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[ Live Captioner Standing by ] .

>>*VICTORIA*: Okay. Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Victoria, and I'm the coordinator of the City Hall Community Meetings. Before we begin I would like to note that live transcription is available tonight for those via Zoom. If you would like to see live captioning please select the CC captions button. Bathrooms are located down the hall on the left and right. Everyone is welcome to pizza and refreshments if you haven't gotten that already. Tonight's City Hall Community Meeting is in a hybrid format, meaning that in addition to those here with us tonight, there are residents tuned in via Zoom. To give important updates from City staff. Presentations will not be taking too deep a dive and will primarily focus on main updates. For the sake of time we have established a question process. Once each speaker finishes, we will first take up to two questions from those in person with us. To those here in person, raise your hand and we do have a staff member with a microphone so you are able to ask your questions. Please be sure to speak slowly so those on Zoom can hear. After in- person questions we will be taking another two from those on Zoom. Questions will be read aloud by myself or a staff member. Please make sure your devices are turned up and we will be doing our best to enunciate and speak clearly and slowly. If we don't get to your question, don't worry, staff will also be taking additional questions and we will have a laptop for staff to answer any unanswered Zoom questions. I would just like to quickly ask all City staff here tonight in person to please stand. And we will go kind of around the room. If you could just start with your name and your position title. And I apologize, I'm going to repeat so those on Zoom can hear. Captain Jim Donovan of the police department. Chief Charles Breen of the fire department. Nick Salerno, Elections Commissioner. Vanessa Boukili,

Senior Urban Forester.

Tom Galligani, Acting Executive Director of OSPCD.

Richard Raiche, Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management.

Jesse Moos, construction liaison, and asset management.

Adrienne Pomeroy, ADA Coordinator.

Denise Molina Capers, Director of the Racial and Social Justice Department.

Greg Jenkins, Director of Arts Council.

Sarah. Sorry.

[ Laughter ]

Sarah Lewis, Director of Planning, Preservation, and Zoning.

Erin? Erin Noel, Community Engagement Specialist with our Office of Sustainability and Environment.

Ashley Speliotis, Director of the Council on Aging.

Kate White, Outreach Coordinator from the mobility division.

Fred Berman, Co- Deputy Director of the Office of Housing Stability.

Ben, Economic Development Planner.

Rachel, Acting Director of Economic Development. Thank you all.

[ Applause ]

Staff are ready to speak with you and answer your questions. Please feel free to go up and say hello or if you are on Zoom, please feel free to write in a question and we will direct it to the appropriate department.

Around 8:00 p.m. this meeting will come to a close. If you have any remaining questions we please ask that you email [CM@somervillema.gov](mailto:CM@somervillema.gov). All questions will be responded to in the coming days. City staff will also be hanging out after this meeting for additional conversations.

I do want to note that tonight's meeting is also being recorded and will be on the City YouTube channel in the coming days.

Thank you for taking the time and being gracious about us as we get used to the hybrid format. I would like to invite Councilor Scott up to say a few words.

[ Applause ]

>>*J. T. SCOTT:* Thank you for that and thank you all for being here. I just want to welcome everybody to Ward 2. All the City staff, welcome back so many neighbors, great to see so many familiar faces, especially some of the wonderful seniors we have here front and center. And just I'm really grateful that we are doing this here tonight.

I know probably better than most that COVID is not over. Just a month ago I had it for the first time. So it is real, please keep wearing the masks. I'm glad I'm this far away from you all. But also I'm just really grateful we are doing these meetings again. I'm ResiStat. New mayor, new name. As your Ward 2 Councilor it is my job to work with the legislature to advocate for policy change and implement laws that actually reflect values

of our community.

But I also serve a role maybe more of intersession. You know, your friendly neighborhood Spiderman who makes sure when you are having problem with the City department, when you don't know how those budget dollars aren't getting done with things that affect you directly, I get that call all the time. I love that I get that call all the time, and I love that I see you at office hours, every Friday. And I'm glad they are happening again because this is when all of the City staff and the Mayor herself come down to Ward 2 to hear directly from you.

So I'm also especially glad to see that there is only 35 slides tonight. We don't have 2 hours of PowerPoint. Thank you. I'm going to give a round of applause myself for that.

[ Applause ]

And I want to say thank you for bringing your cash and your expertise, because nobody understands this neighborhood, nobody understands what this neighborhood needs and how the City can serve it best better than you all that live here. So I'm really -- I'm here, I appreciate the courtesy of having my name on the slides tonight, but I'm going to watching them as an audience member for the first time just like ya'll are, and I'm sure that the questions you are are going to sound a lot like the ones that I have been asking, too. So thank you for being here. Thank you, Madame Mayor, for being here, and I would like to introduce our Mayor, Katjana Balantyne.

>>*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE*: Good evening. It is so nice to see everybody tonight.

Yes. So I didn't see -- so Kristin, Councilor at large, () Bermley (sp), Councilor at Large, are here. Are there any other Councilors that I did not acknowledge or any elected official.? Mike Conley was here. There he is.

[ Applause ]

State representative. Thank you. () Ward 2. Corrections committee. Anybody else? Okay. Please remind me if anybody else steps in. Thank you. So my pronouns are she/her. I'm very excited to be with you this evening. I have attended these meetings as a resident, City Councilor, and now as your Mayor. Some of you may remember, as the good Councilor from Ward 2 said, these were previously known as ResiStat meetings. And I was hoping to do a quick ice breaker, to see who is in the audience tonight.

So I would ask you to raise your hand after the following questions. If this is your first meeting, would you raise your hand?

Wonderful. Wow. Thank you so much for coming. If you have lived in Somerville under a year, raise your hand.

Okay. If you have lived in Somerville between two and five years, raise

your hand.

If you have lived in Somerville between 5 and 10, raise your hand.

Thank you. 10 and 15?

15 and 20?

Over 20?

[ Applause ]

If you have lived in Somerville your entire life, raise your hand.

Wonderful. Thank you.

If you have a pet, raise your hand. Wow. Okay. If you are -- if you have children in the Somerville Public Schools raise your hand.

Okay. If you -- I'm going to ask you some questions about how you typically move around the City. If you primarily walk around the City, raise your hand.

Okay. If you ride your bike around the City.

Take the bus?

Use your car?

Okay. Great. So thank you for that. And thank you for sharing and now we have a little better sense of who is in the audience with us today.

I hope tonight provides you clarity on how City Hall is here to serve you and 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. It is 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 their work.

