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>> Welcome, everyone, and thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Victoria and I'm the coordinator of the city haul community meetings.

Before we begin, I would like to note that live transcription is available tonight for those joining via Zoom. If you would like to see live captioning during this meeting, please select the 'See Captions' Button on your screen.

I have a few additional items before we begin. Bathrooms are located just outside auditorium straight outside and to the right. Everyone is welcome to pizza and refreshments which are located outside the auditorium. No food or drinks are allowed inside auditorium. The survey is out and we have our staff here and ready to talk with you about the survey and assist in filling out some [?] do.

I just want to go over the run of show for tonight.

Tonight's city hall community meeting is in a hybrid format. In addition to those with us here at the East Somerville Community School, residents are tuned in online via Zoom.

We have a pretty packed agenda tonight.

Presentations will not be taking too deep a dive into any subject and will primarily focus on main updates.

For the sake of time, we have established a process for taking your questions.

Once each speaker finishes

Their presentations, we'll take up to two questions from our live audience. From there we will take another two questions from our Zoom audience. We have staff with a wireless microphone for those of you here with us, so we will come around, just raise your hand if you have a question.

Presenters, please make sure to speak slowly and to repeat all in-person questions to ensure those on Zoom can also hear it.

If you're on Zoom, please write any questions you have in the Q&A area on your screen. Questions will be read aloud by staff and will be answered by the presenter.

If we don't get to your question initially, don't worry, upon completion of each presentation staff members will spend a few minutes with us checking the online Q&A and writing in answers to additional questions.

While not presenting tonight, we do have other departments here with us, including Somerville fire department, the council on aging and Health and Human Services. Staff are ready to speak with you and answer your questions. Please come up and say hello or if you're on Zoom, feel free to write in a question and we'll make sure it gets to the appropriate staff member. Around 8:00 p.m. this meeting will come to a close. If you have any remaining questions, we ask that you email [cm@somervillema.gov](mailto:cm@somervillema.gov) and we will get those questions answered in the coming days.

For those of you here with us, staff will be hanging out after the meeting for additional conversations. Tonight's meeting is also being recorded by CityTV and will be on the live YouTube channel in the coming weeks.

Thank you for take the time to be with us here tonight. I'd now like to invite Councilor McLaughlin.

>> Councilor McLaughlin: Hello, everyone, I'm Matthew McLaughlin, good to see you all in person for the first time in three years for a staff meeting. We haven't had the opportunity to be like this and hello everyone to remote as well. But very excited to be here finally after such a long time of not being able to see human beings for such a period.

This is not a meeting that I'm here to talk a lot at. I'm hear to hear your concerns and we have Matt Valentine here also. If people are interested in getting more community updates, I have an email list that I put out sporadically and full of information so I don't overwhelm you email box with it. If you want to talk to me about that after this meeting, that would be great. Otherwise, I'm interested in hearing from the city, interested in hearing from all of you and thank you all for coming.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Good evening, everybody. I'm Katjana Ballantyne, my pronouns are she/her and I'm really excited to be here with you tonight. I've attended these meetings as a resident, as a city Councilor, as a city council president, and now as mayor. Some of you may know that this particular meeting formerly known as ResiStat, but we renamed it city hall community meetings. For some of you this may be your first time attending a meeting in Ward 1 and for some this may be your first time in a meeting ever.

Whichever it is, I hope tonight provides your clarity on how City Hall is and can be a resource for you. I also hope it empowers you to get involved in city processes.

The goal of the ward City Hall community meetings is to provide you with access -- excuse me, information, access, and community to get to know some of your neighbors.

And what I'd like to start out with is just sort of get a sense of who's in the room. So I'm going to ask a few questions and I'll just ask if you would raise your hand. If this is your first meeting ever for the City of Somerville, would you raise your hand?

Wonderful. Thank you for coming.

If this is your first City Hall community meeting, formerly known as ResiStat, please raise your hand.

Okay, great.

If you've lived here a year or less, would you raise your hand.

If you've lived here between two and five years, raise your hand.

Five and ten, raise your hands.

Ten and 15.

15 and 20.

More than 20?

Okay. And then I will ask who's lived here their entire lives?

[Laughter].

Okay, great. Thank you. If you have a pet, raise your hand.

If your primary way to get around the city is to walk, raise your hand.

If it is to ride a bike, raise your hand.

If it is using public transportation, raise your hand.

Car?

[Laughter].

Okay. Last question. If you have children in -- who attend the Somerville public schools, raise your hand.

Okay. Well, and actually I'll ask one other question. If you have children who are just prekindergarten, so between newborn and preschool, raise your hand.

Okay. Wonderful. Okay, great. If you graduated from Somerville public schools, raise your hand.

Wonderful. Okay. All right. Last question, so if you have children who have children who have graduated from Somerville high school.

Okay. Wonderful. Thank you.

So again, the goal of these meetings is to provide information access and hopefully develop a little bit of community here. So understanding Somerville and how we utilize city resources is equally important for residents and for staff.

In order to identify and act and act on current issues, we must first understand some of that today. I'm just going to share a little bit of data.

So what is the current status of Somerville? Somerville is four square miles in comparison to our neighbors, Cambridge is six square miles, closer to 7, and Boston is 45 square miles. Cambridge has just under \$800 million budget. The City of Boston has just about a 4 billion budget. And Somerville is about 309 million.

Every three years roughly 60% of our population turns over. This consists of residents moving in and out of the city, and that's roughly 50,000 residents.

Between 2010 and 2020, Somerville's population increased by 7% to 81,000. We have 50 plus languages spoken within the City of Somerville. Somerville is also a

community that's primarily 76% White, our Somerville public schools is almost the reverse with it being the majority of a minority school district and over 60% identifying as low income.

Jobs in Somerville have increased a little over 8,800 between 2011 and 2021.

And our budget ten years ago was just under \$185 million and for this fiscal year we're a little over \$309 million.

In the last ten years, we've renovated 17 city parks and on average we plant 350 trees a year to add to our urban canopy.

Here's some vehicular data for you in Ward 1. Ward 1 bears the burden of several high-volume state roads. Interstate 93 carries 200,000 vehicle trips on average during the weekday.

Route 28, McGrath highway, carries 50,000 vehicle trips per day near Pearl Street. For comparison, major city streets include Washington Street and East Somerville, which handles roughly 20,000 vehicle trips on an average weekday. Broadway and East Somerville which carries roughly 12,000 vehicles. Cross Street has roughly 5,000 daily vehicles, Grand Union Boulevard has about 5,000 daily vehicles. These data points matter, because traffic is a major issue for safety, health, and quality of life.

Later tonight we'll hear from the city departments working to get cut-through traffic out of the neighborhoods and keep people safe. These statistics confirms that we need changes from where we've been to where we are as a city today. It's up to us to act on what we know.

These community meetings are a step in the right direction. They allow city departments to tell their story for you, our residents, and to keep you informed.

Access. Access is multifaceted. And we must take every opportunity to ensure it. As our community is changing, I'm establishing systems that give residents access to change around them from developers, employees, job seekers, workforce development, pipelines, youth, and more.

It's rooted in affordability which includes both housing and jobs. It's the ability to live, work, and do business in Somerville. We're working to connect people. This past spring I hosted a forum connecting developers and unions. The first of its kind for a mayor to host such a forum, building off what I did as city councilor. I'll continue to host these forums twice a year, in the spring and in the fall to connect groups to the development relationships and opportunities. Residents and city staff need to have access with one another and residents and the local workforce.

So the community, many of the city's major projects include public process to get community feedback. City Hall community meetings are another vehicle for residents to meet, talk, and come together on issues that matter most to them.

Residents like you play a key role in development of the SomerVision's 2040 comprehensive plan. For those of you, that's our strategic plan. It's a visionary plan and it says vision goals.

The plan captures the community goals, the values, and directly identifies ongoing challenges. Some of the goals in the SomerVision 2040 and SomerVision is the name that we gave to the strategic plan, is the creation of affordable housing, job creation, mobility, that's how we move around the city in a safe way, and infrastructure, climate and sustainability and more.

And this strategic plan is greatly echoed in my administration's progress for all

agenda.

So I committed in this progress for all agenda to be open and have an inclusive government. So how did we create it?

We first asked that the answers should be an inclusive, intentional effort all with this view through the eyes of an equity lens. We must make space for all voices and prioritize those who often feel unheard.

And guess what? That sometimes takes a little bit longer, because you all were able to make it here, but there are many people who were not able to make it here because they have family obligations, kids' obligations and can't actually walk here. So I've gone out to engage them.

I've gone out door knocking twice in the [?] housing since the spring. Hosted three community meetings over there.

