

Melnea Cass Boulevard

**Design Concepts
Meeting
May 30, 2012**

presented by
**Boston Transportation
Department**

with

Howard/Stein-Hudson
Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge
Toole Design Group
GLC Development Resources



Agenda

Part 1 – Presentation

6:00 – 6:30 PM

Introduction/Process

What we have learned

BRT lanes as part of the project

Design concepts by area

Part 2 – Discussion of Design

Concepts – 6:30 – 7:15 PM

- Breakout Groups

Part 3 – Breakout Group

Reports/Q & A – 7:15 – 8:00 PM

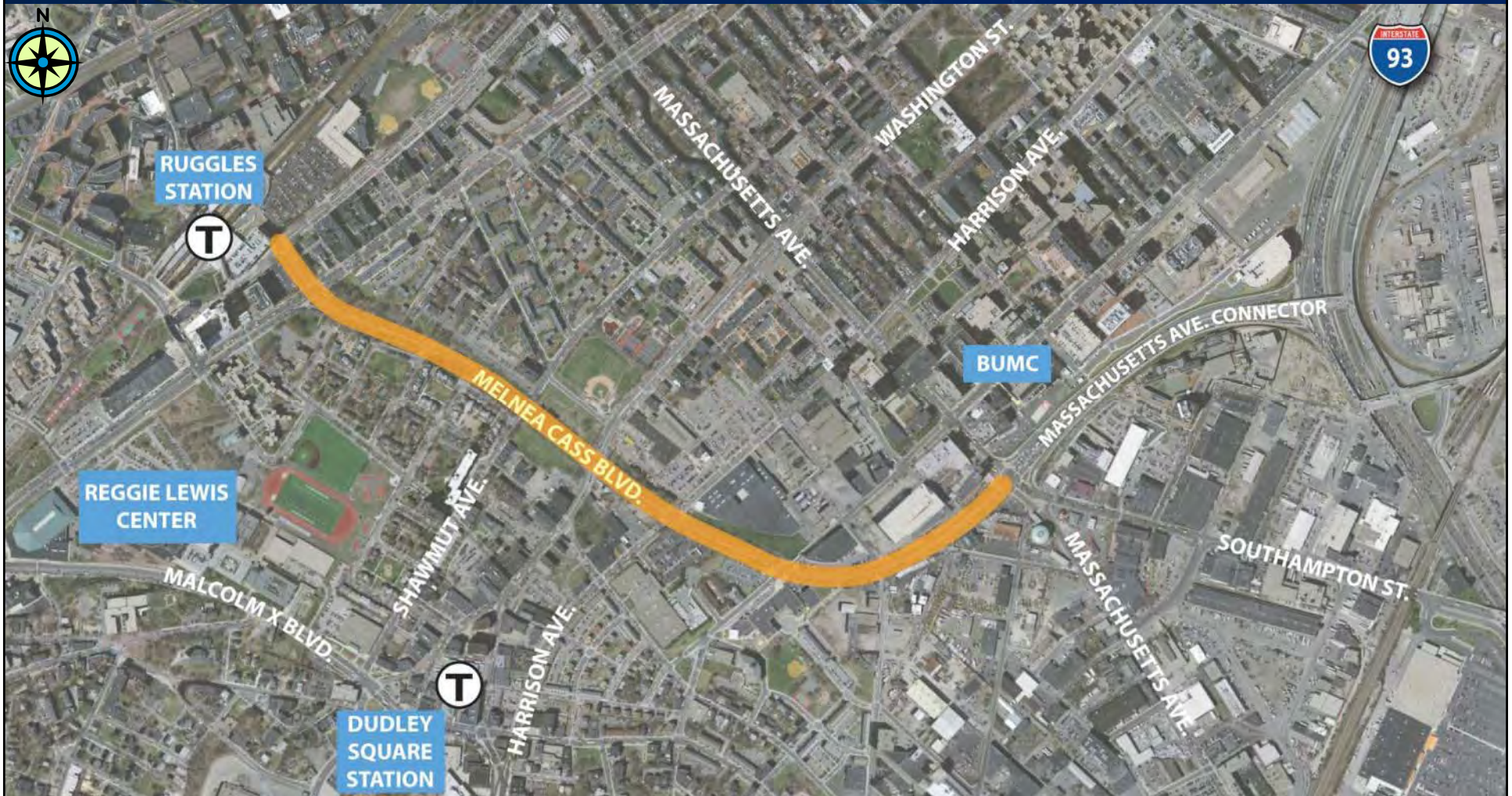
- Group representatives give summaries of breakout group discussion
- Questions and answers

Melnea Cass Boulevard Clean-Up

- **April 27, 2012:**
 - BTD, BRA, and consultant team
 - Trash removed
 - Greenery trimmed
 - Old signs replaced
 - Signal lights repainted
 - Review of tree health corridor-wide
- **Will continue to seek early action steps**



Project Area



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Project Timeline

- **Initial Public Meeting – 10/11/2011**
 - *Introducing the project*
- **Community Visioning Meeting – 12/14/2011**
 - *Envisioning success*
- **Design Objectives Meeting – 3/15/2012**
 - *Turning the vision into concepts*
- **Sharing Initial Concepts – 5/30/2012**
 - *Wide median – by section*
 - *Narrow median – by section*
 - *Discuss pros/cons of options*
- **Consensus on Preferred Option – Summer 2012**

What We Heard From You - Vision

- Safe, clean and beautiful
- Well-maintained – snow and litter consistently removed
- All parcels owned and cared for
- 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



What We Heard From You – Design Direction

■ Transportation should work well for all modes:

- Safe, efficient, calmed traffic
- Lower speeds
- Good bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Effective transit:
 - *Center BRT preferred*
 - *Improve current bus service*



What We Heard From You – Design Direction

■ Soften the Boulevard – reduce “highway feel”

- Heightened safety for non-vehicle users – safe crossings
- Walking/cycling connections
- Use greenery to soften BRT stations
- Use greenery to reduce speeds
- Native, low maintenance plants and trees



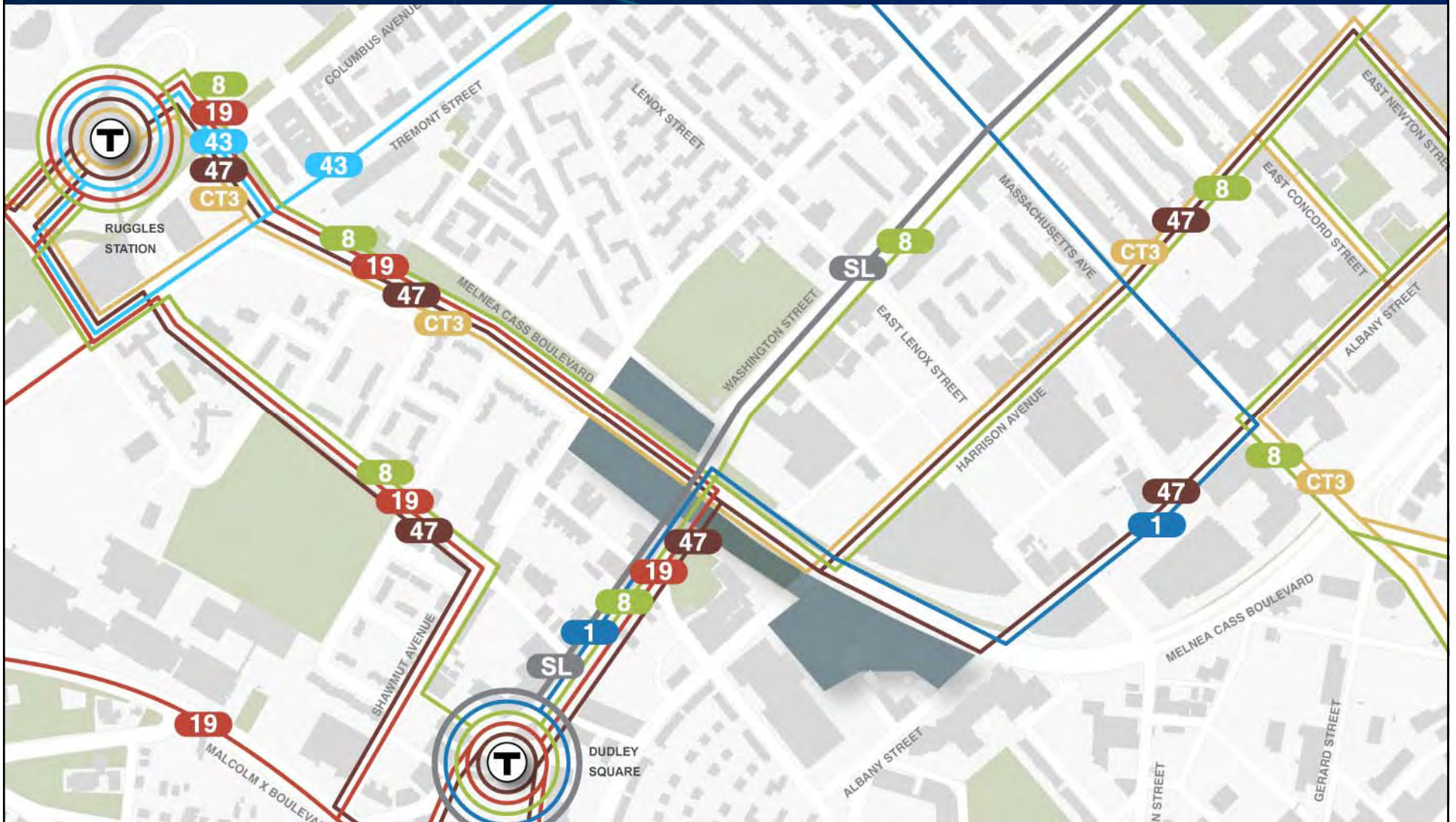
What We Heard From You – Design Direction

