

WELCOME!

Huntington
Avenue/South
Huntington Avenue
E-Branch
Accessibility Project

Open House

April 30, 2024

CITY of BOSTON



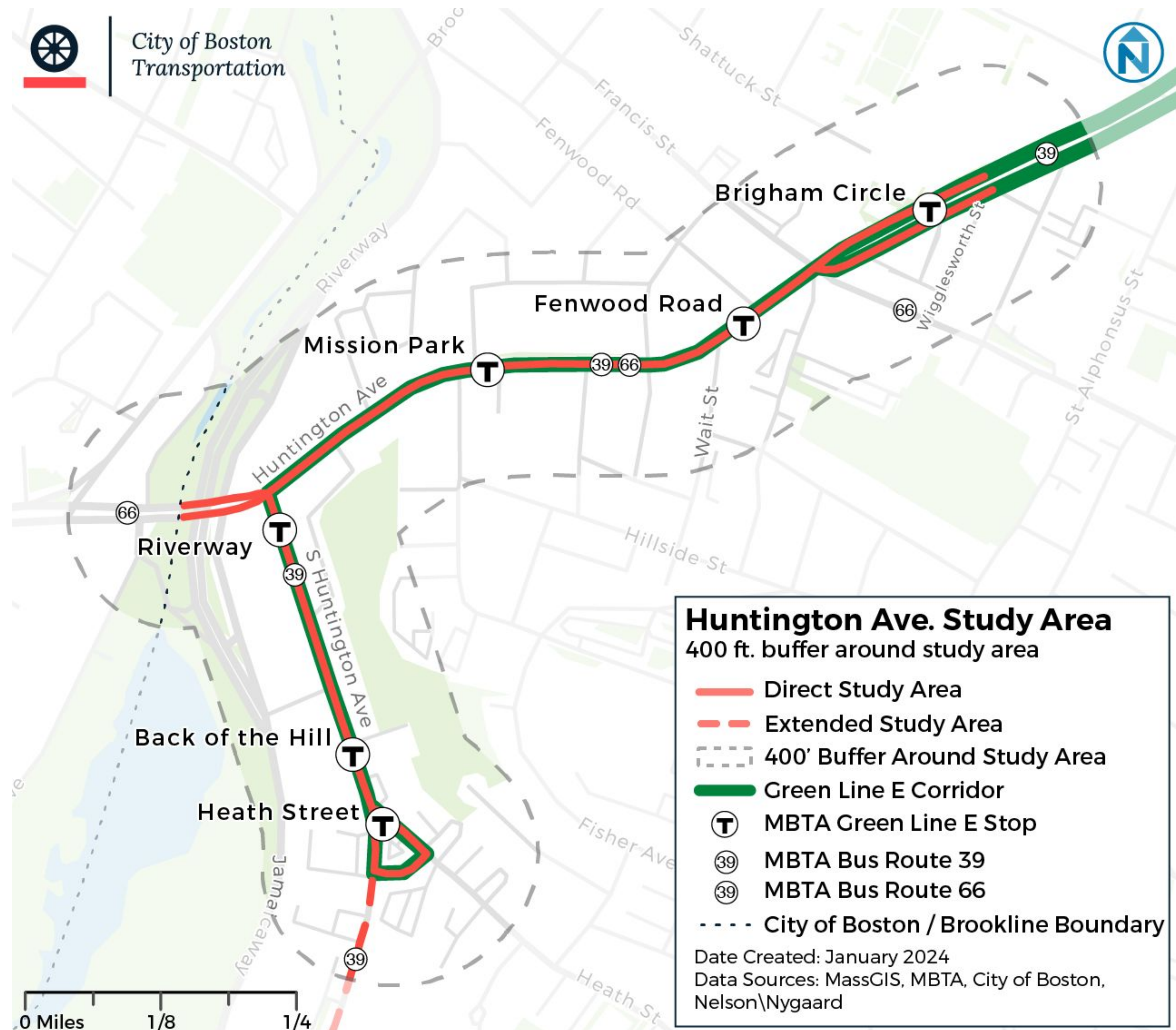
Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Boston and MBTA are beginning a redesign process to address safety and accessibility issues between Brigham Circle and Heath Street Stations.

The project will focus on:

- Creating fully accessible stations and stops for the Green Line E Branch and Bus Routes
- Improving pedestrian and bike safety along the street
- Dedicating space to transit to improve bus and train reliability
- Creating a less chaotic experience for all travelers
- Preserving the ability to extend the Green Line south in the future
- Getting ready for construction to be complete by 2027

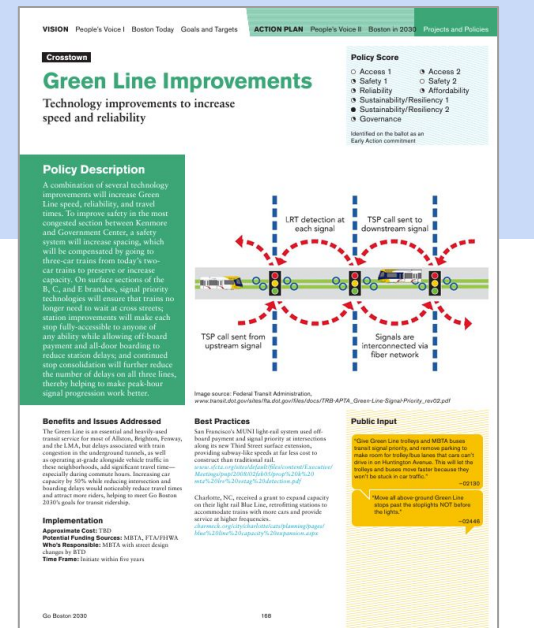


PLANNING BACKGROUND

There have been consistent calls for improvements to Huntington Ave:

GoBoston 2030

- Completed in 2017; included two-year public process receiving thousands of comments
- Plan describes new high quality crosstown bus connections to a Longwood Transit Hub



MBTA Accessibility Initiatives Report



- Developed in 2021 by MBTA's System-Wide Accessibility Department and rider feedback
- Projects include pilot projects, full accessibility upgrades for stations, and Type 10 trains to address accessible boarding along E Branch



Route 39 Transit Priority Corridor Speed, Reliability, and Access Needs Report

- 2023 by BTD's; Part of ongoing Transit Priority Corridor Program; 4th highest ridership bus route in MBTA system
- Identified key challenges: high crash volumes, pedestrian conflicts with other modes, transit accessibility

