



## November 2025 Meeting Minutes

### Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne

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### Meeting Information

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

This meeting will be hybrid:

- **In-person meeting location:** [101 South Street](#), Somerville, MA 02143.
- **Zoom info to join remotely via computers, tablets, and smartphones:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89181225932?pwd=aWpoL2FtaUh3aGdVbHNRWUJmeDRNQQT09>  
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

\* = present

1. \*Ted Alexander
2. \*Ginny Alverson
3. Meredith Brown
4. \*Laura Evans
5. \*Christopher Ferry
6. \*Preston Gutelius
7. Satoko Hirai (Digital Communications Office)
8. \*Brenda Marvin (Secretary)
9. \*Steven Mulder
10. \*Barbara Myers

11. Bianca Norkunas
12. \*Vitor Pamplona (Vice Chair)
13. \*Zach Rosenberg
14. \*Alessandra Seiter (Chair)
15. \*Mackenzie Webb
16. J.T. Scott (Ex Officio, City Council, Ward 2)
17. \*Katherine White (Ex Officio, OSPCD Mobility)
18. \*Justin Schreiber (Ex Officio, OSPCD Mobility)

## Guests

1. Melissa Dullea, *Senior Director of Service Planning, MBTA; Somerville resident*
2. Brian Postlewaite, *Director, Somerville Engineering Division; Somerville resident*
3. Viola Augustin, *Senior Transportation Planner, Somerville Mobility Division; Somerville resident*
4. Joshua Michel, *Somerville Resident*
5. Crystal Huff, *Somerville Resident*
6. Cynthia Stillinger, *Member, Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets (SASS); Somerville resident*
7. Yushuo Ding, *Somerville resident*

## Acting Secretary

Zach Rosenberg

## Call to Order

6:30

## Agenda

### Procedural Business (5 Minutes)

- Roll call and guest introductions
- Vote on October draft minutes
  - Alessandra motions to approve, Ted seconds, motion passes
- Announcements
  - Jan Meeting moved to 22nd
  - Mobility just posted an open call for new PTAC members
    - Interviews planned mid January
    - Goal is 2-5 new members
  - Officers would like to do outreach to the new admin
    - Survey on priorities to discuss will go out

### Subcommittee Updates (5 Minutes)

- Community Events
  - Did not meet
  - Plan to table at the Winter Market (Jan/Feb)
- Design Review
  - No updates

- Special Projects

## Long-Term Considerations for Bus Route 90 (35 Minutes)

- Originally, the T had communicated that the goal for the 90 is a connection between west Somerville and the Green Line
  - Given many folks are going to North Station, would an acceptable alternative be to provide a connection to the Orange Line?
- A Spreadsheet with 6 main options of 88/90 Bus options put together by the committee
  - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-OkeJlDaBNDz7oJBcCmhUSW0XmuscTrbXlwY4KEkKg/edit?usp=sharing>
- Simple scoring for each option across a number of desirable connections
- Top option by points: Consolidate 88 & 90 Clarendon Hill via Broadway and Cross St
- Melissa Dullea shares the MBTA's perspective
  - Since GLX opened, 88 ridership at Lechmere dropped 29%
  - 90 has lower service (40-70 minute headways)
    - 1/3 of ridership as 88
    - Hearing pain points including higher desired frequency
    - Cross St is difficult - higher crash history
  - Original 88/90 Plan shown
    - Single consolidated route, connecting to orange line and assembly
    - Improved service hours
    - Heard concerns about steep and long path for GLX connections
  - Updated 88/90 Plan
    - Partial implementation in the summer
    - Provide GLX connection at east somerville (still a long walk)
    - Maintains Sullivan Square Orange Line connection
    - Continues to Assembly
    - Adds about 5 new bus operators to 88/90, improved service hours
  - We don't have great data on transfer rates at Lechmere (and surface Green Line generally)
- Discussion
  - Is there a specific place the MBTA wants to connect the green line?
    - We have 380 people getting off at Lechmere
    - We are okay to have folks transfer, but we want to avoid too many transfers
  - Would a Ball Sq connection work?
    - Would work for some people, but misses some mid-Highland Ave
    - Trying to recreate those trips
  - If the bus were to remain on Cross St, would that increase delays or is it just difficult
    - The street is very narrow, and that can lead to more crashes
  - Is there anything that might make cross st more bussable?
    - Possibly if there were an opportunity to take out a lane of parking
    - But south Cross St bus direction would still be difficult to connect to the Green Line
  - When we combine the buses, do we get all of those trips?
    - Goal for combined would be service every 20 minutes 6am-10pm - close to full frequent
    - Off peak would be closer to 30 minutes
    - Right now, connecting Highland Ave to Orange Line is very tough, combined option would make that much better

