

Mount Auburn Street



A Complete Streets Project

Open House: Summary

Monday, May 14: 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Hosmer Elementary School - Cafeteria

1 Concord Road, Watertown

Present

Town of Watertown Attendees

Superintendent Gerald Mee, Matthew Shuman and Dennis Sheehan, Department of Public Works (DPW)
Gideon Schreiber, Steve Magoon and Laura Wiener, Community Development & Planning

Town Councilors

Councilor Caroline Bays

Councilor Angeline Kounelis

Councilor Vincent Piccirilli

Project Team Attendees

Bill Mertz, John Dixon, Michael Pompili, Adam Prichard and Kristopher Surette, WorldTech Engineering (WTE)
Nancy Farrell, Sarah Paritsky and Emily Christin, Regina Villa Associates (RVA)

Public Attendees

A list of public attendees can be found below.

Materials (available on [project website](#))

- Informational Boards
 - Sign in/registration
 - Live/Work Map of Watertown
 - Complete Streets and Bicycle/Pedestrian Issues
 - Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
 - Streetscape Amenities
 - Road Diets
 - Transit Operations
 - Transit Improvements
 - Bus Stop Layout
 - Bus Priority Pilot Program
 - Traffic/Safety
 - Traffic Forecasting
 - Traffic/Safety Improvements

Open House Summary

- Traffic Volume
- Draft Concept Plans
 - Corridor-wide plans
 - Plans by Segment:
 - Segment #1 – West of Common Street
 - Segment #2 – Common Street to Dexter Avenue
 - Segment #3 – Dexter Avenue to Arlington Street
 - Segment #4 – Arlington Street to Cambridge City Line
- Handouts
 - Welcome Handout
 - Summary of Public Input
 - Complete Streets Concept
 - Bus Boardings & Alightings
 - Road Diet Fact Sheet

Format

The meeting was arranged in an open house format with informational boards set up at stations around the room. Project team and Town staff were available to speak one-on-one with members of the public and answer their questions. At the Conceptual Map stations, attendees had the opportunity to place dots, draw or write comments directly on the maps or on sticky notes. Three colored dots were available and indicated the participant's preference for different amenities: tree (green), bench (red), bike rack (yellow).

Appendix B includes photos of the Conceptual Maps with comments and dots, and categorized transcriptions of the notes on the maps.



Attendees received a handout/comment form that guided them through the different stations. After signing in, participants were invited to place a pin on a map of Watertown indicating where they live (white) and work (yellow). Results of this exercise are below.

Open House Summary



Public Attendees

David Aitcheson

Paul Angiollo

June Baboian

G. Bader-Wechsler

Jeannette Beecher-Schepis, CSRTS Watertown

Jon Bockian, Watertown Public Transit Task Force (WPTTF)

Peter Boyajian

Charlie Breitrose, *Watertown News*

Joanna Brownstein

Kathy Button

Nick C.

Kathleen Cercerau

Nancy Chenausky

Chris Chiotasso

Matt Colella

Rita Colella

Andre Compagna

Bruce Coltin

Aaron Derderian, St. James Armenian Church

Dimitri Dimidis

Susan Downard

Jean Dunoyer

Sarah Eckstein

Mal Elfman

Sheila Fay, Watertown Bike/Ped Committee

Kerry Feltner, *Watertown TAB*

Sheppard Ferguson, Watertown Library

Marian Ferro

John Foley

Maureen F. Foley

Sophia Galimore, Watertown Transportation Management Association (TMA)

Susan Gregorian

J. Gregorian

Adrian Gropper

Jesse Hammond, Watertown Bike/Ped Committee

Ralph Holmberg

Open House Summary

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Sarah Hu | H. Rakoff |
| Randal Imai | Penny Roscoe |
| Jane Iman | Barbara Ruskin |
| Janet Jameson | Arun Sannuti |
| Nancy Kay | John Schepis |
| Kate Kelly | Sam Scoppettone, Watertown Bike/Ped Committee |
| Marc Khederian | Libby Shaw, Trees for Watertown |
| Florence Kilgo | Randa Shedid |
| Ben Kotic | Dawn Slaven |
| Ernesta Kraczkiewicz | Eileen Snyder |
| Mark Kraczkiewicz | Joe Sousso |
| Nelson Lan | Richard Stanton |
| Joe Levendusky | Stephen Steadman |
| Lucy Lovrlen | David Stokes |
| Paul Moreton | Andrew Sumski |
| Hoi-Chan Nguyen | Natalie Tarbet |
| Albert Ordoubeigian | Elodia Thomas |
| Sarkis Ourfalian, Massis Bakery | Rod Trial |
| Steve Owens | Jeanne Trubek |
| Dwayne Parmley | Karin Vandar Schaaf |
| Deborah Peterson | Miranda Volpicelli |
| Vincent Piccirilli | Yu Yai |
| Irene Pistoftzian | Anonymous |
| Camilla Potter | |

Appendix A: Comment Form Transcriptions

A total of 13 comment forms were submitted during the meeting. Personal information of the commenters has been redacted.

