

Boston to Blue Hills Feasibility Study
Blue Hills Parkway
Milton, MA

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Executive Summary

Blue Hills Reservation is a historic and recreation destination located in the municipalities of Quincy, Milton, and other nearby municipalities. Despite its close proximity to the southern neighborhoods of Boston, the Reservation remains disconnected for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users. Boston-area parkways were originally designed to connect parks and provide recreational access. Over time, these parkways have carried increased motor vehicle traffic for commuter use and reduced space for safe active transportation.

The work in this study aims to restore the original recreational aim of these parkways and builds on prior planning efforts from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the City of Boston, the Town of Milton, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). These previous planning efforts have identified Blue Hills Parkway as a key gap in the regional active transportation network. This project seeks to address that gap by establishing a preferred multi-modal route from the Neponset River Greenway in Boston to the Blue Hills Reservation that utilizes context-sensitive, Complete Streets strategies. The project team, consisting of MAPC, the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepWRA), and Nitsch Engineering, explored design alternatives to achieve this goal. The Boston to Blue Hills project has been broken down into two phases: 1. Blue Hills Parkway, from Mattapan Square to Canton Ave, and 2. Three reservation roads; Unquity Road, Chickatawbut Road, and Hillside Road. This report investigates Blue Hills Parkway including existing conditions, explored design alternatives, community engagement efforts, and next steps.

Three reservation roads were included in the recommended project route: Unquity Road, Chickatawbut Road, and Hillside Street. These roadways are key to the final connection to Houghton's Pond in the south of the Blue Hills Reservation, and they will be further explored in a separate report. The design and construction work along Blue Hills Parkway does not necessarily need to occur simultaneously with the reservation roads; the envisioned work along these roadways can proceed separately so as to not delay the safety changes described within this report.

Throughout the course of the project, MAPC and NepRWA conducted numerous one-one-one conversations, attended in-person events, conducted an online public survey, organized site visits, and held virtual and in-person community meetings. Overall, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about the project.

Nitsch Engineering was hired as the transportation consultant and collected traffic counts, speed data, and pathway counts to understand and evaluate traffic on the project roadways. The data indicates that most traffic throughout the day travels northbound along Blue Hills Parkway; even during peak hours; however, the two northbound lanes are carrying a combined volume below the standard lane capacity. Therefore, a northbound road diet would not significantly restrict the flow of motor vehicle traffic along Blue Hills Parkway. Additionally, Nitsch Engineering found that motor vehicle traffic travels at an average speed of five miles per hour or greater than the posted speed limit throughout the corridor, indicating that traffic calming should be implemented to slow drivers and improve safety for those traveling outside of motor vehicles.

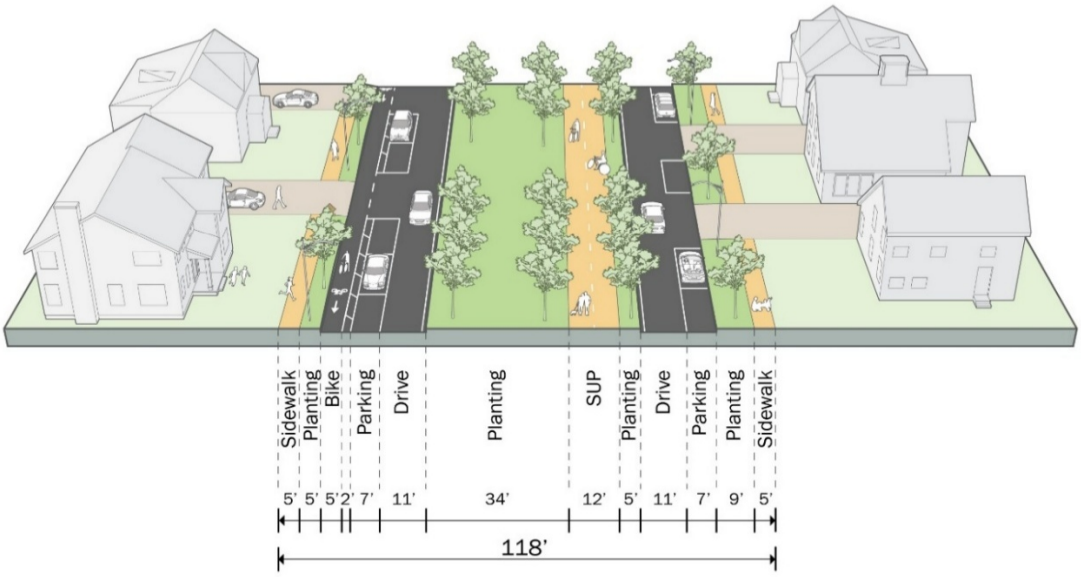
Nitsch Engineering analyzed recent crash data along Blue Hills Parkway and found that 82 crashes were reported during this timeframe. Six of these crashes involved vulnerable road users such as bicyclists or pedestrians. Additionally, 31 crashes, or over one third, resulted in some type of injury to those involved in the crash. This again demonstrates that traffic calming could be implemented to improve the safety for all road users along the corridor.

The project team created and evaluated six alternatives for the Blue Hills Parkway cross section. These cross sections were evaluated based on ten criteria: safety, traffic mitigation, design effectiveness, environmental impacts, project costs, connecting people to nature, encouraging more people to travel car-free, equitable access to transportation and recreation, access for various groups, and having a stress-free place for people to spend time. Using results from the 2023 community survey, the project team weighed the ten characteristics in a scoring matrix and scored each alternative. The top scoring alternatives were Alternatives 2 and 4. Alternative 2 would create a

two-way cycle track along the northbound sidewalk, and Alternative 4 would create a shared use path along the northbound side of the existing median. A full description of each alternative and its matrix score is included within the report.

These alternatives were shared with the community at an open house public meeting. Support for the project was strong, and participants were excited about the prospect of changes along Blue Hills Parkway. Participants shared feedback on the design and were overall in favor of Alternative 4. Participants also shared that safer crossings, placemaking amenities such as benches, and traffic calming features would be welcome along Blue Hills Parkway. Parking was also frequently mentioned as priority to maintain. Based on the feedback the project team received from the community, some adjustments to Alternative 4 and additional considerations could also be implemented, such as specific traffic calming elements and expansion of the median along the southbound side of the roadway.

Blue Hills Parkway - Alternative 4



Based on public feedback and our analysis, the project team recommends Alternative 4 be implemented along Blue Hills Parkway from its intersection with Brook Road to its intersection with Canton Avenue. This alternative would provide dedicated space for walking, biking, and rolling via a median running shared use path and would prioritize the historic recreational intent of this parkway. At the northern terminus of the project corridor, the shared use path would transition to the east side of the roadway to better connect to the existing two-way cycle track that extends south to Curtis Road from Mattapan Square. This design is estimated to cost approximately $10 million, including design, temporary traffic control, and construction costs. Next steps will include identifying funding opportunities and writing and issuing a Request for Proposals for the full design.

At the northern terminus of the project, the “figure eight” intersection of Blue Hills Parkway and Brush Hill Road was observed to operate poorly and under unsafe conditions. As such, it is recommended that this intersection be studied further to remove this barrier to safe walking, biking, and rolling. Due to the complex geometry and overlapping jurisdiction, this intersection warrants a standalone major project to improve it for all users.

This feasibility study process has identified a design ready alternative to create a safer Blue Hills Parkway that welcomes users of all modes, ages, and abilities. This alternative selection involved extensive community outreach and public support, in addition to the traffic and safety analyses. Implementing the selected alternative will encourage more people to travel car free and support equitable access to recreational opportunities.

Introduction

Project background and goals

Blue Hills Reservation is a historic area spanning the municipalities of Quincy, Milton, and other municipalities south of Boston. Renowned for its recreational amenities—including walking and biking trails—the Reservation remains surprisingly disconnected from Boston, lacking a safe, dedicated route for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized users. This project seeks to address that gap by establishing a preferred multi-modal route from the Neponset River Greenway in Boston to the Blue Hills Reservation. The project team, consisting of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepWRA), and Nitsch Engineering, explored design alternatives to achieve this goal. The proposed design alternatives aim to deliver a safer, more equitable experience for all users, maintain corridor continuity, and respect the natural landscape through context-sensitive, Complete Streets strategies.

Sense of safety for all users

Green connection through plantings

Continuity along the corridor

The project has been broken down into two phases: 1. Blue Hills Parkway, from Curtis Road to Canton Ave, and 2, three reservation roads, Unquity Road, Chickatawbut Road, and Hillside Street. All roadways within this study area are under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Blue Hills Parkway and the three reservation roads have distinct challenges and opportunities and therefore will require different approaches and roadway treatments. Blue Hills Parkway is characterized by a wide right-of-way, center-running grassy median with trees, and adjacent residential properties requiring driveway access. The three reservation roads are narrow, with few required access points along the adjacent open space land use. By separating the project into two phases, each phase will be able to more deeply investigate the distinct challenges and opportunities along these two types of roadways. This report will address Blue Hills Parkway, including existing conditions, community engagement, explored design alternatives, preferred conceptual design and cost estimate, as well as next steps.

Location

The project corridor primarily traverses the Town of Milton, with a small segment crossing into Quincy. Blue Hills Parkway, the northernmost section, connects River Street to Canton Avenue, providing access to neighborhoods, schools, and the Reservation (Figure 1). Three key reservation roads—Unquity Road, Chickatawbut Road, and Hillside Road—wind through the Blue Hills Reservation, featuring narrow lanes that vary between 10 and 12 feet in width. Some sections of the Reservation roadways have striped bicycle markings with narrow shoulders. As part of the DCR Parkways Master Plan (2020), the roadways are key to the project's southern terminus at Houghton's Pond and will be addressed in a separate report.



Figure 1 - Project Corridor

The complex “figure eight” intersection of Blue Hills Parkway at Brush Hill Road and Eliot Street is excluded from the project corridor and any future planning and design work will require coordination with entities including the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the City of Boston, and the Town of Milton, all of whom own portions of the roadways connecting at the intersection. In addition, the geometry of this intersection is complex, with over nine legs within the area. Given the complexity of this location, both geometrically and in terms of ownership, this intersection was excluded from this study and should be addressed in the future as a standalone project.

History of DCR Parkways

Boston-area parkways were originally designed in the late 1800s to connect parks and provide recreational access. Designed by landscape architects, these parkways were wide and provided space for all modes to enjoy greenspace as shown below in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Over time, increased motor vehicle traffic led to reduced space for walking and biking. Today, some parkways still support active transportation, while others have become barriers. This study aims to restore the Parkway’s recreational intent by prioritizing walking and biking and enhancing safety for all users.



Figure 2 – Blue Hills Parkway Historic Photo 1, from early 1900s



Figure 3 – Blue Hills Parkway Historic Photo 2, looking toward Boston from about Eliot Street

Recent Planning Efforts

The work in this study builds on previous planning efforts performed by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the City of Boston, the Town of Milton, the City of Quincy, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). These previous planning efforts have identified Blue Hills Parkway as a key gap in the regional active transportation network.

MAPC LandLine Greenway Network

MAPC published the LandLine Greenway Network plan in 2018, which envisioned a regional network of trails and dedicated infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling, including the connection studied in this report. The LandLine plan proposes a shared use path along Blue Hills Parkway and along the three reservation roads. This envisioned network is consistently updated, and the 2026 version is shown in Figure 4 below. A similar project is ongoing to provide connections from the Neponset River Greenway to Blue Hills Reservation from the east.

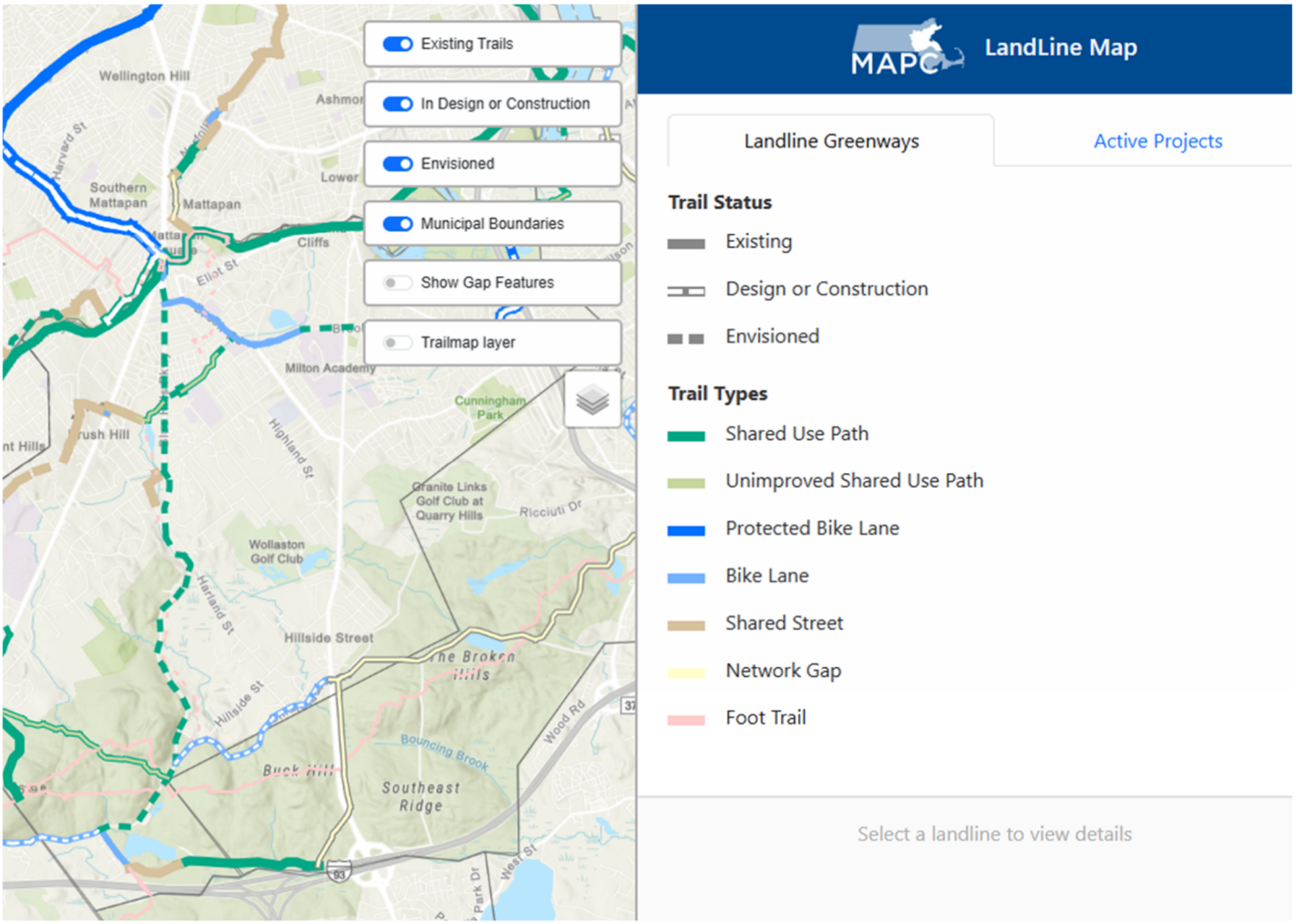


Figure 4 – Excerpt from LandLine plan showing the envisioned project corridor.

