



NEWTON CORNER

LONG-TERM PLANNING STUDY

MassDOT Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study

Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Virtual on Zoom

Summary:

On Tuesday, October 8, 2024, MassDOT held the first Public Meeting for the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study. The study team presented the study goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria. The study team then shared key takeaways from existing conditions findings on mobility, safety, land use, zoning, demographics, employment, Environmental Justice communities, and mobility. The study team also presented the study process and schedule, as well as ways to engage with the study. Members of the public who attended provided feedback and questions.

Attendees:

Name	Title	Affiliation
Drashti Joshi	Civil Engineer	MassDOT
Dan Fielding	Legislative Liaison	MassDOT Highway Division
Jacquelyn Goddard	MassDOT Communications	MassDOT
Sandy Johnston	Deputy Director of Regional Transit Planning	MBTA
Eileen Botti	Project Manager, Transit Priority	MBTA
Steven Owens	State Representative	State Representative Steven Owens (29th Middlesex – Watertown)
Dana Hanson	District Director	U.S. Representative Jake Auchincloss (Massachusetts District 4)
Pam Wright	Councilor-at-Large, Ward 3	Newton City Council

Shawna Sullivan	Deputy Commissioner	City of Newton Department of Public Works
David Koses	Transportation Coordinator	City of Newton Department of Public Works
Isaac Prizant	Transportation Engineer	City of Newton Department of Public Works
Jenn Martin	Director of Transportation Planning	City of Newton Department of Planning and Development
Jini Fairley	ADA Coordinator	City of Newton
Amalia Timbers	Citizens Assistance Officer and Boards & Commissions Coordinator	City of Newton
Lucie Chansky	Member	City of Newton Commission on Disability
Ed Olhava	President	Bike Newton
Lucia Dolan	Member	Newton Safe Routes to School
Robin Boger	President	Newton Corner Neighborhood Association
Matthew Costas	Chief of Staff to City Councilor Liz Breadon	Boston City Council (District 9)
Erin Rathe	Senior Planner for Economic Development	City of Watertown
Zeke Mermell	Senior Transportation Planner	City of Watertown on behalf of the City Manager's Office
Aaron Colby	Not Listed	Attendee
Alina Duckham	Not Listed	Attendee
Anthony Tucker	Not Listed	Attendee
Bill McBeath	Not Listed	Attendee
Carolyn Lattin	Not Listed	Attendee
D Snyder	Not Listed	Attendee
DD Morton	Not Listed	Attendee
Debra Minard	Not Listed	Attendee
Janet M	Not Listed	Attendee
Janet Sterman	Not Listed	Attendee

Joel Iff	Not Listed	Attendee
Judith Siporin	Not Listed	Attendee
Laura Johnson	Not Listed	Attendee
Liz Cremens	Not Listed	Attendee
Madelyn Sorenson	Not Listed	Attendee
Nancy Felts	Not Listed	Attendee
Nate Gibson	Not Listed	Attendee
Joan Gumbleton	Not Listed	Attendee
Rachel Ketchman	Not Listed	Attendee
Rosalind Williams	Not Listed	Attendee
Seth Parker	Not Listed	Attendee
Sondra Shuster	Not Listed	Attendee
Srdjan Nedeljkovic	Not Listed	Attendee
Steven Carter	Not Listed	Attendee
Suzanne Loughlin	Not Listed	Attendee
Patrick Snyder	Study Project Manager	MassDOT
Rachel Kelly	Study Team Member	MassDOT
Christine Trearchis	Study Team Member	VHB
Niki Hastings	Study Team Member	VHB
Matt Duranleau	Study Team Member	VHB
Christine Yi	Study Team Member	FHI Studio

Presentation

The following sections are copied from the presentation slides. Where necessary, comments from the study team and Zoom polling results have been added.

