



SOMERVILLE PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PTAC) OCTOBER 2022 MEETING MINUTES

MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE

Thursday, October 20, 2022, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

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

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: +1 (872) 240-3212 **Access Code:** 539-724-445

Community Representatives:

- * Ted Alexander
- * Ginny Alverson
- * Caroline Bodager
- * Meredith Brown
- * Thomas Coen
- * Laura Evans
- * Christopher Ferry
- * Vitor Pamplona, *Vice-Chair*
- * Zach Rosenberg
- * Alessandra Seiter, *Chair*
- * Carole Voulgaris, *Secretary*
- Kirsten Walters

Ex Officio:

J.T. Scott, *City Council*
Alexandra Kleyman, *OSPCD Mobility*
Justin Schreiber, *OSPCD Mobility*

*= present

Guests: Lauren Craik (OSPCD Mobility), Greg Hanafin (OSPCD Mobility), Karen Molloy, Stephen Mackey, Crystal Huff, Andrew Reker

Acting Secretary: Caroline Bodager

Call to order: 6:34pm

Item 1: Procedural business (10 min)

1. Intros & Roll Call
2. Meeting Guidelines
 - a. Reminder to say muted
 - b. Next meeting will be November 3 instead of November 13 to accommodate presenter
 - c. Might also move up December meeting to accommodate another presenter, more details to come
3. VOTE: Approve September minutes
 - a. Motion to approve by Zach, seconded by Laura, unanimously approved

Item 2: Subcommittee updates (15 min)

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1. Policy & Enforcement - report by Thomas and Ginny
 - a. Talked about snow pilot from last year
 - i. Thinking about plans for upcoming year
 - ii. Would be great to meet with DPW and connect with them before snow season starts
 - iii. Wish to share out findings from last year's pilot
 - b. Ongoing work on Davis Sq Station elevators
2. Engineering & Evaluation - report by Zach
 - a. Discussed Washington st redesign
 - b. Overall excited; we have specific question and comments we can talk about later in the meeting
3. Education & Engagement - report by Ted
 - a. The upcoming opp to go out and table at the Somerstreets event on Oct 30
 - i. Mobility will have a table there, time to give out PTAC info
 - ii. Starts at 2pm, contact Ted if you are interested in joining
 - b. There is also the bike breakfast on the 28th at whole foods Beacon street, last one this year 8-9am
 - c. We talked about doing a walk on Western Washington St / might co organize with bike committee and might do it in the spring in April

Item 3: City Update (30 min) - report by Lauren and Greg

1. Data collection
 - a. Annual bike and ped counts; 10 years running
 - i. Counts 40 intersections around the city
 - ii. 100% sign-ups this year!
 - iii. Just finished counts last night
 - iv. In process of transferring data to begin analysis
 - v. Notes/questions
 1. Continue tracking age and gender?
 2. Confusion with minutes on basic count sheets
 3. Construction/closures - more specific instructions
 - vi. Shows that even though overall lower after 2020, the Broadway transit counts are still high after the protected bike lane went in
 - b. Traffic data collection
 - i. Speed Hump Study
 1. Understanding impacts to traffic around speed humps
 - ii. Safety Zone Study
 1. Safety zone signage
 2. Impacts of reducing traffic speeds in the area
 - iii. Crosswalk Compliance
 1. Seeing driver compliance on who yields to pedestrians and under which conditions
 - iv. Project Evaluation
 1. Part of Vision Zero reporting

2. Exped improvements at Broadway and Winchester, at Powder House Rotary
2. Transit pass program
 - a. New program, check out the website!
<https://www.somervillema.gov/content/transit-benefits-program>
 - b. M7 Student Pass expansion
 - i. Grade 7-12
 - ii. Started Sept 2022
 - iii. Access to subway, bus, and some commuter rail
 - c. SPS Parents and Guardians
 - i. Needs based (income eligible)
 - ii. 1200 annual passes
 - iii. will launch Nov 2022
 - d. Low income fare program
 - i. Partnership with community org
 - ii. 500 annual passes, <200FPL
 - iii. winter launch
3. Vision zero update
 - a. Safe routes to school
 - i. VZ action plans directs City to prioritize sidewalk and street improvements in proximity of schools
 1. Monitor speeding and driver behavior around schools, with a focus on the start of the school year
 2. Engage caregivers and educate students
 3. Tracking and analyzing crash data around schools
 4. Monitoring driver behavior during school arrival and dismissal
 - ii. Drone being used to monitor pick-up/drop-off behavior around some schools
 - iii. New working group to coordinate between city and school
 1. Goal is to systematize City and School coordination with safe routes to school. Representation includes departments who cover one or more of the 6Es
 2. Priorities
 - a. Arrival/dismissal
 - b. Crossing guard locations and priorities
 - c. SRTS maps
 - d. Construction coordination
 - e. School-specific issues
 - f. Pedestrian safety training - volunteers?
 - iv. Christopher: will this take into account charter, parochial or private schools?
 1. Greg will check on that; public is where they've started
 - v. Christopher: why aren't Neighborways called out on SRTS map?
 1. Greg will also check on this

