CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF STREETS
SURVEYS, DESIGN, & CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
830 Municipal Services Building
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1676

CARLTON WILLIAMS
Streets Commissioner

March 31, 2021

C. Beige Berryman, AICP
Director
The Philadelphia Art Commission (PAC)
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: MLK, Jr. Drive Bridge Project
Request for Final Approval

Dear Ms. Berryman:

We kindly request an opportunity to present this project to the PAC at the upcoming meeting on April 14, 2021. A copy of the Submission Package will be provided at least a week before the scheduled Meeting.

On March, 10 2021, the Department of Streets presented the MLK, Jr. Drive Bridge project for conceptual approval. The Commission requested that Streets investigates how to mitigate pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts on the shared use path. Streets has submitted the shared use path configuration to the Planning Commission, who is responsible for reviewing and approving shared use path designs in the City. As part of their approval process, the Planning Commission will have a public meeting, during which they will accept comments. Considering these public comments, the Planning Commission and Streets will determine the final pavement marking and signage arrangement for the shared use path on the bridge.

As a reminder, the MLK Jr. Drive Bridge, originally built in 1965, is a 690-foot four span structure which is comprised of one 608 foot three-span continuous steel box-beam girder-floorbeam section and an additional 82-foot 2-inch steel box-beam girder-floorbeam western approach span. The bridge crosses over the Schuylkill River, below Spring Garden Street, and is located on the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, which is within the Fairmount Park system. The overall width of the existing bridge is 45’-10”, which accommodates two 10’-0” eastbound travel lanes, a 12’-0” westbound travel lane, a 4’-0” shoulder, a 1’-6” safetywalk on the downstream side, a 5’-0” sidewalk on the upstream side, and two 1’-8” concrete barriers (one along each fascia line). Photographs of the existing conditions and site are attached.

The purpose of the proposed project is to rehabilitate the structure and the scope of work primarily consists of a deck replacement. The existing deck will be removed along the entire length of the bridge and replaced with a reinforced concrete deck. The proposed deck, at 49'-8¼", will be approximately four feet wider than the existing and will accommodate two 10'-0" travel lanes in the eastbound direction, one 10'-0" travel lane in the westbound direction, two 2'-0" shoulders (one on either side of the travel lanes), a 10'-6" shared-use path on the upstream side, a 1'-6" curb/pedestrian railing between the westbound travel lane and shared-use path, a 1'-6" barrier along the upstream fascia line, and a 2'-2¼" barrier along the downstream fascia line. The existing steel will remain and be repaired as needed, cleaned and repainted. The scope also includes, but is not limited to: reconstructing the top portions of the wingwalls to accommodate reinforced concrete barriers and the wider approach slabs; minor approach roadway and sidewalk reconstruction; ADA ramp installation; bearing rehabilitation; minor substructure rehabilitation; and lighting improvements.

The project is anticipated to cost approximately $12 million and use a combination of 80% Federal, 15% State, and 5% City funds. The Public Art Director stated that, due to the small portion of City funding incorporated into the budget, the project is not eligible for the Percent for Art Program. Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2022.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this submission, please contact Timothy Dragan, at timothy.dragan@phila.gov or (484) 576-3539.

