

Madalyn Letellier

From: Chris Fiore [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 8:18 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Somerville Bicycle Network Plan

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I am writing to support the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan and improved bicycle infrastructure in general. I bike everyday in Somerville, often with my young kids on my bike, and bicycle safety is very important to me. A full network that spans the city is critical to ensuring everyone is more comfortable biking in the city. I would urge the plan to be implemented as quickly as is reasonably feasible.

Chris Fiore
[REDACTED] Somerville

Madalyn Letellier

From: Howard Horton <h[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 5:27 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bike Plan has merit, but not for Highland

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Dear Clerk:

Please consider my article below (click on link or enter into browser) from the Somerville Times as public testimony on the proposed Bike Network Plan.

Thank you.

Howard Horton

[REDACTED]

Somerville

[REDACTED]

<https://www.thesomervilletimes.com/archives/124504>

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Bike Plan has merit, but not for Highland

On May 24, 2023, in [Latest News](#), by The Somerville Times

(The opinions and views expressed in the commentaries and letters to the Editor of The Somerville Times belong solely to the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of The Somerville Times, its staff or publishers)

More public input and process is needed

By Howard E. Horton, Esq.

The City's new Bike Network Plan is comprehensive and, generally, well-thought out in its attempt to make biking safer – and, of course, the plan has had a lot of input from bike riders. More than 50 new miles of interior streets and roads will be impacted by new bike lanes, safety markings and related equipment. But, what is less apparent is how these changes will impact parking, automobiles and other users of our streets – as these new bikeable miles are all contained within Somerville's very small footprint of 4.2 square miles.

With a growing population which will approach 100,000 in the next decade (back to pre-93 days); a huge housing boon; and, the electrification of cars, we need to assure we have a balanced approach to all of our public ways. It is an admirable objective of the new bike plan that "every resident" of Somerville should have free and ready access to a bike. The problem is that not every resident wants a bike, and many are actually unable to use a bike to get around the City (especially in cold months) to accomplish day to day objectives like shopping, banking, visiting neighbors and accessing professional offices.

Of particular concern is the Network Plan's design for Highland Avenue. A major spine for the City, and a street that is steeped in tradition, the plan to incorporate two bike lanes running in either direction is not tenable. This would cause substantial parking displacement at a time when both ends of Highland (the Central school campus and government center on the East – and Davis Square on the West) already have inadequate parking. Housing along Highland continues to grow, unabated, with no City requirements for onsite parking – but with the average household still holding on to an average of 1.1 cars. Unlike, Broadway, Highland is too narrow for bike paths – and it is not surprising it is one of the most frequently complained of street for bikers. Along Highland, we have many small businesses, churches and professional offices which rely on foot traffic and car parking to remain viable. Some are minority owned or centered, and many employ people of color. We cannot sacrifice these for the purpose of expanding biking when there are good alternatives.

We need to remember that Somervision 2040, while bullish on improving and expanding bike riding, was just as bullish on balancing equities for small businesses, minority populations, persons with disabilities, the elderly and young families – many of whom will not be using bikes in their daily Somerville lives. But, an even more compelling reason to abandon the bike plan for Highland, is that just a few hundred yards away, we have the parallel Community Path, which is an excellent and even safer alternative for east/west biking in the City.

The advent of the Network Bike Plan also elucidates the need for more public process and public hearings about our public ways. Currently, it does not appear that the City has a standard requirement for public hearings when it comes to changes in the disposition of a public way. Even the Massachusetts Department of Transportation held public hearings when it redesigned some intersections of state-owned roads in Somerville. Why is the local process less deserving of the same? In fact, the City Council would be wise to amend the Charter to require that the Traffic and Parking Commission hold public hearings before changing the status of any street – whether for bikes, directionality, or fixed facilities and should have a requirement (as we do with Zoning) to provide advance notice to abutters of proposed changes – we don't need a municipal agency making these kinds of decisions about our streets in absentia.

Again, the Bike Network Plan is a very good piece of work – but, it should be considered a starting point for conversation– not the finish line. And, in the case of Highland Avenue, well.... some things in the City just merit conservation.

Howard Horton is a member of the Board of Directors of the Somerville Chamber of Commerce; He previously served as Co-Chair of Somervision 2040; as Chair of the Somerville Zoning Board; and in the respective Somerville administrations of Mayor Ralph and Mayor Brune.

If you found this article of interest, please consider sharing it.



4 Responses to “Bike Plan has merit, but not for Highland”

1. *Ines Santos* says:

[May 26, 2023 at 6:29 am](#)

Highland needs bike lanes exactly *because* it’s a “major spine for the City, and a street that is steeped in tradition.” And the fact that there is a bike path nearby doesn’t change the fact that Highland has businesses, childcare, and public buildings that bikers need to access without using the bike path. As an example, I regularly take my children from Winter Hill Community School to the YMCA for swim classes, then to the library, and then home. There is no logical way to do this using the community path (even when it opens,) and I am thankful I no longer have to do this by car as I have found a bike solution for transporting my 4 and 5 year old children.

I hope you appreciate that fewer cars on the road means less congestion for all!

I appreciate your concern about folks who may not have access to bikes and would love to hear more from you about how to improve public transit for such folks.

