



Appointed by Joseph A

Curtatone, Mayor

Meeting: Joint Meeting of Somerville PTAC, SCPD, and Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

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

PTAC 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*

SPCD Representatives:

- *Bonnie Denis
- *Colin Killck
- *Brian Postlewaite - Secretary

Somerville Bike Committee:

- *Tom Lamar – Chair
- *Katie Pierce – Vice Chair
- *Ted Lester – Secretary
- *Ken Carlson
- *Gregory Ely
- Ted Philbin
- *Alex Frieden:
- *Kevin Mcgrath
- *Mark Vollinger
- *Lena Webb
- *Ian Woloschin
- *Michael Weber

Ex-Officio:

- *Katjana Balantyne
- *Adam Polinski

*=present

Guests:

Haleemah Qureshi - CoS Engineering Project Manager with the City of Somerville Engineering Division

Jason Schrieber - Senior design principal with Stantech

Andy Reker - Cambridge city employee, Somerville resident

Arah Schuur - Somerville resident, volunteer with bike committee

George Schneeloch - Union Square Resident

Nate Kaufman

Derek Hug - engineer with Stantech

Jordan Safer - Somerville resident

Michelle Moon - Summer Street resident

Martin Pivlic - Somerville resident

Acting Secretary: Jessica Ferguson

Call to order: 6:35 PM

Agenda Item 1: Meeting structure

1. Tom Lamar called the meeting to order as the chair of the bike committee.
2. Noted that this meeting, although during the Somerville Bike Committee's usual meeting slot, should be considered a simultaneous meeting of the Bike Committee, the Pedestrian Transit Advocacy Committee, and the Commission on Persons with Disabilities.
3. Should any vote come up, would be handled separately by each body.

Agenda Item 2: Proposed Transit-Pedestrian-Bicycle Summit

1. Ken Carlson took the floor to describe plans for a joint advocacy summit
2. Currently being planned by Zach Rosenberg, Arah Schuur, and Ken Carlson.
 - a. Goals are to bring together advocates for all communities, the city staff, and elected officials, as well as members of the public.
 - b. Ideal output is a three year platform to make getting around Somerville less carbon dependent and more equitable.
 - c. Invitees will include pedestrian groups, cyclist groups, transit advocates, and persons with disabilities. Some groups that will be invited include the three committees in this meeting, Livable Streets, STEP, Transportation for Massachusetts, SPAC, Somerville Bike Safety, Friends of the Community Path, Blue Bikes, the MBTA, Transit Matters, the Climate Coalition of Somerville, and the Vision Zero task force, as well as interested members of the public.
3. Tentatively, the summit will be a 90 minute meeting taking place in early February. The proposed structure is to spend half the time sharing goals and visions, and for the second half to have either a moderated panel discussion or breakout sessions with a mixture of advocates from different groups.

4. Emails will be sent to each group to solicit feedback on the summit plans.
5. Katie Pierce asked how guests could get involved. Ken noted that the minutes will have contact information for the various committees.
6. Bonnie suggested that people with disabilities should be called out explicitly as part of the summit planning as having separate interests than pedestrians and other transit users; Ken agreed and invited Bonnie to represent the SPCD on summit planning.

Contact Info:

