Grand Junction Shared Use Path Update and Next Steps

Cambridge City Council, Transportation and Public Utilities Committee Presentation
March 25, 2015

Agenda

- Overview of the Grand Junction Path
- Updates since June 2014
- Next Steps

Overview of Grand Junction Path

Overview of the Grand Junction Path

- Shared use path alongside rail right-of-way, aka Rail with Trail
  - Community path shared by pedestrians and bicyclists
  - Supports bicycling for all ages and abilities

Rail with Trail examples: Seattle (WA), British Columbia, Burlington (VT)

Overview of the Grand Junction Path

- **Regional Context:** Connects dense population and key employment centers in Cambridge, Boston, Somerville and beyond via regional pathway system

Graphic courtesy of the Friends of the Grand Junction Path

Overview of the Grand Junction Path

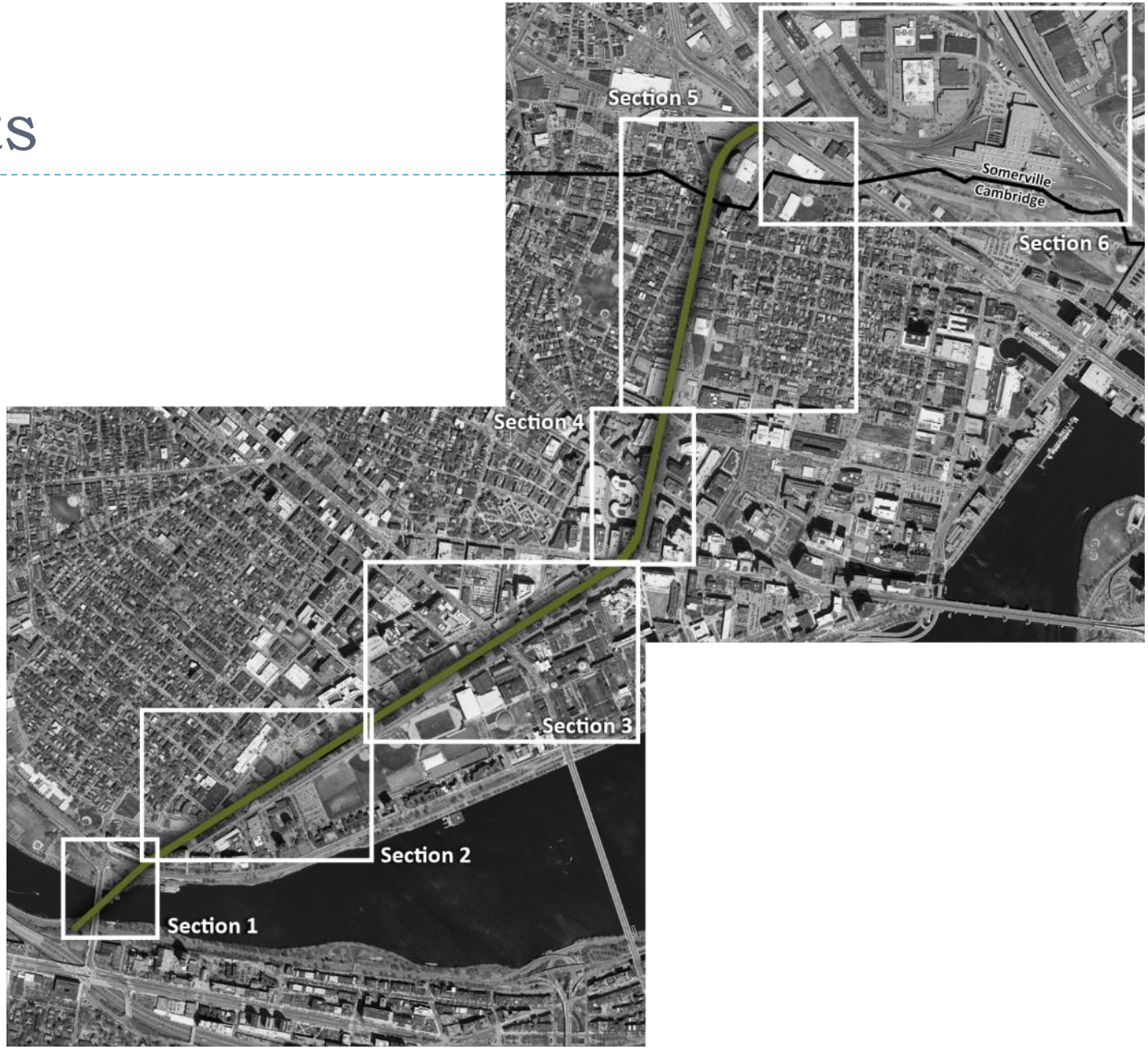
- Regional Connections
  - Path network: Community Path, Minuteman, Paul Dudley White river paths, within a mile of the Emerald Necklace
  - Connects Green Line, Red, and Orange Line
  - Future connection to the new West Station in Allston

