

Watertown Aid Overview

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State education aid is roughly based on need and ability to pay.

- "Foundation" **budget** is amount of resources needed to run basic school system for specific student population
- Required **local contribution** reflects ability to pay computed from property value and income in the municipality
- **Aid** is primarily based on foundation budget less required local contribution

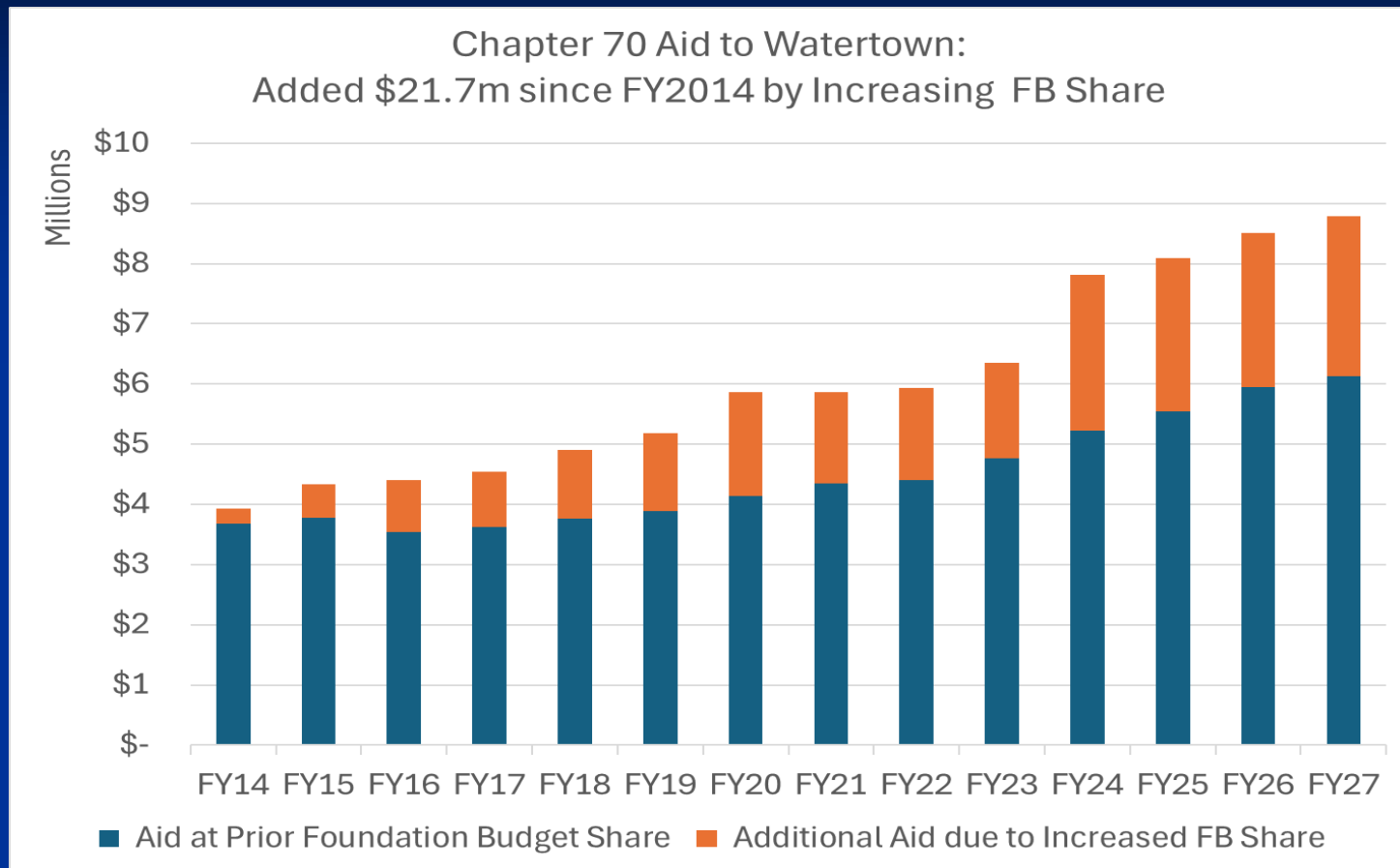
For 10 years before 2014, Watertown was underfunded as compared to communities with similar ability to pay*

- Received only 13% of foundation budget (vs. 17.5% target)
- Investigation revealed that underfunding was due to formula glitches (not deliberate policy)
- Watertown was not alone; built support for fix among similarly mistreated communities

Formula fix raised Watertown aid share of budget from 13% to 17.5% by FY2019, now 19%.

