Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS
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CHELSEA THOMSON
JENNY WANG

MEETING MINUTES

The **Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee met in person with Zoom (remote) participation on Monday April 6, 2026, at 7:30 pm.** Present: Jamie, Shanta, Eileen, Maria, Adrian, Hannah, Jenny, Becky, Chelsea; Zeke Mermell (staff); visitors: Sheila Fay.

A. Acceptance of minutes of February 2, 2026 and March 3, 2026 meetings, moved and passed.

B. Updates on snow removal/ordinance/operations letter to City Council: Jamie confirmed that following the Committee input provided, the letter to City Council is ready to send and is signed on behalf of the Committee. Zeke will send the letter and copy Jamie. For scheduling a meeting, Public Engagement Specialist Tyler Cote is planning an enhanced meeting to thoroughly discuss, beyond a basic meet-and-greet format.

C. Subcommittees' updates/discussions

i. **Live Well Watertown:** April 14 Getting Started Biking event: Jamie to attend, will bring Watertown Bike Map. Some bikes will be on hand for demonstration, it is not necessarily e-bike focused. Zeke requested Committee members to help spread the word with flyers to increase the event signups. Members can also attend.

ii. **Pedestrian signals & safety:** Adrian compiled discussion topics, organized into themes: crash analysis and Vision Zero commitment, signal operations and pedestrian phasing, parking violations for blocking sidewalks particularly during winter parking ban (the enforcement gap between code enforcement and police). It may be preferable to split these topics into two meetings, given the scope of topics to cover. The next step is for Sgt. Sampson (Traffic Division WPD) to attend a Committee meeting. Preferably May, but June or July could also work. Committee discussed inviting Tyler Glode DPW City Engineer, or his designee, for the signal phasing technical discussion.

iii. **Arlington/Nichols/Greenway Intersection:** DPW had confirmed/communicated that implementation of two-way painted bicycle crosswalk (connecting the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway through the intersection) will take place in Spring 2026. Winter construction embargo is expected to end mid-April, as road markings require specific temperature thresholds. Zeke will follow up with DPW on implementation timeline of changes that DPW discussed last year following

Committee request. DPW also communicated that implementation includes detectible pedestrian warning panels at the curb at two corners of the intersection.

D. **Watertown Study to Improve City-Supported Mobility: presentation from Zeke Mermell:** Zeke presented an overview on the City-Supported Mobility Study as part of his work as the City's Senior Transportation Planner. The draft report was completed by consultant team led by Stantec. The study report document features five main strategy buckets: local transit, universal access, corridor themes, Vision Zero safety, and regional partnerships. Key findings include a high share of residents driving alone (61%), despite density that is similar to peer municipalities with higher transit usage and lower driving alone rates, indicating unmet demand/opportunity for multimodal travel.

   Among the study recommendations are: expansion of the Watertown Connector to feature Pleasant Street and Arsenal Street routes as a unified publicly accessible system, an extension of the MBTA 65 bus to Arsenal Street for a direct connection to the Longwood Medical Area, reducing inner core commuter rail fares, and tying into the MassDOT Newton Corner Improvements Project. Next steps for finalizing the study include City Council committee review, and then a full City Council endorsement.

   i. **Feedback for WEC3 on Mt. Auburn Street:** A reminder that the MassDOT project is already underway with implementation, there is limited scope for recommending changes. Focus could be on intersection improvements rather than major infrastructure changes. The Committee can provide minor design feedback through Deborah Peterson, who spoke at the previous meeting on this topic to solicit Committee feedback. Next steps: members to send comments and feedback to Jamie by next meeting, referencing the latest PS&E plans from www.MountAuburnStreet.com

E. **Committee staffing at upcoming events:**

   i. **Yard Art bike ride:** This event is not happening in 2026, so no volunteers are needed.

   ii. **Bike to Work Day: May 7, 2026:** City of Boston Transportation Department is looking for ride leaders in Watertown and Newton. Watertown meeting point is at 7:00 AM at the California Street pedestrian bridge on California Street.

   iii. **EcoFest: May 9, 11am-2pm:** Volunteers for tabling - Jamie to send an email with details to solicit volunteers.

   iv. **Get Out Your Bike: May 17, 10am-12pm:** Jamie to send an email with details to solicit volunteers.

F. **Quick reminder for feedback on rules and regulations document:** Reminder to send Jamie comments. While there is not an urgent deadline, and are waiting on Council to approve other change to committees, it is preferable to get ahead on finalizing.

G. **Member items/New business**

   i. **Watertown Square Project – Future Meeting Topic:** request to hear updates and follow up on Watertown Square Project in future meeting

   ii. **Community Path Project – Future Meeting Topic:** Shanta requested updates on the Community Path project as a future meeting topic. Noted the nexus with Watertown Square Demonstration Project graphics that display the Community Path crossing Mount Auburn Street, and inquired which project or process will be improving that crossing (whether it is the Watertown Square Project, or the

MassDOT Mount Auburn Street project) and connection to the Community Path along Arsenal Street.

iii. **Hosmer School Bike Bus:** Zeke shared an update that the Committee received an email about residents starting a bike bus from the south side of the City up toward the Hosmer School. The person emailing was interested in Committee feedback and whether there was any interest in joining.

H. UPCOMING EVENTS:

i. 4/14/26, 6:00-7:30pm: Getting Started Biking event with Watertown TMA, MassBike & others; at Watertown Free Public Library. Sign up at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050C49A4AD23A3FB6-63170445-getstarted#/
ii. 5/4/26, 7:30pm: Next Watertown Bike-Ped Committee Meeting
iii. 4/6/26, 6:00pm: Watertown Square Implementation Update at Watertown Free Public Library
iv. 5/7/26, Bike to Work Day: join the group ride route in Watertown/Newton/Needham (starts in Needham at 6:15am; at California St Charles River Footbridge at 7am); and the festival at Boston City Hall Plaza at 7:30-9:30am. More info at https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-bikes/bike-work-day
v. 5/9/26, 11am-2pm: EcoFest, at Commanders Mansion- https://www.watertownecofest.com/
vi. 5/16/26, 10am-Noon: Annual Get Out Your Bike Event, Watertown Square in plaza in front of riverfront dock

I. **Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn, moved & passed.