- Local Connections
  - Recreational areas: for example, Charles River Basin, Magazine Beach, Gold Star Mother's Park, possible direct connection to North Point parkland through the Community Path
  - Schools: Kennedy Longfellow School, Morse School
  - Local shopping areas: Cambridge Street, Mass Avenue
  - MIT
  - Kendall Square

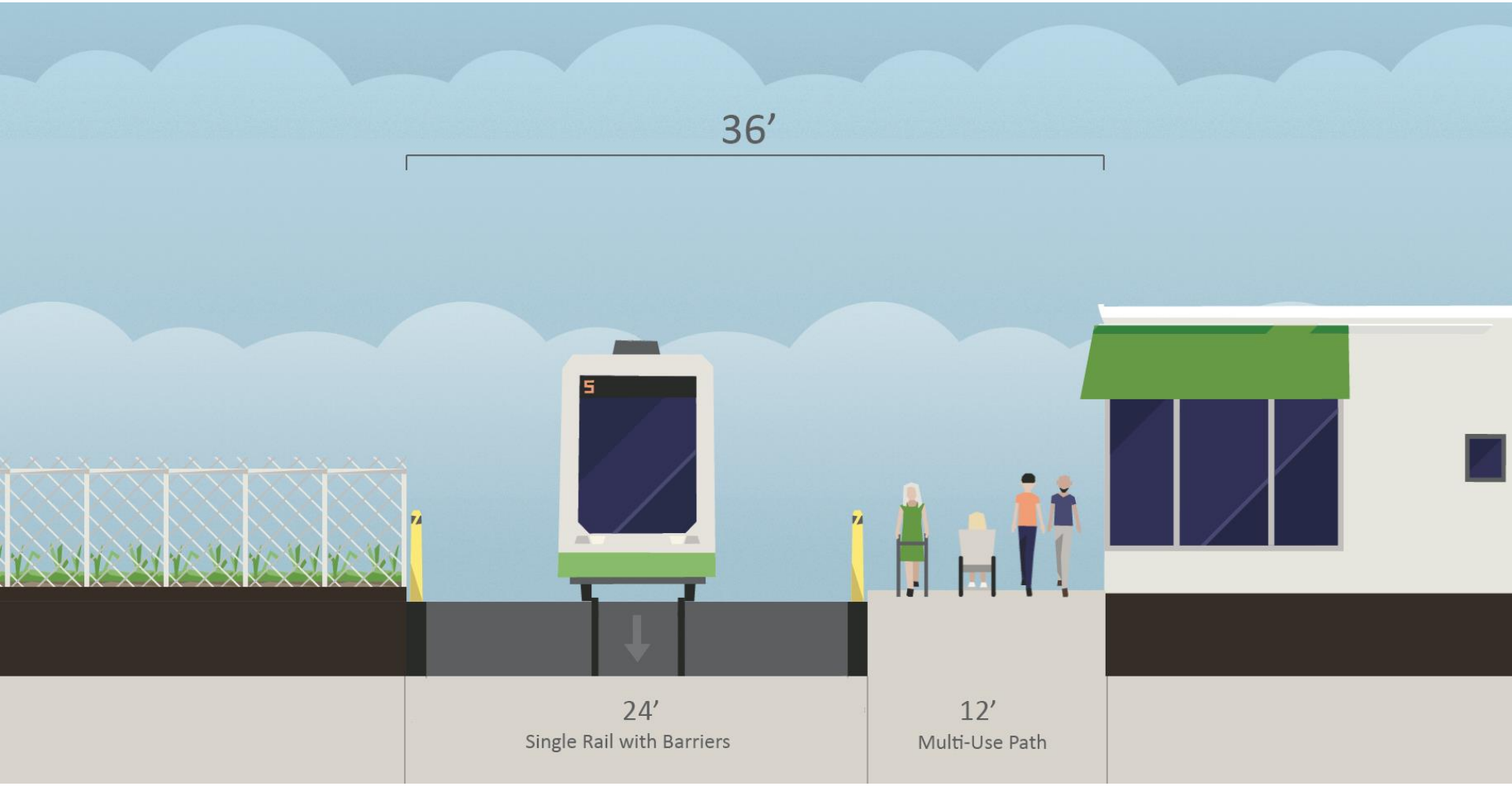
- Makes vital connection to Charles River for people in East Cambridge, Area 4, Cambridgeport

