



TRANSPORTATION GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This Master Plan (The Plan) is the result of a collaborative process that included the community at large, as well as the Planning Board, representatives of Town Departments and Administration, a Master Plan Advisory Committee and a team of consultants. Various combinations of this group are referred to throughout the report as The Natick 2030+ Team.

Under each goal, recommendations and action items are listed in the order of the time frame in which they might be implemented, based on complexity of implementation and requirements for coordination with other recommendations and actions. The order does not imply priority.

While it is the intent of the Master Plan that all of the recommendations be considered, some of the recommendations represent relatively minor changes to existing procedures and bylaws while others are more ambitious. Recommendations highlighted in green are generally considered to be particularly ambitious because they require actions or cooperation by public entities outside the jurisdiction of Natick (e.g., state agencies or adjacent municipalities) or by private businesses and/or property owners; they require the Town to take on new roles (e.g., establishing and managing a loan program); or they require extensive further analysis.

Recommendations that support sustainability and resiliency are indicated with this leaf icon.



Natick has a well-developed transportation system that nevertheless faces a number of challenges to satisfying residents' and visitors' travel needs, now and into the future. Drawing from an understanding of the existing conditions of Natick's transportation system and keeping in mind the identified issues and opportunities, the Natick 2030+ Team worked with residents to develop goals for the future of transportation in Natick. Through survey responses, public meetings, and topic-based focus groups, community members helped identify areas of improvement and identify and modify specific recommendations. Those ideas and recommendations are organized by the following agreed upon goals:

- 1. Improve safety in all travel modes through the implementation of proven safety counter-measures, such as improved traffic control equipment, upgraded pedestrian crossings (e.g. median and crossing islands), roadway design improvements/road diets, access management measures along commercial corridors, and roundabouts.**
- 2. Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by improving/increasing multi-modal access, including vehicular access, public transit, walking, bicycling and ride-sharing.**

Existing conditions and key transportation issues that were identified in earlier phases of the Master Plan were reviewed in the context of these goals.

The recommendations for achieving these goals are listed on the following pages under each goal heading. Listed next to each recommendation are the primary and support parties responsible for carrying out the recommendations in the years to come. A suggested time frame is also included, associated with the specific actions (in blue) of each recommendation. In some cases, a recommendation may require coordination with recommendations from other chapters. In those cases, the icons for the related chapters will appear next to the recommendation. Metrics of progress are also included for recommendations that involve tracking progress over time.



Planned upgrades to the Natick Center Commuter Rail Station will improve accessibility at the station.

GOAL 1

Improve safety in all travel modes through the implementation of a Complete Streets design approach, roadway and intersection improvements, and proven safety counter-measures.

The Natick 2030+ Master Plan approach to transportation system improvements is intended to improve safety and comfort for all roadway users. The alternatives reviewed and The Plan's recommendations are designed to improve safety using proven safety countermeasures, such as improved intersection geometry and traffic operations, upgraded pedestrian accommodation, traffic calming/road diets, access management measures, and roundabouts. The following are some of the design approaches and specific measures that the Natick 2030+ Team recommends for transportation system improvements.



R1.1

EMPLOY A COMPLETE STREET DESIGN APPROACH

LEAD



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

SUPPORT



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

A Complete Streets design approach is a core transportation design principle for the Town of Natick and for the Natick 2030+ Master Plan. A Complete Streets design approach entails ensuring the safe and convenient accommodation of all roadway users – not just drivers, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders, with a focus on ensuring safety and accommodation of vulnerable roadway users, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and children. The Town of Natick's Board of Selectmen unanimously adopted a municipal Complete Streets Policy in 2015 to not only improve safety, but also enhance "health, economic viability, and quality of life." In 2015, Smart Growth America ranked Natick's Complete Streets Policy the seventh best new Complete Streets Policy in America, and it has enabled the Town of Natick to win grant funding from MassDOT to upgrade intersections and pedestrian crossings. A rendering of a comprehensive Complete Streets treatment on a hypothetical urban arterial is provided below. **The Town should continue to implement the Complete Streets policies into all roadway improvement projects.**



ON-GOING



Example of Complete Streets treatment for hypothetical urban arterial roadway.

R1.2

IMPLEMENT PROVEN SAFETY COUNTERMEASURES

LEAD 
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT








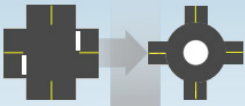
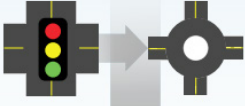
SUPPORT 
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proven safety countermeasures are roadway design and operating strategies that have been demonstrated as effective at improving roadway safety and endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These countermeasures include:

- + Pedestrian refuge medians for crossing wide arterial roadways
- + Road diets to eliminate unnecessary general travel lanes, shorten pedestrian crossings, and provide additional roadway width for other modes
- + Roundabouts to reduce crash severity
- + Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI), to provide crossing pedestrians with a “head start” before turning vehicles



The Town of Natick should consider these measures as potential design elements that should be evaluated for inclusion in all roadway improvement projects, as appropriate to the project context.

 <p>Road Diets (Roadway Reconfiguration)</p> <p>A “Road Diet,” or roadway reconfiguration, can improve safety, calm traffic, provide better mobility and access for all road users, and enhance overall quality of life.</p> <p>SAFETY BENEFIT:</p> <p>4-LANE → 3-LANE ROAD DIET CONVERSIONS 19-47% Reduction in total crashes</p>	 <p>Leading Pedestrian Intervals</p> <p>SAFETY BENEFIT:</p> <p>60% Reduction in pedestrian-vehicle crashes at intersections</p>   <p>LPIs are beneficial at intersections with high left-turning volumes. Source: pedbikeimages.org / Burden</p>	 <p>Medians and Pedestrian Crossing Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas</p>  <p>Median and pedestrian crossing islands near a roundabout. Source: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden</p> <p>SAFETY BENEFITS:</p> <p>RAISED MEDIAN 46% Reduction in pedestrian crashes</p> <p>PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ISLAND 56% Reduction in pedestrian crashes</p>	 <p>Roundabouts</p> <p>TWO-WAY STOP-CONTROLLED INTERSECTION TO A ROUNDABOUT</p>  <p>82% Reduction in severe crashes</p> <p>SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION TO A ROUNDABOUT</p>  <p>78% Reduction in severe crashes</p>
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Proven safety countermeasures (Source: FHWA)

GOAL 2

Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by improving multi-modal access, including vehicular access, public transit, walking, bicycling and ride-sharing.



LEAD 

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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 ON-GOING 

The Natick 2030+ Team recommends a range of transportation system improvements to enhance access in all travel modes.

REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY BY MANAGING TRAFFIC BOTTLENECKS, IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY OF THE ROADWAY NETWORK, AND UPGRADING INTERSECTION DESIGN AND TRAFFIC CONTROLS.