■ Fully integrate with cross streets and the neighborhood

- Provide a gateway to Dudley Square
- Design buildings for active street life
- Safe and family-friendly
- Design that invites people to use neighborhood businesses



Existing MBTA Routes



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BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)

- Frequent Service
- Widely-spaced Stops
- High-capacity Vehicles
- Real-time Information
- Priority Traffic Signal Control
- Dedicated Lanes
- Emergency vehicle access



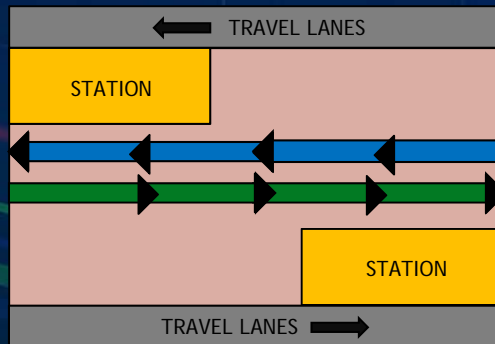
BRT Stations

- Safe pedestrian access
- Easy loading/unloading
- Comfort and security



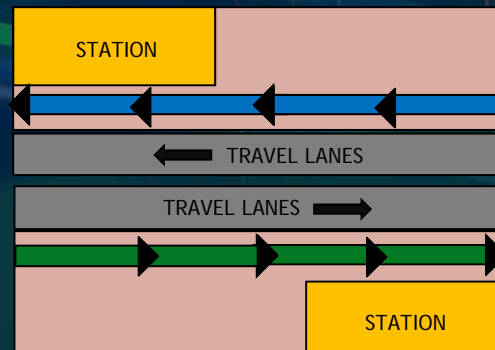
BRT Alternatives

Center Bus Lanes



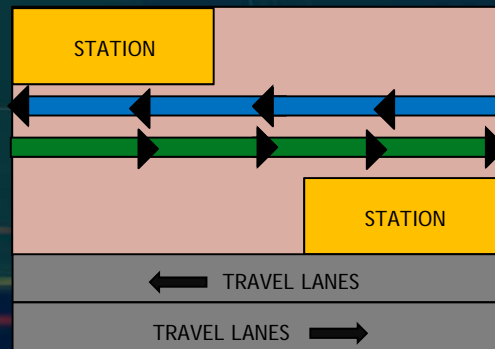
- Urban Ring Phase 2 Locally Preferred Alternative
- Reviewed by the Roxbury community including RSMPOC
- Typically most efficient design for BRT
- Passengers exit onto median island station
- Better access for new development and curbside parking

Curbside Bus Lanes



- Bus stops next to curb for passenger loading/unloading
- Parking conflicts
- Intersection conflicts

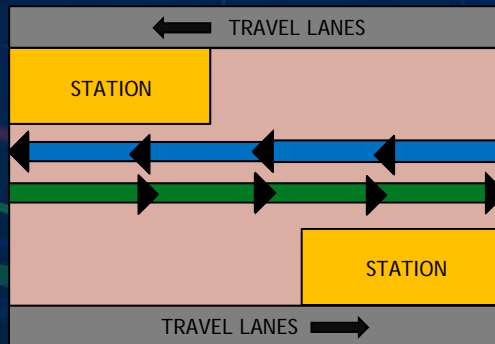
Bus Lanes One Side



- Passengers exit bus onto island and curb stations
- Parking access issues
- Intersection challenges

Preferred BRT Alternative

Center Bus Lanes



- Urban Ring Phase 2 Locally Preferred Alternative
- Reviewed by the Roxbury community including RSMPOC
- Typically most efficient design for BRT
- Passengers exit onto median island station
- Better access for new development and curbside parking



BRT Features on Melnea Cass Boulevard

- Accommodate future transit plans
- Enhance local bus service
- Give transit priority at signals
- Provide safe and easily accessible transit stops
- Reduce exhaust emissions