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Study Overview
 - Study Area
 - Study Process
 - Public Involvement Plan

- Previous Efforts and Themes
- 3. Goals and Objectives
- 4. Existing Conditions
 - Planning Context
 - Multimodal Mobility Conditions
- 5. Schedule and Next Steps
- 6. Public Comment Period

Welcome

Meeting with You Today

- ▶ MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
 - Patrick Snyder (Project Manager), Rachel Kelly
- ▶ Study Consultants:
 - Christine Trearchis (VHB), Niki Hastings (VHB), Matt Duranleau (VHB), Christine Yi (FHI Studio)

Study Overview

- ▶ The Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study will develop **long-term multimodal transportation solutions and safety improvements** to the Newton Corner I-90 Exit 127 Interchange.
- ▶ The study area includes Newton Corner, West Newton, and DCR Roadway areas in Newton, Brighton, and Watertown.
- ▶ The study will develop and analyze alternatives, present recommendations, and develop an approach for potential implementation.
- ▶ The study kicked off in Spring 2024, with a planned completion by the end of 2025.

Study Background

Previous Studies

- ▶ Will leverage previous studies that have occurred, including:
 - Newton Corner Road Safety Audit (2020)
 - Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) Newton Corner Studies (2006, 2009)
 - Local and state planning documents

Ongoing Projects/Studies

- ▶ MassDOT Short- to Mid-term Improvements project (DOT #609288)
 - Focused on operational / safety improvements on a 10-year horizon
 - Publication of Final Report expected in Fall 2024
 - Immediate safety improvements to be implemented Fall 2024

Previous Themes from Newton Corner Short/Mid-Term Improvements Project Public Information Meeting #1 (September 2022)

Biggest Transportation Concerns

- ▶ 51% Safety
- ▶ 25% Vehicular Traffic/Congestion
- ▶ 8% Pedestrian Infrastructure
- ▶ 7% Public Transit Access
- ▶ 5% Speeding
- ▶ 4% Bicycle Infrastructure

Comments from Public Information Meeting #1:

- ▶ “As a pedestrian, this is a nightmare. As a driver, there is not enough distance to merge (especially for visitors).”
- ▶ “Despite being a confident bicyclist, this is not a safe connection.”
- ▶ “Lack of clarity and channelization”

Local and Regional Study Area

- ▶ Long-term planning study areas include West Newton, Newton Corner Area, and the DCR Roadway Area. This area considers land use, environmental factors, and more.
- ▶ Regional study area considers public and private transit.

Study Process

Christine Trearchis walked through the graphic outlining the study process. The process is noted below:

- ▶ The study team first established goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria.
- ▶ The study team then developed the Working Group and created a Public Involvement Plan.
- ▶ The study team completed the Existing Conditions Analysis, which established the baseline for this study, and started to plan for Future Conditions, which look ahead toward the year 2050.
- ▶ Later in the process, the study team will create up to six long-term solutions as alternatives for detailed analysis. This process is intended to be a workshop-style development process that will start with an initial brainstorming and solicit ideas from the study team and stakeholders.
- ▶ After a first level screening of these ideas, the team will narrow down to six discrete alternatives to consider.
- ▶ Finally, the study team will analyze mobility, public health, economic development, and community effects along with evaluation criteria to form final recommendations based on the results of the analysis. Continuous stakeholder engagement is critical throughout this study process.

Public Involvement Plan

- ▶ Outreach Approach and Methods
- ▶ Outreach Team

- ▶ Working Group meetings (6)
- ▶ Public Information Meetings (4)
- ▶ Online engagement
- ▶ Study Website / Contact Information: <https://www.mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study>

We Want to Hear From You

- ▶ Share your lived experience with us
- ▶ Survey available in our Virtual Meeting Room
- ▶ <https://vmr.vhb.com/v/E118wZWNqOB>

Goals and Objectives

Study Goals

- ▶ Improve access, safety, and mobility for all
- ▶ Reconnect Newton's neighborhoods
- ▶ Enhance quality of life
- ▶ Promote sustainable transportation solutions
- ▶ Develop actionable recommendations

Goal: Improve Access, Safety, and Mobility for All

Objectives:

- ▶ Enhance safety for all users
- ▶ Expand access to transit options
- ▶ Improve transit priority and reliability
- ▶ Reduce travel delays for all users
- ▶ Protect major east-west regional roadway and transit connections
- ▶ Close social and economic transportation equity gaps

Goal: Reconnect Newton's Neighborhoods

Objectives:

- ▶ Reconnect neighborhoods isolated by the Newton Corner interchange
- ▶ Improve safety, convenience, and comfort for all travel
- ▶ Capitalize on existing facilities
- ▶ Create enhanced regional north/south connections for all users
- ▶ Support a welcoming environment through the lens of equity

