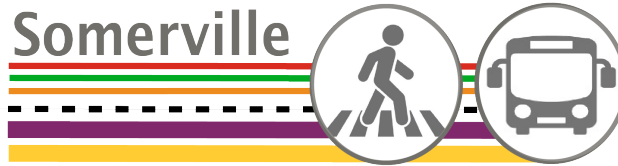


Somerville



Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee

Appointed by Joseph A

Curtatone, Mayor

Date: Thursday, January 20, 2022

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

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

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander

*Ginny Alverson – Vice Chair

*Caroline Bodager

*Meredith Brown

*Thomas Coen

*Laura Evans

*Christopher Ferry

*Paola Massoli

*Mary Napolitano

*Audrey Orenstein – Secretary

Vitor Pamplona

*Zach Rosenberg – Chair

*Alessandra Sieter

*Julia Toof

Carole Voulgaris

*Kirsten Walters

Ex-Officio:

*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*

Kate White, *OSPCD Mobility, Community Outreach*

*JT Scott, *City Councilor Ward #2*

*=present

Guests:

*Tom Lamar – Chair of Bicycle Advisory Committee

*Jessica Bellow – Traffic Engineer from CoS

Acting Secretary: Meredith Brown

Call to order: 6:34 pm

Agenda:

1. Procedural business
 - Intros
 - Meeting guidelines
 - VOTE: Approve December minutes
2. Subcommittee updates
3. Washington/Webster/Somerville signal timing
4. 2022 goals & priorities
5. City update
6. Other business

- Public comment

1. Procedural business

- Membership: Emily Vides (not in attendance) and Paola Massoli (in attendance) have resigned from the committee
- Review of meeting guidelines
 - Question about open meeting law: Deferred to later during city update
- **VOTE:** Unanimous approval of December meeting minutes

2. Subcommittee updates

- Update from Tuesday meeting of Commission for Persons with Disabilities (Ginny)
 - Entire meeting spent discussing new proposed rules/regulations for outdoor dining (including sidewalk space and requirement that outdoor dining facilities have adequate restroom facilities for all)
 - Sidewalk clearance issues: Brian Postlewaite gave an extensive presentation that would be good for all of us to see
 - 4-5' of clearance needed on sidewalks; Somerville sidewalks/streets are very narrow. Some businesses may not be able to meet the regulations and their applications may be denied
 - Q: Is the proposed guidance different from previous years? A: Not sure. There was a temporary license created at start of pandemic with special, temporary guidelines around that; the future guidance will likely differ from the previous guidance in some areas, particularly as pertains to what can or cannot occur on the street level
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Brian will come next month to discuss sidewalk clearance issues
 - **ACTION ITEM:** It would be great to invite Bonnie to come and discuss at some point as well
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Mobility to email proposed guidelines
- Education & Engagement subcommittee (Alessandra)
 - Membership: Aud, ++ Alessandra
 - Inaugural relaunch of newly renamed Education and Engagement subcommittee
 - Education: Help community understand responsibilities as pedestrians, drivers, community members
 - Engagement: Solicit broad feedback and dialogue, and intersect with other committees within and outside of Somerville
 - Digging into existing resources and documentation (e.g. SomerVision and Vision Zero) to inform broader strategic priorities
 - Another major priority is creating effective channels for communication
 - Working with city to understand how we can build on existing robust communication channel rather than duplicate effort
 - Another key goal is fostering engagement within committee
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Minutes to come
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Meeting every 2 weeks on Tuesdays from 1-2 and will send out link for other to join

- Policy & Enforcement subcommittee (Ted)
 - Membership: Ted, Zach, Ginny, ++ Meredith, Kirsten, Thomas
 - Subcommittee shared observations and notes on sidewalk snow clearance from Jan 7 snow
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Please take snow pics and submit to subcommittee!! esp but not limited to Broadway & School St
 - Subcommittee followed up on automated traffic enforcement legislation with Rep Connolly & Sen Jehlen
 - Received response from Rep Connolly: There has been little real movement on the relevant bills at the state level at this point but he provided suggestions for ways that we can potentially continue to advocate further for the legislation
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Review & follow up on suggestions
 - Discussions around stop sign compliance & daylighting
 - Jessica did a presentation on crosswalk daylighting recently
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Subcommittee should connect with Jessica on this issue
 - **ACTION ITEM(?):** Should we reach out to Viola about GLX infrastructure?
- Engineering & Evaluation subcommittee (Julia)
 - Membership: Julia, Vitor, Paola, ++ Laura
 - Recent subcommittee meeting focused mostly on Washington/Webster intersection: Concurrent vs exclusive phasing?
 - Justin & Ali & JT joined subcommittee meeting
 - Discussed 6 potential ways to change phasing (3 concurrent, 3 exclusive, with 1 best option of each from subcommittee's perspective)
 - Subcommittee in favor of Scenario 6 which proposes exclusive phasing with reduced ped wait times (55s)

Alternatives Analysis

Scenario #5
Concurrent Pedestrian Phasing
AM ■ 56ft ■
PM ■ 115ft ■
Westbound Right Turn operates at all times under yield conditions, except when pedestrian phase is called.