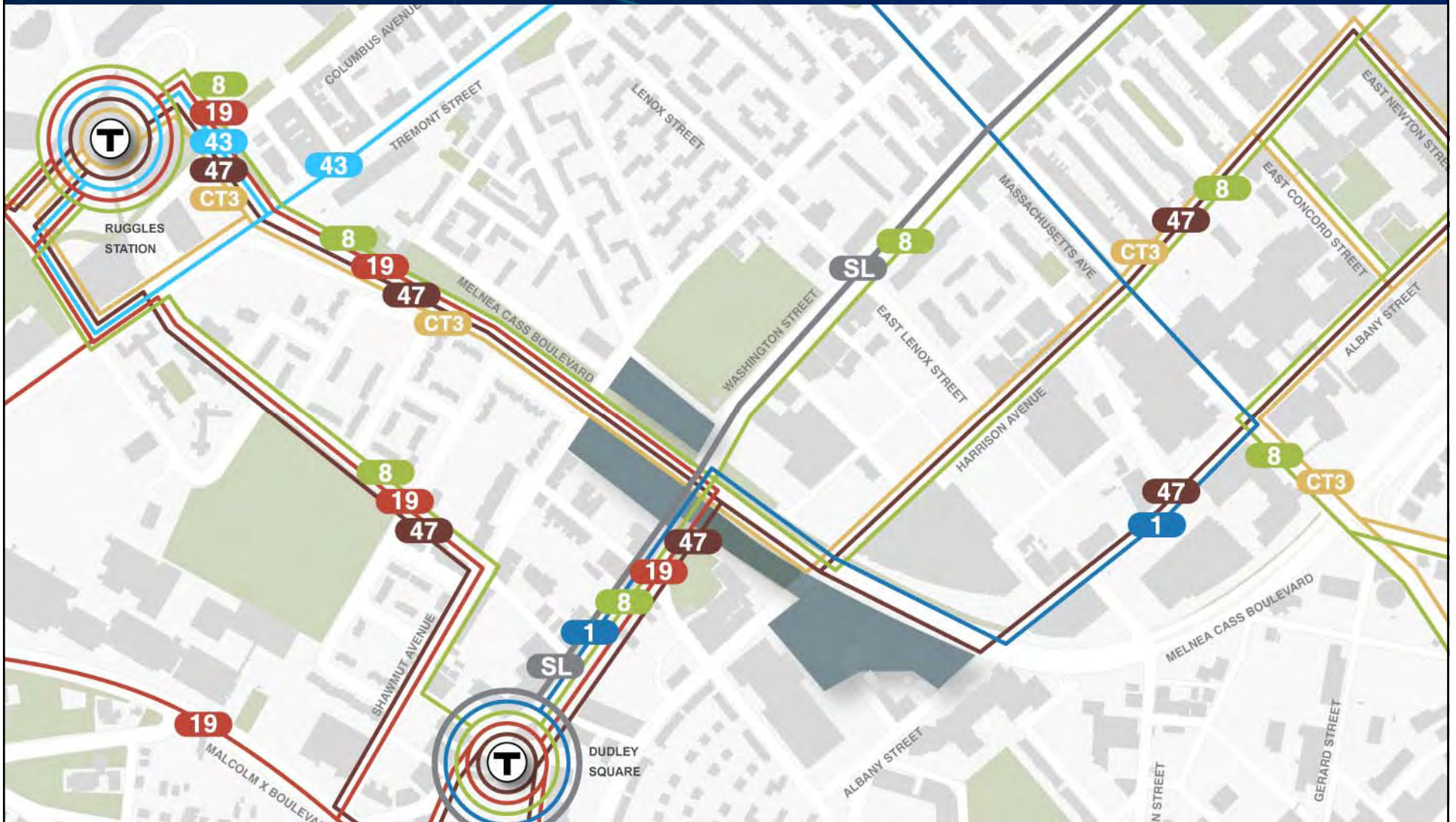
Tools for BRT and Benefits

- **Bus signal priority**



- **28 buses removed from regular travel lanes (Routes CT3, 1, 8, 19, 47) during PM peak hour**
- **Improved trip times on buses along corridor**
 - Existing: 7 min. from Ruggles Station to Crosstown Center
 - Urban Ring RDEIS (2008): 4 min. from Ruggles Station to Crosstown Center

Existing MBTA Routes

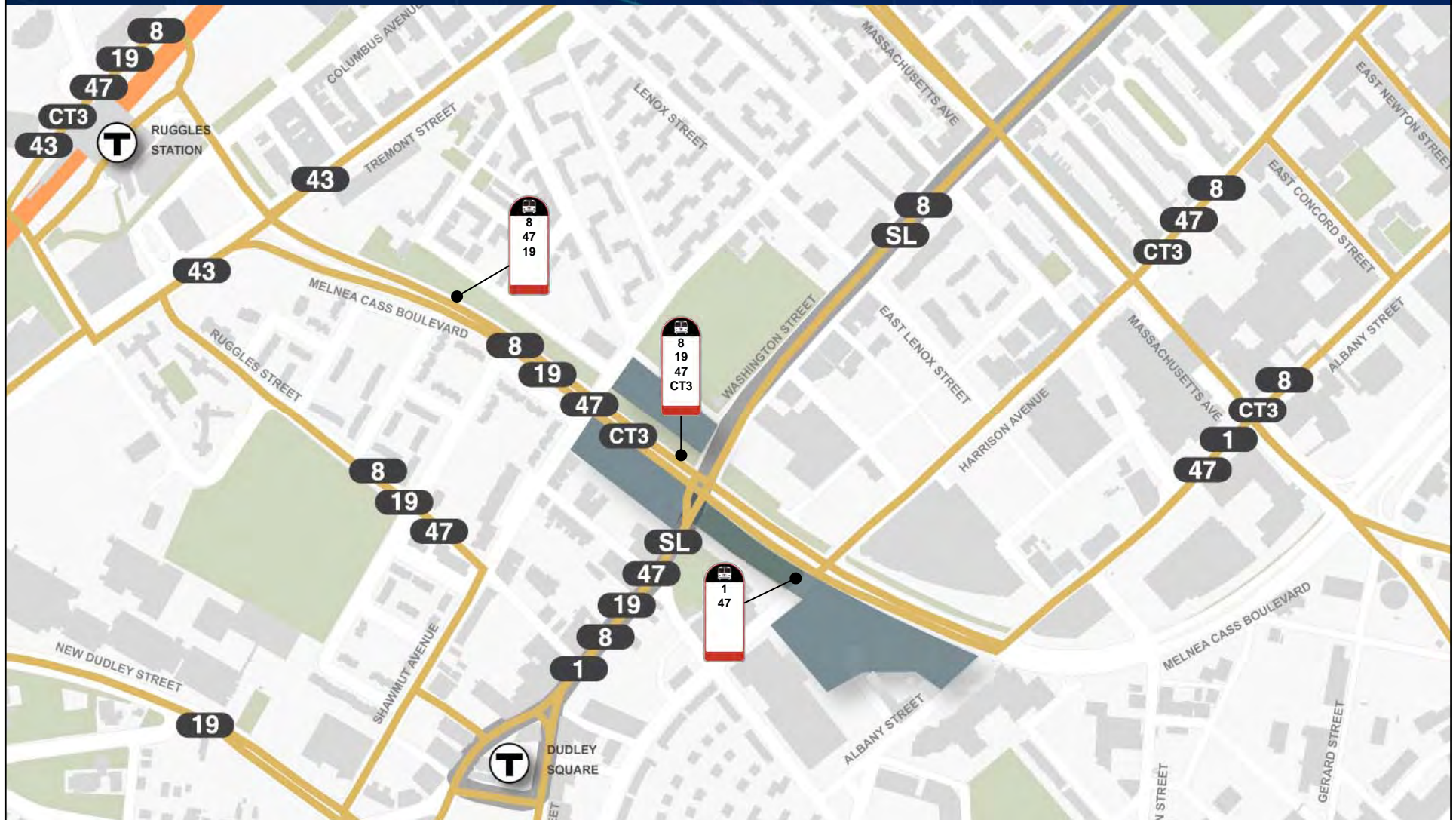


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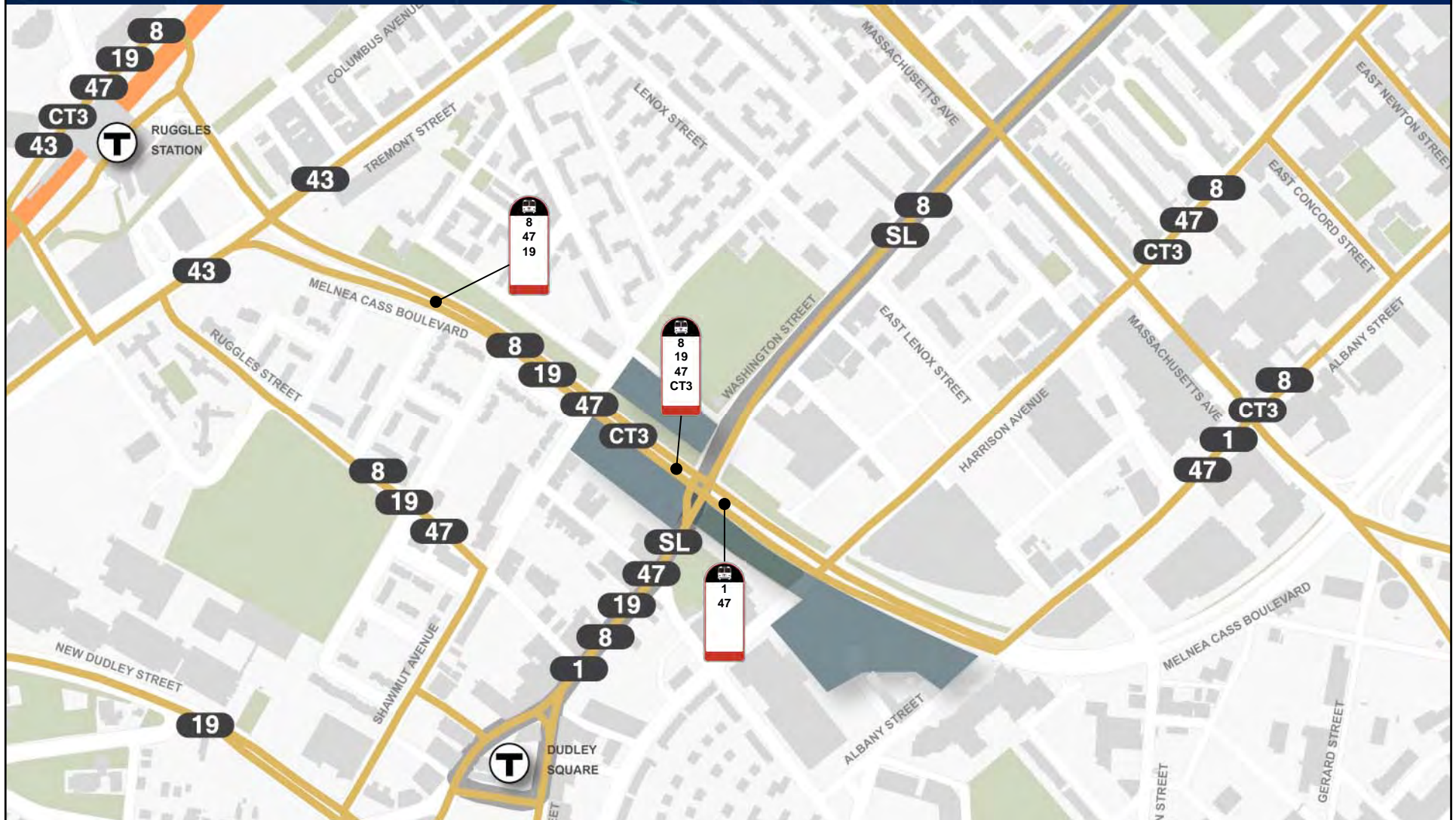
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Existing MBTA Routes and Stops



