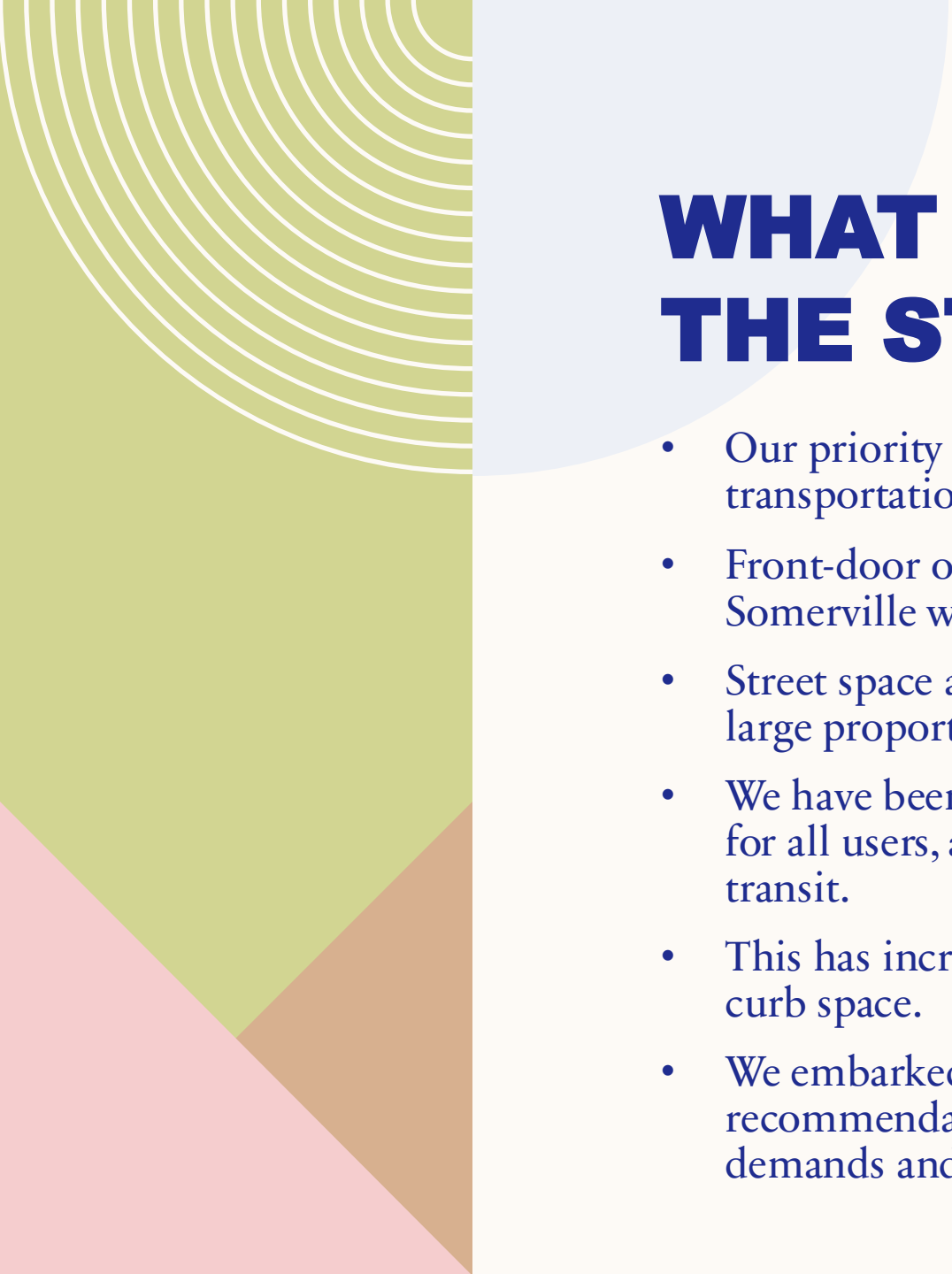




**CITYWIDE PARKING AND  
CURB USE POLICY STUDY  
WINTER 2025 UPDATE**

**CITY COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 27, 2025**



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- Our priority is to create a more sustainable, equitable and accessible transportation network.
- Front-door on-street parking at all destinations cannot be guaranteed if Somerville wants to achieve this vision.
- Street space accounts for more than a quarter of Somerville's land area, and a large proportion is dedicated to vehicle parking and storage.
- We have been transforming more of our street space to create safer options for all users, and more space for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.
- This has increased the range of priorities competing for our limited curb space.
- We embarked on this study from 2021 to 2022 to help produce a set of recommendations and guide how we manage this limited curb to meet the demands and goals for the future.

# WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?

- Study goals and process
- Key findings from:
  - Engagement
  - Curb regulations and inventory analysis
  - Curb utilization analysis
- Parking and Curb Profile summarizes key data
- Key Issues and Opportunities
- Curb prioritization framework

Read the report at [somerillema.gov/parkingstudy](https://somerillema.gov/parkingstudy).



# RECOMMENDATIONS THEMES



Strengthen Parking  
Administration and  
Operations



Reallocate Curb  
Space to Support  
Community Goals



Adjust Regulations  
to Better Manage  
Parking Demand



Revise the Permit  
Program to Meet  
Community Goals

# THE STRATEGY MATRIX

- Strategies are intended to be **flexible**
- This is a **menu of options**
- Not all strategies may be implemented, but all have value
- Later strategies are dependent on earlier ones
  - **Technology and staffing investments** are key to enabling long-term goals

STRATEGY MATRIX				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Strategy Number and Name	Priority	Prerequisite Strategy						
A1	Clarify curb management roles.	High	–					
C1	Implement a Curb Prioritization Framework to prioritize curb access for the users with the greatest need.	High	–					
C3	Ensure adequate access for commercial and passenger loading activities in key districts.	High	A1, C1					
C7	Ensure adequate access for customers of local businesses.	High	A1, C1					
A2	Continue to expand loading zones and improve loading zone request procedure.	Medium	A1, A4, C1					
A3	Formalize and streamline parklet request and permitting process and expand the number of shared spaces.	Medium	A1, A4, C1					
A4	Formalize and improve communications processes, including website.	High	A1, A6					
A11	Implement design standards to reduce modal conflicts and integrate curbside needs into all roadway redesigns.	High	A1, C1					
B7	Ensure adequate access for employees of local businesses, including by revising the Business Visitor Permit Pass.	Low	A1, A6					
A6	Enhance enforcement protocols and add staff capacity.	High	A1					
C2	Expand multimodal (bus and bike) infrastructure.	High	A1, C1					
C6	Increase accessible parking in all neighborhoods in Somerville.	High	A1, A6					
D5	Seek shared parking opportunities, particularly during new development.	Medium	A1					
C4	Enhance wayfinding to public parking facilities.	Medium	A1, A6					
A7	Procure management and enforcement technology.	High	A1, A6					

A Operations and Administration    
 B Revise the Permit Program    
 C Reallocate Curb Space    
 D Adjust Regulations to Manage Demand



## STRATEGY MATRIX

Strategy Number and Name	Priority	Prerequisite Strategy
<b>A1</b> Clarify curb management roles.	High	—
<b>C1</b> Implement a Curb Prioritization Framework to prioritize curb access for the users with the greatest need.	High	—
<b>C3</b> Ensure adequate access for commercial and passenger loading activities in key districts.	High	A1, C1
<b>C7</b> Ensure adequate access for customers of local businesses.	High	A1, C1
<b>A2</b> Continue to expand loading zones and improve loading zone request procedure.	Medium	A1, A4, C1
<b>A3</b> Formalize and streamline parklet request and permitting process and expand the number of shared spaces.	Medium	A1, A4, C1
<b>A4</b> Formalize and improve communications processes, including website.	High	A1, A6
<b>A11</b> Implement design standards to reduce modal conflicts and integrate curb needs into all roadway redesigns.	High	A1, C1
<b>B7</b> Ensure adequate access for employees of local businesses, including by revising the Business Visitor Permit Pass.	Low	A1, A6
<b>A6</b> Enhance enforcement protocols and add staff capacity.	High	A1
<b>C2</b> Expand multimodal (bus and bike) infrastructure.	High	A1, C1
<b>C6</b> Increase accessible parking in all neighborhoods in Somerville.	High	A1, A6
<b>D5</b> Seek shared parking opportunities, particularly during new development.	Medium	A1
<b>C4</b> Enhance wayfinding to public parking facilities.	Medium	A1, A6
<b>A7</b> Procure management and enforcement technology.	High	A1, A6

