Watertown City Council

Committee on Economic Development and Planning
Meeting
Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber - Second Floor

Agenda

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, the meeting and public hearing will be conducted with remote opportunities for participation. Remote participation and access methods include:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

A. This meeting will be held on October 21, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. Location: Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber

B. The meeting will be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3

C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/83549340015

D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 835 4394 0015

E. Public may comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

F. Please Visit the Committee on Economic Development and Planning Webpage here:https://watertownma.portal.civicclerk.com/?category_id=78

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1. Call to Order
2. Discussion
   A. Presentation and Discussion of the ARPA-Funded Study for Improving City-Supported Mobility, and Make Recommendation on Preferred Options
   B. Update on Consideration and Recommendation of Transportation Network Company (TNC) Funds
3. Adjournment

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Lisa J. Feltner, Chair	John G. Gannon, Vice Chair	Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Secretary

Watertown Study to Improve City Supported Mobility

"Founded in Peace"
WATERTOWN
MASSACHUSETTS

Stantec

Journey

Executive Summary

Introduction

What is the Purpose of this Study?

The City set out on this project to improve mobility and access within Watertown in three key ways:

- Identifying **opportunities within City control**. Although the City has an important voice in the region, it is challenging for it to invest in major regional projects such as highways or train lines, or to influence policies at the state or local level that are not the City's own.
- Projects that are in alignment with **twin goals to increase access for particular groups and reduce emissions.** The study sought to identify the best options to connect people to where they want to go locally without a personal automobile in accordance with the City's goal of reducing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel mileage by 50% by 2050. The charge of the study was also to consider the needs of residents whose mobility needs are not being met, including older adults, those with disabilities, low-income residents, students, parents with children, and households without vehicles. These groups often cannot rely on private automobile ownership, nor can they all make use of cycling or walking.
- Guided by the goals, the study identified **needs defined through both empirical data and community conversations**. Each hold equal weight, as data alone cannot tell the whole story of mobility.

Project Process

Universe Of Projects

The Project Team reviewed recent Watertown plans and reports for City-identified projects, best practices from peer municipalities, and regional initiatives that may impact Watertown, highlighting projects the City could pursue or advocate for to enhance its overall development and accessibility.

Data- and Community-Driven Needs Assessment

Community conversations and a review of key data revealed important characteristics of Watertown's mobility network. The analysis used these findings to narrow down and add to the list of strategies for the City to consider:

- Watertown has limited options for traveling north-south by transit or bicycle
- More people are traveling from Watertown neighborhoods to Arsenal Yards and Boston Landing
- Nearly 2/3 of Trips that Start in Watertown are Local
- Many Trips Occurring in Watertown are Just Passing Through
- Most trips within Watertown require crossing a major street, some of which lack signalized crossings
- All of Watertown has the density of people and jobs needed to support fixed-route transit service
- Neighborhoods farther from Watertown Square have transit access to fewer destinations

Final Strategies

The final set of strategies target the above identified needs and include additional detail regarding implementation, potential partners, funding sources, and next steps for the City.

Executive Summary

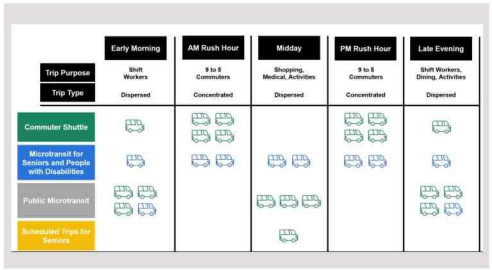
Key Strategies

What is the Outcome of this Study?

The analysis identified five key mobility strategies for the City to prioritize, several of which have sub-recommendations and additional details which are discussed later in this report:

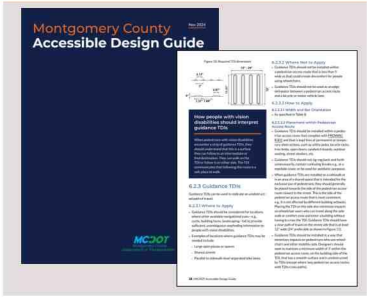
1. Expand a Local Transit Approach

- Explore ways (within the City's direct control) to fill transit gaps and unmet needs. Sub-recommendations include:
  - Approaches for a Unified Watertown Connector
  - Expanding Community Microtransit Services
  - Creating a Community Transit Platform



2. Become a Leader in Universal Access Design

- Begin by developing a Universal Design Guide and associated standards with local community partners like Perkins School for the Blind, the Council on Aging, and other organizations representing those with mobility challenges.
- Beginning with a pilot corridor, implement Universal Access corridors, focusing on predictability, consistency, and ease of use for all users.



3. Invest in Top Corridors by Use

- In addition to the Universal Access corridors (Strategy 2) the City should invest in specific corridors for Bus Preservation (for future transit routes) and Bike Priority.
- Emphasis on North-South streets was identified both by analysis and stakeholders as a challenging direction of travel.

4. Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach

- Continue to prioritize safety on Watertown's streets, including via recent federal grant awards as well as the Boston Region MPO's Safety Action Plan.
- Develop a Traffic Calming Program that links resident feedback to a catalog of pre-approved street design interventions that can be installed first as a quick-build, and then as a permanent design.

5. Pursue Local + Regional Priorities

- Sub-recommendations include:
  - Creating a north-south MBTA bus route through Watertown
  - Extending MBTA Bus Route 65 from Brighton to Watertown Square
  - Reducing commuter fares at inner core stations to match subway fares
  - Additional long-term recommendations (see section)

See City-Supported Mobility Strategies section of this report for details on each.

Acknowledgements

CONSULTING TEAM

Stantec Consulting Inc.

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- Liza Cohen
- Erin Cameron
- Adam Gendreau

Journey (WBE)

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CITY OF WATERTOWN

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1 Introduction

What is the Watertown Transportation Strategy?

The City set out on this project to improve mobility and access within Watertown in three key ways:

- Identifying **opportunities within City control**. Although the City has an important voice in the region, it is challenging for it to invest in major regional projects such as highways or train lines, or to influence policies at the state or local level that are not the City's own.
- Projects that are in alignment with **twin goals to increase access for particular groups and reduce emissions.** The study sought to identify the best options to connect people to where they want to go locally without a personal automobile in accordance with the City's goal of reducing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel mileage by 50% by 2050. The charge of the study was also to consider the needs of residents whose mobility needs are not being met. These groups include older adults, those with disabilities, low-income residents, students, parents with children, and households without vehicles. They often cannot rely on private automobile ownership, nor can they all make use of cycling or walking.
- Guided by the goals, the study identified **needs defined through both empirical data and community conversations**. Each hold equal weight, as data alone cannot tell the whole story of mobility.

This report provides a brief overview of the study process, followed by the data findings relative to the emissions reduction and community access goals. The bulk of the report focuses on five strategy areas for the City to focus on in the immediate future, although elements of each strategy may be more mid- or long-term. **These strategies emerged directly from the project process and strike a balance between strategies that would directly decrease vehicle miles traveled and those that target groups that are underserved today.**

Existing Transit and Bicycle Amenities in Watertown

Source: Watertown Bicycle and Transit Maps

Existing Community Transit Services

The City of Watertown and the Watertown Transportation Management Association (Watertown TMA) support a range of community transportation services and programs, including:

- **Watertown Connector – Pleasant Street:** A commuter shuttle connecting Pleasant Street, Watertown Square, and Harvard Square. The shuttle is provided by the City, open to the public for a $1 fare, and free to participating TMA members. The City currently funds the shuttle using fare revenue and TMA member contributions.
- **Watertown Connector – Arsenal Street:** Two commuter shuttle services connecting the Arsenal Street area and Harvard Square – one serving residential users and another serving corporate users. These shuttles are managed by the ARE and are open only to participating members.
- **Senior Shuttle:** The City operates weekly grocery trips and scheduled excursion trips for seniors, using a City owned-and-operated shuttle van.
- **School Bus Transportation:** The City provides school bus transportation for qualified students at Hosmer K-5, as well as temporary service for Middle School and High School students during the 25-26 school year.
- **GoGo Transportation & Taxi Subsidies for Seniors:** Two programs that enable qualified Watertown seniors to access subsidized or free Uber, Lyft, and Taxi rides. These programs are funded by the City and the Marshall Home Fund.
- **MBTA Student Passes:** The City participates in the MBTA Student Pass Program, providing discounted fare products for Middle and High School students.

The City and the Watertown TMA currently contract with third-party vendors to operate the Watertown Connector and School Bus Transportation services.

Project Goals

This study is motivated by the goals outlined in the previously-adopted Comprehensive Plan. To guide the Watertown Study for City-Supported Mobility, the City developed two specific metrics, calling for expanded access and reduced single-occupancy vehicle travel. In this report, the recommended priority projects will be evaluated by how well they meet these two goals.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

1. Be **a leader on municipal sustainability** and managing climate change impacts.
2. Enhance the **character and quality of life** in Watertown's neighborhoods, squares, and along the corridors that connect them to help build community.
3. Cultivate **a mix of diverse businesses** that strengthens our community by providing jobs, services, and support for City infrastructure.
4. Provide **safe, efficient multimodal transportation options** that provide access to homes, jobs, amenities, and services.
5. Facilitate a **range of housing types** and affordability.
6. Ensure **high-quality parks, recreation, and open spaces** that meet the needs of residents and the environment, and encourage active and passive use.
7. **Support community wellness** through inclusive programs and events, diverse arts and culture, enhanced natural and historic resources, and livelier public and private spaces.
8. **Proactively maintain** and improve infrastructure and services.

METRICS OF SUCCESS FOR THIS STUDY

1. Expand access for underserved groups/neighborhoods
2. Reduce travel by single occupancy vehicle, including for those who can't walk and bike

Project Process

The Project built on the community's prior work to identify detailed plans for sustainability, bicycle and walk access, and an overall community vision. This was the first step in the process of developing a "Universe Of Projects" that Watertown could pursue. Specifically, the Universe draws from:

- Watertown Comprehensive Plan
- Watertown Square Area Plan
- Watertown and Coolidge Square Parking Management Plan
- Resilient Watertown
- Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The Universe of Projects also includes best practices from peer municipalities and regional initiatives that may impact Watertown, highlighting projects the City could advocate for to enhance its overall development and accessibility. Examples include the MBTA's planning efforts, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (BOS MPO) long-range plans, and planned Bluebikes expansions, among others.

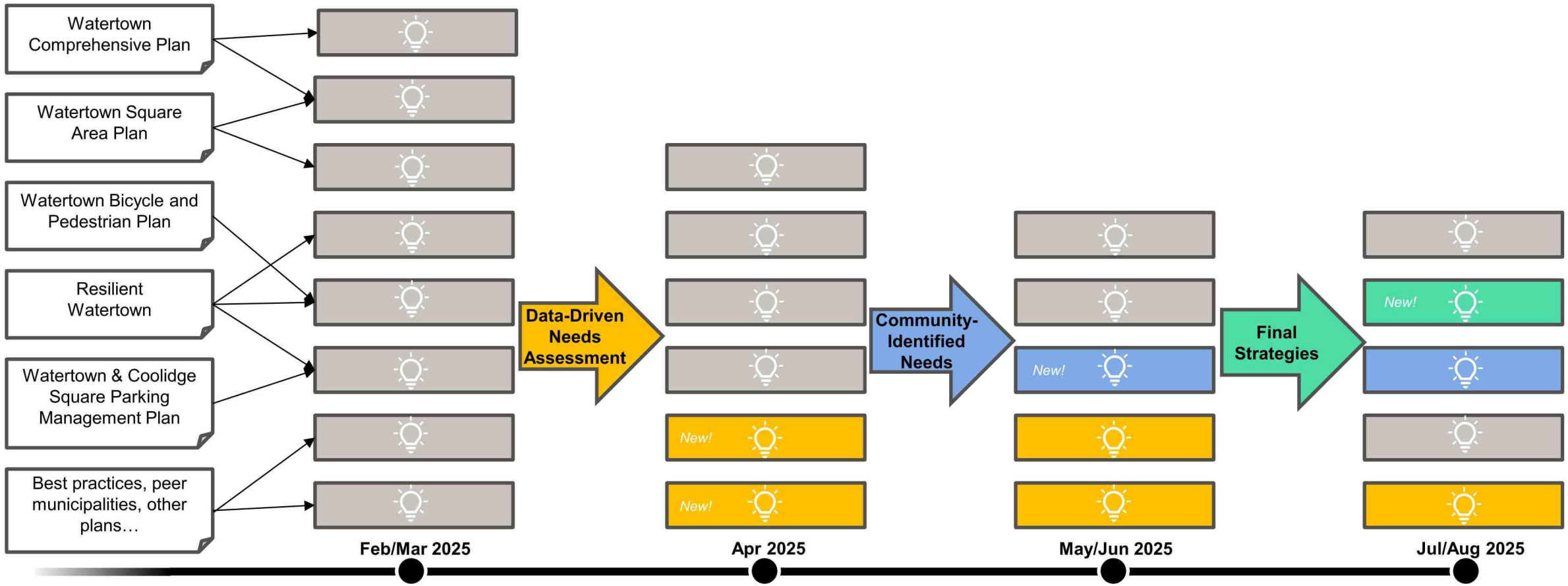
The next task was to narrow and hone the Universe to key recommendations in two stages. The first was an empirical data-based needs assessment. This analysis helped the Project Team identify key projects from the Universe that could meet these identified needs. The second was a series of detailed meetings with community, business, and civic partners to identify projects that would best meet their own identified needs. Stakeholder sessions were grouped around the following themes:

- Commercial/Business
- Active Transportation & Resilience
- Youth and Schools
- Accessibility
- Transit Riders

Further detail about the outcomes of these meetings can be found in the appendix. This stakeholder input helped refine the needs assessment, determining which projects should be prioritized to expand access for and reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel.

This process identified five priority projects that would push Watertown towards its goals of increasing access while reducing VMT, as outlined in the following pages.

Project Process Diagram



Step 1: Universe Of Projects Development*

- Identify Watertown-planned projects
- Best practices from peers
- Regional plans that may impact Watertown

Step 2: Data-Driven Needs Assessment

- Look at mobility trends in Watertown using quantitative data
- Identify new projects to add to list in response to needs
- Remove some projects from list

Step 3: Community-Driven Needs Assessment**

- Review data with community members and advocates
- Discuss project list and identify those that would best meet needs
- Understand additional needs and continue to add/remove projects from list

Step 4: Final Strategy Recommendations

- Pair community and quantitative data
- Identify additional best practices as needed to meet goals
- Refine strategies with staff and partners to begin implementation

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Needs Assessment and Outreach Findings

Needs Assessment Overview

DATA APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- **Reviewed the City of Watertown's available data**
  The Project Team examined spatial GIS datasets including land use and transportation infrastructure. The Project Team also reviewed development plans, Bluebikes ridership, and City and TMA-provided transportation service data.
- **Analyzed data from prior planning efforts**
  This included recommendations from the City's *Comprehensive Plan* and the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, and regional plans, such as *Focus40* and the *MBTA Capital Investment Plan*.
- **Leveraged Replica travel flow data to understand travel behavior**
  Replica is a data platform that uses anonymized mobile location data to model travel patterns and estimate trip origins, destinations, and volumes within and beyond Watertown, providing a detailed picture of how people move through the area across different modes.
- **Assessed transit service using data from the MBTA Bus Network Redesign and MassDOT Open Data Portal**
  The MBTA Bus Network Redesign is a system-wide initiative to improve bus service through route restructuring and service changes. The team reviewed proposed routes to evaluate potential impacts on transit accessibility in Watertown. General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data was used to analyze current transit schedules and service levels.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- **Watertown has limited options for traveling north-south by transit or bicycle**
- **More people are traveling from Watertown neighborhoods to Arsenal Yards and Boston Landing**
- **Nearly 2/3 of Trips that Start in Watertown are Local**
- **Many Trips Occurring in Watertown are Just Passing Through**
- **Most trips within Watertown require crossing a major street, some of which lack signalized crossings**
- **All of Watertown has the density of people and jobs needed to support fixed-route transit service**
- **Neighborhoods farther from Watertown Square have transit access to fewer destinations**

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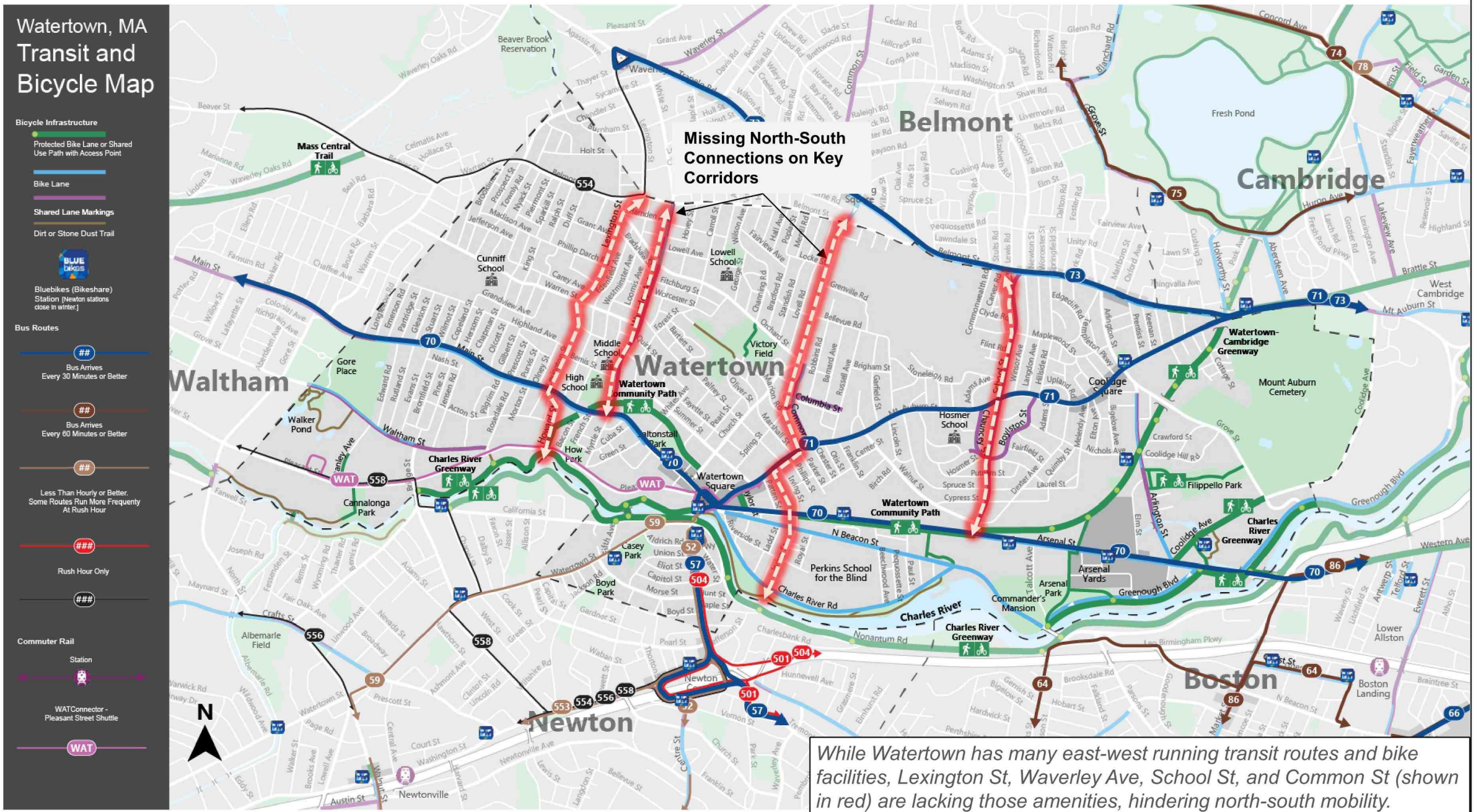
Watertown has limited options for traveling north-south by transit or bicycle

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Watertown has **no transit service for north-south travel** within the City or to adjacent/nearby communities such as Belmont and Arlington.
- Similarly, there are **limited bicycle facilities for north-south travel**. Several primary north-south streets have also significant hills, which makes it more difficult and higher-stress for people to bike or walk.
- The lack of north-south transit and bicycling options is **in direct contrast to frequent transit service and high-quality bicycle facilities available for east-west travel.**
- Most of Watertown is located within two miles of MBTA Commuter Rail stations on the Worcester Line and Fitchburg Line, which are to the north and south of the City. These rail lines provide fast and reliable access to Boston, Cambridge, Newton, Waltham and many western suburbs. **Many Watertown residents cannot easily access commuter rail service due to the lack of north-south transit and bicycle connections.**
- Watertown has several primary north-south streets, including School Street, Common Street, Waverley Street, and Lexington Street. These **north-south streets are generally narrow and therefore require careful planning and management to ensure they function well for people driving, using transit, walking or biking.**

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- There are strong transit connections to places like Cambridge, but **intra-City transit and north-south transit service is lacking.**
- Existing TMA shuttles are useful but primarily connect to Harvard Square, which is already well served by MBTA bus routes. The City should explore service to new locations, in partnership with the Watertown TMA as well as stakeholders in adjacent communities.
- Improvements are needed to create walkable corridors between **the Perkins School for the Blind** and the Charles River Greenway, Watertown Square, and other local destinations.
- Improvements are needed for **north-south bicycle connections**
- Strong interest in improving north-south transit connections via multiple streets: Arlington Street, School Street (connecting to Belmont Center), and Lexington Street (**serving seniors, low-income, and disabled residents**). Topography challenges particularly on Common Street should be considered.
- **Gaps in transit service to major hubs like Boston Landing and Waverly Square** cause frustration. An extension of MBTA Bus Route 65 connecting Watertown to Boston Landing and further destinations like Brookline and Longwood was supported by stakeholders.



While Watertown has many east-west running transit routes and bike facilities, Lexington St, Waverley Ave, School St, and Common St (shown in red) are lacking those amenities, hindering north-south mobility.

Source: Watertown Bicycle and Transit Maps

More people are traveling from Watertown neighborhoods to Arsenal Yards and Boston Landing

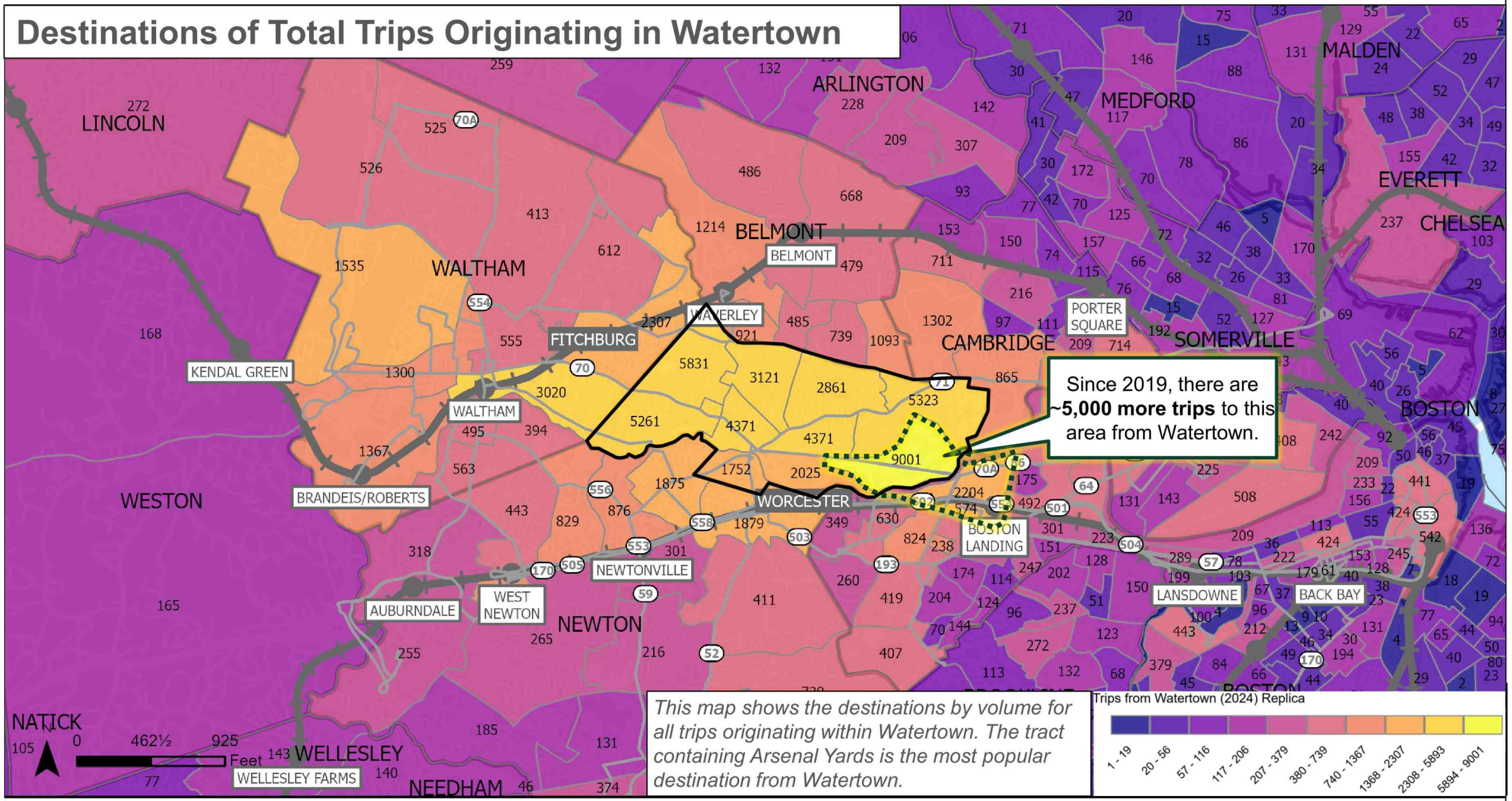
NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- **The number of trips that both begin and end in Watertown increased by about 28% (or 9,700 additional trips) between 2019 and 2024.**
- **Nearly 5,000 more people are traveling from Watertown to Arsenal Yards and Boston Landing each day in 2024 than in 2019.** This increase in travel is likely being generated by significant development in these neighborhoods.
- Trips from Watertown to surrounding municipalities and Downtown Boston saw modest levels of growth (expected during a 5-year span), though there are still **notable volumes of daily trips to these destinations beyond Watertown's borders.**

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- **When asked where there were major transit gaps, transit rider stakeholder group identified from Watertown to Boston Landing and Waverley.**
- **No direct MBTA Commuter Rail access from Watertown was cited as a major disadvantage by stakeholders.**
- **Gaps in transit service to major hubs like Boston Landing** cause frustration. A MBTA Bus Route 65 extension to Arsenal Street was proposed and supported by the stakeholders.
- There is interest **in transit priority throughout Watertown's busiest corridors and improved amenities at bus stops, such as shelters, benches, and real-time information**. Participants noted the Mt Auburn Street transit lane as something that is working well and should be replicated on other popular corridors.
- The City should **advocate for improved MBTA service**, with particular emphasis on improving the frequency and reliability of Route 70, which connects Watertown to Waltham, Lower Allston, and Cambridge. Stakeholders expressed concern about the proposed discontinuation of direct Route 70 service to Market Basket in Waltham.

