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>> [Live captioner standing by]  
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>>-- Ted Fields, senior planner, economic development. The Office of Housing Stability. Arron with urban space and forestry. Rich Raishe, director of Infrastructure and Asset Management. Charlie Breene, Chief of the Somerville Fire Department. Charlie Femeno, Chief of Police. Captain Jim Donovan, Somerville Police Department. Erin Noel. And Brad Rosen, Director of Mobility. Ashley, director of the Council on Aging. Anybody else? Hi, Denise. And Denise Molina Capers, Director of the Department of Racial and Social Justice. Thank you.

So staff here tonight are ready to speak with you and to answer your questions. As I said, please feel free to go up and say hello. Or if you're on Zoom and you have a specific question for someone here tonight, please feel free to submit it to the Q&A. Around 8 p.m. the community meeting will come to a close. If you have any remaining questions, we ask that you e-mail [cm@SomervilleMA.gov](mailto:cm@SomervilleMA.gov). If you're in person, staff will be hanging out if you want additional conversations. Tonight's meeting is recorded and will be on the city channel in coming days. Thank you for being here with us tonight. I'd like to invite up councillor --

>>Good evening, everyone. Good to see you. I'm your City Councillor here in Ward 7. Before I share a couple of words about me, I want to recognize colleagues in the room. We have our state representative, Christine Barer with us tonight. And City Councilor at large Dave Wilson as well.

Of course, you'll be hear from our amazing Mayor Katjana

Ballantyne soon. But it's really good to see you all in person, after so many years, sheltered at home, I got asked all the time on the campaign trail last year, when are we going to return to ResiStat meetings. This is a newer version of them. I'm really excited to hear the updates, to share updates with all of you. I walked around the room during networking and refreshments. I didn't get to everyone. I'm going to stick around. Please come up to me, I have cards and contact information.

I'm here to support you, to serve you, to answer your questions and connect you to city resources and services. That is my role as counsellor, happy to answer questions ongoing beyond tonight as well and really glad to see all of your faces. I love the city. I love Somerville, I've been here the last 13 of 16 years. I was on Paulina for five years, I moved this summer, and just really love the neighborhood, excited to continue to go to festival, art fests, I'm excited all these things are back. It's really good to see you all.

I'm excited of the city staff here supporting tonight's presentation. They are also here to answer questions. So please feel free to jump in. I'm sure there will be time for Q&A. And again, I will be here until the very end to answer your questions and please introduce yourself after the meeting. So thank you again for being here.

[ Applause ]

I'd like to welcome, our mayor, Katjana Ballantyne.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Wow, it's nice to see everybody. Thank you. My name is Katjana Ballantyne. I am fortunate to be the Mayor and certainly honored to be the Mayor of this city. I have lived in Somerville for 28 years. I've attended these meetings as a resident, as a City Councillor, as a City Council president, and now I'm just really honored to be here at this meeting as your mayor. And as Judy had mentioned, these used to be called ResiStat meetings. Everybody would ask me every year, what does ResiStat mean? So we changed the name to City Hall community meeting. This is City Hall coming out into the community to be with you so you can meet our department heads and you can talk to them and hopefully have their questions answered or we'll certainly follow up with you if we don't have the questions answered.

What I'd like to do is maybe we can get to know who's in the room. So I'm going to -- I've been known to do this in the past, ask you to raise your hand after I ask you the following question. So if this is your first time at a ResiStat meeting, would you raise your hand? Wonderful. Thank you for coming. Welcome.

If you have lived in Somerville a year or less, raise your hand. Welcome.

>> [ Off mic ]

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. If you've lived in Somerville two years or less, raise your hand. Okay. Between two and five years, raise your hand. Between five and ten. Between 10 and 15. Between 15 and 20. Over 20. Okay.

If you've lived here your entire life, raise your hand. Yeah. Wonderful.

[ Applause ]

Okay. So if you have a dog or a pet, raise your hand. Okay. If you have children in the Somerville Public Schools, raise your hand. Okay. If you primarily move around Somerville walking, raise your hand. Riding a bike? Using the buses, public transit? Using your car? Okay. Great.

So let me just throw it out to you, is there a question you'd like to know about people in the audience that I haven't asked? Go ahead, Lexi.

>>[ Off mic.]

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Great question. When was the City of Somerville founded, what year? Was it -- 1872. Thank you to the peanut gallery. Okay. Thank you all.

So I hope tonight provides you clarity on how City Hall is here to serve you and to be a resource for you. I also hope it empowers you to get involved in city processes. The goal of the Ward City Hall Community Meetings is to provide information, access and community. Information is a word we hear so much and it's easy to forget how important it is, but the old phrase, "knowledge is power" still stands.

It is just as important that community members understand how we use city resources as it is for the staff who do the work. To identify and act on current issues, we first must understand Somerville today, so let's zoom out and take a look at some of the facts.

So Somerville is a city of four square miles, in comparison to our neighbors, Cambridge is six square miles, or just under seven. Boston is 45 square miles. Every three years, roughly 60% of the Somerville population turns over. Those are residents moving in and out of the city. That's roughly 50,000 people. Between 2010 and 2020, the Somerville's population rose 7%, to about 81,000. And to give an idea, was it back in the '60s, the population was about 130? Okay. Around 110,000.

There's 50- plus languages spoken within the City of Somerville. Our population is 76% white. Somerville Public Schools is almost the reverse, with it being a majority minority school district, and over 60% identifying as low income.

Jobs in Somerville, between 2011 and 2021 grew by over 8800. Our budget ten years ago was just under 185 million, and our budget now for this fiscal year is a little over 309 million. 17 city

parks have been renovated in the last 10 years. And on average, 350 trees are added to the urban canopy every year.

So vehicles. I find this interesting because I learned as a Ward Councillor, the most frustrating, although working -- a lot of the land in Ward 7 is owned by the state, the park, stadium, parkway, and know that both sides of the sidewalk are owned by the state on the park way. So on the house side it is, and the reason I found that is many years ago there was a light bulb out and I was trying to get the light bulb fixed for one of the constituents and found out that really that the state owns that we needed to get the state involved. It did get fixed. It took a little bit but Rep Barber helped. Those are the things that make a difference.

But the streets and roads, Somerville bears the burden regionally of cut-through regional traffics and Ward 7 definitely feels it because we're the gateway to the suburbs who are traveling and passing through to get to Boston and Cambridge. Eight out of ten cars on the road in Somerville do not stop at a business and do not stop at a resident. They're just trying to get to Boston or Cambridge.

For folks to visualize our Route 16, which is owned by the state, where stop and shop is over to cape, that carries over 30,000 vehicle trips -- excuse me, 30,000 vehicles on an average weekday, so that's Monday through Friday. I will say that's grown significantly because at least a decade ago, maybe a little bit more -- I'm looking to Brad because he's the director of mobility -- it was maybe around 25,000 vehicle trips. Just to get a sense, in a decade we have 5,000 more cars on that road.

This, of course, feeds into the regional cut-through traffic on the major city-owned streets in Ward 7, so Broadway, between Clarendon where stop and shop is, carries roughly 12,000 vehicles. Holland, from the square down to Davis carries about 10,000. Patterhouse Boulevard carries roughly 8,000 vehicles daily. The north/south city streets also feel the burden. So Curtis Street carries roughly 5,000 vehicles daily. North Street and Cameron Ave are similar, they're roughly 5,000. City policy is to discourage cut-through traffic and to reduce dangerous speeding to keep our residents safe.

One way we do this is with physical traffic calming measures like speed bumps and crosswalk islands. You'll hear more about this from Brad and his team in a few minutes. All these statistics are just a sampling that confirm significant change from where we have been to where we are as the city. It is up to us to act now on what we know. These community meetings are a step in the right direction. They allow city departments to tell their story for you, our resident, to keep informed.

So the access, remember these meetings about information, access and community. Access, I feel, and certainly my staff supports this, should be multifaceted, and we must take every opportunity to ensure it. A main goal of the City Hall Community Meetings is to prioritize residents and center conversation around you. Everyone speaking tonight, myself included, is available to speak to you one- on- one. Our job tonight is not only to inform, but to listen.

As our community meetings -- as our community is changing, I'm establishing systems that give residents access to help shape the change around us. Job seekers and neighbors need access to city planners and private developers. Youth need to be heard by their schools, city and by adults. Historically underrepresented voices need to be sought out and amplified in all our shared decision- making. Long time residents and newcomers must have an opportunity to find common ground in our shared goals and priorities.

Access is also rooted in affordability, which is created not just by housing, but also by access to good jobs. It's the ability to live, work, and do business in Somerville. It's the ability to walk, ride, and roll to civic opportunities safely and easily, or to participate virtually. We're working to connect people. This past spring I hosted a forum connecting developers with unions, the first of its kind for a mayor to host such a forum, building off what I did as a City Councillor. Last week we invited in more than 60 Somerville non- profits to deepen our work to aid them in their service to our community.

I'll continue to host these forums twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, to connect groups, to develop relationships and opportunities, and to create progress for all. We're seeing, you know in the last decade there have been zoning ordinance that has been put in, square plans around the city, but now you're starting to see it build.

So many people, as we said, 50,000 people move into our city every three years over a three- year period, and they see the change that's happening to the built environment, but we want to remind that many of you in this room also have been involved in the conversations on the zoning that has gotten us to this built environment. So it's my job as our population and our residents are constantly turning over that there is an opportunity with these meetings, but also with, as I said, with the unions, with the youth, with the nonprofits, that as these companies are coming in or these developers are building that they know who's here and that the residents have the same access that I have. I can be the convener. I can't tell people they can work together, that's not ethical, but I can say, hey, let me get you all together and start the

conversation so you can build that relationship and you can have the same access that I and my city staff have.

So community. Many of the city's major products include a public process to get community feedback. City Hall Community Meetings are also a vehicle for residents to meet, talk and come together on issues that matter to them most. Residents like you played a key role in developing our strategic plan, our strategic plan called SomerVision 2040. The plan captures community values, goals, directly identifies ongoing challenges.

