



## SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

### Community Representatives (bold = present):

**Ken Carlson, Chair**

**Tom Lamar, Vice Chair**

**Katie Pierce, Secretary**

**Alex Anderson**

Emily Balkam

**Mark Chase**

**Alex Epstein**

**Alex Frieden**

**Ted Feldman**

Enid Kumin

**Ted Lester**

**Kevin McGrath**

**Alan Moore**

**Brandon Stafford**

**Lena Webb**

Ian Woloschin

### Ex Officio:

Skye Stewart, Office of the Mayor

Jesse Clingan, Board of Alderman

Commissioner Stan Koty, Dept. of Public Works

Terry Smith, Traffic and Parking

**Mike Tremblay**, Office of Strategic Planning and Community Dev

Deputy Chief **Steve Carrabino**, Police Department

### Guests:

Tom Bertulis

Liza Burkin

Ben Holmes

George Schneeloch

Zachary Zimmerman

Michael Weber

Sky Rose

Thursday June 7, 2017, 6:30-8:00 PM, Somerville Police Department, Washington St

Meeting began: 6:34 PM

### Procedural, General Business & Updates (20 Minutes)

1. Member identifications, Guest introductions and sign-in sheet
2. Acting Secretary: Alan Moore
3. VOTE: May Minutes
  - a. Vote postponed until July
  - b. **ACTION:** Katie/Ian to edit final changes
4. July Meeting
  - a. Would normally be July 5, the day after Independence Day
  - b. **ACTION:** Ken to poll members if July 12 may be better

5. Bike Week Commuter Challenge
  - a. Tom announced that Somerville had the most miles for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, and showed the certificate
6. SBAC membership Update by Ken
  - a. Michael Weber, who has been updating the Twitter feed, has applied to become a member. He's a post-doc working in the Longwood area. His "issues" are dangerous routes, education and encouragement.
  - b. **ACTION:** The committee will vote after the meeting on Michael's membership application [Note after meeting- Michael's application was unanimously approved. Welcome Michael!].
7. Lower Beacon St. plans – update by Ken
  - a. The committee did well collecting parking utilization data and could made a good case for removing parking to provide for protected bike lanes, but due to tight time frames, and city staff bandwidth, it's been decided not to push now, but to try again in 2019 or 2020.
8. White St
  - a. Alan mentioned that White St is ideally situated to provide a low-stress connection around Porter Square, but the one-way street grid prevents access. Two-way biking on White St would unlock a network of low-stress streets, but requires coordination between Somerville and Cambridge. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend a safe two-way biking connection on White St. Alan will write a letter conveying the recommendation.

**City Update. (20 min)** (NOTE: because of time constraints, additional updates were submitted by Mike Tremblay and appended at the end of these minutes).

1. Community Path detour (between Davis and Mass Ave) – for most of the summer. Official alternative route signage has been posted at the end of the Path closures. There's a possible alternative route that Ron Newman had posted on social media.
  - a. How else to advertise and educate all users?
  - b. Could anything be done for traffic calming on the alternative routes?
2. Davis Sq. Signal Timing:
  - a. Currently, because of the poor and long timing (up to 6.5 minute wait for some movements, like legally walking from the plaza to near Oath), 75% of pedestrians don't even follow the signals.
  - b. Mike presented, with turning and signal diagrams, the proposed new signal timing to decrease the full cycle time from 155 seconds presently to 100 – 130 seconds. The exclusive timing will be changed to concurrent with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI). This proposal has been presented at Resistat meetings already.
  - c. Lena was concerned about pedestrians crossing with turning cars, even with LPI.
3. Additional Blue Bike stations:
  - a. 9 new locations planned for Somerville this year and 8 more next year, with an emphasis on underserved areas in Winter Hill and East Somerville.
  - b. One station in Assembly will be paid for by a developer. A larger effort will be made to get developers to pay for stations.

**Focus Item #1: Cedar St. (30 min)**

1. Cedar St. Update: paving and striping to be happening soon. Approved design is southbound buffered bike lane, travel lane and parking lane. If the Committee wants to propose a different short-term or long-term solutions, it needs to be soon.

2. Six different designs, depicted by Mike with StreetMix and sketched by Brandon were discussed. Some flip parking and some have a northbound (contraflow) bike lane.
3. Mike thought only a few of the options are plausible. Katie suggested a dotted advisory bike lane within the southbound travel lane. Many thought that striping for a short-term solution should be consistent with a possible different long-term solution.
  - a. **Action:** The Engineering team will consider further and provide comments to Mike and the Committee.
  - b. **Action:** Mark and a resident are organizing to get community input into the design options.

### **Focus Item #1: Broadway (10 min)**

1. Mike again presented his proposal to add bike lanes (protected where possible) and bus lanes without reducing # travel lanes.
  - a. **Action:** Tom recommended that the Engineering team look at these plans in more detail and provide comments to Mike and the Committee.