Ken Carlson: kencarlson8@gmail.com

Agenda Item 3: City Presentation on the Spring Hill Sewer Separation Project

1. Haleemah Qureshi, Engineering Project Manager with the City of Somerville Engineering Division gave an overview of the project scope.
 - a. The overall project was prompted by the need to upgrade stormwater and sewer infrastructure. In this area, sewer pipes date back to the 1800s and water mains date back to the early 1900s. The stormwater and sanitary sewer are combined in this area.
 - b. Doing this work will alleviate flooding and improve water quality.
 - c. Due to the amount of underground work requiring digging up the street, aboveground work on the street should also be done at this time.
 - d. The project area is limited to the area impacted by the utility work. There are two major areas under discussion, Project Area 1 and Project Area 2. Project Area 1 will be moving forward in 2021; Project Area 2 is still at a concept stage.
 - e. Within Project Area 1, the major roads affected are Central, School, Highland Avenue, and Summer Street.
2. Community outreach began with the first meeting in January 2020; a second community meeting will take place in two weeks.
 - a. The first public meeting was held in a workshop style, and got 45 participants. The survey was posted online and got an additional 149 responses.
 - b. Haleemah noted that when compared to the census responses of residents living in the project area, the survey got a very different mix of the population when considering work commute modes.
 - i. The Spring Hill Project Survey got 71% bikes, 13% Other, 14% Drivers
 - ii. The census shows 62% other, 30% drivers, 7.7% bikes.
 - iii. "Other" in these numbers includes modes like transit and pedestrians.
3. Viola Augustin with the Mobility Division presented on the proposed street improvements.
 - a. Intention with this project is to improve sidestreets for ADA compliance so that at least one side of each side street will be ADA compliant, including ADA bumpouts where trees narrow the sidewalk below ADA compliant widths.
 - b. School Street
 - i. Major issues raised at the public meeting and in the survey include things like poor crosswalk visibility at Cummings and how the Union Square and Gilman Square redevelopment will affect traffic on School Street.
 - ii. The major goal for School Street is to focus on traffic calming improvements, including things like improving the crosswalk at Somerville Avenue and adding

many raised crosswalks on the side streets (except at Avon Street, where it would affect a bus route) and one across School Street itself. The intersection of School Street and Summer Street was singled out for particular improvements with curb extensions and crosswalks.

c. Central Street

- i. Issues raised include how Central is Important for connecting to the community path, the need to slow traffic, where the street is too narrow, that it needs better sidewalks, and that the existing bike lane needs upgrades.
- ii. Viola noted that there are underground utility conflicts on the northern part that limit some options for improvements.
- iii. Like with School Street, there will be raised crosswalks on side streets except for on Avon Street, where it would impede the bus.
- iv. Bicycle lane on Central Street south of Summer will be redesigned to be a Copenhagen style bicycle lane, elevated slightly to be a bit above street level but below sidewalk level.
- v. On Central Street north of Summer, the plan is to make Central Street a one way, and with removal of parking, there will be bidirectional bike lanes, with 2 foot buffers between there and the travel lane.

d. Summer Street

- i. Issues raised include complaints about speed, that Summer is a key link between Spring Hill and Union Square, that the bike lane is too narrow, and there needs to be wider sidewalks by Nunciato Park.
- ii. The Summer Street plan includes adding several chicanes for traffic calming, improving the bicycle lane, and adding raised crosswalks on side streets.
- iii. The bike lane west of Putnam would be a Copenhagen style bicycle lane like the one on Central Street. East of Putnam, the bike lane would have a wider buffer between traffic and the sidewalk.

4. Highland Ave

- a. Highland Avenue plan was presented by Jason Schrieber.
- b. Issues for Highland Avenue include cars going too fast, the need for more efficient bus transit, the demand for parking, more frequent and safer crosswalks, and more visibility for pedestrians.
- c. Some of this is included in the Central Hill Campus Plan. Colin asked if these plans still include the city's commitment to an elevator from the new GLX station to the field; Viola said that yes that is still the plan. There will eventually be a second elevator from the field to City Hall.
- d. Subsurface utilities cause issues with the Highland Avenue project.. The utility placements limit things like bumpouts and bus stops because curbs can't be located over utilities (they require removing the curb every time work needs to be done).
- e. Transit on Highland
 - i. Route 88 and 90 both run on Highland and are key routes
 - ii. Central Hill Campus stops see a lot of usage
- f. Pedestrian safety on Highland could be improved, as there are long stretches without crosswalks, so new crosswalks should be added.

