



Chapter 3

CASE STUDIES

The Field Projects team decided to study several multi-use paths and cycle tracks in the region in order to better understand the challenges communities have faced when implementing them. The goal was also to learn how different communities overcame those challenges. The case studies include the Minuteman Bikeway and the Vassar Street cycle track in Cambridge. While neither the bikeway nor cycle track is identical to the Community Path, each is similar to different portions of the Community Path in significant ways. The eastern portion of the Path will include a cycle track along Arsenal Street, while much of the remaining portion will be a multi-use path.

3.1 Minuteman Bikeway

The Minuteman Bikeway is an 11-mile, paved multi-use trail that runs from Alewife Station in Cambridge to the Town of Bedford. Shown in Figure 3.1, it is a former Boston and Maine railroad ROW that was converted into a bike trail in 1993.¹ The path runs close to locations where the Minutemen fought with British troops at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775, hence the name Minuteman Bikeway.

The Minuteman Bikeway is similar to the proposed Community Path in several ways. It is a former railroad ROW, it goes through busy commercial districts in Arlington and Lexington, and it runs close to residences. The major difference is that the Minuteman Bikeway was built exclusively on an existing abandoned railroad ROW, so issues related to private property and the need for easements did not exist. Business owners also thought the Minuteman would increase business, so they did not openly oppose to it.² The proposed Community Path, on the other hand, largely runs through property that has already been sold and developed by private entities. While business owners and managers generally express support for the Path, they have concerns about potential changes to parking. (See Chapter 4.4 for more details.)

Despite these differences, proponents of the Minuteman Bikeway faced

and overcame their own challenges in developing the path. It was not easy, for example, to convince the public to build the Minuteman Bikeway because there were people who adamantly opposed the idea from the beginning.³ Eventually, proponents of the trail enlisted the support of politicians, who helped obtain funding for it.⁴ Had this not occurred, the path might not have been built.⁵ More than 15 years after it was built, the Minuteman Bikeway is now very popular.⁶ There are, however, still outstanding problems, particularly regarding the busy and dangerous crossing at Arlington Center.⁷

3.2 Vassar Street Cycle Track

Background on Cycle Tracks

Multiple studies conclude that safety concerns are the most prominent barrier to cycling.⁸ People are generally less comfortable riding a bicycle in traffic on a roadway, and a painted bike lane does not provide an adequate level of comfort or safety for the average cyclist. An alternative to bike lanes are cycle tracks. These are bicycle paths that are separated from pedestrian and vehicular traffic by a physical barrier, such as on-street parking, curbs, planting buffers or bollards. Cycle tracks provide riders with a higher perception of safety, which can result in more people riding bicycles.⁹ The construction of cycle tracks in Copenhagen, Denmark resulted in a 20 percent increase in bicycle mileage and a reduction of vehicle miles traveled by 10 percent; there is more than the 5 percent growth in bicycle miles traveled and the 1 percent decrease in vehicle miles traveled associated with painted bicycle lanes.¹⁰

A cycle track, however, is not recommended for every location. They present their own challenges, most notably safety issues at intersections. A study by the Transport Research Laboratory in the United Kingdom found that cycle tracks reinforce driver's feelings of "road-ownership," leading drivers in some instances to behave more aggressively to indicate

Figure 3.1
Minuteman Bikeway;
Source: Michelle Moon



that cyclists should not be using motor vehicle travel lanes.¹¹ Cycle tracks and bike lanes have also been reported to increase the risk of injuries at intersections because automobile traffic is less likely to notice the cyclists when turning.¹² For these reasons, raised crossings, road markings and signage are particularly important along the Arsenal Street corridor of the proposed Community Path.

Cost is another consideration, though estimates of cycle tracks often include other road construction improvements, so it is difficult to determine their actual cost. Constructed in 2007, the 2.2-mile Claire-Morissette bicycle track in downtown Montreal cost \$3.5 million to complete.¹³ This amount included a variety of design options; more cost-efficient alternatives do exist.

Vassar Street Project

In 2003, the City of Cambridge partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to narrow the travel lanes on Vassar Street – which runs through the university campus – and install the city’s first off-road cycle track. The goal of the project was to transform what had been an industrial area into a “more inviting, campus-like one,” which would include a pedestrian-friendly environment.¹⁴ Although Watertown lacks a major college campus, the industrial nature of the setting coupled with its proximity to Cambridge (both communities face issues related to narrow streets and concerns related to snow removal) makes this an applicable example with many lessons to be learned.