To identify and act on current issues, we first must understand Somerville today. So let's zoom out and look at some of the facts. The City of Somerville is 4 square miles. In comparison to our neighbors, Cambridge is just under 7 square miles and Boston is 45 square miles. Every 3 years 60% of Somerville's population turns over. Those are residents moving in and out of the City. That's roughly 50,000 residents. Between 2010 and 2020 Somerville's population rose 7%. To 81,000 residents. 50 languages are spoken within the City of -- 50- plus languages are spoken within the City of Somerville. 76% of our population is 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 increased by over 8800 between 2011 and 2021. Our financial resources have grown in the last decade. And we call it FY, fiscal year '13, so around 2013 we had a budget of just under 85 million. For this year that we are working in right now, our budget is a little over 309 million. We have 17 City parks that have been renovated in the last

10 years. Over 350 trees are added to our urban canopy per year. In the last 5 years that's over 700 just in Ward 2 alone.

So vehicles on the road in Ward 2. Somerville bears the burden of regional cut-through motor vehicle traffic. Ward 2 definitely feels this. For folks to visualize, the State-owned roads, Route 28, McGrath Highway, between Washington Street and Somerville Avenue carry roughly 40,000 vehicles on an average day. So that's -- the numbers I'm giving you are the weekday, Monday through Friday.

By comparison, here are the statistics for our major City-owned streets. Washington Street to Joy Street, 20,000. Washington Street to school, 20,000, Somerville Avenue to Union Square Plaza, 20,000, Somerville Avenue at Merriam Street, 10,000. Medford Street at the railroad underpass is about 10,000.

Prospect Street at Webster Avenue is about 10,000. The City works every day to reduce the number of vehicles on our streets to improve public safety, quality of life, and climate outcomes. These data points matter because traffic is a major issue for safety, health, and quality of life. All of these statistics are just a sampling that confirm significant changes from where we have been to where we are as a City. It is up to us to act 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 residents to be kept informed.

So access. Access should be multifaceted, and we must take every opportunity to ensure it. As our community is changing, I'm establishing systems that gives residents access to shape the change around them. Job seekers and neighbors need access to City planners and private developers. Youth need to be heard by our school, City, and by adults. Historically underrepresented voices need to be sought out and amplified in all of our shared decision-making. Long-time residents and newcomers must have opportunities to find common ground on our shared goals and priorities. Access is also rooted in affordability, which has been created not just by housing, but also access to good jobs. It is the ability to live, work, and do business in Somerville. Opportunities safely and easily, or to participate virtually. We are working to connect people. This past spring I hosted a forum connecting developers and unions. The first of its kind for a Mayor to host such a forum building off of what I did as a City Councilor. Last week we invited more than 60 Somerville nonprofits to deepen our work, to aid them in their service for our community.

In the fall we will be developers -- or this is the fall, but for the spring we will pick up another theme, and that will be with developers or access to something. So we are taking the feedback out of these forums to see what

else residents want or community- based organizations need to help to thrive here.

I will continue to host these twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, to connect groups, to develop relationships, and opportunities to create progress for all.

Many of our City's major projects include public process to get community feedback. City Hall Community Meetings are another vehicle for residents to meet, talk, come together on issues that matter to them most.

Residents like you played a key role in the development of the SomerVision, our strategic plan, our visionary plan of where we want to be by 2040. The plan captures community goals, values, and directly identifies ongoing challenges.

The SomerVision 2040 goals include affordable housing, job creation, mobility, and infrastructure, climate, and sustainability and more.

SomerVision's 2040 is greatly 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 asked how do we create progress for all? The answer is through inclusive, intentional efforts, always viewed through an equity lens. We must make space for all voices, and prioritize those who feel unheard.

Progress for all begins with listening, and understanding the concerns. So here is how I have been engaging Somerville, our Somerville community. I have held over 10 COVID Listening Sessions so far with various residents groups to understand concerns, ideas, and needs. I have met with over 30 senior groups and over 10 youth groups. I have dedicated one million from the City's budget for the first time ever participatory working group. We have launched the Voices of Somerville survey in April to hear the issues that are most important. So I have not only gone to meet people where they are most comfortable, but there are some people who like to be connected through electronic surveys or emails.

I have attended many City events and talked with many residents. And I have been listening to our youth. So what are the issues that I'm hearing? Affordability, housing and living costs, I have been hearing about COVID impacts, about the financial recovery that people are going through from COVID, the health and safety and food access issues they might have. I have been hearing about social justice, global warming, sustainability, transportation issues. City infrastructure, schools, City buildings, and our street services, and underground.

I have been hearing about quality of life issues, rodents, public safety. My administration and City staff have taken concrete steps to address multiple areas of concern City- wide. Affordability, we have free breakfast and

lunch at our Somerville Public Schools. We have free T passes for the subway and bus, youth, from age 7th grade up to senior year. To help people recover from COVID, we have organized or the Somerville Food Security Coalition, identifying access to food to Somerville Mobile Markets. We have also launched City- wide \$15 SNAP and P- EBT match programs for the Somerville's farmers market. Cab to grocery stores, food pantries, farmers markets, or medical appointments.

The economic development has grant awards for small businesses. We have free and rapid tests, COVID tests. We have KN95 masks which are available at City Hall and all libraries. Flex pay, if you are having trouble paying your rent and major utilities.

On social progress we are happy to say we have staffed our Racial and Social Justice Department. Our SomerNova immigrant affairs, now with 6 languages offered for interpretation and translation. That's Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Nepali, Chinese Mandarin, Chinese Cantonese. We had a historic increase in 10% of funds to the Somerville Public School. It is the only community in the state.

[ Applause ]

Thank you. That has also translated into 10 additional multi -- one of the things is 10 additional mental health staff at all levels in the Public Schools from behavioral therapists to social workers for youth and more. For affordable housing, we have added first- time ever \$8.5 million to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund so they can acquire land once it goes up for sale. We have used a tool that the State allows municipalities to use to finance affordable housing project known as () up in Ward 7 to build nearly 300 affordable housing units. We have also added over 80 affordable housing units within the neighborhoods to the market.

Here is where progress for all is headed. We are reimagining the policing coming up with public safety process for all, public survey has been launched. Also, if you want to help us hire and build out our staff to support the communities in need, some positions include, we are looking to hire an LGBTQ coordinator, plus coordinator, Youth Services Director, Health Deputy Director, Green Clean coordinator, Chief Administrative Officer, we also have positions in the Somerville Public Schools that are open, and there is more on our City website.

If you have concerns that have not been mentioned tonight, we are here tonight beyond to talk to you. Know that we are hard at work in numerous other areas and we are actively assessing all City's activities. As stated in my inaugural address, my pledge to you as Mayor is that I will 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. I thank

you for your participation as we continue to build progress for all in Somerville. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

And I can certainly take some questions now if you -- what is it, a couple? If anybody has them. Or we can move on to the next person.

Okay. Great.

>>*ERIN NOEL*: Good evening. I'm Erin. I'm with the Office of Sustainability and Environment. And I'm here to present about some updates we have in our office.

So our mission statement is to develop and implement policies and programs that minimize environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions, build resiliency, and increase equity, enabling a healthy and enjoyable environment for all people of Somerville and a responsible City government.

