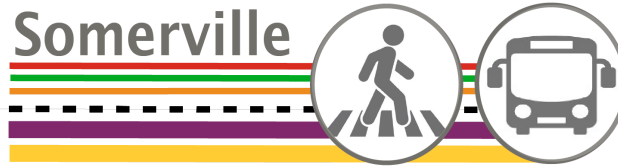


Somerville



Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee

Appointed by Joseph A

Curtatone, Mayor

Date: Thursday, Month Day, Year

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

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

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:

Name – Title

Tom Lamar – Chair of Bicycle Committee

Andy Reker – City of Cambridge, lives in Somerville

Arah Schuur—Founding member of Somerville Bicycle Safety

Acting Secretary: Emma Blaxter

Call to order: 6:32 PM

Agenda Item 1:

1. Councilor Ballantyne presented on government civics and how the Somerville city council operates
 - a. Note: Emily had some specific questions; Councilor Ballantyne has looked into the answers and is happy to answer via email
 - b. The municipal charter is a legal document that stipulates how the government functions, established in the late 1800s:
https://library.municode.com/ma/somerville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH
RELE
 - c. Executive branch: Mayor: Like the CEO of a non-profit, in charge of the day to day functioning of the municipality

- d. Legislative branch: city council
 - i. Write ordinances (laws)
 - ii. Can block budget or other executive moves but can't choose specific sections to pass and others to block
- e. The city council meets in full 2x month
 - i. Council members can propose an order, which is an agenda item for the council
 - ii. They can ask department heads to come but not the power to ask the mayor
- f. Enforcement: the council can put an order in and then get a response from the executive branch that it needs to be rethought or changed
 - i. And ordinance has an enforcement section in it to show who is responsible
- g. Tools and mechanisms that they can use to get advisory advice, ie an advisory group to the school department
 - i. Somerville elects the school committee (vs Boston where the Mayor selects)
 - ii. Other examples: PTAC, Bike Committee
 - iii. Community engagement and getting ideas is better than working in a silo, added value and expertise
- h. Katjana wanted to be on PTAC and Bike Committee because she understands the value and wants to support the mission
- i. How to update an ordinance- talk to Katjana or your local councilor, lots of options
- j. Example goals we might take on: review ordinances that relate to VisionZero, or eliminate existing ordinances
- k. Question: Are there other ways to develop policy?
 - i. Yes, for example Somervision2030, the strategic plan that guides us
- l. Question: Could you discuss the best practices for directing feedback to the city?
 - i. Method depends on what the issue is but if the city is asking for specific action (survey) you can give them feedback directly; To give unsolicited advice contact the department head or your ward councilor
- m. Question: Is there a breakdown of who responds to particular requests?
 - i. Infrastructure requests: 311 or contact your Ward Councilor
 - ii. Transit issues may be could be state rep or city councilor
- n. Most difficult issues to manage are those beyond city control

2. City Update on Holland-College and Western-Washington Street

- a. Note: Julia has recused herself from the conversation on Holland-College
- b. Holland-College, which is one of the major Covid-response related bus projects, will be implemented this fall
- c. Based on PTAC and bike committee response the city updated some elements of the original plan
 - i. After original presentation, request was made to make bike lanes all day in order to get people in and out of Davis safely
 - 1. Updated plan: prioritized all day bus lanes near the squares and protected bike lanes between Teele and Davis and Community path

- ii. Parking: 30 new side street 2-hour meters, added loading pickup drop off zones, and ADA spaces were created along with a parking deck
- iii. PTAC engineering committee feedback: this is a good faith effort to respond to feedback
- iv. Question from Councilor Ballantyne: What kind of feedback did you receive from the small businesses in Teele Square?
 - 1. Justin: Mobility committee is still scheduling meetings but the updated plan was partly based on conversation with small businesses (for example, it preserves patio space for them)
- v. Zach proposed a general statement of support
- vi. Motion made by Paola to support current plan of Holland and College Ave; Julia seconded
- vii. 9 in favor, Jessica abstained

3. City Update on Washington St West (Beacon to Webster)

- a. MBTA has created a program that offers design services for rapid response bus improvements along high-ridership corridors that have sustained ridership throughout the pandemic, so City has proposed piloting a project this fall on Washington Street
- b. Project includes dedicated bus bike lane which is shared with people turning right at the corner
- c. Washington street will still be resurfaced in 2021/2022 but this will be a pilot that could be amended when the street is repaved
- d. Ted: how will you evaluate the pilot project?
 - i. Justin: They need to develop criteria, but new lanes will likely be in place until the road is resurfaced
- e. Community meeting in October (next 2 weeks); implementation in the next 4-6 weeks
- f. City is hoping businesses will participate in the community meeting in October so as to get their feedback
- g. Paola: Can the parking at the school be used by anyone?
 - i. Confusing, some signs say no parking any time
- h. Rauvin: are you anticipating changes at the Washington-Beacon intersection?
 - i. Yes, part of the project the MBTA is looking into project where bus gets head start light to merge but it won't be implemented until next year
- i. Ted: official motion of support
 - i. Paola seconded
 - ii. 10 in support
- j. Emma and Ted offered to flyer

4. City Update on Mystic Ave Bus Lanes

- a. Project is a collaboration with Medford located 2-miles from Main Street in Medford to Route 28/Kensington crossing in Somerville; proposal is to create 24-hour bus only lanes
 - i. Impacts: could create car congestion bt allow the 95 but to move through traffic more easily and hopefully reduce congestion directly in front of homes

- b. Hoping to implement project this fall (30-90 days)
- c. Does this mean that the bus will run more often?
 - i. No, just that there will be less congestion for the bus
- d. Emily: Concern that there is already a lot of traffic and the potential to back up onto 93
- e. Justin: It is a pilot, paint only, will monitor and do data analysis on efficiency
- f. Paola: how big is the ridership in Covid?
 - i. Steady
- g. Emily: suggestion: make it during commute/peak hours and that there be a consistent rule between Somerville/Medford
- h. Jessica: having 24/7 bus lanes seems like a great idea, would like to see situations where cars have to go slightly out of their way, it's much harder to shift buses than cars and they carry many more people
- i. Paola: Utilization of the bus should determine whether it's 24/7

5. Update on Shared Streets and Traffic Calming

- a. Creating pinch points where one car has to yield to the other
- b. Experimenting with speed limits
- c. Working with neighbor ways groups with monitoring and repairing
- d. Example projects: Traffic calming at Lowell and Albion; new painting at Ball Sq/Broadway Bridge

Meeting ended: 8:04 PM