

Melnea Cass Boulevard

Public Meeting
April 13, 2015

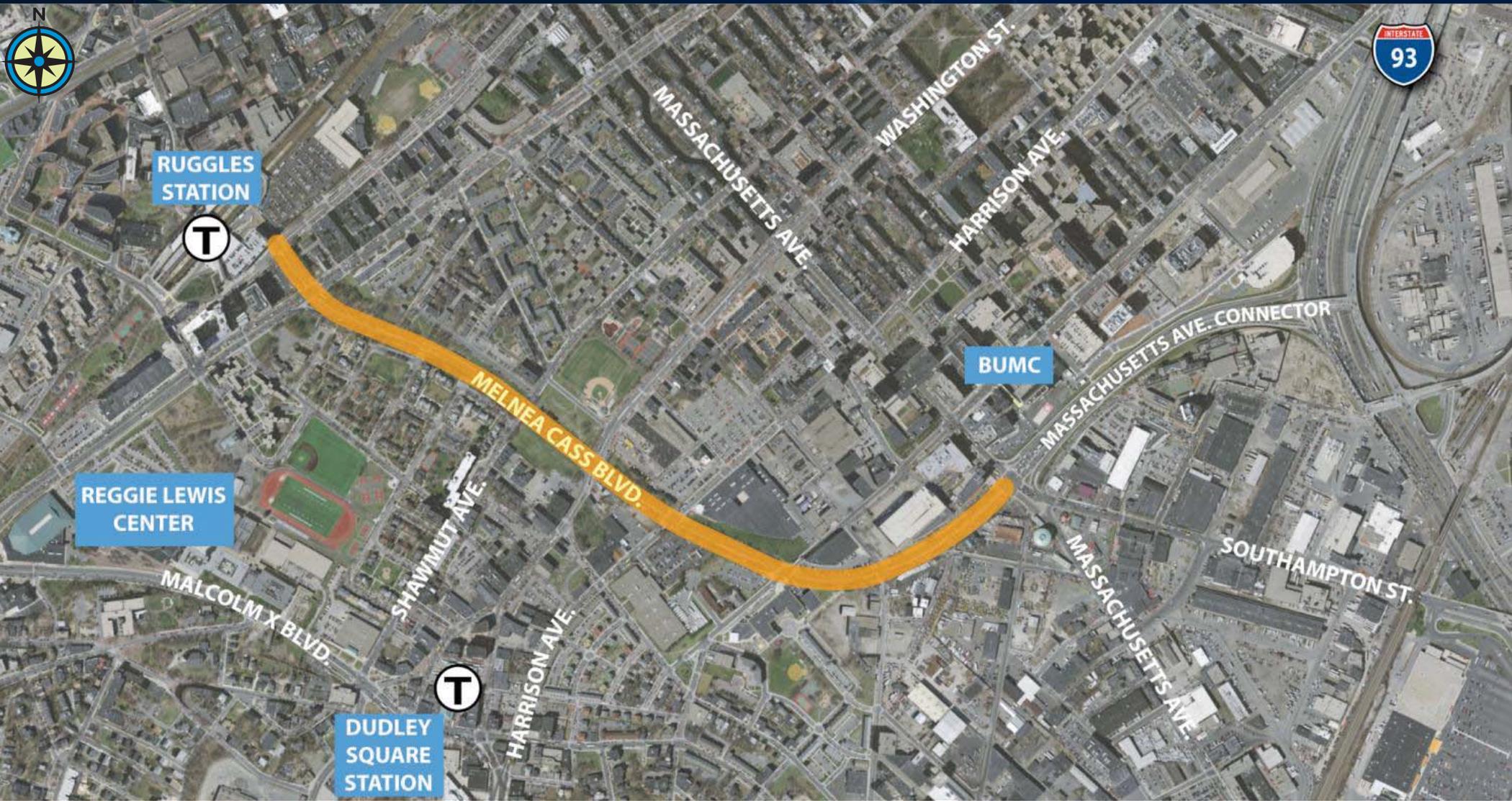
presented by
**Boston Transportation
Department**

with

Howard/Stein-Hudson
Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge
Toole Design Group
Charles River Watershed Association



Project Area



**MELNEA CASS
BOULEVARD
DESIGN PROJECT**

Boston Transportation Department



Project Timeline

- **Community Meeting – shared two BRT design concepts – 5/30/2012**
- **Developed Hybrid Concept in response to comments– Summer/Fall 2012**
- **Shared Hybrid Concept with community– 3/6/2013**
- **Community site walk – 7/20/2013**
- **Developed Alternative Ruggles Design – August/September 2013**
- **Community site walk – 8/12/14**
- **Developed Revised Design – Winter 2015**

Center BRT Alternative



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Engaging the Community



Community Engagement

The Friends of Melnea Cass Blvd.

- Grassroots neighborhood group formed to stop the widening of Melnea Cass Blvd. and engage community residents and stakeholders in the planning process
- Led community outreach to mobilize strong participation in public planning meetings
- Worked with BTD to make the planning process more transparent, accessible, and participatory.
- Helped make the plans more understandable with 3-D community walk-throughs



March 5, 2013 Public Meeting

- Turning point in the planning process: more than 100 residents and stakeholders attended and voiced strong and unified concerns about widening the road
- Friends of Melnea Cass Blvd. presented “40 Feet of Facts” to demonstrate problematic impacts of widening the road



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Melnea Cass widening project raises resident questions, concerns

Sandra Larson

At a public meeting hosted by the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) last week, Roxbury residents, activists and local elected officials raised sharp questions about a plan to widen Melnea Cass Boulevard in order to add new center median bus lanes and stations.

A group called Friends of Melnea Cass Boulevard stretched a 40-foot string across the meeting room to illustrate how much extra width the new bus lanes will demand. The group's members decried the expected removal of mature trees and the increased distance for pedestrians crossing the busy street.

“I don't see how this is going to make the road safer,” said Yvonne Lalyre, a Lower Roxbury resident who held one end of the string. Who wants a strewn eyesore in some part of the city? Many consider the street a barrier separating the Dudley Square area from Lower Roxbury and the South End.

The project team also presented options for placement of new bus

“I don't see how this is going to make the road safer. Who wants a widened road in their backyard?”

Community Walk-Through July 2013

Working with BTD, Friends of MCB advocated for taking the planning process to the street. The event utilized markings to visually demonstrate:

- What it would look like for the road to be forty feet wider
- That the plan included a dramatic reduction of trees and green space
- Other elements of the design plan of concern to the community

The event attracted strong community participation and highlighted many pressing community questions and concerns.

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Community Walk-Through of Melnea Cass Blvd. July 2013



- The Friends of MCB continued to meet with BTD, elected officials, and other stakeholders to advocate against the widening of Melnea Cass Blvd and for improvements to the road that would benefit the community and be more responsive to neighborhood concerns.
- Friends of MCB continued to audit conditions on the road, and report on incidents and accidents which demonstrated the need to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- In early 2014, BTD announced that it would no longer pursue widening of the road, and that it would continue to work with Friends of MCB to engage the community in a new design process, informed by priorities identified in the earliest public meetings.



- To move the planning process forward, the Friends of MCB worked with BTD to re-convene a follow-up walk-through in August 2014, attended by several local elected officials as well as community residents and partners.
- At this walk, we identified specific improvements and maintenance issues to be addressed in the short term as well as long term priorities to incorporate into a new design plan.



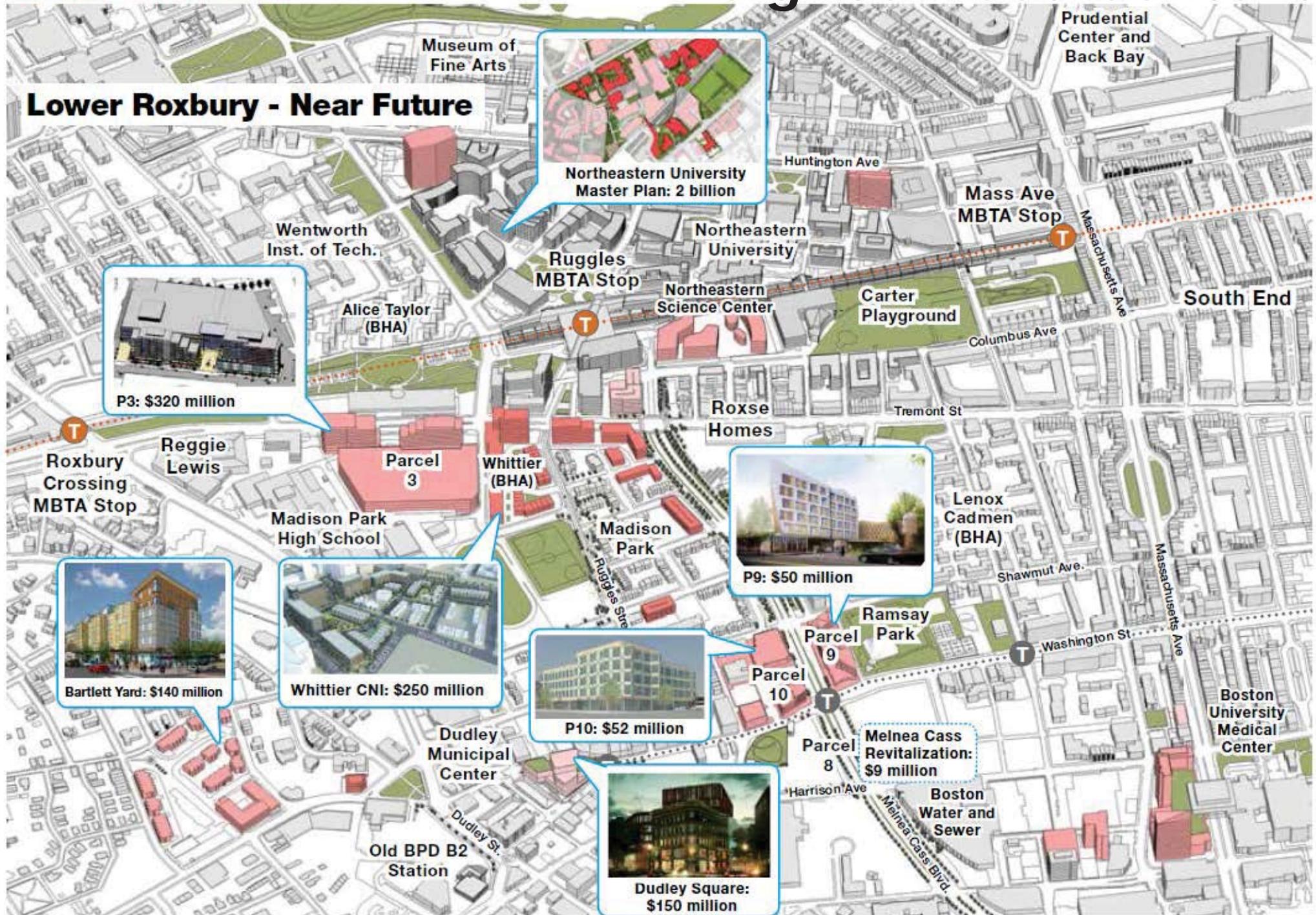
What We Heard: Vision

- Safe, clean, and beautiful
- Safe for cyclists and pedestrians
- Providing safe, effective transit service
- Moving calmed vehicular traffic effectively
- Fully integrated with its surrounding neighborhood
- A catalyst for neighborhood economic development



