

Envision Needham Center
WG Meeting #9

May 19th, 2025



Agenda

- Introductions
- Minute Approvals
 - *Format: member vote*
- Feedback from SB public hearing
 - *Format: discussion, decision*
 - *Objectives: Determine how feedback should be incorporated into next steps*
- Review of refined concept plan
 - *Format: Q&A, discussion*
 - *Objectives: Synthesize WG feedback on further concept plan alternatives/refinements*
- Timeline objectives & demonstration goals
 - *Format: discussion, decision*
 - *Objectives: Identify timeline for next steps & demonstration goals*
- Meeting schedule
 - *Format: discussion, decision*
 - *Objectives: Identify schedule & timing for future WG meetings*



Feedback from Select Board Public Hearing





Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Community Feedback

- **Traffic & Roadway Concerns**
 - Congestion
 - Diversion to residential streets
 - Turning movements
 - Length of time to get through the Center
 - Reducing lanes
- **Parking Concerns**
 - Reduction in parking
 - Wayfinding is not an/the issue





Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Community Feedback

- **Bike Lanes & Bikers Opinions & Concerns**
 - Biking is unsafe in the Town Center
 - Biking is safe in the Town Center
 - People know to “walk” their bikes
 - Project is prioritizing bike lanes over other priorities
 - Biking on sidewalks is an issue
 - There are no bikers in Needham





Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Community Feedback

- **Safety & Logistics Concerns**
 - Crossing distances
 - Crossing timing
 - Bike safety
 - Snow removal
 - Interim safety improvements
 - Project cost and funding sources





Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Community Feedback

- **Shared General Support For**
 - Wider sidewalks
 - Outdoor dining
 - Trees & green space(s)
 - Project vision, vibe, and innovation
 - Measures to boost and support economic vitality & stability



Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Select Board Feedback

- **Traffic, Roadway & Parking**
 - Turning movements and turn lane removal – How much will this impact traffic?
 - One call for turn lanes to be prioritized
 - Reducing lanes – How much will this impact traffic?
 - 3pm “Kid” traffic time
 - Reiterating shared community concerns re: traffic, parking, deliveries and loading
 - Board to consider prioritizing addressing parking this year?
 - Turn lanes – considered to be “bad” by some – why?



Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Select Board Feedback

- **Concerns, Feedback & Observations**
 - Goals do not call out “economic vitality”
 - Concept plans – contextual blocks will help visual communication (where is this exactly?)
 - Visual representation communicates significant decrease in parking
 - Errors and challenges with precedents and builds/designs in the past
 - Is there an in-depth comp we can look at?
 - Engagement: If people show up, it may mean they don’t feel they’ve had an opportunity to be heard yet
 - Safety at crosswalks
 - Funding – where will it come from?
 - Businesses are fearful
 - Community loves outdoor dining



Select Board Public Hearing

Summary of Select Board Feedback

- **Requests**
 - Traffic study
 - Additional design options (High, Mid, Low? No bike lanes?)
 - Want to see potential cost differences
 - Give the community a chance to compare
 - Economic study – how do we track success?
 - Establish demonstration metrics
 - Metrics for timing to get through Town Center
 - Project FAQs



Review of Refined Concept



Proposed Design – Initial Alternatives

Alternative 1

- Key Elements
 - Parking retained on both sides of GPA
 - ~103 proposed parking spaces within project limits (103 existing)
 - 3' buffer between parking & Bike lane
 - 5' amenity zone provided between bike lane & sidewalk
- Findings & Feedback
 - Positive:
 - Clear separation between bike lane & sidewalk
 - No (or minimal) reduction in on-street parking within project limits
 - Negative:
 - **Sidewalk width narrower or same as existing condition in many locations**
 - Limited flex space for businesses
 - 3' + 5' buffers lead to inefficient use of space



Proposed Design – Initial Alternatives

Alternative 2

- Key Elements
 - Parking retained on one side of GPA
 - ~65 proposed parking spaces within project limits (103 existing)
 - 5' amenity zone provided between bike lane & sidewalk
- Findings & Feedback
 - Positive:
 - Wider sidewalks & more flex space
 - Additional opportunities for rain gardens
 - Clear separation between bike lane & sidewalk
 - Negative:
 - Long stretches of no parking on one side of GPA
 - 3' + 5' buffers lead to inefficient use of space
 - **~40% decrease in on-street parking**



Initial Feedback

Feedback

- Parking
- Deliveries
- Traffic Congestion
- Flexibility in Design

Design Translation

More in-depth look at tradeoffs; review of off-street alternatives

Curb Management (Loading zones, limited time spaces, etc.)