South Huntington Better Bike Lane

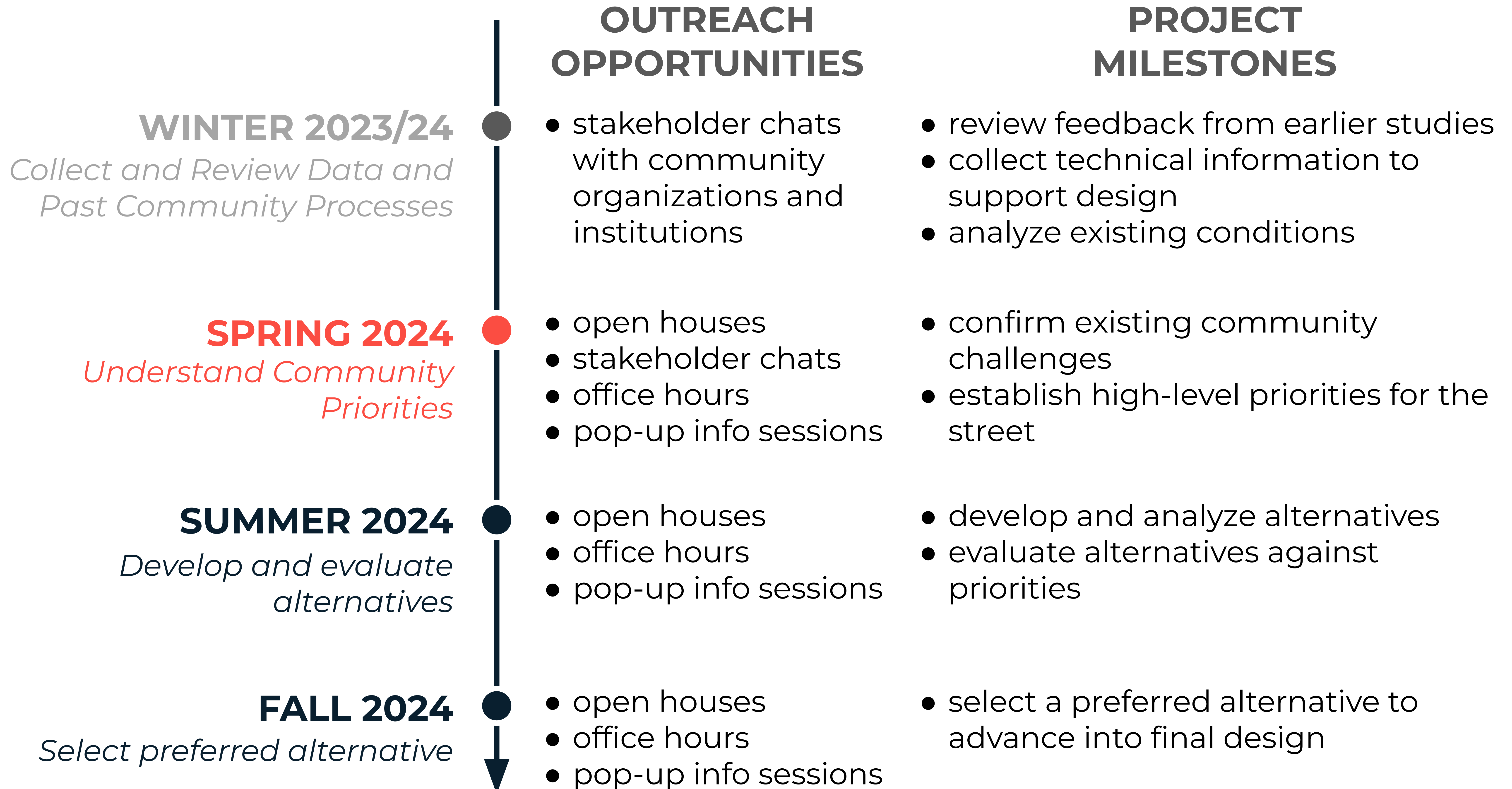


- Conducted in 2022 by BTD; identifies high-crash area for cyclists; importance for commuters in LMA and Mission Hill
- Addresses gaps in the surrounding study area's bike network and connections to Emerald Necklace

Focus40

- Conducted in 2019 by MBTA; systemwide 25-year capital improvement plan through 2040
- Discusses a dedicated right-of-way for the Green Line, Route 39, and Route 66 on Huntington Ave between Brigham Circle and South Huntington Ave

PROJECT PROCESS



TODAY'S CHALLENGES

SAFETY

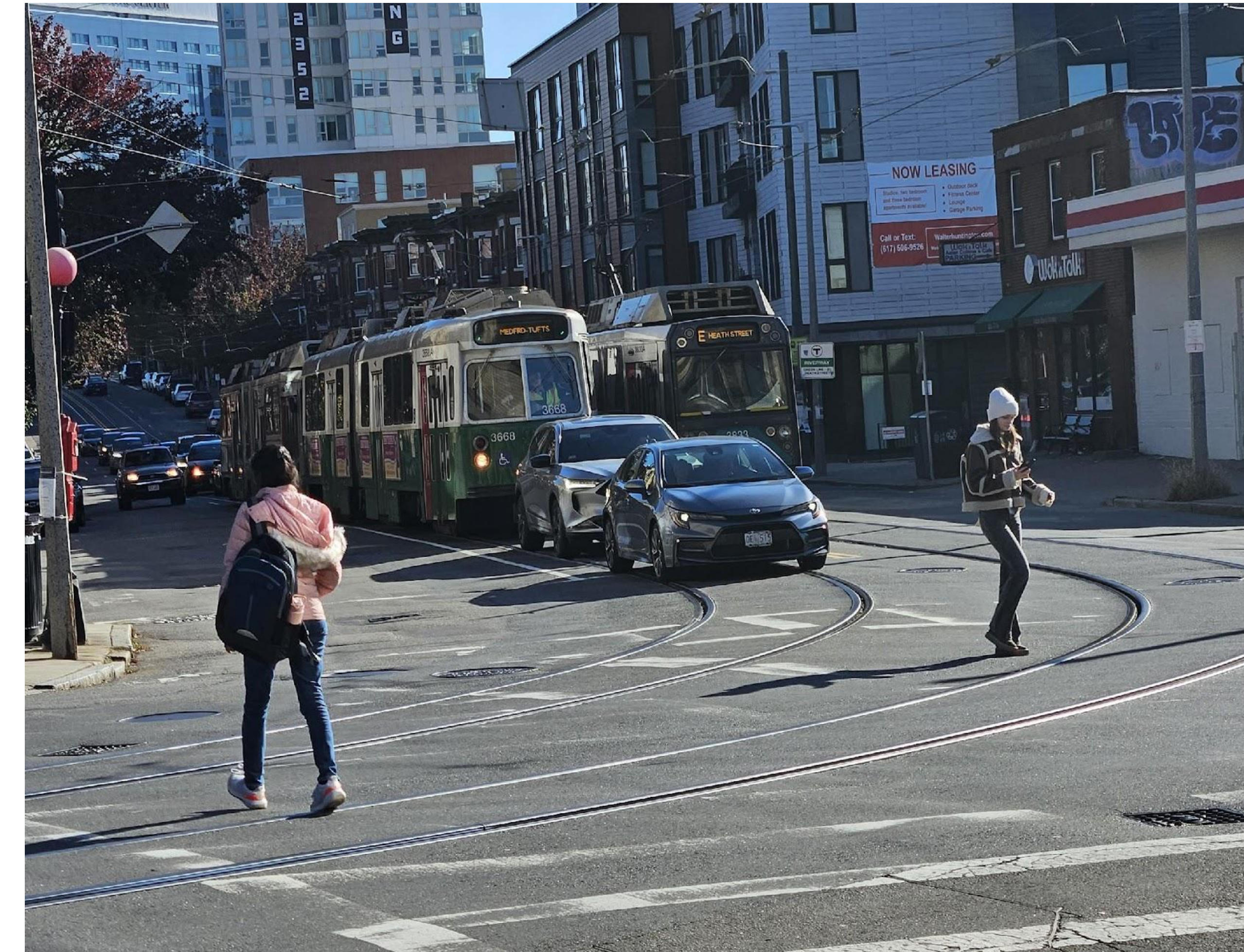
Today, trains share lanes with cars and bikes and people must enter the street to board. As a result, Huntington and S. Huntington are chaotic, with a higher rate of crashes for all modes.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Green Line E Branch does not have accessible stations. People must get on and off the train alongside moving traffic making these stations inaccessible and unsafe for all passengers. Sidewalk conditions are also often inadequate.

RELIABILITY

Tens of thousands of bus and Green Line passengers experience slow trips caused by mixed traffic of vehicles and transit.