Figure 4-3. Planned Investment

Neighborhood Context



Source: The American City Coalition / Utile

Design Team's Challenge

- **Effectively integrate community desires for:**
 - An attractive, safe neighborhood main street
 - Active local business
 - Connectivity between Roxbury and South End
 - Effective, safe transportation for all modes
 - Saving existing trees



Revised Concept:

- Design is not inclusive of dedicated BRT lanes but does not preclude BRT in future
- Maintains existing roadway capacity
- Adds cycle track to south side
- Aligned to balance cross section and maximize trees saved
- Parking for local merchants where safe
- Enhances environment for all users



Tremont Street Slip Lane



MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENT
TREMONT STREET SLIP LANE TO MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD

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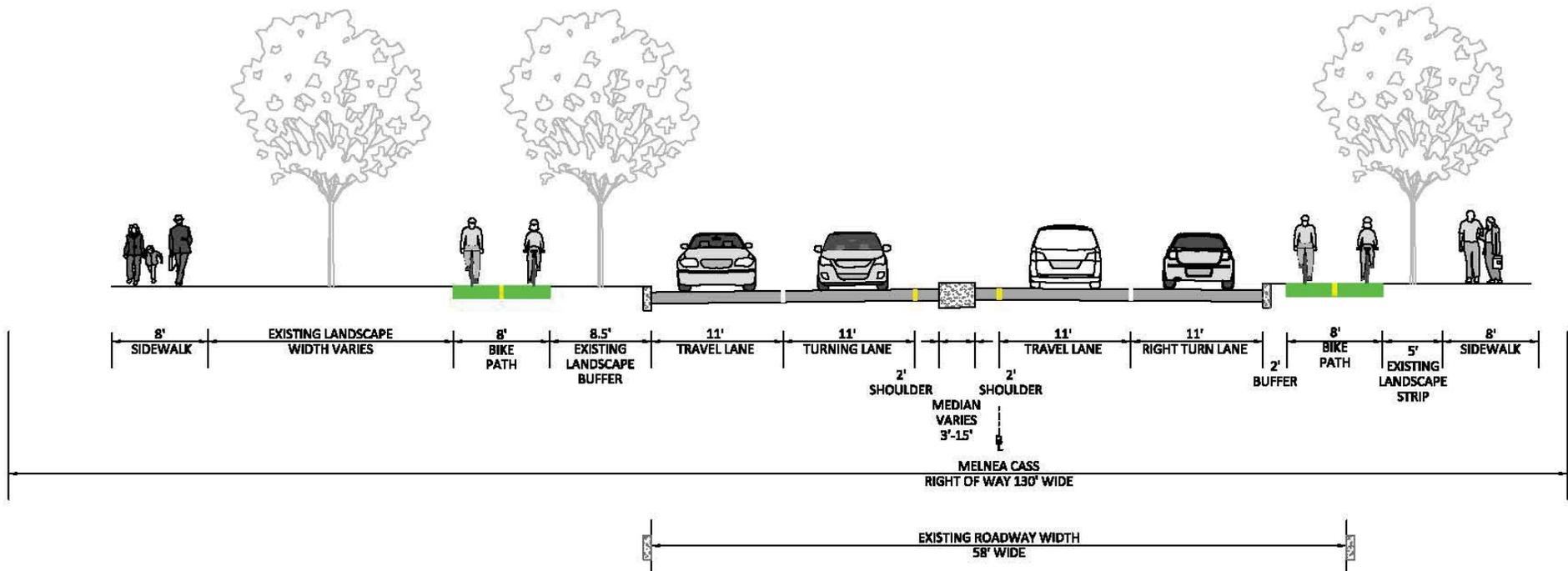
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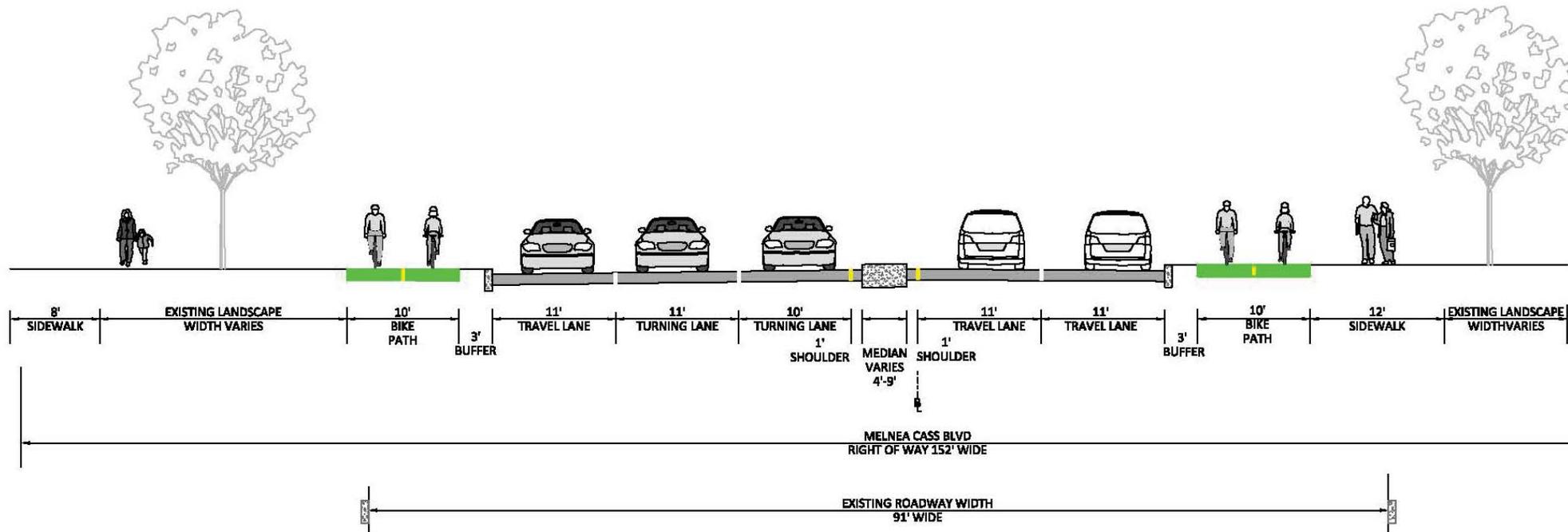
Columbus Avenue to Tremont Street



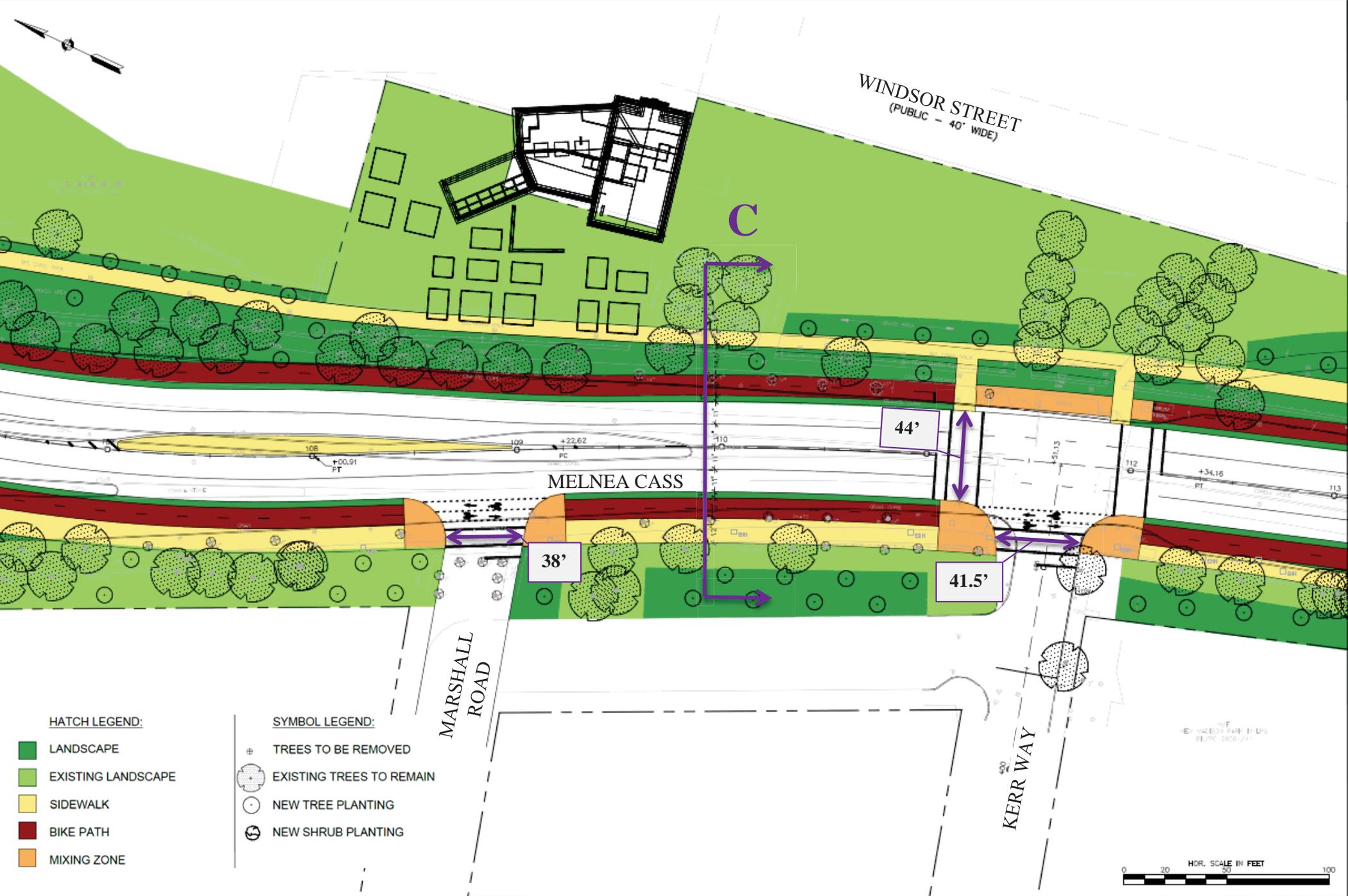
Columbus Avenue to Tremont Street Cross Section – “A”