Goal: Enhance Quality of Life

Objectives:

- ▶ Ensure that benefits and resources are distributed equitably
- ▶ Minimize public health and environmental impacts
- ▶ Minimize externalities of I-90 transportation demands
- ▶ Enhance economic opportunities
- ▶ Support land use and open space plans

Goal: Promote Sustainable Transportation Solutions

Objectives:

- ▶ Create solutions that include climate change mitigation measures
- ▶ Identify and adapt to risks associated with impacts of climate change
- ▶ Further the transition to low- and zero-emission transportation modes
- ▶ Align the project with local climate mitigation measures

Goal: Develop Actionable Recommendations

Objectives:

- ▶ Create solutions that have support from the public and host communities
- ▶ Identify projects that are cost-effective based on return on investment
- ▶ Develop projects that align with possible funding sources

Evaluation Criteria

- ▶ Evaluation criteria are the standards by which the goals and objectives will be measured and evaluated.
- ▶ Criteria for each goal and objective are currently being developed and will be used to facilitate the evaluation of the different alternatives.
- ▶ Draft evaluation criteria have been posted on study website.
- ▶ Link to full set of Evaluation Criteria: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study-draft-evaluation-criteria/download>

Poll Question

- ▶ The study team then initiated a Zoom poll with the following question: If you could envision the future of Newton Corner, what word would you use to describe it?
 - Poll answers were as follows: walkable, safe, efficient, welcoming, pleasant, community, smooth, integrated, pedestrian and bicycle friendly, accessible, connected, organized, unified, urbanized, , coherent, , lively, neighborhood, transit-accessible, urbanized, and easier and safer merging of cars.

Existing Conditions

Existing Conditions Review

Previous Planning Efforts:

- ▶ Primarily looked at Newton Corner, focused primarily on vehicles and intersection-level analysis.

Current Study:

- ▶ Explores a broad range of information, understanding transportation impacts in a broader context.
- ▶ Considers not just vehicles but land use, public health, environmental, demographics and more.
- ▶ Informs a variety of solutions that go beyond the current scope of previous efforts.

Previous Planning Efforts: Relevant Documents

Mobility Planning Documents (highlights)

- ▶ CTPS Newton Corner Studies (2006 and 2009)
- ▶ Newton Corner Road Safety Audit (2020)
- ▶ Congestion in the Commonwealth (2019)
- ▶ MBTA Bus Network Redesign (2022 and ongoing)
- ▶ MassDOT Beyond Mobility (2024)

Mobility Key Takeaways

- ▶ Recommendations to improve the local and regional study area, including reconfiguring roadways and installing new pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.
- ▶ Enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accommodations need to be a critical component of all local and statewide infrastructure projects.
- ▶ Improving roadway safety and reducing the number of collisions needs to be a key objective of infrastructure projects.

Mobility: Mode Share & Vehicle Ownership

- ▶ While people travel through the study area for all purposes, commuter data provides insight on existing mode share and travel patterns.
 - <10% of commuters who live in Newton take public transit
 - 6% of the Newton population are zero-car households
 - 52% of commuters who live in Newton drive alone
- ▶ The current design of Newton Corner is oriented toward driving and does not optimally serve alternate modes.

Mobility: Pedestrians

- ▶ Pedestrian accommodations through Newton Corner are limited and uncomfortable.
- ▶ Some locations are not ADA compliant.
- ▶ Pedestrians experience a high level of traffic stress when walking along major roads.
- ▶ Newton Corner is a critical pedestrian area due to bus stops and its proximity to a village center and the Charles River.
- ▶ North-south connections require an indirect route that could be made more efficient, safe, and low-stress.
- ▶ Examples of Non-Accessible Accommodations
 - An uncomfortable and wide pedestrian crossing location
 - A curb ramp where the transition to the street is not flush

Mobility: Bicycles

- ▶ Dedicated bicycle facilities are limited and those that exist are disconnected.
- ▶ The Charles River paths are a key east-west bicycle route but lack neighborhood connections.
- ▶ There is demand for north–south connections.
- ▶ This study will consider ways to create more direct and comfortable connections to existing facilities.

