



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, September 4th, 2025
6:30 PM

E-mail: cyuen@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: 802-878-6944, ext. 1607

This meeting will be held in-person at 2 Lincoln St and remotely. To participate remotely:

- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free audio only): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 953 1240 7791; Passcode: 040339

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
4. **MINUTES**
 - a. August 7th, 2025
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Amtrak Station Improvements Public Open House and Discussion* [6:33 PM]
 - b. Continued discussion of Revised Design Alternative for Pearl Street between Susie Wilson Rd and West St Extension* [7:40 PM]
 - c. Update on Connect the Junction project public engagement [8:00 PM]
6. **MEMBERS UPDATES** [8:05 PM]
7. **STAFF UPDATES** [8:05 PM]
8. **ADJOURN** [8:06 PM]

*attachments included in the packet

Agenda item timestamps are estimates of the starting time of each topic and are subject to change.

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Planning Commission, like all programs and activities of the City of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the City Manager's office at 802-878-6944 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
AUGUST 9, 2025
DRAFT**

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Diane Clemens, Vice-Chair; Finn Hamilton (non-voting member); Elena Juodisius; Scott McCormick; Kirstie Paschall

ADMINISTRATION: Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Eva Benen, Luke Brockmeier, Steven Eustis, Jack Evans, Joseph Finch, Dave Fogle, Christine Forde, Karen Halverson, Carlton Houghton, Daniel Liguori, Resa Mehren, Sean Neely, John O'Brien, Lauren Philbrooke, Alison Wermer, Dave, Emily

1. CALL TO ORDER

In Mr. Massey's absence, Ms. Clemens called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

None.

4. MINUTES

a. July 10, 2025

DIANE CLEMENS requested to approve the minutes of July 10, 2025. Motion passed 4-0.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. a. Introduction of new members of Planning Commission

Mr. Yuen said that Finn Hamilton has been appointed to the Planning Commission (PC) as a non-voting member. Mr. Hamilton said that he is fifteen and has lived in Essex Junction his entire life. He is excited to be involved in the planning process.

b. Discussion of Revised Design Alternative for Pearl Street between Susie Wilson Rd and West St Extension

Mr. Yuen said that Essex Junction has been contemplating changes to Pearl Street over the past several years, and that a scoping study was held in 2018. Funding could not be secured for the entire \$4.3 million dollar project; however, the City's Capital Plan has \$1.2 million allocated for this project. An updated scoping study has been created to fit within the revised budget. Mr. Neely, Associate at Stantec, discussed existing project conditions, noting that there are no dedicated bicycle facilities in the project area. He reviewed the purpose and need statement for the project. He discussed alternatives that had previously been reviewed for this project.

Mr. Neely highlighted the new alternative that was developed to meet the updated project cost. This alternative does not include the removal of the median, which would be necessary for improved motor vehicle access. However, the alternative improves safety and connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians,

minimizes disruption to existing curbs, sidewalks and utilities and incorporates new crosswalks and a proposed eastbound transit stop. The existing sidewalk will be converted to a ten-foot multi-use path and will include a buffered bike lane. The alternative proposes that the speed limit be reduced from 45 mph to 30 mph. Ms. Clemens said that the road cannot currently handle the traffic that it has and expressed concern about reducing lanes. Mr. Neely said that the bike lanes could possibly be closed to accommodate an additional car lane during events. Mr. McCormick said that traffic gets delayed due to the light sequence, and that changing this could assist with better moving traffic. The estimated project cost for the current alternative is \$960,000. Median removal would cost \$1.8 million and is outside of the project scope. Stantec has been consulting with VTrans during this project and will contact the Police Department for input in the future.

Mr. Neely said that this project is a missing bicycle link. Mr. Yuen said that this project was developed with Essex Junction's comprehensive planning process. Essex Junction is densifying, and it is important to allow for more transportation methods to be able to use the space. The Transit-Oriented Development Draft Plan is available for review and mentions this specific area as needing pedestrian-friendly improvements. Mr. Yuen said that Pearl Street is one of the region's strongest transit corridors and has three bus stops in the westward direction, however it currently has none in the eastward direction. Answering a question from Mr. Houghton, Mr. Neely discussed the traffic volume counts from each intersection as well as the average daily traffic along the corridor. Mr. Houghton said that Pearl Street should remain at the current lane structure and said that he was interested in the destinations for inbound and outbound travel from Essex Junction. He said that reducing the median will reduce the safety margin.

Answering a question from a member of the public, Mr. Neely said that this project will increase walkability from project transit stations. Mr. McCormick said that information about increasing bus access on the westbound side needs to be in the purpose and needs statement. This is a very important issue, especially in inclement weather and for people with disabilities. He also suggested having crosswalk signal at the intersection. Mr. Neely said that this would increase the project beyond its available budget. Ms. Wermer said that narrowing the road to one lane would not be a good experience and suggested a single bike path on one side of the road. She cited the Fanny Allen crossing as an example of a successful two-lane road with safe pedestrian crossing. Mr. Neely said that a single lane of travel will help to reduce driver speeds and that the Fanny Allen intersection is only safe because of the signalized crosswalk. Mr. McCormick questioned the need for both a bike lane and a multi-use path. Mr. Yuen said that there is only one lane feeding into the westward direction and that this can lead to a bottleneck. He said that planning for future capacity is important.

Mr. Evans said that he commutes this area every day and that it is unsafe. Pedestrians and bikers are often competing for a small amount of space. Adding a shared use path will assist with this. Mr. Evans said that he does not see how the second lane of car travel alleviates congestion. Increasing biking and walking to events at the fairgrounds could also lead to a decrease in impaired driving. Mr. Eustis said that he prefers this plan as he believes that maintaining the median is important. He said that stacking is critical and that the proposed signalized crosswalks will work well. He suggested not changing the traffic timing at the light at West Street Extension as this plan provides room for a right-turn onto West Street Extension. He would like to see some shade trees planted in the greenspace. Answering a question from Ms. Clemens, Mr. Neely said that it is GMT's preference not to use bus pull-offs. Mr. Finch said that he rides along the sidewalk and said that he has had safety concerns along the driveways on this route. He said that sometimes going on the road feels safer. He said that the only thing that helps reduce traffic is to offer

alternatives to driving. Mr. Neely said that no signal phasing to accommodate bike crossing will be included with the new alternative.

Mr. Finch spoke of drivers speeding and said that reducing Pearl Street to one lane is essential to helping with this. He also feels that removing the median would contribute to drivers speeding to make a green light. He suggested that the speed limit be reduced to 25 mph. Mr. Neely said that the speed limit could be reduced along Pearl Street and in the project limits if desired by the City. A member of the public asked if the speed could be reduced near the Fort, Mr. Neely said that residents could petition the state for this to occur. Mr. Evans said that transit only works when it is convenient, and that improving connectivity will assist with usage. He said that the conditions shown on the map will make it so that more people take advantage of biking and public transit. He said that buffered bike lanes are often not used for their intended purpose. A member of the public asked about the slip lane included in the current project. Mr. Neely said that this is a part of a current study that VTrans is doing. If the median remains, the slip lane provides the stop control necessary for a left-hand turn. A member of the public said that the expo only has shows on 10% of the days of the year, and that it is important not to design for the worst-case scenario.

Ms. Wermer asked how eastbound bikes would be accommodated with this project. Mr. Neely said that they would use the shared use path. Mr. Houghton said that it is not Essex Junction's responsibility to alleviate Chittenden County's traffic concerns. He believes that diverting traffic is a better alternative. A member of the public said that the bike lane would help to remediate bike traffic in the shared-use path. Mr. Neely said that a low height retaining wall might be necessary, and that there is some space in the budget for additional projects. If need be, the ten-foot shared use path can be reduced to eight feet. Also included in the project is pedestrian lighting. No additional streetlighting is included. Underground utilities are present which could interfere with street tree planting. Planting could also increase the cost.

A member of the public asked what could be done to help bicyclists crossing the slip lane and heading west. Mr. Neely said that this is not ideal but that the crossing will be realigned with this project and that a pedestrian signal could be added. Mr. Houghton said that there should be signaling for bikes and pedestrians so that they could safely cross Susie Wilson Road. Mr. Neely said that the pedestrian signal on the slip ramp for turning right contains no pedestrian signal. VTrans will be doing signal work in the area. Mr. Houghton discussed the West Street crossover, stating that it backs up and pushes a bottleneck to the shopping center area. Mr. Neely said that they will be coordinating with VTrans on this issue. Mr. Finch recommended a slightly raised crossing instead of a slip lane. Mr. Houghton expressed concern about snow storage with the bike lane, and Mr. Neely said that the median will be available for snow storage. The green strip will maintain its width. Mr. Houghton said that biking is only available during the non-winter months. Mr. Finch said that the ease of plowing with this configuration will make it easier for more people to bike during the winter. Mr. Houghton said that most of the traffic going through Essex does not terminate in Essex Junction.

Mr. Neely said that he will review and incorporate all the helpful comments from this evening, as well as what was received online. An alternatives evaluation will be completed, which includes a traffic evaluation. A recommended preferred alternative will be selected for approval by the City. The process should be completed by the end of the year. Once the preferred alternative is endorsed by the City Council the project will be able to move forward.

6. READING FILE

a. a. Vermont Public story- “Vermont towns continue to debate short-term rental rules

7. MEMBERS UPDATES

Mr. McCormick said that he will be the new Essex Junction representative to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Clemens said that the Lincoln Inn is planned for demolition and suggested that the Development Review Board and PC request a tour of the building prior to this occurring. Future planning for the site should also be considered and discussed. Mr. McCormick said that this and other issues could be discussed at a joint meeting. Mr. McCormick said that it would also be helpful to discuss Pearl Street as the PC separately prior to additional public comment. He said that he would like to see how it fits into the Capital Committee process and the Transit-Orientated Development District. Mr. Yuen said that this project can be discussed further at a future PC meeting. He said that there needs to be direction to Stantec on how to refine the alternative or how to provide an additional alternative. Mr. McCormick said that he would like to have additional discussions after a vehicle study is conducted. He believes that not enough through traffic uses the Circ highway and said that a traffic study could help to determine if this is true. Ms. Clemens said that she preferred this version to the 2018 version. Mr. Hamilton said that a reduced speed limit could reduce the risk of an accident for bicyclists.

Answering a question from Mr. McCormick, Mr. Yuen said that VTrans is interested in removing the jug handle at Susie Wilson Road due to its non-standard design. Several alternatives have been developed, however no funding is available for this. Regarding the Connect the Junction project, Mr. McCormick said that it would be helpful to look at reusing the presentations to the Rotary to other local organizations and religious organizations. Data from all the events will be summarized and compiled by the consultant. The in-person open house is tentatively scheduled for September 27. There is also a plan by Essex Junction Recreation and Parks to do a temporary pedestrianization of Main Street at this time. The report is anticipated to go to the City Council by late fall.

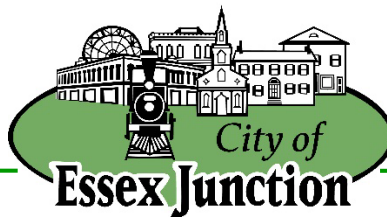
8. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Yuen said that staff will be in touch regarding tabling assistance for the Connect the Junction project. Ms. Clemens said that the amount of data available at previous events was overwhelming to some but that the dot polling was popular.

9. ADJOURN

Ms. Clemens adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director
Meeting Date: September 4, 2025
Subject: Amtrak Station Improvements – Public Open House

Issue: The Amtrak Station Improvements project is holding a public meeting in an open-house format as a part of the planning commission meeting.

Discussion:

Background

In 2022, the City of Essex Junction was awarded \$3,000,000 in federal funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program, administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This funding was secured through a Leahy Congressionally Directed Spending request to improve the local Amtrak station.