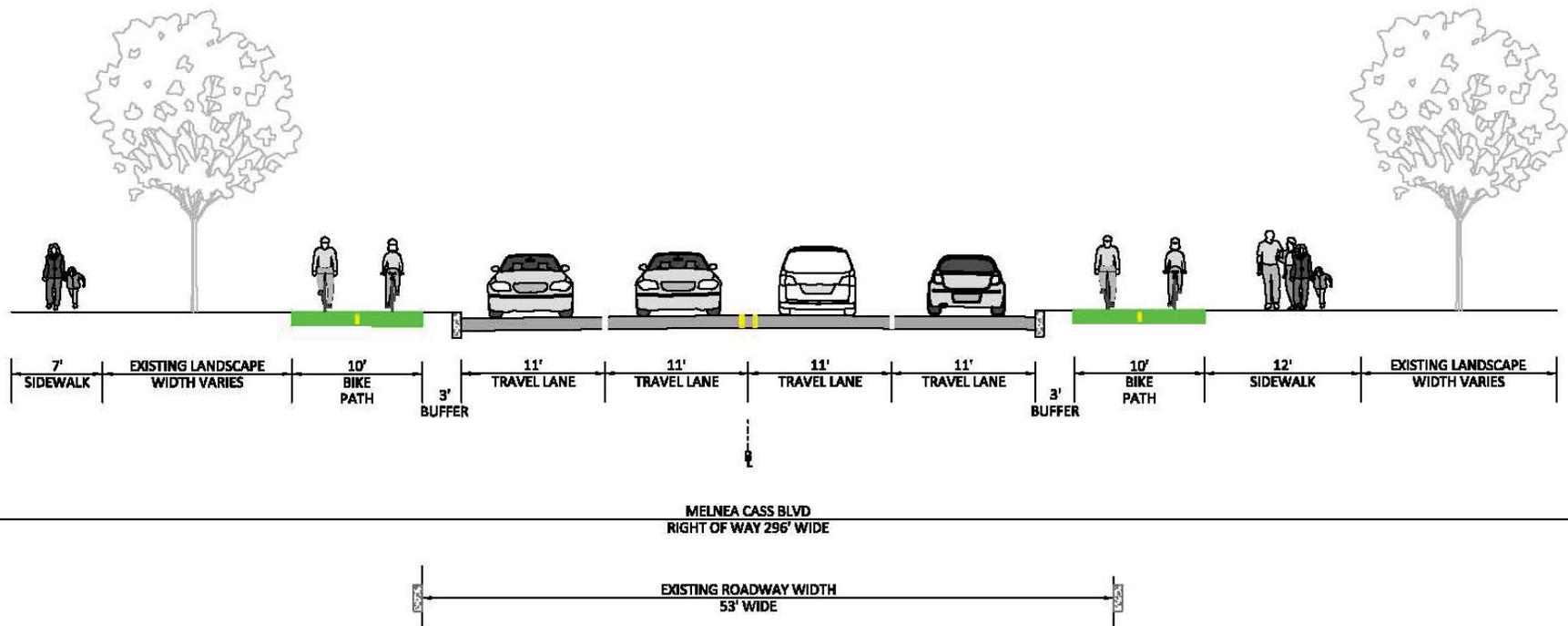
Columbus Avenue to Tremont Street Cross Section – “B”



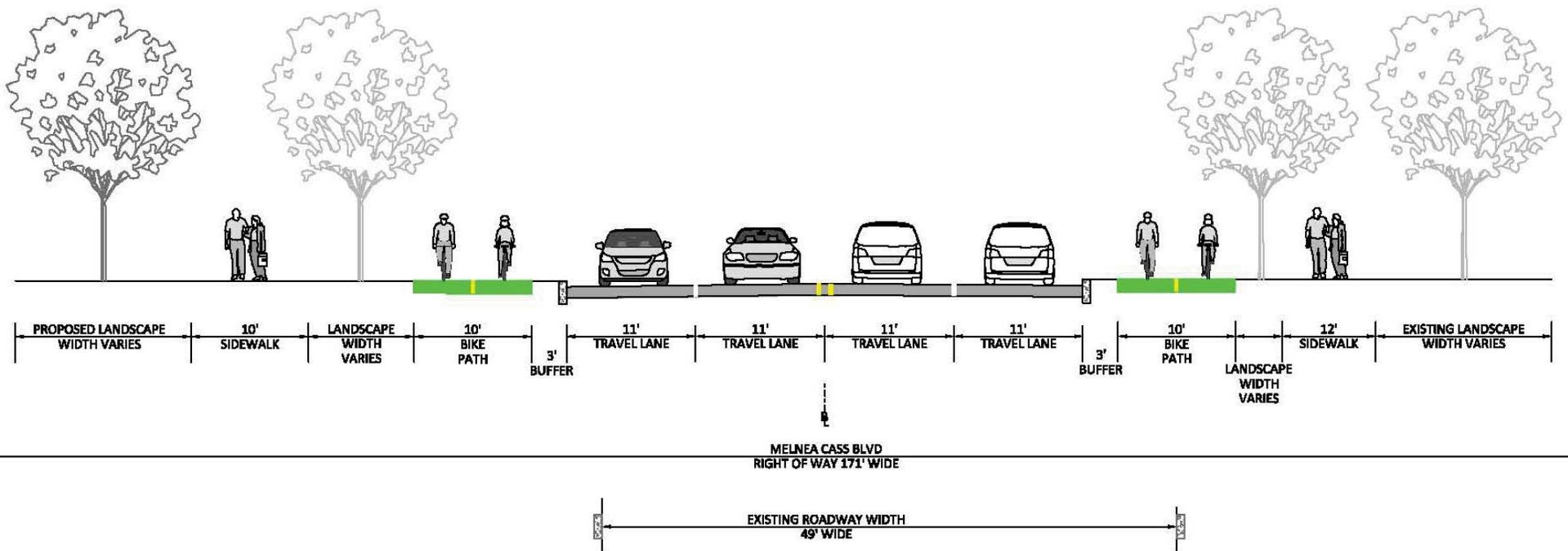
Tremont Street to Kerr Way



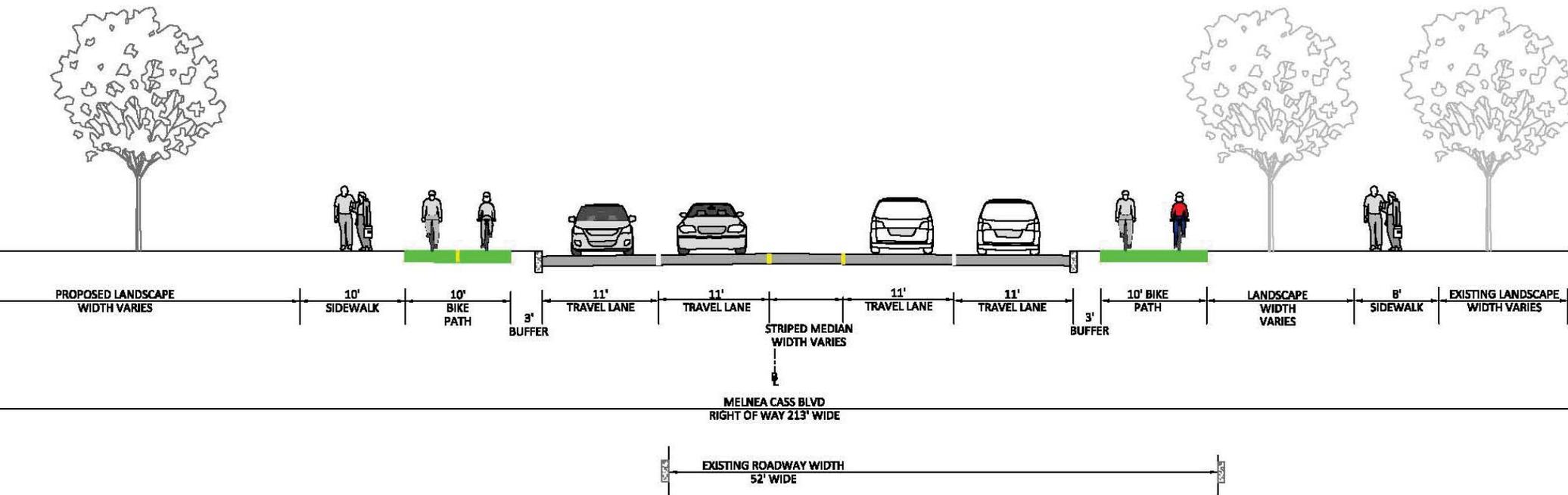
Tremont Street to Kerr Way Cross Section – “C”



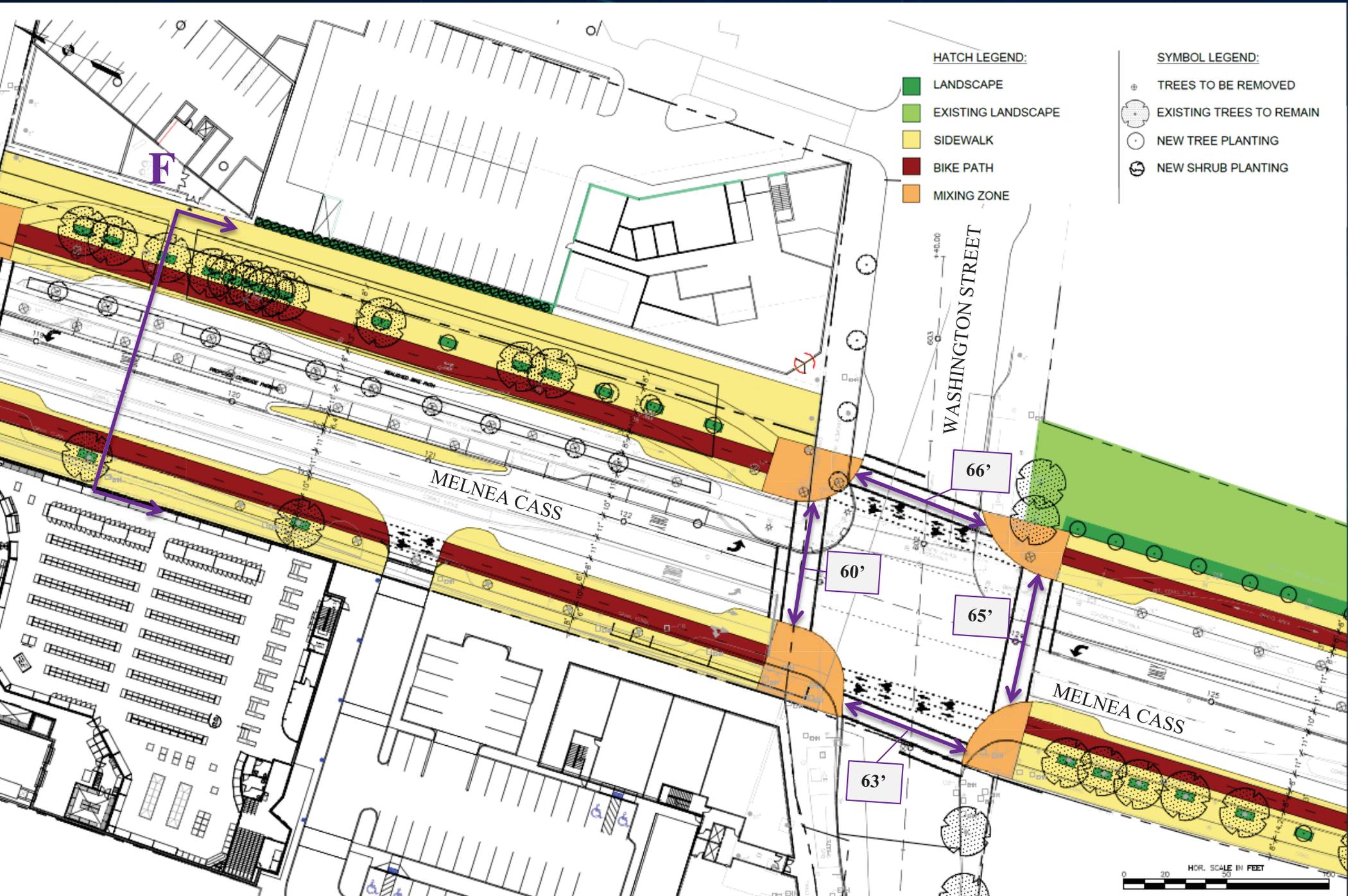
Kerr Way to Shawmut Avenue Cross Section – “D”



