

August 2026 Meeting Minutes

Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

Mayor Jake Wilson

Thursday, August 20, 2026 , 6:30-8:00PM

Meeting Information

Members

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| 1. Ted Alexander * | 14. Barbara Myers * |
| 2. Ginny Alverson | 15. Vitor Pamplona (Vice Chair)* |
| 3. Meredith Brown * | 16. Zach Rosenberg* |
| 4. Rachel Chiquione * | 17. Andrew Rosenfeld * |
| 5. Laura Evans* | 18. Alessandra Seiter (Chair) * |
| 6. Christopher Ferry | 19. Mackenzie Webb |
| 7. Susan Foley * | 20. Ben Ewen-Campen (Ex Officio, Ward 3
City Councilor) |
| 8. Christopher Friend * | 21. Katherine White (Ex Officio, OSPCD
Mobility)* |
| 9. Preston Gutelius * | 22. Justin Schreiber (Ex Officio, OSPCD
Mobility)* |
| 10. Satoko Hirai | |
| 11. Sebastian Lopes-Filho | |
| 12. Brenda Marvin (Secretary) * | |
| 13. Steven Mulder | |

Guests

1. Chris Dwan, *Chair, Review of Multiple-Member Bodies Committee*
2. Karen Molloy, *Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets (SASS)*
3. Suzanne Wilkinson, *Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets (SASS)*
4. Logan Brill, *Conservation Commission*

Acting Secretary

Barbara Myers

Call to Order

6:30

Agenda

Procedural Business

- Meetings approved by voice vote, after motion and second.

Announcement

- Preston Gutelius updated on 2 acts in the state government, one presently before the House, and one before the Senate. Both relating to economic development. The bills are different and in reconciliation some important parts may be dropped. Preston urged that members send a short message to the 6 reconciliation process members urging support on speed cameras in school areas and action against large vehicles without required safety equipment. This is a matter with time urgency. Preston will write and urges other committee members to send a short, 1-2 paragraph letter. The mobility legislation is Senate bill 3176 and House bill 5576.
- A motion was passed empowering Preston to write and send a letter on PTAC's behalf.

Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

Subcommittee Updates

- Community Events. PTAC held a very successful walk audit of Assembly Square with more than 30 in attendance, including local legislators, Assembly Connect representatives, Safe Streets and Groundwork members. The committee is transcribing the comments of the attendants; a letter and report will be generated.
 - In the fall, PTAC will join Mobility in tabling at 3 events: Gilman Square Arts Festival 9/12/26; Union Square Farmers Market 10/10/26; and Monster Mash 10/18/26. There will be opportunities for interested PTAC members to participate.
- Design Review met and the results of their efforts will be reviewed in the meeting.
- Special Projects did not meet.

Draft Letter in response to the Multiple Member Boards Committee (MMBC or "Committee on Committees")

- Alessandra explained that the MMBC was established as a requirement in the city charter approved in the 2025 election. This is a 5-member board appointed by Mayor Jake Wilson. The committee has recommended that PTAC and the Bicycle Safety Committee become a single committee. In response, PTAC and the Bike Chair have drafted a letter, attached to the agenda for this meeting. The Bike committee approved the draft at its most recent meeting.

- Chris Dwan, chair of MMBC was a guest and offered the following information: The city has at least 64 multiple member committees; some haven't met in years and some are required by Massachusetts state law. PTAC isn't mentioned in any ordinance. The same Somerville City staff are involved with both committees and there is concern of over-burdening staff. Chris agreed to revisit the decision based on a letter from both committees and Somerville staff.
- Alessandra explained the letter and opened the meeting to member and guest comments. A spirited discussion followed with all who spoke opposing the merger and approving the draft letter.
- Rachel thanked Alessandra and Design Review for the letter and spoke of the unique needs of bikers and walkers. She is a transportation professional and remarked that infrastructure needs differ as do program and safety measures. She also commented that a joint committee would actually have reduced efficacy as needs can conflict.
- Ted voiced strong support and thanks and reminded that as a founding member of PTAC he remembers that it took some time to get the committee up and running and a newly combined committee would also take time, which would be wasteful.
 - He also mentioned that PTAC often has a difficult time at tabling events explaining that we are not bicycle riders and feels our message would be much more difficult in a combined committee.
- Susan offered full support of the letter and spoke of equity issues as some pedestrians do not have a choice of transportation and deserve our advocacy. This includes shift workers, people with disabilities, the blind, etc whose voices would be lost. The work the Bike Safety Committee has done is impressive. PTAC is the only pedestrian voice.
- Zach offered thanks and a mention that PTAC is effective.
- Brenda mentioned that many local residents applied to join PTAC, indicating a strong interest in the community. Many guests who come to PTAC meetings recognize PTAC as clearly the place to express needs and criticisms. She pointed out that we are a large committee and would need to reduce our membership if we were a part of a combined committee.
- Barbara mentioned puzzlement at what the "correct" number of city committees is.
- Guest Logan also voiced support and commended PTAC as the best organization and most efficient he has ever interacted with. He has a career in transportation and agreed that the issues both committees address are complex enough to support two committees. He feels that our committee is efficient, and yet our meetings require that full amount of time allowed. He did urge the two committed to interact and suggested quarterly joint meetings.
- Alessandra called for a vote with a motion seconded by Rachel. The letter was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Review Proposed Changes to the PTAC Bylaws

- Alessandra introduced the changes with a bit of history about the founding of PTAC after some tragic pedestrian deaths. She summarized the changes.
- A paragraph about the history and scope of PTAC will be added.

- The special Projects subcommittee hasn't materialized and the member who proposed it is no longer on PTAC. Such a subcommittee, as well as other subcommittees, could be established in the future in response to PTAC members.
- The requirement that committee members serve on a subcommittee would be eliminated.
- Members would serve a two year term after appointment. Those in good standing would be offered a second term. Good standing requires attending 8 regular meetings each year and serving as acting secretary once per year. A discussion about this requirement followed. There are more than 12 committee members, so it actually isn't necessary to serve every 12 months. The officers are excused from this requirement. Brenda is available in the event of last-minute cancellations. Committee members with disabilities could also be relieved of this requirement. There was considerable discussion of whether reappointment is automatic, whether new committee members who join mid-way through the calendar year serve only 1-½ year before reappointment consideration.
- There being many unresolved issues, it was decided that the discussion points would be considered and a revised draft would be presented in September or October.

Update on Squires Bridge

1. Slides are attached to the agenda. Justin presented an update.
2. Vitor and Andrew presented a draft letter about the project.
3. Guest Logan requested that the possibility of connecting to the Community Path be kept open as long as possible.
4. A brief discussion followed. The letter will be presented in September or October for a vote.

Meeting Ended

8:00 pm