Destinations of Total Trips Originating in Watertown

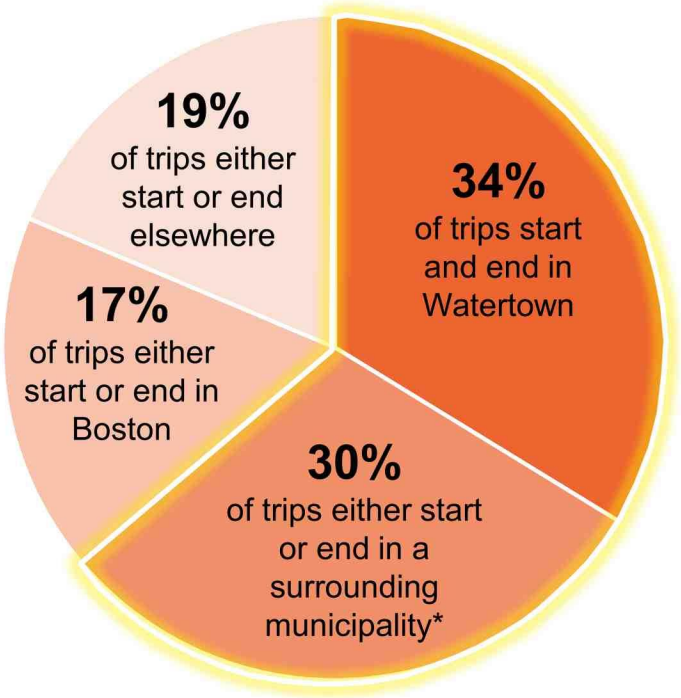


This map shows the destinations by volume for all trips originating within Watertown. The tract containing Arsenal Yards is the most popular destination from Watertown.

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Data

STUDY FOR CITY-SUPPORTED MOBILITY
CITY OF WATERTOWN

All Trips Starting or Ending In Watertown



Nearly 2/3 of Trips that Start in Watertown are Local

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

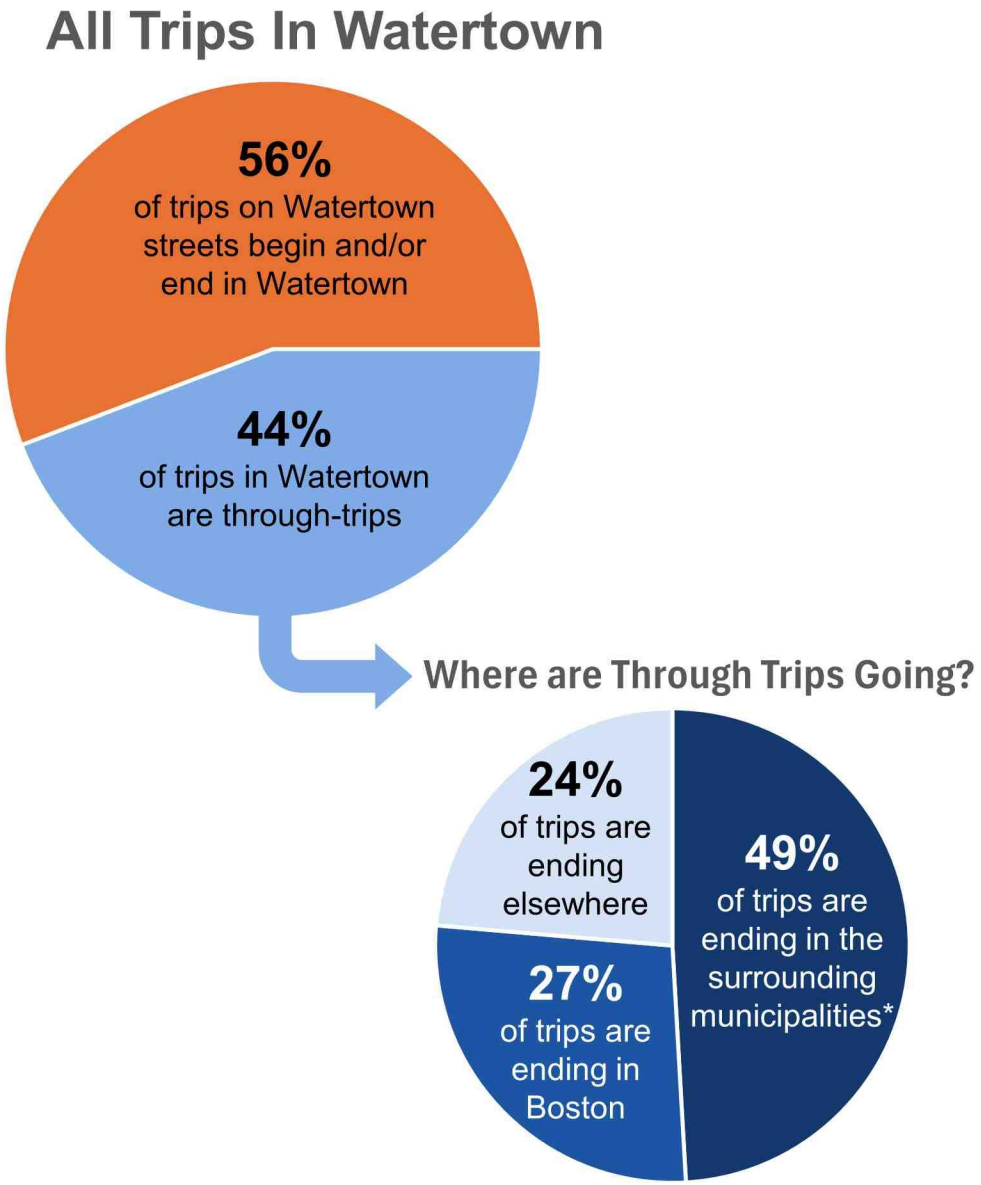
- **Two thirds of trips are local: 2/3 of trips that begin in Watertown (using any mode of transportation) either end in Watertown or a surrounding municipality***
  - **34%** of trips start and end in Watertown
  - **30%** of trips either start in Watertown and end in a surrounding municipality*, or start in a surrounding municipality* and end in Watertown

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- There are existing transit opportunities to get to areas beyond Watertown, but **intra-City transit is lacking**.
- **Bluebike stations** throughout the City, specifically concentrated in commercial corridors would increase business access.
- Traffic calming measures **to improve walking and biking safety along key corridors can improve safety** for a variety of user groups.
- **Expand eligibility for microtransit services**, as stakeholders who want to ride do not technically meet the criteria to ride.

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Data. All trips refers to trips across all modes of transportation.

**Surrounding Municipality refers to Waltham, Belmont, Newton, and Cambridge*



Many Trips Occurring in Watertown are Just Passing Through

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- **56%** of trips on Watertown streets are either start or end in Watertown
- **44%** of all trips on Watertown streets are going through the city on the way to something else. Of that 44%...
  - **49%** of trips end in a surrounding municipality*
  - **27%** of trips end in Boston
  - **24%** of trips end elsewhere

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- Existing non-MBTA transit services (WATConnector, other private shuttles) have a bias towards rush-hour travel; optimized **microtransit should provide all day service for non-commuting trips**.
- A **Vision Zero Policy** would be helpful to guide a targeted City-wide traffic calming intervention using primarily quick-build strategies.
- Traffic calming measures **to improve walking and biking safety along key corridors** like elevated crossings, rapid-rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs), and other low-cost interventions could help various user groups traverse major arterial roads in Watertown to work, school, recreation, etc.

Source: Replica, Spring 2024 Data. All trips refers to trips across all modes of transportation.

**Surrounding Municipality refers to Waltham, Belmont, Newton, and Cambridge*

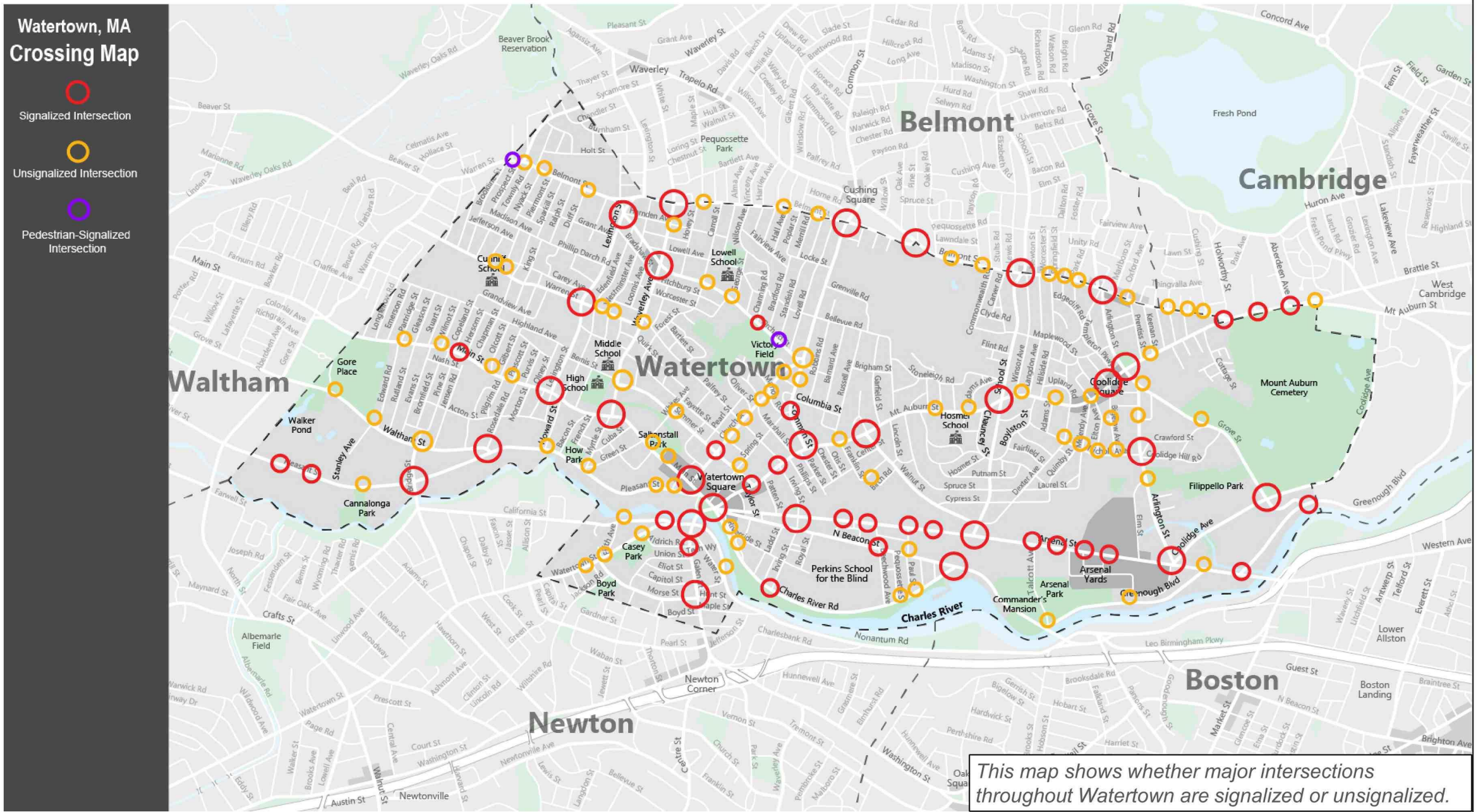
Most trips within Watertown require crossing a major street, some of which lack signalized crossings

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- **Watertown is bisected by several major streets that carry high volumes of regional traffic**, several of which are over 80 feet wide. Most trips in Watertown require crossing at least one of these streets.
- Apart from Arsenal Street and the area around Watertown Square, **major corridors in Watertown have few or inconsistently spaced signalized crossings for people walking.**
- **Several bus stops on Main Street, Mount Auburn Street, and Belmont Street are not located at signalized intersections.** The lack of signalized crosswalks at these locations makes it more difficult to access bus service.
- **Key corridors with limited or no transit service, such as Pleasant Street and North Beacon Street, also have limited signalized crossings.** This makes it more difficult for people to make local trips or walk to bus stops on nearby streets.
- There are likely **opportunities to improve conditions for walking and biking between Watertown residential neighborhoods and schools.**

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- **Interest in traffic calming measures to improve walking and biking safety** along key corridors. This could include interventions like elevated crossings, rapid-rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs), and other low-cost interventions.
- A Vision Zero Policy, ADA Sidewalk Audit, or something similar would be helpful to guide **a targeted City-wide traffic calming intervention** using primarily quick-build strategies, including for those with additional mobility challenges.
- General **support and excitement for the Watertown Square Area Redesign** project currently underway.
- **Consistency in streetscape design is very helpful for the low vision community**, as it increases predictability throughout one's journey. Participants **noted challenges with the City's tactical street improvements** that leverage paint and flex posts, which are not standardized and hard to interpret for people with low vision.
- **Interest in leveraging emerging technologies**, especially for local navigation, including the NaviLens system being piloted by the MBTA and the Polara PEDAPP. Participants also noted increasing usage of AI image analysis to read signs, including at bus stops.



This map shows whether major intersections throughout Watertown are signalized or unsignalized.

Source: Watertown Bicycle and Transit Maps

All of Watertown has the density of people and jobs needed to support fixed-route transit service

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Watertown has about 9,000 people per square mile – **a residential density comparable to Arlington, Medford, Roslindale, and Hyde Park.**
- **Residential and employment density is highest along Arsenal Street, Mount Auburn Street, Pleasant Street, and surrounding Watertown Square.** These areas all have the density to support high frequency transit service operating at least every 10-15 minutes.
- While density is lower in Watertown's primarily residential neighborhoods, **all areas in Watertown have the density to support all-day fixed-route MBTA bus service operating at least every 20 to 30 minutes.**
- About 8% of Watertown residents commute to work by transit. This **commute mode share is lower than communities with similar residential density**, such as Arlington (13%) and Medford (17%), as well as several communities that are significantly less dense, such as Newton (9%), Belmont (11%), Melrose (16%).
- **Watertown is one of the only inner core suburbs that lacks direct subway or commuter rail service.** While commuter rail lines run directly north and south of Watertown, the lack of north-south bus and bicycle connections to nearby stations, as well as significant congestion affecting the high frequency bus lines that connect to the subway network, likely reduces Watertown's transit commuting mode share.

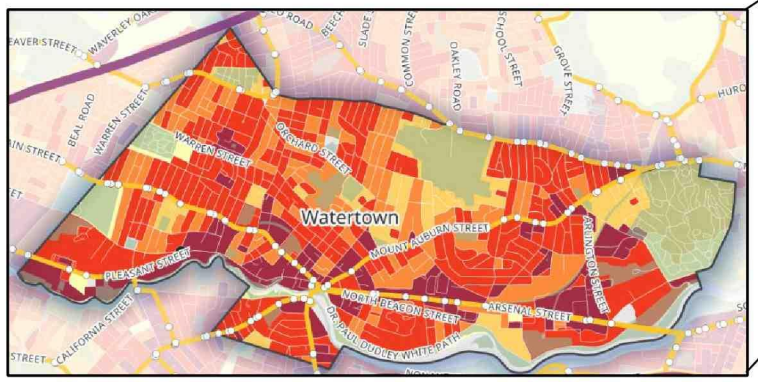
KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- There is interest in **transit priority throughout** Watertown's busiest corridors **and improved amenities at bus stops**, such as shelters, benches, and real-time information.
- Stakeholders identified recent successes **including reliable service on Route 73 (attributed to transit priority infrastructure minimizing slowdowns) and improved headways on Route 57** during rush hours.
- Strong interest in improving north-south transit on Arlington Street, School Street (connecting to Belmont Center), and/or Lexington Street (**serving seniors, low-income, and disabled residents**).
- Existing TMA **shuttles are useful but are limited in their destination range**, with all connecting to Harvard Square. The City should explore partnerships with other TMAs, and **expansion of private-shuttle service to destinations within Watertown and neighboring communities**.

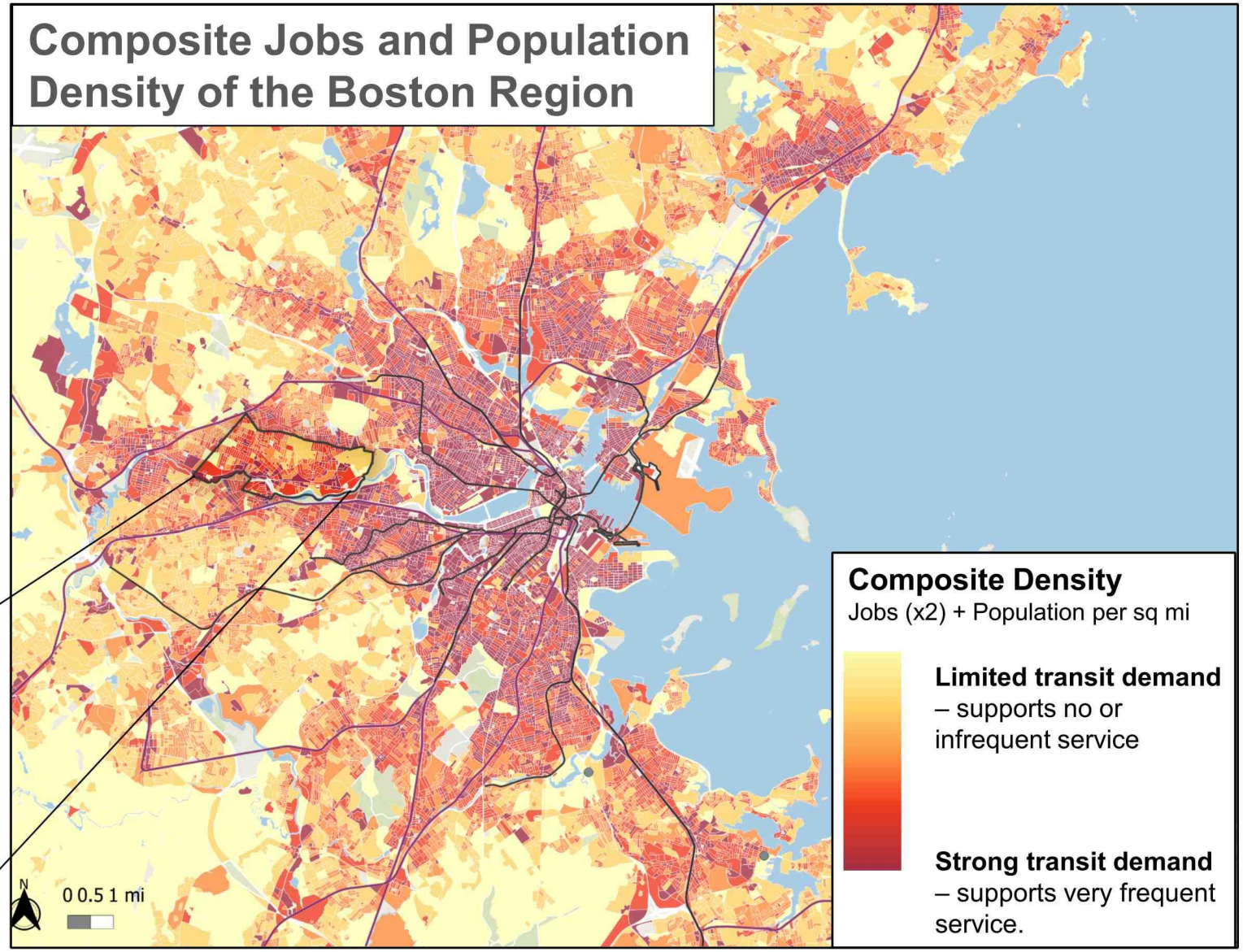
2023 Commute Share

Community	Drive Alone	Transit	Walk/ Bike	Other *(no commute, carpool, taxi, etc.)*
Medford	64%	17%	6%	13%
Watertown	61%	8%	7%	24%
Brookline	28%	20%	20%	32%
Waltham	55%	5%	7%	33%
Melrose	50%	16%	2%	32%
Arlington	46%	13%	7%	34%
Belmont	49%	11%	5%	35%
Newton	50%	9%	6%	35%

- All of Watertown has the density of population and jobs needed to support frequent transit ridership. While existing bus routes have high ridership, the City's overall transit mode share is significantly higher than similar, and even some less densely population, inner core suburbs.



