



## SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE JUNE 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

### Community Representatives

**Tom Lamar, Chair**  
**Lena Webb, Vice Chair**  
Ted Lester, Secretary  
Ken Carlson  
**Gregory Ely**  
**Guest: Brad Rawson OSPCD**  
**Guest: Gavin Lund**

**Ted Feldman**  
**Alex Frieden**  
**Mark Vollinger**  
**Ian Woloschin**  
**Guest: James Hines (ward 5)**  
**Guest: Alex Epstein**

Katjana Ballantyne, City Council  
Viola Augustin, OSPCD Mobility  
**Adam Polinski, OSPCD Mobility**  
Eric Weisman, DPW

**Guest: George Schneeloch**

People present are bolded.

Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, 6:30-8:00PM

GoToMeeting link for computers, tablets, and smartphones: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/265786629>

GoToMeeting dial-in number: +1 (872) 240-3212, Access Code: 265-786-629

### **Procedural, General Business & Updates (15 minutes)**

- Guest introductions and meeting logistics
- Acting Secretary: Gregory Ely
- Approval of May minutes and April special meeting minutes
  - Minutes approved
  - Tom: Likely moving July meeting from July 8<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Logistics and events planning
  - Greg: What is city policy regarding outdoor events such as bike breakfast?
  - Alex Frieden: notes that he has received requests for bike breakfast. I believe that is allowed along as we follow state guidelines.
  - Ian: states that he will reach out to whole foods on Beacon Street to see if they are comfortable resuming bike breakfast
  - Adam: Probably okay to do bike breakfast. We can start planning it soon.
- **Annual Report Update – Tom**
  - Tom: Notes that it is coming along but needs some additional work with the following specific request:
    - Request for goals for 2021.
    - updated bike map with new infrastructure.
    - Add more photos and drop some photos into the shared drive.
    - Request somebody write up general response to COVID, moving meeting online etc.

### **Focus 1: Endorsement of SASS street design guide (15 minutes)**

- Discussion of any remaining SASS street design guide details
  - Alex Epstein: Presented a couple of small changes to the SASS document.
    - Adding except bikes signs to no turn on red signs and changes to adding bike to allow cross with leading pedestrian interval. There should also be a section added regarding lighting and safety.

- Tom: voices concern over document's recommendation of bump outs. Recommends city consult various committees (PTAC, SBAC, and accessibility) regarding bump outs.
- Alex E: states these changes have now been incorporated into the SASS design document.
- Brad: suggests change to language to be a single fatality at a HAWK light.
- Alex E: Will update the document to be correct.
- Greg: asked if there is data on HAWK lights compliance?
- Brad: We are collecting data and comparing to other intersections and traffic control devices.
- Committee votes to endorse the SASS street design guide.
  - The vote passes unanimously!