Proposed MBTA Routes and Stops



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Complete Streets Components



Exclusive
Transit
Lanes

Complete Streets Components



**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

**Exclusive
Transit
Lanes**

**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

Complete Streets Components



**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

**Exclusive
Transit
Lanes**

**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

Bikes

Complete Streets Components



Pedestrians

**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

**Exclusive
Transit
Lanes**

**Travel/
Parking
Lanes**

**Bikes
Pedestrians**

Urban Design Framework

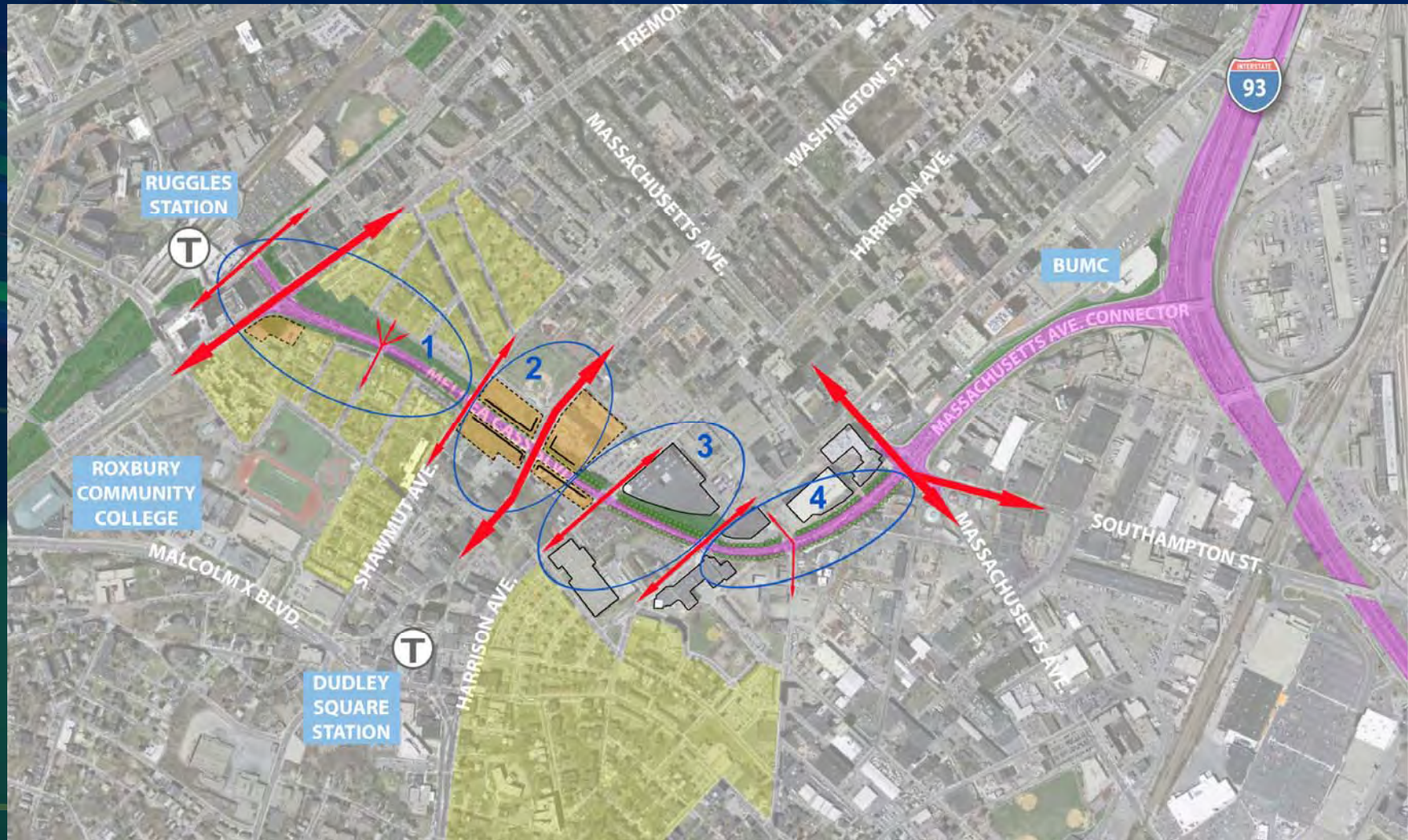


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Urban Design Areas



Two Approaches to Road Layout

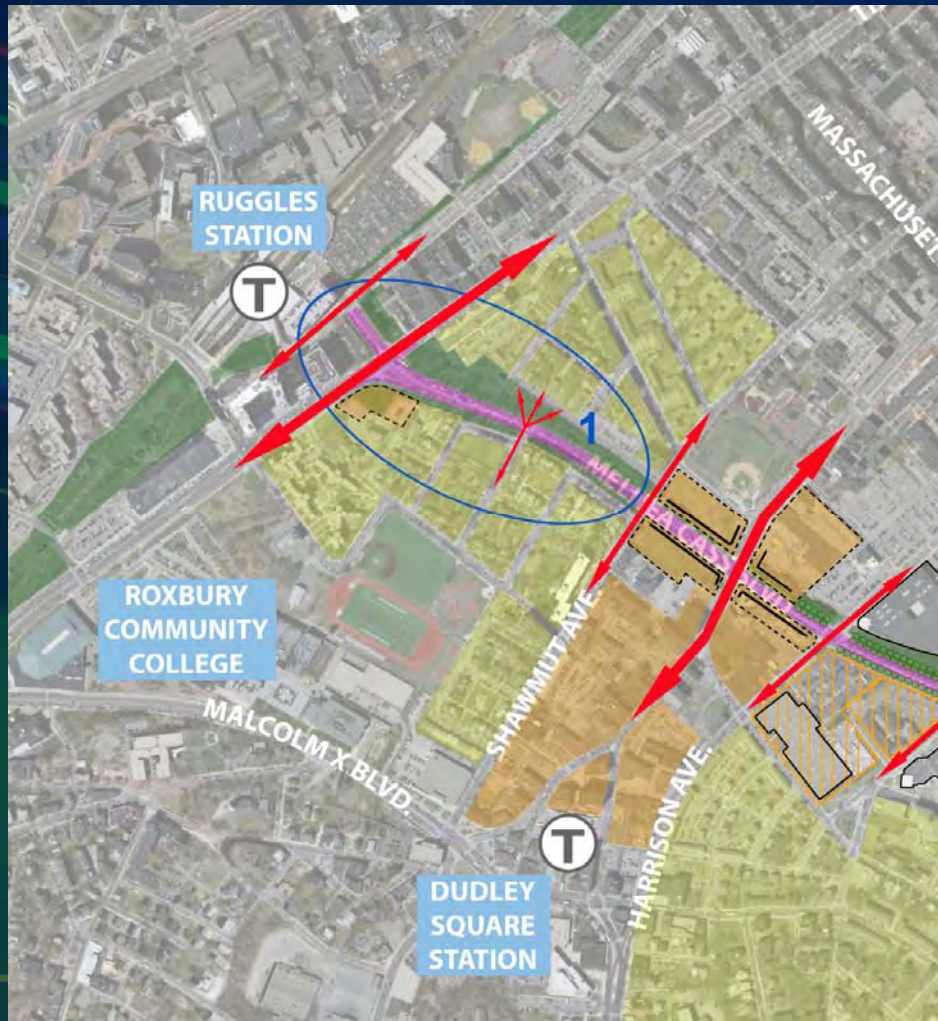


Benefits and Challenges

Option	Benefits	Challenges
Tree-lined center medians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 extra rows of trees• Additional shade• Pedestrian islands• Breaks up pavement• Median lighting• Net tree gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrower greenscape buffer• Longer crosswalks
Minimal median treatments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shorter crosswalks• Wider greenscape buffer• Saves more mature trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrian islands at stations only• Trees at edges only• No median lighting• Perception of more pavement

