

Somerville



Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee

January 20, 2026

Mayor Jake Wilson
93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Mayor Wilson,

Congratulations on your election and inauguration! We on the Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) look forward to serving under your administration. We particularly look forward to accelerating momentum for a transportation network that supports the safety and livability of all Somerville community members regardless of age, ability, or travel mode. This letter outlines our priorities for the next few years, on which we hope to have your leadership.

First, some brief context for our priorities¹. Over the past 15 years and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Somerville community members choosing to walk has grown, especially among families with school-age children. At the same time, reported crashes in Somerville have significantly decreased. Crucially, our city has now gone four years without losing a community member in a crash. These heartening trends align with the city's exponential increase in traffic calming interventions, safety-focused pavement markings, and sidewalk reconstructions. Our city is steadily becoming safer and more walkable, largely thanks to a world-class Mobility Division and critical partners in IAM Engineering, Parking, and DPW.

Unfortunately in terms of transit, Somerville is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, bus ridership remained significantly below 2019 rates across the MBTA system. Many of Somerville's 14 bus routes served less than 60% of their 2019 ridership, with notable exceptions in the 86, 95, and CT2. The good news is that meaningful improvements to Somerville's bus network are on the horizon, with the MBTA estimating a 32% increase in service under the ongoing [Bus Network Redesign](#). Additionally, the City continues to invest in bus-priority infrastructure including dedicated bus lanes, floating bus stops, transit signal priority (TSP), and automated enforcement of blocked bus lanes. These developments must continue if public transit is to effectively serve the transit-dependent members of our community, and to become a competitive option for all Somerville residents.

With this context established, we turn to our committee's **top three priorities** for the next few years:

1. **Advance the McGrath Boulevard project:** We unequivocally support MassDOT's once-in-a-generation project to transform McGrath Highway from one of the deadliest corridors in Somerville into a human-scale boulevard that is safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. This transformation will prevent countless deaths and injuries, reconnect East Somerville and Brickbottom with the rest of the city, improve health outcomes for those who live next to the corridor, and represent a huge leap forward in achieving municipal and statewide climate goals. We do have

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all data is drawn from the [Mobility Division's 2024 Key Performance Indicators report](#).

concerns about certain design elements [as described in our letter sent on January 5, 2026](#), and hope your administration can advocate for continued improvements. However, we do not want to lose momentum on a project so critical to the safety, health, and vibrancy of our community.

2. **Advance the [Union Square Plaza and Streetscapes project](#):** We are so excited for a Union Square re-envisioned as a dynamic, inviting civic hub for community events and creative programming where space is reallocated to people and environmentally friendly infrastructure. In April 2025, PTAC collaborated with four local organizations to lead over 60 community members in a walk audit of Union Square. As described in our [August 2025 report summarizing the walk audit's findings](#), community members are eager for improvements to the safety, walkability, and vibrancy of Union Square. While [many of our walk audit recommendations were deemed by City staff to be appropriate for shorter-term implementation](#), several more transformative recommendations depend on the advancement of the Union Square Plaza and Streetscapes project. We are thrilled the City has secured design funding for Phase 1 of the project, and encourage your administration to prioritize this project for additional internal and external funding opportunities.
3. **Move forward with automated enforcement:** While Somerville is becoming safer for people walking, dangerous driving behavior like speeding, red-light running, and crosswalk noncompliance continue to endanger community members on a daily basis. Many streets see over 500 speeding vehicles per day, while intersections under measurement have seen up to 7% of vehicles running red lights during the evening peak hour alone. Meanwhile, speeding and distracted driving remain common violations cited by the Somerville Police Department. While PTAC members have a wide range of views on appropriate methods of street safety enforcement, we do have clear and strong consensus around the importance of automated enforcement. [Studies in other US cities have found automated enforcement](#) to have long-term effectiveness in preventing dangerous driving behavior, [Somerville's own automated parking enforcement efforts](#) have improved pedestrian safety and bus reliability, and there are [concrete strategies](#) for pursuing automated enforcement consistent with individual privacy and data security. We encourage your administration to continue expanding automated enforcement of parked vehicles in key areas, advance automated enforcement of moving vehicles where legally possible, and work with Somerville's state delegation to advance the legalization of automated enforcement of moving vehicles across the Commonwealth.

Beyond these priorities, we are eager to see additional capacity added to the Mobility team, improvements made to the City's snow clearing operations, and safety improvements made to the Community Path.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to a collaborative and productive term!

Sincerely,
The Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

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