- g. Bus Priority Improvements
 - i. The plan is to remove some stops and add a new stop that can be combined with later signal improvements for bus priority.
 - ii. From 13-14 stops in either direction this plan will reduce it to 9-10 stops
 - h. Pedestrian safety improvements include adding ~10 new crosswalks, and creating more opportunities for pedestrians to cross safely, including with curb extensions in some areas. Making crosswalks more regular will improve the driver and pedestrian experience.
 - i. Adds a bus stop at Cutter and Highland. There are also mini queue jumps on Highland Avenue to get past the Highland/Willow intersection, and similar for Highland and Cedar.
 - 1. Adds a bus stop and mid block crossing between Crocker and Tower by the hospital, which also allows for better loading for businesses nearby.
 - 2. The stop at Benton is moved to be in front of the Armory and provide a midblock crossing
 - j. Overall goal is to have a significant traffic calming impact and add some green infrastructure.
5. Parking impacts throughout the project are spread across providing transit priority, ADA bumpouts, traffic calming, and bike lane improvements.
6. Discussion Period moderated by Adam Polinski
- a. Alex Frieden asked what was happening with Somerville Avenue in this corridor. Answer was that the streetscape design hasn't been included at this time, because that area is part of Project Area 2, and this plan covers Project Area 1 and Highland Avenue which is in both areas.
 - b. Alex Frieden asked if flex posts would be used to provide bike lane protection on Central Street. Viola answered that it's a design detail that still needs to be decided on.
 - c. Alex Frieden noted that curb extensions are great for pedestrians, but can harm cyclists by forcing them to mix in with vehicular traffic.
 - d. Bonnie asked about parking implications, specifically whether the city is looking at aligning accessibility with parking removal; with removal of general parking there should be adding new accessible spaces. Adam agreed that accessibility should be considered in this.
 - i. Colin asked that the city commit to no loss of accessible spaces.
 - ii. Bonnie said that when general parking is removed, there need to be new accessible spaces added. She also said that this is critical and should be considered explicitly at this point of the design process like other key infrastructure decisions.
 - e. Lena Webb commented that these meetings can feel like they pit advocates against one another. The overall maintenance of general parking leads to treating cyclists, pedestrians, and persons with disabilities as at odds with one another.
 - f. Ken Carlson noted the lack of cycling infrastructure other than sharrows on Highland in this plan, and added that if the intention is for cyclists to use neighborways instead of Highland Avenue, there needs to be improved wayfinding.

- g. Mark Vollinger noted that he did not feel the committee was getting actual responses about parking impacts.
 - i. Adam responded that there are a lot of parking needs on Highland: accessible spots, business parking, and loading zones, as well as resident parking.
 - ii. Haleemah said that their goal is to respond to questions as much as possible. She also noted that the questions about how parking loss will impact accessibility is a good one, and she will commit to investigating that.
- h. Audrey asked to clarify what the modes mean in the pie charts.
 - i. Haleemah answered that the splits are between driving, biking, or other (including walking and transit) as modes to get to work, compared across responses to the survey and the census data for the project area. The goal of including this comparison was to acknowledge that the received feedback might not be as representative as we want.
 - ii. Nate commented that the skewed representation might come from the fact that Highland Avenue is currently designed for vehicles. Cyclists might respond more because their needs are being less well met.
 - iii. Jessica Ferguson acknowledged that although that might explain some of the disparity, it doesn't mean that transit users' and pedestrians' needs are being met. For example, cyclists may identify more as cyclists and see the need for improvements, while pedestrians and transit users may be less likely to self-identify as that and join advocacy groups or think that the city will respond to their concerns.
- i. Colin commented that needs for transit users still aren't met in this plan, as there should be more north/south buses (although that requires working with the MBTA and isn't necessarily in scope here). The north/south streets in the city are often not particularly accessible for persons with disabilities because many of the streets have too steep a grade.
- j. Alex Frieden said that we have not seen any framework from the city for managing accessibility around residential corridors, and showing us the impact on accessible parking. If the city strategy here is to focus on bus service, then why is there not more space taken for it? If the goal is to preserve on street parking, the city should be more explicit about it.
 - i. Adam responded that the city tends to think of Highland Ave as less of a place to go through and more of a destination. They're considering using street space for things like specialized dropoff, and outdoor dining, etc. Focusing on through movement limited the ability to add these destination features.
- k. Lian Guertin asked if the city looked into putting in bike lanes that allow people to cross them easily to get access to the sidewalk. They also pointed out that we should try and understand what car users need in this area: is it mostly that there be parking available, regardless of speed, for example?
 - i. Adam said that combining bike lanes and sidewalk access is not always an easy solution, but we will commit to looking into it.
 - ii. Bonnie provided a link to a resource on how to provide sidewalk access and bike lanes.