- Over ¼ of Cambridge residents live within half mile

Segments

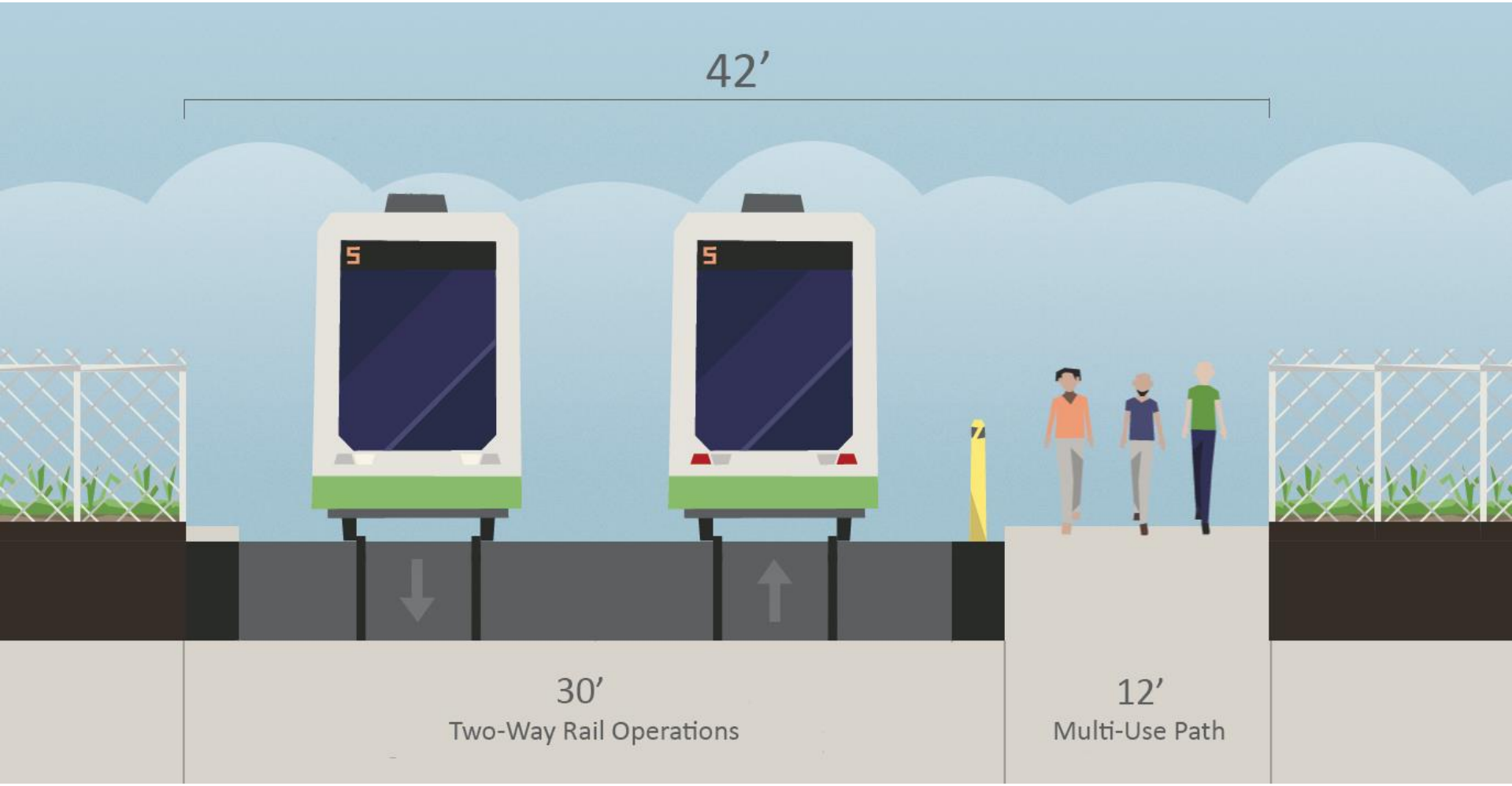

Section 5
Somerville
Cambridge
Section 6
Section 4
Section 3
Section 2
Section 1

Desirable Dimensions – Single Track



