

Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street

A Complete Streets Project



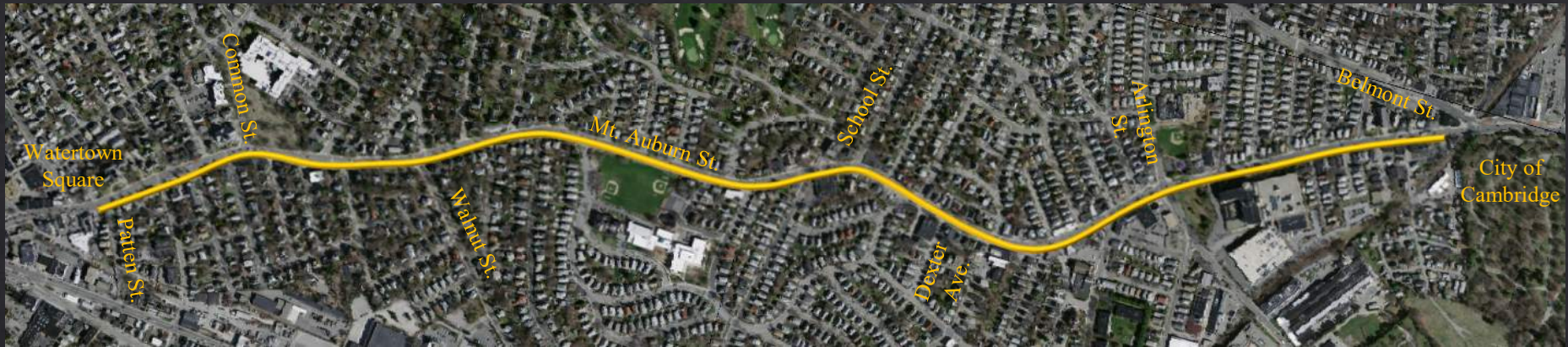
City of Watertown
Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
Project Update
May 2, 2022

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Project Overview
- Project Status Update
- Comments from MassDOT Design Public Hearing
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Letter



PROJECT OVERVIEW



- Project Limits
 - Patten Street to the Cambridge City Line
 - Approximate length = 9,300 FT = 1.76 Miles
- Project Scope
 - Roadway and sidewalk reconstruction
 - Implementation of road diet, east of Common Street
 - Traffic signal upgrades
 - Bicycle lanes along corridor
 - Improved transit accommodations

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

- Project programmed through MassDOT
 - Fiscal Year 2023 State Transportation Improvement Program
- MassDOT Design Public Hearing
 - November 4, 2021
- 25% Design Approved by MassDOT
 - February 14, 2022
- Utility Coordination
 - MBTA – Catenary wires / bus service
 - National Grid Gas – Infrastructure upgrades along corridor
 - MWRA – Replacing main from Irving Street to Russell Avenue
- **Advancing 75% Design Phase**



PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM MASSDOT DPH

- MassDOT Design Public Hearing
 - November 4, 2021
 - Over 100 participants attended virtual meeting
- Written Comments from MassDOT Hearing
 - MassDOT received a total of 68 written comments
 - Project team reviewing comments and providing detailed responses
 - Responses will be distributed by MassDOT Project Manager
 - Formal process governed by MassDOT



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE

LETTER TO MASSDOT



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS
ANDY COMPAGNA, CHAIR
SHEILA FAY
JESSE HAMMOND
JANET JAMESON
DAN MCKINLEY
AMY PLOVNIK
HANNAH RAKOFF
MARIA SAIZ

To: Carrie Lavelle, PE
Acting Chief Engineer, MassDOT
10 Park Plaza, Suite 6340
Boston, MA 02116
Attn: Project Management, Project No. 607777
From: Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
Date: December 6, 2021
RE: Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, Project # 607777

Dear Ms. LaVelle,

On behalf of the Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, I want to submit comments in response to the 25% design public hearing held on November 4, 2021 for the Mt. Auburn Street redesign project. We are a City appointed committee with extensive experience advocating for those who walk and bike within Watertown, and are therefore well positioned to offer informed comment on this project. We appreciated the opportunity to participate in the hearing and we look forward to continued engagement as the design advances towards the 75% milestone. We have summarized our recommendations, based on the hearing presentation and the updated roll plan (dated 11/11/2021), herein.

