



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

Date: Thursday, June 18th, 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

Georgy Cohen

Emma Blaxter

*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*

*Viola Augustine, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*=present

Guests:

George Schneeloch (Guest; Bicycle Committee)

Rachel Berets (Guest, Somerville Times)

Tom Lamar (Guest; Bicycle Committee)

Call to order: 6:35PM

Acting Secretary: Rauvin Johl

Procedural Business

1. Introductions: Zach read off the names from the screens that were logged in and we all gave a brief introduction.
2. May Minutes:
 - a. Zach R. corrected the voting for the decision to sign onto the PTAC-Bicycle committee letter to the City from 9 votes in favor to 10.
 - b. The May minutes were approved. Paola M. made the first motion, followed by Vitor P.

Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes from Last Month

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City Update

1. Shared Streets Update

- a. Alexandra K. provided an update on Phase One of Shared Streets and Shared Curbs
- b. The goal of the initial phase of Shared Streets was to address the problems of narrow sidewalks and the need for more space for walking.
- c. The City acknowledged that when designing the Shared Streets mapping, it was difficult to create a cohesive network of Shared Streets without crossing major roadways.
- d. The city has solicited and received feedback via map entries, surveys, and emailed comments. There have been over 5,000 visits to the webpage as of June 18th.
- e. Phase II of Shared Streets will be implemented in West Somerville during the week of June 23.
- f. Each phase of Shared Streets is subject to change based on input from engineering, the community, and the committee.
 - i. Rauvin J. asked about the timeline for subsequent phases. The City plans to roll out new phases approximately every two weeks, with an assessment period between each phase to allow for improvements. For example, in Phase II the City will use glued flex posts rather than sawhorses to solve the problem of barriers being removed. These flex posts will be similar to the posts in Ball Sq. and will be implemented mid-block. The City also expects there may be supply chain difficulties in later stages, because other communities are implementing similar programs.
- g. Laura E. asked what the City was doing to calm traffic at crosswalks. The City indicated it plans to implement calming measures like flex posts in those areas, and that it would like assistance from the Committee to identify areas of concern. Emily V. indicated that more physical improvements to the intersections would be appreciated.
- h. Ginny A. raised concerns about the impact of traffic changes on the seeing impaired. The City confirmed that pedestrians on the sidewalk will be unaffected by the Shared Streets program.
- i. City originally conceived of Shared Streets as a way to connect the community with essential services. It is now considering expanding its approach into a non-networked model, which would involve Shared Streets on low-volume residential roads. Julia Toof noted that people seem to be using quieter streets more than the busier Shared Streets. She suggested that better signage on busier streets (such as signage visible to cars turning onto the street from various points, on both sides) might make those streets friendlier to pedestrians. The City indicated that this was on its to do list. Audrey also suggested putting up “no right on red” signs in some intersections.
- j. The Committee discussed Jakes Street, which has had issues with traffic backing into side streets because it is diverted from Jakes. The City indicated that Jakes had been experiencing complaints pre-COVID about increased volume and is open to suggested fixes.
- k. Emily V. suggested making Mystic Ave., Temple St., Broadway Ave, and Main St. into Shared Streets. She hypothesized that this would reduce traffic speed overall and avoid the problem of smaller streets becoming congested.
- l. Julia T. suggested posting lower speeds limit on shared streets. The City explained that there is a state process for posting speed signs, but that suggested speed limit signs are a possibility.
- m. Zach R. asked how the City was monitoring Shared Streets use. The City is relying on volunteers as well as a feedback form. It is also considering reaching out to people at

different food distribution locations to ask about Shared Streets use and the possibility of real count data collection.

- n. Laura E. asked if the City plans to collect speed data. The City is considering it, though budget is a concern.

2. Shared Curbs Update

- a. The first phase of Shared Curbs was implemented on Bow St. in Union Sq.
- b. The City has reached out to businesses about the program, and the primary business concern is the loss of parking and potential loss of sidewalk dining space.
- c. There have been some creative ideas submitted for how to use the shared curbs, like socially distanced yoga, dancing, or movies on the street. Also, people have requested more aesthetically pleasing barriers.
- d. Tom L. asked about the schedule for Somerville Ave Shared Curbs. The City does not yet have an implementation date.

3. GLX Feedback/Update:

1. Viola A. gave the city update on the Green Line Extension (“GLX”) and the Community path extension plan.
2. Paola M. asked whether the City was aware that traffic has not abated along the Washington and Broadway detour routes. The City is aware and hopes that traffic will lighten when Google Maps catches up to the reopening.
3. Vitor P. asked whether the City intends to widen the path; Zach R. asked whether seating areas are a possibility. The City indicated that the width was a result of the budget, and that no seating areas are part of the initial rollout plan but could be added later. The same goes for mid-block crossing signals.
4. Tom L. asked about Gilman Sq. and whether there is a plan to remove through traffic through Medford St. The City is working with engineering and design teams on this issue.
5. Zach R. what the committee can do to help with the GLX. The City has a website for comments on Gilman Sq. and there will be an online video project for us to give feedback on in July.
6. Ginny A. asked what considerations have been given to people with mobility issues. The City explained that the MBTA accessibility team has taken a close look at entrances.

PTAC Website:

1. The Committee discussed the format of its new website and what information should be stored on it. The plan is to include a database of agendas, minutes, slides, subcommittee list information, and links to meetings.
2. The Committee also discussed adding a feedback form and translations into Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.