Sincerely,

Ryan Sen, P.E.
Engineering Supervisor 2

CC: File; RSS/tzd/mjs/bac

MLK Jr. Drive Bridge

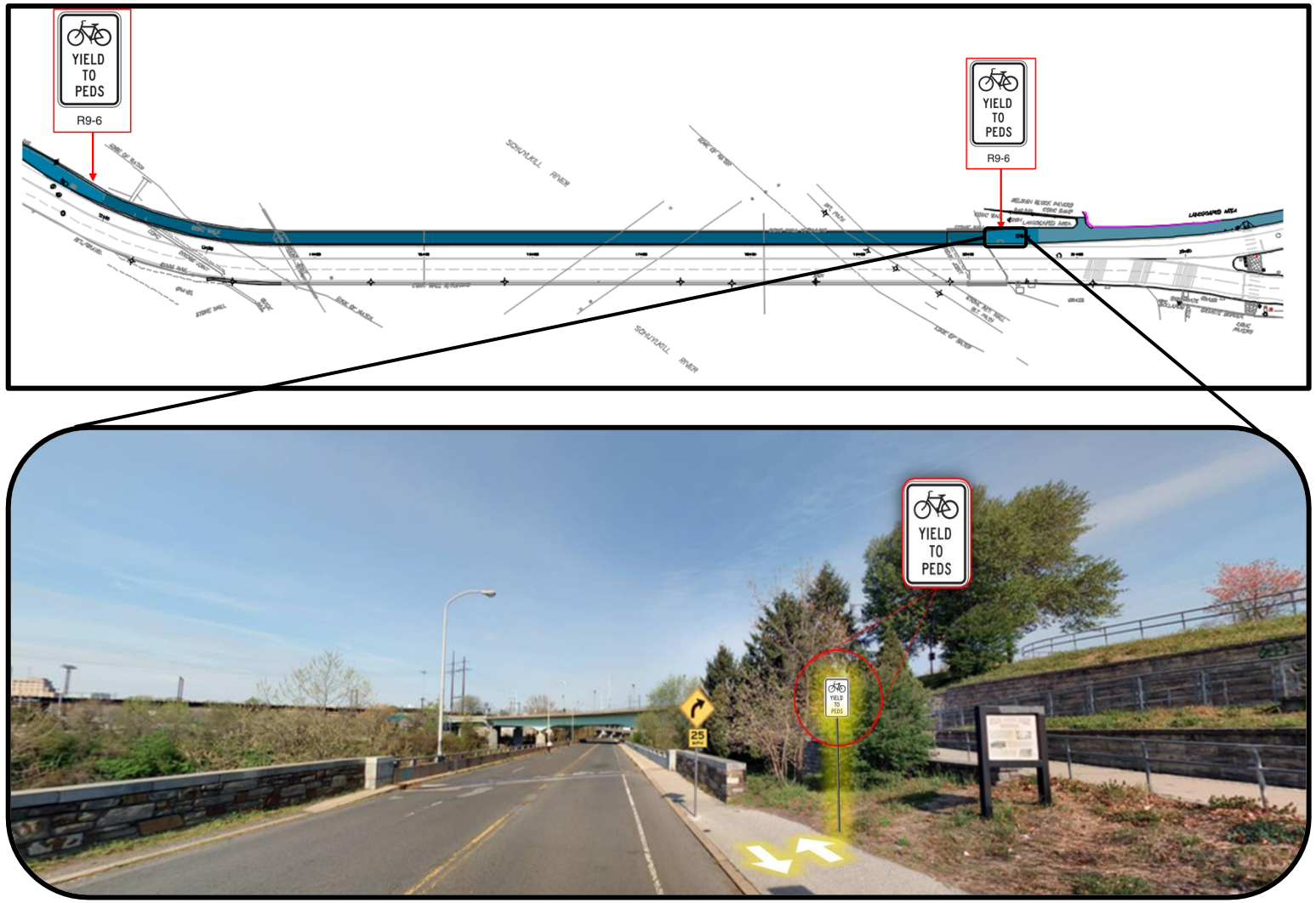
Rehabilitation Project

Project Background

- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Bridge rehabilitation project started in 2017
- The goal is to create a safer and more functional crossing for all users
- The majority (80%) of funding for this project comes from the Federal Highway Administration (gas taxes), with the understanding that the bridge would re-open to all modes of traffic

