



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

MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE

Thursday, November 3, 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*
*Justin Schreiber, *OSPCD Mobility*

*= present

Guests:

Lauren Craik, OSPCD Mobility
Jason B., Resident of Somerville
Lynn McWhood
Jim McGinnis, STEP
Karen Molloy, STEP
Melissa Dullea, Senior Director of Service Planning, MBTA
Heather Hoffman, STEP
Wig Zagmore, STEP
Ellin Reisner, STEP

Acting Secretary: Thomas Coen

Call to order: 6:32PM

Agenda Item 1: Procedural Business (10 min)

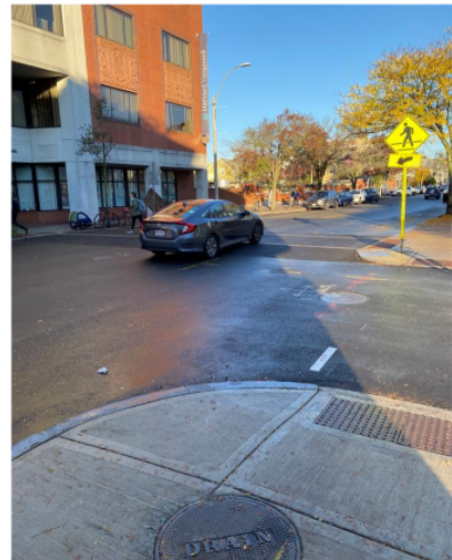
1. Intros and roll call — Looking to reschedule December meeting to December 8th and will include representatives from the Dept. of Public Works and Inspectional Services Dept. on snow removal, street cleaning, and other topics as requested by members
2. Meeting guidelines — please mute yourself when not speaking
3. October minutes — will be shared via email tomorrow and voted on at our December meeting

Agenda Item 2: City Update (15 min)

1. Year-End Updates — Construction Phase Projects
 - a. FY20 Streets Package
 - i. Holland Street
 1. Paved last month, raised crosswalks completed two weeks ago
 2. New striping and curb use plan approved by the Traffic Commission on 10/13
 3. Remaining crosswalks have been scheduled to be striped tonight
 4. Pushing contractor to schedule long line work as soon as possible, expectation is that new striping plan will be implemented by the end of the construction season
 - ii. College Ave
 1. Punch list work remains
 - iii. Speed Humps
 1. Corrective work has been taking place to ensure that the speed humps meet the standard
 2. Some will be raised a few inches after City went out and measured each hump

Year-End Updates – Construction Phase Projects

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b. FY22 Streets Package

- i. Pearl St.
 - 1. Contractor is tackling some drainage work in the Cross/Pearl vicinity, will begin sidewalks in the spring
- ii. “The Six” Intersections
 - 1. Contractor is planning to construct improvements at Temple/Heath/Sewall and Cross/Gilman/Oliver before the end of the season
 - 2. Remaining intersection improvements will take place next year
- iii. Speed humps
 - 1. Corrective work has been taking place to ensure that the speed humps meet the standard
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Year-End Updates – Construction Phase Projects

- **FY22 Streets Package**

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- **Green Line Extension**

- Ball Square safety / accessibility upgrades currently in construction
- Washington / Tufts – interim treatments 2022; floating bus stops 2023

- c. Green Line Extension

- i. Expected to open by end of November
- ii. Community path to open 30 to 40 days after that
- iii. Ball Square safety/accessibility upgrades currently in construction
 - 1. Closing one slip lane
- iv. Washington/Tufts — interim treatments 2022; floating bus stops 2023

- d. Eastern Washington St. Rapid Response Improvements

- i. Still hoping that MBTA can deliver red for bus lane before end of year, which would include extending the westbound bus lane back in Boston. That said, there is a good change that it ends up getting pushed to the spring

- e. Washington St. and Webster Ave. signal improvements

- i. New phasing, the most substantial change being the addition of an exclusive pedestrian phase, is expected to take place next week

