



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES**

October 20, 2021
REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Hannah Carrillo -Mayor's Office, Brad Rawson-OSPCD, Eric Weisman-DPW, Jill Lathan-DPW, Brian Postlewaite-Engineering, Councilor JT Scott-Ward 2, Adam Portney-Resident and Erika Uyterhoeven-State Rep

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairperson Niedergang and adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Approval of the September 20, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Traffic Signals, Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety

212254: That the Director of Mobility replace the HAWK signal at Buckingham and Beacon Streets with a standard RYG stoplight signal.

Chair Niedergang stated this issue has been before the Committee for two years with similar issues on Beacon Street. He read a statement from Lt. Polito that was sent to the committee members re: the HAWK light at Buckingham and Beacon. It is attached to the agenda.

The Chair sponsored Ward 2 Councilor JT Scott to speak. He stated his first order on Buckingham was in 2018. Councilor Scott stated that not a single person has stated they appreciate the light. He also stated that Senator Pat Jehlen could not join the meeting tonight but would like this light changed.

Chair Niedergang read a email from Senator Jehlen that she feels this is problematic and is in support of changing the light.

Mr. Adam Portney was sponsored by the Chair. He stated the intersection is extremely dangerous for bikers, pedestrians and cars. In 2019, a non-traditional HAWK signal was installed and no one understands the signal. He stated the federal guidelines do not recommend

this signal for an urban two-lane road. He stated the walk sign comes on and the pedestrians and cars are confused by the signal.

State Representative Erika Uytterhoeven was sponsored by the Chair and stated that she was reached out to a few months ago about the danger to pedestrians crossing the street at this location. They organized a petition and got 143 signatories to remove the HAWK signal. The constituents she has spoken to hate the signal and do not feel safe and need to dodge vehicles when crossing the cross walk. (NOTE: The petition text and list of signers and an email in support from Mr. Portney are attached to the agenda for the meeting.)

Mr. Rawson stated that a review is ongoing and the City will continue to monitor this area. The City has recently staffed up the Engineering division. Mr. Postlewaite stated traffic engineering staff has improved over the past year and is working to understand the full scope of options for this intersection. The federal highway administration states that a HAWK signal is a recommended solution for two lane road, he said. They are looking at what other signals could be installed at this location. There are specific regulations that must be followed to install a RYG (red yellow green) standard light. He said there are approximately 95 pedestrians a day at this location and according to the guidelines there would need to be over 250 pedestrians to justify changing to a RYG light at this location.

Mr. Postlewaite stated that federal regulations have strict guidelines that have been around for decades where RYG signal can go.

Chair Niedergang commented that he agrees with the people who spoke tonight. The residents who have every day experience are the experts in what is safe, he said.

Mr. Rawson stated the Administration is taking this seriously and has assigned resources to work on it

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209148: That the Commissioner of Public Works immediately replace the HAWK signals on Beacon Street with more suitable and effective RYG pedestrian-activated signals.

See item #212254

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207903: That the Director of SPCD discuss with this Council the use of "concurrent with leading interval" pedestrian crossing timing at major intersections that see high usage by school and pre-school children, particularly at the intersection of Beacon and Washington Streets, and consider reversion to pedestrian-exclusive crossing timing at several relevant intersections.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209616: That the Director of Engineering install a crosswalk on Somerville Avenue at Kent Street and Spring Street.

Chair Niedergang stated there is a petition that was circulated by the Girl Scouts asking for a new crosswalk at this location.

Mr. Rawson stated there have been plans to install a crosswalk in this area for some time now and there is a private development project nearby in the works and they are willing to construct the crosswalk as part of their development. There will be more dialog in the coming months. He stated that 2023 would be realistic and the earliest for the crosswalk.

Councilor Ballantyne stated this area has a lot of pedestrians with little kids. She would like a safe way for pedestrians to cross, even if it is temporary road painting or flex posts for the bus stop. Mr. Rawson will work with the team to look into deploying some quick-build traffic calming methods for this area. Councilor Ballantyne suggested maybe using yellow bollards to cause people to slow down in the area. Chair Niedergang suggested to condition the crosswalk as a first step to be completed at the same time as the foundation on the project. Maybe the Zoning or Planning board could require this be done early on as part of the deal for the project? Mr. Postlewaite stated he will explore requiring an interim crosswalk that would be put in place at the beginning of construction.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205831: That the Director of Engineering share with this Board the feasibility of creating a pedestrian crossing on Somerville Avenue, between Belmont and Spring Streets.

See item #209616

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209482: That the Director of Engineering construct a pedestrian crosswalk across Washington Street in front of the Public Safety Building. (2nd request)

Mr. Rawson stated he did not have any major updates from the last time it was discussed. There are a series of site constraints that have stymied every test plan. Chair Niedergang said that he hopes that this crosswalk gets done as part of redevelopment of the D-1 block that now has the Public Safety Building on it.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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City Employees Driver Safety Training

210975: That the Administration and the Commissioner of Public Works discuss the vehicle training process for all DPW employees and contractors whose job requires them to drive city vehicles.

