The Committee convened at 5:30 pm on Wednesday June 27, 2018 in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chambers. Present were Public Works members Vincent Piccirilli, chair; Anthony Palomba, vice chair; Kenneth Woodland, secretary. Also present were Councilor Lisa Feltner, staff from the Department of Public Works, Department of Community Development and Planning, and WorldTech; as well as members of the public (see Attachment A sign-in sheet).

The purpose of the meeting was to make a recommendation to the Town Council on moving forward with the 25% Design for the Mt Auburn St Reconstruction Project.

WorldTech Engineering, the Town’s consultant for the Mt. Auburn project, presented a general overview of recent updates to the conceptual design and described the community involvement in those updates (see Attachment B). Additional aspects of the conceptual plan were presented in more detail and broken down into four separate sections for review (see slides 10-16 of Attachment B).

The presentation was being made this evening to receive an endorsement of the updated concept in order to advance to the 25% preliminary design phase with MassDOT and keep to the current projected timeline (see slides 4-5 of Attachment B). It was noted that the design would need to be submitted this December, after 6 months of design work, in order to not delay the project or risk project funding from the State.

It was noted that some details such as where bus stops, benches, lights, crosswalks etc. will specifically be located is not yet determined but will be part of this next step of the process. Additionally, such decisions will be monitored by the State and as the project moves forward there will be additional public input and Council review. However, the general concept design will stay the same. Councilor Piccirilli then read the legislative action and community meeting history on this project (see Attachment C).

Councilor Woodland made a motion, seconded by Councilor Palomba for discussion purposes only, that the full Town Council authorize the Administration to proceed and submit to MassDOT a design for the Mt Auburn St Reconstruction Project that is based on the conceptual design developed to date with input from the public since 2013, that is consistent with MassDOT Complete Streets Planning Guidelines, and is consistent with the goals of the Watertown Comprehensive Plan to revitalize Coolidge Square.

The motion passed 2-0 with Councilor Palomba voting present.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm. Report prepared by Kenneth Woodland.

**Note:** Subsequent to the meeting, Councilor Palomba requested that the letter sent by Deborah Peterson to the Committee be attached to the Committee report.

Attachment A: Sign-In Sheet
Attachment B: WorldTech Presentation
Attachment C: Background Sheet provided by Councilor Piccirilli
Attachment D: Letter sent to the Committee by Deborah Peterson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Street or Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Stecker</td>
<td>30 Lawrence St #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristopher Sutte</td>
<td>World Tech Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Metz</td>
<td>World Tech Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Portrait</td>
<td>World Tech Engineering</td>
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<td>My H Shumon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Farrell</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Mee</td>
<td>RVA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dennis Sheehan</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rich Benevento</td>
<td>DPW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Mee</td>
<td>World Tech</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gideon Schreiber</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy Conponig</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary Kudth</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Feltner</td>
<td>DPW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlie Breidrose</td>
<td>DPW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eloisa Thomas</td>
<td>Watertown News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brice Collins</td>
<td>Marion Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>23 Dexter Ave Apt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Keighoff</td>
<td>275 Main St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>13 Bay St</td>
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</tbody>
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Mount Auburn Street
A Complete Streets Project

Public Works Committee Meeting
June 27, 2018
Agenda

- How We Got Here...
- Purpose of Meeting – *Why are we here?*
- Public Outreach Summary
- Interagency Coordination
- General Overview of Updates
- Recommended Plan by Segment
- Next Steps – *Where do we go from here?*
- Questions
How We Got Here...

Previous Meetings
- Coolidge Square Workshop June 2009
- Public Works Subcommittee Meeting March 2011
- Community Workshop held in June 2013
  - Town Council approval July 2013
  - MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC) approval April 2014
- Public Works Subcommittee Meeting in May 2015
- Community Workshop held in December 2016

Project Reboot in 2017
- Joint Public Works & Bike/Ped. Committee meeting on June 19, 2017
- Presentation to Public Works Subcommittee on November 20, 2017
- Coolidge Square Open House on January 30, 2018
- Transit Public Meeting on February 15, 2018
- Mount Auburn Street Open House on May 14, 2018
Purpose of Meeting
Why are we here?

- We are here today to:
  - Receive endorsement of updated concept to advance to Preliminary Design with MassDOT
    - 2013 Town Council approval to develop 25% Design Plans implementing Road Diet concept
    - Updates to concept based on extensive public outreach
  - Outline the Next Steps in the Design Process
    - 25% Design Submission to MassDOT (end of 2018)
  - Project Included on the MassDOT FY2022 TIP
    - Current Estimate = $14,000,000
Purpose of Meeting
Why are we here? (cont.)

