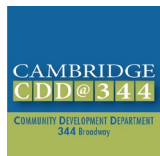


September 14, 2023

City of Cambridge
Community Development Department

PUBLIC MEETING #2

Feasibility Study of a Pedestrian & Bicycle Crossing of the Fitchburg MBTA Rail Line



CambridgeMA.gov/FitchburgCrossing



Public Comment on Zoom Webinar



You will join the meeting with video and microphone off.



Public comment period will use the “**raise hand**” feature. We will provide more instruction then.

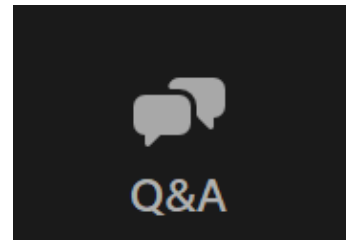


You can **type written questions or comments** in the Zoom Q&A Panel.



Please limit comments to 2 minutes or less.

Bottom Panel
of Zoom
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Public Comment Instructions

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For Zoom-related questions reach out to Charlie Creagh at ccreagh@cambridgema.gov



You can call in to this meeting on a phone:

- 301 715 8592
- Meeting ID: 830 9863 1844



We are recording!



Meeting Purpose & Process

Purpose

- The meeting will update the public on design options since the last meeting, and based on this work, discuss the city's intention to move forward with the over-crossing bridge concept. Next steps will be discussed and how the community can continue to provide ideas on the project.

Process

- Explain the underpass options studied, and engineering and property constraints.
- The format is a digital presentation with a slide deck and time for questions and answers.

Meeting Outcome

Outcome

- Identify and explain opportunities to provide ongoing input and review of the project
- Hear ideas on an overcrossing bridge concept
- Provide information about the federal grant application process





Agenda

Welcome!

- 1. Schedule and Goals**
- 2. Background, Regional Context, Study Area**
- 3. Updates Since Public Meeting #1**
- 4. Federal Grant Application**
- 5. Next Steps & Q and A**





Schedule

Schedule

- **Fall 2022:** Start review of property and technical issues.
- **Spring 2023:** Develop crossing options.
- **Spring-Summer 2023:** Public engagement begins and confirm design direction.
- **Fall 2023:** Submit federal grant application for design. Set up next steps so design can begin with **\$600k ARPA funds** and hopefully beyond with federal funds.
- **2023-2024:** Hear grant decision and continue public engagement, and work with stakeholders on design.

Background & Goals

Goals of the crossing feasibility study include:

- Create a convenient, comfortable, safe and accessible crossing between Rindge Avenue area and Danehy Park and beyond
- Improve resident connections to green spaces and retail offerings



**Carlton Street Footbridge
Brookline, MA**

Regional Context



The next slide has a map showing the important path connections in the region

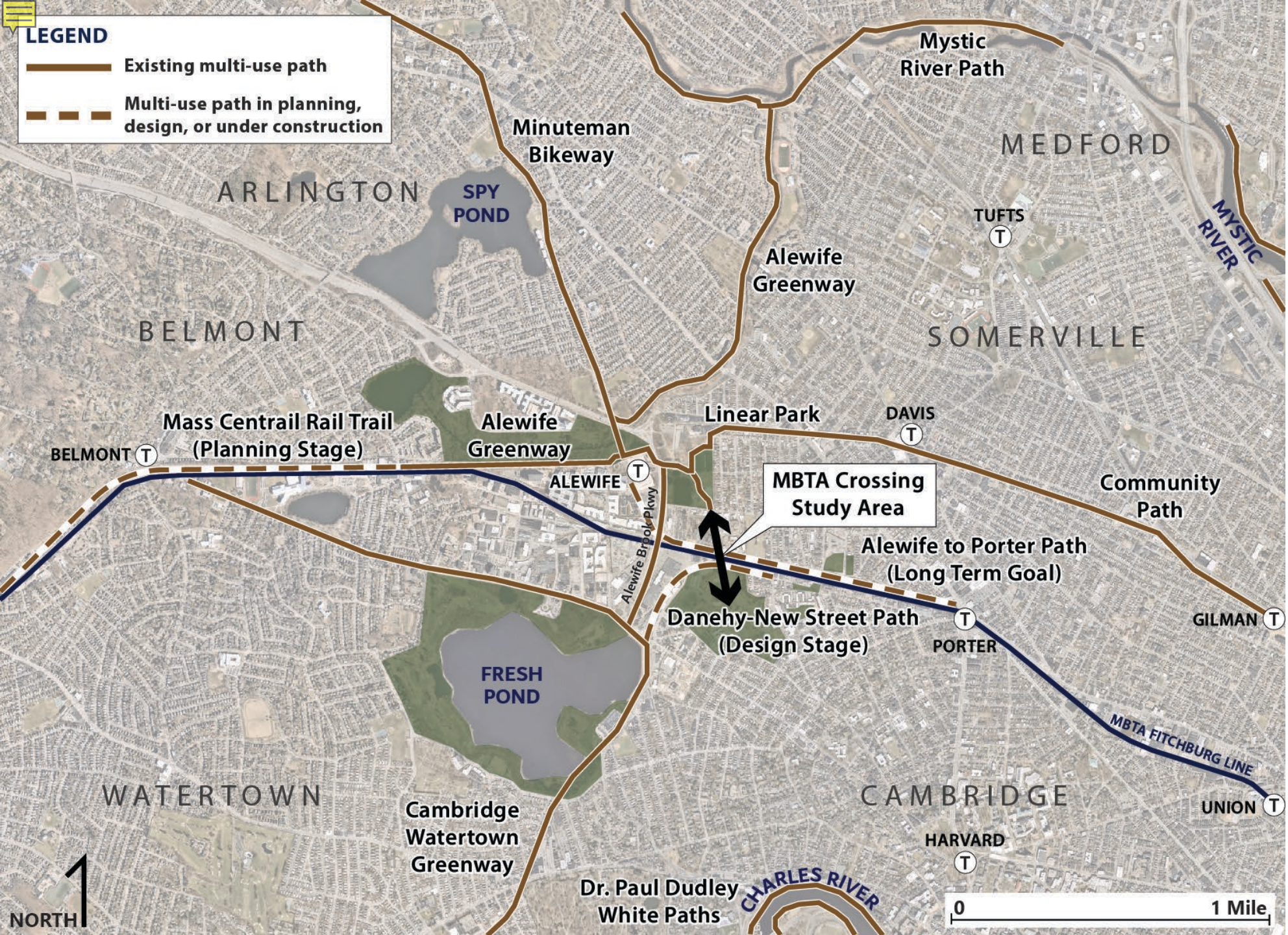
- Watertown-Cambridge Greenway
- Danehy-New Street Path (in design)
- Linear Park
- Minuteman Bikeway
- Alewife Greenway paths



**The Watertown-Cambridge Greenway
Watertown, MA**

LEGEND

-  Existing multi-use path
-  Multi-use path in planning, design, or under construction



