

FRAMINGHAM DOWNTOWN PROGRAMMATIC STUDY
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM ON EXISTING CONDITIONS

Technical Memorandum #2 - Existing and Potential Improvements

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PURPOSE

This memorandum provides an evaluation of the existing streetscape enhancements within the project area of the Downtown Framingham Programmatic Enhancements Plan.

PROJECT AREA

The project study area addressed in this memorandum consists of that part of Framingham's central business district on both sides of Concord Street (Rt. 126) extending north from Waverly Street (Rt. 135) to the Clinton Street intersection. South of Waverly Street, the study area continues along Irving Street as far as the Hollis Street intersection and then on Hollis Street as far as Hollis Court. It also includes Union Avenue from Memorial Square to the Pearl Street intersection and around the Park Street Common as defined by Park Street, Franklin Street and Howard Street. The study area is illustrated in Figures 1A and 1B.

This memorandum contains the following sections, which summarize the results of the field reconnaissance:

1. Special Sidewalk Surfaces
2. Condition of the Urban Forest/Street Trees
3. Opportunities for Planting Enhancements
4. Orientation and Interpretive Signage
5. Street Light Character
6. Streetscape Furniture/Pedestrian Amenities

Comments are illustrated on the attached plan.

SPECIAL SIDEWALK SURFACES

As noted in Technical Memorandum #1, the majority of sidewalks within the study area are cement concrete. While not in pristine condition, most of these walkways are well-maintained and are, generally, quite serviceable. Where some very limited areas of special sidewalk treatments exist, they are related to high visibility civic locations in the center of the district.

The areas of special sidewalk surface treatment are described below and are illustrated in Figures 1A and 1B.

Brick Pavers at the Memorial Building

In 2001, the Town installed ornamental unit pavers at Memorial Square. Clay brick pavers (4" x 8") in three colors were installed in a geometric pattern in the forecourt of the Memorial Building. The unit paver treatment was extended across Union Avenue and Concord Street in crosswalks. The unit pavers at the crosswalks take the form of 6" x 12" concrete pavers edged with flush granite curbs. Wheel chair ramps serving these crosswalks have been constructed at sidewalk extensions ("bumpouts") at #26 Union Avenue



and #149 Concord Street. The sidewalk extensions are paved with clay brick pavers matching the ‘field’ treatment at the Memorial Building forecourt.

This pavement is in excellent condition.

The central roundabout within Memorial Square has been edged with 8”x8”x4” granite cobbles with mortared joints.



Park Street Common

The other principal area of special pedestrian pavement is at the Common. Clay brick pavers have been installed across the full width of the park sidewalk fronting Concord Street and on walkways traversing the park interior. Similarly, the Franklin Street sidewalks at the rear entry to the Common are paved with clay brick.

Concord Street at Bank of America

At the Bank of America building at the corner of Waverly Street and Concord Street, a short length of private walk linking the Concord Street public sidewalk to bank entry and the platform of the former train station is paved with colored concrete unit pavers.

CONDITION OF THE URBAN FOREST/STREET TREES

Street trees and the urban forest provide benefits that are both tangible and intangible and are of vital importance to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the community. While many of the principal streets in the study area have extensive tree cover in admirable condition and the Town appears to recognize the value of its urban forest by maintaining existing trees and replacing dead ones, there is a lack of species and age diversity that is troubling. The vast majority (>90%) of existing street trees are honeylocusts (*Gleditsia triacanthos inermis*) between 6” and 12” in diameter at 4’ above ground level (relatively even-aged).

Having a large percentage of a single tree species (monoculture) is dangerous for the health of the forest and can lead to catastrophic results. A good example of this situation was the dominance of the American elm (*Ulmus americana*) on the streets of American cities in the early twentieth century. When Dutch elm disease was introduced in the 1930’s, the resulting loss of trees was devastating. Similar scenarios are now foreseeable in regard to the Asian long-horned beetle (maples) and the emerald ash borer.

The Town is beginning to address the hazards of street tree monoculture by replacing dead or previously removed specimens with young ginkgo trees (*Ginkgo biloba*) and Zelkovas.