Composite Jobs and Population Density of the Boston Region



Source: Replica, US Census Data (ACS 5-Year (2023))

STUDY FOR CITY-SUPPORTED MOBILITY
CITY OF WATERTOWN

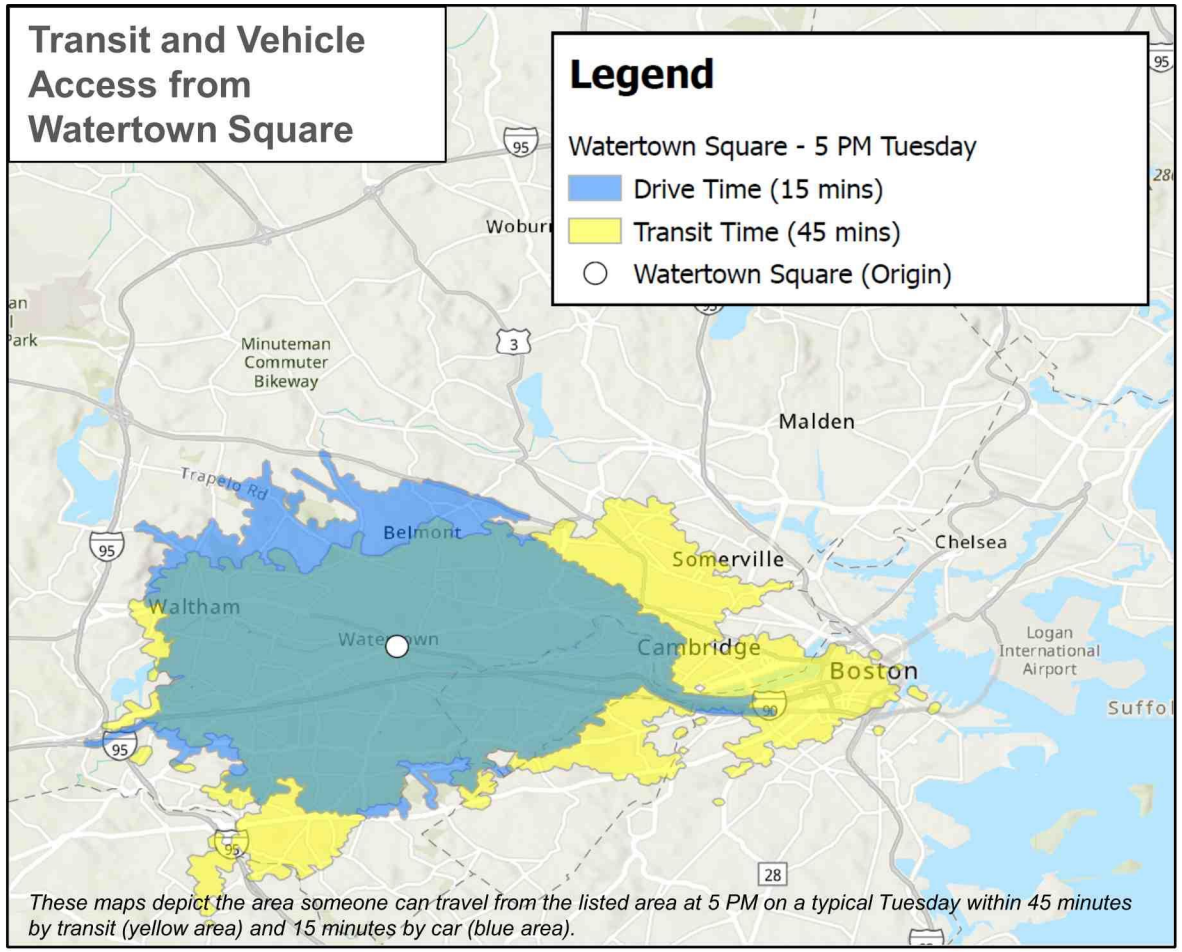
Neighborhoods farther from Watertown Square have transit access to fewer destinations

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

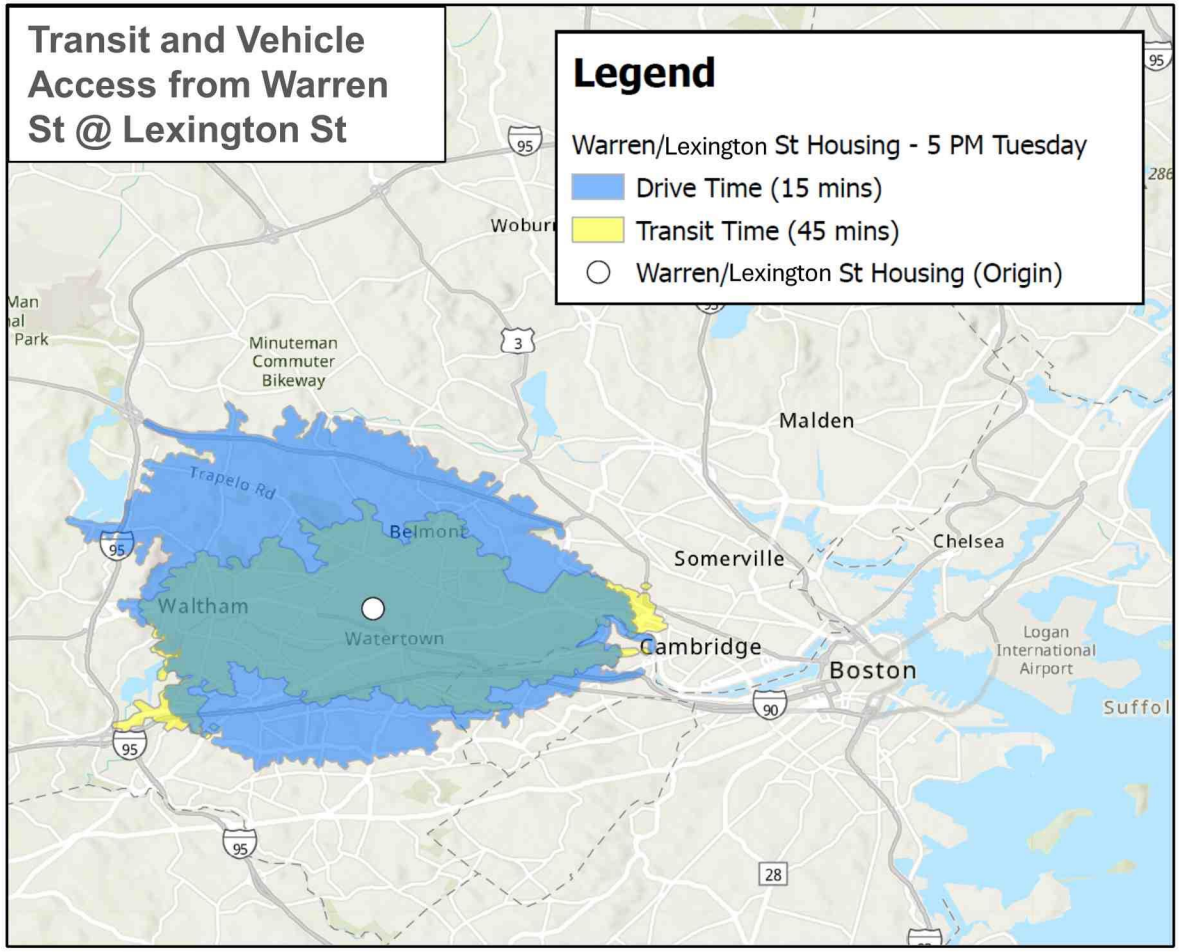
- **Watertown Square and the adjacent Watertown Yard serve as the City's primary bus hub. The hub is among the most frequently served locations in the MBTA network that is not a subway station.**
- Watertown Square is served by three high frequency bus routes (57, 70, 71) that connect to Cambridge, Allston/Brighton, Kenmore Square, and Waltham. Additionally, the hub has lower frequency express service to Downtown Boston via the Mass Pike and local service to Newton, with more local service planned to be extended from Newton Corner as part of the MBTA Bus Network redesign.
- Watertown Square is accessible to significantly more places within a 45-minute transit trip than other City neighborhoods. **The farther a Watertown resident lives from Watertown Square, the fewer places they can access within 45-minutes using transit.**
- **This disparity in transit access is primarily due to the lack of north-south transit options in Watertown –** residents who do not live near Watertown Square often need to walk a long distance to the closest bus route, take a short bus ride to the Square, and then transfer. This significantly increases travel times and reduces access.

KEY COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- The existing MBTA transit service faces challenges such **as reduced service on Route 71 during off-peak hours**, "ghost buses" (when a scheduled bus never arrives), bus bunching on weekends, and real-time information issues on the MBTA app.
- **City-operated transit (WATConnector) should be better advertised and expanded for public access** during off-peak hours and on weekends. Stakeholders expressed interest in exploring a microtransit **shared-fleet model**, which would incorporate services like the Senior Center shuttle.
- Strong interest in improving north-south transit on Arlington Street, School Street (connecting to Belmont Center), and Lexington Street (**serving seniors, low-income, and disabled residents**).
- Stakeholders identified recent successes including **reliable service on Route 73 and improved headways on Route 57** during rush hours.



These maps depict the area someone can travel from the listed area at 5 PM on a typical Tuesday within 45 minutes by transit (yellow area) and 15 minutes by car (blue area).



- Watertown Square is a major MBTA hub served by multiple high frequency bus routes and express service to Downtown Boston. People near Watertown Square have access to many more destinations using transit (yellow area on map above) than other locations within Watertown.

- In contrast, Warren and Lexington Streets (an area with lots of senior and low-income housing) is a ten minute walk from the closest bus route on Main Street. They may also need to transfer at Watertown Square to complete their trip. As a result, they have access to significantly fewer destinations using transit (yellow area on map above) than people starting at Watertown Square, despite being able to access a similar number of places by car (blue area).

Source: MBTA GTFS, Spring 2025

3

City-Supported Mobility Strategies

Recommendations At A Glance

- The Project Team identified 5 key strategies (and sub-recommendations) that the City can pursue to expand access, reduce SOV trips, and meet additional City goals:
  - **Expand A Local Transit Approach**
    - Approaches for a Unified Watertown Connector
    - Expanding Community Microtransit Services
    - Creating a Community Transit Platform
  - **Become a leader in Universal Access Design**
  - **Invest in Top Corridors by Use**
  - **Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach**
  - **Pursue Local and Regional Priorities with Agency Partners**
    - Creating a north-south MBTA bus route through Watertown
    - Extending MBTA Bus Route 65 from Brighton to Watertown Square via Boston Landing and Arsenal Street
    - Reducing commuter fares at inner core stations to match subway fares
    - Other long-term recommendations (see appendix)

- In the following pages, each recommendation has a two-page spread with additional information including:
  - Cost
  - Implementation Timeline
  - Possible Funding Sources
  - Potential Partners
  - Next Steps

- If a strategy has additional sub-recommendations, figures, or details, this information will be found on additional pages following the two-page spread
- Given the broadness and complexity of the 5th strategy, additional information has been provided in the appendices of this report (see Appendix B).

1. Expand A Local Transit Approach

TIMELINE: Long-term | COST: $$ | FEASIBILITY: High

OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

The project team identified three community transit strategies that could assist Watertown in meeting its mobility and climate goals:

- **Create a Unified Watertown Connector Route**
- **Create a Microtransit Service for Seniors and People with Disabilities**
- **Create a Microtransit Service for the General Public**

These strategies are designed to fill gaps in Watertown's existing transit options – including limited options for north-south travel within the City and the lack of direct service to medical and social service facilities in neighborhood communities.

Watertown could implement these three strategies independently or as a unified coordinated transportation service. A coordinated approach would enable the City to provide comprehensive mobility options at more efficient cost and access additional federal, state, and private funding sources. Watertown could also continue existing mobility programs, such as GoGo Transportation & Taxi Subsidies for Seniors, in lieu of or in addition to these options.

The following pages detail the range of potential community transit options, and an implementation approach for each recommended strategy. For a review of existing services, see Introduction.

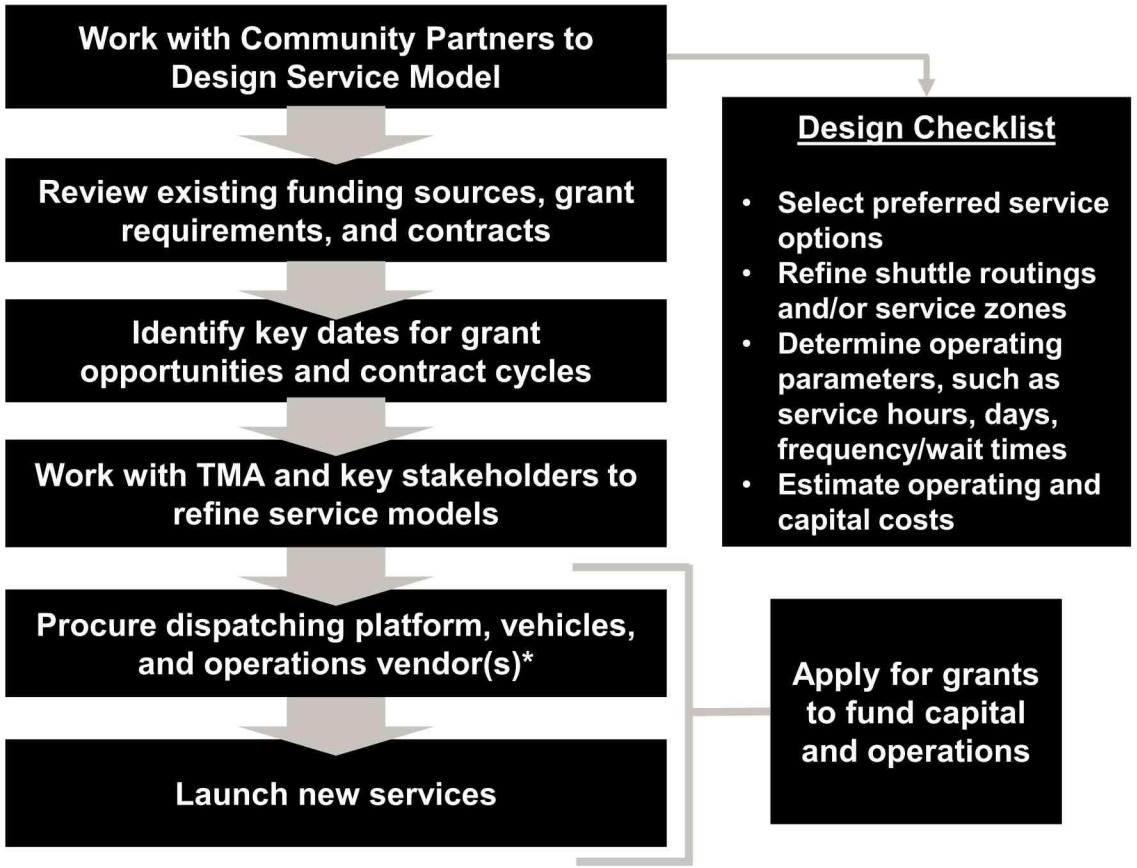
Required initial capital and ongoing operating costs vary widely based on program implementation, service design, and contracting decisions. The project team estimates that could be operated for between $1 million (basic unified shuttle) and $3.5 million (full implementation) each year. *See page 43 for cost calculation assumptions.*

- MetroWest RTA operates five curb-to-curb microtransit services branded as "Catch Connect." These services are designed to provide both local mobility and first/last mile connections to MWRTA and MBTA transit. Catch Connect is funded through a variety of federal and local grant programs, as well as local contributions. MWRTA uses a shared van fleet to provide the services, which are also integrated with the agency's ADA paratransit call center.

EXPANDING ACCESS: ●●● REDUCING VMT: ●●○

1. Expand A Local Transit Approach

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION



POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Developer Contributions (via Watertown TMA)
- Massachusetts TNC Rideshare Fund
- Parking Benefits District
- Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant
- MassDOT TMA Grant
- Community Transit Grant Program (5310, CDBG, Mobility Assistance Program, Education and Transportation Fund)
- Boston MPO Community Connections Grant (CMAQ)
- EOEA Council on Aging Formula Grant
- Older Americans Act Title III-B Grant

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Watertown TMA (ARE, AY/BP)
- Watertown City's Council on Aging
- Commission on Disability
- Perkins School for the Blind
- Watertown Housing Authority
- Watertown Public Schools

The following pages document potential approaches for local transit in Watertown and are intended to provide a starting point for selecting a preferred service model.

Approaches for a Unified Watertown Connector

Watertown could combine the existing three Watertown Connector services into unified service. This service would be open to the public and tailored to meet the needs of both Watertown residents and corporate users. The project team identified two options for a unified Watertown Connector. The first option creates a single route connecting most existing Watertown Connector stops to Harvard Square. The other creates two routes, serving all existing Watertown Connector stops, with one route serving Harvard Square and the other serving Boston Landing.

ONE-ROUTE OPTION

Service Design: This option creates a single route running between Pleasant Street, Watertown Square, Perkins, the Arsenal Street corridor, Coolidge Square, and Harvard Square.

Benefits:
- Better Connectivity within Watertown, including one-seat rides between Pleasant Street, Perkins, Arsenal Yards, and LINX.
- More Connections to MBTA Network, including a transfer at Coolidge Square that makes it easier for residents of Northern Watertown to access Arsenal Street.
- More Efficient (or More Frequent) Service, by creating a single route to Harvard Square for all users.

Tradeoffs:
- Service is discontinued to 99 Coolidge to reduce travel times for all other riders.
- Service to 66 Galen requires deviation from Watertown Square that adds several minutes (and potential traffic delays) for people traveling to and from Pleasant street.

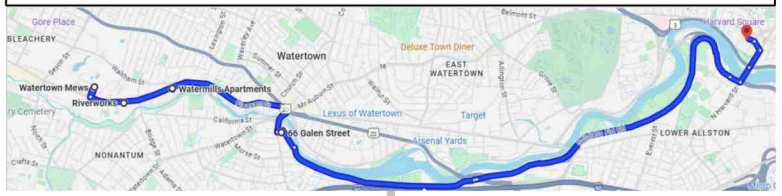
TWO-ROUTE OPTION

Service Design: This option creates two routes, one that runs from 66 Galen to Harvard Square via Arsenal Street and Coolidge Square, and a second that runs from Pleasant Street to Boston Landing via Watertown Square and Arsenal Street.

Benefits:
- **New one-seat ride to Boston Landing from Watertown Square,** a short trip that often takes three seats from parts of Watertown.
- **Frequent, front-door service between Perkins, Watertown Square, and Arsenal Yards**, making it easier to access the MBTA and local amenities.
- **Retains service to all existing Watertown Connector stops**, including 99 Coolidge.
- **Eliminates deviation to 66 Galen Street**, reducing travel times between Pleasant Street and areas east of Watertown Square.

Tradeoffs:
- Higher operating costs (or less service on each route) than with one route.

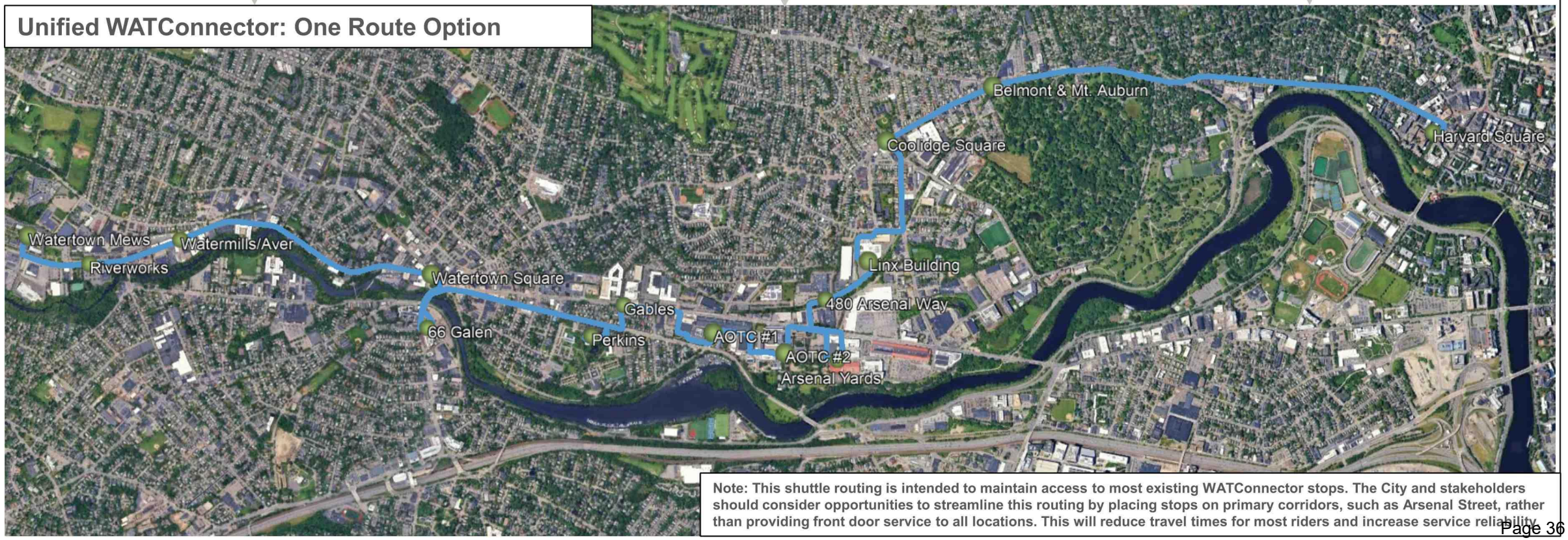
Existing Pleasant Street Shuttle



Existing Arsenal Street/ Corporate Shuttle

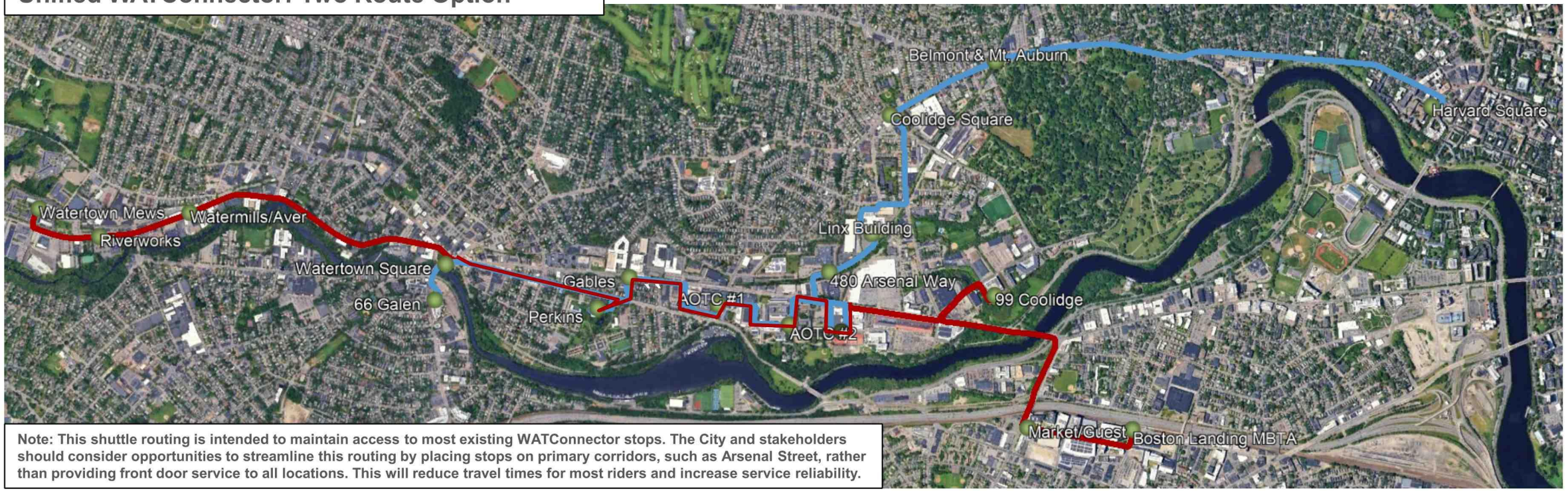
Existing Arsenal Street/ Residential Shuttle

Unified WATConnector: One Route Option



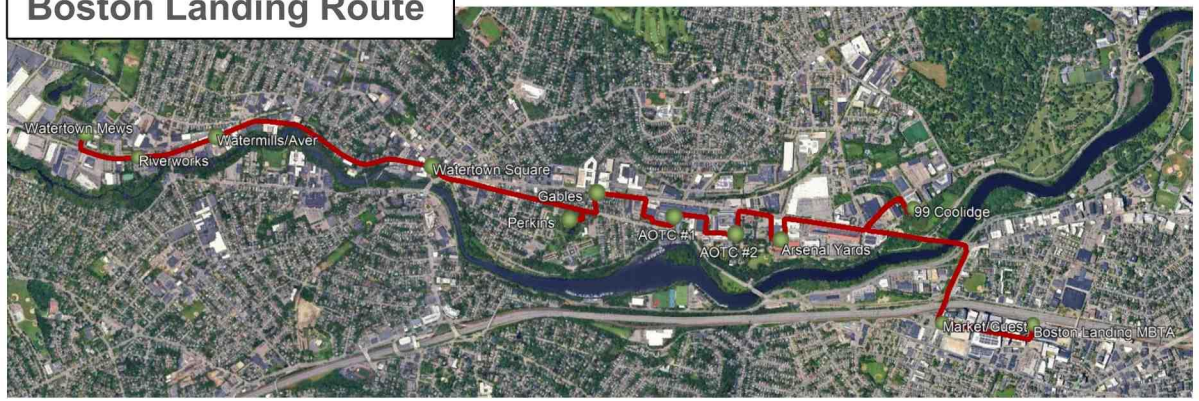
Note: This shuttle routing is intended to maintain access to most existing WATConnector stops. The City and stakeholders should consider opportunities to streamline this routing by placing stops on primary corridors, such as Arsenal Street, rather than providing front door service to all locations. This will reduce travel times for most riders and increase service reliability.