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians

Area 1 – Columbus Ave to Shawmut Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Residential neighborhood setback behind park land
- Separated ped/bike

SOUTH SIDE

- Residential neighborhood setback behind park land
- Separated ped/bike

OPPORTUNITIES

- Intersection of Melnea Cass and Tremont
- Open space

Option 1 - Tree-lined Center Medians Perspective – Area 1



- Slip lane removed at Tremont Street
- Improved 'City Street' entrance to Melnea Cass Boulevard
- Planted medians doubles as pedestrian islands

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians

Area 1 – At Tremont Intersection

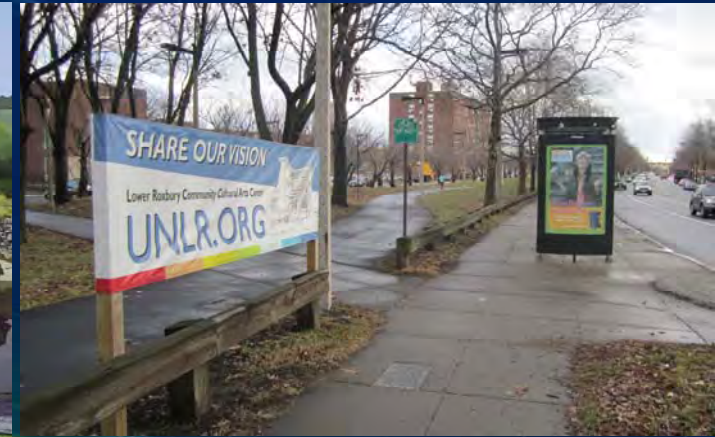


Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Plan Close-up - Area 1

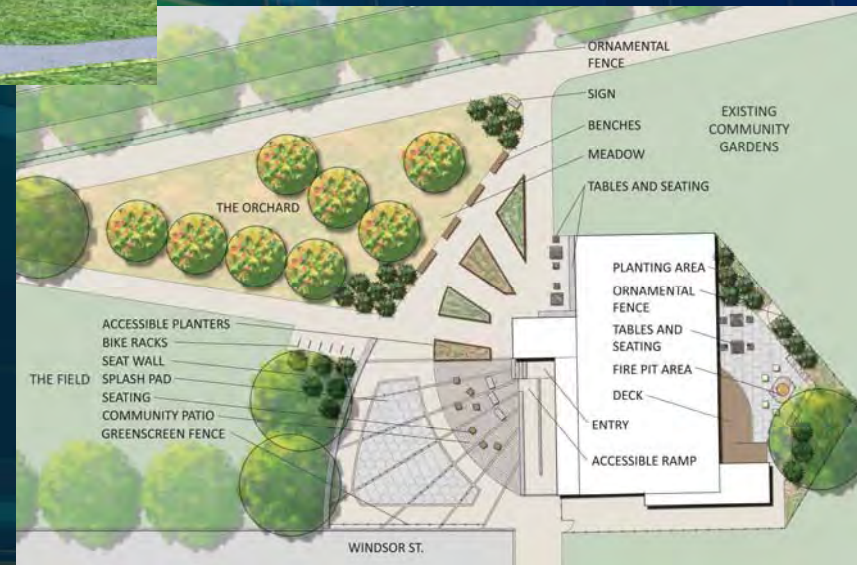


- Open space for paths, gardens, and park land on north side

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Open Space – Area 1

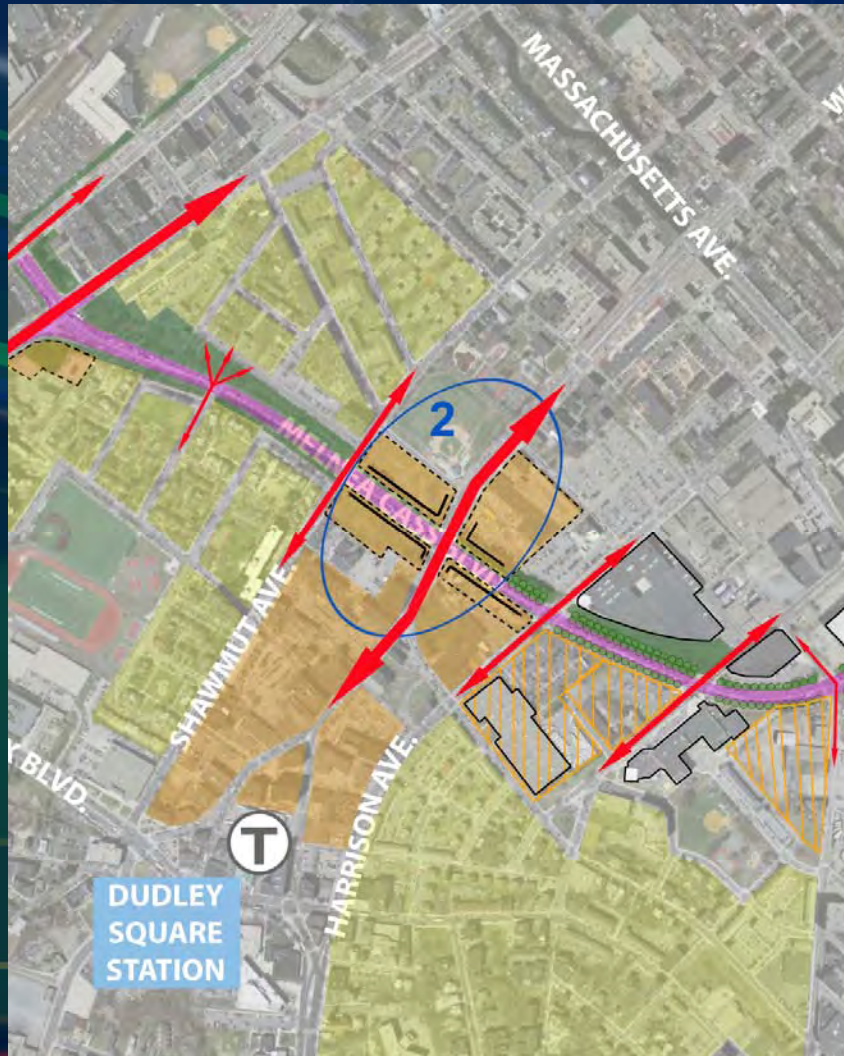


Lower Roxbury Community Arts Center



Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians

Area 2 – Shawmut Ave to Harrison Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Future building edge / destination
- Ped/bike use?