The total project budget is \$3,750,000, requiring a 20% non-federal match. The City has secured \$200,000 from the Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund Grant. The remaining \$550,000 will be provided through the City's Economic Development Fund.

The existing station building is owned by New England Central Railroad (NECR), a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming (G&W). Amtrak operates daily passenger service at the station, connecting St. Albans, VT to Washington, D.C.

The City has received pre-award authority from the FRA to begin preliminary engineering. In 2025, Michael Baker International was hired to lead this effort.

Note: This project is separate from Amtrak's ADA Station Platform Project, which is currently under construction and expected to be completed this construction season.

Proposed Scope and Design

The proposed improvements are based on the preferred alternative selected by the Village Board during the 2016 Essex Junction Train Station Scoping Study, which involved extensive public engagement. That study is available here:

<https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/essex-junction-train-station-access-circulation-study/#essex-documents>

While the design has been updated to reflect current cost conditions and budget limitations, it remains consistent with the 2016 vision. The central feature is a large, continuous roof canopy that will cover both the bus loading area and part of the train platform. Additional components include:

- Multimodal access and safety improvements
- Parking area reconfiguration

- Fire safety system upgrades (as required)
- Wayfinding signage
- Landscaping

A set of “add-on” elements is also included in the draft scope, which will be implemented only if the budget allows. These include:

- Demolition of the former ATM vestibule on the south side of the building
- Façade improvements
- New furnishings

Initial cost estimates from Michael Baker International suggest that not all these add-ons will be feasible within the current budget. These estimates will be refined during the Preliminary Engineering phase.

Illustrations of the proposed design are included in the attached document.

Grant Obligation

The project team has submitted the required documents to the FRA and is awaiting grant obligation. The City will need the grant to be obligated prior to the completion of Preliminary Engineering to ensure that design costs can be reimbursed.

Attached is the draft submittal to FRA to request grant obligation. It is titled “Attachment 2: Project Specific Terms and Conditions”. If we get FRA approval, this document includes the terms and conditions we will need to abide by. It includes:

- Article 4 – Statement of Work
- Article 5 – Estimated Project Schedule
- Article 6 – Project Budget

Public Engagement

The project now has a dedicated page on the city’s website, at

<https://www.essexjunction.org/departments/community-development/amtrak-station-improvements>.

A public survey is available now and will be open until October 4, 2025.

Cost:

Below is the anticipated project budget from the latest draft grant documentation:

Task #	Task Title	Agreement Federal Funds	Agreement Non-Federal Funds	Total
1	Project Administration and Management	\$44,000	\$11,000	\$55,000
2	Environmental Review	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
3	Preliminary Engineering	\$166,800	\$41,700	\$208,500
4	Final Design	\$320,000	\$80,000	\$400,000
5	Construction	\$2,449,200	\$612,300	\$3,061,500

Total	\$3,000,000	\$750,000	Total Project Cost: \$3,750,000
--------------	--------------------	------------------	--

Also included here is an initial (very rough) breakdown of the construction costs, including the canopy and site/roadwork. This estimate does not currently assume inclusion of the "add-on" elements. Those elements may be feasible through cost savings in design or value engineering.

Item Description	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total
Site and Roadwork	1	\$313,577	\$313,577
Canopy and building related	1	\$1,845,911	\$1,845,911
SUBTOTAL A - CONTRACT ITEMS¹			\$2,159,488
Minor Items	5.0%	\$2,159,488	\$107,974
SUBTOTAL B - MINOR ITEMS			\$107,974
Maintenance and Protection of Traffic	0.5%	\$2,267,462	\$11,337
Construction Surveying	1.0%	\$2,267,462	\$22,675
SUBTOTAL C - RECURRING LUMP SUM ITEMS			\$34,012
Inflation, 5% - Bid Opening Date	3.0%	\$2,301,474	\$80,772
SUBTOTAL D - INFLATION			\$80,772
SUBTOTAL E - TOTAL ESTIMATED BID (TEB) A+B+C+D			\$2,382,247
	-	-	-
RR Flagperson protection	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
Contingencies	10.0%	\$2,382,247	\$238,225
Incidentals	10.0%	\$2,382,247	\$238,225
SUBTOTAL F - NON-CONTRACT ITEMS			\$526,449
TOTAL PROJECT COST E+F			\$2,908,696
SAY			\$3,000,000

Not included - Allowances to consider

Fire protection system

Landscaping

Underground stormwater infiltration

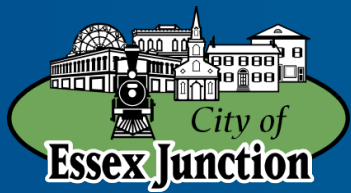
\$75,000
\$50,000
\$75,000
\$200,000

Recommendation:

Staff requests that the Commission review the proposed design and provide any comments or direction that should be considered before preliminary engineering advances

Attachments:

1. Essex Junction Station Open House Print Handouts
2. Draft Presentation Slides
3. Print Version of Public Survey



Essex Junction MULTIMODAL TRAIN AND BUS STATION

29 Railroad Avenue, Essex Junction

The City of Essex Junction is planning design improvements to the Essex Junction Multimodal Train and Bus Station through a combination of federal, state and local funding.

The project includes the proposed construction of a new roof canopy designed to cover the area surrounding the entire station building and provide an exterior connected shelter for passengers accessing trains and buses. Additional project elements may include, but are not limited to, roadway improvements, sitework, parking reconfiguration, stormwater drainage upgrades, wayfinding signage, landscaping, fire safety system upgrades, a bird deterrent system and other targeted modifications to the station building to improve the passenger experience.

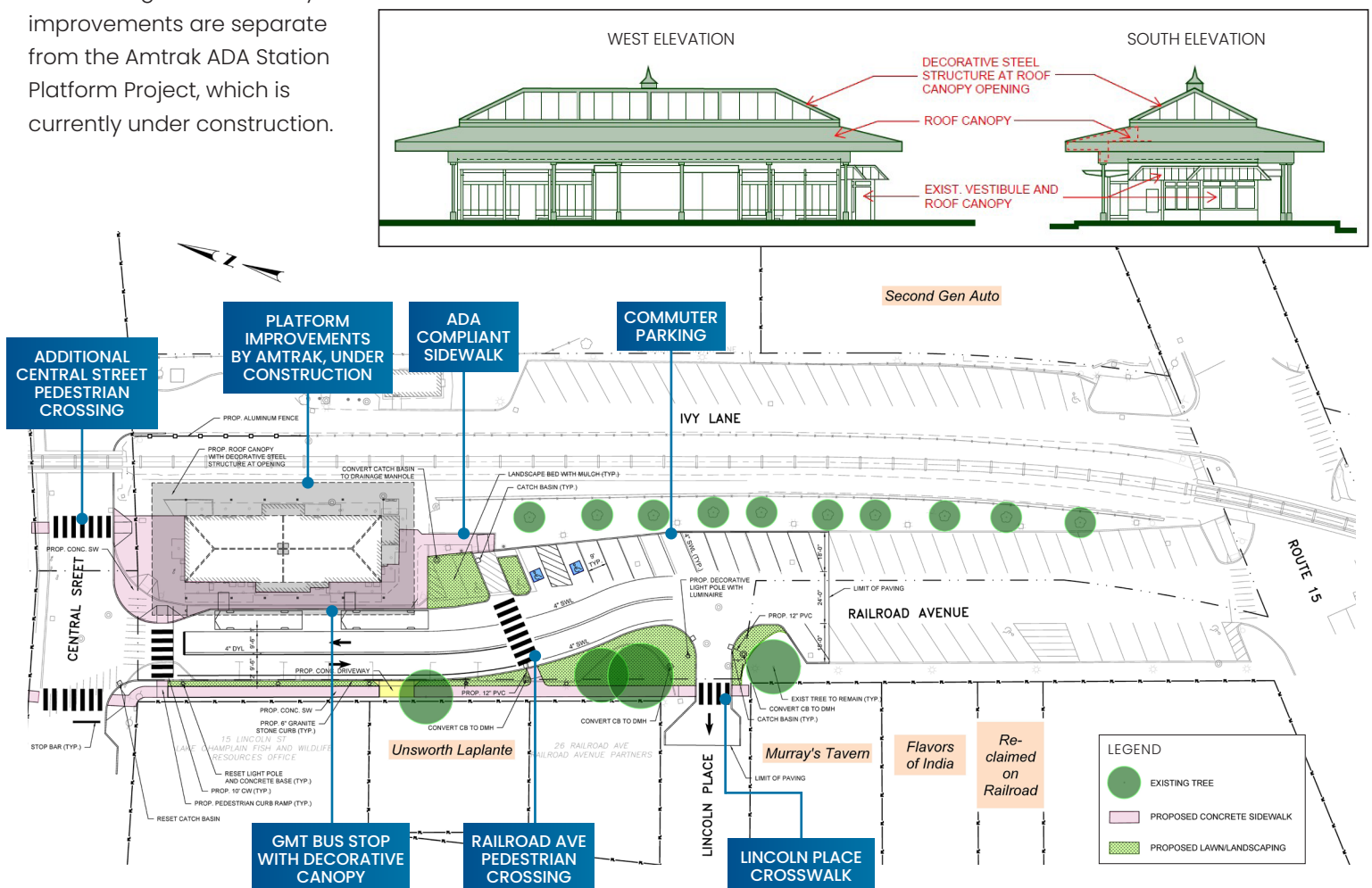
The project is currently in the 30% design phase. Once complete, the project will move to Environmental Review (NEPA) and Section 106 (Historic Preservation) Reporting.

NOTE: Due to the financial constraints of this project, the city is not able to completely revamp the existing building.

These design and roadway improvements are separate from the Amtrak ADA Station Platform Project, which is currently under construction.



Proposed Station Rendering





PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Canopy and weather protection
- Aesthetics of existing buildings
- Indoor seating
- New crosswalks
- Bike racks
- Covered bike storage
- Lighting
- Video screen displaying bus and train information

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

What would you like to see for a passenger sheltering area, wayfinding signage, or a roof canopy? Public feedback will help inform us about what passengers want and need in improvements to the station.

TAKE THE SURVEY!
ENDS 10.4.25



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

July 8, 2025



PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT
KICKOFF

August 22, 2025



PUBLIC
SURVEY OPENS

September 4, 2025



PUBLIC
OPEN HOUSE

September 27, 2025



CONNECT
THE JUNCTION
OPEN HOUSE

October 4, 2025



PUBLIC
SURVEY ENDS

CONTACT US



CHRIS YUEN

Community Development Director
City of Essex Junction
cyuen@essexjunction.org
(802) 878-6944 ext. 1607



MICHAEL GIGUERE

City Planner
City of Essex Junction
mgiguere@essexjunction.org
(802) 878-6944 ext. 1625



ASHLEY SNELLENBERGER

Communications and
Strategic Initiatives Director
City of Essex Junction
asnellenberger@essexjunction.org
(802) 878-6944 ext. 1601

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/EssexJunctionAmtrak>

UPCOMING EVENT

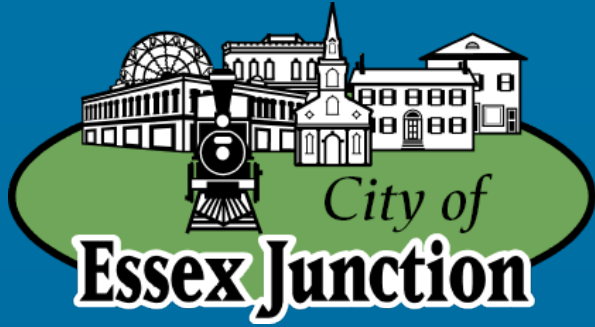
Connect the Junction PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

September 27, 2025 • 10am – 3pm

City of Essex Junction Municipal Offices
2 Lincoln St, Essex Junction

Meet the
project team
and learn about
the project!