- ii. PTAC discussed this in detail in January 2022 meeting ([minutes here](#))
- f. Davis Square Signal Improvements
 - i. Replacement of brick crosswalks and brick curb ramps was completed last week
 - ii. Crosswalk striping scheduled for tonight
 - iii. Signal-related construction anticipated to begin Spring 2023
- g. Spring Hill Phase 1 Streetscape
 - i. Subsurface utility work continues; surface-level work to begin in 2023
- h. Route 28/38 intersection early action improvements
 - i. MassDOT work complete
 - ii. Now can focus on longer-term improvements

Year-End Updates – Construction Phase Projects

- Eastern Washington St Rapid Response Improvements
 - Still hoping that MBTA can deliver red for bus lane before end of year, which would include extending the westbound bus lane back in Boston. That said, there is a good chance that it ends up getting pushed to the spring
- Washington St at Webster Ave Signal Improvements
 - New phasing, the most substantial change being the addition of an exclusive pedestrian phase, is expected to take place next week
- Davis Square Signal Improvements
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 - Subsurface utility work continues; surface-level work to begin in 2023
- Route 28/38 Intersection Early Action Improvements
 - MassDOT work complete



2. Year-End Updates — Design Phase Projects

- a. FY23 Streets Package
 - i. Western Washington St.
 - 1. Currently reviewing all feedback. Will make design changes based on feedback and incorporate an updated version of the concept plan into the construction bid package that is going out this winter.
 - a. Alessandra — is there a formal deadline for giving feedback?
 - b. Justin — not sure but I can find out.
 - 2. Cannot currently anticipate when construction will begin, but it will be completed by the end of 2024
 - ii. Somerville Ave at Central St. and Washington St. at Washington Ter.
 - 1. In process of designing pedestrian-focused safety improvements to include in construction bid package
 - iii. Speed humps

1. In process of determining list of streets to include in construction bid package
- b. East Broadway Bus Lanes (McGrath Hwy to Cross St)
 - i. Extended to Cross St., expected next spring
 - ii. Will continue to work with MassDOT on a pavement markings plan over the winter, which is anticipated to be finalized in time for Spring 2023 implementation
 - iii. Thomas — wondering if this plan will address issues created by the creation of the dedicated bus lane on Broadway. Very much appreciate the decrease in transit times, but because of the infrequency of buses many drivers double-park in bus lane (especially around businesses) slowing bus transit and creating an unsafe environment for bikers. New bus lane has also created frustration among community members due to additional traffic jams
 - iv. Justin — it's possible we could revisit this plan for further discussion. There are also planned traffic signal enhancements for buses. The MBTA bus redesign is addressing bus frequency.

Year-End Updates – Design Phase Projects

- **FY23 Streets Package**
 - **Western Washington St**
 - Currently reviewing all feedback. Will make design changes based on feedback and incorporate an updated version of the concept plan into the construction bid package that is going out this winter.
 - Cannot currently anticipate when construction will begin, but it will be completed by the end of 2024
 - **Somerville Ave at Central St and Washington St at Washington Ter**
 - In process of designing pedestrian-focused safety improvements to include in construction bid package
 - **Speed Humps**
 - In process of determining list of streets to include in construction bid package
- **East Broadway Bus Lanes (McGrath Hwy to Cross St)**
 - Will continue to work with MassDOT on a pavement markings plan over the winter, which is anticipated to be finalized in time for Spring 2023 implementation
- c. **Highland Ave Redesign**
 - i. Stakeholder engagement continues; design yet to begin
- d. **Clarendon Hill Intersection Reconfiguration**
 - i. Procurement and contracting complete; minor startup work to occur over winter
 - ii. Heavy utility and street reconstruction to begin 2023
- e. **Mystic Ave at Shore Dr. Intersection Improvements**
 - i. MassDOT construction permitting underway
 - ii. Eversource construction planned for 2023

Year-End Updates – Design Phase Projects

- **Highland Ave Redesign**
 - Stakeholder engagement continues; design yet-to-begin