Some of the strategic goals are affordable housing, job creation, mobility and infrastructure, climate and sustainability and more. The SomerVision's 2040 is also echoed in my administration's Progress For All agenda. My Progress For All agenda is a commitment to an open and inclusive government. First we ask, how do we create progress for all? The answer is through inclusive, intentional efforts always viewed through the lens of equity. We must make space for all voices and prioritize those who feel unheard. Progress For All also begins with listening and understanding the concerns.

Here is how I've been engaging the Somerville community. So since January, I've held 10 COVID listening sessions with various resident groups to understand their concerns and ideas and needs coming out of COVID. I've dedicated \$1 million of the city budget for a first- ever participatory budgeting working group. I've launched a survey in April to hear issues of residents electronically, that was an electronic survey, it's called the Voices of Somerville. I've met with youth a dozen times. I've met maybe over 30 times with various senior groups.

I've also, you know, attended events. And as my younger daughter says, Mama, can you put your mask and hood on so when you walk from our house to Davis Square it only takes us ten minutes and not an hour. But those are the best conversations is on the sidewalk.

So what am I hearing? I'm hearing about affordability, housing and living costs, the impacts that COVID is having on our family and our residents here, the financial recovery they're going under; the health and safety and food access information that they want or difficulty that they're having. I'm hearing about social justice priorities. I'm hearing about the environment and global warming and sustainability. I'm hearing about transportation, the impacts, how to get easier, how to move around safely. I'm hearing about our city infrastructure, the need for safe schools, city buildings, street surfaces. I hear a lot, almost every day, about our roads, you know, people -- yeah. It's a little bumpy. Thank you for laughing. And your patience more than anything.

I hear about quality of life issues, like rodent control, public safety. My administration and city staff have taken concrete steps to address multiple areas that concern the city. We've dealt with affordability issues where we have free breakfast and lunch in the Somerville Public Schools. We have free T passes for youth starting in 7th grade and high school and the T passes or bus and -- to help people in the COVID recovery, we have a coalition, the Somerville Food Security Coalition who is always looking to make sure that everybody has access. We have Somerville Mobile Farmer's Market. We have a city-wide \$15 SNAP and E, EBT program that can be used at the Somerville farmers market. We have a cab program which provides free cab rides to grocery stores, food pantries, farmer's markets or medical city appointments. Ashley is the person to talk to here, raise your hand. Sorry.

Economic development has given grants for small businesses. We have free and rapid tests and K- 95 masks available in City Hall and all libraries. We have flex funds that can be used for rental assistance. And you'll hear more about that, too, in the further presentation. We've made some advancements in social progress and we're constantly working to make it better. We've fully staffed our racial and social justice department as of maybe about a week ago. Our SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs has expanded, we have six offices for interpretation, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Cantonese. We have an increase of 10% to the Somerville Public Schools budget, the only one that was that high in the state of Massachusetts.

And what does that mean in concrete terms, it means that one of the really positive benefits is that we were able to add ten additional mental health staffs at all levels in the public schools from behavioral health, social workers for youth and more. In affordable housing we added \$8.4 million to the trust fund for land acquisition. The biggest thing is the land and the property goes for sale very quickly, so we have the Affordable Housing Trust Fund managing that money to help nonprofits be able to acquire the land. We implemented a tool that the state allows us to use on financing to help us finance the rebuild of the public housing at Clarendon Hill North Street, that's going to bring nearly 300 affordable units, that will be 80 more than what is currently there.

We've also put on the market this year through our inclusionary zoning and community land trust over 80 affordable housing units.

Here's where Progress For All Now is headed. We are launching a public safety for all survey, which Denise will talk about more when she presents on what public safety for all means in Somerville. We also need help with filling some positions here

in Somerville. So I would ask that you look at our website, that's always helpful. Know that we have positions open for an arts development manager, a health communications officer, a chief administrative officer, a director of finance and administration in DPW, plus more, if you look on the city website on the city site and the school site.

If you have concerns that have not been mentioned tonight when we're done, just know that we're here tonight to talk to you, now and beyond. Know that we are hard at work in numerous areas and we are actively assessing all city activities.

As stated in my inaugural address my pledge to you as mayor is I will always, always have an open and honest conversation with you about the issues we face and our plans to address them. The City Hall Community Meetings are a vehicle to do just that. Thank you so much for your participation as we continue to build progress for all in Somerville.

[ Applause.]

So right now I'm happy to take -- I think what I've been given -- where is -- oh, sorry, right in front of me. Two questions from the audience. I'll be here all evening and I will also take two questions online if they're there; otherwise, then we'll have other department heads come up.

Yes, please.

>>Good evening. [ Off mic ]

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Sure. Great. Excuse me. I need to repeat the question because the only microphone for the Zoom meeting is here. So the question was, from Sandy, was, what is the percentage of elderly that live in the city. The current number is 11,000. So we have about 81,000. So it's about -- okay. So it's a little -- it's over 10%, 11%. Thank you. 13%, thank you. Yeah, that seemed --

>>Hi. I'm really glad to hear that you're talking about repaving the streets. I was wondering if -- [ off mic ] -- it's in really bad condition and we've been wanting that for so long and I've been asking and I keep getting told it's coming, it's coming. I would really love to see that get done sooner than later. I know you mentioned North Avenue. Is there like a program? I know the street behind us, Caldwell Street was done, but I don't know -- [ off mic ] --

>>Mayor Ballantyne: On our city website there is a pavement plan. I'm actually going to let Rich answer that in more detail. Do you want to come up here?

>>I didn't hear the question.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: The question is, when is Raymond Ave going to get paved and is there a process or information so we know where we are in the queue?



>>Okay. So we collect data on the condition of all the streets and also have traffic and use data on them, so we prioritize it based on those two data points.

>> [ Off mic ]

>>Wow, that's the first time anyone said I was too quiet. So we, every year we collect data on the condition of the pavement. We also already understand what the volumes of traffics are on each one of the streets. And that goes into a formula to help us prioritize. All of it is posted on the website. I don't know exactly where Raymond falls out. We are seeking to accelerate the side streets, progress on the side streets has been very slow. Conwell was one of our first pilots for the partial paving, which is the tool we have that allows us to accelerate that.

There's a lot of reason behind that in terms of the cost of construction and how long it takes to rebuild sidewalks. We're actually finalizing, I just got a draft of it from one of my staff, a memo that describes all of this that we'll be posting on the website, if not tomorrow, early next week. So I'd invite everyone to keep an eye out for that.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: All right. We'll take -- I'm sorry? Okay. Kerry.

>>Thank you. I'm Kerry nor man, I want to talk about young adults. My 21- year- old has -- [ off mic ] -- my 18- year- old went to visit his friend from kindergarten in the jail and just in his section, not the young offender's section, the adult, there is seven young adults from Somerville. That's not detection, that's another thing. The problems of our young people, and I'm not talking about the schools or teen centers, when they graduate they fall off a cliff. We don't have supports for them.

Sometimes I feel like I live in a different world because there's some problems and some of them get addressed at a great speed and others where we have kids getting fired at and kids and young adults making bad decisions and don't have resources. We talk about housing, if they get out of jail, often our young adults aren't going back home for a host of reasons and they're out serving with the people that are making it more difficult to redirect their lives.

We talk a lot about equity and to me it often feels like it's a question of access. So my question is, what are we -- I would like more transparency about what are the violent 66 -- what's actually happening in the city. I feel like it's not well known, and yet, if you have a teenager or young adult, this is a life that our young people know and their peers, it's their friends who are dying literally. This isn't hyperbole. I'd like information how many guns are in our city and what are we doing to support our young people. There is a lot in schools, I get that. Once they graduate

they fall off a cliff and we don't have supports. We don't have workforce development. And I just -- you ask a 22-year-old if they're okay, they'll say, yeah, I got it. They're not the ones coming to the meetings. They're not the ones answering surveys. And yet, their needs are tremendous. So I guess my question is, from the city side, from the human services side, what do we offer young people after they have graduated from school?

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So what I'm going to --

>> [ Off mic ]

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Mayor Ballantyne: So what I'd like to do is answer Kerry's --

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Mayor Ballantyne: Happy to answer your question. I want to answer Kerry's question.

>> You don't want to answer the question?

>> Mayor Ballantyne: First I'm going to answer Kerry's question and the chief is right here and he can chat with you if you want to get the answer now. Thank you, Chief. Kerry, thank you for bringing the question up. So we've identified that there's certainly more we can do on the city side. So in this year's budget, I did put a youth director's position in that we haven't quite filled yet. We're looking to possibly have a support there. And really, we're trying to create -- I've worked with Mary Skipper who was our former superintendent has left, but I'm working with the acting right now, Jeff Curly as how do we marry what services or opportunities are offered on the school side that we can build on the city side.

To your point about access and workforce development and opportunities, that has been a lot of the conversation. It's the youth that might be a senior, might be a junior or has dropped out and can we support them or give them access up until their early 20s. We're in transition. We're trying to make something happen on that point. I'm really sorry that you and your family and your son has -- that's stunning.

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Mayor Ballantyne: In terms of the statistics, the chief can come up. He's presenting later, but he'll be able to answer more specifically the statistic question. If we don't have it exactly, happy to get it for you, okay, the way you want it.

So at this point, I'm going to stop. I'm here all evening. I'm going to pass it on to Erin and she's going to talk about our sustainability department. And thank you very much.

[ Applause ]

>> Erin Noel: Hello. I'm Erin. I'm with the office of

sustainability and environment and I'm here with a couple of updates from your office.

>>Speak closer to the mic.

>>Erin Noel: Oh, okay. Can you hear me now? Okay. So if you could just hit the next slide, please. So the mission of our office to develop and implement policies and programs that minimize environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions, build resiliency, increase equity, enabling a healthy and enjoyable environment for all the people of Somerville and a responsible city government.

