

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Amy SeilaWhite [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 9, 2024 10:34 AM  
**To:** Lance Davis; Jake Wilson; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Charlotte Kelly; [REDACTED]  
Planning1; All City Council; Public Comments; Katjana Ballantyne  
**Subject:** Biking infrastructure concerns

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To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to voice my concerns about the bike infrastructure that is being built in Somerville. The city has created a safety issue by increasing the space allocated for biking while not regulating it the way car traffic is regulated. This has simultaneously made walking and biking more dangerous and car traffic more challenging. My 13 year old son was shaken yesterday when he witnessed this first hand. He watched a biker run a red light at high speed on Somerville Ave. during an all way pedestrian crosswalk. The biker struck a pedestrian crossing the road. When the police arrived 2-3 minutes later the pedestrian was still unconscious. As evidence, please see the attached video he took.

Below is a list of issues I see with the increasing bike infrastructure.

1. The on-road bike lane infrastructure added to the roads so far is unsafe for bikers. Cambridge has implemented similar bike infrastructure. 3 bikers have died in Cambridge in the past 5 months. As a result, Cambridge stopped work on additional bike lanes and are reassessing safety. Somerville should do the same before another biker is killed.
2. Traffic laws, such as stopping at red lights and 4-way stops, aren't being enforced for bikers. Bikers aren't held accountable for their behavior, so they have no reason to follow the rules. Most bikers bike through pedestrian crosswalks and ignore the "bike traffic lights" instead of following the traffic laws and waiting for the green light. These behaviors have led to pedestrians getting hurt. See attached video as evidence.
3. The Somerville community and green line extension paths are not patrolled, and basic biking laws aren't being defined and enforced appropriately. Most bikes move at high speed down these paths, don't announce passing, and pass pedestrians within close proximity. These behaviors make for an unsafe environment for the pedestrians and children that also use these paths. This is especially true for e-bikes and Mopeds which are heavy and regularly travel at >30 mph on the paths. If speed limit enforcement on the paths isn't implemented, someone will be killed.
4. Accommodating bike lanes, for example on Summer and Washington streets, is making it difficult to drive in Somerville. This has a negative impact on families that need to get around via car since these changes congest traffic. I'm a parent of 3 children and to get them to their activities on time I must drive. I'm fully supportive of traffic calming measures such as speed humps on our roads, but not supportive of narrowing roads to incorporate bike lanes.

Below is a list of suggestions I think the city should consider.

1. Reconsider the bike infrastructure before the problems get worse and someone gets killed.
2. Remove all 4-way pedestrian crosswalks. If the pedestrian crosswalks aren't 4-way, bikers can't bike through the red lights. This would make it safer for pedestrians. For example, Cambridge doesn't have 4-way pedestrian crosswalks and I don't see bikers running red lights when I'm in Cambridge.

3. Add speed bumps to the Somerville community and green line extension paths. These traffic calming measures that have been added to Somerville streets and have reduced the speed of cars, would also work on the community paths.
4. Establish laws on biking, especially on the community paths, and enforce those laws. If bikers know they will be held accountable to the law, they will be more likely to follow it.

I have a few questions for the city about the community paths.

1. What is the definition of motor vehicle with respect to the community paths?
2. Are Mopeds, which I'm defining as any vehicle that has an engine and no pedals, allowed to use the community paths?
3. Are e-bikes considered motor vehicles? They can move at very fast speeds, significantly faster than a non-electric bike.
4. Is there a speed limit that has been defined for the community path? If yes, what is it?

In summary, It appears that Somerville is over-investing in bike infrastructure to serve a small portion of Somerville residents, 15% according to the website, while having a negative impact on 85% of Somerville residents. The changes that have been made aren't being regulated in a way that keeps bikers, pedestrians, and drivers safe. I hope that the city will consider the points above that I will see changes that increase safety in the near future.

Thank you for your time.

Amy White

[REDACTED]. Somerville