The project, along with new developments in the area, transformed Vassar Street into a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The cycle tracks on Vassar Street, however, are highly flawed. One of the biggest design failures is the placement of the cycle track at the same grade as the pedestrian sidewalk. Markings with signage and colored pavement differentiate the cycle track from the sidewalk, but there is no physical barrier between the two. This lack of clearly delineated travel paths for

Figure 3.2

Vassar Street lacks separation between pedestrians and cyclists;

Source: John Allen, Truenwheelers.org



cyclists and pedestrians has led to confusion, with walkers often blocking the cycle track, as shown in Figure 3.2. This forces many cyclists onto the roadway, so they can maintain a consistent speed and avoid accidents.

The Vassar Street cycle track also has a few problematic design features as it approaches intersections. As noted in the signage in the Figure 3.3, motor vehicle traffic is forced to cross the cycle track to make a right turn. A row of parked vehicles often block cyclists from a driver's vision, and the potential for an accident is increased as the cyclists rejoin the roadway. To provide a better line of site for drivers, parking may need to be eliminated and replaced with bollards or bulb outs where the path nears crossings.¹⁵ The cycle track does protect users from driveway traffic in most cases. At driveways, the cycle track remains above the road level on raised crossings, providing a physical indication to drivers that they are to yield to cyclists and pedestrians as they cross over the cycle track.

Snow removal and drainage are also potential issues associated with cycle tracks in New England. In the case of Vassar Street, MIT agreed to be responsible for removing snow from the cycle track. The design of the cycle track, however, poses a problem as there are multiple grade changes at driveways and entrance points at the end of blocks. This makes it difficult to plow the cycle track with standard equipment, and as a result, the cycle track is often ignored by maintenance crews as shown in Figure 3.4. In Montreal, this type of problem was solved by placing the cycle track on the same level as the street and providing an unobstructed width of 8 to 10 feet to accommodate a plow truck.

The lessons learned from Vassar Street shed light on how the Arsenal Street section of the Community Path should be designed. Most notably, it is important that a two-way cycle track be placed at street level and raised pedestrian crossings be provided as a physical buffer for vehicles entering and exiting driveways.

Figure 3.3

The row of parked cars block drivers' lines of sight to the path as they approach the intersection;

Source: John Allen, Trueneelers.org





Figure 3.4

Three days after a snowfall, the path remains unplowed;

Source: John Allen, Truewheelers.org

Endnotes

- 1 Minuteman Commuter Bikeway Official Website, <http://www.minutemanbikeway.org/Pages/intro.html>.
- 2 Joey Glushko, Town of Arlington Planner and administrator for the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee, personal email correspondence, February 11, 2010.
- 3 Anonymous, personal email interview by Jong Wai, February 15, 2010.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Joey Glushko interview.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Jennifer Anderson. "Why We Bike - or Don't." Portland Tribune, 2007, sec. A, p. 1. http://www.portlandtribune.com/news/story.php?story_id=118427835449808000.
- 9 Transport Canada. <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs/environment-utsp-casestudy-cs77ebikeplanning-1177.htm>.
- 10 Soren U. Jenson. "Bicycle Tracks and Lanes: a Before-After Study." TRB Committee on Bicycle Transportation.
- 11 CTC Charitable Trust. <http://www.ctc.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=5174>.
- 12 Soren U. Jenson. "Bicycle Tracks and Lanes: a Before-After Study."
- 13 K. Dobbin. "New bike path on the way: As Maisonneuve bike lane inches toward completion, the city weighs in on the bike system across Montreal." McGill Daily, 2007, p. 6.
- 14 John Allen. TrueWheelers.org. <http://truewheelers.org/cases/vassarst/how.htm>.
- 15 John Allen. TrueWheelers.org. <http://truewheelers.org/cases/vassarst/insurrection.htm>.



Chapter 4

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A major component of the Field Projects team’s work was to raise awareness about the Path project and solicit input from the community. To achieve this, the team was interviewed for an article in the local weekly newspaper, the Watertown Tab. The team also held a community meeting, administered a mapping exercise, conducted a survey, interviewed key stakeholders and property owners and created a Facebook page. The information that was collected through these various methods was incorporated into the team’s site analysis and recommendations.