So that's what we do in my office. And the next slide, please. And one program that we've been working on and we're renewing for the winter, well, like until 2024, is the Community Choice Electricity program and it's a great program that helps Somerville residents save on electricity bills with a stable and competitive rate. Renters can enroll in it. You don't need permission from your landlord. It also helps with development of jobs on the area because a lot of -- most -- all of the electricity comes from green -- green ways, is done in the metro area -- not the metro area, the regional area, so it helps with jobs creation. And it's also something that most residents are already in. You can opt up which is great, you get 100% green energy, but if you want to stay at the rate you are, that's perfectly fine as well.

We also have the climate ambassador program that we're bringing back. It went virtual during COVID but we're going to have it in-person and kind of hybrid. So for more information, you can visit that link or scan that QR. We also are looking and we are going to have stipends for people who have a couple, like have some issues with like either like if you're choosing a program and you want to -- and you have to work, you can do that. Or we've heard concerns about -- [ Inaudible ] -- so we have a way to offset that if it's something that you're interested in.

Next slide. And then we also have the community Climate Forward update which is where we go to the community and we hear what we've been doing right as an office and what we can improve on for the update program that we have for our climate goals. So we're asking for anyone who wants to comment on how they feel, like we've been doing enough, if we haven't been doing enough, if we're just doing all right, if you want something new to be done, you can definitely let us know because that's what we'll be asking for.

And I think that's all I have for tonight. So if anyone has any questions, comments.

>>Thank you. I have a question about the airplanes that -- sounds like I'm not the only one -- and so it's not only the noise and the fact that our house shakes sometimes, but it's

also pollution. All of those planes are leaving fuel exhaust that's streaming down on us. And so I would love to know -- I know that the FAA and () point fingers at each other and say no, it's not our fault, it's their fault or whatever.

Can you give us information on this, please, so everybody knows in 2015, Nasport and the FAA instituted a new -- [ off mic ] -- sometimes all of the airplanes come over Medford and Somerville instead of disbursing throughout all of the skies they did before 2015. So we're looking for fairness in disbursing. Thank you.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Thank you for the question. I hear about it all the time from my girls. You're mayor now, you have to be able to get something done on this. So it is -- the city filed a lawsuit, this is -- so maybe circumstance seven years. We lost. And it is because, the runways are own by the state, the airs are regulated through the federal government. Planes, as I've learned, when they built this runway would, if the wind is coming from the northwest, planes have to take off into the wind, so if the wind is coming from the northwest the planes are going to take up and that's when we hear it. They're supposed to stay in sort of this channel, this air channel, but they deviate outside of that. So I just wanted to explain that's what's going on and that's why the noise is so loud here.

We have asked in the past that the -- that residents share the data, call 311, because we can pass that on. But I would say it's an uphill and we need to talk to our state delegation and our federal delegation because they're the ones that are closer to navigating. And we tried with a lawsuit and we lost the lawsuit.

So I would encourage you to, you know, continue to call 311 so we can just collect the data. And I'm certainly happy to follow up with our federal delegation to see if there is any more. I think Rep Barber has left, but I'll follow up with her, too. Thank you.

>>Hi. I want to say I recently signed up for the community electric -- [ off mic ] -- but for anybody who hasn't, I've saved a lot of money. It's wonderful. I'm really glad you have this program. The other thing, I don't know who the new -- [ off mic ] -- I'm happy to see all the trees going in. But I've noticed it, it seems like the side streets aren't getting watered and I thought there was a contract with someone to water them. I don't know if it's under your purview or not, but I would hate to see all the time and energy going into this, we need more trees definitely for the environment.

So I'm wondering how that is being handled or if there is a way to follow up to know if they're getting water. I think for the first two years they have to make sure they're getting watered. And also with the heat and drought we had this past summer, some

of them are looking a little sad.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Yes. Thank you for the question. So it is about how do we keep the new planted trees healthy and strong so they can survive. Yes, our contract with the nursery that puts those in are for three years. They're required to water them. And the young trees, the newly planted trees, there are some that have died. We're well aware of it, the contractor is. There's some didn't survive. What I'd like to know, which I don't have yet is, they're going to replace those trees in the spring. And if those that didn't make it is to find out really what the number is. But they're supposed to be going down.

They're also going down and watering them. You can also adopt a tree. You can water the tree, too. There is a program, we have a section of our website that's called the Urban Forestry. I don't know if there's anybody here to speak on that this evening, but we can certainly get you more information. But there are a number of programs that we're trying to encourage residents to also help with our plants. Thank you.

>> [ Off mic ] I'm thinking about composting, and we hear a lot of stories, more and more cities are developing pilots, composting pilots and going in that direction. And I know that Judy made some movement in City Council with composting and the city got picked up to office of sustain -- to your office.

>>Erin: I think I actually spoke with you once. That is not my job per se, but it's Batal. Batal does anything that deals with recycling. He also has a water barrel program. It is something we're looking into, but we don't have a fixed timeline that I could promise or like state right now. But it's something that we're looking into because we do know there is other municipalities that have like the composting programs and hopefully we can bring it to Somerville, but I don't have anything to like give you like concrete right now.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: So Rachel, we did fund in our budget this year to do a study on it. So there was a study about composting, I want to say it was five years ago or so, four years ago, it was going to cost us something like five to eight million dollars to roll out. There was a big concern. Well, we didn't have the space to actually do composting on-site. And then there was some communities that piloted it up in the northern part of the state near -- I forget the communities, but someplace in the Merimac Valley. So at this point there is new -- we're going to study it. We're going to figure out, because many people are asking for it. We've also made sure that Colin, who is our rat czar is part of those discussions, because when you have composting out, it can attract other rodents. So it is going to be studied. If we can get a pilot up this year, then Batal is the best one that we can

connect you to to get the information. It sounds like you have more information.

>>I also hear that there is some upfront costs for composting. But once it goes into effect, the city can actually save money. And there is also, well, anecdotally information, that if there is good way or -- [ off mic ] -- the rat population can be actually starved out.

>>Mayor Ballantyne: Okay. Well, thank you for that information. Vital is the best one working on this. We can make sure he connects with you. I don't accept that. I just want you to know that we said we would look into it because since five years ago when the cost to try to implement a municipal one was around the five, seven million dollars versus can we get 81,000 people, 50,000 who move in and out every three years, behind something like this? You know, it was a really heavy lift and we only have one person on staff to do that.

But now there's newer technologies. There have been some regional approaches. So we're happy to look into it. And I know this is a big passion of yours and I thank you so much for constantly, you know, pushing us on this. Thanks, Erin.

>>Hi, folks. How's everybody doing? I'm Tom Galligani, acting director of OSPCD. I want to invite Alaina and Arn and Brad is up here already, we're going to give you updates on items within our world which is the city's planning and development agency. Ward 7 is near and dear to my heart. I spent a lot of time as a youth in ward seven. My father and grandmother, playing kick ball in the streets with my cousins, maybe even causing a little bit of trouble in Ward 7. But it's good to be back.

I'm going to give an update on the Clarendon project. We have soon excitement on Clarendon. There is three parts, Phase I, ready to launch, soon you'll see some activity maybe at the end of the year, most likely in January, that's where it says block B1. Just for your reference, that's the area closest to the Stop and Shop parking lot, so you may see activity there. And also the city is going to be undertaking work with its contractors to fix the intersection in the round- about there, that work may start in the spring and sometime in the future Phase II will happen, which is the rest of the site that's not outlined. And again, I'm going to bring everybody out.

Should we do updates on all of ours first before we answer questions, Victoria, or do we want to take questions now? Okay. So Arn is up next. Come on up.

>>Hi, everybody, nice to see. Thank you for coming out. This is a great turnout tonight. My name is Arn, I am a project manager with the department of public space and urban forestry. Our department is the two public spaces and urban forestry. I know

there was a question earlier about trees and I just wanted to point out that there is an e-mail that you can use if you have tree questions. It is trees@SomervilleMA.gov. If you use that e-mail you can contact our urban forestry plan.

I'm happy to be here tonight because one of the projects I've been working on for a long time, along with community members, former councillor, now Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, is the renovation of the west Somerville neighborhood school schoolyard. This is a phenomenal school, but the schoolyard has been lacking for a number of years. If you've been outside during the daytime, it's just a large asphalt space, so working with the community and the school department and the school administration. We've developed this design. And construction on this playground starts on Monday.

[ Applause ]

There are two phases -- thank you -- there are two phases. This project is going to go on for a while, so I want to ask for everyone's continued patience as this goes on. It is a construction project. There are two phases. The first phase is we're going to renovate the upper parking lot, the current staff parking lot. There's going to be a small -- I don't have a pointer -- but if you look at this illustration, this area up here is the upper parking lot. Here's the school building. Here's the upper parking lot. Here's the new school yard that wraps around the side of the building.

So because one of the things that we want to do is to keep an open space for the kids at all times through construction. We're going to phase it. We're going to do the upper parking lot first, that starts on Monday. And then in the spring or as soon as we can, we will take on the rest of the schoolyard. And then there will be landscaping in the front as well. In any case, I just wanted to point that out.

I'll be around afterwards if anybody has detailed questions about the project or details.

I also want to toot the horn for our department in Ward 7, you know, in addition to having an active tree program, I think the numbers were in the last five years, I think we planted 184 trees in Ward 7. One of the things that people always talk about in the city is a lack of open space. Somerville has a lot of open space per capita than any place in New England. With the development of LouAnn David Park a few years ago has been a successful space. We added more than half an acre, 0.62 areas of open space there. So that's a permanent park of the city's open space network, so we're really proud of that accomplishment.

That was my main message tonight. All right. Does anybody have questions? I'm sorry. We're going to take questions

afterwards. We can talk later. I'll be around after the meeting. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> Good evening, everybody. How's the volume, okay? Awesome. My name is Brad Rossen, I serve the great city of direct remember of mobility in the mayor's community development office. We're responsible for many things. We're responsible for making sure nobody gets run over on our streets, making sure that buses run on time and get people where they need to go when they need to go, build the MBTA green line that this community has built on for 40 plus years. We do these because they help with our affordability goals, the vitality of commercial squares, the opportunities for our young people and older adults as well. They're important for you are efforts to combat the climate crisis. I'll be very brief tonight. I'll be here all evening for anybody who wants to follow up.