DCR Parkways Master Plan

DCR owns many parkways throughout the Boston Metro region and in 2020, the Department published a DCR Parkways Master Plan to guide investments along these roadways. The project described herein is part of Focus Area 16, Blue Hills, and includes Blue Hills Parkway and the three reservation roads, among others. The Parkways Master Plan refers to the length of the Blue Hills Parkway corridor as well as the Reservation Roads as having the opportunity to improve bicycle facilities by means of exploring the potential for reconfiguring the lane geometry.

Town of Milton Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

MAPC assisted the Town of Milton in developing their Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in June 2022. The plan's overall goal is to "improve, expand, and celebrate safe walking, biking, and rolling," and many of the projects build on MAPC's earlier efforts on the LandLine Greenway Network discussed above. The "Mattapan to the Blue Hills" project is mentioned as a key component to connect Boston and the Blue Hills Reservation. Blue Hills Parkway is noted as a recommendation to explore future options for more protected infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling. The corridor can be seen below in Figure 5; Blue Hills Parkway is shown in blue. Milton residents also expressed safety concerns along the project corridor during the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan community engagement process, particularly how dangerous road conditions pose a barrier to walking, biking, and rolling in the town.

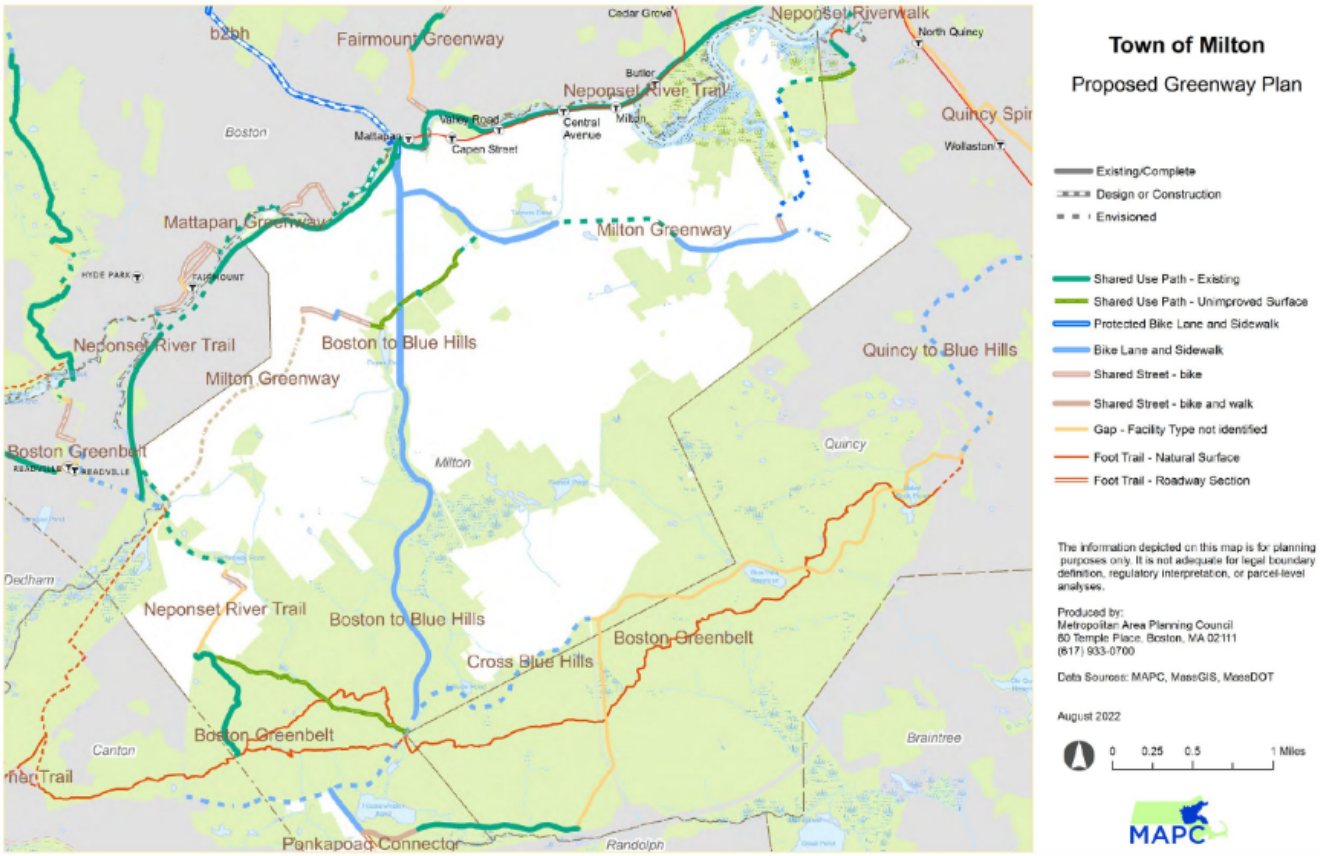


Figure 5 – Proposed Greenway Plan from Milton Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

City of Quincy Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan

MAPC assisted the City of Quincy in publishing their Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan in 2014. This planning process identified a connection from Blue Hills to the shoreline as a high priority recommendation. Known as the Sea to Summit Greenway, this route would connect to the overall Boston to Blue Hills project corridor along Chickatawbut Road, ultimately creating a greenway loop that would extend south from Boston, connect through the Blue Hills Reservation along Chickatawbut Road, and then east to the shoreline. The Sea to Summit can be seen in Figure 5 above as a dashed blue line and in Figure 6 below in the lower left corner in red and green.

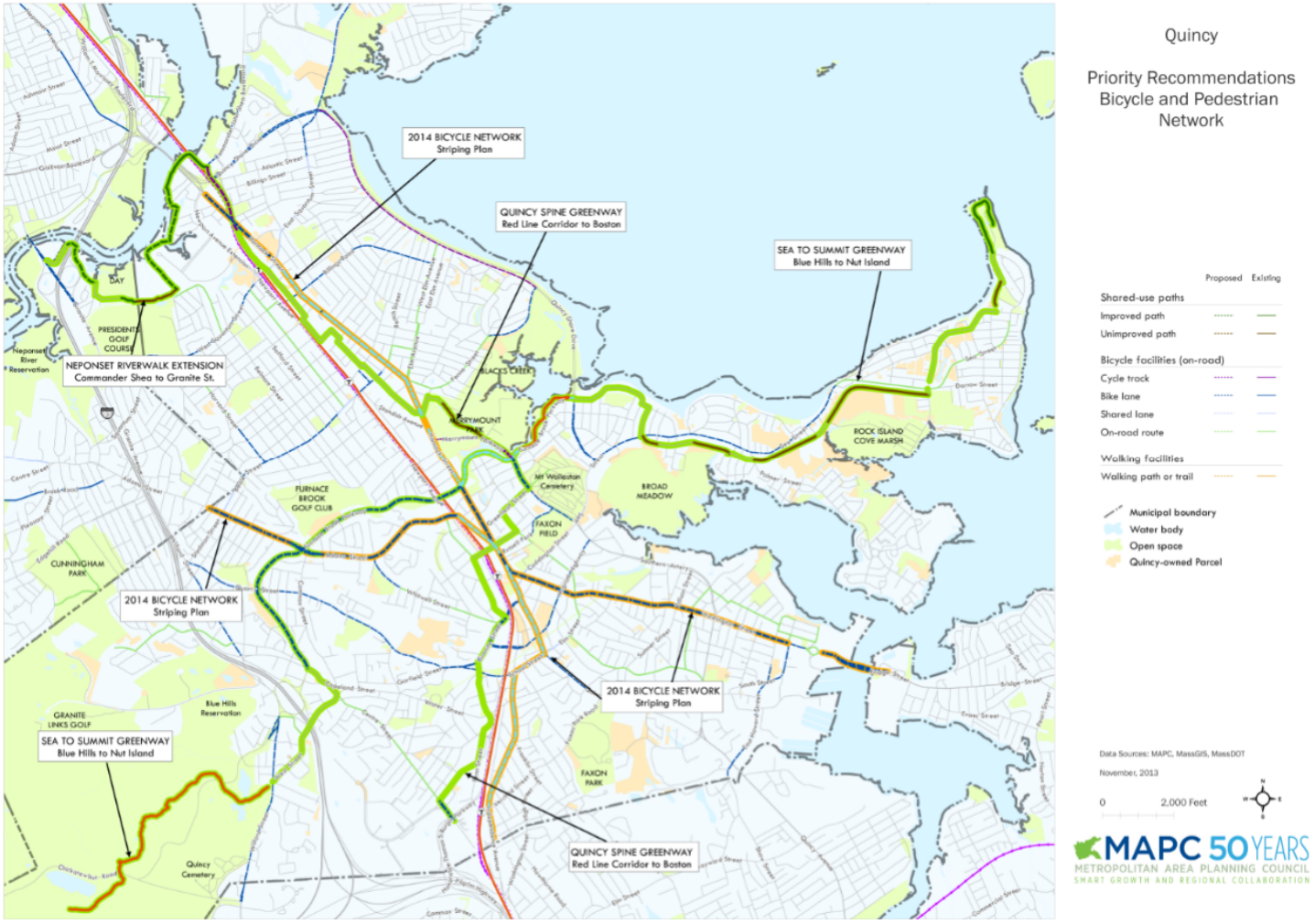


Figure 6 – Excerpt from the Quincy Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Plan

Community Engagement

Throughout the course of this project, MAPC and the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) utilized multiple community engagement methods to talk to local residents, visitors, and organizations to understand if and how a safer connection to the Blue Hills Reservation would benefit them.

MAPC, NepRWA and Nitsch Engineering conducted extensive community engagement efforts with residents and neighbors to understand how Blue Hills Parkway is currently utilized and to identify the most preferred design changes that would make Blue Hills Parkway more comfortable for all roadway users. MAPC and NepRWA conducted one-on-one meetings with stakeholders such as the Friends of Blue Hills Parkway, the Friends of the Blue Hills, Mattapan Food and Fitness, Milton Bike Milton, and more. MAPC and NepRWA hosted virtual public meetings, shared a public survey, worked with youth focus groups and Milton High School, and tabled at in-person events such as Mattapan on Wheels and Neponset Day. These efforts built on the engagement efforts from prior plans and guided the project's preferred alternative. A summary of all events is included below.

Community engagement was a central component of this feasibility study and has informed the project from its earliest stages. Beginning in 2022, the project team conducted outreach with community organizations, neighborhood leaders, and residents throughout the study area to better understand how people access the Blue Hills Reservation and what barriers prevent greater use of this regional resource. Interviews were conducted with community leaders, including Fatima Ali-Salaam, Chair of the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council, as well as representatives from the Edgewater Neighborhood Association, the Neponset River Greenway Council, and other local organizations. These conversations focused on residents' personal connections to the Blue Hills Reservation, how they have historically traveled to the Reservation, and the challenges they face in reaching it safely and conveniently. Reoccurring themes during these conversations were the fact that roadway safety and the lack of public transportation are a big concern and often deters people from going to the Blue Hills Reservation. Additionally, people expressed a strong interest in a trail connection to the Reservation that is scenic, enjoyable, and safe for people of all ages and abilities.

To broaden participation, the project team developed and distributed a public survey in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Simplified Chinese. The survey received approximately 1,000 responses, demonstrating strong community interest in improving access to the Blue Hills Reservation. Survey results revealed overwhelming support for enhanced connections, with 90% of respondents indicating they would like more ways to get to the Reservation. Among respondents who had previously visited the Blue Hills Reservation, 91% reported traveling there by car, highlighting the lack of viable and accessible alternatives. Among those who had never visited the Reservation, 70% identified a lack of transportation options as their primary barrier to access. Safety concerns also emerged as a major theme, with 67% of respondents reporting that bicycling to the Blue Hills Reservation feels unsafe. In addition to the survey, project staff attended community events including Mattapan on Wheels, Neponset Day, and the Mattapan and Milton Farmers Markets, providing opportunities to engage residents directly and gather additional feedback about their experiences accessing the Blue Hills Reservation. The project team also hosted its first public meeting in 2023, creating a forum for residents and stakeholders to review project goals, discuss challenges, and share ideas for potential improvements.