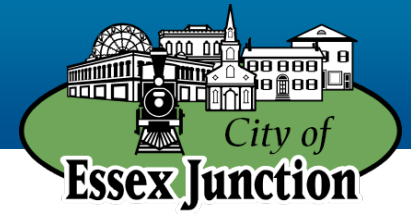
Essex Junction Amtrak Station Improvements

Public Open House

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025



Purpose of Open House



Provide an overview of this station improvement grant project.



Solicit feedback during the early stage of project ideation and development.



Listen to concerns, ideas and take questions from the public.

Project History and Public Outreach



TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
2012	Scoping Study: 1. Alternative options for improvements to transportation circulation and access 2. Improvements for the train station
2015	Community engagement for the 'Design 5 Corners' – document barriers to walking in city center
2016	Community chose Alternative 4 from Scoping Study
2022	City approved for \$3,000,000 in Congressionally Delegated funds for Amtrak station improvements.
2023	Accessibility improvements to the platform and statin area (separate from this project)
2024 (ongoing)	Connect the Junction Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan – supports climate action goals, promotes a walkable city center, improves access to public transit. Community input gathered in Fall of 2024.

2024 Pre-award for FRA Grant

- 1 Administration (\$36,000)
- 2 Preliminary (30%) plans and drawings (\$110,000)
- 3 Environmental Review (NEPA) and Section 106 (Historic Preservation) Reporting (\$15,000)

Table 6-A: Approved Project Budget by Task

Task Title	Agreement Federal Funds	Agreement Non-Federal Funds	Total
Project Administration and Management	\$44,000	\$11,000	\$55,000
Environmental Review	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Preliminary Engineering	\$166,800	\$41,700	\$208,500
Final Design	\$320,000	\$80,000	\$400,000
Construction	\$2,449,200	\$612,300	\$3,061,500
Total	\$3,000,000	\$750,000	Total Project Cost \$3,750,000

Project Overview



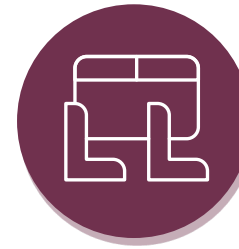
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant money is available to:



Enhance
safety

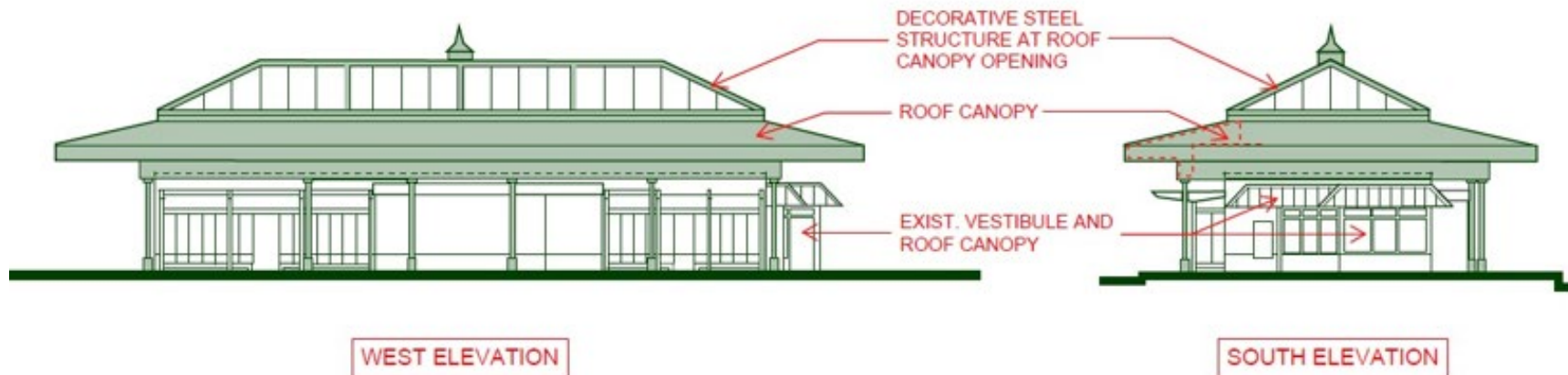


Increase
comfort



Increase
multimodal
accessibility

Location: 29 Railroad Avenue



***Note:** This project is separate from the Amtrak ADA Station Platform Project, which is currently under construction.*



A CLOSER LOOK:

Planned Design Improvements for Improved Passenger Experience

- Construction of a new roof canopy overhang around the entire station building
- Roadway improvements (crosswalks and parking reconfiguration)
- Stormwater drainage upgrades
- Wayfinding signage
- Landscaping
- Fire safety system updates





The Village Cemetery

ADA COMPLIANT SIDEWALK

Second Gen Auto

ADDITIONAL CENTRAL STREET PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

PLATFORM IMPROVEMENTS BY AMTRAK, UNDER CONSTRUCTION

COMMUTER PARKING

IVY LANE

ROUTE 15

RAILROAD AVENUE

CENTRAL STREET

LINCOLN PLACE

RAILROAD AVE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

LINCOLN PLACE CROSSWALK

GMT BUS STOP WITH DECORATIVE CANOPY

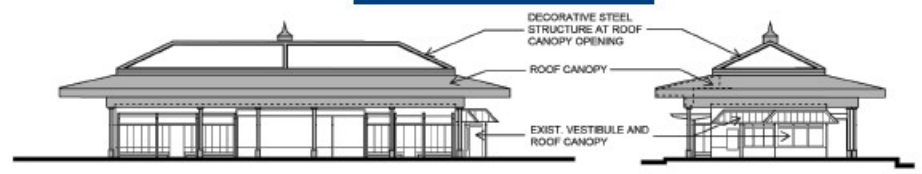
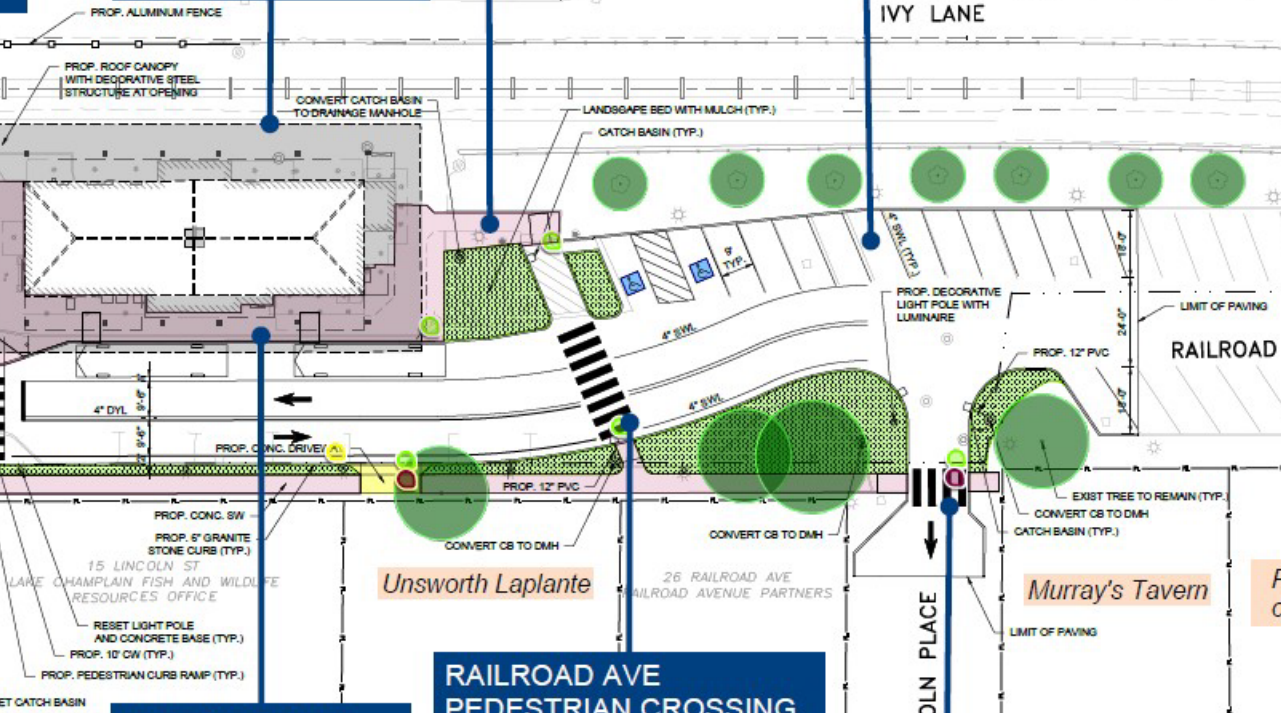
Unsworth Laplante

Murray's Tavern

Flavors of India

Re-claimed on Railroad

20 MAIN ST
BSA MANAGEMENT INC



WEST ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

LEGEND:

- EXISTING TREE
- PROPOSED CONCRETE SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED LAWN/LANDSCAPING

NOTES:

1. TOTAL PARKING AVAILABILITY ON THE SITE IS PROPOSED TO BE REDUCED BY 11 SPACES.

Share your ideas and priorities for:

Canopy and Covered
Areas Style

Crosswalk Location

Bike Racks/Shelter
Location

Railroad Avenue
Parking Changes

Public Feedback Survey



**Your opinion could help shape the future
of this station improvement project.
We want to hear from you!**

Survey is available **Aug-Oct**.

A mix of distribution methods will be
used (website, social media, email,
paper copies, etc.)



Due to financial constraints, the city is not able to completely revamp the existing building.

SEEKING INPUT ON:

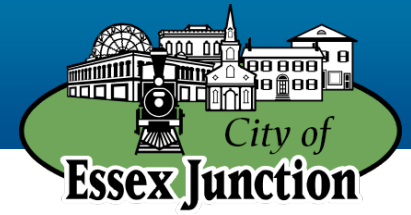


**Safety
Improvements**



**Comfort
and ease of use**

Project Prioritization – Your Input



Safety Improvements:

- Lighting
- Canopy and weather protection
- New crosswalks



Comfort and ease of use improvements:

- Aesthetics of existing building
- Indoor seating
- Video screen displaying bus and train information
- Wayfinding information (maps and/or transit schedules)
- Bike racks
- Covered bike storage

City Project Team Contact Information



Chris Yuen

Community Development Director

cyuen@essexjunction.org

(802) 878-6944 ext. 1607



Michael Giguere

City Planner

mgiguere@essexjunction.org

(802) 878-6944 ext. 1625



Ashley Snellenberger

Communications and Strategic

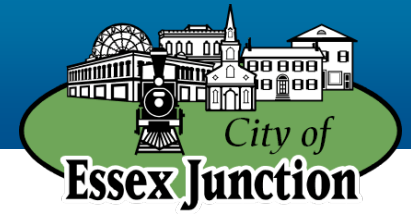
Initiatives Director

asnellenberger@essexjunction.org

(802) 878-6944 ext. 1601



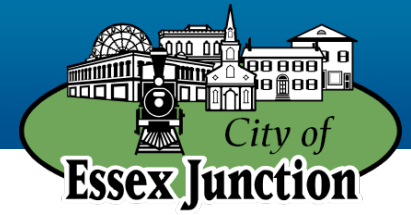
Next Steps



- 1 Incorporate public and stakeholder feedback.
- 2 Survey (online) – Obtain additional community feedback early in the project process.
- 3 Tabling Event during Community Day Festival on Sept. 27 at Foster Road Park.
- 4 October: analyze survey responses.
- 5 Conduct Environmental Review (NEPA)
- 6 Historic Preservation Report



Public Outreach and Engagement Timeline



7/8/2025



Public
Engagement
Kickoff

8/22/2025



Public Survey
Opens

9/4/2025



Public Open
House

9/27/2025



Connect the
Junction
Public Open
House

10/4/2025



Public Survey
Ends

THANK
YOU!