“It's SO hard to get on with a stroller when the bus can't stop at the curb. Most often, it's a parked car in the way.” - 02130

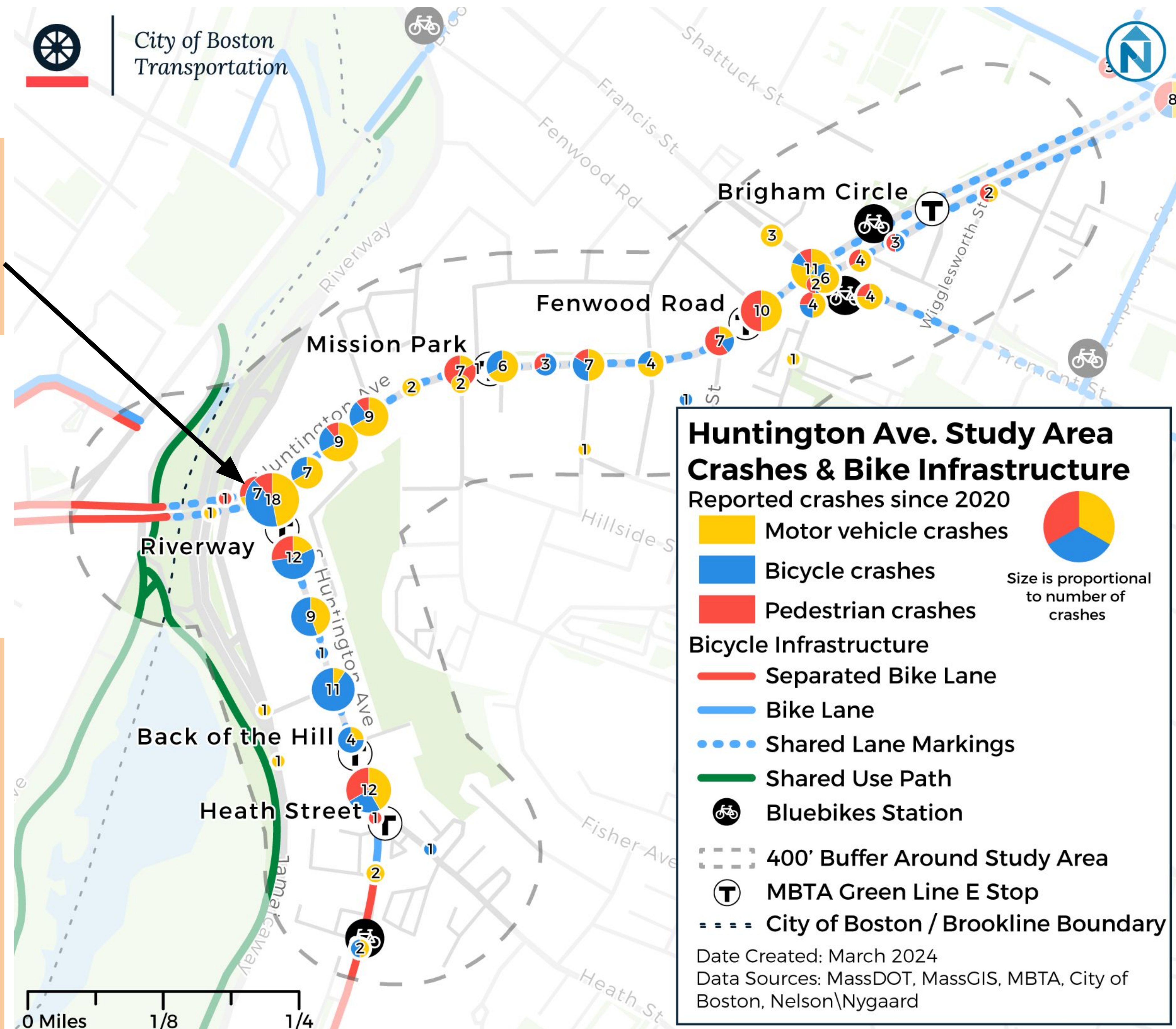
SAFETY

206 crashes occurred within the study area between 2020 and 2023

“Riding around this intersection is dangerous. The curve, train and buses make it very intimidating when I bike in this area (S. Huntington Ave) and there's no room to take it safely.” - 02135

- The Corridor is part of City’s VZ High Crash Network
- Pedestrian crashes are **more common near Green Line stations**, where people must walk in the center of the street to get on and off the train

“ The city has built fantastic new bike lanes on the southern portion of S Huntington, but they abruptly end at the Heath St stop...Overall, I hope you keep the bike network effort in mind while reconfiguring things. The street gets fairly heavy bike traffic from Longwood Medical Area workers despite being very dangerous for them. ” - 02130



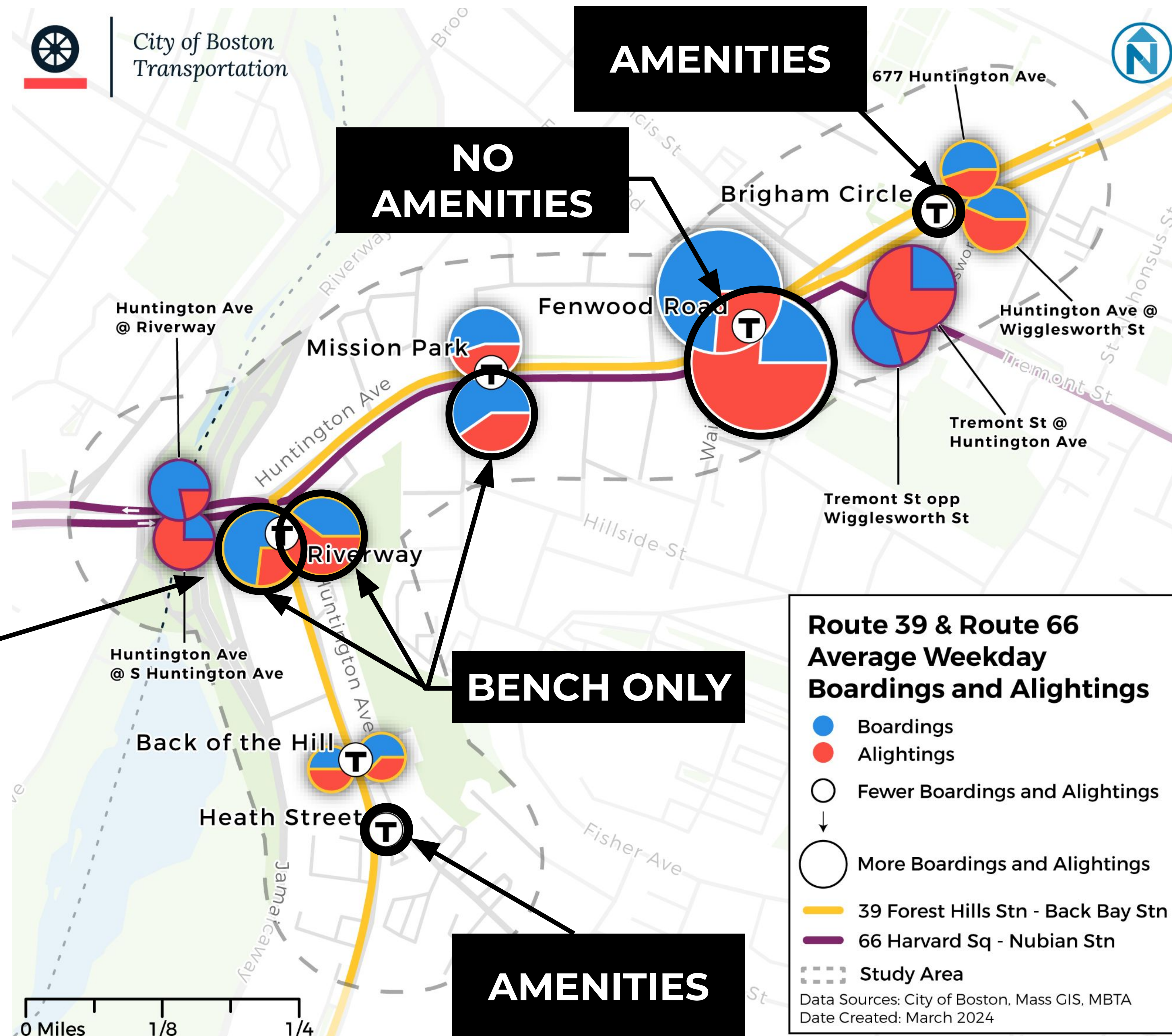
ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

- All stations between **Fenwood Road** to **Heath Street** are currently **inaccessible**
- This project will construct bus and train **boarding platforms** and reconstruct **sidewalks and crossings** to enable full accessibility
- This project will improve conditions at stops and add shelters, benches, and wayfinding signage to stations.