So with the times right now for winter, we have the Community Choice Electricity program that we are locked in for another season. So we have stable and competitive rates for electricity costs. You can choose between 3 programs, with variable renewability energy amounts. It also promotes regional and serene zero carbon, and renewable energy generation and job creation as well because most of the energy that is funded -- most of the energy that's drawn upon is from Massachusetts and like New England region.

Renters can also enroll in this because you can do it without your landlord's permission. And it is from this November to 2024, December.

And for more information you can visit the website that's not there, which is [cce.somervillema.job](http://cce.somervillema.job).

And we also have the revamp of the Climate Ambassadors. It is something that we rolled out right before COVID and we went online with it, but we heard that a lot of people wanted it back in person which is very valid because it is more engaging in person. So we also listened to the community and heard that it was kind of hard for people who have jobs or who had children, so we do have stipends to cover babysitting, or if you are a student, if you have to like work in an after school job like I did, you can skip like two or three days and you can come and do this if you want to.

And you can also sign up for like the program at that site or -- and the QR code.

We also have our Climate Forward update that's coming up. So we prioritized equity, mitigation, adaptation and resiliency, and we are looking to see if we are doing that, and if we should be doing more. So we go into the community and we ask questions. We are also asking for your feedback, do you feel like we are doing enough, are we not doing enough, just all right, what do you want to see, don't want to see. So the



comments are going to be open soon. We can also sign up for the newsletter and that will like let you know when we are having the comment period. So love to hear from everyone about your concerns and comments.

And that's all for me. If anyone has any questions.

[ Applause ]

>>*FRED BERMAN*: So thank you all for coming. I'm Fred Berman, Co- Deputy Director of Office of Housing Stability. And I think the first thing I want to do is just distinguish between the housing division and the Office of Housing Stability. The housing division is the bricks and mortar portion of OSPCD around housing, and we are the people division. So the housing division does inclusionary housing, they developed -- they implement the City's ordinance around requiring developers to create one out of every five units to make them affordable. They do rehab in lead, condo review board where developers and owners who are converting properties to a condominium have to go through, and they manage the City's participation and the State's continuum of care for homeless services and do some other things as well as staffing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

What our office does, the housing stability office, is to help people access rental assistance, we help people access legal services when their tenancies are at risk, and a few people access mortgage assistance, few programs in the State that help with that. We help people do housing search when they can't find a way to stay in Somerville. When they can't find a way to stay in their current apartment. Sometimes they have to move out of Somerville. And we do policy and program development.

So the next thing I wanted to do was just say thank you for our existence because if it weren't for the voters of Somerville who made affordable housing a top priority, we wouldn't be here. And the City Council and the mayor, both the past mayor, and the current mayor have been very generous in supporting our staff development so we are better able to meet the needs that we are asked to meet.

We have had about 4500 different requests for assistance over our 3 years or so of existence, 3 and a half years. We have about 130 requests each month. They range from requests for help, resolving landlord/tenant issues, questions about tenants' rights or landlords' rights. We have lots and lots of requests, especially during the pandemic for rental assistance, and we have requests, again, for housing search support, especially startup costs. Because when you -- in today's market, which is a crazy market, if you are moving and you have -- you are moving into a place with a \$2,000 rent, you might be asked to come up with first, last, security, and maybe even broker's fee, which could be \$8,000. Most people don't have

that in their banks. So we help people with moving costs. We leverage State, federal, and City funds, and we contract with the Homeless Coalitions which both do a great job of making sure that we are in compliance and getting the money out to the organizations that need it. We also contract with Cambridge- Somerville Legal Services and with De Novo Legal Services for representation and advice on cases that go to court. We contract with CAS to do tenant outreach education and organizing as buildings are threatened with turnover, new landlord buys it, a new owner buys a building, and they want to empty it and turn it into luxury housing or they -- we want to make sure that if nothing else, the tenants who are living there have time to make plans to have some stability as long as possible, and certainly what we really try to do is make sure that the tenants have a chance to stay there and sometimes we are able to partner with organizations like SCC, Somerville Community Corporation, to buy a building like that and keep it affordable.

So those are the kinds of things we do. We have leveraged over \$5 million now of rental assistance, and the City has been very generous in supporting that effort beyond just the State and federal monies that are available.

And that's one of the reasons why Somerville has had one of the lowest eviction rates over the past two or three years of any of the communities in our metropolitan area. Notwithstanding the fact that something like 70% of housing transactions prepandemic were cash, so people walking in with 7, \$800,000, and buying property or even more if they are buying multifamily property, and as soon as you buy a new property, you raise the rent. So we have managed to enable people to stick around and -- with the help of considerable rental assistance and, as I said, legal advocacy. The other thing that we do is we work on policy and programs, both within the City of Somerville and advocating at the State legislature. So Councilman Bermley (sp) -- I guess I will start, we had created something called the Housing Stability Notification Act, which required that landlords, when they are trying to evict somebody, provide the tenant with information about their rights and about resources that would be available to help them avoid housing loss. So informing us about that, the funds that are available to cure arrears, and about the access to legal services. Councilor Bermley recommended that we do one step further and the City Council approved that and we worked on drafting with them an ordinance that requires landlords to provide a comprehensive information to their tenants at the outset of the tenancy about what their rights and resources would be so that they know, for example, about the need for adequate heating, the need for adequate ventilation, basically what an apartment should provide when you rent it.

[ Applause ]

Thank you. So we have also created, and I think Mayor Ballantyne mentioned the flex fund, and that's something a little bit more flexible so that not only with rent, but other costs so they are able to stay in an apartment, a car repair, so that somebody can continue working, so that they can continue to pay the rent.

We also created something called the Somerville Voucher Incentive Program, Somerville VIP, which incentivize with their apartment. It recognizes that landlords that participate in that program have to go through a housing inspection that other landlords don't have to go through and several weeks of paperwork before they can accept the tenancy, so this kind of compensates them and tries to make it more feasible for landlords to participate in that program. And once they do, they realize that it is a great deal for them.

We are working on trying to figure out how to create a municipal voucher program to help people who can't access the Section 8 program. It is a pilot, we are hoping it will work, we think we are really close. You will find out pretty soon. We also work on State legislation to try to make the environment for affordable housing a little bit more favorable, and kudos to Rep Conley, a huge advocate in the state legislature, including rent stabilization. And then we also we have been advocating for a transfer fee, which doesn't penalize residents, it assesses fees from the nonresident, buyers and sellers of property. In other words, the corporations and LLCs that move property around that constitute the majority of transactions in Somerville.

A tenant's right to purchase, a right to counsel, so that there isn't this power imbalance when tenants are facing an eviction, and finally, eviction ceiling.

That's what we do. We could go into tremendous detail, but we won't. And thank you. And any questions? And I want to acknowledge Mike Felmoney (sp), who leads those other programs that I was mentioning before.

Any questions?

