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[Live Captioner Standing by]

>>*VICTORIA*: Hi, everyone. We are going to get started in just a minute or two. Thank you.

Welcome everyone, and thank you for joining us. My name is Victoria, and I am the coordinator of the City Hall 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.

A few additional housekeeping items before we begin. Everyone is welcome to Bathrooms are in the back corner of the stage.

Tonight's City Hall Community Meeting is in a hybrid format. In addition to those with us here at the Healey 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 presentation, they will first take up to 2 questions from our live audience.

To those here in- person, please raise your hand if you have a question and a staff member will come over to you with the wireless microphone so you can ask your question.

Presenters, please repeat all in- person questions to ensure those on Zoom can also hear it. After in- person questions, we will be taking another 2 from those joining us via Zoom.

If we don't get to your question initially, don't worry. Upon completion of each presentation, staff members will spend a few minutes checking . While not presenting, we have multiple other departments here with us tonight, including Somerville Fire Department, Council on Aging, Health & Human Services, and the Elections Department. Staff are ready to speak with you and answer your questions. Please go up and say hello or, if you're

on Zoom, you can write- in any questions you have for them in the Zoom Q&A.

Around 8:00 p.m., this community meeting will come to a close. If you have any remaining questions, we ask that you email cm@somervillema.gov. All questions will be responded to in the coming days. For those in- person with us, City staff will be hanging out if you're wanting to have any additional conversations.

I do want to note that tonight's meeting is also being recorded and can be found on the CityTV YouTube channel in the next day or so.

Thank you for taking the time and for being gracious with us as we get experienced with running hybrid meetings. I'd now like to invite Councilor Clingan to the podium.

>>JESSE CLINGAN: Thank you. Good evening. It is really a pleasure to see all of you. It has been so long with the pandemic. I haven't done one of these in a long time. () and I'm really excited to see all the stats and so on, but I just want to update you in terms of the projects. As you know, right here in the school right in the backyard, they are redoing the Healey schoolyard. It is going to be beautiful. I don't know if you had a chance to see any of the drawings, but we are timely going to connect the [Indiscernible] housing up to this area to the boat house. So it is really exciting. A long time coming and very excited about that.

I also wanted to mention market () an ongoing process with the private developer. If you haven't been following that, it is going to be some pretty mundane meetings. But nonetheless, if you want to pay attention to this whole process, and if everything goes well, then we will see their project come to fruition, if not, we will be back here probably talking about something of that nature.

But in the meantime, you know, here is to hoping that we see something out there. So those are some exciting things, and we have put in some new speed bumps put in here and there, and some biking and () structure we have been excited about. So really happy to be able to be here and serve you all this evening and actually, I want to bring up Jake Wilson because he lives right up the street and he is our counselor, but just want to give him an opportunity, because he is sort of your home base Councilor, and we also have () in the back.

So I just wanted to give Jake a chance to say hello, and let you know what he is been up to you and then we will pass it over to the Mayor so we can hear all the great things.

>>Thank you, Councilor. Good evening, everyone. I'm Jake Wilson. I live right on Jake Street. Kids go to this school. Proud to be representing all the wards but especially given Ward 4 presentation up at City Hall, so yeah, tried to be very accessible if you ever have any concerns definitely

feel free to reach out. And I'm excited to see these meetings back and be a part of it. So yeah, thank you. Mayor Ballantyne.

[Applause]

>>MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE: I didn't quite hear, but I guess this is not working? Is that the idea?

Okay. So thank you, everybody, for being here. Really excited to see you all here.

I just thought we'd, you know, ask a few questions so we can get to know who is in the room and you know who your neighbors are.

So I'm going to ask you to raise your hand after a series of questions that I have for you.

So would you raise your hand if this is your first meeting?

Awesome. Welcome. Would you raise your hand if you have lived here for under a year?

Would you raise your hand if you have lived here under two years?

If you have lived here between two and five years? Five and 10?

10 and 15?

15 and 20?

More than 20, raise your hand.

[Applause]

Okay. Raise your hand if you have lived here your whole life.

Awesome. Welcome. Whew!

So would you raise your hand if you have been grocery shopping at Market Basket? If you go grocery shopping at Stop and Shop?

Okay. If you shop over at Twin City Mall, raise your hand.

Assembly?

Okay. How about Winter () Broadway.

Okay. I'm going to ask you how you move around the city. Would you raise your hand if you walk mainly, go to work or mostly around the city?

Okay. Raise your hand if you use public transit as your main mode of transportation.

Use your bike, raise your hand.

Okay. Use your car.

Okay. Would you raise your hand if you live and work in Somerville?

Would you raise your hand if you work in Boston or Cambridge?

Okay. Would you raise your hand if you have a dog?

If you have a cat?

[Laughter]

If you have a dog and a cat?

I know.

[Laughter]

Okay. So let me ask you all, is there a question you would like to know

about your neighbors who are sitting in here in the room? And I'm going to ask a resident, not a city official, not an elected official. Okay. Thank you. Of course. Raise your hand if you have children in the Somerville Public School System.

Okay.

>>[off mic].

>>*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE*: Raise your hand if you have an electric car.

Okay. All right. So thank you. My name is Katjana Balantyne, my pronouns are she/her. I'm so excited to be with you here tonight. I have attended these meetings as a resident, as a City Councilor, as a City Council President, and now as Mayor. Some of you may remember these meetings known as (). And for some, this might be your first time attending here, which you said. To any meeting for Ward 7. And this might be your first, we are renaming them to City Hall Community Meetings.

Whichever is true, I hope tonight provides you clarity on how City Hall is, and can be a resource for you. I also hope to empower you to get involved in City processes. The goal of the Ward/City Hall Community Meetings is to provide information, access, and community. So information that we share, access, because many of my City department heads are here here assuetude, and hopefully you have made some friends and new neighbors and have a better sense of community here.

So understanding some of the information piece, understanding Somerville and how we utilize City services and resources is equally important for residents and for staff. In order to identify and act on current issues, we first have to understand Somerville tod. So I'm going to share some data back with you. The City of Somerville is 4 square miles, Cambridge is 45 square miles. Boston is 90 square miles.

I'm also going to share some budget. We are at about 309 million, Cambridge is about 800 million and Boston is at 4 billion.

Every 3 years roughly 60% of our population turns over. This consists of residents moving in and out of the City, that's roughly 50,000 people out of 81,000.

In the last 20 years in the census between 2010 and 2020 population rose by 7% to a little over 81,000. We have 50- plus languages spoken within the City of Somerville. Our demographics are we're a community, 76 white population, Somerville Public Schools is almost the reverse with a majority/minority school district and over 60% are identifying as low income.

Jobs in Somerville have increased by over 8800, between 2011 and 2021. So I hear a lot about speedy cars and roads and pass- through traffic so I wanted to share, you know, what are the numbers.

So interstate 93 carries roughly 200 vehicles during a week day. Route 28, which is the () carries roughly 60,000 vehicles. This is during the weekday. Workweek.

() carries about 30,000 vehicles.

In terms of the major local streets, Broadway on Winter Hill carries roughly 20,000. Temple Street carries 12,000, Medford Street carries () vehicles and by comparison the smaller local cut- through street volumes include Sycamore Street, Walnut Street, Marshall Street, 1,000.

And in the last decade our revenue has increased. So in FY13 we were just under \$185 million, and our budget for this year is a little over \$309 million.

We have 17 City parks which have been renovated in the last 10 years.

On average, we plant 350 trees on our urban canopy every year. These statistics confirm significant change from where we have been to where we are as a city.

These Community Meetings are a step in the right direction. They allow City departments to tell their story to you, our residents, so you can keep informed.

Changes happen, so we want to give you access to the information, the people, and as we are developing new systems, to make sure that you have access to potential jobs or decision- making. So it is multifaceted. And we can -- and in my opinion, we have to take every opportunity to ensure that you all have access.

As our community is changing, establish systems that give residents access to the change around them. From developers and employees, job seekers, work development pipelines, youth, and more. It is rooted in affordability, which includes both housing and jobs.

It is the ability to live, work, and do business in Somerville. We are 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 a City Councilor. Within the next month I'm hosting another forum with developers, employers, and nonprofits. And I will continue to host these forums twice a year in the spring and in the fall to connect groups to develop relationships and opportunities.

Residents to City staff, residents to local work force.

Many of our City's major projects include public process to give community feedback. City Hall Community Meetings are another vehicle for residents to meet, talk, come together on issues that matter most to them.

Residents like you play a key role in development of our SomerVision's 2040 comprehensive plan. So that's a visionary plan, strategic plan that identifies our values. The plan captures the goals, the values, and it directly identifies ongoing challenges.

And the goals have been, you know, the creation of affordable housing, job

creation, mobility, and infrastructure, climate and sustainability, and more. And the underlying theme in all of this to connect the threads is advancing equity. And so that equity is not a buzzword.

The SomerVision strategic plan is greatly echoed in the progress for all agenda, which is a commitment to open inclusive government. First, we ask how do we create progress for all? The answer is through inclusive, intentional efforts, always viewed through the equity lens.

We must make space for all voices and prioritize those who often feel unheard. Progress for all begins with listening and understanding the concerns, here is how I have been engaging Somerville communities, our neighborhoods in the last 8 months.

I have held 10 COVID listening sessions, so far with various resident groups to understand ideas and needs. I have held 15 meetings or more with senior groups, 5 meetings with the youth. I have door knocked the mystic housing twice and had two Community Meetings there. I have dedicated a million dollars from the City budget for a first- ever participatory budgeted working group. Voices of Somerville launched in April to hear the issues of residents, it is the way for you to connect is through the internet. I mean, there is lots of ways. It is in- person, it is online, but those who don't always show up at these meetings, it means going into their neighborhoods, going into their living rooms, and it means talking with them so they feel that they are heard and acknowledged.

So what are the issues that I'm hearing about? I think many of you probably know this. It's affordability. The cost of housing, the living cost. It is the impacts of COVID, whether they are financial recovery health and safety or food access. It is about social justice. It is about the environment, global warming, and a sustainability. And I hear a lot about transportation and how do you move around the City.

I hear a lot about City infrastructure, how do we rebuild, how do we make sure that our schools are safe, City buildings are good for the workers and I hear a lot about our bumpy roads.

And I also hear about quality of life issues. Rodent control, and public safety.

My administration and City staff have taken steps to address multiple areas of concerns citywide. Affordability, it is free breakfast and lunch for Somerville Public School students, it is free () passes for () through high school. For COVID recovery, it is food security access. We have the Somerville Food Security Coalition, the Somerville mobile farmer's market, and we have one Saturday left. We have a citywide \$15 SNAP and EBT match program at the Somerville farmer's market.

We have cab to health programs which provide free rides to grocery stores, food pantries, farmer's markets, or medical appointments. Economic

development has awarded grants to small businesses, free and rapid K95 masks are available at City Hall and all libraries.

We have flex funds if you need help with rental assistance. For some of our social progress, we have staffed the racial and social justice department, our Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs, expansion has now 6 languages offered for interpretation, that's Spanish, Haitian, Creole, Chinese Mandarin, Chinese Cantonese. We have a historic increase of 10%, that's over \$8.4 million to fund into the Somerville Public Schools budget. We are the only City in the state of Massachusetts municipality that increased their school budget by 10%.

[Applause]

You know, one of the outcomes is that we have, as we have heard, the youth, mental health issues are a problem, and a priority, as you say, for everyone. That meant in the schools we () a10 additional mental health staff members at all different levels, from behavioral, therapists, social workers, to redirect and more.

In affordable housing we added \$8.5 million to the affordable housing trust fund for land acquisition.

[Applause]

() public housing we were able to do a district finance, infrastructure financing. It is a way to get more affordable housing by using a special financing tool that the State allows us to do.

And that's -- and that will create nearly 300 affordable housing units. We have also added over 80 affordable housing units within our community, which were through inclusionary zoning, so if developers are building they are required to put 20% of their new housing or their housing number to affordable housing. We also have 16 that came from the community land trust.

Here we are, progress for all is headed in reimagining policing and public safety. We have sent a survey that has been launched and Denise Molina Capers, the Director of the RSJ division will talk about that. And we have some open positions. So if you are interested in working for the City of Somerville, these are a few, but please go on to the website or the school website.

We are looking to hire an LGBTQ coordinator, a youth services Director, a health deputy Director, a Green Clean coordinator, a chief administrative officer, which in business or nonprofit terms would be a chief operating officer.

If you have a concern that was not mentioned hearted we are here tonight and beyond to talk to you. Know that we are hard at work in numerous other areas, and we are actively assessing all City activity.

As I stated in my inaugural address, my pledge to you as mayor is I will

always have an open and honest conversation with you about the issues we face and our plans to address them. The City held Community Meetings is the vehicle to do that.

Thank you for your participation as we continue to build on Somerville for all of us.

[Applause]

>>*EMILY SULLIVAN:* Thank you for being here tonight. My name is Emily Sullivan, climate change program manager in the Office of Sustainability and Environment. Tonight I'm going to share updates on 3 different programs that OSE manages.

So next slide.

>>*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE:* I also wanted to mention that ().

[Applause]

>>*EMILY SULLIVAN:* The Office of Sustainability and Environment works to improve environmental performance of the City government and the community. The department works to implement different programs, projects, and policies to reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions, to minimize environmental impacts and waste, to adapt to climate change, and to foster equity in the community. OSE is a growing department and currently consists of 5 staff members.

So recently OSE renewed the City's Community Choice Electricity contract. The Community Choice Electricity program or CCE, is the City's bulk purchasing electricity program. By leveraging combined consumer power, the City is able to purchase more stable, competitive, and cleaner energy. With this most recent contract renewal, the City was able to double the amount of renewable energy in the program.

[Applause]

Thank you. All of the energy used through the CCE program is generated regionally, and it is therefore supports regional Clean Energy projects and jobs.

Next slide, please.

Just a few things to note about the CCE program. You can -- there are 3 different levels with various energy or renewable energy percentages that you guys can choose from. Folks can change levels or opt out of the program at any time without any penalty. No one from the CCE program will contact you directly via phone or in person unless you guys specifically request that.

And then finally, renters who pay their own electric bill are eligible to participate in the program without their landlord's approval.

CCE is a really great way to make impactful or take impactful local climate action, but there are a few other programs that you can participate in that are also a great way to take action. One such way is to become a Climate

Ambassador. The Climate Ambassador program consists of a group of residents and community stakeholders who are interested in learning more about the environmental initiatives in the City and want to participate civically in developing or brainstorming new projects, programs, and policies. So participants in the program, they attend regular classes, they attend public meetings, they consult with former ambassadors who have been through the program. They work with City staff and the program culminates in a capstone project, where residents or ambassadors produce a project and end project that can sometimes become a City policy or integrated into City programming.

The 2023 Ambassador Program will start in early 2023, and then it will end in June 2023, and more information will be updated online about that program. And a big focus of the 2023 Ambassador Program will be the Somerville climate forward, which we will be embarking on this fall.

Somerville Climate Forward is the City's climate action plan. It identifies the goals and actions that Somerville can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resiliency to extreme weather events that are made as a result of climate change. Somerville Climate Forward was originally published in 2018 so through this process community members will be able to work with City staff and provide feedback to City staff about how Somerville is doing as it relates to its climate goals.

