



Western Washington Street Mobility Improvements

Final Proposed Designs

Somerville Commission for Persons with
Disabilities, July 2023

Background



- The City of Somerville plans to reconstruct sidewalks and repave Washington Street between Webster Avenue and Line Street. As part of this effort, we aim to redesign the street to increase safety and comfort for people walking, rolling, biking, driving, and taking transit.
- In 2020, we implemented a pilot project to increase the reliability of the Route 86 bus. We did this by painting short bus lanes on the street and installing a separated bike lane with flexible plastic posts to protect people biking. Over the last three years, we engaged community members to hear feedback, collected traffic data, and evaluated safety and travel needs to develop a new permanent design for Washington Street.

Background



- The City is proposing to install protected bike lanes on both sides of Washington Street. Protected bikeways offer the most comfort for people biking and have the widest appeal to riders of all ages and abilities. One side will have sidewalk-level bike lanes. The other side will be street level and protected with concrete curb barriers.
- We will construct expanded bus stops to provide a larger waiting area. Expanded bus stops also reduce bus delays because the bus doesn't have to pull in and out of the vehicle lane.
- We will construct raised crosswalks across Washington Street and across some adjacent side streets.
- We will plant new trees along the reconstructed sidewalks.
- To learn more about the new designs and other safety improvements in Ward 2, visit somerillema.gov/westernwashington.

Construction

- Construction on Washington Street is scheduled to begin in 2023 and be completed by November 2024.
- Speed hump installation will take place in 2024.
- City contractors will start on sidewalk reconstruction and then move to repaving the roadway and installing the new traffic calming features.
- To stay up to date on construction, sign up for [City Alerts](https://www.somervillema.gov/cityalerts) available via phone call, text, or email at [somervillema.gov/cityalerts](https://www.somervillema.gov/cityalerts).
- You can also sign up for the City Construction Newsletter at [somervillema.gov/construction](https://www.somervillema.gov/construction).
- Regular updates will be posted on the project website at [somervillema.gov/westernwashington](https://www.somervillema.gov/westernwashington).
- If you have any questions during construction, reach out to the Construction Liaison at construction@somervillema.gov.



Washington Street & Ward 2 Safety Improvements



Response to Feedback from SCPD Chair

Can you provide an option near the Beacon St intersection. Can you use paint to differentiate the accessible space? Especially with the bike lane? Help to signal to people biking that they are traveling next to an accessible space and to be more aware and bike slower.