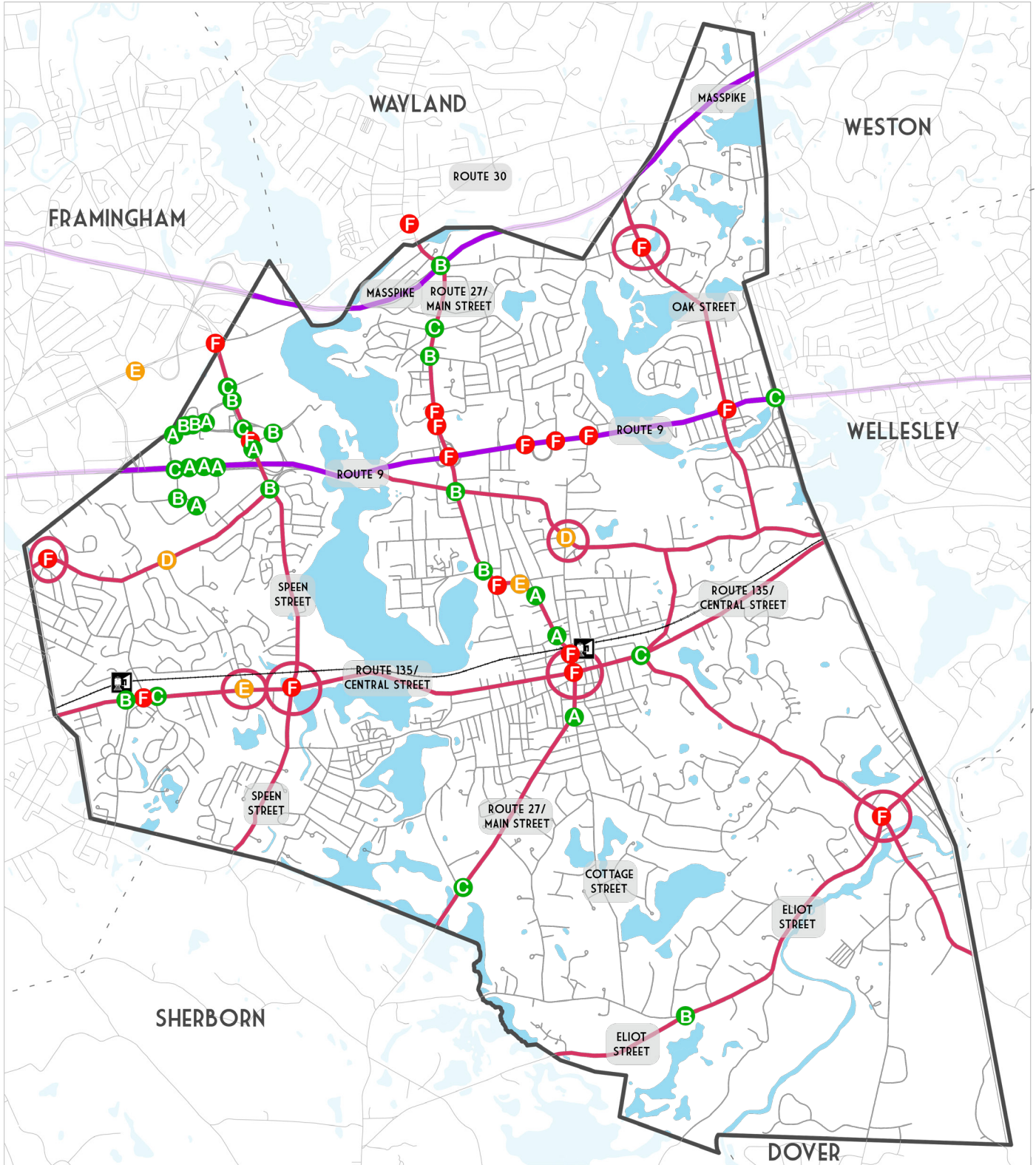
Natick’s many lakes and its express highway and railway corridors create significant barriers for local traffic, as well as pedestrian and bicycle access. As shown on Map 4.12 and discussed in Existing Conditions, there are a limited number of continuous east-west and north-south roads, and a large number of dead ends and cul-de-sacs in residential neighborhoods further impede access. Improving connections throughout the Town is of key importance. **To that end, the Town should look for opportunities to create connections between dead ends and cul de sacs and highlight dead ends that could be connected over time (some of these connections are identified in Chapter 7: Open Space, Recreation and Natural Resources). The subdivision regulations should include a provision stating that, where possible, those connections should be made, either with a roadway or pedestrian/bike connection.**

At the same time, due to Natick’s long history, its major surface streets are historic roads that were laid out long before the advent of the automobile and its attendant congestion. Property lines and buildings constrain the width of these roadways, especially at major intersections. As a result of these factors, Natick’s traffic local traffic is largely concentrated on a limited number of narrow streets, which contributes to roadway congestion.

Map 4.12 shows the principal roadways in Natick and the major intersections where they come together, alongside a map of the existing evening peak hour traffic “levels of service” (LOS) at key intersections in Natick. As shown, Natick’s natural and man-made barriers concentrate traffic onto a handful of surface streets; where these intersect, significant congestion (LOS E/F) frequently results.

The Natick 2030+ Project Team reviewed these intersections and identified opportunities to address traffic congestion and multimodal access through improved geometric design and traffic operations. The following are strategies and design guidelines that the Project Team used for improving these intersections.

- + Balanced allocation of roadway space, per Complete Streets principles.
- + 11-foot general traffic lanes, with use of 10-foot or 10.5-foot lanes in constrained conditions.
- + Preservation of existing curb lines where possible to enable cost-effectiveness and facilitate near-term or medium-term implementation.



MAP 4.12 KEY CORRIDORS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- L
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E
N
D**
- ● ● Intersection Level of Service (PM Peak Hour)
 - MBTA Stations
 - MBTA Commuter Rail
 - Limited Access Highways
 - Major Surface Streets
 - Intersection Improvement Opportunities

- + Where needed, upgrades to modern traffic signal equipment that can enable more efficient signal timing, coordination, and Transit Signal Priority (TSP).
- + Traffic signal timing plans that maximize intersection operational efficiency through strategies such as:
 - Coordinated signals, which minimize “wasted” green time and enable better traffic progression
 - Overlapping phases, which maximize the intersection movements that can flow at the same time

Concurrent pedestrian phasing, which allows pedestrians to cross at the same time that parallel/non-conflicting vehicular traffic flows (in contrast to exclusive pedestrian phasing, which stops all traffic and allows pedestrians to make all crossings)

Based on existing conditions analysis; identification of key transportation issues; and discussions with the community, Town officials, and the Planning Board, the following locations were identified as key locations for traffic congestion, safety, and/or multimodal access, and are the intersections that were evaluated for geometric and traffic operations improvements. For the most part, these are intersections where major surface streets intersect, as shown on Map 4.12:

- + Hartford Street/Bishop Street
- + Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 (Eliot Street)
- + Pine Street/Oak Street
- + Route 135 (East/West Central Street)/Route 27 (North/South Main Street)
- + Route 135 (West Central Street)/Speen Street
- + Route 135 (West Central Street)/Mill Street
- + Walnut Street/Bacon Street/Chestnut Street

Key issues, opportunities, and potential improvements are summarized for each of these locations, along with a high-level review of benefits and impacts of the potential improvements. Key evaluation criteria are traffic operations, pedestrian access, and bicycle access. The alternatives evaluation summarizes these criteria for a range of comparative conditions:

- + **Existing Conditions:** Actual current conditions.
- + **Future “No-Build” Conditions:** The conditions that would be anticipated for a future “horizon” year to allow for growth in travel demand and an opportunity for proposed improvements to be implemented. For the Natick 2030+ Master Plan, the future horizon year is 2027, 10 years from the baseline “Existing Conditions” year of 2017. The Future No-Build Condition reflects an annual one percent increase in traffic demand, along with improvement projects that are already planned.

- + **Future “Build” Conditions:** The conditions that would be expected based on a given improvement that is proposed as part of the Natick 2030+ planning process.

The proposed time frame for each intersection is based on ease of implementation, safety concerns and the existing level of congestion.

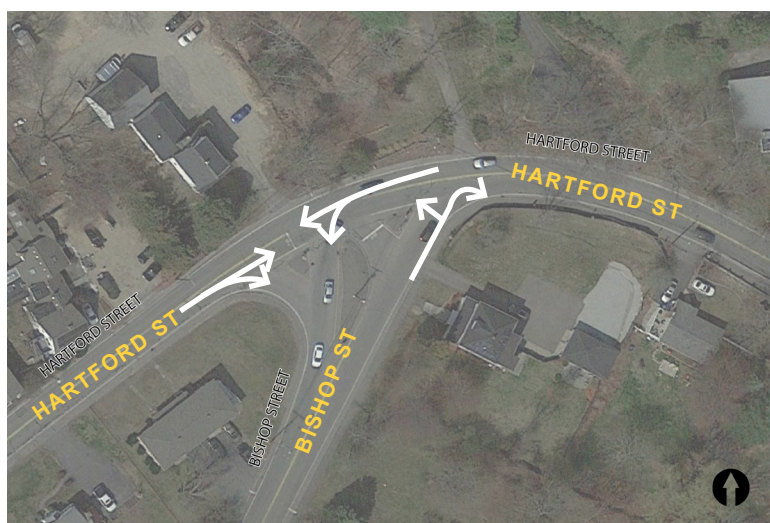
It is important to note that these are high-level and preliminary analyses based on reasonable growth projections; for all of these intersections, further study will be required to identify and finalize a preferred design. In some cases, the preferred alternative may be one that has not been identified in this Master Plan. Some options in this Plan may become obsolete if significant growth results in traffic volumes which cross the threshold for what can be accommodated by a specific option. Recommendations and final designs will be based on detailed traffic analyses conducted at the time a specific improvement is being implemented.