- I. Tom Lamar summarized some general comments from the chat.
 - i. There is an overall lack of bicycle facilities on Highland; we don't need protected lanes everywhere, but this is a large area and we should consider adding it.
 - ii. North/south routes are necessary, especially if Highland won't have bike facilities. There should be safe and clearly signed connections between the neighborways and the community path on side streets (that are also safe) if we want cyclists to use them instead of Highland.
 - iii. Many people seem skeptical about mountable curbs.
 - iv. Adam and Viola agreed that there are two weak points here: the general lack of a network for cycling, and overall lack of knowledge about parking. Removing parking from Highland is a bigger impact than can be done in this project.
 - v. Tom noted that removing parking on Central all the way down may improve the bike facilities there.
- m. Ted Feldman asked if the MBTA had given any input on what will happen post GLX, and how the street usage will change as transit modes change, since this project focuses on transit so much. Adam said that the city views the priority of this project as pedestrians, not so much transit users.
- n. Ted Feldman asked what the plan is for cyclists turning from Highland toward neighborways. Viola said that the designers are considering left turn bicycle infrastructure off of Highland like bike boxes.
- o. Ian Woloschin said that the city should not use sharrows as part of a bike safety plan in this area. Sharrows should indicate that cycling is safe, but it needs to be safe for all users, so Highland doesn't really qualify due to traffic speeds. Viola noted that the city's goal for Highland with all this traffic calming is to slow Highland down to 20 miles per hour or less. Ian questioned whether these improvements would have the same impact at off peak times, as it seems like they require a certain level of other vehicles to deter speeding.
- p. Bonnie asked if the city says they recognize needs like accessibility, but doesn't have the data to make good decisions, why we should move forward if we're not sure it can be done well.
 - i. Haleemah responded that this project, unlike something like the Broadway project, was motivated by urgent underground infrastructure needs. This project is really designed to address increasing issues from climate change and flooding and constraints on the city related to EPA compliance and state environmental requirements for water going into waterways. The motivation is more to fix the infrastructure problems, but there are time and economic efficiency gains from doing these all together.
 - ii. Bonnie agreed that although frustrating for the committees, that makes sense, and asked for more information about what flexibility is actually available.
 - iii. Haleemah said that Project Area 1 has less flexibility than Project Area 2, because it's being done first, while Project Area 2 is still in concept phase. Some constraints can't be worked around, like subsurface utility constraints. Things like traffic calming, adding crosswalks, and moving bus stops are more flexible.

- q. Gregory Ely asked if the city can look at the new zoning overhaul and transit zones for this area, specifically zones UR and MR4 and 5. When redeveloped, none of those will have residential parking permits which may reduce the residential parking demand on this corridor.
 - r. Zach summarized some final thoughts:
 - i. The city should think about accessible spaces and loading zones separately from general or residential parking.
 - ii. The city should follow the vision zero guidelines to prioritize pedestrian and transit and cyclist infrastructure, and only then look at parking.
 - iii. From a pedestrian perspective there's a lot to like here; the amount of raised crosswalks are great, for example, and adding more safe crossings along major streets is great.
 - s. Tom summarized some final thoughts:
 - i. Generally he agreed with Zach's opinions.
 - ii. The traffic calming elements seem great, but we need to advance the goal of people of all ages and abilities to bike through this area with quality infrastructure.
 - iii. The meeting attendees had a very mixed response to the partially raised Copenhagen-style bike lanes, so the city should provide additional engineering details about how those would be built.
 - iv. General parking and accessible parking should be treated separately.
 - t. Bonnie summarized some final thoughts:
 - i. Generally she agrees with the other chairpersons.
 - ii. She was heartened that there is more alignment with the bike committee than she expected, and wants to work together to prioritize all of our needs.
7. Upcoming Meetings
- a. SCPD meeting is December 8th at 6:30pm
 - b. Public meeting: December 14th at 6:30pm
 - c. PTAC meeting: December 17th at 6:30pm
 - d. SBAC meeting: next regularly scheduled in January, may have an additional scheduled meeting

Meeting ended: 8:47 PM

Addendum: Chat Logs

A copy of the meeting chat log is provided as part of the minutes for this meeting, unedited.

Chat Log

Ted Lester (to Everyone): 6:36 PM: Kevin, your audio was very weak
Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 6:41 PM: tom we have guests too
Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 6:42 PM: they should intro themselves
bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 6:48 PM: I'd like to

suggest adding explicitly disability advocates which is broader than pedestrian

Arah Schuur (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: Sorry, not sorry Bonnie!