**A** Operations and Administration

**B** Revise the Permit Program

**C** Reallocate Curb Space

## Strategy Matrix (continued)

Strategy Number and Name	Priority	Prerequisite Strategy
<b>A8</b> Implement a virtual permitting system to enable advanced parking management.	High	A1, A6, A7
<b>B1</b> Increase the on-street parking permit price.	Low	A1, A6
<b>D4</b> Require unbundling off-street parking spaces.	Medium	A1
<b>A5</b> Complete and refine digitization and data strategy.	High	A1, A6
<b>A10</b> Pilot automated enforcement technologies.	High	A1, A6
<b>A12</b> Collaborate with ride-hail vendors to manage demand and operations.	High	A1, A6
<b>B2</b> Implement graduated permit pricing for on-street permits and cap the number of available permits per household.	Low	A1, A6, A7
<b>B3</b> Charge a higher permit price for people with off-street access.	Low	A1, A6, A7
<b>B4</b> Place a cap on permits by zone.	Low	A1, A6, A7, A8, A10
<b>B6</b> Tie the permit cost to income level.	Low	A1, A6, A7
<b>D1</b> Implement flexible curbside regulations.	Medium	A1, C1, A6, A10, A5
<b>D2</b> Add meters to the most popular two-hour spaces to encourage turnover.	Medium	A1, C1
<b>D3</b> Set meter and other curb pricing based on demand.	Medium	A1, C1, A6, A5
<b>B5</b> Enforce permits based on zones and reassess geography.	Low	A1, A6, A7, A8, A10
<b>C5</b> Add off-street and on-street electric vehicle charging stations to meet growing demand.	Medium	A1, C1, A6
<b>A9</b> Revise the visitor permit program for LPR-based enforcement with a daily, graduated rate.	Low	A1, A6, A7, A8, A10

**A** Operations and Administration

**B** Revise the Permit Program

**C** Reallocate Curb Space

# **A1: CLARIFY CURB MANAGEMENT ROLES**

- A new Project Manager position was created through the Parking Department's FY24 budget and filled in October 2023.
- The Project Manager oversees department curb management strategies and participates in regular planning meetings with the Mobility and Engineering Divisions.
- The Mobility and Engineering Divisions have increased staffing capacity which has allowed greater coordination among all three departments.
- The interdepartmental teams are working to define clear roles and responsibilities to enhance interdepartmental coordination.

# C1: IMPLEMENT A CURB PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK

- When the City is redesigning a street or street segment, we look at surrounding land uses and the area context to rethink curb management.
- This includes talking with businesses about delivery operations and customer patterns, working with nearby schools to understand school arrival and dismissal patterns, conducting parking utilization analysis, and more.
- To help make curb management more effective, the study produced guidance for prioritization in commercial and residential areas.
- This prioritization deprioritizes long-term storage space and creates more priority for mobility options and people such as protected bicycle facilities, bus lanes, pick up and drop off spaces and deliveries.
- The City pairs understanding of local context with this prioritization framework to develop new parking proposals for a street redesign.