2. *Sean* says:

[May 27, 2023 at 8:10 pm](#)

I could not agree more with the opinion. I am a Somerville resident for 30 years. The City takes a “data driven approach”. This has been a skewed approach. The City takes survey’s & opinions from known friendly or overly aggressive groups. Some of these groups participates do not live in Somerville. I believe in the green approach. I believe we need to get off of fossil fuels. This biking network plan has been a white wash by City Hall. They do not listen to residents who own, senior citizens or handicapped citizens that are not included in this option. It is actually about getting state & federal funds in a pre determined outcome.

This process in redesigning Somerville’s infrastructure should have a legitimate democratic process!

CONCERNED RESIDENT.

3. *Slaw* says:

[May 28, 2023 at 8:58 am](#)

“steeped in tradition” Speaking of that Highland ave used to have two trolleys running down it (88 & 90) and of course was first built without cars in mind. Adding bike lanes to “a major spine for the City” is both exactly where bike lanes should be and an appropriate nod to that tradition of car free travel. It is the desire to preserve car parking that is out of step with the tradition of the street.

“We need to remember that Somervision 2040, while bullish on improving and expanding bike riding, was just as bullish on balancing equities for small businesses, minority populations, persons with disabilities, the elderly and young families – many of whom will not be using bikes in their daily Somerville lives.” Except they do. Bikes are without saying significantly cheaper than cars and expand the distance you can comfortably and quickly travel without one tremendously. Elderly people and people with disabilities often ride bikes for exactly those reasons and there are all kinds of bikes that cater to various specific needs. The proliferation of e-bikes also makes that argument more and more out of touch with reality as well. You simply don’t live in somerville if you don’t see young families on bikes constantly; families riding together, kids on the back of bikes, kids riding in cargo bikes, etc. They are a constant feature of the city and should be able to access the schools, daycares, libraries, hospitals, shops and other services on Highland safely. On top of all that Numerous studies indicate people on bikes and on foot are more likely to support small businesses than people driving by in cars and are more frequent customers, with the consistent finding that bike lanes are a net benefit to the businesses on the streets they run along.

This is a misguided and poorly informed article. In a climate crisis parking spaces are not ever worthy of “conservation” and it is absolutely laughable to suggest they should be.

4. *Howard Horton* says:

[May 31, 2023 at 7:29 am](#)

I appreciate the passion that Slaw has for biking as an environmentally friendly and inexpensive method of getting around. But, to think that cars will be going away and that parking is not an issue – especially now with the push toward electrification – is just a naive perspective. As well, the City is planning to grow its population with 8000 more housing units, many affordable by 2040 – this will bring even more cars to the City, despite wishful thinking that all new residents will simply rely on bikes and public transit – the data indicates otherwise. Let’s engage in appropriate and good faith debate about where bike lanes make sense – where we need to preserve parking – and let’s be respectful of different points of view – rather than being dismissive toward concerned residents and businesses.

Leave a Reply

Madalyn Letellier

From: Marcos Rodriguez [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 11:37 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Testimony in Support of Somerville Bike Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Somerville City Council Traffic and Parking Committee,

I am writing to support the Somerville Bike Network Plan that will increase Somerville's bike lanes by 56 miles. People deserve safe options when commuting to and from work, dropping off kids at school or daycare, or simply going to Porter or Davis to get lunch or dinner. Not everyone has the ability to do this with a car. This is not a call to stop driving; it is a call to provide another (safe and cheap) option besides a car, to increase safety for drivers, people on bikes, wheelchairs, and walkers, and decrease congestion.

- Cost prevents many people, myself included, from having a car (the average person spent over \$10,000 to own a car in 2022, which was up from \$9,666 the previous year according to a 2022 study by AAA Insurance).

- Most trips by car can be replaced by a bike trip removing congestion.
- More bike infrastructure allows people that need to drive a less congested and safer street by allowing most people that can bike to not make trips by car.

- Safer streets

- More bike infrastructure does not take away revenue from businesses. Studies have found that places with safe bike infrastructure allow for just as much spending or more at businesses than places without safe bike infrastructure. Research shows bike lanes increased sales of up to 49% near a 9th Ave bike lane compared to the rest of Manhattan (<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-10-measuring-the-street.pdf>). Similarly, a broader evaluation of NYC showed a spike of up to 24% (<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-09-03-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf>). A 2015 Salt Lake City sales tax stat showed increased sales: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8tOk7_upXv5djhCaig1Z0I3bmhTVTlxWldwRzA0YjJWNW9R/view?resourcekey=0-Fr7Mp141yXvXzW6u5NBjqQ). Two thirds of San Francisco business owners reported increased business after bike lanes and wider sidewalks installed: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0361198118792321?journalCode=trra>.

- Bike infrastructure is a much cheaper option for the city when compared to roads for cars. With a much cheaper maintenance cost and being inherently longer lasting, bike infrastructure offers a cheap solution to safety and congestion. Streets for cars, however, will never be cheap especially with cars getting bigger and much heavier. This causes damage to roads that is hundreds of times more than that of a bike.

- People will bike all year around even when it is raining or freezing. The #1 predictor of people biking is safe bike infrastructure. This can be seen across the world such as in Oulu, Finland, where many people still bike as their main transportation mode in -4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Thank you and I hope this plan passes and gets implemented soon for the safety and benefit of Somerville and surrounding areas.