The project team met with elected officials, such as State Senator William Driscoll, State Representative Brandy Fluker-Reid, and later in the process, State Representative Richard Wells to present the projects goals, key findings from community engagement to date, and hear questions or concerns they had for a connection to the Blue Hills Reservation.

In 2024, engagement efforts focused on youth voices and perspectives. The project team worked with Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition's Vigorous Youth program, Milton Academy students, and Milton High School students to better understand how young people experience the study area. Through interactive mapping exercises and

discussions, participants were asked what they would like to see in a future trail connection and how Blue Hills Parkway could better serve students traveling to school, parks, and natural areas. A consistent theme emerged around the center-running greenspace within Blue Hills Parkway. Students expressed a desire for improved access to this underutilized resource, noting the lack of benches, formal pathways, and safe crossings. Their feedback highlighted the potential for the green median to function as a more active recreational and transportation corridor and became an important consideration in the development and evaluation of project alternatives.

In 2025, the project team continued stakeholder engagement by meeting with organizations and advocates focused on Blue Hills Parkway and the surrounding open spaces, including the Friends of the Pine Tree Brook Trail and the Friends of the Blue Hills Parkway. These stakeholders emphasized longstanding concerns regarding vehicle speeds and pedestrian safety along the corridor. They expressed strong support for strategies that would calm traffic, improve safety for people walking and bicycling, and enhance access to the center-running green median. Many stakeholders supported the concept of repurposing a northbound travel lane to create additional space for multimodal improvements, safer crossings, curbing along both sides of the street and median, as well as other design elements intended to reduce speeding and strengthen connections between surrounding neighborhoods and the Blue Hills Reservation.

In January 2026, the project team held an in-person public meeting at Milton High School that included attendance from approximately 75 local residents. The meeting started with an open house, showcasing the designs and talking to attendees about the project. The project team then gave a presentation, highlighting the history of the project, community engagement efforts to date, technical work completed, the six design options for Blue Hills Parkway, and next steps. The remaining portion of the meeting allowed time for attendees to walk around, ask questions of the project team, and provide their feedback in multiple ways about the designs they liked and disliked. Alternative 4, with a center-running shared use path, emerged as the clear favorite of those that attended the meeting. Specific feedback from this event is discussed in further detail in the Alternatives Explored Section on page 34 and is included in Appendix A.

Following the public meeting, the project team presented the results of the community engagement process and the preferred improvement alternative to the Milton Planning Board. The presentation highlighted key findings from stakeholder outreach, public surveys, youth engagement efforts, and technical analysis that informed the recommended design for Blue Hills Parkway. A local resident joined the meeting to share their strong support of the project. Planning Board members asked questions regarding opportunities for near-term improvements, project phasing, and potential funding sources for future design and construction. Overall, Board members expressed support for the project goals and the preferred alternative, recognizing its potential to improve safety, accessibility, and connections between surrounding neighborhoods and the Blue Hills Reservation. The Planning Board later provided a letter of support for the project, included in Appendix B.

Together, the engagement conducted between 2022 and 2026 provided a robust foundation of community input that directly informed the study's recommendations and helped ensure that proposed improvements reflect local needs, priorities, and aspirations.

List of Groups Engaged

One-on-one conversations

- State Representative Brandy Fluker Reid
- State Senator William Driscoll
- State Senator Walter Timilty
- State Representative Richard Wells
- Jen Klein, Executive Director for the Friends of the Blue Hills
- Fatima Ali – Salaam – Chair of the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council

Stakeholder Meetings

- Edgewater Neighborhood Association
- Neponset River Greenway Council
- Friends of the Pine Tree Brook Trail
- Friends of the Blue Hills Parkway
- Friends of the Blue Hills
- Town of Milton Planning Board

Youth focus groups

- Mattapan Food and Fitness Vigorous youth
- FF & Milton High School and Milton Academy students
- In-person events/tabling
- Mattapan on Wheels
- Neponset Day
- Hyde Park Juneteenth Celebration
- Milton Farmers Market
- Mattapan Farmers Market

Public Meetings

- August 1st, 2023
- January 15th, 2026

Public survey

- Open during the spring of 2024

Site Visits

- June 2024
- August 2025

Traffic Data Collection

To assess traffic on the project roadways, Nitsch Engineering engaged Precision Data Industries (PDI) to collect Automated Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts and speeds in three locations along the corridor as shown in Figure 7. Traffic data was collected for a continuous 48-hour period Wednesday, May 1, 2024, and Thursday, May 2, 2024, Saturday, May 4, 2024, and Sunday, May 5, 2024 to obtain weekday and weekend data. PDI also collected pathway counts in four locations, also shown in Figure 7. Data from count locations D, E, and F will be described in the separate Reservation Roads report. May was chosen for data collection to reflect typical recreational activity near the Blue Hills Reservation. Full data is available in Appendix C, with detailed pathway counts described below.

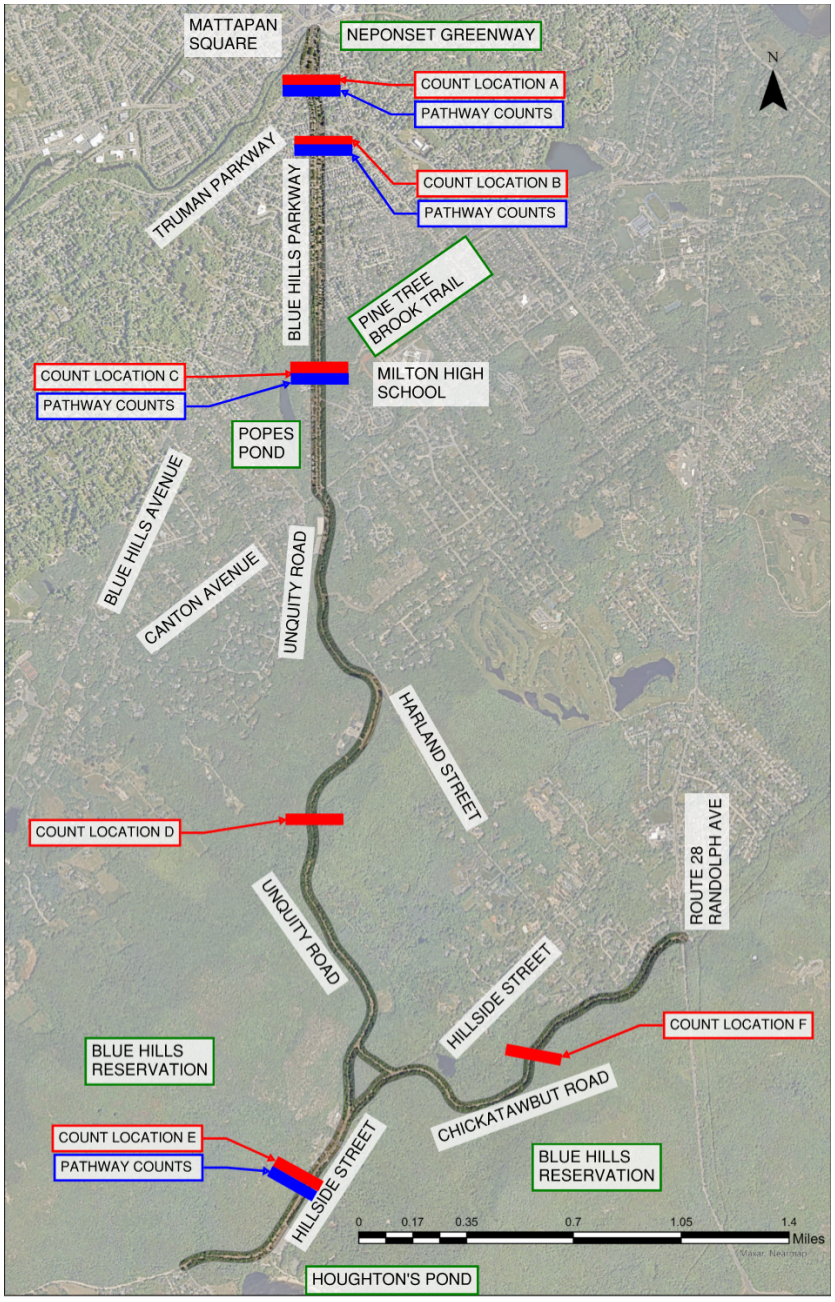


Figure 7 – Count Locations along Project Corridor

Based on the ATR data, Nitsch Engineering analyzed the collected data to identify hours of peak roadway usage and speed information for each count location. The average daily traffic and peak hour volumes are summarized in

Table 1 below. The data indicates that most traffic throughout the day along Blue Hills Parkway travels northbound. Additionally, peak hour traffic volumes account for about 10% or less than the total daily traffic volumes, indicating relatively steady stream of traffic volumes throughout the day. During weekday morning peak hours, drivers along Blue Hills Parkway primarily head northbound toward Boston, while weekday afternoon peak hours correspond to more traffic heading southbound, away from the city. During weekends, peak hour traffic at the northern end of the project corridor (Count Location A) is primarily headed northbound towards Boston, and peak hour traffic at the southern end of the project corridor (Count Location C) is primarily headed southbound, towards recreation in the Blue Hills Reservation. Since traffic is primarily headed northbound overall, this direction of travel was more closely examined as part of our alternatives analysis.

Table 1 – Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) Summary – Volumes

Location	Period	ADT[a]			Peak Hour Traffic				K Factor[e]
		Volumes (vpd)[b]	Directional Distribution[c]		Period	Volumes (vph)[b]	Directional Distribution[c]		
Blue Hills Parkway, between Eliot Street and Brook Road (A)	Weekday	27027	55%	NB	Morning	2101	68%	NB	0.08
					Afternoon	2086	54%	SB	0.08
	Weekend	22433	54%	NB	Morning	1420	54%	NB	0.06
					Afternoon	1776	54%	NB	0.08
Blue Hills Parkway, between Brook Road and Oak Street (B)	Weekday	12079	55%	NB	Morning	958	66%	NB	0.08
					Afternoon	751	59%	SB	0.09
	Weekend	8664	52%	NB	Morning	655	56%	NB	0.08
					Afternoon	751	51%	SB	0.09
Blue Hills Parkway, between Pine Brook Trail and Canton Ave (C)	Weekday	13472	53%	NB	Morning	1432	65%	NB	0.11
					Afternoon	1271	59%	SB	0.09
	Weekend	8982	50%	NB	Morning	651	51%	SB	0.07
					Afternoon	860	54%	SB	0.10

[a]Average Daily Traffic; [b]Vehicles per day; [c]NB = Northbound, SB = Southbound, EB = Eastbound, WB = Westbound; [d]Vehicles per hour; [e]Proportion of daily traffic

Speed data

The average speeds as recorded by the ATRs at each count location are summarized in Table 2 below. The data indicates that the highest speeds are on Blue Hills Parkway immediately north of Canton Avenue. In this location, the posted speed limit is 40 mph northbound and 30 mph southbound. The 85th percentile speeds in this location were measured to be 50 miles per hour in the northbound direction, meaning traffic is regularly moving at speeds more than 10 mph higher than the posted speed limit. Speed data along Blue Hills Parkway is shown graphically in Figure 8 and Figure 9 below.

Table 2 – Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) Summary – Speed

Location	Period	2-way Speed (MPH)		Directional Speed (MPH)		
		Average	85th Percentile	Direction	Average	85th Percentile
Blue Hills Parkway, between Eliot Street and Brook Road (A)	Weekday	30	35	Northbound	30	34
				Southbound	31	36
	Weekend	31	35	Northbound	30	36
				Southbound	31	36
Blue Hills Parkway, between Brook Road and Oak Street (B)	Weekday	32	37	Northbound	34	41
				Southbound	31	38
	Weekend	33	39	Northbound	34	41
				Southbound	32	38
Blue Hills Parkway, between Pine Brook Trail and Canton Ave (C)	Weekday	42	47	Northbound	43	50
				Southbound	40	45
	Weekend	42	47	Northbound	43	49
				Southbound	41	46