Unified WATConnector: Two Route Option

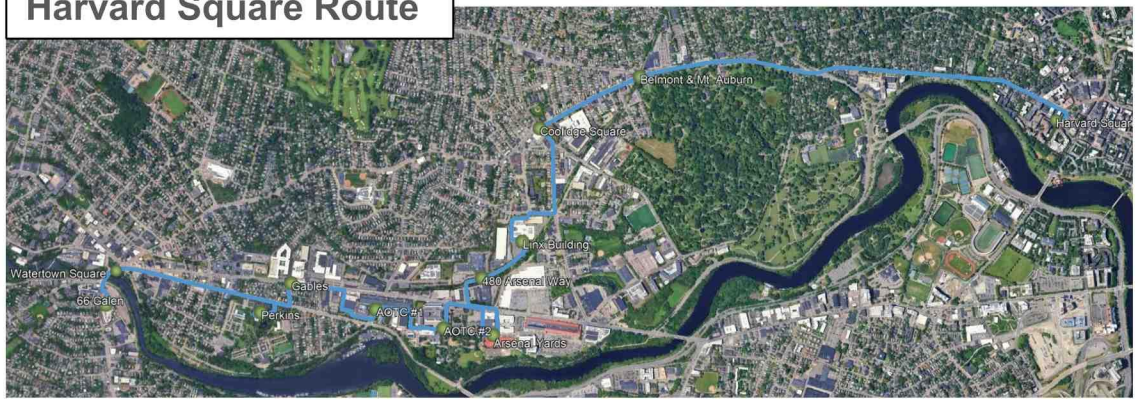


Note: This shuttle routing is intended to maintain access to most existing WATConnector stops. The City and stakeholders should consider opportunities to streamline this routing by placing stops on primary corridors, such as Arsenal Street, rather than providing front door service to all locations. This will reduce travel times for most riders and increase service reliability.

Boston Landing Route



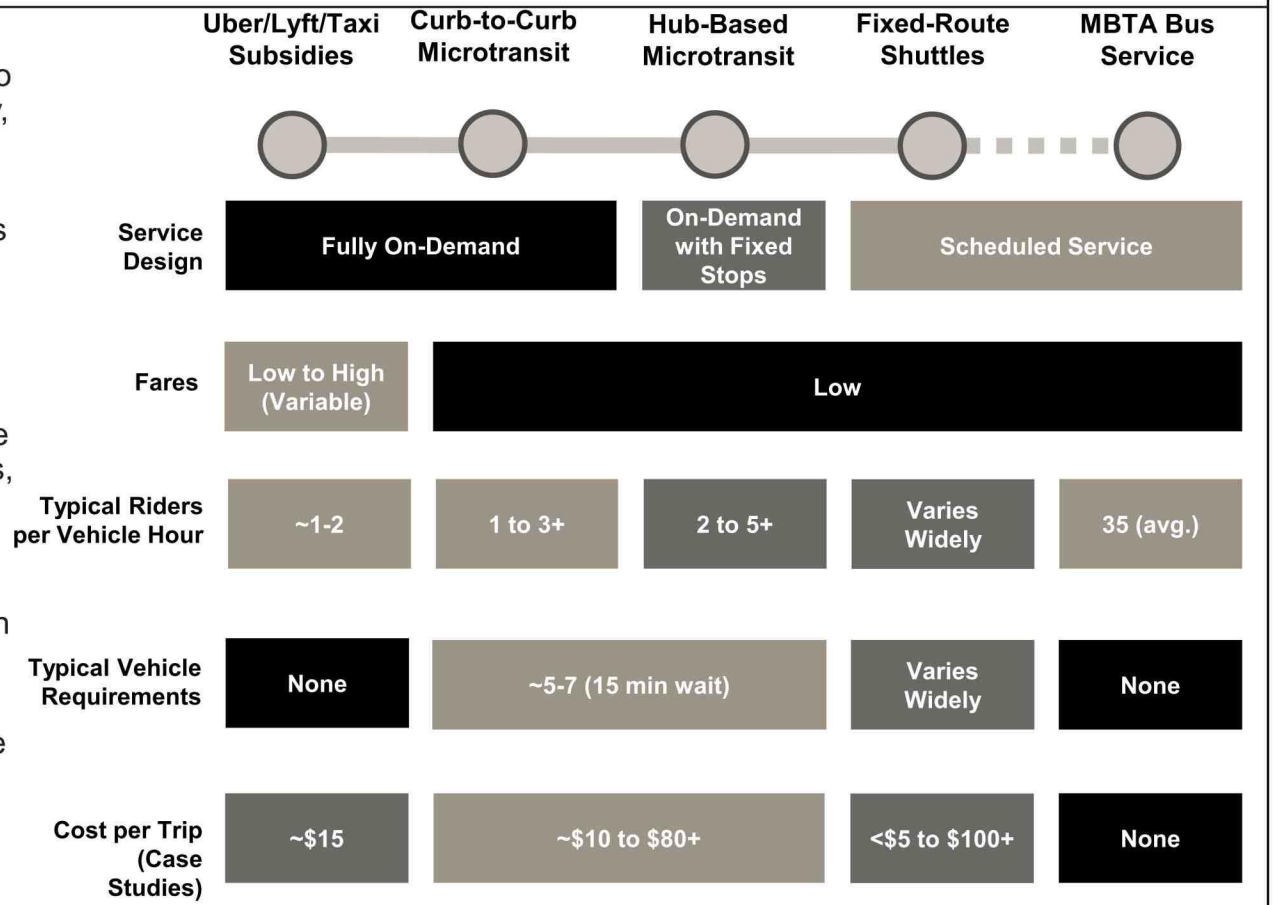
Harvard Square Route



Community-Focused Transit Service Models

The adjacent graphic details several local transit options applicable to Watertown – documenting their service design, operational efficiency, and general cost per trip – including:

- **Uber/Lyft Subsidies:** A fixed subsidy per trip (or time-period) for trips on Uber or Lyft. Watertown currently provides these subsidies to qualified seniors via the GoGo program.
- **Curb-to-Curb Microtransit:** Small shuttles that provide on-demand trips between any two places. Riders are typically picked up within 15 minutes and trips are shared with other riders.
- **Hub-Based Microtransit:** An alternative microtransit model where riders must begin and/or end their trip at designated pick-up points, such as a transit station. This model is often more operationally efficient and can provide faster travel times for many riders.
- **Fixed-Route Shuttles:** Regularly scheduled service operating on a fixed route, like an MBTA bus route. Often designed to fill gaps in the regional fixed-route transit network.
- **MBTA Bus Service:** Public transit services operated and funded by the MBTA (including Watertown's mandated contributions to the MBTA Local Assistance Fund). Unlike the options above, Watertown does not directly control, but can influence, where the MBTA operates transit service, or provide funding for specific services.



The figures in the graphic above were collected from case studies and best practice examples. They are not performance and cost projections for services designed specifically for Watertown.

Expanding Community Microtransit Services

Microtransit is a local transportation service that uses shuttle vans to provide on-demand mobility. Riders request trips via an app or by phone, receive a pick-up time and location, and are then transported to their requested destination, making stops for other riders along the way. Communities typically use microtransit to fill gaps in the regional transit network, including for short trips to local retail or medical facilities and first/last mile connections to other transit services. The project team identified two strategies for launching microtransit in Watertown, which could be implemented independently or in combination.

MICROTRANSIT FOR SENIORS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- **Eligibility:** Qualified seniors and people with disabilities
- **Service Model:** Curb-to-curb microtransit
- **Service Area:** All of Watertown, select destinations in adjacent communities, including medical facilities and social service centers, and select MBTA rail stations.
- **Funding:** Specialized transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities are eligible for FTA 5310 funding, which is distributed in Massachusetts via the Community Transit Grant Program. Watertown may also be able to leverage some funds and grant programs accessible via the Council on Aging and Area Association on Aging.

MICROTRANSIT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- **Eligibility:** All Watertown residents, workers, and visitors
- **Service Model:** Hub-based microtransit
- **Service Area:** All of Watertown, select destinations in adjacent communities, including medical facilities and social service centers, and select MBTA rail stations.
- **Funding:** Massachusetts has multiple active grant programs that assist communities in launching new microtransit services. The City could also collaborate with the Watertown TMA to generate funding through TMA-member contributions and the MassDOT TMA Grant Program.

Creating a Community Transit Platform

The Challenge:
Microtransit works better with more vehicles, but providing more vehicles is expensive.

A Solution:
Pool existing Watertown fleets to provide great on-demand service…*most of the time.*

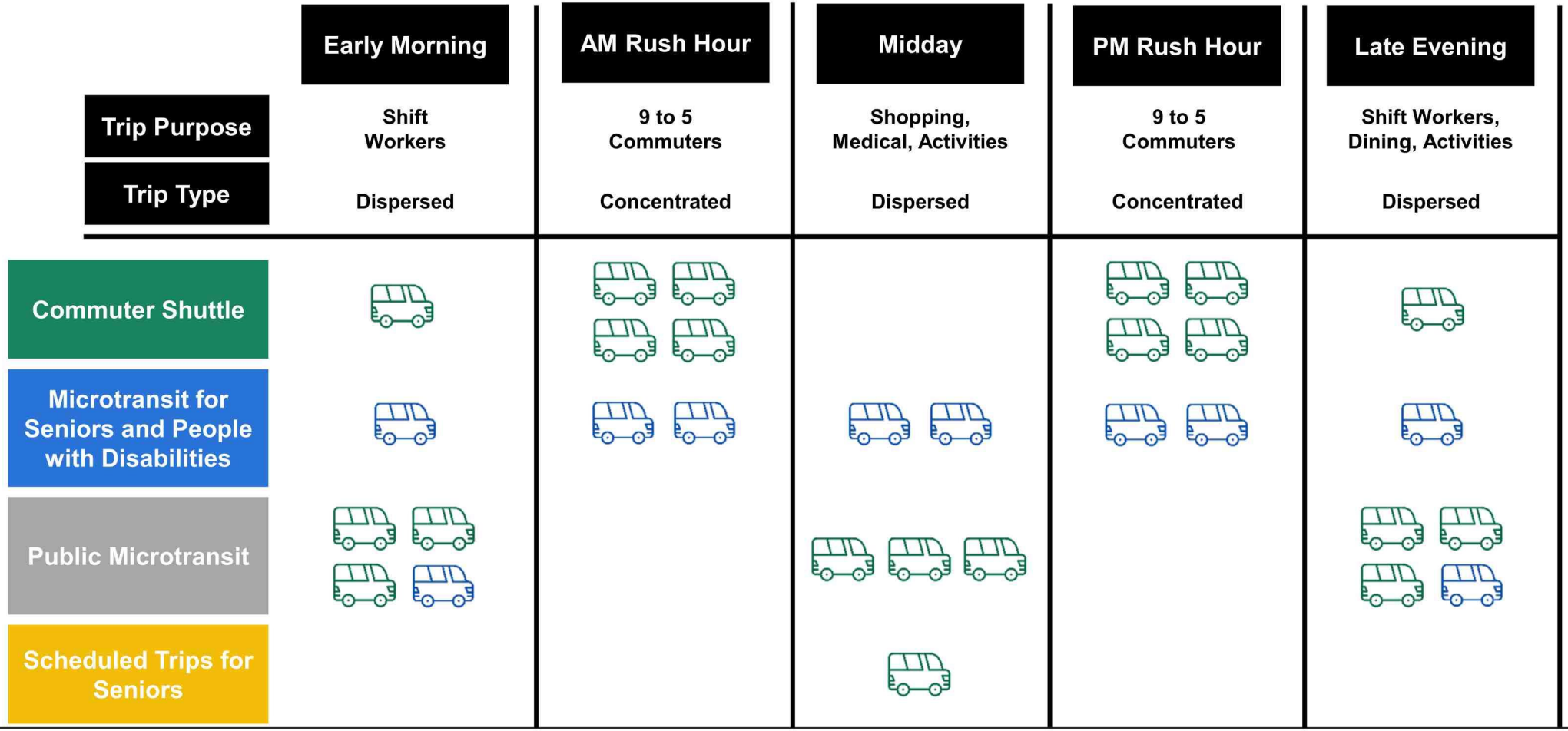
HOW IT COULD WORK

- Watertown mobility providers contribute towards shared pool of vehicles and drivers with unified dispatching
- Specialized services continue to operate during key hours of use for direct constituents
- At other times, vehicles are available to provide on-demand service for all Watertown residents

The graphic on the following page provides an example of how a community transit platform could work in Watertown using six vehicles.

- **Commuter Shuttle:** The fixed-route shuttle(s) operate during rush hours (4 vehicles), with limited early morning and late evening service (1 vehicle).
- **Microtransit for Seniors and People with Disabilities:** This service would have at least one dedicated vehicle all day, with additional vehicles utilized if needed to meet demand.
- **Microtransit for the General Public:** This service would operate early morning, midday, and late evening – using up to four vehicles that would otherwise be out of service. During rush hours, service would be limited to space available trips on vehicles dedicated to trips for seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Scheduled Trips for Seniors:** The Watertown Council of Aging would continue to have access to a vehicle as needed to provide group trips.

How a Shared Fleet Could Work in Watertown



This graphic is an example – not a recommended service plan. Exact fleet configuration would be determined as part of finalizing a complete service plan.

Estimated Costs by Service

The project team developed example cost estimates based on the operational characteristics of the services outlined above. All estimates assume a total operating cost of $150 per hour – which is at the high end of privately-contracted van services in the Boston area.

Final cost estimates will be based on the specific service design, operating frequency, and service hours selected by the City and its partners. The table below shows unit costs and an example service plan is provided on the right.

Transportation Service	Unit	Cost per Unit
One Route Option	1 Round Trip	~$200
Two Route Option: Harvard Square Boston Landing	1 Round Trip	~$150 (per route)
Microtransit	1 Hour	$150

Example Annual Cost Calculation

The annual cost of providing community transit services is primarily determined by the number of days and hours each service operates. The following is an example service model and its resulting costs.

Watertown Connector (One-Route Option)
- Operates Monday to Friday
- Service every 20 minutes from 7 AM to 10 AM and 4 PM to 7 PM
- Assumptions: 4 vehicles / ~7,200 annual hours
- Approximate Annual Cost: $1 million

Microtransit for Seniors and People with Disabilities
Microtransit for General Public
- Operates every day
- Available on weekdays from 6 AM to 10PM / weekends from 8 AM to 8 PM
- 10-minute average response time (longer for general public during peak)
- Assumptions: 2 to 5 vehicles (varies by time of day) / ~17,000 annual hours
- Approximate Annual Cost: $2.5 million

Total Annual Cost: $3.5 million

2. Become a Leader in Universal Access Design

TIMELINE: Long-term | COST: $$$ | FEASIBILITY: High

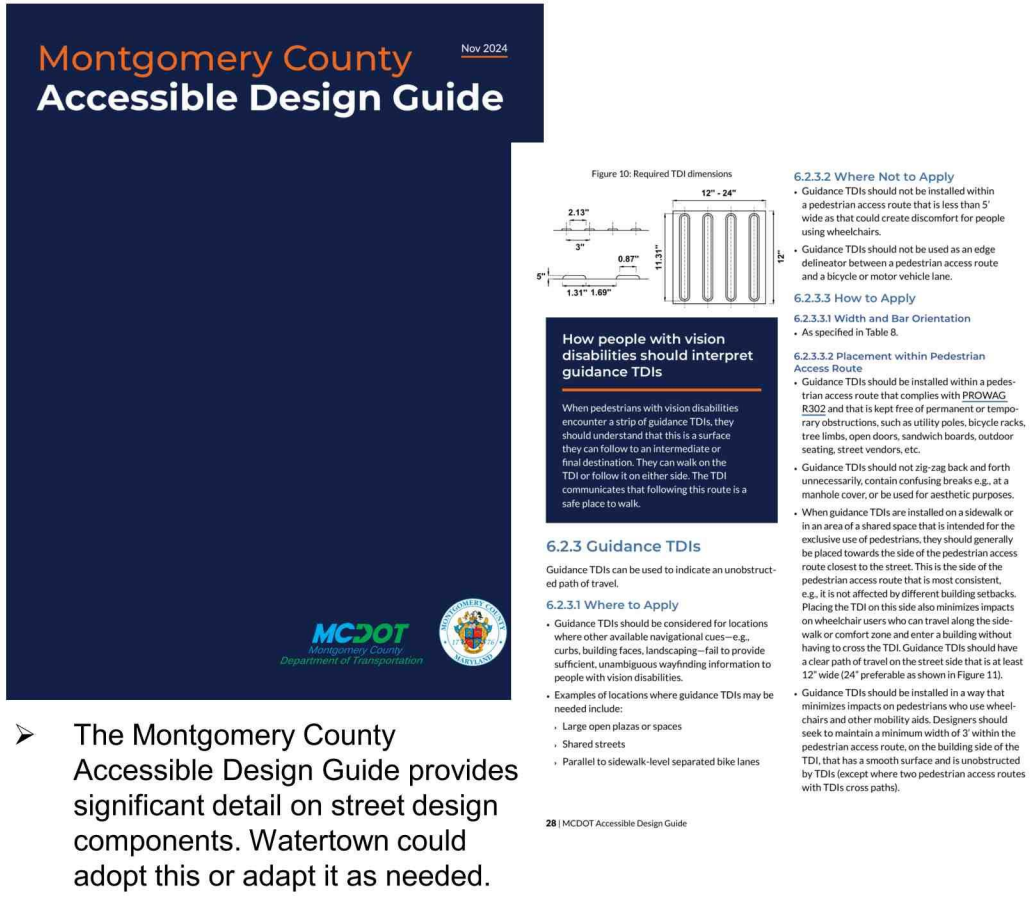
OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

Create and/or adopt an Accessible Design Guide, building on existing partnership with the Perkins School for the Blind. The Guide would be a comprehensive resource that outlines best practices and standards for creating accessible environments for everyone, meeting any physical, sensory, or cognitive needs.

In the long-term, **invest in key Universal Access Corridors** throughout the City, potentially starting with one pilot corridor on which to test the latest design thinking. Based on stakeholder feedback, the analysis identified some key corridors that would significantly expand access for those with mobility challenges. These corridors connect to the transit hub of Watertown Square, commercial uses along Arsenal Street, and provide north-south connections where the topography is challenging. Ultimately, all corridors should be easily traversed by those of all ages and abilities.

Key benefits of this strategy include:

- Predictability and consistency in streetscape design benefit all users, not just the disabled community.
- Watertown can become a regional leader in this effort, creating a resource that nearby communities can also draw from.
- The City has a unique opportunity to partner with local institution Perkins School for the Blind to develop standards.



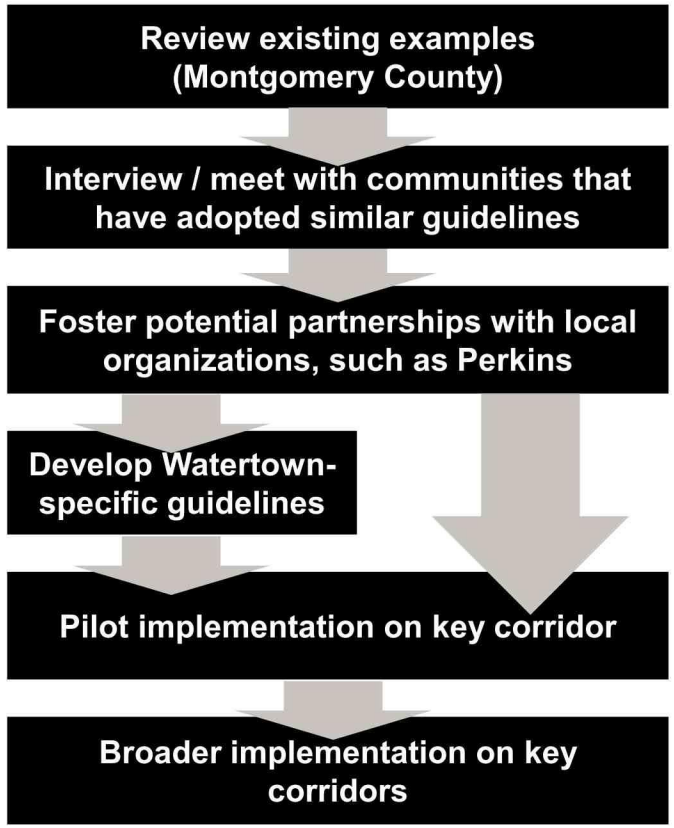
➢ The Montgomery County Accessible Design Guide provides significant detail on street design components. Watertown could adopt this or adapt it as needed.

EXPANDING ACCESS: ●●●

REDUCING VMT: ●●○

2. Become a Leader in Universal Access Design

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION



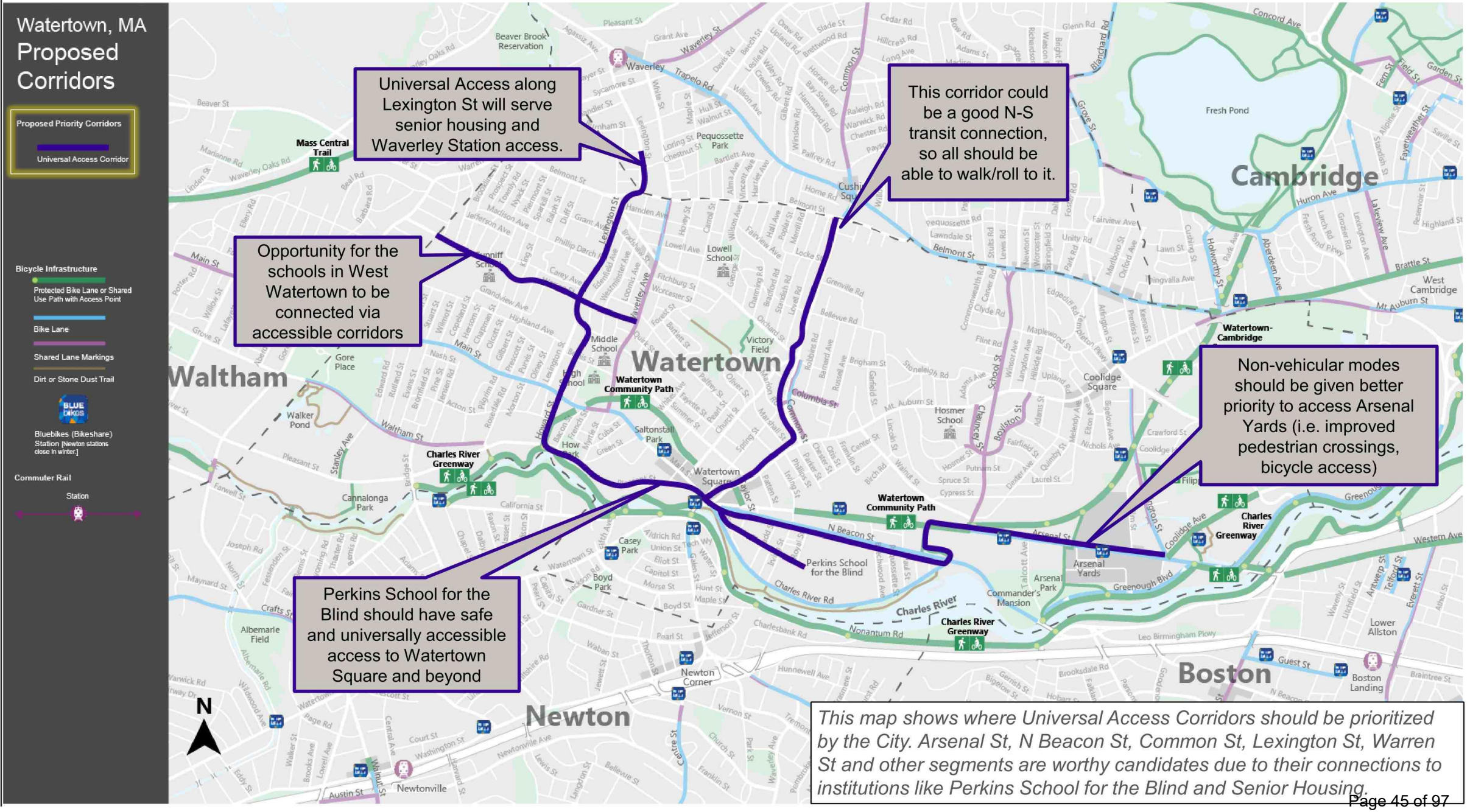
POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Massachusetts Office on Disability Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program
- MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program
- Safe Streets for All Grant Program (USDOT)
- Local Advocacy Organizations

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Perkins School for the Blind
- Watertown Commission on Disability
- Watertown City's Council on Aging
- Watertown for all Ages
- Watertown Public Schools

Watertown, MA Proposed Corridors



This map shows where Universal Access Corridors should be prioritized by the City. Arsenal St, N Beacon St, Common St, Lexington St, Warren St and other segments are worthy candidates due to their connections to institutions like Perkins School for the Blind and Senior Housing.

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3. Invest in Top Corridors By Use

TIMELINE: Long-term | COST: $$$ | FEASIBILITY: High

OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

Invest in key corridors (shown on the map) to improve overall mobility, either by building new infrastructure or planning for future infrastructure. Specifically, identify and/or invest to prioritize corridors for bus preservation, bike comfort, and universal access. People will not bike in Watertown if there is not a safe, useful network. Similarly, people will not take the bus if it is slow, and people with mobility challenges will be unable – comfortably or at all – walk/roll to their destination without streets that they can use. Investing in these improvements will allow people to choose these other modes instead of traveling by car.