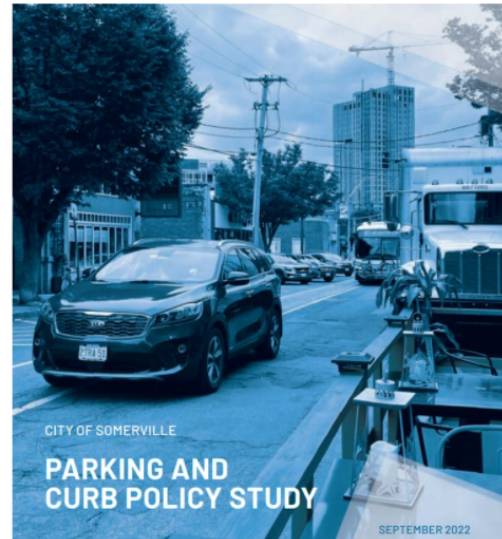
 - **Clarendon Hill Intersection Reconfiguration**
 - Procurement & contracting complete; minor startup work to occur over winter
 - Heavy utility & street reconstruction to begin 2023

 - **Mystic Ave at Shore Dr Intersection Improvements**
 - MassDOT construction permitting underway
 - Eversource construction planned for 2023
3. Year-End Updates — Planning Projects
- a. Parking Study
 - i. Study complete; all project files available at SomerVoice
 - ii. Staff work will continue
 - iii. City Council engagement planned for winter/spring
 - b. Bike Network Plan
 - i. Final draft to be published November 2022
 - ii. Public comment to follow
 - iii. Likely that engagement process with City Council will be pursued, similar to Parking Study

Year-End Updates – Planning Projects

- Parking Study
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 - City Council engagement planned for winter / spring

- Bike Network Plan
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 - Public comment to follow



4. Bike and Pedestrian Count
 - a. 100% signups this year for volunteer counting!

Agenda Item 3: Presentation and discussion of MBTA Bus Network Redesign Second Draft (60 min)

1. Presentation by Melissa Dullea
 - a. Changes made to the draft map
 - i. Changes were made to 85 of the 133 proposed routes from the May 2022 Draft Network Map
 - ii. Second draft still increases service overall by 25% while staying within budget
 1. Right now the MBTA is at 91% bus service coming out of COVID service levels, the projected additional 25% would be on top of 100% service levels
 - iii. Change include new routing, restoration of existing routes, addition or subtraction of routes, extensions of routes, and modifications to frequency and span of service
 - iv. Changes were made for 5 primary reasons:
 1. To respond to public feedback received on the first draft but network proposal
 2. To improve access to hospitals, senior centers, and other destinations
 3. To reduce walk distances for seniors and other riders in locations with challenging topography
 4. To preserve existing one-seat rides to many destinations

5. To balance resources and stay within the limit of buses available during peak times, and within the overall service limit of 25% more service above the existing network
- v. Bucket of service was added for routes with 20-minute headways
 1. Tier between high-frequency and medium-frequency
 2. This becomes every 30 minutes after 10:00 pm

Changes made to the draft map

- Changes were made to **85 of the 133 proposed routes in the May 2022 Draft Network Map**
- Changes include **new routing, restoration of existing routes, addition or subtraction of routes, extensions of routes, and modifications to frequency and span of service**
- Changes were made for **five primary reasons:**
 - To respond to public feedback received on the draft bus network proposal.
 - To improve access to hospitals, senior centers, and other destinations.
 - To reduce walk distances for seniors and other riders and in locations with challenging topography.
 - To preserve existing one-seat rides to many destinations.
 - To balance resources and stay within the limit of buses available during peak times, and within the overall service limit of 25% more service above the existing network.