“The South Huntington/Huntington stop bound for FH [Forest Hills] shares with a Green Line stop which is not marked well and bus drivers can stop at different points. With no seating or shelter, it’s difficult to know where to stand while waiting.” - 02130

“Many of the bus stops on the 39 do not have seating or any kind of shelter. It is hard for me to stand for long periods of time so the addition of seating would be helpful.” - 02130



RELIABILITY & CURB USE

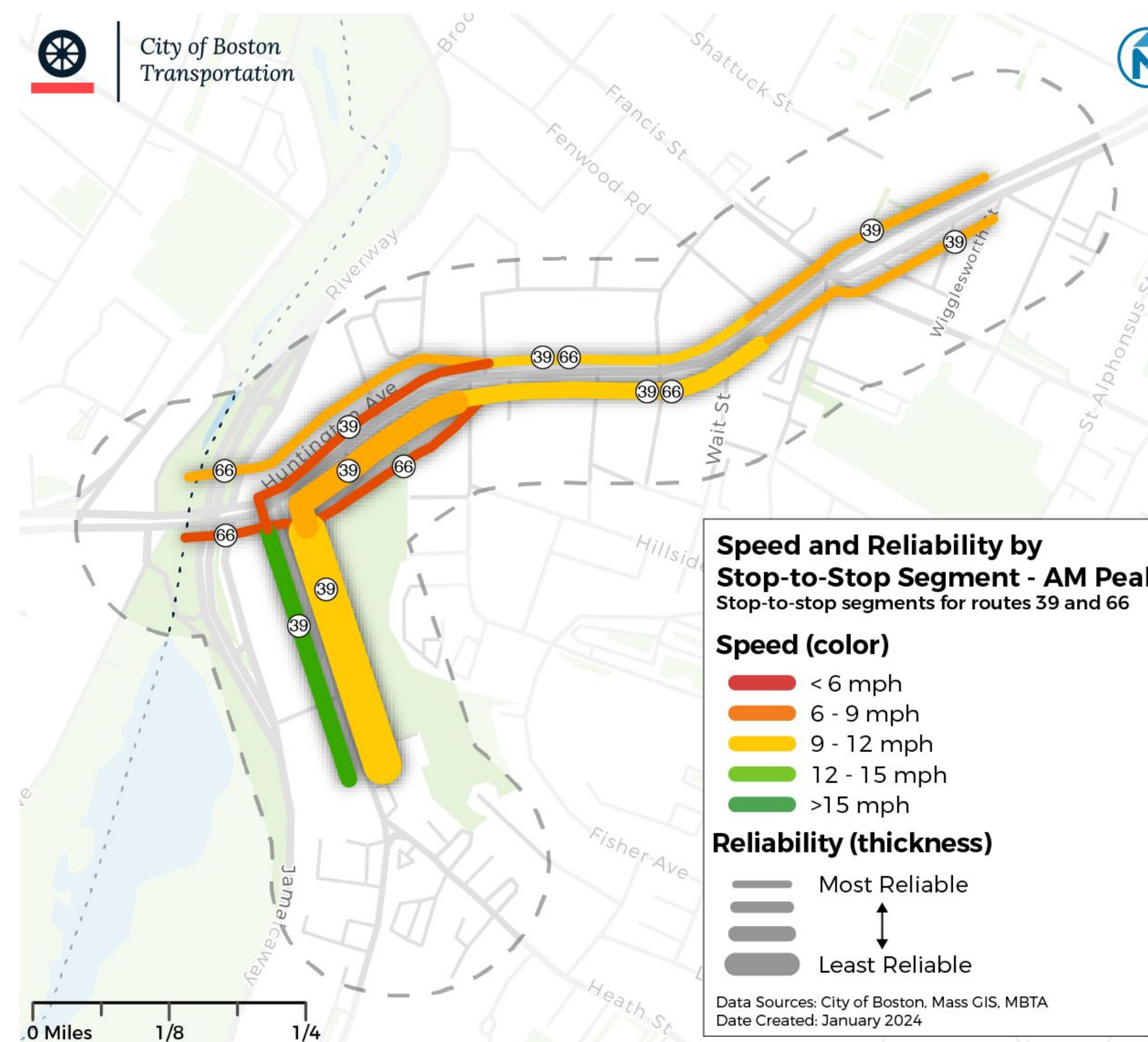
BUS & TRAIN DELAY

- On an average weekday, riders are delayed a total of nearly 200 hours while traveling through the Corridor

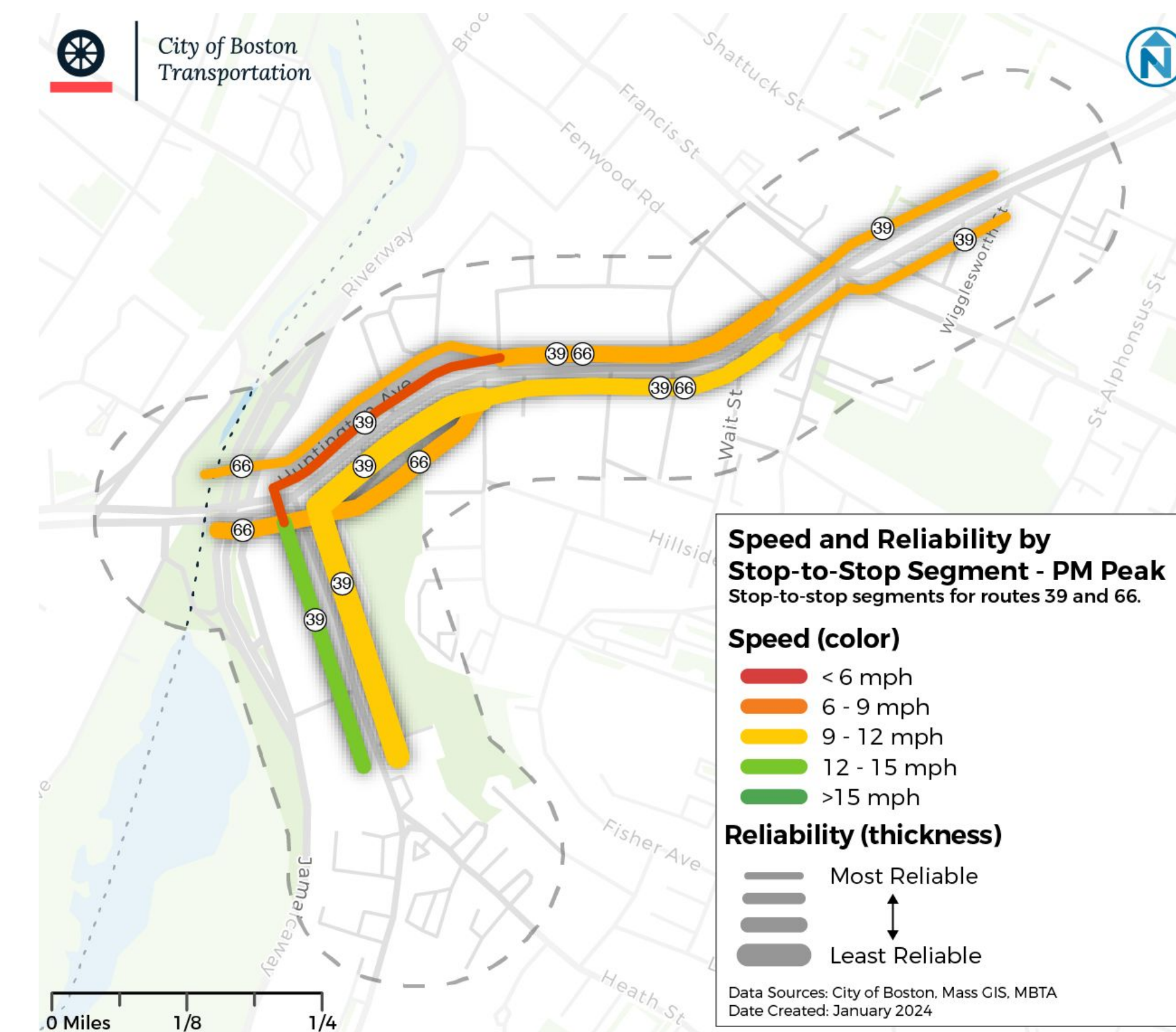
“Without accessing the app on a phone, could there be boarding and status updates as in subway stations?” - 02130, Age 65+

“Riding the 39, especially from Heath St. to Brigham Circle, often feels hardly better than walking when it’s rush hour.” - 02130

AM PEAK



PM PEAK



CURBSIDE USES

- Curb space in the study area is used for bus stops, commercial loading, trash pickup, and parking
- Double parking** and parking in **bus stops** is a common issue today.
- Only one accessible parking space** is available within the study area
- 4%** of parked vehicles along Huntington belong to Mission Hill residents



TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

- Huntington Avenue often sees traffic congestion in the morning and afternoon rush hours
- Congestion along Huntington Avenue is often due to double-parking, confusion, and trolleys in mixed traffic, not due to road capacity or traffic signal design

“Center running lanes in segment 2 [Brigham Circle to Heath St] that the green line could also use would be amazing. currently both the bus AND the green line get stuck.” - 02130

“Trucks or cars parked at the bus stop forcing the bus to discharge passengers in the middle of the road. I then have to walk with my toddlers between the bus and 18-wheeler, hoping neither moves before we get to the sidewalk.” - 02130



PROJECT TOOLKIT

What tools are available for improvements along Huntington and South Huntington Avenue?