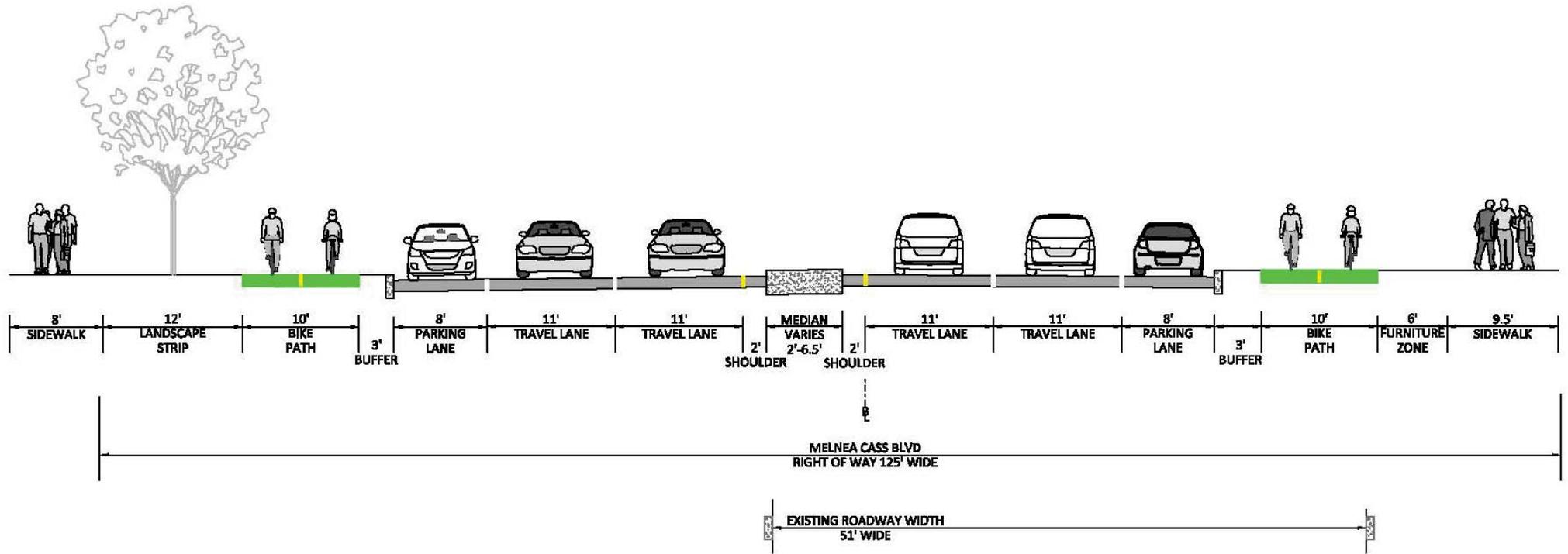
Kerr Way to Shawmut Avenue Cross Section – “E”



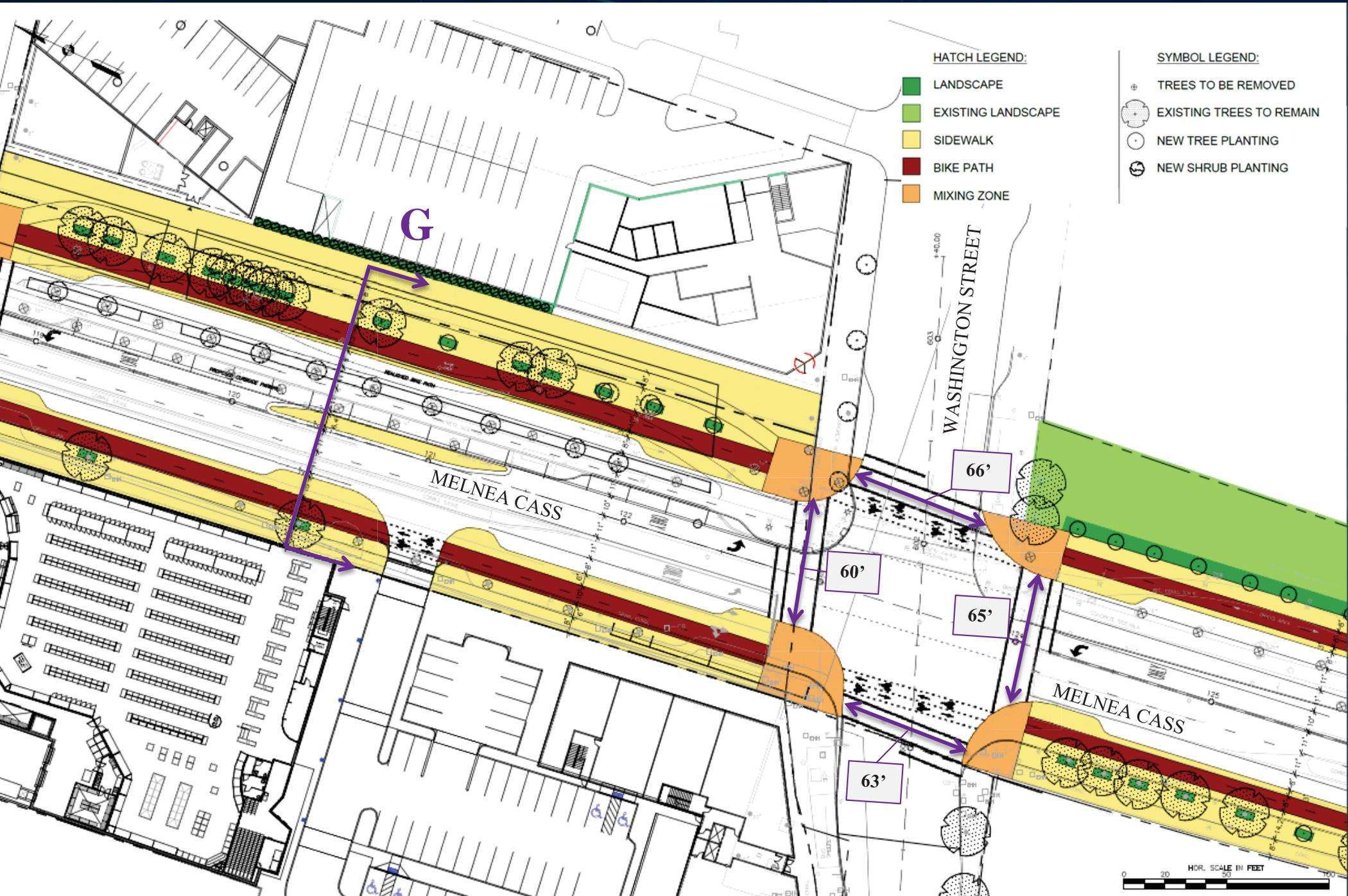
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street



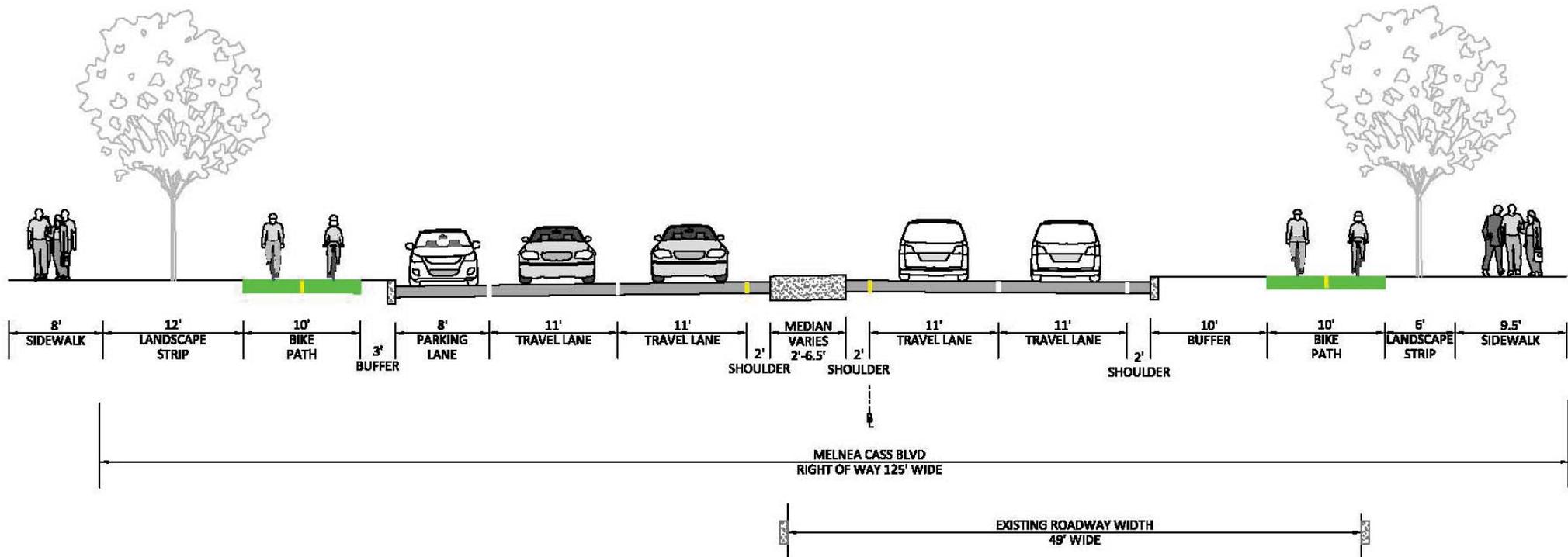
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street Cross Section – “F”