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 6:53 PM:

<http://www.somervillebikes.org/contact.html>

Arah Schuur (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: looking forward to working with you

Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: kencarlson8@gmail.com

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 6:54 PM:

bonniemdenis@gmail.com

Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 7:11 PM: Nice change to Central St with bike lanes in both directions!

Colin (to Everyone): 7:12 PM: With the protected bike lanes, are they being put in in ways that preserve accessible parking spaces? I'm also curious about how curb ramps deal with the Copenhagen elevated lane

Colin (to Everyone): 7:12 PM: *they

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:12 PM: I have a strong vote against the enhanced curbs like the ones along Cambridge street in front of the school. My wife crashed her bike when a car was parked in the bike lane and she attempted remount the curb. Hard edges are really for cars over but challenging for bikes.

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 7:14 PM: There have also been reports of crashes on the Beacon St raised bike lane. I don't think we ever got a real confirmation or root cause of those crashes, but the assumption was issues with the mountable curb.

Jessica Ferguson (to Everyone): 7:15 PM: There were also issues with the bike lane being at the same level as the sidewalk, with pedestrians walking directly in front of cyclists, and having a dip seems like it might assist

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:16 PM: Is it possible to remove more parking on central to have a full length bike lane?

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:16 PM: It also seems the mountable curb isn't as robust as the regular curbs. There have been reports of the curb and lane starting to separate

Jessica Ferguson (to Everyone): 7:16 PM: The Beacon street one is better than, say, the Vassar Street one in Cambridge, because it's more visible with the green paint, and Vassar has a lot of pedestrian traffic from MIT and Kendall, but it's still not ideal

Paola Massoli (to Everyone): 7:16 PM: The issue on Summer is delivery vans constantly parked in the bike lanes. Just today I took another picture of a USPS and UPS both parked in the bike lane - will the raised bike lanes with the buffer prevent a truck from hopping on the bike lane?

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:17 PM: Or maybe some flexposts that emergency vehicles could run over?

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 7:17 PM: Nope. USPS regularly parks on Beacon St.

Ted Alexander (to Everyone): 7:17 PM: I second Gregory Ely's suggestion to consider removing parking on Central. Glad to see the proposal to remove some parking on Summer

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 7:17 PM: (On the mountable curb bike lane, that is)

Michael Weber (to Everyone): 7:18 PM: Spring Hill is right where I live and I welcome the suggested improvements. I agree that mountable curbs are not perfect, but the current 'bike lane' going up Summer St is useless and completely ignored by people driving.

MARK VOLLINGER (to Everyone): 7:18 PM: USPS parks on the entire sidewalk on summer and school street

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:18 PM: Yeah, I would argue cars can still mount regular curbs but are less likely to unless there is a need

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 7:19 PM: I would also very much like to see a continuous north-south bike route that is comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. It seems like removing parking to extend the Central St bike lane would be the easiest candidate, but there should definitely be a continuous north-south route somewhere in the project area

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 7:21 PM: Mountable curbs will literally always be mounted by a vehicle

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 7:21 PM: If you have the space to do a sidewalk-level lane, it is a horrible thing to make that mountable

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 7:22 PM: I thought we'd stopped putting sharrows on the bike facility map, since sharrows don't do anything?

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:22 PM: I understand the desire to remove parking to allow bike access but note that there is often no way for pwd to navigate these steep streets without being able to park

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:23 PM: if we're going to aim for wholesale removal of general parking there need to be accessible spaces added in at regular intervals

Kevin Mcgrath (to Everyone): 7:24 PM: Bonnie - that's an excellent point - is there a best practice guideline that we should consider in future proposals to try to meet more equitable needs across all users and modalities?

Kevin Mcgrath (to Everyone): 7:24 PM: regarding parking intervals or to ensure that appropriate buffers between side-walk level bike lanes and parking spaces exist to allow for pwd to safely enter and exit their vehicles?