- Marcos Rodriguez

Madalyn Letellier

From: James Hines [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 9:44 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Cc: Beatriz Gomez-Mouakad
Subject: Somerville Bike Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Chairperson,

I am writing in support of adopting the proposed bike network plan, and an ordinance to mandate its implementation on an expedited timeline. After years of community outreach, it is time to move forward as soon as possible. Every day lost to stalling tactics or studies in search of the perfect compromise is a day where someone might be injured or killed on our roads because of our inaction.

As a parent of two young children, I share the concerns I heard on that call, and hear daily on our trip to and from school that some day, one of our children might pay the price of our delays.

I heard on the call a couple of people expressing concerns about how this plan doesn't accommodate older residents or those with mobility challenges, so let me relay the story of my mother:

She can no longer drive, or walk the short distance from Davis (where she lives) to Ball Square (where I live). She has a mobility scooter, but does not feel safe getting herself to our home independently. Even though the community path connects most of the route, the first and last few blocks are too treacherous on the sidewalk, and riding on the street with cars and trucks is simply out of the question. This means that if she wants to visit her grandchildren I need to pick her up in the family car, and it means she cannot visit if my wife is at work with the car. It's not just my mother, many older residents can no longer drive. This network is a network for them too. It's for all of us.

Please help me keep my family safe and independently mobile. Please respect the hard work of City staff and the lives of those who we've already lost. Please act quickly on approving and implementing this plan.

James Hines
[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA

Madalyn Letellier

From: SUSAN JACOBUCCI <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 9:39 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Comments Regarding Somerville Bike Network Pl

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Hello,

I hope you are well. We attended tonight's public hearing of the City of Somerville Bike Network Plan and would like to express some of our concerns regarding the plan. For starters we live on [REDACTED] which is a small, dead end private road. My husband and I were surprised to learn in April of 2023 when a draft of the plan was made available on the city website that I happened upon that [REDACTED] was designated as a Neighborway in the City of Somerville Bike Network Plan. We asked our next-door neighbors and other property owners on our private road if they knew anything about this and they did not. No one on [REDACTED] was contacted by the Bike Network Plan Committee nor by our Ward 2 Alderman. We were never asked for our input. How can you include a private road in your bicycle network without permission from the property owners on a private way? The city has already constructed a dedicated bike path along Beacon Street which is feet away from [REDACTED]. A lot of money was invested in that project so why not keep bicycles on it and not divert them to an alternative route which also appears to utilize the Beacon Street Star Market parking lot, which is private property as part of the plan. [REDACTED] is a very small street that has significant pedestrian traffic that would be endangered by bike riders. Besides the pedestrian traffic, some of which are handicapped, there are neighborhood children that play on the street daily and not to mention numerous cars belonging to property owners, food and delivery vehicles and Uber and Lyft. Regular bike traffic would add to the chaos and endanger the pedestrians and children thus destroying the fabric of our neighborhood.

A few meeting attendees tonight pointed out that there have been no earlier public hearings, only a small population of 320 people or .4% of the population of Somerville have been surveyed, and your community engagement has reached just over 1,000 people or 1.3% of the population of Somerville all during Covid. There needs to be more community engagement, especially since your presentation noted that currently only 7% of the population of Somerville rides bikes while pedestrians make up 11% and cars comprise 34%. Your proposed Bike Network Plan caters to a small percentage of the city's population, yet you want the majority of City Residents to adopt a plan that will impact our already congested streets, pays no attention to how the elderly, the disabled or to those of us who do not want to ride a bike will get around at a cost of over \$9,000,000 paid by who, the property owners? Perhaps the City can make up this cost by charging bike riders a fee to obtain a bicycle license and your plan should include an education piece for bicycle riders to obey the rules of the road and teach them courtesy. I am fortunate to be able to walk to work on Somerville Ave and at least twice a week I need to dodge a bicycle rider who is either riding on the sidewalk while there is a dedicated bike lane feet away or when I am in a crosswalk with the light. I am a middle-aged woman and at times feel threatened by some bike riders. I have been yelled at while on foot and a few times when I am behind

the wheel of my car trying to inch out from Kent Street, trying to see through parked cars and the bike lane to pull onto Beacon Street. Instead of the bike riders stopping to allow me to turn onto Beacon they swerve their bicycles and yell obscenities at me. I am not saying all bike riders are bad, many behave accordingly.

Please advise how a private road can be included in your plan when property owners on the street were not notified or given the opportunity to engage in any meaningful public way. I do not see how you can move forward with your plan until all property owners along all your network roadways are included in the discussion.

Thank you for your time. My husband and I are very concerned property owners.

Best regards,
Susan Jacobucci
Nathan Thompson


Madalyn Letellier

From: Andre Comella <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 7:56 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Somerville bike plan feedback

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Hello,

As a cyclist, I love the plan to increase bike lanes in our wonderful city

I am writing, however, to address something I did not see in the plan (although perhaps I missed it): enforcement.

