



SOMERVILLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Community Representatives (in attendance in Bold):

Tom Lamar, Chair

Katie Pierce, Vice Chair

Ted Lester, Secretary

Emily Balkam

Ken Carlson

Alex Epstein

Ted Feldman

Alex Frieden

Kevin McGrath

Alan Moore

Mark Vollinger

Lena Webb

Ian Woloschin

Michael Weber

Ex Officio:

Katjana Ballantyne, City Council

Adam Polinski, OSPCD Mobility

Deputy Chief Steve Carrabino, Police Department

Thursday October 3rd, 2019, 6:30-8:00 PM, Somerville Public Safety Building Academy Room, 220 Washington St

Guests: Greg, Zack, Owen, Sara, Lilly, Scott

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Procedural, General Business & Updates (15 Minutes)

- Guest introductions and sign-in sheet
- Acting Secretary: Emily Balkam
- VOTE: Approve September Minutes (Motion – Lena, Kevin – Second, Approved)
- Ex Officio Stan passed away last month, we held a moment of silence in honor of Stan.
- Upcoming events
 - Memorial Ride for Joe Lavins at 9am tomorrow in Porter to Kendal.
 - Open House one week from today – SomerVision 2040, Thursday – contact Tom or Lena if interested.
 - This Sunday – Annual Historic Ride “Tracking the T”, leaves from City Hall at 2:00 PM.
 - Oct 14th – Honk Fest – Wheels and Feet to Reclaim our Streets ride from Davis to Harvard Square, with the bands. 10/10:30 am.
 - ResiStat is going on right now. Look up your Ward meeting [here](#) and attend.

Ongoing City Planning Processes (20 min) – Tom

- SomerVision 2040 – public mtg next Thursday. Goal was to have a strong visionary document to help the city prioritize sustainability and safety.

- Goal of Non-Vehicle trips – 50% was a goal from the 2030 plan. New Trips is hard to measure/compare. And this feels low compared to other metrics in the plan. Looking at making this closer to 80% for walking/biking/transit.
- Should we aim to reduce the # of vehicular miles per capita instead?
- Whatever you choose should be measurable, tricky to do, but an important aspect.
- Mode Share % should be easier to get.
- Now's the time to get involved, talk to Tom.
- Davis Square Neighborhood Plan
 - Old plan is decades old.
 - Process started in 2013-ish, wrapping up now.
 - Includes concepts around:
 - Protected intersections in the square
 - Include on street bicycle facilities (didn't mention protected lanes)
 - Slip Lanes by parking lots to protect pedestrians
 - Pedestrianizing Elm Street
 - Parking maximums rather than parking minimums
 - Prioritizing buses – On Holland Street from the Davis Square bus station
 - Data shows on a one mile stretch along College, Holland, and from cedar on highland – Green/no traffic – takes a min. Yellow – twice as long. Red (95th percentile) – 5 min. Helps to show in bad traffic you can walk faster than the bus to Davis square. Bus schedules are based off the 90th percentile time.
 - Community Path connection – vague on how this would happen, but it should be connected.
 - Tom – let's write a letter highlighting the things we like about this and asking that the bike lane recommendations are protected bike lanes.
 - Kevin – opportunities for specific edits/suggestions to language, etc?
 - Tom's recommendation is to just highlight a few areas of improvement since it's so close to being finalized.
 - Earlier renderings showed some better connections for the Community Path, might be worth looking back for those, or asking for more concrete details around that.
 - Alex - Make a recommendation around supporting pedestrianization of those two streets -were not opposed at all at the meeting.
 - VOTE: To write the letter as discussed. Passed.
- Zoning Ordinance overhaul
 - We are voicing general support for this. Specific issues around Bike Rack spacing etc. We should be advocating for the specifics. Any volunteers to work on this?
 - Guest – Researching Portland OR bike racks, they have good documentation. Will connect with Tom.
 - Alan – Residential/Commercial Development will require less off-street parking, which will lead to more parking on streets, may lead to more resistance to removing parking on streets for more biking infrastructure.
 - Adam – in transit-oriented districts, city is trying to allow buildings that aren't building parking(?) would restrict you from having an on-street parking permit. Legal questions around that. Note - not 100% clear on the specifics here. Adam will see if there's an update. System can't currently handle it, but they will figure it out. Adam will ask Dan Martin to come explain this if it passes.
 - Alan – ¼ mile radius from transit, is actually half the city it looks like.

