



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PEDESTRIAN & TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2020

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting using GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/539724445>

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander

*Ginny Alverson

*Jessica Bellow

Emma Blaxter

Georgy Cohen

*Laura Evans

*Jessica Ferguson

*Rauvin Johl

*Paola Massoli

*Audrey Orenstein

*Vitor Pamplona

*Zach Rosenberg

*Julia Toof

*Emily Vides

Ex-Officio:

*Katjana Ballantyne, *City Council*

*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*=present

Guests:

Brian Postlewait - *City of Somerville Assistant Director of Engineering*

Tom Lamar - *Vice Chair Somerville Bike Committee*

George Schneelock - *Somerville Bike Safety*

Call to order: 6:35PM

Procedural Business:

1. Introductions - Zach read off the list of names from our agenda and then screens that were logged in and we all gave a brief introduction.
2. Meeting Guidelines - Zach suggested best-practices for virtual meetings.

Several members have signed up to be involved in the three sub-committees formed. At this point, only the Engineering sub-committee has leadership: Paolo Masoli. Encouragement for signing up continues. In addition, we need more members to volunteer to be the monthly acting secretary - taking minutes. Without volunteers, members will be assigned alphabetically.

April Minutes approved: Jessica Bellow made the first motion, followed by Rauvin Johl.

City Update:

1. COVID Update

- a. Hands-Free cross signals - Somerville owns 70 of the crosswalk buttons and can program those. The rest belong to the state and need coordination with the DOT to reprogram. On the ones that are switched to hands-free, signs are being placed on the poles to explain to pedestrians the change.

Ginny was concerned that sight-impaired persons would not see the sign. The buttons remain functional and can be pressed as usual. Ginny expressed that auditory signals are ideal and there is an overall agreement that Somerville crossing signals need to be upgraded to state-of-the art, but that will be in the future.

- b. Traffic-calming and crosswalks - using quick build approach. Applying red back to crosswalks for visibility. Adding new crosswalks where there aren't any.
- c. Shared-curbs - Pickup -drop off locations - in commercial areas, more 15-minute parking will be installed for dropping off/picking. Blue way-finder signs are going up.
- d. Shared streets - creating a network. "Shared curbs" are being developed in business areas and shared streets are being developed in residential areas. Slides show different ways other cities are sharing streets.

Ginny is concerned that obstacles placed in the street to change traffic flow will be a tripping hazard or be confusing. Pedestrians that stay on the sidewalk and in crosswalks will not be affected. Brian said that he sees the bigger effect as traffic calming, and that cars will still be able to ferry disabled passengers to destinations. Somerville needs to communicate to delivery drivers that they are "essential" and can drive through.

Before our June Meeting, feedback is requested on which corridors and crosswalks should be prioritized. At the time of this meeting, the neighborhood walking network map was not published. It is now available.

2. General Update

- a. MBTA - phased re-opening.
- b. General progress of annual maintenance. Brian talked about how sidewalks and streets are prioritized for repair/repaving. Streets and sidewalks have different scales since they serve different needs and populations.

Joint PTAC/SBAC letter Discussion:

Together with the SBAC, PTAC wants to send a letter to the city to show appreciation for the work they are doing to allow residents to use public space safely, and to encourage faster

implementation. After the presentation by the city, the question was raised about whether the letter should still be sent.

Ted approved sending the letter in its general form, with another round of edits. This was seconded by almost everyone. Edits are due back by May 30 so that the SBAC can have a final vote early June.

VOTE: to approve sending the letter, with edits:

Approve: 10

Abstain: 2

Vote passed

Website Discussion:

Time expired. Audrey requested that people reach out with comments and edits to the website.

Online Meeting Addendum