First and foremost, has anybody been involved, quick show of hands, in the MBTA's first time in 50 years work to rebuild the bus network region wide? They've done a decent job of outreach. It can always be better. They are proposing to change the bus system regionwide and add 25% more bus trips during that time. That's a great thing for the region, great thing for Somerville. They are also proposing to reduce the bus systems dependent on traditional 9 to 5. We move in such different ways than 30, 40 years ago. Cross town connections, midday, late night, weekend connections are essential for all types of workers, young people, seniors, work from home folks. So these are great things in the abstract.

The MBTA proposed the first draft of the network plan last spring it was pretty good for the region and it was terrible for Somerville and you all raised up your voices, Mayor Ballantyne raised hers, Christine Barber did, councillor is here, thank you. Our community rose up. The MBTA recorded more than 20,000 public comments in this process and more than 5,000 of them were from our little four square miles and our 80,000 people.

[ Applause ]

So I'm not going to dwell on this right now. I want to be respectful of everybody's time. Today they published a draft and it's transformationally better for this city as well as for the region and it's because Mayor Ballantyne was fighting both the inside game and the outside game. She was listening to residents, you can see a couple of photos we worked on to engage our residents because she and I were sitting with the general manager and not taking no for an answer.

Here are a few examples. You will still have a one seat drive from Clarendon Hill to Somerville Avenue, union square, to target



and all the shopping at Twin City Plaza. I love public service. These are honorable jobs and people that work hard to serve our communities and it's a head scratcher -- the green line helps us but not everybody, and we need to connect -- [ off mic ] -- it's so good part of a chorus of Somerville advocacy that moved the needle on this issue. When the work is not done, we will continue to do everything we can so that bus stops are accessible, safe, well lit with weather shelters for when it's windy or crummy outside. We will continue to work on bus priority projects because bus lanes are essential to get buses running on time. How can you blame somebody to call an Uber if they don't trust the bus is going to show up? All of these are captured in the climate action plan. Erin was talking about it earlier. We do this work in an interdisciplinary way so our climate plan is consistent with our mobility plan, consistent with our equity plan.

Let's move on if it's okay and I'll be happy to answer questions afterwards and all nod. Tom touched on this, many of you have be rolling up your sleeves with us. We're a contractor building this new intersection. It's unacceptable our residents feel like they might get run over -- did I mention my little guy goes to school here -- it is terrifying to cross State Route 16. This project we've all been working on for many years is starting construction this winter, next spring, that horrible -- [ Inaudible ] -- is going to be a slower, safer, human scaled intersection, year- and- a- half, two years from now and it's because we all worked on this together. Mayor, when you were a councillor, you took important votes to help finance this thing and now we're building it. We're so happy.

Erin mentioned the construction impacts respect real. When you have concerns we have an incredible construction management team, our staff are eyes and ears on the ground. They believe trouble- shoot the issues if folks are having trouble with with noise, lights, construction alerts are available on the city home page. From our communication department, he's here and he gets those out every week. We are here for you, support you through this really important construction.

Next slide, please, Victoria. Last but not least, folks, I've served this great city for 15 years. Last four years we've buried six of our residents who were run over by motorists on our streets. Many of you remember how horrible it was to look each other in the eyes when Karen -- we've taken old and decisive action to prevent things like that from happening again. I am here all night. I will be glad to speak to anybody who thinks the pendulum has gone too far -- making your life miserable. I'm here to tell you that it's not okay for our residents to be run over and these are the only tools that will do the job.

Construction is underway. It will be protected facilities. Parking preserved for residents and merchants but there will be less of it. The Mayor talked about how important it is to be honest with you all about these trade offs so we look you in the eyes and say it will be harder for some people to park sometimes, but we will continue to work with you to manage that limited resource and prioritize people with mobility impairments, businesses, commercial -- meter parking. This stuff is hard but we're here to get through it together. So we're happy to take questions afterwards until the last person leaves this evening.

We have so many more people. Why don't I shut up. Thank you for your time. I love this city and it's great to see everybody face- to- face again. Thank you for your time.

>>Hello. My name is Alanna. I'm the inclusionary program manager. I totally was there about five years ago, I'm with you. I want to make sure I explain it because it is a little -- it's a great program and I hope folks are familiar with it. That is our big challenge. I kind of listed it out here. Affordable units produced via inclusionary zoning ordinance, so this is making Somerville more affordable for residents to be able to rent here as well as own here. So this is huge. It is that two- tier component, you're going to see there is a different area of median income available for renting and homeownership.

There is information on our website as well. I want to make sure I highlight that. It's small in the corner but it's on the printed slides. When you hit our landing page you'll notice there's two awesome buttons that sign you up for listserv and let you know there are opportunities. So please tell a friend and let them know this program exists and there are great options available for folks to be able to live in this awesome city.

Beyond that, there's one other plug and the whole reason I'm speaking here today is to talk about the consolidated rental wait list. This is an awesome program update I'm excited to share. Originally if you wanted to try and go for an opportunity that was a rental opportunity, you would have to apply individually for each opportunity. That sounds like a lot of work, and honestly, it can be. No more, whoo- hoo. Anticipated in spring going into summer we're going to be launching a consolidated wait list, you apply once to be able to see these amazing opportunities come your way.

So we are actually going to be doing information sessions in December into January where we're going to be talking about how we're managing this and we want to hear from you. So make sure that you join our listserv and you attend these sessions and we're going to build this system together. I'm very excited. But I think that's it for me. I had one slide. Cool. I think we can all come up now. Perfect.

>>Thanks, Alanna. Does anybody have any questions for us, any of the four of us?

>>Hi. My name is -- the escape room you all built at the intersection of Holland and Cameron Avenue. I love the aim is to make things safer. I love -- to calm traffic. I think there is unintended consequences. So I have an invitation and a question. And my point is this. Every day from about 6:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. it is impossible to get out of my driveway and drive down Holland avenue, every day from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. it's the same, that intersection backs the cars up all the way to Cambridge. I timed it one day, I tried. I spent ten minutes trying to get out of my driveway and 12 minutes to travel quarter mile to Holland Street.

I'd like someone to come sit on my step, have a beer, I have excellent taste, and see what it is like to be a resident of Holland Street. We're being held captive to cars and the -- [ off mic ] -- and my question is one, if it's to make everyone safer and orderly, why not a traffic light with designated crossing times? Because crossing the street, I don't feel safer now. I feel less save than I did running through traffic a year ago. So anyone who wants a beer, I've got great beer. Anyone who can tell us -- I'd really like to hear that answer.

>>Thanks so much. I appreciate what you just said. We'll be glad to go myself, and team members who live in the neighborhood here.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>Wrong answer. No. For real. There are many challenges here. The Mayor talked about the regional economy and things have changed, people have lost confidence in it. People have lost confidence in public health. They're driving when they used to take the bus and train. There's more traffic than there used to be. It exists regionally and locally, state wide. We need to collect data. What you're describing in terms of your lived experience matters to us. We send folks down to observe and look for opportunities to make that flow better. Traffic signals are ridiculously bureaucratic to design, engineer, permit and build, and we've gone through that process in a number of locations and we'll be happy to start that process here. The Mayor advocated for it, we couldn't pass the tests. It didn't work from a traffic engineering standpoint but it may today. Conditions changed. Be happy to follow up with you, Christy.

>>Thank you for your question. Any other questions.

>>Hi. My name is Kathleen Steinberg. I have a question, this is a question that comes up frequently at Ward 7 meetings and it is, are there any updates on the pit? My husband and I moved here six years ago and our neighbors came to greet us and they said the pit is going to be developed, there will be progress made and it's

been very frustrating that there has been no progress made. It is really just kind of a waste of space and just an eyesore in general. So would love to hear updates.

>>You don't like our swimming pool? Yes. This is one of the tough questions I get. I am in frequent touch with the developer. I'm not going to make excuses. He's not here, I don't want to speak for him. A couple of things I learned recently. So, because it was an old dry cleaning location and it's a spot is you are surrounded by other buildings, we want to protect the foundation of the other buildings, and there is a residential street there. The way the -- the density of the location requires a very specific type of contractor, which are hard to find and harder to find in this construction environment.

So he's had to wait until they are done with other projects. He is cautiously optimistic, this was about two weeks ago when I had a conversation with him that they will continue excavation this fall, fall, we're in fall, I get it, and that as things change or shift, he will keep me posted. He's told me please put me in touch with residents who have concerns, so feel free to reach out to me. I'm happy to make that connection as well. I've been in touch with the business on that street that will be impacted when some of the larger construction vehicles will come down that street, as well as the church across the street. So we're navigating through all of that. But it's really been the timeline of this very specific type of contractor that can work in that environment that's been hard to nail down. So he's an apologetic, I'm just passing that along. I'm in touch with him frequently and happy to make that connection. I've asked him, let's host a community meeting when there is updates for a timeline, and he said I want to, I'm happy to, but I don't have a firm timeline from the contractor yet.

So when we have that I'm happy to make that connection and host something or invite him to office hours so he can talk directly to residents. And he's a Ward 7 residents. He lives across the street. He gets to see the pit every day as well, so yes.

>>This will be my last question, I promise. [ Off mic ] during the last administration we had an issue with people flying off of Raymond Avenue and there are kids on both sides. As a matter of fact, I think more come off Raymond Avenue. Now, what's happened is that we requested during that time not to make this a one-way. And the reason we didn't want to make it a one-way because cars are going both ways, it makes the other cars slow down and have to pull over and pass. So in that way it was more safety for the kids. We have kids on both sides of the street coming up, going to school every morning. Plus we have kids from projects and other neighborhoods coming around coming up Raymond Avenue.

Why do we have speed bumps all over the city but no speed bumps

where the kids are, coming up the street here? That's a real problem. And we've been talking about this since the last administration to control that particular problem. But, no -- refuse to listen to us, we're speaking, letting them know it's going to create a major problem. And this has been going on for years now. But it's going to stop. If something happens out here, a kid get --

>>If I can repeat the question Sandy for folks watching online. The question was, when is Raymond Avenue going to get a different type of traffic calming. You talked about the school drop-off temporary conversion to one way and you made a good point is that one-way streets are usually faster streets for speeding than two-way streets because most rivets don't want to run into each other head on. We see this all over Somerville.