Hollis Street

- 7 honeylocust trees from 10” – 14” diameter
- 2 ginkgo trees – 3” diameter (newly planted)
- 1 zelkova tree – 3” diameter (newly planted)

Irving Street

- 10 honeylocust trees from 8” – 14” diameter

Irving Street/Waverly Street Intersection

- 2 honeylocust trees from 10” – 12” diameter

Concord Street – Waverly Street to Memorial Square

- 20 honeylocust trees from 6” – 10” diameter
- 2 honeylocust trees – 3” diameter (newly planted)
- 2 ginkgo trees – 3” diameter (newly planted)
- Fabric Place parking lot – a substantial shrub bed exists between Howard Street and #79 Concord Street

Concord Street – Memorial Square to Clinton Street

- 7 honeylocust trees from 6” – 8” diameter
- 2 honeylocust trees – 3” diameter (newly planted)

Union Avenue from Memorial Square to Pearl Street

- 4 honeylocust trees from 8” – 10” diameter

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLANTING ENHANCEMENTS

Opportunities exist to enhance existing street tree plantings with additional installations where adequate sidewalk width exists and the presence of overhead utilities are not a constraining factor. Additional opportunities exist to better define the pedestrian realm or screen adjacent land uses by securing easements to plant trees and shrubs on private property abutting the public right of way.

Hollis Street – west side

- #75 Hollis Street – space for 3 street trees
- #39 Hollis Street – space for 2 street trees

Hollis Street – east side

- #34 Hollis Street – space for 2 street trees

Irving Street – east side

- #46 Irving Street – space for 3 street trees

Waverly Street – south side

- At Store 24 parking lot - space exists adjacent to sidewalk on public road right of way for additional shrub and tree plantings to better screen parking lot

Waverly Street – north side

- At Bank of America branch - space exists on private lawn to install street trees and shrub plantings (with easement) to buffer view of ‘T’ tracks



Concord Street

- At MBTA parking lot – space exists on land adjacent to Concord Street sidewalk to plant street trees and shrub plantings (with easement) to buffer view of ‘T’ lot
- #46 Concord Street (Salvation Army) – space for 1 street tree
- #171-181 Concord Street (opposite Memorial Bldg) – space for 2 street trees
- #188 Concord Street (opposite Frederick Street) – space for 2 street trees
- #196-200 Concord Street – space for 3 street trees
- Concord Street just north of Sanger Street – space for 3 street trees
- #214 Concord Street – space for 3 street trees



Union Avenue

- #14-20 Union Avenue (at Memorial Square) – space for 3 street trees
- #40-82 Union Avenue (opposite Memorial Bldg) – space for 5 street trees
- Union Street at Memorial Bldg parking lot – space for 4 street trees
- Union Street edge of Memorial Bldg parking lot – space at edge of parking lot might be used to install shrub plantings - visually define street edge and buffer view of lot; may require re-striping parking lot
- Union Street at Police Headquarters – space for 3 street trees



ORIENTATION AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE



Beyond directional and regulatory signs for vehicles, pedestrian orientation and interpretive signage is limited in the study area.

Irving Street/Burkis Square

- Charlie Burkis Jr. memorial monument

Concord Street

- At MBTA grade crossing – train station pedestrian orientation signage and map site. Installation is partly obscured by visual clutter of RR crossing gates and traffic signals and has been damaged
- At Park Street Common sidewalk – Common pedestrian orientation

signage and map site

- #113 Concord Street (Brasilio Supermercado) – Memorial Square pedestrian orientation signage and map site. Sign has been damaged

Union Avenue

- At Proctor Street intersection – parking orientation sign

Franklin Street

- At Common – Park Street Common pedestrian orientation signage and map site

Park Street Common

- At Common – interpretive signage exists within the Common highlighting Framingham’s history, diversity and culture

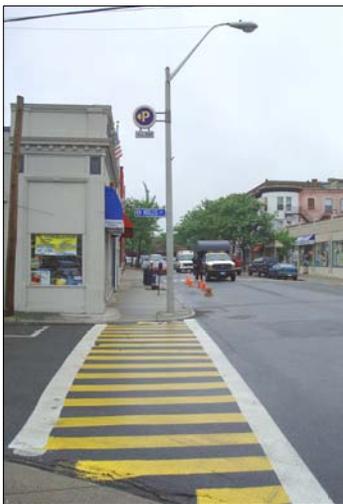


SIGNAGE OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist to enhance existing signage may exist at key pedestrian nodes and traffic zones.