Amtrak Station Improvements Public Survey

The City of Essex Junction received a grant to enhance the safety, comfort and multimodal accessibility of the Essex Junction station area for rail and transit passengers. This project will primarily be located at the Amtrak train station located at 29 Railroad Avenue. The project includes construction of a new roof canopy designed to cover the area surrounding the entire station building and provide exterior connected shelter for passengers accessing trains and buses and roadway improvements. The city is seeking public input and ideas on the style of the canopy, covered areas, location of crosswalk, location of bike racks/shelter, and parking changes on Railroad Avenue.

The goal of these station modifications is to improve passenger experience. We welcome your feedback on some of these planned station improvements and design. Please contact Chris Yuen, Community Development Director, for more information at cyuen@essexjunction.org. **This survey comment period closes on October 4, 2025.**

1. Which of the following describes your relationship to Essex Junction? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Resident/property owner
- ☐ Business owner
- ☐ Employee working in Chittenden County
- ☐ I pass through Essex Junction frequently
- ☐ I visit Essex Junction frequently
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. If you don't live in Essex Junction, what is your relationship with the city? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ I commute to a job here
- ☐ I own a business here
- ☐ I own a property here, but it is not my primary home
- ☐ I drive through the city to other destinations
- ☐ I visit friends and/or family
- ☐ I visit the city to enjoy events and attractions
- ☐ N/A - I live in Essex Junction

3. How do you use the multimodal station? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Bike to the station to use either the bus or train transportation
- ☐ Drive to the station and leave my car to use either the bus or train transportation
- ☐ I walk to the station to use either the bus or train transportation
- ☐ Work-related travel
- ☐ Non-work related travel
- ☐ I don't use the multimodal station

4. How frequently do you use the multimodal station?

- ☐ 5-7 Days Per Week
- ☐ 2-5 Days Per Week
- ☐ Once Per Week
- ☐ A Few Times Per Month
- ☐ A Few Times Per Year
- ☐ Never

5. How important are the following proposed improvements to you? (1 being the most important to 4 being the least important)?

	1 = Most Important			4 = Least Important
Canopy and weather protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aesthetics of existing building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indoor seating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New crosswalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike racks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covered bike storage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video screen displaying bus information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video screen displaying train information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wayfinding information (maps and/or transit schedules)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 6. Which of the following proposed improvements would you most like to see? (Check up to three)

- ☐ Canopy and weather protection
- ☐ Aesthetics of existing building
- ☐ Indoor seating
- ☐ New crosswalks
- ☐ Bike racks
- ☐ Covered bike storage
- ☐ Lighting

- ☐ Video screen displaying bus information
- ☐ Video screen displaying train information
- ☐ Wayfinding information (maps and/or transit schedules)

7. If you had to choose between improvements to **safety** (lighting, weather shelter, crosswalks, etc.) or **comfort/ease of use** (indoor seating, video screens with bus route or train information), which would you prefer to see?

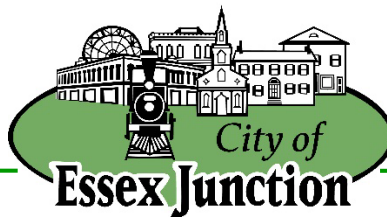
- ☐ Safety (better lighting, weather shelter, crosswalks, etc.)
- ☐ Comfort/Ease of Use (indoor seating, video screens with bus route or train information)

8. Would you be more likely to use the multimodal station (for bus and/or train) if these improvements were made?

- ☐ Yes, much more likely
- ☐ Yes, somewhat more likely
- ☐ No, not more likely
- ☐ N/A – I already use the multimodal station

9. What would you like the project team to keep in mind when considering improvements to the station?

Done



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director

Meeting Date: Thursday, September 4, 2025

Subject: Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study 2025 Updated Alternative

Issue: Following last month's open house on the updated Pearl Street Road Diet alternatives, the Planning Commission may wish to provide additional direction to the design team before recommendations are finalized.

Discussion:

At last month's open house, the Planning Commission requested additional time to discuss the updated alternatives. For reference, the August presentation slide deck for the proposed updated alternative is attached.

On August 21 and August 26, city staff, joined by volunteers from the Planning Commission and City Council, hosted two targeted outreach events outside the apartments at 197 Pearl Street and 235 Pearl Street. These events were designed to gather feedback from renters in multi-family buildings—voices that are not often represented in the City's traditional engagement processes. At both events, staff presented display boards for the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl Street Road Diet project and recorded comments from participants. A summary of this feedback is attached.

The perspectives of residents along this segment of Pearl Street are particularly relevant to the Commission's consideration of whether a lower-cost alternative—one that leaves the median in place—would be acceptable, as these residents are the most directly affected by the existing median.

The project team plans to finalize the updated scoping study and present recommendations and a draft plan to the City Council in November, with a final report delivered in December.

Cost:

The updated alternative seeks to deliver meaningful improvements in the near term using available funding. The 2018 Preferred Alternative was estimated at \$4.3M, while the updated alternative is estimated at \$960,000. The City currently has \$1.23M in capital program funds reserved for this project.

Recommendation:

The Planning Commission should review the proposed updated alternative and provide any additional questions, feedback, or direction to the project team before work proceeds to further refine the design.

Attachments:

1. August Open House slide deck
2. Summary of August 21 public engagement event
3. Summary of August 26 public engagement event

Essex Pearl St Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study

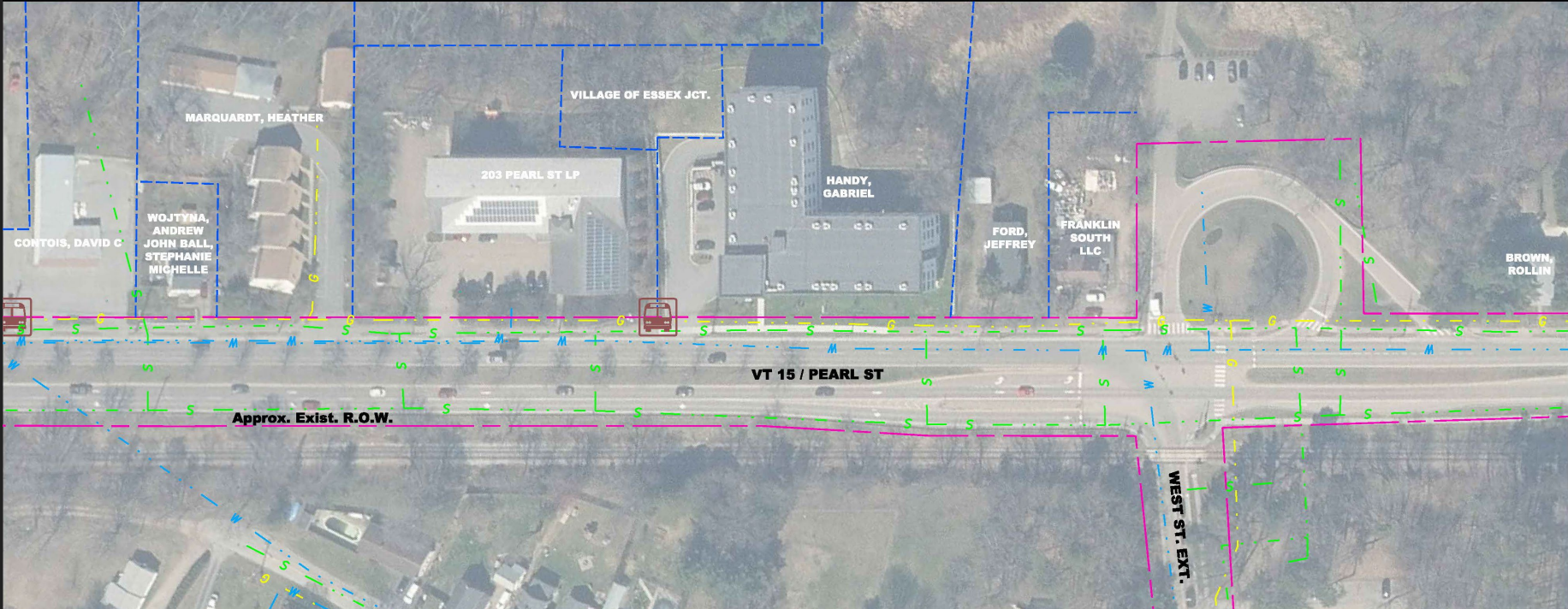
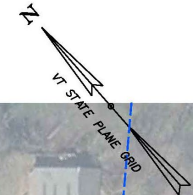
Planning Commission – 08/07/2025




Agenda


- Background – 2018 Scoping Study
- Purpose & Need
- Review Alternatives:
 - Previous 2018 Study Alternatives and Cost Estimate Updates
 - New 2025 Alternative and Cost Estimate
- Questions/Comments/Input
- Next Steps


PEARL STREET MULTIMODAL SCOPING STUDY - BASE MAP





LEGEND


 **TRANSIT STOP**


 **SEWER LINE**


 **VT GAS LINE**

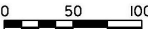
 **WATERLINE**


 **CULVERT**

 **STATE RIGHT OF WAY**

 **TOWN RIGHT OF WAY**

 **PARCEL BOUNDARY**


SCALE IN FEET



Purpose & Need Statement

Current Study

Purpose:

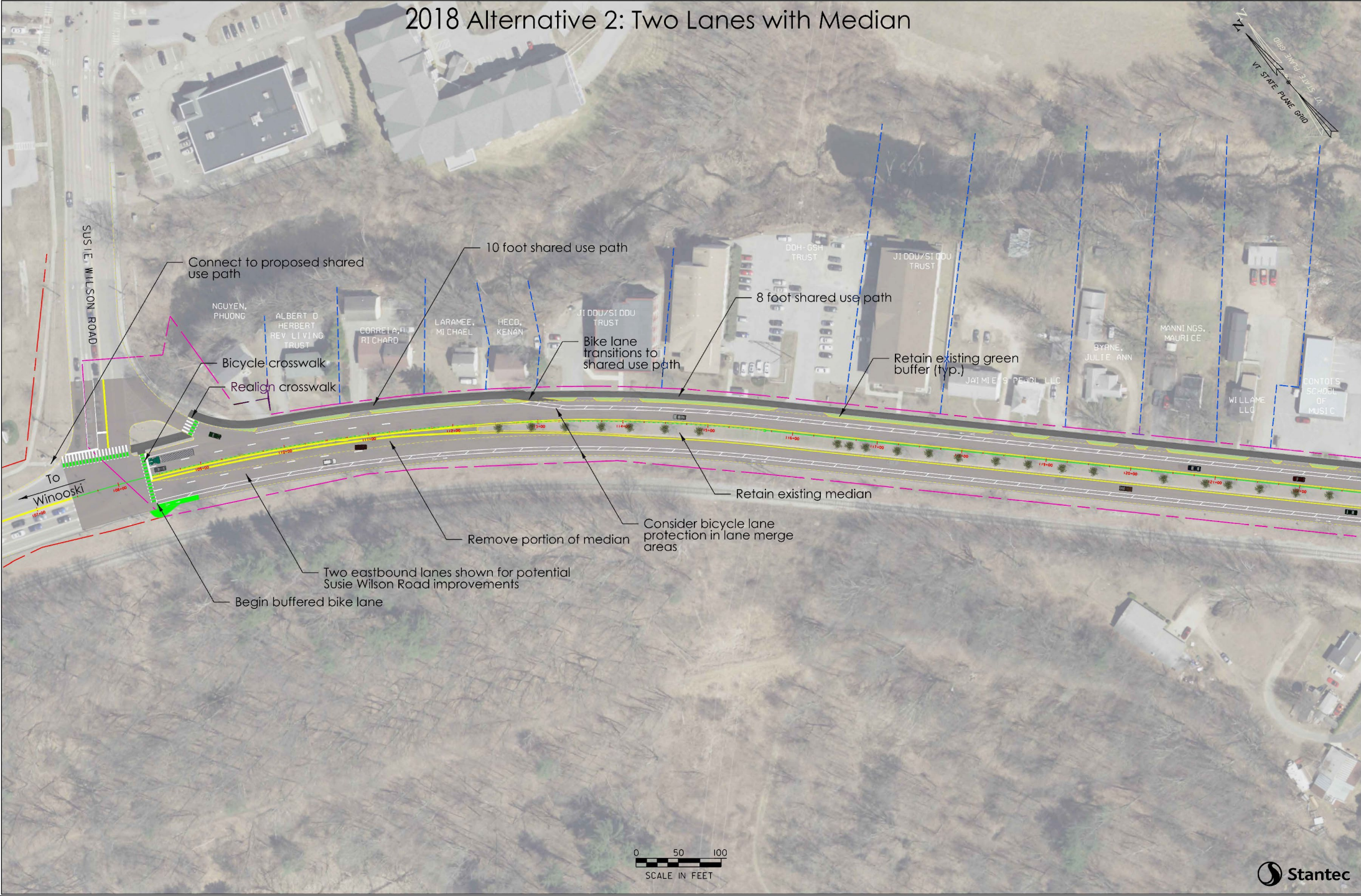
The purpose of this project is to provide safe, visible, comfortable, and convenient multimodal accommodations, including improved transit facilities, that connect existing and/or planned facilities on Pearl Street (VT Route 15) between Susie Wilson Road and West Street extension, for use by all ages, abilities, and trip purposes, while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian conditions on VT Route 15.