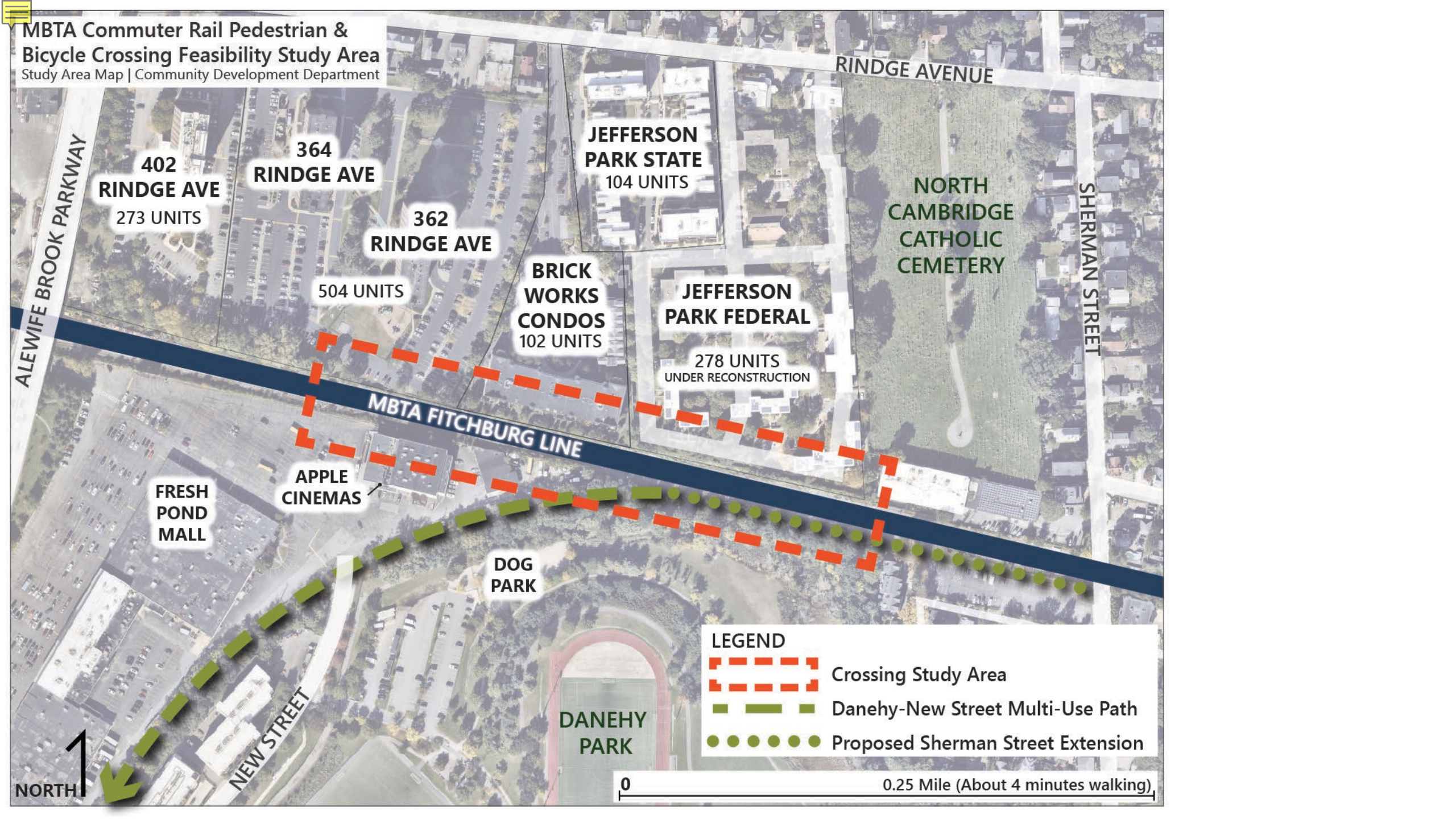
Study Area

The study area in the North Cambridge and Alewife neighborhoods are close to many destinations

- **Rindge Avenue/Russell Field**
- **Sherman Street**
- **Danehy Park & Fresh Pond Mall**
- **Alewife Brook Parkway & retail**



MBTA Commuter Rail Pedestrian & Bicycle Crossing Feasibility Study Area
Study Area Map | Community Development Department



402 RINDGE AVE
273 UNITS

364 RINDGE AVE

362 RINDGE AVE
504 UNITS

BRICK WORKS CONDOS
102 UNITS

JEFFERSON PARK STATE
104 UNITS

JEFFERSON PARK FEDERAL
278 UNITS
UNDER RECONSTRUCTION

FRESH POND MALL

APPLE CINEMAS

DOG PARK

DANEHY PARK




RINDGE AVENUE

SHERMAN STREET

NEW STREET

MBTA FITCHBURG LINE

LEGEND

-  Crossing Study Area
-  Danehy-New Street Multi-Use Path
-  Proposed Sherman Street Extension



0 0.25 Mile (About 4 minutes walking)



Opportunities: City-Owned Property

Danehy-New Street Multi-Use Path

- The city-acquired former Watertown branch line up to Fitchburg MBTA line behind Apple Cinemas
- Danehy Park, a large recreation facility and former landfill

Parcel B

- Passed to City by Brickworks developer
- 16' wide and located behind Jefferson Park

Fresh Pond
Apartments

Brickworks
Condominiums

Jefferson
Park

Catholic
Cemetery



MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail

Apple
Cinemas

Parcel B

Danehy-New Street
Multi-Use Path

Dog
Park

Danehy
Park

LEGEND



City of Cambridge Owned Land

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Opportunities: Easements

Easement through Brickworks

- Surface easement for walking and biking from Rindge Avenue to railroad right-of-way
- 16' easement along rear of property “for future bike path”

Easement from Jefferson Park

- In Process - Cambridge Housing Authority intends to give City 16' path easement along southern edge of redevelopment site, adjacent to Parcel B
- Jefferson Park Federal is currently under redevelopment

Fresh Pond Apartments

Brickworks Condominiums

Public use easement, pedestrian and bicycle access

Catholic Cemetery

Jefferson Park

Easement in process

MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail

Apple Cinemas

16' easement for "future bike path"

Dog Park

Danehy Park

LEGEND

City of Cambridge Owned Land

Easement for Bicycle & Pedestrian Paths



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Fresh Pond
Apartments

Brickworks
Condominiums

Jefferson
Park

Catholic
Cemetery



MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail

Apple
Cinemas

**A multi-use path from Alewife
Station area to Sherman Street
is included in the federal grant
application**

Danehy
Park

LEGEND



Long Term Goal: East-West Multi-Use
Path from Alewife to Porter



Approx. Danehy-New St Path Location

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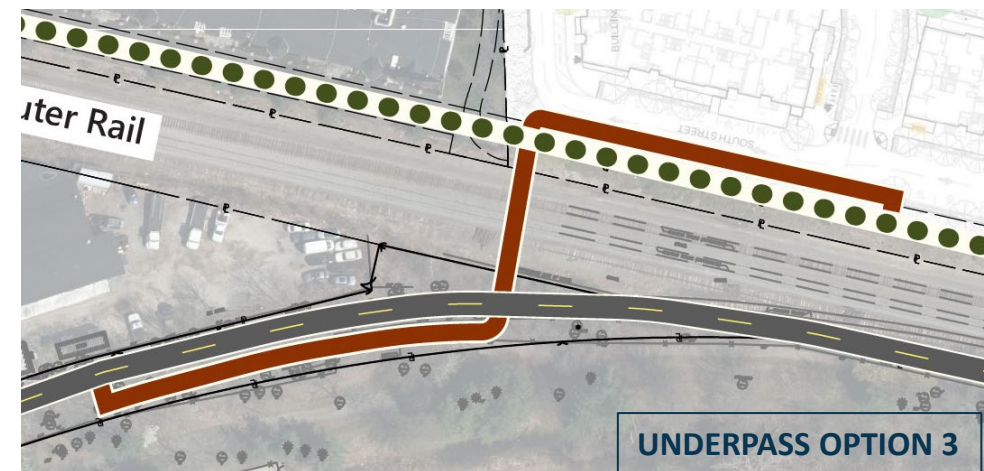
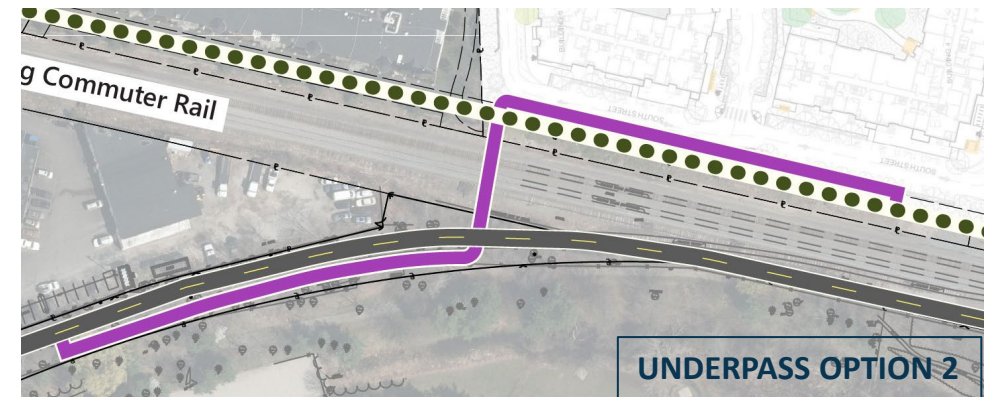
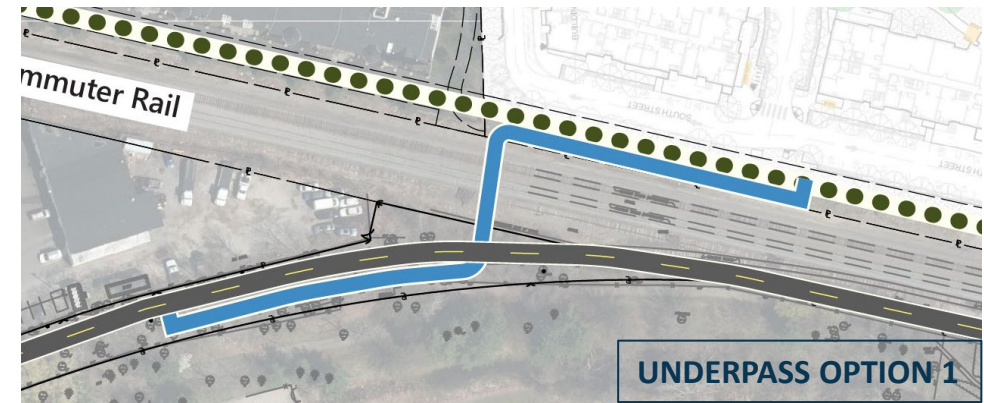