I've met with -- it's over 20 senior groups, youth groups, teenagers, probably close to a dozen. We've hosted ten Covid listening sessions so far with various residence groups to understand concerns and ideas and needs.

I've dedicated a million dollars from the city's budget for the first ever participatory budgeting working group.

We've also launched a survey known as the voices of Somerville in April to hear issues that are important to residents.

I've also attended many city events and talked with residents and certainly listened to our youth.

So we've tried to go out and meet people where they're at, whether it's through social media, whether it's through emails, whether it's hosting community meetings, going into the schools, going into the senior centers, again, meeting people where they're at.

And what have I been hearing?

So I've been hearing about affordability. Housing, the cost of housing, but not just housing, but the living costs too. And jobs.

I've heard about the impacts that Covid have had on people's personal lives. Their struggles with financial recovery, health, safety, food access. Heard a lot about social justice issues and the environment, global warming and sustainability.

Transportation, infrastructure, schools and our city buildings and our street surfaces. Quality of life issues. Rodent control, rats, public safety.

My administration and city staff have taken concrete steps to address multiple areas of concern city-wide. And I'm just going to list a few because they're deep and far.

On affordability we have free breakfasts and lunch for the students in our public school system. There's free T passes, but they're not just bus passes, they're bus and subway passes for the students starting in fifth grade. To help people recover from Covid, we've worked on food security and access.

So providing -- and we've done this with the Somerville food security coalition. The Somerville mobile markets. City-wide \$15 S.N.A.P. at the Somerville's farmer's market. We have a cab to health program which provides free rides to grocery stores, food pantries, farmer's markets, or medical appointments.

Our economic development department awards small grants -- excuse me, awards grants to small businesses. We have free and rapid tests and KN95 masks available in City Hall and in all libraries and they were also on the table out there.

We have flex [?] for rental assistance. If you're having difficulty paying your utilities

and rents, and Ellen Shachter is here, she'll talk from our office of housing stability what else is available.

In terms of social progress, we've staffed, finally, thank goodness, our racial and social Justice Department. Our Somerville office of immigrant affairs is expanded now with six languages offered for interpretation and translation. Spanish, Portuguese, Creole, Chinese, Mandarin, Chinese, and Cantonese. Last night we had this community meeting in Spanish here.

We've given a historic increase of 10% in funds to the Somerville public schools, to their budget, which is the -- we're the only municipality that will give a 7% increase to their public schools.

Some concrete examples of what that did also was we've identified the youth need extra help and -- I shouldn't say extra, they need help. So we've added ten additional mental health staff at all levels to the public -- through the public schools for behavioral therapists, social workers, and more.

And affordable housing, we've added 8.5 million to the affordable housing trust fund for land acquisition. At the Clarendon Hill public housing, we've used a tool that the state gives us for a special financing mechanism called a district infrastructure financing. And that will help us create nearly 300 affordable housing units.

[Broken audio] will be rebuilt and then we're adding another 90 on top of that. The groundbreaking, hopefully, will happen before the end of the year, but maybe it will be the front end of next year. Within our community, we'll [broken audio].

So here's where progress for all is headed. We imagine policing and public safety survey was launched and our director Denise Molina Capers will talk and she's right up here, will talk in more detail about everything else that we've done.

Help us hire and build out our staff to support community needs. You can look on our website for positions that are open. But they also do include an LGBTQ coordinator, a youth services director, a Health Department director, a green clean coordinator, a chief administrative officer.

If you have a concern that is not mentioned tonight, we're here and beyond to talk. Know that we are hard at work in numerous other areas and we are actively assessing all activities.

As I stated in my inaugural address, my pledge to you as mayor is that I will always have an open and honest conversation with you about the issues we face and our plans to address them. City Hall community meetings are a vehicle to do just that.

Thank you for your participation this evening as we continue to build progress for all in Somerville.

Oh sure, yes. Yeah. Go ahead. I think they're going to bring you a microphone.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So parking is a concern. I think for [broken audio] so thank you for the question.

Ali, are you going to be talking -- you don't have to answer this now, but are you talking on this item later? Just at a high level, Ali can talk about it more when she comes up and talks about mobility. The city is doing a parking study. I've not seen --

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I don't think there's any -- there's no final, is that just a community meeting? Maybe you should talk.

>> Yeah, I apologize for [away from mic]. Share contact information with the people [away from mic]. So, yeah, [away from mic]. This is a gathering and [broken audio] and best practices [?] or policy that.

So tonight is [away from mic]. Division works with planning and zoning on developments around the city, and one way that we work [away from mic] is that [away from mic] is operated as commercial. So that is available to [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: If I could just to do that, I understand that there ask a development that's going to happen. I think it's known as is it Somerville breaks or -- it's across from -- pardon?

>> [Inaudible].

>> Broadway breaks. And my understanding is that it's going to be a commercial building. So as Ali said, I believe I've heard going to be putting parking under ground. So that parking is required to be public. So that is one of the tools that the city has used is that if there's any commercial and there's parking there, everybody is allowed to use it. It is not only for the building.

I'm sorry. Are you --

I looked this way. Bob, do you mind -- okay, thank you. That's so kind of you.

>> First thing I don't understand, I really don't [inaudible] but did you mention about data studies and this and that. Who does that in no one comes and knocks on our doors and asks us, you know. I mean, [inaudible] so you're making [inaudible] this and that. But no one's asking us anything.

I don't want to hear [away from mic] is tell me what we're doing wrong here. No. You come and you [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you for the question. I understand that you're frustrated. Let me see if I can answer them, I won't be able to do them all. The numbers I was listing earlier were vehicle trips per day. That's counted through the state, it's counted through the data collectors. So to know how many cars go on the street.

In terms of when I said earlier is we're trying to meet people where they're at to connect people. So for example, some of those surveys might have the gone out in emails. You might not be on that email list. So this is another way that we're trying to meet people where they're most comfortable in community meetings to share the data. So everybody gets the information differently.

If you want to be on that survey, I'm sure Ali can tell you where to get that survey or we can, you know, certainly search and we'll get your contact information and we can send you an email with the link to the survey.

Do you -- so there's -- I want to move us along, but I'm wondering, Ali, when you come up if you could just share maybe a little bit more background on how the data was collected in terms of the parking survey.

I will say as I understood this has been going on for a few years, they counted every single parking spot on the street. They've counted every single driveway on the street. It's not something, they've done that through GIS mapping, maybe some people actually going out and counting. So that's, you know, a beginning way to collect the data.

And they're sharing the data back, so this is not the end of the process. We're trying to make sure the people know what we're doing, that's why this meeting is here. And we'll make sure that you are connected and are able to give input.

No final decisions have been made in any of this. But one thing I would like to say is,

we see construction going up in Boston. We see construction going up around Cambridge Crossing. And eight out of ten cars on the road in Somerville are just passing through because they're trying to get to Boston and Cambridge. And those buildings keep on going up. So that means the traffic's going to keep on going through. So we have to sort of stop and say to ourselves and pause, how do we make sure that the people in Somerville are able to move around safely in all kinds of ways, whether it is walking, biking, or using their car or using the bus.

If we don't do anything, it's just going to make it harder for Somerville. So the point was to try to figure out how to move forward and address parking, address traffic in Somerville.

So thank you. I'm happy to talk to you some more.

>> [Broken audio].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I love [away from mic] and go to the small business [away from mic].

>> I have to tell you within this before I asked my question, less talking, more listening from all of [away from mic]. We want you to listen to us.

[Applause]

That's just [away from mic] over in three years. What would you say to the other [away from mic] who live here beyond three years and feel as though they're not engaged in our community?

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Coming here is one of the ways. I've certainly been out door knocking. I've been in your kitchen. I've been in the kitchen and homes of many of the other residents around Ward 1. I will always do more. The point of being here is to share back the information that we've gotten so you know what's happening in -- in the city.

If you would like -- and I've offered to do Covid listening sessions and other listening sessions. So --

>> But if you're listening to the 60% of people who are turning over every three years --

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I didn't say that. I didn't say I was listening to the 60% of the people who are, you know, temporarily in our city, you know, during that three-year period.

>> Did you tell me that you're not making decisions based on that 60%?

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm making decisions based on an open, accessible government, affordability, that's housing and jobs, dealing with social issues, dealing with the racial and social justice, public safety issues, school issues, infrastructure issues, rebuilding roads to name a few.

Jerry.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: We will not exclude you.

>> [Inaudible] at this point one suggestion was [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Yep.