SOUTH SIDE

- Future building edge / destination
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- New development to front Melnea Cass Boulevard and Washington Street
- Gateway connections to Dudley Square
- Innovative transportation solutions

Option 1 - Tree-lined Center Medians Perspective – Area 2



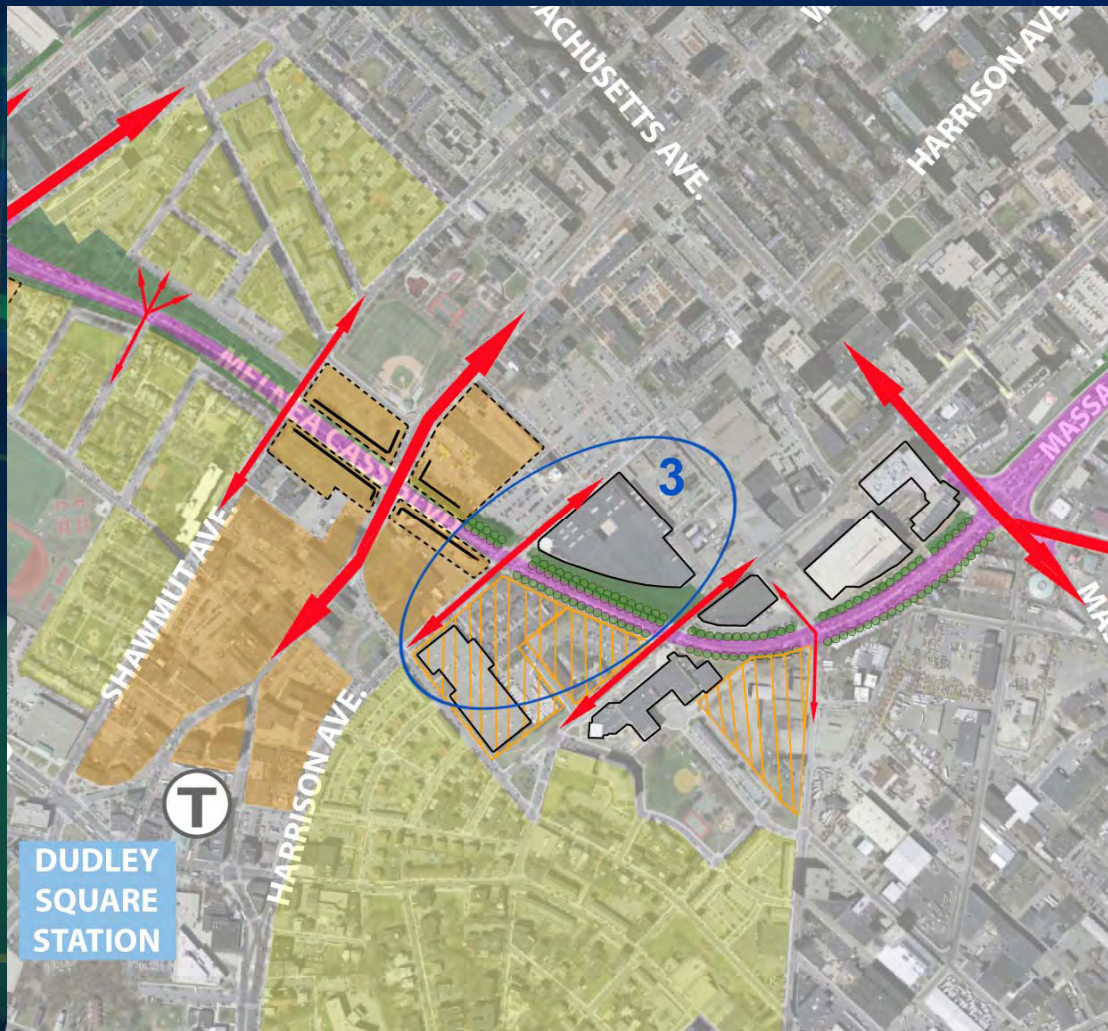
- Tree-lined transit corridor – helps to humanize scale
- Planted medians doubles as pedestrian islands

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Area 2 – At Washington Street



Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians

Area 3 – Harrison Ave to Albany Street



NORTH SIDE

- Building setback behind landscaped zone
- Strong double row of trees at road edge
- Separated ped/bike use

SOUTH SIDE

- Fenced parking / open areas - future development sites
- Single tree edge
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen pedestrian connections across Melnea Cass Boulevard
- Keep separated ped/bike on north side

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Perspective – Area 3



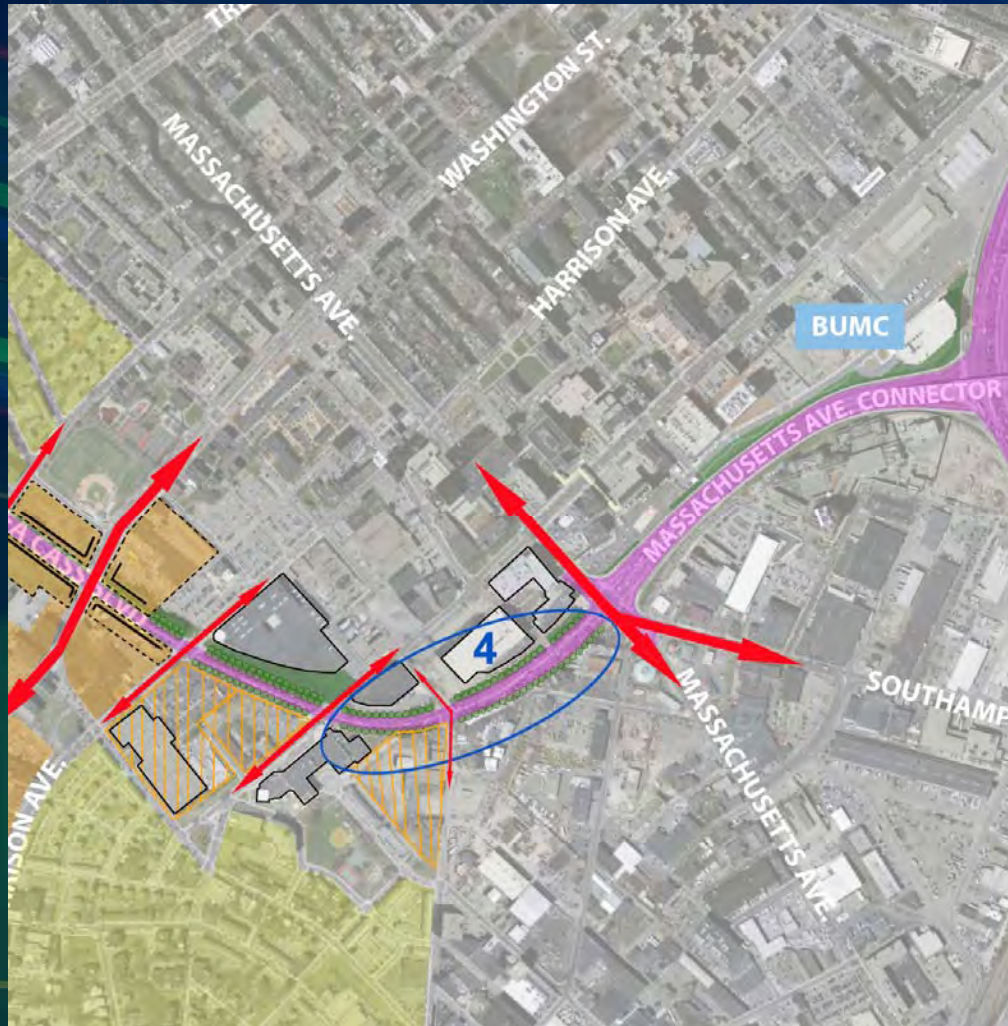
- Tree-lined transit corridor – helps to humanize scale

Option 1 - Tree-lined Center Medians Area 3 – Albany Street Looking West



Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians

Area 4 – Albany St to Massachusetts Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Building setback behind landscaped zone
- Single tree edge
- Separated ped/bike use

SOUTH SIDE

- Fenced parking - area / yards
- Single tree edge
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen gateway at Mass Ave
- South bay harbor trail as designed on north side
- Improved median treatment
- **Off-Street Parking at Crosstown Development**

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Perspective at Mass Ave – Area 4



- Off-street parking and a tree-lined median

Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Area 4 – At Mass. Ave.



