



Appointed by Joseph A

Curtatone, Mayor

Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting using GoToMeeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/8446187011>

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander

*Ginny Alverson – Vice Chair

*Jessica Bellow

*Emma Blaxter

Georgy Cohen

*Laura Evans

*Jessica Ferguson

*Rauvin Johl

*Paola Massoli

*Audrey Orenstein – Secretary

*Vitor Pamplona

*Zach Rosenberg – Chair

*Julia Toof

Emily Vides

Ex-Officio:

Katjana Ballantyne, *City Council*

*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*=present

Guests:

Arah Schuur, volunteer with the Somerville Bicycle Committee

Acting Secretary: Jessica Bellow

Call to order: 6:41PM (due to GoToMeeting technical difficulties)

Procedural Business:

1. Roll call: Zach read off the list of names from the agenda to determine who was present.
2. July Meeting Minutes: Jessica B. clarified that she would like to modify the July meeting minutes to note that she recused herself from the discussion about the Washington St. Bus Lane Design because her firm, McMahon Associates, did the design work. Motion to approve July meeting minutes with this modification by Audrey Orenstein and seconded by Rauvin Johl. All in favor.

City Update:

1. Holland & College Project: <https://somervoice.somervillema.gov/hollandandcollege>
 - a. Jessica B. recused herself from the discussion because her firm, McMahon Associates, is involved with the design work on this project.
 - b. Paola summarized feedback from the Engineering & Evaluation Subcommittee which recommends a 24/7 bus lane instead of peak time bus lane. She then asked if the City

could perform a study to determine the feasibility of removing parking along the entire stretch of corridors in order to provide bike lanes in both directions. In particular the removal of parking along Holland Street was specifically called out. The City is already planning to provide additional safety measures for pedestrian crossings which satisfied the Subcommittee.

- c. Zach advocated for raised crosswalks across Holland Street and College Avenue. Justin said that there are not raised crosswalks in the plan right now because this is primarily a resurfacing project. Justin said that the City could reach out to the engineers to ask if this would be a possible addition. Paola suggested that adding a raised crosswalk at the intersection of Holland & Cameron would be an ideal location to slow vehicles. She also suggested considering a raised crosswalk at the Hodgkins Curtin Park along Holland Street.
- d. Audrey asked the City to explain how the traffic calming tools affect other maintenance activities (like street cleaning & plowing). Justin stated that yes, these are maintenance activities are impacted by traffic calming measures, and clarified that while this is the case, the Department of Public Works is up for the task. Ginny asked (1) how the bike lanes might make it more difficult for pedestrians to cross and (2) how much more difficult it would be for snow removal along the bike lanes. Justin clarified that there are no proposed protected bike lanes for this project area; so, generally speaking bike lanes slow vehicles down which makes it easier for pedestrians to cross.
- e. Jessica F. mentioned that as a bicyclist she doesn't mind biking with vehicles if the vehicles are going at a safe speed. She asked for clarification about speed reduction measures, specifically with regards to the chicane at Teele Square. Justin explained that there are several traffic calming measures being considered along Holland Street and College Ave, including narrowing lane widths (10' proposed travel lane widths) and proposed curb extensions.
- f. Paola asked how much room there is for feedback on the project. Justin said they are intending on a 3rd project meeting this fall. They have not finalized the design for this project yet. Justin said they still need to hear more feedback from the key stakeholders (especially business owners in Davis Square). Justin mentioned that it was a relatively homogeneous group that attended the 2nd public meeting in August. Paola stated her belief that removing one row of parking wouldn't encounter strong feelings from business owners in Davis Square since so many people travel to Davis on foot, on bike, or via transit.
- g. Laura Evans asked Justin about his perspective on the homogeneous representation from the bike community. Justin clarified the importance of counting people, regardless of how they choose to travel, including the people who ride the bus every day and don't show up at the public meetings.
- h. Justin presented the counts along the roadways illustrating that less than a third of people are traveling to Davis Square by car.
- i. Arah Schuur asked what canvassing the City did before COVID-19. Justin provided specific details that were not included in the public meeting last week, but said that he would be willing to share that information with the PTAC.