Bike lanes right now in Somerville aren't really bike lanes, they're parking lanes painted green. I live *on* [REDACTED], and I never use the bike lane there. The reason is pretty simple, on the half mile stretch I would take, there's always at least one car parked in the bike lane, and more often two or three. Even when parked for short periods, these drivers endanger cyclists and discourage bicycle lane use. Plus, they often block other things like bus lanes, or even sidewalks. Cars park so frequently on the sidewalk in front of 390 Broadway that I've even seen two parked on it at once.

In short, parking enforcement, even for short periods of time, needs to be massively increased or else the bike lanes in this city will remain tragically underutilized.

Sincerely,
Andre Comella

Madalyn Letellier

From: Epstein Household <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 6:15 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; All City Council
Subject: Resident comment supporting Bicycle Network Plan

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Dear City Council,

We are writing as residents, homeowners, and parents. **We support the proposed final Bicycle Network Plan and hope that you will unanimously vote to support it**

We moved to Somerville instead of to the suburbs in order to raise our family in a place where we can walk, bike, and T for our daily needs, rather than be dependent on piling into a car for every work and life trip and contributing to stress, pollution, cost, and congestion. But to realize this future, our streets must be made safer, safe enough for children like my 8-year-old to bike and walk on their own and experience the freedom we moved here for back in 2008. A community in which everyone from children to seniors has real freedom to choose how they get around our community and how we see our neighbors--that is the Somerville we want to live in.

We are excited and enthusiastically support the Bicycle Network Plan. We worked with local community leaders to create one of Somerville's first neighborways in 2017 for safer walking and biking and slower traffic. It has been a success, but the real dividends of a safe walking and network will only come with a complete network as shown in the Network Plan, not a segment here and a segment there. The City has run a robust public process to collect feedback that we have participated in over the past two years, and it shows in the final plan.

Our only concern and feedback on the Bicycle Network Plan is that we would like to see it funded to be built out faster. Even the 30 miles to be built or upgraded by 2030 feels like a long time to wait for our children and families to fully benefit.

Sincerely,
Epstein family
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Cole rainy-slavick [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 5:17 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Somerville bike plan

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Hello, I hoped to attend the meeting but I will not be able to make it unfortunately so I wanted to submit written testimony. I am a resident of Somerville and do not own a car. I regularly bike around the city both with my own bike and blue bike and have a strong interest in seeing this plan implemented as quickly as possible.

I do have certain concerns with some parts of the bike plan, mainly the lack of bi-directional North-South connections and the failure of the plan to fill small gaps in the existing infrastructure, however those comments are already included in the appendix of the plan so I will not add more in that vein.

Instead I am writing to urge you to move this plan from plan to implementation as quickly as possible. Safe infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities cannot wait and it shouldn't be allowed to be delayed in long drawn out processes. The plan was the process, and it already includes more than enough concessions to parking and cars, we cannot afford any more. The community demands this plan, the community needs this plan, the community deserves this plan. Please make it a reality as quickly as possible so this can be a jumping off point not a finish line.

Cole Rainey-Slavick

Madalyn Letellier

From: Leticia Costa [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 5:06 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Written testimony in favor of bikeline

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As someone who bikes to work and university, doesn't have a car, and is a low-income immigrant, I would love to live in a bike friendly city and I hope to see the plan implemented soon as possible. Safe bike infrastructure matters to my safety, mobility, and well-being as Somerville resident.

However, the north-south connections are only one direction, which makes them not as functional as a route if you need to come back the same way. It would be great to have them both directions so we don't need to go out of our way on the way back. For example, central street is not bi-directional all the day as it is one direction after summer street, and I need to go all the way through it to work and get home. I and many others would benefit if these routes were bidirectional.

Also the Mystic ave bike lane could be made longer to allow more connections from Winter Hill. And the lanes should be protected as it is pretty busy and wide street.

Overall road conditions on neighbor-ways and in bike lanes should be prioritize as pot holes are very hostile for bikers.

The plan should be a bottom-line not a long-term plan. It's the minimum cyclists need to be safe.

Best,
Leticia Costa

Madalyn Letellier

From: Avery Louie <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2023 4:02 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bike lane network project

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi City Council,

I wholeheartedly support this project. As a resident, one of the things that keeps me living here is how bikeable the city already is to *me*. It warms my heart to see that the city is considering *everyone* in this bike network plan. Please make biking viable for everyone all year round!

My only criticism is how fast this plan will be completed. In 7 years, most of the kids who are biking around the city today will be graduating from high school! It seems unacceptable to wait that long. I know it's not an easy task but the faster you can make the city safer to bike- the better!

--Avery [REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jon Jachimowicz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 9:33 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Comment on Somerville Bike Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To whom it may concern:

I would like to comment on the recently released Somerville Bike Plan that is currently under public comment.

In particular, I would like to comment on the plan for Walnut Street, which has been designated as the top-ranking Neighborways Route (NRW-A) and the highest priority to address. I am beyond excited that this street is getting the attention of the city — in its current state it is incredibly dangerous for cyclists given the reckless speeding of cars, intersections with poor visibility, and extremely high traffic.

Particularly the stretch of Walnut Street from Bow St to Highland Avenue is the most egregious of them all. This is an important connector street from Union Sq to the high school, library, and city hall; because this stretch of the street has a relatively steep incline, bicyclists are slower than usual; cars are more impatient and try to speed past bicyclists making the incline on this narrow street that has led to many near-misses (including for me personally, as I bike-commute here every day) and some accidents (I've been pushed off my bike more times than I can count).