Throughout this effort, residents voiced concerns of several major types. These concerns centered on:

- Safety issues, particularly around street crossings and crime on the Path;
- Proper maintenance of the Path, or lack thereof;
- Project funding; and
- Trespassing on private property along or near the Path.

4.1 Community Survey

To determine community knowledge of the project and better understand concerns from specific neighborhoods, the Field Projects team administered an anonymous survey to Watertown residents and property/business owners.

Survey Methodology

Using data from the Watertown Assessors’ Office, the team selected owners of properties abutting the proposed Path corridor. This resulted in 67 designated parcels. Because much of the corridor is flanked by

commercial and industrial properties, an additional effort was made to identify and poll residents based on the findings of a study examining path usage among residents in close proximity to bike paths in Minnesota. This study found that people who live within a quarter-mile of a path were much more likely to use it than those living beyond that distance.¹ Therefore, the research team decided to reach out to those who live within a quarter-mile of the proposed Path corridor, adding 105 residential addresses to the survey mailing list. Most of the residences were located between Winter and Waverley streets, north of the Path.

To reach the broader community, the Field Projects team created an online version of the survey. A link to the web version of this survey was included in the initial mailing and posted on the Town of Watertown website. The WBPC and local elected officials distributed the link to their mailing lists.

Questions

The survey was one page long and was intended to take fewer than five minutes to complete. There were a total of 11 multiple-choice questions and three open-ended questions. The Field Projects team also collected information regarding the address, gender and age of respondents. Questions within the survey aimed to gauge feelings about the Community Path project and identify concerns of residents, property owners and potential Path users.

The multiple-choice section included 10 statements that respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (agreement) to 5 (disagreement). The final multiple-choice question asked participants to rate their overall support of the project, again on a 1-5 scale. The three open-ended questions asked participants to explain any concerns they had, describe potential benefits they saw resulting from the proposed Path, and indicate whether they had previous knowledge of the project.

Results

The response rate for the online survey was much higher than the response rate for the mailed surveys. Thirty hardcopy surveys were returned to the Field Projects team, a response rate of more than 17 percent. Due to a limited project budget, no follow-up mailings were made to non-respondents. An additional 17 surveys were returned to the research team due to invalid addresses. The online survey, on the other hand, produced 243 responses, many of which came from residents targeted by the team's mailing. Because specific addresses were requested but not required – this was done to respect the privacy of respondents – it was not possible to fully cross-reference the mailing address list with the online address field results. Of the 243 online responses, only four people declined to provide an address; similarly, among the hard copy respondents, only two people declined to provide an address. None of the responses from the online survey responses matched those of the

hardcopy responses, although it is possible that the five who did not provide addresses were duplicates. The research team decided this was unlikely due to the different short-answer responses. In total, the team received 273 survey responses, 256 of which were more than 50 percent complete. The geographic distribution can be viewed in Figure 4.1.

It is important to note that while specific addresses were selected to participate in this survey, the dissemination of the survey through the email lists and websites of the team's clients – who support the Community Path project – creates some bias in the results. This is not a stringent scientific survey with a random sample; the team's effort to target residents near the Path resulted in responses from the entire community because of the open distribution of the online survey. It is probable that those interested in cycling, walking and open space would be more likely to complete it than those who are not interested. Approximately 64 percent of respondents were from beyond the team's initial proximity boundary of one-quarter mile away from the Path corridor. However, if this buffer is extended to a half-mile, 54 percent of responses fall within the boundary. Because the research team aimed to gauge the sentiments of not only property owners abutting the Path but of all Watertown residents, the decision was made to include the results from all respondents.

Figure 4.1

*Survey response distribution;
Data source: MassGIS;
Cartographer: Kris Carter*



Major Findings

- Concerns about public safety, maintenance and project timeline were the dominant issues from those surveyed;
- 91 percent of respondents at least somewhat agreed that they would utilize the new Community Path for recreation and exercise;
- 79 percent of respondents at least somewhat agreed that they would use the Path to visit shops, restaurants and businesses in Watertown Square;
- 78 percent of respondents did not think the Path would negatively affect their property; and

- 92 percent of the respondents considered themselves “supportive” or “very supportive” of the Path project, while only 4 percent consider themselves “very unsupportive.”