Need:

1. There is a need to complete a missing bicycle facility link in the City, Town, and regional bicycle network.
2. There is a need to provide an inviting travel corridor for a growing number of residents and bicycle commuters that reinforces the City's, Town's, and region's goals for pedestrian and bicycle mobility.
3. There is a need to identify short- and medium-term improvements that can be accomplished within the existing resources secured by the City of Essex Junction.

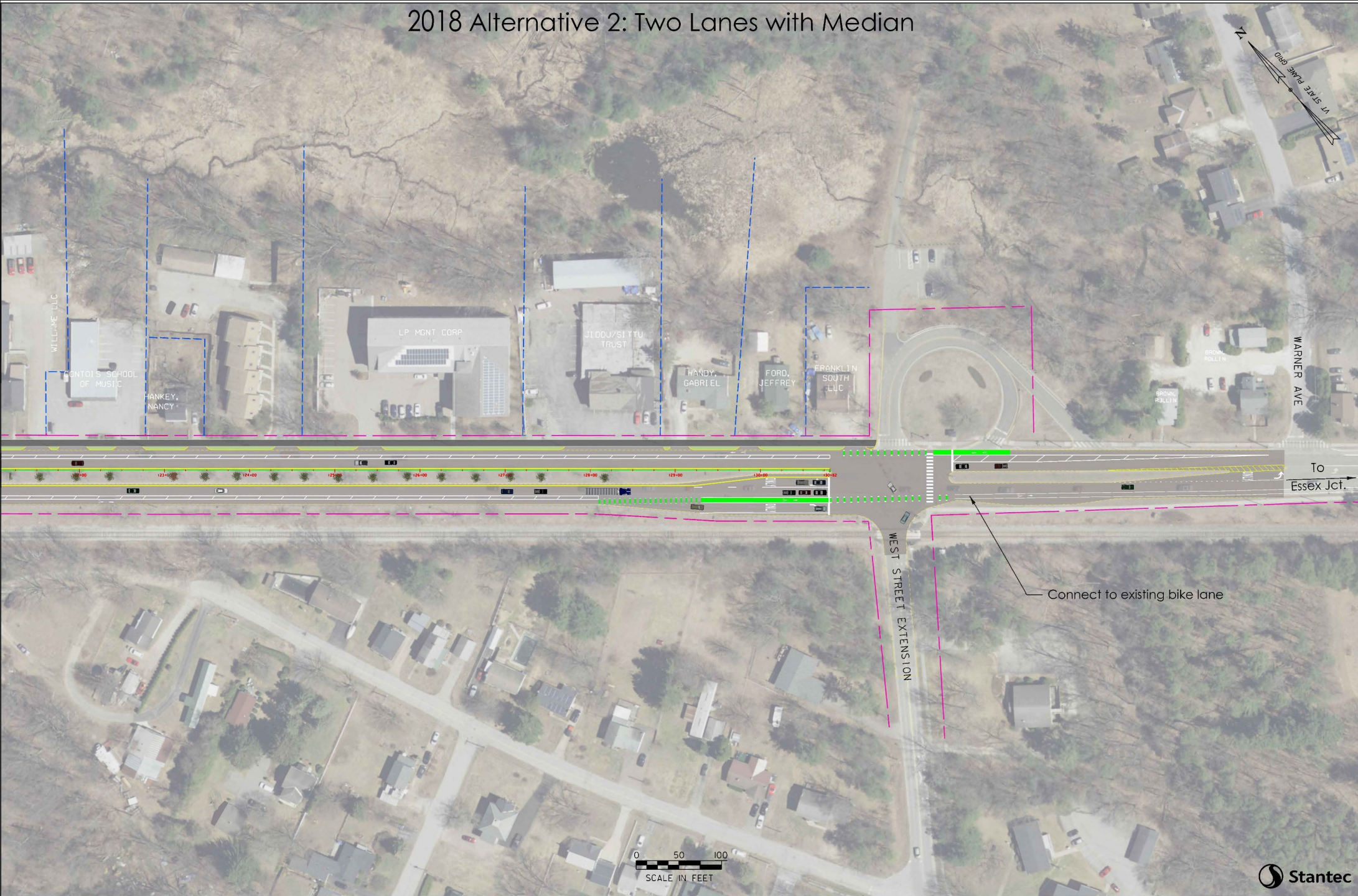
2018

2018 Alternative 2: Two Lanes with Median



2018

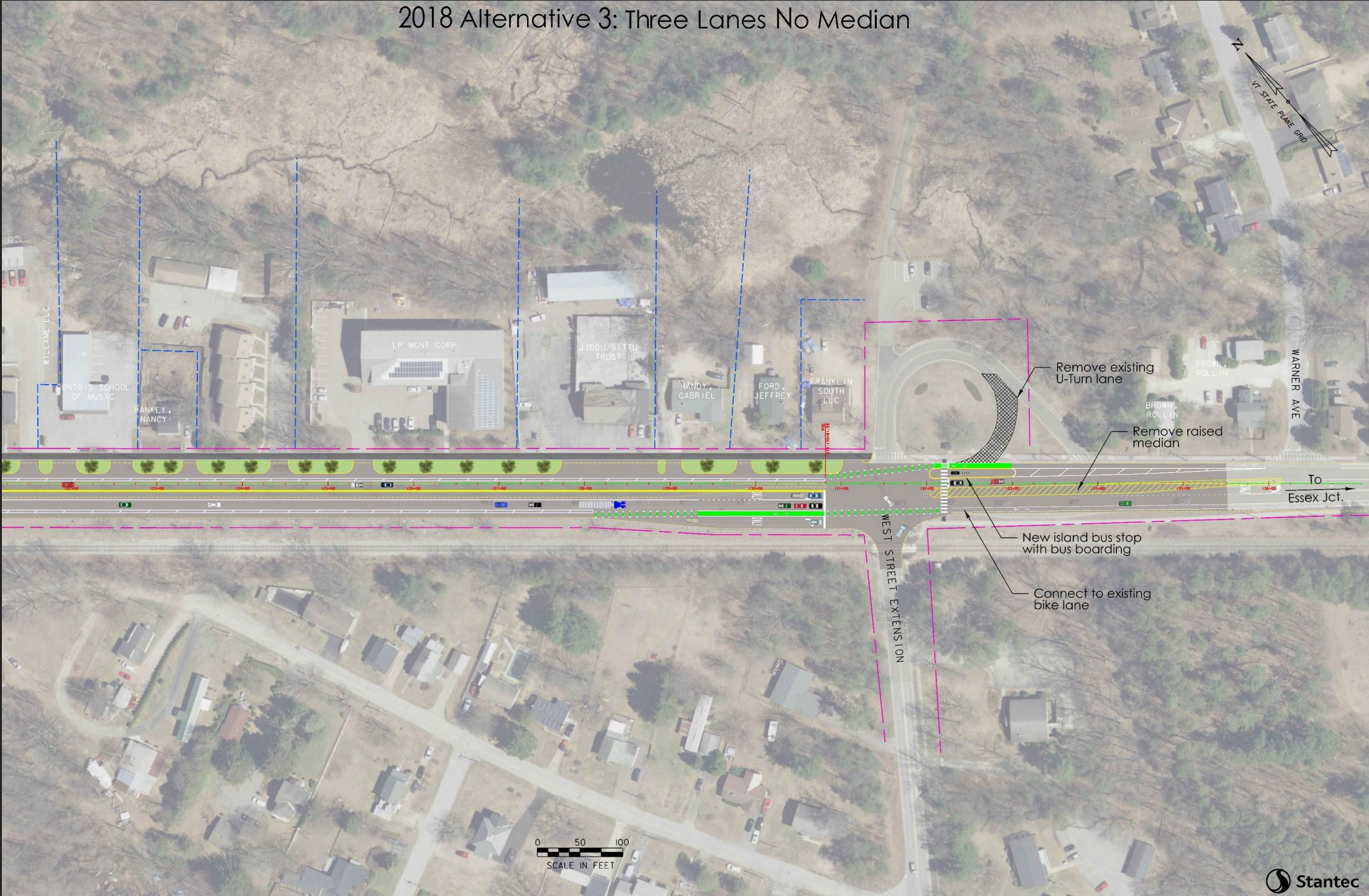
2018 Alternative 2: Two Lanes with Median





2018

2018 Alternative 3: Three Lanes No Median

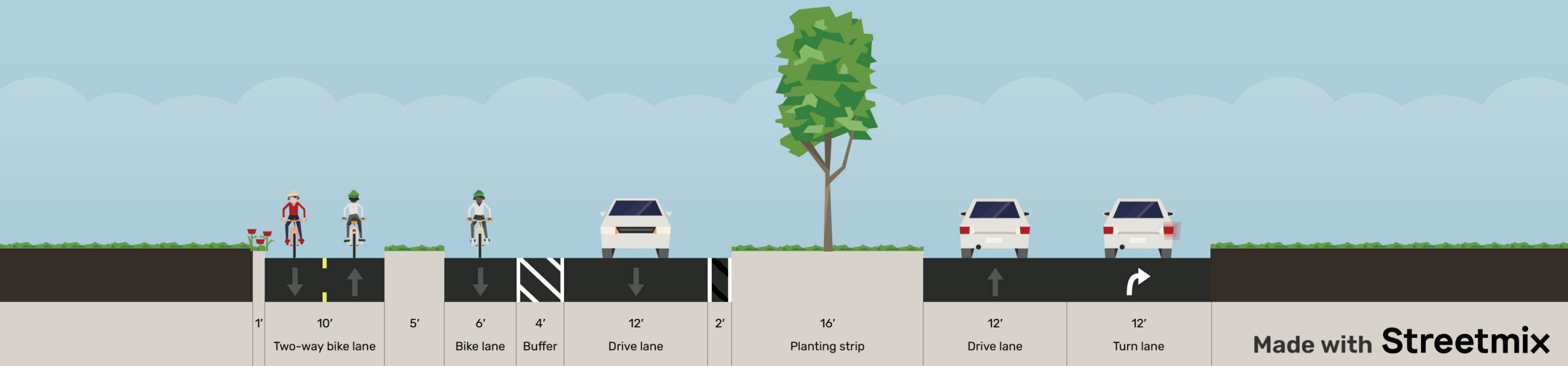
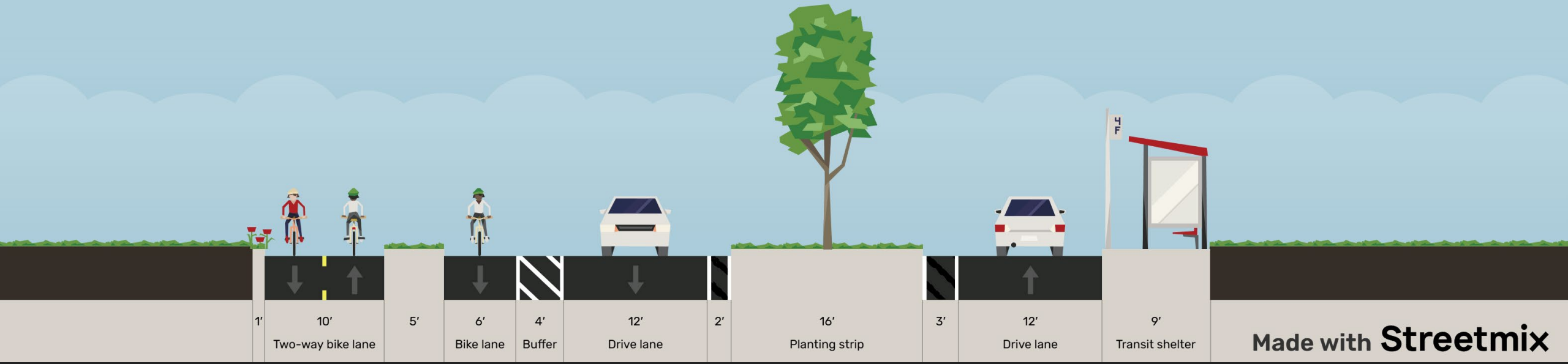