The intersection of Walnut Street with Boston Street and Summit Avenue in particular is very dangerous — there is poor vision for cars turning left from Summit Avenue or intending to go straight, and this leads to tricky situations for cars and bicyclists alike. In addition, crossing the street as a pedestrian in this area is very dangerous the poor visibility here. Two final attributes make this stretch worthy of the highest attention: one, cars love to accelerate up the hill and then speed through, hitting speeds of 40-50 mph on this narrow street; second, there is a lot of traffic on this street, particularly from 3-5pm, where traffic will often pile up all the way down the hill.

To quote from Chapter 5 - 6 that on Neighborways “on average care volumes should be less than [...] 50 per hour during peak hour in peak direction” I would be curious to hear more from the administration on how this will be accomplished. On the stretch of Walnut Street from Bow St to Highland Avenue, during peak hour, I have counted 200-250 cars/hour (note that this was even before the School St detour — the number is much higher now). It would be tremendously helpful for the city to be **radically transparent in it's timeline for NRW-A, and how the city believes the goals of neighborways can be implemented in this stretch of the bike plan.**

Given that this section has been rated as the top priority for the city to address, and seems particularly difficult to do so, I would appreciate learning more about the city's plans for how and when this will occur.

Best regards,

Jon Jachimowicz
[REDACTED]

Somerville, MA 02143

Madalyn Letellier

From: Daria Domin [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 10:52 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Public comment on the Somerville Bike Lane Network

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello,

The city has heard my comments before but I am happy to reiterate them again. I live at [REDACTED] in a 15-unit condo building. I have 2 kids (ages 6 and 8). My husband works at MGH and rides his bike to work, which he loves to do. I work in south Boston and have to drive. We are a multi-modal family - we bike, walk to school, take the Green Line on the weekends (but usually it takes triple the amount of time than driving!), and we drive. We purchased our condo in 2013 when street parking was plentiful. We only have on-street parking as do hundreds of people who live on my block.

1.5 years ago half of our street parking was taken away and given to high school staff and teachers because the city made a conscious decision to NOT build a parking garage that the residents voted on in 2016 as part of funding the new high school. This sneaky bait and switch has created a very contentious situation between the high school employees and residents. The green line has opened yet on-street designated parking for teachers and city staff remains in place. At the same time, the city is proposing to take away more street parking from residents to build a 2-lane bike lane on Highland Ave when there is a community path 1 block away. Whose parking will be taken away when the proposed 2-lane bike path on Highland is built? I have a strong hunch that it will be resident parking while teacher parking will be preserved. If the green line has opened, why not return street parking to residents and make staff take the green line? But I digress....

People who live in Somerville don't necessarily work in Somerville. Realistically, my husband and I can't hold down full-time jobs, take our kids to school and activities, grocery shop and NOT USE OUR CARS. Installing bike lanes everywhere and encouraging everyone to bike is not realistic for many. I agree that there are too many cars trips in Somerville. And many drivers are negligent, on their phones and many behave in ways that is unsafe. Yet there is NO ENFORCEMENT BY POLICE. The way to stop car traffic is fast, efficient public transportation, but the MBTA has not delivered. The last time I took the green line from Gilman Sq, it took my family 60 mins to get to the Science Museum door to door. Driving would have taken 15 mins. I also don't appreciate the demonization of people who drive.

Additionally, I would like to see more data collection that takes families into consideration and mapping out their day to day life like you did with cyclists. This bike network plan assumes that people living in Somerville are all able-bodied with no children. Somerville should serve everyone who wants to live here.

Daria Domin
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Joan Liu <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 10:23 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Please approve bicycle network plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Please approve the bicycle network plan. While this plan is not as bold as I would prefer, having a plan is better than no plan. Building out a true network will save lives, not just for people on bicycles. A recent study shows that protected bike lanes lead to increased safety for all road users: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm>

Neighborways and shared streets are an excellent addition to a bicycle network, if the city does commit to measuring and iterating the real-world conditions of low speed traffic. These will make the streets more pleasant to walk and play on. Almost every street in Somerville should be a neighborway or shared street.

I want to encourage the city to approve this plan, and to act quickly on implementing this plan, evaluating what is installed and making modifications based on real-world conditions.

I am looking forward to having a place to track the progress - preferably with relevant status information throughout the year, so that everyone has the opportunity to understand how we're measuring up to our goals. I appreciate the priority list that shows a commitment to equity and speed, but I admit I'm skeptical the city can deliver. This progress page would help me and others trust.

A wide variety of people of different ages, abilities, and income can bike. Encouraging more those physically able to bike leaves more room for those who must drive. Bike lanes are sometimes preferred by people who use mobility devices, as they provide better width and often better surface quality than our sidewalks. For those who require accessible parking, [there are guides on how to design bike lanes with these concerns](#).

Let's have a plan, and let's have it be a plan we see come to life.

A few minor additions I'd like to see:

- Pearl St, east of Cross should be a neighborway or shared street at the very least. The major reconstruction of this street should slow down traffic.
- Mt. Vernon should be upgraded to protected bike lanes where the lane exists now, and where it's buffered, it should have protection.
- Metrics to track flexpost replacement, and metrics to determine when these need to be upgraded to something sturdier.

