



Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee

City of Watertown
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

JAMIE BURKE, CHAIR
EILEEN BOTTI
ADRIAN HAUCK
SHANTA KELLER
BECKY LIN
HANNAH RAKOFF
MARIA SAIZ
CHELSEA THOMSON
JENNY WANG

MEETING MINUTES

The **Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee met in person with Zoom (remote) participation on Monday June 1, 2026, at 7:30 pm.** Present: Jamie, Shanta, Eileen, Becky, Chelsea, Maria, Jenny & Adrian; Zeke Mermell & Michelle Moon (staff); Visitors: Cal, Ian Sexton, 2 visitors on Zoom: Donald MacDonald & 1 other person. Absent: Hannah.

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

B. **Acceptance of minutes of May 4, 2026 meeting, moved and passed.** Chelsea made a motion to accept the minutes, Shanta seconded the motion.

C. **Discussion on roadway safety/enforcement with Sergeant David Sampson of Watertown Police Department Traffic Division.** This agenda item will be covered in the July meeting instead.

D. **Discuss and decide on potential collaboration items with Michelle Moon (Open Space Senior Planner).** Michelle discussed the Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is required by municipalities, and highlighted several the action items and objectives from the plan that relate the most to the Bike Ped Committee for discussion and potential collaboration. Other departments in collaboration with Michelle included the Recreation, Planning, and Sustainability departments. Items discussed included:

- i. Objective 1.C. Support the development of safe and accessible multimodal connections between local and regional open space and recreation
 - i. Item 6: Wayfinding Signage expansion with DCR: Maria suggested creating an inventory of the bike parking facilities to note racks/facilities that are outdated. Noted extra distance between racks needed for cargo bikes, which are increasing in usage.
- ii. Objective 2.A. Maintain and expand recreational use of and around the Charles River.
 - i. Item 1: Continue working with DCR on recommendations for Charles River Basin Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Study, with a focus on locations such as: Arsenal St., 580 Pleasant Street near Blue Heron Bridge, Former GSA site when opened. Discussions focused on the connections across

Arsenal St, noting the need for the bike path to be separate from walking paths. Wayfinding for all areas mentioned, and especially Arsenal St: Maria noted the need for wayfinding signs indicating best places to cross streets to access Charles River (i.e. Arsenal St). For example, for corridors connecting east west between the Eliot Bridge area and Galen St. especially. Additionally, this need was noted from Belmont St to the Mass Central Rail Trail. It was pointed out that this connection is challenging to access and that attendees at “Get Out Your Bike” also provided this feedback. The Belmont St. section of Watertown toward the trail entrance would be useful to improve signage for.

- iii. Objective 4.B. Raise public awareness about open space and recreation sources in Watertown.
 - i. Item 3: Jamie noted the need for safety promotion materials. Noted some older Mass Bike materials that could be revised or repurposed, but due to the date produced, they might not reference the new 4-foot passing law.

E. Subcommittee updates:

- i. **LiveWell Watertown / Watertown TMA- recap of Get Out Your Bike event; and discussing the last event of the series, a guided bicycle ride on June 16, 2026. Potential farmer's market tabling date.**
 - i. The event generated a lot of interest - Jamie and Adrian attended and noted that many attendees had feedback and that it would be good to formalize a way to let attendees submit feedback formally in the future. Zeke and Jamie will check with 311 to determine a preferred feedback process. Zeke also receives access to transportation complaints submitted to SeeClickFix. The Committee could also make a flyer advertising the best way to suggest feedback be submitted (for use at future events).
 - ii. Guided Ride Event planned for 6/16/26, Tues at 10am
 - iii. Farmer's market tabling – Jamie is following up to find out best time to table, ideally when bike repair is set up. Discussed activity to engage tabling participants (i.e. last year the Arlington/Nichols greenway crossing survey). Suggestion for the BLTS (bike level of traffic stress) map to encourage discussion on user experience of various bike-ped facilities in town (note that it may need to be updated slightly based on new facilities implemented since, such as Arsenal St east of School St, and Coolidge Ave).
- ii. **Arlington-Nichols-Greenway intersection - updates on upcoming steps that DPW is implementing**
 - i. Zeke noted that implementation of striping would be likely for August, per confirmation from DPW. It is on DPW's list currently, and coordination is underway. Discussed the need to confirm whether DPW is still updating the signal timing to extend the pedestrian phase as previously committed to. A visitor at the meeting who lives around the corner from the intersection also

requested an update on the signal timing aspect and noted that they cross diagonally with their children and have had near misses with vehicles almost hitting them due to lack of crossing time. They suggested they will also report on 311 and/or SeeClickFix.