- b. Summary of Changes in Somerville
 - i. Restoration of existing routes to their current routing (in part or in whole)
 1. 87 — medium-frequency; Clarendon Hill - Teele Square - Davis Square - Union Square - Lechmere
 2. 89 — medium-frequency; Davis Square - Ball Square - Winter Hill - Sullivan Square
 3. 354 — peak; Burlington - Woburn - Medford Center - Mystic Ave - Sullivan Square - North Station - Downtown Boston
 4. T39 — no longer services Somerville
 5. T47 — high-frequency; Brickbottom - Union Square - Inman Square - Central Square - BU - LMA
 6. T101 — high-frequency; Medford Center - Winter Hill - East Somerville - Sullivan Square - Charlestown - Kendall Square
 - ii. Rerouting to better service medical facilities, senior housing, and other destinations, or at the request of municipalities
 1. 83 — medium-frequency; Fresh Pond - North Cambridge - Porter Square - Beacon Street - Inman Square - Central Square
 2. 90 — medium-frequency; Assembly Square - East Somerville - Highland Ave - Davis Square - Clarendon Hill

3. 95 — medium-frequency; Arlington - West Medford - Medford Center - Mystic Ave - Sullivan Square
 4. T96 — high-frequency; Malden - Medford Center - Davis Square - Union Square - Brickbottom
 5. T101 — high-frequency; Medford Center - Winter Hill - East Somerville - Sullivan Square - Charlestown - Kendall Square
- iii. New routes added to the proposal
1. 80 — medium-frequency; Burlington - Woburn - Winchester - Arlington - West Medford - Medford Hillside - Tufts - Davis Square
 2. 85 — low-frequency; Assembly Square - East Somerville - Union Square - Kendall Square - BU - LMA
 3. 89 — medium-frequency; Davis Square - Ball Square - Winter Hill - Sullivan Square
 4. 113 — medium-frequency; Assembly Square - Sullivan Square - Everett - Chelsea
 5. T47 — high-frequency; Brickbottom - Union Square - Inman Square - Central Square - BU - LMA
- iv. Frequency or span adjustments
1. 90 — medium-frequency; Assembly Square - East Somerville - Highland Ave - Davis Square - Clarendon Hill
 2. 95 — medium-frequency; Arlington - West Medford - Medford Center - Mystic Ave - Sullivan Square
- v. Routes removed from proposal
1. 94, 133, 350

Summary of Changes — Arlington, Bedford, Burlington, Cambridge, Lexington, Lincoln, Medford, Somerville, Winchester, Woburn

- **Restoration of existing routes to their current routing (in part or in whole)**
 - T39, T47, 55, 67, 74, 87, 89, 100, T101, 131, 134, 354
- **Rerouting to better service medical facilities, senior housing, and other destinations, or at the request of municipalities**
 - 54, 62, 64, 76, 83, 90, 95, T96, 99, T101, 112
- **New routes added to the proposal**
 - T47, 80, 85, 89, 113, 134
- **Frequency or span adjustments**
 - 78, 90, 95
- **Routes removed from proposal**
 - 94, 133, 350



c. T39 and T47

- i. T39 was originally proposed to connect Forest Hills - LMA - BU - Central Square - Union Square - Porter Square
 - 1. Hope was to connect JP directly to Cambridge and Somerville, and to connect Somerville to LMA
 - 2. Feedback from bus drivers was that route was too long
 - 3. PTAC's comment letter emphasized the importance of maintaining a one-seat ride from Union Square to Davis Square, which would have required a transfer from the T39 to T96
- ii. Now T39 is split apart to continue into Copley so that JP has direct connection to Downtown Boston
- iii. Crosstown portion of T47 is new, still connects to Cambridge and LMA