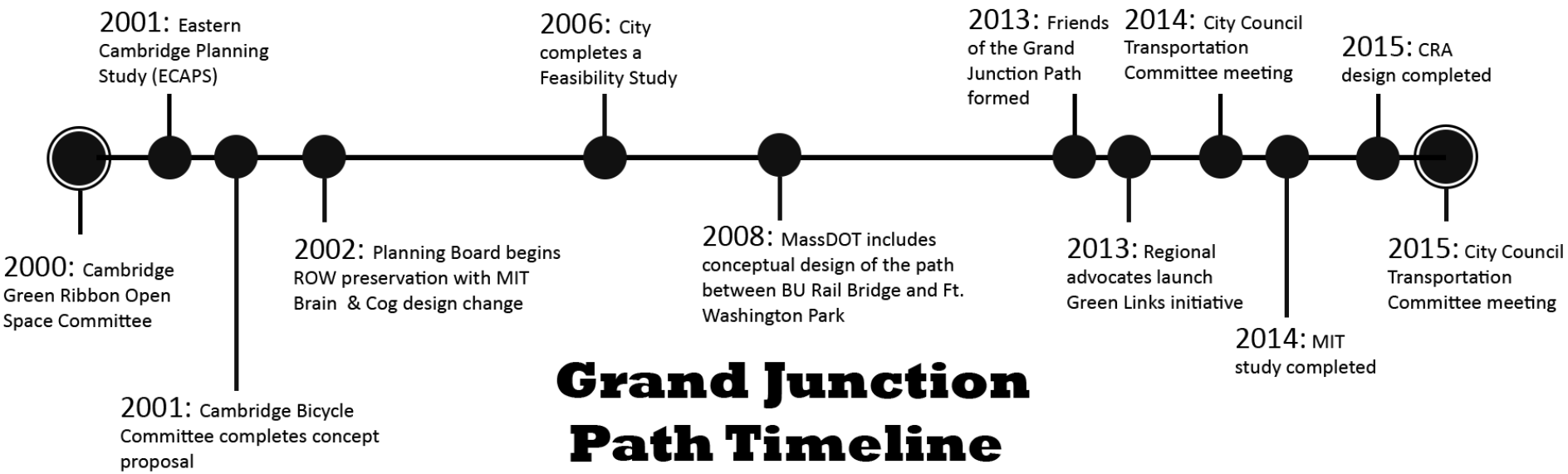
Source: MBTA Rail Operations Standard Plans, 2006 Grand Junction Feasibility Study

Minimum Width – Two Tracks



Source: MBTA Rail Operations Standard Plans, 2006 Grand Junction Feasibility Study

