

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
ORDINANCE NO. 2024-
IN CITY COUNCIL: _____, 2024

Be it ordained by the City Council, in session assembled, that Chapter 12, Article VII, the Complete Streets Ordinance, of the code of ordinances of the City of Somerville is amended as follows by removing the ~~struckthrough~~ text and adding the underlined text.

Sec. 12-116. —~~Complete streets ordinance.~~— Purpose.

The primary aim of the Safe Streets Ordinance is to eliminate fatalities and injuries on city streets in accordance with the City’s Vision Zero goals, and to enhance access, convenience, and comfort for all users of all ages and abilities, providing for equality in use between pedestrians (including people who make use of mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and freight drivers. The method for accomplishing this aim is the design, operation, improvement, and maintenance of the transportation network to create a connected network of facilities accommodating each mode of travel, consistent with and supportive of the local community. The ordinance recognizes that all streets are different and that the needs of various users will need to be balanced in a flexible manner to achieve complete streets.

Sec. 12-116.1. – Definitions.

Bicycle lane miles means the combined distance of separated bicycle facilities. A two-way facility or one-way facilities in both directions on a one-mile street segment shall count for two bicycle lane miles. A one-way facility on a one-mile one-way street segment shall count for one bicycle lane mile. If a gap in a separated bicycle facility of any distance occurs for any reason other than those specified in the definition of the particular separated bicycle facility, the distance of the gap shall not be counted toward bicycle lane miles.

Connectivity means the provision of a permanent separated bicycle lane system that reflects desired routes between all major origins and destinations in the City.

Improvements means the construction of a new public street or the reconstruction of an existing public street, including but not limited to full-depth reconstruction, widening or narrowing of roadway, or realignment of street or intersection. Improvements shall not include routine maintenance, including but not limited to activities to repair damaged pavement, provide access to persons with disabilities, or to protect or improve other municipal assets (e.g. trees and utilities), provided that existing bicycle lanes shall be restored to existing conditions or better.

Permanent separated bicycle lane means a bicycle lane separated from motor vehicle traffic by a permanent vertical barrier that shall remain in place year-round, including but not limited to granite barriers, concrete barriers, or raised curbs, provided, however, that the bicycle lane need not be separated from motor vehicle traffic by a permanent vertical barrier for short stretches to accommodate crosswalks, curb cuts, drainage, accessible parking and loading, intersections, and public transportation. Existing bicycle lanes may be temporarily removed during city-conducted or city-permitted construction or maintenance, so long as they are restored to existing conditions or better. Further refinement of the definition and requirements of permanent separated bicycle lanes shall be provided by design guides created by the City of Somerville and incorporated into this definition, including any updates and name changes.

Public transportation means bus and shuttle stops as defined by Massachusetts General Law, including those requiring municipal licenses as defined by MGL Ch. 159A § 1.

Priority network means the subset of bicycle facilities targeted for priority installation in the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan (April 2023). It shall include any updates to the priority network, regardless of potential name changes.

Quick-build separated bicycle lane means a bicycle lane separated from motor vehicle traffic by flexible delineator posts, on-street parking, or a similar separator, that shall remain in place year-round, provided, however, that the bicycle lane need not be separated from motor vehicle traffic for short stretches to accommodate crosswalks, curb cuts, accessible parking and accessible loading, intersections, and public transportation, and provided further, that existing bicycle lanes may be temporarily removed during city-conducted or city-permitted construction or maintenance, so long as they are restored to existing conditions or better.

Separated bicycle facilities means either a permanent separated bicycle lane or a quick-build separated bicycle lane.

Separated network means the proposed set of bicycle facilities identified in the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan, or any plan superseding it, provided, however, that any such plan shall maintain Connectivity.

Somerville Bicycle Network Plan means the plan dated April 2023 and approved by the city council on October 05, 2023 to create a framework for developing a network of complete streets. It shall include any update to the existing plan, regardless of potential name changes.