- j. Ted asked what might be precluded in the future by design decisions that get made for this project (especially with regards to curb extensions). Justin said that there is approximately 40 foot of roadway width from curb to curb and explained that yes, this is something that needs to be considered. Ted said he would love to see a 24/7 bus lane, but would understand if this was something that could be added in the future.
- k. Audrey asked if there were two curb extensions on a side street if there would be enough space for two vehicles to pass each other. Justin stated that a traditional residential street in Somerville is 26' wide which provides two 6 foot parking lanes and about 14 foot shared travel way in the middle for both directions which works just fine for residential streets. These are called yield streets because vehicles have to slowly pass each other (because parking on both sides doesn't allow for two way travel).
- l. Zach asked Justin to bring up the proposed work at the Holland/Cameron intersection (full disclosure he lives at this intersection). Zach asked what the City could do to build a protected intersection here. Justin said he would need to look into this. In a protected intersection, pedestrians have a refuge area between the sidewalk and the travel way, after crossing the bike lane. Jessica F. questioned if this would be the best option for pedestrian safety. Laura Evans explained that the pedestrian crossing would be shorter with the protected bike lane. Laura travels through this intersection regularly and suggested that anything to narrow the lanes here and slow down vehicles turning from Cameron onto Holland would increase the safety here. Ted agreed with Jessica F. and is thinking that it would be safer for pedestrians to have one simple crossing at a curb extension instead of crossing the bike lane and then the vehicle lane. Audrey suggested that the bicyclist would be mindful of the pedestrians.
- m. Justin asked if there were any other intersections or general/specific comments. Laura Evans brought up intersections that are skewed (instead of right angles) (ex. Buena Vista/Paulina) where vehicles take turns without paying as much attention. Justin said that curb extensions could be considered at these intersections; however there is not enough budget to add curb extensions everywhere. In particular, curb extensions can only be added on corners without catch basins for this resurfacing project.
- n. Jessica F. brought up the bus stop consolidation aspect of the plan. She asked about how the City reached out to encourage feedback from the public. Justin said they flyer bus stops when the consolidation goes into effect. Paola mentioned that Livable Streets collected feedback last year after the bus lane and stop consolidation went into effect on Broadway. The main feedback from this project was that bus riders did not feel included in the changes. Ali said that we're pointing out that outreach can be challenging and said that PTAC can be helpful providing these insights. The Education & Encouragement subcommittee will work with the City to help coordinate outreach improvements. It was mentioned that the transit ridership may be lower now due to COVID-19; however, Jessica F pointed out that the current transit riders are the people who really need it and whose voices should be heard.
- o. Justin concluded by stating that the City is going to test out the shared bus bike lanes later this year by adding some low quality red paint around Davis Square.

Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee Items:

1. City Council Update as a new standing agenda item:
 - a. The Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee members (Jessica B., Zach, & Ted) met with Councilor Ballantyne to discuss the potential of having a regular update from the City Council. The PTAC members agree that this will be beneficial.
2. Somerville Civics 101
 - a. The Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee thought that it would be beneficial for Councilor Ballantyne to present an overview (tentatively scheduled for September) on how the Somerville government functions and the role of the City Council vs. Mayor and how to think about more effectively advocating to the City for pedestrian and transit policy improvements. (~20 min. presentation with time for questions/answers)
3. Discussion around having a police department contact, and possible ex officio member
 - a. It was noted that the Somerville Bicycle Committee has an ex-officio position for a Somerville Police Department representative.
 - b. The Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee members suggested that it would be beneficial for the PTAC to consider at least having a contact from the police department to reach out to regarding enforcement and traffic regulations and potentially an ex-officio position as well. Jessica B. mentioned her prior experience on the Morgantown Pedestrian Safety Committee in West Virginia and the role that the ex-officio police officer played on that committee, explaining the background behind enforcement decisions to help the committee better advocate for pedestrian safety in the community.
 - c. Laura is concerned that members of the public might feel unwelcome at the PTAC meetings if there is an Ex-Officio position for the police department.
 - d. Ginny said an individual updating us on new regulations, what officers are doing to stop people from speeding, illegal turns at red lights, etc. could be insightful for our committee.
 - e. Jessica F. stated her position that a police contact would be acceptable; however, she would not be in support of an ex-officio position for a police officer since not everyone is comfortable around police officers. She further clarified that she has not felt that police enforcement has improved her safety as a pedestrian or transit user.
 - f. Emma agreed with Jessica F. and stated that a police contact for the PTAC committee (which could coordinate directly with the Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee) would be acceptable; however, she would not be in support of an ex-officio police member either.
 - g. Paola asked how this would work in practice. Ali clarified that to a certain extent it would be just like having input from Councilor Ballantyne. The police officer would be another source of information when questions arise. Ali reminded everyone that the Somerville Bicycle Committee has an ex-officio police officer and suggested that the PTAC could reach out to the bike committee to see what they think of the relationship. Paola agreed that this could be useful.
 - h. Ted clarified that he was thinking that the police officer could provide input on higher level issues as well regarding the protection of pedestrians and transit riders. For instance, he noticed in the City Council meeting minutes that a \$6,000 grant was allocated to the Somerville Police Department for pedestrian and bicycle enforcement and wanted to know how this money was going to be used. He also mentioned that it

would be good to know if/how the Somerville Police Department works with the MBTA for transit enforcement.

- i. Rauvin suggested that the Policy & Enforcement Subcommittee should reach out to the Somerville Bicycle Committee for more information regarding their relationship with having an Ex-Officio Police Officer to report back to the PTAC next month.
- j. Arah mentioned that before COVID-19, the Bicycle Committee meetings were held in-person at the police department. She also mentioned that the Somerville Police are a big part of the Vision Zero plan. There is an enforcement subcommittee within the bicycle committee and there is a police officer that meets with the subcommittee (which is a different officer than the ex-officio member on the Bicycle Committee).

Education & Encouragement Subcommittee Update:

1. Emma said that the subcommittee was excited about the shared streets initiative. They are planning on jump starting social media activity for the PTAC by having everyone take pictures of themselves using shared streets and posting about it.

E-Cargo Bikes in Somerville:

1. Paola said that the City of Boston recently posted a RFI for electric cargo bikes as a delivery solution: <https://www.boston.gov/news/city-releases-rfi-electric-cargo-bikes-delivery-solution>. She explained that it could be beneficial for the City of Somerville to explore this idea as well. Ali stated that the Mobility Division briefly looked at this a few months ago and pointed out that this needs to be part of a more regional freight discussion.
2. Audrey shared an image of a UPS cargo bike:
https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.electrive.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2018%2F06%2Fups-cargo-pedelec-lasten-pedelec.png&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.electrive.com%2F2018%2F06%2F21%2Fups-launches-custom-made-cargo-e-bikes%2F&tbid=5BHsvZjSa0D6PM&vet=12ahUKEwjL6pvh_qrrAhV1ieAKHVjpCPQQMygfegUIARDPAw..i&docid=ER_rgdCJyXXiYM&w=1000&h=500&q=e%20cargo%20bike&client=safari&ved=2ahUKEwjL6pvh_qrrAhV1ieAKHVjpCPQQMygfegUIARDPAw
3. Paola explained that different cities around the country are beginning to look at these E-Cargo bikes as potential delivery methods. She then asked who would be responsible for taking the lead on this discussion. Jessica B. suggested that we could carry this discussion over to the next meeting and ask Councilor Ballantyne for her input on how to more effectively advocate for this.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM