

# PTAC SEPTEMBER MEETING

Thursday, September 19, 2024





# AGENDA

- Procedural business (10 min)
- Subcommittee updates (5 min)
- Western Pearl Street Reconstruction (25 min)
- Prep for October Meeting with SPD (15 min)
- Officer nominations (10 min)
- New subcommittee structure proposal & vote (20 min)



# PROCEDURAL BUSINESS & SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

6:30 – 6:45PM



# WESTERN PEARL ST RECONSTRUCTION

[voice.somervillema.gov/westernpearl](https://voice.somervillema.gov/westernpearl)

6:45 – 7:10PM



# TONIGHT'S GOALS

- Review publicly available project info
- Discuss early-stage preferences
- Decide who will attend 1<sup>st</sup> public meeting on October 9
- Decide subcommittee involvement
- Finalize date for community walk

# PROJECT AREA



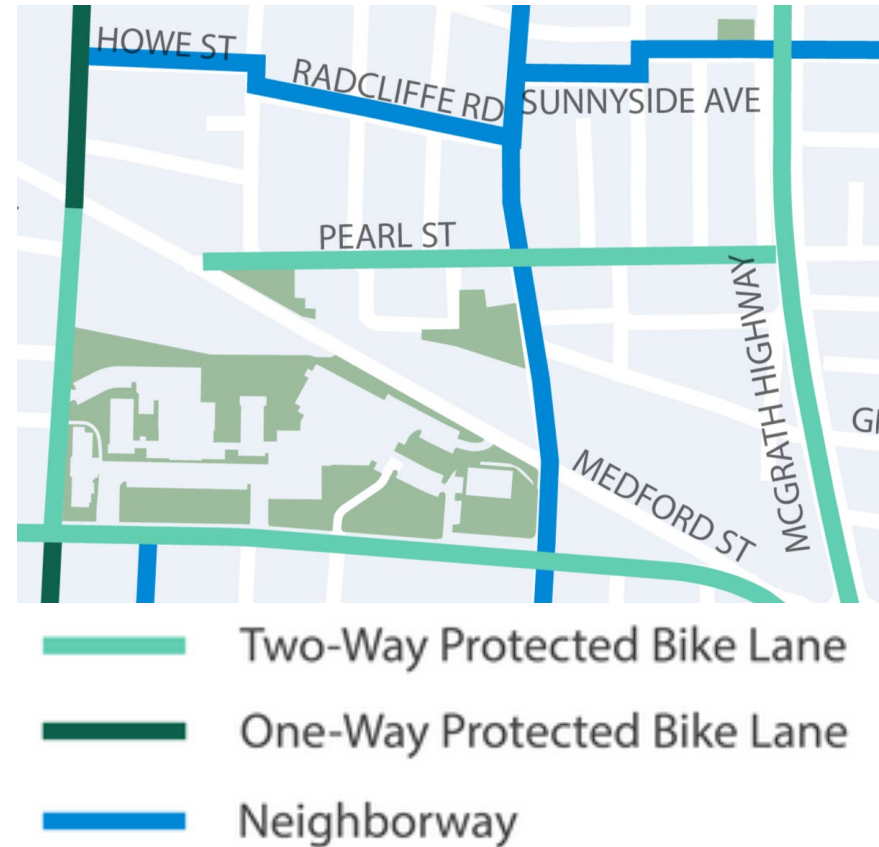
# PROJECT GOALS

**Make Pearl Street safer, more accessible, more sustainable, and more comfortable by...**

- Reconstructing all sidewalks and repaving Pearl Street from Medford Street to McGrath Highway as part of the City's [Pavement and Sidewalk Management Program](#).
  - Sidewalk reconstruction will include ~20 ft into intersecting streets.
- Adding accessible curb ramps to all existing crosswalks.
- Installing intersection safety improvements (e.g., raised crosswalks/intersections, curb extensions) and exploring opportunities for new crossings.
- Identifying locations for new trees, replacing tree stumps, and considering tree bump-outs or expanding tree wells to support tree longevity.
- Installing protected bike facilities.
- Incorporating [Clear Corners](#) at each intersection to improve visibility for people driving as they turn or move through the intersections.