Updates Since Public Meeting #1

Underpass

Options that were reviewed in June and are not preferred include:

- Option 1: Blind corners, uncomfortable sight lines, longer tunnel.
- Option 2: Extremely deep tunnel to avoid box culvert, very long ramps.
- Option 3: Relocation of box culvert, ramps impact Jefferson Park redevelopment plans.





Public Meeting #1 Follow-up

Additional Underpass Study: Option 4

- The design team investigated if an underpass that includes “more open sightlines” and similar to the Beacon Street at Sacramento Street underpass in Somerville could be replicated at Jefferson Park.
- The design team also looked at another precedent underpass example in Orange, CA.

Beacon Street underpass existing conditions

Stairs

- 3 feet wide – which is too narrow for two people to walk side-by-side.

Ramping

- 4 feet wide - with 3x 180-degree switchbacks, which are difficult for bicyclists to traverse.





**Beacon Street at Sacramento Street underpass
Somerville, MA**

Orange, CA

Located at a train station

- Very wide stairs and ramps
- Allows clear sight lines through
- Different setting with more space and fewer constraints when compared to Jefferson Park





Site constraints at Jefferson Park

- Lack of space means turns in the staircase required on the north side of underpass option 4 and pinch point in headroom.
- The narrow width of Parcel B requires use of MBTA land, which they have indicated isn't available.
- The location of the box culvert storm drain is a significant engineering constraint.
- The result is no clear sight line through the tunnel, like at the Yerxa Road underpass.

UNDERPASS OPTION 4

12' multi-use path with 2' offsets

1,696 SF OF MBTA LAND REQUIRED FOR UNDER CROSSING

2.00' FROM WALL TO EXISTING BOX CULVERT

14' multi-use path with 2' offsets

LEVEL LANDING

8.00'

7.00'

N

14.00'

7.00'

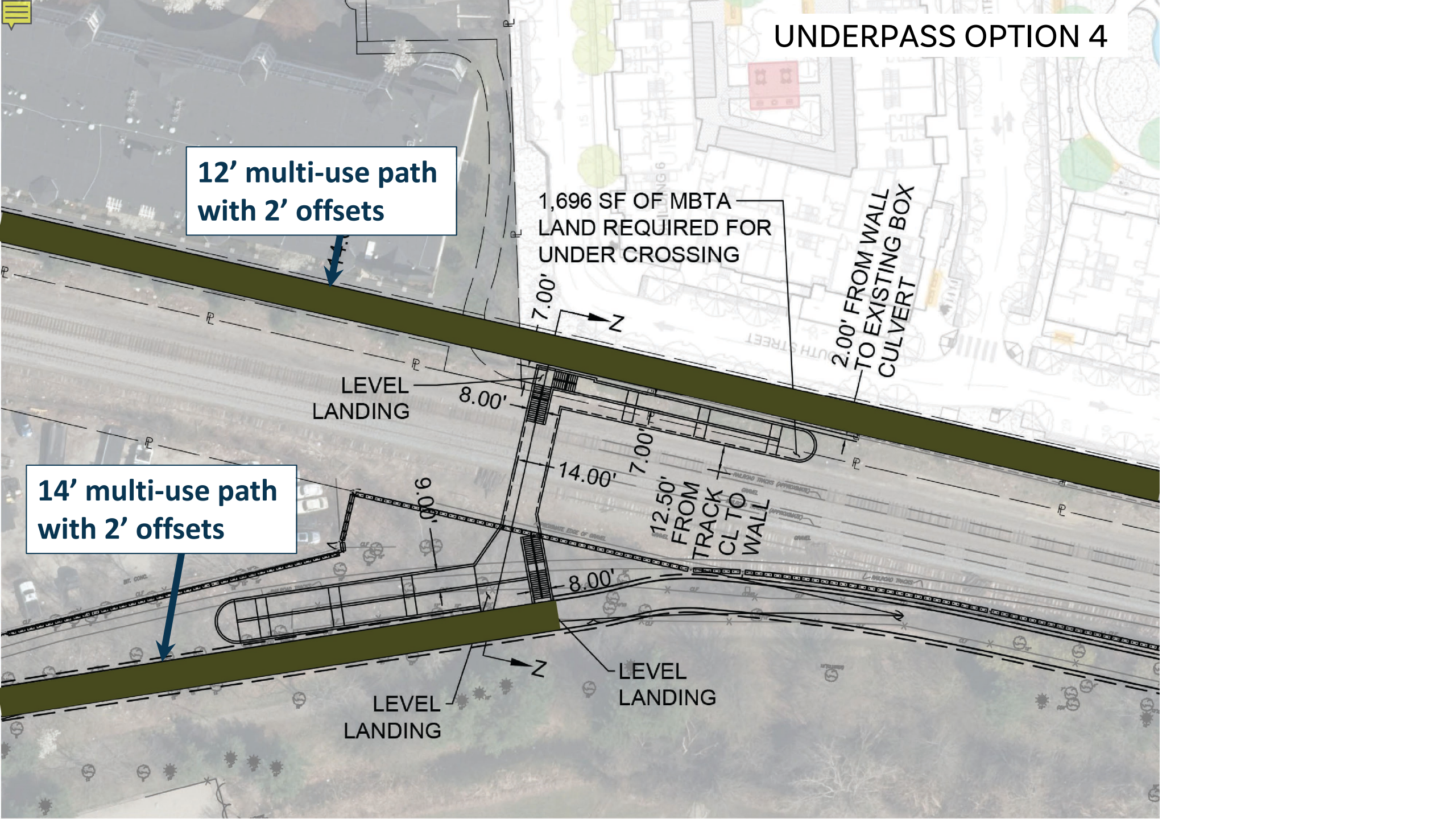
12.50' FROM TRACK CL TO WALL

8.00'