Scenario #6
Exclusive Pedestrian Phasing
AM ■ 93ft ■
PM ■ 199ft ■
Westbound Right Turn operates at all times under yield conditions, except when pedestrian phase is called.

A Leading Bus Interval can be added on Washington Street Eastbound for minimal impact. Short queues on Somerville Avenue Westbound limit bus-delaying blockages.

Average Pedestrian Wait Times are directly proportional to signal cycle length. This assumes equal pedestrian distribution in terms of time and direction.

Intersection Analysis done using the Synchro 11 software. Level of Service is based off of average vehicle delay.

* Wait time to cross one leg of intersection (both only if crossing diagonally). See detailed wait time analysis.

Scenario #6:
Exclusive pedestrian signaling alternative that allows Bow St slip lane to operate at all times under yield conditions.

Can operate with a push button for a red light / pedestrian signal, or without either vehicle or ped signals (like the entrance to a roundabout, for example Powder House Cir).

Option without signals allows pedestrians to cross at any time – given single direction of traffic and very short 20' crossing distance a high rate of yielding would be expected. This may be a preferable option for all users.

Best alternative with exclusive pedestrian signals.

- Less subcommittee consensus on what to do about slip lane to Bow St (crosswalk vs light/signal); current situation is not ideal

could over time lead to pedestrian adaptation to avoid this intersection altogether

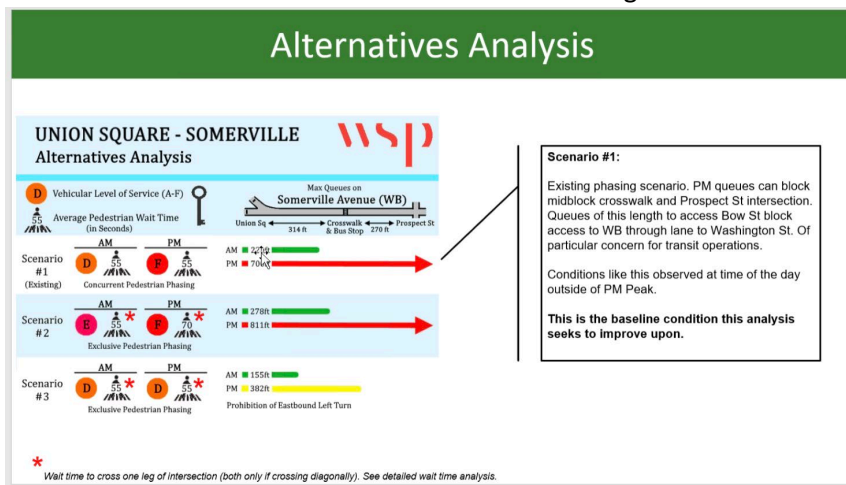
- Walk Boston submitted a letter to CoS in 2016 regarding concurrent vs exclusive phasing, recommending concurrent except in situation of lots of turning vehicles (which is the case here, though under the Boston threshold)
- On the other hand, buses do get significantly backed up here so need to consider impacts to transit users as well as pedestrians (Justin notes that any change should be a definite improvement for transit regardless)
- Q: Audible intersection? A: Already there, and actively working on it on the slip lane

Tom Lamar to Everyone 7:09 PM

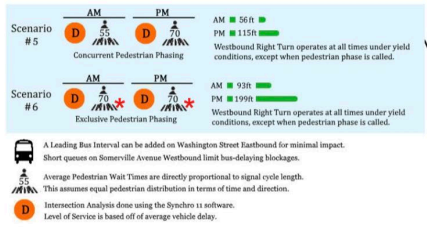
This can wait until Mobility is ready to present to SBAC, but do we have an analysis of how this would delay people biking? In particular, I'm wondering about people making a two-stage turn, who would potentially experience any delay twice.