Hartford Street/Bishop Street

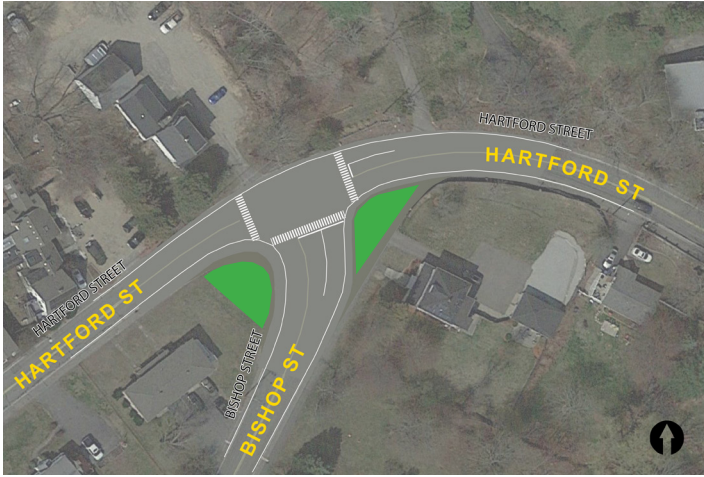
This intersection is at the western edge of Natick, near the Framingham line. Hartford Street is an important connection between Framingham and Route 9, the Massachusetts Turnpike, and the Golden Triangle. This intersection does not experience significant congestion, but it has several other issues that warrant review of its design.

Key Issues & Opportunities

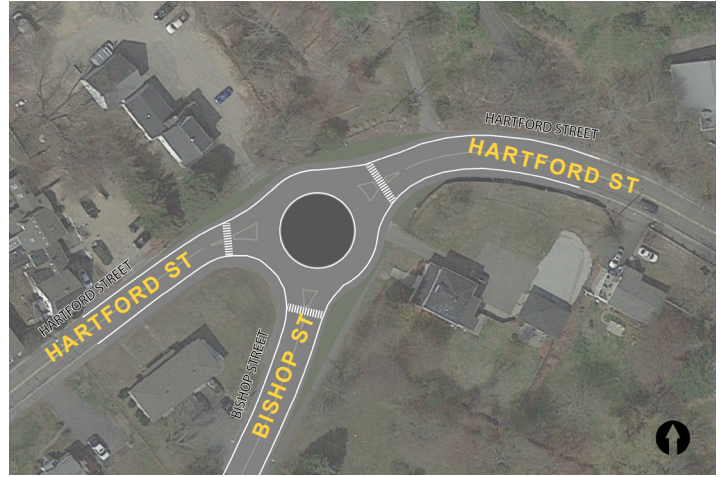
- + Horizontal curve at the intersection creates challenges for sight lines and visibility.
- + Unconventional traffic control, with two approaches controlled by stop signs and one approach uncontrolled, has the potential to create confusion.
- + Westbound Hartford Street’s downhill grade increases speeds, and potential for crashes.
- + Wide paved areas and lack of any crosswalks create a very pedestrian-unfriendly location.



Existing conditions at the Hartford Street/Bishop Street Intersection.



Proposed Conditions at the Hartford Street/Bishop Street Intersection: Option 1.



Proposed Conditions at the Hartford Street/Bishop Street Intersection: Option 2.

Potential Improvements

Option 1

- + Reconfigure intersection as a standard T-intersection, with narrower paved areas.
- + Provide crosswalks and pedestrian signage.
- + Create plaza areas with unneeded space.

Option 2

- + Reconfigure intersection as a single-lane roundabout.

Option 1 results in:

- + Improved operations for Hartford Street eastbound traffic (no longer stop-controlled).
- + Minor delay for Hartford Street westbound left turns.
- + Improved operations for Bishop Street right turns (heavy movement).
- + Slightly worse operations for Bishop Street left turns (very low-volume movement).
- + Reduced pavement area should slow traffic and improve safety.
- + Crosswalks significantly improve pedestrian access and safety.
- + Potential for creation of hardscaped or landscaped plaza areas.

The LOS for Option 1 only applies to the Bishop Street movements. The LOS D in the morning peak and the LOS F in the evening peak apply to very low left turn volumes. LOS C and LOS B for the Bishop Street right turns represent generally acceptable/good LOS in a suburban area. The Hartford Street traffic experiences no delay, which is not reflected in the LOS numbers.

Option 2 results in:

- + Reduced congestion.
- + Reduced vehicle speeds and improved safety relative to the existing condition.

LOS is not the only consideration. Both options would improve access for pedestrians by implementing crosswalks and shortening crossing distances. And, both options would enable traffic to continue flowing (through traffic on Hartford Street or all approaches at the roundabout), so pedestrian access would require good signage and driver compliance.



The Town should further assess both options and implement the preferred option. Option 1 would provide a design that is similar to current conditions, but would significantly improve pedestrian access and would create landscaped or hardscaped plaza areas. Tightening the T intersection and adjusting the traffic control would be less expensive and disruptive to neighbors and travelers than a roundabout. Roundabouts are frequently an excellent option, but a roundabout does not appear to be necessary to address congestion and safety issues at this location. If a roundabout were desired, however, it would be an appropriate design, particularly should there be a significant growth in traffic volumes.

**The LOS ratings are for the north-bound Bishop Street left turn onto Hartford Street (on the left) and right turn onto Hartford Street (on the right).*

	EXISTING	NO-BUILD	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
Traffic				
AM LOS*	C / C	C / C	D / C	A
PM LOS*	D / D	E / E	F / B	A
Pedestrian*	No Crosswalks	No Crosswalks	Crosswalks on all Approaches	Crosswalks on all Approaches

TABLE 4.13 EVALUATION OF INTERSECTION OF HARTFORD STREET & BISHOP STREET

Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 (Eliot Street)

This intersection is at the center of South Natick. The intersection is an important crossroads, with Route 16 running through South Natick to connect Wellesley with Sherborn, Union Street connecting to Natick Center, and Pleasant Street connecting to Dover. The area around the intersection is also the village center for South Natick, with stores, churches, schools, and recreational areas surrounded by residential neighborhoods. As in other areas of Natick, the surface street network is limited, and these roadways provide the major connections for the area. Therefore, the intersection accommodates significant traffic volumes, but the roadway widths at the intersection are constrained.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Heavy traffic flows result in congestion and queuing.
- + Limited potential for widening due to adjacent buildings and private property.

Potential Improvements

Option 1

- + Reconfigure northbound Pleasant Street approach to provide dedicated left-turn lane, combined through-right lane.
- + Concurrent pedestrian phase with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI).

Option 2

- + Prohibit Route 16 eastbound and westbound left turns.
- + Change circulation on Robert Sproule Lane (behind Eliot Church) from two-way to one-way westbound to provide connections for Route 16 left turns.
- + Provide dedicated left turn lanes and shared through-right lanes on northbound Pleasant Street approach and southbound Union Street approach.
- + Concurrent pedestrian phase with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI).

Option 3

- + Create one-way counter-clockwise circulation pattern around Eliot Church
 - Route 16 eastbound left turns circulate via Robert Sproule Lane
 - All Route 16 westbound traffic circulates via Robert Sproule Lane
- + Exclusive pedestrian phase due to conflicts on western leg of intersection

Option 3 cannot be a roundabout; but rather has to be a one-way loop. There needs to be a signal at the intersection of Route 16/Eliot Street with Pleasant and Union Streets. Any recommended option will need to address weaving issues on the legs of the loop, especially on the north and southeast sides, as well as pedestrian access and safety.

Option 1 Evaluation:

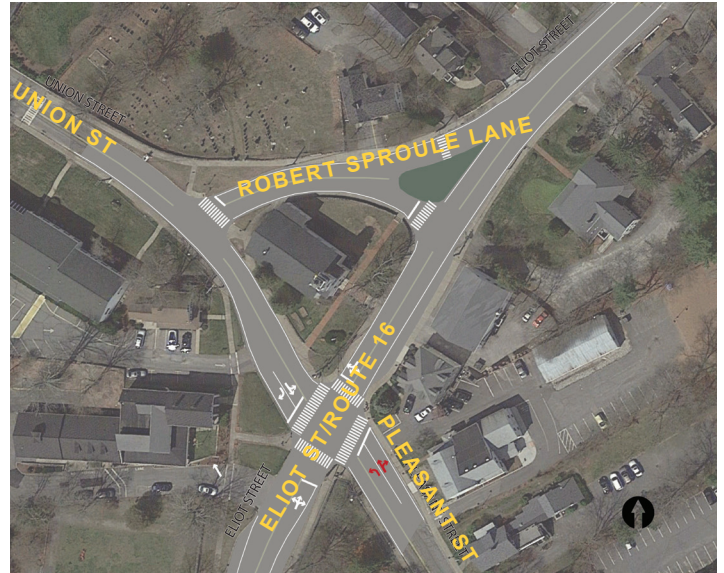
- + Simple fix requiring only restriping and lane reallocation on northbound Pleasant Street approach.
- + Morning peak period traffic operations are comparable to No-Build condition due to heavy northbound Pleasant Street right-turn demand (must share lane with through-traffic).
- + Afternoon peak period traffic operations are significantly improved from No-Build due to a more efficient signal plan and fewer northbound right turns.