# PROJECT CHOICES

- Western Pearl Street is designated for two-way protected bike facilities in the [Somerville Bicycle Network Plan](#).
- The [Safe Streets Ordinance](#) passed in June 2024 requires that when a street is being reconstructed, if that street is included in the Bicycle Network Plan, the project will include the bike infrastructure improvements specified in the plan.
- SSO has provision for exceptions based on a street's physical features or usage.





# PROJECT CHOICES (CONTINUED)

**Pearl Street is narrow enough that implementing two-way protected bike lanes would...**

- Require removing all existing parking on the street.
- Limit the ability to shorten crossing distances with curb extensions.
- Limit the ability to expand the sidewalk to provide more space for people walking and rolling.
- Limit the ability to provide curb access for activities like deliveries and pickup/drop-off.

# PROJECT POSSIBILITIES

- Install a one-way protected bike facility on Pearl Street and use a different neighborhood street to serve the other direction.
- Consider one-way motor vehicle traffic on Pearl Street.

# PROJECT TIMELINE

- **October – November 2024 [WE ARE ALMOST HERE]:** Gather community feedback on transportation safety concerns on Pearl Street and future priorities.
- **Winter 2024 – 2025:** Mobility will draft a concept design based on community feedback and data analysis (vehicle speed/volume, parking utilization).
- **Spring 2025:** Goal for publishing concept design and conducting another round of community engagement.
- **Summer 2025:** Mobility will refine concept design.
- **Fall 2025:** Community feedback on refined design. Mobility will finalize design based on feedback.
- **2026 – 2027:** Goal for construction.



# NEXT STEPS FOR PTAC

- Discuss project choices & possibilities
- Decide who will attend [1<sup>st</sup> public meeting on Wednesday, October 9, 6:00-7:30PM](#)
- Decide subcommittee involvement
- Finalize date for community walk
- Plan to discuss project in further detail at October or November meeting



# OCTOBER MEETING WITH SPD

7:10 – 7:25PM



# GOALS FOR OCTOBER

- Discuss SPD's latest application for the Municipal Road Safety Grant
- Discuss how SPD has incorporated community feedback into their work
- Discuss SPD's future goals for traffic enforcement

# BACKGROUND: PTAC ACTIVITY

In 2023, PTAC explored the relationship between enforcement & street safety with four sets of guests:

- *Somerville Parking Department (May)*
  - Spoke about the regulations they uphold, how they respond to violations (prefer warnings over tickets), and results of the automated parking enforcement pilot in Davis Square (now permanent in front of H Mart).
- *LivableStreets Alliance (June)*
  - Presented 2022 report *Dismantling Law Enforcement's Role in Traffic Safety: A Roadmap for Massachusetts* which included evidence that pretextual traffic stops don't improve road safety, that high-visibility enforcement campaigns have no lasting impact on driver behavior, and that automated enforcement can reduce crashes where cameras are installed.

# BACKGROUND: PTAC ACTIVITY (CONT)

- *Somerville Mobility (June)*
  - Presented evolving approach to traffic enforcement within Vision Zero framework. Since 2020 release of Vision Zero Action Plan, Mobility has seen a lack of evidence that enforcement effectively improves street safety and has found it difficult to separate traffic enforcement from systemic issues like discriminatory traffic stops and inequitable fines. Currently prefers to educate rather than punish, alongside primary focus on changing the structure of our streets so unsafe behavior is less likely to happen.
- *Somerville Police Department (August)*
  - Presented approach to traffic enforcement. Of SPD's 88 staff members, three were assigned to Traffic Unit which focuses on motor vehicle enforcement. [Between 2017-2023](#), the most frequent citation types by far were no inspection (11,715) and speeding (11,139) with using electronic device while operating motor vehicle making a distant third place (2,750).