Right now we are an interdepartmental group transforming the way we do safe routes to planning, we work with local school administrations, neighbors, police department, parking department, engineering department and my office. We do site by site assessments and we direct resources.

A few years ago, before Al son's crash we didn't build speed bumps in Somerville. We started doing some. This year we are doing 30. We are scaling up these programs to keep our people safe, the priority will be around schools, senior centers, places of worship and parks. I don't have a specific timeline but I will make sure we follow up together, work with the councillor, school administration, try to get a contract in place and talk to neighbors about the trade offs. I think you're right, that's the most durable safety measure we can -- we need to make sure we're doing it here as well.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>[ Off mic ]

>>That collects data, how many cars, how fast are they going, how many exceeds 25 miles per hour, they will be gone in a day or two.

>>Hi. I was wondering what the Holland Street adjust changes, the parking, there is a lot of kids on the street who are from all lives of the city who -- [ off mic ] -- side street which is already hard to park and then you're just deterring people from participating in already low specifically baseball is really low turnout for some kids. Also, with the businesses, it's been really hard for them to keep up their business. City of Cambridge, they are suing the city. I'm wondering, this also plays into the whole zoning thing, how are we supposed to participate in the local -- also my children are in -- we live in Somerville, all their practices are in East Somerville, so where am I to park? [ Off mic ].

Make people who have driveways pay more, why am I being penalized for being off the street? And how are you -- [ Applause ] -- and how are you going to -- all these people who are renting from landlords who have access to driveways but do not pay for them, how are you going to manage that? Because they're going to lie to you and say I don't have access. I have three houses of students on my street, very nice people. The landlord charges per parking spot, so they all buy permits to park on the street and not in the driveway. They're going to lie to you when they come for the permits. How is that fair to me as a person who has a driveway that's documented on public record?

>>A lot of great questions.

>>Yeah, I pay taxes and the renters don't. I do.

>>Well said. Let me try to quickly acknowledge your questions one at a time. The first one first, you talked about -- the safety project we were thinking about business vitality and meter parking tends to be the best for business and it can also be used for overnight resident parking. Councillor Judy pointed out to us, I think you let the pendulum swing too far. So the final plan has more resident- only parking adjacent to -- that is a change from one month ago and responding to your councillor representing perspectives like ones you mentioned. In terms of business issues we are in constant efforts to work with business owners, landlords, Chamber of Commerce, main streets, organizations, and what you're saying I want to acknowledge it is hard. This is a transition period yet we want to work with the business owners to truly understand revenues, access for deliveries, for workers, customers. Typically people walking to businesses arrive more frequently than people driving but they spend a little less. How do we bridge that gap with them. We don't have the answers right now. I want to validate what you are saying and let you know it is front and center in our mind.

The third thing you said is resident permit parking policy. I want to be very clear, folks, there is no city proposal to change resident permit parking right now. We have --

>>[ Off mic ]

>>That was produced by a City Councillor who is working hard to share information that does not reflect city policy. We have just done a study, we collected a bunch of data. We are not proposing changes to parking rates, driveway issues, we're not proposing to do Cambridge or Boston style with a zone of parking that would propose you from going to your kid's soccer game. It's going to take years to make better use of the -- we completed a study, there are no proposal to change those rates at this time.

>>Thank you.

>>[ Applause ]

>>Two more questions here. We have two and then we're going to keep moving just to be respectful of everyone's time.

>>How are you? First, I just want to say that I resonate with this woman very well living down with the Clarendon project. We have people who like to utilize our parking lot. That is our parking lot. When we can't park in the lot we have to park on the street, so ultimately you're giving people tickets and not you who could afford it. I don't like that.

As far as traffic stuff and pedestrian safety -- [ off mic ] -- has been a problem for a very long time since you guys decided to shut off the signal there. We would like you to turn at least the pedestrian lights on to make it a little bit more safer.

For the raised crossing signs that we have down here at 215th () boulevard, it's hidden behind a tree, so I'm not sure who's out keeping tree trimming, making sure signage is actually visible, but you should probably do that.

Also, North Street and Powder House Boulevard, the stoplight, if Clarendon is on the right side and you're going up towards the rotary there is a no turn on red sign hidden behind the stop signal. We complained about people turning right on red when it says no right on red, but how can they see the sign when it's directly behind the stop lights. That's all I have for now.

>>We are taking notes. We've taken all those notes on all those items that you've identified. We'll take a look at each of those.

>>Final question. And then folks, Brad and Tom will be here if you want to approach them and ask questions. We want to be respectful of time.

>>[ Off mic ] I also answered a survey I received at home. I thought it was from the city. One of the questions was that if you had you're own off street parking that you'll be charged for that. And that annoyed me. I pay real estate taxes. My taxes have gone up in the last seven years quite a bit. I can remember not that long ago half a year was \$1200, now I'm paying closer to \$3,000. [ Off mic ].

I'm a Somerville native, lived here all my life, and we all have to save for a rainy day. I can live my retirement peacefully and I'm grateful for that. Many of our parents had a difficult time during their period of living in this city and I know that because it was more of a blue collar community. Now we have a real combination, people paying over a million dollar for a house or condo. So I want people to remember that we are taxpayers as well and most of us are good to our tenants. I have charged my tenants a lot less money for my apartment than most have because I am a native and I don't tell friends who want to move here look for an apartment from people that are elderly. They pay their mortgage

and they can afford to give you a more reasonable rate to live here.

So I want my people who represent me to keep that in mind when they say yeah, we don't need one, we need three of those, when they're talking about adding something to the budget because that does concern me and it's not just for me, it's for the people that I would like to rent to and everybody else should have that attitude. There was a time, it wasn't until recently, I had a three bedroom apartment she lived in for \$1200, three bedroom apartment. Where can you find that in Somerville. She kept an eye on things for me. It got to a point my tax rate got so high, I can no longer afford -- [ off mic ] -- they must have to pay a fortune to rent.

I would like people from all income brackets to live here in the city. We've lost the middle class. All my friends left, they left along with the Haitians who came in, large amounts in the city, followed by many of the Brazilians who can no longer afford to live, they want to live out because the rent is so high.

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Thanks for your comments.

>> Tom, sorry, one more.

>> Hi, I live at Clarendon towers. I have a lot of questions, I'll save them for later. Right now my main question, not just my question, all the seniors would like to know the thought process that went into the bench on Holland Street that is in the middle -- was put in on like a slab in an island in the middle of the street so senior citizens sitting there, and I sat there for two hours the other day and I really felt like a senior citizen sitting duck because when I sat there, it was either a lot of cars whizzing by or maybe a lone car when I sat there for maybe 10, 15 minutes a lone car would come by and I'm thinking, I'm a senior citizen, I have my pocketbook on me, some jerk could just jump out of their car, stop and jump out of their car and grab my purse.

I mean, what is the thought process that, number one, puts a bench without an enclosure, which Brad said at Clarendon when we had the MBTA bus crisis, that he was going to make sure that money was allocated, they had the money to put enclosures around the bench. So number one, the bench is in the middle of the street. It's actually in the middle of the street. No enclosure. And what happened to the bus sign? There's no bus sign there. And also, the bench is so far away from the senior center, so actually it's a little bit of a walk now from the senior center to that bus.

Fortunately, the bus drivers, because I've taken the buses and I've interviewed them, and they said well, we know the symptom, so we stop. So that's the situation there. It's a very bad situation. And Brad, when you were at Clarendon towers, you said enclosures, enclosures. Where is it?



>>We're still working on it. Weather shelter is coming just like the old one used to be.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>We want more options for seating, and yes, that is a situation, once the construction is finished, still a construction site, signage, cones, barrels, the long-term solution is a weather shelter like the one there before the weather shelter. We're still working on it a hundred percent.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>All of us will be here all night, so if you have questions, feel free to come right up to us.

>>Hello again, everybody. My name is Rich Raiche and I am following OSPCCB. I hope you have half as many questions or a third. So asset management, we are engineers, architects, construction managers. If Somerville was fragile rock, we would be the -- we are less vocal and visible than Brad, but we just build the stuff.

And we have some -- we have a very good construction liaison, most of us are engineers, you can tell -- we have done buildings, we do buildings. During COVID we upgraded the ventilation systems in this building along with the other school buildings. We are now moving along with the next phase of that starting next week. We will have mechanical engineers back in this building assessing everything that we didn't touch in terms of air flow, concentrating more on temperature updating equipment in this building and other school buildings. We'll move on to other buildings after that.

On the next slide, public service announcement, if anyone doesn't know, we manage a lead service replacement program every year. We've done about 150 to about 200 of them thus far. This is an excellent program. Somerville has some of the best drinking water in the nation. We are supplied by NWRA. We maintain our water mains to make sure that the water that's in the street is also of high quality.

We've been systematically working through what we know or locations we suspect have lead services, that's the pipe that goes from the main in the street into the houses. Communities are required to do this by DEP regulation and EPA regulation. We go above and beyond that. Some communities only go to the curb stop and make property owners and homeowners do that last leg from the curb to the homes. We do the entirety of the water service.

We do look for volunteers to sign up for the program. We'll be doing another about 100 next year. There's a website that you can sign up for or tweet our Somerville infrastructure Twitter, we'll reach out to you, get you on the program for next year.

The next thing I need to do public service announcement on, we are in the process of prescribing updates to our -- or

improvements to our sewer system. This may seem less impactful to ordinary days than some of the traffic stuff, but it is very important. We have finished an evaluation of what we would need to do to the system to alleviate flooding. The next step, which is under regulatory review by DEP and EPA is to determine what needs to be done to combined sewer overflows. We are an old community in which both storm water and sanitary are in the same pipes. When we have heavy rains that system overflows. There is an overflow into the mystic and into the (). We will be under regulatory requirements to do system upgrades to reduce those.