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:25 PM: for the latter, yes. let me dig up the link I sent to the SCPD on best practice of building out streets and sidewalks

Kevin Mcgrath (to Everyone): 7:25 PM: awesome, thank you very much

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:26 PM: Question: Was new zoning overhaul combined with the transit overlay considered as parking demand? Nearly all of this corridor is in a transit zone is upzoned to UR and MR and those residents won't be able to procure residential parking permits as part of the new zoning overhaul and this should put significantly less demand on highland itself

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:26 PM: for the former, no, but the guidelines for someone qualifying for an accesible parking permit are not being able to walk 200ft which... spaces are nowhere near that plentiful (which is fine, given ability for some to use other spaces, but only if they exist)

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:26 PM: <https://walksf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/getting-to-the-curb-report-final-walk-sf-2019.pdf>

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 7:31 PM: quick note as we're halfway through the meeting, Zach (Chair, PTAC) will now be acting as Chair to facilitate the meeting

Audrey Orenstein (to Everyone): 7:33 PM: Willow needs a LEft turn light from North to South

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:36 PM: Do we have an alternative to bump outs? These tend to preclude better and safer bicycle use.

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:36 PM: (but still gains the benefits)

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 7:37 PM: If possible, would be helpful to at least include a climbing (eastbound) bicycle lane on Highland Ave from Cutter to Willow. (It would also narrow the travel lanes for traffic calming)

Zachary Rosenberg (to Everyone): 7:37 PM: A pedestrian island might be an alternative

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:38 PM: How will these bus routes shift with the GLX?

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:38 PM: How long of a crossing is that today? I agree I would prefer island vs this double bump out

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 7:38 PM: +1 to Audrey's comment about improving safety of left turns from Willow onto Highland (especially when on a bike)

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 7:39 PM: I like the idea of pedestrian refuge islands for unsignalized midblock crossings on Highland, to be able to cross in two stages.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:40 PM: As a person who uses a wheelchair I would want a reaaaaaally protected island if I was chancing sitting between traffic.

Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 7:40 PM: No bicycle improvements at all on Highland. Is the idea that bicyclists are to use the parallel neighborways?

Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 7:41 PM: If that's the case these neighborways should be made as safe as possible and the wayfinding should be explicit, including wayfinding signs for cyclists on Highland itself

ben (to Everyone): 7:41 PM: Was a bus lane (that can be used by cyclists) considered along an important transit route like Highland Ave?

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 7:42 PM: I think the city really needs a clearer explanation of how biking will be safe for people of all ages and abilities in this project area

Nate Kaufman (to Everyone): 7:42 PM: So there will continue to be parking on both sides of Highland for virtually the entire length of the street, but no bike lanes at all? How does that meet any of Somerville's long term goals?

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 7:43 PM: agreed @bonnie, it would need to be a larger than minimum width and well-designed pedestrian island.

Alex Frieden, SBAC (to Everyone): 7:46 PM: + to access spaces (and also to loading zones)

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 7:50 PM: It isn't just repurposing parking, it is also enforcing that repurposed parking remains repurposed, instead of just defacto parking.

Ken Carlson (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: hear hear Lena!

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: 100% agree.

Ace Young (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: +1 for Lena's remarks

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: Agreed.

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: We should not be fighting for scraps.

Ted Alexander (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: Thank you Lena - I heartily agree!

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: agreed with Lena, thanks for having the courage to say that!

ben (to Everyone): 7:52 PM: Great point Lena!

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: Well said Lena!

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: agreed, Lena. I apologize for the pitting against the other groups.

Nate Kaufman (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: Yes, Lena!

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: There was a parking task force that I was on but Itgot shelved due to COVID

Martin Pavlinic (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: Thanks for that Lena

MARK VOLLINGER (to Everyone): 7:53 PM: +1 on lena. City only says "Thanks" == parking is a prioty

Audrey Orenstein (to Everyone): 7:54 PM: Yes, Ken!

Katie Pierce (to Everyone): 7:54 PM: Lena, this needed to be said and you said it so well. completely agree that we're fighting over scraps.

Jessica Ferguson (to Everyone): 7:56 PM: In this map, what are the distinctions between sharrows and enhanced sharrows?

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:03 PM: I think Alex Frieden had a hand up for a while too

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:03 PM: @Jessica I believe "enhanced sharrows" are brighter green-backed sharrows, like on the northern part of School St. (Neither type of sharrow has much of an effect on safety)

Lian Guertin (to Everyone): 8:04 PM: (I can't find the raise hand option but would like to speak)

Laura Evans (to Everyone): 8:04 PM: presumably there will be

changes to bus routes post-GLX - do these changes on the N-S streets preclude buses there?