>> One way is a [away from mic] streetscape and that would help us a lot and [away from mic]. Street lighting [away from mic] I'm not telling some of the people here, they know. [Away from mic]. Respectfully, you know, trying to keep [away from mic] getting in [away from mic]. It's been that way since the 1970s. I'm not sure [away from mic] some



[away from mic]. I get it.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: You shut it off, Jerry.

>> [Away from mic] in the '70s and [away from mic] but all these people are [away from mic] it's incredible all the things that have been happening with all the [away from mic]. Only because my [away from mic] take the money and [away from mic] that's what I [away from mic] what everyone wants and get their opinion.

So [away from mic] streetscape, and it's not -- it's no offense to the [away from mic] but the words I'm looking for is [away from mic] nothing's happening [away from mic]. I've been involved with trees and [away from mic] so streetlights, oh, one other thing and I'll finish [away from mic] was I could be wrong, but the most of all [away from mic] in the city, the most state-owned land is [away from mic] east Hummel station. There might be something on that side. One example would be [away from mic]. It looks [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm sorry, you're talking about the Somerville T stop?

>> Yes. And they had [away from mic] landscape and they might still [away from mic] put in all this gravel and I don't like that [away from mic] a lot of [away from mic] commercial and residential investment to help out everybody. Thank you very much.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay.

>> I appreciate the time.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you. I'm going to take one more question, but I'll be here longer. But we want to be able to hear from our other department heads.

Go ahead.

>> [Broken audio].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: What is your address, we'll follow up on it.

>> It is [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: 9?

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you. I don't have the answer right now, but I will look into it. Thank you.

So you're asking specifically for it to get trimmed?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Because it's touching your house?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. So the lady behind you and then the gentleman.

>> [Away from mic] former mayor may have actually run out and catch him because I was -- had wanted to say something. So I think comments from the gentleman who was talking about [away from mic] is really important. We come to these meetings, we get information, it's great, we need it. But it's sometimes extremely long, people talk to us and they [away from mic] Somerville really [away from mic].

We've been living in Somerville since 2003 and honestly, I want to know what is going on with Lowell and Broadway. It's almost the same as it was since 2003. The rest of the city has some really nice development, for the most part. And we are [broken audio] the previous mayor referred to it as a dump. East Somerville. And we have vacant lots with vacant buildings. We have a [away from mic] street in Broadway, a developer that started planning and still hasn't started anything. Vacant lot full of grass.

Trees are growing, and nothing's being done in East Somerville. Everywhere else you go to [away from mic] square, everything's happening. And nothing is happening in this part of the city.

And people are tired of it.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So thank you for the question. I think I might have to look to Councilor McLaughlin to get some background. But is the property on Wall Nut and Broadway, just so you know, I'm not informed on every transaction that happens in this city. But one of the abutters has taken the current property owner to court. So that issue is in land court. So your question, why hasn't anything moved on that, that's the answer. It's in land court. I don't know the specific details and I don't know, Councilor McLaughlin, if you want to add anything to that.

>> Councilor McLaughlin: [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: It's for the video.

>> Councilor McLaughlin: I've been to a lot of these meetings over the years and [away from mic] because we have [away from mic] take these questions up now [away from mic]. I'm frustrated as well as [away from mic] talk about the construction site, what happens in St. Davis square in East Somerville. I do find lots of times, for example, speaking [away from mic] and sometimes the wheel that squeaks a lot [away from mic].

For those of you [away from mic] but I've seen the difference between how west to east and it's been decades now. So it's not just [away from mic] people have lived here for their entire lives say this as well. So [away from mic] I think lots of times it's because [away from mic] thank you all for speaking up, it's what makes it happen. I hope people are listening and the city is responsible for when people get really agitated and speak up and sometimes it works as well.

In terms of that property, the Mayor is right that the [away from mic] is suing that property. I could give a full explanation of that, but that's the reason it's not happening. I spoke to that developer yesterday. So that developer wants to build [away from mic] and he's also trying to develop the property [away from mic] hopeful that I comes up for [away from mic] so those three issues, and I just want to -- just want to [away from mic] I get frustrated as well and I just think that meetings like this can speak [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So what I -- one second. [Broken audio] come to you. I guess I just want to say to my staff, let's make a [away from mic] figure out then -- well, we'll just regroup at the end and see which departments you want to hear from. Because if you could raise your hands, department heads who are presenting. So Colin, the chief, racial and social justice, ADA compliance, office of housing stability, economy -- no, planning and zoning. You're doing for infrastructure, right? Okay.

And who's doing -- and mobility. Yeah. Rodent control, Health and Human Services. So is there any department head who I didn't mention? Okay.

So those are the -- those are the departments that are here. We'll hold off. I'll take your questions, if I can't ask them, I will ask the department head to at least update you on -- or hopefully answer your question. After we get all the Q&A done I would probably then come back and ask you do you want to listen to the department heads? If not, then I guess you could look at some of the videos that we have online to see.

Or if you have any specific questions. So we're punting here a little bit, all right.

So just wanted -- so the gentleman in the white shirt. And we're going to give you all the microphone, because this is being videoed, okay. And this Q&A is for the residents

of ward -- for the residence here in Somerville.

>> My business is [away from mic]. We share that [away from mic]. But we do have a huge white canvas that runs almost entirely down the street. It runs [away from mic] that represents Somerville and [away from mic] somehow that's us, but we want to make that something that actually makes Tufts Street look nice and not just sort of [away from mic] it was when the [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Thank you.

So how about if I do a section at a time and I'll just go from the front to the back. Does that work? And I will -- we'll make sure that we get everybody.

So Grace, if you could start on the far right and just see who is there. Raise -- if they can just raise their hand in this section. Thank you.

>> [Inaudible]. That street is even more narrow but the buildings [away from mic]. Yeah. It's almost terrifying [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So thank you for the questions. Just so you know that that seems to be common in the entire city. So who could answer that question? Ali?

City staff? Okay. City staff are going to have to come up on stage because we're not picking up the audio for the people who are Zooming in. And the mic is here.

Yea, maybe you can all come up here and pull some chairs up. The department heads are supposed to [away from mic]. Thank you. And you can just come to the podium.

>> Ali: So to answer the question, not having a center lane, two-way narrow [broken audio] Somerville can actually be a traffic [away from mic] on the long and narrow streets.

>> [Inaudible]. You're talking no center lines for [away from mic].

>> Ali: No, sorry, it was just directed to that woman's question about why it's not on some streets.

>> It's on no streets.

>> Jesse: I'm Jesse, construction lead for the City of Somerville, also a resident. It's nice to see you all. So the question is, why do we not have a center lane on Cross Street? I worked with our engineer who fold the MBTA and it's recommended on most streets that you don't actually put a center line. This is something that's come out in the last ten years or so. As you see a lot of our new construction does not have a center line.

>> If you could talk about [away from mic] why are there no lines for crosswalks?

>> Jesse: Actually I had a conversation today with the engineering mobility around 3:30, and those are going to be part of the Washington Street station.

>> So [away from mic]?

>> Jesse: Three weeks. End of November.

>> So we're going to have proper crosswalks, signage in three weeks?

>> Jesse: They're going to refresh the intersection. They've also got a long-term plan for a bump out for the bus station, for the bus stop there. So that will probably be next year.

>> This is where we could use your help and [away from mic] it's a dangerous intersection. Somebody is going to get killed. It's not [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: We're going to continue with this side, happy to -- we're here until all your questions are answered. We'll stay. Just want to be stay in the order.

>> Hi, my name's Nicole and I [away from mic]. One quick thing. So yesterday I tried attending the all [away from mic] Spanish meeting and I was extremely concerned because I was watching the webinar for hours and it had a lot of people [away from mic] I don't think we ever got audio or video after the first 40 minutes. So first I want to ask your administration if you're willing to host the meeting [away from mic] in my experience, [away from mic] Spanish-speaking neighbors, making them [away from mic] at night. So that's just [away from mic].

>> Hi, thank you for that question. Hybrid meetings are very new to us so, yes, we did have audio issues last night and we sincerely apologize for that.

We are in talks about correcting that and they're having discussions on doing it strictly virtual meeting for Spanish speaking residents. So stay tuned for more information about that. But thank you for bringing that up.

>> Great, that's wonderful to hear. A lot of our Latino, Latina neighborhoods [away from mic].

My next question is about our neighbors [away from mic] and just recognizing that [away from mic] Somerville and I would be curious to hear what [away from mic] resources and more stability especially as [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you for the question. We agree with you wholeheartedly. You are probably the emails that I shared or I should say that my staff had shared with you. We're close to being able to roll something out to share with you all. We've been working closely with the Somerville homeless coalition. I just don't have the details right now.

We're having a nonprofit summit tomorrow and, yeah. But it's an important issue. I just can't stress that enough. And we -- we are working really hard to make something happen for this winter.