The data analysis and conversations with community partners highlighted the need for improved connections for different modes, and the challenges associated with trying to fit amenities for all modes onto one street. While all streets should at a minimum be safe for travel, some corridors emerged as useful bus connections, while others can serve people using bikes, and others can be Accessible Corridors as mentioned in recommendation #2.

➢ *"Super Sharrow" and Advisory Lane – Summer Street, Somerville. These interventions create a comfortable bike environment on lower-volume residential roads in particular*

- A **Bus Preservation Corridor** should:
  - Accommodate/preserve space for bus and shuttle transit services (e.g. WATConnector or MBTA)
  - Avoid elements that could hinder bus operations like narrowed travel lanes, raised crossings, curb extensions, tight turn radii, and others
  - Incorporate the ability for transit signal priority in any signal upgrades
- A **Bike-Prioritized Corridor** should:
  - Generally follow the pre-existing guidance from the Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
  - Incorporate protected bicycle lanes where possible
  - Use traffic-calming measures to create a safe shared street where bike lanes are not possible, such as speed tables, curb extensions, lane narrowing, advisory lanes, and 'super-sharrows'
- A **Universal Access Corridor** should:
  - Implement features based on the City's Universal Access Design Guide (for more detail, see the *Leadership in Universal Access Design* Recommendation)

EXPANDING ACCESS: ●●○ REDUCING VMT: ●●○

3. Invest in Top Corridors By Use

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Integrate bus preservation corridors into asset management / other planning

Consider field trip to Somerville (with partners such as Bike-Ped Committee) to try out 'bicycle boulevard' facilities

Initiate design process for School Street and Waverly Avenue bikeways. Include parking counts/study.

Follow process for Universal Access Corridors

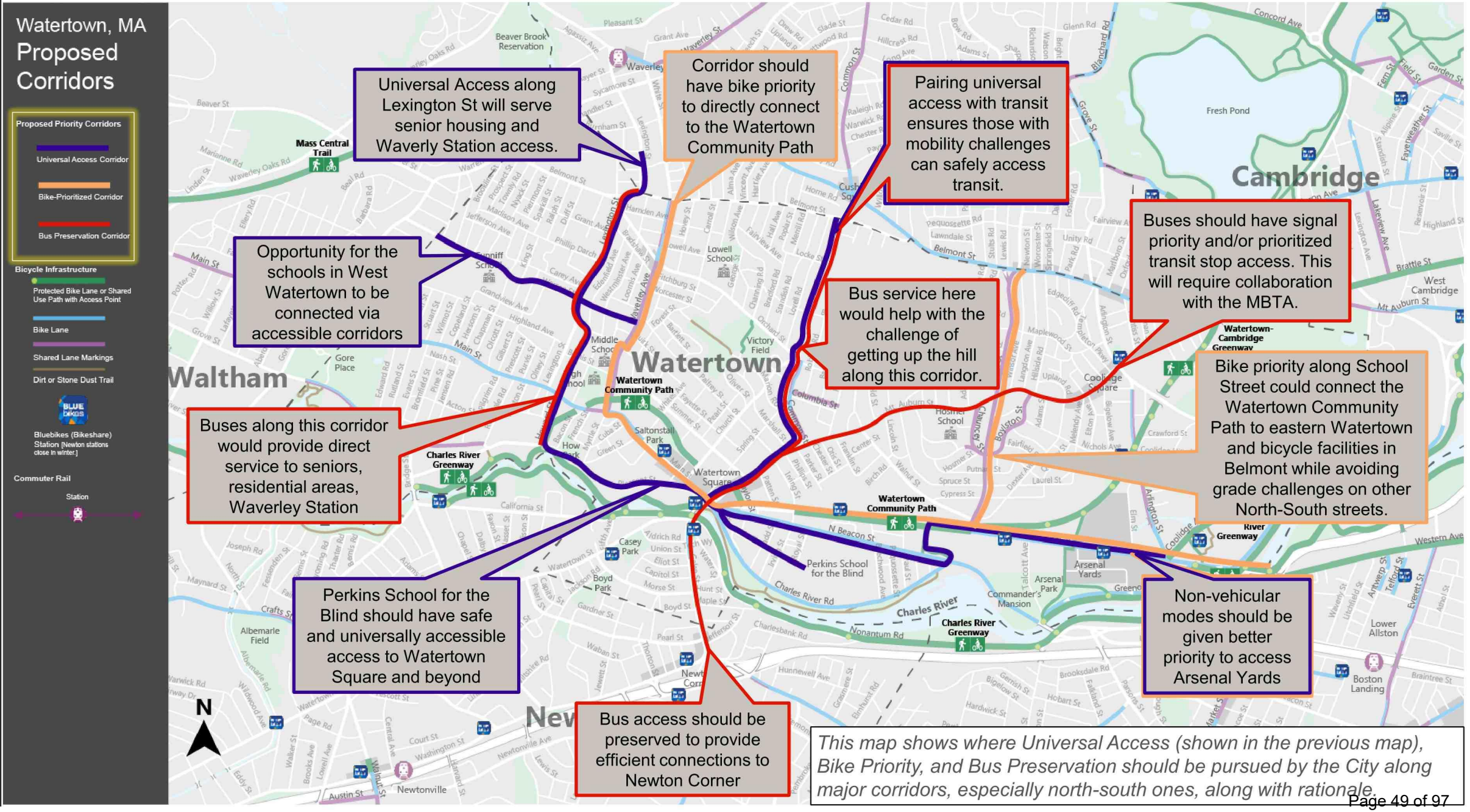
POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Safe Streets for All Grant Program (USDOT)
- Transportation Network Company (TNC) Municipal Disbursements
- MassDOT
    - Complete Streets Funding Program
    - Safe Routes to School Program
    - Shared Streets and Spaces
- Mass Gaming Commission

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Perkins School for the Blind
- Watertown Public Schools
- Watertown Bike-Ped Committee
- Watertown Faces Climate Change
- MBTA

Watertown, MA Proposed Corridors



This map shows where Universal Access (shown in the previous map), Bike Priority, and Bus Preservation should be pursued by the City along major corridors, especially north-south ones, along with rationale.

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4. Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach

TIMELINE: Short-term | COST: $ | FEASIBILITY: High

OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

Adopt a formal commitment to Vision Zero, which is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on Watertown's Streets. Becoming a Vision Zero community will inspire confidence and serve as a guiding principal for many projects that the City hopes to pursue. Additional components of this recommendation include:

- Continue to work with the Boston Region MPO, who recently developed a Vision Zero Action Plan that covers Watertown. Review the "high injury network" (HIN) for Watertown-specific locations and apply the toolkit.
- Consider a more tailored, City-wide plan, as called for in the Comprehensive Plan and Bike & Ped Plan.
- Implement the federal Safe Streets for All grant that the City received to review speeds and pursue safety projects on select corridors.
- Consider creating a local dashboard or reporting system to increase transparency and messaging around crashes in the City

Create a formalized **Traffic Calming Program** that links resident feedback with an established set of street design interventions to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes, improving safety and comfort for non-motorized street users.

- This should be a transparent application-based program, that selects specific streets or intersections for improvement based on a criteria-based selection process.
- Many strategies can be "quick-build" pilot strategies, followed by evaluation, and then long-term installation.
- Empowers residents to participate in the safety improvement process, fostering community engagement and ensuring that interventions are targeted where constituents most need them.
- Traffic calmed streets are more comfortable for walking and biking, so more people can choose this for short trips.

EXPANDING ACCESS: ●●○ REDUCING VMT: ●○○

4. Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach

NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Coordinate with Boston MPO

Establish reporting mechanism on Watertown-specific HIN/crashes

Consider developing Watertown-specific VZ plan

Proceed with SS4A Grant

Work with entity like City Council to adopt Vision Zero

Coordinate with Salem, Lowell, etc. to learn about Traffic Calming Programs

Internal coordination on how TCP fits in to ongoing processes

Establish TCP

City of Salem Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Application

The goal of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is to evaluate and determine whether to implement small-scale, inexpensive projects to calm traffic on local, residential streets by using semi-permanent materials to test ideas that can become hardened and permanent if successful. These projects can be initiated by residents or the Traffic and Parking Department, but in both cases will involve a collaborative process with residents, City staff, Ward Councilors, and the Police Traffic Unit. The program seeks to fund projects costing less than $25,000 and is intended to complement the larger repaving and repair work as well as other major intersection and corridor projects.

To submit an application, please complete the below form. Thank you!

- The City of Salem, MA has a comprehensive approach to traffic calming, including visualizations of where crashes and speeding occur

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Safe Streets for All (SS4A) USDOT Grant
- Boston Region MPO
- MassDOT

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Boston Region MPO
- Watertown Traffic Commission
- Watertown Complete Streets Working Group
- Watertown Public Schools
- Watertown Bike-Ped Committee
- Watertown Faces Climate Change
- Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition

5. Pursue Local and Regional Priorities with Agency Partners

TIMELINE: Short-term to Long-term | COST: Varies | FEASIBILITY: Moderate

OVERVIEW AND BENEFITS

Many projects, programs, and policies that can improve mobility for Watertown fall under the purview of the state legislature and regional agencies, especially the MBTA and MassDOT, or require close collaboration with neighboring municipalities. Watertown should take a proactive role in advocating for its regional mobility priorities, bringing clear asks and specific justifications to ongoing coordination processes.

To assist with this process, Appendix B provides detail that the City can bring to regional agencies on the topics listed below.

Short-term priorities identified and confirmed as part of this study include:

- Creating a north-south MBTA bus route through Watertown
- Extending MBTA Bus Route 65 from Brighton to Watertown Square via Boston Landing and Arsenal Street
- Reducing commuter fares at inner core stations to match subway fares

Medium-term and long-term priorities identified and confirmed as part of this study include:

- Improving transit circulation through Newton Corner
- Implementing transit priority projects on Western Ave and River Street (Route 70), Washington Street & Cambridge Street (Route 57), and into and through Harvard Square (Routes 71 & 73)
- Advancing regional rail implementation, including a new station at Newton Corner, fully accessible stations in Newton and Belmont (including Waverley Square), and frequent service

EXPANDING ACCESS: ●●○ REDUCING VMT: ●●●

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Priority Projects Summary: Understanding Metric Rankings

This study recommends **five key projects/efforts that will help the City of Watertown meet its goals of expanding access and reducing vehicle miles traveled**. There are additional projects that may also or better meet these dual goals, which is why Watertown has other comprehensive plans it is pursuing. However, the study process identified these projects to directly address the needs and opportunities that the conversations with community partners and empirical data analysis identified.

Priority projects include:

- **Expand A Local Transit Approach**
  - Approaches for a Unified Watertown Connector
  - Expanding Community Microtransit Services
  - Creating a Community Transit Platform
- **Become a Leader in Universal Access Design**
- **Invest in Top Corridors by Use**
- **Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach**
- **Pursue Local and Regional Priorities with Agency Partners**

Priority Projects Summary: Metrics & Explanations

The table below provides a planning-level overview of the VMT reductions and costs associated with each strategy. Understanding the VMT impacts of various strategies is challenging. However, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) has created a handbook for government entities to understand the impacts of various tools that communities use to reduce VMT and GHGs. The table below draws from that handbook to compare the strategies proposed to one another.
Costs also vary wildly; the table below provides planning-level estimates based on previous work and MassDOT costs (see Appendix D for detail)

	Reducing VMT		Expanding Access		Cost	
Priority Project	Ranking	Details	Ranking	Details	Estimate	Details
Expand A Local Transit Approach	●●○	Extend transit network coverage: **5% reduction** Increase transit service frequency: **11% reduction** **Note: impact will vary based on model selected; i.e. direct subsidy for rideshare use could increase VMT.**	●●●	An increase in local transit services can be used by a greater amount of residents, with a renewed focus for those with mobility challenges	$ $	$1-3.5 million per year*
Become a Leader in Universal Access Design	●●○	Pedestrian network improvements: **6% reduction**	●●●	Improving the pedestrian experience throughout Watertown, especially those with mobility challenges, will greatly enhance access for all users.	$ $ $	$200,000 for guidelines $10-15 million per corridor mile
Invest in Top Corridors by Use	●●○	Transit supportive infrastructure: **0.6% reduction** Bicycle infrastructure investments: **0.8% reduction**	●●○	Enhances connections and convenience for pedestrians, bikes, and transit riders, particularly in the North-South direction which currently has limited coverage.	$ $ $	$10-15 million per corridor mile
Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach	●○○	Over time, safer roads will encourage a mode shift towards non-SOV modes. Further research is needed to determine a direct link.	●●○	Safer streets ensures that all groups (including seniors, those with limited mobility, and students on the way to school) have safe options for travel.	$	$250,000-$500,000 to establish reporting mechanism and plans
Pursue Local and Regional Efforts with Agency Partners	●●●	Extend transit network coverage: **5% reduction** Increase transit service frequency: **11% reduction**	●●○	Increased transit access and multimodal projects will help more people get to more places from Watertown without a car.	Varies	City staff time MBTA staff time Additional operations costs (fuel, driver, etc.)

*Assumes an all-in annual cost if the City procured a private vendor to operate the service, who would typically provide the vehicles rather than requiring the City to purchase them directly.
*Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity. We note that "emissions reductions achieved by transportation measures are estimated using the expected percent reduction in vehicle trips or VMT, with an associated adjustment to account for the relationship between VMT reduction and vehicle emissions." In other words, CAPCOA assumes a direct relationship between VMT and GHG so percentage reductions are interchangeable. It is also important to note that the reductions may not be additive.

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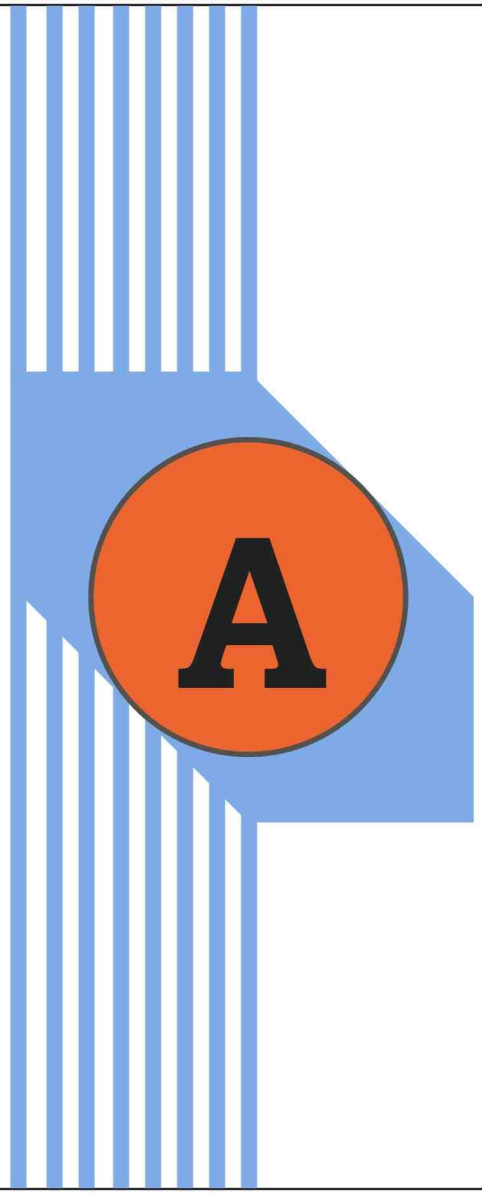


Appendix A:

Universe of Projects

Universe of Projects Classification

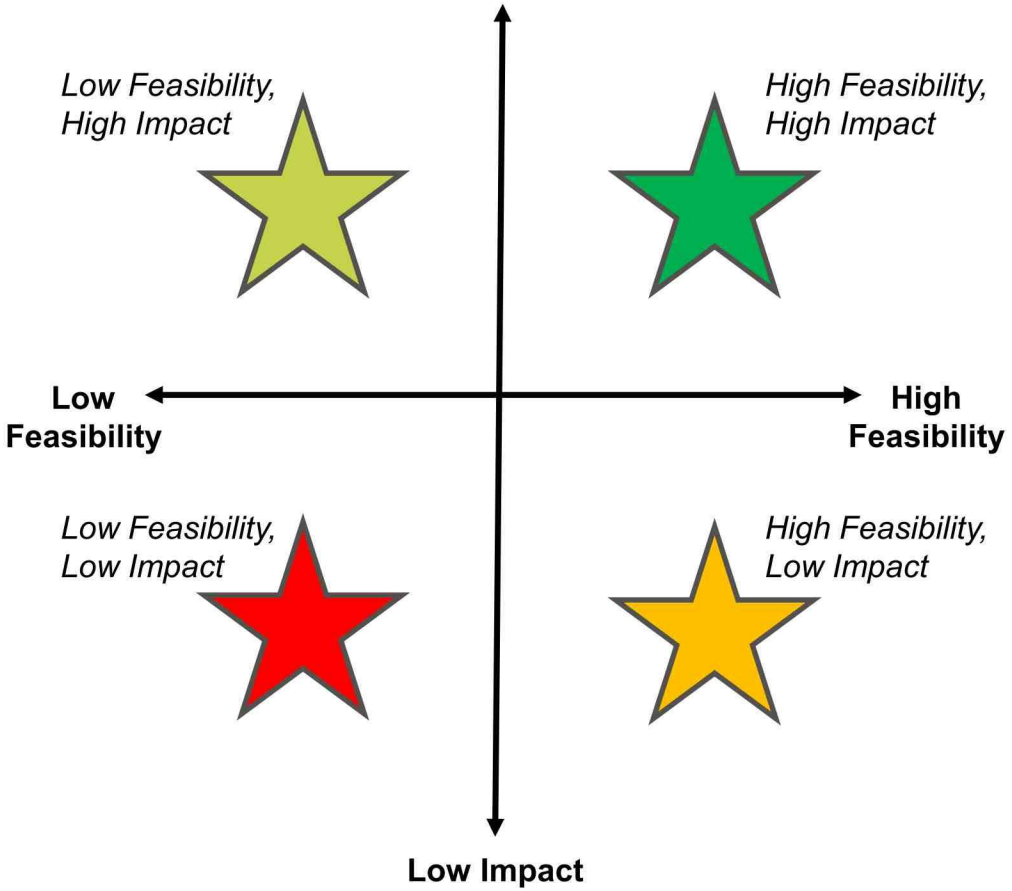
As noted earlier in the report, the Project built on the community's prior work to identify detailed plans for sustainability, bicycle and walk access, and an overall community vision. This was the first step in the process of developing a "Universe Of Projects" that Watertown could pursue.

The following organization is only a lens to view the universe of projects; it is not a prioritized list of projects. Projects have varying impacts, costs, and political feasibility. To help the study team and stakeholders digest and understand the list of projects, the team used impact and feasibility to group projects with like status, presented in this overview.

Impact is defined as advancing the community goals identified in the RFP and through the project initiation process. These goals are:

- SOV reduction
- Expanding access for underserved groups/neighborhoods

Feasibility is an assessment of the project's likelihood to advance, including financial cost to the City of Watertown and political feasibility. *It is not just how likely a project is to happen, but how many obstacles it may face.*



High Feasibility, High Impact Projects (1 of 3)

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
2	Communication Strategy for Transportation- regularly publish more updates and data	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
3	Promote Bicycling Citywide (list of specific actions)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
4	Parking Requirements Review	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
7	Development Policies to Promote Multimodal Access	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
8	Review and Update Bicycle Parking Requirements Review	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
10	Improve Bicycle Access to Charles River Path (Private Developments)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
45	ADA Audit of Key Corridors	Comp. Plan; Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
14	Trail-Oriented Development	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
16	Bikeshare Expansion	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
19	Watertown Thoroughfare Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
20	Establish Vision Zero Policy	Comp. Plan; Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
25	Transit Service Evaluation	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
24	Last-Mile Solutions	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
27	Expand MBTA Service in Watertown	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
31	Common Street Safety Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
32	Watertown Street Safety Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
41	Methodology for Evaluating ROW Use	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
43	Promote Safe Routes to School	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project

High Feasibility, High Impact Projects (2 of 3)

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
51	Cross-City Bike Routes (E-W, N-S)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
54	Improved Charles River Path Maintenance	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
55	Develop Micromobility Policy for operations and parking	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
59	Expand Free Micro transit	Watertown Mobility Study Kickoff Meeting	Watertown-identified project
61	Relocate MBTA Route 59 and 71 Terminus	Watertown Square Area Plan	Watertown-identified project
65	Create new north/south transit connections	Stantec	Stantec Recommendation
29	Bus Prioritization (dedicated bus lanes and signal priority	Resilient Watertown	Watertown-identified project
67	Price Parking to Reduce Demand in Watertown Square and Coolidge Square	Stantec	Stantec Recommendation
42	Active Transportation Plan for Watertown Schools	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
28	Improve MBTA Accessibility (Physical Access to Bus) in Watertown	Resilient Watertown	Watertown-identified project
B1	Newton	GoGo Newton	Peer City Best Practice
B2	Everett	Everett Shuttles (via Encore Casino)	Peer City Best Practice
B3	Salem	Salem Skipper	Peer City Best Practice
B4	Boston	Boston E-Bike Incentive Program	Peer City Best Practice
B5	Worcester	Worcester E-Bike Voucher Program	Peer City Best Practice
B7	Allston Brighton	Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning-Mobility Recommendations	Peer City Best Practice
B8	Lexington, Bedford, Burlington	Tri-Town Efficiency and Regionalization Transit Study and Middlesex TMA Shuttles	Peer City Best Practice

High Feasibility, High Impact Projects (3 of 3)

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
B9	Pilot / quick-build projects for traffic calming	Watertown Mobility Study Kickoff Meeting	Watertown-identified project
R1	Reduce MBTA bus service delays	MBTA Bus Priority Vision	Regional Initiative
R2	Improve the Alewife MBTA Station	Transit Oriented Development at Alewife	Regional Initiative
R3	Extend the MCRT to nearby municipalities	Mass Central Trail Trail Feasibility Study	Regional Initiative
R6	Expanding the Allston-Brighton shuttles	Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Link Study	Regional Initiative
R11	Provide more bus service in busy neighborhoods	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R12	Provide more around-the-clock bus service	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R13	Expand the MBTA network- (including non-downtown centers)	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R16	Regional Blue Bike Expansion	Bluebikes Expansion Planning	Regional Initiative
R20	Upgrade Newton Commuter Rail Stations	Regional Rail Modernization Program	Regional Initiative
R21	Provide more frequent, all-day regional rail service on the Framingham/Worcester and Fitchburg Lines	Regional Rail Modernization Program	Regional Initiative
R22	Upgrade Belmont Commuter Rail Stations	Regional Rail Modernization Program	Regional Initiative

Low Feasibility, High Impact Projects (1 of 2)

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
1	Complete Pedestrian and Bicycle Network- close gaps and improve safety and accessibility	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
5	Establish All-Season Bicycle Facility Maintenance Procedures	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
23	Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections to Retail, Parks, and Community Amenities	Comprehensive Plan/Resilient Watertown	Watertown-identified project
30	Electrify the transit system that connects areas of Watertown not served by the MBTA to MBTA services	Resilient Watertown	Watertown-identified project
35	Galen Street Separated Bicycle Facility and Pedestrian Safety Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
37	Mt Auburn - Watertown/Cambridge Greenway / Belmont Street-Mt Auburn Street Integration	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
39	North-South Bicycle Facility and Sidewalk Reconstruction with Raised Intersections	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
47	Mt Auburn Street - Watertown/Cambridge Greenway Pedestrian Route	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
50	Watertown Community Path- implement missing links	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
52	West Watertown Pedestrian Improvements and connections to Charles River	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
53	Walnut Street Bicycle Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
56	School Street Reconstruction (no additional detail identified)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
58	Subsidize Transit for Low and Middle Income Riders	Watertown Mobility Study Kickoff Meeting	Watertown-identified project
60	Watertown Square Area Plan Intersection Redesign*	Watertown Square Area Plan	Watertown-identified project
64	Expand transit on Pleasant Street	Stantec	Stantec Recommendation

Low Feasibility, High Impact Projects (2 of 2)