From the steward of our system I am also very interested in making sure that these system updates that we do that will be compelled by regulatory compliance, we also aren't ignoring the things that are important to us as a community. We want to make sure that we're not sacrificing our level of service. We want to make sure that we're not simply reducing combined sewer overflows and continuing to have neighborhoods flood. So we do need our voices heard during this regulatory review process.

We had a kick-off meeting for it a few months back. The next meeting will be in late November, early March -- or early December, where we'll be talking about some of the ways that we evaluate CSOs but also what our priorities are and how we'll evaluate potential system improvements. So I think it's very important to get word out to the neighborhoods and attend what will probably be a very boring presentation, but then hopefully we get some feedback on the direction in which we want to take the program so that what we build and what we pay your sewer bills with is consistent with what it is that we want to see with our system.

With that, I'm happy to entertain any questions or things we build.

>>I live 15 years -- 50 years everybody promise to fix the street. You never fix the street. Promise, yes. Fix the home, yes, but never fix the home and the issue. Please make sure to fix it.

>>I think we'll be paving it and putting speed bumps on it.

>>Hi. I have a question about the lead replacement. I believe I'm signed up on the list and I'm wondering if you prior size homes where there are children living differently than homes where there are not children living.

>>I almost said -- yes. So it does get prioritized by kids in the home and the type of service that we have in our database.

>>Hi. It's me again. So the sewer drains that are surrounding powder house probably to about here and then down by route 16, that area, I've been cleaning them myself. The leaves, sticks, trash, anytime that we get a heavy rain, anytime that it snows, I'm out there with my middle child cleaning all of that because you guys

are not doing that. That's part of the reason why people's yards are flooded, why route 16 is flooded, and I think that it's important, but also that we have a job as people who live in the community to do it, too.

So I'm out there all the time cleaning the drains. If you guys ever have an opening for a job for somebody cleaning the drains, I will do that, more than happy to.

>>I'll pass your information on. We are definitely hiring in the sewer department. We need the help.

>>I'm confirming that that's on track and --

>>Excellent question. Permanent chemicals is a huge problem for communities that are not on the MWRA system. Again, we are very lucky to be part of the MWRA system, one of the founding systems. Cambridge, because they're fancy and older, have their own water source, that reservoir is out by Woburn and contaminated by PFAS. They have an emergency agreement with MWRA for supply, they switched over. [Off mic] -- we absolutely have no PFAS problems. I'm on the executive committee for MWRA. We're looking to lower the barriers to sell more MWRA -- it will lower Somerville's annual costs because it's a commodity we can sell to other communities that will lower our cost. It's a huge problem for everyone who isn't on the MWRA system.

>>Any questions? Thanks, Rich.

>>Thanks, much.

[ Applause ]

>>Good evening, everyone. Good evening.

>>Good evening.

>>Thank you. I am again Denise Molina Capers, I'm the director -- [screen froze] -- is pretty much known for the, what we're calling now the public safety for all initiative formerly known policing and public safety. But really what we should be talking about is public safety for all because public safety involves so many different intersections of life.

So the department of racial and social justice, although we are known for that because we are prior sizing that initiative, our general mission is to lead the City of Somerville in its equity efforts and collaborate with departments, constituents and stakeholders to eliminate the institutional structural systems that create racial inequities, social disparities and other social injustices. The role of the department is to be a department that collaborates with all, creates initiatives that are community driven.

We were established in 2021 and we have continued to build the capacity of the department. We've hired an RSG coordinator, Amanda Williams with us tonight. We hired a community engagement specialist, Leonar G, and public information officer, Haakon

Brooks. Last year we began a study with Somerville youth to collect data on the concerns Somerville youth had around social justice, around racism in the city and public safety and we also asked them about what would it be like for them to have a youth cabinet that gives them a voice in the decisions that are made in the city.

I am happy to say that the RSJ department is planning on presenting this data and we are also planning on presenting the RSJ youth cabinet that will live under the RSJ department and give youth a voice and a space at the table. We started in September what is called psychological first aid training. The department of racial and social justice in partnership with the Somerville office of immigration affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services posted two free psychological first aid training sessions for city staff, frontline workers and people like you here today who we consider community leaders.

The point of this training is to be able to give our community the tools that are needed so that you are able to support anyone in Somerville, residents and workers. We have had over 100 participate in these trainings and next week we will have the third follow-up to that training.

Around hate and bias incidents, the community requested RSJ monitor the establishment of the system for recording, investigating and referring hate and bias incidences. We are in the process of implementing a case management system. This is going to allow us to customize and track any and all relevant information for these complaints. And we will also allow us to keep consistent contact with the person who has made the complaint and let them know what is happening with the particular case.

Around public safety for all, the staffing and operations analysis, we have completed the phases of initial meetings and fact finding, focus groups and interviews, data collection and analysis. We are currently in the process of recommendation development. And the final phases after that would be report development and then presenting the findings to the community.

We currently have published the policing and public safety perception survey. It is available in six languages. It is posted online. And if you would like to fill one out today, we have them in the languages and you can raise your hand, Amanda will come over to you and make sure that you get a hard copy to fill it out before you leave. There's also the QR code.

Community visionings are happening, they are happening since August we are to host this week visual and in-person sessions that are basically walk-ins. And you can choose to either participate in a group that already exists or if you feel more comfortable you can choose to host one with people that you know, and we will help

you arrange all of those plans for location, materials, et cetera.

The RSJ department is tasked with creating recommendations for what the civilian site will look like in Somerville. We will be announcing in November those task force members that will be putting together those recommendations. The Commissions that are housed and supported by the RSJ department are currently having an open call for members. The human rights commission has four spots available. The Commission for women has four spots available. And the Somerville commission For Persons With Disabilities has four spots available. These spots will be available until filled.

>>Good evening. Thank you all so much for being here and taking time to be here. As said earlier in the evening, my name is Adrienne Pomeroy and I served almost a year now, coming up soon, as the ADA Coordinator for the City of Somerville, I serve the whole city both internally and externally. I am housed in the racial and social justice department because can you not have conversations and education around diversity and inclusion if you are not including folks who have disabilities.

With that said, as I started to educate myself about this community, I started with my colleagues, who I'm thrilled to share with you are eager to learn more about the ADA. And many departments have a really great working knowledge of the ADA already because of the work they do around our city. That survey was completed in early spring and will inform my work around trainings and education with my colleagues, across many departments, as that has been mentioned in many meetings, I work almost with every department at this point as they introduce projects across mobility, engineering as the city is developing to make sure accessibility is being talked to at the beginning of the conversation.

With that said, as of approximately midday today, I finished the first of those trainings with our fearless firefighters who serve our cities and have -- our city and have firsthand experience serving our residents in a variety of capacities. It was a really fruitful training in order to increase their positive relations with folks who have disabilities and also to serve as a resource to them. They often see folks that maybe don't have all the resources they need in place to have a high quality of life, and now they know they can call me to help with some of those conversations.

With that said, we will move on to the police department and other -- question? I haven't finished yet.

>>Oh, I'm sorry.

>>With that said, continuing to inform training with city departments. And then as soon as when you all come in, there will

be an ADA community survey released sometime in November, and I will welcome your feedback not only on sort of by the book ADA-related but accessibility for all, because you are the people that can tell me the things you are seeing, the things your neighbors may be experiencing, and I look forward to gathering that data. Thank you so much.

[ Applause ]

>>Sorry, guys. It's been a really long day. And the police department is after us, so I thought she was introducing them and I didn't want to leave without answering questions. Yes, sir.

>>Ms. Capers, I'm excited about the prospect of what your office can do. And particularly interested in this public safety for all initiative. It's really meaningful for me both because professionally my work involves working with communities around promoting the social and emotional well-being of young people but also just my own experience personally, being a family member of someone who had mental health disability; that those of you who have been in Ward 7 since the mid '90s might well have known my brother John. If you think about somebody who looked kind of like me but much taller and really thin who was a part of this community, worked at () for many years.

And I know that the long time members of the police department definitely knew my brother because when John would get into a manic phase, then he would go dashing around the streets of Somerville. And as my folks got older and I became the person to look after my brother, then I would be on the other end of the hand-off when John would get taken to the emergency department. So I understand that as part of this reimagining public safety that the city is looking into ways of responding to those kind of crisis situations which have no criminal intent.

And I talked with a member of your team at one of the fares that was happening during the summer, that I understand that your department is doing some research into the kind of alternative crisis response models that could come before the kind of core follow-up of what is happening here. And I'm curious, and I know that the City Council prior advertises -- around developing civilian responses to noncriminal situations.

And I understood that the department is researching what some other communities are doing. I'm wondering how that research is going. I didn't see that reflected in your PowerPoint. And I'm wondering when we may here about some of these models.

>>Thank you for your transparency and thank you for sharing your story. I think the most important part of the work that we do is understanding the stories of everyone in Somerville and understanding that everyone's experience is very different, so thank you for that.

As far as the research that the department has been doing, you are very correct. I want to get away from the myth that there's only one kind of response that exists. There is unarmed, there is corespondence and there is alternative response. So part of the research that we're doing is really having a good understanding of what each of those mean and how does it relate, what are the implications for a city like Somerville.

Another piece that we match up with the research that we're doing is really what are the different concerns from the constituents in each ward, what are the different events that are happening in each ward, where do they differ, where are the commonalities. All of these things are the things we are putting together and understanding and meeting with other experts from other cities, meeting with people who do the work behind understanding just unarmed response, just corespondence, just alternative response.

And so one of the things that I also want to make clear is that this is not a cookie cutter situation; right. We cannot say, well, this city is doing it this way, and so it must work for our city. That's not the way it works. The crimes and the events and the needs of constituents from Ward 7 are different from constituents from Ward 1, constituents in Ward 4. We have people from all walks of life, from all different kinds of lived experiences. We have our youth who have a completely different opinion of what their lived experience is and that differs from what their experience is in school versus what their experience is at home; right.