Bus Routes T39 and T47

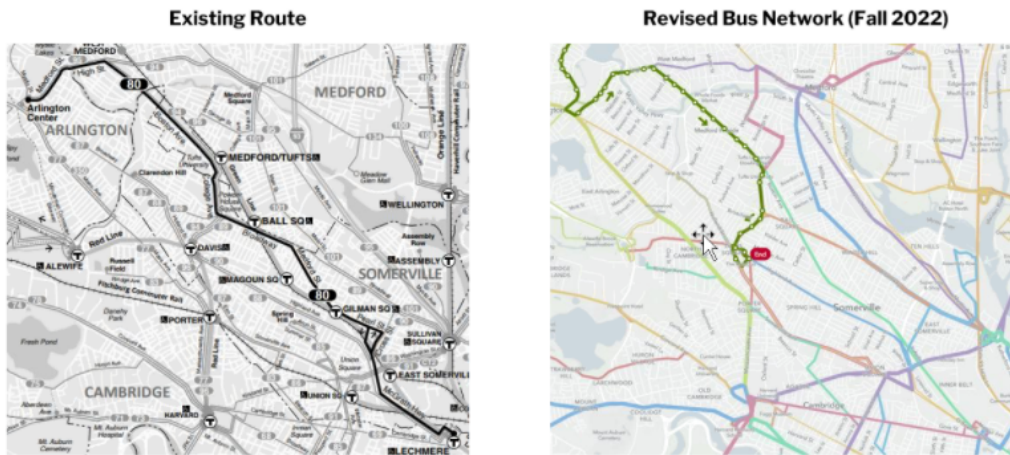


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- d. T96
 - i. Adjusted to provide direct connection between Davis Square and Union Square through Porter Square
 - ii. Gets close to the East Somerville GLX station but the bus stop is on the other side of McGrath Hwy which makes for a challenging pedestrian situation
 - iii. Union Square now has more connections to Medford and Malden
 - iv. Doesn't go directly through Porter Square, instead stays on Elm St (bus stop next to Star Market parking lot)
- e. 55 and 85
 - i. Originally proposed 55 as a mashup of 85 and CT2. Heard from West Fenway neighborhood that they highly valued their connection to downtown Boston, so 55 is now split apart as a standalone route and does not service Somerville anymore

- ii. To get the CT2 replacement, the 85 route was modified. It now runs from Ruggles - LMA - BU - Cambridgeport - Kendall Square - Union Square - East Somerville - Assembly
 - 1. Changes to Bow Street will make bus travel difficult so instead of turning around there, 85 will now connect Union directly to Assembly Square T station
 - 2. Turnaround stop at Assembly will be directly in front of the Trader Joe's
- f. 80
 - i. Connector between Arlington and GLX at Medford/Tufts station, and to Davis Square (Red Line)
 - ii. Not in original network, added back into new network to facilitate GLX connection to Tufts
 - iii. Overlap between 80 and GLX
 - iv. Combined with 350 from Alewife
 - v. Now from Davis or anywhere on the GLX, riders can get out to Burlington Mall, Wegmans, or elsewhere to the northwest