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
66	Create direct connection between Watertown and Boston Landing	Stantec	Stantec Recommendation
26	Expanded operation of WATConnector (Watertown Operated Transit/Shuttle Service)	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
33	Summer Street Intersection Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
32	Watertown and North Beacon Street Safety Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
B13	Establish a Parking Benefit District	Various Towns	Peer City Best Practice
B16	Tri-Town Efficiency and Regionalization Transit Study- streamlined shuttle service between towns	Tri-Town Efficiency Study (Lexington, Bedford, Burlington)	Peer City Best Practice
B17	Tri-Town Efficiency and Regionalization Transit Study- add Sunday service to certain MBTA bus routes	Tri-Town Efficiency Study (Lexington, Bedford, Burlington)	Peer City Best Practice
B19	Continue Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Monitoring	Cambridge	Peer City Best Practice
R10	Improve transit equity	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R14	Streamline the MBTA network	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R15	Transit-aiding tech (transit priority, etc.)	MBTA Bus Network Redesign	Regional Initiative
R17	Expanding the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway	MassDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update	Regional Initiative
R19	Newton Corner Improvements, with Bike/Ped Connections and Signalized I-90 Ramps (improved multimodal access to Watertown Sq. and beyond)	Newton Corner Improvements Project	Regional Initiative
R23	Newton Corner Infill Commuter Rail Station (brings additional option for rail access nearby)	Regional Rail Modernization Program	Regional Initiative

STUDY FOR CITY-SUPPORTED MOBILITY
CITY OF WATERTOWN

High Feasibility, Low Impact Projects

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
11	Wayfinding - Coolidge Square	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
12	Wayfinding - Charles River Greenway	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
13	Wayfinding - Watertown Community Path	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
15	Inventory the current Bicycle Network	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
18	Define Gateways via wayfinding, landscaping, lighting, and coordination with stakeholders (e.g. DCR IHOP rotary)	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
21	Establish Curbside Use Policy	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
34	Belmont Street Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements (no additional detail identified)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
38	Pleasant Street and Arsenal Street Pedestrian Improvements (no additional detail identified)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
40	Little Greenough Improvements	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
44	Improve Crash Reporting	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
62	Improve Customer Parking Experience (technology and signage)	Parking Management Plan	Watertown-identified project
63	Manage Parking Demand through Priced Parking and a Parking Benefit District	Parking Management Plan	Watertown-identified project
57	Watertown Square and Coolidge Square Bike and Pedestrian Facilities (no add'l detail identified)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
6	Wayfinding to facilitate walking and biking downtown and to regional paths	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
B18	Tri-Town Efficiency and Regionalization Transit Study- bus stop consolidation around Burlington Mall	Tri-Town Efficiency Study (Lexington, Bedford, Burlington)	Peer City Best Practice

Low Feasibility, Low Impact Projects

ID	Project Name	Source	Project Type
17	Traffic Calming techniques (specifically on cut through streets)	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
22	Loading Study- to establish dedicated loading zones in commercial areas	Comprehensive Plan	Watertown-identified project
36	Improve Bicycle Access to Charles River Path (Grove St and Greenough Blvd)	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
48	Connections between Charles River Greenway and How Park	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project
49	Bridge Street Connections- physical access and wayfinding	Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Watertown-identified project

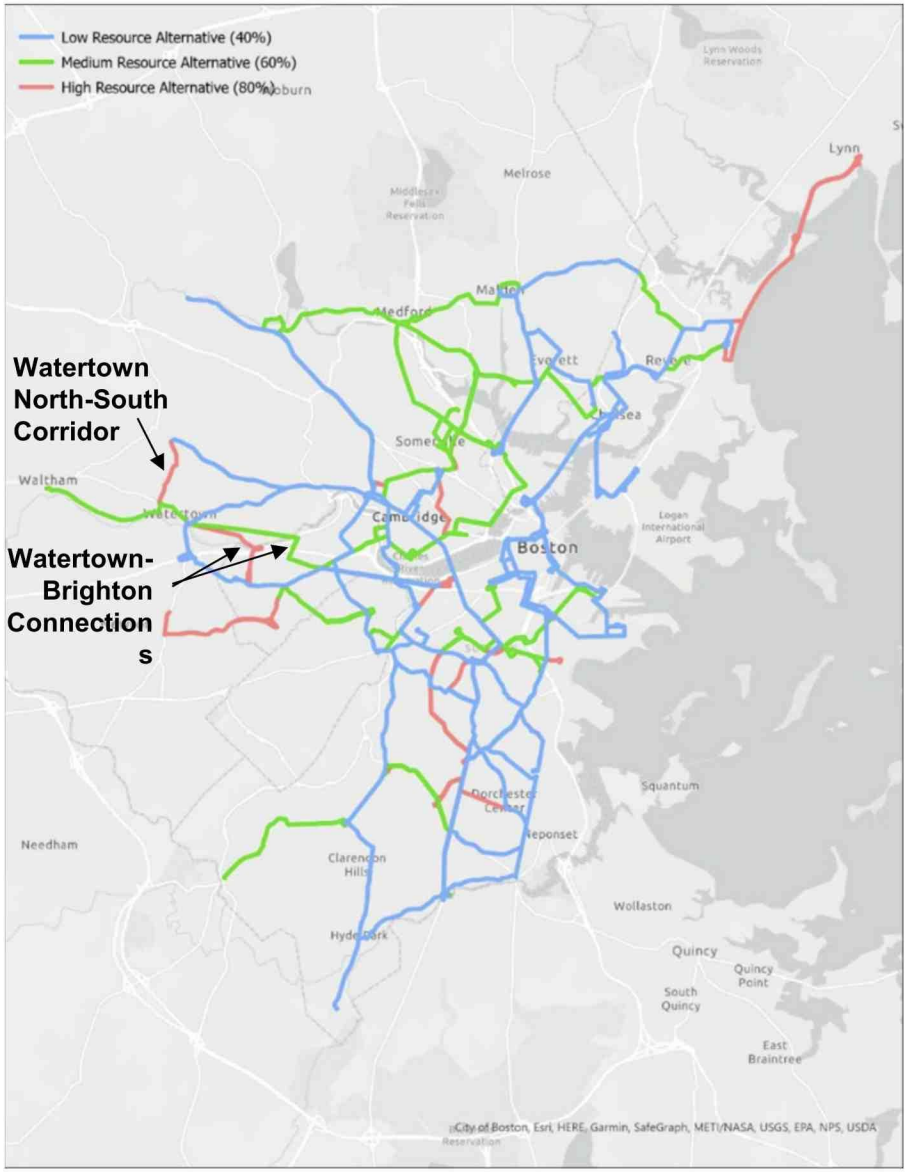
STUDY FOR CITY-SUPPORTED MOBILITY
CITY OF WATERTOWN

B

Appendix B:

Local and Regional Efforts with Agency Partners- Additional Details

Figure 5 Map of High-Frequency Networks for Each Resource Alternative Following Automated Network Generation Process



Create a North-South MBTA Bus Route Through Watertown

Justification: While Watertown has strong east-west transit service, there is currently no transit running north-south. As a result, transit is not a realistic option for many short trips within Watertown or to neighboring communities such as Belmont, Arlington, or Chestnut Hill.

Research conducted as part of MBTA Bus Network Redesign determined there is enough north-south demand in Watertown to justify buses running every 15 minutes. The final redesigned bus network does not include a north-south route. In fact, the north-south corridor is one of only two identified high demand segments that remain completely unserved by transit in the future network.

Recommendation: The study team evaluated multiple potential north-south bus corridors, including School Street, Common Street, Waverley Avenue, and Lexington Street. Based on data findings and stakeholder insights, our team recommends that Watertown first pursue north-south transit on Lexington Avenue. This corridor has a high density of older adults and people living in lower income households that often benefit most from transit access. Additionally, the corridor could facilitate direct service between Watertown, Belmont, and Arlington – including connections to rail service in Waverley Square and/or Belmont Center.

Implementation:

- Recommend to MBTA staff that Lexington Street is evaluated for service as part of implementing the Watertown phase of Bus Network Redesign
- Coordinate with Belmont, Arlington, and Newton to advocate for north-south service – including working with the MBTA to develop a full route proposal
- Preserve Lexington Street as a transit supportive corridor

Extend Route 65 to Connect Watertown, Boston Landing, Brookline, and Longwood

Justification: Watertown does not have a direct transit connection to activity centers southeast of the city, such as Boston Landing, Brookline, and the Longwood Medical Area (LMA). The MBTA Bus Network Redesign identified demand between the Arsenal Street corridor in Watertown, Boston Landing, and Brighton Center as justifying high frequency bus service.

Car trips between these locations take 10 to 30 minutes, while transit trips can take over an hour and often require multiple transfers. For example, a trip between Arsenal Yards and Boston Medical Center Brighton takes 10 minutes by car versus 30 to 40 minutes via transit – about the same amount of time it would take to walk.

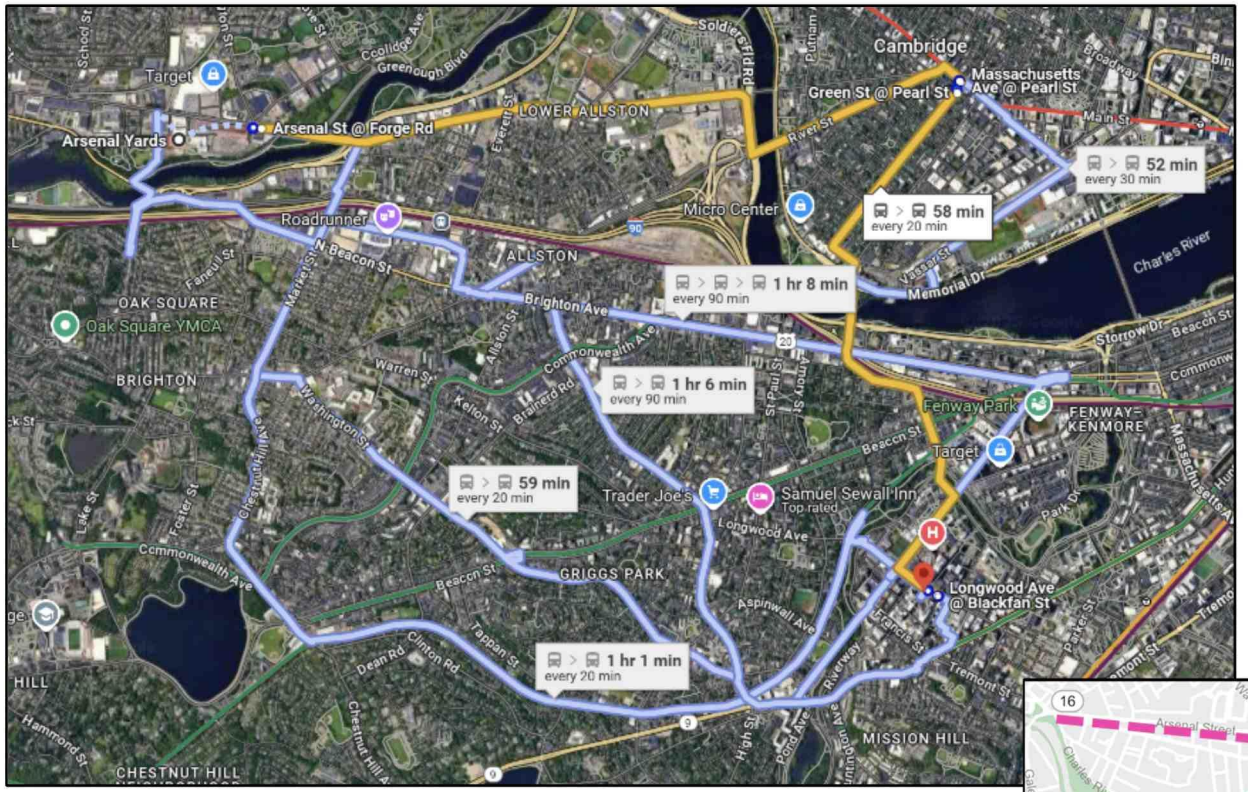
As part of Bus Network Redesign, the MBTA will modify Route 65 to run between Brighton Center and Ruggles Station via Washington Street and the LMA. This route, like the existing Route 65 that runs to Kenmore Station, will likely continue to have highly directional rush hour demand – with most riders traveling towards the LMA in the morning and back towards Brookline in the afternoon.

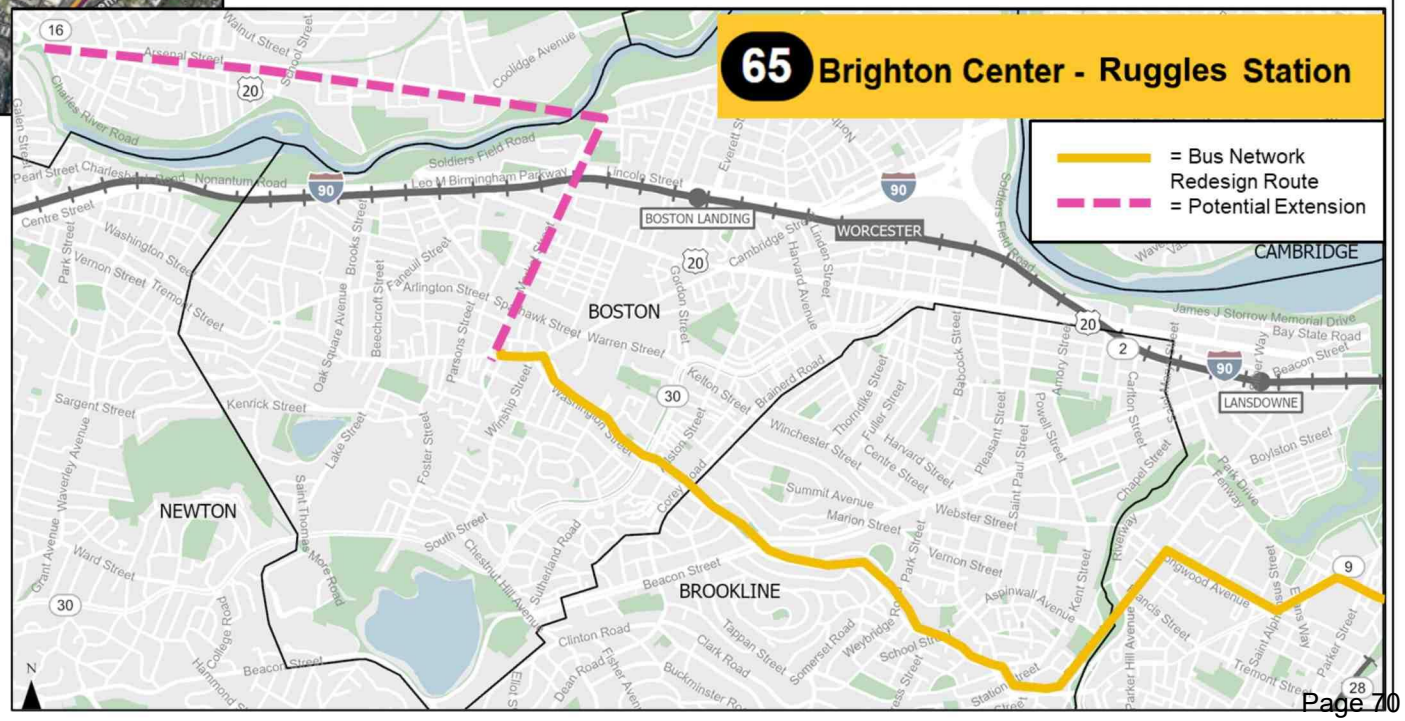
Recommendation: Watertown should advocate for the MBTA to extend the planned Route 65 from Brighton Center to Watertown Square via Arsenal Street and Market Street. Although this is a long route, the MBTA operates routes that are significantly (such as the frequent Route 109, among many others). The route could be run reliably in practice and adding a strong complementary anchor to the western end of the route will likely improve the route's operational efficiency. This extension will provide benefits for multiple stakeholders, including:

- Creating a faster and more reliable connection between Arsenal Street, Boston Landing, Brighton, Brookline, and the LMA - with transfers to all Green Line branches and the Orange Line.
- Leverage growing demand at Boston Landing and Arsenal Street as a complementary ridership generator to the LMA – filling otherwise underutilized reverse peak service on the planned Route 65.

Implementation:

- Recommend to MBTA staff that a Route 65 extension evaluated for service as part of implementing the Watertown phase of Bus Network Redesign
- Coordinate with Boston, Brookline, the Watertown TMA, and A Better City TMA to advocate for the service extension





- A GPS software like Google Maps presents a vast array of transit options from Arsenal Yards to Longwood Ave (above), all of which take about an hour. None of the existing transit routes are one-seat rides. An extension of the 65 Bus (right) would enable a one-seat ride from Watertown to Brookline, Boston Landing, Longwood, and Ruggles. The exact routing of the extension could continue to be workshopped.

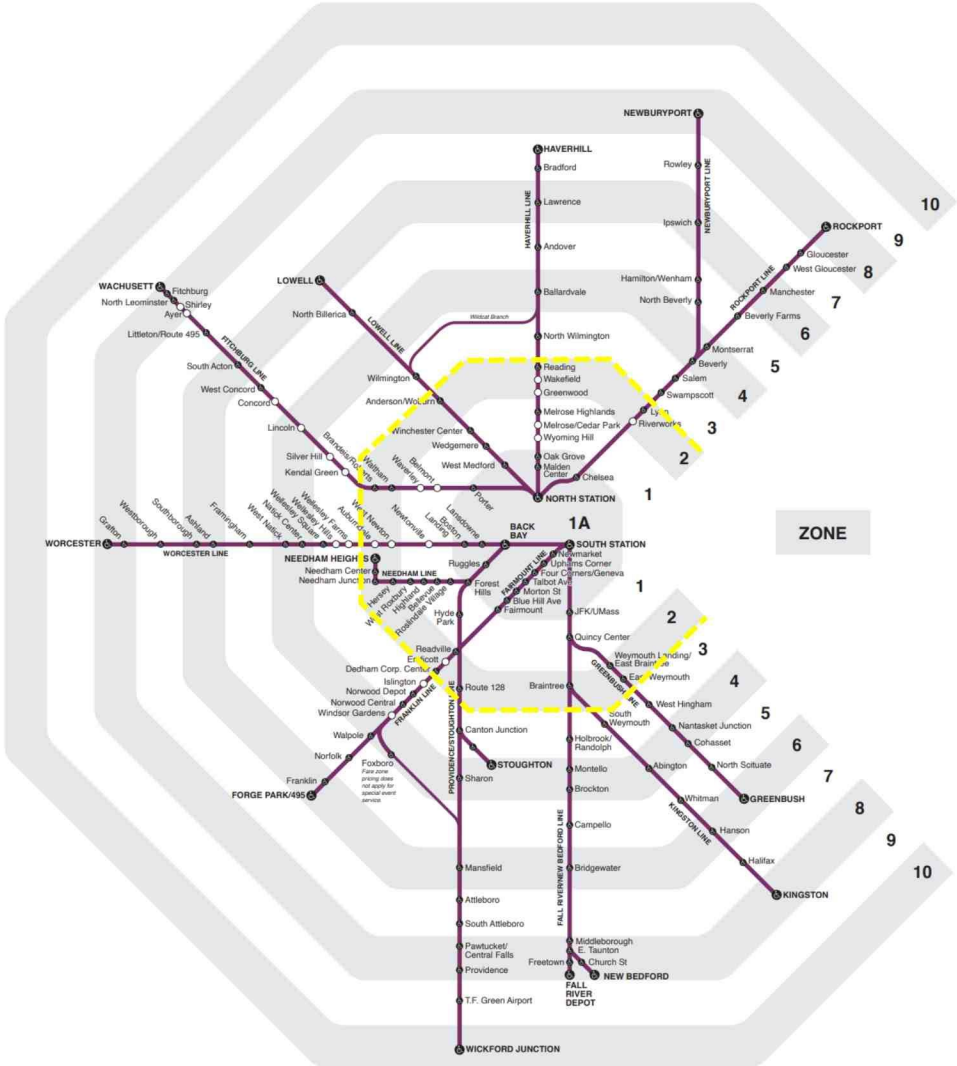
Reduce Inner Core Commuter Rail Fares (Zone 1A-2)

Justification: Watertown is served by MBTA Commuter Rail stations in Belmont and Newton. This service provides direct access to Downtown Boston, as well as regional access to the western suburbs, often with travel times that are competitive to driving. Today, however, commuter rail fares are significantly higher than other transit modes, including for short trips. For example, traveling between Waverley Square and Porter Square takes 8 minutes by commuter rail versus 20 minutes by car. The MBTA charges $6.50 each way for this trip – nearly three times more than a subway fare ($2.40) – even though the trip is significantly shorter than many subway trips (such as Braintree to Downtown Boston).

Recommendation: Watertown should advocate for the MBTA to charge subway fares ($2.40) for all trips between Zones 1A, 1 and 2. These fares should also include free transfers to subway and bus lines, like the subway fare, which will made more technically feasible via the Automated Fare Collection (AFC) 2.0 roll out at commuter rail stations—a new account-based, contactless fare system—at commuter rail stations starting in 2026. AFC 2.0 is the MBTA's new account-based fare collection system that will support contactless payments and fare integration across all transit modes, making it easier to implement consistent pricing and seamless transfers. As a secondary priority, Watertown could advocate for the MBTA to reduce interzone fares (the fares charged for trips between all zones except Zone 1A) to a flat $2.40 per trip.

Implementation:

- Identify municipal and community partners interested in similar commuter rail fare reforms. About twenty municipalities have Zone 1A, 1, and/or 2 stations – including high transit ridership communities such as Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Lynn, and Medford.
- Advocate for recommended changes via both direct outreach and official forums, such as the MBTA Advisory Board and MAPC.



Improve Transit Circulation Through Newton Corner

Justification: Newton Corner and Watertown Square function as an interconnected bus hub. Upon the completion of the MBTA Bus Network Redesign, as many as 45 buses per hour will run on the half mile stretch of Galen Street, Centre Street that connects these community centers. Newton Corner has severe congestion and a complex roadway layout that adds as much as 10 minutes to bus trips. This congestion makes transit less reliable and increases bus operating costs.

Recommendation: MassDOT is actively studying long-term solutions for reconfiguring Newton Corner. Watertown is in the Newton Corner MassDOT Project's working group already, and should to continue to advocate for prioritized transit as part of the new design. Priority strategies for transit include:

- Transit priority for buses on Washington Street and Galen Street, including on the bridge over the Mass Pike, ideally fully separated from car traffic.
- Two-way circulation that enables buses to take direct routes between Galen Street and Washington Street, Park Street, and Centre Street.
- A new commuter rail station with direct vertical circulation to an adjacent bus hub, preferably as close to the existing Washington Street bridge as possible.

Implementation:

- Continue to actively participate in the MassDOT Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study, advocating for the transit priorities identified above.

Implement Transit Priority Projects in Boston and Cambridge that Benefit Watertown Bus Routes

Justification: Watertown is served by four bus routes currently or planned to have "frequent" service – defined by the MBTA as operating every 15 minutes or better. These routes include:

- Route 57, which runs between Watertown Square and Kenmore Square via Tremont Street, Washington Street, and Commonwealth Ave.
- Route 70, which runs between Waltham, Watertown Square, and Central Square in Cambridge via Main Street, Arsenal Street, Western Avenue, and River Street.
- Route 71, which runs between Watertown Square and Harvard Square via Mount Auburn Street.
- Route 73, which runs between Waverley Square and Harvard Square via Trapelo Road, Belmont Street, and Mount Auburn Street.

These routes operate on roads with significant congestion and complex intersections that reduce reliability and increase travel times, making transit more difficult to use and more expensive to operate. These delays will increase as the region grows, especially with large planned developments along Arsenal Street and within Lower Allston. While Watertown can work to improve bus speed and reliability on its own roadways, all bus routes serving the City cross municipal boundaries. Reliable bus operations for Watertown also relies on transit priority projects led by other jurisdictions, notably Boston and Cambridge.

