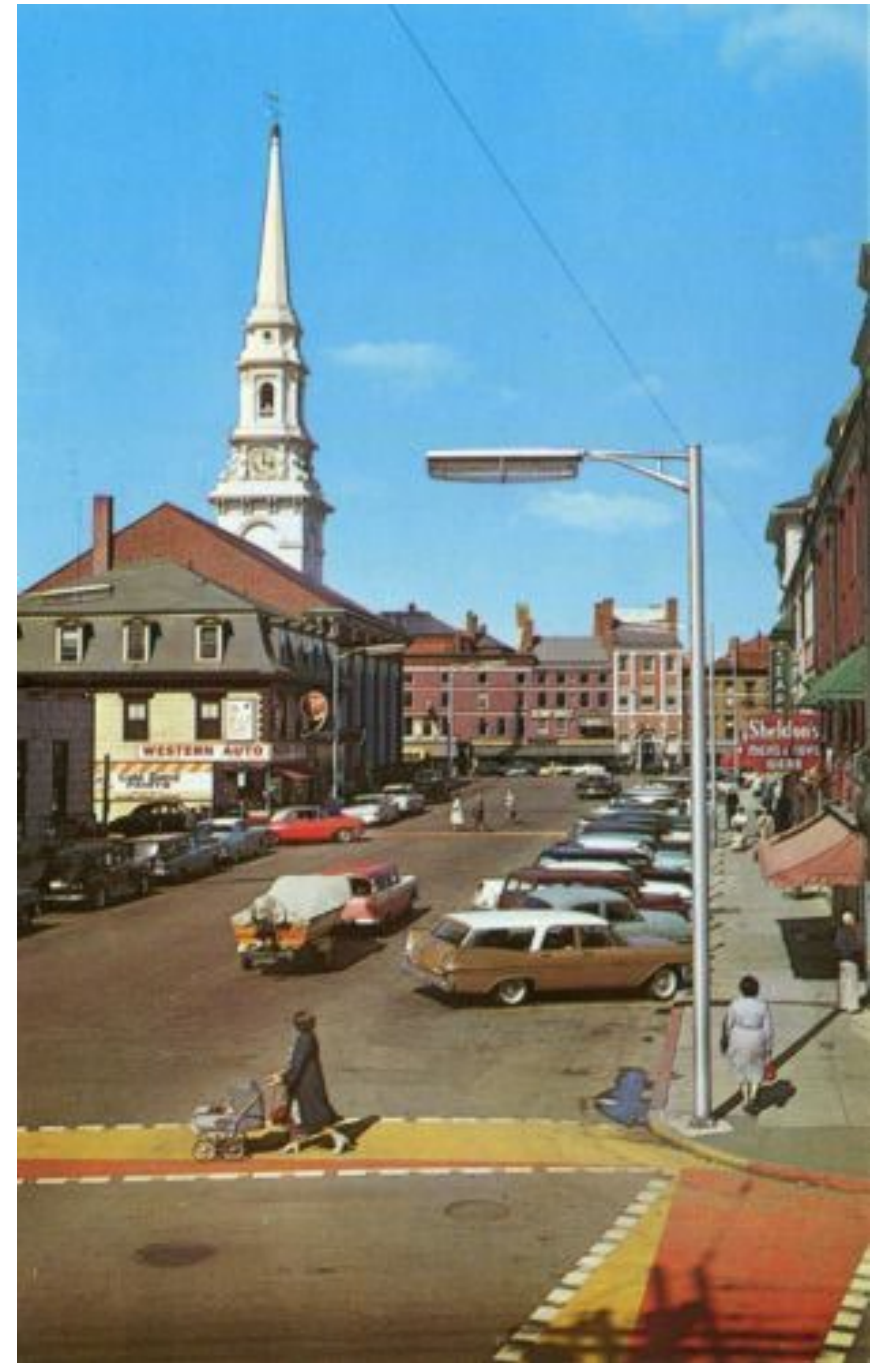


# **Portsmouth NH Speed Limit Review Progress Report**

**March 15, 2023**

Parking and Traffic Safety Committee

# Welcome



# Agenda

- Accomplishments to date

- Future Discussions: Public Input Desired

# Goals

- Set safe speed limits in accordance with engineering guidance and road function/context
- Maintain consistent speed limits throughout the City based upon street classifications
- Ensure compliance with State laws
- Recommend ordinance updates to Council to fulfill above criteria

# Why are Speed Limits Important?

- ❖ Speed limits protect safety while retaining reasonable mobility.
- ❖ Historically focused primarily on vehicular travel speed, but now more balanced with neighborhood context and the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ❖ Rational speed limits reflect actual driver speeds.
  - ❖ they encourage public compliance,
  - ❖ they reduce speed differences among drivers, and
  - ❖ they are fair in the context of traffic law.
  - ❖ most drivers will consider the speed limit appropriate.
- ❖ The goal is to tailor our road contexts to align with desired travel speeds.

# Streetscapes Impact Speeds



**Marcy Street**

Posted Speed Limit: **20 MPH**



**Borthwick Avenue**

Posted Speed Limit: **35 MPH**

Drivers tend to select operating speeds based on the visual scene presented to them. Therefore, the speed limit and design of the road must work in concert if desired operating speeds are to be achieved. Factors that contribute to slower travel speeds:

- Narrow roadway pavement widths
- High driveway density
- Horizontal and vertical curves
- Narrow shoulder widths
- Driveways with restricted visibility and other developments



# Terminology

Basic Rule:

Vehicles shall not travel faster than is safe for current conditions



# Terminology

## Chapter 7 - City Code of Ordinance regarding vehicles, traffic and parking

### CHAPTER 7 VEHICLES, TRAFFIC and PARKING

Article I	Parking Meters	7.101 - 7.114
Article II	Taxis	7.201 - 7.217
Article III	Traffic Ordinance	7.301 - 7.350
Article IV	Off-Street Parking Areas	7.401 - 7.408
Article IVA	Bus Stops and Taxicab Stands	7.A400 - 7.A408
Article V	Bicycle Regulations	7.501 - 7.518
Article VA	Community Center/City Hall/District Court Parking	7.A501 - 7.A503
Article VI	Loading Zones	7.601 - 7.605
Article VII	Truck and Bus Travel	7.701 - 7.712
Article VIII	Hazardous Materials	7.801 - 7.805
Article IX	Penalties/Forfeitures/Separability	7.901 - 7.903
Article X	Towing	7.1000 - 7.1005
Article XI	Speed Limits	7.1100
Article XII	Parking for the walking Disabled	7.1200
Article XIII	Equipment Required – Snowplows	7.1300
Article XIV	Registration Exemption for Prisoners of War (POW's)	7.1400
Article XV	Emergency Lanes	7.1500 - 7.1504
Article XVI	Resident Only Parking	7.1601 - 7.1603
Article XVII	Moped Regulations	7.1701 - 7.1704
Article XVIII	Electric Vehicle Charging Station and Electric Vehicle	7.1801 - 7.1804
Article XIX	Parking Spaces Regulations	
	Shared Active Transportation	7.1901-7.1905





# Terminology

## State Law:

- RSA 265:60; Streets default to 30 MPH in ‘business or urban residence’ districts, and 35 MPH in ‘rural residence’ districts
- RSA 265:62; Limits may be adjusted to no lower than 25 MPH with an appropriate “engineering or traffic investigation”

# Terminology

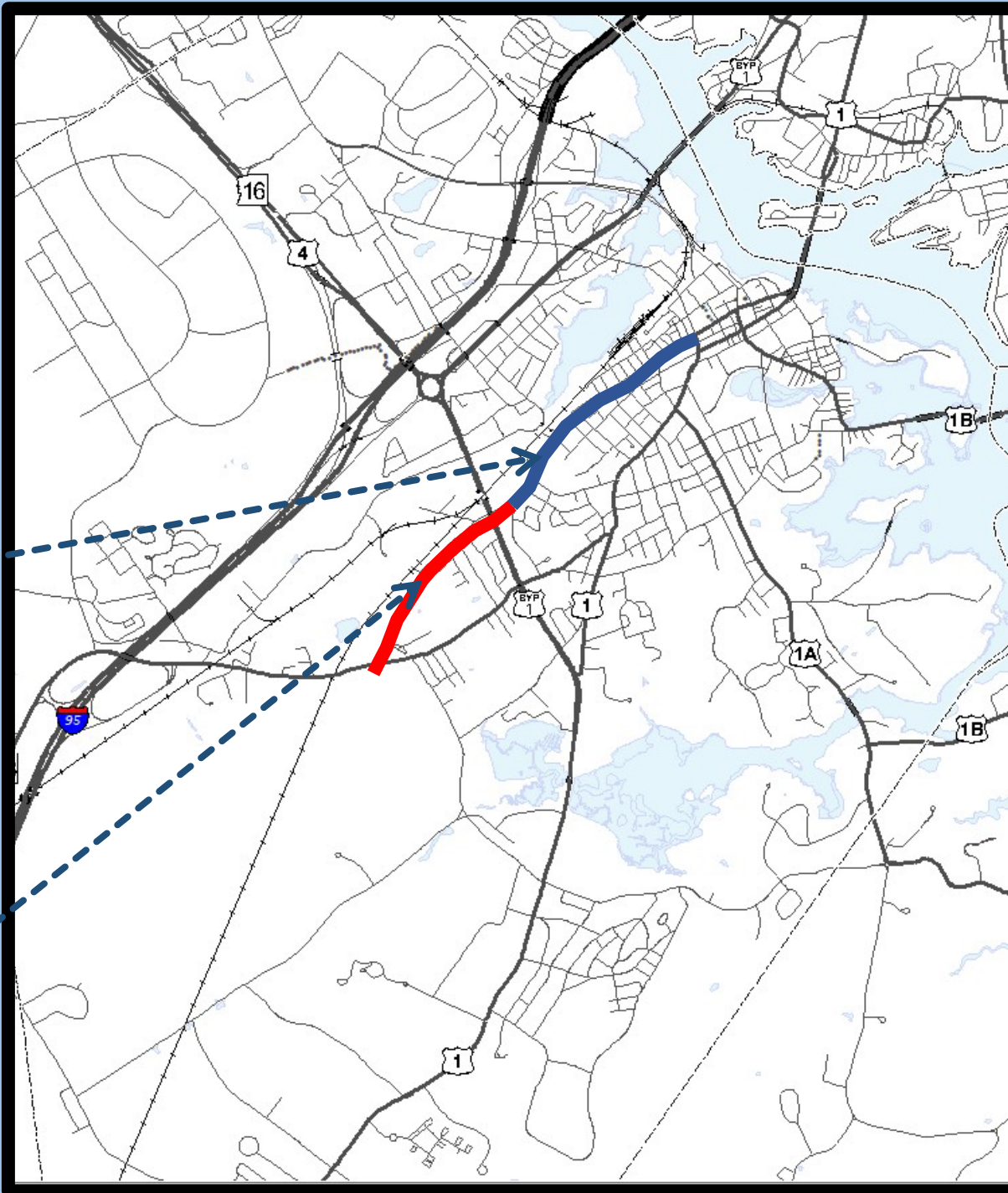
**Posted Limit** - Speed limit per posted signs