Find links to meeting minutes and presentations in [PTAC's 2023 Annual Report](#).



# BACKGROUND: PTAC PREFERENCES

**From our conversations, we found an array of committee preferences:**

- Stronger law enforcement toward dangerous driving behavior (e.g., speeding, noncompliance at crosswalks)
- Modified approaches to traffic enforcement that involve less direct interaction between law enforcement and civilians (e.g., automated ticketing)
- Self-enforcing roads based on design rather than police presence

# BACKGROUND: MUNICIPAL ROAD SAFETY GRANT

- [Grant program from the MA Executive Office of Public Safety and Security](#) that “makes funds available to Massachusetts police departments to address local safety issues.”
- Timeline
  - **May:** Notice of Availability
  - **July 1:** Application Deadline
  - **October:** Award Announcements
  - **November – Following September:** Performance Period
- SPD has used past grants for overtime traffic enforcement, pedestrian and bike enforcement & education, equipment (e.g., speed radar signs), and safety gear (e.g., bike lights & helmets).
- City Council declined to accept the grant funding in February 2022, accepted it in 2023, and narrowly accepted it in 2024.

# PREPARING FOR OCTOBER MEETING

- Discuss SPD's latest application for the Municipal Road Safety Grant
- Discuss how SPD has incorporated community feedback into their work
- Discuss SPD's future goals for traffic enforcement

## OTHER QUESTIONS?



# OFFICER NOMINATIONS

7:25-7:35PM



# SUBCOMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL

7:35-7:55PM

# SURVEY RESULTS

- 13 responses out of 18 PTAC members (72% response rate)
- Most popular subcommittee ideas:
  - Pedestrian Experience (10)
  - Transit Experience (7)
  - Community Events & Volunteer Recruitment (6)
  - Design Review (5)
- Annual meeting instead of subcommittee:
  - Snow Clearing (7)
  - Parking Management (2)
  - Enforcement Liaising (2)
  - City Council Liaising (2)

# SURVEY RESULTS (CONTINUED)

- 4 people interested in leading subcommittees
  - **Alessandra:** Community Events & Volunteer Coordination
  - **Satoko:** Community Events & Volunteer Coordination **OR** Digital Communications Officer (preferred role)
  - **Vitor:** Design Review
  - **Zach:** Unspecified, if another lead is needed

# WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION

- Alessandra, Barbara, Brenda, Rob, Satoko, Vitor, & Zach (7 members)
- Difficult to differentiate between Experience subcommittees and PTAC as a whole
- Preferred focus on clear activities and deliverables
- Wanted to respect committee members' bandwidth (e.g., not forcing more subcommittees than those interested in leading)



# WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL

- **2 subcommittees:**
  - Community Events (*Alessandra*)
    - Plans community walks & tabling opportunities
    - Explores new venues for community interaction based on member interest & bandwidth (e.g., Streetwise)
  - Design Review (*Vitor*)
    - Review Mobility's designs for street reconstruction, quick-build, & other projects with a focus on pedestrian & transit experience
    - Writes feedback/support letters on projects

# WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL (CONTINUED)

- **Annual Meetings**
  - Snow Removal (Winter)
  - Municipal Road Safety Grant review & enforcement check-in with SPD (May/June)
- **Committee Norms**
  - All members should aim to participate in at least one community event per year.
  - Subcommittee leads can change at any time based on interest and capacity.
  - Individual members should feel free to pursue independent initiatives by either reporting back to the full committee or launching a new subcommittee.
  - Subcommittee leads should have the option to attend Officer/Mobility meetings (monthly on the first Thursday).
- **This vote will need to include an amendment to our bylaws.**



# PUBLIC COMMENT

7:55-8:00PM