The update process will begin later this fall and will wrap up in September of 2023. If folks are interested in participating in this update process we would love to have you. We are open to reengage the folks from the 2018 process and then engage new folks this time around.

And if you are interested in learning more about any of the programs I mentioned, CCE, the Ambassador Program, the plan update, I recommend that you sign up for the monthly OSE newsletter called (). What's happening in OSE and more of the environmental initiatives in the City.

So thank you for being here to hear this update. If anyone has any questions I'm happy to answer them now, and then I can also answer questions after all the presentations conclude.

Okay. Thank you.

[Applause]

We got () earlier. Okay. I should just say all elected officials, raise your hand.

[Laughter]

>>MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE: Economic development.

[Laughter]

>>WILLIAM BLACKMER: Hi, everyone. My name is William Blackmer, and I'm representing the economic development division this evening.

Economic development is one of the 7 divisions of the Office of Strategic

Planning and Community Development in City Hall. We have 3 areas that our division focuses on, first of which is work force development which involves making sure that training and education opportunities are available that connect residents to employment in the City.

The second division is business development, which primarily involves working closely with our Main Street organizations, and providing technical support and financial support to small businesses across the city.

And the third division is real estate development, which involves the buying, selling, and leasing of surplus City property across the city, one example of that currently is the Somerville Armory.

So I'm going to talk now a little bit about two of the proposed redevelopment projects that are happening here in (). So the first of these proposed redevelopment projects is at 299 Broadway, as Councilor Clingan mentioned earlier. Here are some of the statistics on the project, but to tell you a little bit about the development process, the development team has presented to the Winter Hill Civic Advisory Committee, 3 meetings related to the permitting processes. As Councilor mentioned, the project will now transition to conversations with the zoning board of appeals, which will be the permanent granting authority that will review the details of this project.

After the permitting stage of the project the civic advisory committee will then resume their work as -- their role as advisers on the site, and others in urban renewal plan area in spring of 2023.

So there are a couple of upcoming meetings to learn more about the proposed redevelopment of 299 Broadway, and the first of which is Monday, the 17th, there will be a neighborhood meeting at 6:30 p.m. There will also be a meeting on Wednesday, the 19th at 6:30, and more information about this project can be found by visiting the link here, the SomerVoice website, and searching Winter Hill plan implementation.

The second urban renewal site that I'm going to discuss is Gilman Square. Gilman Square also has a civic advisory committee that consists of two City Councilors, Councilor Clingan, along with residents, business owners, and employees in the area who have volunteered -- yeah, residents, business owners, and residents who have volunteered their time. The civic advisory committee, provide feedback at key stages of the process.

So up until this point the CAC has prepared or has received feedback from several workshops, in- person meetings and tabling events to get resident input on what the -- what they would envision for if space. There will be an up coming meeting, to learn more about this project. And similarly, you can also visit the SomerVoice site to learn more about Gilman Square as well.

So I'm happy to take questions. He.

>>I wanted to ask a quick question about the () meetings on October 17th and 19th. Are those duplicates, the same content or different?

>>*WILLIAM BLACKMER*: That's a great question.

[Laughter]

I am happy to look into that for you if you want to give me your email in a minute. Or -- yeah.

>>Great question. So because there are so many little zoning changes [off mic].

>>If citizens attend those meetings, are we doing so to encourage the development to go forward as I hope it does, or what's the purpose of the citizen attending?

>>[off mic].

>>[off mic].

>>[off mic].

>>*NOTE FROM CAPTIONER*: Sorry. I'm not able to hear with the microphone he is using.

>>Just for the sake of time, if you have additional questions, ().

[Applause]

>>*ELLEN SHACHTER*: I'm the Director of the Office of Housing Stability here in Somerville. Our office has been open since 2019, and has grown, and I think there have been some really exciting and important achievements in the area of housing stability.

First, though, I always want to say, I want to thank every single person in this room, because every time we try to get feedback from Somerville residents about what's important to them, they tell us, housing affordability, housing stability, keeping our City diverse, and keeping our residents here in Somerville. And I say that because many times it is not because the people are giving us this feedback, have their own housing stability problems, it is because everybody really cares about their neighbors that they have been willing and able to prioritize this issue. So I just want to thank you because our office simply wouldn't be here if the neighborhood, if the mayor and the City Councilors hadn't made this a top priority.

So what's the mission of housing stability? I will tell you quickly what the mission is and what we do. The mission is to work to prevent the involuntary displacement of Somerville residents to assist residents who need help finding new housing, and to develop policies and programs that () enhance housing stability.

So what does that mean? It helps residents in the short- term to maintain housing stability and we really try to examine what kinds of programs are missing in the city that we need to have, what kind of laws do we need at

the state level, at the local level to ensure that housing stability can be a real thing. And I want to tell you, this is a challenging task. Not going to sugar coat it, not going to say anything else about it, there is so much that we can't do without permission from the State. So our job is really to identify what can we do, and to be a part of really important coalitions at the State level with others fighting for common goals.

So what are our services? The first thing that Mayor Ballantyne mentioned, we have flex funds, I want to say we have brought over a million dollars of new funding for all kinds of things that relate to housing stability. For rent, for mortgages, for back taxes, for things that are incidental, for instance, somebody needs to renew their work authorization and doesn't have money and they need that to keep their housing and their homes. We really need to have flexible funding for folks.

I'm proud to say since COVID we have brought in \$4.6 million of rental and mortgage assistance and related assistance to Somerville residents, this is a really significant achievement that has really people in their homes.

We do case management to help stabilize () to assist with housing search and to help with applications for affordable housing, just wanted to say, affordable housing is complicated. It seems like it should be easy, but it is super complicated. Different funding sources, different criteria, all kinds of what's the priority, what if you are a senior, what if you are not. So our office is really committed to making sure that everybody, whether they speak English or not, disabilities or not, has equal access to apply for access affordable housing.

Just to know in this year we project about having 1,500 requests this year, this is a really high volume, and we do our best to do what we can within the system, but it is challenging. And we can't solve everything for everybody, but we always do our best.

What else. We do advocacy and legal service referrals. We have two contracts with legal services in the community, one with De Novo, Center for Justice and Healing, Cambridge, so we are able to help residents to access legal services and there is no flexibility () and other things that we built in to make sure that the maximum number of people that need legal assistance will be able to get it if they are facing addiction or other housing instability.

And we do a lot of outreach, education, workshops, trainings, for tenants, landlords, and advocates. There are many landlords that we work with. Oftentimes in housing landlord tenant conflicts there are win- win solutions. Sometimes you need to put services in place, sometimes you need money, sometimes there might be a repair that needs to be done, but then somebody stops () whatever it may be. So we really reach out to all the landlords in the community, feel free to call us, we hope you will ()

vouchers and really remember the office of housing and stability is there for everybody.

Now I'm just going to turn to what have we been doing on policy and advocacy. First I wanted to say, it is not brand- new, we passed a new condominium conversion ordinance that was the strongest in the State. We are really proud of that. We also have a Condominium Review Board that enforces its condominium -- it is up to the people to go to the courts to help. We have a process enable that to happen. Which requires information about tenants.

Whenever there is a new tenancy, if they are not renewing the lease or seek to -- operative documents because, again, if we are here, and we have solutions, doesn't matter if the people that need to know don't know. So this is one way to, you know, put in place, to try to put in place a systems that will make sure that people are getting information at the times that they need it.