LEVEL LANDING

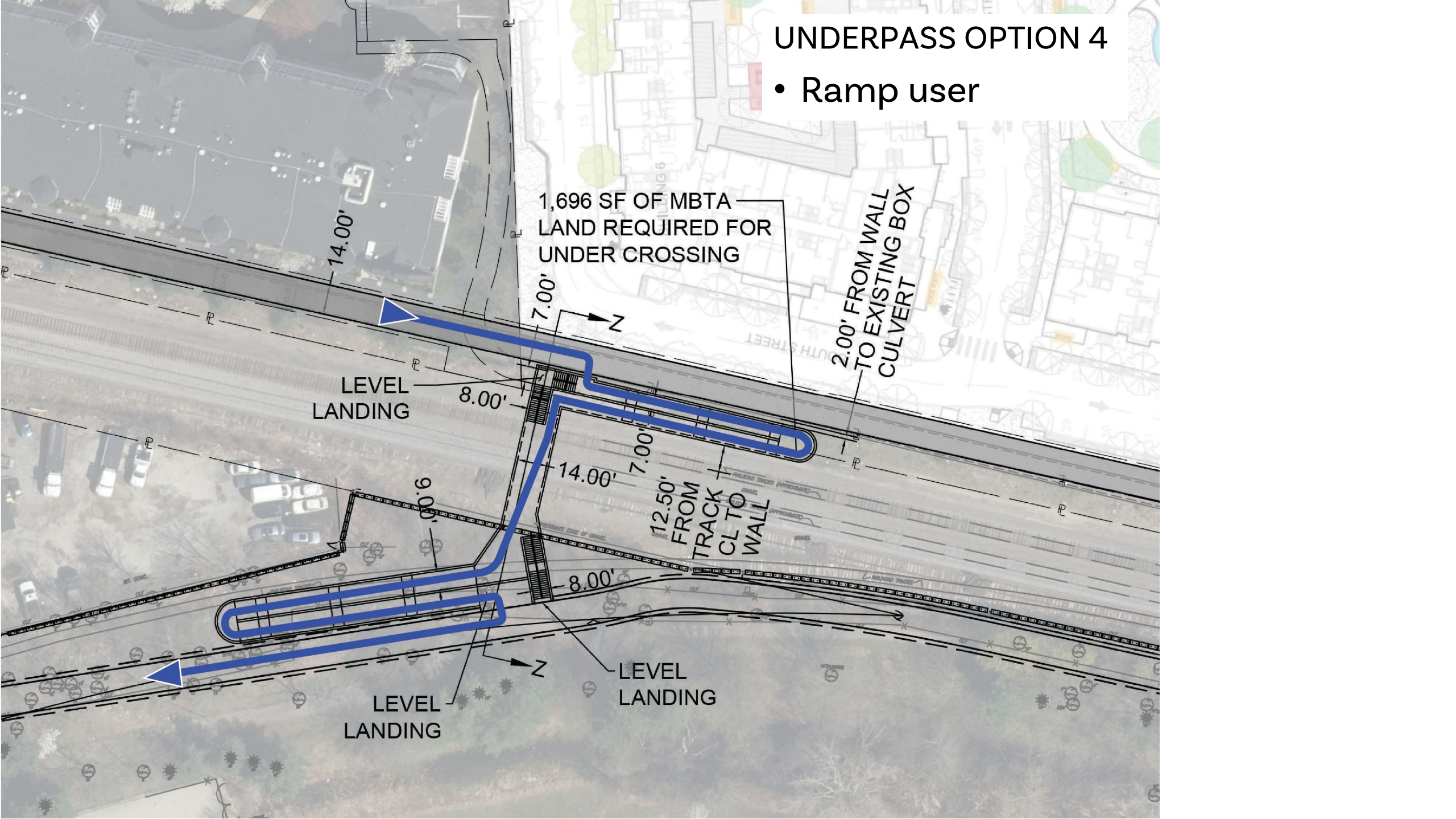
LEVEL LANDING

N



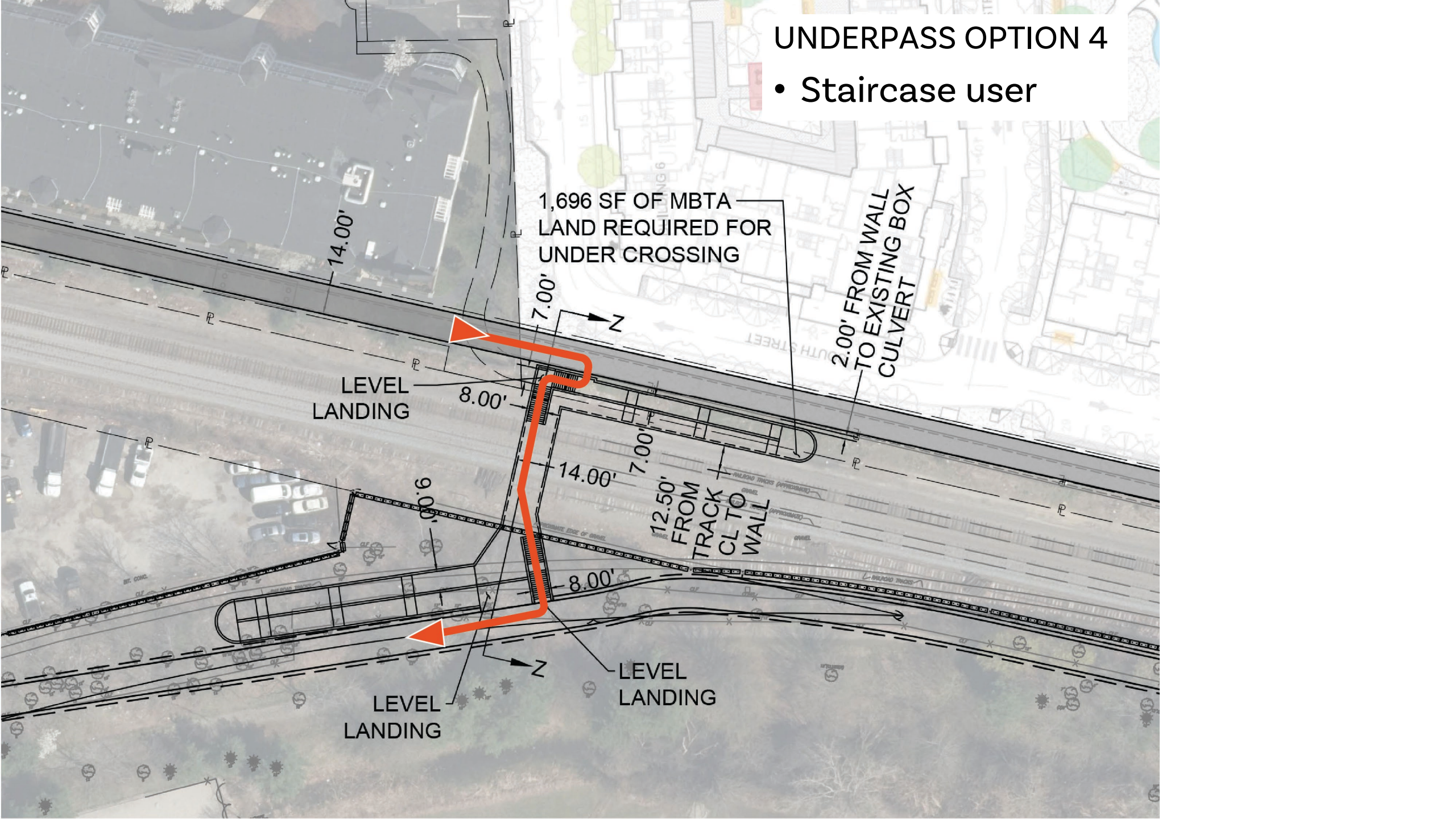
UNDERPASS OPTION 4

- Ramp user



UNDERPASS OPTION 4

- Staircase user



1,696 SF OF MBTA
LAND REQUIRED FOR
UNDER CROSSING

2.00' FROM WALL
TO EXISTING BOX
CULVERT

12.50'
FROM
TRACK
CL TO
WALL

LEVEL
LANDING

LEVEL
LANDING

LEVEL
LANDING

14.00'