Although the proposed design represents an improvement over the existing conditions, as currently proposed we do not believe it will enable people of all ages and abilities to safely use the corridor. Our purpose in providing these comments is to recommend improvements to the design of the street to enable all users to safely walk and bike as a means of transportation. Every trip taken by foot or by bike is a trip not taken in a vehicle, yielding tangible health, climate, and congestion benefits for our community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Background and Overall Feedback

A number of significant events have taken place over the past 3 years which we believe warrant revision of the conceptual design, including:

- The Watertown Town Council approved the Watertown Bike-Pedestrian Plan in February, 2021 which, among other recommendations, calls for a network of safe, physically protected bike routes throughout Watertown.
- The Watertown Town Council declared a climate emergency in May 2021, calling for ending town-wide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible.

In January 2019 implementing a buildings and transport, which walking and biking are the two main components of decarbonizing transportation. Demand Management and Occupant Vehicle trips and to project area, has committed to their jurisdiction as part of their

physically protected bike lanes municipalities and MassDOT have design challenges associated with

protected bike lanes increase protected bike lanes (Karpinski 2021).

safe ways to travel by bike and infrastructure is not only feasible, b. Considering this evolution in and that the design team re-visit corridor. Where sidewalk level lanes be protected with flex posts

ent to encourage road users to safety to the user and the vast life. Per the Watertown Bike and stress rating of 5/5 (High Stress). al Resource Guide should have 7). In addition to providing no bike lanes are easily blocked by to general traffic, eliminating any is critical to their success) is ad, we strongly suggest that the safety - by design.

that incorporates sidewalk-level a higher level of protection than is.

lanes which are not adjacent to cycle encroachment in bike lanes rent design. Flex posts can be pede emergency vehicles which e.

located between car parking e position of car parking and bike lane. This arrangement e daylighting at intersections. e significant safety benefits

TOWN SQUARE: We are the project corridor between ess 5/5 per the Watertown sign (sharrows) will offer no

connectivity with future bike crossing of Mt. Auburn St.

COOLIDGE SQUARE TO installing protected bike lanes e Watertown Bike-Pedestrian roved pedestrian and bicycle improvements of Mt. Auburn recommend that the design Cambridge to ensure future

roximately 140 ft of Arlington of Arlington Street and 250 ft are currently a Bicycle Level alt as-designed will pose a The Watertown Bicycle and e safe north-south bicycle es Grove Street as a priority Additionally, the new DCR rity with access on Arlington lane was striped on Arlington r these locations to ensure DCR Greenway, as well as to re transitions at intersections e visibility and reduce motor

n across low traffic streets be visibility and eliminates water nificant accessibility obstacle

continental" design with thick re equal to the width of the d adjacent communities and we

all walk" phase on pedestrian the length of Mt Auburn St. lay for pedestrians traveling opportunity and incentive for feel that exclusive phasing is Common St, and Bigelow St, or junctions in order to reduce at this type of junction would a recommendation of the

project. The design decisions other 40 years, so it's critical committed to. By making this possible, our community can our residents. If you have any uss them further, please don't mber of the committee.

nger

REVISITING SEPARATED BICYCLE LANES

COMMENT 1

- Project reboot in 2017 based on local feedback
 - Beginning of extensive public participation process
 - Looked at the reallocation of space along corridor for various users
- Bicycle facilities considered during public process
 - Painted bicycle lanes
 - Buffered bicycle lanes
 - Parking protected bicycle lanes
 - Separated bicycle lanes
- Led to a balanced design approved by Town Council in 2018



REVISITING SEPARATED BICYCLE LANES

COMMENT 1 (CONT.)