[Applause]

What else. We have also worked on several really, really critical state legislative campaigns. I don't want to say the named priorities that we have been working with. We have been restarted a statewide coalition here out in Somerville for a real estate transfer fee. What that would mean is that I will say that high- end real estate transactions would have one- time fees, and that money would then be used for affordable housing. You all hear about the challenges of developing affordable housing. Right now the amount of local money that you need to make affordable housing development project work has skyrocketed. That means that in addition to what the Federal Government or the State government can give, right, we need to locally identify new opportunities for these resources. A transfer fee is the best opportunity we have for sustainable, predictable, ongoing income. But we need the permission of the State to do this. Like so many things in the area of housing.

And I'm looking to () certainly been a champion for all things housing, but it has been challenging. The State house is a difficult climate to get some of these housing pieces passed, so one big one, real estate transfer fee, what else do we need? A reasonable -- we simply can't get out of this mess by building enough affordable housing units for everybody, we need to keep people in their homes. We need right to council. Don't know if you all were familiar with this, but about 90% of landlords are represented in eviction cases and between 10 and 20% of tenants are represented in eviction cases. We need to change that balance of power. When you have an attorney in all housing stability cases, is dramatically different, lots of studies have shown that. So we need every tenant who potentially, at the risk of homelessness to have been an attorney to have a fair chance to

state their case in court.

The first chance to buy it at market rate, whatever it is, and if they can, that's nonprofits would have the right to buy it before it was sold on the open market. I cannot tell you how many of the cases that are coming to us now are because an LLC with just -- nowhere near here, international, national corporations are buying up and selling property.

And I know I probably don't have too much time left, but this one shocks me every time I hear it. In the 9 months before COVID, 69% of all real estate sales in Somerville were 100% cash transactions.

What does that say to you about people, regular people's opportunity to impede in this housing market? So it is really important, these are the reasons why we need this State legislation passed. This is why we need everyone of you to be a part of the solutions that can be, and on that note I'm going to say, how many people here have seen the evicted exhibit at the armory? A few? Not many? Some? Thank you. Time to advertise, really compelling, important exhibit at the armory, until November 4th, about eviction, personal stories, you will see it, local data, national data. We are -- and there is a booklet there that says, what can we do to get you -- I urge you to read it and become part of the solution. So thank you.

[Applause]

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>> We are a team of five people and architects and an ash rifts who work on parks and public spaces and trees.

Our main -- the main things we do are there are really four things, we create parks. And if you have been around, you can see some of the one that is we've just completed. And David Ponway, Central hill playground, Bilboy Stadium, and Healey totlot. And we'll be working on Henry Hanson Park, Somerville, and the school yards. So we make

parks. We also work with developers who are, through our zoning, they have to give us a certain percentage as open space and we work with them to make sure that they don't just make lawn. And call it a green because that's that's sometimes what developers try to do. So we try to get to know what the community needs and respond to that. Parks and open spaces. Sometimes they're different types. We also develop policies. So we're working presently on a pollinator action plan which are in the pollinator area and which trees nourishing pollinators, and we'll be putting together a team to work on a plan to make sure that our, what we are putting in our parks in terms of plant material is doing the best that it can in terms of delivering equal services -- ecosystem service benefits. We're also going to be updating our open space and recreation plan in the next year. So both of these are things that you can get involved in, and we'd welcome you and being involved. And then, lastly, the upside of this is that we protect and plant trees.

Last year we were really thrilled to complete our tree Bible which is really the urban forest management plan, and it sets a course for understanding what trees we have, what our canopy looks like, the percentage of species, and what we need to do going forward to both keep canopy loss and keep adding to it.

I highly recommend it. 300 pages. Great read, you will love it, filled with data. And then a couple of the things that the arborist wants me to know about is bugs. There are two bugs that were not welcoming, as opposed to the pollinators and they are emerald ash borer which you may know we've been treating for the last five or six years in Somerville. And if you look at the ash trees in Somerville and look at them in a neighboring town that begins with an M and is not very, very, very wealthy, like the other neighboring town, you will see a big difference. They have not been treating their ash trees and their ash trees are dying.

So urban -- the emerald ash borer is a big problem. And what we are starting to see now is the spotted lantern fly which has been identified in Massachusetts. If you see that in any of the phase phases, the recommendation is that you squish it. So please be on the look out for spotted lantern fly. Unlike emerald ash borer, there is no treatment for it to prevent killing the trees.

It usually hosts -- one of the big hosts is the tree of heaven which, unlike its name, is not a very welcome tree.

But it does also feed on other trees. So spotted lantern fly, squish.

And then next slide. Here's a map of the trees that we plant every year. We are up to about 350 every year. We have 2 -- yeah.

(Applause)

We're happy about that too.

We have two for reps terse in our department and a tree warden in DPW. We call them the tree amigos. And they work on -- they work on getting all of these trees in. So for the fall, this fall, we're working on getting 195 more.

If you see a tree and you want to help, especially in times of dry and hot days, please fill the green bags at the base of them. They are called gator bags and they can never be too full.

When they are new, there is a contractor that's supposed to come by and fill them but it is just so hot and on those times of drought you can absolutely take care of our trees and help us.

And then the last thing I want to talk to you about is happening right now, the kind of highlight project, is the Healey school yard and the ADA path.

And you can see in the first slide the -- there used to be no way to get up to the hill that was -- that you could do safely in a wheelchair or with limited mobility. There is now an access path that goes up to the Healey school from the mystic. And this is huge, number one, because it allows people that are not able to climb to get up but also it really takes down a barrier between the two communities of the housing and the upper community. So we're really hopeful that everyone can start to enjoy this space.

It has been quite a transformation, if you remember, that was a slope and actual field is being built on top of it. You can see that rectangle.

And then the other two pictures are of the school yard and of you can't see but what's coming on this upper right hand is the basketball courts.

So just to let you know what's happening at the Healey, and it is very much a transformative project in that everybody from all of the different communities is going to be able to use it, there's a tot lot for smaller children that was finished a couple of years ago. The school yard is for children in this age bracket but there are a number of other things for older children and adults too.

We also like to go outside. And the access has been greatly improved both with mobility but also visual queues for folks. And some of the crossings for traffic safety.

There are seats and picnic tables that allow for a wheelchair to move in to roll in and sit with others. So a lot of a -- a number of different ADA accommodations. And then there will be a under 12 field that you can see coming soon, and two outdoor basketball courts, a full classroom, and this issued gooded goon, a addition of 141 trees.

So it has been a long time coming. We found fill that was con

tomorrow nayed. We had to get rid of that. That has happened a couple of times now. But we anticipate the school yard will open later this fall, fingers crossed, and that the field will be open in the spring of 2023. So we've been trying our best to get this done.

>> Hello, hello. Well, first off, thank you all for the work you do. I know you're developing tons of policies such as stuff about signage or privately owned public space which I'd love to continue talking with you about.

But my question is about parks, actually. Because creating new parks is something I think most Somerville residents love and want more of. And I know, I as a member of the memorialization committee, I helped name a new park coming the next year hopefully is Leonard Grimes park which is named after a Black abolitionist who lived in east Somerville over 100 years ago.

I'm curious if you have been speaking at all with the developer who is doing it. It is going to be in Woodland, sorry. But it will be nearby. So I'm just curious how that process is going.

>> Do you know the address of that project?

>> I believe it is 31 Tufts Ave. It is near like Everett Street which is a very small street.

>>

>> So yeah, so I don't have the details on that. But I will say our department does review all of the development plans, and because of the new zoning, when developers are coming in and building whatever they need to build and, you know, frequently, like I said, they want to put down some sod and call it a green but now they have to deal with us and we are saying to them, one, you need to do a specific space study to figure out what are the needs of the department -- of the neighborhood who lives in this neighborhood, what amenities are missing from this neighborhood. And then we push them to build things that are more active, that have a better, you know, aside from a green or something passive and sometimes people will go to the neighborhood meetings and really push for something that's just lovely when we really actually need something for kids to do or other things. Though now have to go through us.

