



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Traffic and Parking Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 26, 2022

6:00 PM

Others present: Brad Rawson-OSPCD, Viola Augustin-OSPCD, Hannah Carrillo-Mayor's Office and Mark Chase-resident and Neighborways

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:03p.m. by Chairperson Gomez Mouakad and adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Beatriz Gomez Mouakad , Ben Ewen-Campen and Vice Chair Jake Wilson

Studies - New Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-1454](#))
By Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Wilson and Councilor Kelly
That the Director of Mobility provide this Council with a timeline for a final Bicycle Network Vision Plan.

Viola Augustin, Senior planner and Project Manager gave a slide presentation summarizing the status.

The presentation was called the Bicycle network plan 9/26/22. The summary included: Community Engagement with bike talk launch plan over a year ago, handlebar survey rides, virtual public meeting, online survey in multiple languages. There were discussions about wanting 86 miles of bicycle infrastructure which includes 52 miles protected bike lanes, 23 miles neighborways, 2 miles shared street, 8 miles off street plan and 1-mile existing bike lane. They will publish a draft of the Network Plan in November. Additionally, they will start a bicycle design guide in the fall 2022 which will include wayfinding. The team is hoping to finish a bike parking plan in 2023.

Councilor Ewen-Campen asked about tying the plan to an ordinance. Director Rawson stated the city of Cambridge has the country's only ordinance of its type and City of Somerville should take lessons learned from Cambridge. One of the examples from the City of Cambridge is making sure the city does early and often outreach to the community. The City of Somerville wants to understand what type of communications the City of Somerville will need in the network plan.

Councilor Wilson asked about wayfinding signage and if it will help make it easier to navigate around Somerville. He mentioned the City of Medford's wayfinding. He asked about a law suit to challenge the authority of council in Cambridge passing an ordinance. Director Rawson stated they have been trying to understand the Cambridge process and suggested following up on the law suit with the city solicitor. Ms. Augustin talked about the goal to not leave a weak leak. The residential design should be for low volume and safety. It will be a challenge to design in certain areas which is why they are

looking closely at the bicycle design guide.

Chair Gomez Mouakad asked about when the bike lanes end and the cyclist is thrown into traffic. Traffic stress can be influenced by many variables. The Chair also stated one of issues is running through red lights and asked if bike signaling is a goal for the city. She also asked about being cognitive of school areas. The Chair asked if the city will ask for enough bike parking. Director Rawson will examine bike parking and standard operation procedures in all neighborhoods. The Chair stated that all new development should include bicycle friendly in the street designs.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Studies - Old Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-0182](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Director of Parking provide regular updates on the status of the Parking Utilization Study.

This is a recurring item. Director Rawson provided a quick summary on next steps for the fall.

The study document has been prepared by the consultant team. There is a task force of community members. There is a draft study report that will be finalized and published in October. The study will provide user feedback and potential scenarios for the futures of curbs on public streets. The city staff, council and community will work together to identify the appropriate solutions going forward to manage curb safe and quality of life commitments.

Councilor Ewen-Campen asked Director for the next steps which will be for the administration to publish a study and initiate a process with the city council.

The Chair asked how will curb management work with the current sidewalk conditions. Director Rawson stated the current sidewalk conditions can be a challenge for the city's senior residents.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

On Going Projects - New Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-1412](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen

That the Director of Mobility provide this Council with an updated schedule for the redesign of Highland Avenue.

Councilor Ewen-Campen stated the administration is working on the CIP and will provide a clear update once this is done. He wants to understand if Highland Ave is a high priority. Director Rawson stated they are working on CIP and Highland Avenue is a critical priority on the plan. The team is currently working to understand costs for streetscape redesign. Councilor Ewen-Campen suggested there be an update to the community on the status

of the design process on Highland Ave. The Chair suggested there be a timeline to share with the community. Director Rawson talked about Request for Proposal could be in an on-call capacity and will provide more details on the options as they move forward. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked for a more detailed forecast on this project. Director Rawson suggested following up with Directors Carrillo and Bean on timeline. Councilor Wilson stated he hears about the rough shape of Highland Avenue from multiple residents.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 2. Order
(ID # [22-1413](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Director of Parking consider a "local preference" parking permit policy for the post-reconstruction resident parking spaces on Highland Avenue.

Councilor Ewen-Campen sponsored Mark Chase from the community to speak at tonight's meeting. He is involved with Transportation planning and teaches at Tufts and a good person to talk about neighborways. He talked about local preference parking to prioritize local existing resident streets who are giving up parking to be residents of the street only. Mark suggested to create a district along Highland Avenue for residents who live on the street who would have some sense of the parking on the street. Also, not give parking to new residents on the street unless they show some sort of hardship. Director Rawson stated these ideas have been thought of through planning efforts. They want to think through the details of prioritizing parking.

Councilor Wilson asked about resident parking expiration dates. The parking taskforce has thoughts about more enforcement activities, such as digital light license plate reader.