### **Team Updates (10 min)**

1. Enforcement:
  - a. Ride Share letter by Kevin almost complete and ready to send
  - b. Crash survey is complete and should be shared
2. Encouragement (Alex A.):
  - a. Bike to Work convoy June 15 from Somerville to downtown Boston, perhaps BostonBikes could also promote the event.
  - b. Historic Bike Ride with the Historic Preservation Commission – June 17
  - c. Whole Foods breakfast - June 29
  - d. Family bike ride in Ward - July 15

### **Banter over Beer: Location TBA**

### **Additional City Updates from Mike Tremblay**

- Beacon Street – Ongoing, moving along. We are saving up to four trees on the north side of Beacon Street between Whole Foods and the Cambridge CL. Bike accommodations should not be affected, and the changes should not preclude a protected bike lane option now or in the future (which is a larger discussion). Bikes will likely now have to share the bus stop space at Whole Foods, similar to the bike lanes on Mass Ave in North Cambridge. The bus stop there is only 6 feet wide once the trees are saved, so we need to either show the bike lane going straight through the bus stop, or show a substandard width bike lane next to a substandard width bus stop. I'm leaning towards the former. Trees are being planted over the next few days/weeks; please be patient as I know some of them are blocking the cycle track inbound. Mass Ave in North Cambridge. The bus stop there is only 6 feet wide once the trees are saved, so we need to either show the bike lane going straight through the bus stop, or show a substandard width bike lane next to a substandard width bus stop. I'm leaning towards the former. Trees are being planted over the next few days/weeks; please be patient as I know some of them are blocking the cycle track inbound.
- Webster Avenue – No meaningful update. We are still trying to figure out a way to do this this year. But any update I can give would just be speculation.

- Medford Street – Significant construction between Somerville Ave and the Cambridge CL as Cambridge does some water main work (IIRC). Giant bleeping hole in the street, you should check it out. Alternating traffic with occasional full closures. Bikes may be directed to use sidewalks. This is a painful period for this stretch. I believe once this work is completed, we can put back what we got approved by TC last year.
- Mt. Vernon St. – Northbound bike lane seems like a no-brainer. When we get a spare painting crew in the new FY, this could potentially be done in a night. Should not affect anything between Pearl and Broadway. If I have my way I'd have them paint a bike box at Broadway too, to facilitate left turns onto Broadway WB.
- Cutter Avenue – A bit trickier than Mt. Vernon. The width is there, but the parking is on the right side of the street, rather than the left, and traffic does form two lanes approaching Highland, at least sometimes. I may hesitate narrowing the road to one travel lane without looking at signal operations at both Highland and at Elm/Summer. But I'm planning on doing some queue observations sometime this summer to determine if that's necessary.
- Powder House Boulevard – Cycle track between circle and Packard still on the table, though uphill climbing lane remains the default. Looking to hear back about neighborhood outreach. I had a thought – if Tufts proves to be an obstacle here, especially if they claim they need that space for graduation, we may be able to offer them use of the cycle track for parking for some small number of weekend days per year. Half-cooked idea, but worth considering.
- HSIP – This is on the agenda, but if we cover it here we can remove it. HSIP was set back due to a contracting snafu by MassDOT. They had to rebid the project, which they did promptly, but it reset the clock. Looking like fall of this year or Spring of next year for all four projects. Disappointing. I would not consider the plans fair game for changes however; we are dealing with MassDOT and the plans are already out to bid. That said, if you have any significant concerns, let me know. I believe I distributed those plans last year.
- Vision Zero – I'm starting to put together framework for public meetings and task force. Hope to host some meetings this summer about:
  - o What tools we have in the toolbox, including
    - Traffic Calming
    - Signal timing
      - Including concurrent ped phasing
    - Regulatory changes (No Turn on Red at intersections)
      - Idaho Stop?
      - Bikes may use adjacent crosswalk's ped signal? (head start on LPI's, legal use of all-ped phases)
      - Etc.
  - o Where unsafe conditions exist in the city/what tools could be used to address
- Green Line Extension – This is the big one. Brad has been talking about it at Resistat meetings this past month, but it's very likely that the bridge over the RR tracks on Broadway in Ball Square (Between Josephine and Cedar) will be fully closed to all traffic for the duration of about a year, beginning as early as fall of this year. This has sparked discussions including, but not limited to:
  - o Changes to one-way street directionality, either as a temporary measure or on a permanent basis
  - o Changes to signal timings along the detour routes and in the affected area
  - o Improvements to Powder House Circle
  - o Neighborways treatments on would-be cut-through streets
  - o Placemaking in Ball Square to help draw customers
  - o Etc.

This project will be very uncomfortable for everyone, including bicyclists and pedestrians. The Broadway closure is particularly harsh, as folks essentially need to go over a half mile out of their way to get around the detour. My

understanding is that a temporary ped/bike access bridge is not on the table. We may want to include discussion on this in future meeting agendas.

- New item – It looks like a concept for the intersection of Powder House Boulevard/Route 16 will be advanced as part of the SHA project at Clarendon Hill. Schematic designs include accommodations for bikes to cross over to the Alewife Brook Greenway via a signal and dedicated crossings. We should monitor the progress of this project, but all in all this change would make it *so much easier* to bike between West Somerville and the Greenway without needing to use congested Broadway or go all the way up to Boston Avenue.