>> [Inaudible]. Who didn't have any power. They sound like somebody [away from mic] could be [away from mic] and I feel your frustration, but you sound like me. And you're my City Council member. You have the power. [Away from mic] feel like you get stuff done in our community. But my real [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: You didn't send me your newsletter so I didn't --

>> [Away from mic] they very real issues about [away from mic] that I don't [away from mic] anyway. My question is, I don't understand what are 311 is actually for, because I called 311 about dogs who were on my stairs, I've called 311 about other things that seemed like they were 311 related. And I've been told [broken audio] that I should call the police meaning 911. And I said, so you want me to call 911 when there's dog poop on my stairs? And their response was yes.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you for the question. I'm not sure what the conversation was in particular whether they thought you were being vandalized and that was the issue. So it wasn't -- 311 was set up during the Dorothy Kelly Gay administration and it was a way to give quick response to residents so they didn't have to go through their ward Councilors. That there was this [?]. That was the reason why it was set up.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: No, I would not say it's the Somerville -- city councilor for Ward 7 for years.

I don't understand that.

I don't know the specifics, again, it's supposed to be operationally focused. I'm sorry

you had that experience. You know, if you got a -- if you can give us a date, we can look up that exchange and maybe it needs a little bit more training. But then I can talk to the director of constituent services who oversees 311.

Thank you for the question.

>> If I could speak very quickly. I think [away from mic].

>> [Inaudible].

>> That's not a very [away from mic] call about things like that. But quickly, the issue of [away from mic] it's because I literally don't have power. People actually look at this [away from mic] because the City Council actually don't have a lot of power. I didn't ask the city to [away from mic]. I can't make [away from mic] there's a lot of pictures like that. So when I speak up and I'm told to speak up, I said in my last email, I asked them [away from mic] because not everybody talks -- not everyone comes [away from mic] not everyone speaks up. I do feel like, well, sometimes issues are [away from mic].

And it's mostly because you may call [away from mic] but [away from mic] so I'm not -- when I speak up, that's the only thing I know [away from mic] and that's what I will -- and hopefully [away from mic].

>> Thank you. My name's Tracy. I love [away from mic] and I have more are of a comment than a question. And the comment is about inequity, inequity, inequity. We've heard this word all evening long. We mentioned it, we talk about it, and Matt, I want to thank you for bringing up some issues that you brought up and how Somerville [away from mic]. But everyone [away from mic] but everybody who ran for office ran on equity. Making this a more equitable city. An equitable city would mean if we know East Somerville [away from mic] you guys would be proactive with [away from mic] without [away from mic]. It means that we have resources here because we have less than everywhere else in the city. That would be automatically put in that we would get more because of the inequity. [Away from mic] that's what needs to happen.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So if I could just make a comment on that. We are -- I would say there's a tremendous amount of effort to make sure that all voices are heard in that. We reach out to make sure not only through online communication to get participation through our office of immigrant affairs, SomerViva, to our seniors, to our residents in public housing, we -- it takes us a little bit longer because we're trying to connect with those people.

I would say in terms of the resources, so I'm learning a little bit here. But I -- I guess I would have to rely on some of my staff to talk about a lot of the infrastructure work that is being done here. So there's certainly in terms of what is it Pearl Street that's been worked on? Lower Broadway.

>> There's no work on Pearl Street.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm sorry, which street is coming out of -- is that in process?

>> It's delayed again. [Away from mic].

>> Let's talk -- bring me a slide. One more. There we are, Pearl and 6th. This is not a poorly named Prince cover band, this is our next big project. Pearl Street did get in the way, it is true. What happened was we were supposed to start work in August, and we ran into the supply chain demand. And basically 6 foot curb, which is used throughout the whole city, we couldn't get them. We're still having this issue, so we had to pivot. And we did do the drainage work. You seen some work happen at Everett and cross. But unfortunately, you won't see shovel in the ground until April. There were six major

intersections that -- I can't see that. But one of them being that councilor McLaughlin has advocated for years, which is [away from mic] so you have received that.

Is there a question on it?

>> [Away from mic] I'm assuming the supply problem [away from mic].

>> So the issue is it's cold. You know, construction really runs from April to mid-November. For them to even try and get something done in the next two weeks, you know, [away from mic] we don't want to get a shovel in the ground and having to worry about asphaltting it over if they can't pour because of the weather. So open we're coming back. It's going to happen.

Any other questions about Pearl while I'm up here? So this is our next -- the next major project. Holland is done. We have west Washington in the future. The next major project in the city is [away from mic].

>> [Inaudible].

>> For all construction.

>> Right. [Away from mic].

>> That's a good question.

>> [Inaudible].

>> We didn't actually have another project in the city that was installing six foot.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: That was installing curbs.

>> It's the curbing that's the issue. So hopefully, you know, come April we will have the curb available to us and we'll start construction. Sure.

Online question. So the question is: Is the fire department, I see chief there in the back, involved in the development of our plan for [away from mic]. As you can see, there are many traffic measures, some that actually never been seen in this part of the city. We have rotaries that in here. So [away from mic] is involved in all mobility and [away from mic]. We run it by him before we do anything. He is very much the voice of sanity sometimes when it comes to some of that.

Is there anything you want to say about this, chief?

>> Sure. Yes, fire department's involved in all mobility projects and regarding Pearl Street, we did run some tests on proposals for bump outs down there and some things worked, some things didn't work for us and mobility modified the plans for us. So the fire department is involved.

>> So the Pearl Street project is a complete street project. So it's not just the Engineering Department and mobility department, we also involve public space and [away from mic]. They're going to seed 22 new trees in these projects. You can see the bump outs are along Pearl street and you see that in the colored intersections. East Somerville will see more construction next year than it's seen since Broadway was redone back in 2013. Good or bad, there's [away from mic].

>> [Inaudible].

>> So I have someone talk about rodents.

>> Quick question about Pearl Street intersection. This might be an important question, but is there any way it can be repaved in the interim before April? Because it's miserable if you're in a [away from mic].

>> Oh. Oh, I very much know some of you live -- I live on that [away from mic]. So to do proper sidewalks which involves removing the curb, you can't pave before it. You have continue to install the curbing and pave after it. I do have some good news for you.

The other half of Pearl Street between McGrath and Medford going to get paved tomorrow. They are required by BPU to come back and pave their trenches. They're going to be paving tomorrow, milling and paving on Friday. That half of the street will be better.

Do we want to talk about rats? Who wants to talk about rats? All right.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Just one second. We want to keep on going through. We're going to get everybody, I just want to be clear. Grace, go ahead. Oh, Mr. Sam, hi.

>> Hi, I'm [away from mic] public safety, so I have [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you. Please continue.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Okay, I'll try to answer your question. Good evening, thank you for coming. My name's chief Charles Femino. I started my career in 1984, so I know what Ward 1 used to be. Many of the changes that have transpired over the last 30 plus years. Ironically, we have retired Ricky Stiles who taught me how to walk up and down East Somerville streets and knock on doors back in 1984 and he's here tonight. He gave me words of wisdom then and gave me some before the meeting tonight. I want to recognize him.

General question is, I believe the first part of your question was no turn on red at Tufts and Washington Street. And I didn't get the [away from mic] but after the meeting I'll be here and take the specific information.

We have a traffic department at the police department. We try to do traffic enforcement. Unfortunately, we can't be everywhere all the time. We try to deploy officers at times and at locations where complaints are lodged. So I would ask you that if, in fact, you have a complaint about a specific area, we would try to put officers in that area during those time frames to address those types of issues.

There are -- there are times when we get additional monies from the state, Federal Government grant money. We did not get that this past year. We hope to get it next year. That allows for extra hours of enforcement for both pedestrian and cyclists. And that's one of the areas particularly that we usually do enforcement at a particular time of the year. So I can talk with you after the meeting.

Thank you.

>> I have a question.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: We're just going to go -- we're trying to give everybody a chance. Some people have asked twice, but we want to give everybody and we're going to be here until all your questions are answered.

Grace, who's next?

>> Are there any questions on this side?

>> [Away from mic] two quick questions. One, is there anything we can do for [away from mic] side streets at Cross [away from mic] people going across the streets with kids is not safe. Second question, will there be any kind of crosswalk where the community [away from mic] also very unsafe, people speeding and [away from mic]. Thank you.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm going to start with the first one. Is there going to be a crosswalk at Cross and Chester. Yes, there will be? When? Before the community path opens.