Open-Ended Questions and Responses

The research team mapped the survey responses in order to examine respondents’ feelings about the Path. The team used this map to identify

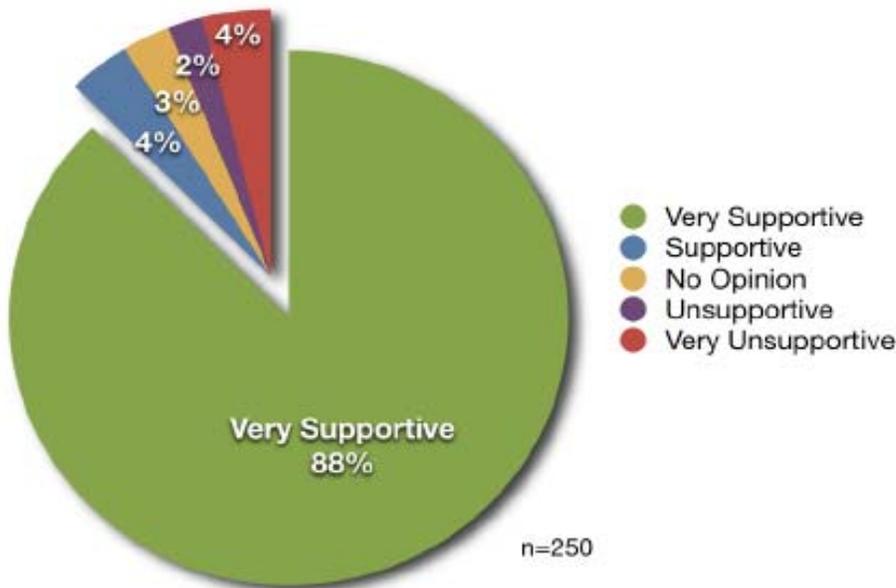


Figure 4.2

Overall support level for the Path;

Data source: Feld projects community survey

Created by: Kris Carter

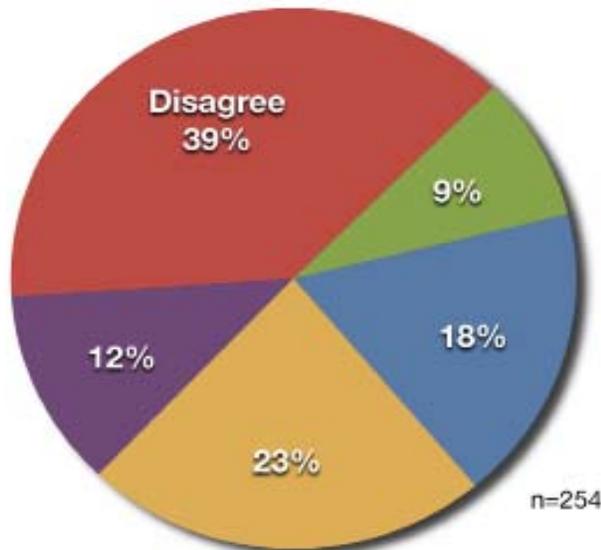
areas where respondents may have concerns that can be addressed by Path advocates. Key concerns and benefits identified in the open-ended section of the survey are summarized below.

Project Concerns

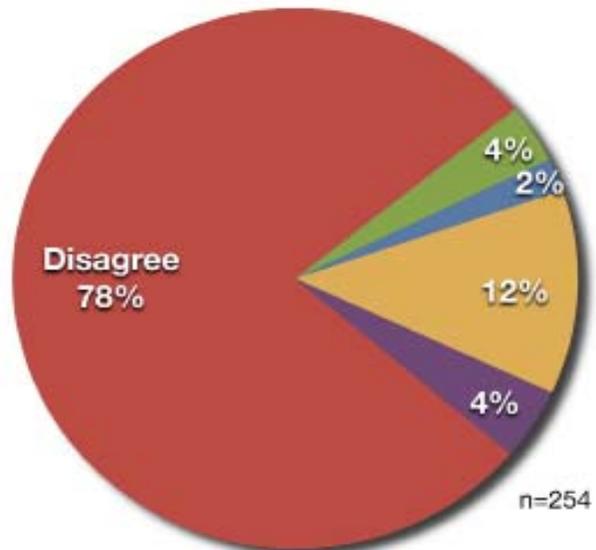
Respondents voiced many concerns, but the largest number centered on issues related to the project timeline, user safety and maintenance. Participants repeatedly asked if the Path would ever be completed and voiced skepticism “that it won’t be created in my lifetime.” This echoed the feelings of the WBPC.

Concerns about safety largely fell into two categories: path design and vandalism/crime. Specific design issues centered on the multi-use nature of the Path and on potentially dangerous street crossings, particularly near Watertown Square. In particular, issues related to signaling, safe crosswalks, lane markings and Path width were most commonly noted. Concerns about crime focused on Path lighting and the safety of Path users. One respondent noted that a “police patrol of the path, like in Lexington would be nice,” and another expressed concerns about “teenagers and hooligans loitering on the path at night.” Several respondents requested police call boxes to deal with what one resident called “a very good escape road for thieves, criminals, and sex offenders because police cars cannot follow these people on a path that will serve

I have concerns about safety in the area of the Path



I have concerns that the Path will negatively impact my property



● Agree
 ● Somewhat Agree
 ● Neutral
 ● Somewhat Disagree
 ● Disagree

Figure 4.3:
Concerns about safety and property impacts;
 Data source: Field projects community survey;
 Created by: Kris Carter

as a secure haven [for criminals].” It is important to recognize the concern for public safety and clearly address it through design, education, community cooperation and collaboration with law enforcement.

In addition, many respondents stated that public places are poorly maintained, so they feared that a new path would be neglected. Pleas for trash receptacles, snow removal, attractive plantings and graffiti removal were repeated in the survey results.

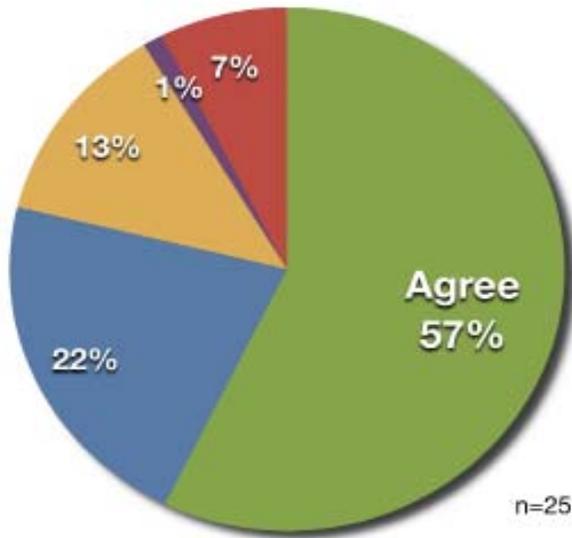
Other concerns focused on cost and who should pay for the Path project. One respondent argued that “potholes on Mount Auburn Street should be fixed before we spend money on any path,” and another asked whether “taxes would be increased to support the project.” A few people questioned the Path’s impact on private property or whether there would be any loss of parking spaces. Still others voiced concerns that the Path, if not completed in full, would lack the connectivity to the regional network of paths that they said make it such an attractive undertaking.

Project Benefits

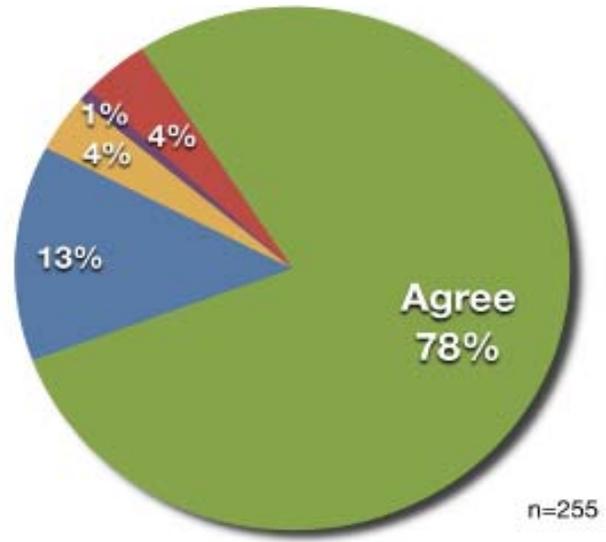
Survey respondents listed many potential benefits of the proposed Community Path. Although specific responses varied, they can be roughly grouped into three categories: commercial opportunities, health benefits and community connectivity.

Many respondents cited other paths, specifically the Minuteman Bikeway, as a positive example of how their development can lead to increased business opportunities. One respondent hoped that “the path [would] help make businesses in Watertown Square more of a destination.” Another stated that it would “encourage more small shops, like ice cream

I would use the path to access shops and restaurants in Watertown Square



I would use the Path for exercise and recreation



● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Neutral ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree

stores, bakeries and cycle repair.” Most respondents thought the Path would result in more foot traffic through Watertown Square and along Arsenal Street, which would benefit all businesses in those areas. One respondent noted “I *always* notice more about my surroundings on foot and by bike than in a car. It will support the area economy by creating more awareness of area businesses.”

The most common response focused on creating a healthier community. Nearly all of the survey responses saw the Path as a new alternative for a safe place to exercise. Some went further, seeing the potential for “kids in the community to walk to school” and expecting “cleaner air” due to fewer car trips. Many hoped that the Path would become a park, which would foster a more active community.

Also noted in the survey responses was the Path’s potential effect on quality of life. A frequent walker stated that “when I use the Charles River path, I always meet somebody I know and I like that.” Others saw the Path project as way to re-brand the city as it would “provide more access to the waterfront and help realize that Watertown is a jewel.” Other responses suggested that the Path could attract new residents and better connect the community to the Arsenal Arts Complex, parks and transportation hubs. The connectivity between the Charles River and Watertown Square was important for one resident who dreamed of “safer access to shops from the rear, by-passing the Square of Death.”

Figure 4.4:

Expected uses of the Path;
Data source: Field projects community survey;

Created by: Kris Carter

4.2 Community Meeting

The Field Projects team held a community meeting about the Watertown Community Path on March 4, 2010 in the Town Council Chambers in Watertown Town Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to gather input from residents, business owners and the community at large to help guide the preliminary design of the Community Path. The research team mailed meeting fliers and surveys to 170 abutters along the proposed Path route. The meeting was also advertised on the Town's website, in the newspaper and through various list-serves. More than 35 people attended the meeting, many of whom expressed support for the Community Path. Clients and others from the DCDP, WCES, and WBPC also attended.

The meeting, which was broadcast live on local access cable, was broken down into three sections. The first section was a short overview of the Community Path and the work done to date by the Field Projects team. Meeting attendees then participated in an independent mapping exercise whereby they drew or wrote down concerns that they had about the proposed Path. The final section of the meeting was a question-and-answer session intended to give residents an opportunity to ask questions, express concerns and provide suggestions.

Many of the comments made by the participants were in favor of the Community Path, though they expressed concerns and asked questions about specific details. These questions and comments touched on a variety of issues, including funding, design, safety, and maintenance.

Several people raised the issue of funding. Because all levels of government are in tight financial times, some meeting attendees feared that local taxes would have to be raised to pay for the project. One person recommended that the Town get state politicians to support the Path before moving forward to help ensure there is funding for the project. Others suggested that the Town seek private funding for the project instead of relying on state and federal grants. DCDP Director Steve

Figure 4.5:
*Community meeting at
Watertown Town Hall;
Source: Kris Carter*



Magoon said the Town has not yet looked into funding; that it is expected to occur after a preliminary design of the Path is completed.

Other major concerns centered on the potential impact the Path would have on private property. Specifically, business owners claimed that the Path would drive people away from their businesses as opposed to attracting people. The owner of one abutting business, for example, did not want to give up a portion of the property he has leased from the Town for over four decades. Another person feared the Path would attract vandals who would damage adjacent property. Proponents countered that paths help decrease crime because they increase the presence of people in the area, and crime is less likely to occur when many people are present.

Intersections were another main topic of discussion. One meeting attendee said crossing Main Street is dangerous and suggested that a pedestrian light be installed. An additional light, however, would only increase congestion on the heavily-traveled road. Another person pointed out that traffic on Howard Street tends to move quickly and that drivers often speed down the hill. It was thus suggested that a pedestrian stop light be installed if the Path were to cross that and other similar streets.