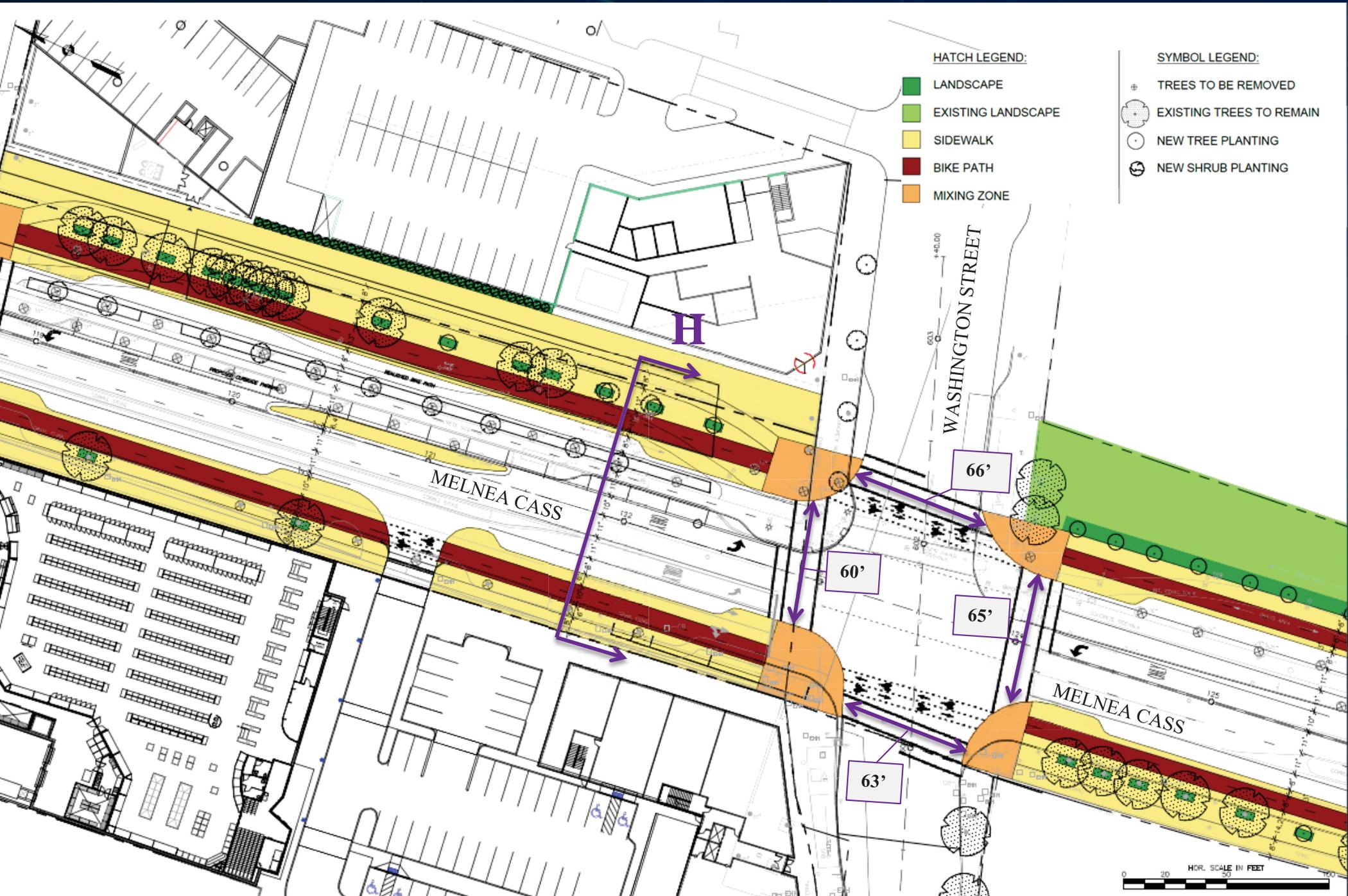
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street



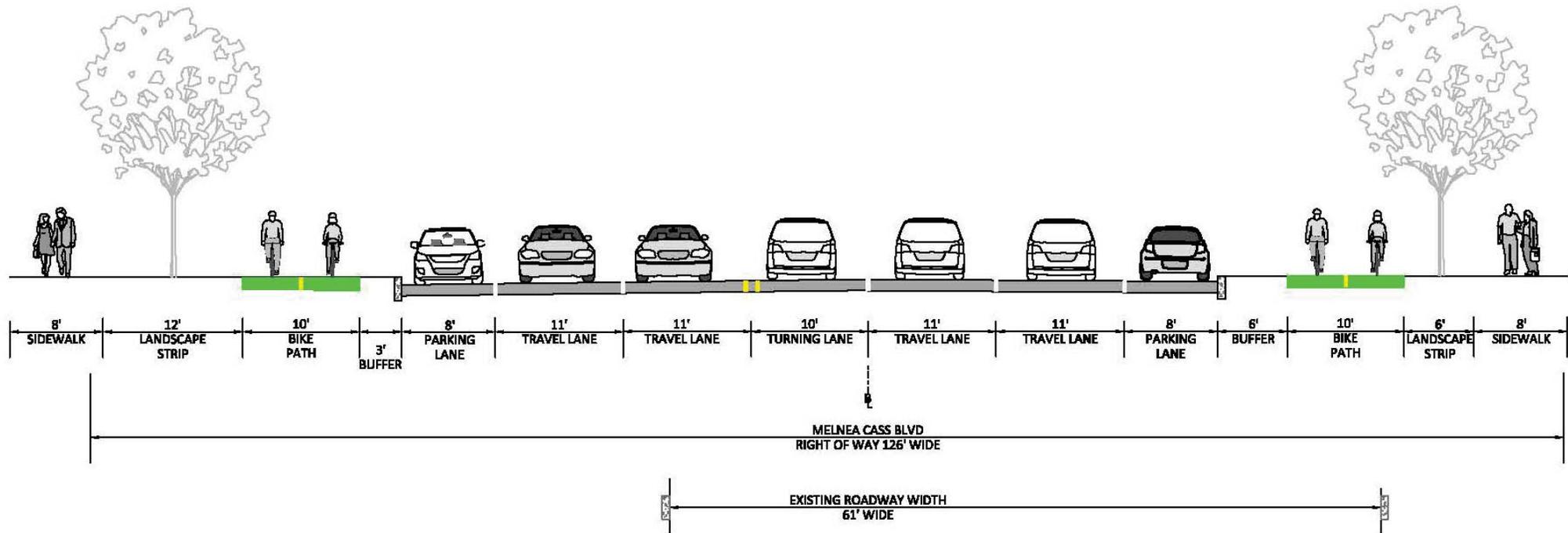
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street Cross Section – “G”



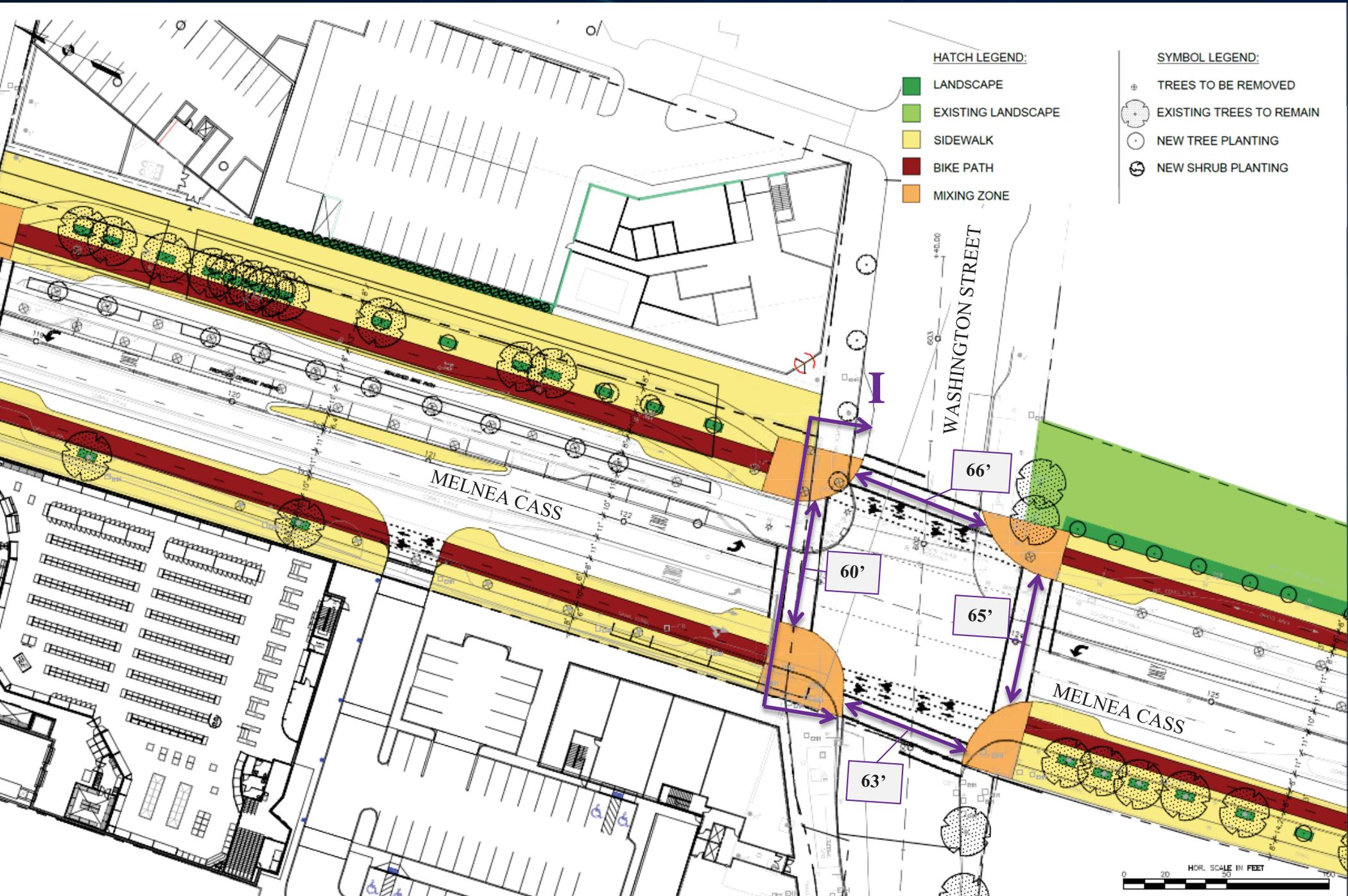
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street