Option 2 Evaluation

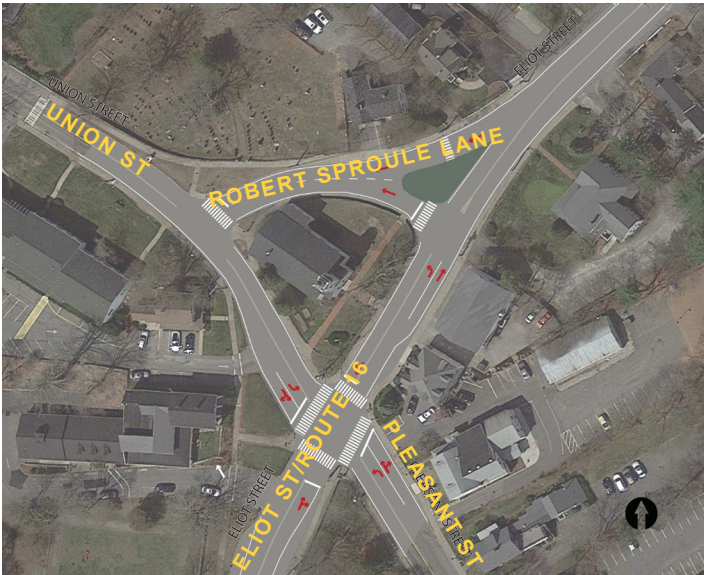
- + More significant change in circulation due to elimination of Union Street and Pleasant Street left turns, use of Robert Sproule Lane to accommodate these turns.



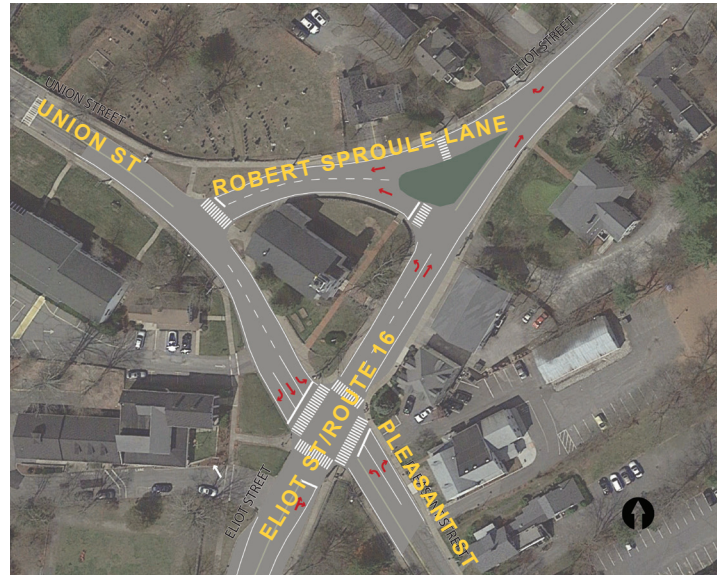
Existing conditions at the Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 Intersection.



Proposed conditions at the Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 Intersection: Option 1.



Proposed conditions at the Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 Intersection: Option 2.



Proposed conditions at the Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 Intersection: Option 3.

	EXISTING	NO-BUILD	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Traffic					
AM LOS	C	D	D	E	D
PM LOS	F	F	D	D	C
Pedestrian	Exclusive Phase	Exclusive Phase	Concurrent Phase w/ LPI	Concurrent Phase w/ LPI	Exclusive Phase

TABLE 4.14 EVALUATION OF PLEASANT STREET/UNION STREET/ROUTE 16 (ELIOT STREET)

- + Potential for weaving conflicts on Robert Sproule Lane.
- + Morning peak period traffic operations are worse than No-Build condition.
- + Afternoon peak period traffic operations are significantly improved from No-Build due to a more efficient signal plan and fewer northbound right turns.

Option 3 Evaluation

- + Major change to circulation in center of South Natick village.
 - One-way circulation pattern tends to speed up traffic, less pedestrian-friendly than two-way circulation.
 - Puts Eliot Church in center of heavy circulating traffic.
 - Potential for weaving conflicts on Robert Sproule Lane.
- + Morning peak period traffic operations comparable to No-Build condition.
- + Afternoon peak period traffic operations significantly improved from No-Build due to elimination of movements, use of one-way circulation.



I-5 YEARS



It is recommended that this intersection be studied in further detail prior to the selection of any preferred alternative.

Pine Street/Oak Street/Erie Drive

This intersection is in the northeast corner of Natick, near the Wayland town line. Oak Street is an important north-south connection between Route 9 and Wayland, while Pine Street provides connections to the MassPike and The Golden Triangle via Route 27 and Route 30. This intersection carries heavy traffic volumes, and has significant peak period congestion.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Significant congestion and delay for stop-controlled Pine Street approach.

Potential Improvements

Option 1: All-way stop control.

Option 2: Widen eastbound Pine Street approach to two lanes: a left-turn lane and a right-turn lane.

Option 3: Signal control

Option 4: Single-lane roundabout



Existing conditions at the Pine Street/Oak Street/Erie Drive Intersection.



Proposed conditions at the Pine Street/Oak Street/Erie Drive Intersection: Option 4.

	EXISTING	NO-BUILD	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
Traffic	Pine St stop	Pine St stop	Pine St stop, 2 lanes	All-way stop	Signal	Roundabout
AM LOS	F	F	F C	F F E	C	B
PM LOS	F	F	F C	F D F	B	B
Pedestrian	Crosswalk on Pine st only	Crosswalk on Pine st only	Crosswalk on all legs	Crosswalk on all legs	Crosswalk on all legs	Crosswalk on all legs

TABLE 4.15 EVALUATION OF INTERSECTION OF PINE ST/OAK ST/ERIE DRIVE

Option 1 would not significantly improve Pine Street traffic access and operations. Option 2 would not significantly improve Pine Street traffic access and operations, and would have negative impacts on Oak Street traffic access and operations. Option 3 would improve Pine Street traffic access and operations, but would have negative impacts on Oak Street traffic access and operations by adding delay from the traffic signal. **Therefore, Option 4, the single lane roundabout, is recommended because it improves access and operations for Pine Street traffic without adding major delay for Oak Street traffic.** A roundabout is also proposed for the intersection of Pine Street with Route 27.



1-5 YEARS



Route 135 (East/West Central Street)/Route 27 (North/South Main Street)

This is a major intersection, and Natick's main crossroads. It is located at the heart of Natick, in the Town's historic center and commercial district. It is also the intersection of Natick's most important surface streets, Route 135 and Route 27. These two streets run continuously across the town and provide critical connections through Natick's lakes, wetlands, express highways, railroad, and major commercial parcels. Like many other surface streets, Route 135 and Route 27 are constrained in width, as is their intersection.

Key Issues & Opportunities

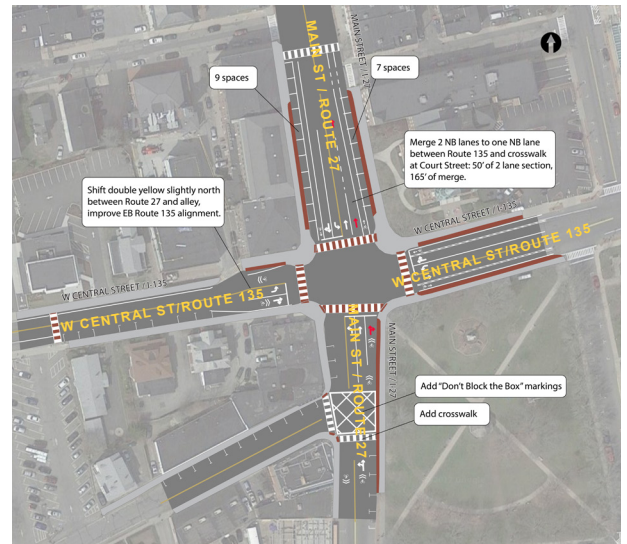
- + Heavy traffic flows result in congestion and queuing.
- + Wide paved areas produce long pedestrian crossings.
- + Lack of bicycle access through intersection.
- + Limited potential for widening due to buildings and green space.
- + On-street parking, including angle parking, is important to residents and businesses.

Potential Improvements

- + Convert northbound right-turn lane to through-right lane – the provision of two northbound Route 27 through-traffic lanes requires that these lanes merge back to a single lane by Court Street.
- + Implement concurrent pedestrian phasing with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI). An LPI typically gives pedestrians a several second head start when entering an intersection with a corresponding green signal in the same direction of travel to enhance visibility of pedestrians in the intersection.