- At the Waverly Street/Irving Street/Concord Street intersection – orientation to town center and train station could be improved by installing additional orientation signage at corner plant bed near Store 24
- At the Union Avenue/Proctor Street intersection and at the Concord Street/Sanger Street intersection – orientation signage for town offices, police station and library would be helpful
- Orientation signage at through-block passage such as #100 Concord Street and #120 Concord Street and at the alley adjacent to #40 Union Avenue would help orient pedestrians to destinations and parking

STREETLIGHT CHARACTER



Most of the street lights in downtown Framingham fall into three types. The basic street light type is an aluminum arm and luminaire commonly referred to as a “cobra-head” fixture. This arm and luminaire is attached to a pre-cast concrete pole and the lamp is typically 26-28’ above the street. At the edges of the study area, where electric and telephone/CATV utilities are delivered on overhead poles, these lamps are mounted on wood poles.

In certain high-visibility districts, ornamental cast iron poles arms and teardrop luminaires are substituted for the more common cobra-head lights. These lamps are sometimes referred to as “Boulevard” fixtures and are mounted about 24’ above street level. A smaller, ornamental light is utilized at the Park Street Common. The light is a “Shepherd’s Crock”-type pole and arm with a teardrop luminaire. The lamp is mounted about 16’ above

finish grade.

Hollis Street to Burkis Square

- Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles

Burkis Square/Irving Street

- Boulevard fixture

Waverly Street (within Study Area)

- Boulevard fixture

Concord Street

- From MBTA grade crossing north to Memorial Square (#120 Concord Street) – Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Memorial Square to Frederick Street - Boulevard fixture
- Frederick Street to Sanger Street - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Sanger Street to Clinton Street – west side - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles; east side - Cobra-head fixtures on wood utility poles

Union Avenue

- Memorial Square to #30 Union Avenue - Boulevard fixture
- #30 Union Avenue to Proctor Street - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Proctor Street to Pearl Street – west side - cobra-head fixtures on wood utility poles; east side - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles

Concord Street

- From MBTA grade crossing north to Memorial Square (#120 Concord Street) – Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Memorial Square to Frederick Street - Boulevard fixture
- Frederick Street to Sanger Street - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Sanger Street to Clinton Street – west side - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles; east side - cobra-head fixtures on wood utility poles
- Frederick Street to Sanger Street - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles
- Sanger Street to Clinton Street – west side - Cobra-head fixtures on concrete poles; east side - cobra-head fixtures on wood utility poles

Park Street Common

- Interior Common walkways – ‘Shepherd’s Crook’ ornamental lights



- Howard Street at Common - south side - Cobra-head fixture on concrete pole; north side - Boulevard fixture
- Franklin Street at Common - east side - Cobra-head fixtures on wood utility poles and boulevard fixture
- Park Street at Common - south side - Boulevard fixture

STREET FURNITURE / PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

- With the exception of trash receptacles, the range and extent of available street furniture is limited in the downtown district.
- A bus shelter with seating faces Concord Street and serves MetroWest Regional Transit Authority patrons at Park Street Common
- Seating is available at the plaza in front of the Memorial Building
- An ornamental street clock (non-functioning) is located at #79 Concord Street
- Trash receptacles are located at:
 - #85, #64, #37 and #30 Hollis Street
 - #18 Irving Street
 - #1, #46, #55, #79, #108, #113, #121, #193, #200 Concord Street and at Memorial Building (2) and Park Street Common (2)
 - #26 and #42 Union Street
 - Franklin Street at Park Street Common (2)