Assessments will be ongoing through pilot

Simplified cross-section



Refined Concept

- Updates to design approach:
 - Narrowed buffer between bike lane & pedestrian zone
 - Bulk of street trees relocated between travel lane & bike lane
 - Staggered spacing of trees/landscape elements & on-street parking
 - More flexible use of pedestrian zone & location of amenities
- Advantages:
 - Staggered parking & street trees act as gateway treatment & traffic calming measure
 - Narrower buffer allows for wider sidewalks & more on-street parking
 - Primarily locating trees between travel lanes & bike lane fosters more flexible use of pedestrian zone and helps block glare from the sun
 - Retained most parking + PROWAG spaces (~90)
- Core concepts retained:
 - Wider sidewalk & dedicated infrastructure for each mode
 - New & expanded space for community amenities & gathering opportunities
 - Updated intersections and mid-block crossings to encourage slower speeds, increase visibility of pedestrians, shorten crossing distances, & improve safety for all modes
 - Increased resiliency through removal of impervious surface & addition of space for green infrastructure

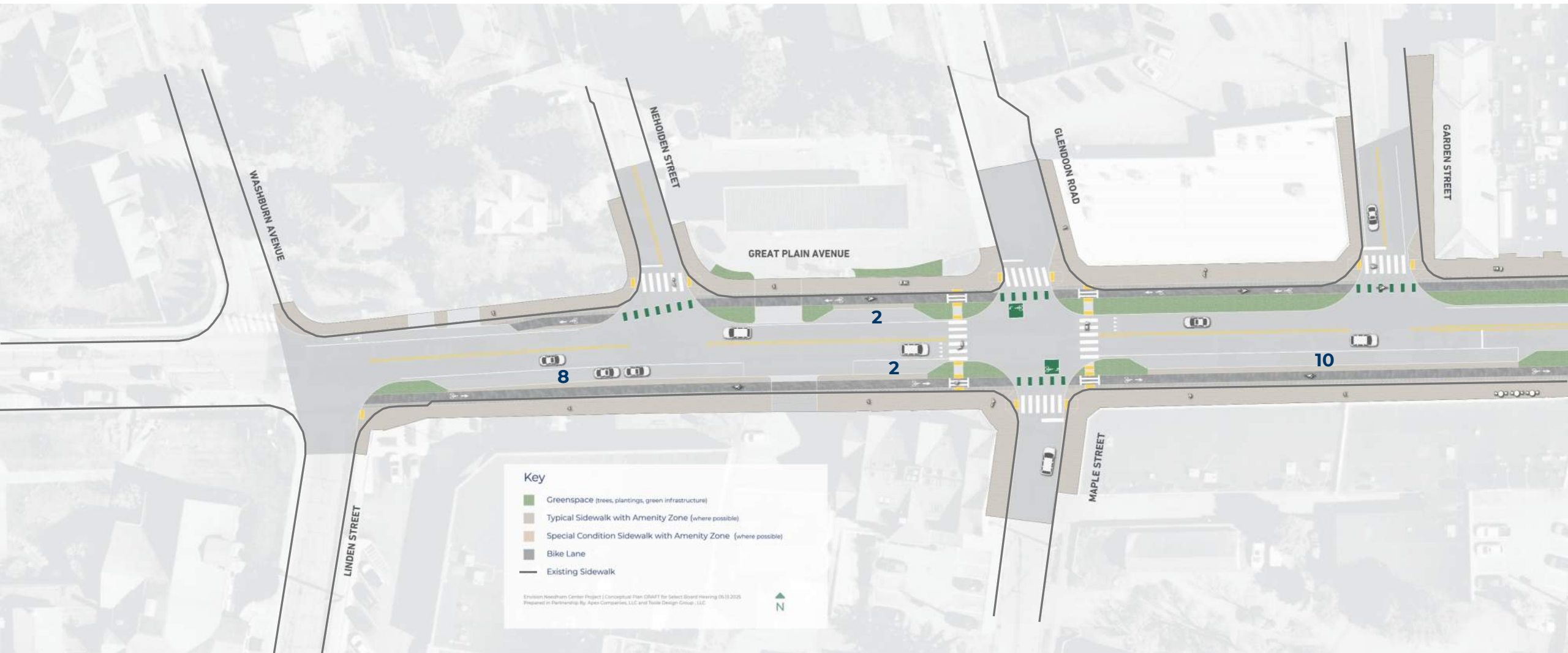


Concept Comparisons

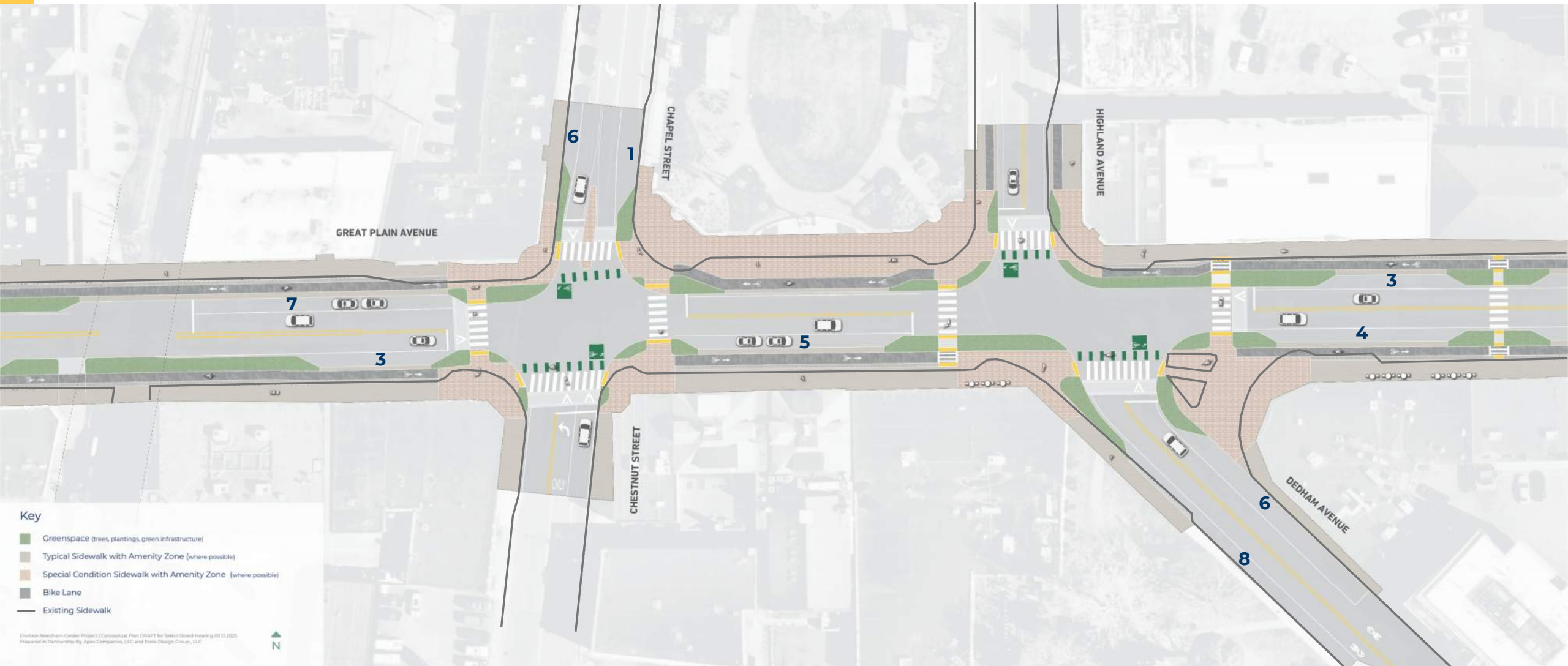
Design Component	Alternative 1 March 2025	Alternative 2 March 2025	Refined Concept May 2025
Wider Sidewalks (compared to existing)	✗	✓	✓
Separation Between Travel Modes	✓	✓	✓
Bike Lanes	✓	✓	✓
Parking Counts	~ 103 (equivalent to unadjusted existing)	~ 65 (significant reduction)	~ 90 (slight reduction)
Key Takeaways	• Sidewalk width narrower or same as existing condition in many locations • No reduction in on-street parking • Limited flex space for businesses	• Increased sidewalk widths • Ample green space • Drastic parking reduction	• Increased sidewalk widths • Green space and gathering additions • Limited parking loss + addition of PROWAG spaces