I couldn't hear you. So when the mic comes.

>>Just curious how many Section 8 ( ).

>>*FRED BERMAN*: I don't have an answer to that question. The Section 8 -- the Somerville Housing Authority issues Section 8s, so does Metro Housing Boston, which is a regional Housing Authority. Most of those are project- based, which means that they are attached to the units, like, for example, ( ) and Hill Towers, or some of the other developments that have units, vouchers built into the development of the property. But I don't know the exact number.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*FRED BERMAN*: Actually, I'm going to ask State Rep Conley about his proposal. Because he is the architect.

>>Thank you, Fred. Let's hear it for Fred, and housing stability. Doing such supportive work for the City of Somerville. And we are so [ audio skipping ]. But to answer the question, rent stabilization, rent control, you know, there are no formal definitions. We get to really, I think, come up with the definition. What I can share with you in terms of the legislation that I'm supporting and that I have followed and has made some progress in legislature, I believe this is about making a distinction between that homeowner and that true small property owner. And then those larger corporate landlords, those absentee landlords, and those big sort of real estate speculators. And I think for too long what has happened is the bad actors, the speculators, the corporate landlords have took the truly small landlord and propped them up as a defense against any sort of regulation. But in terms of, you know, how this could look like, it is something that's really going to hopefully be worked out in the next legislative session. But the final thing I will say and, you know, if you gave me the mic I could sit here and talk for probably 50 hours about housing policy, but the one thing I do want to leave everyone with is to just make the point that what we are seeing right now has no precedent in the history of the United States. The level of housing emergency. And when it comes to rent stabilization and rent control, this isn't a new idea and it is by no means a radical idea. We had rent control in the 1920s. Then when the Great Depression hit, they let it expire because rents were falling naturally. Then when World War II came there was a push to do rent control again. We had it through the 1950s, there was actually a referendum in Massachusetts, and the majority of communities supported rent control in 1950s in Massachusetts. Back to the 1920s, Calvin Coolidge was a Republican governor, he supported rent stabilization. It went away when there was a push for urban renewal. They wanted to tear down the west end, did terrible policies of highway construction. There was a push to get rid of rent control then. It was only gone for a short period of time. And it was back again in 1970 and it was in place until 1994.

And so I just share that history with you to make the point that if you look at the last 100 years, we have never faced a housing emergency as serious as the one we now face, and we have never gone this long without some form of rent stabilization.

So I would be more than happy to talk to anyone who is interested in this topic on another occasion. I don't want to take over the meeting, but I'm delighted to chat about it and I'm grateful that we have incredible support for this concept from our Mayor and from the entire City Council. We hope to build on that in the new legislative session. Thanks.

>> Fabulous information and tell you something that you already know about. There is a lot of construction going on in Union Square and Boynton Yards. Surprise!

The thing that I do want to encourage you is to please pay attention to emails and newsletters and the good Councilor keeps everybody informed as these projects come along. While we do have master plans that are in place for some of them, there are still more coming.

Spoiler alert, the ( ) parcels. And each building within the master plans, each thoroughfare, new road, new street, and each civic open space has to go through a public process. So please, please, please stay vigilant, stay on it. Because we need to hear from you.

So thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> [ off mic ].

>> I hear you loud and clear. Some of that happens at the City level. For example, when we have projects coming through planning, preservation, and zoning. We coordinate a lot with mobility and engineering to sort of understand what those timelines are likely to be. And then also with inspectional services who monitors the construction. The thing that I will say is each -- unless there is specific arrangements made for a street to be closed, every street should still be passable. If there are construction vehicles blocking a street, please notify 311, and then we can get somebody out to make sure that that doesn't happen.

But that's how we can keep track of that. There is a lot going on, and the timing of it is sort of a -- it is going to be going on for a number of years, unfortunately. But fortunately. Because what it does to our tax revenue.

[ Laughter ]

But do -- if you really are having problems with street blockages please call 311.

>> [ off mic ].

>> That is part of the construction side of things. So that's actually ISD and special services responsibility. But I will definitely make sure that that message gets delivered.

There are rules in place for making sure that things are safe and clean as possible during construction. So I will make sure that that -- there we go.

[ Laughter ]

There is ( ).

[ audio skipping ].

>> [ off mic ]. And my fear is what's going to ( ) is another ( ). Green space or that kind of ( ). Public space. At a minimum in the designs, ( ) I really like ( ).

[ Applause ]

>>Thank you. Union Square Plaza is not going anywhere. That will always remain. We are trying to come up. So there is 2 fire stations, actually. There is the historic one that we are looking to renovate. It is not a safe building currently, so we are working on trying to figure out how to make sure that can remain. Because it is an important part of the square.

And also the current public safety building is part of one of the disposition parcels under the Union Square neighborhood plan. So if you look at the Union Square neighborhood plan online, that would be on Somerville By Design website. You will see there is a green space, that's called the D1 Block. Very glamorous. The open space is not going to be on Ricky's end of that block, but the other side of that block, the way it is currently planned to be developed.

>>*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE*: Thank you for the question. Change is happening in the City of Somerville and the City and the Council went through a multiyear process to rezone the area. And that zoning means what's going to happen with different parcels around the City. And there was some zoning actually before I even got involved in elected office or your Ward 2 Councilor. But the plan is online, so you can anticipate the last vote on the zoning for that area was taken in December of 2019. This is 2022, so -- pardon?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*MAYOR KATJANA BALLANTYNE*: Right. The rest of the plan, zoning was 2019. That's what I said, some of it predates the current Councilor. But what I wanted to say is there was a plan that was signed off in 2017, a larger plan that was signed off in 2019. That's all online. So you can anticipate and you can see what the big ideas were for that area. That's all I wanted you to know, is that there is information online about that. And I'm sure your Councilor can talk about the particulars. Thank you.

>>[ off mic ]. There is a lot of information, a lot of complaints. I have been told numerous times, I'm sure ( ) I will get that to ISD. Nothing happens. I would like to request that there be a sign from ISD, an inspector with a name ( ) visible to the residents of this area, that we can call and meets with us on a regular basis. Because right now the construction people are in charge. Because by the time you make a complaint or, for instance, the ( ) fall off the walls two blocks away while they are digging ( ) and my husband went to ask them, how long will you be doing it, as long as it takes. We need an immediate ( ) at ISD available to us to help us.

[ Applause ]

>>I will definitely pass that message along. I wish there was

something -- I had a planning magic wand right now I could wave. But I will talk to inspectional services. So ...

>>[ off mic ].

>>Okay.

>>[ off mic ]. But we are taking away those businesses that made Somerville great. And () door. I don't understand why () that made Somerville great for these () spaces.

And you know, maybe you can answer that, maybe you can't. Maybe it is a rhetorical question. I mean, () space also (). Replaced businesses that made Somerville great, and now selling out to these developments.