So I can get back to you on the process of where that is. In terms of the naming, yes, wherever remember building something new, we hand it over to the memorialization committee and they get to name it for all sorts of different people.

>> Hi. Thank you. You mentioned contaminated soil. Can you explain what that was? And if there was a risk in what's happening to negate that?

>> Yes. Contaminated soil is my life. If any of you know anything

about the Conway project, we've been dealing with highly contaminated soil. This, however, was not that. At the Healey school, there were, it's a little bit more complicated in terms of the cut and fill but there were some pockets. Wherever you remove soil from a site, you have to have it tested, and there were pockets of things that were fairly ubiquitous but still have to be disposed. I believe it was coal ash or something like that. And they were removed per the regulation that is we need to follow. And the site is now clean of them. So we work with a licensed site professional on all of our projects, and they, when we find something, we have to engage them to create very complicated plans that are then filed with the state to make sure the site is cleaned up appropriately and that's happened on this project a couple of times. It is very common in all of our park projects because urban fill is not clean.

>> Great. Thanks very much. And don't forget to water the trees.

(Applause)

>> Hello. My name is Ally. I am a senior planner in the mobility division, and I'm a Somerville resident. I have two kids in Somerville public schools.

>> I'm Brian. I'm the director of engineering as part of our infrastructure and asset manager program. We have about a dozen staff members, mostly engineers, who primarily work to reconstruct the streets and utilities in our city, and I also am a resident of the city with two kids going to our lovely schools.

>> Yeah. So the mobility division is about seven people big and we work very closely with engineering to plan and design the street reconstruction projects and bus mobility improvements and bike improvements throughout the city. So we wanted to talk tonight about how we work together across the departments and about some projects in a little more detail.

So the first project is the green line extension, and the Medford branch is going to be fully open. The target time line is Thanksgiving. This is a huge accomplishment, as many of you probably know. And the project was almost canceled more than once, and it is because of the advocacy and work of residents and local and state elected officials that we are now seeing this huge improvement come to Somerville. So we've all been dealing with a lot of construction tax over the last several years, and it is very exciting that we will now see the benefits of the green way extension. -- of the green line extension.

The next and related project that we wanted to talk about is the

community path extension. So this also, as being related to the Green Line extension, is not a foregone conclusion that this is going to be part of that project.

It is also because of the advocacy and work of residents and leaders that this important multimodal path is opening.

So it is set to open one month after the green line extension. And here, the picture right here is what most of the community path extension would look like. So it is actually different than many of the areas of the community path that you may currently be familiar with. And that's just an important point because it relates to some of the operations and maintenance, roles that the city will be playing, and some of the learning curve that all of our departments we would have to have when the path opens in terms of how the trees and the other plantings maintained, how the light bulbs were placed, what happens when it snows and how is that cleared. So we just want to sort of set the expectations for that that the city has been working for many years to plan for this and to learn and plan for how maintenance is going to happen. But there will be a learning curve for all of us yeah. And anything else you want to add?

>> We have an awesome DPW and an awesome emergency services but this is opening on like January, which is the worst time for a public community path to open. So we really to put is simply, we're asking for your patience, especially this first winter, as we work out the kinks, we learn how to use this new facility we have to the city. It will take us some time to get it operating and working 24/7 around the clock. It is not going to be there the first year. And it is going to take us some time to get it. So we're just, we're thanking you now for your patience.

(Applause)

>> I can't you. So the next group of work we wanted to talk about is some of our street reconstruction projects, and specifically what's going on in ward 4. So one of the challenges in ward 4 that you are probably all very familiar with are the state roadway that is run through it and the safety and health challenges of those. And one of the priorities that we've been working on is the design of safety improvements at Mystic and shore drive. So while these roadways pose serious challenges for us and our residents, we are lucky to have a partnership with Mass DOT, to have partners in them, where they allow us, city staff, to design improvements and work with them on the permitting process to get these improvements designed and constructed.

So the main improvements of this project that is being designed is an extension of the median in the middle of Mystic on the north side of the intersection there. Curb extensions on all of the four

corners of the intersection. A pedestrian connections through the intersection. Signal timing and all ADA accessible signals and pedestrian ramps. In the interaction is.

So progress is being made.

It is not, as others have mentioned, working with the state, challenges with that. It is not as fast as we would like it to be. But this is a project that we're working to design and construct. Oh, one of the other things that Brian will talk more about is just how enhanced coordination between mobility and engineering over the last several years has led to a lot of traffic projects, speed bumps and the neighborhood traffic that you see around the city and throughout ward 4.

>> Ali is way too modest. The mobility department -- so first off, Mass DOT, a wonderful organization, but it takes a lot of work from the city to get them to the point of doing these 20% tree designs for street scapes and bring our state roadways up to something a little bit closer to what our residents deserve in this city. So I want to hand it to the mobility division for staying with the highway department and keeping them on task and working with us to really improve our streets.

And just as important, I really want to thank our representatives and especially counselor cling en for keeping the pressure on us and the state to make these really important improvements happen. And we're really hopeful to see more in the coming years.

Something that we have a lot more control inform our city is on our own city streets and that is something where Ali was alluding to, the engineering division and the mobility division really worked together, we made mete on a very regular, multiple times a week too so that when they're coming up with a wonderful improvement for traffic calming, for pedestrian safety, cyclist safety, for motorists convenience, that, for transit priority, that we're able to translate that in to construction documents, work with the contractors, so that they get constructed correctly. And that doesn't always happen.

So one of the things I wanted to point out is this year we've been really stepping up our movement to do speed humps throughout the city. And many of you have seen them. We've put them in on [sic] more and we put them in on the street here in Ward 4. Other people may not even notice they're there. Because they are too small. So these are the types of things where we are working with our contractors on a regular basis. These are new for them as well. And we are trying to work with them and get them to build it right the first time and when they don't work with them and get them to build it right the second time. So if you find the speed humps a little

underwhelming, they will be fixed probably in the spring but they will be improved.

The other thing that we're able to work on collaboratively as a team and again this is huge props to ward counselor but to all of the counselors to really say how important pedestrian safety is in the community. So the last contract that we let at the beginning of this calendar year and the rural 6 is the six intersections throughout the city we're improving for pedestrian safety, primarily. And the highlight is ward 4 with the intersection at Sewell and Keith. And -- Sewell and Heath. And we're adding in a much more safe pedestrian crossing with a pedestrian island in the middle that is large enough for even a wheelchair or a person with a stroller to be able to look one direction across half the street, stop, wait, take a break, look the other direction and cross the second half of the street.

This is -- thank you.

These are -- these are elements that we've been rolling out throughout the rest of the city. They also serve to slow motorists down.

It doesn't limit through put of the streets. We still get the same amount of traffic for our streets but it serves to slow the motorists down. It gives them a chance to encourage them to the other people who are on the road who aren't necessarily in a vehicle.

All right. Let's go to the next one.

All right. I want to change gears on you all together, I'm going to go underground for a moment. So we have one of the best water supply systems in the U.S. with the MWRA. But it is old, like, much of our infrastructure, and a lot of the infrastructure coming in to our homes are equally old and have lead pipes or other nonproper pipes. So for the past two years, the engineering division has been running a fantastic program where at no cost we are replacing the noncopper services, water services that go to residents' homes. And in the past two years we have replaced over 150 services. We plan to replace 100 more this year. And if you suspect you might have a noncopper service, please go to our website check to see if you're on the list and we will prioritize you for the following year.