Mobility: Transit (Buses)

- ▶ Bus transit hub that will see high frequency service under MBTA Bus Network Redesign
- ▶ Washington St @ Bacon St bus stop sees over 600 boardings / alightings per day (busiest in study area).
- ▶ Private shuttles are provided in study area by local colleges, Transportation Management Associations, and others.
- ▶ Newton Corner is a large transfer bus hub with high ridership, which could merit transit priority treatments.

Mobility: Transit (Rail)

- ▶ 4 Worcester/Framingham Line MBTA Commuter Rail stations in the regional study area
- ▶ The 3 Newton stations are stair-access only and are not accessible.
- ▶ Ongoing MBTA projects to address
- ▶ Other rail options include the Green Line south of I-90 and the Fitchburg Line in Waltham.
- ▶ Connections to Commuter Rail stations could be made easier with improved bus, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

Mobility: Existing Travel Patterns (Origin-Destination Data)

- ▶ Most vehicles using the Newton Corner interchange are local, with origins and destinations in the study area.
- ▶ Majority of vehicle traffic is bound for destinations in the immediate Newton Corner area, with some destinations beyond that.
- ▶ Existing trip patterns indicate heavy reliance on Exit 127, which must process large traffic volumes.

Mobility: Vehicles

- ▶ Many roadways are over capacity, notably the I-90 eastbound off-ramp.
- ▶ The roadway network can be confusing with lane weaving and inadequate wayfinding.
- ▶ Existing street network operates inefficiently with the number of lane changes required and merge/conflict points.

Safety: High Crash Locations

- ▶ Several Road Safety Audits identified safety issues and potential enhancements.
- ▶ 3% of crashes inventoried at study area intersections in 2018, 2019, and 2021 involved pedestrians or bicyclists.

- ▶ Alternatives will consider long-term safety improvements and safer, more comfortable accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Land Use & Zoning

- ▶ The study area is primarily residential with commercial and mixed-use zones in village centers and along key corridors.
- ▶ Future development may be focused in current zoning overlay districts such as West Newton village and Arsenal Street in Watertown.
- ▶ Office space has grown by nearly 40% in the past decade.
- ▶ Develop alternatives that consider current and future land use, with likely further office development and moderate increase in density.

Population & Employment

- ▶ Newton has lower population and employment densities than Watertown, Cambridge, and Boston.
- ▶ Minority populations in Newton (27%) and Watertown (29%) are slightly below the statewide average (31%).
- ▶ The local study area hosts over 3,000 businesses and nearly 40,000 employees.
- ▶ Significant employment hubs in the study area include Boston Landing and the Arsenal Street corridor.
- ▶ Consider equity and the variety of populations that use the Newton Corner area for travel.
- ▶ Newton Demographics [Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2022)]
 - Total Population: 88,453
 - Youth Population: 21%
 - Senior Population: 19%
 - 8% of the population identify as having a disability
 - 27% of the population identify as minorities

Environmental Justice (EJ) & Public Health

- ▶ Within the regional study area, several EJ neighborhoods are in Waltham, Watertown, Boston, and Brookline.
- ▶ Compared to the U.S. and the Boston Metro Area, the study areas display lower prevalence of all chronic diseases, except for asthma.
- ▶ Consider public health and environmental concerns when developing alternatives to improve quality of life.

Preliminary Existing Conditions Issues, Opportunities & Constraints

- ▶ Roadway Geometry & Safety: Existing roadway geometry and congestion linked to safety issues.
- ▶ Transportation Infrastructure Barrier: MBTA rail line and I-90 hinder north-south mobility
- ▶ Interchange Reliance: Lack of access points along I-90
- ▶ Automobile Commute: 60% of Newton residents commute via automobile modes.

- ▶ Non-Resident Workforce: 94% of the workforce commutes from outside the area, causing congestion and demand.
- ▶ Natural & Historic Resources: Natural, historic and archeological resources constrict alternatives.
- ▶ Climate Vulnerability: Extreme heat is a significant concern in local climate resiliency plans.

Schedule and Next Steps

Study Schedule

Patrick reviewed the schedule for the study and noted that the study framework is complete and the existing conditions work is concluding. He stated that the public feedback from this meeting would be included before moving into future conditions work.

