



Watertown Town Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

March 20, 2014

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,
Vice President

Aaron Dushku,
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounellis,
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk,
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
District C Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland
District D Councilor

Dr. Beverly Scott, Chief Executive Officer/General Manager
Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3910
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Dr. Scott:

At its March 11, 2014 meeting, the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown voted unanimously to send to you this letter asking for the MBTA's assistance to help improve public transit in Watertown. As the 13th most densely populated municipality in the state, Watertown residents are highly dependent on MBTA service, and Watertown's annual MBTA assessment is currently \$2,045,030. Key issues identified by the Town Council are as follows:

- Service on the 70, 71 and 73 bus lines has deteriorated significantly in the past five years.
- These bus lines experience overcrowding and delays that are not fair to the paying transit riders of Watertown.
- The Town Council is concerned greatly about the inconvenience and reduced quality of life suffered by Watertown's MBTA riding public.

There is a sense of urgency created by the size and pace of redevelopment in Watertown which is predicated on the residents and workers commuting by MBTA to mitigate rush hour traffic. As one of the first "streetcar suburbs" and well-served by multiple transit lines, Watertown is very well situated for "smart growth", attracting new residents in thousands of new apartments and condos who rely on the MBTA to commute into downtown Boston and Cambridge. The renewal of the Arsenal as an office park has also brought thousands of new employees into Watertown, many of whom commute using the MBTA.

Watertown is an engaged community with residents that are eager to work with Town officials, State Representatives Jonathan Hecht and John Lawn, State Senator William Brownsberger and the MBTA on finding and implementing public transit solutions. Watertown is also fortunate in that developers of new projects are willing to assist the Town with public transit.

The Town of Watertown requests the MBTA to investigate the feasibility of immediately implementing four solutions to improve bus service in the short term:

- Priority signals for MBTA buses at traffic signals (especially Fresh Pond/Mt Auburn)
- Off-bus fare collection to speed loading (especially Harvard Station)
- Running express buses on existing routes during peak hours.
- Charlie Card ticket kiosks at key locations in Watertown.

The Town of Watertown also requests the assistance of the MBTA to develop Transit Management Associations as public/private partnerships using shuttle buses for both employees and residents of specific developments as well as the general public. This is especially important along the Arsenal St and Pleasant St corridors where most of the redevelopment in Watertown is occurring.

The Town of Watertown further requests the MBTA consider adding additional buses to the 70, 71 and 73 routes at both peak and off peak hours, and also engage with the Town of Watertown and neighboring municipalities to identify other measures that would increase the quality of bus service on these lines, and to consider other public transit improvements.

Finally, the Town Council requests the MBTA send a representative to one of its regularly scheduled meetings to discuss these problems and potential solutions.

In closing, I want to emphasize that the Town of Watertown is appreciative of the work already done by the MBTA as part of the Key Bus Routes program. I also cannot stress enough the importance of the MBTA's role in both the quality of life and economic development in Watertown.

I look forward to hearing from you soon to assist us with these issues.

Sincerely,



Mark S. Sideris, Council President

cc: Honorable Town Council
Town Manager Michael Driscoll
State Representative Jonathan Hecht
State Representative John Lawn
State Senator William Brownsberger
Charles Planck, MBTA Director of Strategic Initiatives
Clinton Bench, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning
Eric Bourassa, MAPC
Beth Isler, CTPS/MPO