



Renewable Communities 2020

Massachusetts cities and towns
leading the way to 100% renewable energy

Somerville: Winter Hill in Motion

Somerville's "Winter Hill in Motion" initiative, implemented in 2019, aims to improve travel along Broadway, one of the city's busiest streets.¹

A survey conducted by the city found that Broadway was serving the needs of drivers well but falling short for bus riders, cyclists, and pedestrians.² The street is used by two MBTA bus lines, routes 89 and 101, which average about 8,000 boardings per day.³

The centerpiece of Winter Hill in Motion was the installation of a dedicated bus lane on each side of Broadway. In addition, the city installed a parking-protected bike lane and other bike facilities, adjusted the timing of traffic signals, installed transit signal priority technology, and added new signs and pavement markings.⁴

The MBTA increased the frequency of service on the Route 89 bus to take advantage of the improved infrastructure. Trips were faster and ridership increased in the initial months of the project, with 230 more bus riders on weekdays and more than 400 additional riders on weekends. Riders are saving an average of 60 seconds during morning rush hour and 30 seconds at other times.⁵

While there was an initial increase in congestion after the bus lanes were installed, travel times for drivers have since returned to previous levels. City officials attribute the short-term increase to the fact that traffic signals weren't adjusted until a few weeks after the bus lanes went in.⁶

In December 2019, the MBTA said it is considering adding more service to the Broadway corridor in Somerville, as

well as another street with dedicated bus lanes in Everett. This demonstration project would provide service similar to rapid transit lines by running buses along these corridors every 10 minutes during peak times and every 15-20 minutes during off-peak times. The MBTA would use new software to actively manage bus dispatching.⁷

Setting aside more space for dedicated bus and bike lanes, and reducing the amount of street space allocated to parking, is one of the strategies identified in Somerville's Climate Forward plan to meet the city's greenhouse gas reduction goals.⁸

1. "Winter Hill in Motion," City of Somerville, <<https://www.somervillema.gov/winterhillinmotion>>.

2. "Winter Hill in Motion," City of Somerville, <<https://www.somervillema.gov/winterhillinmotion>>.

3. "Somerville's New Bus Lanes Projected to Shorten More Than 8,000 Bus Trips per Day," City of Somerville, 4 September 2019, <<https://www.somervillema.gov/news/somerville%E2%80%99s-new-bus-lanes-projected-shorten-more-8000-bus-trips-day>>.

4. "Somerville's New Bus Lanes Projected to Shorten More Than 8,000 Bus Trips per Day," City of Somerville, 4 September 2019, <<https://www.somervillema.gov/news/somerville%E2%80%99s-new-bus-lanes-projected-shorten-more-8000-bus-trips-day>>.

5. "Early Data Show Less Traffic, More Bus Riders On Broadway In Somerville," Christian MilNeil, StreetsblogMASS, 10 December 2019, <<https://mass.streetsblog.org/2019/12/10/early-data-shows-less-traffic-more-bus-riders-on-somervilles-new-bus-lanes/>>.

6. "Early Data Show Less Traffic, More Bus Riders On Broadway In Somerville," Christian MilNeil, StreetsblogMASS, 10 December 2019, <<https://mass.streetsblog.org/2019/12/10/early-data-shows-less-traffic-more-bus-riders-on-somervilles-new-bus-lanes/>>.

7. "Early Data Show Less Traffic, More Bus Riders On Broadway In Somerville," Christian MilNeil, StreetsblogMASS, 10 December 2019, <<https://mass.streetsblog.org/2019/12/10/early-data-shows-less-traffic-more-bus-riders-on-somervilles-new-bus-lanes/>>.

8. *Somerville Climate Forward: Somerville's Community Climate Plan*, Office of Sustainability & Environment, City of Somerville, November 2018, <<https://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/somerville-climate-forward-plan.pdf>>.