- Benefits, issues, and limitations were discussed in detail as part of public process
 - Including several challenges with:
 - Parking protected bicycle lanes
 - Separated bicycle lanes
 - Challenges included:
 - Sight distance safety issues
 - Impacts to on-street parking
 - Traffic operations
 - Design implements road diet
 - MBTA Route 71
 - Emergency response
 - Retain existing tree canopy
 - Maintenance requirements



RECOMMEND PARKING PROTECTED OR FLEX POSTS

COMMENT 2

- MassDOT responsible for administering / constructing project
 - Municipality responsible for maintenance
- Flex posts along the corridor?
 - Long term maintenance concerns
 - Traffic flow and emergency response
 - Snow removal / trash collection
 - Driveway spacing



BIKE LANES BLOCKED BY PARKING / DELIVERIES

COMMENT 3

- City of Watertown will consider several strategies to combat double parking and deliveries in bicycle lanes
 - **Education**
 - Work with public and business owners
 - **Signage**
 - Visual reinforcement of no parking restrictions within bicycle lanes
 - **Enforcement**
 - Work alongside Watertown Police Department regarding enforcement of no parking restrictions
 - Police Department actively participated in conceptual layout development



PROJECT TRANSITION TO WATERTOWN SQUARE

COMMENT 4

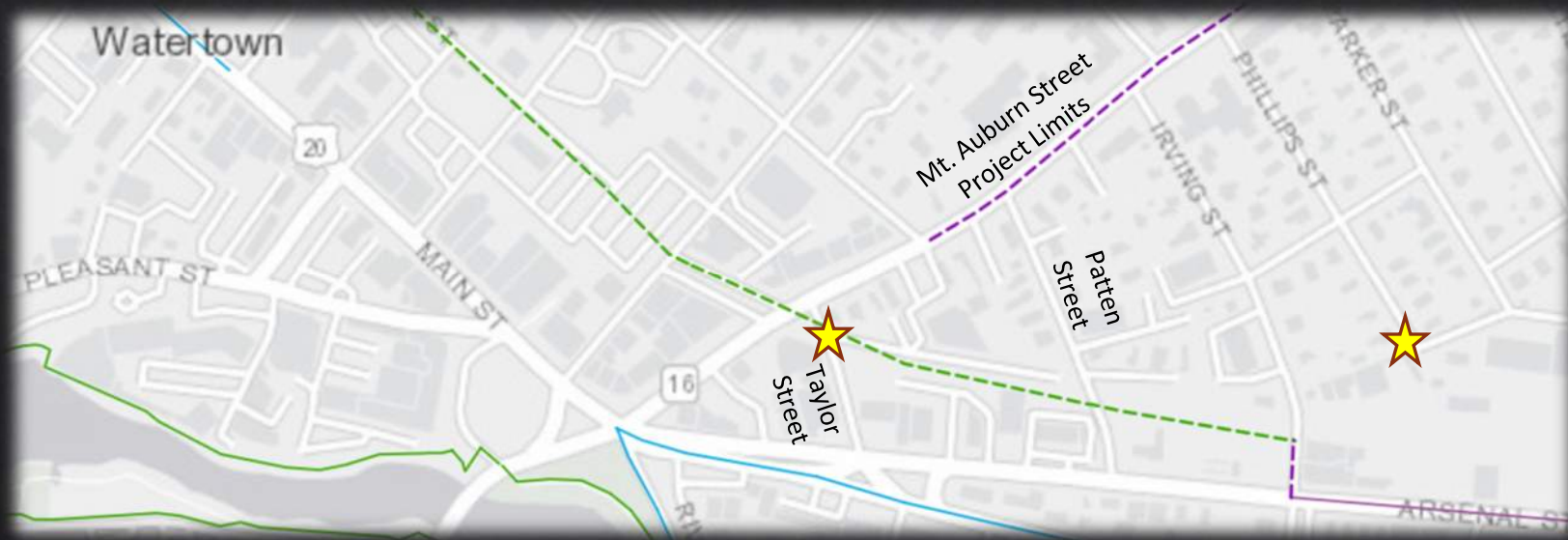
- Road diet begins at Common Street
 - Two travels lanes in each direction to Watertown Square
- Maintain location of existing curb line
 - **Design objective from public participation process**
 - Concerned with impacts to tree canopy and utilities
- Manage traffic between Watertown Sq. - Common St.
 - Traffic volumes do not support road diet
 - Heavy turning volumes at Common Street
 - Palfrey Street / Common Street intersection spacing
 - Offset intersection
- **Design updated to accommodate future road diet**
 - Pavement marking adjustments
 - Part of future city / MassDOT project