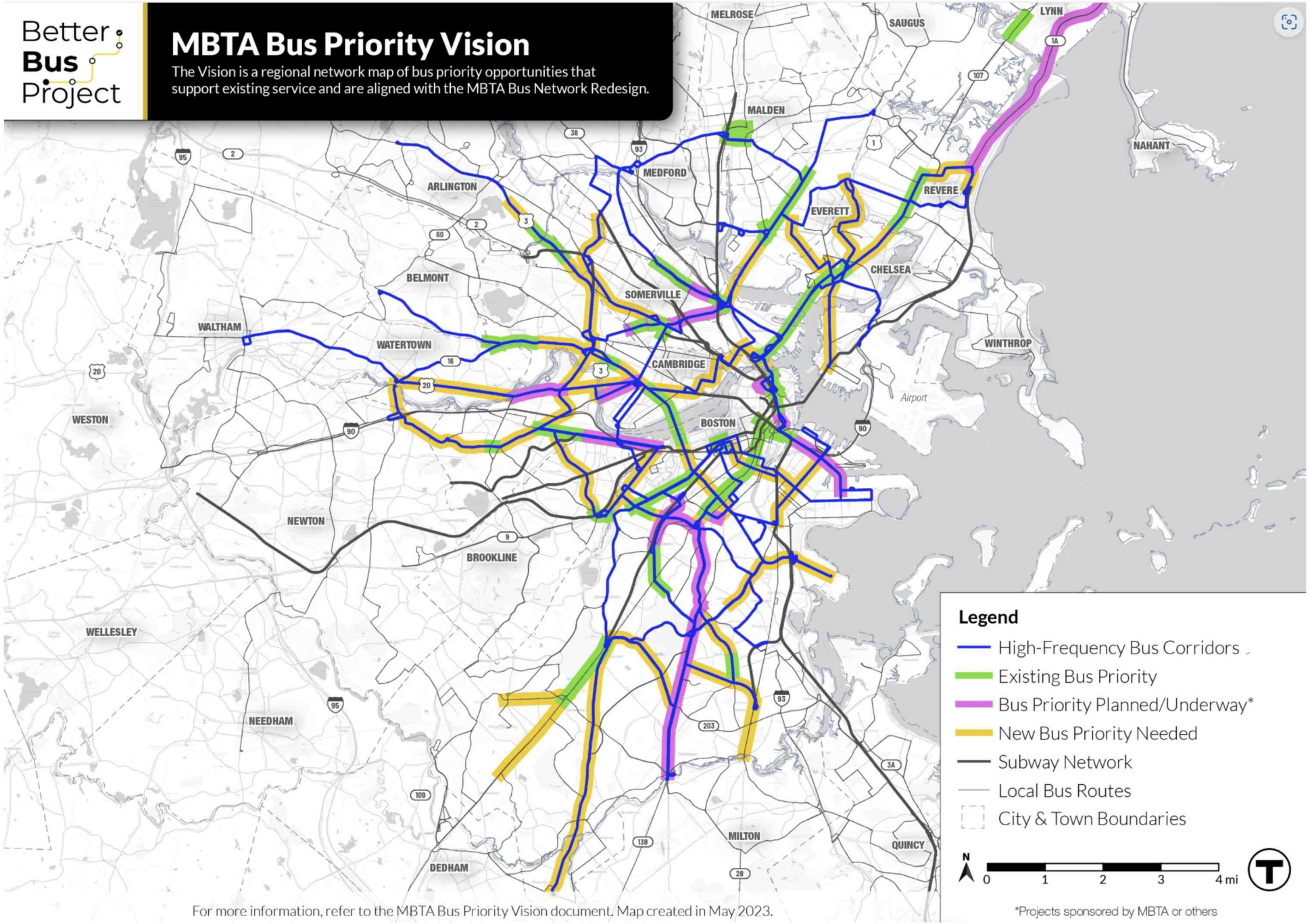
Recommendation: Watertown should support transit priority projects along streets served by Routes 57, 70, 71, and 73 outside its boundaries. Notable active or proposed projects in

- MBTA's Arsenal Street (Route 70) Study which Watertown is already collaborating with the MBTA on.
- Route 57 Transit Priority Corridor Study (City of Boston)
- Western Avenue Transitway (City of Boston)
- River Street Reconstruction (City of Cambridge)

The MBTA Bus Priority Vision identified several additional locations within Cambridge where the agency plans to pursue transit priority projects supporting Watertown-bound routes, including along Western Avenue, Mount Auburn Street, and through Harvard Square. Additional information about these corridors are included on the proceeding pages.

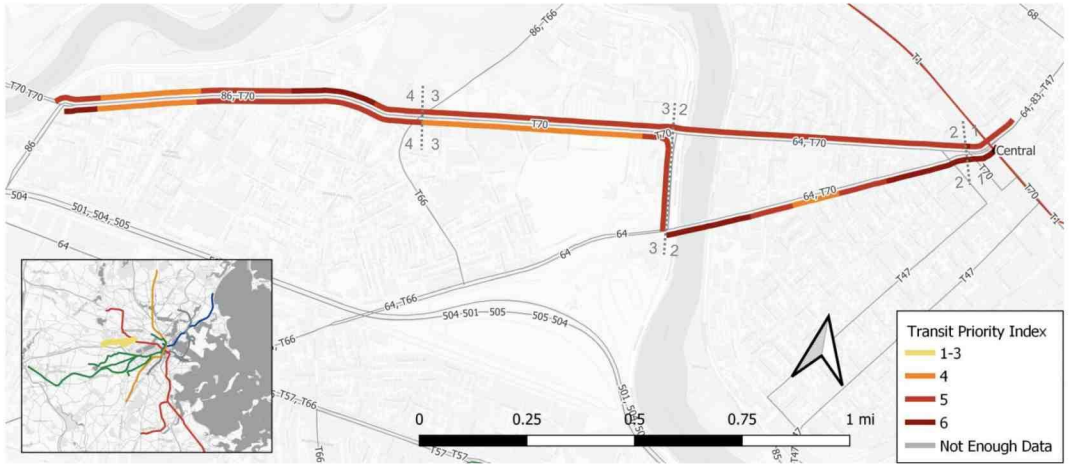
Implementation:

- Coordinate with Cambridge, Boston, and the MBTA to plan, identify funding, and program transit priority projects supporting Route 57, 70, 71, and 73.



For more information, refer to the MBTA Bus Priority Vision document. Map created in May 2023.

Central Sq to Arsenal St (via Western Ave)



Central Sq to Arsenal St (via Western Ave)– Service and Customer Attributes

	BNRD Routes	Length (miles)	Person-Hours of Delay	Bus-Hours of Delay	Service Volume (Bus Trips)				Percentage of Riders			Transit Critical?
					Peak Hour BNRD	Peak Hour Increase	All Day BNRD	All Day Increase	Minority	Low-Income	Zero-Auto	
Central Sq	64, 83, T47, T70	0.1	88	3	20	+6	309	+146	16%	16%	20%	52
Central Sq to Soldiers Field Rd	64, T70	0.7	357	11	11	+3	158	+70	16%	15%	20%	51
Soldiers Field Rd to Harvard St	T70	0.6	49	2	8	+3	114	+49	21%	20%	25%	66
Harvard St to Arsenal St	86, T70	0.8	252	8	11	+2	157	+46	14%	13%	18%	45

Central Sq to Arsenal St (via Western Ave) – Development Attributes

	Customer Activity (Boardings + Alightings)	New Commercial Development		New Residential Development		Residential Density (Units per Acre)		Number of New Developments by Size (Sq Ft)		
		Additional Sq Ft	Percent Growth	New Units	Percent Growth	Existing	Projected	Small < 20k	Medium 20k – 50k	Large > 50k
Central Sq	1,121	42k	3%	121	3%	41.7	43.1	0	3	0
Central Sq to Soldiers Field Rd	755	20k	2%	300	10%	19.4	21.4	0	1	0
Soldiers Field Rd to Harvard St	494	1,550k	45%	250	210%	0.5	1.5	1	0	3
Harvard St to Arsenal St	2,439	604k	20%	742	51%	3.4	5.2	0	8	2

Harvard Sq to Belmont St (via Mt Auburn St)

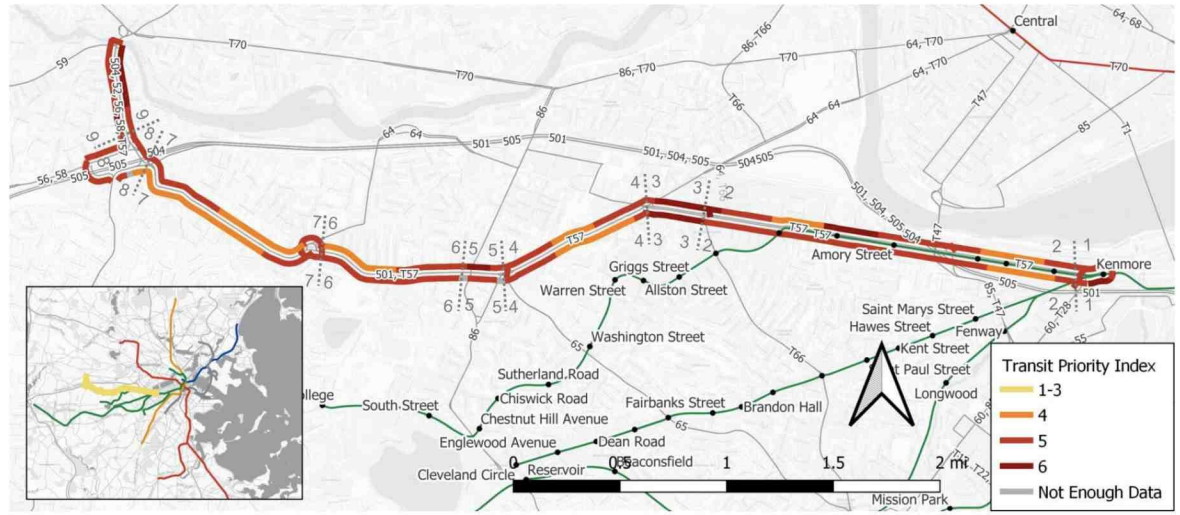
Harvard to Belmont St (via Mt Auburn St) – Service and Customer Attributes

	BNRD Routes	Length (miles)	Person-Hours of Delay	Bus-Hours of Delay	Service Volume (Bus Trips)				Percentage of Riders			Transit Critical?
					Peak Hour BNRD	Peak Hour Increase	All Day BNRD	All Day Increase	Minority	Low-Income	Zero-Auto	
Mt Auburn St	T71, T73	1.5	310	13	16	-2	228	+30	11%	12%	12%	35

Harvard Sq to Belmont St (via Mt Auburn St) – Development Attributes

	Customer Activity (Boardings + Alightings)	New Commercial Development		New Residential Development		Residential Density (Units per Acre)		Number of New Developments by Size (Sq Ft)		
		Additional Sq Ft	Percent Growth	New Units	Percent Growth	Existing	Projected	Small < 20k	Medium 20k – 50k	Large > 50k
Mt Auburn St	16,779	0	0%	0	0%	155.6	155.6	0	0	0

Kenmore to Watertown Sq



Kenmore to Watertown Sq – Service and Customer Attributes

	BNRD Routes	Length (miles)	Person-Hours of Delay	Bus-Hours of Delay	Service Volume (Bus Trips)				Percentage of Riders			Transit Critical?
					Peak Hour BNRD	Peak Hour Increase	All Day BNRD	All Day Increase	Minority	Low-Income	Zero-Auto	
Kenmore Station	60, T28, T57	0.1	133	14	18	-4	264	+18	29%	40%	24%	92
Kenmore Station to Harvard Ave	85, T47, T57	0.7	261	9	10	+1	136	-5	42%	28%	39%	109
Harvard Ave to Cambridge St	T57, T66	0.3	3,681	138	18	+2	253	+43	23%	22%	30%	75
Brighton Ave to Washington St	T57	0.7	51	3	10	-1	135	+15	35%	32%	40%	108
Washington St to Chesnut Hill Ave	65, 501, T57	0.2	44	3	17	+6	205	+85	37%	26%	34%	97
Chestnut Hill Ave to Oak Sq	501, T57	0.8	51	4	14	-1	161	0	24%	16%	22%	62
Oak Sq to Newton Corner	64, 501, T57	1.0	60.5	3.4	14	-1	162	+1	19%	13%	18%	50
Newton Corner Crossing Mass Pike	52, 56, 58, 501, 504, T57	0.2	265.0	19.2	22	+3	253	+55	10%	10%	10%	30
Newton Corner to Watertown St	56, 58, 504, T57	0.4	54.6	5.7	18	0	226	+30	15%	13%	14%	42

Kenmore to Watertown Sq – Development Attributes

	Customer Activity (Boardings + Alightings)	New Commercial Development		New Residential Development		Residential Density (Units per Acre)		Number of New Developments by Size (Sq Ft)		
		Additional Sq Ft	Percent Growth	New Units	Percent Growth	Existing	Projected	Small < 20k	Medium 20k – 50k	Large > 50k
Kenmore Station	19,098	1,541k	75%	400	21%	7.5	9.1	0	2	6
Kenmore Station to Harvard Ave	5,338	552k	17%	243	14%	6.0	6.9	0	1	2
Harvard Ave to Cambridge St	10,784	890k	78%	1,639	151%	10.4	26.1	0	5	2
Brighton Ave to Washington St	3,088	0	0%	71	5%	8.1	8.5	0	1	0
Washington St to Chestnut Hill Ave	899	14k	1%	83	6%	10.9	11.5	1	2	0
Chestnut Hill Ave to Oak Sq	4,406	33k	5%	65	3%	10.4	10.6	0	3	0
Oak Sq to Newton Corner	1,841	0	0%	0	0%	9.4	9.4	0	0	0
Newton Corner Crossing Mass Pike	2,635	0	0%	0	0%	2.9	2.9	0	0	0
Newton Corner to Watertown St	3,673	2k	0%	24	1%	11.8	11.9	0	1	0

Watertown Priorities for Regional Rail Modernization

Justification: Watertown is served by Worcester Line and Fitchburg Line commuter rail stations in Newton and Belmont. Rail service at these stations is limited and expensive, with mostly hourly off-peak service and fares starting at $6.50 each way. In the coming years, the MBTA Regional Rail Modernization Program will transition the commuter rail network to a "Regional Rail" operating model – with more frequent all-day service and electric trains.

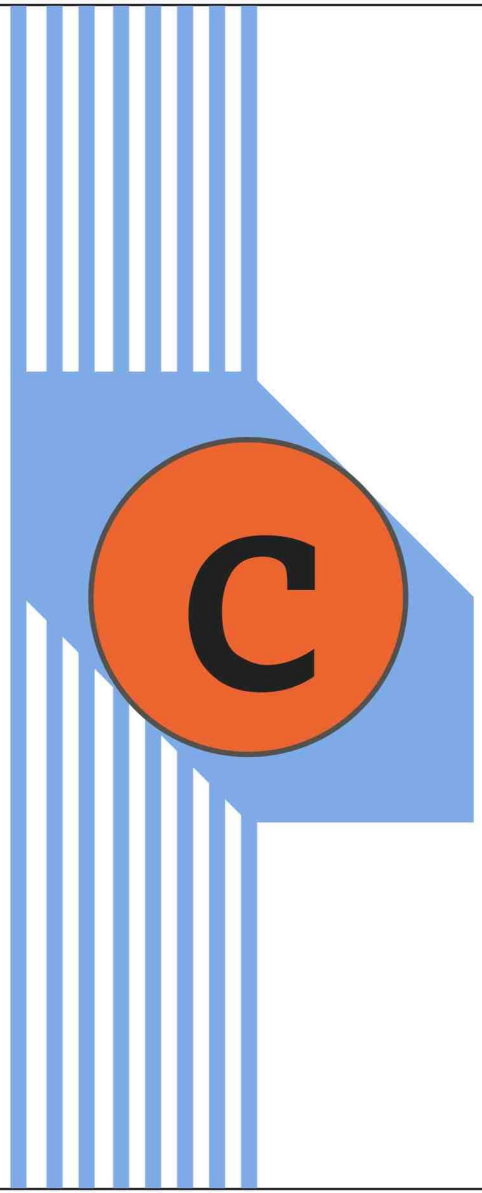
Regional Rail service has the potential to make transit a significantly more competitive option for travel to and from Watertown. However, this transition requires significant capital and operations investments – and thus will be implemented gradually.

Recommendation: Watertown should advocate for specific Regional Rail investments and strategies that optimize benefits for people traveling to and from the city. Priority projects and programs include:

- **Fare Policy:** Reduce inner core commuter rail fares to match subway fares and include free transfers (see project sheet for additional information).
- **Service Design:** Increase service frequency on both the Worcester and Fitchburg Lines to rapid transit levels, with a short-term goal of all day service every 30 minutes using existing equipment and a long-term goal of trips every 10 minutes as the MBTA transitions to an electrified rail fleet.
- **Capital Projects:**
    - Construct a new commuter rail station at Newton Corner, with direct vertical circulation to bus connections to and from Watertown
    - Complete bi-directional high-level platforms and other accessibility upgrades at Belmont Center, Waverley Square, Waltham, Newtonville, West Newton, Auburndale, and Back Bay Stations. Ensure that these stations incorporate features that streamline connections, including bicycle parking, bus stops with enhanced amenities, Bluebikes, and pick up/drop off space.
    - Advance capital projects that enable increased service at inner core Worcester Line and Fitchburg Line stations, such as signal upgrades, turnback tracks, and vehicle layover.

Implementation:

- Identify municipal and community partners interested in priority Regional Rail projects, such as Belmont, Newton, Watertown, Boston, and Cambridge.
- Advocate for recommended projects and programs via both direct outreach and official forums, such as the MBTA Advisory Board and MAPC, as well as through MassDOT and MBTA capital planning processes.

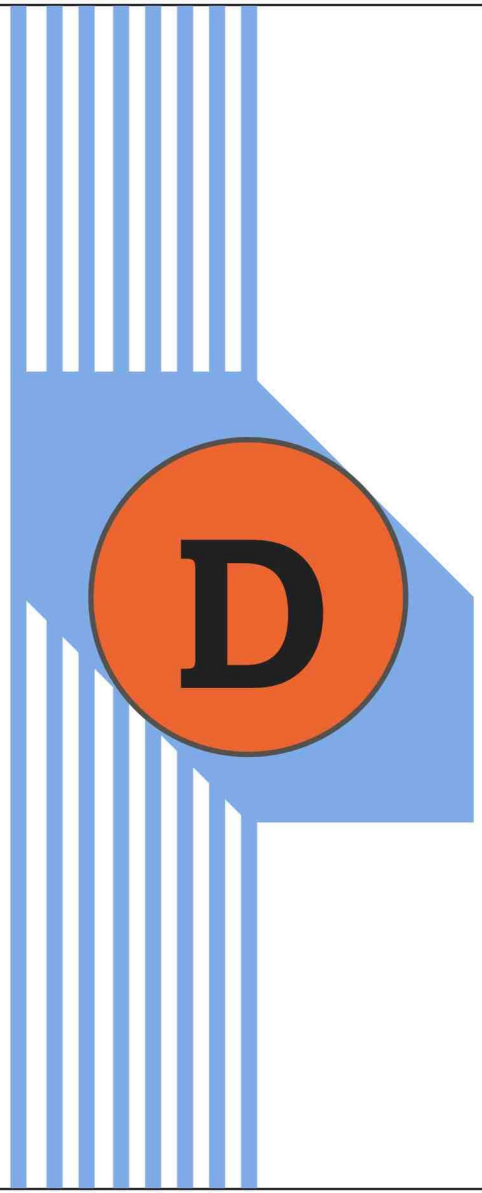


Appendix C:

Costs

Cost Sources:

	Cost		
Priority Project	Estimate	Details	
Expand A Local Transit Approach	$ $ $	$1-3.5 million per year*	Assumes an all-in annual cost if the City procured a private vendor to operate the service, who would typically provide the vehicles rather than requiring the City to purchase them directly. The project team developed example cost estimates based on the operational characteristics of the services outlined above. All estimates assume a total operating cost of $150 per hour – which is at the high end of privately-contracted van services in the Boston area. See Report p.42 for more info.
Become a Leader in Universal Access Design	$ $	$200,000 for guidelines $10-15 million per corridor mile	Guidelines: consultant opinion on cost to develop. Corridor investment: Low end based on MassDOT's State Aid Reimbursable Programs Estimating Tool (SARPET) tool for Common Ave as an example (~0.8 mi). Key assumptions include: upgrade all curbs, replace road signs, adjust drainage, new 8ft sidewalk, no signal replacements, resurfacing needed. This results in a cost estimate of ~$8M or about ~$10M/mi. Mt. Auburn Street cost estimate was about $18M/mi, but that included full-depth reconstruction which might not be needed on each corridor. (https://www.mass.gov/doc/rehabilitation-of-mount-auburn-street-report-to-the-board-on-january-17-2024/download)
Invest in Top Corridors by Use	$ $	$10-15 million per corridor mile	
Develop a Comprehensive Safety Approach	$	$250,000-$500,000 to establish reporting mechanism and plans	Consultant opinion on cost to develop dashboard, plan docs. Smaller cities in the northeast that recently received funding to develop safety action plans: City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts – Awarded $250,000 to develop a new Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. City of Schenectady, New York – Granted $250,000 to create a safety action plan targeting high-risk corridors. Auburn, ME - $250,000 to create a safety action plan. Additional funding would be needed to develop a Traffic Calming Program and/or Watertown-specific crash dashboard.
Pursue Local and Regional Efforts with Agency Partners	Varies	City staff time MBTA staff time Additional operations costs (fuel, driver, etc.)	Important to consider cost of T operations, e.g. fuel, driver, etc., charges with an extended mileage of the bus route.



Appendix D:

Stakeholder Summaries

Stantec

Watertown Study to Improve City-Supported Mobility: Stakeholder Interviews Summary

1. Introduction

The City of Watertown and the Stantec consultant team held a series of stakeholder interviews for the Study to Improve City-Supported Mobility on May 6th (2 interviews) May 8th (2 interviews), May 14th (1 interview), and June 9th (1 interview) for a total of six 1-hour interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to introduce the study, present data analysis, discuss potential projects, and generally receive feedback from a wide array of technical and community stakeholder groups across special focus areas.

While the specific data findings and related projects were adapted to be most relevant for each stakeholder group based on its topic area, these 3 key questions guided all six sessions:

1. What are the transportation/mobility needs of your constituents or members of your community that are not currently met well?
2. What transportation/mobility improvements have you seen work well in other communities that you think could work in Watertown?
3. What else could Watertown do to reach its established transportation goals?

The meeting formats varied from virtual to in-person/hybrid, and were structured as follows. The consultant team would introduce the study at a high level, then discuss the list of seven initial data analysis findings regarding transportation needs. Then, the consultant team would prompt a more in-depth discussion around potential projects that could meet the needs identified from a subset of the data findings. Stakeholders could guide the conversations by providing further information and discussing priorities.

Thematically, the six stakeholder interviews were as follows:

- Commercial/Business Group (split among 2 sessions)
- Active Transportation and Resilience
- Youth and Schools
- Accessibility
- Transit Riders and Advocacy

This document includes a summary of key takeaways from each interview session, more detailed meeting notes from each of the interviews, as well as a list of invitees for each (Appendix A).

2. Summary Takeaways from Stakeholder Interviews

2.1 Commercial/Business Group 1- May 6th, 2025

- There are existing transit opportunities to get to certain areas beyond Watertown, but intra-City transit is lacking.
- Additional Bluebike stations throughout Watertown, though specifically concentrated in several different commercial corridors (including surrounding areas like Newton Corner) would increase access to businesses.
- A Vision Zero Policy (or something like it) would be helpful to guide a targeted City-wide traffic calming intervention using primarily quick-build strategies.
- Existing City and WTMA shuttles are useful but are limited in their destination range, with most connecting to Harvard Square. The City should explore partnerships with other TMAs, and expansion of private-shuttle service to destinations within Watertown and neighboring communities.
- General support and excitement for the Watertown Sq Redesign.

2.2 Active Transportation and Resilience- May 6th, 2025

- There should be greater investment in bicycle infrastructure. Bike parking is lacking, gaps in the network exist (particularly on the Community Path and Main Street), and there is a need for year round maintenance (i.e. snow removal).
- The local topography suggests that north-south transit routes, specifically on Common Street, would be highly valuable for all users, but especially those with mobility challenges.
- The City should advocate for improved MBTA service, with particular emphasis on the Route 70's frequency and reliability.
- A Vision Zero Policy (or something like it) would be helpful to guide targeted City-wide safety improvements. A Vision Zero Plan was recommended in the City's Comprehensive Plan prior to this study as well.
- Traffic calming interventions using primarily quick-build strategies were identified as a priority. For low volume streets, sharrows alone are insufficient for bike users. A mix of other traffic calming techniques (chicanes, delineators, speed humps, and sharrows) would be more impactful.
- Improved Bluebike access in western and northern Watertown, Belmont, and Waltham should be prioritized.

2.3 Youth and Schools- May 8th, 2025

- Traffic calming measures to improve walking and biking safety along key corridors can improve safety for a variety of user groups. Targeted interventions like elevated crossings, rapid-rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs), and other low-cost interventions could help various user groups traverse major arterial roads in Watertown. There was also interest to

work locally with MassDOT's Safe Routes to School program to implement similar improvements.

- Few students take the bus to school in Watertown (the City operates 2 school buses), so most students are either dropped off by car, walking, or biking to school.
- Mobility hub areas with concentrated transportation amenities would be valuable near school zones and/or senior and low-income housing, particularly in West Watertown.
- North/South transit opportunities could benefit Watertown Housing Authority constituents, granting access to more destinations in adjacent communities.
- Though limited data is available on Watertown Public Schools' use of reduced fare passes or M7 passes from the MBTA, and Bluebikes, there is opportunities to better connect Watertown students with affordable, reliable, and efficient transportation options.
- Schools are a large employer in the City, and currently do not offer any transportation benefits beyond parking for staff.