Thank you,
Joan Liu

[REDACTED] Ward 1 Resident

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jon Ramos [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 1:36 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; Katjana Ballantyne
Subject: Bike Network Plan - MY FULL SUPPORT

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Hello,

I am writing to voice my full support for the proposed bike network plan. I hope the city votes in favor of executing this plan entirely and swiftly.

My two kids are being "raised by bike". About 90% of their trips are by bike, 5% by car, and 5% by a mixture of other modes. They are currently ages 6 & 3, and they will be riding independently in just a few short years. I would like for both of them to have the ability to get around safely and separated from automotive traffic.

Here is a photo from this past winter, when we took a sunset family ride up to Mystic Lakes.



Thank you,
Jon Ramos
[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA 02144

Madalyn Letellier

From: Erika Kirichenko <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 2:55 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Public Hearing on the Somerville Bike Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good afternoon,

First off, I would like to thank all those with the City of Somerville who were involved in the creation of the detailed, data-driven and well laid out plan for the bicycle network implementation.

While I was not able to attend the meeting on May 31st, I still wanted to reach out and voice my support for Somerville's Bike Network Plan. I am of the strong opinion that pedestrian and bicycle safety measures cannot wait and must be implemented on the most aggressive schedule possible to prevent the fatalities that continue to occur every year. Furthermore, having seen many flexposts destroyed throughout Somerville and nearby towns, and cars that squeeze in to park in the middle of bike lanes, I encourage the city to move directly toward fully separated and protected lanes, whenever possible (using permanent structures, such as bollards, curbs, etc).

I am excited to see this plan come to fruition over the next few years (and ideally, well ahead of schedule!), and look forward to a safer, cleaner and less car dependent City of Somerville.

Thank you,

Erika Kirichenko
West Somerville, Ward 7

Madalyn Letellier

From: Epstein Household [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 6:46 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; All City Council
Subject: Re: Resident comment supporting Bicycle Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear City Council,

While I'm overall very excited and supportive of the 2030 Priority Network, as long as it is implemented and funded on time, I do believe there is one major omission that should be corrected. Lower Beacon Street, between Washington Street and the Cambridge city line, is used by more people on bikes than people in cars even today, and the City of Cambridge later this year is going to implement protected bike lanes on Hampshire Street just on the other side of Inman square, all the way to Kendall and Boston. Please help make it so that the Priority Network includes lower Beacon Street. Thank you so much.

Alex Epstein
[REDACTED]

Sent from my phone, never while driving.

On Wed, May 31, 2023, 18:15 Epstein Household <epsteinhousehold@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear City Council,

We are writing as residents, homeowners, and parents. **We support the proposed final Bicycle Network Plan and hope that you will unanimously vote to support it**

We moved to Somerville instead of to the suburbs in order to raise our family in a place where we can walk, bike, and T for our daily needs, rather than be dependent on piling into a car for every work and life trip and contributing to stress, pollution, cost, and congestion. But to realize this future, our streets must be made safer, safe enough for children like my 8-year-old to bike and walk on their own and experience the freedom we moved here for back in 2008. A community in which everyone from children to seniors has real freedom to choose how they get around our community and how we see our neighbors--that is the Somerville we want to live in.

We are excited and enthusiastically support the Bicycle Network Plan. We worked with local community leaders to create one of Somerville's first neighborways in 2017 for safer walking and biking and slower traffic. It has been a success, but the real dividends of a safe walking and network will only come with a complete network as shown in the Network Plan, not a segment here and a segment there. The City has run a robust public process to collect feedback that we have participated in over the past two years, and it shows in the final plan.

Our only concern and feedback on the Bicycle Network Plan is that we would like to see it funded to be built out faster. Even the 30 miles to be built or upgraded by 2030 feels like a long time to wait for our children and families to fully benefit.

Sincerely,
Epstein family

[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Philip Ballentine <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 7:58 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bike Network Feedback

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I live and own a home in Ward 3, on [REDACTED]

Somerville has better bike infrastructure than many places but it is still unsafe and insufficient. The plans to expand this are too slow and conservative and cater to drivers, many of whom are not residents.

Every week, I seriously worry about my and my partners safety while biking. Please be less conservative and implement faster. Additionally, please have a plan to repair the bike lanes. Flex posts on Washington St and elsewhere are constantly broken. Bike lanes were recently painted like on Kirkland but still retained large pot holes. They painted the pot holes! This is not a good reflection on Somerville.

Second, please formulate a plan to actually enforce traffic laws against drivers who constantly park or idle in bike lanes and crosswalks. This is near constant on Washington street near Union Square. What's the point of these lanes if there is absolutely no enforcement.

Sincerely,

Phil Ballentine
[REDACTED], Somerville, MA 02143

Madalyn Letellier

From: Aaron Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 9:10 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bicycle Network Plan - repaving

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Nice to see this word mentioned exactly one time in the entire 89 page document.

It also requires the city to approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve the transportation network for all users, and to incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities when applicable and practical, in all street projects, such as reconstruction, repaving, and rehabilitation projects.

This is the single most important sentence in the entire document. And yet, it's just thrown in there like a joke. Come on. We can do better than that.