- vi. Alessandra: what kind of collaboration is there with the statewide SRTS program?
 - 1. Have been talking with state coordinator on doing some more observations around schools
- vii. Meredith: Why does East Somerville school has five crossing guards, and Capuano school has none?
 - 1. Greg and Lauren are aware; acknowledge shortage
- b. Safety Zone project
 - i. Putting 20mph zones throughout the city
 - ii. 508 street segments now
 - iii. Full list of Somerville Traffic Regulations available at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema.gov/1/s3fs-public/2022-09/TrafficCommissionRegulationsAug2022.pdf>
 - iv. Interactive map of Safety Zones to be rolled out soon
 - v. Ted: around some schools there are still some flashing signs that say go 20 when flashing = should those stay or come down?
 - 1. They have started a discussion to just move to standard signage, but right now they are focusing on the backlog of signs they still have to get out
- c. Crash Data and Mapping
 - i. High crash network 5 year report 2014-2018
 - ii. 12% drop in crashes in that time
 - 1. 21% drop in injury related crashes
 - 2. 15% drop in crashes involving non-motorists
 - iii. Current definition of a high crash intersection is one that has 10 or more crashes in 5 years; might have to reevaluate definition of a “high-crash intersection” in order to continue pushing the needle forward
 - iv. Alessandra: Route 16 is still marked as a high-crash corridor. There are a bunch of exciting things happening on 28/38, which is also a state road. Is there anything planned for Route 16 besides the intersection redesign at Powder House Blvd and ABP?
 - 1. Greg: Nothing else planned right now
- 4. GLX and CPX update
 - a. Medford branch slated to open November 2022
 - i. Currently testing trains at Magoun
 - b. Vitor: Will the community path open at the same time?
 - i. Currently projected in winter 2022 or early 2023
 - ii. 2016 MBTA value-engineering process resulted in a design that creates maintenance challenges
 - 1. Christopher: What kind of maintenance challenges?
 - 2. Greg: Primarily snow but also tree-trimming, vegetation, emergency response, lighting
 - iii. City will build capacity over multiple years of operations; we ask for patience and grace we learn
- 5. Winter operations preview

- a. Refresh on 2022 pilot
 - i. Focus on sidewalk snow clearing on Broadway and School streets
 - ii. Increased enforcement of sidewalk snow removal rules
 - iii. Increased clearance from bus stops and ped ramps
 - iv. City snow clearance from sidewalks not shoveled on time by property owners
- b. In 2023 the city will...
 - i. Continue sidewalk snow clearing undertaken in 2022
 - ii. Mobility, DPW, ISD coordinating on preparing for snow clearing from new infrastructure constructed in 2022 (e.g. Holland St)
 - iii. Continue to collect data and evaluate
 - iv. Ted: Is there a report/evaluation from last year's program?
 1. Lauren: Not really. The timing of the snowstorms last year made it tricky for comparison reasons because most of the major ones happened on weekends and gave folks a little more time for the snow to melt.

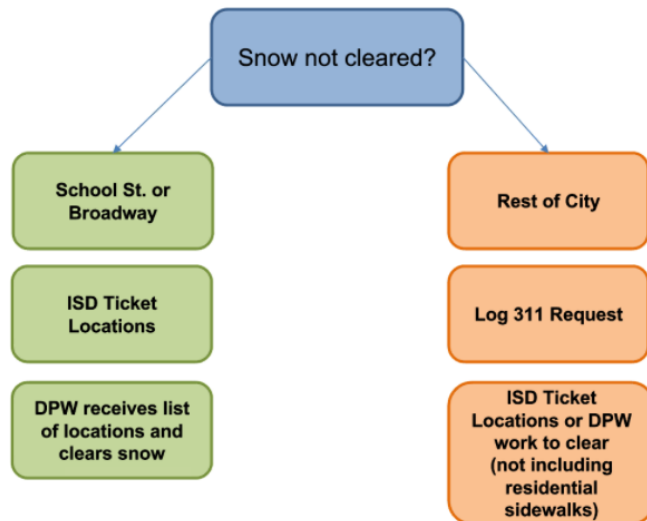
2022/23 Winter Ops Preview

Refresh on 2022 Pilot

- Focus on sidewalk snow clearing on Broadway and School streets
- Increased enforcement of sidewalk snow removal rules
- Increased clearance from bus stops and pedestrian ramps
- City snow clearance from sidewalks not shoveled on time by property owners

In 2023, the City will...