Other concerns raised involved the design and maintenance of the proposed Community Path. For example, one meeting attendee mentioned the potential of water pooling in a path due to inward-sloping edges. A solution would be to design the Path with a crowned center, which would help water run off of the Path. Others asked who would maintain the Path, particularly who would be responsible for plowing it in the winter. Steve Magoon responded that staff from the Watertown Department of Recreation is equipped to maintain such sites, and contractors could be brought in if necessary.

At the end of the meeting, attendees asked if Tufts University students would be committed to the project after the Field Projects team finished their work. DCDP Senior Planner Danielle Evans said it is likely that, with support from the university, other students would pick up where the team left off. Steve Magoon and UEP Field Projects instructor Rusty Russell also suggested that the team create a Wikipedia entry, Facebook page, or some other social media to update the community on the research team's work.

Mapping Exercise

As mentioned earlier, the Field Projects team asked those who attended the community meeting to participate in a mapping exercise. Attendees were given a map of Watertown that showed the likely route of the Community Path. They were asked to circle areas of concern on the map and then elaborate on them in the additional space provided. The goal was to give attendees, particularly those who did not feel comfortable speaking in public, an opportunity to express their concerns about specific locations along the Path corridor or to provide detailed suggestions about what they wanted to see in the Path's design.

The comments gathered through the mapping exercise were similar to those verbally expressed at the community meeting, though they tended to go into greater detail. The two major street crossings along the Path's route – those at Mount Auburn and Main streets – were among the most frequently mentioned concerns. Specifically, people stressed that these crossings would be dangerous if improperly designed or implemented. Suggestions to improving safety included installing crosswalks and pedestrian signals at both crossings.

Parking – and the location of the Path through parking lots – was also frequently mentioned as a concern. Some worried that parking spaces would be eliminated, with one person noting that parking is already at a premium on weekends. Another person wanted the Path to only accommodate bicycles, so it could be narrow as it ran through parking lots. Another preferred that the Path run closer to the businesses as opposed to through the rear of the parking lots near Watertown Square.

A few concerns were raised about the portion of the Community Path that is proposed to run along Arsenal Street. A couple of people asserted that it would be impossible for the Path to cut through private property developed in that area. Others did not want to see on-street parking removed from Arsenal Street.

As for the western section of the Path, several people articulated concerns about Howard Street and the crossing of Pleasant Street. It was noted, for example, that many trucks drive down Howard Street, which could pose safety problems for pedestrians and bicyclists in the area. The existing pedestrian crossing across Pleasant Street at Howard Street also does not align with the entrance of the Charles River Reservation Path. Another person was uneasy about losing trees at the DPW site.

Concerns about safety and maintenance of the Path were also conveyed through the mapping exercise. A few people worried that mixing bicycle and pedestrian use in a single path would not be safe. Others were apprehensive that the Path would attract crime and vandalism, with one person specifically referring to the Linear Park section. A couple of people suggested creating two parallel paths along the Arsenal Street section, one for pedestrians and one for cyclists. Others seemed to support the project on the condition that the Town find a way to keep it clean and accessible.

Some specific suggestions for the Community Path included:

- Installing bicycle racks along the Path;
- Using smooth pavement;
- Rebuilding the Linear Park section;
- Paying attention to drainage design to keep stormwater off the Path;
- Conducting research to ensure the Path does not hinder existing vehicular traffic patterns at major crossings.

4.3 Town Council and Watertown Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Meetings

Two members of the Field Projects team attended a meeting of the WBPC on February 1, 2010. Held at the Watertown Town Hall, the meeting gave them the opportunity to learn more about the Committee's activities as well as plans for future phases of the Charles River Connector project.

On May 11, the team will make a final presentation to the Watertown Town Council and explain all of the recommendations for the Path, including reasoning for the preferred and alternative routes.

Interviews

Section A Interviews: School Street to Mount Auburn Street

A discussion with business managers along the Arsenal Street corridor revealed cautious approval of the project. Managers at UFood Grill, Bask Tanning and Firestone noted an interest in the increased foot traffic the Path would likely bring to their businesses, but they were skeptical about how parking could be affected during busy hours. United Tile America had minimal concerns about the project as long as on-street parking was not eliminated.

Angelo Paolini, one of the owners of the wooded Patten Street property behind Jiffy Lube, said he supports the idea of the Community Path. He and his partners, Michael and Susan Penta and SMC Trust, are willing to sell their property to the Town as they have no plans to develop it.