Existing Route 135/Route 27 intersection



Proposed Route 135/Route 27 intersection

- + Add pedestrian neckdowns.
- + Add bike lanes on Route 27 north of Route 135, and on Route 135 east of Route 27.
- + “Don’t block the box” markings and crosswalk at Pond Street.
- + Convert angle parking on Route 27 to parallel parking to improve the pedestrian environment and provide width for an additional northbound lane – as illustrated in the adjacent figure, there is no net loss of parking. The change in parking layout will need to be carefully studied and perhaps tested temporarily to ease concerns. Suggested changes to the existing parking layout have met with opposition in the past.



4-7 YEARS



The proposed design, traffic operations, and parking changes represent a significant improvement for traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists and should be evaluated further for potential implementation.

Route 135 (West Central Street)/Speen Street

Speen Street is an important north – south connection, providing access from many neighborhoods on Natick’s west side to Route 9, the MassPike, and The Golden Triangle. This location is an important crossing of two major local roadways, and also provides access for the Roche Brothers supermarket shopping center. It is constrained by environmentally sensitive water bodies at three corners.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Heavy traffic flows result in congestion and queuing
- + Lack of bicycle access through intersection
- + Limited potential for widening due to wetlands adjacent to the northwest, southwest, and southeast corners of the intersection

Potential Improvements

- + Widen westbound Route 135 approach to add right turn lane (adjacent to CVS property). Further assessment should consider the potential for a right turn lane to reduce breaks in the westbound Route 135 traffic (breaks currently provide opportunities for cars to exit the CVS parking lot) and recommend mitigation measures for that impact.
- + Extend westbound Route 135 left turn lane to address left turn demand, unsafe crossings of double-yellow center line.
- + Implement concurrent pedestrian phasing with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI).
- + Add bike lanes on Route 135.



Existing and Proposed Conditions at the Route 135/Speen Street Intersection.

	EXISTING	NO-BUILD	PROPOSED
Traffic			
AM Level of Service (LOS)	F	F	E
PM Level of Service (LOS)	F	F	F
Pedestrian	Exclusive Phase	Exclusive Phase	Concurrent Phase w/ LPI
Bicycle	No Bike Lanes	No Bike Lanes	Bike Lanes on Route 135

TABLE 4.16 EVALUATION OF 135/SPEEN ST INTERSECTION

The proposed changes offers moderate improvements in congestion and queuing for all movements during both morning and afternoon peak periods, even though the intersection continues to operate at LOS E in the morning peak hour and LOS F in the afternoon peak hour. **Because this proposal has only modest improvements, further evaluation should consider the overall value in making these changes.**



4-7 YEARS

Route 135 (West Central Street)/Mill Street

Mill Street provides an important connection between Route 135 and Hartford Street. Its intersection with Route 135 carries heavy traffic flows and experiences significant peak period congestion, but property constraints limit the opportunity for widening.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Heavy traffic flows result in congestion and queuing
- + Lack of bicycle access through intersection



Existing and Proposal Conditions at the Route 135/Mill Street Intersection.

- + Limited potential for widening due to Henry Wilson Park on the northwest corner and private homes with limited setbacks on the southwest and south-east corners of the intersection

Potential Improvements

- + Widen northeastern corner of intersection to provide a dedicated left-turn lane from Mill Street southbound onto Route 135 eastbound
- + Implement concurrent pedestrian phasing with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)
- + Add bike lanes on Route 135. The northwest corner of the intersection could potentially become the start of a shared use path, rather than a separate bicycle path and sidewalk, continuing west on Route 135 (see page 4.68 for a more detailed discussion).
- + Review signal phasing to ensure the intersection is functioning efficiently

	EXISTING	NO-BUILD	PROPOSED
Traffic			
AM Level of Service (LOS)	F	F	E
PM Level of Service (LOS)	F	F	F
Pedestrian	Exclusive Phase	Exclusive Phase	Concurrent Phase w/ LPI
Bicycle	No Bike Lanes	No Bike Lanes	Bike Lanes on Route 135

TABLE 4.17 EVALUATION OF I35/SPEEN ST INTERSECTION



4-7 YEARS



The proposed improvements result in improvements in congestion and queuing for Mill Street movements, but on Route 135 some movements improve while others worsen, and there is no improvement from overall LOS F in both morning and afternoon peak hours. **Further evaluation should consider the overall value in making these changes.**

Walnut Street/Bacon Street/Belvedere Street

Walnut Street and Bacon Street are important neighborhood collector streets in the neighborhood north of Natick Center around the Walnut Hill School for the Arts. These streets, along with Chestnut Street, a local residential street, are adjacent to Loker Park. This intersection operates with all-way stop control; it experiences intermittent congestion on some approaches, but it only infrequently experiences significant congestion.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Wide paved areas due to skewed intersection.
- + Lack of sidewalks and crosswalks create unfriendly pedestrian environment.

Potential Improvements

- + Tighten southeast corner of intersection to shorten crossing distances.
- + Add crosswalks on all approaches.
- + Add sidewalk on east side of Walnut Street from Deerfield Lane to Belvedere Street.
- + Tighten corners at Belvedere Street/Walnut Street and Belvedere Street/Bacon St.

The proposed improvements result in no change in traffic operations or queuing, but significantly improve pedestrian access and safety. Some trucks (a very low proportion of vehicles on Walnut Street) could no longer turn right from Walnut Street northbound to Bacon Street eastbound; they could, however, make this connection via Belvedere Street.



4-7 YEARS



The Town should move forward with these improvements because they offer significant benefits for pedestrian access to Loker Park and along major neighborhood streets without negative impacts on vehicular access or circulation.



Existing conditions at the Walnut Street/Bacon Street/
Belvedere Street Intersection.



Proposed conditions at the Walnut Street/Bacon Street/
Belvedere Street Intersection.



ENCOURAGE WALKING AND BICYCLING AS MODES OF TRAVEL AND EXERCISE THROUGH IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND ENVIRONMENT, AN EXPANDED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK, AND IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY.

LEAD 
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COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
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COMMITTEE

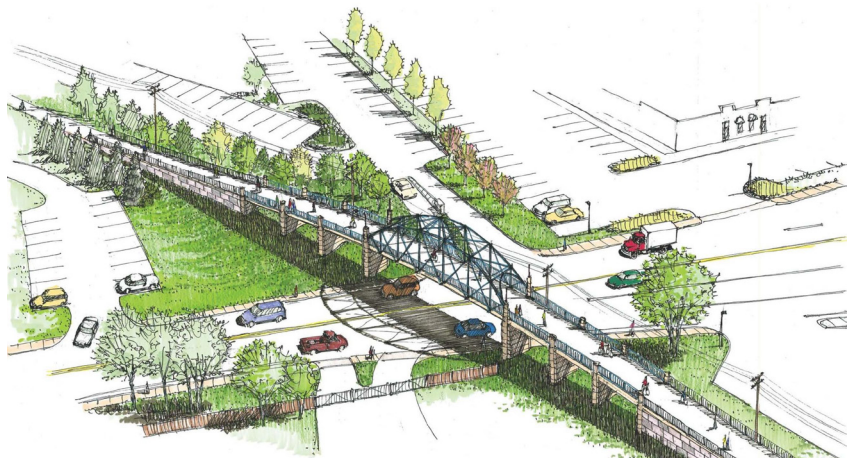
The intersection improvements described under Recommendation 2.1 include traffic operations improvements as well as significant multimodal improvements. Recommendation 2.2 addresses several key corridors that would benefit from “traffic calming” improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.

There are several ongoing projects that will improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety along important corridors in Natick. These include the following:

- + Route 27 North – This project, which is being designed and built by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), would rebuild Route 27 from North Street in Natick Center to the Wayland town line. It would rebuild sidewalks, add crosswalks, and create continuous five-foot wide shoulders for bicycle accommodation.
- + Route 27 South – This project is being planned and designed by the Town of Natick for the section of Route 27 from Cottage Street in Natick Center to the

Sherborn town line. It would rebuild sidewalks, add crosswalks, narrow travel lanes, and create continuous four-foot wide shoulders for bicycle accommodation.

- + Cochituate Rail Trail – This project will create a 2.4 mile long shared-use path in the abandoned Saxonville Branch of the former Boston and Albany Railroad (now CSX) and a 0.25-mile connection to Speen Street known as the Wonder Bread Spur. The project follows the existing railroad right-of-way from Commonwealth Road (Route 30) in Framingham to the Natick Center MBTA Commuter Rail Station. This will provide an important pedestrian and bicycle connection for Natick Center, The Golden Triangle, and the neighborhoods of northwest Natick in between.