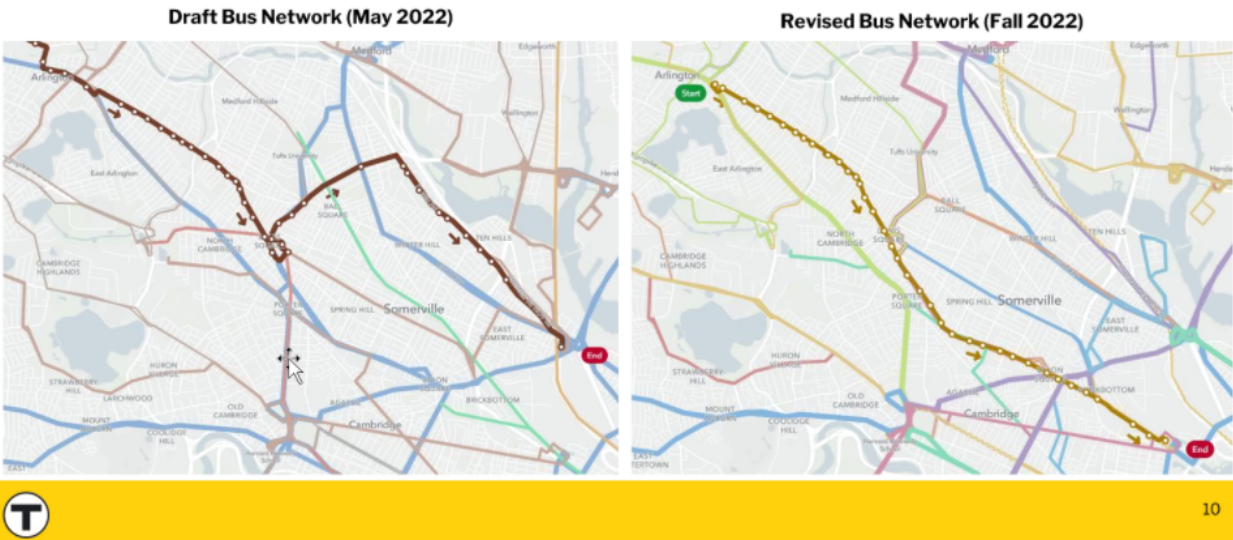
Bus Route 80: Arlington to Davis



- g. 87
 - i. Original proposal had this route going Medford - Mystic Ave - East Somerville
 - 1. Heard from Somerville riders that it was really important to maintain one-seat ride from Clarendon Hill and Davis to Market Basket, Union Square, Lechmere, and Twin City Plaza
 - 2. Also heard from Cambridge riders that it was important for them to get into Union Square
 - ii. New network restores 87 with direct connection to Lechmere

1. Now, instead of connecting to Arlington only ~4 days per week, the new 87 will connect to Arlington Center every day
2. New route also consistently stops at Clarendon Hill rather than sometimes continuing to Turkey Hill
 - a. Heard from Turkey Hill riders that it was important to maintain their connection to Alewife Station

Bus Route 87: Arlington to Lechmere



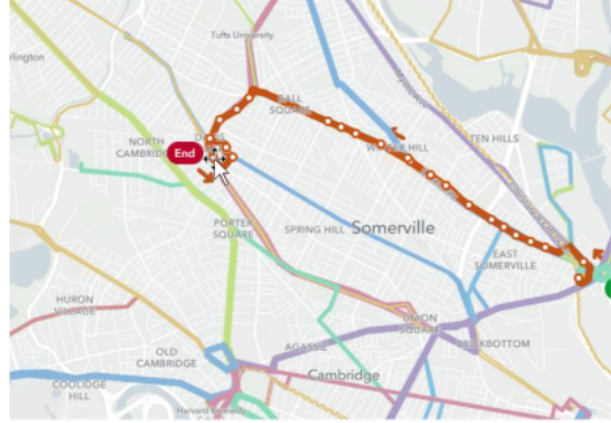
- h. 89 and T101
 - i. One of the biggest issues Somerville riders expressed was the lack of connectivity from Ball Square to any bus, but in particular from Winter Hill to Davis (in part for the Red Line connection)
 - ii. 89 is now restored between Davis Square and Sullivan Square with GLX connection at Ball Square
 - iii. T101 still exists, but it now serves the northern side of Winter Hill while the 89 will use the full length of the Broadway bus lane
 1. This will hopefully alleviate the need for rider to walk on steep hills
 - iv. 89 would operate with single service pattern to always go to Davis rather than sometimes continuing to Clarendon Hill
 1. Still possible to get to Clarendon Hill with connection to the 90

Bus Route 89 and T101

Draft Bus Network (May 2022)



Revised Bus Network (Fall 2022)



- i. 90
 - i. Heard from City and bus drivers that original route was too long
 - 1. Arlington Center - Everett - Market Basket in Chelsea — some segments between Assembly and Wellington can be congested and unreliable
 - ii. New route goes from Clarendon Hill to Assembly Square
 - 1. This is still an extension because today's 90 only goes to Davis, which is important for Somerville Public High School students as an 88 replacement
 - 2. 90 will do same loop in Assembly as 85
 - 3. Route doesn't currently pull into Sullivan Square to make direct connection, but that might be changed
 - 4. Frequency upgrade as a 20-min bus, but there wasn't quite enough budget to make it a high-frequency route
- j. 113
 - i. Replaces 90 with extension from Somerville - Everett - Chelsea
 - ii. Residents in Everett and Chelsea were excited about connection to Assembly
- k. 95
 - i. Put back onto Mystic Ave
 - ii. Continues to Sullivan Square
 - iii. Upgraded to every 20 minutes
- 2. Comments from PTAC members
 - 1. Alessandra — original BNR draft had estimated that service outside of Somerville would increase by 44%, while service within Somerville would only increase by 4%. Do we have updated estimates on these numbers with the second draft?