2025 Alternative 2

Existing Curbs, 10-foot Separated Shared-use Path, Transit Stop

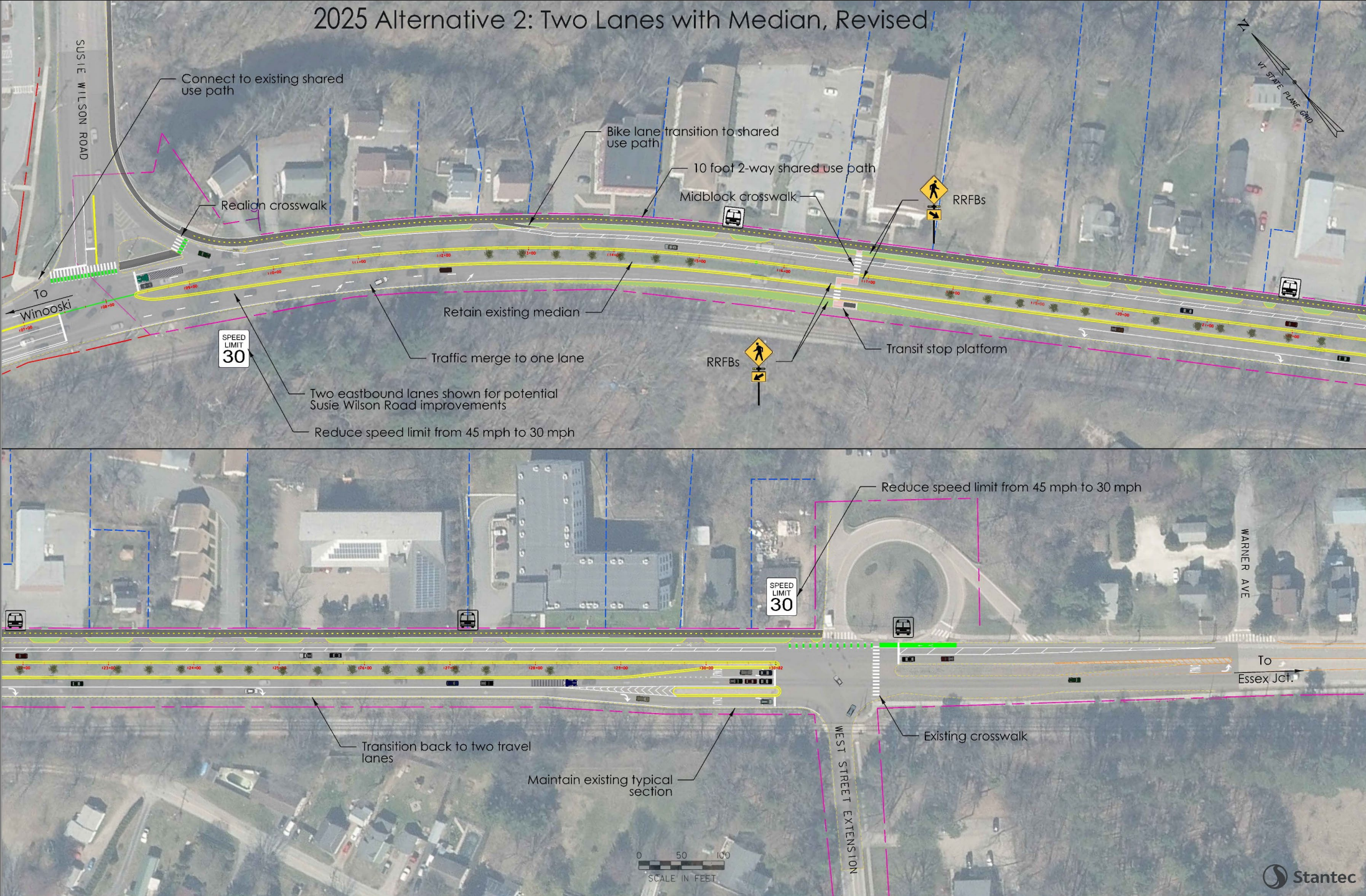
This alternative retains most of the existing median and curbs. The existing two-lane westbound roadway reduced to one lane, with a buffered bike lane, and the adjacent sidewalk is converted to a 10-foot shared-use path separated from the roadway by a 5-foot grass median. The existing two-lane eastbound roadway is primarily maintained as is, except for a narrowing to one-lane approximately mid-way through the study area to accommodate a public transit stop with a mid-block pedestrian crossing.

Typical Sections – 2025 Alternative 2



2025

2025 Alternative 2: Two Lanes with Median, Revised



Project Costs (adjusted to reflect 2025 costs)

Item	2018 Alternative 1 No Action	2018 Alternative 2 (2 lanes with Median)	2018 Alternative 3 (3 Lanes No Median)	2018 Option A (EAA to SWR Bike Lane)	2025 Alternative 2 (2 lanes with Median, Revised)
Construction Costs	\$0	\$1,450,000	\$3,400,000	\$310,000	\$760,000
Right-of-Way Costs	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
Design Engineering	\$0	\$218,000	\$510,000	\$47,000	\$114,000
Construction Engineering	\$0	\$145,000	\$340,000	\$31,000	\$76,000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$0	\$1,823,000	\$4,260,000	\$388,000	\$960,000

Cost of Median Removal Alone

Item	Median Removal
Construction Costs	\$1,450,000
Right-of-Way Costs	\$0
Design Engineering	\$218,000
Construction Engineering	\$145,000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$1,823,000

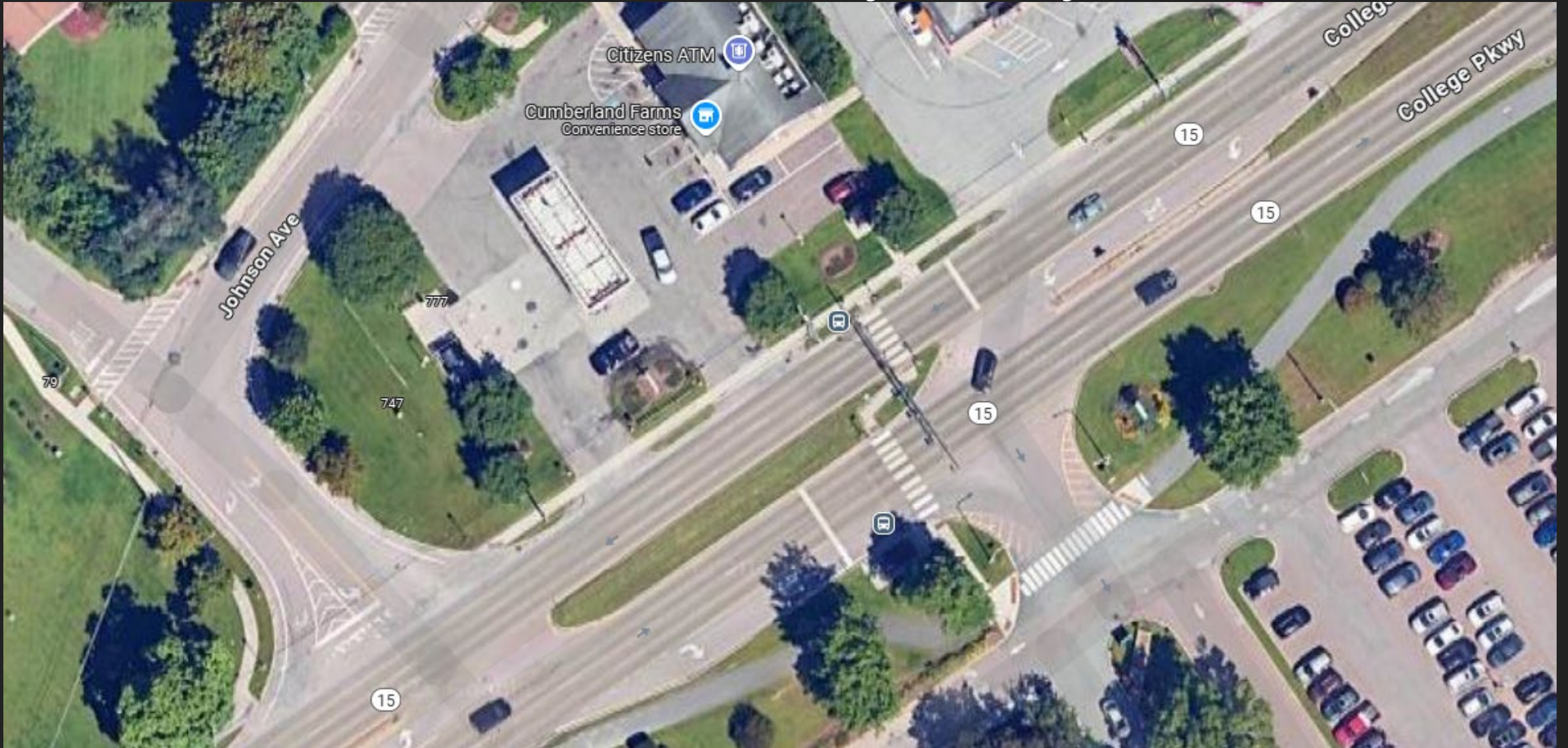
Mid-block Crossing

VTrans Criteria for Installation

- ☐ Speed limit is 40 mph or less
- ☐ 20 or more pedestrians using the crossing per hour during the highest pedestrian volume hour (elementary school age and elderly pedestrians count as 2 each)
- ☐ AADT exceeds 3,000 vehicles per day (VT Route 15 – East of Susie Wilson Road = 16,800 AADT)
- ☐ There is a sidewalk or adequate shoulder for use by pedestrians.
- ☐ There is not another crosswalk across the same roadway within 200 feet;
- ☐ A determination has been made that the pedestrian shall have the right of way over the vehicular traffic;
- ☐ There is adequate sight distance (equal to or exceeding the stopping sight distance for the posted speed) available in both directions.