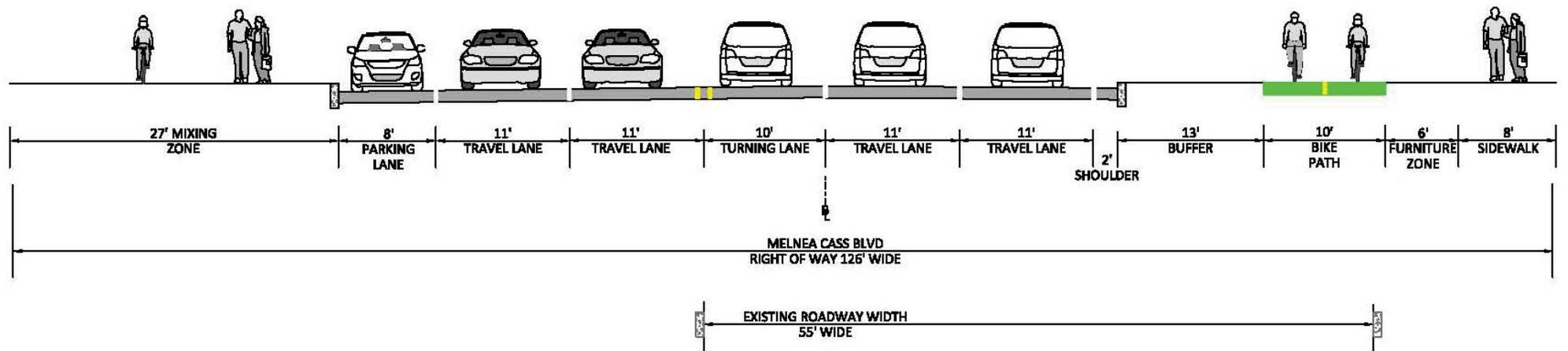
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street Cross Section – “H”



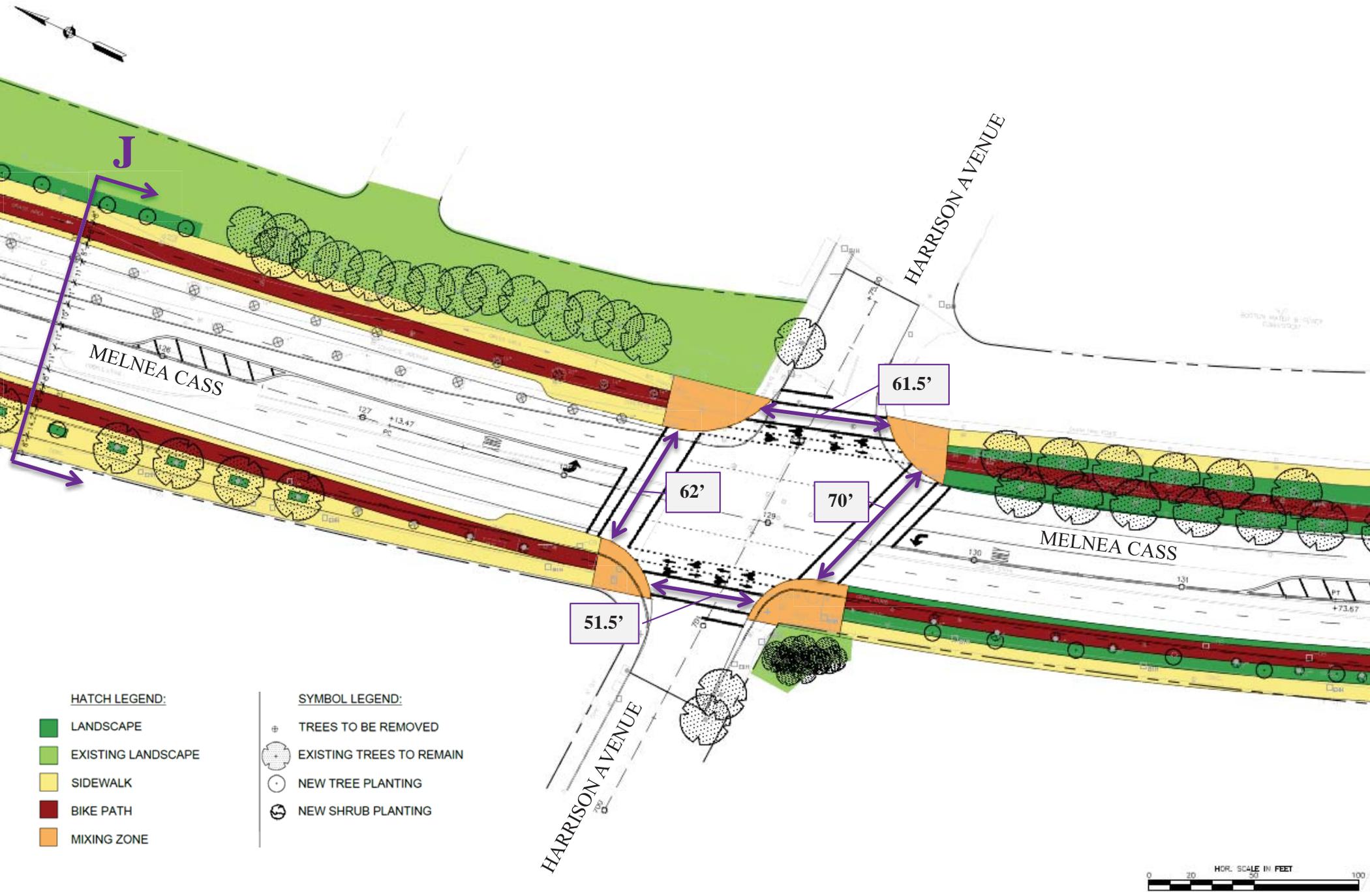
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street



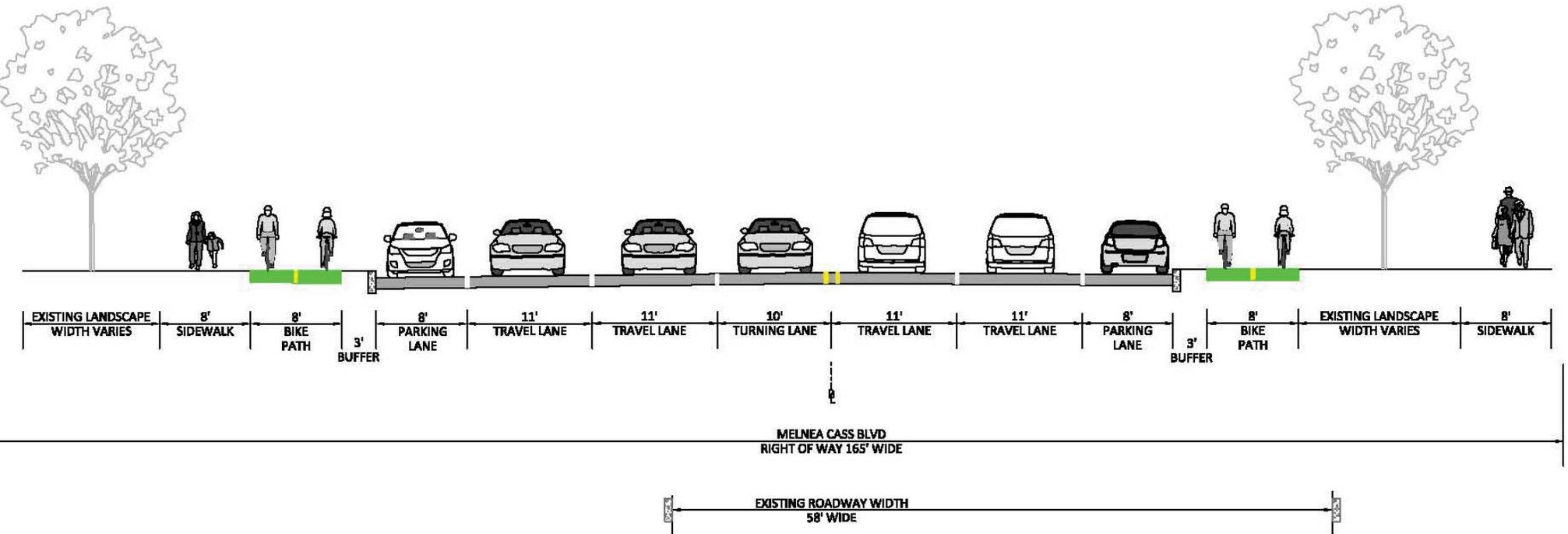
Shawmut Avenue to Washington Street Cross Section – “I”