YES, the streets need to be safer for biking. But they need to be safer for everyone, no matter how they get around.

Right now, the single best investment we could make for the safety of both cyclists as well as all cars and other road vehicles is to simply commit to repaving our road surfaces. Yes, we're making progress. Yes, lots of roads are better than they were a couple years ago. But the pace of improvement is HORRENDOUS.

As a cyclist, the road surfaces terrify me a lot more than the drivers or getting hit by an open door. Yes, people get hit by open doors, and that can and does cause bad injuries, and even deaths. But every single cyclist has to contend with potholes every single day on almost every single street. To avoid them means biking into traffic. Not a great idea. And to bike thru them? I've crashed more than once this way. It's awful.

I would LOVE to see a 5-page document, never mind 89 pages, dedicated to the repavement plan. Dowe have one of those? How many decades will it take? And why? We can do better. I know we can.

Madalyn Letellier

From: Aaron Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 8:59 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bicycle Network Plan - parking

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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So, what's the deal with the one-way protected lanes?

One-Way Protected Bike Lane: Some streets are designated with protected bike lanes but only in one direction of travel. This is because there is not enough width to accommodate one side of parking and a bicycle lane in each direction.

We have that now on Shore Drive, and it's AWFUL. If you want to prioritize biking, then you have to give up parking. If you can't accommodate bike lanes on both sides, then you should either a) get rid of parking on both sides, or b) DON'T put in any protected bike lanes.

Why? Because we constantly have cyclists biking in both directions on the one protected bike lane. This is NOT safer.

Oh, and also, in the case of Shore Drive, the street isn't wide enough for even the one lane of parking and one protected bike lane, anyway. It's squished, and unsafe to drive on, especially around the bends.

Madalyn Letellier

From: Aaron Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 8:55 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bicycle Network Plan - feedback on goals

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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1) Increase biking as the main mode of transportation for daily trips and aim for 15% of residents traveling by bike by 2050.

15% in 25+ years? That's a joke, right? That's how high we want to aim? Come on. We can do better than that.

2) Provide infrastructure throughout Somerville that is safe and comfortable for biking for all residents regardless of age, ability, gender, and background.

Wait, wait, wait. You just said the goal was 15% in the 1st goal. Now it's "all residents"? That's another joke, right? That literally makes no sense. And is patently absurd. There are lots of people who won't be able to bike, and that's ok. They need to be able to get around safely, too. Let's try thinking about them, as well. Come on. We can do better.

3) Ensure that every resident in Somerville has access to a bicycle and can safely reach their everyday destinations by biking.

Ok, I guess that one's fine.

Madalyn Letellier

From: Aaron Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 8:48 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bicycle Network Plan - As if you care

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Thanks for the 6 hours of advanced notice before the public hearing.

Thanks for the 48 hours to get public comments in.

And thanks for burying the 89 page document, and making it near impossible to read on a mobile device.

Great job. You've fulfilled your responsibility to give time for public feedback on your plan.

Thanks,

Disgruntled citizen

Madalyn Letellier

From: Arah Schuur <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 7:07 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Comments on Bicycle Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Mayor Ballantyne, City Council, and Mobility Division -

Thank you for all of your work on and support for Somerville's first Bicycle Network Plan. As a founding member of Somerville Bicycle Safety and the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets, I have been advocating for a citywide plan like this for several years.

I believe the plan represents an excellent blueprint for an all-ages-and-abilities network that connects all neighborhoods of the city *with one exception*:

Beacon Street is Somerville's busiest bike corridor, and the omission of protected bicycle lanes south of Washington Street should be remedied and implemented as part of the priority plan. Like many others, I commute on my bicycle from Somerville to downtown Boston, and this stretch of Beacon Street presents a major barrier to safely travel this route. I urge you to correct this as soon as possible.

I also urge you to prioritize durable vertical separation of bike lanes, such as precast concrete curbs and planters, in quick build projects. As we have seen over the past number of years, flexposts are easy to destroy, and often wind up in the bicycle lane (a hazard). This is also a time and labor maintenance expense that will balloon as the quick build projects are implemented.

I also hope that you address connectivity through Davis Square for people riding bicycles through the Square on the Community Path and people riding to and from destinations in the Square. We cannot wait for the redevelopment and potential pedestrianization of the Square to make this popular family route safe for people on bicycles.

Finally, the plan needs safer connections to the East Somerville Community School - please reconsider two-direction protected bike lanes in this area.

I encourage you to support, fund, staff, and implement the plan as quickly as possible.

Thank you
Arah Schuur

[REDACTED]

--

Arah Schuur
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Amanda McDermott [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 6:51 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Bicycle network plan comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi, I wasn't able to attend the meeting last night about the new bike network but I am beyond thrilled about it! It makes me so excited to know that Somerville is putting so much into improving its biking infrastructure.

I've lived in Somerville for 7+ years, and even though it's getting more and more expensive to live here, initiatives like this one are a major reason why I want to stick around despite the cost. It's so rare to find a place in the US that is willing to make the investment in sustainable transportation.

I especially love the considerations that have been made to accommodate a comfortable biking incline. As it stands, I'm hesitant to bike to certain points north because some of the routes take me up crazy steep inclines. I get nervous about car traffic speeding past me while I'm trying to haul myself up the hills, plus it's just so unpleasant to go through a forced HIIT cardio workout when I just want to run a quick errand.