[ Applause ]

>>Oh, okay. Let's see if I can summarize. I have to repeat the question. Sorry about that. The idea that there are businesses that have made Somerville great, especially Dunkin Donuts right there at Union Square, and some of the businesses in Davis Square are being replaced by lab buildings coming in.

The sushi block is proposed as a lab building in the Union Square neighborhood plan, in the disposition office. Sorry, office, not lab. All of the businesses in those particular parcels, and this is the same in Davis as well, have been spoken to about whether they want to stay, whether they want to remain in the new building. The example of the () is actually remaining and being built around in Davis. So that's not going anywhere.

>>[ off mic ].

[ Simultaneous Conversation ]

>>They have all had the option of coming back into the new building, and I don't know the status of absolutely each business.

>>[ off mic ]. Have been there forever and then you say, oh, we are going to (). Now what are they doing? They are sitting at home ()?

>>So the concern is for those who are online that the -- any sort of displacement of small businesses, while there is construction going on, means that they will be out of business for at least a year, if not longer, for the construction. So whether the businesses can survive to come back and be occupying the new building if they so choose.

These are decisions that are for the property owners and the businesses to work out. I know there are lots of programs that the economic development division offers to those businesses, but the -- it is sort of -- it is outside of my scope of work from a zoning perspective, but we will, you know -- we do our best to keep the small businesses and maintain them in Somerville as best we can with the assistance programs and relocation programs that we have in place.

>>[ off mic ].

>>The question --

>>[ off mic ].

>>Um, I'm not the property owner, I believe 101 South Street is pretty much fully occupied as I understand it. The -- it's a difficult thing to know as to how these deals work, whether they have tenants lined up coming in ahead of time or not. I think mostly because of the funding that's required and this is me speculating outside my class. But they probably do. But I would be very glad to talk to you one-on-one about this afterwards so we can keep moving forward.

>>*KATE WHITE*: I'm going to pivot us to the street now. So I have got a map here to my left, to any upcoming street improvements in Ward 2. The headline this evening is our Washington Street reconstruction project and this is where we are going to fix the sidewalks, repave the street, and do a lot of traffic calming is and that's something from raised crosswalks to raised intersections to speed humps to where we kind of narrow the street to make it so that folks start to go a bit slower as they are driving their vehicle, as well as improve any of the intersection. Paired with that we are doing some traffic calming across Washington Street. So those online and in person, the bright blue, from Line Street to Webster Avenue reconstruction project. Then we have intersection improvements, I will list them all, Somerville Avenue at Central Street, Washington Street and Washington they are as, right in front of new kitchen, and then Oak Street and Houghton Street.

And speed humps, Washington Street, as well as on 311, and all the community events where you see us tabling at your farmers market -- Perry Street, and Calvin Street. And then we also have some crosswalk improvements right here at Perry Street by Lincoln Park entrance, and a few others. So these are all being proposed and expected to begin construction from 2023 to 2024. And then dive into the Washington Street project. But all of this is available as well as all the information on this project.

So protected bike lines on both sides, expanded sidewalks for people walking, expanded bus stops so that there is more space for you to wait while you are waiting for the bus. But those bus stops also allow for folks to bike around the back so they don't have to be right up against those driving and putting in tons of raised crosswalks, across Washington Street and as well as on adjacent side streets. If you are crossing Washington to get to Perry Park, if you are walking or wheeling you are going to be raised up and so folks can see you more prominently and increase safety, whereas if you are crossing () and Calvin Street, 4 legs of the crosswalks to make it easier to cross at different points.

As well as more crosswalks because we heard that lots from folks as well. So we want to hear from you. We have got a survey out right now to



gather your feedback on these proposed design. The QR code, it will take you right to the site or you can go to [Somervillema.gov/westernwashington](http://Somervillema.gov/westernwashington). And I just want to highlight some of our other flyers we have, which is vision zero action program. All of this work, traffic calming and things like that just increase safety of everyone, whether you are visiting our town or staying, whether you live here, whether you work here. We want to make sure that no one faces any -- that no one faces any severe injuries or everyone has absolutely zero traffic fatalities. So all of this work is to align with our vision zero program. And we have got some helpful materials here, too, around that program there.

[ Applause ]

>>Yes. I contributed to the surveys on various (). I thank you (). I think you are reaching out. I would mention that the focus on () interactions is alienating or is not approachable by a large portion of the population (). I don't think that they () a certain niche () computer skills ().

I was wondering what the (). And parking is always an issue () in Somerville. But now access for () access to (). Is there some provisions () stop in front of the house () without getting ()?

>>I think there is a couple of questions in there, but I want to make sure that folks on Zoom can hear. How do we collaborate with the ADA Coordinator or contribution from the RSJ office, and office for loading and unloading if you don't have a () I will start, Adrienne, and if you want to chime in, too. So for any of our projects, one of the first people we go to is Adrienne, and I'm excited to introduce Adrienne Pomeroy. We go to the Somerville Commissions for People with Disability who reviews all of our projects as well.

Adrienne, do you want to add anything?

>>Sure. Thanks, Kate. That is true. I am often one of the first staff personnel to be brought in on these mobility projects, and that comes really from that collaboration with that staff. And particularly so if there is some sort of dedicated process, you know, for a bike lane or change in parking, making sure that we are not taking away accessible space, that even presenting the opportunity to increase it where we can.

I certainly understand that not having access or worried that somebody may be penalized for not having time to unload safely is an issue, and that's definitely something we always keep in mind. As Kate said, she is -- plans are often reviewed by the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and as Kate said, I am happy as well to take any feedback, whether tonight or later as mobility moves through this particular project.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*ADRIENNE POMEROY*: Thank you for your service. I am happy to

answer that question.

>>*KATE WHITE*: One of the things we do when we think through, what are the options with the curb. We think through, where do we have unloading and loading space, and many of our loading zones allow for passenger pickup or dropoff or passenger loading. So the trucks who are dropping off deliveries can run through, and when you want to come through and run in, get a baked good, have those options, increase the amount of accessible spaces we have. So with the parking available where can we put that and make more options for folks.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: So how do you get speed humps on a street, temporarily or permanent. And as I'm really excited, if you go take our survey, one of our questions are where are the locations you want to see speed humps. We do prioritize locations based on the amount of cars that are on the streets, so if there is a higher amount of cars going through then we know it is going to have more of an impact. We have also focused more on locations that are closer to where we might have a high amount of children. Because we really want to make sure there is increased safety around there. So right now you will see, you know, those ones on Morrison and Kidder, we are going to have the Green Line Station, so people crossing and moving around. And that's why we picked () and Perry.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: I don't know if I can answer when to expect it, but definitely share that information and they say Councilor Scott shared a lot of information. High volume of vehicles, and children, I also want to say that when we are doing these projects we are coming in and we are going to reconstruct the street, we have the crews in town, they are right there. So ideally, too, we often prioritize areas where we have those crews. This is a great opportunity to give that input, let us know where the low cases you want to see, and then we can -- as we are developing a design for this project.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: We are not removing all the parking. I don't have the exact number for you, but we are maintaining one side of parking.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: Generally. So it will switch from side to side as you travel down the street.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: No. So right now with those new pavement markings we put in November 2020. It is going to be relatively similar to that. To the new pavement markings that were implemented in November 2020. So the lines that you see out there now. Going to come back and fix those,

but it is generally similar. There will be changes to --

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: I don't have that number off the top of my head, no. I'm sorry.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: Well, we are --

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: I'm happy to follow up with the exact number, actually, afterwards.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: We are in the process of giving design feedback, so when we have the finalized designs we are happy to share the exact number we know. But, again, we are looking for input from you to help finalize those designs.