(1) Any bus stop that does NOT have a shelter, should have a shade tree! (2) Need lots of trees near Mobil Gas Station corner @ intersection of Mt. Aub St. & Arlington St, to help suck up rain water. There is a HUGE puddle/ocean that forms on that street area whenever there is a heavy rainstorm! (3) St. James Church (@Mt. Aub St & Winsor Ave) has church buildings on south side of Mt. Auburn St but church parking lot on north side of Mt. Aub (corner of Winsor Ave). Your plans show no crosswalk there (due to poor visibility Eastbound traffic rounding curve). I understand your reasoning but crosswalk @corner of Langdon has EXACT SAME curve problem! And trust me, church-related parkers WILL J-WALK TO CROSS TO CHURCH rather than walk an entire block R or L to get to your proposed crosswalks! Be realistic! (3) St. James Church, I think even a dangerous cross-walk is better than NO crosswalk from parking lot to church, with J-Walkers randomly crossing. Strongly suggest MAINTAIN CURRENT, but add FLASHING WARNING SIGNS, especially on Eastbound side, BEFORE crosswalk is visible. (4) PLEASE work with Cambridge to turn slum-my train track near Star Market into bike path from Fresh Pond to Arsenal Mall!!

Please don't move the bus stop (WB) at Amherst Rd. It leaves a pair of stops (Amherst WB & Boylston EB) that are separated. Thanks

So pleased that the signal for crossing Mt. Auburn will be moved from mid-block to in front of Boylston St. It would be such a quick win on safety to leave the westbound bus stop at Amherst Rd, just past the signal. Currently, we all run across Mt Auburn after de-boarding from the WB bus. If you move the stop further along, we will just be re-creating the situation where pedestrians run across the street. Staff did not know why the stop was slated to move. A few guessed that it was because there is not enough space for a far-side WB bus stop. However, that is where the stop is now. If the new design means that the Amherst Rd. site is technically a foot or two short for a bus stop, I would urge you to consider a compromise, as strict adherence to that guideline (if indeed the case) will increase bus passenger risk significantly. Thanks.

Pedestrian crossing lights should allow more time for aging population. (I believe the cross walk in Harvard Sq. allows ~30 seconds to cross.) Lots & lots of trees! Use structured soil under sidewalks to allow tree roots room to grow and avoid soil compaction.

Please ensure that there is NO disturbance of root system for very large old (130 year) copper beach tree at 200 Mt. Auburn St. (front of Church of Good Shepherd). Their tree is already distressed from salting sidewalk. Please provide benches or shelter for bus stops at Common St. (Bench for Parker St. was removed following damage in 2018 during snow removal.) There was no bench at Marshall St.

Given the complexity, scope and impact this project will have on the community, it would be nice if there was some sort of ballot question (2018 or 2020) or petition for taxpayers to approve or disapprove the project.

(1) THANK YOU! A step in the right direction. (2) It seems as if cyclists are typically the most vocal. I would appreciate it if the town could find ways for cyclists to obey the laws of the road (like stopping after red lights) I imagine this will help safety. (3) You can't please everyone - just filling the potholes would be a win for everyone!

Where's the outbound bus stop at Common Street? Citizen is concerned distance to next stop and from previous stop is too far.

Need more communication. Very few people impacted know about it. Consider change of school start times - will increase traffic from Hosmer to Middle School at specific times.

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VERY happy about removal / narrowing of travel lanes. Slow down those cars!! I live & drive in Watertown and congestion / slowing of traffic throughout is NOT a concern, for me, TRANSIT speed and reliability, bike facilities that I can feel comfortable letting my kids ride in, and pedestrian safety are MUCH more important. I would like to see even more space taken from cars and given to buses, bikes & pedestrians. I want to see MORE protection for bike lanes. Grade separation, protected intersections, wider buffers, (I would be MORE likely to frequent local businesses if you trade parking for bike & ped in front! NOT LESS!! Flexposts bicycle signal phases my kids' safety is more important than a few minutes driving time more or less. Stay strong folks & keep fighting the good fight. Don't let the wimps get you down. Watertown is READY for change!!

Thanks for emailing links to the plans and having this open house. I appreciate the level of planning for this work - and this open house. Thanks!