Project Timeline

- **2009**: Public Participation Process
- **2018**: Public Works Committee Meeting, June 2018
- **2022**: Scheduled Project Advertisement, FY 2022

MassDOT Design Process (25%, 75%, 100%, PS&E)
Public Outreach Summary
Project Website / Outreach

- Project website
  - www.mountauburnstreet.com
  - Regina Villa Associates responsible for website
  - Provide project updates
  - Email list / comment section

- Uploaded Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s)
- Responded to 120 comments
  - 5,225 unique visitors to project website
  - 13,500 pageviews to date
Comprehensive responses provided

Balancing the needs of all users of the corridor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns of Watertown Residents</th>
<th>How a Complete Street Will Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…there isn’t really room for 2 lanes in each direction, let alone for bikes and parked cars.”</td>
<td>More efficient use of space and dedicated space for each mode reduces conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is not unusual to have cars speed away … as if they think they are at the Indy 500.”</td>
<td>Reduced lane widths are shown to decrease travel speeds along a corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pedestrians take their lives in hand when attempting to cross the street.”</td>
<td>Curb extensions create shorter pedestrian crossing distances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am a Watertown resident, and bike commute everyday on Mt. Auburn Street into Cambridge. It is dangerous and terrifying…”</td>
<td>Dedicating space for bicyclists creates safer conditions for cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Currently, the buses get caught up in car traffic and, as a result, bus service is sub-par during the busiest times of the day.”</td>
<td>Queue jump lanes and improved transit stop locations increases the efficiency of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“As soon as you go through a green light, the next light is red.”</td>
<td>Modernization of traffic signal control improves efficiency for vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Autos already have a tough time in that region”</td>
<td>Layout maintains/increases capacity with fewer conflict points and crashes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you are walking towards Watertown Square… there is no place to rest”</td>
<td>Dedicated space for landscaping, amenities, and street furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…glad to hear that it has been noticed that the Coolidge square is hurting”</td>
<td>Improved safety and aesthetics attract pedestrians, shoppers, and diners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…I am glad to have the [Coolidge] square is hurting”</td>
<td>Safety and aesthetic improvements create a destination, rather than a through-way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…I am glad to hear that it has been noticed that the Coolidge square is hurting”</td>
<td>Safety and aesthetic improvements create a destination, rather than a through-way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We need to consider the impacts to the trees…”</td>
<td>Maintaining the existing road width will preserve the shade trees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interagency Coordination

- Multiple meetings/discussions with MassDOT officials regarding our updated concept plan
- Met with Cambridge DPW to discuss operations and maintenance of bicycle facilities
- Reviewed concepts with Watertown Fire & Police Departments
- Coordination with MBTA officials
  - Bus stop locations and the use of Transit Signal Priority
  - Discussed condition and service life of catenary wires along Mt. Auburn Street
- Barr Foundation Grant
  - Mt. Auburn Street Bus Priority Pilot – Summer 2018
General Overview of Updates

- Updated cross sections based on feedback from MassDOT / initial alternatives analysis
- Continuous bicycle facilities from Common Street to Cambridge city line
  - Double buffered where feasible
- Analyzed bus stop locations for future implementation of Queue Jump Lanes and Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
- Analyzed impacts of each alternative for all modes of transportation in relation to Complete Streets objectives
  - Vehicles
    - Parking
  - Pedestrians
  - Transit Users
  - Bicycles
Project Limits
Mt. Auburn Street Corridor

Design separated into four segments:

1. Patten Street to Walnut Street
2. Walnut Street to Dexter Avenue
3. Dexter Avenue to Arlington Street (Coolidge Sq.)
4. Arlington Street to Cambridge city line
Project Segments
Patten Street to Walnut Street (1)

- Road diet begins east of Common Street
  - Formal parking added where feasible
- Maintains Parker Street as two-way
Project Segments
Walnut Street to Dexter Avenue (2)

- Buffered Bike Lanes (single / double buffer)
- New traffic signal at Boylston (W) intersection
Simulation
Rendering of Mt. Auburn Street at Richard Road
Project Segments
Walnut Street to Dexter Avenue (2)

- Buffered Bike Lanes (single / double buffer)
- Placemaking at the Boylston Street (E) intersection
Project Segments
Dexter Avenue to Arlington Street (3) (Coolidge Sq.)

- Improvements based on Road Safety Audit (RSA) Findings
  - Placemaking at Bigelow Ave. intersection (added open space)
  - Increased pedestrian access
  - Dedicated bicycle facilities through Coolidge Square
Project Segments
Arlington Street to Cambridge city line (4)

- Double Buffered Bike Lanes
- Shared Bus-Bike Lane eastbound into Cambridge
  - Part of the Watertown / Cambridge Barr Foundation Grant
  - Tying into City of Cambridge Bus Priority Pilot Project
Next Steps
Where do we go from here?

- Endorsement of updated concept from Public Works Subcommittee & Town Council
- Advance Recommend Plan to Preliminary Design Phase with MassDOT
  - 25% Design Submission – end of 2018
  - *Critical to stay on FY2022 schedule*
  - Design Public Hearing – Summer 2019
- Additional Public Meetings (*Updates*)
- Advance Approved Preliminary Design to Final Design with MassDOT
- Advertise Construction Project in FY2022
  - Total Funding = $14,000,000
Questions?