I didn't hear the first question.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So thank you for that question. I understand your frustration with the car acts. I will say having been a Ward Councilor up in Ward 7, we have many of the ways indicate cars should go up one-way streets from Broadway from Cambridge. It was extremely dangerous. I would say as we don't have control over the apps, we -- so that's not a -- that's not going to resolve the issue. But we don't have control over the apps and are they going to direct you on quicker routes to get someplace? I would guess they probably would.

>> We have in the past tried to communicate with Google about the mapping. We did that during the Covid streets add those to the map to stop -- to try to discourage traffic on those streets. So it's an ongoing, you know, thing that we are working on.

In terms of the speed humps, there are speed humps planned as part of the -- as part of the Pearl project that Jesse was talking about.

>> Hello, my name's Dave.

I don't want to give my last name. My mother was a high school teacher here for about 40 years. [Away from mic] experience, you may or may not like me.

So I've been [away from mic] and I've noticed a real difference in terms of responsiveness [away from mic] in the streets. Two places, one there and [away from mic] about two years ago. My first -- my first main specific complaint, there needs to be a speed bump on Myrtle Street. People there have a lot of kid on that street flying 50 miles per hour down that street. It's an absolute disaster. One speed bump with that hill comes and there's a turn about, we had a motorcycle accident the other day because someone [away from mic] so that's number one.

Number two is [away from mic] it is the Pearl Street project. It's very disappointing but clearly other resources need to be [away from mic] so it is what it is.

The third issue would have to be with the responsiveness of your administration, mayor Ballantyne. I over the past few months have tried to get in contact with the chief of staff. Matt always responds. [Away from mic] regarding ISD. I got one [away from mic] response from her. And I've asked her [away from mic] nine months from now for half an hour. We can meet an intern, I just want half an hour to discuss this issue. Please, you know, this is [away from mic]. I've waited outside your office on Thursdays it seems [away from mic]. I've called the number multiple times. I've emailed you nine times. Now I'm calling this number. Can I please get a response.

So you know, [away from mic] to not get a response if one request respond, that's not really helpful to my question. And then having to continually and continually try to communicate in different ways just to get silence is very, very frustrating.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Thank you for that. What's your issue about ISD?

>> How much time do we have?

Resources is number one.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: When you say resources, what are you talking about?

>> [Away from mic]. I talked to Nick multiple times. And he's basically said, listen, before he was there it was a total disaster. Nobody knew what they were doing. There's a lot of humans that were [away from mic] in the city within [away from mic] inspections. I'm going to [away from mic] we have to [away from mic] legal action for \$100,000 against the [away from mic] because it's not up to code.

I've reached out to people on social media that have had the same issue. And --

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So you want more inspectors because there are specific



buildings that [broken audio]?

>> Well, I mean, he said he's working on it, still not where it should be. He says he needs more people. He has no [away from mic] and frankly there are inspectors there that, you know, it's easier to [away from mic] get rid of them. Because they're just not qualified. I've seen construction done and I've reported it where I've seen construction -- I've learned more about [away from mic] assemblies than I ever [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So you've observed construction and your concern is you're concerned about the quality of the craftsmanship that's going into the construction or things that you see are not up to code?

>> Yes. And it was admitted by the director [away from mic] that during -- before his tenure that there was a serious, serious issue with things not being up to code. [Away from mic] just the processes, the zoning, all that stuff. He said to me, it's a total disaster. [Away from mic] and you know, he said that [broken audio] it doesn't seem like [away from mic] I was told we got a lot of people retiring in the next three to four years, hopefully then we'll hire people that have better training, that kind of thing.

But you know, that's the other issue, kind of my real frustration is, your chief of staff whereas, I can kind of [away from mic] nine months, ten months, a year, just give me a time [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm happy to look into it. Nikki Spencer my chief of staff is incredible. I'm sure that the discussion was had with talking to the ISD director since she is not expertise in that. We have put funding into the positions, but I appreciate your comments and will certainly look into it. But the person to talk about ISD is not our chief of staff, it is the director of ISD. And we have worked on a plan in terms of training and coaching that ISD director has put in place to help give the skills that are necessary.

We're also hiring, so if you have any suggestions on who else or anybody that you feel can also work for the city, please direct them to our website, our HR department to apply. Thank you.

>> I appreciate that too and, you know, I appreciate you kind of taking -- taking the appropriate [away from mic] tonight. I know a lot of these issues really predated and you haven't had that much time to deal with this. You have a lot of issues [away from mic] you're getting complaints that you were not [away from mic]. But kind of as a matter of principle, I want my meeting. I want my half an hour. Six months from now, nine months from now. But the lack of response was kind of insulting. Mostly [away from mic] wasn't your chief of staff, Matt was [away from mic] I talked to him before. I talked to him because I went to the inspection section and said --

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you. Thank you. But the point person on ISD is Nick. But we will make sure we get, Dave, your contact information. Can you make sure you get that. Thank you.

>> Hi, my name's Arlene and I'm [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: You shut off the mic.

>> [Away from mic] intersections of Washington Street, Tufts Street and [away from mic] because the police department is [away from mic] I would like to know why [away from mic] multiple times told go away, stop [away from mic] tell us who to call, because you guys have not listened [away from mic]. I didn't talk to you about [away from mic]. I called over 200 times [away from mic]. I live behind an abandoned building that nobody

cares about, it's been abandoned for over ten years and [away from mic]. They aren't doing anything for the rest of us, why are you doing that? [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. So let's find out about the street [away from mic]. Jesse, are you the person?

>> Sure.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: No, I just -- that priority of.

>> Jesse: So as we said, the street paint is from Washington crossing and Knowlton -- or Tufts is going to be done as part of the Washington Street being open.

>> So what are you going to do [away from mic] somebody is going to get hit. [Away from mic] to stop [away from mic] it's a pathetic little stop sign [away from mic] you know and it's ridiculous.

>> Jesse: Sure.

>> Somebody needs to do something. I can get a spray can and [away from mic].

>> Jesse: Sure, Eileen, I mean, you know that I listen to you because you call me all the time.

>> You do.

>> Jesse: You know you know where to find me. So this is definitely the intersection of the day. I've heard from all of you. I'm going to go back to director of mobility and say, this is what I heard and what I want. We need to get this colored and it's not just paint. Something to Tufts Street.

I heard from Jerry, heard from Bob, heard from yourself, we're going to look at Tufts Street in the future.

>> The other thing I wanted to talk about [away from mic].

>> Jesse: I got a guy for you.

>> Hi, Eileen. Nice to see you again. Nice to see you after our call yesterday.

>> Yes. I have been very involved in the city's [away from mic] I called over 200 times in one year but I called to say [away from mic] three more [away from mic]. It's a hell hole. The house behind me is a hell hole. The house behind the street. Full of rats and these rats aren't small. I walked out there the other day to take [away from mic] for nine months. I could [away from mic] my feet. Something has to be done. Why is it not [away from mic]?

>> That's a great question, Eileen. And the justification for where the smoke boxes are located currently also have to do with high concentrations of 311 calls. But in addition, they have to do with the conditions that we're recognizing in those spaces. And those are pilot areas. So we need to get a general idea of different environments, how the boxes operate, do they collect more data in one spot, how are rodents behaving?

I wish we could stick them in everyone's backyard. But the date and justification isn't quite there yet.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Like I said, there are a none of factors that go into choosing those locations. So I'll get to the 311 here, Eileen, actually. This is my favorite graph, as I like to introduce this. This tracks the total number of logged calls that come into 311 relating to any rodent issues throughout the city. Calls are down this year, which may be some fatigue, which I think we might be experiencing.

>> Just given up.

>> I'm very aware. But overall trends are down. And if it is fatigue, that's something

that we're going to continue to work on and encourage folks to continue calling. This data helps me do my job and discover different locations and concentrations that we need to start focusing on and better understand those issues in those specific areas. While I understand you're frustrated that you're not getting response times, remember, we're trying to deal with an issue that's throughout the city and is more complex than simply there's rats in my backyard. It's a water issue, food issue, infrastructure, it's just a general human behavior that we're experiencing throughout cities in the United States and human behavior is notoriously difficult to change.

>> You want to see how bad rats, come to my street.

I live on [away from mic] the hill next to Crescent Street is a huge community of rats. It's in [away from mic] so nothing's ever done. I'd like to know if there's any communication between Somerville and Charleston. I have a dead rat every day on the street. Every day. And it's -- it's absolutely obscene. I mean, I take my dog out for a walk every day and there isn't a day that goes by there isn't a dead rat in the middle of the street. It's worse than that because [away from mic] they come out. They want [away from mic] houses, the yards, everywhere. And I mean, it's -- it's -- it's so bad my neighbor has a light that turns on and the light comes on. Guess what turns it on all night long? Rats. Rats, rats, rats. [Away from mic].