* Background at: <https://willbrownsberger.com/whats-wrong-with-chapter-70/>

\$21.7 Million Additional Aid due to increased share*



* Bars are annual Chapter 70 Education Aid. Orange segment is portion of aid due to increased share: Computed in each year as difference between (a) actual aid and (b) aid at uncorrected share level. Aid at uncorrected share level computed as 13.1% (prior ten-year actual average of ratio of aid to foundation budget) multiplied by applicable foundation budget. Computation details at <https://willbrownsberger.com/download-education-aid-files/>

Other State Education Aid Increases

- Statewide effort to increase Foundation Budget based on higher allowances for health care, special education, etc.
- Fully funded special education circuit breaker every year since 2019 -- \$3.4m to Watertown in FY25
- Special “pothole” account as device to support Watertown (based on high special ed spending through Perkins): \$125k to 250k per year
- Additional 2026 earmark funding for special education (\$150K in current supp. budget)

MBTA Improvements

- 71/73 Bus Acceleration
 - Most crowded bus lines in the system by occupancy ratio
 - Initiated redesign of Fresh Pond Parkway/ Mount Auburn Intersection
 - Bus lane solution substantially improves bus throughput
 - Battery buses shortly to arrive will reinstate dedicated service quality
- Regional Rail improvements – Waverley and Boston Landing (results very limited so far; interrupted by COVID and MBTA core service focus)

Major DCR Projects

- Done: **Cambridge-Watertown Greenway** – \$250,000 drainage funding* and continuing agency advocacy and follow-up
- Done: Road, sidewalk, and river path **improvements from Watertown Square to Yacht Club** – \$500,000 private funding** and continuing advocacy and follow-up
- In Progress: Earmarks and continuing advocacy for **Arsenal Street and North Beacon Street bridges**/intersections
- Early conceptual: **Charles River sea wall** elevation to address increasing risk of storm surge due to sea level rise
- Early conceptual: Passive recreation plan for sealed hazardous waste site on former **GSA property**

* An Act Relative to Immediate COVID Recovery Needs, Senate 2564 #348, Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021;

** From Simmons College -- Daly Field community benefits, Chapter 223 of 2012

Support for Watertown Square

- 2024: \$10 Million Bond Bill Earmark for infrastructure and other public improvements
- 2025: \$750,000 Supplemental Budget Earmark for transportation improvements in Watertown Square
- 2026: \$250,000 Supplemental Budget Earmark for design expenses related to the main intersection in Watertown Square

Notes: Senate 2856, #17, [Chapter 238 of Acts of 2024](#); S2512, #21, [Chapter 7 of the Acts of 2025](#); Senate approved earmark: [S3041 \(2026\) #209](#)

Other local project support

- 2016: \$200,000 for Arsenal Street Corridor improvements
- 2016: \$300,000 for business area façade improvements
- 2021: \$150,000 for lead pipe replacement and awareness
- 2022: \$900,000 for Saltonstall Park Improvements
- 2022: \$500,000 for North Branch Library (Bond Bill Earmark)
- 2024: \$500,000 for Group Housing (Bond Bill Earmark)

Economic Devevelopment Appropriation, Senate 2423 #140, Chapter 219 of Acts of 2016;
An Act Relative to Immediate COVID Recovery Needs, Senate 2564 #348, Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021;
Economic Devevelopment Appropriation, Senate 3018, #234, Chapter 268 of 2022;
General Government Bond Bill, Senate 2951, #129, Chapter 140 of Acts of 2022.
Housing Bond Bill, Senate 2834, #21, Chapter 150 of Acts of 2024 (Nichols Ave Group Home)

Other Earmarks Approved in Senate Version of FY26 Supplemental Budget

- \$100,000 for after school transportation
- \$200,000 for local shuttle bus transportation
- \$150,000 for extraordinary special education costs

Amendment numbers 209, 215, 216 to Senate Version of 2026 Supplemental Budget ([S3041](#))

Home Rule Petitions

- 2012 | Ch. 41 | Special police officer appointments |
- 2012 | Ch. 327 | Menton Corner intersection designation |
- 2015 | Ch. 111 | Increased residential property tax exemption |
- 2016 | Ch. 73 | 15 additional on-premises liquor licenses (1st round) |
- 2017 | Ch. 32 | Firefighter Toscano funeral expenses |
- 2020 | Ch. 48 | 15 additional on-premises liquor licenses (2nd round) |
- 2022 | Ch. 220 | Authority to acquire property in Waltham |
- 2022 | Ch. 302 | Affordable housing linkage fee |
- 2023 | Ch. 5 | Updated special police officer authority |
- 2023 | Ch. 58 | Property tax classification (50% residential factor, FY2024–26) |
- 2024 | Ch. 189 | Municipal charges lien authority |
- 2025 | Ch. 60 | Parker School site (124 Watertown St.) lease authority |
- **2026 FULL SUPPORT FOR PENDING TAX CLASSIFICATION BILL**

Thank you!

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