Mr. Weisman said that the City has contracted with a driver safety program and will roll out the program over the next month. Ms. Carrillo met with Human Resources and the “Safer Trucking in Changing Cities” video has been incorporated in the driver safety training. Every City staff will go through the training within a month. Also, all new staff members will go through this online and video training in the future. Human Resources is still trying to work out details for refresher training program.

Chair Niedergang asked if the training is the same for all City staff such as truck vs. those driving cars. Mr. Weisman stated that the program used for DPW drivers is longer for people who drive more intensively.

Chair Niedergang asked about city contractors such as garbage and recycling trucks, if there are any plans to do training or check with companies on what type of training they are offered.

Ms. Carrillo stated the City will not start training private contractors.

Chair Niedergang asked about speed limiters. Mr. Weisman is waiting for samples to come in that would be a plug-in version of vehicle speed limiters.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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212251: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Mobility report to this Council whether the video "Safer Trucking in Changing Cities" is being used to train City truck drivers in safe driving techniques.

See item #210975

Mr. Weisman stated this is being bundled into the training that HR is setting up.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211128: That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss installing speed limiters on the city's vehicles to monitor speed and ensure that employees are observing speed limits.

See item #210975

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Traffic Calming Around GLX Stations and CPX Crossings

211814: That the Director of Engineering install raised crosswalks rather than standard crosswalks for each at-grade crossing of the Community Path Extension, including Central, Sycamore, and Walnut Streets.

Mr. Rawson gave a refresher update following the Committee's last discussion on this matter. The Community Path (CPX) street crossings are close to the bridge decks and they have been working with MBTA on them. The proximity to the bridges present major problems for constructing crosswalks there due to drainage issues and the challenges and cost of making changes to bridges. Plus the bridges are not under control of the City but of MassDOT or the MBTA.

Mr. Postlewaite stated they worked with the GLX team and MassDot bridge team to find compromises for Central and School Street crossings. Due to the complexity of those areas, and the fact that there is City-owned infrastructure all around them, the GLX and the City agreed that those two crossings would be the responsibility of the City to address. City staff are looking at other traffic calming measures up and down stream, perhaps installing some bump outs wherever possible. The Walnut, Sycamore, Medford and Lowell Streets are the responsibility of the GLX Team to address safety issues.

Councilor Clingan stated he is most concerned about Sycamore Street with the number of cars coming down the hill.

Mr. Rawson stated the CPX will be one of the last portions of work by the GLX Team and should be completed in the summer.

Councilor Ballantyne asked what are the costs of treatments to go into the sites and are there any opportunities to use the money that has not been spent for the GLX.

Mr. Postlewaite stated speed humps costs \$5-10k and are fairly easy to install. Additionally, they do not create additional problems with abutters and pedestrians. The costlier elements are resetting crosswalks, bump outs and raised crosswalks. Flashing lights can be more expensive in range depending upon location and constraints.

Councilor Clingan asked if the state is putting in any funds for traffic calming for the CPX crossings.

Mr. Rawson stated the existing community path is owned by the MBTA but they are not putting in any additional funds beyond the \$1.4 million given to the City in the Memorandum of Agreement signed several years ago (see item 13).

Mr. Postlewaite stated both School and Central streets are adjacent to other projects the City is working on and they would coordinate between addressing the CPX crossings and those projects.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211135: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council on traffic management and calming plans for the streets and neighborhoods around the five Green Line Extension stations expected to open before the end of this year.

Mr. Rawson was asked if there are any challenges or obstacles. He stated all processes are moving forward and suggested reading the February 8th City Council meeting notes and viewing the presentation with diagrams and full details. He gave a brief summary. There is traffic calming in the Ball Square neighborhood. A new cross walk will be constructed across from Kelly's Diner. There are protected bike lanes in Ball Square. In Gilman Square, they are working hard with the neighborhood and excited with the direction. There are raised crosswalks in Union Square and they are constructing new traffic calming near Prospect and Webster.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210968: That the Director of SPCD brief the Traffic and Parking Committee on the work that will be done on our streets and Community Path pursuant to the Memorandum of Agreement with the MBTA and MaDOT, which will provide the city with a \$1,400,000 payment.

Chair Niedergang asked if everything is going as planned and the work is proceeding.

Mr. Rawson stated the working is proceeding on time and within budget; they are installing traffic calming, as needed.