3. Washington/Webster/Somerville signal timing

- **MOTION** (Julia): To recommend Option 6 (described above) to the city
- Thomas: Not convinced the broader committee has enough information on Option 6 vs. Option 5 (and/or others) to make an informed vote
- Justin: Brief Option 5 vs Option 6 overview
 - Pro for concurrent: Can be more efficient, though we would not really be getting those efficiencies in this case because the two sides don't go at the same time



Alternatives Analysis



Scenario #5:
 Concurrent pedestrian signaling alternative that allows Bow St slip lane to operate at all times under yield conditions.
 Can operate with a push button for a red light / pedestrian signal, or without either vehicle or ped signals (like the entrance to a roundabout, for example Powder House Cir).
 Option without signals allows pedestrians to cross at any time – given single direction of traffic and very short 20' crossing distance a high rate of yielding would be expected. This may be a preferable option for all users.
Best alternative with concurrent pedestrian signals.
"We can test this scenario without new equipment or programming by bagging the signals and adding signage"

A Leading Bus Interval can be added on Washington Street Eastbound for minimal impact.
 Short queues on Somerville Avenue Westbound limit bus-delaying blockages.
 Average Pedestrian Wait Times are directly proportional to signal cycle length.
 This assumes equal pedestrian distribution in terms of time and direction.
 Intersection Analysis done using the Synchro 11 software.
 Level of Service is based off of average vehicle delay.

○ Wait time to cross one leg of intersection (both only if crossing diagonally). See detailed wait time analysis.

Detailed Wait Time Analysis

EXCLUSIVE PED PHASING	Destination			
	NW Corner (Gracie's)	SW Corner (Prospect Hill Academy)	SE Corner (Mama Gina's)	NE Corner (Reliable Market)
Origin				
NW Corner (Gracie's)		52	127	52
SW Corner (Prospect Hill Academy)	52		52	127
SE Corner (Mama Gina's)	127	52		52
NE Corner (Reliable Market)	52	127	52	
Average wait to cross one xwalk	52 seconds			
Average wait to cross two xwalks	127 seconds			
	<- Does not include the time walking across the first crosswalk, only time spent waiting			
CONCURRENT PED PHASING	Destination			
	NW Corner (Gracie's)	SW Corner (Prospect Hill Academy)	SE Corner (Mama Gina's)	NE Corner (Reliable Market)
Origin				
NW Corner (Gracie's)		52	127	52
SW Corner (Prospect Hill Academy)	52		81	52
SE Corner (Mama Gina's)	43	52		52
NE Corner (Reliable Market)	52	43	52	
Average wait to cross one xwalk	52 seconds			
Average wait to cross two xwalks	62 seconds			
	<- Does not include the time walking across the first crosswalk, only time spent waiting			

- Pedestrian wait time for the exclusive phasing is significant longer when crossing more than one crosswalk (a.k.a. crossing to the opposite corner of the intersection).
- Wait times include time waiting for signal, not time crossing.

- Q: What is the assumption of how frequently the optional crosswalk signal for the slip lane would be used? A: Modeling under yield conditions
- Q: Push buttonped lights or ped lights every cycle? A: On recall (i.e. every cycle)
- Q: How does this compare to what other cities are doing or what we are doing elsewhere? A: This is the first thing CoS looks at, along with how long the crosswalks are, it's a complicated multidimensional situation
- Zach & Christopher: Generally lean concurrent in most situations but there being schools nearby pushes their inclination more toward exclusive
- Justin & JT: Emphasizing again that because N/S don't go at the same time, that really reduces the potential benefits of concurrent signalling
- **MOTION:** Ted seconds Julia's motion
- **VOTE:** Unanimous approval of recommendation for Option 6

4. 2022 goals & priorities

- What projects should we work on this year as a committee?

- Can we emphasize and work to mitigate disproportional impacts of infrastructure in crash corridors in Wards 2 & 4?
- With newly developing neighborhoods, can we try to proactively get out ahead of creating relatively isolated neighborhoods wrt both pedestrian and transit access (e.g. Assembly Row)?
- Can we look into possibility of intercity buses to supplement MBTA?
- Can we connect more directly with the MBTA to advocate for better bus stop and/or bus stop signage?
- Can we get countdown clocks for buses? e.g. could be sponsored by local businesses
- Can we take more official public positions on things and publicize them e.g. on our website?