And so all of these things have to be taken into consideration. I'm very happy to say that we have gotten really far in terms of putting together a lot of the data, really beginning to read it, really beginning to understand it, to bring more eyes on it. And all of this information is also important for our civilian task force because they will be using this information to understand the landscape of Somerville around public safety, which is why we're able to say we can announce the task force in November because we have a majority of this information that they need to begin being aware and informed and trained on what does this mean.

So we are working really hard. I am working a lot of overtime because I understand how important this is for all of you here. I understand how important it is for the Mayor. And it's very important to me to be able to come to the table with evidence-based data saying this is Somerville. This is Somerville in all its facets, and these are the different ways in which public safety is experienced. These are the different ways in which public safety can be addressed. And I'm not going to be the one coming

up with the recommendations. It's going to totally be a neutral separate task force. And so I want everyone to understand that as well, that it is not myself, it is not the RSJ staff coming up with recommendations. We are making sure that this is a community-driven process because we are trying to build trust in the community. We are trying to make sure that everything we bring forward is evidence-based and that there's eyes from different lived experiences within Somerville that have an opportunity to say this is what we know to be true and this is what we recommend.

Any other questions?

>>This is an Americans With Disabilities Act question. What do people who are -- the majority of people who are disabled look like me. I'm not () disabled and I don't use a walker or assisted -- how are you going about training people to interact with people like me where I might have to say this is what I -- this is the accommodation that I need? For example, if I go to -- let's say I go to a dinner, I might not be able to take the bus and prefer to arrange my own transportation and go to dinner. Because of the package deal, I don't care about getting a discount because I'm not using the transportation. But I think that when you talk about the Americans With Disabilities Act, we aren't talking about people like me. And how are you addressing that issue?

>>Thank you so much for your question and comment. And it's a very important thing. There are so many different types of the way folks identify with disabilities. Some of those, and I had this discussion with the firefighters this week, some of those will not be, what would folks say, are apparent, and sometimes folks, such as this individual here, will have to voice and advocate for their own accommodations because the ones that are laid out by federal law may not necessarily work for them.

So that is the core of my trainings with my colleagues and staff is it looks different on everybody, and sometimes you may not know and you may need to open your ears and increase your cultural competency around the disability community because it's different for every person who identifies that way. And of the utmost importance, and I told this to the firefighters this week, it is up to those folks to define what their personal narrative is about their lived experience. And for us as folks who are learning by educating ourselves to listen and form policy and adaptations and accommodations around those because, yes, I am the ADA Coordinator for this city, and yes, this city has obligations under that federal law in Title II, but there's so much more we can do that doesn't fall within that verbiage and that is why I exist. Thank you.

>>Hi.



>>Hi. How are you?

>>Good. So racial and social justice for the city. One thing I would like to see the city step away from is their work with the state and DCF because people who are low income, when something happens, the police has to show up or police in general, whether it has to do with your child or you, nothing abusive has happened, no neglect has occurred; however, a 51- A has to be filed every single time. And for our families, and maybe even with the disabled people, too, because this is a thing, nobody wants to talk about this thing, but it's definitely a thing. We're discriminated against by the state often and the number one race that is discriminated against when it comes to advocacy and being able to defend yourself like against something like the state with DCF, those are people of color; right? Those are the families that often get targeted by the state agency. I would like to see something happen within the city where we don't resort to calling DCF. It is used as a threat for low income people and families. We constantly say keep families together, let's not tear people apart, let's keep kids in the home, and we don't get help people need. I can't tell you how many times I've heard that in this city alone but I've never seen it. I've never seen it at all ever.

So I understand people have addiction issues, people have issues. But why does one outburst where I get into a head but thing argument with my 15, 16- year- old kid have to end up with me getting charged with some type of neglect or child abuse even though it never was a physical thing. For example, I'm in the wrong every time as a parent and then, you know, they throw their services in. Oh, here, let us offer you this. They're like salesmen but they have you by the throat. I hate seeing my neighbors have their children in horrible living conditions, but I also hate seeing my neighbors who are good people have their kids removed from the house for no reason. They're good parents. We all could vouch they are good parents, so why is this state and this agency even involved. It's used as a tool to threaten families and I often feel like the people who are middle and upper class don't experience the same life when we raise our children as low income in our community.

We are constantly a target and it's -- [off mic] -- somebody is coming after you. I don't want people to feel like that. I don't want to feel like that. I don't want my neighbors to feel like that. I would like you as the city, you know, social, racial justice committee to focus on keeping DCF, state agencies, things that are not protected immigrants and documented people and low income people out of the city, take them out of the equation and build something that works.

>>Thank you. I have to say you rock. This is not the first

time I've met her and she is just -- you're amazing, I just have to say, you are. And I'm not saying that just to say that, but I say that because there is a level of awareness that needs to exist to have deep knowledge about experiences in that way.

I understand exactly what you're talking about. As a mother, as a woman of color that identifies as black and Latina, as a daughter of parents who came here undocumented, there is a lot of that that I can relate to. I could tell you that there is multilevels to that. First, we are a city entity. We do not control state mandates. And so federal statutes have specifics around mandated reporters. What does that mean for us? If that mandated reporting is triggered and that's a state level thing, we don't have control over that, unfortunately.

What we do have control over is what we are working on, which is looking at our systems that are in place, our systems that were created to advantage some and disadvantage others. And I can tell you that it has been a priority for the Mayor -- I meet with her on a weekly basis -- it is impossible for us to have conversations about 400 years of embedded systemic racism and social injustice and try to solve it in a year. But I can tell you that the reason why we meet on a weekly basis is because we are making sure that we are touching base in as many systems within the City of Somerville to take a look at what is happening on the levels that we can control and have conversations with our constituents, have conversations around what is within our control, what is out of our control, what are different levels of us being able to address it, and that's why I mentioned it's about unarmed, coresponse, alternative, because those are not three in the same.

So it's the difference between understanding that it's not just about responding to something; it's also about looking at the public policies and what is currently in place to support our families, to support our families who live in specific areas, to support our families of color, to support our single parents; what do we have in place? Is it enough? Do they want more? What exactly do they want? Because one of the things we failed to do and we're complicit in perpetuating the system is that we assume to understand what people need in order to sustain a livable lifestyle, in order to take care of their children, in order to have a work -- work development. Right? We assume all these things. Our state department does not want to continue to assume.

This is why we're taking time to talk to people, do the focus groups, taking the time to give people to participate in whatever way they want through the RSJ panel. We're canvassing, we're out on the street. We've been going to different areas, knocking on doors. We're posting the QR codes wherever we can. We're calling people on the phone saying if you need it in your language, we're

here, we need to know what you need.

So it's really grass roots level work and that takes time. I know it doesn't give an immediate response that will help to alleviate the situation but it's the beginning. I don't know if anyone knows the story of the little girl who picked up one clam throwing them in the ocean and people laughed at her and she said I saved that one. We're asking people to come and help us throw these clams in the ocean and we're doing it in every language we can possibly do it in. And we ask City Council to provide us with a budget to be able to do it and they did. And so we're doing the work and hopefully we'll have a response for what we can do around that specific public safety issue that can help alleviate the state mandate being triggered.

[ Applause ]

>>All right. I'm here afterwards if anyone wants to talk. If you want a public safety survey, we have them here. And now, Chief Femino.

>>Good evening. It's getting late, so in the interest of time, I'm the interim police chief for the city. By way of background, I started my career here in Somerville in 1984, I spent 32 years on the department before retiring and going into the private sector, higher education and practice of law. In 2020, I was asked to come back on an interim basis and I've been here since then and will be here until a permanent chief is chosen. I work very closely with the mayor. I work very closely with Director Molina Capers, I meet with her weekly. And in the interest of some of the conversation going on tonight, we as the department, I as the chief, work closely with her in the department of racial and social justice, it's changed over the last 35 years since I came on. It's ever changing and I hope it changes and continues to change for the better and some of the things and concepts that have been brought out today and tonight.

Over a year ago I met with a group called the advocates with the idea of producing a coresponse model of policing, an alternative model. I did that prematurely because it was just about the same time that I met Director Molina Capers and what I lacked in my introduction was the input to the community. So she opened my eyes and has opened my eyes over the last 20 months or so in areas of community input, the importance of what you have to say as a community when any type of a program is implemented. So I am working closely with her and I hope that as we move forward, the different type of policing that Somerville will have will be for better policing.

Tonight, before I start, I also have deep roots in the city. My family owned, some of you in the crowd might remember the old Ocean Reef Restaurant, over 20 years family- owned business. My

family still lives in Somerville. I have family in west Somerville. So I have deep roots in Somerville, always have been and I have a great interest and love for Somerville itself.

With that being said, before going into any crime statistics which is my primary reason for being here to alert you as to the crime, there are several crime sets you'll see on the board here that are often topics of conversation, questions at different meetings. We've been going to different meetings. If you can't see that, you have to have bigger glasses there. Community policing, a lot of times we're asked what's the status of our community policing unit. As a lot of you may know, at one point we had up to 14 officers in community policing, one officer per ward. They knew the residents, the business owners. That number had been reduced to seven and just this past January the unit, what was remaining of the unit was disbanded. The officers had to be reassigned into the patrol force for staffing purposes. We hope in the future as staffing and operations analysis study comes out that we'll be able to put some type of a community policing community outreach program back together again. We just don't know that at this point in time.

School resource officers is another topic that's been discussed in many different forums. Currently our three resource officers are assigned to the patrol division by way of a vote for the school committee, we put that program and the STEPS program in the grade level schools on pause. So we're in discussions now with the school committee, school administration and trying to bring back some time of form -- some form of policing in a nonenforcement role at the high school and in the grade level schools to build a positive relationship with the kids.

Police accreditation, what does that mean. The Somerville Police Department is one of the larger departments in this area that was accredited in 2019. We were just reaccredited by the Mass police in 2022 in June. What the accreditation does it's an audit of policies and procedures modelled after the best practices according to the Commission who have developed these policies and procedures. Every few years they audit the department. There's about 275 mandates and about another 125 or so optional. We have met about 280 standards so our policies are up to date.