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:05 PM: @Lian You can jsut physically raise your hand on-camera

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:05 PM: Tom, not everyone can do that

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:06 PM: or feels comfortable being on camera

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:06 PM: @bonnie good point

Alex Epstein (to Everyone): 8:06 PM: Would be good to see an inventory of all Highland Ave parking spaces, and what fraction of them are accessible and loading zone, versus just general parking. I feel like the latter should be considered discretionary--AFTER that space has been prioritized for accessible and loading spaces along with transit, pedestrian, and bicycle use.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:07 PM: they city was working last year on creating an inventory of all spaces.. have not seen fruit of that labor.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:07 PM: (I don't know if it got shelved with the rest of the parking work group)

Jessica Ferguson (to Everyone): 8:08 PM: I believe Bonnie is referring to the parking study, which was postponed due to COVID.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:08 PM: yes. It was one part of the parking study.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:08 PM: I think it's an important piece to pick up regardless of anything else given how it ties in to this work

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 8:08 PM: Personally, I travel on Highland all the time from East Somerville to Davis on the 90. It's not necessarily a destination when two bus lines go through it. The 90, for example, is often late because of the combination of traffic, stop lights, and many stops.

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 8:09 PM: I believe it was going to be too problematic to do parking count during COVID

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:09 PM: is parking count not also an outdoor activity, much like the work of redesigning our streets?

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 8:10 PM: I think there was concern that the

bid for contract for counting parking would be too expensive.

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 8:10 PM: Many people are WFH and therefore not moving cars these days, so it skews counts that assume some people will drive to work during the day, allowing those spaces to be used for other purposes. Around the high school this is definitely a problem if teachers are expected to park on the street.

alan moore (to Everyone): 8:10 PM: what does parking counts have to do with Covid? There's no human interaction.

Vitor Pamplona, PTAC (to Everyone): 8:11 PM: Adding my voice to the suggestion to seriously consider removing all parking in one side of highland, remap acessibility and loading zones and open space for bike lanes and/or better bus service.

alan moore (to Everyone): 8:13 PM: I'll vote for that.

Vitor Pamplona, PTAC (to Everyone): 8:13 PM: I also support the suggestion of removing all parking on Central St between Somerville ave and Summer st and extending the PROTECTED bike lane downhill to make sure south bound bikers get where they want to go (Somerville Ave)

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 8:14 PM: Also the connections from community path or neighborways are pretty terrifying (i.e. central or lowell). If Highland is desntination it needs to be safe for everymode to get there.

Ted Alexander (to Everyone): 8:15 PM: On the parking study: we learned at one of the recent PTAC meetings that the city used the software it purchased for that study to do the parking counts on western Washington St. I'm not sure whether this has been used to inventory spaces on Highland or whether it is still available.

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 8:16 PM: I also support removing more parking from Highland, preferably removing discretionary parking on one side completely, and removing parking on Central St all the way down. There will never be as many people biking as we would like without a solid, protected network that makes more people feel comfortable.

Nate Kaufman (to Everyone): 8:16 PM: +1

Vitor Pamplona, PTAC (to Everyone): 8:19 PM: Let's get that Parking Study effort started, please. We can help motivating other departmnets of the city if needed.

MARK VOLLINGER (to Everyone): 8:20 PM: the parking study is paid for

MARK VOLLINGER (to Everyone): 8:20 PM: the budge line item was last year

Laura Evans (to Everyone): 8:20 PM: can we even do a parking study now, since parking use is so weird?