WEST SIDE, BARRIER FOR BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY

COMMENT 5

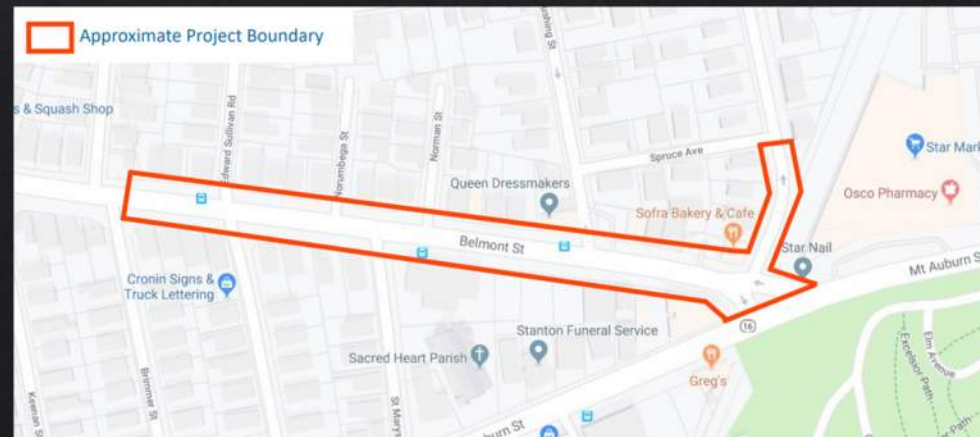
- Project approved at regional level in 2014
 - Limits defined as part of the process
 - Prior to 25% Design / Watertown-Cambridge Greenway
- Connections to Community Path (outside project limits)
 - End of Phillips Street
 - Taylor Street



COORDINATION WITH CAMBRIDGE - CONNECTIVITY

COMMENT 6

- Project team working closely with City of Cambridge
- Confirmed separated bicycle lanes part of Bicycle Plan
 - Detailed design yet to begin
 - No schedule for implementation
- Improvements on Belmont Street (Cambridge)
 - Includes Mount Auburn Street intersection
 - Roadway and sidewalk reconstruction
- **DCR installed wayfinding signage on Mount Auburn Street**
 - Directs pedestrians / bicycles to Cottage Street access
 - Additional access on Holworthy Street (Cambridge)



ARLINGTON STREET BICYCLE FACILITIES

COMMENT 7

- Limited Right of Way
- Utility lines / poles relocations would require easements
- Heavy traffic volumes
 - Comparable to Mt. Auburn Street
- Proximity of intersections
 - Queue lengths
 - Level of Service
- Old Burying Place Cemetery



NON-SLIP GREEN PAINT AT INTERSECTIONS

COMMENT 8

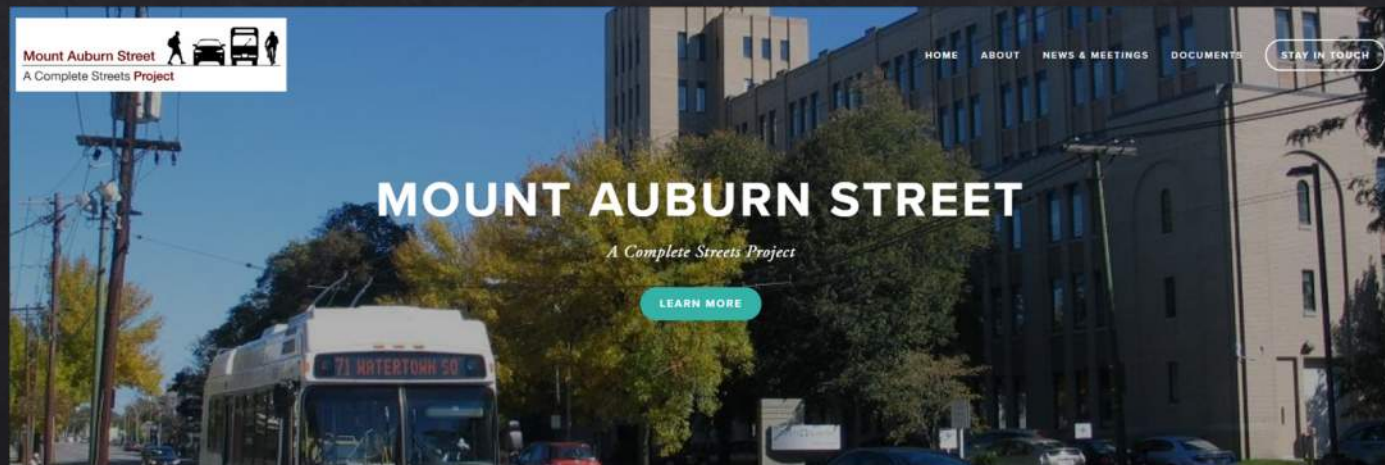
- Team to determine if this can be option at signalized intersections
 - Maintenance concerns at local level
 - Layout and materials must comply to MassDOT standards
 - Project subject to MassDOT reviews
 - Can be discussed with MassDOT



RAISED CROSSWALKS AT LOW TRAFFIC SIDE STREETS

COMMENT 9

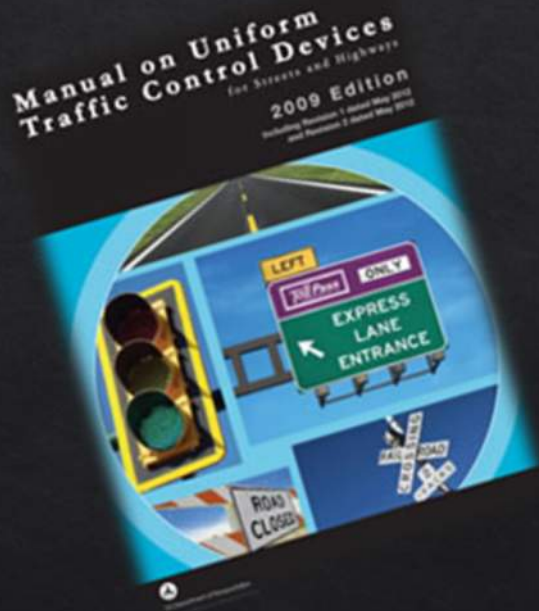
- Design team considering raised crosswalks
 - At select locations
- Follow project for future updates on this topic
 - Project website / mailing list



CROSSWALK STRIPING

COMMENT 10

- City of Watertown standard
 - Ladder style crosswalk
 - Default configuration along corridor
 - Considered high visibility crosswalk
 - Line width and spacing in accordance with MUTCD standards



PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL TIMES – “ALL WALK PHASE”

COMMENT 11

- Project team evaluating traffic operations along corridor
 - Turning movements
 - Traffic signal timing
 - Pedestrian phasing
- Evaluating the implementation of pedestrian signals
- Needs of all users will be considered
 - Vicinity of Perkins School for the Blind



THANK YOU