*Note- Speed limits are not required to be posted*

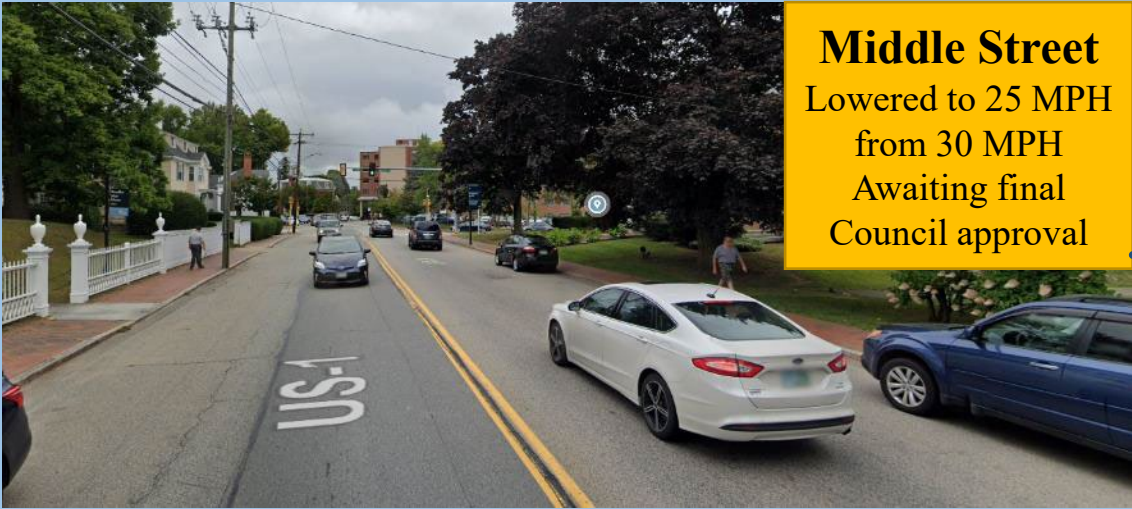


# PTS and Council Actions To Date





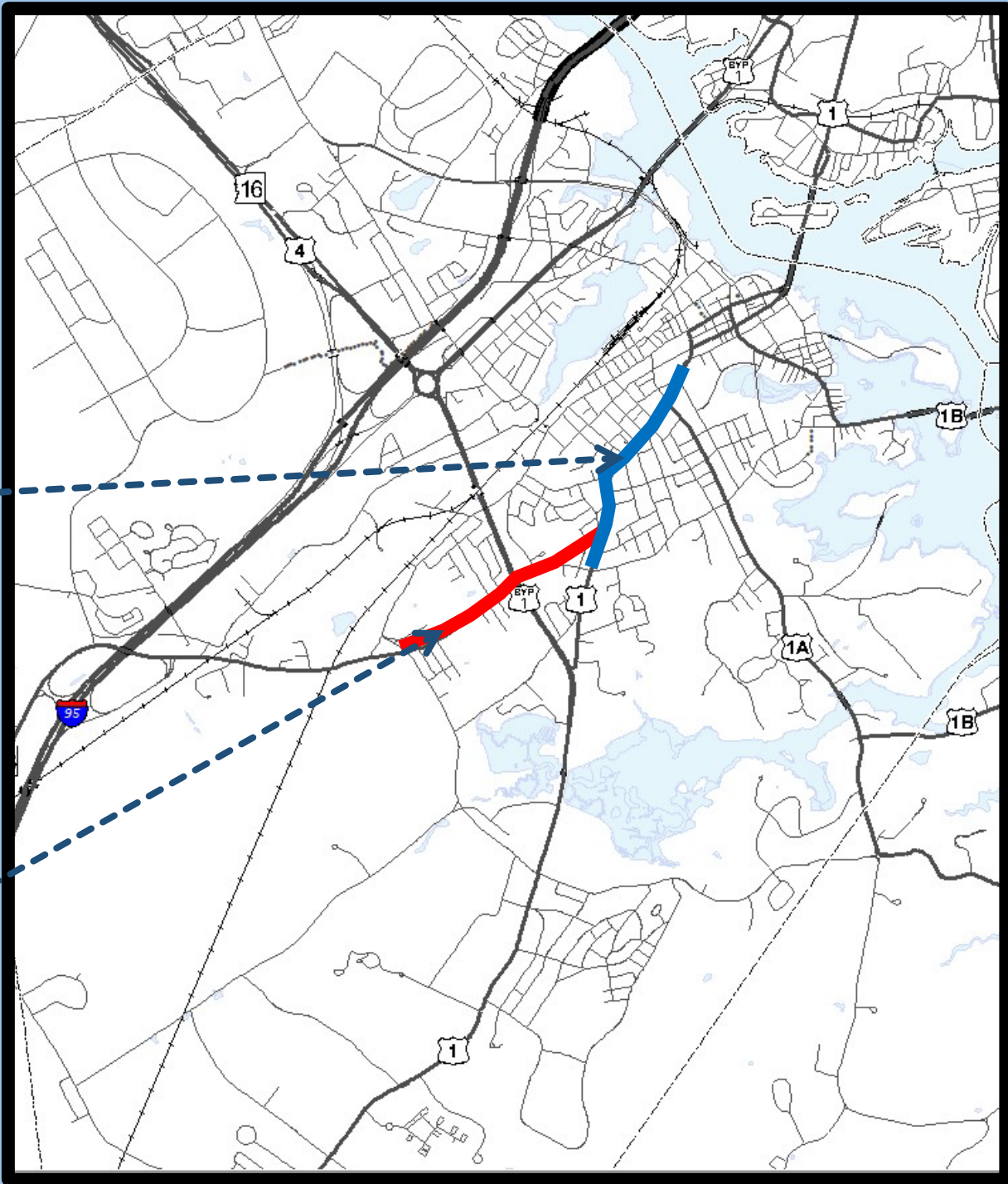
# PTS and Council Actions To Date



**Middle Street**  
Lowered to 25 MPH  
from 30 MPH  
Awaiting final  
Council approval

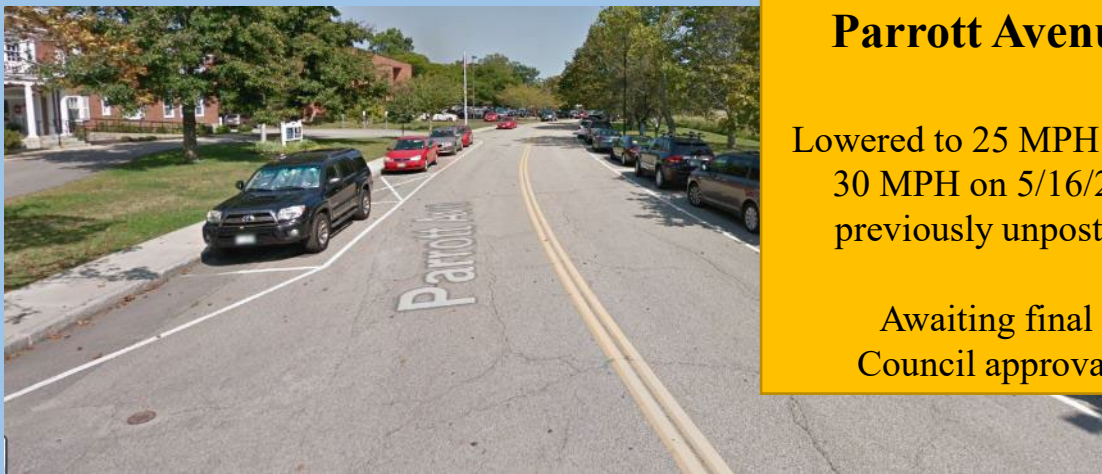


**Middle Road**  
Lowered to 25 MPH  
from 30 MPH on  
trial basis 5/26/22,  
awaiting final  
recommendation.





# PTS and Council Actions To Date



## Parrott Avenue

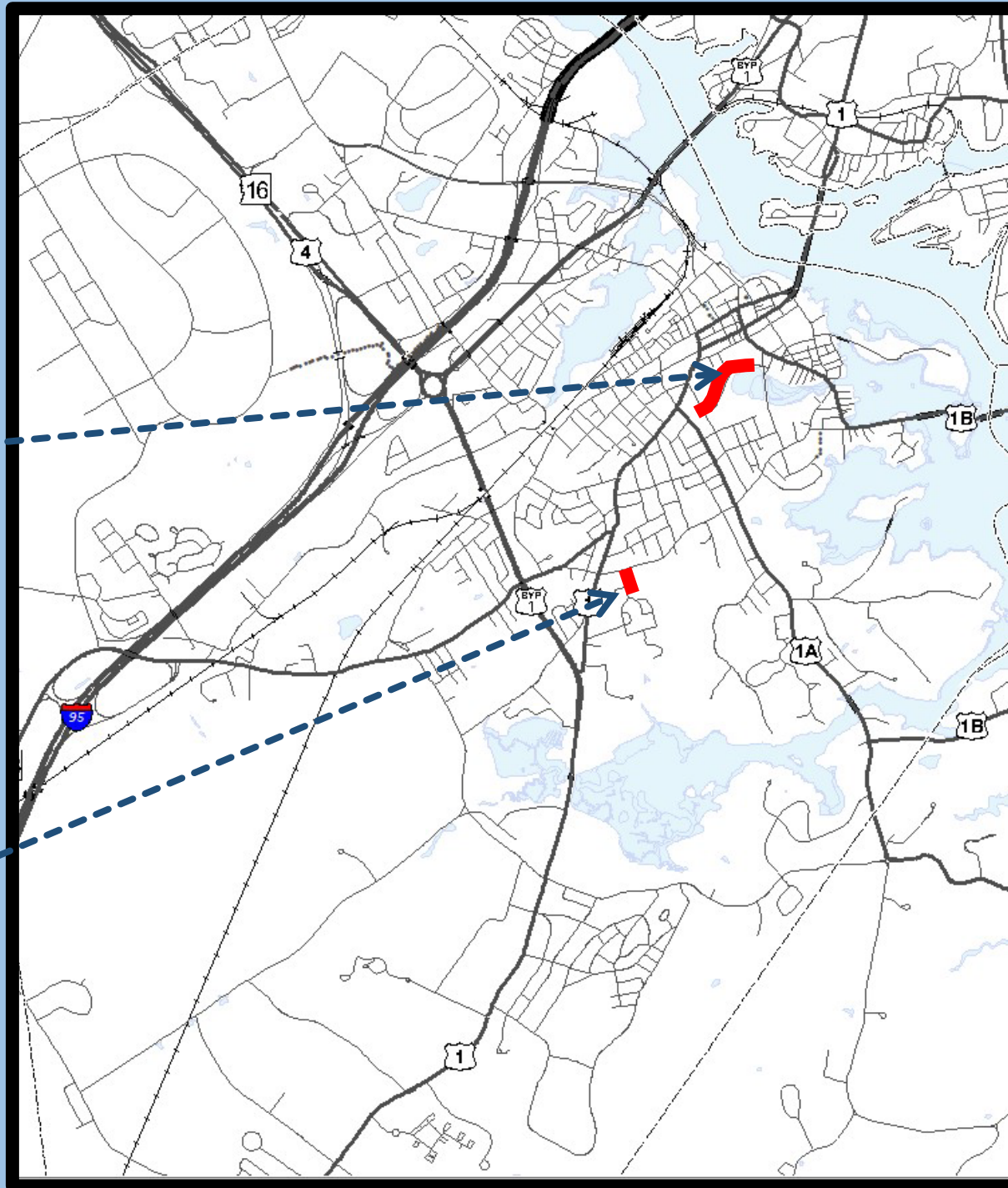
Lowered to 25 MPH from  
30 MPH on 5/16/22,  
previously unposted

Awaiting final  
Council approval

## Summit Avenue

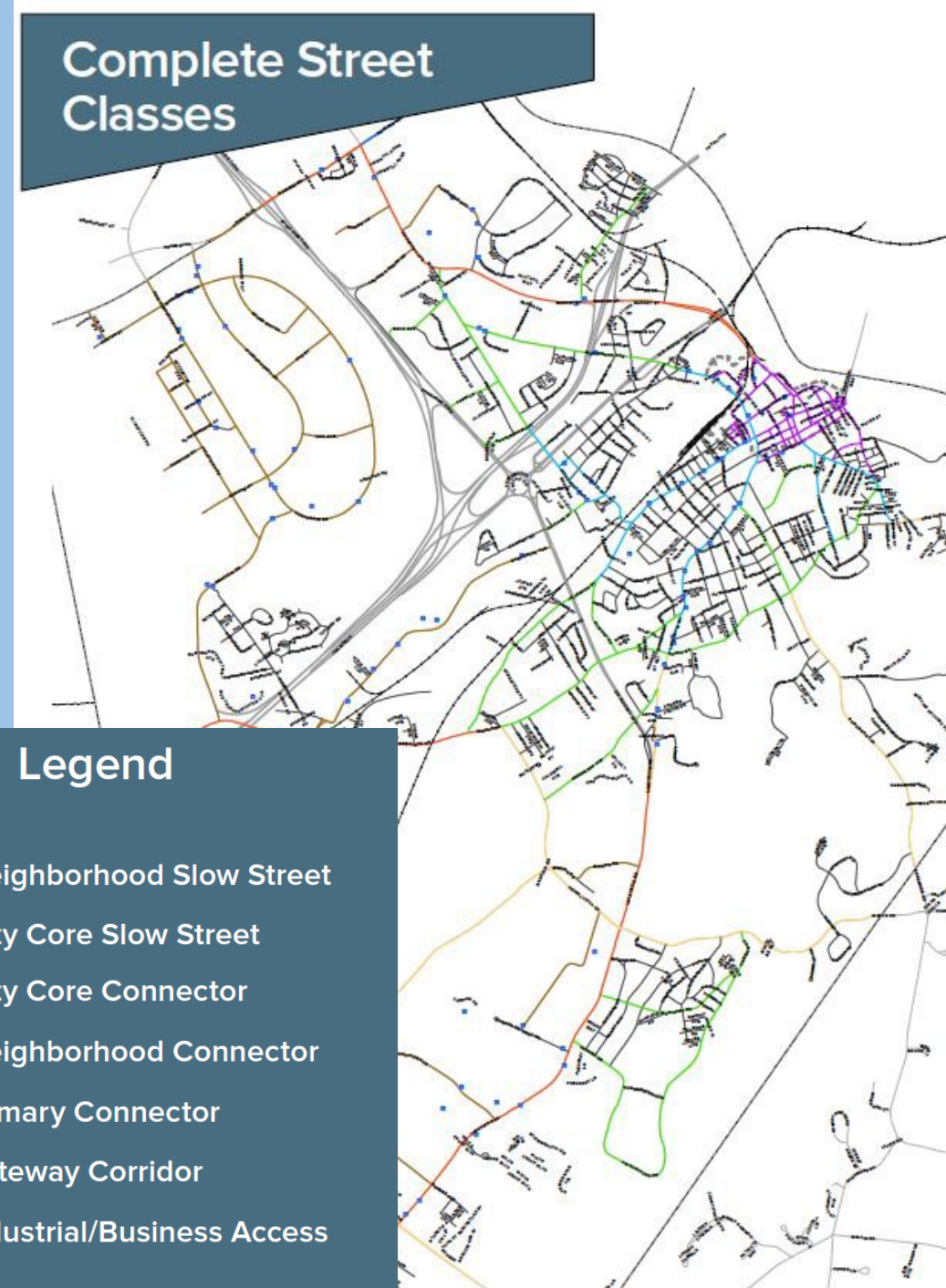
Lowered to 25 MPH  
from 30 MPH on  
5/16/22, previously  
unposted

Awaiting final  
Council approval



# 2017 Complete Streets Design Guidelines

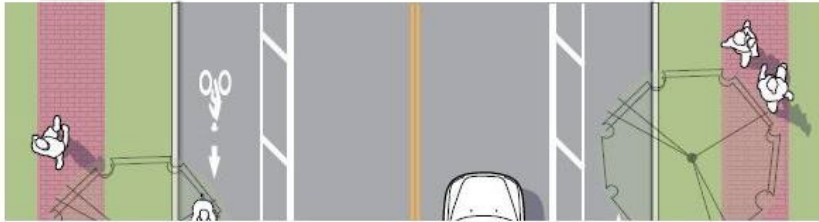
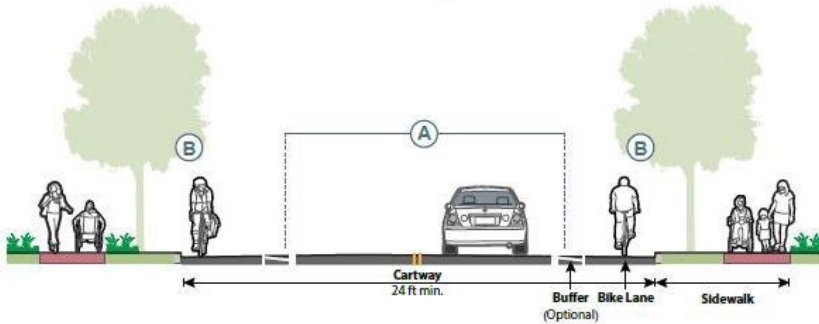
- The City's Complete Streets Policy
  - adopted by the City Council in 2013
  - directs City departments to incorporate Complete Streets principles into
    - the City's Master Plan,
    - Ped/Bike Plan and
    - other plans, manuals, rules and regulations as appropriate.
- The 2017 Guidelines were developed in response to that directive.
- The Guidelines may be revisited and adjusted as needed.



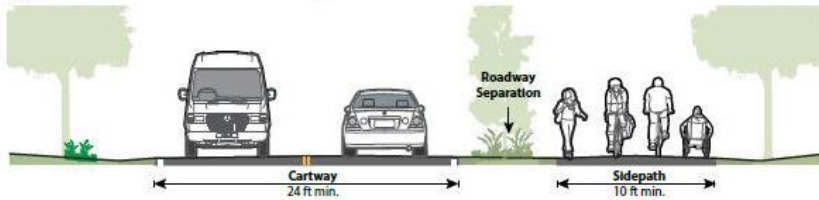


# 1<sup>st</sup> Focus Category: Neighborhood Connectors

Neighborhood Connector: Typical Street Features



Neighborhood Connector: Sidepath Alternative



## Critical Design Features

- (A) Two travel lanes, marked with a center line marking.
- (B) Bicycle facilities are preferred.
  - Pedestrians walk on a separated sidewalk.

## Additional Potential Design Features

- A sidepath may replace on-street facilities and sidewalks.
- A planting strip to support street trees and landscaping in the furnishing zone is a high priority.

## Neighborhood Connector

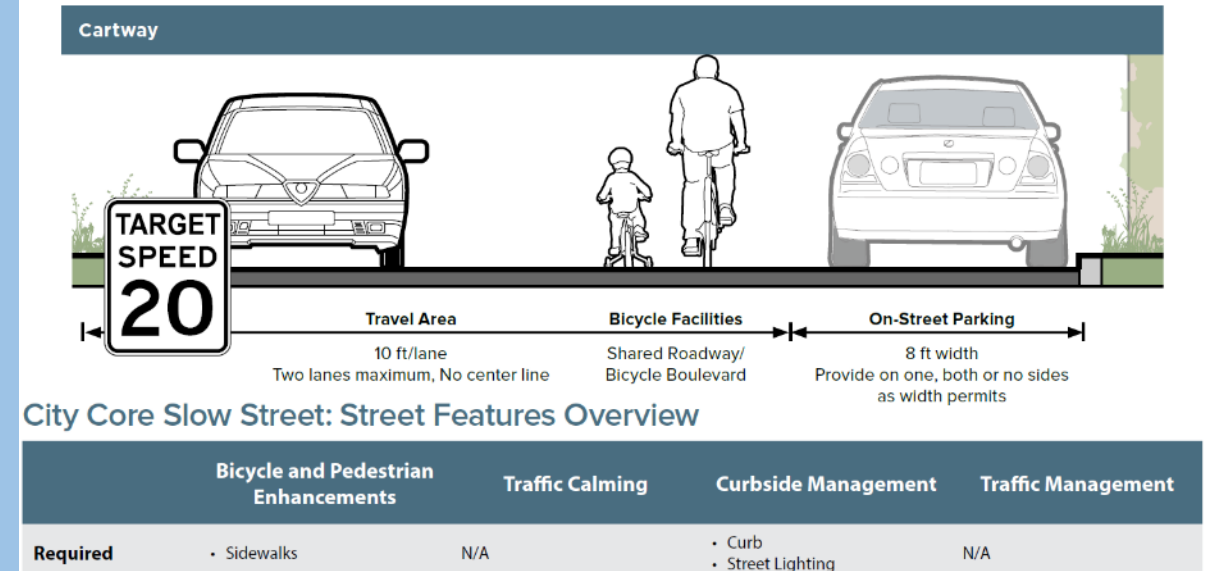


# 2017 Complete Streets Design Guidelines

## Target Speeds per Classification

*Planning document, not a Legal Ordinance or Regulation*

Neighborhood Slow Street	20 MPH
City Core Slow Street	20 MPH
City Core Connector	25 MPH
<b>Neighborhood Connector</b>	<b>25 MPH</b>
<i>(Lowered to 25 MPH from 30 MPH, Approved by City Council June 2022, as recommended by PTS)</i>	
Primary Connector	30 MPH
Gateway Corridor	35 MPH
Industrial/Business Access	35 MPH





# Neighborhood Connectors

Posted Speed Limit Aligns with Target Speed;  
Focus on Improving Compliance

## Woodbury Avenue

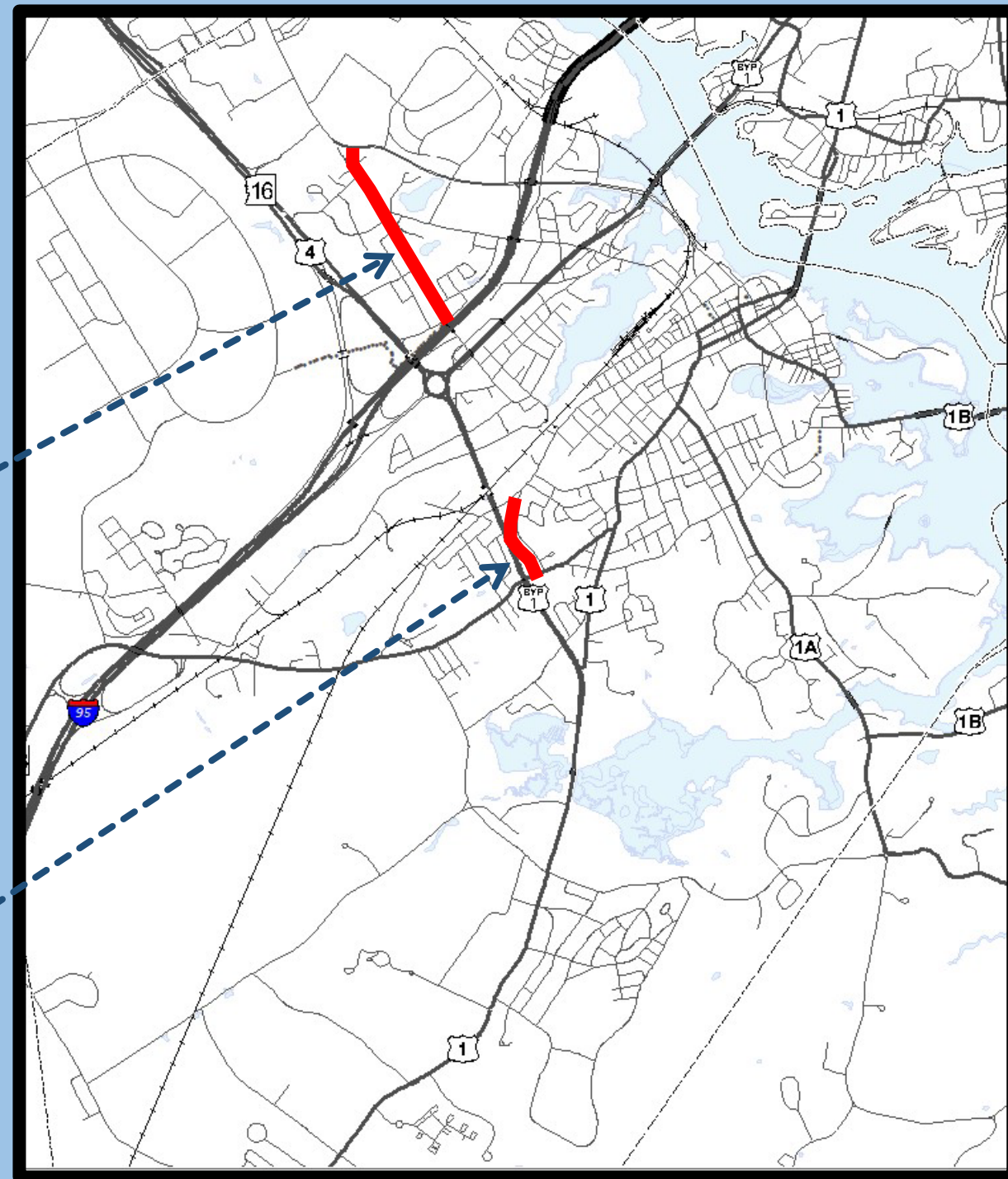
*(Market Street to  
Rockingham Avenue)*

Posted at 25 MPH



## Spinney Road

Posted at 25 MPH



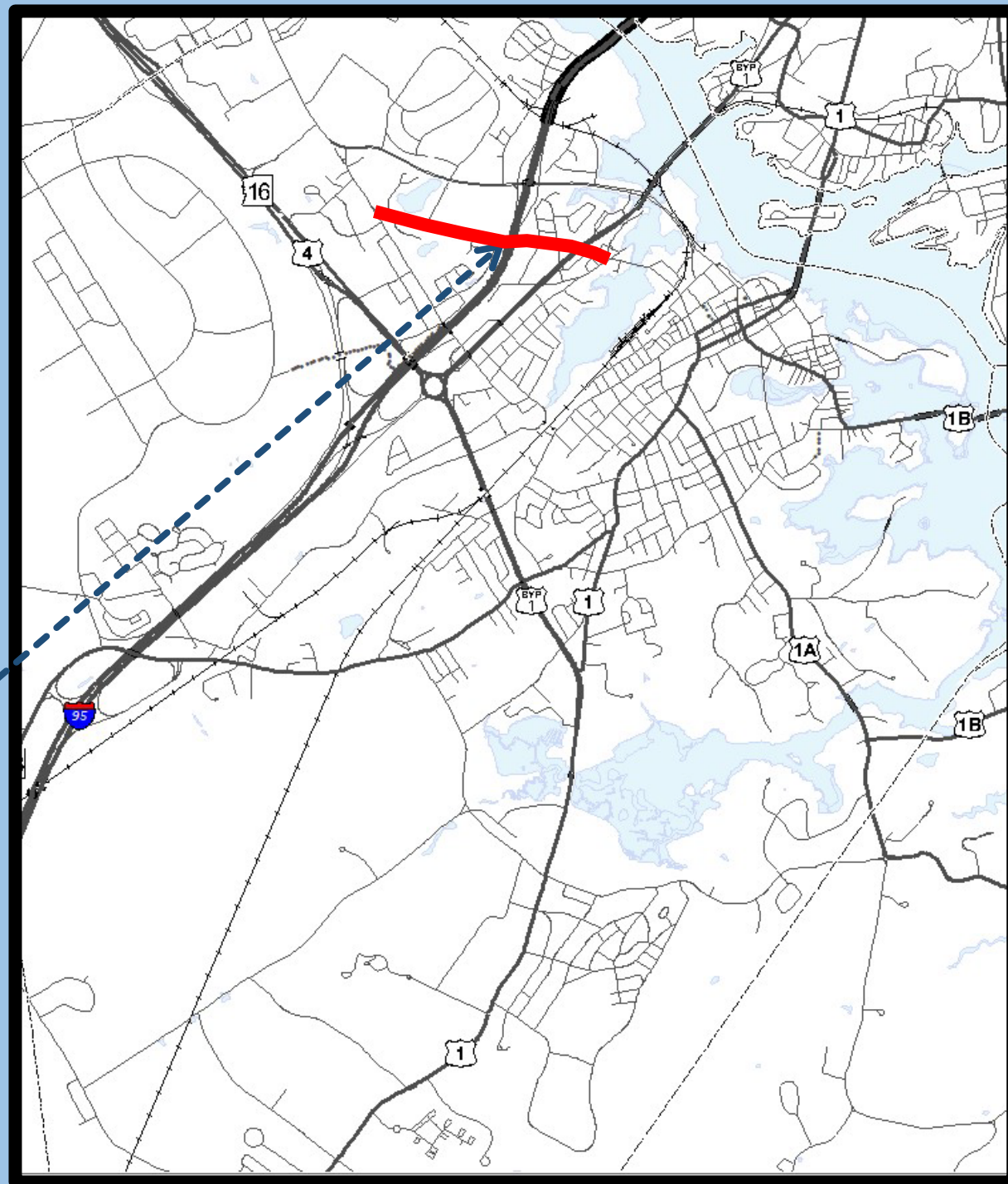
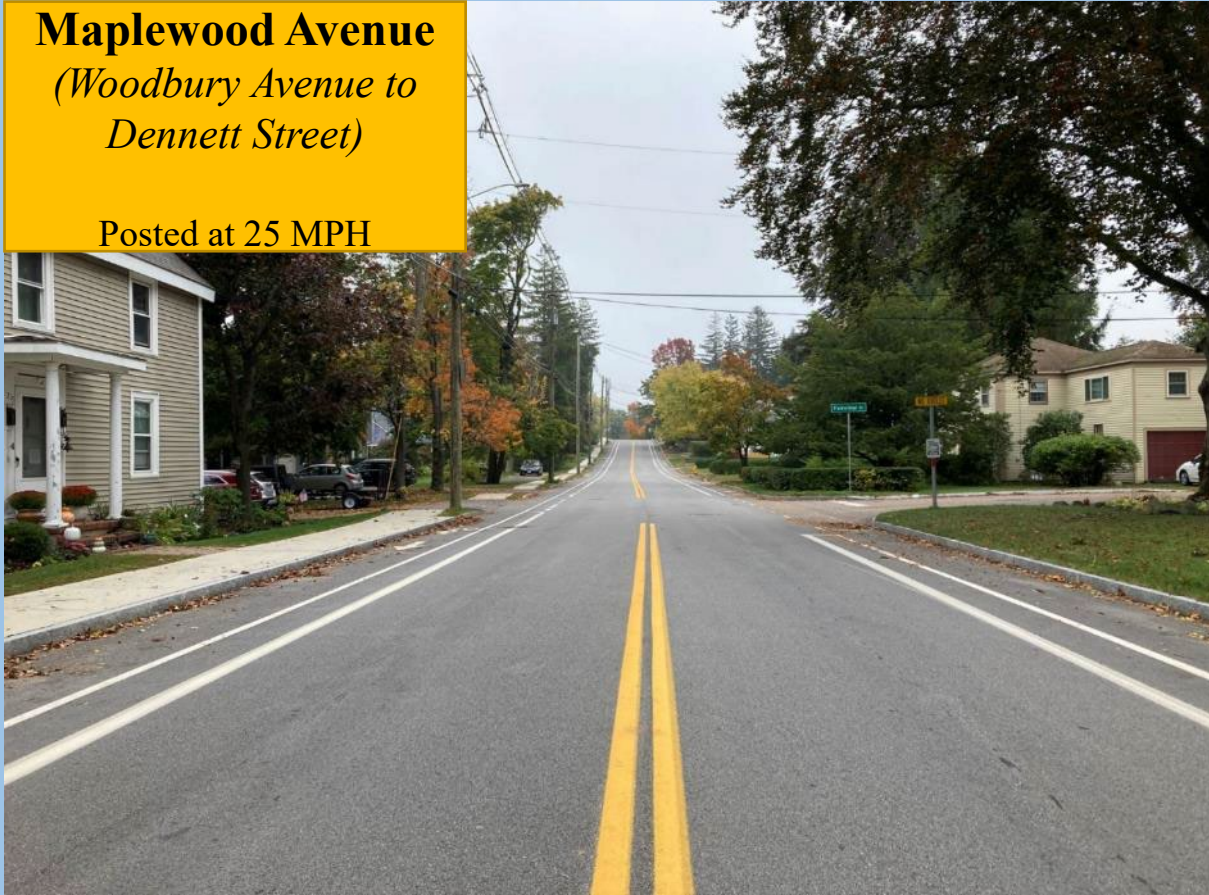


# Neighborhood Connectors

Posted Speed Limit Aligns with Target Speed;  
Recent treatments have improved compliance

**Maplewood Avenue**  
*(Woodbury Avenue to  
Dennett Street)*

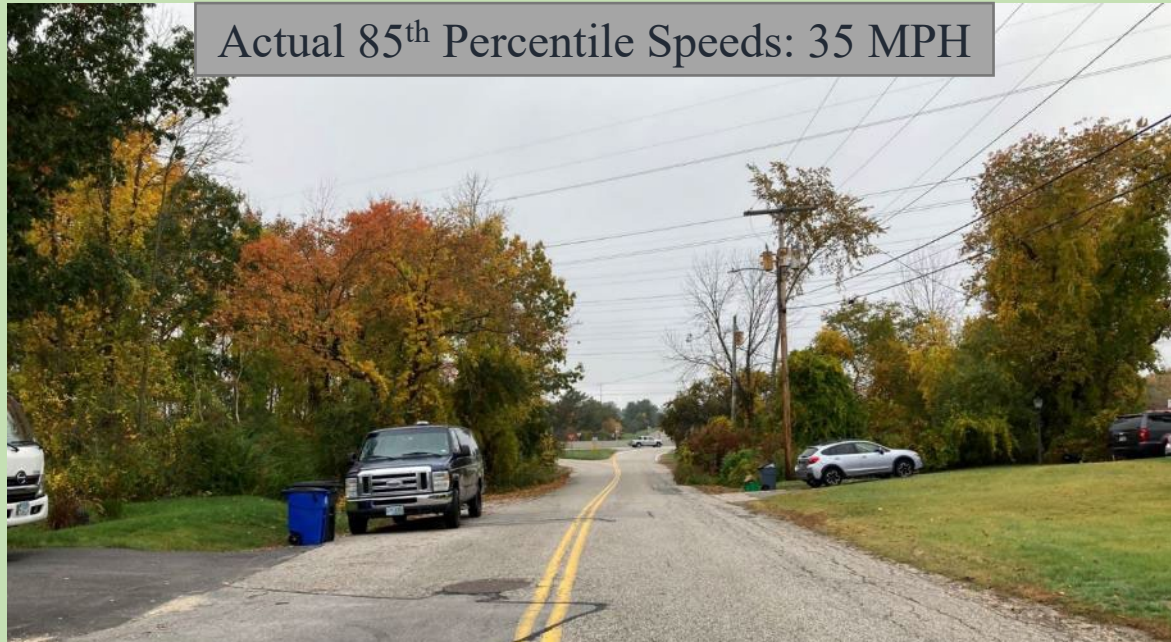
Posted at 25 MPH





# Neighborhood Connectors

*Recommend classification change to **Primary Connector** street, with target speed of 30 mph.*

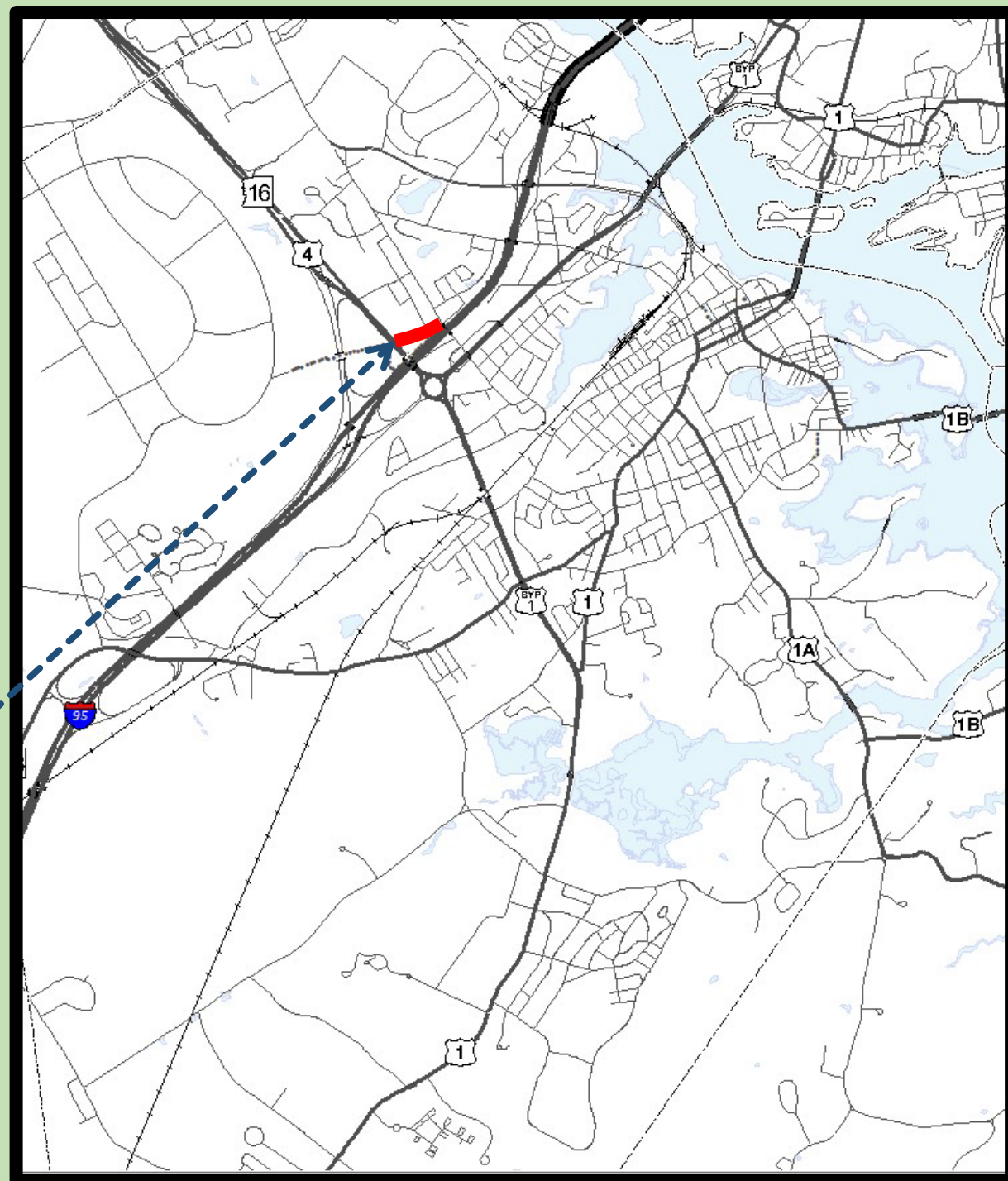


Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds: 35 MPH

**Rockingham Avenue**

Currently unposted, defaults to 30 MPH

Recommended Action: Change to Primary Connector





# Neighborhood Connectors

*Recommend changing classification to **Neighborhood Slow Street** which has a target speed of 20 MPH*