MARK VOLLINGER (to Everyone): 8:20 PM: they did not extend it as the money was already spent

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:22 PM: Quick reminder to everyone that we're planning to send a copy of the chat to the city afterwards for them to help them incorporate this feedback; please let me know if would prefer to have their name or comments omitted from the chat transcript

Jessica Ferguson (to Everyone): 8:22 PM: Bike boxes are also less effective when drivers just pull into them

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:24 PM: Here's a powerful quote from the Vision Zero Action Plan: "However, there are still gaps in Somerville's low-stress network, and on some of the busiest streets, traditional painted bicycle lanes are not sufficient to keep bicyclists safe, with heavy vehicle traffic, turning vehicles, and high-turnover parking or to encourage bicycle by people of all ages and abilities. According to the American Journal of Public Health, injury rates on streets with bicycle lanes were about 50% lower than those without any bike facilities; this improved to 90% on streets with separated bicycle facilities. Making streets safer for bicyclists is also proven to dramatically increase ridership of bicycle facilities, as more users feel comfortable riding on a low-stress, separated facility than they had with a painted bike lane." (from <https://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/vision-zero-action-plan.pdf>)

alan moore (to Everyone): 8:24 PM: I agree with lan, my daughter would only bike to the HS via Highland on the sidewalk and sometime get yelled at.

Kevin Mcgrath (to Everyone): 8:25 PM: I would also say, the city needs to seriously consider how it regulates parking. Many properties have off-street parking available, but landlords are absent, leaving parking garages to fall apart, they rent parking spaces out to non-tenants, or fill these garages with junk to continue to use rental properties as storage. If a property is not owner occupied, landlords should be required to offer any available off-street parking to tenants. The city should do more to ensure off-street parking is actually usable.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:26 PM: YES

Kevin. This was brought up in the shelved parking study work group
Ted Alexander (to Everyone): 8:28 PM: One comment on a specific aspect of the plan: I was very happy to see the extensions of sidewalks around trees where the trees currently narrow the sidewalk to the point where it is not accessible. Please keep that in the plan! It would be great to see this feature everywhere in the city on residential streets where trees block the sidewalk.

Ted Lester (to Everyone): 8:28 PM: Another comment on specific aspect: Glad to see the raised crosswalks on as many intersections as possible

Colin (to Everyone): 8:28 PM: Co-signed

Laura Evans (to Everyone): 8:29 PM: +1 for sidewalks around trees

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 8:30 PM: @Tom It's true, many people would love to bike but see it as too dangerous without a linked network, and thus see it as recreation rather than a viable form of transportation.

Vitor Pamplona, PTAC (to Everyone): 8:31 PM: Highland is a good walking experience today but it could be an amazing bike ride experience.

Ted Lester (to Everyone): 8:31 PM: Also, really like the design of Central to with bi-directional bike facilities. In addition to considering extending the treatment to the south, the City should consider extending good infrastructure Northbound to GLX and CPX

Julia Toof (to Everyone): 8:32 PM: +1 for raised crosswalks and sidewalks around trees

Paola Massoli (to Everyone): 8:33 PM: Raised crosswalks please, to make cars slow down as much as possible.

Tom Lamar (to Everyone): 8:35 PM: Raised crosswalks would be great, and a project like this should be the perfect project to build a lot of them

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 8:35 PM: +1 Bonnie

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 8:38 PM: YES.

Ian Woloschin (to Everyone): 8:38 PM: Yup.

Nate Kaufman (to Everyone): 8:40 PM: Yes, Zack. Pedestrians, transit, bikes, then cars. Those are the city's own stated priorities, echoed constantly by the mayor. The design for Highland doesn't reflect these stated priorities at all.

Gregory Ely (to Everyone): 8:41 PM: I also think if the city is going to prioritize parking so significantly it should state it as a goal for its streets

and projects. At this community meeting, parking was never stated as priority.

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 8:42 PM: Mounters gon mount.

Michelle Moon (to Everyone): 8:42 PM: There a few green infrasture sites that were shown today and it would be great to see more - and green the streets. A core part of this project is about addressing stormwater and it would be great to see above ground solutions as well. Plus green the streets makes it better for people.

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:44 PM: SCPD meeting is Dec 8th 6:30pm

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:44 PM: this coming Tuesday

Justin Schreiber, OSPCD Mobility (to Everyone): 8:45 PM: Holland/College Meeting Next Wed the 9th @ 5:30 PM. View the proposed final design:

<https://somervoice.somervillema.gov/hollandandcollege>

bonnie denis (she/her) Chair, SCPD (to Everyone): 8:46 PM: <https://zoom.us/j/98306866436?pwd=K001M2ZaU1ZKV2hvZXdhYTROQ2NrUT09>

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 8:46 PM: THAT's HUGE

Lena Webb (she/her/hers) (to Everyone): 8:46 PM: thank you for speaking up