7.00'

8.00'

14.00'

7.00'

8.00'

N

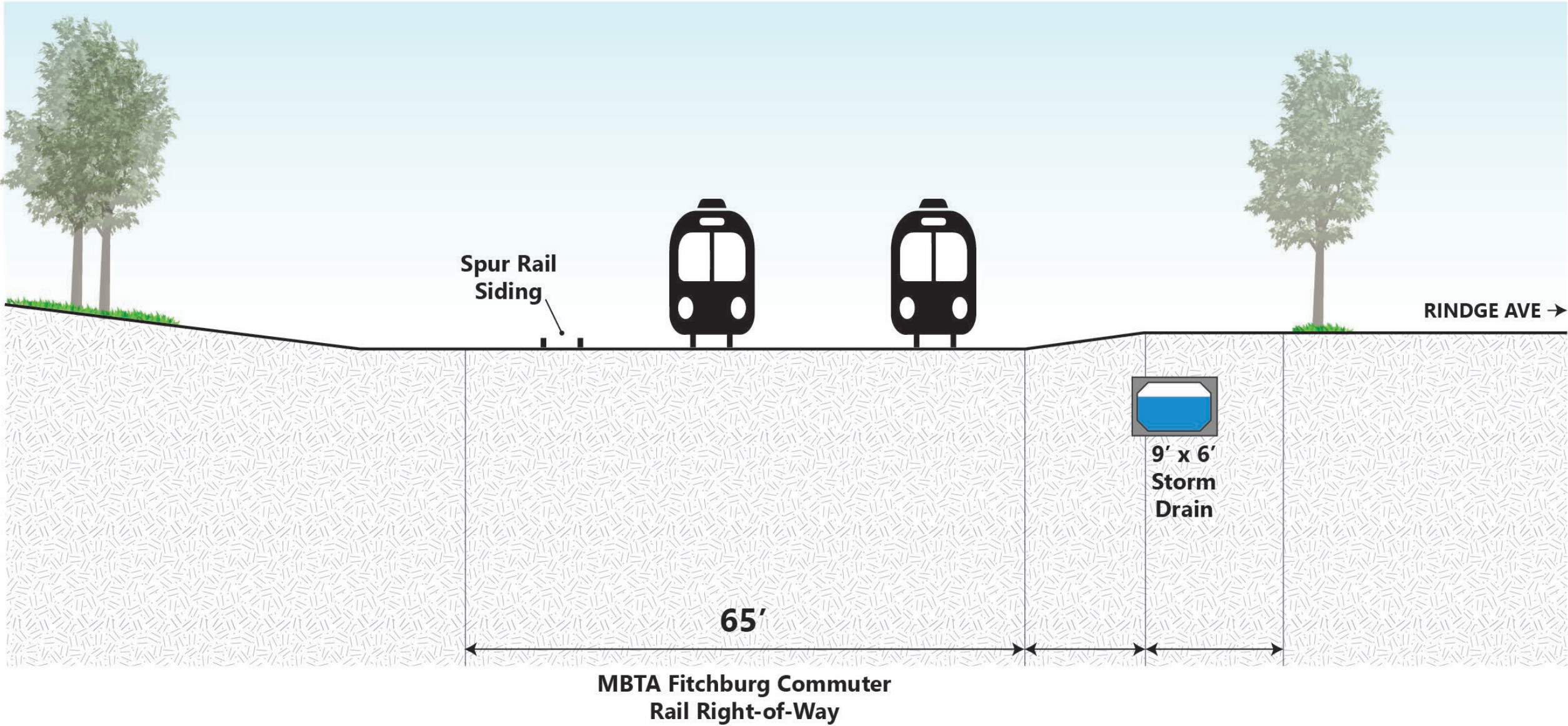
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DANEHY CONNECTOR PATH & PARK

MBTA FITCHBURG COMMUTER RAIL LINE

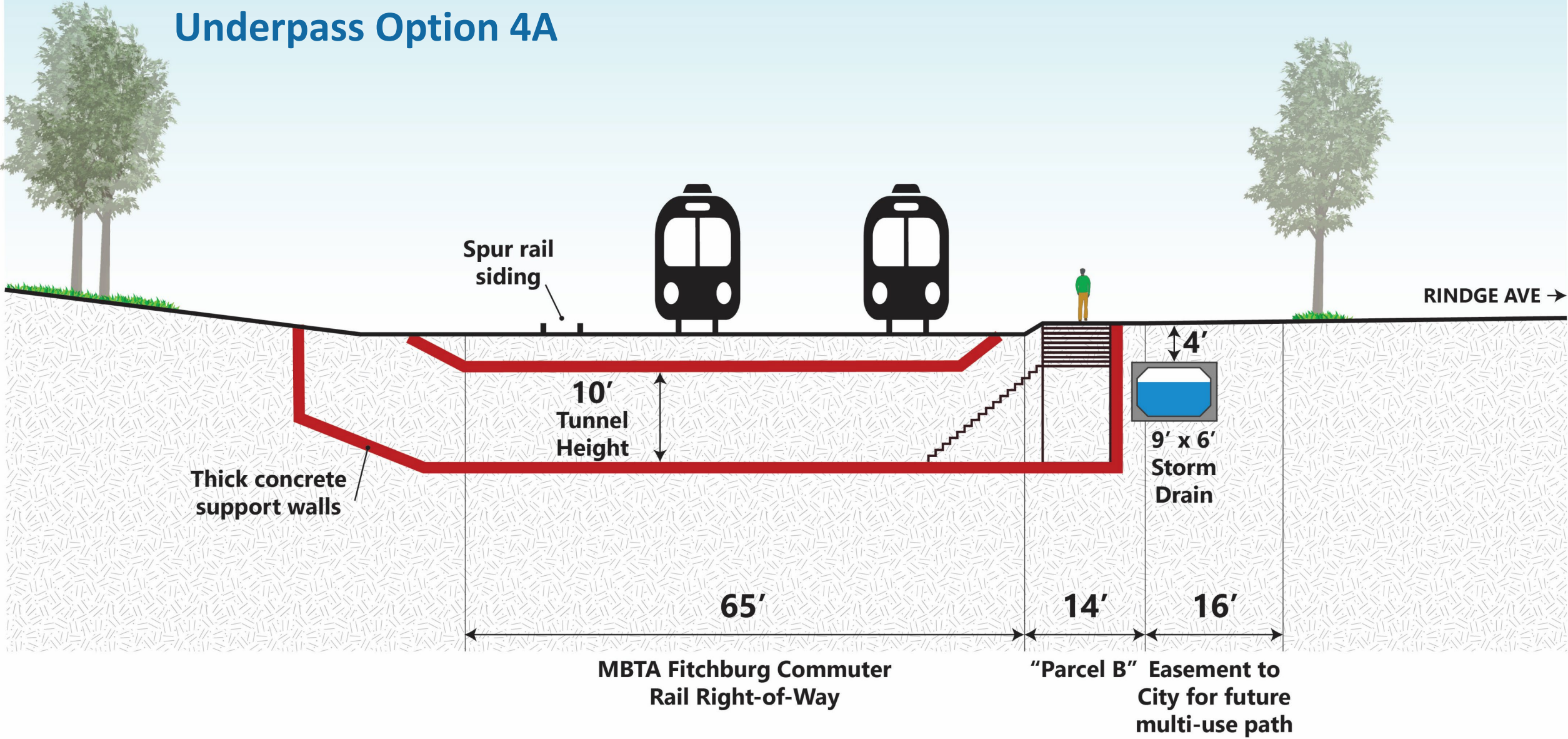
"PARCEL B"