## Farm Lane

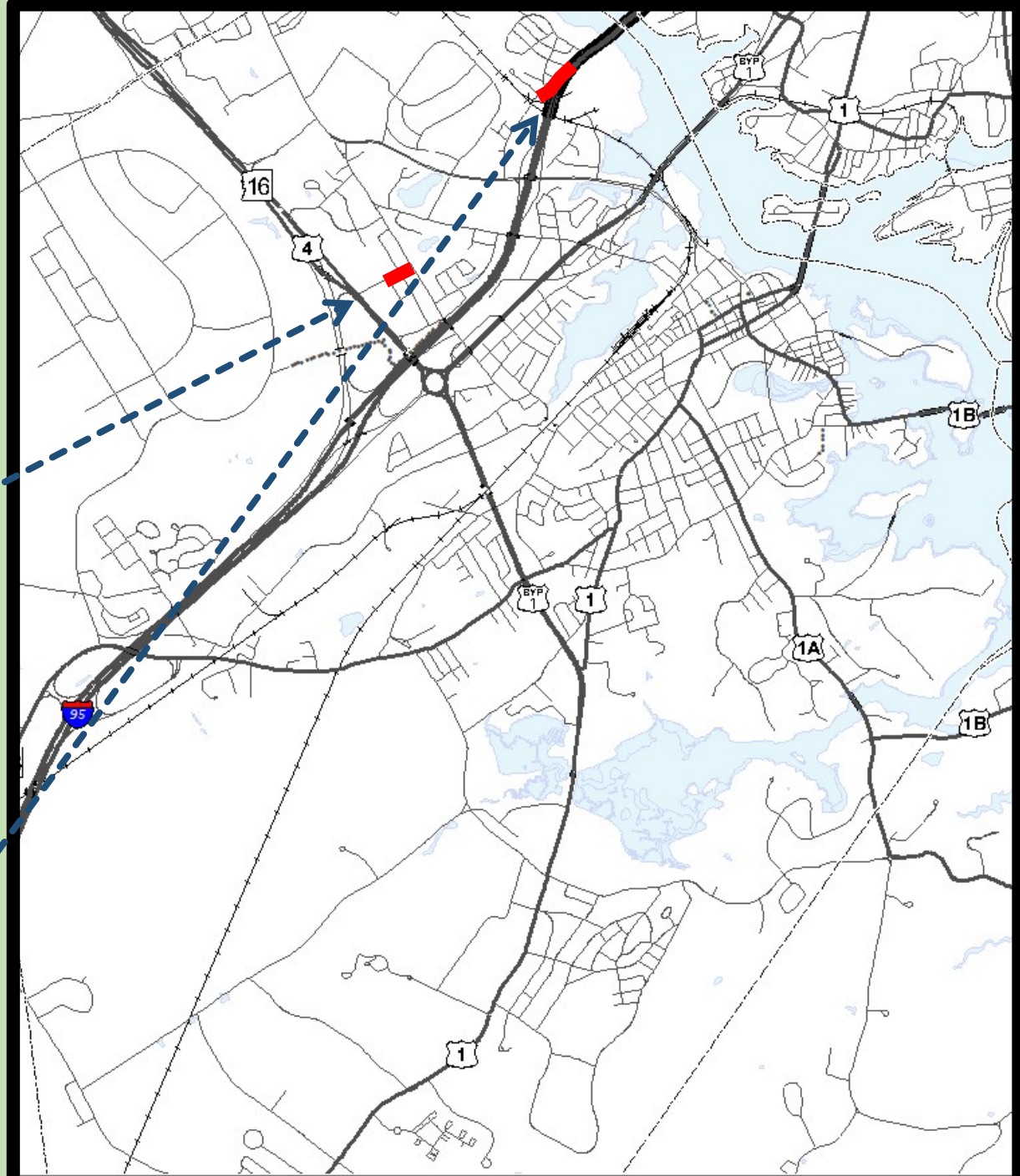
*(Clover Lane to Woodbury Avenue)*

Change to  
Neighborhood Slow Street



## Ranger Way

Change to  
Neighborhood Slow Street



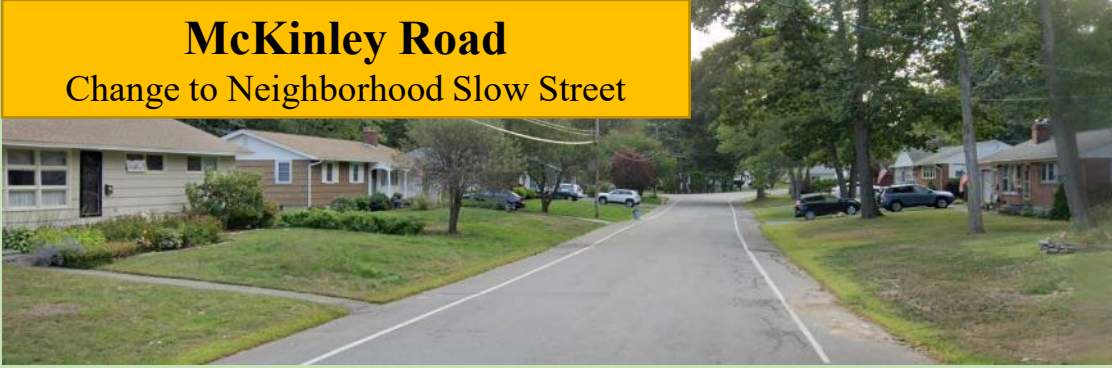


# Neighborhood Connectors

*Recommend changing classification to **Neighborhood Slow Street** which has a target speed of 20 MPH*