Find out where bike commuters are going & re-route them via Common (which could have students too) on the side streets to Church St - or Baptist Way to bike path west

I would like to express extreme concern regarding the left turn lane onto Langdon Ave. from Mt. Auburn St. This is a residential street; there is no traffic / trip generations count data (per Michael Pompili from World Tech) that supports a left turn lane here. Cut thru traffic already occurs and presents a [illegible] condition as drivers crest over two hills on either side of Maplewood traveling above the posted speed limits. My issue with a left turn lane is the very real potential for exacerbating a pre-existing hazardous condition by encouraging additional - unnecessary traffic thru this residential neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration and I am hopeful to see this left turn lane removed especially since there is no traffic count to support this turning lane.

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Appendix B: Conceptual Map Comments

Scanned conceptual maps are included below:

Segment 1 – Patten Street to Walnut Street

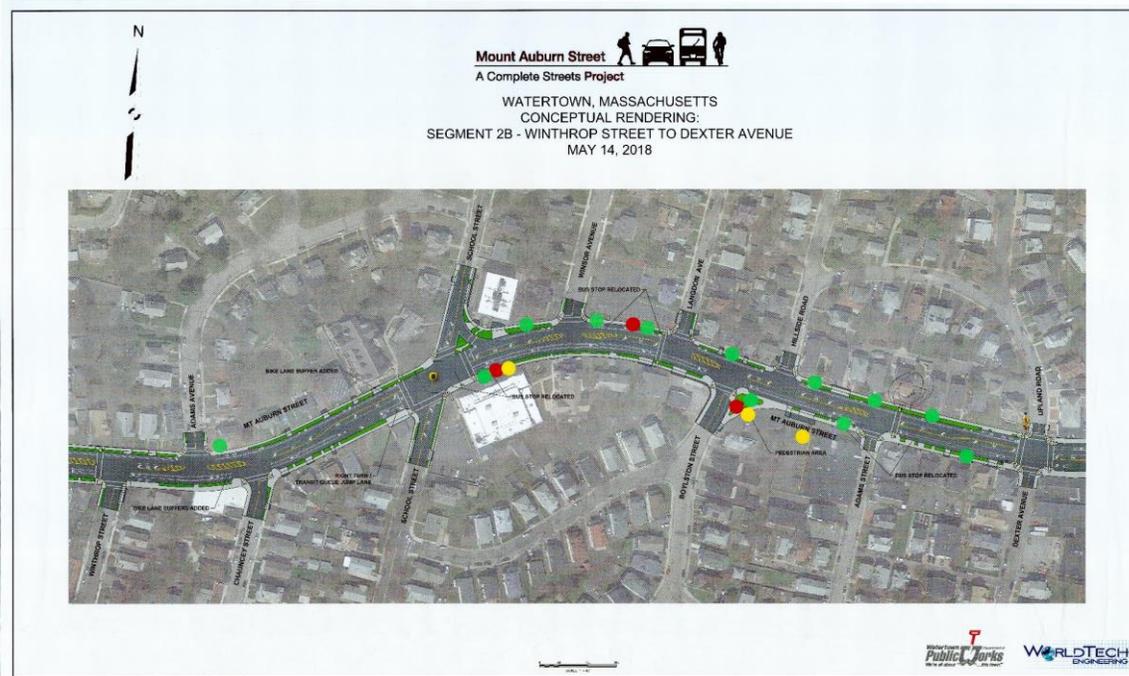


Segment 2A - Walnut Street to Winthrop Street



Open House Summary

Segment 2B - Winthrop Street to Dexter Avenue



Segment 3 - Dexter Avenue to Prentiss Street



Open House Summary

Segment 4 – Prentiss Street to Cambridge City Line



Written comments on the Conceptual Maps are organized by Segment and topic.

| Segment 1 – Patten Street to Walnut Street | |
|--|---|
| <i>No written comments – dots only.</i> | |
| Segment 2A – Walnut Street to Winthrop Street | |
| Traffic and Safety | N/A |
| Complete Streets and Pedestrian/Bicycle Issues | N/A |
| Parking and Loading | N/A |
| Transit Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [At Bailey Road:] Why is bus stop relocated, would negate safety [improvement] of signal w/crosswalks • [At Boylston Street:] Great that you are moving the signal to the (old) bus stop. Now, what is the rationale for moving the bus stop (westbound) away? Thanks. • [Red dot] – All over • [Green dot] – Everywhere |
| Other | N/A |

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|---|--|
| Segment 2B –Winthrop Street to Dexter Avenue | |
| <i>No written comments – dots only.</i> | |
| Segment 3 – Dexter Avenue to Prentiss Street | |
| <i>No written comments – dots only.</i> | |
| Segment 4 – Prentiss Street to Cambridge City Line | |
| Traffic and Safety | N/A |
| Complete Streets and Pedestrian/Bicycle Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn Railroad track into Bike Path PLEASE!! [from Cambridge City Line to Arsenal Mall] |
| Parking and Loading | N/A |
| Transit Operations | N/A |
| Other | N/A |