JEFFERSON PARK
CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY



EXISTING CONDITIONS

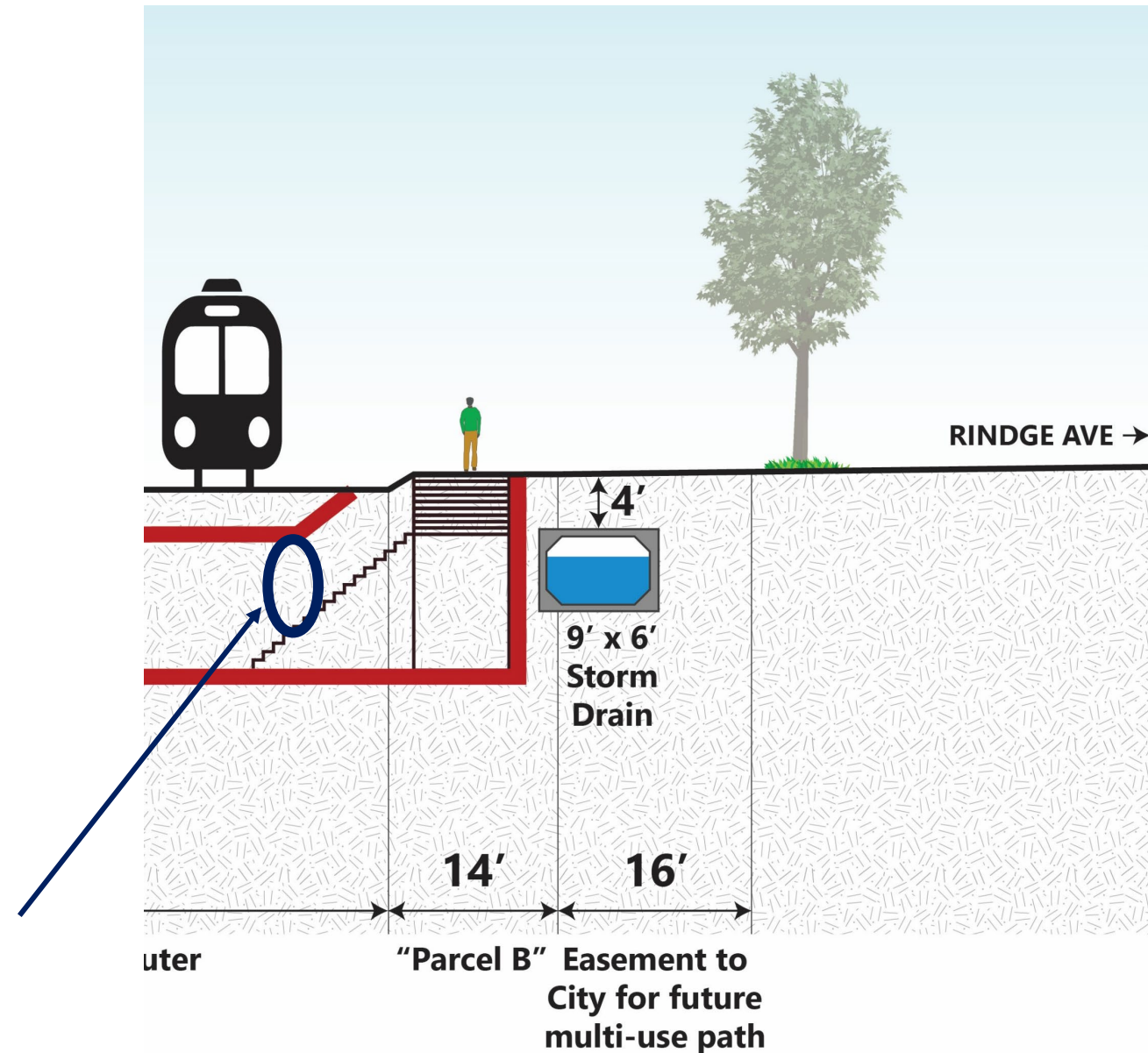
Underpass Option 4A



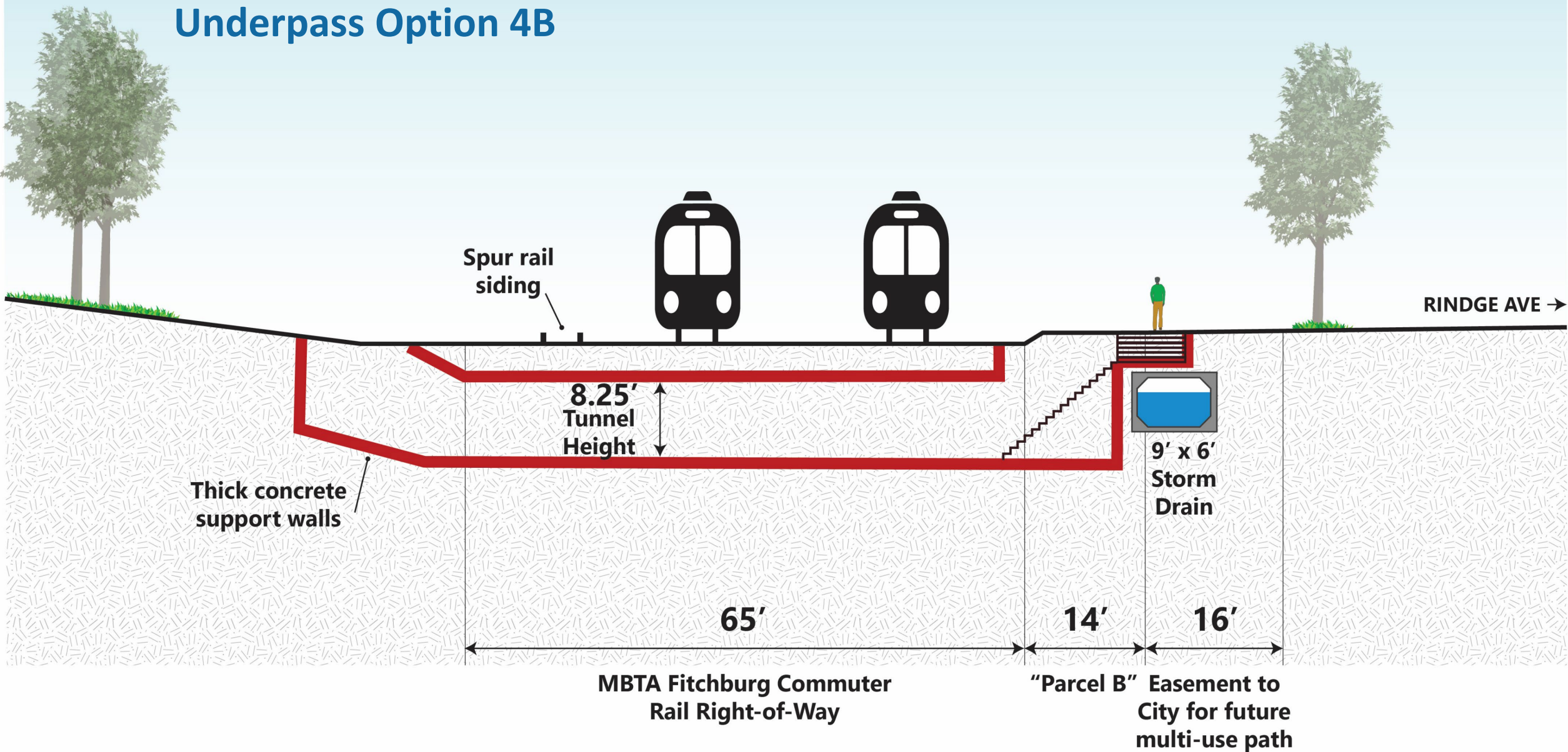
Underpass Option 4A

Primary design issues

- Requires the use of MBTA right-of-way, which the MBTA has indicated is not available.
- Turn in staircase required, resulting in limited sightlines through the tunnel.
- Pinch point between stairs and roof of tunnel: 6'-6"