Very much looking forward to supporting all of these improvements in the coming years.

Amanda

Madalyn Letellier

From: Larry Stone [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 1:59 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Cc: Ben Ewen-Campen
Subject: Comments on Bicycle Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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(Copied to my Ward Councilor, Ben Ewen-Campen)

This is what I have to say about the proposed Bicycle Network Plan:

Implement it! All of it! As soon as possible!

I want to live in the city with this network of bike facilities.

I am speaking as a resident of Somerville for the last 38 years, a homeowner, and something of an activist. Somerville is a wonderful place to live, but it could be better. Transportation is still often a difficulty. One of Somerville's greatest advantages is it is so compact that most of what you need is easily available by walking and/or biking. I have used a bicycle for primary transportation, year-round, for longer than I've lived here, but in the past few years I've seen a lot more people biking year-round for utility, too.

As an experienced city cyclist I can ride on hostile streets but it is dangerous and aggravating. I'll go out of my way to avoid Highland Ave, for example, just because Somerville Ave and Broadway have decent bike facilities. I sincerely hope separated paths on Highland Ave will be a priority. For all the people whining about the parking and slowing down cars, I remind them it is time for more equitable distribution of transportation resources. Bike riders deserve safe and convenient roadways too. Anyone driving a car in our compact, crowded city is taking a disproportionate share of transportation resources so they can give up their convenience in the name of equity. In other words, they do not need or deserve to go as fast as they want and park where they want.

Finally, I'll point out another advantage of getting around by walking and biking: it is quiet. Having the windows open for summer means enduring a constant blaring of car horns and loud music. What we need is fewer cars, so if taking back some of the unfair portion of resources they get now will discourage driving, it sounds good to me.

thank you,

-- Larry Stone (ward 3)

Madalyn Letellier

From: David Hattis [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 1, 2023 11:18 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; Transportation
Subject: Bike Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello,

I wanted to write in support of the Somerville bike network plan. I appreciate the work that went into it. Protected bike lanes make it much safer and more enjoyable to get around by bike. As more and more streets become safer, I think you will see a significant number of people switch their mode of transportation from driving to biking, which will have all sorts of benefits.

I hope that these changes are done as quickly as possible. A cycling safety ordinance similar to Cambridge's seems like it would be helpful. I would also like to see Beacon St. added to the priority network. The Beacon St. to Hampshire St route is heavily used, and for many Somerville residents it provides a direct route to Kendall Square. It would be really great if that whole route were protected, especially given that Hampshire St. will be receiving protected bike lanes later this year.

Thank you,

David Hattis
[REDACTED]
Somerville MA 02145

Madalyn Letellier

From: Megan Prokop <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 8:46 AM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Support for the Somerville Bicycle Network Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello, I am writing to **strongly support** the proposed Somerville Bicycle Network Plan. This plan will start Somerville on the path of providing mobility infrastructure that will allow users of all ages and abilities to bike for transportation if they choose to.

I also strongly believe that this plan **must be paired with a cycling safety ordinance**, similar to Cambridge's, which will require implementation of key corridors quickly. I have a 5-year-old who will attend the WSNS next year, and I dream of the day he can safety bike there. I've lived in Somerville for 15 years, and this plan gives me the first hope of that becoming reality.

Thank you,

Megan Prokop
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: smackey [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 11:57 AM
To: All City Council
Cc: Planning1; City Clerk Contact
Subject: May 31 Bike Network Plan hearing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear President Ewen-Campen and Committee Chair Gomez Mouakad:

Cc: City Clerk
(as a courtesy) Planning Board

Public ways need public hearings.

Thank you for the hearing opportunity this past Wednesday.

To re-purpose (rezone) about 100 miles of local streets -- the land area of about 1 square mile of our 4.2 square mile city -- we need our best public process.

While the simple "Bike Network Vision" below is a starting point, the "vision" needs much more engagement and input.



The vision needs more eyes and considerably more thinking. The map needs detail to say the least.

Public ways need public hearings because public hearings welcome people to be face-to-face with decision-makers.

I believe The managers and staff in Somerville’s storefront economy are predominately women and people of color.

Except for the City Council’s hearing Wednesday, this process has seen no public hearings and may foresee none.

Instead a mayor-appointed Mobility Division has reported (stealthily) to a largely mayor-appointed Traffic Commission.

The Traffic Commission has not held any formal public hearings on the matter.

Meetings with residents have been with the Mobility Division – not decision-makers.

The Mobility Division meets most regularly with the Bike Committee.

The City’s Charter Section 17 is being circumvented in this process.

City Charter Division I Title 3. Legislative Department Sec. 17. - Powers and duties of city council.

...No public way or street shall be laid out, located anew, changed as to grade or otherwise, widened or discontinued, until a public hearing has been held after notice given in accordance with the General Laws relating to public ways.

We can do better than Amsterdam in being a world-class leader, but only if we do it together.

Thanks,
Stephen

Please note our new address below



Stephen V. Mackey, President/CEO
Somerville Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 440343
561 Windsor Street, Suite BMZ2
Somerville MA 02143

<https://somervillechamber.org/>
smackey@somervillechamber.org