Our Next Steps

- ▶ Tonight's presentation and Zoom recording will be posted to the study website.
- ▶ Incorporate public input from this meeting
- ▶ Finalize Existing Conditions Review
- ▶ Study team will kick-off Future Conditions Analysis and summary of Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints.
- ▶ Once Future Conditions are complete, the initial alternatives development phase will begin.
- ▶ Working Group Meeting #3: Future Conditions & Alternative Development (Winter 2024/2025)
- ▶ Public Meeting #2 (Winter 2024/2025)

How to Reach Us

- ▶ Study Website/ Contact Information: mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study
- ▶ Virtual Meeting Room: vmr.vhb.com/v/E118wZWNqOB
- ▶ Via Email: planning@dot.state.ma.us

Public Comment Period

The below comments and questions include those from both Working Group members and attendees. They were submitted verbally or through the Q&A chat function on Zoom.

- ▶ Dana Hanson from Congressman Jake Auchincloss's office thanked the study team for holding this meeting and stated that Congressman Auchincloss's office is available to support the project in any way possible.
 - Patrick thanked Dana and the Congressman for these remarks.
- ▶ Robin Boger thanked the study team for considering multiple factors that constitute life in Newton Corner. She began with background information on the construction of the Pike (I-90) in the 1960s, which replaced two-thirds of the village's retail space with a giant trench and the "Circle of Death" (a nickname used by residents). She stated that this village-oriented retail space has been replaced by office spaces that depend on the Pike for access. Robin shared that the economic conditions in Newton Corner discussed in the presentation refer to the economic situation of these businesses, and she believes these services are not used by residents of Newton Corner. She claimed there is little commercial and retail

space dedicated to meet the needs of people in the neighborhood. She urged the study team to be more precise when speaking about economic development in Newton Corner. She encouraged the study team to consider the development that responds to the people who live in Newton Corner rather than the development that benefits from the presence of the Pike. She concluded by stating her desire for the study team to consider ways to bring more village-oriented business back to Newton Corner in their analysis.

- Patrick thanked Robin for her comment, noted that Newton Corner is a key neighborhood in Newton, and stated the study team will keep her comments in mind.
- Christine also expressed appreciation for Robin's comment and noted that all land uses within the purview of the study area were assessed. The study team tried to highlight a lot of information and analysis within this presentation; while office space was just one point that the team highlighted, the study team did not overlook retail space.
- ▶ Nate Gibson asked if MassDOT will share information, such as traffic projections, with the public.
 - Patrick stated that this comment seems to refer to future conditions. The future conditions phase is the next step. The study team will present the results of the future conditions at the next Public Information Meeting once the work has been completed.
- ▶ Seth Parker asked if the scope includes potential land acquisition, including eminent domain.
 - Patrick asked Christine to speak with this. He is familiar with the scope but wanted clarification on right of way.
 - Christine stated that a brief analysis of existing rights of way and easements are part of the scope. Potential right of way impacts will be reviewed in the alternatives analysis phase.
- ▶ Nancy Felts asked whether modifications to the West Newton exits to the Pike (I-90) are being considered (as they currently can only enter or exit in one direction). She also asked if there are any entrances/exits being considered for Brighton.
 - Patrick thanked Nancy for her question and stated that this will be explored in the alternatives development phase. Patrick stated that this is a long-term planning study which does not provide solutions in the short- and mid-term. However, the long-term study team will consider the possibility of changes to the exits and how those might impact existing traffic patterns, changes in land use, and future travel patterns in the long-term.
- ▶ Suzanne Loughlin asked if MassDOT considered expanding the West Newton interchange to include both on- and off-ramps in each direction. She remarked that she would like to see less traffic in Newton Corner.
 - Patrick thanked Suzanne and stated that this will be considered during the alternatives development phase.
- ▶ DD Morton asked what the sources of funding for a project resulting from this study were.
 - Patrick stated that the Newton Corner Long-Term Planning Study is currently not a funded infrastructure project but a planning study to develop concepts for a future potential project. Later in the study, the study team will develop a list of ideas for funding sources that will be included if the study moves forward toward a project. Patrick thanked DD Morton for this question.
- ▶ Bill McBeath asked what kind and size of budget is expected. He noted that budget could impact how ambitious the solution can be. He also stated that the budget impacts the scope and ambition of proposed solutions, such as adding pedestrian overpasses or other major structural changes to the interchange.
 - Patrick thanked Bill for the question and stated that the study team will develop alternatives first then think about factors such as cost and constructability.