## Commercial/Mixed Use Areas

## Residential Areas

1) Mobility Space	1) Mobility Space
2) People & Goods	2) People & Goods
3) Activated Space	3) Transportation Services
4) Transportation Services	4) Green Space
5) Green Space	5) Storage Space
6) Storage Space	6) Activated Space

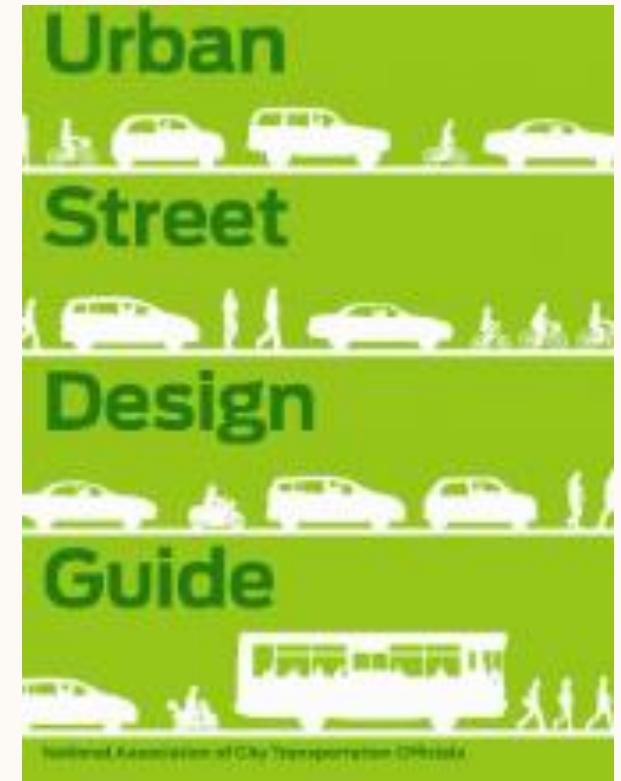
1 = highest priority,  
6 = lowest priority

\*description of each category can be found on the glossary slide at the end



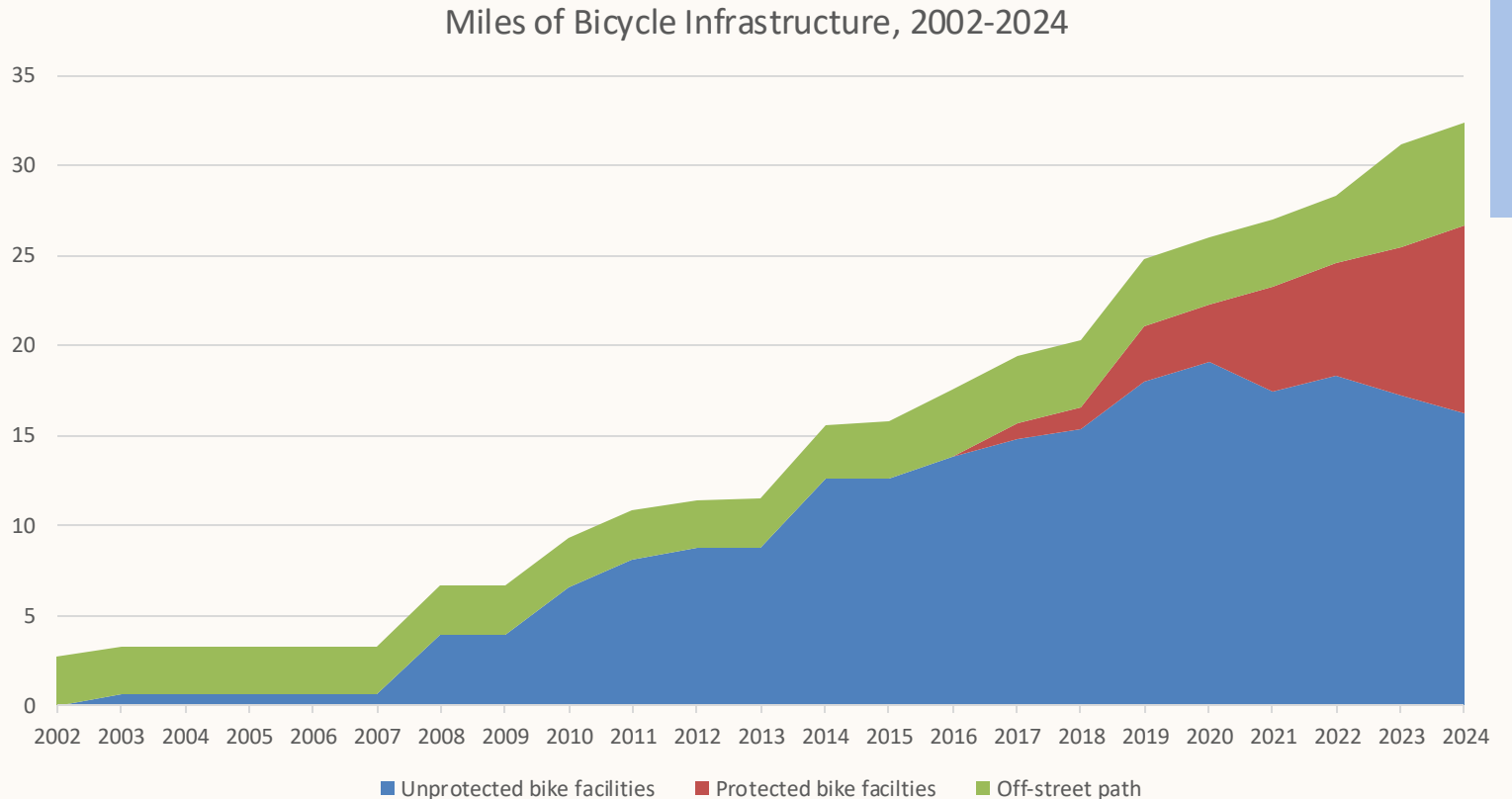
# A11: IMPLEMENT DESIGN STANDARDS TO REDUCE MODAL CONFLICTS AND INTEGRATE CURB NEEDS INTO ALL ROADWAY REDESIGNS

