

FAQ Washington Street

The following questions were either asked or inferred at the August 24th Washington Street Survey Open House; answers to those questions are provided here for additional guidance and clarity.

Q: Is the sidewalk project going to remove a lot of large trees that provide wonderful shade and aesthetics along Washington Street?

A: Not unless absolutely necessary. For any segment of Washington Street where a sidewalk is proposed, a large shade tree is a feature that the Town would want to save and find some way to avoid removing or threatening the health of the tree.

Q: What happens if we have a fence, wall, or other improvement within the right-of-way?

A: If these features are within the adopted right-of-way, they are technically on Town land. However, unless there is an imminent project proposed for the right-of-way in front of your property AND that project was proposed for exactly where your improvement is, then the improvement will be able to remain as is.

Q: What if we do need to remove or move one of our yard improvements? Will the Town pay us for that?

A: Not likely. If a property owner has built an improvement within the public right-of-way, they would be assumed to have done so with the requisite due diligence to find out where their property line was.

Q: What happens next with the right-of-way?

A: Based on received comments, any required minor plan modifications will be made and the final ROW plans will be provided to Town Counsel for legal review of a proposed adoption of the plan. Once legal review has been conducted and any issues resolved, the plan will be submitted to the Town Manager for approval/adoption. The Town Manager may or may not give the Selectboard the opportunity to make this decision. Once the right-of-way plan has been adopted, it is the official right-of-way of Washington Street.

Q: When are the sidewalks going to be designed and built?

A: The Town's top priority sidewalk segment is the segment from Bluefish River Bridge to Fort Hill Lane (#10 on the Prioritization Plan Update). Since the Town will seek the maximum grant amount of \$500,000 during FY 2024 and the estimated construction cost for Segment #10 is considerably less than that maximum amount, we may be able to complete 1-2 additional segments called for in the Plan Update as part of this funding round. Our consultant has recommended segment #5 and part of segment #6 (see locator map [HERE](#)). However, the Town expects to hold a public meeting in September to finalize the segments before the grant application is due on October 1st. After this, Duxbury will not be eligible for another Complete Streets grant for another four (4) years. Sidewalk segments may be constructed sooner should other source(s) of funding be found.

Q: Is the Town going to be proactive and plan holistically in the Washington Street corridor or just have tunnel vision and approach projects in a silo, wasting our tax dollars?

A: Before implementing any projects, the Town will coordinate interdepartmentally and between boards and committees to gain an understanding of other potential projects that may be slated for a given area in the near future to maximize efficiency and allow for the prudent use of tax dollars.

Q: Where are the sidewalks going along Washington Street, in other words, what side of the street?

A: The sidewalks have preliminarily been planned to be primarily located on the west side of the street. However, the ultimate location of the sidewalk will depend on a number of factors, including where the right-of-way best facilitates a facility meeting ADA requirements, where existing sidewalks are located, where people currently walk, where there are a minimum number of obstructions, where certain key destinations can be connected, and where we can minimize the number of roadway crossings. Each segment will require an independent assessment to determine where a sidewalk is best suited.

Q: How will you put a sidewalk along areas of Washington Street that have power poles, mailboxes, fire hydrants, and other obstacles?

A: Any proposed sidewalks will need to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements as well as Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) criteria. Any obstacles that can be retained while still meeting these requirements will be retained, and any obstacles that prevent these requirements from being met will be evaluated for relocation accordingly.

Q: Now that the Planning Director is leaving, who will manage this project in the interim?

A: Mr. Patrick Brennan of PGB Engineering, LLC will be the principal and primary point of contact after the Planning Director seat is vacated. However, there will be other individuals who can assist in answering questions and making decisions or judgments. The current Planning Director will be available on a limited basis; the Planning Board Administrative Assistant can help with some matters such as scheduling or communications; and several committees, such as the Sidewalk and Bike Lane Committee, the Highway Safety Advisory Committee, and the Washington Street Project Working Group, are all available to assist.

Q: When will we be able to discuss the proposed sidewalk projects, including their material, width, location, etc.?

A: The Sidewalk and Bike Lane Committee is expected to host a discussion in mid-September to formalize the set of projects for which construction funding will be sought as part of the October 1st Complete Streets grant application. It is at this meeting that such matters may be raised and discussed.

Q: Why don't you just design the entirety of the Washington Street corridor and build it at once rather than approach it piecemeal?

A: Funding limits a more comprehensive approach to this project, but the Town will be diligent in making sure that project planning and coordination, particularly between phases and segments, is done optimally.