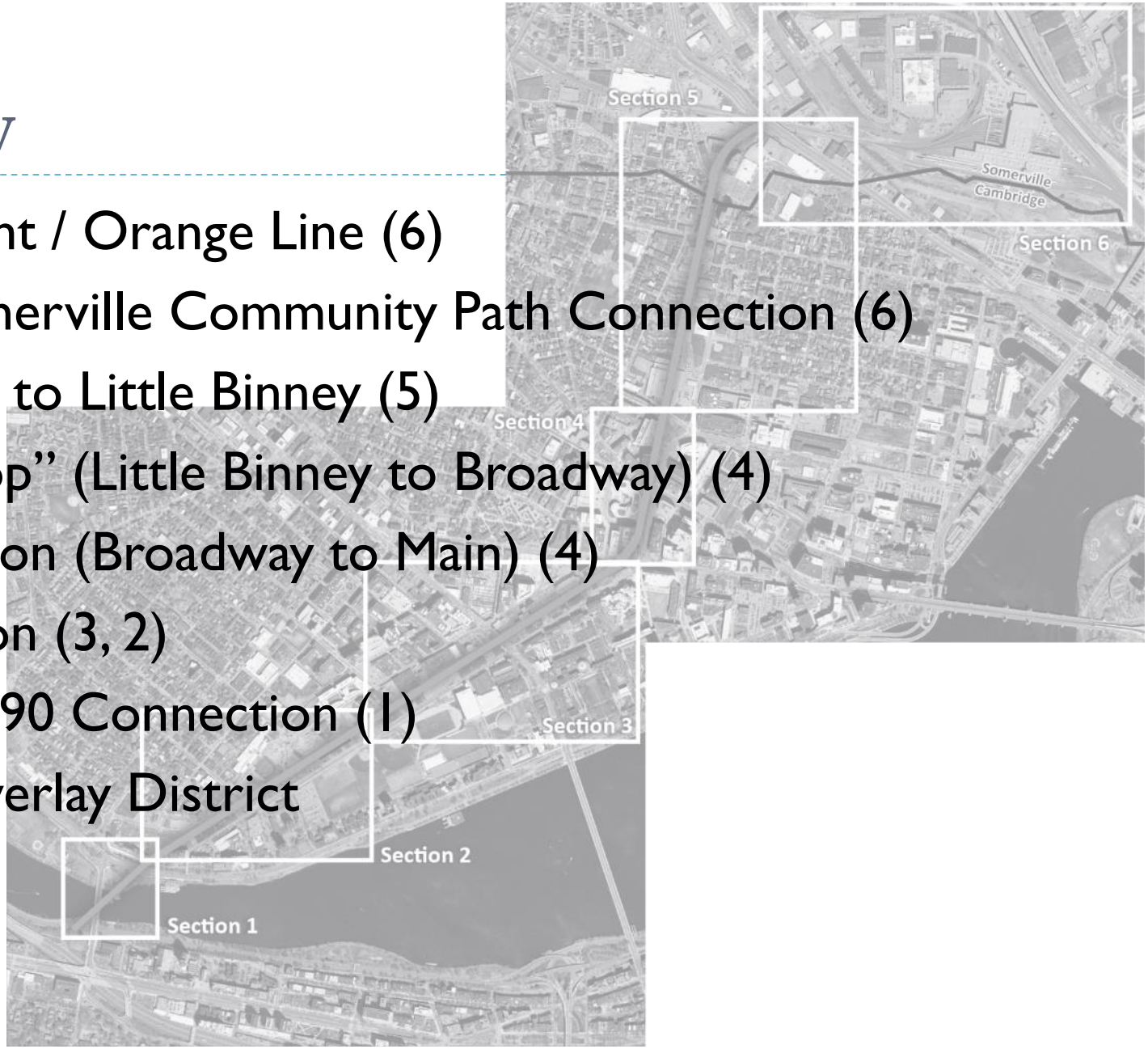
Updated Timeline



Updates Since June 2014

Overview

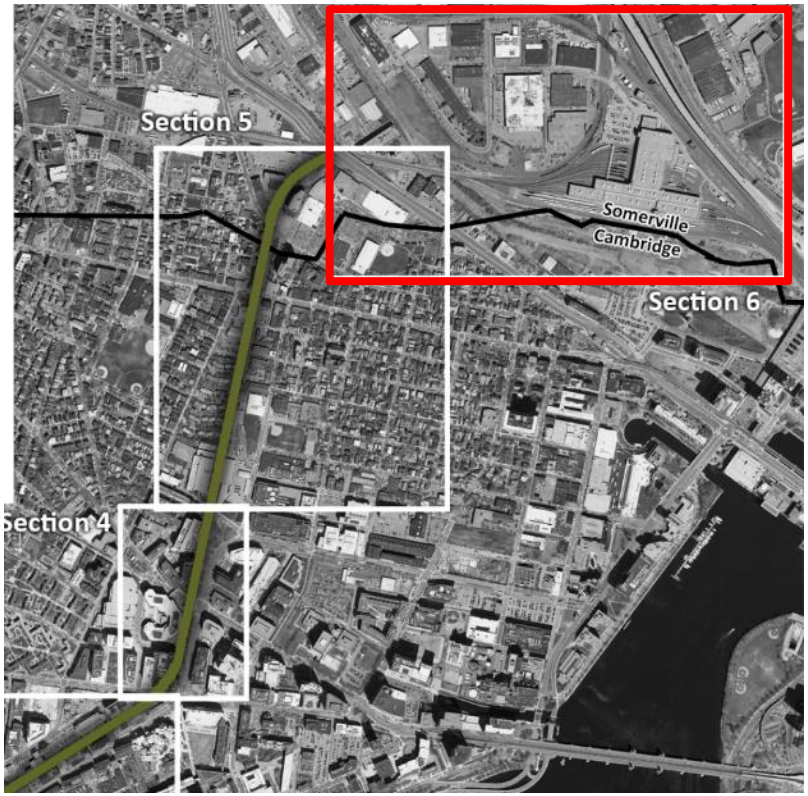
- North Point / Orange Line (6)
- GLX / Somerville Community Path Connection (6)
- Somerville to Little Binney (5)
- "Pork Chop" (Little Binney to Broadway) (4)
- CRA portion (Broadway to Main) (4)
- MIT portion (3, 2)
- Boston / I-90 Connection (1)
- Zoning Overlay District