Councilor Ewen-Campen heard from local businesses on how hard it is to park near their businesses. Regulated parking and short-term parking could work for the Highland Avenues, with residential parking at night.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

- 3. Order
(ID # [22-1455](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That the Director of Mobility report on the feasibility of installing quick-build protected bike lanes on Broadway, and ways that the City plans to enhance safety for cyclists.

Director Rawson stated the staff and consultants are doing test fits, checking if the street could be allocated differently than it is today, wider sidewalks, protected bike facilities and etc. They are evaluating alternatives where a

terrible crash occurred. They provided an alternative quick build to the mayor which included a stronger recommendation on Holland Street. The city-wide bike network plan includes a protected bike lane in one-way direction in certain areas.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [22-1456](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That the Director of Mobility provide an update on the timeline for the Community Path extension.

Director Rawson stated the most recent public update expects that pedestrian train service is expected late November. Community path extension is expected to be completed at the end of the calendar year.

Councilor Ewen-Campen asked why the GLX team does not give clear timelines.

Chair Gomez Mouakad asked who will shovel the snow on the community path. Director Rawson stated that historically parts are owned by the MBTA and operated by the city. He recommends the same service for the community path with the city expecting to care for the community path.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

On Going Projects - Old Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-0091](#))

By Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Mobility update this Council on efforts to establish a 20 MPH speed limit for all neighborhood residential streets.

Director Rawson stated this has been discussed many times in this committee. They have been accepting public feedback. In the month of July, the city's traffic commission added another 6 or 7 streets. They continue to add extra signage and have new staffing to get this work done. Councilor Wilson stated he is seeing more signs and navigation apps updated with the speed limits, which means better drivers.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Traffic Calming - New Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-1471](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.
That the Mobility Department work to clearly mark all speed bumps in the city.

Chair Gomez Mouakad commented that she goes through the city and noticed that the speed humps can be marked differently around the city. She heard a comment from a firefighter that they are driving at night and cannot see the speed hump. Chair Gomez Mouakad would like an engineering

standard and better marking.

Director Rawson stated there is engineering standard with dashes or chevron marks. There are signs in place and this year constructed 25 speed humps. He will take this feedback to Mr. Postlewaite in the engineering department. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked questions why some speed humps do not appear to be in their final state. Director Rawson stated that some markings are temporary traffic tape and may have fallen off. In some areas, the contractor did not use enough asphalt. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked if there will be repairs in a timely manner. Director Rawson stated that contract management is looking through and pushing to allocate crews with reliable schedules. The Chair wants the city councilors to be notified when the work will be done in their wards.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

2. Order
(ID # [22-1196](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Kelly

That the Director of Mobility update this Council on the effectiveness and possible expansion of motion detector streetlights to manage traffic flows.

Director Rawson has talked to Councilor McLaughlin and would like to provide an update at a future meeting. He will have a better conversation within a month or two.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Traffic Calming - Old Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-0832](#))

By Councilor Wilson, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Director of Engineering report on all traffic calming improvements and their scheduled implementation at all intersections for the new Community Path Extension.

Councilor Ewen-Campen asked about curb cuts near community path crossing. Director Rawson stated there is a challenge where the street crossing meets with the bridge joints. This area is under the control of MassDOT. Under this project, MassDOT will not make any fundamental changes.

Councilor Wilson had a conversation with Mr. Postlewaite about stripes that are rolls of painted grooves that warns drivers of the areas. Maybe there could be something done with the pavement to bring attention to the drivers.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Enforcement - New Business

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1. Order
(ID # [22-1199](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Parking explore using regional residential parking permits to reduce parking congestion on streets close to public transit.
- Director Rawson stated this item could be similar to previous conversation about Highland Avenue. It will be very interesting with the new Green Lines opening up with Gilman and Ball Squares. They will evaluate on the options to make better use of parking resources.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

Enforcement - Old Business

1. Order
(ID # [22-0829](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
That the Chief of Police provide the Ward an At-Large Councilors monthly motor vehicle accident reports, detailing pedestrian and bicycle accidents.
- A memo was sent on this item. Chair Gomez Mouakad receives accident reports from Somerville Police Department that could be very helpful to other councilors to better understand what's not working in their wards.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
2. Order
(ID # [22-0827](#))
- By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Parking instruct Parking Control Officers to enforce the ban on license plate covers, in accordance with MGL c.90, §6.
- Councilor Wilson spoke to Director Rinfret on this matter and if fine with the information. Ms. Carrillo stated she spoke to Somerville Police Department and this is enforced by the police.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
3. Order
(ID # [22-0190](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Administration provide a report for all departments using city vehicles for non-emergency services, detailing the measures taken to ensure that staff follow traffic regulations, including the hands free while driving law, and maintain maximum traffic safety while driving.
- The committee received a memo on this item which is attached to the agenda.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**