

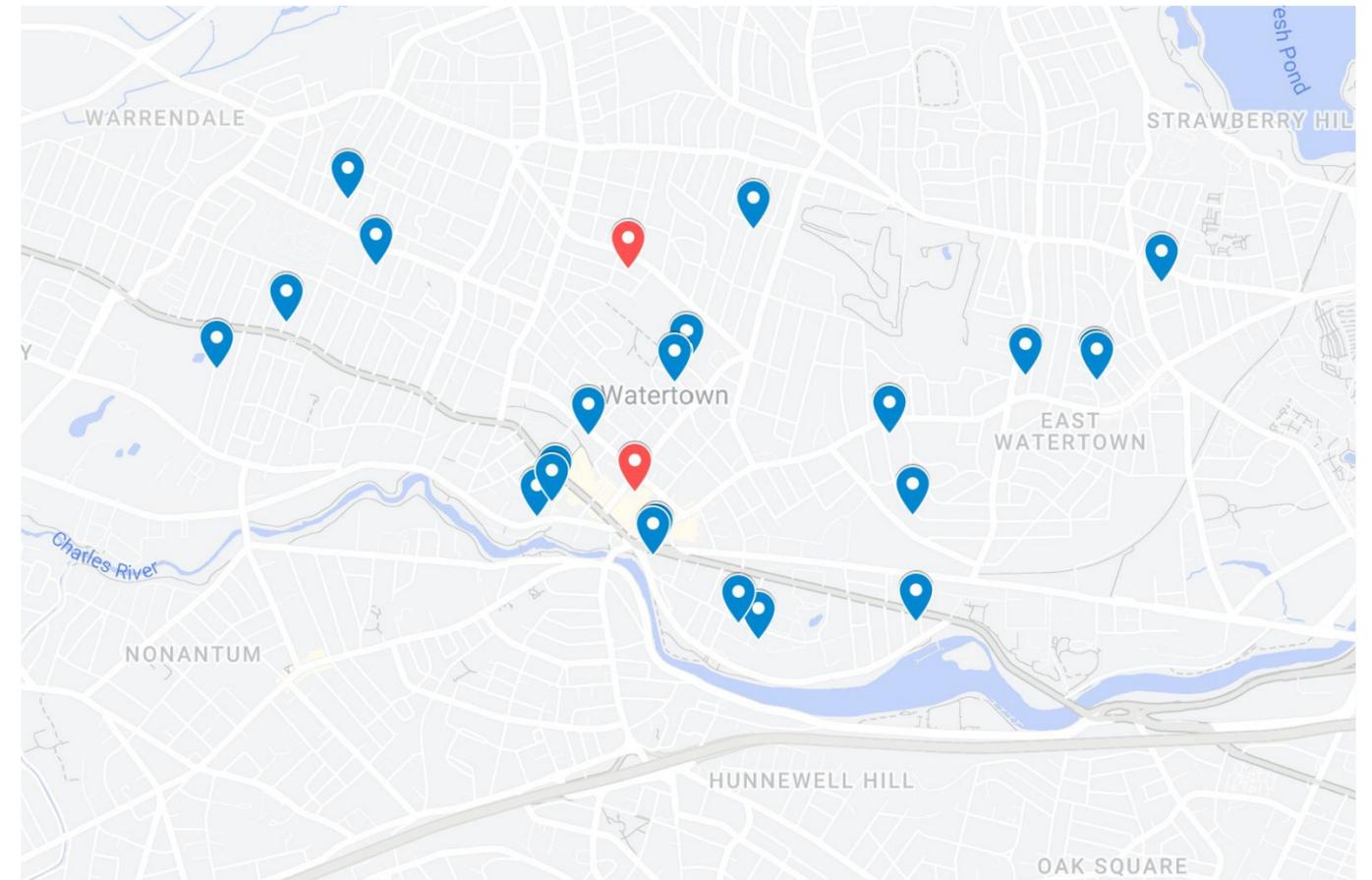
Public Engagement

Kitchen Table Conversations Preliminary Feedback

Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC)

Hosted from October 30 to November 17, 2023

- Small group conversations focused on how residents currently engage with the Square and what they would like to see the Square become
- Attended by over 150 residents in 20 locations across the City
- Facilitated by Watertown Community Conversations
- Specific meetings with Perkins School for the Blind and Watertown Business Coalition



Initial Kitchen Table Conversations Locations

Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC)

Feedback Received

What's working in the Square currently?

- Watertown Free Public Library fosters community
- Access to Charles River Greenway
- Cultural diversity

What would you change about Watertown Square?

- Slowing and reducing traffic to increase biker and pedestrian safety
- Enhanced and increased connectivity to greenspace
- More, vibrant businesses and venues catered to gathering and community: i.e. grocery store, food stand or restaurant, music or dance venue, etc.
- Architectural character of buildings

Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC)

Common Themes

Throughout all conversations, the following themes were emphasized:

- The new Watertown Square should **invite and foster community**
- **Walkability and connectivity** between assets already in the square should be improved
- **Accessibility and green space** considerations should be at the forefront of any design
- Look to **unique building facades** like the Watertown Savings Bank to guide the aesthetics and design



Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC)

Selected Quotes

Plan accessibility FIRST when thinking about Watertown Square – whatever is not functioning well for us [low vision and blind community members] needs to be top of the list for any upcoming changes.

We already have a lot of what we want, but there isn't a design to foster a community feel, enhance businesses that are here, and connect all the pieces. Often we have to stumble upon things.

My pet peeve is the Delta, which lacks charm. Why don't we copy European examples? Install a fountain, benches, and invite food carts.

The library is the heartbeat of the Square. How can this reverberate and be expanded throughout the Square?

Arsenal Yards is a cautionary tale. Is there a way to do that without chains? We want to retain our New England character and preserve our history.

Watertown Square should be less of a highway and more of a destination. Give it a sense of place, with clues that say 'you have arrived.'

Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC)

Varying Opinions

The following topics had conflicting opinions across different conversations:

- **Parking**

- Desire to keep parking to support local businesses and for personal convenience
- CVS lot identified as potential space for recreational use
- Many pointed to Arsenal Yard as a negative example due to car focused infrastructure

- **Transit**

- Some preferred to improve and increase bus access in and through Watertown Square
- Many wondered if removing bus service from the Square would improve traffic