- The Mobility Division regularly references NACTO recommendations for new city street design.
- Critical needs for access are identified during street redesign projects and curb-use needs are an important part of all redesign processes.
- Staff collect data and create maps of proposed curb regulation changes using platforms such as GIS and Adobe during these street redesign projects
  - The City previously had a dedicated curb data platform, Coord, but the vendor ceased operations.
  - The City has not identified a new platform that best fits our needs.



# C2: EXPAND MULTIMODAL (BUS & BIKE) INFRASTRUCTURE

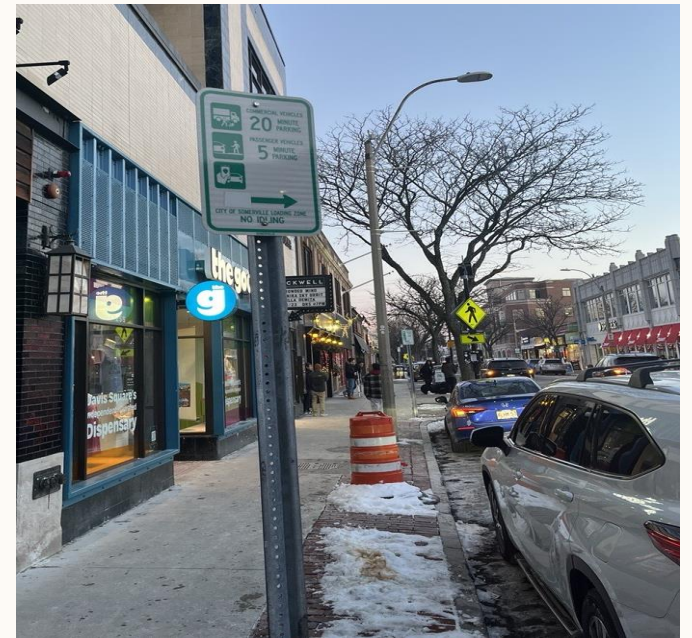
- The City published a Bicycle Network Plan in 2023 and codified the Plan with the Safe Streets Ordinance in 2024.
- The Plan provides a vision for an 88-mile network of protected bike lanes and traffic calmed Neighborways over the next 20 years.
  - Within the Plan, the City created a Priority Network of 30 miles of protected bike lanes and 10 miles of Neighborways to be installed by 2030.
- Since publishing the plan, the City has installed over 4 miles of protected bike lanes.