But there's a couple other issues that were brought up that directly affect me. One is the utilities that were put in my street about five years ago [away from mic] they've never really repaired the street. I mean, unfortunately I'm right at the end of the Pearl Street, and so once you get to the end of Pearl [away from mic] the street that I'm on [away from mic] but it's a real problem and I don't know what to do about it.

The city said a couple times just [away from mic] I guess you got a problem. So that's not really solving the problem. There has to be something that [away from mic] because all the rats are living in Charlestown and [away from mic].

>> Of course. That's a great question. So in coordination with other municipalities, we do work with a number of them, Charleston is not one of them, it should be and that's my responsibility to begin those dialogues. I'd be happy to speak with you afterward to get more specific.

>> In Charleston right next to Crescent Street it's [away from mic].

>> And I can speak directly to the folks at Charleston to help solve -- yeah.

>> That's going to be a problem.

>> Let's connect afterwards and talk more specifically.

>> The other issue is the street repairs. [Away from mic].

>> Throw this ketchup after this. Crescent Street may have been done by national grid. So we can talk about this after this, okay?

>> Regarding the rats, I'm just wondering, [away from mic] pick up metal cans, do they have [away from mic] we kill rats in our yard, you know. [Away from mic] that would be a solution. [Away from mic].

>> Yeah.

>> [Away from mic] why haven't [away from mic] and the [away from mic].

>> I know. I've seen quite a few, as you could imagine. So as to metal trash barrels, it would be expensive. And within the city they might not be viable. They would encounter a lot of damage and when you start damaging metal cans and encounter things like rust, you might be dealing with a far more expensive program. Plastic is just

easy for us to access through a supply chain, number one. Number two they're relatively durable for the work that they're having to go through. And they're just easier to distribute. While I understand, I know we have some fantastic university student around here, if you can come up with a fantastic rat proof garbage idea, I will in debt myself to you, I promise. But we have to look at these things [broken audio] it's not possible currently. But if you find more suggestions and more garbage and waste programs, feel free to send them our way.

>> And one more comment regarding the streets. [Away from mic] you know, Pearl ends -- major Pearl ends at [away from mic] you go across Mount Vernon and you have [away from mic] it's still called Pearl. But the neighbors call it -- the neighbors call it little Pearl. And then it goes into Crescent Street. Nobody knows it's there. And we're on the line. [Away from mic] but the traffic going [away from mic] now, it's one way. One way. We can only get out of our street by going down Washington and it's making it impossible to get out [away from mic] without nearly being hit. And somebody's going to get hit. And I thought maybe the residents -- on the East Somerville, maybe they need to get [away from mic] come to the council. This is [away from mic] rather than just [away from mic] really some concern and, you know, get a petition going.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: There's a lady with the green right behind Bob. You've had a number of times, your neighbors have not. The woman with the -- yeah, the woman in the green. Thank you. Thank you. We'll come back. We'll answer your question, Bob.

>> [Away from mic] I know that nobody wants to [away from mic] I'm wondering if the city can do something [away from mic]. 2014, it's a [away from mic] just do anything to [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: You know, so I don't have that information in details. I'm happy to talk to -- is that something you want to answer now or should we --

>> First of all, I'd just say that 911 calls [away from mic] and representing this community. So [away from mic] represent everyone. I'm an accurate depiction of how people feel right now. [Away from mic] I put in an order this past year requesting the city seize it by eminent domain. [Away from mic] and we just put on order last week, not just myself, [away from mic] have put in orders requesting a space for our homeless people, because living on the streets, one, it's inhumane and also I get a lot of calls from people about litter, trash, things like this that need to be addressed the so it's a [away from mic] is an issue of mine that's completely [away from mic] wonderful developer, they have no intentions of developing the property. That's [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay, the --

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Grace, the gentleman right in front of the women -- yeah, this one. Yeah. And then the one next to him is next.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Is this before the license commission? Okay.

>> And the subject was all the licenses [away from mic]. Previous administration [away from mic] three licenses [away from mic] that building has been vacant since [away from mic] previous administration flooded the market with free licenses and pull those back and all these land are [away from mic]. For people live in the area, no one's [away from mic]. They don't have a placeholder now. The city's [away from mic] redevelopments that aren't being done. I don't understand why they went after those

people when all these buildings are just sitting vacant. [Away from mic] 20 years.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Um.

>> [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So it's -- oh, okay. I thought it was the gentleman next to him.

Okay. Thank you.

>> [Away from mic] businesses beyond.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'm sorry, what is your name? Which is your business?

>> My name's Dustin [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay.

>> Thank you. I really feel [away from mic] as far as rats, yes [away from mic]. We can't do it all. We need the City of Somerville [away from mic] be more aggressive and [away from mic] accountability has to come into play. That person is not doing his or her job, that person should go. There's no [away from mic] we've got to do it. We've got [away from mic]. It's got to happen. Citizens want it, we got [away from mic] I think that's the only way. I appreciate -- we all appreciate the meeting here. Listen to us. We are [away from mic] but we don't want to just sweep the [away from mic] and come up with an empty hand and no results. Please, [away from mic] listen to me and do -- [away from mic] look at us, come to us. Look at the community and send some representatives to speak their language and get their information.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Have you met with Adriana Fernandez?

>> Yes, I have.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Go ahead.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: She and I have spoken. She and I are also setting up a time to door knock or I should say visit all the small businesses in lower Broadway. Okay.

Thank you.

But I wanted to make sure you had actually spoken to her.

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Thank you. This woman spoke. We're going to give -- oh, okay.

>> [Away from mic] even though I'm [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Sure.

>> [Away from mic] but the homeless also [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: East end garage, okay.

>> Right next to me. Now the [away from mic] with rats. You can go there, look around the building you can see all [away from mic] and guess what they doing? [Away from mic] trying to get rid of this problem. But there is homeless again in the back drinking, doing whatever. We're going to have more rats. So please, please, look into this.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Yes, I agree with you.

>> This is the issues. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So Grace, can you take it? And somebody -- was there somebody behind? Yeah, the lady.

>> Hi, [away from mic] so thank you. I'm curious there's a lot of development going on and a lot of [away from mic] I think is valuable. Schools are pretty much at capacity and it is -- I have not [away from mic] how schools are being considered. I assume

housing is being built and I presume that we want some percentage of the housing [away from mic] have families. So I'd love to hear about that.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Sure. Currently the city -- we're going through a capital investment planning process, a five-year planning, which will be worked on every single year, so you're moving out a year at a time. So what are all the capital projects.

The assets that we have. The assets are buildings, our parks, our streets, streets, our trees, built environments, school buildings, and they're all getting worked on to get rated and prioritized and understanding what the condition is. And depending on their condition, then they're put on a five-year capital investment plan.

And then there is then a process to go about where's the money going to come from to pay for the infrastructure? And that's the process that we're going on.

In terms of schools, as you know, one of the first steps in order to get money is to do an enrollment study. The Somerville public schools is doing an enrollment study that's supposed to come out in the spring with I've heard early numbers, general numbers might be available in January.

So we're in the middle of the process and, you know, we have -- we have old and aging infrastructure. And we're trying to figure out what we're going to do with it. What our need are, what we're going to do with it, and if we think that we can do something with it, where's the money going to come from? And that's a labor-intensive process. So thank you for the question.

So let's see. I'm going -- the gentleman in the back.

>> Hi, my name's Paul. I [away from mic].

>> The question is who enforces bike lanes? I think, you know, the enforcement of bike lanes falls, I believe, on the public safety police department. We do enforce when observed bikes that go lane violations. If you talk to me about who can go on to the bicycle lanes, mopeds can travel on the bike lanes.

>> Electric bikes as well?

>> As long as the motor is under 25 miles per hour. If we have complaints in a specific area, they answer to general traffic answer as far as speeding or enforcement of traffic violations if there's a particular area in the city, complaint from you can call the police station, our traffic department, we'll try to set up some selective enforcement. We have at times through a grant program spent specific times at different locations. That grant did not receive last year. The city decided not to take that grant last year. We are applying for it this year and we'll want some extra time, time block for pedestrian cycle enforcement.

>> The other thing too is [away from mic].

>> So are you talking about East Somerville specifically or in general the city?

>> East Somerville where I'm from but [away from mic].

>> Again, speeding enforcement, we have a traffic department who they'll start at 7:00, 7:30 in the morning, they'll go out to specific locations in the city. But I guess what we try to do is deploy that personnel depending on the locations, there's certain high-risk locations that they go to regularly. And then there's areas where we go specifically for selected enforcement based on complaints that are lodged and coming into the department.