>>[ off mic ]. Can you go over what improvements will be done at Oak and Houghton Street? Will this impact all of Oak?

>>*KATE WHITE*: I will call up my teammate, Jesse. But essentially we will be putting in all crosswalks and curb ramps and make sure that intersection is safe. And Jesse Moos, do you have anything to add?

>>*JESSE MOOS*: Hi. Jesse Moos, liaison. You may remember me from such projects as Beacon Street and Somerville Avenue. I thought that was funny. I believe the raised table for the intersection. Is that what you want?

>>*KATE WHITE*: That was online.

>>*JESSE MOOS*: I figured it was coming from my friend over there. So that's planned in our next contract. We will probably primarily focus on Washington Street, but we will be sending off the crews to do these smaller intersections at the same time. So plan ahead, guys.

>>[ off mic ]. Thankfully, most people don't see ().

>>*KATE WHITE*: So the question was around the desire for another crosswalk on Prospect Street, correct? I mean, please continue to share that feedback. I don't know at this time what that is, but those are the things we always want to hear so that when we have these opportunities, yeah. And if you use 311 frequently, they will send that to us, too.

>>*JESSE MOOS*: She knows where to find me.

>>*KATE WHITE*: You know where to find Jesse.

[ Laughter ]

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: The question is are we coordinating with the City of Cambridge on their () square work, correct? With our work. I think we are always in dialogue with Cambridge, so when we are working on this project, the Washington Street project we reach out directly and share,

hey, this is what we are thinking, what is going on, you know, just across the line. And like how do we collaborate. But your question was specifically about ( ) Square?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*KATE WHITE*: Yeah. And we also, each year we routinely do new data analysis collections or data collections, sorry, to analyze. So we will go out there and see, are we seeing higher amounts of vehicles on this street, people taking new patterns. I think we have all seen particularly over the last two and a half years delivery routes completely change when people travel ways we didn't know. So to answer your question, yes, we are definitely always talking to Cambridge to learn and see what's going on, but we are also doing our own data collection efforts to understand how traffic patterns are changing in our City.

>>*JESSE MOOS*: We also have a very good relationship with Cambridge, where they have work going on on Union Square, it is affecting traffic, where Springfield Street is, we will kind of coordinate and communicate it with our emergency response teams and try often not to have our own major construction right there at the same time.

All right. Thank you, guys. We will be around.

[ Applause ]

>>*RICHARD RAICHE*: Will give kudos to anybody who knows what an -- what do you think we do?

That's cheating.

[ Laughter ]

So all right. I will let you off the hook. We are responsible for the design and construction of improvements to all of our City- owned infrastructure. So our buildings, our roads, the Washington Street project that Kate just described to you, when it actually becomes a construction project engineering will manage that. We manage all of the upgrades to the water system, into the sewer system. We are the ones who built the new high school. When this building and the other school buildings needed the air handling updates, we managed the upgrades. We do a lot of roads, we do a lot of sewer work. The Somerville Avenue drainage infrastructure was IAM, and the water work on Washington Street that preceded the roadway work is ours.

One of the projects that we have been working on that is of interest to Ward 2 residents in the entire City is our lead service replacement. We are blessed in Somerville to have NWRA water which is among the best water in the nation. NWRA consistently wins AWWA taste tests for being highest quality. We pride ourselves on making sure that that high quality water is in our water manes all the way through. Our last link from the water mane industry into the houses we also want to make sure that's of highest

quality. So we have been strategically pulling out remnants of lead services. We try to take out about 200 every year, 200 so far, we are opening up enrollment for the projects. Unlike some Cities that only do from the manhole to the sidewalk, which is the portion that the City owns, we do at no expense to the homeowner or property owner all the way up to the building. So we pull that whole thing out and replace it.

There is a website that you can go to, it is up on the screen to sign up. If you suspect that your house has a lead service the database will let you know your eligibility or even better, just talk to Jesse. And if you didn't know, we have the best Twitter account in the City, at least in my opinion. Somerville infrastructure. Tweet us, we will get you into the program. The other thing we have been doing in the program, you have noticed spot repairs to the sewers. We are about halfway down with that project. After years of neglecting our underground infrastructure, we set about with the support of the City Council to properly fund an investigation program so we understand what the needs of our sewer and drainage system are. We find system defects before the pipes collapse and become sink holes, usually. We are going as fast as we can, sometimes there are still collapses that we don't catch. To tackle our deferred maintenance, we have got a lot of pipe work happening in Ward 2. Sometimes it has to be dig and replace, sometimes we are able to utilize trenchless technology so we can get more pipe done quickly and with less destruction to the neighborhood. And we will be going into the trenchless portion over the winter when it becomes harder to dig. It is important that people along those lines watch for the notices because as that pipeline goes through you do have to curtail some water use before we can cut the services back out. But if your street is one of the streets that's on the list you will be hearing more from us on that.

That, again, is focused on main tagging the pipes in place. And long-range planning for upgrading. Ward 2 suffers from flooding, and Ward 7 and Ward 4, we have combined sewer overflow concerns. We are making capital improvements to address all of those legacy problems. You should be hearing more about some outreach that we will be doing for community engagement to help us with that long-term planning so please keep an eye out for that. So if there are any questions about water, sewer, buildings, roads, happy to answer those now.

>>[ off mic ]. He leaves equipment on the street, he comes and goes, digs up and replaces, digs up and replaces. There is equipment that's been stored ( ) for months. Hasn't been moved.

>>*RICHARD RAICHE*: I would like to welcome back to the mic Jesse Moos.

>>*JESSE MOOS*: Lucky him. This is a major project that needs to get done. Prior to do any sort of street construction. So we are actually in

Phase 2 of Washington Street. We did Phase 1 a year and a half ago, maybe two years when we upgraded the water main. We had water source, start doing the gas, so they are going from pretty much this building to Beacon Street. The expectation of finishing is mid- December. So 6 more weeks, some are done, and they will move on.

So let's talk after this and talk about where they are parking, because I have them move around a lot so they are just constantly not in one spot. All right. Thank ya'll.