- Continue sidewalk snow clearing undertaken in 2022
- Mobility, DPW, ISD coordinating on preparing for snow clearing from new infrastructure constructed in 2022 (e.g. Holland St.)
- Continue to collect data and evaluate



6. Q3 milestones

Q3 Milestones + Priorities

Quick-Build or Signals Projects

Eastern Washington Rapid Response Bus Improvements

Task	Status
Add red paint to bus lanes	Ongoing
Continue to explore alternative signal timing options	Ongoing

Webster Ave at Washington St Signal Improvements

Task	Status
Implement signal changes	Exact timing TBD

Davis Square Signal Improvements

Task	Status
MBTA signal contractor scheduling underway	Ongoing
NEW – Begin replacement of curb ramps and brick crosswalks	Underway

Somerville Ave Improvements at Beacon/Mossland

Task	Status
Assess existing conditions, identify opportunities for improvement	Ongoing
Develop project plan (scope, timeline, funding, etc.)	Ongoing

East Broadway Bus Lane Extension

Task	Status
Work with MassDOT to complete sign and pavement markings plan	Ongoing
Establish estimated project cost, funding source, and contract vehicle	Ongoing

Grand Union Blvd PBLs

Task	Status
Develop sign and pavement markings plan	Ongoing

Vertical Separation Pilot

Task	Status
Identify a preferred detail/specification and establish a procurement/installation pathway	Ongoing

Q3 Milestones + Priorities

Resurfacing Projects

Holland / College Mobility Improvements

Task	Status
Complete striping of College Ave	Ongoing
Complete reconstruction of Holland St sidewalks (Claremon St to Simpson Ave & at Winter St)	Complete
Repave Holland St (Claremon St to Simpson Ave & at Winter St)	Complete
Implement pavement markings and parking changes	Changes approved; scheduling implementation

Pearl St & Six Intersection Mobility Improvements

Task	Status
Begin reconstruction of Pearl St sidewalks	Drainage work has begun, sidewalks forthcoming
Install raised crosswalk on Cross St at Everett Ave	2023 construction item

Western Washington St Mobility Improvements

Task	Status
Community meeting #2	Complete
Second round of targeted outreach	Will collect feedback through end of October

Capital Projects

Spring Hill Phase 1 Streetscape

Task	Status
Continue sewer, drainage, and water work on Summer St, Central St, and Avon St	Ongoing

Highland Ave Redesign

Task	Status
Continue to collect feedback and existing conditions data	Ongoing

Clarendon Hill

Task	Status
Bid construction services	Contracting in process
Construction outreach, tabling and resident meetings	September outreach complete; more will be planned closer to construction start

Q3 Milestones + Priorities

State Projects		Long-Range Plans	
Mystic Ave at Shore Dr Intersection Improvements		Bike Network Plan	
Task	Status	Task	Status
Complete design and permitting	Ongoing	Publish draft network & solicit feedback	Expected mid-Nov.
Plan/coordinate construction with Eversource	Ongoing	Community Meeting	Early Dec.
Route 28/38 Intersection Early Action		Parking and Curb Use Study	
Task	Status	Task	Status
Complete construction of raised crosswalks	Complete	Publish final report	Complete
Complete construction of curb ramps and sidewalks	Complete	Hold final community meeting	Complete

Item 4: Proposed Designs for Western Washington Street (30 min)

1. General enthusiasm about the designs
2. Considerations from Engineering & Evaluation
 - a. Is there a way we can increase the speed of bus boarding, maybe with off-board fare collection?
 - i. Any infrastructure we can include now to get ready for AFC - 2.0 would be great
 - ii. Off-board fare collection on busy bus stops
 - iii. Should keep in mind accessibility if we were to add kiosks
 - b. The bike right turn from Beacon southbound to Washington is awkwardly sharp - is there a way that we can make that protected somehow?
 - i. Create an in-lane bus stop, and route the bike line on the other side?
 - c. Should we consider protection between the sidewalk bike lane and bus bumpouts, so there is less crossing danger?
 - d. How effective is the bus-only lane going into Union - enough to outweigh the risk of not having a bike-only lane?
 - i. Without the bus lane, the opposite bus stop could be further from the intersection, which may block less traffic in the intersection when the bus stops
 - ii. Ted: Is there a plan to have transit-signal priority in that intersection?
 1. Lauren: We are looking at one of the signal boxes in that intersection but there's not an immediate plan with the MBTA to do TSP but under the Union Square Neighborhood plan
 - iii. Ted: What are the performance gains we saw on the lane?
 1. Greg: Hoping to have more on this in the near future
 - e. The spacing of the south side of the stop between Beacon/Dane is awkward, as it's doing double duty to be opposite of both the Beacon and Dane stops. What were the options here?
 - f. Can we raise the crosswalk at Perry Street, across Washington?
 - g. Can we include another BlueBikes station near Union Square, maybe at the Argenziano school?

3. Considerations from other PTAC members
 - a. Ted: Is the signal at Dane and Calvin at Washington going to be replaced? Right now one side is missing a button.
 - i. Lauren: Western Washington is a resurfacing project so electric/signal improvements are not included, but we can certainly note this suggestion and others for the future
 - ii. Alessandra: Similarly, is it possible to implement active warning beacons (aka flashing lights) at any of the unsignalized crosswalks in the future?
 - b. Alessandra: How long is the loading zone before Calvin Street on the southern side? Will there be any regulation on the length of trucks that can park in there? It's right before a pedestrian crossing and I wouldn't want trucks to block the crosswalk, especially if the metered parking is full.
4. VOTE: Endorse proposed design plan and send questions to City for additional follow-up
 - a. Approved unanimously

Meeting ended: 7:51pm