

Somerville Climate Forward

Transportation Working Group Meeting #2

December 14, 2017

Attendees

- Dan Flynn
- Mike Tremblay, City of Somerville
- Mike Stanley
- Jonathan Klein
- Jocelyn Newhouse
- Philip Baraona
- Oliver Sellers-Garcia, City of Somerville

Solutions the group is most interested in seeing implemented

- Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure (on street)
- Bicycle infrastructure expansion
- Make EV ownership easier
- Shared autonomous vehicle pilot

Individual Feedback on specific solutions

- Dan: shared autonomous electric vehicles. Getting people into these vehicles solves a lot of problems. We need to find a place that has a high density of ridership. This would work kind of like Lyft Line. What are the steps to take? Ask consultants who to approach. In terms of a pilot: we could be ready sooner, we are a city with big parking problems (focus on the parking problem).
 - Philip: is this just for getting around Somerville or just getting around the region?
 - Mike T: the main thing is that it makes it less important to own your own vehicle—no more parking lots.
- Mike T: a lot of the parking in the HS is going away—this is an example of how parking availability has driven a lot of unnecessary demand. More shared EVs would cut down on people having to drive to work. How would a shared autonomous vehicle plug itself in? Where do the “rest”? For electrifying the fleet, what do you do about the 24-7 vehicles?
- Jocelyn: the reason to do a pilot is because it’s “cool.” For autonomous vehicles, there are lots of problems in Somerville that would need to be solved (e.g., Powderhouse circle). We would have a chance to figure these things out first, like how to deal with pedestrian interaction. What is the scope of a pilot? How do we deal with driving that goes in and out of Somerville. It might make sense to think of a pilot with a fleet.
 - Jonathan: we are a very long way from autonomous vehicles

- Jonathan: The transition to EV ownership is will raise a few issues—charging, economics. Waited to buy an EV until he had a driveway. He has to leave his car charging for a long time. Always looking for places where he can leave the car for a long time. Cost for charging has to be commensurate with gas and convenience. Some cities offer lower electricity rates at night.
 - Dan: focusing on driveway parking technology is not equitable. What is the next step?
- Philip: how do you deal with an EV on a road trip? Maybe this isn't something that we deal with in this plan, but we need to acknowledge that this is something that people in Somerville think about.
 - Install higher power chargers.

Discussion

- Where does the City have a role in EV charging development?
 - Identifying locations for siting stations.
 - Need to think about how to advocate for the additional power and infrastructure that would be needed. City can talk to the utilities about demand.
 - Encourage peak shifting.
 - Roads are being dug up right now (e.g., Somerville Ave). Isn't this the right time to do on-street spaces with EV charging? New infrastructure should all be installed at once. Medford Street and Broadway are all coming up. Make it a policy that when you tear up a road: find out what the demand might be for power and put in the capacity now.
 - Need to get more EV charging into Assembly.
- Are reflective roadways a way to deal with urban heat island? Is there anything that we can do with roadways to reduce UHI? Can there be a compromise with our weather?
- Underground parking is \$80-100k per space.
- Need more cycle tracks. Already part of the City's transportation plans, but this plan should also advocate for them. We need a cycle route to the Central campus. Need to encourage people to take neighborways. Need to make a whole network of low-stress streets.
- Winter maintenance of the bike paths. Look at cold climate examples. City needs to have the equipment to clear many more bike lanes. Make sidewalks walkable 12 months/year.
- MBTA will clear a busway (e.g. Davis) but not bus stops.
- How would BRT work in Somerville? Need to find wide streets: Broadway, Prospect, Holland.
 - We could do bus signal priority. If coordinated with other cities, this could make a big improvement. Could this be a pilot with the MBTA if we put in the signals?
- Electric buses—is this worthwhile for us to advocate for? Don't want CNG buses.
- One of the connectivity issues is that Somerville is bisected by 93 and railway.
- If there is more charging or support of third-party charging, you wouldn't need as many incentives from cities. Doesn't make sense to do outreach if there aren't a lot of ways for people to charge.
- Municipal fleet EVs is about visibility. Pair this with a Transportation Demand Management program. We can demonstrate to large developers that it can be done if we do it.