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Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 12:06 PM

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Subject: For Public Safety: UTV Ordinance and Front Lawn Parking

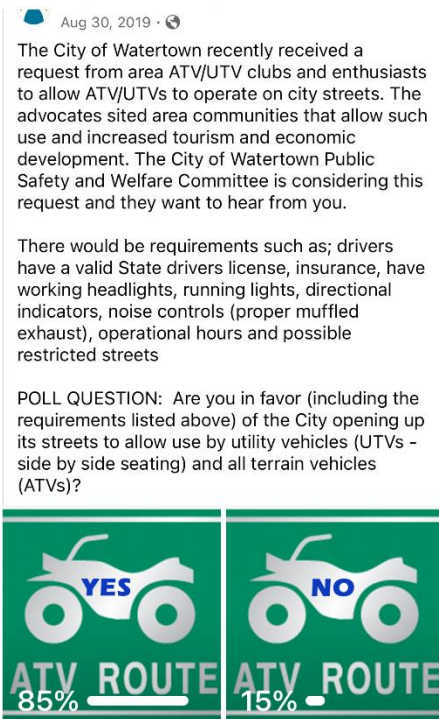
** PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL - CONSIDER OPEN MEETINGS REGULATIONS **

Good morning Public Safety and Welfare Committee members and City of Watertown staff!

I am asking your committee to consider two matters that would potentially lead to new or revised ordinances in the next few months. One is consideration of a new ordinance that would permit the safe use of Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs) on select City streets. The other is consideration of language that would officially ban parking vehicles on front lawns.

UTV Ordinance

Popular interest in a UTV ordinance that allows use throughout the City is not a new issue. In 2019 the City of Watertown published an unofficial poll that suggested that 85% of your constituents are in favor of new freedoms for UTVs. Around the same time, the Watertown Chamber of Commerce "Collaboration Committee" (on which Ald. Board and I have participated) also considered and endorsed a UTV-friendly approach as a new way to encourage people to circulate throughout the city. It is also often observed that we are one of the last "Highway 26" communities to ban UTVs within City limits, since they are currently allowed in Juneau, Johnson Creek, Jefferson and Fort Atkinson. I continue to endorse and agree with these sentiments, and am also interested in UTVs (especially the fully electric UTVs) as a low-energy, low-pollution alternative to cars and trucks on our City roadways.