- a. Melissa — there is a 32% increase in service within Somerville with the second draft (**updated from follow-up email from Melissa on 11/4**)
 - 2. Meredith — delighted about changes that were made and the responsiveness to PTAC letter and concerns; appreciate increased connectivity within Somerville
 - 3. Christopher — appreciated the slight change in 90 so it can now connect to the East Somerville GLX station
 - a. Melissa — Intentionally rerouted this; important to have an easy transfer between the 90 and GLX
 - b. Christopher — encourages MBTA to reach out to developers around this area; development of new PSB could provide space for bus parking and therefore new bus routes
 - 4. Vitor — loves the changes. Why does the T47 end at the Target instead of going further east or connecting to the Gilman Sq GLX station?
 - a. Melissa — Primary focus was on providing a Union Square connection. High-frequency routes need to be shorter to ensure reliability and stay within budget. City officials have shared that Summer St. would not be a good place for buses with infrastructure changes.
 - 5. Ginny — what is going on with the 88 and 90 routes for Highland Avenue routes?
 - a. Melissa — No more 88 but improvements to the 90 for a better experience. Extended beyond terminus Davis to Clarendon Hill. Upgraded frequency to 20 minutes most of the time. Better connection opportunities to East Somerville GLX Station. Terminates at Assembly Row station.
 - 6. Laura — excited by the revised map and will make it easier to get around the city. Are there places where PTAC should advocate for changes to bus lanes and street infrastructure?
 - a. Melissa — Have flagged high-frequency corridors to the City. Suggest focus on those areas.
 - 7. Alessandra — appreciate meaningful changes have been made and think the second draft is a big improvement, including restoration of 87 and 89 buses and additional connections to GLX stations. Appreciate additional connections to Assembly Row. Would really like to see the 90 be a high-frequency route given the main connections. And would like to see the Mystic Ave community reconnected to western and southern portions of Somerville, especially given its historical isolation from the rest of the city.
3. Public Comments
- a. Wig Zagmore — Would like to look up bus operating costs that he can look up (per mile and per trip). Environmental injustice to have I-93 run through East Somerville (e.g. air pollution) and disconnection from other parts of Somerville. How can we address that?
 - i. Melissa — Proposed service increases with more connections.
 - ii. Wig — But there are still no single-seat rides for that community beyond East Somerville to the east and Medford and Arlington to the west. Does appreciate the new additional connections to Assembly.
 - iii. Melissa — MBTA has procurement out right now to support areas with last-mile gaps to transit. City could submit a proposal for funds with

smaller buses to supplement larger buses, such as north-south connections and circulator routes.

- b. Karen Molloy — Appreciates the changes and all the work that went into this. Question on frequency for 87, 30 minutes during rush hour and 60 minutes otherwise. This is a reduction in frequency (89 too). Is this because of budget constraints?
 - i. Melissa — We can monitor and adjust frequency at times, i.e. additional bus when school gets out at the high school. Actual route times will vary a bit and have some room for adjustments.
 - ii. Karen — Supports having more time for community to digest new bus redesign plan, feels rushed
 - iii. Melissa — there will be 2nd public meeting on November 14th
- c. Jason B. — Thank you to the MBTA for listening to all the feedback. Has 2 kids at Somerville High who have tried to take the bus to high school and have been late because the bus didn't show up or was very late. Strongly encourage increasing frequency of 90 bus, at least during school morning rush (between 7 and 8am)

Action Items from Meeting:

- 1. Alessandra to share out October meeting minutes
- 2. Alessandra to share out info on rescheduled December meeting
- 3. Alessandra, Meredith, and Vitor to draft PTAC letter to comment on the bus redesign plan

Meeting ended: 8:03PM