Jason Abrahams, manager of Firestone Complete Auto Care at the corner of Taylor and Arsenal streets, said he is not opposed to blocking Taylor Street at the Watertown Square Plaza exit as long as the Arsenal Street side of Taylor Street became a two-way street. The rear parking lot of Firestone is shared with O'Reilly & Son Auto Body and is frequently at capacity. O'Reilly & Son Auto Body also uses the on-street parking on the west side of Taylor Street, which would be eliminated under an alternative route for the Path. The owner of the auto body shop, Bernie O'Reilly, said this would be devastating to his business because he thinks there is not enough parking as is. The Watertown Plaza lot, on the other hand, frequently has vacancies, so eliminating some off-street parking spaces there would have less of an impact on nearby businesses.

The owner of the property at the corner of Taylor and Mount Auburn streets (33 Mount Auburn Street) said plans for the site have not been determined. The property includes a parking lot and former repair garage, which is being used as a staging area for a nearby construction project. The owner is potentially selling the property to another entity, which is considering developing it. This is a good opportunity to have the Community Path incorporated into any plans to redevelop this underutilized property. While the Path would not cross this property, it

would likely run next to it, potentially affecting access to it. The current owner said the Path could “help us as much as hurt us,” raising caution about potentially blocking through-traffic on Taylor Street. Overall, however, the owner supports the creation of the Path, saying, “I’m supportive of anything that is a betterment to the area.”

Section B Interviews: Mount Auburn Street to Pleasant Street

Business managers and owners on Mount Auburn Street between Main and Summer streets were also cautiously optimistic about the Path. The owners of Watertown Sportswear and Verona Restaurant said the parking spaces in the two parking lots on Baptist Walk are crucial for their customers, as on-street parking is not allowed on Mount Auburn Street. According to these business owners, six businesses on Mount Auburn Street between Baptist Walk and Diamond Nail (26 Mount Auburn Street) are each allotted one spot in the Baptist Walk lot.

Managers and owners of Dyer Discount Liquors, Watertown Sportswear, Meat Spot, Verona Restaurant and Fine European Furniture said they would be supportive of the Path running through the Baptist Walk lots as long as no parking is lost. If parking were removed, they said they would be supportive if they were each given a free parking permit to use in the municipal lots.

There are several other businesses in this section west of Mount Auburn Street. D’Amico Dental Associates, for example, is located on Main Street near Moxley Playground. The proprietor of this business said he has neither good nor bad feelings about the Path. He does not think his business will be significantly affected by it, nor does he foresee increased or decreased traffic at his business as a result of its creation. He did, however, mention that Main Street is a very busy thoroughfare and that an additional pedestrian light at the proposed crossing of the Path would aggravate traffic.

On Howard Street near the DPW Corridor is an upholstery company, Bloom & Company. An associate there did not object to the Path’s potential development, stating that the nearby Charles River Reservation Path currently helps business. The associate was concerned, though, that people would trespass on the company’s property and if they were injured, the company would be liable. The associate also said that people already walk on the DPW Corridor even though they are not supposed to, and they are therefore trespassing.

4.4 Media and Internet Outreach

The Field Projects team aimed to raise awareness about the Community Path through the use of the internet and media. The goal was to not only spread word about the proposed Path, but also to encourage residents to give input and stay abreast of the project as it moves forward.

Toward this end, the team created a Facebook page for the Community Path, where updates on the project can be posted and residents can ask questions and provide feedback. While all three clients already have websites that include information about the Community Path, a Facebook page will reach an even wider audience, especially residents who do not keep up with Town affairs, younger residents who may not read the newspaper or regularly check the Town websites, or those who are temporarily out of the area.

The Watertown Tab, the weekly newspaper in Watertown, also ran an article about the Community Path on February 25, 2010. Written by staff reporter Jenn Thomas, the story appeared online at www.wickedlocal.com/watertown. It gave a general overview of the project and highlighted the Tufts research team's work. A member of the team was quoted in the story, as was Janet Jameson, a member of the WBPC. The story also provided information about the research team's community meeting and included a link to the team's public survey.

The Tab story is attached in Appendix B.

Endnotes

1 Krizek, Kevin J., and Pamela J. Johnson. "Proximity to Trails and Retail: Effects on Urban Cycling and Walking." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72, no. 1 (2006): 33-40.