- ▶ Seth Parker followed up to the response to his prior question and asked for confirmation on whether the project scope would permit land acquisition including eminent domain.
 - Patrick stated that consideration for land acquisition follows the study further in project development and during the study it will be analyzed to the extent feasible.
 - Christine stated that everything is on the table for consideration during alternatives development. Right of way, potential land acquisitions, and easements will be considered as the study team goes through alternatives analysis and scores alternatives to recommend moving forward. She also stated that this is a long-term planning study and does not include design, which is where any final determination on right of way impacts will occur. Any outcome from this is on a planning-level and is not an indication that property acquisition is certain.
 - Patrick thanked Christine for her remarks and welcomed Seth to ask for further clarification.
- ▶ Alina Duckham shared that she is an avid commuter to the city by express bus and affirmed the characterization of Newton Corner as a major hub. While she understands this study is focused on the long-term, she wanted to know who to contact in terms of short-term fixes. Examples of concerns include reductions in MBTA bus services to Newton, increase in single-occupancy vehicle usage, MBTA bus routing, and signage related to the “circle of death.”
 - Patrick thanked Alina for her comments. He stated that he works in the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, which is carrying out this study on long-term planning improvements separately from MassDOT Highway Division’s ongoing immediate and short-term construction work to address the cited examples. He also shared that the MassDOT Highway Division has just completed a study of short- and mid-term improvements that could be advanced in the coming years. Patrick concluded by providing an e-mail address (newtoncornerimprovements@dot.state.ma.us) for Alina to voice support for the aforementioned improvements and ask questions about the Highway Division’s ongoing construction work.
 - Patrick then shared additional information to learn more and engage with the long-term study and study team.
 Study Website/Contact Information: mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study
 Virtual Meeting Room: vmr.vhb.com/v/E118wZWNqOB
 Via Email: planning@dot.state.ma.us
- ▶ Jini Fairley asked what resources and methods were used to determine a low percentage of people with disabilities in this study area.
 - Patrick thanked Jini for the question. He noted that Jini had brought up this point during the Working Group meeting and the study team discussed it and reviewed a variety of methods. Patrick called on Christine to provide details on how the data was extrapolated.
 - Christine thanked Jini for her question and stated that the statistic on people with disabilities came from the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau data. Following the Working Group meeting, Christine reached out to Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director of the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD), to learn about their data sources. IHCD’s data sources captured national data, which could not be parsed into the Block Group-level information used by the study team to analyze Newton. The study team used U.S. Census Bureau data due to the availability of Block Group-level data. She acknowledged that the Census data relies on self-reported data and that the true statistic of people with disabilities may be closer to the national average at 20%. Christine noted that disabilities can be unseen and emphasized that accessibility and consideration of people with disabilities is important and part of the goals and objectives of the study regardless of what the true percentage is.