## **A2: CONTINUE TO EXPAND LOADING ZONES AND IMPROVE LOADING ZONE REQUEST PROCEDURE.**

### **C3: ENSURE ADEQUATE ACCESS FOR COMMERCIAL & PASSENGER LOADING ACTIVITIES**

- Loading zones continue to be a key consideration of street design projects.
- The City also evaluated small business/commercial operations requests on a recurring basis. The Parking Department and Mobility Division have collaborated over the past 2 years to streamline loading zone request, evaluation, and implementation process.
- The City rebranded loading zone signage and began installing new signs throughout the city including in Davis Square, Teele Square, Ball Square, Union Square, and Winter Hill.
- City staff block walking to local businesses to learn more about business operational needs in street projects, and promote new loading zones to businesses, their delivery drivers, and customers.



Rebranded Loading Zone sign on Elm St

# C7: ENSURE ADEQUATE ACCESS FOR CUSTOMERS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

- We continue to prioritize installing more loading zones and accessible parking spaces in commercial areas.
- When we are constructing new protected bike lanes, crosswalks, bus facilities or clear corners markings, we aim to relocate business and customer-focused parking spaces to adjacent side streets.
- We look for opportunities to expand metered parking where appropriate.
  - Ex: New meters installed on Bonner Avenue in Union Square during East Washington Clear Corners implementation in 2024.



Meters installed on Bonner Ave

## **A6: ENSURE ADEQUATE ACCESS FOR EMPLOYEES OF LOCAL BUSINESSES**

- The Parking Department continues to administer the business parking permit program, allowing employees to park in specific resident permit areas in proximity to their job.
- We recognize that this can be challenging in an environment when local business operations may be changing, such as new businesses moving in, or employee patterns can change.
- We continue to promote business permits and business visitor passes to businesses through direct outreach or when engaging with businesses during annual permit renewal.
- We continually evaluate business permit capacity in areas undergoing parking reduction due to streetscape projects.
- The City also works to increase the range of safe and available transportation options for employees.



# C6: INCREASE ACCESSIBLE PARKING

- We aim for at least 5% of available curbside to be regulated as accessible in commercial areas, greater than state & federal guidelines.
- The City generally adds net new accessible spaces in key locations with new street redesign projects.
- The Parking Department continues to work with the ADA Coordinator and Traffic Commission to administer the resident accessible space program.
  - Installed 11 new spaces in front of residents' homes in 2024.



Accessible Space installed on Holland St



# **A7: PROCURE MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT TECHNOLOGY.**

## **A10: PILOT AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT TECHNOLOGIES**

- The City partnered with SafetyStick to install automated parking enforcement cameras. A first in the state of Massachusetts!
- The City piloted the installation on Elm Street in Davis Square where we've seen higher rates of illegal parking in the bus stop, accessible space, and on crosswalks.
- We expanded the program to include the bus lanes on Holland Street and bus stops in Magoun Square.
- We will continue to prioritize new Safety Stick installations in priority bus stops and other locations where we see higher amounts of illegal parking causing safety issues.
- We also expanded parking payment options for metered spaces to include 4 apps, credit cards, and coins.



Somerville PCOs posing with Safety Stick on Elm St for photo that was included in latest edition of Parking Today magazine

# **D1: IMPLEMENT FLEXIBLE CURBSIDE REGULATIONS.**

## **D2: ADD METERS TO THE MOST POPULAR TWO-HOUR SPACES TO ENCOURAGE TURNOVER**

- The City continues to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of 24/7 loading zones vs time-limited loading zones throughout the city.
- We implement more metered parking through street redesign projects or in smaller installations based on business and resident feedback.
- Projects to date include Holland Street, College Avenue, Ball Square, East Broadway, Bonner Avenue.



New meters (previously two-hour spaces) on Broadway near Ball Square

# C4: ENHANCE WAYFINDING TO PUBLIC PARKING FACILITIES

- The City installed a wayfinding sign for the Buena Vista parking lot that displays the number of available spaces.
- The Parking Department worked with Union Square Main Streets and East Somerville Main Streets to install wayfinding signs to direct people from new Green Line stations to business districts.