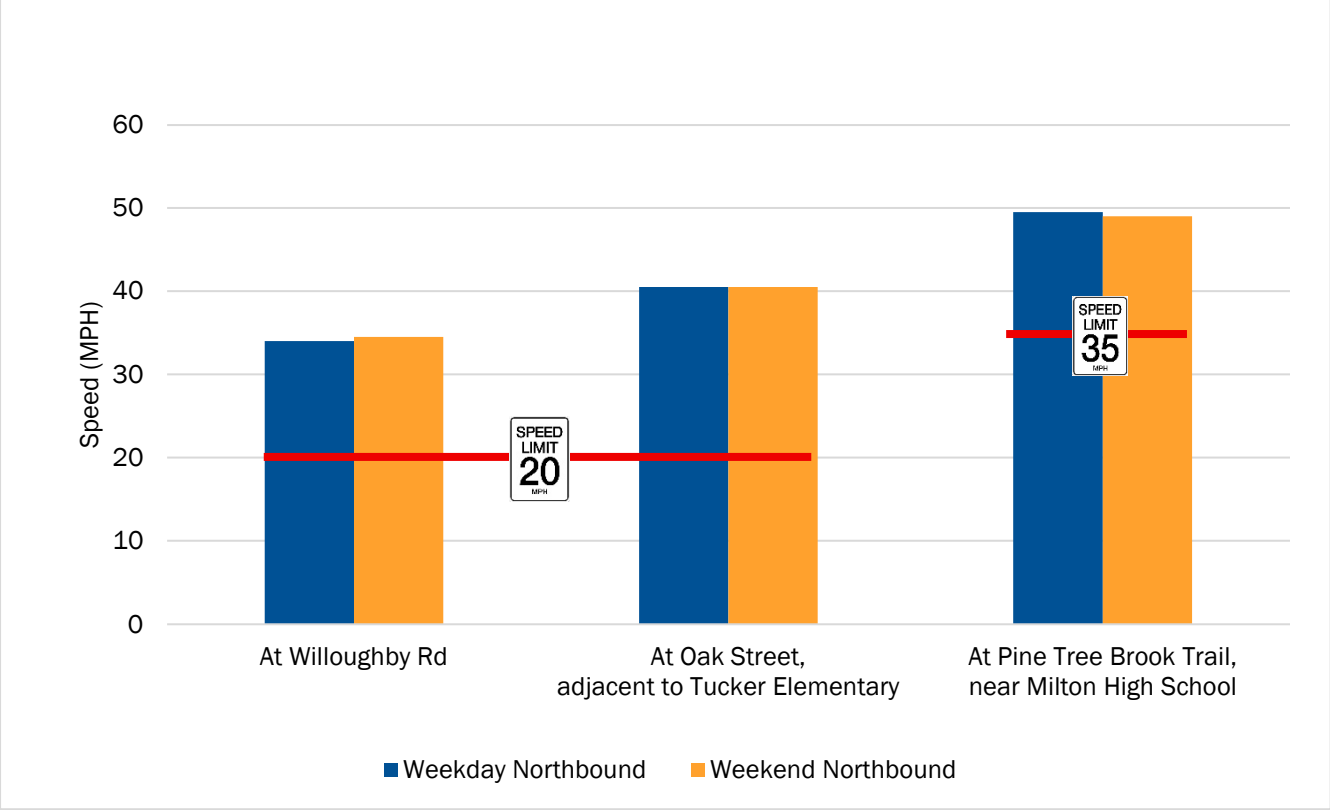


Figure 8 – Recorded 85th Percentile Northbound Speeds along Blue Hills Parkway

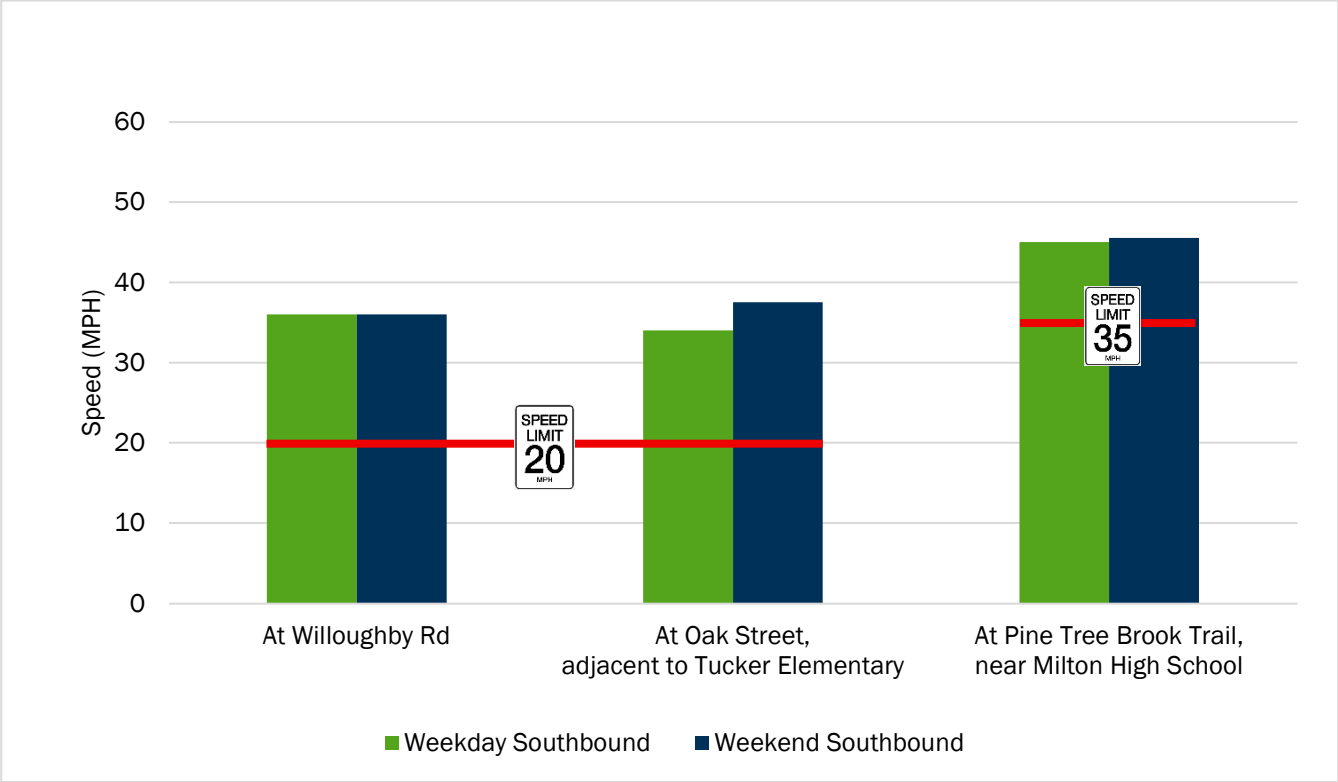


Figure 9 – Recorded 85th Percentile Southbound Speeds along Blue Hills Parkway

The average northbound speed measured along the north end of the study area is 34 mph and the average southbound speed measured along this roadway is 31 mph. The 85th percentile speeds at the north end of the corridor were measured to be 41 mph northbound and 36 mph southbound. The northbound speeds are slightly higher than the southbound speeds, which may be due to the additional lane and therefore available space for northbound drivers. Further to the south along Blue Hills Parkway, the average northbound speeds were measured at 43 mph, and southbound speeds were measured at 40 mph. The 85th percentile speeds were measured to be 50 mph northbound and 45 mph southbound. These higher speeds in the south of the roadway segment indicate that drivers feel comfortable moving faster outside of the residential areas along the corridor. These speeds also present safety concerns to pedestrians crossing the roadway (Figure 10).

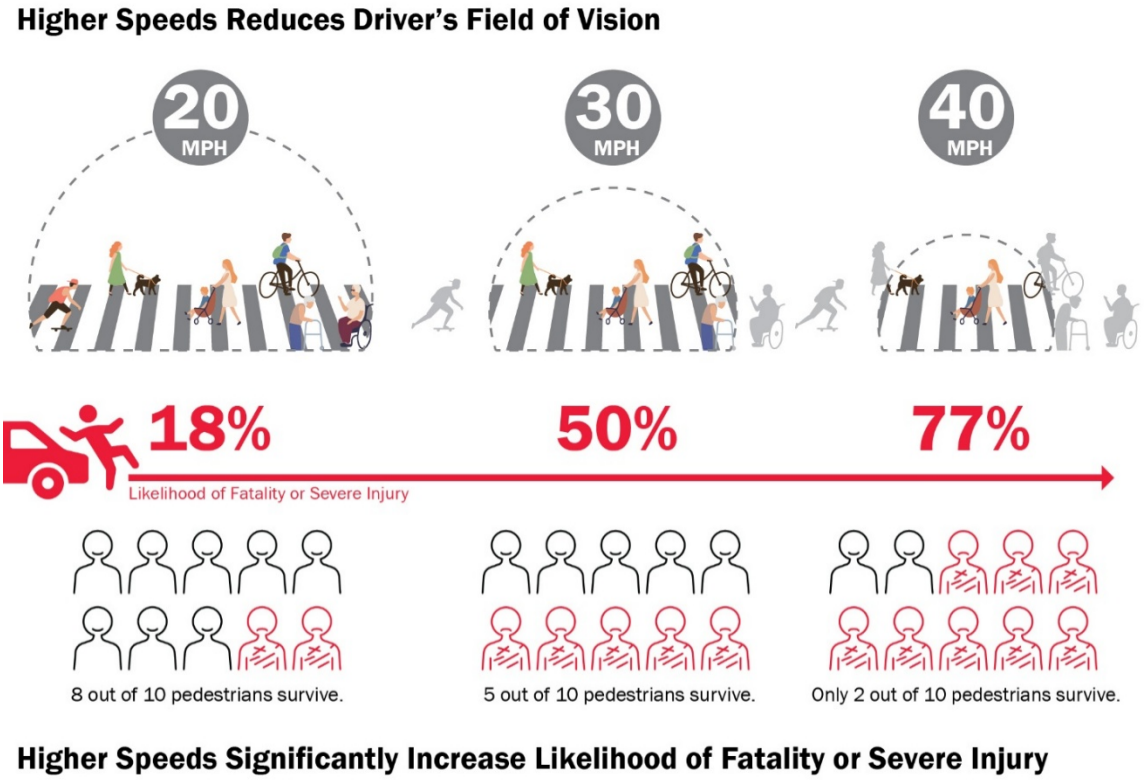


Figure 10 – Speed and Safety

Pathway counts

PDI also collected data along the sidewalks of Blue Hills Parkway to help the project team gain a better understanding of the pedestrian activity along the corridor. These collection locations can be seen above in **Figure 7** above. Data was collected in four locations where vehicle counts were also collected; three of these locations are along Blue Hills Parkway and one is along Hillside Street. The Hillside Street pathway counts will be discussed in the Phase 2 report. The remaining data collection locations were excluded from the pathway counts because there are no existing sidewalks along those roadways. Data on bike lane usage was also collected as part of the traffic data counts. The collected data are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Pathway Count Summary

Location	Period	Pedestrians per Day	Bicyclists per Day
Blue Hills Parkway, between Eliot Street and Brook Road (A)	Weekday	192	42
	Weekend	168	80
Blue Hills Parkway, between Brook Road and Oak Street (B)	Weekday	251	52
	Weekend	211	110
Blue Hills Parkway, between Pine Brook Trail and Canton Ave (C)	Weekday	41	67
	Weekend	86	143

Crash Data

Nitsch Engineering viewed crash data from MassDOT for January 2021 through March 2024 for Blue Hills Parkway. 82 total crashes were reported during this timeframe and are summarized in Table 4 below. Of these 82 crashes, six involved vulnerable road users such as bicyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, 31 crashes, over a third, resulted in some type of injury to those involved in the crash. These injuries indicate the safety concerns that exist along the project corridors; engineering interventions such as traffic calming may help reduce the severity of these crashes. Crash data downloads can be found in Appendix D.

Table 4 – Crashes in project area, Jan 2021 – March 2024

Intersection/ Segment Name	Brook Rd @ Blue Hills Parkway	Canton Ave @ Blue Hills Parkway / Unquity Rd	Blue Hills Parkway, from Brook Rd to Canton Ave	Total Crashes in Project Area
Type of Facility	*Signalized Intersection*	*Signalized Intersection*	*Urban Minor Arterial*	
Total Crashes	20	12	50	82
Severity of Crash				
No Injury (Property damage only) (O)	12	8	26	46
Possible Injury (C)	1	0	6	7
Suspected Minor Injury (B)	6	4	11	21
Suspected Serious Injury (A)	0	0	3	3
Fatality (K)	0	0	0	0
Unknown	1	0	4	5
Involving Vulnerable Road Users				
Cyclist-Involved	0	1	3	4
Pedestrian-Involved	0	0	2	2

Existing conditions and characteristics

Blue Hills Parkway is the northernmost roadway along the proposed project route. Classified as a minor arterial, the Blue Hills Parkway corridor extends from its northern terminus at its intersection with Eliot Street to its southern terminus at its intersection with Canton Avenue. Within the study area, the right-of-way along Blue Hills Parkway is approximately 120 feet wide, providing flexibility for potential changes to lane geometry and recreational accommodations. The direction of travel is separated by a median along the full corridor. In the northbound direction there are two 11-foot travel lanes, a 5.5-foot striped bike lane, a 7.5-foot parking lane, a 9-foot planting strip, and a 5-foot sidewalk. In the southbound direction there is one travel lane, a striped bike lane, a parking lane, and a sidewalk (Figure 11, Figure 12).



Figure 11 – Photo of Blue Hills Parkway Existing Conditions, adjacent to Tucker Elementary School

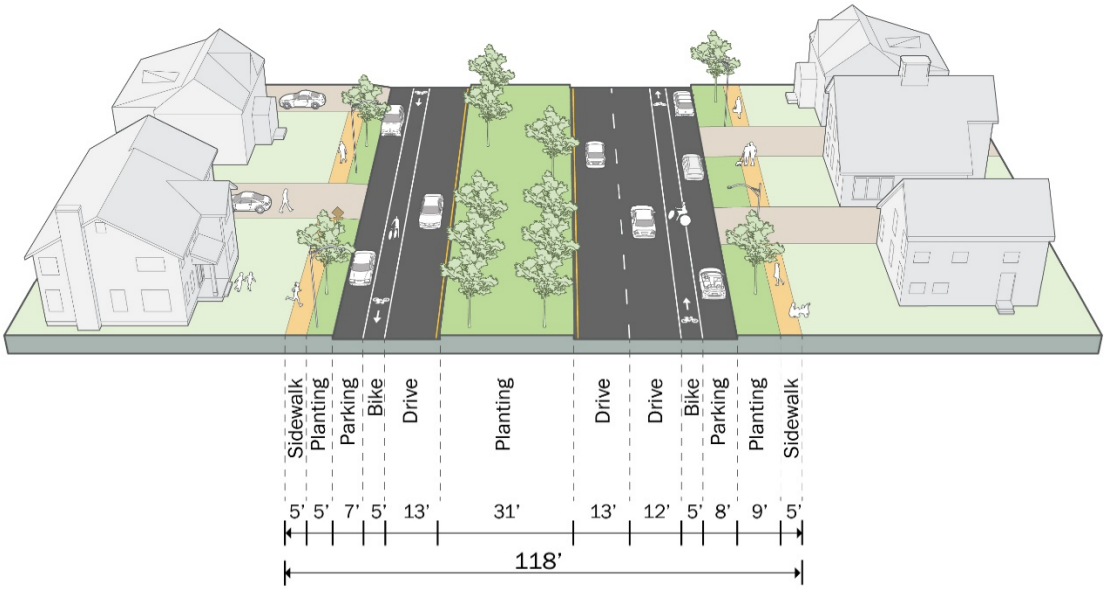


Figure 12 – Blue Hills Parkway Existing Cross Section

Where the Blue Hills Parkway corridor extends from Brook Road south to Audubon Road, the land use is primarily residential, with single family homes on either side of the roadway. In this area, the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour (mph). South of Audubon Road, the west side comprises Popes Pond reservation land, whereas the east features conservation land adjacent to the rear of Milton High School. The posted speed limit south of Audubon Road is 35 mph.