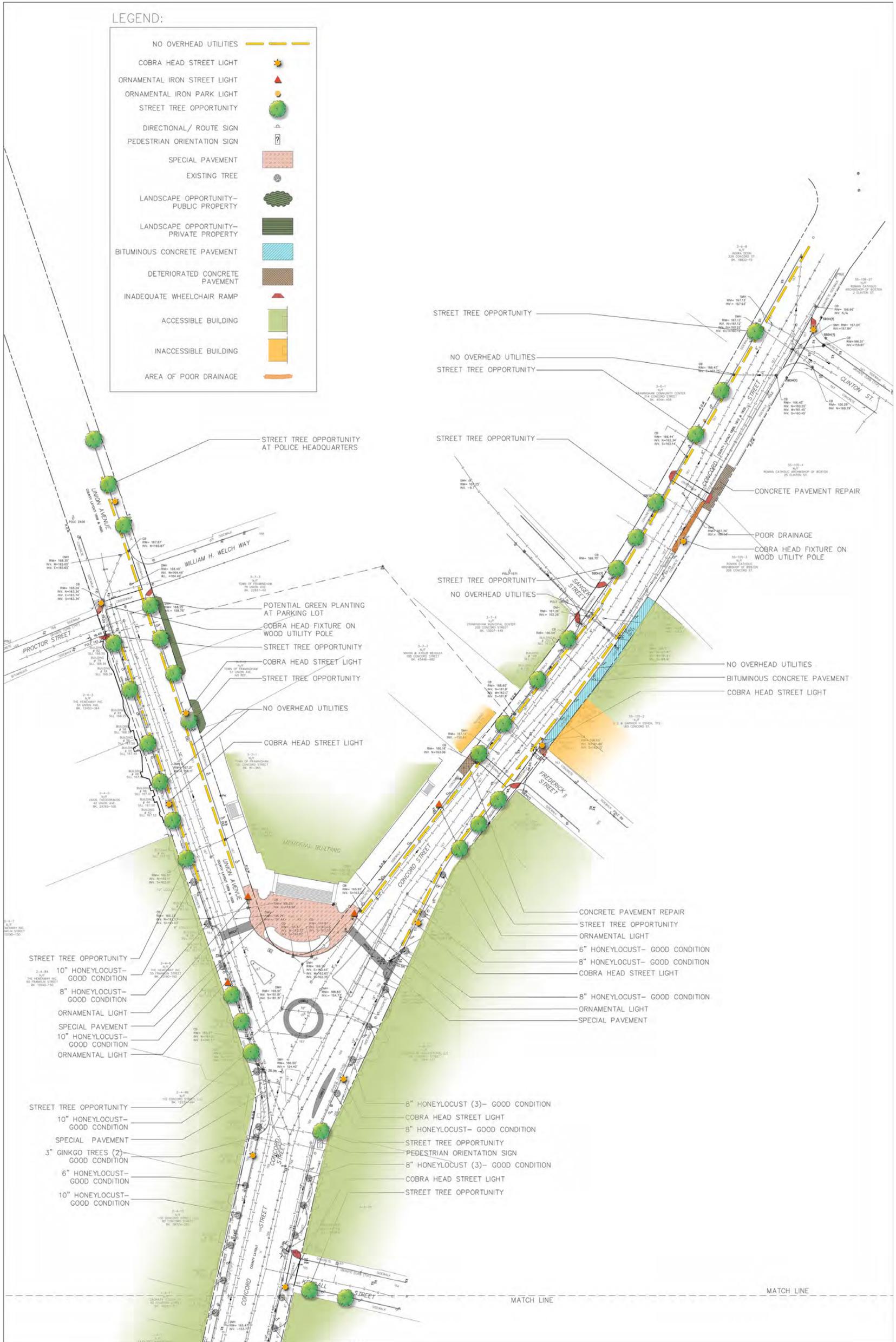
STREET FURNITURE OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist to provide additional street furniture to provide for the comfort and convenience of downtown visitors.