Safety

Upgrading areas for **ADA compliant slopes**, widening sidewalks, separating bike facilities, and **repainting crosswalks** for pedestrians of all abilities will improve both accessibility and safety.

- Reduce conflict points for all users
- Provide safe facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Standardize driveway curb cuts and repair sidewalks



Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

Station Accessibility

Stations and bus stops can be improved by moving stops **closer to crosswalks** and intersections, **combining stops** that are too close together, **adding new shelters**, curb extensions, and other amenities.

- Improves boardings and alightings accessible and safe
- Makes traveling to and from stops safer and more accessible
- Stopping less often saves ride time
- Gives stops and high-ridership stations amenities for waiting passengers



Image source: Nelson\Nygaard

Curb Management

Changing **where and when parking** can occur, as well as what types of parking (e.g., **parking vs. loading**).

- Increase parking turnover so more residents and accessible spaces can park and access businesses in commercial districts



Intersections

Add appropriate **traffic control strategies** such as signalization and turn restrictions.

- Transit signal priority
- Minimize bicycle facility conflicts
- Minimize conflicts across transit right-of-way

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term for stormwater management features that uses **plants, soil and other natural materials** to remove pollutants, **prevent flooding** and **increase greenspace**.

- Improves stormwater run-off
- Trees provide shade and shelter
- Can be used with sidewalks and station platforms/medians
- Environmental, social and economic benefits



Image source: City of Boston

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Transportation Authority



Previous Planning Work

Our work today relies on many previous conversations we had with you, through previous efforts.

- South Huntington Ave Corridor Study (2013, BPDA) - Recommend
- Go Boston 2030 (2017)
- Focus 40 (2019)
- South Huntington Ave Better Bike Lanes (2023)
- Route 39 Study (ongoing)

“Making Buses Work Better”

Reduce transit delay, enhance safety, improve accessibility



DIRECT QUOTES

“The wait times are very long and uncomfortable in most weather conditions, especially without shade” - 02130

“Trucks or cars parked at the bus stop forcing the bus to discharge passengers in the middle of the road. I then have to walk with my toddlers between the bus and 18-wheeler, hoping neither moves before we get to the sidewalk.” - 02130

The South Huntington/Huntington stop bound for FH shares with a Green Line stop which is not marked well and bus drivers can stop at different points. With no seating or shelter, it's difficult to know where to stand while waiting.” - 02130

“Step from bus to street too high” -02130 65+

Confusing signage, multiple T signs, esp with the Green Line - the bus stops in a different spot along the length of the sidewalk every time. This stop is a major transfer point with Route 66, so it would be nice to have better conditions. - 02130

Riding around this intersection is dangerous. The curve, train and buses make it very intimidating when I bike in this area (S. Huntington Ave) and there's no room to take it safely - 02135

Many of the bus stops on the 39 do not have seating or any kind of shelter. It is hard for me to stand for long periods of time so the addition of seating would be helpful. - 02130

It's SO hard to get on with a stroller when the bus can't stop at the curb. Most often, it's a parked car in the way. - 02130

“Without accessing the app on a phone, could there be boarding and status updates as in subway stations?” - 02130 65+

In the winter the snow does not get plowed near bus stops. So you have to walk over a large pile of snow or wait in the street to get to the bus stop. - 02130

Forced to walk into the road because of people parking in the bus stop - 02115

Having better bus shelter
Brigham and Women's H
and South Huntington Av
especially for those stops
wait 20 30 minutes - 02130

It would be nice if, at the
stop, the drivers actually
instead of leaving passen
the street. - 02130

Lighting so that I don't h
bus driver at night - 02130

Make it a free bus. That w
Bike racks on the bus so
with me. - 02130

More frequent and reliab
taken this bus for years a
for me to get out of J.P. a
rest of the T, so when the
for a while it really preven
to work on time and gett
02130

More shelters along the r
could access the GPS dat
available on a screen, it w
if waiting or walking is th

Project Overview

This project is improving safety, access and mobility, and involves:

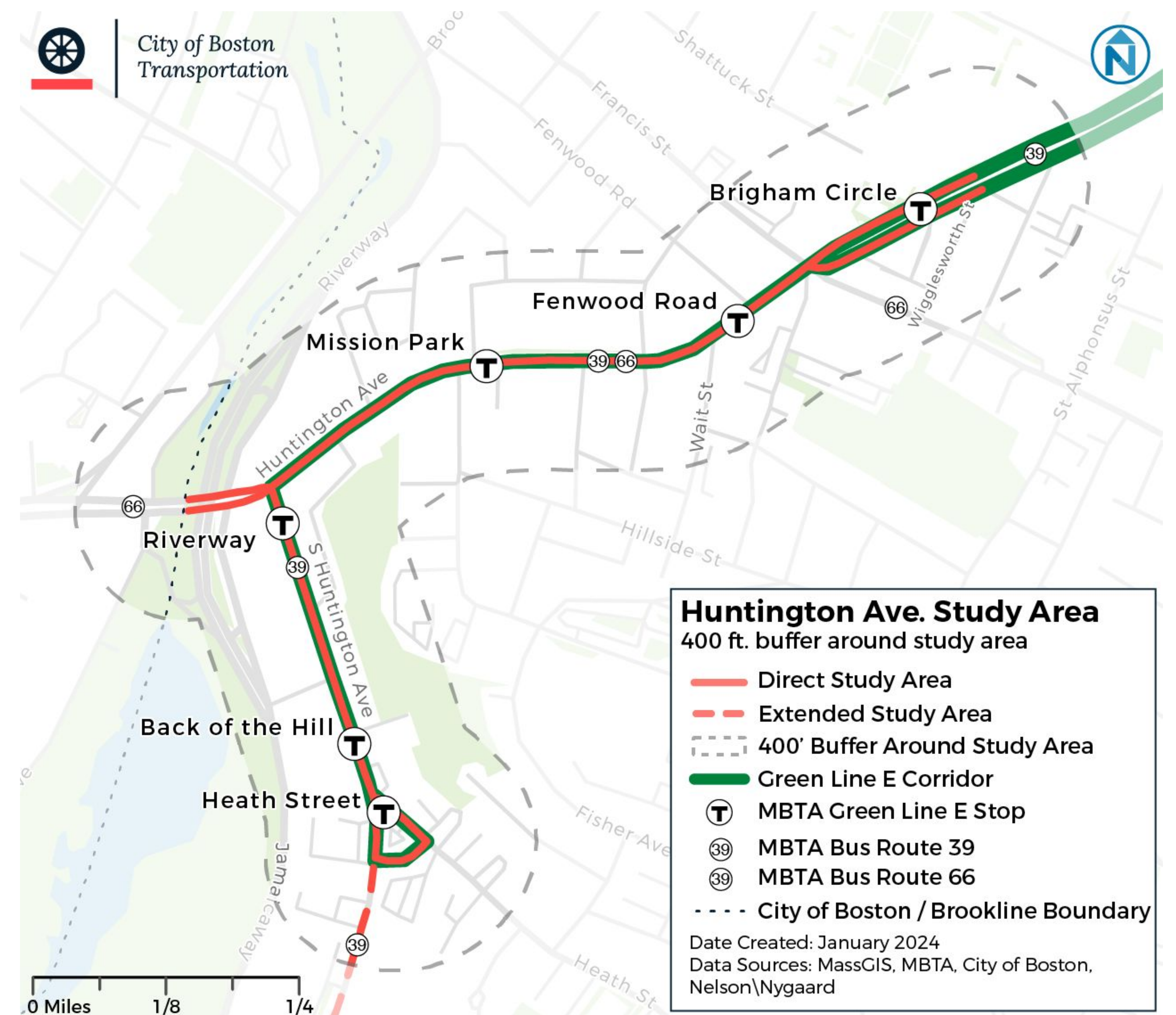
- Reconstruction of Huntington and South Huntington Avenues between Brigham Circle and Heath Street in the short-term, before the end of 2027
- Installs accessible boarding platforms for the MBTA Green Line E Branch

Why is this happening?