Lane Capacities

To understand how the measured volumes along the roadway compare to its ideal capacity, Nitsch Engineering reviewed the *Highway Capacity Manual 6th edition, Volume 3* and based on Exhibit 19-11, the standard lane capacity threshold for an Urban area—comprising a population greater than 250,000—is 1,900 vehicles per hour per lane (vphpl), and 1,700 vphpl in Suburban and Rural areas. To provide a conservative assessment, Nitsch Engineering utilized the 1,700 vphpl to determine if a road diet is feasible. Based on the data collected, there are 469 vph along Blue Hills Parkway in the northbound direction during the weekday morning peak hour (7:30am and 8:30am), or an average of 235 vphpl given the two northbound lanes. Therefore, Blue Hills Parkway is operating under the lane capacity threshold and the measured volumes could be handled by only one northbound travel lane.

Alternatives Explored

As part of this feasibility study, the project team explored six potential cross-section alternatives for Blue Hills Parkway. All cross sections include sidewalks for pedestrians, provide protected and separate facilities for bicyclists, and maintain traffic throughput along Blue Hills Parkway.

Methodology

The project team evaluated each alternative based on ten criteria, listed below with their working definitions:

- **Safety**, the ability of the project to protect people walking, biking, and rolling from roadway traffic;
- **Traffic mitigation**, the ability of the project to decrease vehicle traffic in the study area;
- **Design effectiveness**, the ability of the project to achieve the multi-model transportation goal;
- **Environmental impacts**, the ability of the project to increase environmental benefits and not cause further environmental harm (inc. flooding, heat, etc.)
- **Project costs**, the ability of the project to be completed at a reasonable cost;
- **Connecting people to nature**, the ability of the project to create connections to natural areas, including signage and accessibility;
- **Encouraging more people to travel car-free**, the ability of the project to make it easier, faster, and more enjoyable to travel without a vehicle;
- **Equitable access to transportation and recreation**, the ability of the project to create spaces that are welcoming, accessible, and enjoyable for all users, especially those who have previously had limited access or been disproportionately affected by a lack of access;
- **Access for various groups including older adults, people with mobility challenges, children, etc**, the ability of the project to create accessibility into, throughout and out of the project area, as well as spaces within the project area such as benches, play areas, smooth surfaces, and more; and
- **Having a stress-free place for people to spend time**, the ability of the project to create a space to move through and spend time in that includes low-stress elements such as low-noise, greenery, low-traffic, lighting, places to sit, activities, and more.

These criteria were included in the 2023 community survey, and respondents were asked to select their top five priorities for this project. 93% of respondents indicated that safety from traffic and on-road traffic was a top priority for this project. The next most prioritized characteristic was connection to nature, which 75% of respondents indicated was a top priority for this project. Based on these results, the project team weighed the ten characteristics in a matrix, and each alternative was scored based on its characteristics. This matrix can be seen in Table 5 below. The most important criteria were given a weight of 5, and less important criteria were weighted lower. Criteria weights were based on importance for design, engineering, and community feedback received during the course of the project. Each alternative was scored from 1 to 3, with 3 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest. Based on this analysis, Alternative 2 and Alternative 4 are the top alternatives. Alternatives 5 and 6 were also high scoring, but because they only apply south of Pine Tree Brook, additional alternatives would need to be included. This distinction is further discussed below.

Table 5 – Alternative Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Weight	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4	Alternative 5	Alternative 6
Safety	5	2	2	2	3	3	3
Traffic Mitigation	3	1	3	2	2	3	3
Design Effectiveness	5	2	3	3	3	3	3
Environmental Impacts	2	1	3	2	3	3	1
Project Cost	1	3	2	2	1	1	1
Connecting People to Nature	4	1	3	3	3	3	3
Encouraging More People to Travel Car-Free	4	2	3	2	3	3	3
Equitable Access to Transportation and Recreation	3	2	3	3	3	2	2
Access for Various Groups, Including Seniors, People with Mobility Challenges, Children, Etc.	3	1	3	2	3	2	3
Having a Stress-Free Place for People to Spend Time	4	1	2	2	3	3	3
Totals:		**53**	**92**	**80**	**97**	**94**	**93**

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 maintains the existing sidewalks and relocates the parking lane to protect the bike lane (Figure 13). The center running median and the two rows of existing trees are also maintained. This swap of the bike lane and the parking provides dedicated space for bicyclists that is separated from moving vehicle traffic. This would result in 7-foot parking lanes in both directions, and the northbound travel lanes would be narrowed to 10.5 feet to avoid impacts to the median and existing planting strip. The narrower traffic lanes would provide traffic calming benefits, slowing traffic along the corridor, achieving the safety criterion.

This alternative creates some opportunities but does not fully meet all the criteria. This alternative is lower cost compared to other alternatives since implementation can be accomplished through lane striping modifications, and it does not require curb relocation or addition. Implementing the parking-protected bike lanes would provide a more comfortable environment for bicyclists, as bicyclists would be separated from moving traffic. This alternative does not continue the two-way cycle track that extends from Mattapan Square to Curtis Road, leading to some discontinuity from Boston city limits. Additionally, no green infrastructure opportunities are created for stormwater management. Along the corridor, there are approximately 110 intersection points of driveways and cross streets at the existing sidewalk. By creating parking-protected bike lanes adjacent to the sidewalk the protected bike lanes would meet these driveways and cross streets 110 times, leading to potential conflicts between drivers and bicyclists and creating some safety concerns. While Alternative 1 is a good option for short-term roadway changes, and would present an improvement over the existing conditions, other alternatives more fully address the evaluation criteria.

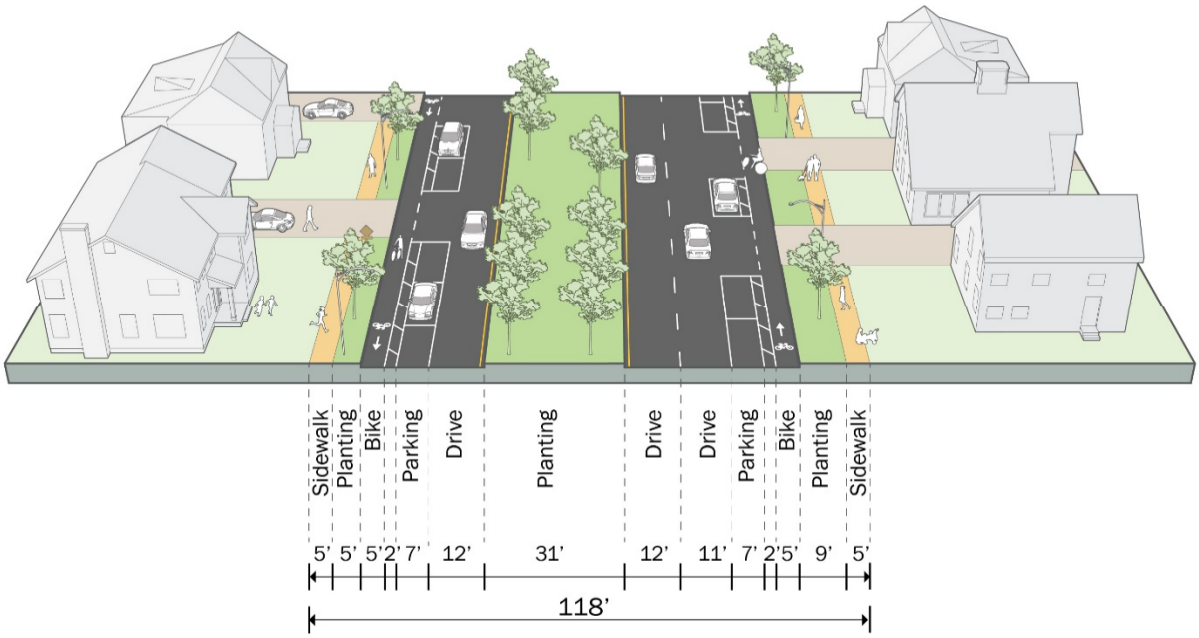


Figure 13 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 1

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 adds a 12-foot two-way cycle track on the northbound side of the median, separated by a 5-foot planted buffer from the 11-foot travel lane and one 7-foot parking lane, and provides a parking-protected bike lane in the southbound direction (Figure 14). This alternative continues the two-way cycle track extending from Mattapan Square to Curtis Road, and it separates bicyclists both vertically and horizontally from moving motor vehicle traffic, providing a more comfortable riding experience. This alternative also creates opportunities for green infrastructure for stormwater management benefits.

Alternative 2 results in additional costs compared to Alternative 1 to construct the cycle track and green infrastructure improvements. It would also require both a road diet and narrower lanes in the northbound direction to create space for the cycle track without impacting the existing median or planting strip. These narrower lanes would contribute to the overall safety of the corridor by providing traffic calming benefits along Blue Hills Parkway. Additionally, discontinuities in the cycle track would need to be installed to accommodate existing driveway access, creating approximately 56 potential conflict points along the northbound side. With the addition of a planting strip along the northbound side of the roadway, residents and visitors along the redesigned roadway will be more connected to nature. The provision of a vertically separated cycle track would also be more comfortable for bicyclists of all ages. The safer space for bicyclists would encourage more people to travel car-free, and the reduced number of motor vehicle lanes would mitigate motor vehicle traffic along the corridor. However, this alternative does not improve walking space, nor does it create space dedicated for people to spend time.

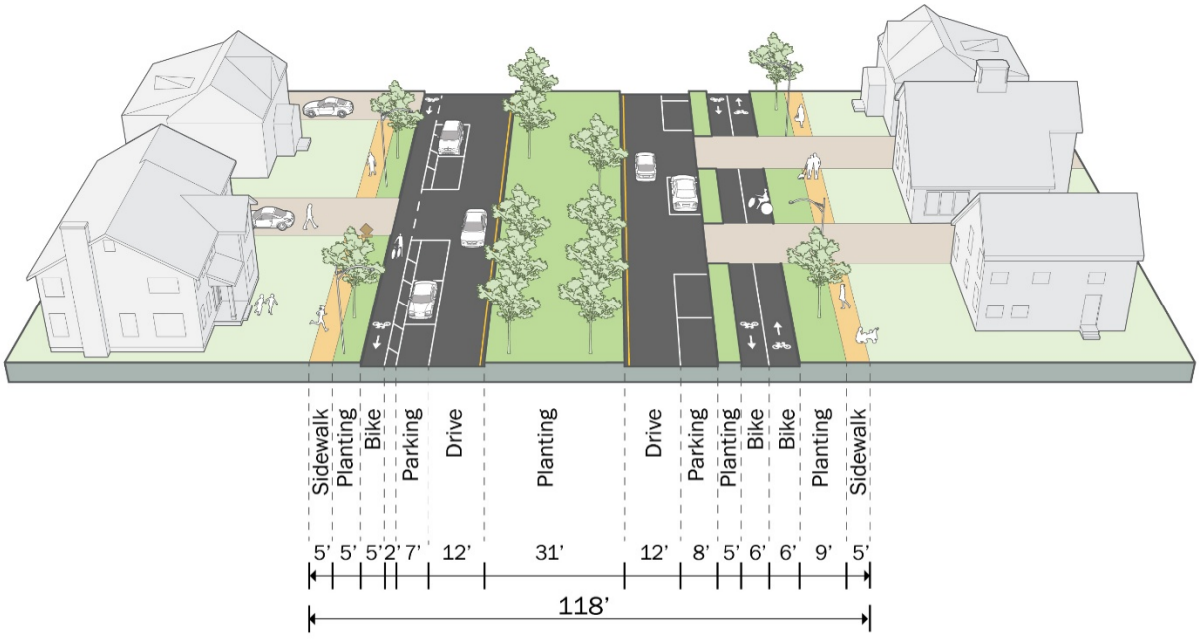


Figure 14 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 2

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2, but the northbound parking lane is removed to provide two 10.5-foot travel lanes (Figure 15). Both the new green infrastructure planted buffer and the two-way cycle track are narrowed by one foot respectively to create space for the travel lanes without impacting the existing median or planting strip. This alternative would shorten mid-block crossings for pedestrian safety. As with Alternative 2, this alternative provides continuity from existing bicycle infrastructure to the north. This alternative also does not require reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes.