Rendering of Cochituate Rail Trail bridge over Route 30.

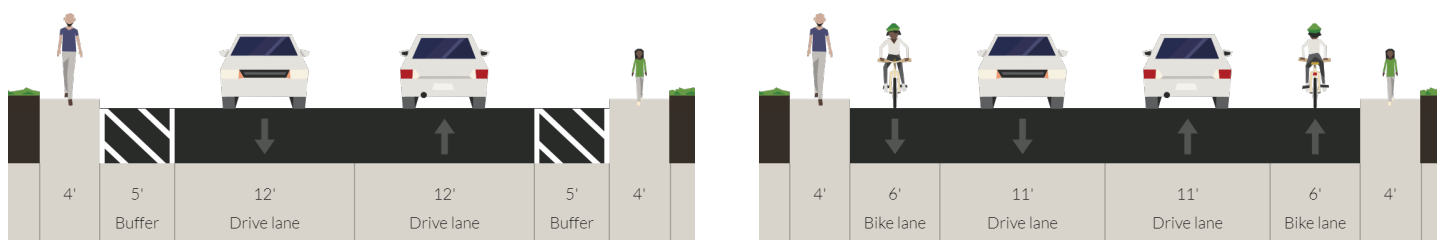
In addition to these corridors, there are other corridors that would benefit from pedestrian and bicycle access improvements. Principal among these are Route 135 and Speen Street.

Route 135 (East and West Central Street)

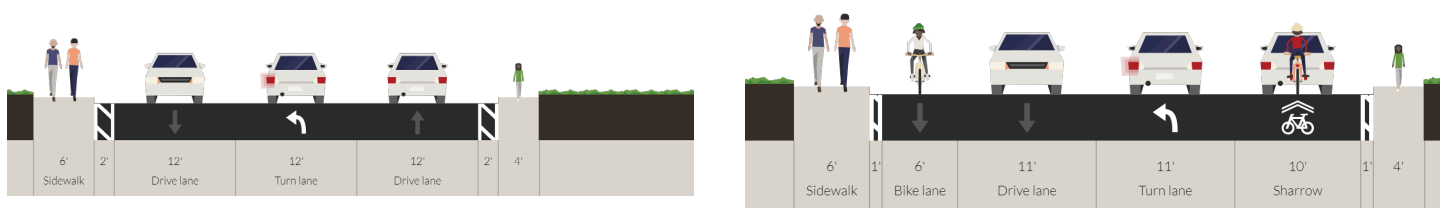
Route 135 is the main east-west surface street through Natick, and the only surface street (i.e. non-limited-access highway) that provides continuous east-west connections through Natick. It provides generally one travel lane in each direction, with additional turn lanes at intersections.

Key Issues & Opportunities

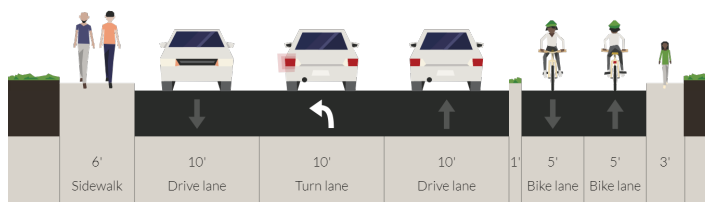
- + Route 135 is the best east-west bicycle connection through Natick, and connects to many destinations, but there are long gaps without bicycle lanes or shoulders wide enough to accommodate bicycle access.
- + Inconsistent bicycle accommodation.
- + Frequent, wide curb cuts create challenges for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.



Cross section of Route 135 showing existing condition with no left turn lane (left) and Option 1 with two one-way in-road bike lanes.



Cross section of Route 135 showing existing condition with left turn lane (left) and Option 1 with two one-way in-road bike lanes and one sharrow (shared bike/traffic lane).



Cross section of Route 135 showing left turn lane and Option 2 with one two-way separated bike lane.

Potential Improvements

- + Upgrade crosswalks at key intersections – these crosswalk improvements are reflected in the intersection improvements described above under Recommendation 2.1 at Route 135/Mill Street, Route 135/Speen Street, and Route 135/Route 27.
- + As parcels are redeveloped, identify opportunities to narrow and/or consolidate curb cuts through improved access management, and roadway connections within and between parcels.
- + Provide continuous bicycle accommodation:
 - Option 1 - Bike Lanes: Create continuous five to six-foot bicycle lanes along most of Route 135, with shared-bicycle lane markings (“sharrows”) on segments of Route 135 where intersection turning lanes or local constraints preclude bicycle lanes
 - Option 2 – Separated Bike-Way: Create a two-way separated bicycle way along one side or the other of Route 135 in order to provide a more secure bicycle facility that is suited to less experienced bicyclists.



4-7 YEARS



It is recommended that crosswalks be upgraded at key intersections. As parcels are redeveloped, curbcuts should be narrowed and/or consolidated. In the short- to medium-term, continuous 5-6 foot bicycle lanes should be provided in each direction through the re-stripping of the existing paved roadway, widening of existing 4-5 foot shoulders, and narrowing of wide travel lanes. In the longer term, consideration could be given to a continuous two-way separated bicycle way along the northern side of Route 135, subject to the following considerations and caveats:

- + The two-way bicycle way should only be provided to the west of Route 27, where major intersection conflicts are less frequent than east of Route 27.
- + The two-way bicycle way would need to be implemented all at once in order to prevent discontinuous segments of bicycle lane and two-way separated bicycle way, which would require bicyclists to frequently cross conflicting traffic.
- + The two-way separated bicycle way would require physical separation, special treatment at intersections, and special traffic controls, which would result in a much higher cost than a painted bicycle lane in each direction.

Consideration also should be given to the long-term development of a two-way shared use path west of Route 27. The shared-use path would be subject to the same caveats listed above. In addition, although siting the path on the south side might be preferable because of fewer curbcuts, the presence of an existing sidewalk and the absence of utility interference, placing the path on the north side would provide better access to existing and potential future mixed-use development and the MBTA commuter rail station.



4-7 YEARS



Speen Street North of Route 135

Speen Street is a key north-south connection, and an important local roadway for residential neighborhoods of southwest Natick. North of Route 135, it is currently fairly unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists, with no bicycle accommodations and infrequent crosswalks.

Key Issues & Opportunities

- + Infrequent crosswalks – there are only four crosswalks across Speen Street in the one mile distance between Hartford Street and Route 135.
- + Lack of bicycle facilities.
- + Adequate width between Hartford Street and Route 135 to provide one travel lane in each direction plus bike lanes in each direction.
- + Continuous center left turn lanes between Hartford Street and Route 135 preclude bike lanes – these turn lanes are typically much longer than needed for the low-volume residential traffic using them.
- + Narrow cross-section (only 24 feet from curb-to-curb) from Route 135 to Sherborn town line.



Existing and proposed Speen Street roadway configuration, illustrating addition of bike lanes.

Potential Improvements

- + Consider shortening left turn lanes on Speen Street in order to provide roadway space for bicycle lanes in between shorter left turn lane segments.
- + Provision of bicycle sharrows on segments of Speen Street with inadequate width for bicycle lanes.
- + Addition of crosswalks at key intersections.



4-7 YEARS



It is recommended that the following improvements be undertaken:

- + Significant shortening of left turn lanes on Speen Street as shown above.
- + Creation of continuous five-foot-wide bicycle lanes along most of Speen Street between Hartford Street and Route 135.
- + Provision of sharrows on segments of Speen Street where intersection left turn lanes are required.

- + Provision of sharrows on narrower segment of Speen Street from Route 135 to Sherborn town line.
- + Addition of crosswalks at key intersections.



A two-way shared use path could also be considered for this portion of Speen Street. The path would be subject to caveats similar to those described for Route 135. Given the existing curb to curb dimensions, the path would have to replace the sidewalk on one side of Speen Street unless it is developed on private property as part of future redevelopment projects. A sidewalk could remain in place on the opposite side.



IMPLEMENT THE TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE PLANNING STUDY.

As described in Chapter 3, the Town of Natick and the City of Framingham recently published The Golden Triangle Planning Study. This study addresses land use, planning, transportation and infrastructure issues in The Golden Triangle. This area, which straddles Framingham and Natick, is generally bordered by Route 126 to the northwest, Interstate 90 to the north, the Cochituate Rail Trail and Lake Cochituate to the east, and Route 9 to the south.