2.4 Commercial/Business Group 2- May 14th, 2025

- There was broad support for a shared-fleet microtransit model. With the TMA already operating shuttles, there is a preference to improve upon or integrate existing transit instead of layering on a new service entirely.
- There are large events at the Gore Place such as the annual Sheep Shearing Festival.
- The City should develop an oversight committee for microtransit services, to optimize network coverage and minimize redundancies. Specific potential committee members were not identified.
- Expand eligibility for microtransit services. Stakeholders mentioned seeing many shuttles operating along their desired route, though they do not meet the criteria to ride.
- Existing non-MBTA transit services (WATConnector, other shuttles) have a bias towards rush-hour travel; optimized microtransit should provide all day service for non-commuting trips.

2.5 Accessibility- May 14th, 2025

- *Note: This session was held in-person at Perkins School for the Blind with a virtual option. Many stakeholders present were employed by or attend the school, and special accommodations were made to meet the needs of everyone present.*
- Stakeholders indicate a need for additional enforcement broadly by the City. Examples include ensuring cyclists obey traffic laws, cyclists do not use sidewalks, and handicap parking is not illegally used.
- Stakeholders expressed enthusiasm towards locally-controlled transit options.
- There are opportunities to create improved North-South connections via transit and walkable corridors could connect Perkins School for the Blind to the Greenway, Watertown Square, and other destination areas beyond.
- Consistency in streetscape design is very helpful for the low vision community, as it increases predictability throughout one's journey. Participants noted challenges with the City's tactical street improvements that leverage paint, which are not standardized and

hard to interpret for people with low vision. A Universal Design approach could help provide this needed consistency.

- A Vision Zero Policy or ADA sidewalk audit (that could include people with disabilities or from Perkins School for the Blind) would help ensure project improvements promote safety for all members of the community, especially for those with additional mobility challenges.
- Interest in leveraging emerging technologies, especially for local navigation, including the NaviLens system being piloted by the MBTA and the Polara PEDAPP. Participants also noted increasing usage of AI image analysis to read signs, including at bus stops.

2.6 Transit Riders and Advocacy

- There is interest in transit priority throughout Watertown's busiest corridors and improved amenities at bus stops, such as shelters, benches, and real-time information. Participants noted the Mt Auburn Street transit lane as something that is working well.
- The existing MBTA transit service faces challenges such as reduced service on Route 71 during off-peak hours, "ghost buses", bus bunching on weekends, and real-time information issues on the MBTA app.
- Stakeholders identified recent successes including reliable service on Route 73 and improved headways on Route 57 during rush hours.
- There is strong interest in improving north-south transit access, with suggestions to consider 1) Arlington Street in addition to 2) School Street, which connects directly to Belmont Center, and 3) Lexington Street, which serves a significant number of seniors, low-income, and disabled residents.
- There are gaps in existing transit service, including to major job and transportation hubs like Boston Landing and Waverley Square. The radial pattern of MBTA service results in major north-south gaps, causing frustration for those trying to reach surrounding communities like Belmont and Arlington, or just traveling north-south in Watertown. A Route 65 extension to Arsenal Street was supported by the stakeholders.
- City/WTMA-operated transit (WATConnector) should be better advertised and expanded for public access during off-peak hours and on weekends. Stakeholders expressed interest in exploring a microtransit shared-fleet model, which would incorporate services like the Senior Center shuttle.

3. Meeting Notes from Stakeholder Interviews

Date/Time: May 06, 2025 / 10:00 AM

Attendees: City: Zeke Mermell, ~~Gideon Schreiber, Steve Magoon~~

STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, Ralph DeNisco, Dan Berez, Adam Gendreau

Commercial/Business Group #1

- Matthew Stephens (Mount Auburn Cemetery President and CEO)
- Max Woolf (Charles River Chamber Public Policy Manager)
- Michelle Lower (Alexandria Real Estate)
- Ashley Molloy (Alexandria Real Estate)
- Cathy Buckingham (Alexandria Real Estate)
- Bob Airasian (Watertown Business Coalition, and Traffic Commission)
- Sophia Galimore (Watertown Transportation Management Association Executive Director)

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Finding (#1): Most trips that start in Watertown are short – On-demand transit would help out first mile-last mile trips from commuter rail stations, bus stops, etc. – Alexandria operates a private shuttle for Alexandria commuters to Kendall Square (not well utilized), a private shuttle to Back Bay (well utilized), and a public Harvard-Connector shuttle (part of the TMA), which is the highest ridership. Used to have a shuttle to Coolidge Square but got rid of it. – Seems to be gaps from Watertown Square to Harvard Square – Challenge to access Arsenal Yards from Mt. Auburn Street. Streets in between that area can be unsafe. Coolidge and Grove St Intersection has historically been considered an unsafe intersection, but has received recent improvements – Connectivity within Watertown is lacking (for example: Pleasant St to Arsenal Yards)- multiple stakeholders agreed. – A shuttle connecting commercial corridors would be helpful – General support and excitement for the Watertown Sq Redesign
Finding (#2): Growth of trips to Arsenal Yards and Boston Landing – Currently, Bluebikes are clustered along Arsenal Street, and there should be more access throughout Watertown. – Bluebikes wanted along Pleasant St corridor, north to the Commuter Rail stations – Generally identified a need for more stations throughout the City

Agenda Item

– City plans to add more stations in the coming months, and years
– Adding a commuter rail station at Newton Corner will be a major benefit for businesses, both for employees and visitors
– Persuade the T to extend bus Route 65 to travel along Arsenal St, providing more connections to Brighton Center and Roxbury
  o General support to extend the bus route
  o No direct rail access to Watertown is a major disadvantage. Even if there is a shuttle from station to Watertown Square

Finding (#3-4): N-S Connections (Transit and Bike)
– Mt Auburn Cemetery hears from Cambridge residents that they would spend more time in Watertown (especially Arsenal Yards) if there was better connectivity
– General support for traffic calming techniques
  o Curb extensions, RRFB, raised crosswalks
  o City has recently installed some road humps, 4-way stops, lighted crosswalks for traffic calming
  o Interested in setting a policy (like Vision Zero) that if a roadway meets a certain criteria, it is eligible for Traffic Calming interventions.
– N-S Transit corridors
  o Connections to other TMA shuttles up North would be impactful, instead of relying on the T. Would involve partnerships with other TMA orgs, and funding could be available
  ▪ For example, Lexpress travels across municipal boundaries
  ▪ Connections to Alewife shuttle helpful too

Other- Key Questions and Curiosities from Stakeholders: – Success of WATConnector – Impact of Bikeshare in communities like Cambridge – How do other municipalities create connections to Waverley Station- could Watertown Replicate?

Date/Time: May 08, 2025 / 11:00 AM

Attendees: City: Zeke Mermell, ~~Gideon Schreiber, Steve Magoon~~

STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, ~~Ralph DeNisco, Dan Berez~~, Adam Gendreau

Active Transportation and Resilience

- Shanta Keller (Member of Bike-Ped Committee)
- Jamie Burke (Chair of Bike-Ped Committee)
- Sheila Fay (Member of Bike-Ped Committee)
- Jenny Wang (Member of Bike-Ped Committee)
- Mia Kania (Resilient Watertown City Staff)
- Ernesta Kraczkiewicz (Transportation Committee of Watertown Faces Climate Change)
- Bruce Gellerman (Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee)

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Finding (#1): N-S Connectivity Issues (Transit) – Transit N-S service o Getting to the buses from the middle neighborhoods between Routes 71 and 73 is very challenging o Common St has a sizable hill, would be helpful to have transit service on that street o N-S connections should tie to destinations/municipal services like Watertown Sq, Arsenal Yards, Belmont, etc. o Lots of community input received about the Go Go Newton Program, not as accessible as NewMo ▪ Senior access to smartphones is limited, and app users express difficulties using the software – Existing transit services o Anything to improve Bus Route 70 (fare free, increased frequency during off hours/less crowding, etc.) ▪ Bus Rte 70 has 50% reliability ▪ Currently, bus 70 does not stop at Watertown Square ▪ Getting from the 70 up to 504 is challenging, but the 504 has great connections to Boston – Western Ave Corridor project is desirable due to its transit priority, but it will end right on the border of Watertown. Watertown should connect to that project – Having more options to get to downtown Boston (in addition to Boston Landing) – Microshuttles tend to be running for the commuting rush hour times
Finding (#1): N-S Connectivity Issues (Bike) – Traffic calming and protected bike lane facilities was identified as a key priority

Agenda Item

– Watertown should enact Vision Zero Policy
– Sidewalks in West Watertown exist, but are inadequate. Lacking ramps, narrow, degrading quality
– Connectivity of bike lanes is an issue. For example,
  o Bike lanes just end on Main St
  o Getting through Watertown Sq while on the community path
  o Small gaps exist. Getting between bicycle facilities especially around Watertown Sq is a challenge
– STN presented alternative bicycle facilities for Narrow/Low vol streets
  o Examples of super sharrow in Somerville- comments that several streets are not really “low volume” enough for that
  o Waverley and Common are straight streets, making it easy to go fast in a car.
  ▪ On narrow streets, sharrows are challenging because cars cannot pass a bike. There should be occasional shoulders/gaps where cars can pass bikes
– Dedicated bike signals with lead time is needed, along with signage.
  o Especially in areas without dedicated bike facilities, signage is important
– Identified a want for flashing pedestrian crossing signals, which light up for motorists and cyclists along the travel lane as a person is crossing the street.
– Walnut Street needs improved signalization and improved bike/ped facilities

Finding (#2): Most Trips that start in Watertown are Short
– Bluebikes Expansion
  o People go to Waltham and Belmont for non-commuting trips, and there is minimal Bluebike access in those areas and West Watertown
– Year-round bike maintenance
  o DCR does not plow in the winter, so maintaining city streets with bike facilities is important
– Bike parking is a major issue (either lacking or hard to find). In areas like: Coolidge Square and Watertown Square
  o Cambridge may be piloting a secure bike lock/storage facility
– Examples of quick build needs:
  o On Main St near Lexington and Waverley, the bike lane disappears
  o Main St near the schools- many kids going to Dunkin, and crossing midblock without any crosswalk or infrastructure
  o People turning from Mt Auburn onto Main St, very unsafe for peds
  o Community Path gaps (especially crossing Mt Auburn St)

Date/Time: May 08, 2025 / 2:00 PM

Attendees: City: Zeke Mermell, Gideon Schreiber, ~~Steve Magoon~~

STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, Ralph DeNisco~~, Dan Berez~~, Adam Gendreau

Youth and Schools

- Dede Galdston (Watertown Public Schools Superintendent)
- Roy Karp (Restorative Practices and Student Leader Development at WPS)
- Olivia Fields (Director of Resident Services for WHA)
- Erikson Ramos (Grants and Operations Manager at WPS, school bus system coordinator)
- Aida Quinonez-Flores (Social Services Resource Specialist at Wayside Youth)

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Context-Setting: How Youth/Schools/Tenants Use Transit Today – Watertown Housing Authority: o Trying to access grants or state benefits for transportation o Coordinating with the senior center shuttle – Watertown Public Schools o How many school buses? ▪ 2 yellow buses to elementary, 2 buses to middle, HS is under construction (currently have a temporary one) and they have 3 buses running. – Who uses the WPS School Buses? o Most students do not use the bus to get to school o Any students who live more than: ▪ 1.5 miles from the elementary schools ▪ Hosmer Elementary School is effectively the only elementary school needing busing ▪ 2 miles from Watertown Middle School ▪ Offer fee-based services to fill any gaps after radius eligibility (only serves around ~23 students) – Estimated Mode Share for School Dropoff o Elementary School ▪ 75% dropped off by parent in car ▪ 25% dropped off by parent by walking o Middle School and High School: ▪ 20% are bused ▪ 40% walk/carpool ▪ 40% drop-off – WPS Interactions with the MBTA?

- Reduced Fare Passes, and M7 passes (only ~10 students use M7), some students qualify for free MBTA passes. Schools distribute the passes themselves. City does not have further data
- *Special services*
  - Reduced-cost MBTA and Bluebike
  - Only a few people used youth passes for MBTA and Bluebikes
  - Zeke can get the reduced fare Bluebike data

Finding (#2): Most Trips that start in Watertown are Short

- Teachers do not have MBTA or Bluebike pass
- Mobility Hub feedback
  - Schools were supportive of adding a mobility hub
  - Bluebikes may not be needed *at* schools necessarily, but should be common knowledge where to get to them, and they should be close by
  - High School kids would be most inclined to use Bluebikes
  - Want students to use bikes more where possible when commuting to school
  - WHA would want a Charlie Card refilling-site at the mobility hub
- WHA constituents are mostly trying to make short trips, and are forced to stay close by for errands/medical needs due to mobility challenges
- Common destinations WHA constituents are trying to get to:
  - Veterans need to get to Roxbury and JP
  - Cambridge comes up for medical needs
  - Downtown Boston generally
  - Forced to go to Star Market and Stop and Shop, but would rather go to Market Basket in Waltham
- Rideshare is not a useful strategy for seniors- useful at times but cost-prohibitive
- Other challenge areas for seniors
  - Community Path crossing gap on Main St
  - Area in between Lexington/Waverley on Main St
  - Mt Auburn across from Hosmer School is wide. Crossing Mt Auburn St is a hazard.
- Superintendent is a big proponent of RRFB (flashing crosswalks)
- Traffic calming identified as a priority

Finding #3- Watertown has the density to support transit service as well as travel by other modes

- Fare loading Charlie Card would need to be accessed along these N-S routes
- N-S routes nearby housing developments would be very helpful
- Encouraging increased transit usage for WPS staff:
  - Over 1/3 of Watertown Public Schools staff live in Watertown (estimated)
  - Schools have parking shortages at schools for faculty
  - WPS can send a list of addresses for faculty, which we can geolocate on GIS
  - Schools (as a large employer) could get involved with local TMAs

Date/Time: May 14, 2025 / 10:00 AM

Attendees: City: Zeke Mermell, ~~Gideon Schreiber, Steve Magoon~~

STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, Ralph DeNisco, Dan Berez, Adam Gendreau

Commercial/Business Group #2

- Jeanne Trubek (co-chair of Watertown Environment And Energy Efficiency Committee)
- Gavin Kleespies (executive director of Gore Place Historic Estate, commutes from Cambridge, Cambridge Cultural District)
- Katie Sullivan (director of marketing for Boylston Properties- developer of Arsenal Yards)
- Fangxue Zheng (Resilient Watertown City Staff)
- Deb Peterson (Watertown Faces Climate Change, long-time resident,)
- Laurel Schwab (Resilient Watertown Manager / City Staff)
- Robyn Duffy (Property manager of Boylston Properties, was involved with Arsenal Yards)
- Mike Altobello (Treasurer of the WTMA)

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Finding (#1): Most trips that start in Watertown are short/N-S – Community-Focused Transit Service Models o Boylston Properties has connected with a microtransit company called Ride Circuit in the past o Bluebikes should be incorporated into transit – Shared Fleet model feedback o During rush hour, there are many ways to get to Harvard Square. There are many services operating that corridor, but eligibility can be prohibitive o Proposed an oversight committee to ensure microtransit routes are not redundant, and that other destinations are being accessed o Example: Crosstown Connect: serves communities in the Metro West area. TransACTION operates these shuttles o This program could be a partnership with other surrounding communities o A demand-based model seems more efficient and environmentally friendly o Hope that there are improvements to what already exists rather than just layer on another microtransit service o Current shuttles operate only at specific times, a pooled fleet would allow for more all-day service – Gore Place and other locations beyond the downtown core: o Microtransit app could coordinate to support a large-scale event at Gore Estate

○ Essentially pooling microtransit resources to serve an event
Other- Key Questions and Curiosities from Stakeholders: – *Question: can we break the data down further among user groups (what types of people are coming from certain areas?*

Date/Time: May 14, 2025 / 2:00 PM

Attendees: City: Zeke Mermell, Gideon Schreiber, ~~Steve Magoon~~

STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, Ralph DeNisco, Dan Berez, Adam Gendreau

Accessibility Group

- Kim Charlson (Perkins Library Director/Commission on Disabilities Chair)
- Brian Charlson (Retired Program Director of the Carrol Center)
- Caroline Karbowski (Orientation and Mobility Instructor)
- Beth White (Watertown Resident)
- David Morrison (volunteer at Perkins School)
- Naomi Ridge (COD Member)
- Carol Menton (member of the COD, Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
- Sharon Schumack- treasurer of Watertown for All Ages
- Bob Shay- Chair of Watertown for All Ages

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Finding (#1): Most trips that start in Watertown are short – Items missing from the list o Enforcement of bike travelers on the sidewalk, ignoring signals, etc. o Enforcement of illegal parking in handicap parking – Particular safety concerns o Bike lanes on Arsenal Street between transit and sidewalks that are sidewalk-level, which does not provide a elevated separation for low-vision individuals between sidewalks, bike lanes, and bus stops o Many audible crosswalk signals in town break o Disabled community feels forced to use paratransit more as walking becomes less safe – Streets in Need of Traffic Calming: o Arsenal St o Warren St between Lexington and the Cunniff School ▪ Excessively wide, but no crossings. Especially near the school. The curve in the road near Chapman Street is particularly unsafe for crossing o Watertown Square • Overlapping audible warnings can confuse which streets can be crossed • Crossing Galen St traveling east in Watertown Sq – What are best-practice intersection features that work well or poorly? – Angled crosswalks are much less safe than perpendicular crossings.

- A best-practice example: raised crosswalks like they have on Waverley Ave near the middle school are liked by this stakeholder group

Finding #2: Watertown Square has much better regional transit access than the rest of Watertown

- Identified “Transit Deserts”
  - Pleasant St
  - Lexington St up to Belmont
  - Between Charles River Rd and Arsenal St
- The RIDE (MBTA)’s perception:
- The Ride (MBTA) is not “On Call” (ride much be requested by 5 pm the day before and it is a shared service)
- Ride Flex doesn’t work for wheelchair users
- Micro-transit opportunities
- Group seems generally really supportive of microtransit
- People wish there was improved access to commuter rail stations

- **Other considerations**
  - Weather dependencies
    - Flooding often pools around walk signals
    - Snow clearance in the winter
  - ADA Audit considerations
    - Cracks and trees make sidewalks **and the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway** inaccessible
    - Key corridors
      - Connections from Perkins to the Greenway
  - Informing people about programs who may not be knowledgeable about existing transportation programs
  - Questions about data access:
    - People were curious about ridership on WATConnector, Senior Shuttle, The RIDE, etc.
  - **Could the senior shuttle be expanded to include all people with disabilities?**
  - Too many bus stops on Arsenal St
  - Not much confidence in the MBTA- getting accessibility-related changes takes a while. Attendees seemed more confident in local options
  - General interest in Salem Skipper- they felt that it could be best aligned with their needs
    - Dan to pass along O’Donoghue report on western MA micro-transit

Date/Time:	June 9, 2025 / 3:00 PM
Attendees:	City: Zeke Mermell, Gideon Schreiber, ~~Steve Magoon~~ STN team: Liza Cohen, ~~Erin Cameron~~, Ralph DeNisco, Dan Berez, Adam Gendreau Transit Riders and Accessibility Group • Mark Peterson (Watertown TMA's appointed advocate for residents) • Lynne O'Connell (57 bus rider) • Jason Cohen (Planning Board member) • Ben Jerome (racial equity advocate) • Josh Rosmarin (Housing for All Watertown) • Lise Paul (WFCC) • Kat Torres (MBTA Riders Transportation Access Group (RTAG) • Tom Gilbert (RTAG) • Susan Backstrom (RTAG) • Jonathan Rosenthal (Shuttle rider who works or lives along Pleasant St corridor) • Macy Radloff (Shuttle rider who works or lives along Pleasant St corridor) • Joe Levendusky (Watertown Transportation Task Force)

Agenda Item
Project Overview – STN presented overview slides to introduce project
Specific Concerns at Specific Locations • Specific concerns raised by stakeholders: o Bus stop across from the Perkins School for the blind is unsafe due to bike lane o Transition between the Community Path and bike lane is unsafe o E-Bike usage on sidewalks was flagged as a safety issue o Walnut Street intersection
Existing MBTA Transit Service: Challenges: – Bus Route 71 reduced service during off-peak hours, particularly after 8 PM. Instances of "ghost buses" reported where a bus is said to be arriving but never shows up – Bus bunching on the weekend (when there are 20-minute headways) is an issue, with buses not coming for 30+ mins – MBTA app is not updating in real time- people find that the timing information is off Successes: – Bus Route 73 does not seem to have significant slow downs – Route 57 recently has once-reduced headways returned to their previous rate during rush hours via Watertown advocating with the T to adjust their service- now considered to be "good quality service"
Gaps in Existing Transit Service:

- Arsenal Street up to the Watertown Mall
- Kendall Square to Arsenal Yards connection
  - Need a bus to Boston Landing and Waverley areas (2 job major job hubs)
  - Commuter Rail has higher reliability than buses- people should be bused to commuter rail stations
- Radial pattern of MBTA service means that between the routes, there are major N-S gaps
- General frustration over not being able to get to surrounding communities like Belmont and Arlington

Transit Priority/ Transit Improvements in the City's Control

- The transit priority infrastructure on Mount Auburn is generally considered a success
  - Stakeholders are interested in having a similar discussion to this one once Mt. Auburn street improvements are complete
- Areas with possible bus stop consolidation
  - General confusion on if bus routes will be doing the full loop in Watertown Square Area
- Improved amenities are wanted at bus stops
  - More aligned with T station amenities: nicer shelters, real-time information, etc.
  - All bus stops should have shelters and benches

N-S Transit Access

- Add/consider Arlington Street as a potential N-S corridor
- Interest in transit connections to Brighton
  - General group support for a Route 65 Extension (Brighton Center-Ruggles Station)
- Choosing a potential N-S corridor:
  - School Street has a direct connection to Belmont Center
  - Should look into what corridor has the highest volumes, school buses, topography
  - A zoomed-in version of the transit propensity map would be useful in street selection exercise
  - Lexington Street has a large amount of housing for seniors, lower income, disabled members
- Headways have to be tight on all routes to ensure reasonable wait-times when transferring at places like Watertown Square

Microtransit/City-Operated Services

- People generally want more communication about the WATConnector
- Only the Pleasant St Shuttle is open to the public
- Short shuttles on the weekends to Arsenal Yards (for recreational/shopping trips)
- The Ride Flex is the best local example of using Uber/Lyft technology to expand mobility for specific groups at a predictable cost
  - Downside is that the cost is high, and cannot decrease as ridership increases (unlike transit)
- Shared Fleet Model Feedback
  - Interested in understanding the feasibility of microtransit (i.e. what would buying a fleet look like)
- Senior Shuttle should be enhanced- opportunity to upgrade it and incorporate it into the shared fleet given its size.

Future Development and Transit Viability, Other Projects

- Stakeholders interested in hearing about development incentives for promoting transit over vehicle use
  - Reducing parking minimums, promoting development along transit
- Wayfinding signage for parking in Watertown Square should be improved
- Watertown Square Area Plan
  - Interest in relocating Route 71 to the Watertown Yard area across the river- City is already considering

CITY OF WATERTOWN
Community Development and Planning
PLANNING OFFICE

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To: Watertown City Council
From: Zeke Mermell, Senior Transportation Planner; Gideon Schreiber, Director of Planning & Zoning; Steve Magoon, Assistant City Manager for Community Development & Planning
Date: October 21, 2025
Re: Transportation Network Companies Funds: Calendar Year 2024 Disbursement

The City of Watertown receives funds from the State's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Lyft and Uber. Municipalities get half of a $0.20 assessment for all TNC rides starting in their boundaries. For calendar year 2024 we received **$59,526.50**.

TNCs are a growing segment of Watertown's and the overall region's transportation modeshare. From January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, there were 595,265 TNC rides *starting* in Watertown, whereas in calendar year 2023 there were 556,964. This represents noteworthy growth over time. According to DPU, these funds must be used "*to address the impact of transportation network services on municipal roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure or any other public purpose substantially related to the operation of transportation network services in the city or town including, but not limited to, the complete streets program… and other programs that support alternative modes of transportation*."

Watertown's funds from past years were allocated to support, including local matches for, the Watertown Connector (WATConnector) electric shuttle on Pleasant Street and Watertown's local bikeshare network of Bluebikes.

We propose utilizing the $59,526.50 in funds to pay for operational costs of the Pleasant Street Watertown Connector shuttle. This will help pay for the costs to charge, drive, and maintain our fleet of two electric vans and a backup van. In turn, this will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and single-occupancy vehicle driving, in line with our City's goals. Recent efforts such as the Study to Improve City-Supported Mobility have identified the WATConnector as a key component of a local convenient, affordable and environmentally-friendly transportation system that we will build upon in coming years.