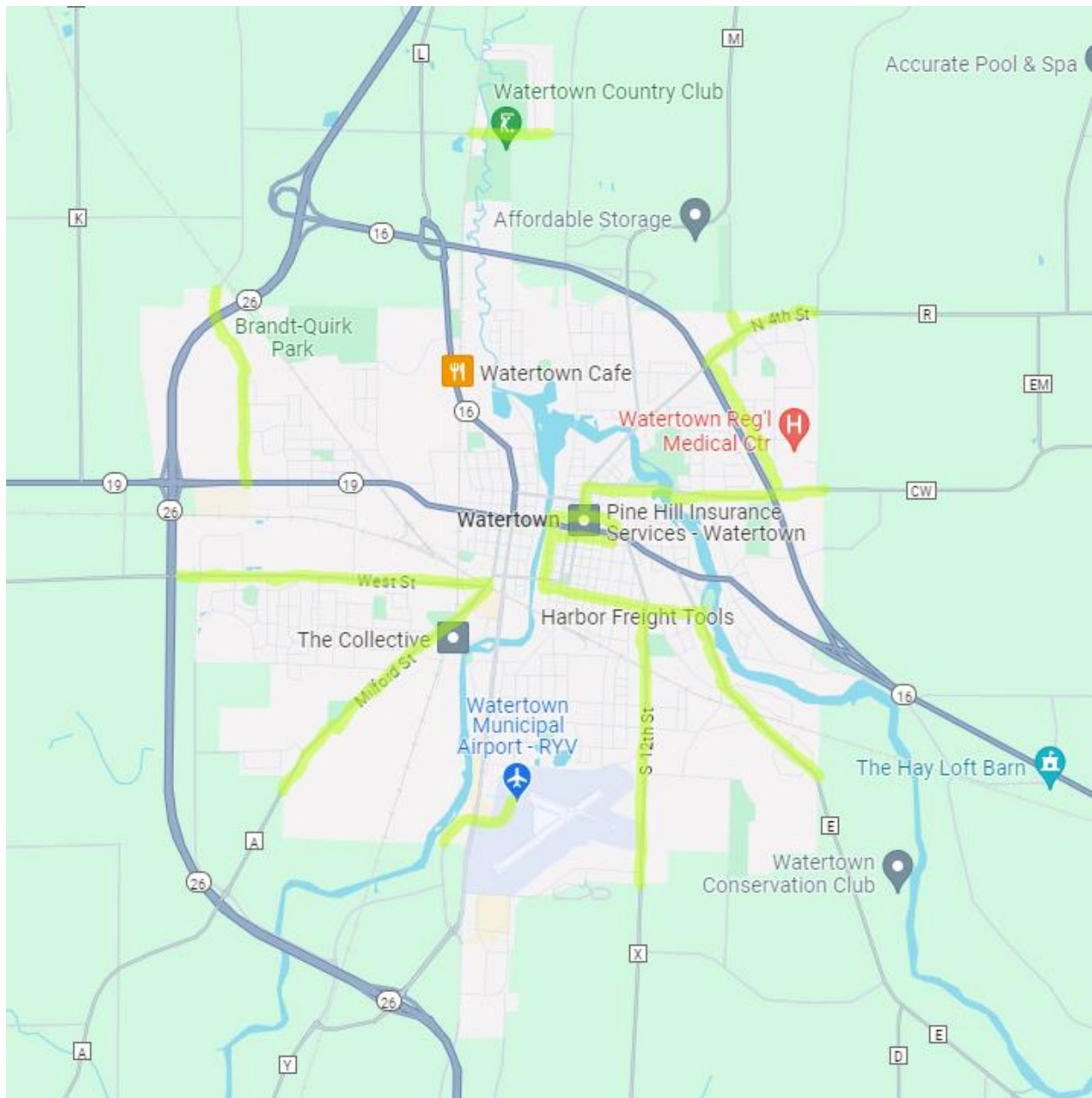
August 30, 2019 official City of Watertown Facebook poll. About 3,600 people voted in this poll with about 3,000 voting "Yes" and 561 voting "No".

Despite the City's unfortunate graphic (that shows an ALL-terrain vehicle or ATV), the average UTV has many safety features that we associate with cars, including seats, restraints, lights and rollover protection. The risk to pedestrians is generally less than that with cars and trucks because UTVs weigh substantially less (and can stop faster) and drivers are typically operating in an open-air environment that avoids the isolation of a climate-controlled cockpit.