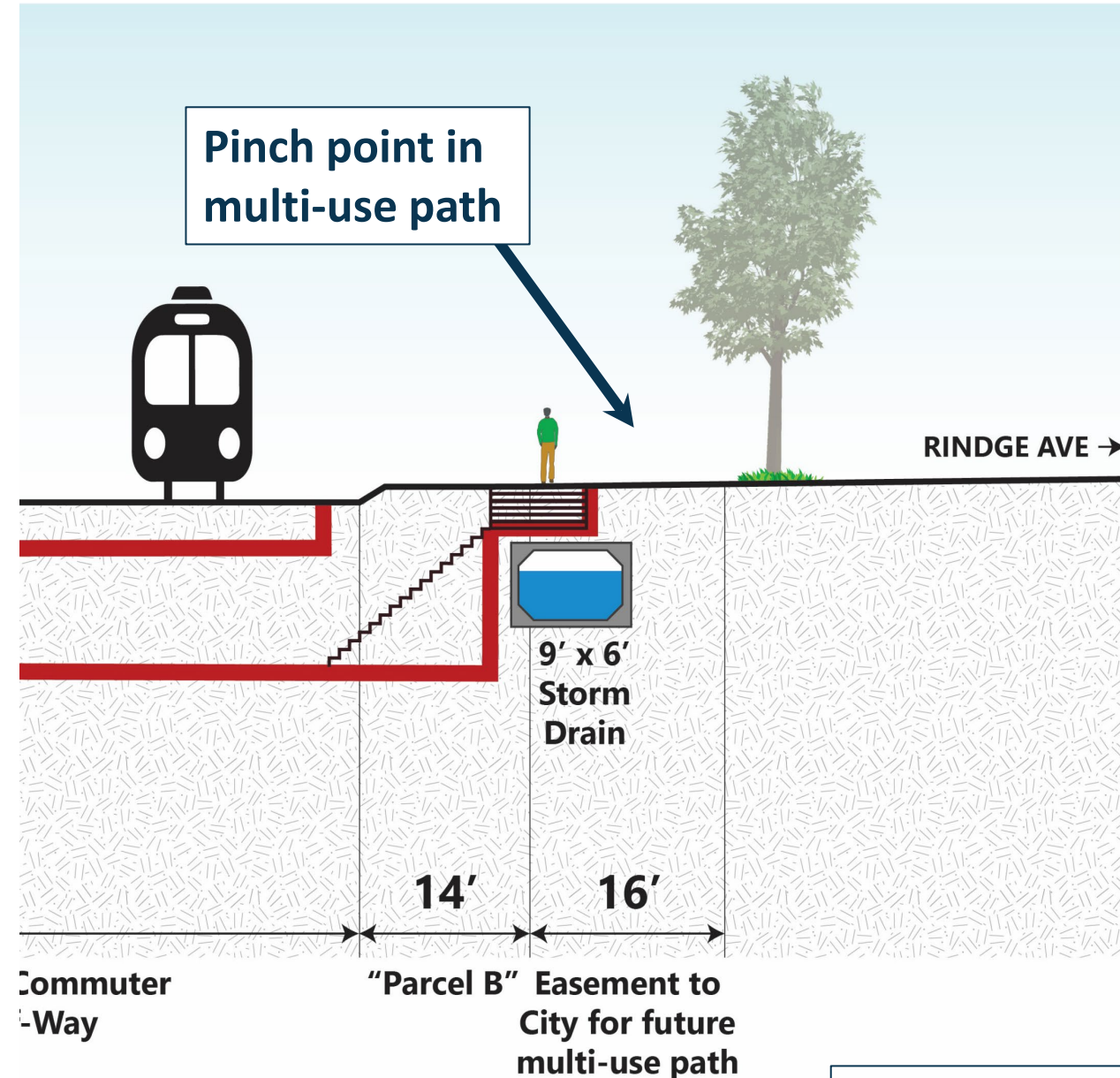
Underpass Option 4B



Underpass Option 4B

Primary design issues

- Requires the use of MBTA right-of-way, which the MBTA has indicated is not available.
- Encroaches into Easement area.
- Results in a pinch point in future multi-use path area, from 14' to 8'.





Underpass Options

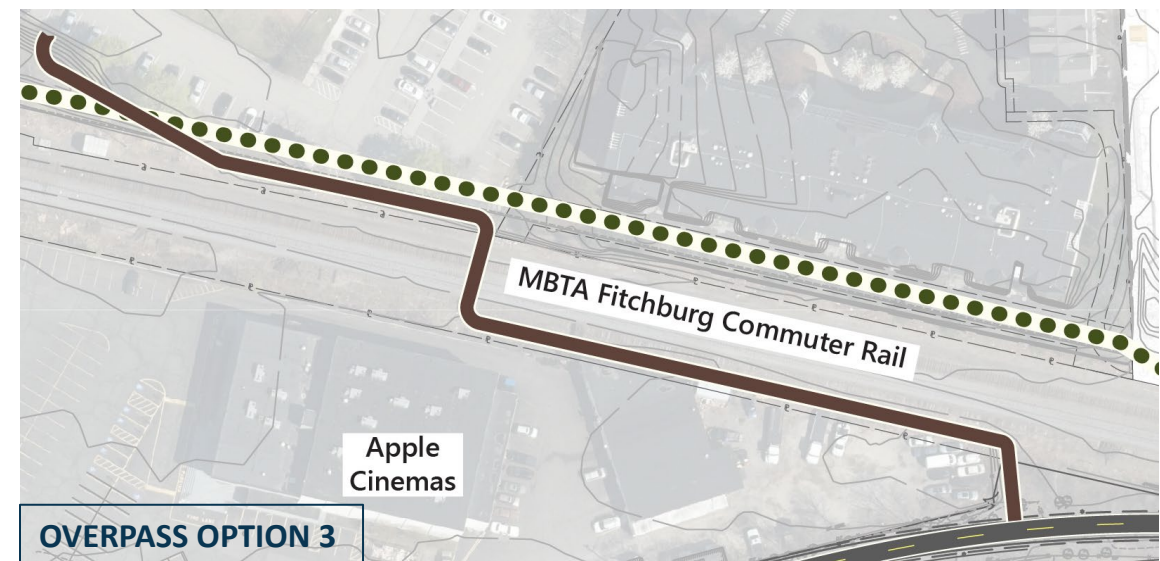
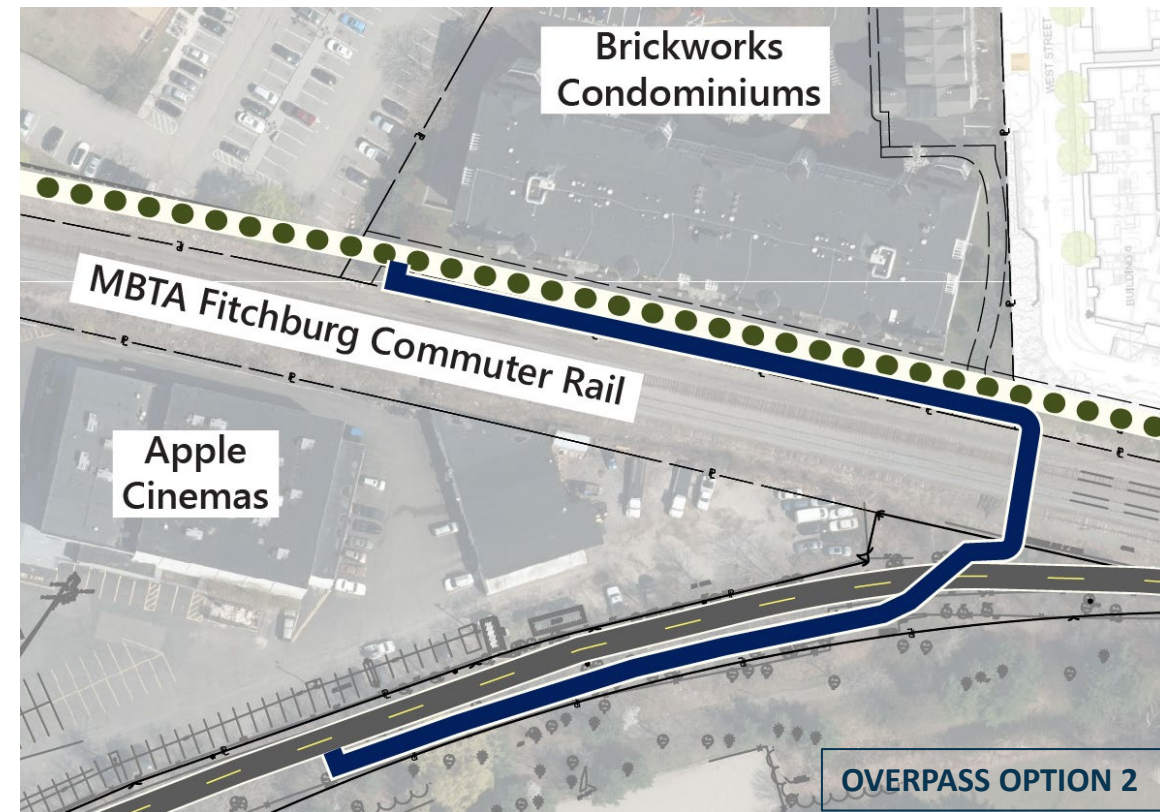
Other design issues