Proposed Pavement Markings and Signage

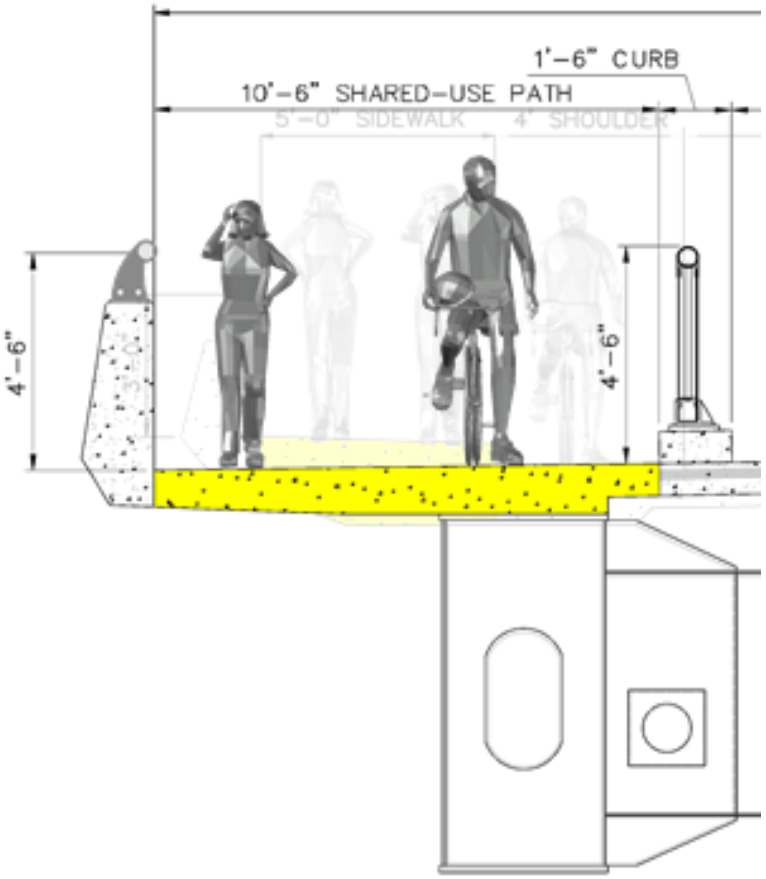
- Preliminary plan is to install **Directional Arrows** & **Yield to Peds** signs on either side of the shared use path
- Final pavement marking and signage plan is subject to **Planning Commission** review and approval



Addressing the Public's Desire for Additional Space Allocated to Cyclists.

- Proposed bridge deck has been designed for the maximum overhang that the structure can safely support.

- After receiving comments from the first community open-house; we did go back to our design and squeezed in an extra 6 inches to the shared-use trail making it 10'-6" clear.