Alternative 3 results in additional costs compared to Alternative 1 to construct the cycle track and green infrastructure improvements. It also removes existing parking, which is particularly impactful to the residents who live along the northern areas of this roadway. This lack of parallel parking along the roadway makes the driveway access noted in Alternative 2 even more important, creating discontinuities and potential conflict points along the cycle track. Under Alternative 3, the existing cycle track at the northern end of the project corridor would be continued. The addition of a five-foot wide planting strip increases the green space and improves stormwater quality along the corridor, but to a lesser extent than Alternative 2. The provision of a vertically separated cycle track would also be more comfortable for bicyclists of all ages. The safer space for bicyclists would encourage more people to travel car-free, but the number of motor vehicle lanes is maintained, so this alternative would not mitigate motor vehicle traffic along the corridor. Additionally, the travel lanes are not narrowed, so this alternative does not create significant traffic calming benefits. This alternative does not improve walking space, nor does it create space dedicated for people to spend time.

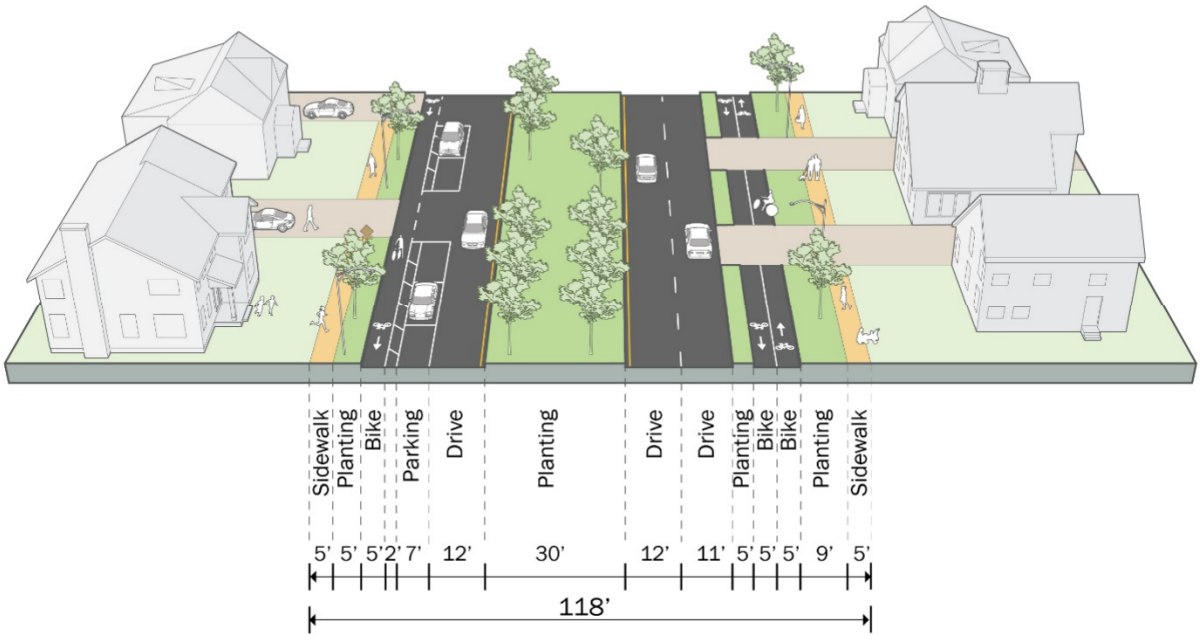


Figure 15 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 3

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 adds a 12-foot shared use path along the median on the northbound side of the existing median and creates a parking protected southbound bike lane (Figure 16). This alternative includes one 11-foot travel lane and one 7-foot parking lane in each direction and maintains the existing sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Alternative 4 scored the highest on the matrix

Alternative 4 would require a northbound road diet and would require frequent crossings to provide convenient resident access to the shared use path. This alternative would also require additional costs to install new curbing and trees to separate the proposed shared use path from northbound traffic. The proposed trees would expand the green space along the corridor, and the wider shared use path compared to a cycle track would create space dedicated for people to spend time. Locating the path along the median results in fewer conflicts between the path and side streets or driveways and shortens crossing distances for pedestrians and bicyclists. A consolidated path would provide continuity from the existing cycle track at the northern end of the project. The narrowed travel lanes would create traffic calming benefits, and the reduction in northbound travel lanes would encourage slower motor vehicle speeds along the corridor. Alternative 4 also does not impact the existing trees along the median, maintaining the mature tree canopy along the corridor.

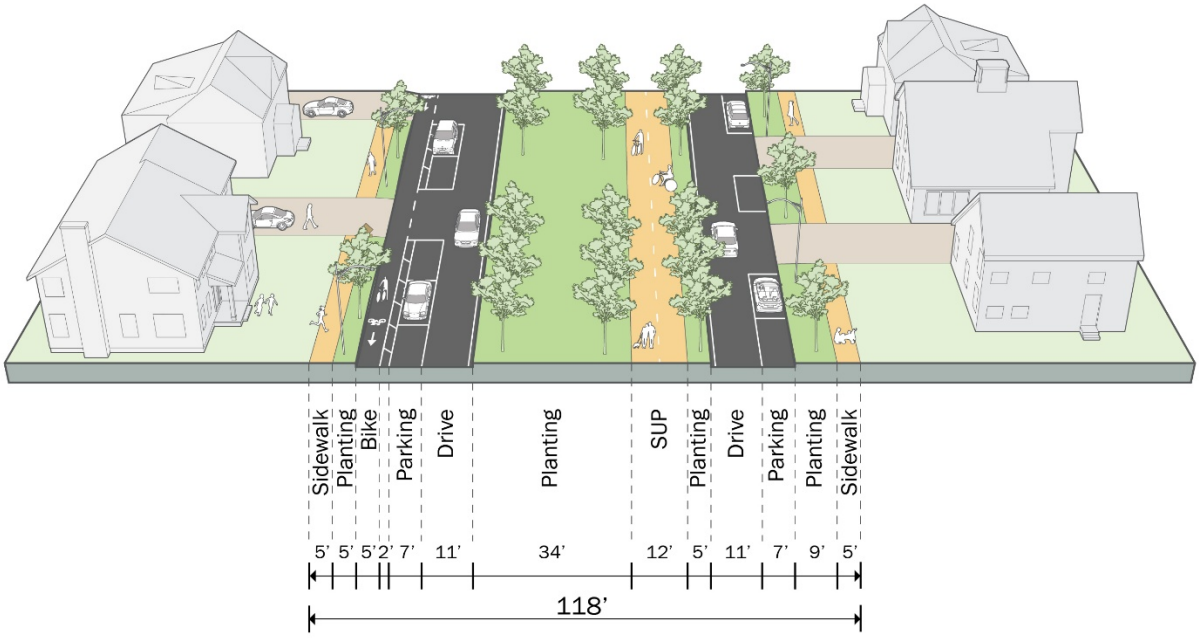


Figure 16 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 4

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 involves major changes to the roadway by relocating all motor vehicle traffic to the southbound side of the existing median and would only apply to the section of Blue Hills Parkway south of Pine Tree Brook Trail. The existing northbound side of the median would be reconfigured to provide a 12-foot shared use path and new plantings (Figure 17). This creates approximately 20 feet of new planting space to promote greener infrastructure along the corridor and enhance the connections to nearby conservation and recreational spaces. Because of the reallocation of roadway and the existing residential land use along the northern portion of Blue Hills Parkway, this alternative was only explored for south of Pine Tree Brook Trail (Figure 18). This alternative removes on-street parking while preserving the existing western row of trees along the median.

This alternative would represent a significant change from the existing roadway configuration and would require significant work at the intersections along the corridor. It would also require extending Milton High School Access Drive and Pine Tree Brook Road to the far (west) side of the existing median and incorporating additional work at these intersections. Additional intersection work would also be required at Pine Tree Brook Trail and Canton Avenue to shift motor vehicle traffic to the west side of the existing median. Alternative 5 also would not create overall corridor continuity, since it is only applicable to the southern section of the project corridor; a second alternative would need to be selected for the northern section of the project corridor. Alternative 5 would create a safer and dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel, and it would create dedicated space for people to spend time. With the addition of a shared-use path, space for walking would be improved as well. The narrower lanes would help calm traffic, and the significant addition of green space would enhance the corridor's connection to adjacent conservation areas.

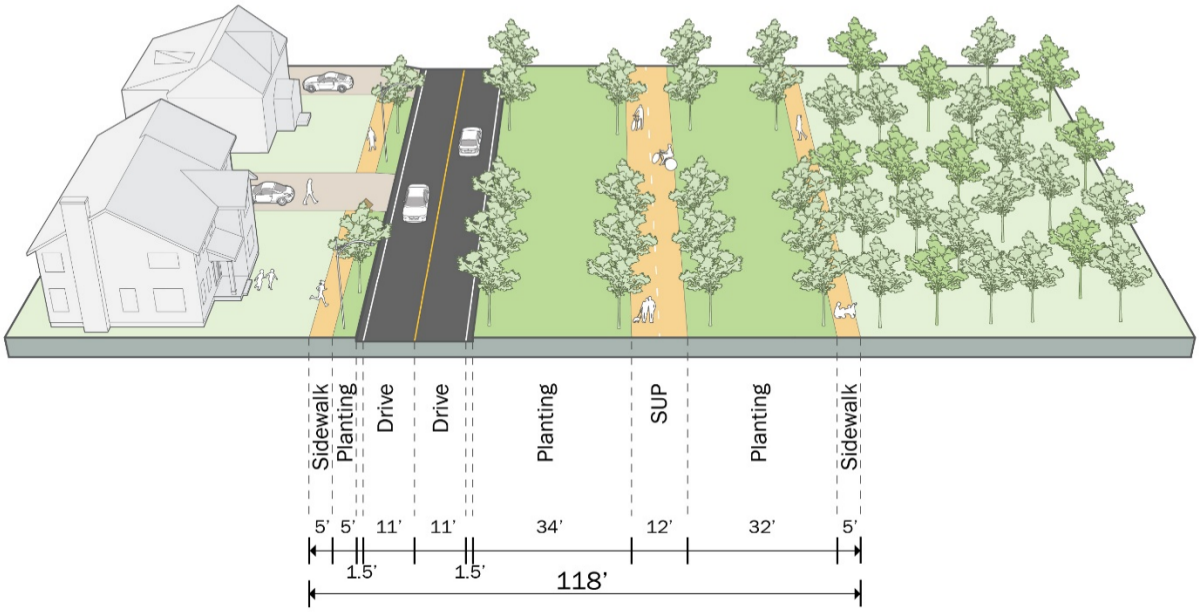


Figure 17 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 5

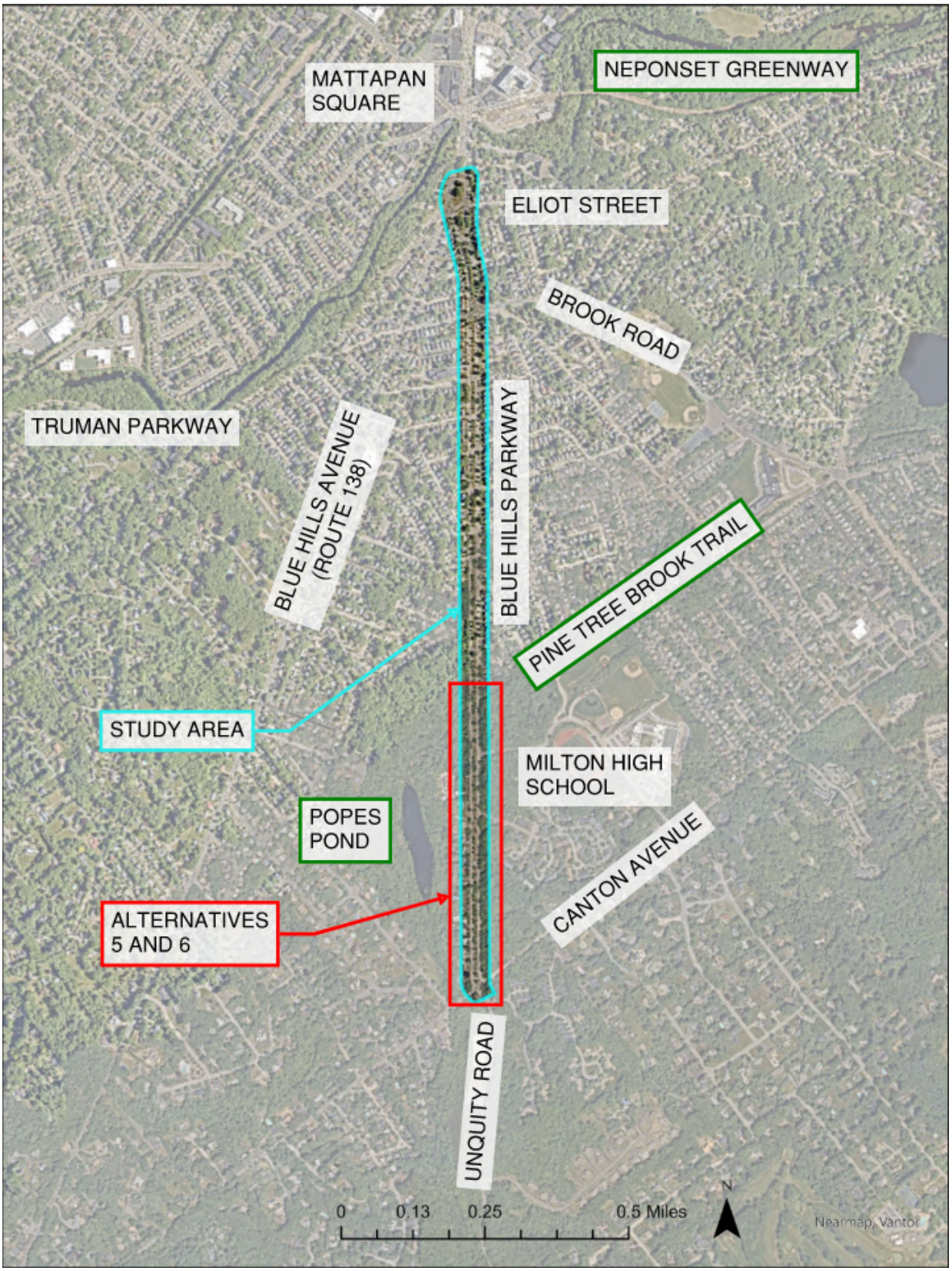


Figure 18 – Applicable Area for Alternative 5

Alternative 6

Similar to Alternative 5, Alternative 6 is only applicable to the section of Blue Hills Parkway south of Pine Tree Brook Trail and relocates all traffic to the southbound side of the existing median to create space for a shared use path and new plantings on the northbound side of the roadway. Alternative 5 preserves the existing southbound parking lane in addition to the existing sidewalks (Figure 19). This alternative preserves the existing southbound parking. It also creates approximately 20 feet of new planting width to promote greener infrastructure along the corridor and enhance the connections to nearby conservation and recreational spaces. As with Alternative 5, this alternative was only explored for south of Pine Tree Brook Trail (Figure 18). To preserve on-street parking, the existing western row of trees along the median would need to be removed.