Vision Zero Action Plan means the plan published the City of Somerville in April 2020 with a strategy to eliminate deaths and serious injuries from the transportation system and specific actions to be taken to achieve that goal. It shall include any update to the existing plan, regardless of potential name changes.

Sec. 12-116.2 – Designing Complete Streets.

~~The City of Somerville shall enhance the safety, access, convenience and comfort of all users of all ages and abilities, providing for equality in use between pedestrians (including people requiring mobility aids), bicyclists, transit users, motorists and freight drivers, through the design, operation and maintenance of the transportation network so as to create a connected network of facilities accommodating each mode of travel that is consistent with and supportive of the local community, recognizing that all streets are different and that the needs of various users will need to be balanced in a flexible manner to achieve complete streets.~~

- (a) The City of Somerville will incorporate complete street elements into public transportation projects in order to provide appropriate accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and persons of all abilities, while promoting safe operation for all users, in comprehensive and connected networks in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community.
- (b) As feasible, City of Somerville shall incorporate complete streets infrastructure into existing streets to improve the safety and convenience of users, construct and enhance the transportation network for each category of users, and foster economic development and new employment.
- (c) The City of Somerville recognizes that complete streets may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.
- (d) The City of Somerville shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, ~~including conducting, once per year, a "rules,~~
- (e) ~~The City of the road"~~ Somerville shall conduct regular education ~~campaigns~~ campaigns to ~~better~~ inform ~~eyelists~~ of all roadway users about city ~~and~~ state traffic regulations and provide tips for traveling safely. This work shall be done by the office of strategic planning and community development, with approval from communications, traffic and parking, DPW, and in cooperation with other departments, agencies, jurisdictions and associations.
- (f) City of Somerville shall follow the most current version of the National Association of City Transportation Officials Street Design Guide.
- (g) Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities shall be incorporated, when applicable and practical, in all street ~~projects~~ improvements, reconstruction, repaving, and rehabilitation projects, ~~with only the following exceptions:~~
 - ~~(1) Bicycles or pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the facility~~
 - ~~(2) The cost of establishing bikeways or walkways as part of the project would be disproportionate in cost or to anticipated future use (not the current use)~~

~~(3) The existing right of way is constrained in a manner that inhibits simple addition of transit, bicycle, or pedestrian improvements. In this case, the city shall consider alternatives such as lane reduction, lane narrowing, on-street parking relocation or reduction, shoulders, signage, traffic calming, or enforcement~~

~~(4) Where such facilities would constitute a threat to public safety or health in the determination of the city traffic engineer in consultation with the department of transportation and infrastructure.~~

- (h) All initial planning and design studies, health impact assessments, environmental reviews, and other project reviews for projects requiring funding or approval by City of Somerville shall (1) evaluate the effect of the proposed project on safe travel by all users, and (2) identify measures to mitigate any adverse impacts on such travel that are identified.
- (i) In design guidelines, City of Somerville shall coordinate templates with street classifications and revise them to include complete streets infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and cycle tracks, sidewalks, street crossings, curb geometries, and planting strips. The design of new or reconstructed facilities should anticipate and support likely future demand for bicycling, walking and transit facilities.
- (j) Nothing in this article is intended to impose any additional civil liability upon the City of Somerville other than that which is imposed by existing law.

Sec. 12-116.3. – Bicycle lane installation.