- **Requires well designed and maintained pumps station(s) during heavy rains.**
- **Digging in former landfill raises possibility of contamination issues and poor fill.**
- **Concerns by Housing Authority and Police with underpass safety, plus MBTA with space available.**

Overpass

Options that were reviewed in June and are not preferred include:

- Option 2: Ramping needed on MBTA property or on easement at south edge of Brickworks property which may not be allowed
- Option 3: Relies heavily on ramping and support pylons in MBTA and/or private property



OVERPASS OPTION 1

362 Rindge Ave

Brickworks Condominiums

Jefferson Park

Catholic Cemetery



Approx. 400' of ADA compliant ramping on north side

MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail




Apple Cinemas

Bridge structure is about 23' above train tracks

Dog Park

Danehy Park

LEGEND

-  Overpass Option 1
-  Long Term Goal: Alewife to Porter Sq Path
-  Approx. Danehy-New St Path Location

0 500 Feet

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OVERPASS OPTION 1 DESIGN IDEAS

362 Rindge Ave

Brickworks Condominiums

Jefferson Park

Catholic Cemetery



Reviewing options for path on south side of tracks to Sherman Street

MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail

Apple Cinemas





Possible staircase or ramp into Danehy Park

Dog Park

Possible at-grade path connection into Danehy Park

Danehy Park

LEGEND

-  Overpass Option 1
-  Long Term Goal: Alewife to Porter Sq Path
-  Approx. Danehy-New St Path Location
-  Connections into Danehy Park under study

0 500 Feet

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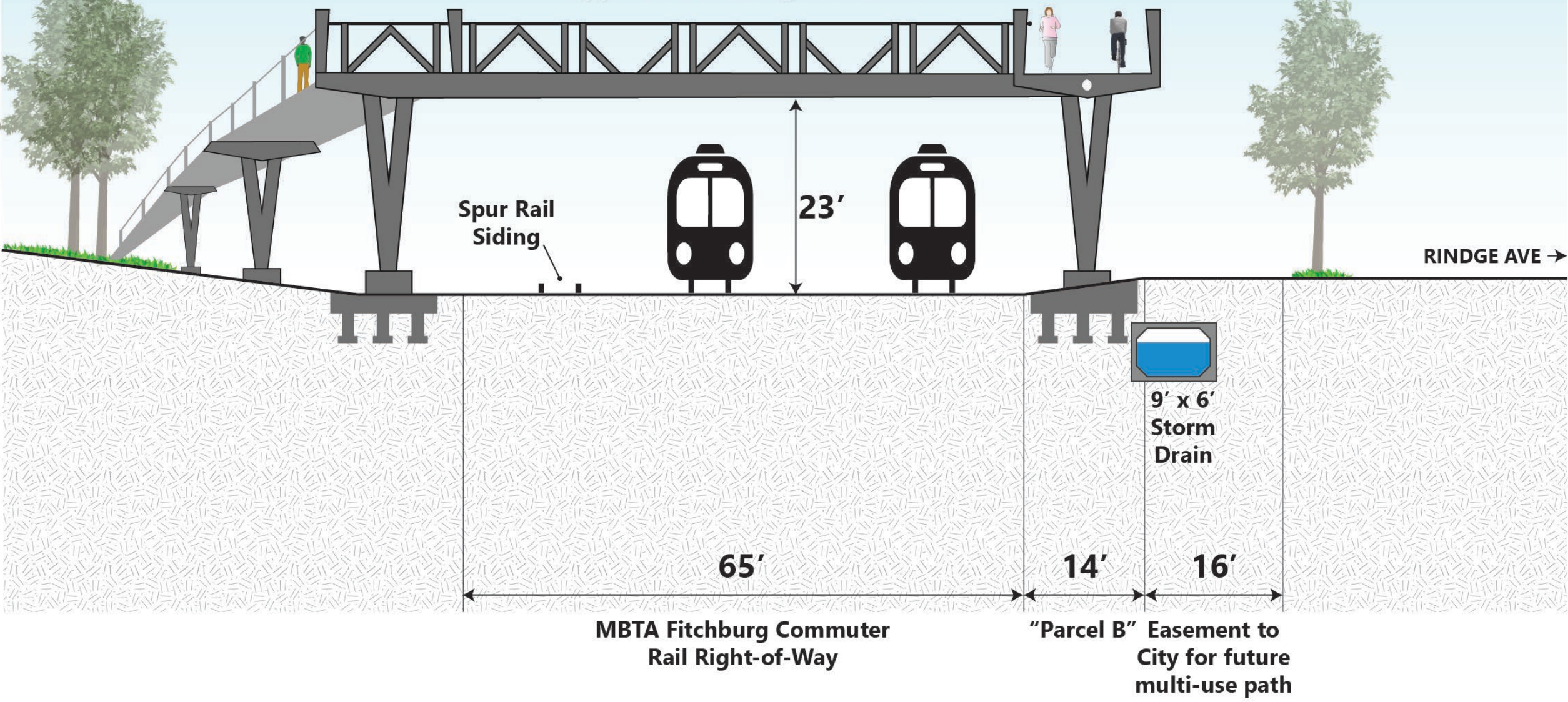
DANEHY CONNECTOR PATH & PARK

MBTA FITCHBURG COMMUTER RAIL LINE

"PARCEL B"

JEFFERSON PARK
CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Approximate Bridge Location



Spur Rail Siding

23'

RINDGE AVE →

9' x 6'
Storm
Drain

65'

14'

16'

MBTA Fitchburg Commuter
Rail Right-of-Way

"Parcel B" Easement to
City for future
multi-use path




Design Direction

Based on detailed review of options and constraints, plus discussions with MBTA and others, our plan is to move forward with further developing the bridge design option.



Next Steps – Grant Application

- Apply for federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant (end of September).
- \$2.4 million in funds for crossing design.
- We are applying for federal design grant funding, seeking letters of support.





Next Steps

- Review options for future construction funding, add project to MassDOT State Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Coordinate with CRA on Rindge Commons path project.
- Hold regular coordination meetings with the MBTA.
- Review precedent project examples.

Precedent Project Examples

Carlton Street Footbridge

Brookline, MA

- Span Length: 70'-6"
- Width: ~ 11'



Precedent Project Examples

Frances Appleton Bridge

Boston, MA

- **Span Length: 220'**
- **Width: 14'**

What other precedent examples should we look at?



Public Comment on Zoom Webinar



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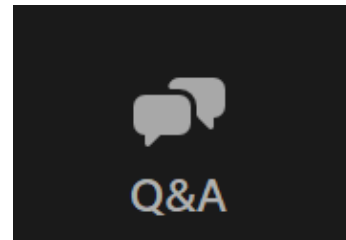


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City of Cambridge Community Development Department

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Thank You