Alternative 6 would be a significant change from the existing roadway configuration and would require significant work to realign the intersections along the corridor. This configuration would also require shifting the existing median, increasing costs. It would also require extending Milton High School Access Drive and Pine Tree Brook Road to the far (west) side of the existing median and incorporating additional work at these intersections. Additional intersection work would also be required at Pine Tree Brook Trail and Canton Avenue to shift motor vehicle traffic to the west side of the existing median. Alternative 6 also would not create overall corridor continuity, since it is only applicable to the southern section of the project corridor; a second alternative would need to be selected for the northern section of the project corridor. Alternative 6 would create a safer and dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel, and it would create dedicated space for people to spend time. With the addition of a shared use path, space for walking would be improved as well. The narrower lanes would help calm traffic, and the significant addition of green space would help replace the existing trees that would need to be removed.

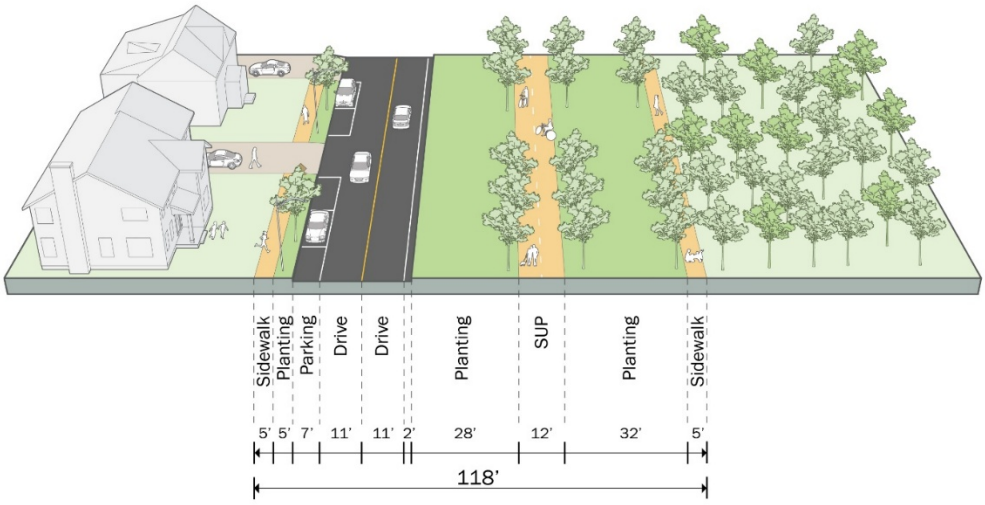


Figure 19 – Blue Hills Parkway Alternative 6

Stakeholder and community outreach

Extensive stakeholder and community outreach has been ongoing throughout this project process, as described above in the Community Engagement section.

MAPC, NepRWA, and Nitsch Engineering hosted a public open house meeting on January 15, 2026 to share the data collection, existing conditions, and the resulting six alternatives for Blue Hills Parkway. A photo of the session is shown in Figure 20 below. Participants shared feedback on the proposed alternatives via anonymous comment cards, sticky notes on the project boards, and a simple dot exercise where green dots represented positive feedback and red dots represented negative feedback. Local political representatives and members of the media were also present. Specific feedback from this event is included in Appendix A.



Figure 20 – Photo from January 15, 2026 Public Meeting

Feedback received from public meeting participants:

"I live right off the parkway and would bike to the train station, but I don't feel safe as a cyclist. I could eliminate my reliance on my car if this strip was safer."

"All the proposed plans are better than the current situation. The plans with a SUP are the best. Please don't forget the figure 8 intersection at the north end of [Blue Hills Parkway]."

"FYI please don't remove any parking [...] I live on a street of 2 family houses and parking is very difficult. Don't take parking spots away."

Overall, meeting participants were in favor of Alternative 4. Specific feedback ranged from the importance parking and tree preservation to a desire for placemaking amenities such as benches. The project team also heard from participants about experiences with fast moving traffic, feeling unsafe as a pedestrian or cyclist, and difficulty parking along the corridor. There was also support for improving the safety of crossings of Blue Hills Parkway and support for adding wayfinding, benches, and other place-making amenities along the corridor. Participants expressed hesitation with parking protected bike lanes and a desire for additional traffic calming such as vertical deflection, safer crossings, and a desire for quick build traffic calming opportunities. The project team also heard that the existing turning movements from side streets onto Blue Hills Parkway create confusion due to limited signage. Based on the outreach, the community's preferred alternative is Alternative 4. Additional photos of the community feedback received are included in Appendix A.

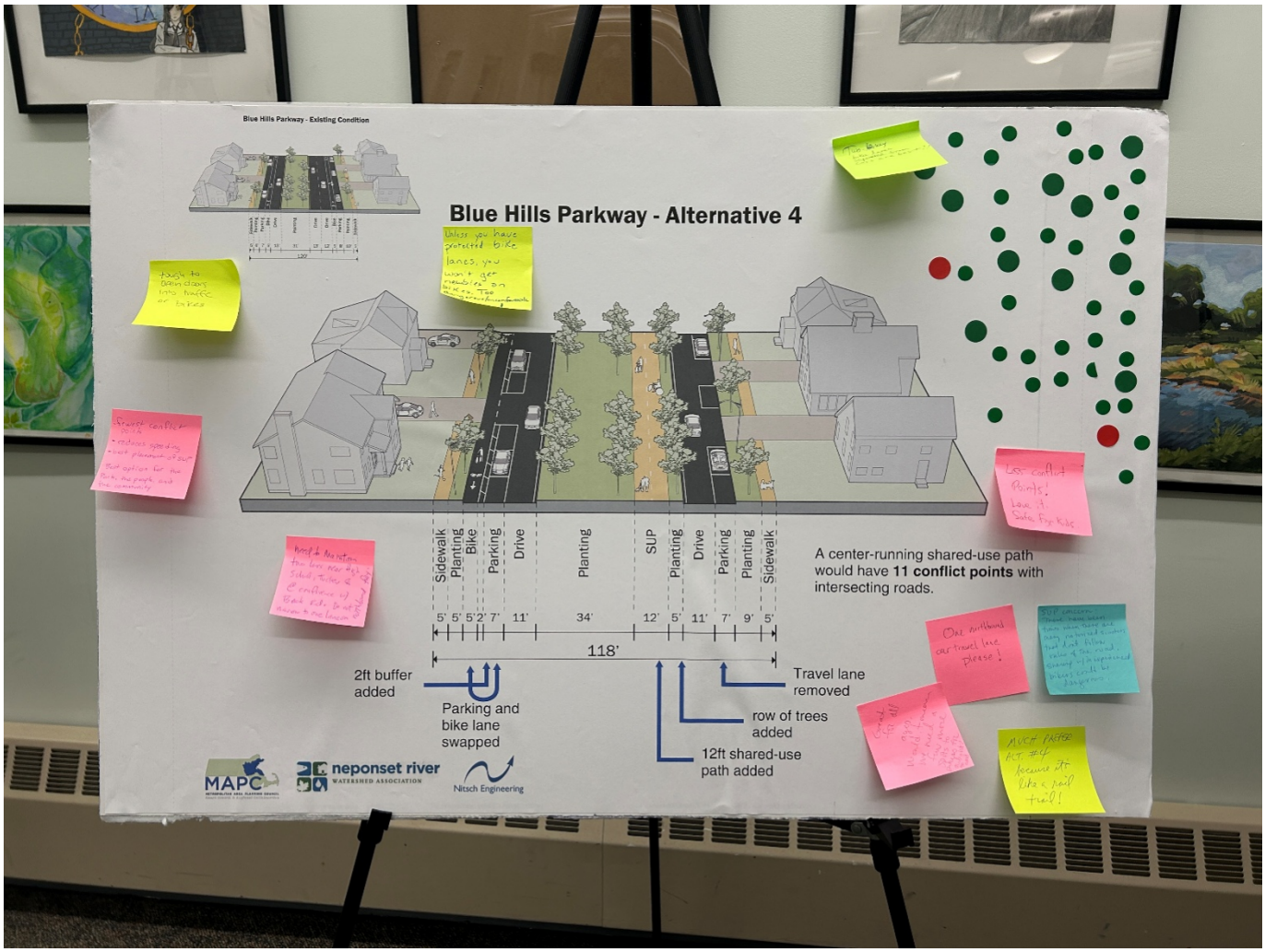


Figure 21 – Feedback on Alternative 4

Preferred Alternative

Based on the information described above and our conversations with project stakeholders, Alternative 4 was selected as the preferred alternative. This alternative creates a center-located shared use path along the existing median by reallocating an existing northbound lane. This alternative preserves parking on both sides of the roadway, preserves the existing trees, and creates opportunities for additional green space and placemaking amenities. This alternative achieves the project goals of safety, traffic mitigation, design effectiveness, environmental impacts, project costs, connecting people to nature, encouraging more people to travel car-free, equitable access to transportation and recreation, access for various groups, and creating a stress free space. By providing a shared use path, this alternative separates pedestrians and bicyclists from motor vehicle traffic which also improves the safety along the corridor and enables access for a variety of groups. Reduction in travel lane widths would have traffic calming and safety benefits. Alternative 4 also connects people to nature in a cost effective way by activating the existing median. Key connections at the northern project limits to Mattapan Square, the Neponset Greenway, and co-located transit opportunities will encourage more people to travel car-free and create more equitable access to recreation opportunities. Alternative 4 would close a key gap in the recreation and transportation network.

Some adjustments to Alternative 4 could also be implemented. For example, feedback from the community meeting suggested that vertical deflection could provide additional traffic calming benefits. This could include raised crossings at key locations or speed humps to slow motorists along the corridor. Additionally, the original version of

Alternative 4 included a parking-protected bike lane along the southbound side of the existing median, which was included to better allocate the wide existing travel lane to safer infrastructure for bicyclists. However, based on the feedback received at the public meeting, this extra lane width could be allocated to widen the existing median along the southbound side. This additional space would be approximately five feet in width and could be utilized for stormwater management or native plants. These adjustments to Alternative 4 would further the goals of the project as described above.

Additional consideration must be given at crossing locations and at the northern project limits to transition pedestrians and bicyclists to existing infrastructure. At the intersection of Blue Hills Parkway and Brook Road, the project team envisions that more robust crossing infrastructure would be installed to transition bicyclists to the existing cycle track extending south from Mattapan Square. The existing curb ramps would be widened, as would the existing crosswalk markings and refuge islands to provide more space for active transportation users to navigate through the intersection. Additional signal retimings would also be implemented to prioritize active transportation users. These transitions are shown graphically in Figure 22 below. North of the Brook Road intersection, a two-way cycle track would be installed to better transition bicyclists from the median shared use path to the existing cycle track extending south from Mattapan Square to Curtis Road. This cycle track would take the place of the existing parking lane, or one existing travel lane closer to the intersection with Eliot Street. In the existing condition, there is approximately 37 feet between the curbs on the northbound side. This could be reallocated to two 10-foot travel lanes with a 1-foot shoulder adjacent to the median, a 4-foot buffer, and one 10-foot two-way cycle track, with the existing tree strips and sidewalk maintained. This option maintains two lanes of motor vehicle travel to minimize impacts to adjacent intersections but would remove approximately 6 parking spaces. Another option is to reallocate the 37-foot northbound cross section to one 11-foot travel lane with a 1-foot shoulder adjacent to the median, one 8-foot parking lane, and one 7-foot buffer one 10-foot two-way cycle track. This option would maintain parking, which was a priority based on community feedback, but would remove a motor vehicle travel lane which could impact traffic congestion. Either of these options would provide continuity between the proposed cross section and adjacent infrastructure at the northern project limits.

In addition to the improved crossing at Brook Road, five new crossings of Blue Hills Parkway are envisioned to connect residents along Blue Hills Parkway to the proposed shared use path, increasing access and transportation options. These five crossings would be located at Oak Street (adjacent to Tucker Elementary), at Dyer Avenue, at Audubon Road, at Pine Tree Brook Trail, and at Milton High School. A representative detail for these crossings and locations are shown in Figure 23 below. Each new crossing would include curb extensions, marked crossings, and wayfinding for motorists to reduce confusion when crossing the median. Crossings could also be raised and include rectangular rapid flashing beacons. Retiming of signals and crossing infrastructure may be required at the southern project limits at the intersection of Blue Hills Parkway and Canton Avenue. These transitions can be further refined during the project design phase.