North Point / Orange Line

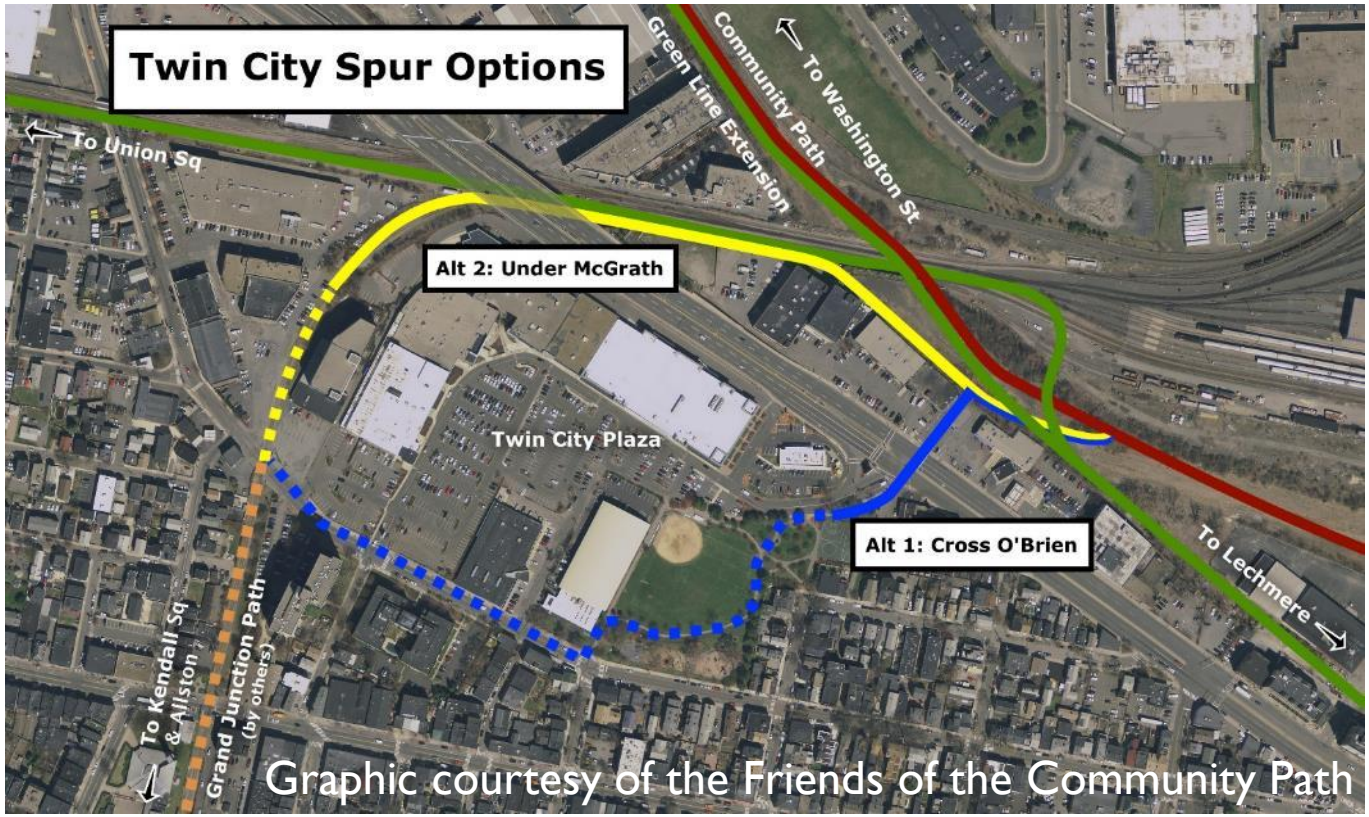
- Commented on EF (3) ENF that project needs to build path at DCR site

- HYM continues construction of Twenty 20 bicycle/ pedestrian connection to Orange Line



GLX / Somerville Community Path

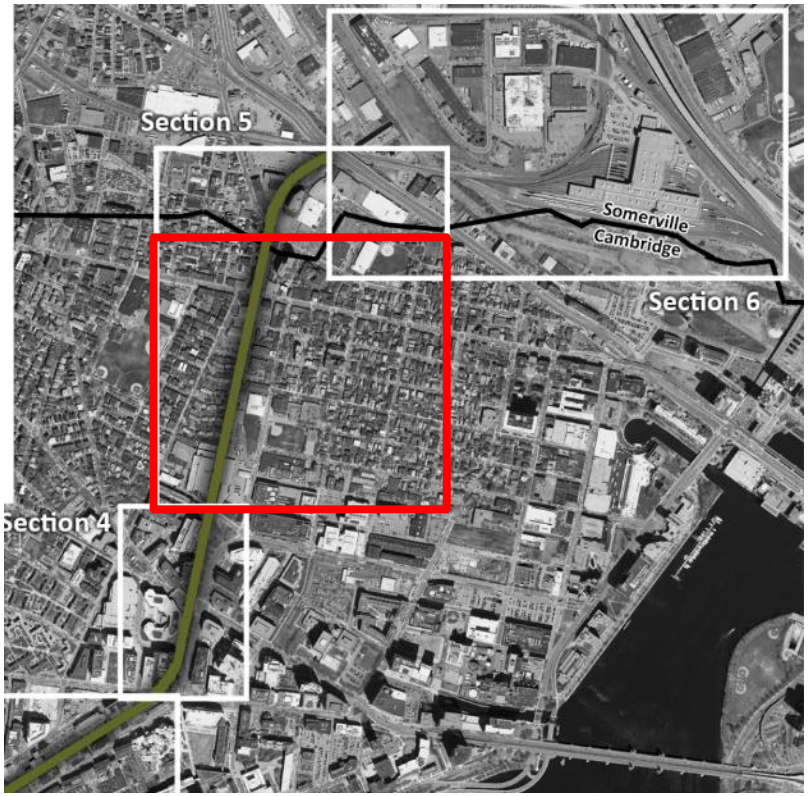
- Recent coordination with GLX team, Friends of the Community Path, Friends of the Grand Junction Path, municipalities, HYM
- Discussion of not precluding various draft options for connections