How to Stay Informed

• Visit the project website and sign up for email updates: www.MountAuburnStreet.com
The purpose of the meeting is to make a recommendation to the Town Council on moving forward with the 25% Design for the Mt Auburn St Reconstruction Project.

Background:
- On June 26, 2013, the Town Council voted to instruct the Administration to give a full presentation on Mt. Auburn Street including a cost estimate for entire project and the 25% design timeline.
- At the July 30, 2013 Special Town Council meeting, there was an Informational Presentation on the Mt. Auburn Street Project, and the Town Council voted unanimously to authorize the Manager to proceed with this project.
- On May 14, 2015, the Public Works Committee held a presentation to update the community on the Mt Auburn St Reconstruction Project.
- On June 23, 2015, the Town Council adopted a Comprehensive Plan recommending that: Mt Auburn St be redeveloped using Complete Streets techniques that include the option to provide bicycle lanes/features along the corridor; efforts to expand streetscape and hardscape elements in Coolidge Square to create a gateway be considered; and corridor improvement strategies for major roadways, including Mt Auburn St be developed that focus on roadway/intersection operations, pedestrian/bicycle accommodations and traffic calming strategies.
- On December 8, 2016, the DPW held an informational meeting to discuss the conceptual plans for the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction Project, focusing on the section between Patten St and School St.
- On June 12, 2017, the DPW announced its new [www.mountauburnstreet.com](http://www.mountauburnstreet.com) website, which has to-date received over 5,000 unique visitors.
- On June 19, 2017, there was a joint meeting of the Public Works Committee and the Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee to discuss the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction Project.
- On November 20, 2017, the Public Works Committee held a presentation to update the community on the Mt Auburn St Reconstruction Project.
- On January 30, 2018, the DPW held an Open House to present the conceptual plans for the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction Project, focusing on the Coolidge Square section of the project.
- On February 15, 2018, the DPW held a Mt Auburn Street Transit Public Meeting to discuss bus transit planning in the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction Project.
- On March 27, 2018, the Town Council adopted a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan for the Town, which included the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction Project as a high priority project.
- On May 14, 2018, the DPW held a Corridor-wide Open House to present the conceptual design plans for the Mt Auburn Street Reconstruction as a Complete Streets Project.
- On May 24, 2018, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization voted to endorse the FFYs 2019-23 TIP, and the Mt Auburn St Project continues to be programmed for FY2022.

The DPW has determined that to maintain the goal of continued programming by the MPO for FY 2022 funding, a 25% design should be submitted to MassDOT by the end of the year to allow time for MassDOT review, additional public hearings, obtaining right-of-way certification and other tasks required to obtain certification from MassDOT for bidding and construction of the project, and that 6 months is required to complete the 25% design.
To: Town Council Committee on Public Works
Re: Mt. Auburn Street Project 25%
From: Deborah Peterson
Date: June 27, 2018

I would like to see this project move forward, but with a more constructive and collaborative engagement with the community. I and many others have expressed concerns around the public input for this project in numerous communications. We have been disappointed and frustrated in the responses and level of engagement with our concerns and suggestions.

Complete Streets is more than an outcome with bicycle, pedestrian, and transit elements. As embodied in the Complete Street Guidelines it is a process that promises to yield a more optimal accommodation among the users. Core to the guidelines is the early identification of stakeholders and collaboration with these stakeholders. So far in this process individual stakeholders have been treated primarily as outsiders with a passive role as commentators no different from any other resident.

I think it would be valuable to acknowledge the frustration and anger that has been felt around the planning and the resulting deficits in the plan. The promised Coolidge Square revitalization effects are perfunctory. Potential solutions were missed when suggested alternatives were rejected and tradeoffs in benefits to different user groups were made without articulated objective criteria. Modeled data was cited to support choices and but never shared resulting in skepticism about effectiveness.

These deficits can be ameliorated with more constructive public participation if the town were to adopt the following approaches consistent with MassDOT Complete Streets Planning Guidelines:

- Creation of stakeholder groups for mass transit, walkers, bicyclists, neighborhood groups, merchants and businesses and their active involvement in refining the plans.
- Performance criteria and standards for users groups and subgroups developed as a way to evaluate alternatives and suggested interventions and final designs. Analyze the bicycle, pedestrian and bus usage stratified by such subgroups as recreational, casual, commuter, school bound to identify potential diversionary routes in congested areas
- Sharing of data and methodology used to evaluate the expected performance.

In addition, the shortcomings of this plan in revitalizing Coolidge Square should be addressed in concert with the road project as it could affect the final demands on Mt. Auburn Street. These revitalization efforts should include parking improvements a review of the local circulation within the district, evaluation of potential bike by pass, and side street improvements to encourage walking.

Mt Auburn Street is one of the most important arteries in town. Let’s make sure we do this right, so well into the coming decades it will be the best it can.

Thank you. Deborah Peterson

Cc: Town Council, Steve Magoon