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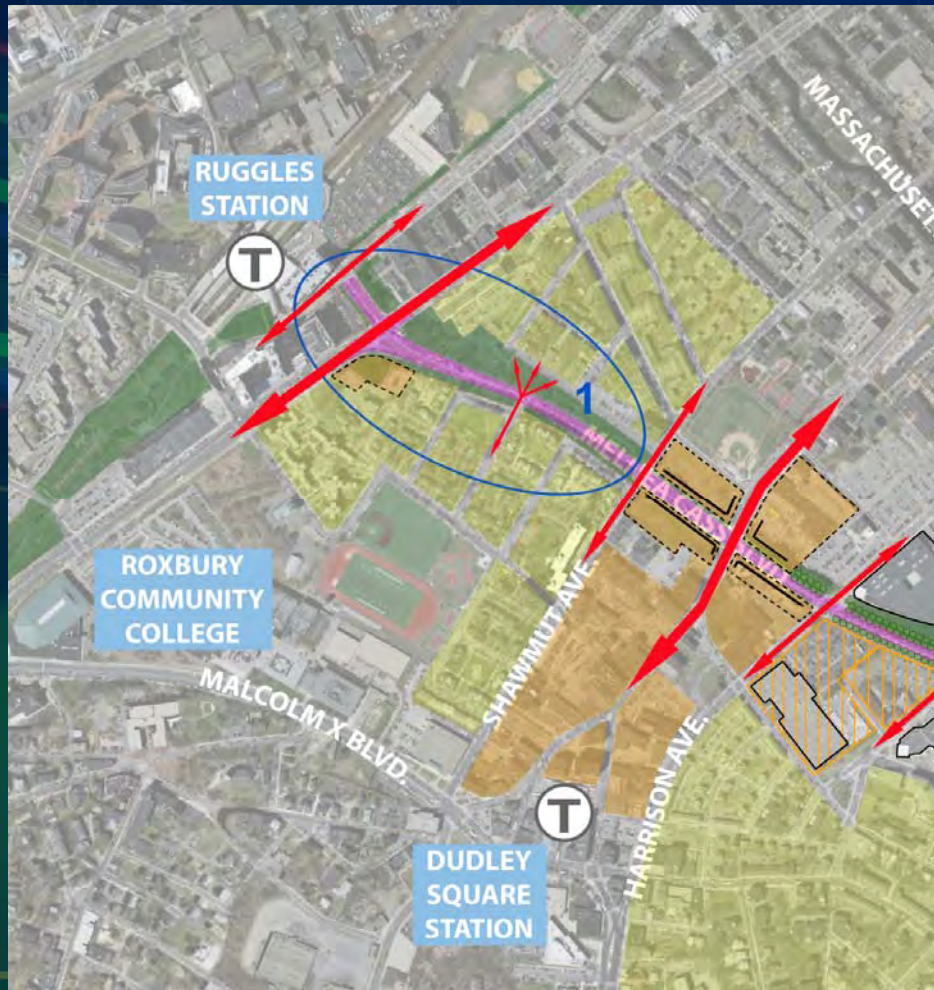


Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians Area 4 – At Mass. Ave.



Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 1 – Columbus Ave to Shawmut Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Residential neighborhood setback behind park land
- Separated ped/bike

SOUTH SIDE

- Residential neighborhood setback behind park land
- Separated ped/bike

OPPORTUNITIES

- Intersection of Melnea Cass Boulevard and Tremont Street
- Open space

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment Perspective – Area 1



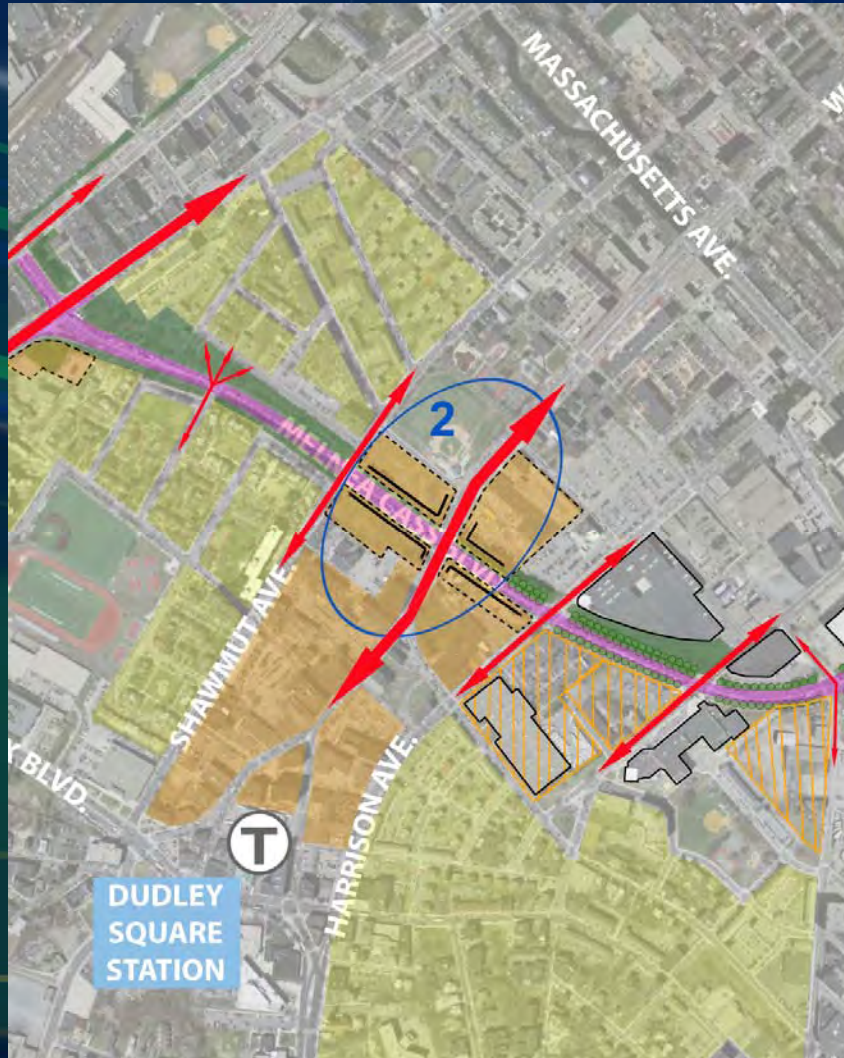
- Existing trees saved between Columbus and Tremont
- Bike path and sidewalk possible on both sides

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment Perspective at Tremont St – Area 1



Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 2 – Shawmut Ave to Harrison Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Future building edge / destination
- Ped/bike use?

SOUTH SIDE

- Future building edge / destination
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- New development to front Melnea Cass Boulevard and Washington Street
- Gateway connections to Dudley Square
- Innovative transportation solutions

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment Perspective – Area 2



- Greater number of existing trees saved along south side
- Shortened crossing with pedestrian island
- Widened tree-lined edges