A good question that came up last year at ward 3 is don't realready do this. If we're out replacing the line in your street, we're already looking at the list and replacing those noncopper lines. But many parts of the communities have perfectly good water lines. We're not replacing them any time soon. But you may still have a service that needs to be repaired. So if you think that may be the case, please, please let us know.

Next.

All right. The next -- the underground thing that sometimes

doesn't stay there is storm water.

We have a, over the past two years, we've been doing a very large storm water, citywide modeling system that not only is based on current rainfall data but is also based on the projections going into the future that we studied about three years ago.

So we're trying to future proof this as best as we can. This model is coming up with really important proposals on how to fix the system and that plan will be released in November, this November, a month away. And one thing I wanted to be clear and is really exciting is that two of the projects that really floated to the top of the list are ward 4 and that's the new storm water to Mitt Mystic river that will include sewer and drain separation in this ward that trains towards the Mystic river so that we can give a clear out let for storm war water in the ward.

The second one would follow I that which is a storm water tank in Gillman square would likely be located on the Holman site and that will follow on and after the Mystic river outlet because we need to have a good outlet for that storm water so we are discharging our storm water in to a good receiving water body.

Some people who know, and I a I say separating storm and sewer, you know I'm talking about combined sewer overflows. Who knows what a combined sewer overflow is? I'm sorry for you.

Combined sewer over flows. That is when we get too much rainfall and our sanitary system overflows into the Mystic river. So we are going in following this study immediately to plan on how to minimize reduce and some day eliminate this. And this project that we're moving forward with will help move that goal forward by creating a sprite outlet that doesn't overflow the sanitary system or at least reduce that is overflow.

So excite things happening in the city of Somerville. I know it is a lot of construction. I know it really impacts us as a community. And I can just ask again, we really need your patience. We're really trying to make the city a better, safer and healthier place for all of to us live.

But it is not free in money and it is not free in time and it is construction. So thank you for your patience.

>> You do have two on- line questions.

>> So the how long or how soon do we have the project is in fact I hear you saying in November because I'm very anxious and I'm very angry because you're talking about the sewer. Last year it was not the sewer. The water is coming from the street. Right now it goes to grand street. It hits it. That moment, it runs down there already.

So is right there and like my size, obviously, it is at least six

feet water in my basement where I'm like having like struggling, trying to get some help, like, screaming and, like, sending e-mails every where and, you know what was the answer? Silence. So that's not just the sewer, it is coming from the street. How we can have an answer on that.

>> So yeah, first off, please talk to me afterwards. Your silence response really frustrates me and that is unacceptable in any case. As far as, but to answer your specific question, the reason why it is can you think from the street is because sewers are full, sewers are overflowing and the sewers don't have anywhere -- or where the sewers have traditionally run their storm water is also fall so that is the point to give a place for that storm water to go. So it is not going in your basement or any one else's basement, it is not overflowing the street and hopefully not overflowing in the streets in the first place, at least among regular storms that we have. So that is enough that's coming from Broadway and the Jakes neighborhood.

>> (Speaking away from microphone)

>> Okay. Why don't we look at them afterwards.

>> I hope you're the right people to address this question, you talked about the water lines and storm water there. Has been a lot of work going on on the sewers as well. Can you comment on what has been happening? Is it regular maintenance? Are they replacing? I know it is really old sewers that are made of bricks so I'm wondering if they're getting more modern sewers.

>> Absolutely. I am the right person to talk to about that. So yes, sewers are, we have a very old sewer system. The sewer system is much older than all of us probably put together. It is at least 200 years old in some places. So when you see the sewer reconstruction work that is out there, it is out there to replace or reconstruct the existing sewers that are there. These are such as itself sewer collapse on Metric Street that some of you may be aware of, an old brick sewer collapse and we're in they're right now through the water and sewer to replace that with a modern PVC perhaps particular pipes that are much more durable and much more able to withstand the current demands but also flows more quickly so if it is able to move more water more quickly.

But a lot of other symptoms we have a annual project where we inspect sewer lines throughout the city and we determine what are the repairs needed for the sewer lines and that's the most typical sewer reconstruction projects that we see, and it is the project that led to the work on Jakes and Edgar Street earlier this year -- earlier this month.

>> Two questions in my mind. The first is, is there a plan for the city to go back to do a assessment of the street copings to the community path to from a safety perspective.

>> Yes. We worked with the GLXC to the best that we could. During the construction to address the safety and improve it as best as we could. We are now going through and working on elements that we can impact so many of the streets if we can fit speed humps in like Central and [sic] more, we're putting speed bumps in on the approaches to those crossings. But we will be regularly going back and looking at the impacts that both the community path extension with this many crossings but also the new GLT stations with many of its entrances opening right out on to really narrow side walks on bridges. So we will be regularly looking through that with the mobility division to find out what is the best solution moving forward.

>> Another question, will be there a typology for city streets? Can you describe ahead, what are will the streets be in the city?

>> So typology of streets, and I'm tot entirely sure what the questioner is driving at, but win looking at -- actually I'm going to back this up to complete streets ordinance. We have a complete street ordinance in the city that requires every street that is being reconstructed to look at that street from the perspective of every single use who use that is street and so every one of the streets are different, they are different people and different users on it and we address that street to meet the needs of the users of that street as best we can.

That said, there are themes, there are patterns that develop and constantly looking for the themes and patterns and that might be what the questioner is asking typology of a street because if we can come up with good themes and patterns of streets, we can excuse more street reconstruction because we'll be able to repeat those themes and patterns more consistently through our community but do we have these those really set up now already, no, we don't. But that is something that we are looking at.

>> Another quick question, sorry. Is there any information on when School Street will reopen once GLX opens?

>> It will definitely reopen before the green line reopens. They are repaving School street yesterday and today.

They still have more work to finish on it so we can probably count it in the next few weeks but I don't have a specific date for you.

>> Good evening, everyone.

>> We'd like to ask our city expert to please come up as she will

be presenting with me.

>> All right. Good evening. Thank you. So the department of racial and social justice for the city of Somerville is widely known to everyone as the Department that is responsible for prioritizing the city's initiative on re-imagining public safety.

I want to enhance the mission of department that is specifically to lead the city of Somerville's equity efforts and collaborate with city departments, constituents and stakeholders to eliminate the institutional and structural systems that create racial inequities, social disparities and other social injustices.

As it relates to the city and its services and its departments and their function.

So as of right now we are prioritizing nine different initiatives which is primarily what everyone continues to hear about it because we want to you hear about it because we need your feedback and this is a community driven process for the city of Somerville and that is what our state department is prioritizing that everything we do is collaborative in nature, community driven, community fed as far as how we move along in the process of these priorities.

So we were established in 2021 officially and we have continued to build the department and its capacity. You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter and we've recently welcomed staff members, RSJ coordinator, Amanda; community engagement specialist, Leonor; and public information officer, Haakon Brooks.

We worked last year with several Harvard graduate students with from the school of education and we recruited youth from the city of Somerville to help conduct a short participatory action research project to continue the design of what a youth cabinet that would be housed would look like. This youth cabinet would give the youth of the city an opportunity to pan in the Democratic process, to have a voice in policies that are being created and basically have a voice to be able to say what are the things that are effecting them and their lived experience here in Somerville.

So the youth lead is just about done with the study and in November we will be announcing a date where they will present their findings and what the new RSJ youth cab will look like.

Recently we have held trainings around what's called PFA, psychological first aid. This happened September 20th and September 22nd of last month. Our department, we hosted two free psych logical first aid training sessions to city staff, front line workers and community leaders and what I mean, and I always like to emphasize this which community leaders down the hallway saying hey, do you know about this, do you have any resources about that, use because the community is not just someone who you elect, it is also

your neighbor who helps from you time to time. So the RSJ department is committed, again, to collaborating with you shallen constituents and stakeholders and equipping them with a toolkit to help us do this work.

