



Appointed by Katjana Ballantyne, Mayor

Date: Tuesday, June 28th, 2022

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting using Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83567883662>

Community Representatives:

*Ted Alexander
*Ginny Alverson
*Caroline Bodager
*Meredith Brown
*Thomas Coen
*Laura Evans
*Christopher Ferry
*Mary Napolitano
Audrey Orenstein
*Vitor Pamplona, *Vice Chair*

*Zach Rosenberg
*Alessandra Seiter, *Chair*
Julia Toof
*Carole Voulgaris, *Secretary*
*Kirsten Walters

Ex-Officio:

*Alexandra Kleyman, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*
*Justin Schreiber, *Mobility Division, OSPCD*
JT Scott, *City Councilor Ward 2*

*=present

Guests:

Greg Hanafin, Mobility Division, mobility planner for City of Somerville
Lauren Craik, Mobility Division, transportation planner for City of Somerville

Acting Secretary: Kirsten Walters

Call to order: 6:32 PM

Agenda Item 1: Procedural Business

1. Intros
 - a. Roll call attendance taken
2. VOTE: Approve June minutes
 - a. Motion from Meredith, second from Caroline.

Agenda Item 2: Subcommittee Updates

1. Vitor: new plan for coordinating between subcommittees and larger committees. Vitor will be working closely with subcommittee leaders to align agenda, etc. with what's going on in each subcommittee.
2. Policy and Enforcement: Ginny presents update on subcommittee meeting. Subcommittee discussed parking study and curb space reallocation, potential to change speed limits to 20 mph and how Cambridge did it.
3. Education and Engagement: Alessandra presents update on subcommittee meeting. Subcommittee plans to join Somerville Bike Committee in tabling at Whole Foods, tabling with City of Somerville at Union Square Farmer's Market on 7/30.

Agenda Item 3: Review Draft Bus Network Redesign Letter

1. Link to letter:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pCSup8pr-oTwHCX38zog_So76_DCXujtilS_WlBqK6A/edit
 - a. Thanks to Zach for drafting the letter, Meredith for edits.
2. Context about letter from Zach: used feedback from last PTAC meeting to inform content of letter. A few key points:
 - a. Somerville residents use the MBTA to travel within Somerville, not only to surrounding areas. Current BNR plan lacks a bit in this regard.
 - b. 3 seat ride between Clarendon Hill and Union, 2 seat ride between Davis and Union. Encourage the MBTA to consider 1 seat ride between Davis and Union, if possible also a 1 seat ride from Clarendon to Union. Move endpoints to Davis instead of Porter.
 - c. Proposed BNR has relatively few connections to GLX stations. Suggest increasing connectivity. Specific ideas: jog the new 87 route to stop at the Ball Square station, Broadway and Winter Hill could also be connected to GLX stop and further to Davis Square.
 - d. 101 could also connect to Ball Square station, perhaps also Davis.
 - e. Propose updating 90 on Highland to high-frequency bus route, given it's main thoroughfare through the city.
 - f. Propose alternative route for T96, encouraging North-South routes and convenience for folks on Mystic Ave while fitting within MBTA's 6% grade constraint. T96 would begin at Medford/Tufts, go down Broadway, turn onto Medford, continue onto Lowell and connect to Magoun, connect onto Central and Gilman, and then get onto McGrath to connect with Assembly or follow 90 route. In conjunction encourage 101 to connect Winter Hill to Davis Square by going all the way down Broadway.
3. Alessandra got in touch with Somerville Transit Equity Partnership (STEP) who have proposed own North-South connector. They suggest using Cedar Street, another route with below 6% grade. This could be another option.
4. Chris: Somerville Alliance for Safer Streets (SASS) email mentioned no service on Alewife-Brook Parkway. Perhaps another relevant point for consideration
5. Mary: Senior buildings with people still working and depend on the 88 to get to Twin City – with steep hill leading up to Highland. No way to get from Highland Ave to Lechmere using current BNR. BNR also underutilizes Lechmere station.
6. Thomas: Comment on proposed redesign for T96 route: Vernon Street is not appropriate for a bus – there's parking on both sides with little space for driving, it's a residential street. Also turn from Lowell onto Vernon is a sharp left.
7. Chris: responding to Mary's comments about access to Gilman – there may be an elevator from Highland to Gilman Station, which could lessen accessibility concerns. When drawing 5, 10, 15 minute circles – it's not as the crow flies, thinking about road grades is also important.
8. Caroline: Losing 85 bus from Kendall to central Somerville/Spring Hill is a huge loss. Easy for transit from Red Line to central Somerville/Armory area. Got you up lots of large hills. Seconded by Meredith.
 - a. Ted: 83 would somewhat replace that route – though it runs from Kendall to Porter.
9. Ted: Suggestion to conclude letter with bullet points highlighting a few things that would be lost – including 87, 85, 88.
10. Chris: T90 should perhaps involve redesigning Cross Street – it's a residential two-way street with parking that becomes difficult to navigate with snow.

11. Meredith: Parent groups have been talking lots about school access with BNR – especially for Capuano and Somerville High – schools that serve kids citywide. Upgrading 90 to T90 would improve access to Capuano from West Somerville.
 - a. Ted: And Somerville doesn't have school buses.
12. Vitor: what about MBTA's comment regarding smaller buses? Perhaps note general support for considering alternative bus options.
13. Kirsten: Considering e-bikes? Perhaps beyond the scope of this letter. Laura's helpful response: E-bikes are technically illegal in the state of Massachusetts – could take advocacy at the state level.
14. Vote unanimously passes to approve revised letter, with the following specific changes:
 - a. 85, 87, 88, 89 – all disappointed to see dropped.
 - b. Remove T96, suggest instead potential streets below 6% grade
 - c. More flexible vehicles
15. Ali: city has been hearing similar feedback and is drafting official letter to come from the Mayor on similar topics.