Cost Estimate

To understand the potential financial cost of this design, Nitsch Engineering utilized MassDOT's Grant Cost Estimator to identify an anticipated order of magnitude cost. The cost for Blue Hills Parkway was estimated to be $9.73 million for design, construction, and temporary traffic control. This estimate assumes a construction start date in 2030 and includes: resurfacing work along the corridor roadway, raised crossings along the existing median to continue the shared use path, minor updates at the intersections of Eliot Street and Canton Avenue, major rework at Brook Road, and five midblock crossings. The cost of temporary traffic control can be estimated as approximately 7% of the construction cost, or approximately $407,000. The cost of design for this project can be estimated as approximately 10-12% of the construction cost, resulting in a design cost of approximately $700,000. The backup for these estimates is included in Appendix E. Funding for this design could come from Chapter 90 allocations, MassTrails or Shared Streets and Spaces funding awards, or other grant opportunities.

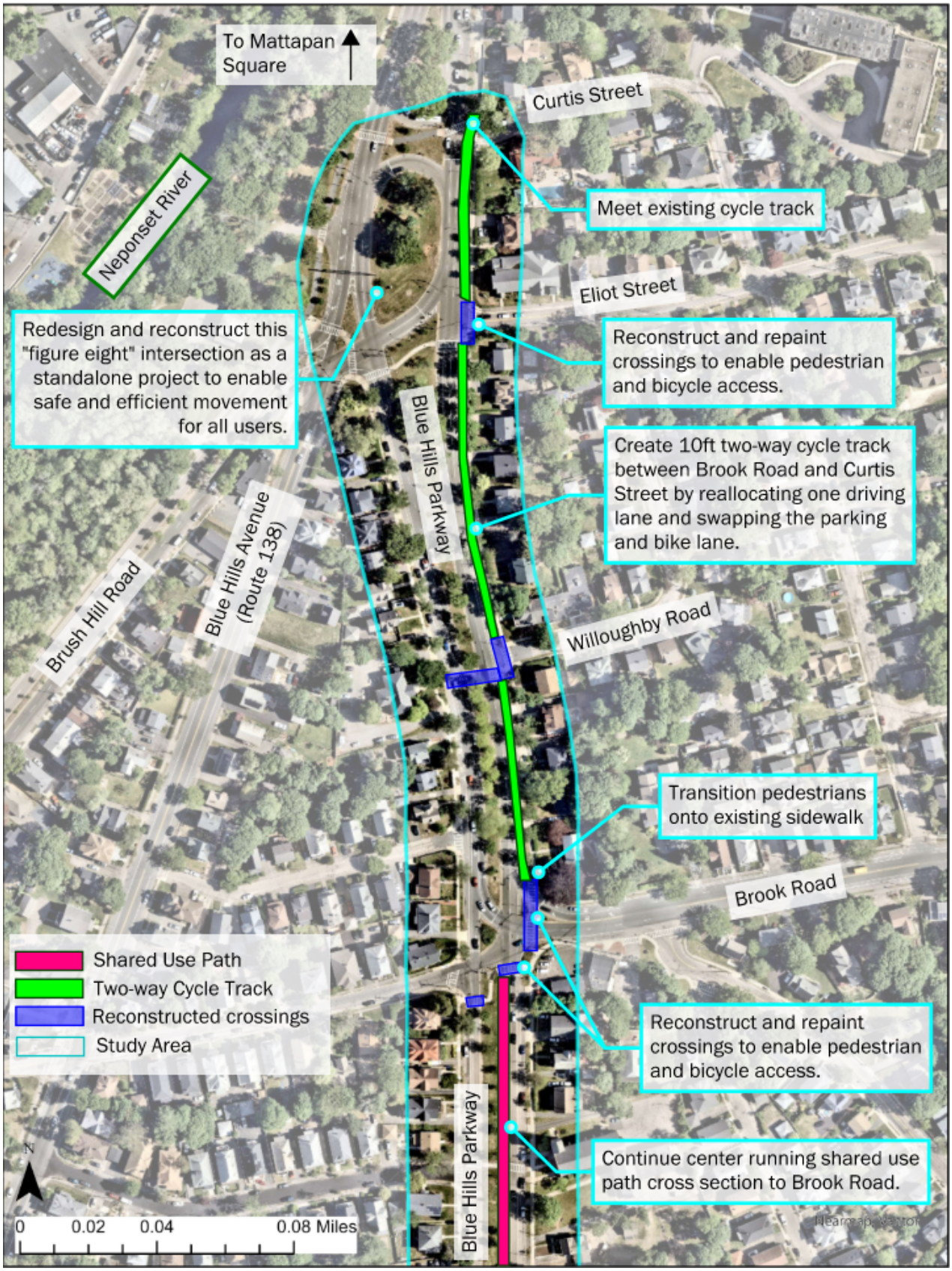


Figure 22 – Key connections at northern project limits

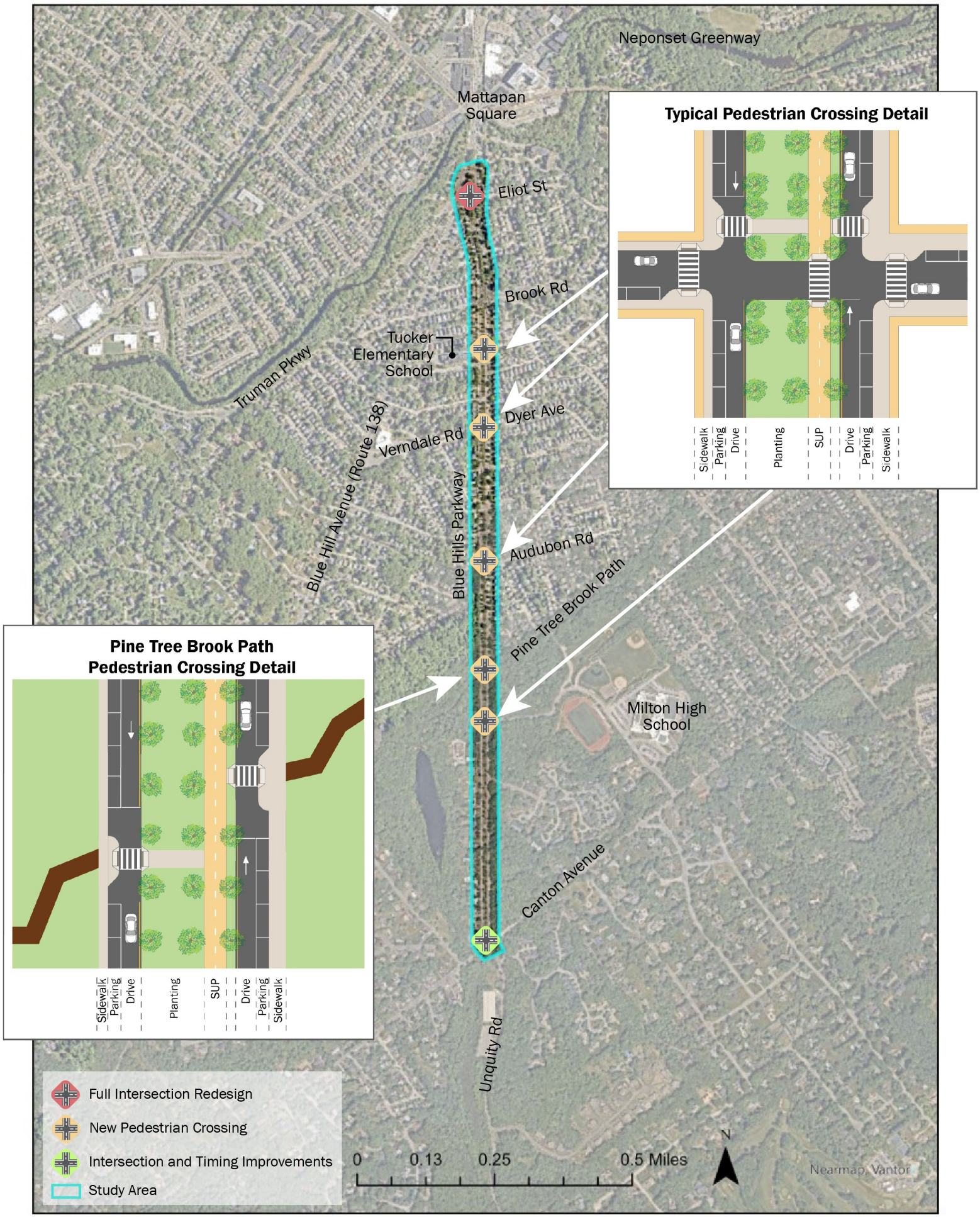


Figure 23 – Envisioned crossings along corridor

Conclusion and Next Steps

The connection from Boston and the Neponset River Greenway to the Blue Hills Reservation has been recommended by several prior planning efforts, and this study further investigates specific infrastructure options along Blue Hills Parkway. In the existing condition, Blue Hills Parkway carries primarily commuter motor vehicle traffic and lacks bicycle infrastructure that is safe and comfortable for users of all ages.

The project team investigated six alternatives during our feasibility analysis. Alternative 1 provides parking-protected bike lanes within the existing roadway cross section, so no road diet would be implemented. This is the most cost-effective option but creates conflicts for bicyclists and drivers at driveways and side streets. Alternative 2 provides a two-way cycle track on the northbound side and removes one lane of motor vehicle traffic. This alternative is more expensive to construct the grade separated cycle track and creates conflicts for bicyclists and drivers at driveways and side streets. Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2, however removes the existing parking and maintains two lanes of motor vehicle traffic. It has similar cost implications and conflict points as described in Alternative 2, and based on community feedback, parking removal would preclude a successful design. Alternative 4 adds a shared-use path along the existing median, creating a wider median and removing one lane of northbound motor vehicle traffic. This option has similar cost implications to Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, however creates significantly fewer conflict points between bicyclists or pedestrians and motor vehicles. Alternative 5 and Alternative 6 would only be applicable between Pine Tree Brook Trail and Canton Avenue, as they represent a significant change from the existing roadway configuration. Both of these alternatives would relocate all motor vehicle traffic onto the existing southbound side of the roadway and reclaim the northbound side for a shared use path and green space. In Alternative 5, northbound parking would be removed; Alternative 6 would remove an existing row of trees to preserve parking. These six alternatives were compared in a scoring matrix and presented to the public.

Based on our investigation, the project team recommends Alternative 4 be implemented along Blue Hills Parkway from its intersection with Brook Road to its intersection with Canton Avenue. This alternative would provide dedicated space for walking, biking, and rolling via a median running shared use path, as shown in Figure 24. At the northern terminus of the project corridor, the shared use path would transition to the east side of the roadway to better connect to the existing two-way cycle track that extends south to Curtis Road from Mattapan Square. This would also restore some of the historic intent of these parkways by prioritizing the recreational uses that were once the primary purpose of Blue Hills Parkway and similar roads. Additional traffic calming and vertical deflection could also be installed to further the safety goals of this project. This alternative was one of the highest scoring based on our selection criteria matrix and was the most popular with the public during community engagement efforts, as seen in the dots exercise results shown in Figure 21.

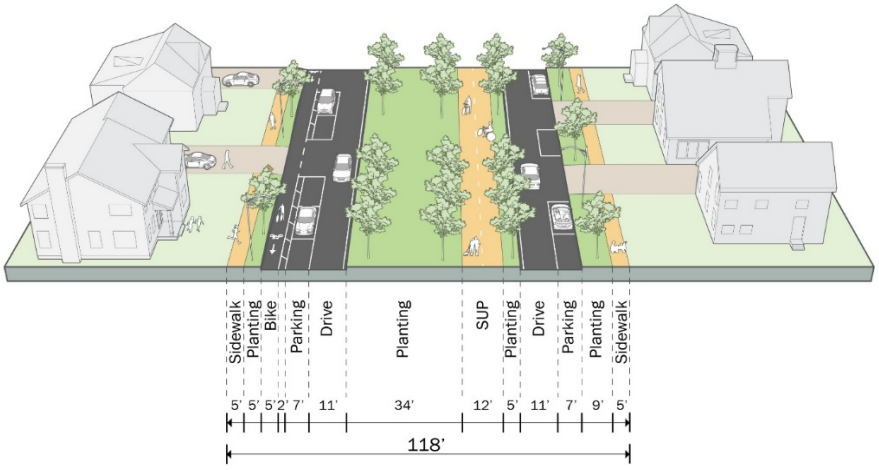


Figure 24 – Alternative 4

Three reservation roads were included in the recommended project route. Unquity Road, Chickatawbut Road, and Hillside Street are characterized by narrow and winding routes through the Blue Hills Reservation. These roadways are key to the final connection to Houghton's Pond in the south of the Blue Hills Reservation, and they will be further explored in a separate report. The work along Blue Hills Parkway does not necessarily need to occur simultaneously with the reservation roads; the envisioned work along these roadways can proceed separately so as to not delay the safety changes described within this report.

At the northern terminus of the project, the "figure eight" intersection of Blue Hills Parkway and Brush Hill Road should be studied in detail to remove this barrier to safe walking, biking, and rolling. Due to the complex geometry and overlapping jurisdiction, this intersection warrants a standalone major project to improve it for all users.

A preliminary cost estimate found that the preferred alternative would cost approximately $10 million. Following funding identification, an RFP can be written and issued. Depending on funding levels, this RFP could be written to progress the design of an improved Blue Hills Parkway to a 25% level or to 100% design level. This design process may include additional research and study to inform the design by investigating environmental and permitting impacts, tree health and status, utility investigations, more detailed cost estimates, and maintenance and operation impacts.

Through this feasibility study process, the project team has identified a design ready alternative to create a safer Blue Hills Parkway that welcomes users of all modes, ages, and abilities. This alternative selection involved extensive community outreach and public support, in addition to the traffic and safety analyses. Implementing the selected alternative will encourage more people to travel car free and support equitable access to recreational opportunities.