- At the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority bus stop opposite Park Street Common, a shelter to match that across Concord Street would benefit bus patrons.
- Additional benches located at intervals under the shade trees on both sides of Concord Street south of Memorial Square would contribute to a more comfortable pedestrian environment
- Additional benches could also be installed on the east side of Hollis Street near the market

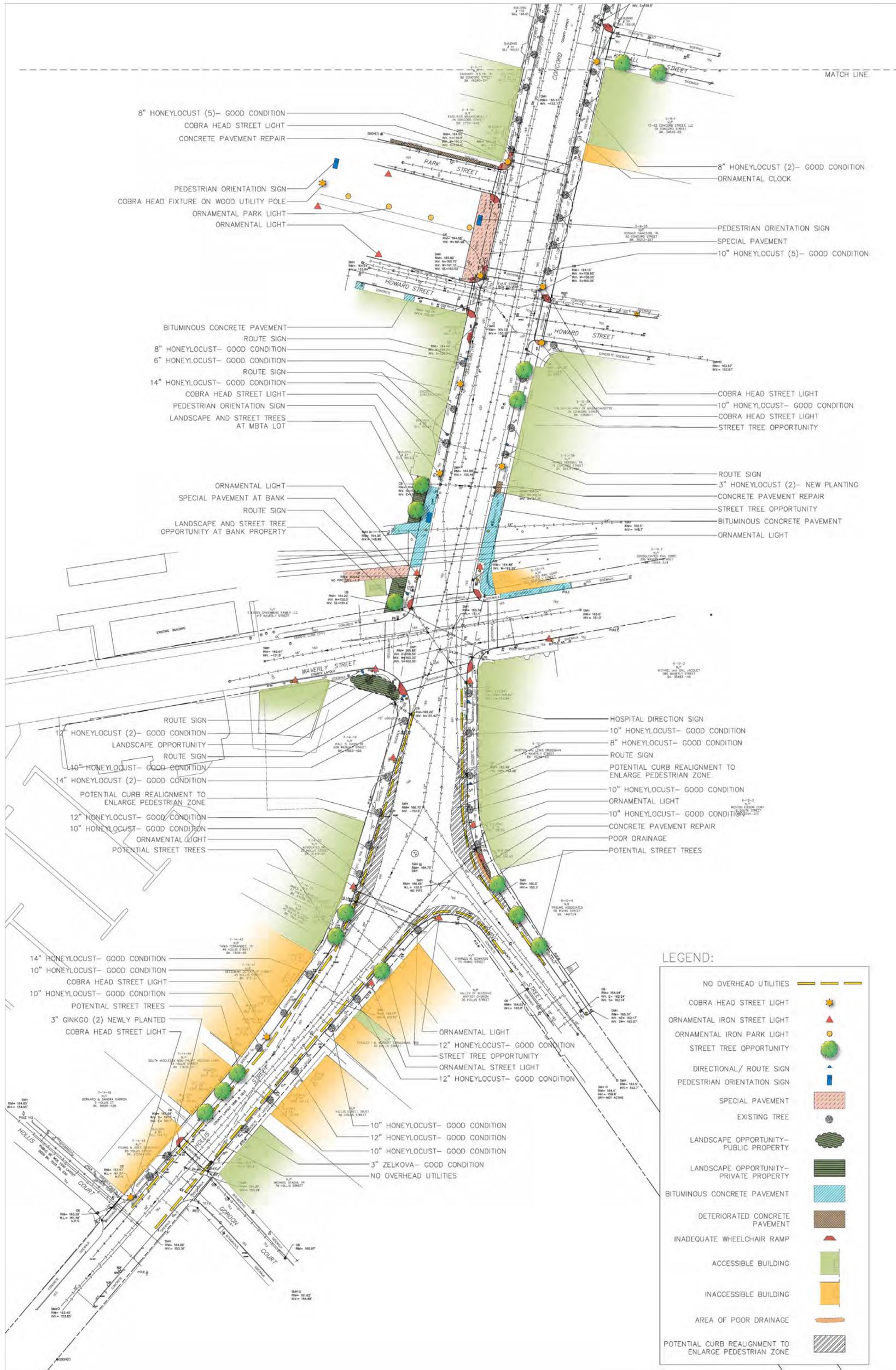


Figure 1A - Study Area North



Version: June 16, 2008

Figure 1B - Study Area South



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