Agenda Item 4: City Update

1. Q3 Milestones and Priorities (Ali):
 - a. Resurfacing projects:
 - i. Complete stripping of College Ave is ongoing
 - ii. Complete reconstruction of Holland St sidewalks is ongoing
 - iii. Pearl St improvements estimated to begin in August
 - iv. Western Washington St redesign is ongoing, with second community meeting and community outreach beginning in September
 - b. Quick-build projects:
 - i. New projects: East Broadway bus lane extension, Grand Union Blvd protected bike lane
 - c. Capital projects: Spring Hill streetscape work, Gilman Square Redesign, Highland Ave redesign, and Clarendon Hill ongoing. Tabling and resident meetings for Clarendon Hill in August.
 - d. State projects: Mystic Ave at Shore Dr and Route 28/38 intersection ongoing.
 - e. Long-range plans: Bike Network Plan, Parking and Curb Use
2. Construction updates (Ali):
 - a. Holland St and College Ave: new pedestrian refuge islands, new floating bus stop at Holland and Cameron, raised crosswalk at College and Morrison, speed humps at Wallace and Winslow
 - b. Broadway at Winchester: pedestrian refuge island, protected bike lane, repaving/pavement markings complete
 - c. Mystic at McGrath: pedestrian refuge island at Mystic Ave SB and I93 onramp, raised crosswalk at Kensington Connector crossing at Mystic Ave
3. Bike Network Plan (Ali): Draft Bike Network Vision includes many more protected bike lanes, one-way protected bike lanes. Community engagement has been ongoing, Network Draft out now. Next step is putting together actual plan.
 - a. Opportunity for comment at somervillema.gov/bikenetwork
 - b. Zach: Is the outcome of the Bike Network Plan an implementation plan, or is it more aspirational? What are the next phases for the project?

- c. Ali: Next step is to develop a design for how these treatments could be implemented on Somerville's streets. As streets get reconstructed/traffic calming projects get executed, changes would gradually be made.
 - d. Justin: Plan does designate priority streets for bike lane construction.
- 4. Route 28/38 Intersection update (Ali):
 - a. 3 subprojects:
 - i. Resurfacing and road diet for McGrath Highway – ongoing now
 - ii. Route 28/38 intersection – design in progress
 - iii. Bridge substructure repairs
 - b. Route 28/38 has 2 phases of improvements:
 - i. Phase 1: Early action pedestrian safety and accessibility improvements
 - ii. Phase 2: Longer-term full intersection reconstruction – 25% design, MassDOT coordinating with City on design review.
 - c. Next steps:
 - i. Continued construction of early-action projects
 - ii. Fall 2022: public hearing for larger design project
 - iii. Fall 2023: finalize design, with construction anticipated to begin in Spring 2024.
- 5. Parking and Curb Use Study (Justin):
 - a. Goal is to comprehensively understand parking and curb use in Somerville.
 - b. Process involved walking every street in Somerville to collect current data on parking conditions, task force meetings, community meetings, draft recommendation meeting.
 - c. Vast majority of curb space in Somerville devoted to resident permit parking
 - d. Draft curb prioritization framework: defines prioritization of curb uses based on surrounding context (commercial/mixed use vs. residential areas).
 - i. In both sets of contexts, mobility and people and goods are top curb use priorities.
 - ii. Other priorities include transportation services (bike share, EV charging), activated spaces (e.g., parklets, outdoor dining), green space, storage space.
 - e. Draft recommendations:
 - i. Strengthen parking administration and operations
 - ii. Reallocate curb space to support community goals
 - iii. Adjust regulations to better manage parking demand
 - iv. Revise permit program to meet community goals
 - f. Vitor was involved as community member with Parking and Curb Use Study. His comments: the goal of the committee was to think in the longer term about what kind of city we want in 10-20 years.
 - g. Justin: adding to Vitor's comments, the question here is prioritization. Many of these items would require new staff, new technologies, new methods of doing things. Consultant will provide more information about potential costs and priorities, but our feedback is important as well.
 - h. Continued outreach: new survey and comment tool, to elicit feedback on proposed plan, at <https://voice.somervillema.gov/parking-study>
- 6. Committee discussion:
 - a. Alessandra: Parking and Curb Use Study will be a medium-term topic for PTAC as well, especially for Policy and Enforcement Subcommittee. Question for the City: what is the timeline for making recommendations?
 - b. Justin: Ideally by August PTAC meeting, September PTAC meeting also okay.

- c. Laura: What is the scope of feedback you're looking for?
- d. Justin: Which of these ideas are the most important, which are not important, what's missing, what the City should spend its time on.
- e. Laura: It may be challenging to give that sort of feedback. More interested in outcomes – want city to prioritize busses, prioritization of pedestrians, etc.
- f. Meredith: Potentially actionable shorter term goals: piece around license plate reading? Key to basically every other part of enforcement.
- g. Thomas: Demand for permits may be inelastic.

Action Items from Meeting:

- 1. Vitor: check in with Engineering and Engagement subcommittee

Meeting ended: 8:10 PM