Wayfinding sign at the Buena Vista lot

# **C5: ADD OFF-STREET AND ON-STREET ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS**

- The Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) has identified ~254 off-street EV charging stations generated through projects that have been issued permits and gone through their sustainability review.
- The City commissioned a Siting Strategy in 2023 to identify best locations for new chargers.
- We applied for grants that would add 10 new dual-port stations to our municipal public charging inventory.
- The City adopted Specialized Energy Code.
  - Requires 1 parking spot with Level II EV charging per unit in 1-&2-family developments.
  - 20% of spots in multifamily buildings must have EV chargers.



## **D4: REQUIRE UNBUNDLING OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES.**

## **D5: SEEK SHARED PARKING OPPORTUNITIES DURING NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- Unbundling off-street parking spaces from the sale or lease of dwelling units or non-residential space is a standard requirement for all new development subject to a Mobility Management Plan (>20 units, >50k sf or >50 employees)
- Mobility Management commitments are enforced via annual reporting once buildings are occupied.
- District parking maximums are in place in many development subareas
- Mobility recommends conditions to the Somerville Planning Board that require all new parking garages at large commercial developments to be operated as commercial parking facilities open to the public.
- City can track parking facilities of developments subject to Mobility Management Plans (>20 units, >50k sf or >50 employees) and will receive annual reports of occupancy and travel patterns as these projects become occupied.

# A12: COLLABORATE WITH RIDE-HAIL VENDORS TO MANAGE DEMAND AND OPERATIONS

- Collaboration with ride-hail vendors remains challenging.
- In high demand areas, the City prefers to use multi-use short term passenger and commercial regulations rather than space dedicated specifically to ride-hail vehicles.
  - We continue to promote 5-minute passenger plate feature of loading zones to ride-hail and food delivery vehicles.
  - We incorporated graphics geared towards these vehicles in new loading zone signs.
- We were able to remove previous ride-hail zones that were not working as intended on either side.



Rebranded loading zone sign



## **A4: FORMALIZE AND IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS.**

## **A5: COMPLETE AND REFINE DIGITIZATION STRATEGY**

- The Parking Dept. continually reviews the website and makes improvements wherever possible.
- Parking, Mobility, and Engineering staff regularly coordinate on developing standard public messaging and constituent responses to ensure accuracy and consistency across departments.
- The City tracks a number of metrics listed in recommendation A5, but more work is needed.
- Staff regularly meet with vendors to learn about current data collection and evaluation technology.

# A3: FORMALIZE & STREAMLINE PARKLET REQUEST AND PERMITTING PROCESS

- The City has created a permanent licensing process for parklets.
- Parking collaborated with Engineering and Mobility to improve parking restriction request process ahead of parklet installations.
- Parking, Mobility, and Engineering coordinate on relocation of loading zones and accessible spaces that conflicted with parklets to ensure space for both uses are maintained.



Parklets utilized by local businesses on Elm St

# OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are a number of recommendations from the study that are not a priority at this time or have high barriers to implementation.
  - Barriers include budgetary considerations, staffing levels, and technology procurement.
- We want to focus on changing behavior and expanding alternate transportation options for all Somerville residents and visitors.
- We recognize that this process will take time and are continuing to work towards meeting our goals.

# **GLOSSARY – CURB PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK DEFINITIONS**

- **Mobility Space** – through-movement of people and goods on a variety of vehicle types (general purpose lanes, bike lanes, bus lanes)
- **People & Goods** – support pickups and drop-offs from public transit or private vehicles and loading and unloading of delivery goods (commercial loading, bus stops, passenger pickup, accessible loading, valet zones)
- **Activated Space** – an extension of public space and the sidewalk, encouraging activities, events, and interaction (parklets, extended sidewalks, plazas, food trucks, curbside dining, farmers' markets)
- **Transportation Services** – dedicate space to access transportation services, which are frequently the result of partnerships with private mobility service companies (car share, bike share stations, electric vehicle charging)
- **Green Space** – support green space for public access and environmental services (planting, trees, bioswales, rain gardens)
- **Storage Space** – accommodate the short- to long-term storage of vehicles (metered parking, permit parking, accessible parking, bus layover space, in-street bike parking)

**THANK  
YOU**