- How important is the connection to Sullivan?
  - It would be faster to the Orange Line, but it was more of an opportunistic connection in the updated plan
- Is there an urgency to shift the bus to Washington Street? We have heard about a lot of difficulty from those school connections. Could we keep the bus on Cross St until the new school opens
  - MBTA really wants to connect the green line, and that works best at East Somerville
  - The bus can't get that good southbound connection to East Somerville by going down Cross St
  - Tufts street isn't really usable with the neighborway improvements
- Why do we not connect directly to Assembly station?
  - Those streets weren't designed with buses in mind.
  - Pretty much has to stay on Grand Union
- What kind of timeline is the MBTA looking for?
  - T is in implementation phase right now of BNR
  - Couldn't possibly implement sooner than Spring 26
  - Looking for enthusiasm and support
  - 2026 or 2027 could be in the implementation timeline
  - But if we are getting a lot of pushback, it doesn't need to be done

## Next Steps from Union Square Walk Audit (35 Minutes)

- Viola Augustin presented on City report response
  - Slides  
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/2025-11/pedestrian-transit-advocacy-committee-20251120-meeting-materials-walk-audit-response.pdf>
- Union Square Plaza + Streetscape plaza is still in the works - Hoping to restart design in 2026
- Happy to see city is investigating flexipave on the trees
- City will replace plastic tactile strips by 311 request
- If design for phase 1 is 2026, what would be expected timeline for construction?
  - If everything goes well, 2028 is possible but funding needs to be worked out
- On Somerville Ave/ Prospect Street, are there other examples of > 2 minute wait times for Peds?
  - Possibly around Davis - 2 minutes is near the upper limit
- On Webster Ave intersection - how is it determined when guardrail is needed by MassDOT?
  - Required for railroads from MassDOT
  - Some of the guardrail will go, City will push for making room for greenery
- A few weeks back, a ped was hit at Webster/Newton. Some of the lights are brighter on one side than the other - City may want to take a look at that and other locations.
- Bow St and Warren Ave to replace mixed signals with all-way stop - would it be difficult to try and trial a 4 way stop? There is a lot of confusion there.
  - It's a complicated intersection
  - On another light, City made an adjustment of a few seconds that resulted in all day queues, so these are sensitive.
  - To keep engineering consistency, evaluation needs to be done that takes time. Need to understand if it's worth the effort before the larger Union Sq updates
- Mid block crossing at the GLX exit? We see a lot of people walking across through heavy traffic. We had it during construction and that seemed better.

- Not as simple as just putting a crossing there - need lighting, coordination with close intersection.
- Is a mid block crossing included in Phase 1 design?
  - Yes - but those drawings are 25% so they could change. But intention is there.
- Somerville / Prospect Street - There isn't a bike box there. Are there any signs to make that clear?
  - No sign right now, but that's a good point. A pavement marking could help.

## Officer Elections (5 Minutes)

- Nominated current slate of officers:
  - Chair: Alessandra Seiter
  - Vice Chair: Vitor Pamploma
  - Secretary: Brenda Marvin
  - Digital Comms: Vacant
- Motion to elect given slate of officers: Approved

## Other Business (5 Minutes)

- Returning to discussion of 88/90
  - Cross Street seems to be such a problem for buses - realistically is there something the City can do about it?
    - Possibly - on the bike network plan.
    - But the key issue might be the connection to green line, and the fact that it would have to use Tufts Street
    - We did use flex posts for the corners to help the buses and would do that again
  - Logan Brill - Live on highland ave, mixed feelings on the 88 - sad to lose lechmere connection, but would be nice to get that connection to Assembly
    - Walking down to Gilman or the 87 isn't so bad for someone able bodied, but they are very steep.
  - End of the 88 to Lechmere is crucial for people with disabilities - and the requirement to cross McGrath is also dangerous.
  - We could keep status quo until McGrath highway changes might give us better opportunities
  - The transfer point at East Somerville is so far, it makes that connection not very desirable
  - Sounds like we're getting close to alignment, officers will get together on next steps.

## Meeting Ended

8:03