

Somerville



Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee

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March 2025 Meeting Agenda

Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

Meeting Information

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 6:30-8:00 PM

This meeting will be virtual:

Zoom info to join remotely via computers, tablets, and smartphones:

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89181225932?pwd=aWpoL2FtaUh3aGdVbHNRWUJmeDRNQOT09>
- Passcode: 152274
- Or join by phone:
- Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
- US: +1 646 558 8656
- Webinar ID: 891 8122 5932
- Passcode: 152274
- International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcVy69ROJG>

Members

1. *Ted Alexander
2. *Ginny Alverson
3. *Caroline Bodager
4. *Meredith Brown
5. *Laura Evans
6. *Christopher Ferry
7. *Preston Gutelius
8. *Satoko Hirai (Digital Communications Officer)
9. *Brenda Marvin (Secretary)
10. *Steven Mulder
11. *Barbara Myers
12. Bianca Norkunas
13. *Vitor Pamplona (Vice Chair)
14. *Zach Rosenberg
15. *Alessandra Seiter (Chair)
16. Robert Stanzel
17. Carole Voulgaris
18. Will Mbah (Ex Officio, City Councilor At Large)
19. Justin Schreiber (Ex Officio, OSPCD Mobility)
20. *Katherine White (Ex Officio, OSPCD Mobility)

Guests

1. Jackie Stagnari, *Parking Department, City of Somerville*
2. Camden Blatchly, *Somerville resident*
3. Liam Jewell, *Somerville resident*
4. Mackenzie Webb, *Somerville resident*

Acting Secretary

Laura Evans

Call to Order

6:32

Agenda

Procedural Business

1. February minutes to be voted on at next meeting
2. FYI: [First annual Safe Streets Ordinance progress report](#)
3. Public meeting next Tuesday from MassDOT updating progress on McGrath project
4. Ginny suggesting we add public comment on NHTSA SUV regulations

Subcommittee Updates

1. Design Review met to discuss Elm-Beacon (to be discussed in a later item)
2. Community Events met to plan upcoming walk in Union Square (Tuesday April 29th)

Review Latest Draft of Snow Clearing Letter

1. [latest draft of an advocacy letter on snow clearing in Somerville](#)
2. Vitor highlighted several requests from the letter:
 - a. separate regulations for ice
 - b. stricter snow regulations
 - c. increase enforcement
 - d. improve public outreach
 - e. treating minor storms differently
 - f. 24 hour goal to full recovery
 - g. construction zones
 - h. businesses
 - i. increase fees and standards for landlords
 - j. bus stops
 - k. improve sidewalk designs
 - l. explore partnerships
 - m. explore city snow removal
3. Group discussion generally favorable with a few minor changes

- a. partnerships -> single point of contact in the city to own this
- b. language tweaks around snow removal costs
- c. suggestion for prioritization among requests
- d. discussion around viability of zero tolerance for ice, should we consider pretreating sidewalks to prevent ice buildup
- e. value of ticketing vs clearing & ticketing (to ensure problem is actually fixed)
- f. should stress impact of unsafe sidewalks on people with disabilities
4. Alessandra moves to send to city with edits, many seconds, unanimous vote in favor

Parking & Curb Use Study Progress with the Parking Department

1. Jackie from CoS to provide update on parking and curb use study
2. [full report](#) on city website
3. Strategies fall into four major buckets
 - a. admin and operations
 - b. revise the permit program
 - c. reallocate curb space to meet community goals
 - d. regulations to manage parking demand
4. [I wish I had captured the policies that Jackie presented but it went very fast and I didn't have the slides to get the titles - maybe could be a post-meeting addition?]
5. Q&A
 - a. how much progress is being made on the strategies? some progress being made on most of the medium and high priority items
 - b. goal number of safety sticks? not a target, need to make sure the office can keep up with volume of tickets being issued
 - c. false positives on the safety stick? Jackie doesn't have the answer but she'll check back
 - d. comment: signage around safety sticks could be better and might be a better deterrent

Review Elm-Beacon Connector Concept Design

1. Kate briefly presented the designs - [available on city's website](#)
 - a. Quick build safety improvements on Elm, Somerville, and Mossland - bike lanes, crosswalk visibility, centerline hardening, signal updates, bus stop relocation, narrowing car lanes throughout
 - b. remove the slip lane at Beech and Elm
 - c. Turning Mossland at Elm into a dead end (but allowing bikes, peds, and fire truck through)
 - d. harden turning for vehicles at Beacon and Somerville
 - e. timeline - originally planned for 2025 using a federal grant so might be 2026
2. Vitor summarized discussion from Design Review meeting
 - a. generally very much in favor of these changes
 - b. curious to know how the new public space at Beacon and Elm will be used
 - i. Kate: not decided yet, will still be asphalt but trying to indicate it's curb and not street
 - c. possibility to add trees along Somerville over the railroad tracks?
 - i. Cambridge has tried it on their end of Somerville and we're watching to see if it works. planters not really in scope for quick build
 - d. bus stop spacing?
 - i. within MBTA's recommended distance but will discuss again

- e. possibility to make other improvements at Elm and White to coordinate turning movements vs pedestrians there?
 - i. this project is big already but White may get a dedicated project because of the complexity with Cambridge

3. Discussion

- a. Can the crosswalk across White be raised? Or maybe dead end White like Mossland?
 - i. [see above]
 - b. Seconding the trouble with the grocery parking lot, big fan of the Beech changes
 - i. new management group for the Porter Square shopping center and they're interested in dialogue with city
 - c. Audible signals, tactical strips?
 - i. yes, always add audible signals when upgrading signals. can't add new curb ramps in quick build but tactical warning pads will be replaced if damaged or missing
 - d. Bus stop usage on Somerville Ave?
 - i. heavy usage at Porter, much lower on the others
4. Kate: any thoughts on traffic signal changes?
- a. Would like to discuss concurrent vs exclusive ped phases in a broader context in a future meeting

Other Business

- 1. N/A

Final Items

Action Items from Meeting

- 1. Vitor to edit snow removal letter with group feedback

Meeting Ended

8:07