The police reform as many of you know was passed in 2020, they came out with a lot of mandates with the idea of being more transparent and accountable for policing in general. The post commission, that Massachusetts peace officer standards and training, it's an independent entity and the biggest takeaway I'd like you to know is that they themselves are the disciplinary files, the records of every police officer, not just in Somerville, in Massachusetts, had to be conveyed over to that POST commission

who is responsible for reviewing them and certifying every single police officer in Massachusetts, but more importantly they have a review process for decertification. So they have decertified a number of police officers in the state. That's an ongoing process and every three years officers have to be recertified in good standing or they can't work as a police officer, whether it be in Massachusetts or elsewhere, because that data is placed into a nationwide database so if an officer for some reason left the Somerville Police Department for whatever reason, not in good terms, and tried to reapply for a job let's say in Florida, in that national database it would come up his history here, his or her history here, and that would give that police agency the ability to hire or not hire them based on qualifications.

So with that being said, I have Captain Donovan here. I'm going to have him go over the crime status for the ward specific and city wide crime status and we'll both be here after the meeting to answer any questions.

>>Good evening. Like the chief said many of you probably know me. 34 year resident of Ward 7, until my mom kicked me out of the house at age 34. She's still here. She's 90 years old. She's been in Somerville almost 70 years.

>>Still driving.

>>Still driving. You probably know me, my office -- I'm here all the time. If you don't get a chance to speak to me tonight, knock on my door. I'm pretty consistent. I am a moving target. I'm on the street a lot. I do try to be in the office a fair amount of time to answer questions. I'm out walking in the neighborhoods, usually walking back and forth during lunchtime to see my mom. You may see me at the route 16 traffic meetings I attend those on a regular basis and I'm on their calls all the time and I actually have a meeting a week from Thursday. I'm usually in close contact with the City Councillors. I talk with Judy all the time.

So I'm available. I'm here with the chief to answer questions, if you want to run out or if you have a question after the fact I am in the square next --

Citywide we see an increase in crime, 10% over one year, 11% over two years. A lot of that is due to property crimes. Violent crimes have gone down, property crimes increased. In Ward 7 you will see the decrease of 1% over one year and 2% over two years. Actually that's my office being located in TL square. But that's, again, that's property crime. So what we see is violent crimes are going down, property crimes increased a little bit. We are concerned with the upcoming season, with the packages being delivered by Amazon and stuff like that, we see our crime rates spike a little bit with regards to property crimes. I think last

year was flat because people were home. More people are leaving the house to go to work again, so we want people to be cognizant of that.

Next slide. As far as crime prevention we reach out to people. We can't do this alone. It's a collaborative effort. We can't be every where. Simple stuff, locking your vehicle. I can't tell you how many times people come to us, my car was broken into, but it was locked. I saw on TV there was a universal door opener. Doesn't exist. Lock your doors. Really, it makes it really simple. We see people go up and down the side street checking locks, people leave their wallets in there, personal identification, mail, you know, bank statements, stuff like that.

We've seen increase of theft on catalytic converters, it's happening across New England. We have an officer assigned to that regional task force. But right now there is no pattern as to location. They may -- a week or two and not come back for a month. Crime analysis units does try to track it and direct our resources. So if we saw a trend we would direct our resources to that trend be it time of day, day of the week, what part of the city.

As far as bike thefts, cycling community, be aware of how you secure your bike, good secure cable, secure to a post not a wooden fence. Keep your serial numbers on file. When we come across bikes it's helpful to have those serial numbers we put them in our system and if you have your serial number and your bike stolen, contact us, we'll run it through our system.

Package thefts, we've seen a increase in this time of year. There are ways to alternative methods to receiving your packages. Amazon is great now, you can have it delivered to whole foods in Medford. I do that. My wife works from home now but we have had packages stolen with her in the house. A lot of times I'll have something delivered to my mom's house if it's something valuable. She'll call me immediately upon it arriving because she's staring out her window.

No crime, we have her. As far as area cars, we deploy our cars on temporal patterns, we work closely with the crime analysis unit, we're looking at time of day, area of the city and the days of the week and even seasonal stuff. So right now crime analysis this morning at the direction of the chief and I think right now we're probably going to move -- have them focus a little more on Davis Square, we're seeing an increase of bike thefts around the tee. As far as something like the ward 2 area, increase in bike thefts and package thefts so we're going to move ward 3 and 5 down to that area. Otherwise cars are based on the ward system. We don't just stick a car in Ward 7 if the crime is not happening in Ward 7 then we try to use that car in other areas based on crime

analysis.

I will be here to answer any questions, the chief will be here, if you have any questions tonight. Stop by, Monday through Friday, 7 to 3. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>>Any questions?

>>Thank you. And thanks for all you're doing for west Somerville. I live on Broadway and 87th. I want to talk about crossing guards for the students at our schools. This connects a lot of dots between the different departments that presented tonight, street safety, ensuring safe corridors, walking to school, and then the crossing guards, which I know are housed in had the police department.

We have a number of dangerous intersections, some around here. There's one additional crossing guard that has come onboard I think just for the mornings over here at Raymond and --

>>Moving down Curtis Street.

>>Yes, which is great. I'm glad he's there now. He's awesome. And we have two over at powder house and Curtis. But there's a number of what they call secondary locations, additional locations that kids need to cross at, goodness forbid a kid gets struck in the morning when people are rushing off to work, drivers are crazy. And I guess I just really want to reinforce that the entire school community sees this as a big problem, the fact that we haven't for two years now had adequate staffing of all of the really key crossing points in this part of the city as kids need to get here.

So I guess my request is to really reach out and find creative ways to staff these positions. I'm sure if you would, you know, get -- you could get volunteers, you could get parents to stand out there and help kids cross. We care about our kids, so we will mobilize, but we can't let this current situation with zero crossing guards at certain intersections persist. So thank you.

>>So a brief comment, not so much to answer, but I know that's a topic of controversy. I know it's an important discussion at the mayoral level also. We're trying to address the staffing issue involved with crossing guards, as well as the general locations as to where they're stationed. We have an officer in our traffic unit who is assigned to the traffic, Officer Joseph Tees, and usually the general premise is primary locations staffed first. Secondary locations are staffed second.

There's a formula that they use. I'm not a hundred percent familiar with the formula but it goes something like if there's a particular intersection that a crossing guard is requested for, then they would go out for a week or longer to see how many children cross at that particular location, how many children are unaccompanied by parents who cross at that intersection. And so

there is a method of staffing. But that issue of staffing is a problem city-wide, and so we are trying to address it.

>>To follow up on what the chief said, we have an officer assigned to the crossing guards and like everything going on now, we want them. We're looking for them. It's incredibly hard to find. So if you know of parents who are willing and able to do it, if there's training involved, reach out to us, we'll put them through the training and we'll put them out there. I'll talk to Officer Teas, maybe he can reach out to the PTA. Let them know, they're the biggest voice.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>I'll hook you up, my neighbor on Broadway.

>>So just to add to what he's saying, I was a crossing guard at the kids' school last year. I absolutely loved being a crossing guard. But there are so many issues with the hours, the huge gap that's in between and the fact that -- [off mic] -- my paycheck dollar for dollar was taken from my social security disability, so everything I'm working to me I don't get, there is no profit in it for me. Ultimately that was my decision to leave. But I definitely would become a crossing guard again if the pay was profitable to me in some way, you know, if I wasn't penalized by other things.

But I think that it definitely needs to be worked on. I did listen to the City Council meeting that was held and hopefully quickly they come up with new ways to give like a full-time job opportunity, because the two hours a day is really what I think is holding people back. But yeah, I would be all in if the pay was better.

>>It is out of our control as to that. But I will get with Officer Teas in the traffic bureau and we'll work something out. Be creative with the PTA, PTO, and even if they covered some. I know the crossing guard was here earlier, he had to leave, but he's great. I think you're new there; correct? Yes. You do have very good crossing guards here. They are great.

Any other questions? This young lady.

>>[ Off mic ]

>>We do that, every year we do that in conjunction with the sheriffs office. We did it this year. Is it lucrative? Unfortunately what we found -- we'll continue to do it, but what we found it's usually someone that has a hundred year old rifle in the basement, which is great to get out of the home. One of the purposes is to get guns off the street. I've been involved for five years off and on is that almost never do we actually get an operating gun that we think is necessarily on the street, in quotation marks. 99.9% of the time it's someone whose parent died, left a firearm. Often inoperable. Great to get it out of



the home but it doesn't solve the purpose. We do it every year and we post it on the website. We do it probably around spring you'll see it on the city's website.

I'll be here if there's anymore questions. Thank you.

>>Thank you, everyone. I know the hour is late. That does conclude the Ward 7 meeting. Staff will be hanging out if you do have further questions. We also do have an e- mail cm@Somervillema.gov if you have questions.

>>Folks, I know you're eager to talk to each other. Just two very quick announcements before you go off to conversations, two very quick announcements. Can I get your attention? If you hear my voice clap once, if you hear my voice clap twice, if you hear my voice clap three times. Great.

Raise your hand if you usually vote here. Okay. Starting Monday, as you heard, folks in the back, starting Monday, there will be construction on the Raymond Ave side of the West Somerville Neighborhood School. That means if you vote here, you're going to come through these front doors and vote here in the cafeteria. I have requested signage on Raymond and there will be postcards sent to everyone who votes here, phone alerts as well, and I'll put it on my social media and newsletter. So please spread the word if you know others who vote here.

My second announcement is I have a monthly newsletter, so if you're not on that list, please share your e- mail with me, grab my card, send me an e- mail, I will add you to the list. I have a lot of city- wide and ward- specific updates to that newsletter as well as daily or frequent updates on my social media, so feel free to grab my card before you leave.

And my last request, I see it happening already, talk to someone you haven't talked to yet tonight. The beauty of Somerville are its people. And I hope you get to meet a neighbor you haven't met tonight. Get to know one another. Stick around. City staff are here. Could we give them another round of applause as well? Thank you all for being here. Have a great night.

[Concluded 8:59 p.m., eastern]