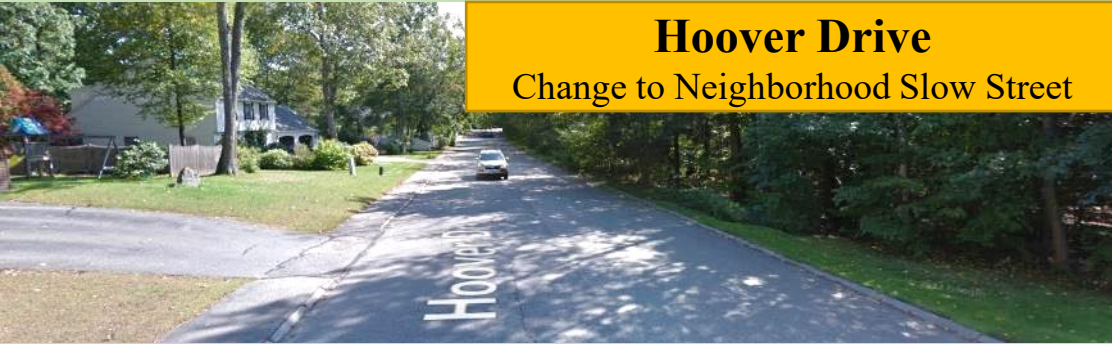
## McKinley Road

Change to Neighborhood Slow Street



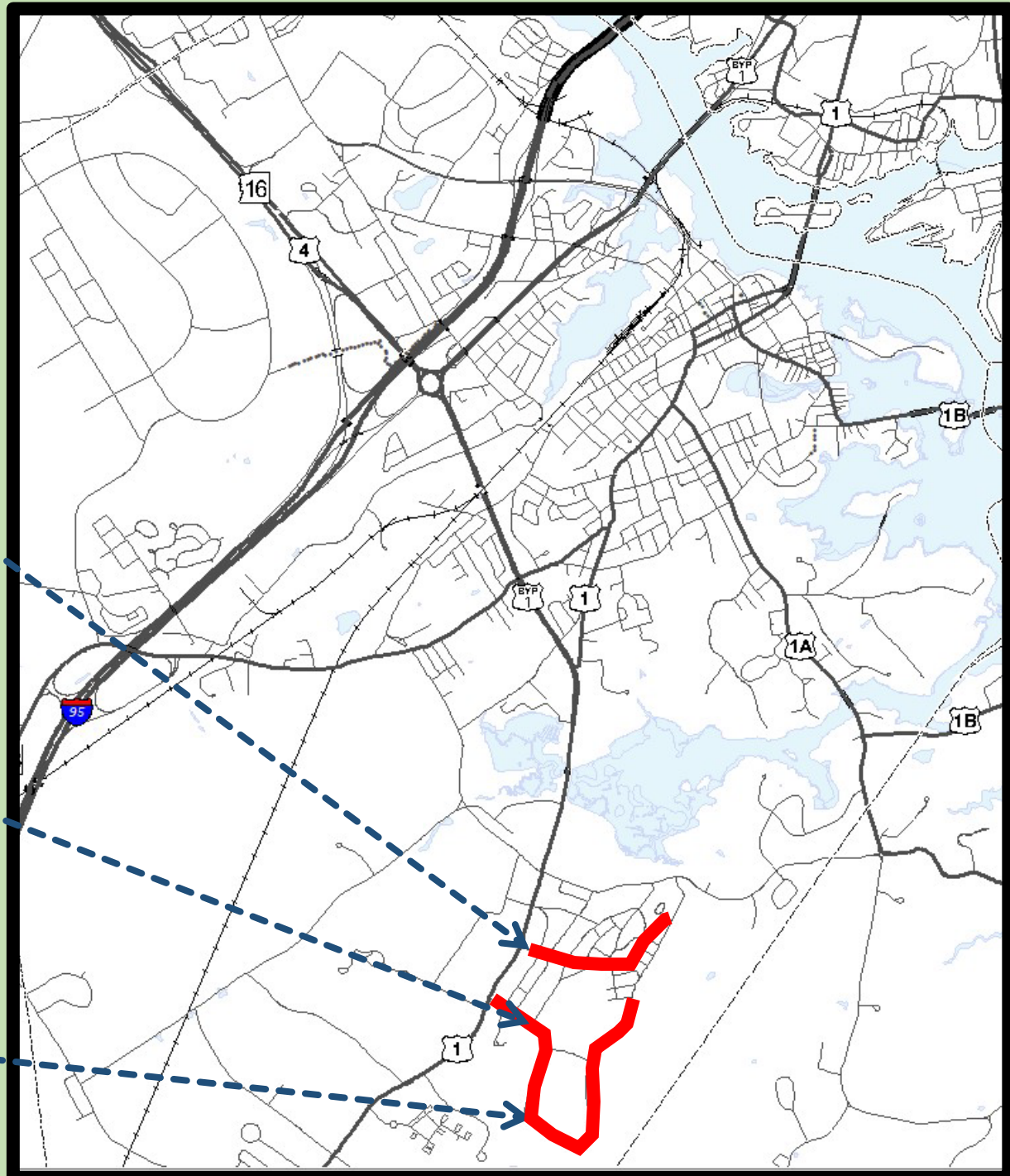
## Hoover Drive

Change to Neighborhood Slow Street



## FW Hartford Drive

Change to Neighborhood Slow Street





# Neighborhood Connectors

*Add Posted Limits to Chapter 7*

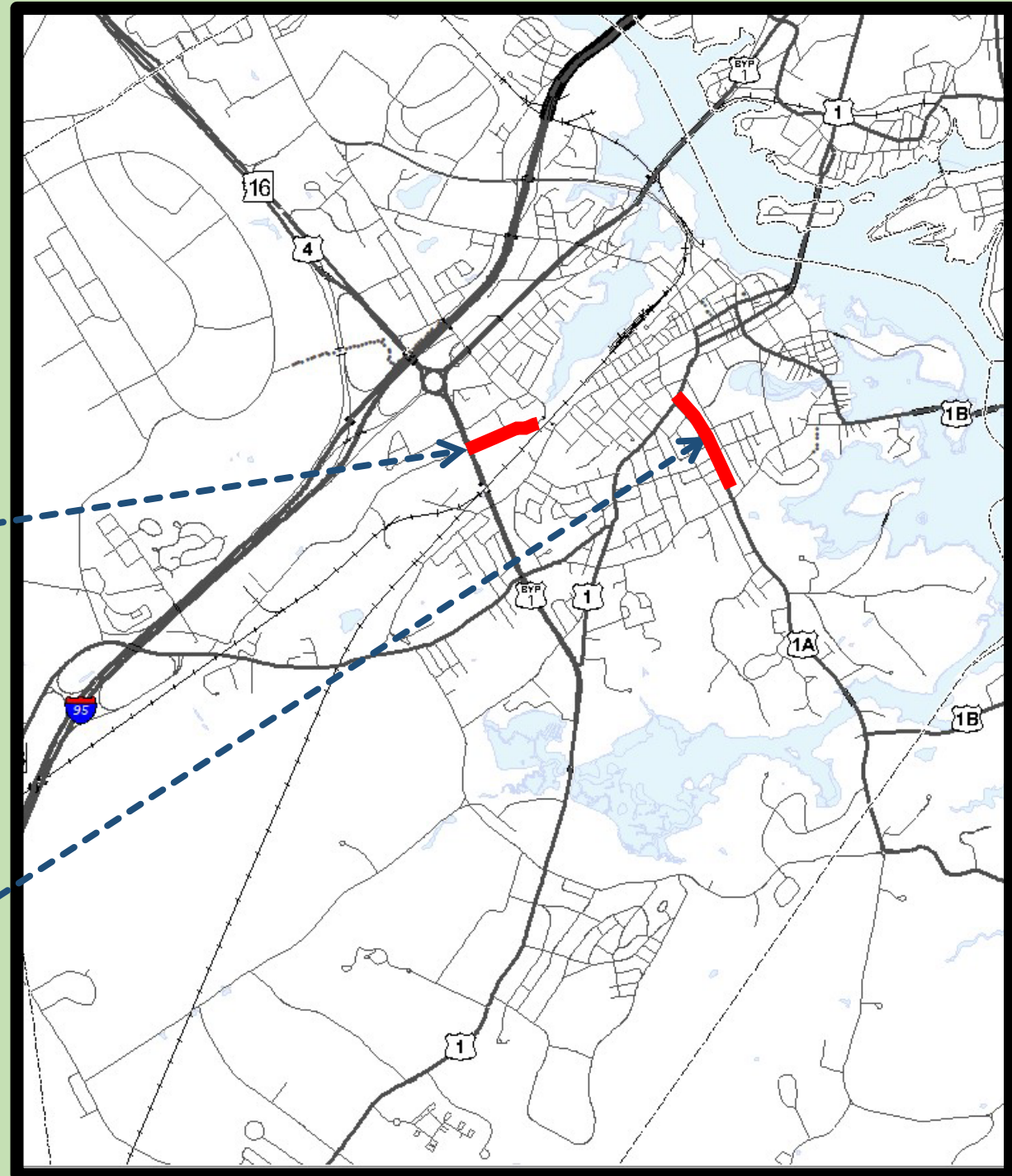
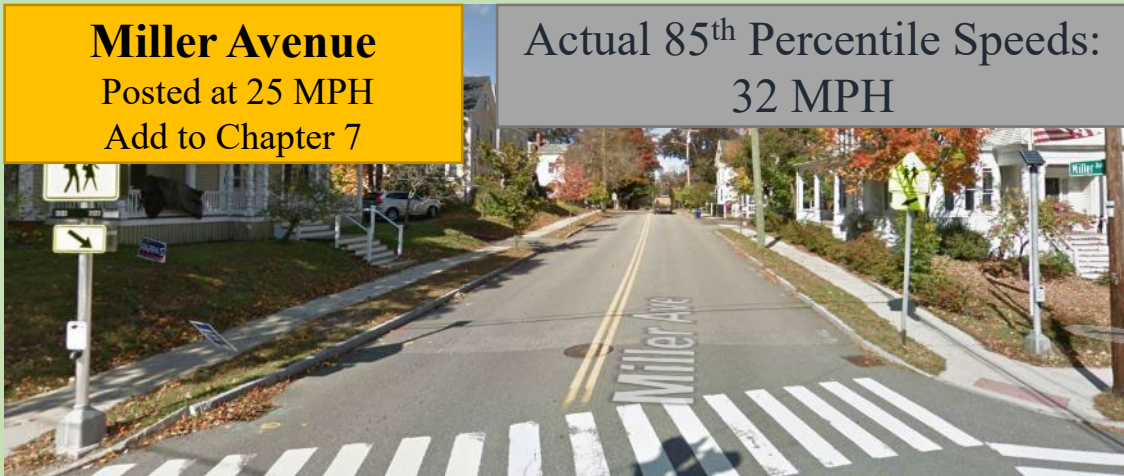
Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile  
Speeds: 31 MPH



**Hodgdon Way**  
Posted at 25 MPH  
Add to Chapter 7

**Miller Avenue**  
Posted at 25 MPH  
Add to Chapter 7

Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds:  
32 MPH





# Neighborhood Connectors

*Speed limits need updates to bring into alignment with RSA and our guidelines*

Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds: 35 MPH

## Kearsarge Way

Posted at 20 MPH

Needs update



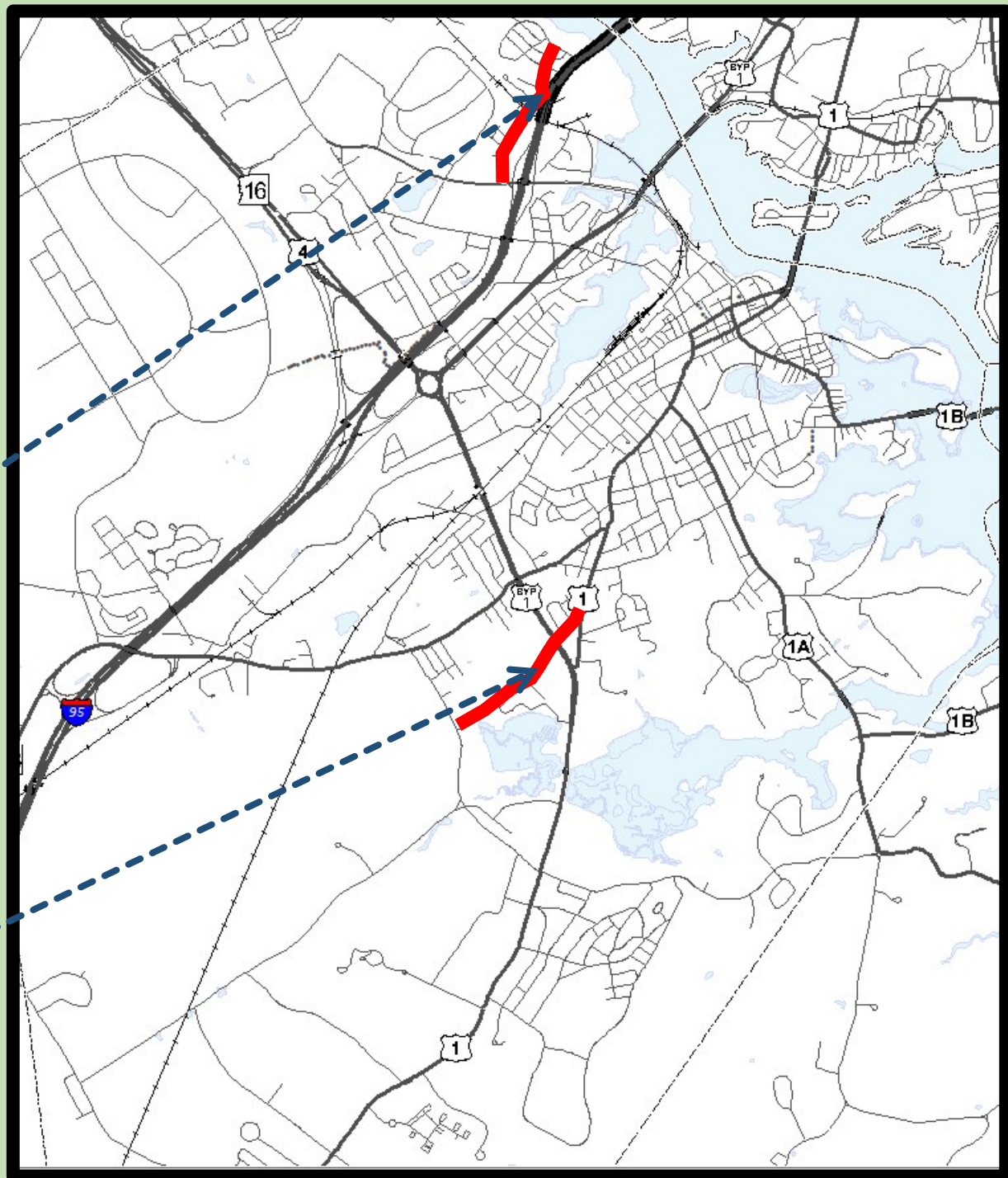
## Greenleaf Avenue

Posted at 20 MPH

Needs update



Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds: 34 MPH





# Neighborhood Connectors

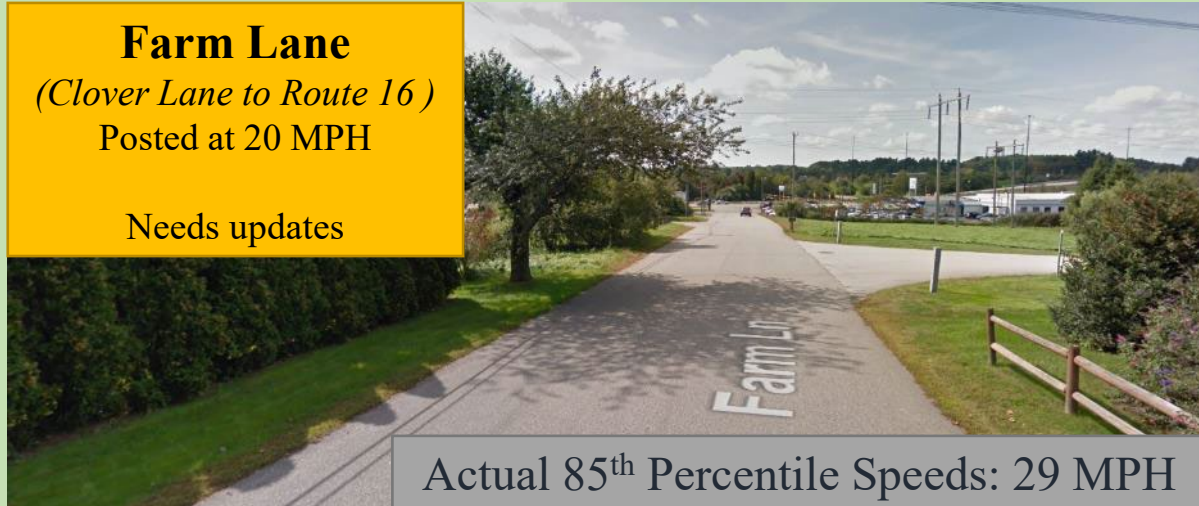
*Speed limits need updates to bring into alignment with RSA and our guidelines*