The trainings were held via Zoom and facilitated by which is a service of Riverside community care. Next week we will be following up with those members, 130 individuals preregistered for the four- hour training; 90 participated. So those 90 participants will join us again next week so they haven a opportunity to have practice and hands on time for Q&A to practice what they learned in September.

For the incidence initiative. Again, the community requested that the RSJ established a system for reporting and investigating and referring hate and bias incidents. We are in the process of implementing a case management system known as file vine. With this tool the RSJ department will be able to track hate and violence initiatives filed not with just our department but with 311 and other department areas like the Somerville Police Department that receive complaints from constituents. We are able to customize this management system to track any and all relevant information to these particular complaints and it also allows us to keep consistent contact so they know what's going on with their face real- time. The initiative of re- imagining police and public safety. For staffing and operations analysis, we have completed the phase. We're simultaneously working on the focus groups with staff and governing bodies, data collection and analysis. The next and time phases of this would be the recommendations of element, the report development and presenting findings to constituents and stakeholders.

We are currently hosting community visioning focus groups that have been ongoing since August. This year we will be doing specific targeted dates and times for each ward, specific targeted dates and times for other groups of constituencies and this will be updated on the SJ.

You can help us as a group or an individual.

The safety perception survey is officially published. It is available in six leans. It is posted on- line and it is also available as a hard cope by request. We have some here today if you would like to fill out a survey.

And you can contact us at RSJ at Somerville MA.gov.

I will also share with a phone number if it is easier to text a request or call in a request.

In addition, RSJ community ambassadors that will play a critical role in outreach and engagement and empowerment of our community especially for most vulnerable who are seldom heard from will be announced in November of 2022. We have evaluators that are

responsible for reviewing the applications submitted and helping to choose the candidates that best represent the diversity and experience of constituents and stake holders of Somerville. Again, we will be announcing the RSJ community ambassadors in November. Updates on all of these areas will soon be available to all constituents and stakeholders on- line as we are creating micro pages so if all you're interested in is the RSJ community ambassadors and what's going on there, there will be a micro page for you to specifically go and seek out that information.

The RSJ fund which was created to dismantle systemic racism and social inequality, the resources that are going to be used to support individuals and organizations that want to join us in this effort, conducting focus groups, constituents in the community and represent of departments so we can have an impact of -- an understanding of impact areas and thoughts around what our constituents really want the funds to be used for around the same impact areas.

We are tasked with what it should look like in Somerville. We are tasked with making the recommendations, not the actual task force. So right now -- I'm sorry, not the board. We're going to be creating the task force, not the board.

So the difference is we are creating a task force and take all of this research that the department is doing, take this information and create recommendations that will then allow the administration to make the decision around how it will be made. So expect to hear an announcement from us as to who the task force members will be. The task force is going to be trained, informed and knowledgeable about what it is and how it functions across different models. Their recommendation also align this knowledge and awareness with the needs of Somerville as a city and as voiced by constituents. The purpose of creating task force is to increase. And it will bring together experts on the subject matter and inform the decisions that are made around the civilian oversight board.

Commissions. We have open calls for members, four spots in each of the following commissions: human rights commission; Somerville commission for women; and as they will tell you, Somerville commission for persons with disabilities.

These four spots will be open until filled.

And so with that, I will hand over the mic to aide reen, our ADA experts.

>> Inc. Holly has a question.

>> What's your question, Holly?

>> They're making open calls for positions, for four positions. All of the commissions -- all of the commissions have four open calls that. Doesn't mean that's all they have open. That means what they have calling for right now.

>> So you're looking -- so you're look willing for 12 people right now?

>> Each of the commissions are the people for people.

>> How many open seats?

>> The commission has four, the commission for Somerville Commission for woman has four and the Somerville commission for persons with disabilities has four.

>> And you said that they are open calls out, I can't find any listings for the commission for persons with disabilities anywhere on the website?

>> I'd be happy to send you the link.

>> But I have people interested in applying and I can't find that. And I would also like to understand how long those will be open.

>> They're --

>> Applicants that have been put on hold.

>> They will be open until filled.

>> But you have the applicants?

>> Yes, they will be open until filled and applicants will have to go through the same process.

>> Okay. So I'm the care person for Somerville commission with disabilities and we've been trying so hard to get our seats filled before we are no longer able to function. Which we are a federally mandated position. And it is very difficult to find people if people can't find the information on the websites and can't get answers from city staff on where things are going. And you can't -- you can't fix this without the help of the city.

I'm very aware of this. I'm just curious what your plan is right now and how I can and anyone else wants to help get this done.

>> I'm happy to speak with anyone who wants to speak with me after this presentation. I will be here afterwards.

>> Well, it is already 20 minutes past and unfortunately I can't stay much longer but maybe we can talk in person another day.

>> Absolutely.

>> Thanks. Good evening, as Denny's said, my name is Adrienne, I'm the ADA or Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator, for the city of Somerville. I am a Somerville resident myself. I'm one of the few people who raised her hand when asked if I had a cat. Many of my colleagues have probably seen Jill on many Zoom calls or Teams call. She's very interested in what I do all day.

With that said, as Denny's said, I get, among many things I do, I get the honor and privilege of being the staff liaison for the Somerville persons disabilities who is the new elected chair is Holly who just spoke, and they're currently recruiting for four open seats. Specifically three of these seats are for people who identify with a disability, and the other seats is for somebody who is a family

member for somebody with a disability.

Going forward, I completed an ADA internal survey with key leadership staff with the city of Somerville had past spring, and I was really [enkurjdz](#) to find out that many of my colleagues have a really great working knowledge through their own work of the ADA and this will actually inform internal trainings for city of Somerville staff and we are actually going to start with our first responders. I look forward to meeting with our the Somerville fire department at the end of the month to train them and then we will move forward with the Somerville police department.

And then finally launching at the beginning of the November, the community, including all of new this room, will get a chance to tell me about your thoughts on accessibility and the a ADA within the city of Somerville. Thank you so much.

>> (Speaking away from microphone)

>> Seeing none, I'm happy, I'm going say around after. I'm happy to answer questions or have a conversation if anyone has any thoughts. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you. Good evening, everyone. I know it is late. I know it is getting later. Before I start, I'm the interim police chief. Would everybody just think back, close your eyes for ten seconds, and not any longer because I don't want to you fall asleep. To 1984 and picture yourselves sitting in a am radio like this, a cafeteria of your elementary and/or high school. Remember those days when life was innocent? As I doned my first uniform in 19ed 4 for the Somerville Police Department and I spent the next 32 years here serving on the police Department, rising through the ranks and retiring initially, my initial retirement in 19 -- in 2014. I transcended into the private sector and entered the world of higher ed and the area of practicing law before I returned here in 2020 as your interim police chief until a permanent police chief is chosen. It is very different these days, one particular example that I will point out, if you could all look at the back wall, when I first started working in 1984 here, this was a blank wall. It was often vandalized with graffiti. And it is Somerville, diversity, happiness and it is moving forward and it is because of the people who have moved here over the last 30 or 40 years. And with that, I'm going to have Captain to speak on points, topics of conversation that have been of interest and are often asked in different types of meetings before I get into the crime stats themselves.

>> Thank you, chief. I'm the patrol captain and all the men see in uniform, they report up to me. And many issues have you in your neighborhoods, communities, that get funneled through the police or council come to me and then we address the problems you may have.

I will say I work very closely with your city council, especially, you know, taxes but is he responsive.

The chief goes, the rank and file was very happy to have him back in the Somerville Police Department. He was in the police department in numerous positions, patrol, traffic. He is really respected and we are very lucky to have him with us for as long as he can stay.