Huntington and South Huntington Avenues are important links in the regional travel networks across all modes

- Transit service along the corridor is frequently delayed by traffic
- Tens of thousands of daily riders - mostly Boston residents - suffer from a lack of reliable transit service
- Mixed-traffic operation results in more conflict and crashes

“Making a safe and accessible street for all”



What we plan to do in this study

Needs of bus and rail riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers are hindered by all-day congestion and safety conflicts.

Designing a street that works for everyone is a challenge and limits the possibility of finding a one-size-fits-all solution.

Here's how we'll be successful:

- **We'll engage with you, the community, for design prioritization**
- **The City of Boston and the MBTA are collaborating on designing the system to work for our most vulnerable users**

How to submit feedback

Scan with your phone to learn more and sign up for updates

- boston.gov/Huntington-Ebranch
- transit@boston.gov

Upcoming Outreach Events

Virtual Public Meeting | May 02, 2024 at 6:30pm

Virtual project introduction meeting for those unable to attend tonight's Open House. Visit the project website for details and registration.

Spring/Summer 2024

Building on previous engagement in the area, we'll host pop-ups, coffee hours, corridor tours, and more



Project Process

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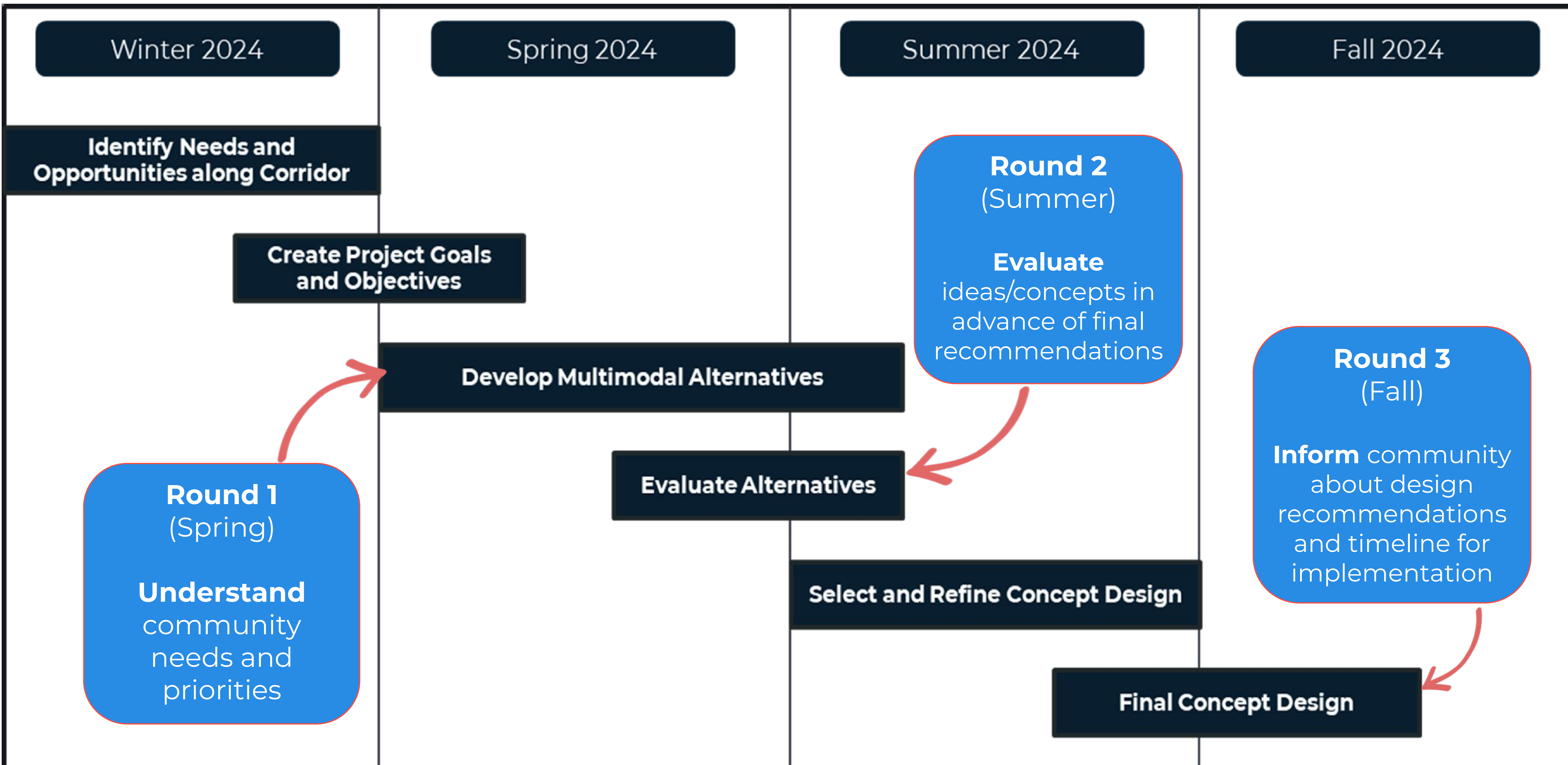
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Project Timeline



Today's Conditions, cont.

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“Making Buses Work Better”