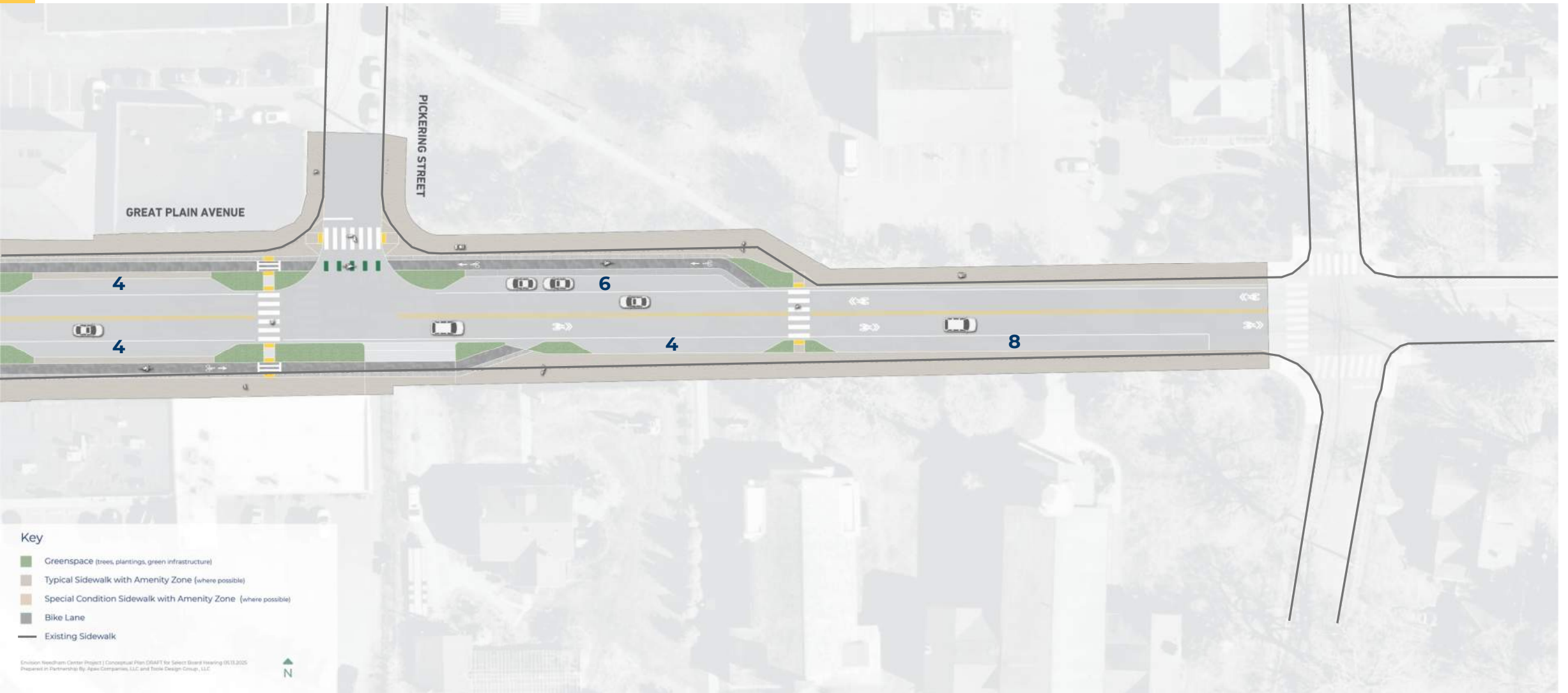
Refined Concept



Refined Concept



Refined Concept





Conceptual Plan: New Potential Gathering Space
at the Corner of Dedham Ave. and Great Plain Ave.



Conceptual Rendering: View Looking West Towards Highland Ave. (right) and Dedham Ave. (left)



Conceptual Rendering: View Looking East
Towards Glendoon Rd.



Conceptual Rendering: View Looking East
at Intersection of Great Plain Ave. and Glendoon Rd./Maple St.



Conceptual Rendering: View Looking North Towards Highland Ave. at New Gathering Space at Corner of Great Plain Ave. and Dedham Ave.