Crosswalks should not be marked on 3 or 4 lane roadways with AADT greater than 9,000 vehicles per day unless other crosswalk enhancements, such as **pedestrian refuge islands, advanced yield lines, or rectangular rapid flashing beacons are included.**

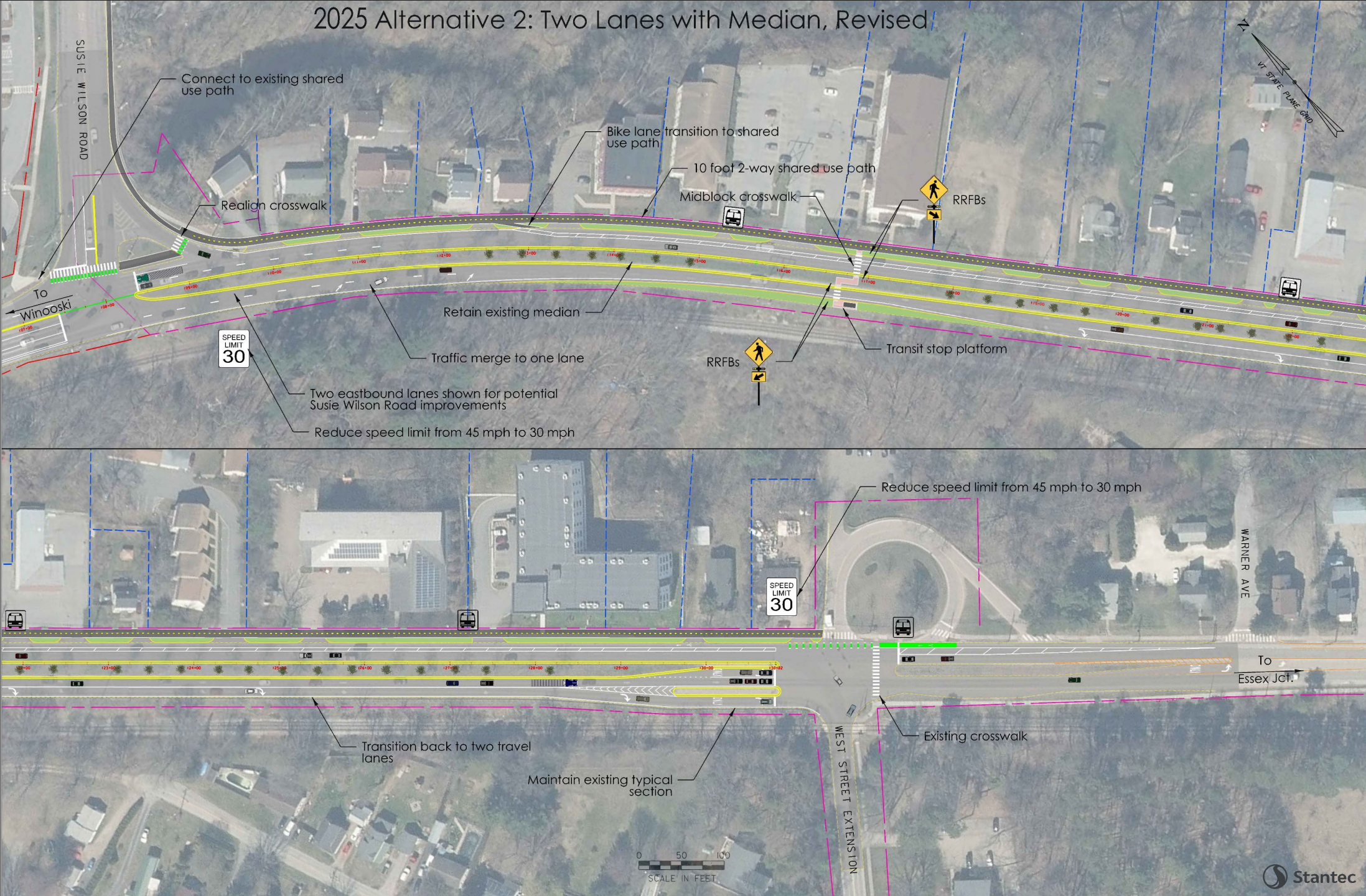
Colchester RT 15 by Fanny Allen



Alternatives Comparison

Item	Alternative 1 No Action	2018 Alternative 2 (2 lanes with Median)	2018 Alternative 3 (3 Lanes No Median)	2025 Alternative 2 (2 lanes with Median, Revised)
Project Costs	\$0	\$1,823,000	\$4,260,000	\$960,000
Complete Missing Bicycle Link	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inviting Corridor for Bike/Ped Mobility	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use by All Ages & Experience Levels	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transit Access	No Change	No Change	No Change	EB Bus Stop Added
Safety	No Improvement	Improved	Improved	Improved
Within Available Budget	Yes	No	No	Yes

Questions/
Comments/
Input



Next Steps

- Incorporate comments
- Consider additional alternative
- Complete alternatives evaluation
- Alternatives refinement
- Selection of preferred alternative
- Report and Implementation Plan

Thank you!

Christine Forde, CCRPC
cforde@ccrpcvt.org

Chris Yuen, City of Essex Junction
cyuen@essexjunction.org

Sean Neely, Stantec:
sneely@stantec.com

Additional Information

COSTS: 2018 Alternative 2 – Updated to 2025

Item No.	Item Description	Unit	Unit Price	Quantity	\$
201.1000	Clearing and Grubbing, Including Individual Trees and Stumps	Lump Sum	\$10,000.00	1	\$10,000.00
203.1500	Common Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$35.00	1550	\$54,250.00
203.1600	Solid Rock Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$120.00	80	\$9,600.00
210.1000	Coarse-Milling, Bituminous Pavement	Square Yard	\$4.00	19200	\$76,800.00
301.3500	Subbase of Dense Graded Crushed Stone	Cubic Yard	\$60.00	1550	\$93,000.00
406.0230	Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IIS, QA Tier III	Ton	\$195.00	375	\$73,125.00
406.0410	Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IVS, QA Tier I	Ton	\$125.00	3025	\$378,125.00
616.4100	Removal of Existing Curb	Linear Foot	\$7.00	1155	\$8,085.00
618.1500	Bituminous Concrete Sidewalk	Ton	\$235.00	250	\$58,750.00
630.1000	Uniformed Traffic Officers	Hour	\$100.00	500	\$50,000.00
630.1500	Flaggers	Hour	\$50.00	500	\$25,000.00
635.1100	Mobilization/Demobilization (Est 12%)	Lump Sum	\$128,959.49	1	\$128,959.49
641.1000	Traffic Control	Lump Sum	\$115,142.40	1	\$115,142.40
646.4030	Durable 4 Inch White Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.40	10700	\$14,980.00
646.4130	Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.60	5300	\$8,480.00
646.4830	Durable 24 Inch Stop Bar, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$15.00	170	\$2,550.00
646.4930	Durable Letter or Symbol, Epoxy Paint	Each	\$175.00	20	\$3,500.00
646.5030	Durable Crosswalk Marking, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$30.00	130	\$3,900.00
646.9001	Colored Pavement Markings, Green	Square Foot	\$19.00	3125	\$59,375.00
900.6450	Lump Sum Project, J (ADD PED PHASE TO EX. SIGNAL SYSTEM)	Lump Sum	\$30,000.00	1	\$30,000.00
				Subtotal	\$1,203,621.89
				Contingency	20.00%
				Total	\$1,450,000.00

COSTS: 2018 Alternative 3 – Updated to 2025

Item No.	Item Description	Unit	Unit Price	Quantity	\$
201.1000	Clearing and Grubbing, Including Individual Trees and Stumps	Lump Sum	\$20,000.00	1	\$20,000.00
203.1500	Common Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$35.00	7200	\$252,000.00
203.1600	Solid Rock Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$120.00	360	\$43,200.00
210.1000	Coarse-Milling, Bituminous Pavement	Square Yard	\$5.00	14200	\$71,000.00
301.3500	Subbase of Dense Graded Crushed Stone	Cubic Yard	\$60.00	5900	\$354,000.00
406.0220	Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IIS, QA Tier II	Ton	\$155.00	2250	\$348,750.00
406.0410	Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IVS, QA Tier I	Ton	\$120.00	3450	\$414,000.00
601.2615	18 Inch CPEP(SL)	Linear Foot	\$120.00	320	\$38,400.00
604.2000	Precast Reinforced Concrete Catch Basin with Cast Iron Grate	Each	\$7,500.00	4	\$30,000.00
604.4101	Rehabilitating DIs, Catch Basins, or Manholes, Class I	Each	\$1,700.00	16	\$27,200.00
616.2100	Vertical Granite Curb	Linear Foot	\$95.00	2800	\$266,000.00
616.4100	Removal of Existing Curb	Linear Foot	\$7.00	1155	\$8,085.00
618.1500	Bituminous Concrete Sidewalk	Ton	\$235.00	275	\$64,625.00
630.1000	Uniformed Traffic Officers	Hour	\$100.00	1300	\$130,000.00
630.1500	Flaggers	Hour	\$50.00	1300	\$65,000.00
635.1100	Mobilization/Demobilization (Est. 12%)	Lump Sum	\$282,605.40	1	\$282,605.40
641.1000	Traffic Control (Est 8%)	Lump Sum	\$188,403.60	1	\$188,403.60
646.4030	Durable 4 Inch White Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.40	10700	\$14,980.00
646.4130	Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.60	5300	\$8,480.00
646.4830	Durable 24 Inch Stop Bar, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$15.00	170	\$2,550.00
646.4930	Durable Letter or Symbol, Epoxy Paint	Each	\$175.00	20	\$3,500.00
646.5030	Durable Crosswalk Marking, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$30.00	130	\$3,900.00
646.9001	Colored Pavement Markings, Green	Square Foot	\$19.00	3125	\$59,375.00
900.6450	Lump Sum Project, . (STORMWATER TREATMENT)	Lump Sum	\$50,000.00	1	\$50,000.00
900.6450	Lump Sum Project, . (LANDSCAPING)	Lump Sum	\$50,000.00	1	\$50,000.00
900.6450	Lump Sum Project, . (ADD PED PHASE TO EX. SIGNAL SYSTEM)	Lump Sum	\$30,000.00	1	\$30,000.00
				Subtotal	\$2,826,054.00
				Contingency	20.00%
				Total	\$3,400,000.00

COSTS: 2025 Alternative 2

Item No.	Item Description	Unit	Unit Price	Quantity	\$
201.1000	Clearing and Grubbing, Including Individual Trees and Stumps	Lump Sum	\$10,000.00	1	\$10,000.00
203.1500	Common Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$35.00	1700	\$59,500.00
203.1600	Solid Rock Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$120.00	90	\$10,800.00
210.1000	Coarse-Milling, Bituminous Pavement	Square Yard	\$4.00	600	\$2,400.00
301.3500	Subbase of Dense Graded Crushed Stone	Cubic Yard	\$60.00	1200	\$72,000.00
406.0230	Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IIS, QA Tier III	Ton	\$195.00	0	\$0.00
	Pedestrian Scale Street Lights	Each	\$10,000.00	5	\$50,000.00
616.4100	Removal of Existing Curb	Linear Foot	\$7.00	1155	\$8,085.00
616.2100	Vertical Granite Curb	Linear Foot	\$100.00	700	\$70,000.00
618.1005	Portland Cement Concrete Sidewalk, 5 Inch	Square Yard	\$115.00	60	\$6,900.00
618.1500	Bituminous Concrete Sidewalk	Ton	\$200.00	350	\$70,000.00
630.1000	Uniformed Traffic Officers	Hour	\$100.00	400	\$40,000.00
630.1500	Flaggers	Hour	\$50.00	1000	\$50,000.00
635.1100	Mobilization/Demobilization (Est 12%)	Lump Sum	\$63,148.44	1	\$63,148.44
641.1000	Traffic Control	Lump Sum	\$50,000.00	1	\$50,000.00
646.4030	Durable 4 Inch White Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.40	4280	\$5,992.00
646.4130	Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$1.60	3100	\$4,960.00
646.4830	Durable 24 Inch Stop Bar, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$15.00	60	\$900.00
646.4930	Durable Letter or Symbol, Epoxy Paint	Each	\$175.00	60	\$10,500.00
646.5030	Durable Crosswalk Marking, Epoxy Paint	Linear Foot	\$30.00	140	\$4,200.00
646.9001	Colored Pavement Markings, Green	Square Foot	\$19.00	0	\$0.00
900.6450	Lump Sum Project, J1 (ADD PED PHASE TO EX. SIGNAL SYSTEM)	Lump Sum	\$30,000.00	0	\$0.00
678.2020003	RRFB, Solar-Powered, Single Sided	Each	\$10,000.00	4	\$40,000.00
				Subtotal	\$629,385.44
				Contingency	20.00%
				Total	\$760,000.00