- Alex – 100 units with zero parking lots will not allow on street parking for ppl living in that building, with a few exceptions for folks who need wheelchair access, etc.
- Tom – let's guide developers to build more bike parking and if buildings have lots of off-street parking, ppl bring cars who otherwise wouldn't. Has a broader network effect.
- Ken – let's be careful about this, High School isn't building a new garage, teachers will be parking on the street in the area – let's ask George to come talk about this.
- Clarendon Hill renovation and rebuild of Powder House Blvd at Alewife Brook Parkway
 - Tom reviewed proposed design change (provided by the developer, not sure which firm made it), includes protected bike lanes, multi-use path, concerns around transitions and sharp angles. Idea is to connect the Alewife brook park path to Powder House Blvd.
 - Eng/Eval committees will review.
 - Lena – current intersection is brutal, this is good because it will help you to cross to get to Stop and Shop. But nothing will feel safe until there's a road diet for the Parkway, ppl speed, so many lanes, aggressive driving. Worry about people thinking it's safer then it is.
 - Ted – Agrees with Lena. There's a lot of desire to cross it biking or running, ppl use the light at Broadway, but the lights are antiquated, ppl play chicken with the traffic. Takes too long to respond - Ppl don't think the cross walk works.
 - Ken – Talking to folks about a road diet for the parkway, this is an option. Good long game.

Finishing Beacon Street (20 min)

- Preventing crashes at cross street intersections on Beacon St
- Kevin talked about a crash outside his home – Beacon and Forest corner. Heard a noise outside, cyclist was on the ground, gave her info to report it, the driver said they didn't see her. Driver ran the stop sign, knocked her off the bike.
- Stop on the line – Kevin
- Kevin reached out to Chief Carrabino, JT Scott, the Mayor. Officer responded and was great, but saw another driver fail to stop while they were waiting. This is a high conflict and dangerous area. Still waiting for an official response.
- Ken texted the mayor asking the city to focus on this. Infrastructure – will have raised crosswalks on the inbound side, they are tiny, may not help. In his free time, Steve has been on the scene giving warning on these cross streets.
- Steve -When we choose locations to enforce the law, you need a place to pull someone over. Don't want to pull them over into Beacon Street to block traffic and affect other bike lanes, don't want to stop them in the cycle track either.
- Ken recommends that they use cones to reserve a parking spot for the police to use to pull people over to ticket them.
- Ian recommended a temporal no left turns in the evening hour commute, no right turn in the morning commute.
- Steve's response - We do this on other streets (no driving during x hours for non-abutters), but judges throw them out, saying they're taxpayers, so they have a right to use them.
- Kevin is concerned that temporal signs are just another thing that needs to be enforced, find a way for the SPD to enforce the stop on a line campaign. Worried that two stop signs won't be effective. Can we do a rumble strip or something more noticeable, like on a highway on the side of the road, won't impact snowplowing.

- Tom – can we add planters, or restrict parking one space farther back to help sight lines?
- Mitigating conflicts at intersection – Adam
- Adam – one raised crosswalk is complete at Eustis, a 4 inch vertical over 12 feet. Someone should drive over it to verify it. The other two should be done in the next 2 weeks. Let's see how it goes in the next few weeks.
- Kevin – great example on Oxford street on Garfield, ppl stop fully there, even though there isn't a stop sign. It's a table. A raised intersection.
- Timing for Beacon St completion and plans for oversight of final project – Adam
- Should be done in the next 3 weeks.
- Ken – will there be a punch-list walk?
- Adam - JT and Brad did this, with a few other staff members. City Staff and Newport is doing this too.
- Tom – small follow-on project to help address that the plan is several years out of date, is this possible?
- Adam – would depend on what the timeline would be and the ask. What's realistic is looking at what isn't working well and being proactive with future projects. Small and quick changes with paint are possible but likely not larger things.
- Alex – are armadillos an option?
- Adam – let's wait and see what the thermoplastic does. Could look at armadillos or flex posts, open to suggestions there.
- Tom – referenced a study where flex posts helped with mountable curbs.
- Think about the transition from the cycle track to Somerville Ave.
- Celebrating the end of Beacon St construction – Ken
- Let's do this! At Whole Foods or Beacon Street. Get Second Line down there, School of Honk. Don't have a date as we're not confident of when all the work will be done quite yet. It's a huge improvement, may not be perfect, but definitely worth celebrating.