## Farm Lane

(Clover Lane to Route 16)

Posted at 20 MPH

Needs updates



Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds: 29 MPH

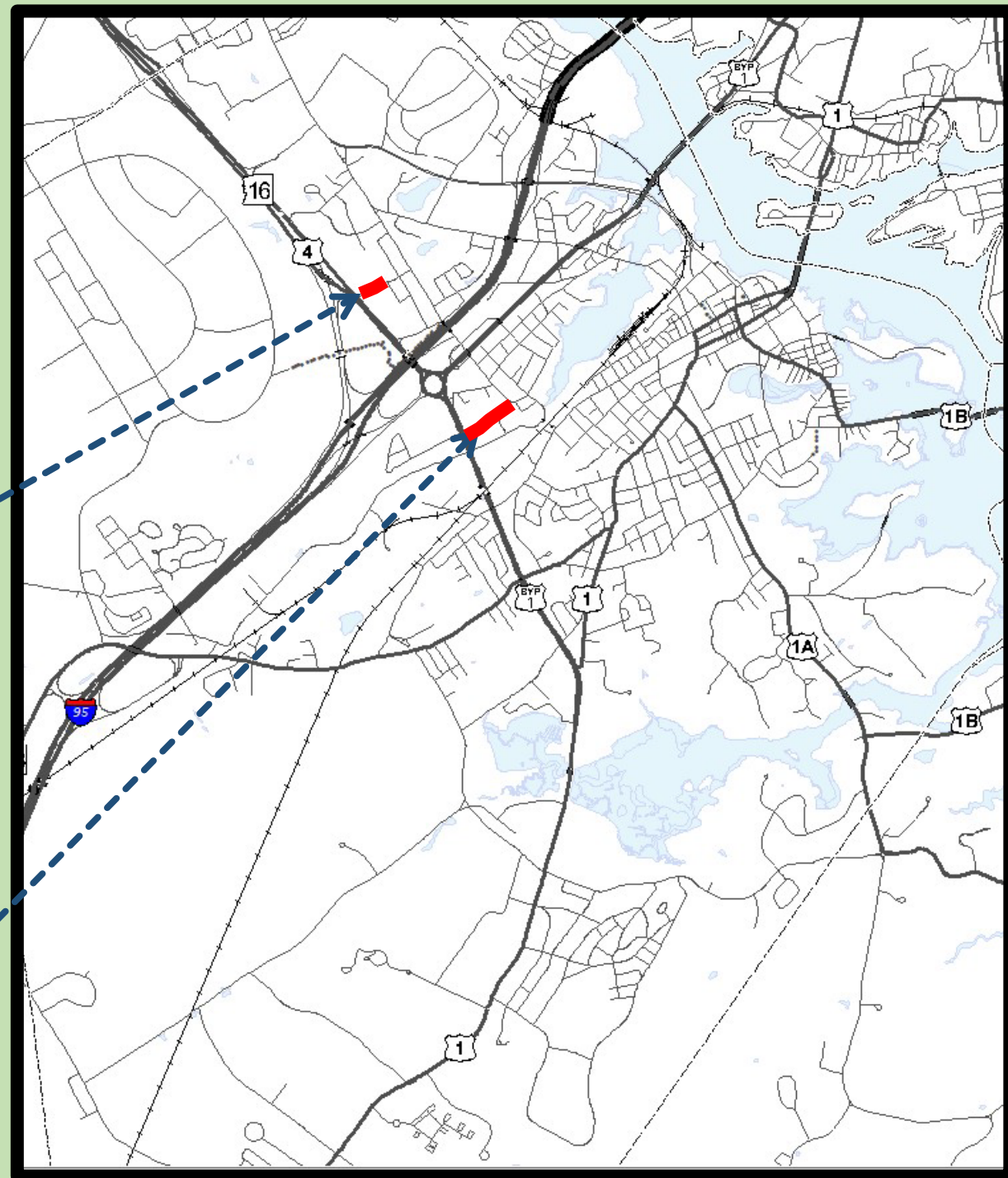


## Cottage Street

Posted at 20 MPH

Needs updates

Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds: 31 MPH





# Neighborhood Connectors

## *South Street*

RSA requires 25 MPH minimum

City Guidelines: Target Speed of 25 MPH

**Actual speed data from May 2022**

*Average Speed – 28 MPH*

*85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed – 31 MPH*

**South Street is currently posted at  
20 MPH in its entirety**



# Summary of Actions to Date

- Lowered Neighborhood Connector Street target speed down from 30 MPH to 25 MPH in the City's Complete Streets Design Guidelines
- Lowered speed limits on Islington Street (from Maplewood Avenue to Spinney Road) and Parrott Avenue to align with Neighborhood Connector Street target speeds and engineering standards
- Initiated speed limit reduction trials for:
  - Islington Street, from Spinney Road to Route 33
  - Middle Road, along with the installation of an RRFB at the Riverbrook Condos
- Middle Street from South Street to Congress Street lowered from 30 MPH to 25 MPH



# Next Focus: Primary Connectors

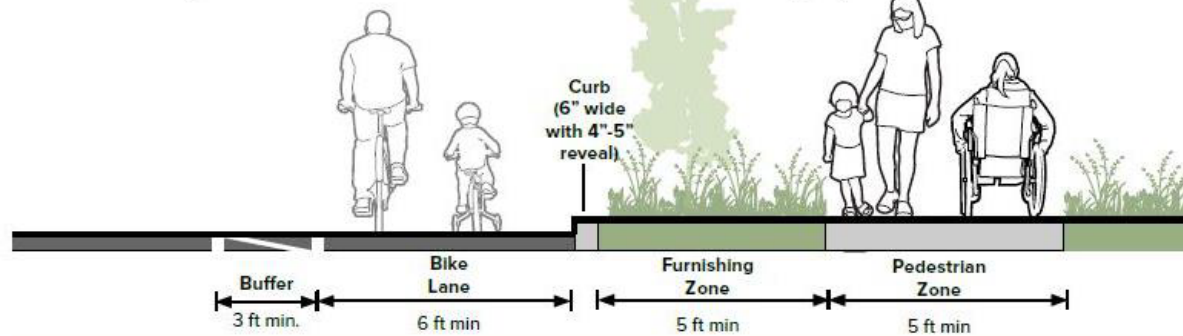
## Primary Connector: Design Guidelines

### Bicycle Network

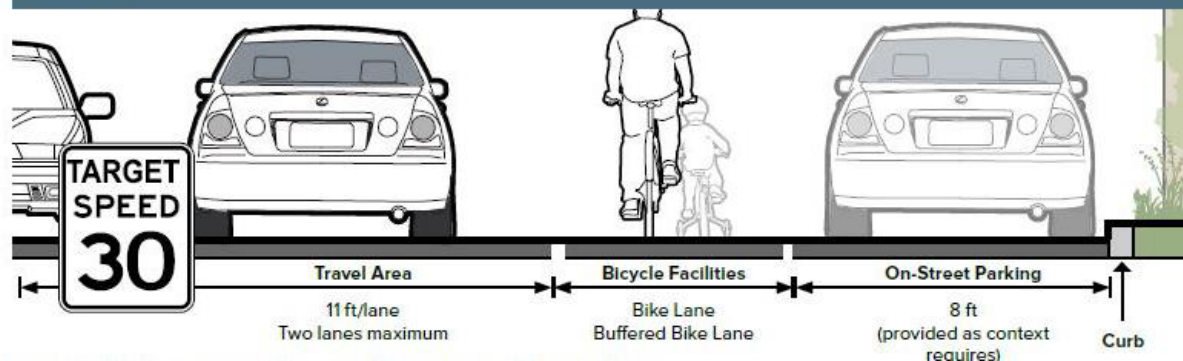
The recommended bikeway on a Primary Connector street is a **bike lane** or **buffered bike lane**. Where additional comfort is desired, consider a **separated bike lane** or **sidepath**.

### Pedestrian Network

On Primary Connector streets, pedestrians will walk on **shoulders** in the absence of sidewalks. Provide **sidewalks** or a **sidepath** where pedestrian facilities are desired and/or appropriate.



### Cartway



## Primary Connector



# Primary Connectors

*Target speed of 30 MPH*

<u>Road</u>	<u>Posted Limit</u>	<u>Actual 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile Speeds</u>	<u>% of Vehicles Exceeding Limit</u>
• Elwyn Road	25 MPH	37 MPH (Oct. 2022)	99 %
• Lang Road	30 MPH	42 MPH (Oct. 2022)	97 %
• Peverly Hill Road	25 MPH	38 MPH (Oct. 2022)	97 %
• Ocean Road*	30 MPH	41 MPH (Mar. 2021)	94 %
• Banfield Road	30 MPH	42 MPH (June 2022)	92 %
• New Castle Avenue	20 MPH	30 MPH (Sep. 2019)	92 %
• Sagamore Avenue	30 MPH	37 MPH (Mar. 2021)	82 %
• Lafayette Road	30 MPH	34 MPH (Oct. 2019)	53 %

\* NHDOT maintained road; City does not set speed limit



# City-Wide Action

- Evaluate potential for City-wide default speed limit of 25 MPH
- Unclear from State RSA as to legality
- Legal department reviewing authority
- Bills in current session of Legislature that may influence options



**Thank you!**