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 2 – At Washington Street



Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

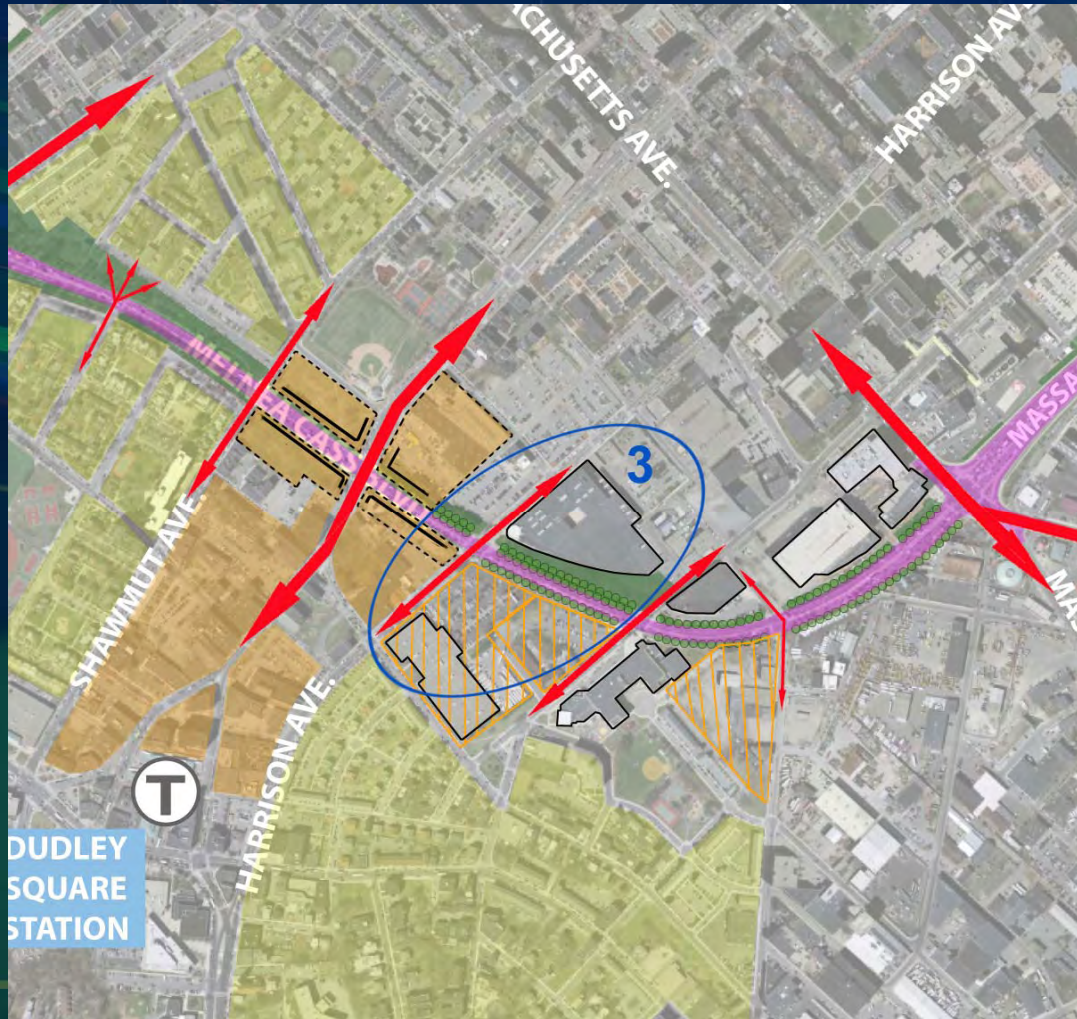
Area 2 – Examples



- Possible decorative fencing option for median separation

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 3 – Harrison Ave to Albany Street



NORTH SIDE

- Building setback behind landscaped zone
- Strong double row of trees at road edge
- Separated ped/bike use

SOUTH SIDE

- Fenced parking / open areas - future development sites
- Single tree edge
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen pedestrian connections across Melnea Cass Boulevard
- Keep separated ped/bike on north side

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment Perspective – Area 3



- Greater number of trees saved along south side

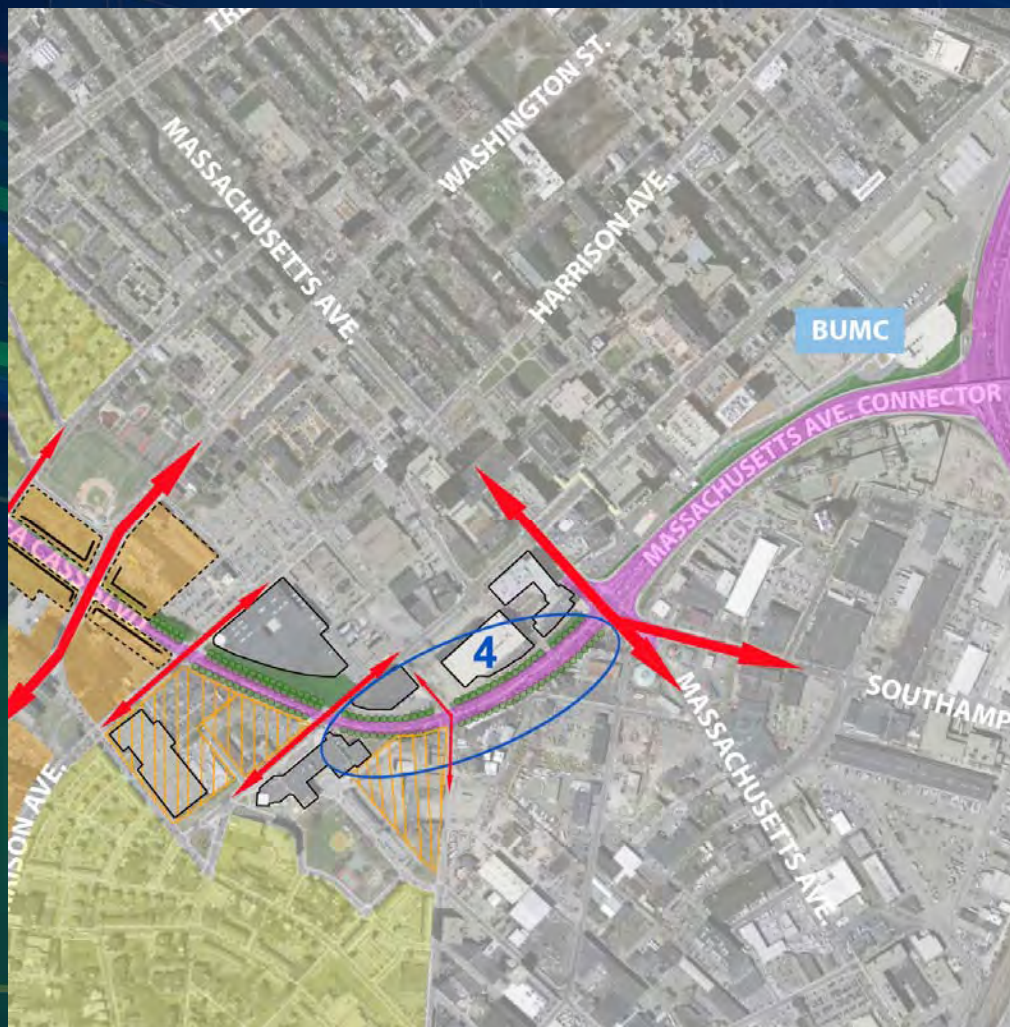
Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 3 – At Albany Looking West



Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 4 – Albany St to Massachusetts Ave



NORTH SIDE

- Building setback behind landscaped zone
- Single tree edge
- Separated ped/bike use

SOUTH SIDE

- Fenced parking - area / yards
- Single tree edge
- Sidewalk

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen gateway at Mass Ave
- South Bay Harbor Trail as designed on north side
- Improved median treatment
- Off-street Parking at Crosstown Development

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment Perspective - Area 4



- Off-street parking and a tree-lined median

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 4 – At Mass. Ave.



Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment

Area 4 – At Mass. Ave.



Option 1 – Tree-lined Center Medians at Washington Street



- Sidewalks – 14 feet
- South Bay Harbor Trail – 10 feet
- Transit reservation – 40 feet
- Eastbound lanes – 32 feet
- Westbound lanes – 23 feet
- Total crossing distance – 95 feet

Option 2 – Minimal Median Treatment at Washington Street



- Sidewalks – 14 feet
- South Bay Harbor Trail – 10 feet
- Transit reservation – 36 feet
- Eastbound lanes – 32 feet
- Westbound lanes – 23 feet
- Total crossing distance – 91 feet

Center Transit Comparison: Coolidge Corner

- Sidewalks – 15 feet
- Transit reservation – 57 feet
- Eastbound lanes – 22 feet
- Westbound lanes – 32 feet



- Total crossing distance – 111 feet
- Melnea Cass crossing distance – 91-95 feet

Center Transit Comparison: Huntington Avenue

- Sidewalks – 10-14 feet
- Transit reservation – 33 feet
- Southbound lanes – 23 feet
- Northbound lanes – 32 feet



Huntington Avenue at MFA



Huntington Avenue at MFA

- Total crossing distance – 126 feet
- Melnea Cass crossing distance – 91-95 feet

Benefits and Challenges

Option	Benefits	Challenges
Tree-lined center medians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 extra rows of trees• Additional shade• Pedestrian islands• Breaks up pavement• Median lighting• Net tree gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrower greenscape buffer• Longer crosswalks
Minimal median treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shorter crosswalks• Wider greenscape buffer• Saves more mature trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrian islands at stations only• Trees at edges only• No median lighting• Perception of more pavement

Breakout Sessions

Thinking about Design Concepts

- **Thoughts on the design concepts:**
 - Which option do you prefer and why?
 - Are there elements of each that you would mix and match to form a hybrid option?

Breakout Sessions – 30 min.

- **Break into small groups (number on handout)**
- **Discussion in small groups**
 - Each group should nominate a speaker to present a summary of its discussion
 - Moderator will board comments/questions

Next Steps

- Review feedback from tonight's meeting
- Continue to develop/refine design concepts based on project goals and community feedback
- Hold the next community meeting in mid-summer/early fall