- ▶ Suzanne Loughlin asked if it would be possible to cap the area over the Pike (I-90) to allow pedestrians to transverse the north and south sides of the community. She also stated that there might also be room for additional green space and recreational areas.
 - Patrick stated that the study team can think about this as part of the alternatives development phase. He shared that part of the study is about enhancing quality of life, which relates to recreational access and increasing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
- ▶ Srdjan Nedeljkovic thanked the study team for having a public meeting and shared that he was glad to see the expanded goals of the study, which include reconnecting communities as opposed to simply moving traffic through a neighborhood. He hoped the alternative analysis will include reconnecting Centre Street across the Pike (I-90). This could allow vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists to travel directly across the two severed portions on Centre Street. He also suggested reducing aggressive driver behavior on one-way roads by allowing bi-directional flows of traffic on these roads. He also highlighted the westbound on-ramp as an issue. He suggested the possibility of moving the westbound ramp somewhere else or closing the ramp.
 - Patrick thanked Srdjan for his input and noted that the study team will review his comments in the alternatives analysis phase.
- ▶ Seth Parker asked who would fund the project and if there was a budget constraint.
 - Patrick stated that funding would be considered toward the end of the study process and thanked Seth for his question. Because the study area lies in multiple jurisdictions, the resulting efforts from this study will be a coordinated effort with MassDOT and other involved entities to determine the funding together.
- ▶ Janet M asked for a link to the slides in the chat.
 - Patrick provided a link to the study website (mass.gov/newton-corner-long-term-planning-study) and stated that the slides are not currently online yet. It will take up to one week for the slides and recording to be uploaded to make sure the slides meet accessibility requirements.
- ▶ Anthony Tucker shared that he believes a Commuter Rail station at Newton Corner could strengthen regional mobility and help ease traffic through this area. He also stated that an infill station at Newton Corner is needed and should be prioritized.
 - Patrick thanked Anthony for his suggestion and stated that the study team will consider this during alternatives development phase.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee stated that there are short-, medium-, and long-term studies. When there are studies, presentations, and webinars, the study team should clearly indicate which study that the materials apply to.
 - Patrick thanked the attendee for the feedback and stated that the study team will try to make the distinction clearer in the future.
- ▶ Madelyn Sorensen asked what "minimize externalities" regarding I-90 meant.
 - Christine thanked Madelyn for the question and stated that an externality related to I-90 would indicate a side effect or consequence. Examples include air pollution, noise pollution, and congestion.
- ▶ Anthony Tucker shared that a new bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists could help with north-south connectivity. He notes his hope that a pedestrian bridge could be considered in one or more alternatives.
 - Patrick thanked Anthony for this comment and stated that the study team will think about this as the study progresses.

- ▶ Rosalind Williams asked if these studies include interplay between Newton Corner, Watertown Square, and Oak Square. She stated that the future of Newton Corner heavily involves connections beyond Newton.
 - Christine replied that the study considers connections to other communities. While the intersection analysis is limited to West Newton, Newton Corner, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation Roads, the study team is working with a travel demand model that includes regional locations and assists with projecting future transportation demands. Additionally, the study team is coordinating with the City of Boston and the City of Watertown on planned projects in their respective communities to have an accurate future baseline condition.
- ▶ Seth Parker stated that the Newton Corner traffic circle is used predominantly by vehicles and he believes that bicycle use would be incompatible. He suggested routing bicycles to other roads or bicycles paths to avoid having bicycles and vehicles using the same roads. For example, Church Street could be used for north-south bicycle travel across I-90.
 - Patrick thanked Seth for his feedback and stated that improving access, safety, and mobility for all is a goal of this study. This includes considering new safe and comfortable bicycle facilities in and around Newton Corner.
- ▶ An anonymous attendee suggested that adding an eastbound off-ramp in Newtonville (at Lowell Avenue) could ease traffic at Exit 127 in Newton Corner. The attendee added that although a new off-ramp at this location could likely be expensive and disruptive to construct, it should be considered as a future project to evenly distribute traffic from the Pike in Newton.
 - Christine thanked the attendee for the input and stated that the study team will consider the suggested improvement in the alternatives development phase.
- ▶ Bill McBeath asked whether the study team was exploring last-mile opportunities to access the bus to Boston. Examples might be commuter parking, Uber/taxi drop-off and pick-up facilities, and frequent shuttle bus services.
 - Christine thanked Bill for this input and stated that the study team will consider these suggested improvements to facilitate connections to Newton Corner in the alternatives development phase.
- ▶ Rosalind Williams stated that the presentation emphasized connections beyond Newton and referred to an expectation of more office workers in the general area. She stated that there was a recent article in the Boston Globe. In the article, one of the new tenants of 66 Galen Street discussed how office workers want to patronize local businesses. She underscored Robin Boger's comment about the lack of small businesses and the need to make Newton Corner much more welcoming to village-sized commerce.
 - Patrick thanked Rosalind for her comment.
- ▶ Seth Parker asked if the design alternatives could include a designated bus transfer and layover area.
 - Patrick thanked Seth for the suggestion and shared that the study team is considering a variety of transit improvements.
- ▶ Janet M shared that the Newton Senior Center might have data on disability in the area. She also noted that many seniors may not report disabilities despite starting to use walkers or even just walking much slower.
 - Christine thanked Janet for the suggestion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