COSTS: Median Removal (Construction Only)

Item Description							Unit	Unit Price	Quantity	\$	
Clearing and Grubbing, Including Individual Trees and Stumps							Lump Sum	\$15,000.00	1	\$15,000.00	
Common Excavation							Cubic Yard	\$30.00	4500	\$135,000.00	
Solid Rock Excavation							Cubic Yard	\$120.00	50	\$6,000.00	
Subbase of Dense Graded Crushed Stone							Cubic Yard	\$60.00	3600	\$216,000.00	
Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IIS, QA Tier II							Ton	\$155.00	1575	\$244,125.00	
Bituminous Concrete Pavement, Type IVS, QA Tier III							Ton	\$175.00	950	\$166,250.00	
18 Inch CPEP(SL)							Linear Foot	\$110.00	320	\$35,200.00	
Precast Reinforced Concrete Catch Basin with Cast Iron Grate							Each	\$7,500.00	4	\$30,000.00	
Rehabilitating DIs, Catch Basins, or Manholes, Class I							Each	\$1,700.00	16	\$27,200.00	
Removal of Existing Curb							Linear Foot	\$7.00	1155	\$8,085.00	
Uniformed Traffic Officers							Hour	\$100.00	200	\$20,000.00	
Flaggers							Hour	\$50.00	1000	\$50,000.00	
Mobilization/Demobilization							(Est. 12%)	Lump Sum	\$123,193.20	1	\$123,193.20
Traffic Control, All-Inclusive							(Est 10%)	Lump Sum	\$102,661.00	1	\$102,661.00
Durable 4 Inch White Line, Epoxy Paint							Linear Foot	\$1.40	9200	\$12,880.00	
Durable 4 Inch Yellow Line, Epoxy Paint							Linear Foot	\$1.60	5200	\$8,320.00	
Durable 24 Inch Stop Bar, Epoxy Paint							Linear Foot	\$15.00	170	\$2,550.00	
Lump Sum Project, J6 (STORMWATER TREATMENT)							Lump Sum	\$50,000.00	1	\$50,000.00	
									Subtotal	\$1,252,464.20	
									Contingency	15.00%	
									Total	\$1,450,000.00	

Purpose & Need Statement

Previous Study

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to provide a safe, visible, comfortable, convenient, and direct bicycle facility connecting existing and/or planned facilities on VT Route 15 between (Ethan Allen Avenue) Susie Wilson Road and West Street extension, for bicyclists of various ages and abilities, while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian conditions on VT Route 15.

Need:

1. Complete a missing bicycle facility link in the town, village, and regional bicycle network.
2. Provide an inviting travel corridor for a growing number of residents and bicycle commuters that reinforces the Town's, Village's and Region's goals for pedestrian and bicycle mobility.
3. Facilitate use by all age groups, experience levels, and trip purposes.

Purpose & Need Statement

Previous Study

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to provide a safe, visible, comfortable, convenient, and direct bicycle facility connecting existing and/or planned facilities on VT Route 15 between (Ethan Allen Avenue) Susie Wilson Road and West Street extension, for bicyclists of various ages and abilities, while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian conditions on VT Route 15.

Need:

1. Complete a missing bicycle facility link in the town, village, and regional bicycle network.

- VT Route 15 is an important regional transportation corridor that was reconstructed in the 1960's as a median divided highway with four (4) 12-foot lanes. It has long been recognized that this area of VT Route 15 lacks bicycle facilities and while some improvements have been constructed, gaps remain. East of the study area bicycle lanes exist along VT Route 15 from West Street Extension to the Five Corners intersection and beyond. West of the study area a shared use path from Lime Kiln Road to Susie Wilson Road has been designed and construction is expected in 2022. This leaves a missing link in the bicycle network from Susie Wilson Road to West Street extension.

2. Provide an inviting travel corridor for a growing number of residents and bicycle commuters that reinforces the Town's, Village's and Region's goals for pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

- Land use and zoning changes in the project area have introduced a greater need to connect corridor residents to surrounding destinations. The 2016 Essex Town Plan states the following specific transportation policy: "Multiple modes of transportation that connect residents to schools, workplaces, shopping centers and recreational areas shall be supported." The 2014 Village Comprehensive Plan objectives include: continuing to increase the number of sidewalks and other facilities to support bike and pedestrian travel, making it easier for residents to visit downtown businesses; provide well-marked bike and pedestrian lanes, to encourage safety by allowing residents to comfortably and securely navigate the community; and promote and implement strategies to encourage the use of bicycles as alternate transportation modes.

3. Facilitate use by all age groups, experience levels, and trip purposes.

- The current facility – VT Route 15 roadway and existing sidewalk - is challenging for all bicycle users, including the most experienced and confident cyclists. The existing roadway is posted at 45 mph and has 4 lanes, 12-feet wide, and no shoulders for much of the corridor. This discourages would-be commuters and recreational cyclists needing to travel along VT Route 15. This connection would provide access to schools, shopping centers, and workplaces and therefore it is expected to be used by a wide range of ages and abilities.

Purpose & Need Statement

Current Study

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to provide safe, visible, comfortable, and convenient multimodal accommodations, including improved transit facilities, that connect existing and/or planned facilities on Pearl Street (VT Route 15) between Susie Wilson Road and West Street extension, for use by all ages, abilities, and trip purposes, while maintaining safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian conditions on VT Route 15.

Need:

1. There is a need to complete a missing bicycle facility link in the City, Town, and regional bicycle network.

- VT Route 15 is an important regional transportation corridor that was reconstructed in the 1960's as a median divided highway with four (4) 12-foot lanes. A shared use path runs from Lime Kiln Road and ends at Susie Wilson Road. On-street bike lanes run from West Street Extension towards Five Corners. This leaves a missing link in the bicycle network from Susie Wilson Road to West Street extension.
- The City of Essex Junction Community and Strategic Action Plan (2024) identifies the need to "Develop a citywide multimodal transportation plan." The public input identified in the plan indicates a demand for safe bicycle facilities and specifically calls out the need for bicycle facilities on VT 15.
- The Essex Town Plan (2024) identifies the need to "Transition from an auto-centric focus to a multi-modal focus that increases attention and investment in walking, biking, and transit use." It also identifies that "multiple modes of transportation that connect residents to schools, workplaces, shopping centers and recreational areas shall be supported."

2. There is a need to provide an inviting travel corridor for a growing number of residents and bicycle commuters that reinforces the City's, Town's, and region's goals for pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

- There continues to be residential and commercial growth in the project area [cite plan/study]. There are no existing dedicated bicycle facilities within the project area. Bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities currently share a sidewalk that was not designed for this shared use. The Chittenden County Regional Active Transportation Plan (2022) identifies this segment of the Pearl Street corridor as a medium priority for making improvements to the countywide bicycle network. Due to its roadway characteristics, the regional plan also identifies this segment of Pearl Street as a high traffic stress segment.
- The City of Essex Junction Community and Strategic Action Plan (2024) indicates the need to enhance transportation safety. The plan states, "To create a walkable and bikeable community will require a focus on safety."
- The Essex Town Plan (2024) identifies a goal to "develop and implement a Safe System Approach to more effectively address traffic safety issues." Public input from the 2018 scoping study indicates that the public expressed concerns about safety for bicyclists and pedestrians in this area. The public preferred the idea of providing off-road bicycle facilities such as a shared use path versus providing on-road bicycle lanes. The public also identified the need to improve safety for the crosswalk at the Susie Wilson Road intersection.

3. There is a need to identify short- and medium-term improvements that can be accomplished within the existing resources secured by the City of Essex Junction.

- The City has funds available for the design and construction of improvements. If additional funding is available, potential add-on improvements could be included.

Existing Conditions

Traffic Operations

		2017 Existing			2025 Existing		
	Peak Hour	LOS ¹	Delay ²	V/C ³	LOS ¹	Delay ²	V/C ³
<u>Signalized Intersections</u>							
VT Route 15 / Susie Wilson Rd							
	AM	C	27.0	0.76	C	32.2	0.68
	PM	D	44.0	0.87	D	37.4	0.81
VT Route 15 / West Street Ext							
	AM	A	9.6	0.48	B	14.5	0.72
	PM	B	14.9	0.79	C	23.2	0.90

197 Pearl Ice Cream Social Engagement Summary – August 20, 2025

On August 20, 2025, City staff hosted an “ice cream social” style public engagement event in front of 197 Pearl Street from 4:30–6:30 PM. Attendees were invited to enjoy scoops of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study update.

Event outreach included email invitations distributed to residents through the property management company, as well as posters placed at 197 and 203 Pearl Street, as well as the nearby bus stop. The weather was sunny and warm, which was conducive to high participation. Approximately 30 members of the public participated in the event, many of whom engaged deeply, asked many questions and provided comments for both projects.

City representatives in attendance:

- Michael Giguere, City Planner
- Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
- Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission
- Elijah Massey, Planning Commission
- Elaine Haney, City Council

Participant comments:

- Resident 1
 - I like the median – it makes things safer and reduces conflict
 - When I lived here in 2018, not so bad, but now I have to take whatever I can find [in relation to housing costs / Connect the Junction project]
 - More housing is great [in relation to housing costs / Connect the Junction project]
- Resident 2
 - Median is annoying – having to go around
 - I wouldn’t mind waiting behind a bus for a bit if it meant people could get home safely
- Resident 3
 - I don’t like on-street bike facilities. It’s dangerous for bikers and drivers
 - I would like to see the median removed eventually, but not a huge deal if it has to stay as I’ve gotten used to it
- Resident 4
 - I don’t mind the median that much. The turnaround at West Street Ext is quite reasonable

- I understand the need for the eastbound bus stop but I'm concerned about the bus completely blocking the eastbound cars while serving the stop
- Resident 5
 - I would like to see one of two futures for this section of Pearl Street:
 - Remove the median, making car access easier, OR
 - Make this section of Pearl Street fully walkable/bikeable. No half measures
- Resident 6
 - Median is okay, I like it for safety
 - GPS sometimes doesn't know how to navigate this area
- Resident 7
 - The median is annoying and requires driving past the apartment complex and turning around- having it removed would be nice
 - If it's not possible to remove the entire median, perhaps it could be removed at strategic locations
 - One lane westbound would be okay, this area is not the real bottleneck for westbound traffic
 - Concerns about drivers hitting bikes/peds at driveway

235/241 Pearl Ice Cream Social Engagement Summary – August 26, 2025

On August 26, 2025, City staff hosted an “ice cream social” style public engagement event in front of 235 Pearl Street from 4:30–6:30 PM. Attendees were invited to enjoy scoops of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study update.

Event outreach included email invitations distributed to residents through the property management company, as well as posters placed at 235, 241, and 243 Pearl Street as well as the nearby bus stop. The weather was cool with intermittent drizzle, which may have reduced attendance. Approximately 10 members of the public participated in the event. Staff also observed about 15 cyclists using the Pearl Street sidewalk during the event, a relevant data point for the Road Diet project.

City representatives in attendance:

- Michael Giguere, City Planner
- Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
- Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission
- Elena Juodisius, Planning Commission
- Diane Clemens, Planning Commission

Participant comments:

- Resident 1 – The median is a little inconvenient but not a major issue.
- Resident 2 – Supports the 2025 Alternative because they frequently walk and take the bus; emphasized the importance of the proposed eastbound bus stop.
- Resident 3 – Finds the eastbound bus stop proposal very useful.
- Resident 4 – Uses transit with children and currently walks 9 minutes each way; strongly supports the proposed bus stop.
- Resident 5 – Reported that Uber drivers often have difficulty navigating the jughandle turn.