[Pause].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: They're changing the battery.

>> Bear with me very quickly.

[Pause].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you. Is this on?

>> Yeah.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Okay.

>> First [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So thank you. Yes, there were mailers sent out in the spring. Every single household, I signed off on the check and I actually got one in my house too. And we piloted it so the regular trash doesn't pick up the mattress, you have to call 311 to have -- it's a separate company that picks up the mattress. That has been mandated by the state, it's a state requirement that the mattresses do not go in regular trash. So every municipality has to have some sort of mattress removal service. So it's calling -- I think it's calling 311. Does anybody else know? No. Yeah, it's calling 311 and -- and there is a fee. The windows I don't know about. We'll have to figure out and see that. I don't know. There could be, if it's considered construction material that's seen as differently.

So the construction material, the property owner just abandoned it there, actually that's right, so construction material is not picked up by our regular trash. So the property owner was required to dispose of that. So what happens now we'll have to figure that out.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So great, thank you. We had a large stakeholder group that came out with recommendations on how we should move forward. We're in the process of taking up their recommendations. We just haven't given all the details on how we're going to -- we're close. We're really, really close to be able to share how we're going to move forward.

It's going to include community process, because that was what was requested in the study. And so [?] will know. But the group that picks the final selection site will have a very robust community process.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: If you for the question. A final site has not been picked. So part of the recommendation is to use public -- or city-owned facilities. And the sites we're looking at, yes, the parking lot at -- well, across Broadway and Mount Vernon. I don't know that that's the right -- let me finish, please. I don't know that that is the right size for the modular. The other sites that were looked at in terms of parking were in Davis square. Which are larger.

What is being [?] is trying to figure out how to get the utilities in. So that's, again, I -- the sites in the Davis square area are larger and, yes.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Well, and the schools and Cross Street. Right. I'm sorry, say that again.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I don't know. We're getting a few parking lots on Broadway, so we're getting more land.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Where did you get that information?

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: It was surveying information. So you gave your input back.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: We have made no decision. It was collecting input. Many people give lots of creative ideas from one end to the other. So we are sharing back. We're being as transparent as possible. If you have other thoughts on that, the email address is -- yeah, transportation@somervilleMA.gov. So no decisions have been made on that.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you.

>> Hi. My name is Regina [away from mic] as some of you know I [away from mic] to our brothers and sisters, immigrants like myself, we can do better as a community. [Away from mic] no one wants to be on the street. It's job loss. It's addiction. We cannot provide [away from mic] involves a shelter, wraparound services, mental health [away from mic] thank you.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you.

I think we're done here, so why don't we go here. Excuse me, you all have had a chance. We're trying to go through -- the gentleman, yes, actually the gentleman with the white -- is it green sweater over here. Black, I'm sorry, my eyesight isn't that good. We're trying to give everyone at least one chance. We'll go back through.

>> My name's Michael.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Hi.

>> And I got a few things to say listening to everybody. I was born in Somerville, so I [away from mic] so I've been here a long time. [Away from mic] 90 years old. I don't live within the city anymore, but I've been here for [away from mic] I ran a business in this city for 28 years. Now I have a question for you people, [away from mic] and elected officials, how many of you guys graduated from Somerville high school school system? Raise your hand.

You guys [away from mic] City of Somerville.

How many of you guys have a dog? I mean.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I have kids too.

>> I got three, they're expensive, aren't they?

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Yes.

>> So my questions are, what are you going to do for the small business community in Somerville? We talk about anything else, I sat here and listened for two hours, we haven't mentioned one thing about small businesses in this city. [Away from mic] for some [away from mic].

>> Thank you. Thank you.

>> [Away from mic] give back. [Away from mic] and all these other things too. So [away from mic] business community, they go to Davis square, they got [away from mic]. I sit across from Pat's, [away from mic] it's been sitting there for eight years. I see the black van pull up and they take a stretcher out and they go get him. We got one guy [away from mic], we get one guy who gets hit by [away from mic] and unfortunately dies, the whole world's upside down. But we got [away from mic] Davis square, [away from mic] union square get built like crazy. We had a building [away from mic] been under construction for fucking years. They've been sitting there six years, not getting done.



We've got a hole down there between [away from mic] they're in court. I understand that. But why is it that we don't get anything?

You talk about the projects. Why didn't the [away from mic] instead of [away from mic] why didn't they come down [away from mic] nobody went on down there.

We all pay taxes. I pay a lot of taxes on my building, and I got to pay for my own dumpsters which I got to get a permit for. You talk about parking permits, try owning a business, they hit you with everything.

So anyways, that's my question. God bless America.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Just so I'm going to introduce Tom and he can answer some of your questions better than I can. I do just want to echo the frustration when it comes to property owners who make us go through community process. We hear about projects that are going to happen and they don't happen. Or they take forever or who knows what's going on.

So is the answer to take the land every time? You know, what is, you know, what are the -- the mechanisms, you know, to be able to do that?

I just want to say that I hear your -- your frustration that the projects haven't been done. I've seen that across the city. I've seen that in my own ward where it's 11 years and a project hasn't gotten done.

So I'll let Tom speak about the small businesses.

>> Tom: Hi, how are you folks? My name's Tom, excuse my voice, I'm getting over a little bit of a cold. I serve as the director of economic development currently. I'm the acting executive director of OSPCD, which is our planning and development agency in the city. And we are very concerned about the plight of our small businesses. We have spent some since I've been here for six years, we've spent substantial amount of resources on supporting our small businesses.

The last 15 -- 15 or so years we're funded a main street organizations in East Somerville. We only do that in two places. East Somerville and we do it in [away from mic] square and we do that for a reason, because we have a very vibrant small business community. Almost all of our businesses in Somerville are small businesses. And we take -- and we're thrilled with that.

[Applause]

Because we're locally owned, as you point out, these are the folks who you turn to if you're raising money from the boy scouts or girl scouts. You talk to your small business owners. Because you know these people. And so we want to support you. And we have been supporting you like we haven't really in [?] we've consistently funded the main street organization during the Covid pandemic, we mobilized as many resources as we could come up with to support our small businesses, our independently owned businesses.

We've had three rounds of Covid business assistance where we provided grants to the smallest of small businesses. We focused on the restaurant industry, focused on our gyms because those folks were being faced with closures that almost every other businesses were not facing. But we also provided different rounds. Be happy to share with you those neighbors I don't have them handy about what businesses and how much was given to folks in East Somerville but it's substantial.

And we're ready to launch a Covid recovery program too. Another round of business assistance for our businesses. We talk about assistance, we're taking about a couple

things, I'm talking about money to support you so that you can pivot out of this pandemic. So you can be more successful moving forward. I'm talking about technical assistance, not only the support we give to main streets, but two planners on our staff who are entirely focused on this development. Adriana who was mentioned speaks Portuguese and English and she is close at this point friends with many small businesses in Somerville. She spends a considerable amount of her time in this district because it's important and because it's important we do something to support the small local folks.

If people want to find out more about the programs and services that we provide, I welcome you to reach out to us. You can -- I will -- I'm around. You can certainly talk to me and I can connect you with our team and our teammates who are specifically focused on the challenges that you face. And I'd be happy to answer any other questions that you might have.

Question in the back.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Well, you notice when the T was down last month and the orange line and green line were down, we mobilized quickly bus lanes to we could move people around. Basically the constant flow of buses at the MBTA was provided in order to keep the service alive.

We are looking at those pilots that we did and we're interested to see if there are more opportunities for us to move people faster. Whether they bus, walk, whether they bike or whether they drive.

>> My question was taking on the [away from mic].

>> I hear ya. We don't want that to happen.

>> [Away from mic].

>> No, we're not -- we don't have immediate plans do that. We are -- again, in all parts of the city we're looking at opportunities to move more people more frequently.

>> You're going to push them right into the [away from mic] and then you're going to --

>> We didn't --

>> I didn't [away from mic].

>> You're right. We've got two terrific resources, they're accessible. Two orange line T stations, one in -- and we'll have a new one in Somerville in the green line.

>> [Away from mic].

>> No, we're talking about connecting residents to transit opportunities and residents to your businesses.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Right, they're going to go to places that are convenient.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Because of parking or density, we have terrific density in East Somerville. You have more roofs in East Somerville within a walking distance in East Somerville than probably 90% of the communities in eastern Massachusetts.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Exactly.

>> [Away from mic].

>> You're right, they're two different things but they both mean the same thing, which

is customers --

>> [Away from mic] all day long, it's been years, [away from mic] go up and down Broadway and [away from mic].

>> And we definitely --

>> Because I know that [away from mic].

>> They [away from mic].