Graphic courtesy of the Friends of the Community Path

Somerville Line to Little Binney

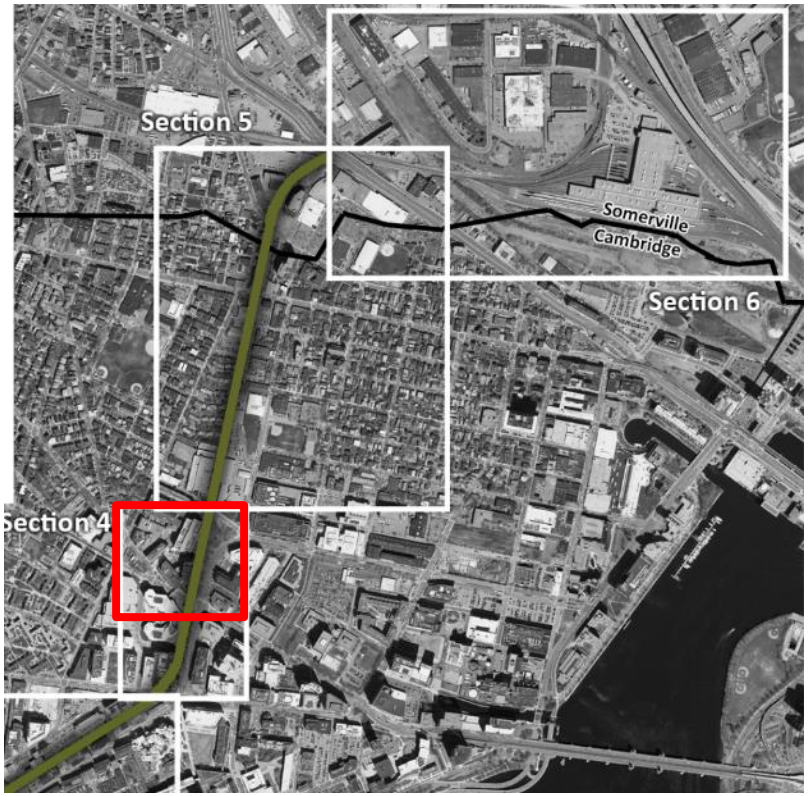
- CRA Role
  - Exploring mitigation to further development in Kendall Square Urban Renewal Area



“Pork Chop” (Little Binney to Broadway)

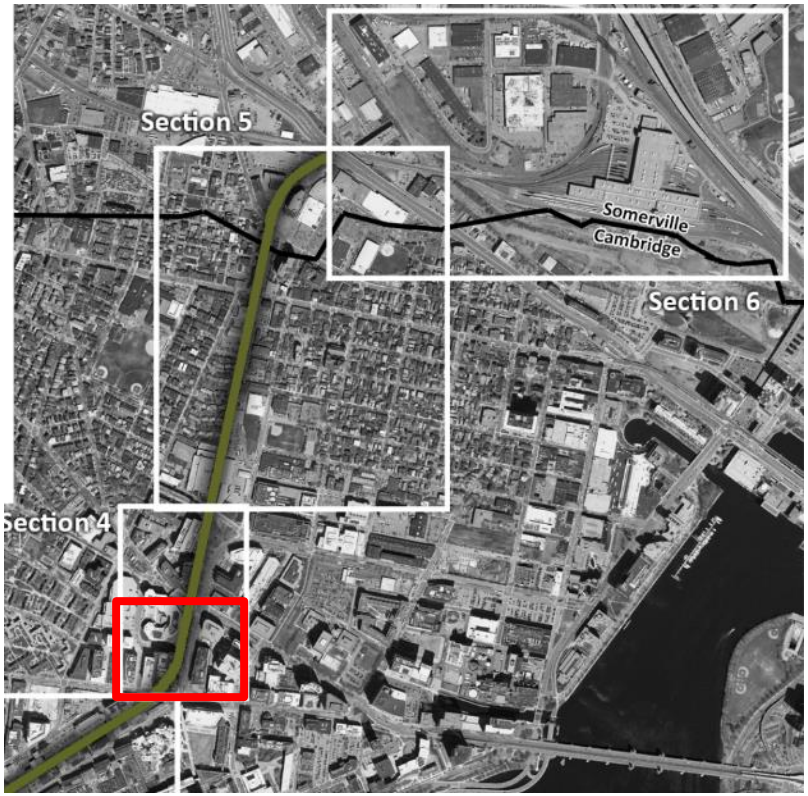
- Connect Kendall Square competition (ECKOS) contains various proposals for use of this space and other open space, incorporating the path

- Funds have been allocated for the design though a contribution from Boston Properties, pending appropriation



CRA Portion (Broadway to Main)

