large vehicles



Optional toolbox item: New Green Street bus/bike way



- A variety of conflicts at Green Street are causing traffic congestion
- A short bus/bike way (open to bikes too) could alleviate vehicular conflicts and improve bus operations.
- Traffic circulation impacts would be studied
- Increased public space is possible with *or without* a Green Street bus/bike way





Impacts of potential Green Street Bus/bike way

- New traffic signals at Franklin Street at River Street and at Western Avenue
- Two-way Franklin Street (between Magazine Street and Western Avenue only)
- May or may not involve parking impacts
- Any changes would require community and rider input

Discussion

Next Steps

Complete and Share the Pre-Construction Survey!!

- Still live at cambridgema.gov/riverstreet!
- Will become the “before” survey for the River Street Reconstruction
- When the post-construction survey is complete, the two will help the City evaluate the project
- **Please help us distribute to your neighbors!**

1. What brings you to River Street? (Check all that apply)

I live nearby

I work nearby

I go to school nearby

I shop or do errands nearby

Other (please specify)

OK

Next Meeting

- **Public Meeting #2:** Tuesday, November 19, Location TBD
 - Corridor Concept Design Introduction
 - Public Feedback

Cambridgema.gov/RiverStreet



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Text Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Enter keyword(s)

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River Street Reconstruction

Take our survey and tell us how River Street works for you today!

The River Street Reconstruction project will upgrade the sanitary sewer, stormwater and water subsurface infrastructure while developing a new surface design for River Street, the bus terminal area at River and Magazine Streets near Central Square, and Carl Barron Plaza. The project aims to create a streetscape design that meets the needs of all the various users and in a way that engages the local community, contributes to overall enhancement of the neighborhood, and meets the City's goals related to infrastructure, transportation, and urban design.

The concurrent design of Carl Barron Plaza, the significant open space at the heart of Central Square will include consideration of public art, fixed and/or unfixed furniture, access, plantings, and landscaping. The design must also consider the complexity of transportation needs related to the bus bays adjacent to the Plaza and people moving through the plaza.

The community outreach and design processes will occur throughout 2019 and into early 2020. Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2020.

[Click here to sign up for email updates on this project.](#)

[Click here to provide general comments and feedback.](#)

The **Public Input Map** is now closed, but you can still access it through the link to see what input was provided on issues and opportunities along River Street and in Carl Barron Plaza. Soon we will be posting a survey to understand how you use River Street today so that we can use that input in the design and also compare to a similar survey after the construction is complete.

Quick Links

I'd like to learn more about...

Select a Topic

Neighborhood or Square

Select One

Current Projects...

Select One



[Click the Map to
Explore Cambridge](#)

**A 5-STAR Community
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September 2019

THANK YOU!

riverstreet@cambridgema.gov