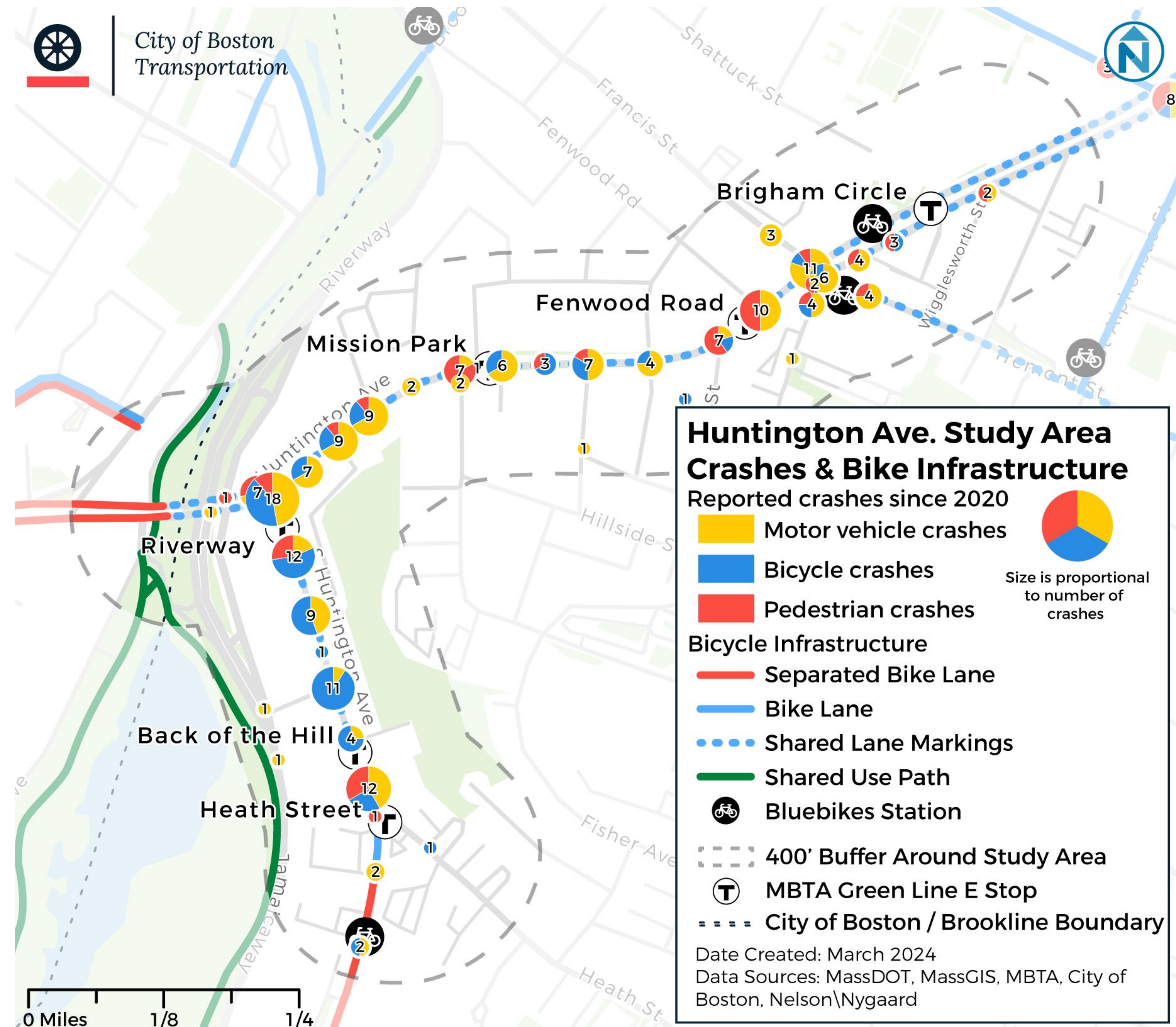
Reduce transit delay, enhance safety, improve accessibility



SAFETY

Existing Pedestrian Conditions

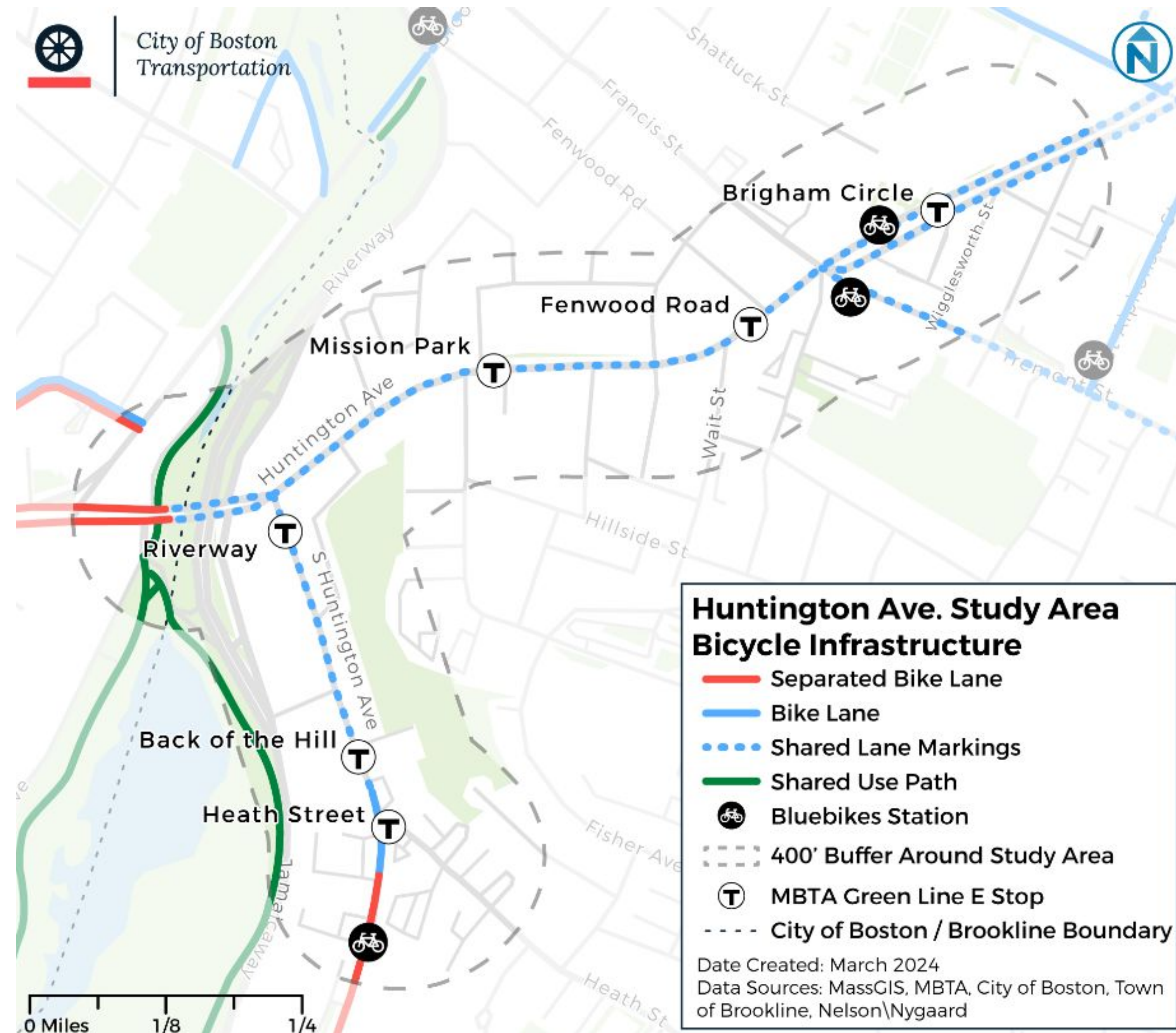
The pedestrian environment along the Corridor and adjacent streets is both unfriendly and unwelcoming, with narrow sidewalks, limited crossings, high traffic volumes, and high collision rates.



Bicycle Conditions

Existing Bicycle Conditions

- Most of the corridor has no bike lanes but instead features shared lane markings (or shared bus/bike lanes east of Francis St).
- A short section of the corridor south of Back of the Hill station features standard bike lanes on the street.
- The Emerald Necklace is a shared-use path along the Riverway that is also available to cyclists, though it is not connected to the rest of the bicycle network in Boston.
- There is a lack of standard or protected bike lanes along nearly the entire length of the Corridor results in bicycles sharing space with trolleys, buses, and automobiles.



Accessibility Concerns

There is a Lack of Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- There are **Missing Curb Ramps** throughout the project area, at street intersections, mid-block crossings, and other places with crosswalks, making travel very difficult for people with mobility devices
- We see **Driveways that are Not Level** with the adjacent sidewalk and road, for both residential and commercial uses.
- Many existing **Curb Ramps are Damaged** and/or the **Slope of the Curb Ramp** is too great, to the point that they affect accessibility



ADA Compliance








Features of ADA compliant and safer streets can include:

- Curb ramps
- Detectable warning panels
- Raised crosswalks

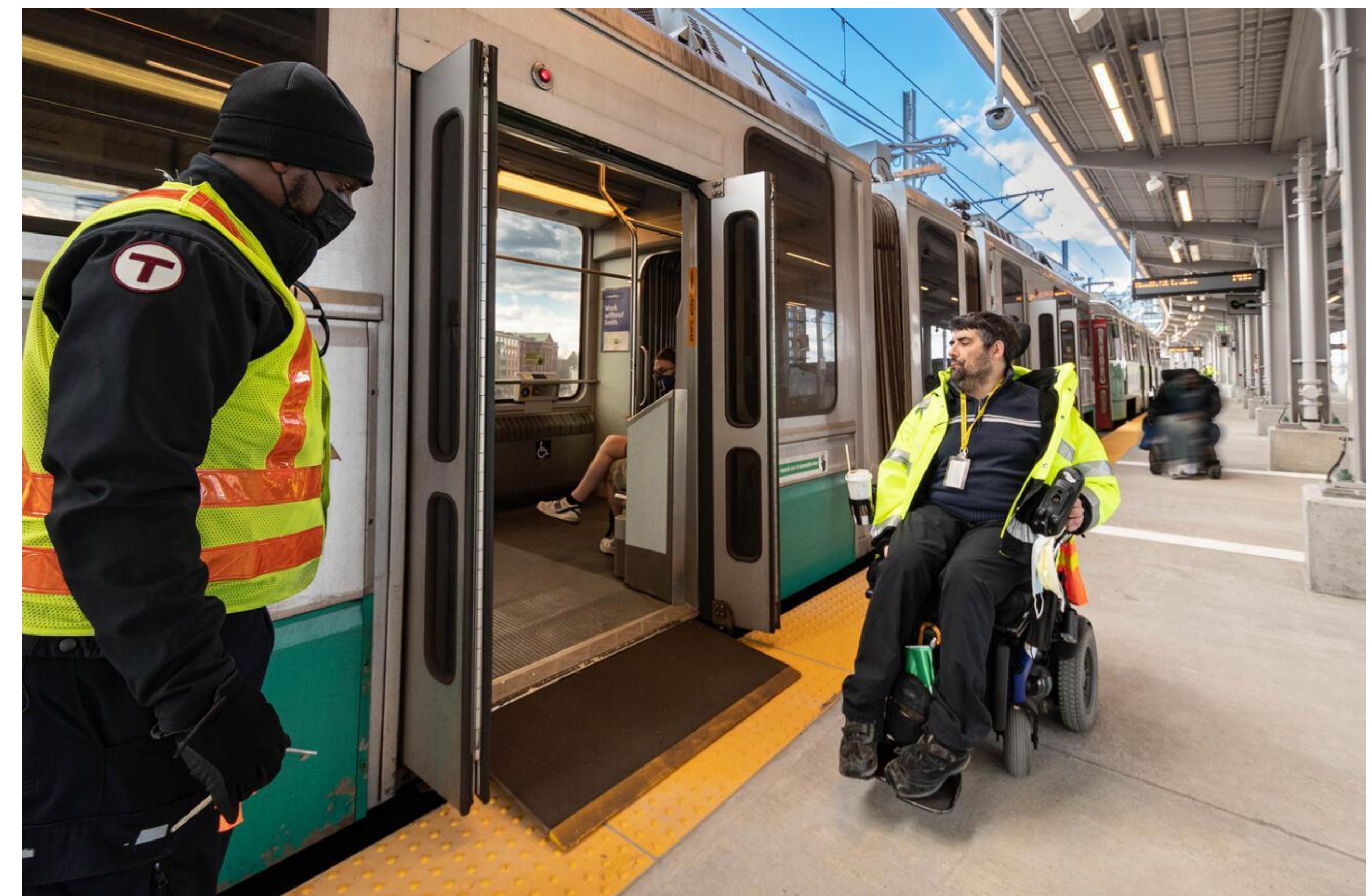


ADA Compliance By Station

MBTA Accessibility status at the project area

Brigham Circle	 
Fenwood Road	
Mission Park	
Riverway	
Back of the Hill	
Heath Street	 

- Accessibility features are available at
 - Brigham Circle: portable boarding lift,
 - Heath Street: portable boarding lift and a “mini-high” level platform to provide level boarding to certain train cars.
- All other stations will be made accessible through the current MBTA project



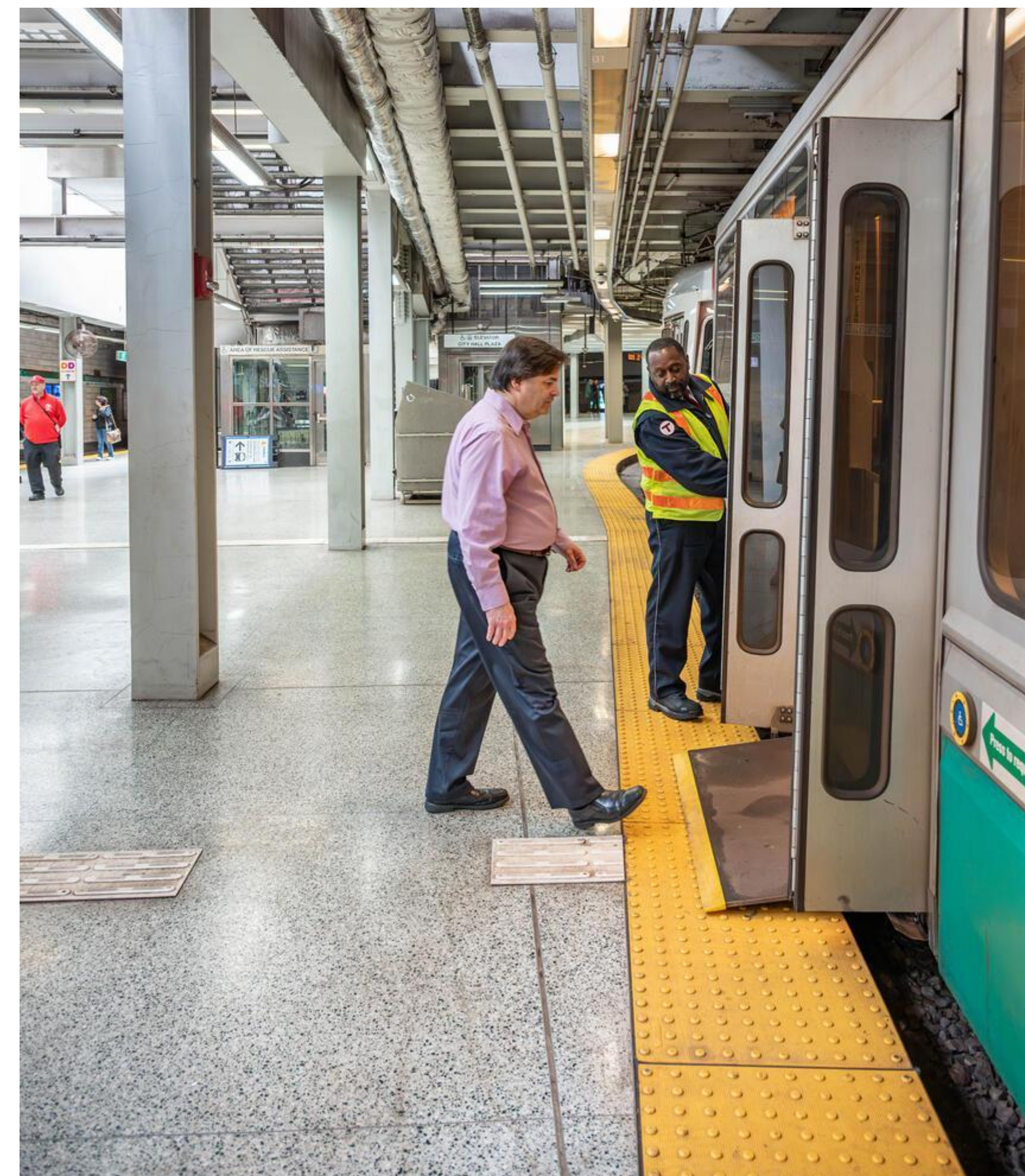
ADA Compliant Features on the T

CITY of BOSTON



What makes an MBTA station ADA compliant? Key features include:

- Bridge plates that span the gap between the platform and the train
- Tactile warning strips
- Automated audio and visual announcements of train stops, destinations, and arrival times
- Emergency call boxes that you can use for general assistance or in an emergency



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Parking and the Curbside

- Double parking is regularly observed on both Huntington and South Huntington Avenues, causing huge disruptions
- On-street parking is often used by drivers without a Mission Hill resident parking permit, and for longer than the posted two-hour limit
- Commercial vehicle loading and deliveries typically occur in areas not permitted, including bus stops, hydrants, and crosswalks



Design Priorities

Design Area	Guidance or Priority
Safety	
Station Accessibility	
Station and Stops	
Train and Bus Operations	
Bike Lanes	