~~(a) Whenever improvements are made to a public street, the City of Somerville shall cause such improvements to comply with the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan; provided, that if improvements are made to a segment of a public street designated for a protected bike lane in the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan, a permanent separated bicycle lane shall be installed along that segment. The directionality of such permanent separated bicycle lane shall be as specified in the Somerville Bicycle Network plan or greater.~~

~~(b) Full compliance with the provisions of (a) is not required where the City of Somerville can demonstrate through a written alternatives analysis, to be made public, why it is impractical to comply with the provisions of (a) above, and where there will be a loss of connectivity if the provisions of (a) are not complied with, how connectivity could be otherwise advanced, if possible. Full compliance with the provisions of (a) will be considered impracticable only in those rare circumstances where the City of Somerville determines that the characteristics of the physical features or usage of a street, or financial constraints of full compliance prevent the incorporation of a permanent separated bicycle lane with directionality as specified in the Somerville Bicycle Network plan or greater.~~

~~(c) By no later than December 31, 2030, the City of Somerville shall complete the installation of all bicycle lane miles designated for protected bike lanes in the priority network of the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan (April 2023), provided, however, that such bicycle lane miles shall be separated bicycle facilities, and provided further, that no less than 29 miles of separated bicycle facilities shall be installed by December 31, 2030.~~

~~(a)(d) If any separated bicycle facilities are proposed to be permanent separated bicycle lanes, the requirements of (c) shall be satisfied so long as the construction of such separated bicycle facilities has commenced prior to the deadline established by (c). In addition, the City of Somerville shall have the discretion to extend the deadline set out in (c) by no more than one year if the City of Somerville deems it infeasible to meet the deadline, provided, however, that the City of Somerville shall submit to the city council a report detailing why such extension is necessary by no later than March 1, 2029.~~

~~(e) All obligations and requirements set forth in this section are subject to appropriation and to the capital planning process.~~

Sec. 12-116.4. – Accessible Parking.

~~If the installation of any separated bicycle facility includes a reduction in the number of available on-street parking spaces, the city shall not reduce the number of accessible spaces reserved for persons with disabilities by making~~

them available for general use. Wherever possible, and where it will not unreasonably limit available parking for other vehicles, the number of such accessible parking spaces shall be increased.

Sec. 12.116.5. – Pedestrian & Transit Improvements.

(a) The City of Somerville shall be obligated to meet the quantifiable goals for pedestrian and transit infrastructure detailed in the Vision Zero Action Plan and the Somerville ADA Title II Transition Plan, including any subsequent updates to these plans.

(a)(b) Full compliance with the provisions of (a) is not required where the City of Somerville can demonstrate through a written alternatives analysis, to be made public, why it is impractical to comply with the provisions of (a) above and how pedestrian and transit infrastructure could be otherwise advanced, if possible. Full compliance with the provisions of (a) will be considered impracticable only in those rare circumstances where the City of Somerville determines that the characteristics of the physical features or usage of a street, or financial constraints prevent full compliance.

(c) All obligations and requirements set forth in this section are subject to appropriation and to the capital planning process.

Sec. 12-116.7. – Reporting.

(a) By no later than March 1, 2025, the City of Somerville shall submit a report to the city council detailing progress towards meeting the requirements set forth in this ordinance. Thereafter, a report shall be given to the city council no later than 12 months from the date of the preceding report. Such report shall include the following:

(1) Details on separated bicycle facilities installed in the previous year’s construction season and separated bicycle facilities planned for installation during the current year’s construction season.

(2) A plan to install no less than 3 bicycle lane miles in the current year’s construction season and a multi-year plan for installing all bicycle lane miles of separated bicycle facilities designated for protected bike lanes in the priority network of the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan.

(3) A forecasted expenditure for installing such bicycle lane miles.

(4) An update regarding the City’s progress on the quantifiable goals for pedestrian and transit infrastructure detailed in the Vision Zero Action Plan.

(a)(b) Installation of separated bicycle facilities, including the total of bicycle lane miles installed under the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan, shall be shown on a publicly accessible website. Such website shall also track exactly where those bicycle lane miles were installed, and the distance of each contiguous segment of bicycle lane miles installed. Such website shall be established by no later than March 1, 2025, and updated at least twice yearly thereafter. All other reports and updates required by this ordinance shall also be uploaded to such a website.

Approved:

President

Approved:

Mayor