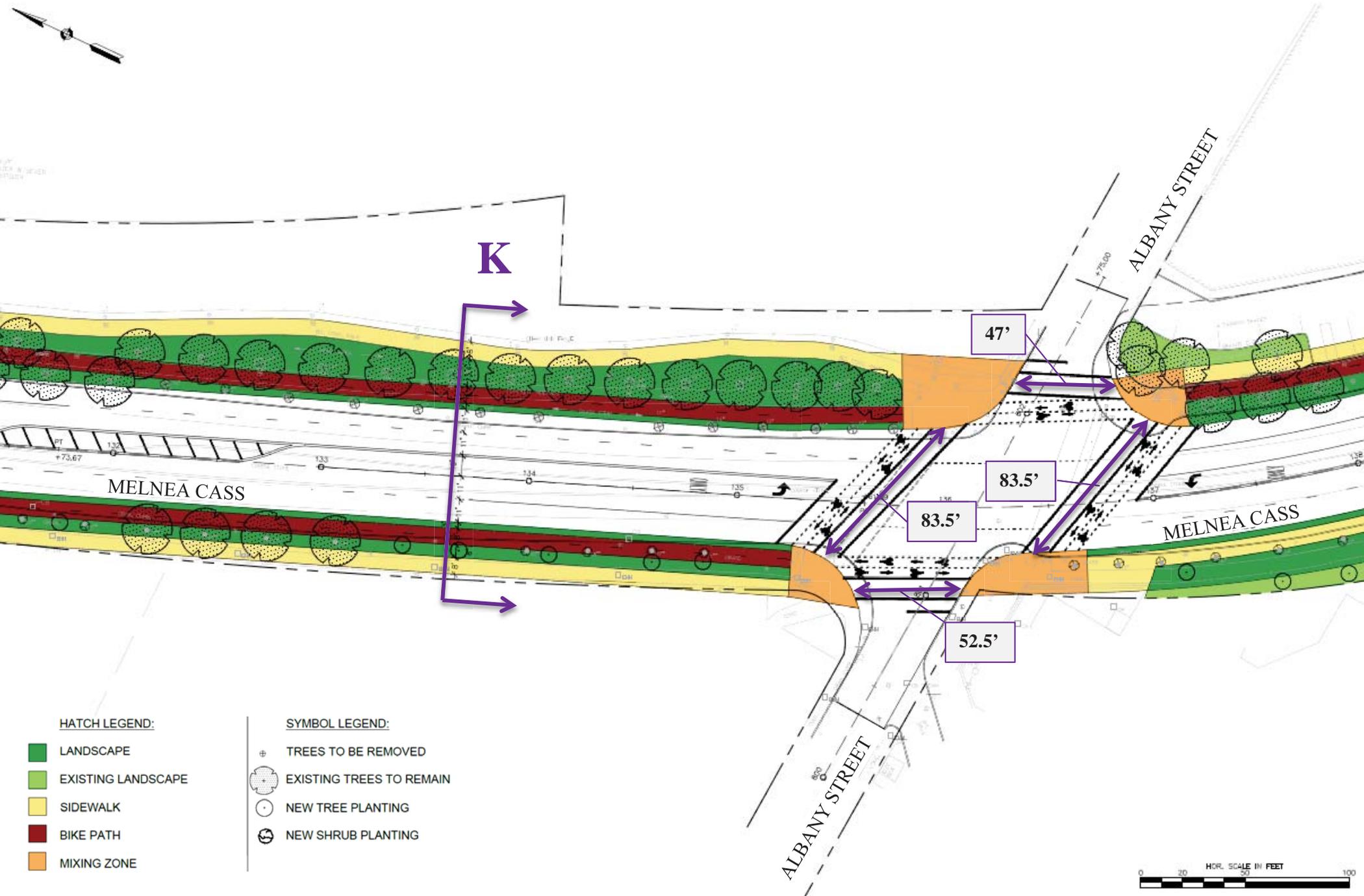
Washington Street to Harrison Avenue



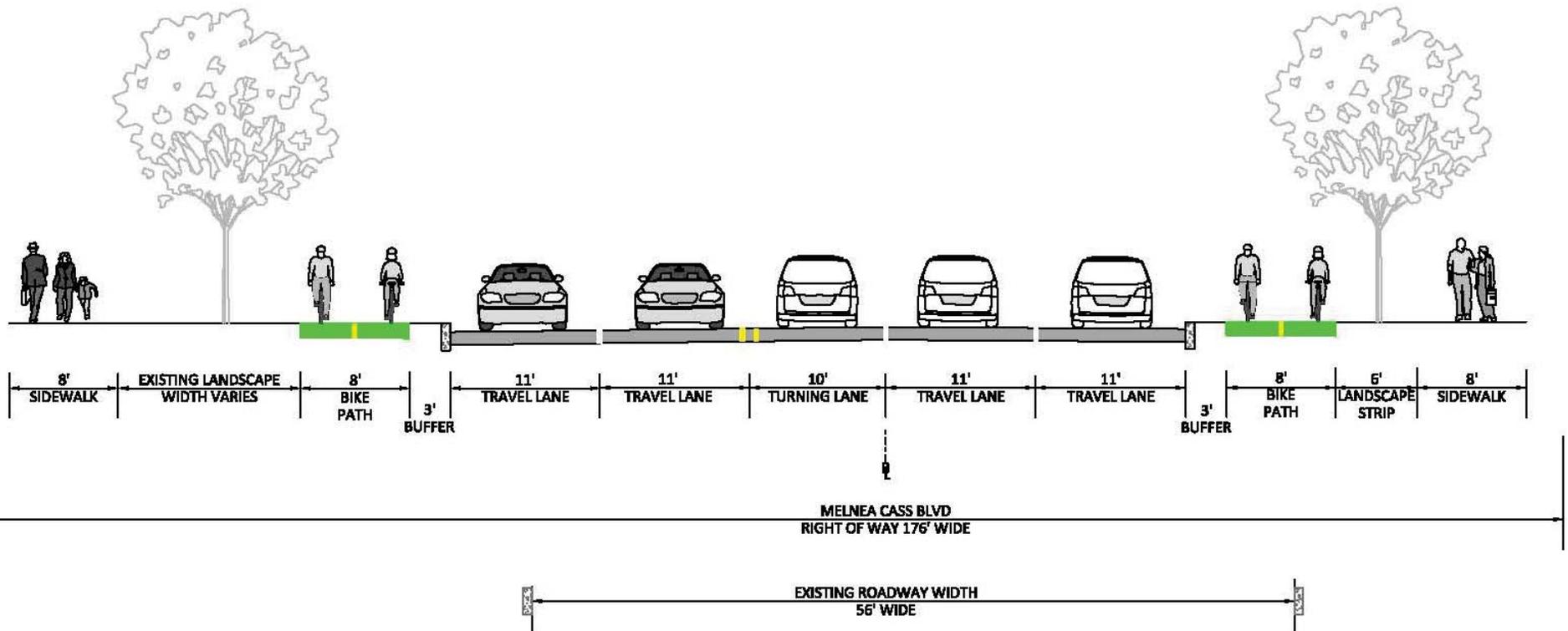
Washington Street to Harrison Avenue Cross Sections – “J”



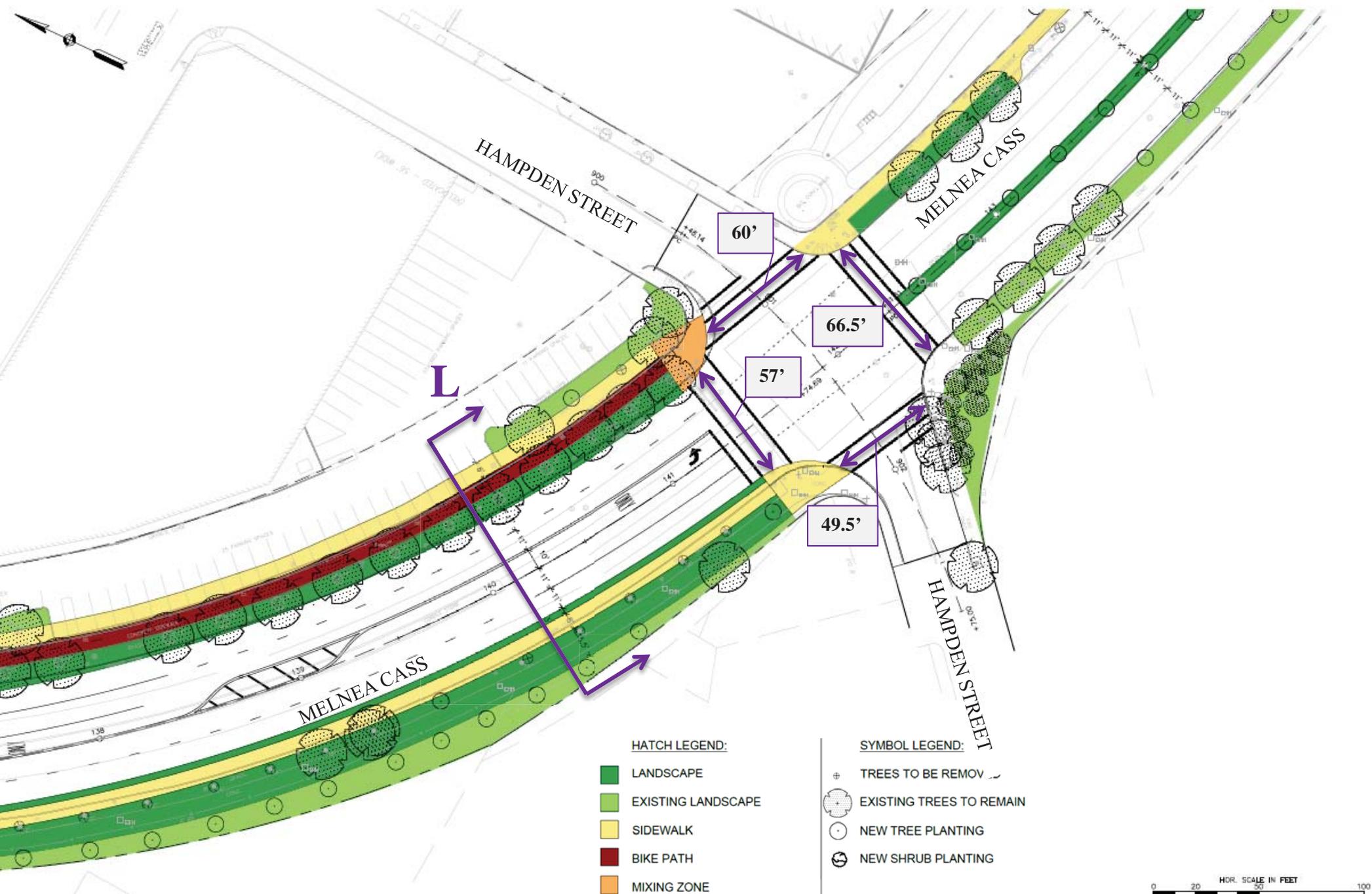
Harrison Avenue to Albany Street



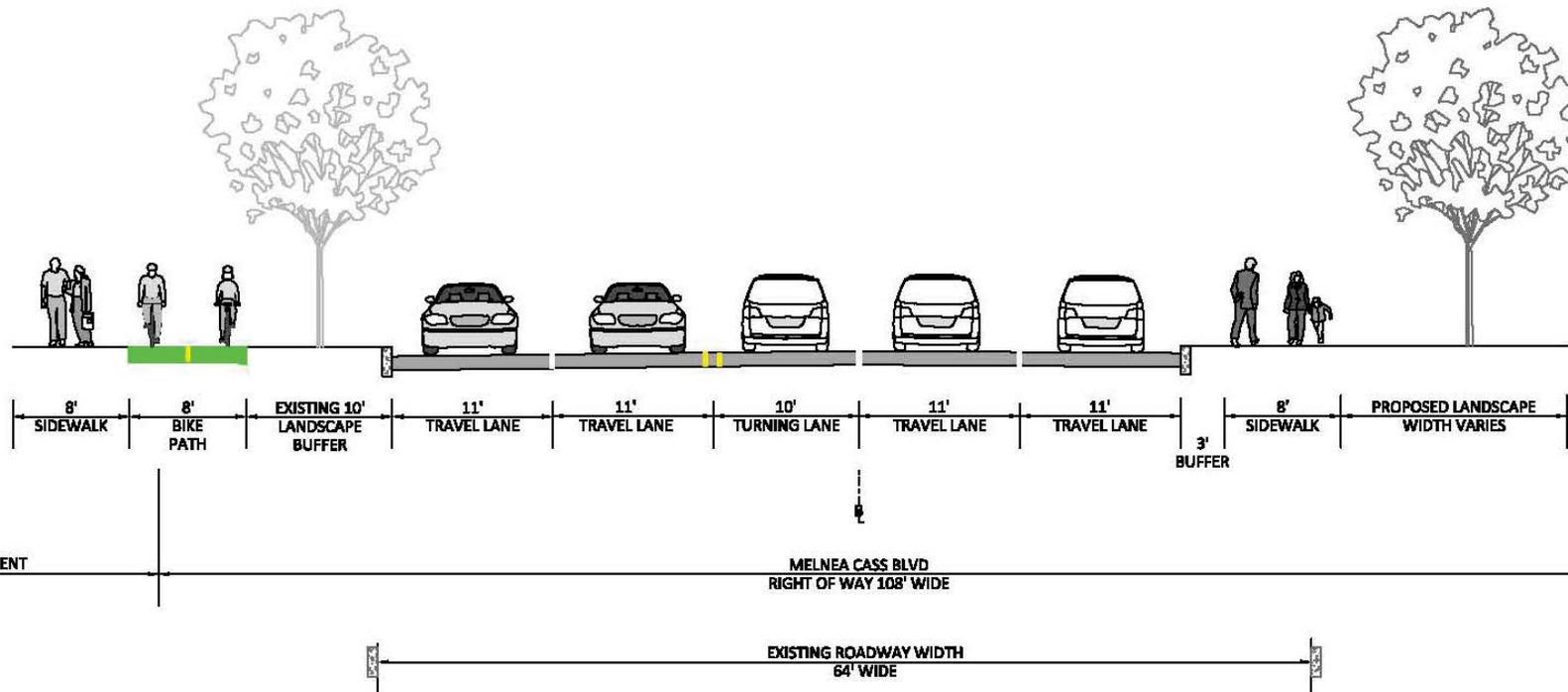
Harrison Avenue to Albany Street Cross Sections – "K"