>>*RICHARD RAICHE*: Don't go too far.

[ Laughter ]

>>[ off mic ] across from the (). 94 is the big, big tall building where they have the terrible water problem () years ago. Anyway, the reason they had a terrible water problem is that when they redid Beacon Street they paved over the water shutoff from the street.

So when the fire department came to try to shut it off, the first thing they had to do is excavate it and find it. That encouraged me to move down the street elsewhere, and I noticed that in front of my house, where there used to be a little round thing like this [ indicating ] that said water on it, it isn't there anymore. They have paved over it.

So I'm thinking I'm probably not the only one () that happened () looked like it happened to () and the folks before. So on your to- do list () intersection of Beacon Street and make sure that all of us can access our water shutoffs.

>>*JESSE MOOS*: Absolutely. I will talk to the water department tomorrow.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*RICHARD RAICHE*: We will get it to Carlos.

Any more questions for Richard or Jesse?

>>[ off mic ]. The telephone poles () trash truck ().

>>*JESSE MOOS*: So about two years ago, single ones that are ()? Or both? The right is the question, the leaning pole or the double pole?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*JESSE MOOS*: Okay. So excellent. So I'm in communication with () electric, Verizon, Comcast, if you give me your address, I can ask them and see when they can come out. It was leaning too far into Washington Street because it ().

>>[ off mic ].

>>*JESSE MOOS*: Okay. Thank you, everybody.

[ Applause ]

>>*DENISE MOLINA CAPERS*: Good evening, everyone. The first time I feel tall. All right. So I am Denise Molina Capers, the Director of the Racial and Social Justice Department for the City of Somerville. And the

Department of Racial and Social Justice leads the City of Somerville in its equity efforts and collaborates with City departments, constituents, and stakeholders to eliminate the institutional and structural systems that create racial inequities, social disparities, and other social injustices. The reason why I mention our main mission is because contrary to popular belief, our only job is not only to work on the initiative around public safety for all.

We were established officially in 2021. And we have continued to build the department's capacity. We have hired an RSJ coordinator, Amanda Nagim- Williams, Community Engagement Specialist, Leonor Galindo, who is here today, public information officer, Haakon Brooks.

We have the RSJ youth league started a study in Somerville youth last year to collect data on youth () city and consider the design of the youth cabinet that would live under the RSJ department and allow a permanent way for our youth to engage in decision- making for the City.

In September and continuing into October the department has partnered with the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services and hosted free Psychological First Aid training sessions to City staff, front line workers, and community leaders. And what we mean by community leaders is anyone in the community like your neighbor who was informed of what's going on, and offers to give you information about what's going on in the City, the neighbor that knows all the kids in the neighborhood, these are people that we also consider community leaders. So the RSJ department is building toolkits for everyone in the community to be a part of this work.

So far we have had over 100 people participate in these trainings. The community requested that the RSJ monitor establish the system of reporting hate/bias incidents. We have a case management system known as (). We are able to customize to track any and all relevant information to these complaints and cases and keep in contact with those who have filed the complaints and giving them consistent updates on their complaint. Around reimagining policing and public safety, public safety for all, the staffing and operations analysis, we have completed the phases of the initial meetings and fact finding focus groups and interviews, data collection and analysis, and we are in the recognition development. Next phases after that will be report development and presenting the findings to the public.

The policing and public safety perception is now published and available in 6 languages. You can find it online. Is also here today with some hard copies. If you would like, there is a QR code if you would like to just at least scan it.

We are still conducting community visioning focus groups that have been

ongoing since August, and we will be publishing some dates for in-person and virtual community visioning focus groups that you can sign up for. You can also sign up to be a host to have your own group, and we will help you with all materials, location, anything needed in order to host your own visioning group.

So we are tasked with creating recommendations for what's () look like in Somerville, a task force will be announced in November. This task force will be trained, formed, and knowledgeable about what oversight is and functions across different models and this task force communication will align with the needs of Somerville as a City and as voiced by its constituents.

The commission, Human Rights Commission and Somerville Commission for Women and for Persons with Disabilities has an open call for 4 spots in each of the commissions, and they will be open until filled.

>>Good evening, as mentioned earlier, I'm Adrienne Pomeroy, and I serve City of Somerville. Denise already talked about the commissions, I'm also the acting staff liaison for the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. I want to talk about a few things. In the spring I conducted an ADA internal survey with internal case staff, and the findings were very encouraging. Most of our folks in various departments have a really good working knowledge of the ADA, and that has only increased with my position being filled last year, and also will influence and help me create trainings for our staff.

And then we are starting with those trainings actually this week. I started with our first responders in terms of our fire department, and we will be training those folks all week to have more positive and great interactions with persons with disabilities on calls.

And then finally, please be on the lookout for in early November for the ADA community survey which will be your chance to comment on accessibility and ADA feedback that you may have for our division. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

Any questions?

>>[ off mic ].

>>So I guess I would say it depends. If the neighborhood association would like the RSJ department to speak with them and advise and help with what does it mean to add that into a strategic plan and maybe some data that could be helpful to that as well as far as like what is () for that constituency and language access, we would be more than happy to help with that.

Can you get his information?

>>Any additional questions for Denise and Adrienne?



Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: Good evening. I'm here on behalf of ( ) couldn't be here tonight. So it is not like he forced me to come tonight. My name is Jim Donovan, Somerville Police Department, been with the department for 22 years. Grew up in Somerville. And my mom, 90 years old, still lives up in west Somerville. So I'm very in connection with Somerville. I don't live in Somerville anymore, where I'm from, it is Somerville. It is not the community I currently live in. My boys live in the community we live in, I'm from Somerville. So just so we all know.

Before coming up here I asked Chief ( ) sing a song, he told me he is going to pay me not to sing.

[ Laughter ]

So as far as myself, I have been with the police department for 22 years. I have been in every department within the department with the exception of traffic bureau. I was never in the traffic bureau, but I have been a detective, every supervisory position within the department. And patrol. We are running late, but I guarantee you, I will not leave this building until every question is answered. As far as today's slides, I can't read, too small, my copy, some status update since our last Community Meetings a few years ago, as far as the community policing unit, we do get some questions about community policing unit as far as, you know, outreach, Homeless Coalition, our seniors, block parties, things like that. At the moment we do not have a community policing unit due to staffing levels. We have had to pull back and roll them back into patrol so we can stay on your patrol, patrolling your streets every day. At one time we did 19. We had 7 officers, one for each ward, as well as a supervisor in that unit. We hope at some point if our staffing levels come up at some point, we can reintroduce community policing in some form or fashion.

As far as student resource officers, I know that's been a big issue and been talked about a lot. We currently do not have SROs in our schools. We did the steps program one time as well, and what the steps program was, I believe it was the 5th grade, one officer would get the -- would follow that class up to graduation. This being our first year, graduating class having an officer follow them and we do have some officers attend graduation down at the stadium. Although they haven't followed through, totally through school due to COVID and other reasons.