F. Member item from Maria: entrance to Mass Central Rail Trail on Beaver Street

- i. Maria discussed the need for wayfinding to access the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) on Beaver St. Noted the entrance is unsafe on Beaver St. (this is located 1/4 mile from the Watertown city line). No wayfinding signs currently indicate the trail location. Commuter rail line goes through Beaver St and there is a dip in the road. The path entrance opens up in the lowest part of the dip. Maria suggests Committee send a letter to DCR requesting that they work with Waltham to improve this. Noted it is located in Representative Lawn's district. Entrance also often has sand located at the entry point. Shanta suggests emailing a question to DCR to ask if there is a plan to address this/approve safety first. Then, as a second step or if no response, Committee to send a letter. Jamie offers to send the question to DCR (cc John/Will?). Maria made a motion to ask Jamie to address it, Shanta seconded the motion. Everyone present voted in favor except Becky virtually. Michelle noted that the general Parks Department email address will respond too.

G. Member item from Shanta: bike racks for Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) event

- i. A ribbon cutting is planned for MCRT (Mass Central Rail Trail) section in Sudbury (from Sudbury to Hudson). This is on June 23, a Tues 11am or so (details to be provided). Shanta requested to provide the Committee bike racks at the event (he would transport them). Shanta to send info about the opening event.

H. Inquiry from resident on Cottage Street

- i. Discussed the greenway crossing location noted in email to the Committee. The greenway crossing is at-grade. Per request of resident, inquiry/complaint was also sent to the bike ped committee. This is currently being looked at as a City staff action item. More updates to follow, related to the design options. This location is DCR right-of-way (ROW), but Watertown is coordinating and working on design changes within areas of City ROW within their control.

I. Snow removal letter and meeting- updates

- i. Zeke provided an update that the Committee will receive an invite from Tyler Cote, Public Engagement Director with City Leadership regarding a debrief about the snow removal process and complaints from the past winter. They will be taking comments and input, and will include Planning, Public Works, and other departments, in an in person evening meeting. In addition to the Bike Ped Committee, the Commission on Disability will attend. One representative to attend per committee (not a public facing event), and the event is expected to be held at end of June (before next BPC mtg). Letter to council is a good blueprint for discussion. Committee to send one designee.

Motion for Jamie to attend (Jenny, Shanta seconded). Everyone in favor, Becky abstained.

J. Discuss possible City Council presentation in Autumn 2026

- i. Jamie noted the need for planning ahead for a fall presentation, this can be a shorter presentation (5 min update or so). Jenny to help facilitate creating/delivering presentation. Targeting November/December timeline.

K. Member items/New business

- i. Joe from the Hosmer School bike bus organizing effort reached out after the last meeting. Interested in expanding in the fall, if Bike-Ped Committee can help promote/expand to other schools. Offered to attend a future meeting.
- ii. Watertown Square Demonstration Project. Discussion on when it will be time for the Committee to weigh in? Zeke noted project website: watertownsquareimprovements.com. Zeke to provide an update to the Committee when there is an opportunity to weigh in.
- iii. Two Watertown residents in attendance (Cal and Ian) raised safety concerns regarding the MassDOT contractor, Newport and its Mount Auburn Street construction methods and phasing. They both travel with children frequently throughout the project area to access parks (such as Sullivan Playground and Filippello Park), and have reported safety concerns with storage of piles of granite curbs, inaccessible crossings, and other hazards noted. They emphasized that a pile of granite curbs were stored in front of Sullivan Park throughout the past year, and children are often tempted to climb on the unstable pile and onto other construction materials since it is not cordoned off. They also highlighted the safety hazards of the lack of pedestrian access along long extents of fully excavated sidewalks, and that it has been very unsafe to cross near CVS (corner of Mount Auburn St and Arlington St). Zeke to coordinate with them and connect them with further channels to raise the safety concerns with.

L. Adjournment

M. UPCOMING EVENTS:

- i. **6/16/2026: Guided bicycle ride with Watertown TMA and LWW**
- ii. **7/13/26: Next Watertown Bike-Ped Committee Meeting**

N. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn, moved & passed. Jenny, Maria seconded.