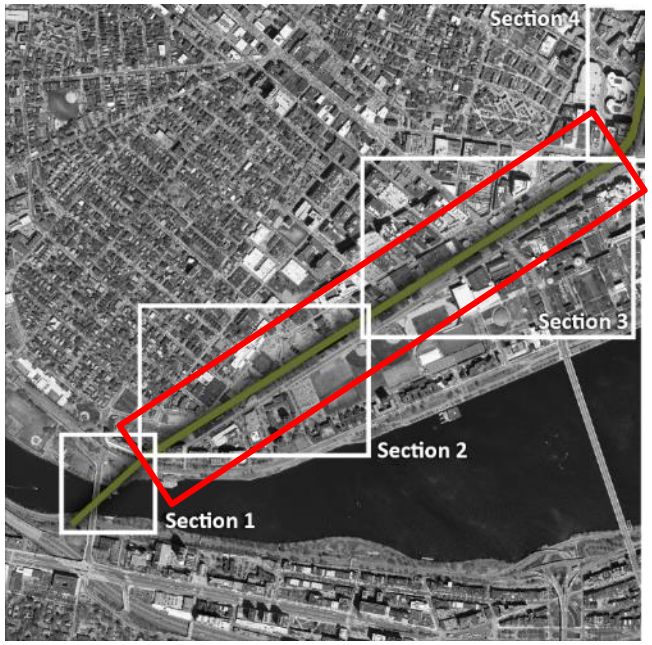
- Final Design approved at March CRA Board Meeting
  - 14' shared use path
  - Does not affect potential future DMU rail service
- Construction scheduled for Summer 2015
  - ~8 weeks
  - Possible steam utility work by Veolia
  - DPW will serve as on-site construction project manager on behalf of CRA
- Worked with Traffic & Parking, CDD & DPW on design



GJ Path by CRA (Main to Broadway)

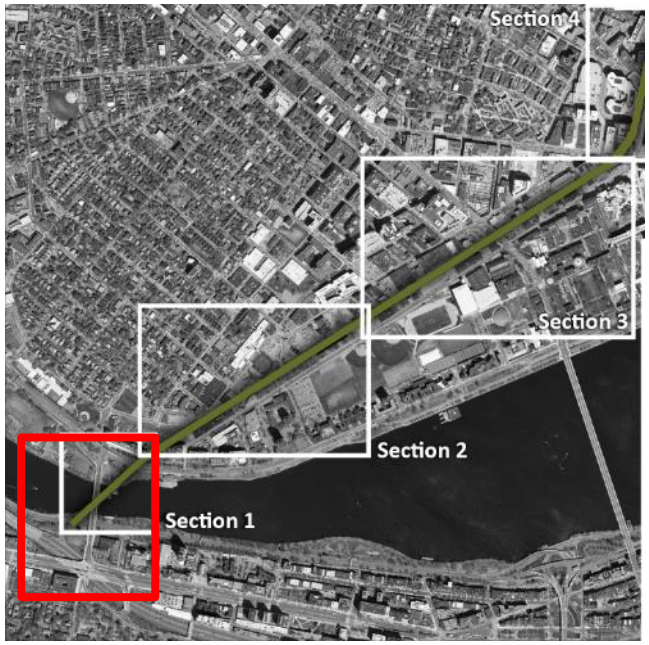
MIT Portion

- MIT Report released Oct 2014
  - Examined feasibility on MIT portion
  - Key conclusions:
    - The path is feasible with some pinch points
    - Doesn't preclude two-track service if path is built on north side
  - Will need to coordinate on path access as MIT constructs planned buildings



Boston / I-90 Connection

- I-90/Allston Interchange project by MassDOT
  - Includes "People's Path" connection to Grand Junction railroad bridge
- ENF completed
  - Included preliminary studies about possible connections on the Cambridge side of the river
- Additional details to be included in the EIR



Zoning Overlay District

- CDD is developing a zoning proposal with the following purposes:
  - Protect the right of way needed for the path along an active rail line (may depend on whether one-track or two-track)
  - Anticipate opportunities where portions of the path could be created if sites are redeveloped
  - Provide incentives to property owners to dedicate land needed for the pathway

Next Steps

Next Steps

- North Point
  - Continue to work with HYM on possibility of designing connections from Community Path to Grand Junction into E. Cambridge
- GLX / Somerville Community Path Connection
  - Coordinate with Somerville to not preclude and to provide incentives for future connections through current zoning update
- CRA portion
  - Construction expected in 2015

Next Steps

- MIT portion
  - Ongoing coordination
  - Review upcoming construction projects to identify opportunities to build portions of the path
- I90
  - Additional details to be include in the EIR
- Zoning Overlay District
  - Outreach to property owners and residents to gather feedback and discuss possible concerns before finalizing a proposal

Next Steps

- Kendall Square Mobility Study
  - One-year study to identify transportation projects and policy initiatives in support of the continued success of Kendall
    - Projects should be technically and financially achievable over the short-, medium- and long-term horizons
  - Integrated multi-modal approach that services multiple user groups (e.g., employees, residents, visitors, institutions)
  - Involves all major stakeholders, public and private to plan for anticipated growth in commercial, institutional, tourist, and residential development

Thank You! Questions?