>> I'd be happy to --

>> The T is cutting bus routes but now the green line has stopped. They're going to cut bus routes, it was in the paper. [Away from mic].

>> The T's facing a lot of challenges, that's true.

>> But there's not [away from mic].

>> They have to figure out [away from mic].

>> Yeah.

>> [Away from mic].

>> We'll take a look at it for you. We'll be happy to take a look at it for you.

>> [Away from mic]. Let's cut the red tape and make a decision.

>> I'm not asking like -- I'm just asking for [away from mic].

>> I understand, yeah.

>> Just from where we are and then [away from mic] we're -- we're the ones [away from mic] and I'm one of those people that [away from mic] so I can't ride a bike back and forth there. I can't take my kid to hockey with the [away from mic] on the bike. [Away from mic] 24 hours a day, plus it's [away from mic].

>> 6:00 to 9:00 in the morning, 4:00 to 7:00 at night.

>> It's just [away from mic] I've been told don't worry [away from mic] I don't know the [away from mic].

>> Well, that's why we're here to listen. I hope you expressed your opinions.

>> I'm sorry [away from mic].

>> I'm not taking it personally.

>> [Away from mic] more police, we don't need them. Yes, they do. [Away from mic] yes, they do.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So Grace, is there anybody over here anymore?.

>> Lane Sergio, [away from mic] these two questions aren't exactly related to small businesses, but it is related to the [away from mic].

I guess first question is, it wasn't clear to me what the plan is for the Washington Street and [away from mic] intersection. [Away from mic] and turning left from Washington Street to Tufts is a death trap, personally. Going through a [away from mic] so how could someone like myself expect to ride safely in this intersection knowing how it's [away from mic]?

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So thank you for the question. I just would say patience. You know, there are a lot of pieces to making the city [?] function, so we might not be fluent, all of us, on this particular detail. We're happy to get back to you with that information, if we, you know, if we haven't drilled down far enough.

Thank you.

>> So you may have missed it when we were talking about Tufts and Washington earlier that the feedback we're getting from this meeting is that's a priority. If anything comes out this meeting know that I listened to all of you and I'm going back to everyone

and say we need to get someone looking into that. Not tomorrow, obviously, but in the future.

>> And did it already come up, is there plans or any other ways for people like myself, I think maybe as a biker I find that intersection or at least that part of my commute the most dangerous. [Away from mic] it's not far, but that particular intersection is enough for me to say [away from mic].

>> [Away from mic].

>> Sure. So Chris, you make a good point. We'll talk to people and see if they can work [?] especially now that we have the new Washington Street station right there.

>> Thanks. The second question I have is I know we've already talked about the Pearl Street payment, that project is a long time coming. I [broken audio] biker I have never felt more unsafe than any street in Somerville because of that street.

>> We did talk about that earlier. I'm happy to catch up with you afterward.

>> I wanted to know specifically as far as a date for when that is going to come, I'd love to know [broken audio].

>> Sure.

>> I knew it was talked about.

>> Sure. Construction will start in April. It will probably be repeating tons of time.

>> Just want to make sure there's a date.

>> Sure.

>> We'll hold you to that.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Councilman Wilson and I were down there at that street and we know there's a problem and [away from mic] so hopefully it sounds like Jesse knows of the problem too. The only thing I want to [away from mic] stoplight there which I think is what will actually solve a lot of problems. It's mostly [away from mic] but I just want to put that out there to make sure that stoplight would actually [away from mic].

>> Mayor Ballantyne: To it's ten of 9:00. I'd like to close comments so our colleagues can leave at 9:00. I will hang around to answer any more questions after 9:00.

If there's nobody on this side. Yeah, I know -- oh, this, okay.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Yeah, this is [?] correct? Yeah. So you cannot trap your way out of a rat problem. They are neophobic, which means that they are adverse to anything that's new. This includes bait boxes, snap traps, anything like that.

The solutions have to come from [broken audio] neighbor by neighbor, street by street, business to business level. That's what I've made my mission do in that area is speak with all the businesses in that area, ones than hold dumpster permits and speak with individual communities members and property owners to address rodent attracting issues. Specifically trash, waste, and shelter. It's going to take some time. I'm sorry it doesn't just happen quickly. I can't put 50 smart boxes in everyone's backyard, like I said. But I want to continue the conversation with you and your neighbors, again, we have to work together on this.

>> [Away from mic].

>> Yeah. So -- yeah.

>> [Away from mic].

>> I --

>> [Away from mic].

>> Yeah, no, I understand the perception entirely. It's a very difficult situation and the reason we don't have that is that we need to understand the smart box program a little more clearly before we start spending hundreds of thousands of dollars more on something like that.

But again, you can't trap your way out of it. Food, water, shelter are the things you have to address first. And it takes one neighbor, we're one of the most dense cities in America, so one neighbor's not doing what they need to be doing, the whole thing's going to have rats. Yeah.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Bob wanted to talk and that's probably the -- that will bring us up to 9:00. Pardon?

No, sorry, go ahead, Grace. To Bob. Oh, I'm sorry, you don't know who he is.

[Laughter].

Everybody else knows Bob. That's a good thing.

>> Melissa, let's talk about Washington Street. It's been defunct, hasn't been anything there for eight years. We lost [away from mic] the entire area is absolutely [away from mic]. It's an eye sore. You have the Washington Street [away from mic] and to add insult to injury, now we have to DW storing all their garbage.

I mean literally garbage, whether it's a [away from mic] in the wintertime or now it's old trash cans and recycling bins, salting mechanisms for the trucks. We talked about this the other day. I'm on public safety [?] committee. The [away from mic] two, three years now. We're not going to have a shovel in the ground for three. There won't be a building for five. And that's if we actually come to a consensus that we're going to do something here.

So to make matters worse, you dump all the DW stuff there, there's no fence. And my understanding is you weren't even supposed to start putting anything in that location until sometime next week. So I'd like to understand why Somerville -- East Somerville continues to be the dumping ground for the city itself.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: I'll let Melissa talk specifically about the project. I -- I will say the dumping ground used to be the powder house school and the powder house playground for a number of years before we even owned 90 Washington Street.

The city doesn't have a lot of property. We had snow fields and the powder house [broken audio] for those of you who don't know exactly where that is, that's up in [broken audio] square between teal square and Davis square. If people want us to plow their streets, which that is a priority, we have to figure out where to put the snow. We're also looking at investing in an ice melter. But I think it's a mischaracterization to say that that particular site has been the dumping ground for the city where the city has used other sites around the city for far longer than what 90 Washington was used.

And so I just want to be really clear on that. I think then in particular about the meeting that was had last week, Melissa, you're probably best to answer that. Thank you.

>> Melissa: Thank you, Mayor, and thank you, Bob, for the question. I was waiting for that up here for three hours. Thanks, everybody, I'm Melissa, I'm the director of capital projects and my department's responsibility will be to supervise the planning and construction for the public safety building at 90 Washington Street.

I've been working closely with economic development that Tom and his office of

associated planning and community development team are working on the activation and redevelopment of what we fondly call the Washington Street development parcels. Because it's roughly three-and-a-half to four acres of land and can fit more than a public safety building.

Right now through our community process that has taken place over the last year, we heard from many of you, especially over the spring and summer, and the community is really excited about the and part of 90 Washington Street. So the public safety building and other uses that will be beneficial to the neighborhood.

We have heard numerous times about the need for services coming back to this area, cobble hill plaza served a purpose when the previous owner closed cobble hill plaza, that took away services from the neighborhood. And we hear that you want those back. And it is a nonstarter for us to do any redevelopment at 90 Washington Street that would hinder bringing those services back to the neighborhood.

There's some outlying questions that we haven't been able to solve as part of this planning process that we've been a part of for the last ten months. And we really feel like the time is right based on the community feedback that we've heard to bring on -- to have another seat at the table and hear from the private development community about how we can solve the problems related to the site and how to bring development that the community wants on to 90 Washington Street.

So the next step is a solicitation to bring development partners to the table, to keep the community process going and to keep community involvement in 90 Washington Street, economic development is creating a community Advisory Committee. This is very similar to what's happening in winter hill right now. And you can apply to be on that community Advisory Committee at our page. If you're interested in 90 Washington Street, please consider participating.

Yes, this does add time to seeing a shovel in the ground. But this is what's best for the development site and you. We have heard from you that you want these services back and bring you people that would develop these buildings and to bring community services back is the next step and important step for the project. So consider being involved. Thanks so much for your question, Bob.

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you for coming this evening. Really appreciate it. I will certainly stay around a little bit if you have any questions. But many of these people have been starting at 7:00 a.m. this morning, as I'm sure that you all have. Okay. Thank you.