As far as the SRO in schools go, I know the school committee has had a working group. I spoke to members here tonight, has a working group with some PTOs, bring the police back to the schools in some form or fashion. I don't necessarily know where that is, but that's a work in progress. A ( ) up there. We are an accredited department, which is

unlikely for a department our size. We are a fairly large department in Massachusetts and we are accredited. What it means, we meet certain standards within best ( ) every 3 years, and reaccredited this year. To achieve that accreditation.

You will hear a lot about that in the media, ( ) created ( ) police officer standards and training commission and what they are doing. It is a 9- member panel, looking at every police officer, their records and files and certifying those officers that should be certified. And what happens if an officer is not certified, he or she is not licensed in Massachusetts, and if they are ( ) Somerville or other community they couldn't just jump to another community for employment purposes. They would be decertified. As far as crime, Ward 2, we have some attempts in increase in crime in one year, 11% in two years and I believe it says -- sorry, Ward 13% in one year, and 14% over two years with an 11%, 10% increase City- wide. We look at statistics, and that's nonviolent crime, it is property crime. It is catalytic converters being stolen, as far as ( ). And what we have done, we have taken some of our resources, we don't have the staffing necessarily to add resources to our community, but we are shifting from other areas of the City who have seen decreases in crime or have held steady. We may pull in Ward 5 or 6, depending on the statistics, may pull them down to Ward 2 for part of their shift for those purposes.

Next slide, please.

As far as crime prevention, we love to bring this up there. I talk to the community all the time, best thing about my job as patrol captain, I can go and walk around the community. You are paying me to get out there and meet the community. I have the best job in the world. And I hear too often from citizens, my car got broken into today, I went to my car and things were messed up, things weren't stolen, I didn't report it. First of all, we need your input. We take that input, redirect resources. So we tell everyone, don't leave your car open, but please, if your car does get broken into, tell us.

As far as motor vehicle thefts, cars don't get stolen anymore. Uber drivers, Uber Eats, DoorDash, delivery drivers, we see a spike in that in the last year. Bike thefts, self- explanatory. I do encourage people, keep your information, because if we do come across bikes, the only way we can identify those bikes are with the serial numbers. We can look them up. These bikes are really expensive.

Christmas is coming. If you work during the day, you know, try to have it delivered to a neighbor that's going to be home to receive a package. I have all of my packages delivered to Whole Foods. That's what I usually do. But we have seen a decrease in the past two years in package thefts because people are home, but with people going back to work, we are

concerned that we may see increase in those.

Next slide, please.

As far as the last slide goes there was the catalytic converters. Seen a jump in catalytic converters. What they do, they slide under your car, there about 15, 20 seconds, they go and they cut off the catalytic converter from your exhaust system. Precious metals in there, take it to a scrap yard and get money for it. We have a regional task force, it is very difficult, it is a crisis level across state and across New England.

This slide is just numbers we always present in neighborhood meetings to provide information, you know. Domestic violence, mental health, as well as sexual assault and such.

And these are the numbers we have from the Somerville Police Department itself. That's a new email just created this month for people, and anonymous crime tips go directly to me. And the meeting slides. I will take a few questions now, but I won't leave this building until every question is answered.

Yes, sir?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: No. We do enforce traffic laws. That's part of our job. We do have a traffic enforcement unit. We have staff cuts, we have taken one officer out of that unit. But we still do have a unit. I know we -- I know that street. It is a busy street. Very busy. Cut- through street. Cut- through to Cambridge.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: I realize that.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: I will say, so we do have a traffic unit, and we do enforce traffic laws. And if the traffic unit sets up at different places based on input from these meetings, needed traffic enforcement, we send a traffic officer out there. They would do, you know, a lot of times we get them and we send an officer out there, yep, I have got two or three people, move elsewhere. But we do set up in certain locations if we get input from these meetings. Disregarding traffic signal, signs has increased, I don't know -- I don't want to blame it on COVID, people tend to blame everything on COVID, but it is about having people cooped up. But with the police department, we work with the infrastructure, we work with Brad -- speed humps, bump- outs, you know, reducing speed in the City and enforcing it.

Sorry?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: Actually, I think the legislation in place now in the State going forward with that. We are not opposed to it. We are not

opposed to it.

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN:* The police department has no control over the speed bumps. We have no input as to where they put those. It is infrastructure. We don't recommend them, that's completely infrastructure. That's, you know, Rich and his people. Not Rich, but someone else ... who was here tonight? Jesse. Yeah. Okay.

>>Any other questions for Captain Donovan?

>>[ off mic ].

[ Applause ]

>>So thanks for all the information. I was wondering if you could talk about changes that the department has been making since 2020. I think a lot of our residents are really concerned about the impacts Communities of Color and police brutality and criminalization of People of Color. So if you could talk about what ( ) are doing ( ).

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN:* Thank you. The question was what have we changed regarding policing with Somerville Police Department that we weren't doing before as a result of societal changes, let's say, in the last two years. I know that my chief and my command staff meet with Denise weekly and coordinate with her. We have increased our training, diversity training, our implicit bias training, and the State now mandates our trainings as well. So as part of our training every year we have some training related to that within our 40 hours of training.

In addition to that, like I say, we work with Denise Molina Capers on going forward and reimagining policing in Somerville, and I think, you know, from someone who has been here for 20 years, especially from another 10 years, we look forward to change. At least as a young -- well, I wouldn't say young, member of the command staff, I look forward to change with the Somerville Police Department. I am proud of where they are now and where they have been. It keeps you nimble, keeps you on your toes, and keeps you better.

But training is a really big part of that, within all of our ranks. We start work with Denise Molina Capers on that, additional trainings, as a result of her studies and what citizens want to see from us. Ultimately we work for all of you. We don't make anything, I mean, I meet new officers all the time, I tell them 3 things, I tell them first of all, save for retirement, I tell them remember everything you do is on video or audio recording.

Everything. If you work like that and know that, you know, it creates transparency. And the third thing I tell them to do is remember we don't create anything at the police department. We don't make anything, we don't make widgets from economics class in college, we provide a service. If we are not providing a good service, why are we doing it to begin with.

We are not electricians, we are not plumbers, we are service providers.

Yes, sir?

>>[ off mic ].

>>*CAPTAIN DONOVAN*: So I will be here to answer any questions you may have after. I won't leave until the last person gets their questions answered. Thank you for your time.

[ Applause ]

>>*VICTORIA*: Thank you, everyone. This concludes the Ward 2 meeting. Staff will be hanging out if you have any additional questions or would like to talk one- on- one. If you would prefer email, you can email any feedback or questions to [cm@somervillema.gov](mailto:cm@somervillema.gov). The recording will be on YouTube in the coming days. Thank you.

[ Meeting concluded at 8:28 p.m. Eastern Standard Time ]