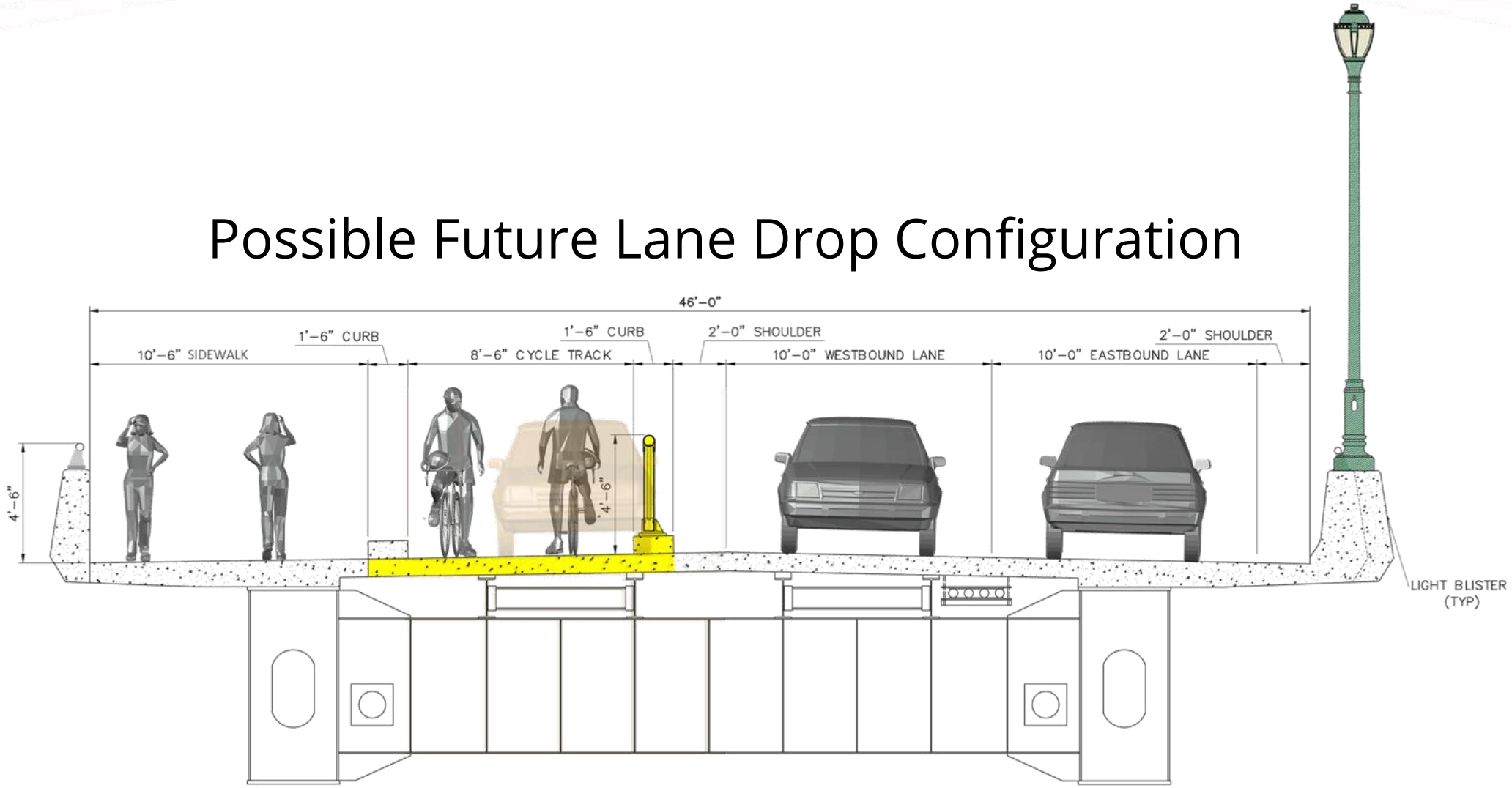


Proposed Aesthetic Elements

- Pedestrian and Cyclist 10’-6” Shared-Use Path

Designed to Accommodate a Future Lane Drop

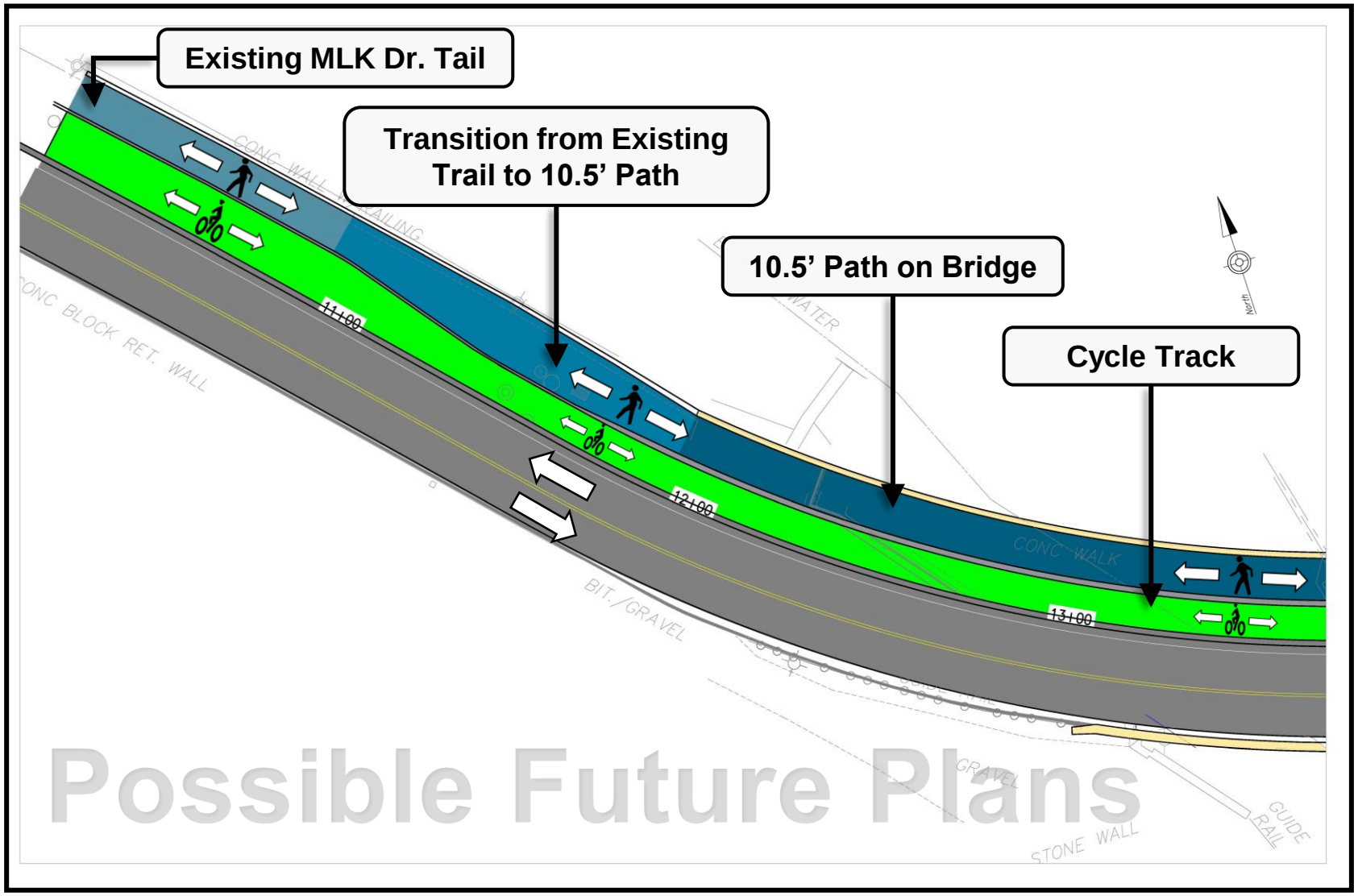
Possible Future Lane Drop Configuration



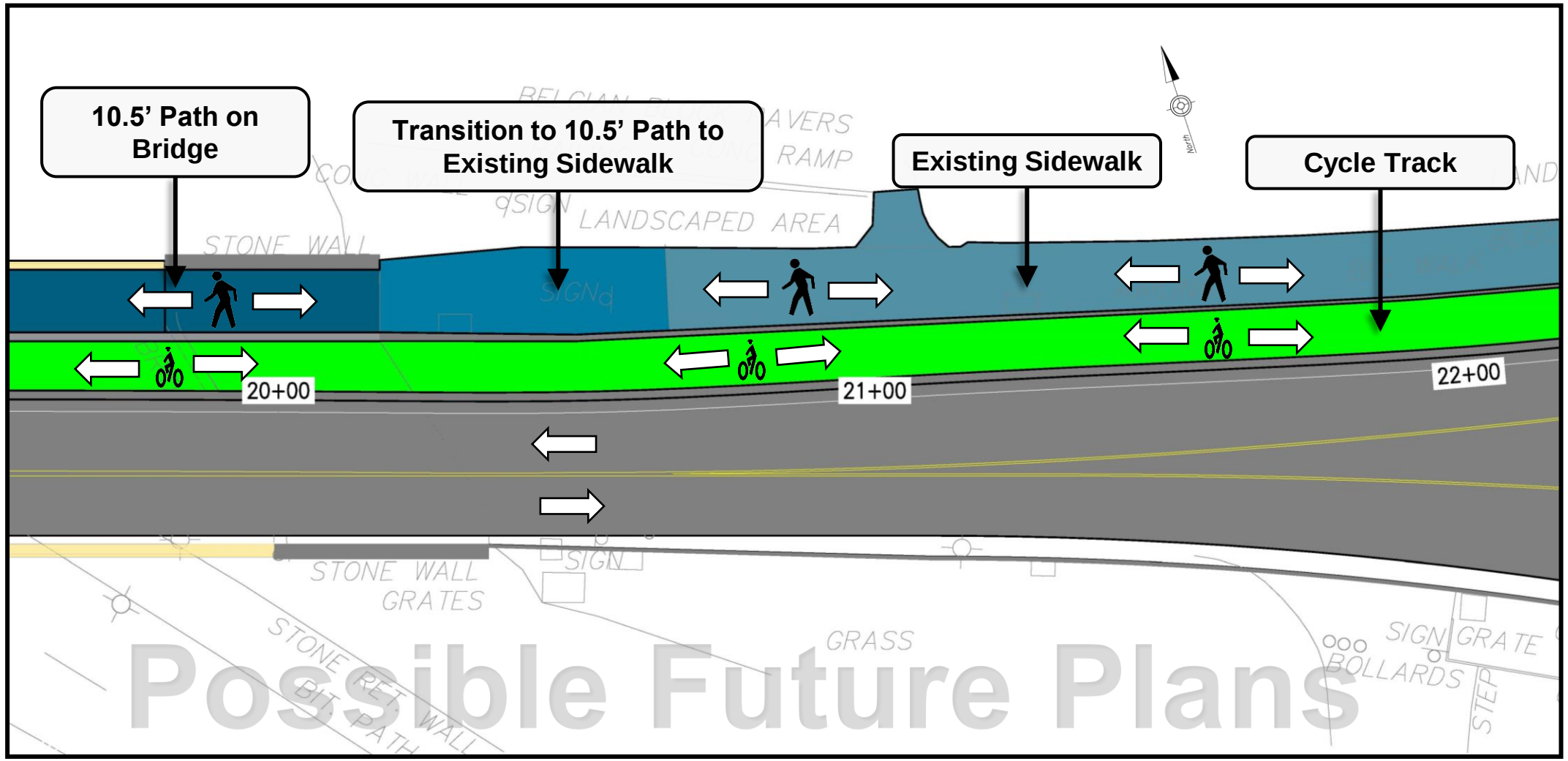
Bikeway Considerations

- **Future lane drop** is being evaluated in the Eakins Oval Project.
  - Changes to the traffic pattern of Eakins Oval **could allow for lane drop**.
- The lane drop will **require a City Council ordinance**.
- **Redundancy** in any transportation network is required for a **resilient system**
- The shared use path on the bridge has been submitted to the **Planning Commission** for shared use path approval. Their **review** and **public hearing** will determine the final pavement markings and signage for the path on the bridge.

Plan View of Western Transition to MLK Jr Dr.



Plan View of Eastern Transition to Eakin's Oval



Budget and Timeline

- Cost
  - Construction Estimate: $12 Million
- Funding
  - 80% Federally Funded
  - 15% State Funded
  - 5% City Funded

- Design Timeline
  - First Community Meeting – August 2020 – held virtually (website still active)
    https://www.mlk-bridge-rehab.com/
  - Second Community Meeting – Summer 2021
  - Complete Final Design – Fall 2021
- Construction Timeline
  - Begin Construction – Summer 2022
  - Complete Construction & Bridge Opening – Fall 2024

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