I have nine years left and I'm hoping that I see him for nine years. So key points and changes that have occurred since the last meetings. I loved these meetings. It gives me an opportunity to get out of my office and people with me and see what's going on in your neighborhoods.

So it is some changes community policing unit. In 2017 you get an award, a regional award and then it was a national law enforcement museum in Washington, D.C. of the Somerville Police. There may have been a picture of a tall handsome captain at the time who had more hair. In that exhibit, I was told, but since then due to staffing and budgeting, that has deteriorated. There were 14 offices original knee when I first started here 21 years ago. Now it is down to 7 officers, one per ward and since then, that is further reviewed reduced accidents and things like that.

As far as student resource office, previous meetings have people who went to them, we really talked about our program, what that was was 20 officers were assigned to a grade in the school and they fall in a nonlaw enforcement capacity and they follow that grade all the way through graduation. They started with that grade and we are one way from that. One attended the graduation.

And there was a school department, two at the high school, one with elementary schools. I know there's a working group in progress and school but there was a solution, maybe a hybrid method I'm not really sure.

Number three is accreditation. In 2022 we were previously accredited accredited three years previous to that. What accreditation is the best practices within law enforcement. I can't say that Somerville Police Department is one of the largest police departments that holds accreditation and though come in and make sure you have those standards but are following those standards and that you do an audit and those odd list done by outside forces, they chair pee pick the ones they want to cherry pick and say we want to do this and we were re accredited here in June of 202 and as the slide says, they we had 322 standards to achieve the examination.

I'm going to turn it over to the chief to talk about the slides.

>> And I will be here afterwards if you have questions.

>> Police reform. A lot of people may have heard about police reform

in 2020, what that actually did is create a commission of 11 people who are responsible for and it is a continuation, responsible for certifying every single police officer in Massachusetts, and they're also more importantly, for decertifying police officers. So what that process looks like is that we will -- we send all of our disciplinary files and they review every single file of every single police officer. They've already decertified a number of police officers. And that decertify indication goes into a national database. So what happens is somebody is, that goes into the database so if that pattern, that officer goes to another department or another state, that comes into the system. So they can choose candidates with a higher level of performance.

Next slide.

So in speaking about crime stats specifically, whether it be citywide and/or ward 4, citywide index crime has increased 10% over year and about 11%. And I say at the beginning of these presentations, when you look at the percentages, they are sometimes deceiving because a percentage decrease could be a matter of one or two or three incidents. So without getting specific, that is what it looks like citywide. What drives those, property crimes, thefts of motor vehicles and parts of motor vehicles. Not just in Somerville but regionally, there has been a big spike in the theft of catalytic converters from cars. It takes three to five- minutes for someone to pull up to a car, cut out the converter and leave. So we have one detective from our criminal investigative division assigned to regional task force that deals with catalytic converters up and down the east coast. And so we are watching that.

Ward foyer index crime has increased about 22%, 34 incidents over one year and 33 incidents over two years.

So I'm going to give somewhat of an explanation and not give specific numbers but again, that in those numbers are still more property related versus aggravated assaults.

So but the numbers have changed. I know in ward 4 there is a concern about this that's in the development. But I will tell you that we've had a slight decrease in shootings over the last year. And I think there was four fewer incidents and over the past two years, five incidents. And what do we attribute that too in this case, I'd like to think that saturation patrol which was a response to the gun violence, gaining violence, in 20 months, in the ward four area has helped. We did conduct it over what we call directed patrols of 2,000 directed patrols over this timeframe. We had officers stationed in and around surrounding areas, these shots fired were reported and recorded.

We also had great success, I want to you think about the number of shootings that were 13 done last year in this ward. I think about

10 to 20. The cities and towns as a task force and they have arrested a number of people who were involved in those past shootings, identified located and they are being prosecuted. The number of people that have been arrested play as part in the arresting of those shooting incidents in the future.

And finally we have partnered, as I stated, with the cities and surround that are having and gun violence and so with that what can we do both on your part and SPD's part?

Again, this is a two-way street. As much as it has been said at different meetings, don'ts leave your car running because what we're finding as the weather gets colder, a lot of people will run in to Dunkin' Donuts get their coffee, leave their cars running and a threats occurs, it is a crime of opportunity if somebody is walking by, and, again, package delivery, trucks are starting to deliver Christmas packages this early and leave their trucks running and they're being stolen.

Bike theft. Bike theft has dropped a little bit in ward 4 but cable locks are easy to cut so be careful where you secure your bike. And I think the most important to think about is if you see something to report something that one phone call could, where that incident is taking place, in the future, in the activity there. So if you do see something suspicious, please call where it is and and we actually deploy based on data driven incidents as incidents occur in different areas of the city, we would like to shift our resources so that in case it becomes more of those areas of the crime that particular area is being, for instance, there's, if there's a spike in bike thefts we'll have calls or offices to that areas for certain times, if there's a trend we focus specifically on that timeframe. So you'll have this. But this core unit is staffed with six to eight clinicians. Our offices work. They are embedded in that department. Our offices work with them on a daily basis. And they read the reports, as well as officers check a box for reports that may have one of those elements in the the call, we refer approximately 25 to 3,000 calls over the next year to the unit on a annual basis to follow-up services. Next slide.

If you have general questions or concerns, we created a specific e-mail that you can send a question to as anonymous line and the link and you can get a copy of the slides tonight. Thank you. So we can stick around after the meeting? Does anybody have questions in the back?

>> If you have questions.

>> I walk primarily in the city and it is really dangerous out there. People with the red lights, people turn red where shouldn't. It is really bad, and it has gotten worse in the last year.

I live on Mystic and that's been completely changed by the state police and city police. People go 50 miles an hour there. There's a speed-reader up there because not because of anybody else I got it there. So now I know how fast I go where before I just managed how fast I go. Any don't pull anybody over. They don't enforce the rules. I don't know what to do. I call the police and they say oh, we're understaffed. And calling the state legislature saying we need more funding is not going to help me. So I don't know what my question is. It is more like that's a huge problem.

>> Let me try to address some concerns. So I understand it is a concern citywide. There's a couple of things. There is a grant we applied for that we did not receive this year called the municipal safety grant that would have provided extra enforcement in the areas of speed enforcement. We did not get that grant this year. It was not the city's desire for us to get that grant. Officers are short staffed. I get that. I am not condoning that the answers you may have received are correct. A lot of the problems stem around if it is on Mystic or McGrath highway, state highway, state police have jurisdiction so sometimes it is a jurisdictional issue and I can't condone whether or not the state police come or not. But then as was pointed out earlier in the presentation, it is not just enforcement, it is about education. Part of the education is the calming and roadway development, development of roadways especially on the Mystic Ave stretch we saw earlier in the presentation I think will help slow down traffic. It is a problem citywide. I get it. But these are just some of the areas that we are looking at and it is not just the police department but what you had seen in the slides previously, those traffic calming types of mobility issues come in to play too.

>> Just one further thing if we want to reduce gang violence, then maybe you should get rid of the highway that connects our part of Somerville to East Cambridge. Because we have 38 and 28 that -- it is a highway and it makes it very easy to get in and out very quickly and, you know, so we can talk all we want about things but we have a highway and they won't do anything about it so it effects everything.

>> I'm not going to disagree with you. I think there's other roadways in other cities where these kids are coming from, where the gang associates are coming from but it is also education and trying to find some alternatives for these alternatives to go through (Speaking away from microphone). So I work closely with Denny's and I've been meeting with her on a weekly basis and she came on board. They are working together on policing and we're trying to resume some community outreach programs and get to these kids to have some

dialogue with these kids so they can see the consequences of maybe coming associated with the gang.
Any other quick question?