Tom Lamar to Everyone 7:47 PM

As inspiration, WalkBoston does a great job sharing comment letters:
<https://walkboston.org/category/comment-letter/>

- **ACTION ITEM:** Continue to brainstorm priorities and fill out survey

5. City update

- Info for new members
- Open meeting law questions
 - Subcommittees do not meet quorum, so their activities do not constitute deliberation
- Crash updates
 - Report from MassDOT IMPACT portal for 2021
 - 10 fatal/serious crashes, 175 minor/possible crashes, 396 “none/unknown”
 - 23 bike-involved & 26 ped-involved crashes
 - Numbers broadly in line with or below past years
 - Q1 milestones & priorities, and opportunities for committee input:

Q1 Milestones + Priorities

- **Pearl Street Resurfacing**
 - Community meeting and targeted outreach
 - Finalize design direction and begin development of 100% construction plans
- **Holland St Resurfacing**
 - Finalize pavement markings plan
- **Western Washington St Resurfacing**
 - Community meeting and targeted outreach
 - Select consultant for construction plan development
- **Eastern Washington St Quick-Build**
 - Develop roadmap for updating signal equipment, timing, and/or phasing at Inner Belt Rd
- **Gilman Square – Medford St/Pearl St**
 - Develop preliminary 60% plans – committee review in March
- **Mystic / Shore Intersection Upgrades**
 - Complete design & permitting
 - Finalize bidding/construction strategy
- **Highland Ave Redesign**
 - Complete public input map and community survey data collection
 - Continue engagement with key stakeholders
 - Kick off design process for conceptual alternatives
- **Davis Square Signal Improvements**
 - Complete design
 - Work with MBTA on bidding and construction for new signals
 - City finalize construction strategy for pavement markings and curb ramp relocation
- **Parking & Curb Use Study**
 - Complete public survey
 - Finalize curb inventory and utilization dataset – Somerville Parking Profile
 - Define future trends, proposed strategies, and implementation plan
 - Winter/spring task force & public meetings
- **Washington/Webster Signal Timing**
 - Moving forward with exclusive pedestrian phase, with Bow St slip lane operating under yield conditions
 - Finalize and implement timing and equipment changes

Opportunities for Committee Input

- **Bicycle Network Plan**
 - 2/9 – BNP Workshop for Advisory Committees
 - Register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/tZ0scuGupjgoHtdqKqfRW2h1M7uO6V7FWya>
 - Invite will also be sent via email
- **Union Square Streetscape & Plaza Design**
 - Public Meeting in March to show conceptual designs of streets and plaza
 - Committee feedback requested in March/April
- **Pearl St Reconstruction & Safety Improvements**
 - Second Community meeting held last night
 - Slides and video will be posted on project website shortly: somerillema.gov/pearlstreet
 - Survey will be posted soon on the project website; subscribe for updates to be notified when posted
- **Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study**
 - Last chance for community survey – will close at the end of this month
 - Project website: <https://www.somerillema.gov/parkingstudy>
- **Highland Avenue Redesign**
 - Public input map is still open for comment
 - Project website: www.somerillema.gov/highlandave
 - Survey will be posted soon on the project website; subscribe for updates to be notified when posted

- Q: Is there a date for Davis Sq redesign/redevelopment in the pipeline? A: Not currently anticipated
- Q: Timetable for start of Highland Ave work? A: Design has not kicked off so no way to anticipate timeline at this time (def not this year, super tentative start of Spring 2023). Central to Hamlet will have some normal (not redesign) construction work this year as well as typical utility work. construction@somervillema.gov for details

7. Other business

- **ACTION ITEM:** Gentle reminder to subcommittees to create content for annual report

Action Items from Meeting:

- **ACTION ITEM:** Brian Postlewaite will come next month to discuss outdoor dining sidewalk clearance issues
- **ACTION ITEM:** Invite Bonnie Denis to a future meeting
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mobility will email proposed guidelines on outdoor dining facilities

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- **ACTION ITEM:** Education & Engagement subcommittee will send out their meeting minutes
- **ACTION ITEM:** Education & Engagement subcommittee will send out future meeting times and link
- **ACTION ITEM:** Everyone should try to take snow pics and submit to subcommittee when it snows (esp but not limited to Broadway & School St)
- **ACTION ITEM:** Policy & Enforcement subcommittee to review & follow up on suggestions from Rep Connolly about continued advocacy for automated traffic enforcement legislation
- **ACTION ITEM:** Policy & Enforcement subcommittee to connect with Jessica regarding intersection daylighting
- **ACTION ITEM:** Policy & Enforcement subcommittee to potentially reach out to Viola about GLX infrastructure
- **ACTION ITEM:** Everyone should continue to brainstorm priorities and fill out survey
- **ACTION ITEM:** Subcommittees should create content for annual report

Meeting ended: 7:59PM