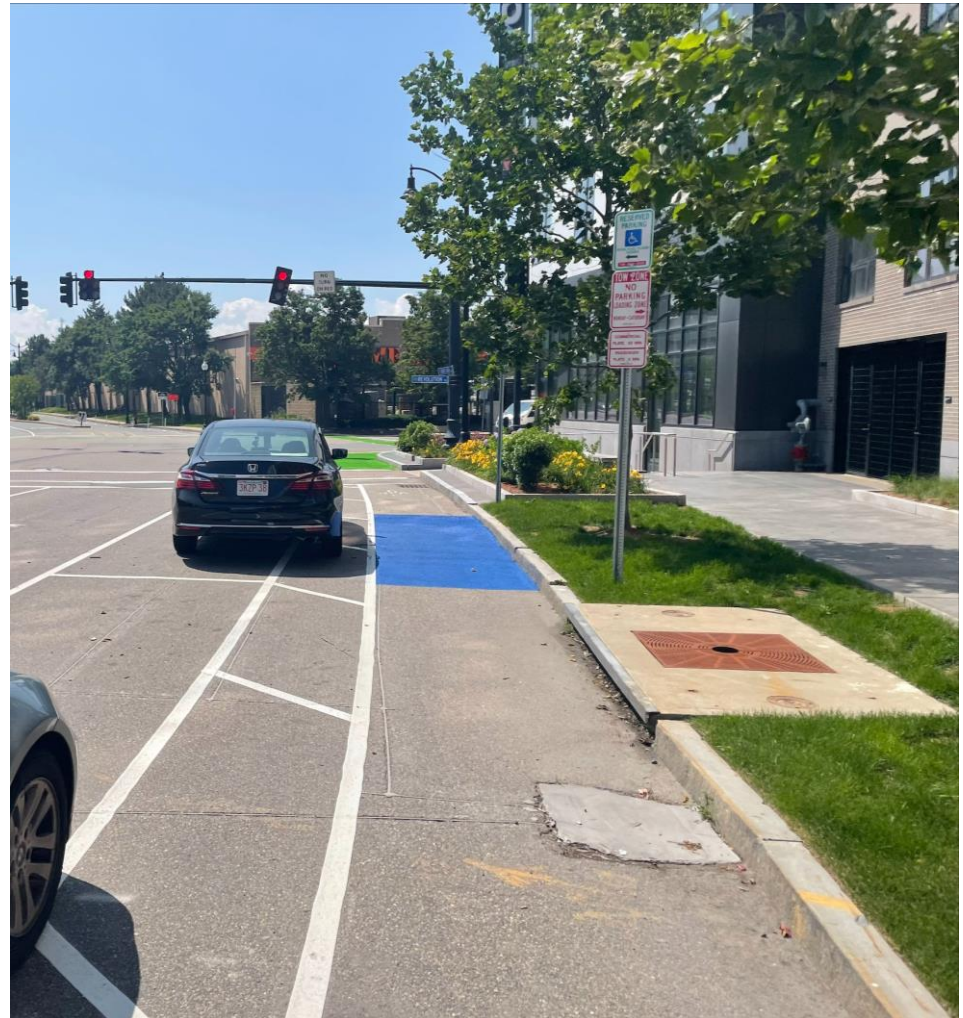
- New accessible spaces will be added on Washington Street at Calvin Street and Perry Park.
- The two spaces near Kingman Road will be put next to each other and a flush curb will be constructed.
- The existing accessible space at 303 Washington St will remain in place.
- The bike lanes next to accessible spaces will be painted blue to make them easier to find and to warn people biking to be cautious while biking nearby.
- A total of 9% of the spaces within the project area are proposed to be accessible, so we didn't include an additional space near Beacon Street.

Western Washington Street On-Street Parking		
Regulation	Number of Spaces	Percentage
Loading	8	14%
Metered	6	10%
2 HR / Permit	23	40%
Accessible	5	9%
Teacher	16	28%
Total	58	100%

Response to Feedback from SCPD Chair

Be mindful of safe unloading and loading for people with mobility impairments.

- Accessible spaces have been located as close to key destinations as possible and at the end of the parking lane so to provide the maximum amount of space for loading and unloading.
- They will also be placed as close to curb ramps as possible, and spaces that are directly adjacent to the sidewalk will have a flush curb to provide more flexibility.
- Where accessible spaces are located next to a raised bike lane, there will be a 2-foot buffer between parked vehicles and the bike lane.



Response to Feedback from SCPD Chair

Should we begin to think through side street parking options? More accessible spaces? More short-term parking options?

- The City's ADA Coordinator has worked with two nearby residents to fulfill two accessible parking requests on Leland St and Bowdoin St.
- At this time, we do not plan to make additional parking regulation changes to the side streets within the project area.
- We are still evaluating the effectiveness of side-street regulation changes in some of our other projects like the Holland Street Mobility Improvements project.



Response to Feedback from SCPD Chair

Bus shelters can block the sidewalk and make it hard for people with visual impairments. We support some kind of shelter for buses, but that particular design can be difficult with people with disabilities.

- Bus shelters will not be placed on the sidewalk.
- Because the bus stops will all be floating and thus provide a separate waiting area for passengers, any benches or shelters that are added will be installed on the waiting island and will not block the sidewalk.



Response to Feedback from SCPD Chair

What is the regulatory guidance for spacing of crosswalks? Could there be a crosswalk closer to the bus stop at Bowdoin/Parker?

- We aim to have crossing options, at a minimum, every 500 feet.
- We will be adding a new crosswalk across Washington St at Perry St, which is about halfway between the existing crosswalks at Perry Park and the Argenziano School.



Summary of feedback from Community Members

We summarized feedback by the themes listed below.

- Transit
- Bike facilities
- Pedestrian facilities
- Driving/Parking
- Greenery
- Maintenance
- Speed humps

The summary is available on the project website at somervillema.gov/westernwashington and in the meeting materials.