

Transportation Working Group

Somerville Climate Forward

8/24/17

Attendance

- Sean Donaghy
- Wig Zamore
- Jonathan Klein
- Phillip Baraona
- Jocelyn Newhouse
- Dan Flynn
- Mike Stanley
- Maureen Barillano
- Adam Polinski, City Staff
- Hannah Payne, City Staff

Overview & Vision

- Equity should consider the burden of regional transportation (i.e. 93 traffic) that is felt in Somerville.
- Vision should include getting in and out of Somerville, not just around Somerville.

Idea Brainstorm

- General comments and questions
 - In general, Massachusetts has done well at reducing emissions in the electric and power sectors but is lagging in reducing transportation emissions.
 - Need to think regionally when it comes to transportation. What opportunities are there to work with Cambridge, Boston, and other neighbors?
 - Department of Environmental Protection has set new emissions targets for transportation—how will that play into carbon neutral transportation?
 - What can we do to encourage improvements to public transit/ MBTA system?
 - There aren't currently great options to get around within Somerville. For example, getting from Davis to Assembly Square is challenging on public transit.
 - Need to look at all pieces of the pie – biking, walking, driving, and transit—can't only focus on one aspect of our transportation system.
 - If the future of transportation is autonomous vehicles, how do we plan for that to make sure that autonomous shared vehicles work for everyone, especially those that are the hardest to get out of cars? For example, families who need car seats.
 - Make sure new and evolving services are accessible to those with disabilities.

- Somerville is one of the best places in Massachusetts for transit accessibility, but a lot of people still own cars and rely on cars because it is still easy and cheap to own a car in Somerville
 - How do you make it harder to use a car while also accommodating the needs of people who have built a life here? For example, homeowners might change jobs and need to drive to jobs in or out of the city.
 - Simply making car ownership more expensive could affect low income residents more than others.
- Vast majority of people are afraid of giving up their cars.
- Some people can't bike or need to use a car to drop kids off etc. Biking cannot be our only solution.
- GLX planning
 - When the weather is bad, more people take public transit – Is MBTA planning for more people to be on transit when it is snowing or raining? Any opportunity for Somerville to support this?
 - How do we make it easier to take transit during bad weather? How do we make sure it runs?
 - One option for Somerville is to implement transit priority signals at our intersections to improve services
- Solution Ideas
 - Outreach campaigns
 - Subsidized transit passes for people who want to give up their cars.
 - Make car ownership and driving less desirable. Increase the cost of car ownership and parking is one way, are there others?
 - Transit X – flying, solar powered, individual pod transit. To get people out of cars, need to give people an option that is better than driving.
 - Green Line Extension (GLX) will change bus ridership and service needs. Once GLX is in place, we should look to multimodal transit and think about how the entire system could work better (biking, walking, bus riding, etc.).
 - As the GLX is happening – need to think about how bus lines are changing around that. Need to work with MBTA and Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) to analyze bus routes and reroute as needed.
 - Should be making it clear sooner rather than later that Somerville wants work with them on this.
 - Surveys to identify transit needs.
 - Climate CoLab proposal to help people get around within Somerville. The City could own and operate a fleet of vans or small vehicles that would run on a set route around the City. Need to find ways to reduce the number of cars that are driving within the city.
 - Encourage or require workplaces to put in showers to allow people to bike or walk to work in hot weather.
 - Electric bikes help to make biking more accessible by making it easier to go up the many steep hills in Somerville.

- Subsidize electric bikes like electric cars?
 - Hubway – Opportunity for Hubway to add Copenhagen wheels to bikes?
 - Public outlets for charging bikes.
- Trees provide shade and make walking or biking easier and more comfortable. Improve tree canopy on busy bike and pedestrian routes.
- Much of Somerville is disconnected by commuter rail corridors – any opportunities for pedestrian bridges over rail lines?
 - Existing pedestrian/ bike paths are well used, like the path from Ten Hills to Assembly.
- Community path is set to end at McGrath and skip over Inner Belt—leaving a critical connection missing between Boston and bike paths to the west.
 - This connection will be critical to expand regional cycling access.
 - People don't like to get off of their bikes when commuting. For example, many people don't walk their bike through Davis Square on the Community Path.
- Portland has a bike development area instead of transit development area that provides bike access and storage. Could this be something to look to for Somerville?
- Electric Vehicles
 - How can we incentivize EV adoption? Preferred parking?
 - People are interested in getting EVs but they rent or don't have a driveway so don't have a clear way to charge at home. Could we install on-street chargers?
 - Can we allow 3rd party installation of chargers on streets or city lots?
 - Need to have very clear signage so non-EVs don't park in EV charging spots.
- Can we support electrification of private car sharing services (Lyft, Zip Car, etc.)?
- Bike parking for people who live on the third floor without space to lock up inside or outside. Many apartment buildings don't provide storage and don't have bike racks.
- If you make alternatives to driving easier than driving, then people will choose not to drive.
 - Change to zoned parking only for your neighborhood? Cars with resident passes can currently park anywhere in Somerville. This encourages driving within the city even if a bus option is available.
 - Charge for overnight parking?
 - Car shares work because it works out to be cheaper than owning a car. What can we learn and borrow from this model?
- Community groups in Somerville and neighboring cities could come together to work on walking, biking, and transit (STEP, Friends of the Community Path, and groups from Charlestown and Cambridge).
- Collect and map data on particulate matter. Make data public and available to community to bring attention to transportation equity needs.