City Update (35 min) - Adam

- Central Broadway bus lane
 - Have been getting a negative response on Broadway. Concerns about not being informed, mitigate traffic, removed parking, signal changes, etc.
 - Seems to be working for bus riders and bicyclists pretty well, but ppl not happy about it are vocal, much higher volume than those who are saying good things.
 - Ted – Has the City started measuring this? How does reality compare to perception?
 - Some days in bad weather, traffic is worse than before. Probably a 30 min – 2 hr commuting time when it's worse.
 - McGrath is very backed up due to construction from bridge closures for Green Line construction.
 - Tom - Busses are packed, more ppl biking where he did counts. McGrath traffic was blocking the box, issue there.
 - Adam – concerned about Temple/Broadway and School street intersections. Signal timing changes should help here.
 - Alex – Winter Hill in Motion had NO people against it, residents asked for a more progressive design. Livable Streets had success in Roslindale Center by having ppl going to bus stops and asking folks waiting there how it improved their lives. Lena seconding these points.

- Adam – wants to do more outreach around not blocking intersections, using variable message boards, education efforts.
- Steve – agrees everyone is angry, anti-bikes.
- Powder House Circle plan
 - Designs are hard - Getting pushed out, likely won't happen until Spring 2020. Need to prioritize Broadway over this.
 - Emily – Can we still get it done before the bridge reopens in March?
 - Adam – will be hard, hoping they can.
 - Alex – can we see designs around the bridges at the next meeting? Alex will get those.
- Powder House Boulevard striping (upgrading to Option E ASAP; and making sure that doesn't preclude Option D)
 - People don't like the 4 way stop, parents don't like it, don't feel safe. Very controversial. Lights are bagged, has been that way for about a month. Hearing that the crossing guards are there in the AM, vehicles go through the crossing around the guard.
 - Pull people over on Curtis – opportunities for enforcement. SPD is stretched thin.
 - Likely no changes in the next month, so no changes this year at this point.
 - Concerns on Powder House Blvd specifically – 9.5 foot lanes are too narrow, (this is good for traffic calming), most has been around the Curtis 4 way stop.
 - Ken – let's have a follow up meeting with the Mayor, Brad and City counselors. Tom and Adam agree.
- Bike/ped counts
 - Extended to 3 weeks due to poor weather this week.
 - Still have 30 open slots, please sign up.
 - Ken recommends avoid next wed – Yom Kippur holiday.
- Update on senior transportation planner position
 - Senior Planner position has been filled – She starts Oct 28th, will be introduced at next meeting.
- Opportunities for contraflow
 - So much going on this year, hasn't been a priority.
 - Revisit this during the winter.
 - Alex – would like to have this for neighborhood connectivity E/W, N/S in the city. Best ROI bang for buck we're going to get. List sent back in March with top 6 priorities, would be great to get even 2 or 3 of those. White street was approve by Joe Bar – just signage. Can we consider this fall as a quick win?
 - Greg – Signage isn't that great for drivers, negative comments from drivers on Handcock. Emily Seconded this.

Education & Encouragement (5 min)

- Bike Talk planning – Ken
 - Once a Month
 - Going into our 5th year in 2020.
 - Has been the first Wednesday of every month, Nov 6th is the next one with Galen Mook.
 - Dec 4; Senator Will Brownsberger – “The Future of Urban Biking”
 - Moving to the 2nd Wednesday of the month
 - Jan 8 – Jon Ramos – Bostreal
 - Feb 12 – Katjana Balynine?
 - March – Somerville Bike Safety

- Rest of year is open, looking for new ideas. (see ken for more examples within each category)
- Advocacy Organizations
- Transportation Professionals
- Politicians
- Businesses
- Topics
 - Bike Safety Panel
 - Beacon Street – lessons learned
 - History of Biking in Boston
 - Winter Biking
 - Grand Junction Path
- Advocates
- Bike Month Kick off – April 26th – Take over Aeronaut Brewery for 5 hrs, labeling, speeches, advocacy, etc.
- War on Cars Live Podcast (Targeting)
- History of Bike Advocacy in Boston Metro Region
 - Steve Miller, Dave Loutzenheiser, Jessica Mink, Nicole Friedman, Jon Allen