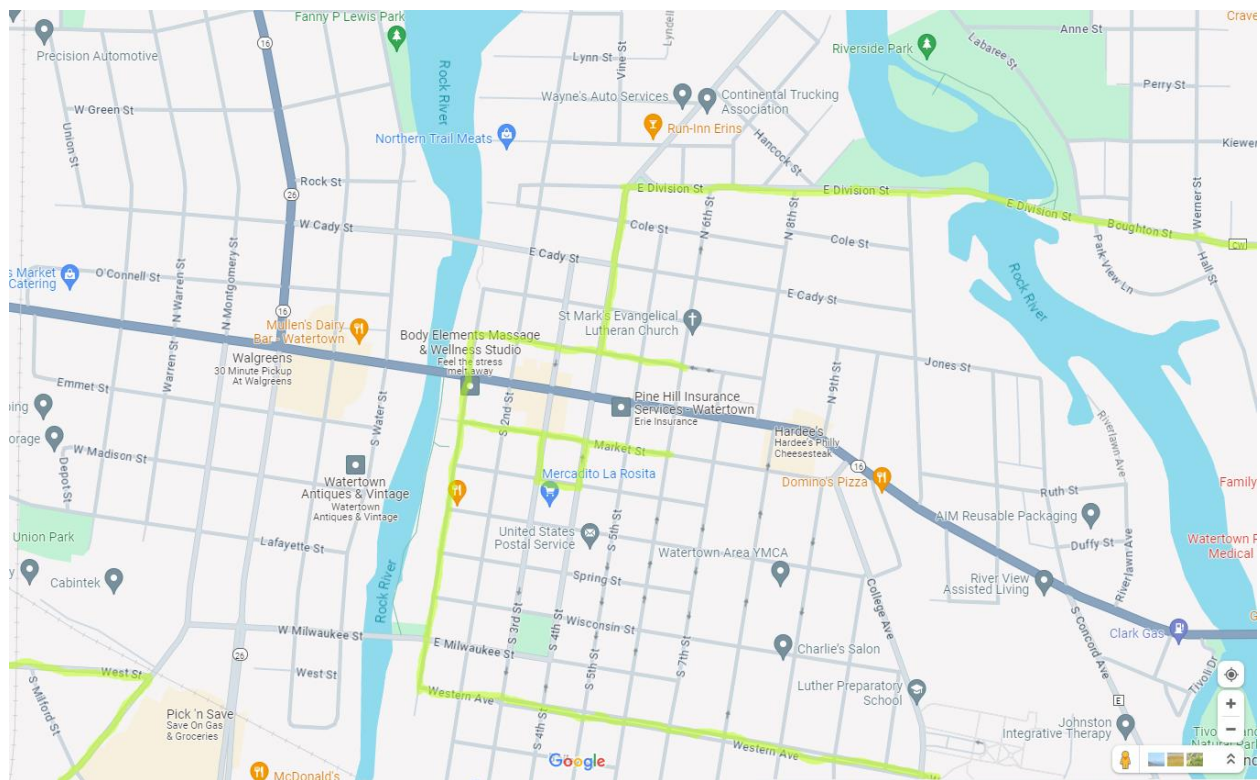
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|---------------------|---|---|
| |  |  |
| | ATV | UTV |
| Seating | 1 to 2 riders straddle seats | 2 to 6 riders sit inside |
| Controls | Handlebars | Steering wheel |
| Rollover Protection | No | Yes |
| Size | Smaller | Larger |
| Weight | Lighter | Heavier |

Graphic from EBay - August 23, 2023 - <https://www.ebay.com/motors/blog/differences-between-atvs-and-utvs/>

I have enclosed a draft UTV ordinance that establishes an initial and *limited-route* ATV/UTV use plan around which I would hope we would find consensus. (You can find many other communities UTV ordinances - such as the [one for the City of Jefferson](#) or the [one for Village of Johnson Creek](#) - online.) This ordinance requires strict adherence to safety regulations and would keep UTVs off major roads while serving Main Street from parallel streets to the north and south. (Maps showing routes which match the enclosure are provided below). I am, of course, open to expanded areas of operation (especially connectors), but limited routes, including crossing of major roads at controlled intersections when possible, would allow citizens and staff currently uncomfortable with the idea of UTVs in our community the opportunity to experience life with them in a limited capacity and participate in a future decision to pare back or expand the allowed area.



Map of routes described in enclosed ordinance draft. Note that travel on state highways is avoided.



Map of routes described in enclosed ordinance draft. Note that access to Main Street businesses is available without access to Main Street itself.

For additional background on the topic, I have also enclosed the November 2023 Municipality article on the UTVs. Finally, I am CC'ing the names of three Watertown business owners, residents and former government staffers who can provide additional background and connect you with other interested parties (Ryan Jones, owner of Central Block Kitchen and Designs downtown and resident of Watertown District 8, Karah Pugh, owner of Badgerland Roofing and Biggs, the Topsy Goose and Local Waters downtown, and Jacob Maas, former Zoning Administrator and resident of Watertown District 2.)

Regards,

Jonathan Lampe

- City of Watertown District 2 Alderperson
- Serving on Finance, RDA and Parks, Recreation and Forestry (Through April 2025)
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