The Golden Triangle is a critical economic generator for Framingham, Natick, and surrounding towns, and it provides important jobs and shopping opportunities. However, it is also a major generator of traffic, and its large blocks concentrate traffic on its limited network of very wide roadways. This results in a highly-congested roadway network and an environment that is very unfriendly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Golden Triangle Planning Study evaluated potential future transportation demand resulting from land use growth assumptions of 10 percent and 20 percent, along with recommendations for potential transportation improvements that would accommodate the traffic growth, make the area more appealing for development, and enhance access in all modes, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The following transportation recommendations from the Golden Triangle Planning Study should be further studied and evaluated, prior to implementation:

- + **Aspirational Connections and Open Space Framework Plan:** The Golden Triangle Planning Study recommends breaking up many of the large blocks in the study area by building new, multimodal Complete Streets and non-motorized connections, as shown on the diagram on page 4.71.
- + **Commuter Shuttle:** A shuttle system from the MBTA Natick Center Commuter Rail Station into and through The Golden Triangle. The shuttle would serve both Commuter Rail passengers and other residents, employees, and visitors wanting to move around The Triangle.

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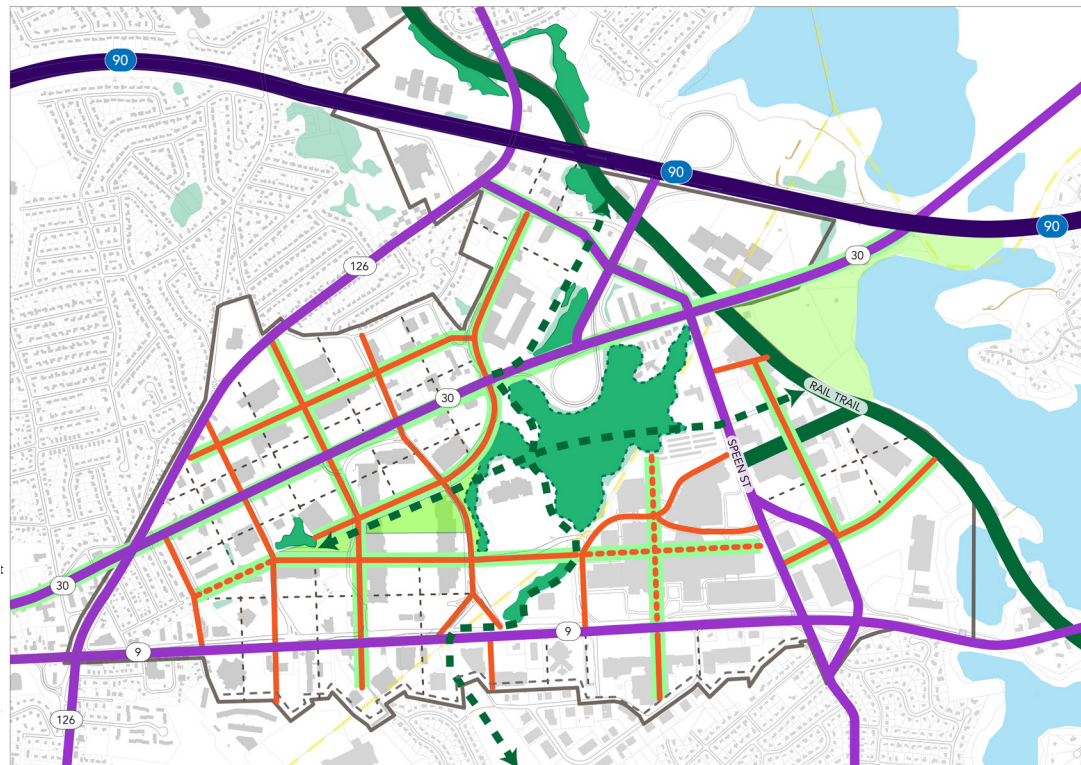


7-12+ YEARS



LEGEND

	Golden Triangle
	Municipal Boundary
	Primary Street
	Secondary Street
	Green Street
	New Greenway
	Future Street
	New Green Space
	Future Internal Street
	Wetland Perimeter Path



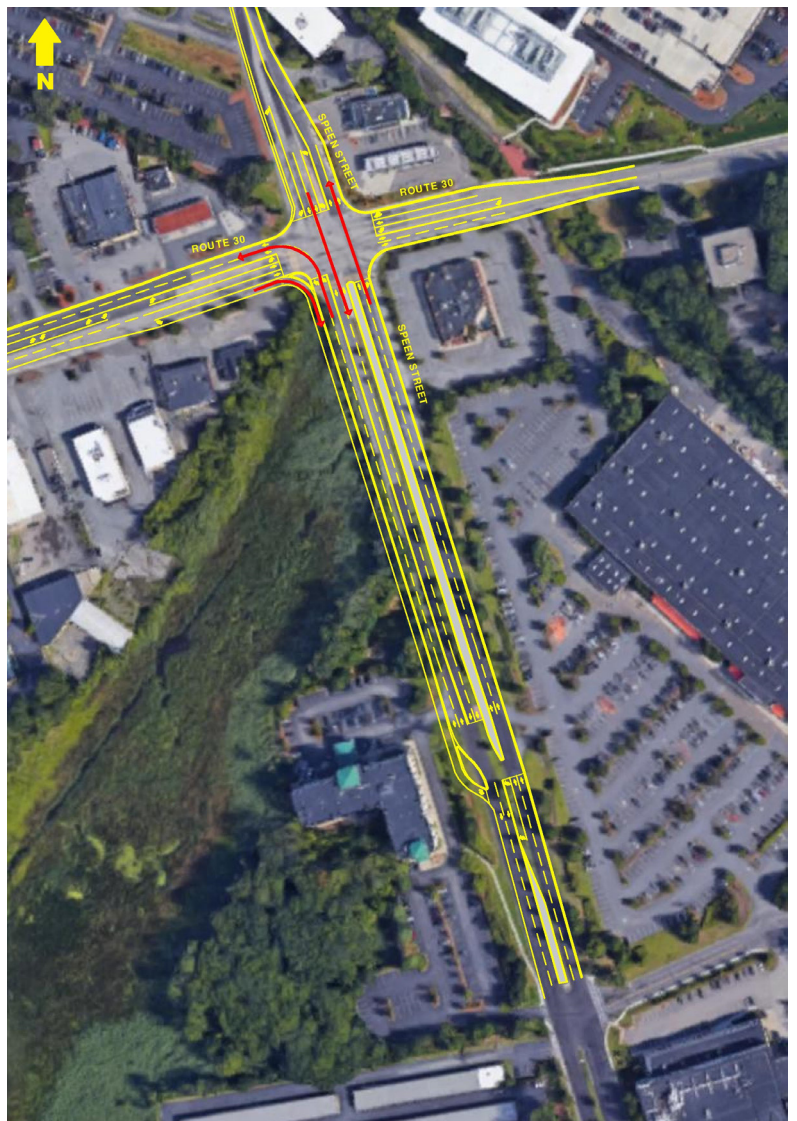
Golden Triangle Planning Study Connections & Open Space Framework Plan

The following transportation recommendations from The Golden Triangle Planning Study should be further studied and evaluated, before implementation:

- + **Displaced Left Turn at Speen Street/Route 30 Intersection:** A significant traffic access and congestion issue in The Golden Triangle is access between Speen Street and I-90. In the afternoon peak period, traffic bound from the Speen Street corridor to I-90 typically overwhelms the double-left turn from Speen Street onto Route 30. The recommended “displaced left turn” would displace those left turns from Speen Street northbound to the outside of Speen Street southbound. This would enable these turns to operate concurrently with Speen Street through traffic, and remove the left turn conflict, a major source of traffic congestion at this intersection. This proposal is shown on page 4.72.
- + **MassPike Exit 13 Interchange Redesign:** This proposal would address the Speen Street/Route 30 congestion issue by adding new ramps directly from Speen Street to the I-90 on- and off-ramps. This would reduce the demand for turning movements at the Speen Street/Route 30 intersection and reduce traffic congestion.

These two recommendations are ambitious because they will require coordination with MassDOT and the City of Framingham (as well as private property owners for the Exit 13 redesign) and MassDOT funding. The designs represent significant changes to existing traffic operations and will require more detailed study. The recommendations are important because the changes offer relief to the existing traffic congestion that will continue to inhibit desired redevelopment in The Golden Triangle.

- + **Natick should continue to work with Framingham on coordinated improvements to the Route 30/Route 9/Spenn Street circulation pattern; consideration should be given to the long-term possibility of a loop pattern of traffic.**



Proposed displaced left turn at the Spenn Street/Route 30 intersection.



REVIEW THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE NETWORK THROUGHOUT NATICK AND DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT PLANS TO BE IMPLEMENTED OVER TIME.