Albany Street to Hampden Street



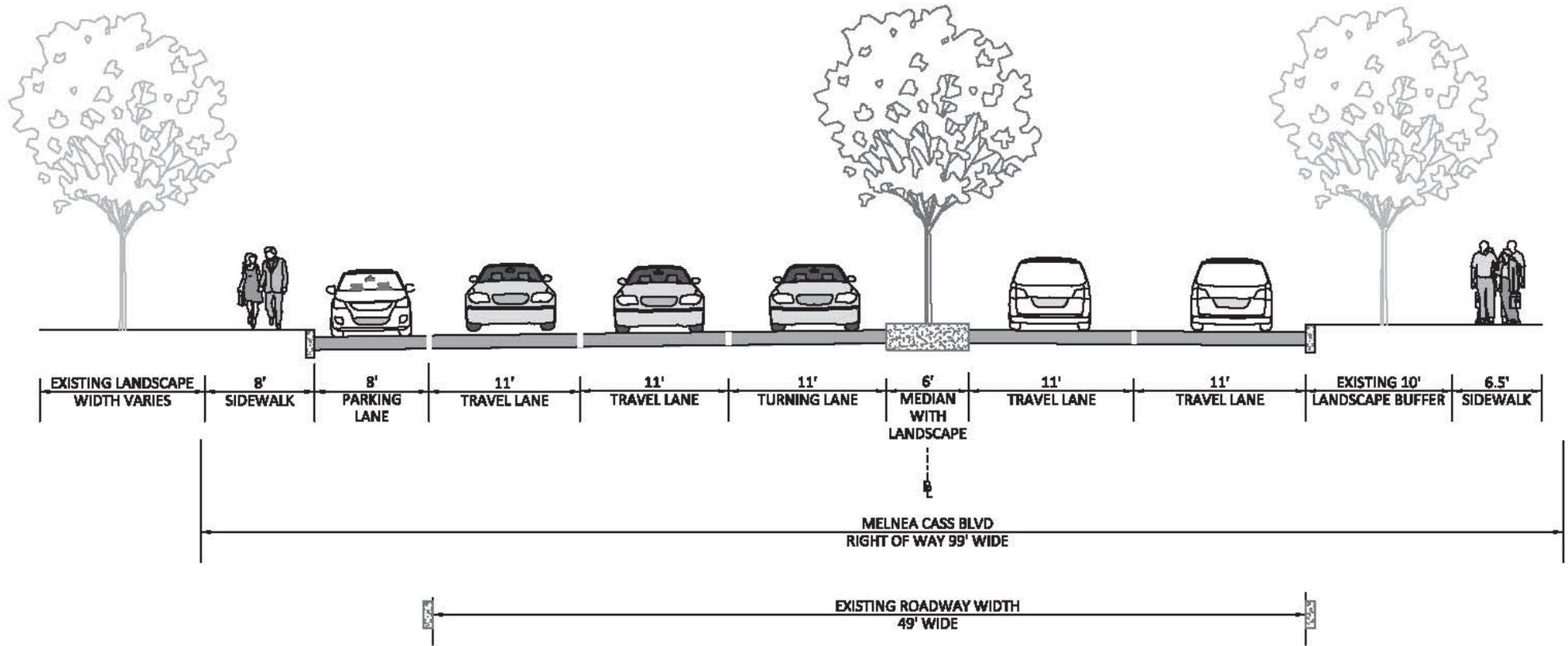
Albany Street to Hampden Street Cross Sections – “L”



Hampden Street to Massachusetts Ave



Hampden Street to Massachusetts Ave Cross Sections – “M”



Melnea Cass at Massachusetts Ave

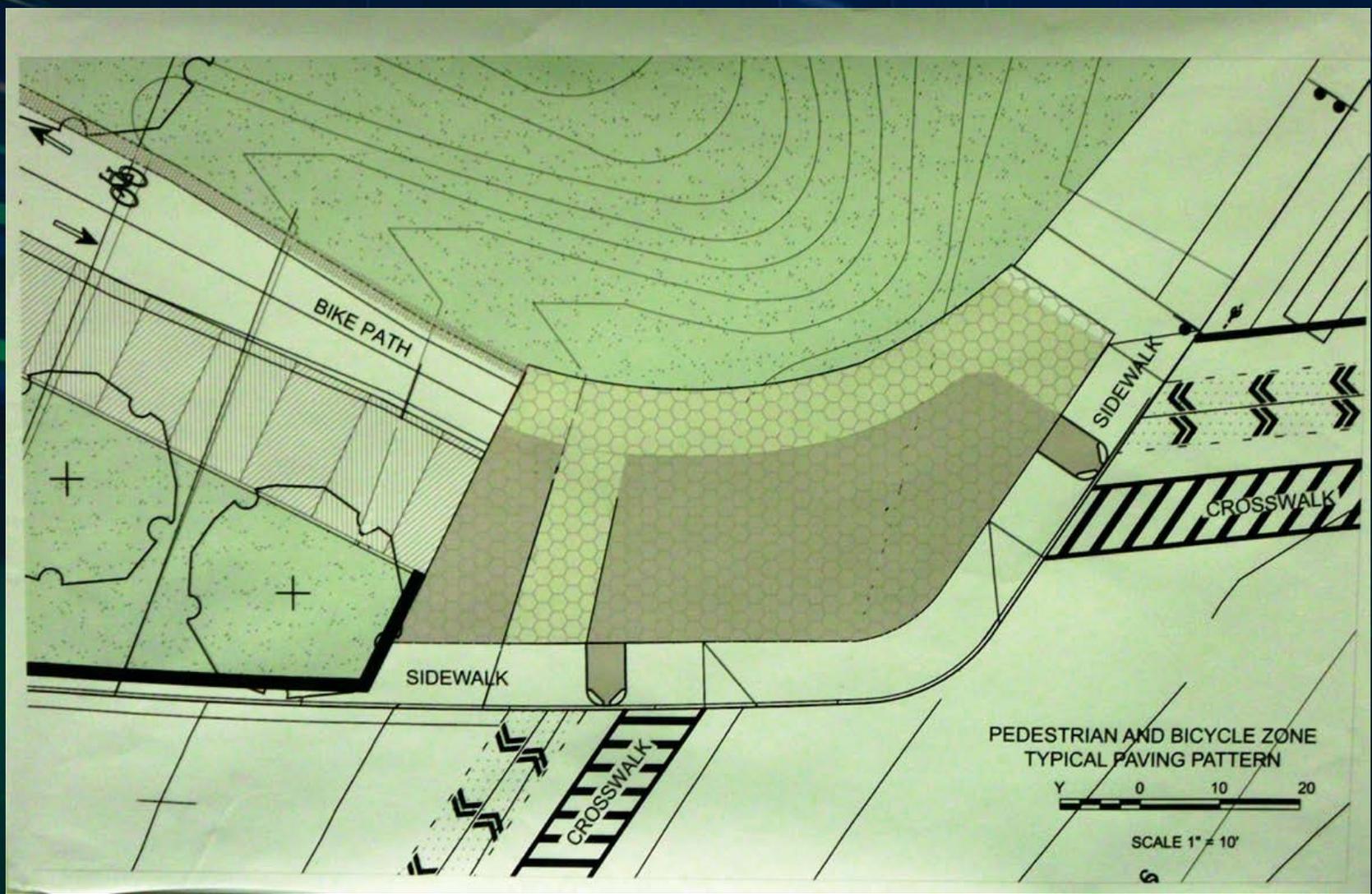


Tree Count on Melnea Cass

MELNEA CASS TREE COUNT									
	COLUMBUS TO TREMONT	TREMONT TO KERR	KERR TO SHAWMUT	SHAWMUT TO WASHINGTON	WASHINGTON TO HARRISON	HARRISON TO ALBANY	ALBANY TO HAMPDEN	HAMPDEN TO MASS AVE.	TOTAL
TREES EXISTING	52	98	58	47	57	72	40	63	487
TREE REMOVED	0	-29	-13	-34	-28	-24	-15	-8	-151
TREES RETAINED	52	69	45	13	29	48	25	55	383
TREES PROPOSED	4	49	24	4	10	11	16	49	167
TOTAL TREES	56	118	69	17	39	59	41	104	503

- New design saves more than 50 additional trees
- Center BRT alternative removed more than 200 trees
- Net Gain of 16 trees

Mixing Zone Detail



Benefits of the Plan

■ Pedestrians:

- Upgraded pedestrian signals
- Wide, accessible sidewalks
- Pedestrian-scale lighting improvements



■ Bicycles:

- Two-way bicycle paths on both sides of MCB



Benefits of the Plan

■ Transit:

- MBTA bus signal priority
- Enhanced bus stop amenities
- Space preserved for future BRT

■ Traffic:

- Maintain current capacity
- Add turning lanes
- Modernized/retimed signals



Funding

- **\$9M federal earmark on state Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
- **\$600,000 in City of Boston funding to match federal dollars**

Next Steps

- Hold community meeting – April 13, 2015
- Revise concept based on feedback received
- Prepare Conceptual Design Report – Late Spring 2015
- Make 25% Design Submittal to City and MassDOT
 - Late Spring 2015
- MassDOT 25% Design Public Hearing
 - Summer 2015
- Continue to develop design towards construction
- Continued City/State agency coordination
- Continued community process

Questions & Comments

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Ruggles Alternative