**Focus 2: Western Washington Pilot Results (20 minutes)**

- Western Washington Pilot results – staff
  - Adam: notes the process was rushed, data was also collected during COVID.
  - Ted: asks clarifying question, slightly confusing language on slides showing indicator improving when speed decreased
  - Brad: we actually saw speeds increase with Motor vehicle speeds.
  - Alex F: when was this data taken?
  - Adam: most of the traffic data was collected in March with crosswalk compliance data collected in May 2021.
  - Ted Feldman: Comment is the increased speed on Washington just part of the larger increase we saw nationally with increases in speeding during the pandemic?
  - Brad: valid point, this was a good point trying to integrate this with other data collected from the elsewhere in Somerville. Notes that are numerous confounding variables regarding pedestrian, driving, and biking due to larger behavior changes due to COVID.
  - Lena: asks to clarify how cross walk compliance metrics is determined.
  - Adam: Percentage of time person yields to a pedestrian.
  - Brad: people watch manually and with cameras too
- Discussion of results and suggested next steps. Curb utilization and parking counts. Numbers suggest decrease in parking demand when parking was removed.
  - Alex F: pre-pandemic vehicle speeds have gone up resulting a in a bias. Also notes that vertical separation on Beacon Street from raised crossing makes it feel significantly narrower rather than the more subtle and paint only sections along beacon street
  - Adam: skeptical of decreased parking counts are lower. Notes the biscuit closed and that may have decreased demand.
  - Ted F: Maybe we should look at how bus traffic level counts changed as a function of traffic counts. Might reduce confounding variables.
  - Greg: asks about suppressed bike counts and lack of connectivity. Although Beacon Street is close to pilot, there is a large gap without bike infrastructure between beacon and Dane and many cyclists won't feel comfortable biking on that stretch.
  - Brad Rawson: responded to lack of connectivity is problematic
  - Alex F: How effective were the queue jumps?
  - Adam: There was a slight difference in direction but cannot recall in which direction.
  - Alex F: When is repaving?
  - Brad: Won't start until fall and early winter.
  - Greg: asks about potential pilot between Dane and Beacon Street.
  - Brad: We said we would do the full section but got pushed back on parking removal.
  - Alex E: I would submit that having to justify closing the gap in a corridor based on how well the partial corridor is working is a bit backward...like justifying completing a crosswalk based on how well half a crosswalk is working.
  - Tom: I think the numbers look reasonable for bike/ped counts during the pandemic.
  - Tom: Notes bike lanes on Washington are very narrow and road condition is poor. This may have discouraged cyclists.

- Lena: Asks if we can repurpose general parking for specific needs such as handicap parking or kid drop-off/pickup areas?
- Alex F: highlights that shape up Somerville shows Argenziano has some of the highest use of pedestrian and bike usage in city and that should improve arguments for making the bike lanes permanent.
- Adam: notes the formal design is planned for 2021.

### **City Update (40 minutes)**

- Update on Spring projects (SAUSI, Lower Medford St, Wellington Bridge, Somerville Ave near Porter)
  - Adam: notes that there has been a request for the city to write letter to endorse blue bikes installation in the Twin city plaza.
  - Mark V: asked about converting Medford Street to a single lane there if volume is too low.
  - Brad: Volume is too low to convert to single lane for bidirectional traffic
  - Greg: voiced concern of queueing on the sidewalk and that volume might be too high for zig-zag connection if there are too many bikers there.
  - Adam: States that there is probably room for 2 or 3 cyclists.
  - Mark V: Concerned that is likely way too small and cyclists will skip the queue or other perform other dangerous behavior. Suggests moving crossing to other side of other side of intersection to allow for a longer cyclist queue.
  - Ian: notes the grand junction angle might cause problematic crossing with roadways and running almost of parallel to train tracks. Concerned about bike wheels getting trapped in tracks.
  - Tom: What is the timeline, how long do we have time for feedback?
  - Adam: unsure Will check on the timeline.
  - Ted: Suggest moving this discussion to the E&E subcommittee
  - Tom: Motions for vote to install Blue bikes in twin cities plaza.
    - Vote passes unanimously to write a letter.
  - Adam: Somerville Ave moving along, should happen in the next couple of weeks! Plan for intermittent sidewalk and bike lanes.
  - Mark V: Will upper Medford street be closed to traffic?
  - Brad: we are opening it up to general traffic.
  - Mark V: concerned that is inviting backlash when it is planned to later close for automobile traffic.
  - Adam: Regarding Somerville ave restriping, how much of the Beacon street intersection can we redesign now?
  - Brad: We can trim up the beacon street intersection and reduce two left lanes of traffic from Beacon Street.
  - Ted: notes that we all agree what signal timing needs to be revised for the section.
  - Adam: Signal timing is a relatively minor amount of work for this intersection, at a minimum we can change timing. Phasing might be challenging.
  - Adam: Flex posts are coming in July for beacon street! Delay in supply chain pushed
- SBAC request for two-way biking on Richdale Ave and on White St
  - Brad: white street contraflow put on hold for now
  - Alex E: has reached out to try to clarify if Cambridge could do it without support from Somerville.
  - Brad: Thinks that all of the parking needs to be removed, seems to narrower than thought.
  - Alex: Thought that parking did not need to be removed. Also thought that no resident outreach is needed.
  - Brad: City has drafted comments on MUTCD letter.