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1-5 YEARS



1-5 YEARS



Natick currently has a very limited bicycle network, as well as many roadways with sidewalks missing from one or both sides. The Town of Natick recently completed a town-wide Pedestrian Accessibility Study that evaluates the condition of sidewalks throughout Natick and recommends a five-year sidewalk improvement plan. **The recommendations from that plan should be implemented. Natick also should undertake a study to determine where additional sidewalks are needed to provide safe pedestrian access to destinations including schools, parks, commercial centers and other destinations.**

The Town of Natick also should consider undertaking a town-wide bicycle transportation plan to build upon the recommendations included in this plan. As part of that plan, the Town should consider developing preferred design standards for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to be used in varying conditions (e.g., traffic conditions, location of utilities, width of right of way, potential for off-road facilities, adjacency to key destinations, etc.).



R2.5

ENCOURAGE INCREASED USE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT THROUGH IMPROVED MBTA COMMUTER RAIL STATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKING OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVED LOCAL MWRTA PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE.

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ON-GOING



Access to the Natick Center MBTA station will be improved by Natick’s ongoing projects – Route 27 North, Route 27 South, and the Cochituate Rail Trail – which will improve traffic operations as well as pedestrian and bicycle access to Natick Center and the commuter rail station. In addition, MassDOT is planning accessibility and station improvements at the Natick Center MBTA Station. Several of the improvements proposed in Recommendation 2.1, notably the Route 135/Route 27 intersection improvements and Route 135 corridor improvements, would also improve motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle access to Natick Center. **The pedestrian improvements from Recommendation 2.1 should be implemented.**



EVALUATE PARKING SUPPLY, PARKING DEMAND, AND OPTIONS FOR PARKING MANAGEMENT THROUGH A DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN.

For residents, visitors, shoppers, and commuter rail riders who drive to Natick Center, parking is a critical challenge. Most of the on-street and off-street parking near Natick Center is limited to two-hour parking or to retail customers in order to support the Natick Center businesses and local institutions, such as the library and Town government.



The Town should consider undertaking a comprehensive parking study, updated periodically, which could entail the following elements:

1. Parking Inventory

- + Inventory of parking supply for Natick Center within about 1/3 to 1/2 mile of the commuter rail station
- + Inventory supply for short and long-term daytime weekday parking for public facilities.
- + Identify and analyze elements such as regulations, permits, enforcement period, special use restrictions (such as handicap spaces, Zipcar use, and loading zones).
- + Review compliance with parking ordinances, payment methods, and price, when applicable.
- + Develop database and GIS-based mapping of all parking supply in study area.

2. Parking Utilization

- + Field surveys of parking utilization for all study area parking.
- + Parking occupancy counts taken periodically (every 1-2 hours) over the course of a typical weekday will provide a time series of typical parking demand in different zones at different times of day.

3. Parking Supply and Demand Analysis

- + Establish the parking supply.
- + Analyze peak daily parking accumulation, daily parking utilization, and patterns of high or low usage.
- + Identify factors that could increase or decrease parking supply or demand, such as new development, loss of businesses in Natick Center, and increased use of TNCs (Transportation Network Companies such as Uber). With the advent of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), it is expected that the cost of vehicular travel will drop, making it “cheaper” to the user. This could make travel by TNCs a more attractive alternative to single-occupancy-vehicle

(SOV) travel, and perhaps to public transportation, cycling or walking. From a parking perspective, some argue that CAVs will create more efficient parking by allowing these vehicles to drop-off passengers and continue to off-site parking, thereby reducing the need for accessible parking and thus reducing cost. In contrast, some fear that the anticipated convenience of CAVs will induce additional vehicular trips, with these vehicles circulating or traveling long distances to avoid parking costs, increasing the external costs of crashes and emissions. Either way, demand for large supplies of parking proximate to dense activity centers is anticipated to drop.

4. *Parking Management*

- + Review existing pricing, evaluate parking pricing options, and conduct a sensitivity analysis of parking revenue.
- + Evaluate construction cost for new parking supply, financing options, and capacity of parking revenue to support project financing.
- + Review potential options for parking management, including separate management of on-street and off-street parking, joint management by the Town of Natick, or joint management of all parking by a separate parking authority or outside parking management company.
- + Consider implementation of a residential parking sticker program that would allow residents to park on any residential-only street across Town. The sticker could also be used to allow resident-only parking at heavily used open space resources such as Dug Pond.



METRIC

A COMPREHENSIVE PARKING STUDY HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND IS BEING UPDATED EVERY FIVE YEARS.












ON-GOING












The Town should implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Parking Study.

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Goal	Recommendation	Action Step	Lead Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Time Frame	Metric	Coordination
<p>Goal 1: Improve safety in all travel modes through the implementation of a Complete Streets design approach, roadway and intersection improvements, and proven safety counter-measures.</p>	<p>R1.1: Employ a Complete Street Design Approach</p>	<p>Continue to implement the Complete Streets policies into all roadway improvement projects.</p> 	<p>Public Works Department</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee</p>	<p>ON-GOING</p>		<p>Open Space & Recreation Economic Development</p>
	<p>R1.2: Implement Proven Safety Countermeasures</p>	<p>Consider these measures as potential design elements that should be evaluated for inclusion in all roadway improvement projects, as appropriate to the project context.</p> 	<p>Public Works Department</p>	<p>Transportation Advisory Committee</p>	<p>ON-GOING</p>		<p>Open Space & Recreation Economic Development</p>
<p>Goal 2: Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by improving multi-modal access, including vehicular access, public transit, walking, bicycling and ride-sharing.</p>	<p>R2.1: Reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by managing traffic bottlenecks, improving connectivity of the roadway network, and upgrading intersection design and traffic controls.</p>	<p>Look for opportunities to create connections between dead ends and cul-de-sacs and highlight dead ends that could be connected over time, either by roadway or pedestrian/bicycle connection.</p> 	<p>Public Works Department</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee</p>	<p>ON-GOING</p>		<p>Land Use Economic Development Open Space & Recreation Historic & Cultural Resources</p>
		<p>Study and/or implement improvement recommendations for the following intersections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 135/Route 27 • Route 135/Speen Street • Route 135/Mill Street • Hartford Street/Bishop Street • Pleasant Street/Union Street/Route 16 • Walnut Street/Bacon Street/Chestnut Street • Pine Street/Oak Street/Erie Drive 	<p>Public Works Department</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee</p>	<p>ON-GOING</p>		<p>Land Use Economic Development Open Space & Recreation Historic & Cultural Resources</p>

Goal	Recommendation	Action Step	Lead Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Time Frame	Metric	Coordination
	R2.2: Encourage walking and bicycling as modes of travel and exercise through improved pedestrian access and environment, an expanded pedestrian and bicycle network, and improved pedestrian and bicycle safety.	Incorporate bicycle lanes and sidewalks on Route 135 and Route 27. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	4-7 YEARS		 Land Use Economic Development Open Space & Recreation
		Incorporate bicycle lanes and improve crosswalks on Speen Street north of Route 135. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	4-7 YEARS		Land Use Economic Development Open Space & Recreation
	R2.3: Implement the transportation recommendations from The Golden Triangle Planning Study.	Further study and implement the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections and Open Space Framework • Commuter Shuttle • Displaced Left Turn at Speen Street/Route 30 Intersection • MassPike Exit 13 Interchange Redesign  	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee City of Framingham MassDOT	7-12+ YEARS		Land Use Economic Development Housing
		Continue to work with Framingham on coordinated improvements to the Route 30/Route 9/Speen Street circulation pattern. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee City of Framingham MassDOT	7-12+ YEARS		Land Use Economic Development Housing

Goal	Recommendation	Action Step	Lead Responsibility	Support Responsibility	Time Frame	Metric	Coordination
							
	R2.4: Review the pedestrian and bicycle network throughout Natick and develop comprehensive improvement plans to be implemented over time.	Implement the recommendations from the Pedestrian Accessibility Study. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	1-5 YEARS		Open Space & Recreation
		Consider undertaking a town-wide bicycle transportation plan. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	1-5 YEARS		Open Space & Recreation
	R2.5: Encourage increased use of public transit through improved MBTA commuter rail station infrastructure and parking opportunities and improved local MVRTA public transit service. 	Implement the pedestrian improvements from Recommendation 2.1.	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	ON-GOING		Economic Development
	R2.6: Evaluate parking supply, parking demand, and options for parking management through a downtown parking management plan. 	Undertake a comprehensive parking and parking management study.	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	1-5 YEARS	Comprehensive Parking Study has been undertaken and is being updated every 5 years.	Land Use Economic Development
		Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Parking Study. 	Public Works Department	Community & Economic Development Department Transportation Advisory Committee	ON-GOING		Land Use Economic Development

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