Councilor Ballantyne asked who's monitoring the compliance and does the City need to monitor the MOU. Mr. Rawson replied that Ms. Eileen McGettigan, the City's Special Counsel is monitoring and managing the process.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Speed Bumps and Flex Posts

210966: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council why there are still so few speed bumps in the city, especially since the ones deployed on Powder House Boulevard seem to be making a dangerous area safer for pedestrians.

Mr. Rawson stated that speed humps were installed in 2019 on Powderhouse Boulevard and have been effective. One of the current flagship projects is the College Ave corridor. They will be installing asphalt speed humps over the next couple of weeks. The City's contractor is planning to mobilize crews to come out soon to perform the work. Mr. Rawson stated next year's flagship project will be Pearl Street.

Mr. Postlewaite stated the speed humps are more beneficial than speed bumps and are gentle enough so that the plows can plow over without too much difficulties as well as first responders are able to go over them without being slowed down significantly.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210965: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council in writing by December 4, and discuss with the Traffic and Parking Committee at its next meeting on December 7, what the plan is for replacing flex posts when they are knocked over or displaced.

Mr. Rawson provided a quick summary. They have been working with DPW on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for years and have learned a lot. The City selected a different product this year that is being installed in the street. If damaged the base post stays intact. 311 is also part of the SOP to help identify and route staff to the locations of flex posts to be replaced. They are working to document the procedures to share with City Councilors.

Chair Niedergang asked what are the standards to replace the damaged flex posts and how are they monitored.

Mr. Rawson stated 311 works for staff as well as constituents to report damaged flex posts. The older vintage flex posts are being decommissioned and replaced with new ones.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Housekeeping - Items to be completed if no objections

202108: That the Administration work with the City of Cambridge to improve pedestrian safety at the intersections of Elm Street with Beech Street and Willow Avenue, including consideration of a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203446: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install additional pedestrian safety measures at the intersection of Holland Street and Cameron Avenue.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

203479: That the Administration update the Ward 6 Alderman on plans to improve way-finding for the Community Path through Davis Square.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

204247: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Chief of Police petition the City of Cambridge to change Clarendon Avenue to a one way street, so it continues in the same direction from Somerville to Massachusetts Avenue.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206189: That the Director of SPCD provide recommendations to improve pedestrian safety at the dangerous intersection of Walnut Street, Summit Avenue and Boston Street.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

206407: That the Director of SPCD, the City Engineer, and the Commissioner of Public Works establish a written policy for deploying temporary safety and visibility materials for the period between street re-paving and re-painting.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

207326: That the Administration advise the Ward 6 Alderman of the notifications provided to city and private contractors about anti-idling regulations, and revise such policies to better ensure compliance.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

207486: That the Director of Engineering and the Director of Traffic and Parking update the Ward 6 Councilor on requests for crosswalks at locations specified within.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

207487: That the Director of Traffic and Parking update the Ward 6 Councilor on requests for crosswalk safety improvements at the locations specified within.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

208008: That the Director of SPCD implement traffic calming and pedestrian and cyclist safety measures on Broadway from Powder House Circle to Teele Square.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

208575: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Parking provide a quarterly update regarding implementation of deed-based parking permit restrictions.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

208685: That the Director of SPCD explain how decisions are made about Blue Bike rack placement, including how the public gets informed.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

208781: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Parking develop a city-wide traffic signaling policy that includes guidelines for temporary signaling during construction.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

208782: That the Director of SPCD develop a city-wide signage policy to equitably inform pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle operators during construction, closing of sidewalks, etc.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

208901: That the Director of SPCD and the Chief of Police update this Council on what is being done in the wake of the two deaths in two different hit and run incidents on Mystic Avenue.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

209142: That the Director of SPCD report to the Ward 6 Councilor on plans to improve cyclist wayfinding through Davis Square.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

209383: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on usage data for the Blue Bike expansion stations of 2019, and plans for expanding the system in future years.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

209477: That the Director of SPCD consider strategies to reduce the volume and impact of package delivery vehicles, such as encouraging smaller or electric vehicles and cargo bike parking, as has been tried in Manhattan and Seattle.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

209758: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on creating a Bicycle Master Plan,

and requiring that future road work adhere to this plan.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209808: That the Director of SPCD develop a plan to create parking-separated bike lanes on East Broadway.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210544: That the Chief of Police, the Director of Parking and the Director of SPCD discuss enforcement to eliminate delivery and other vehicles from parking on protected bike lanes throughout the city.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210624: That the Director of Finance, the Director of Parking and the Director of SPCD discuss scaling parking permit fees with automobile size and efficiency.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210627: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on the Missatuck/Mystic River bike and pedestrian bridge project.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210893: That the Mayor submit a supplemental budget request to immediately add staff and funding to the Mobility Division for traffic calming, and increase its staff and funding by at least 50% in FY22.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210895: That the Director of Capital Projects revise the College Avenue reconstruction plan to include additional safety measures for pedestrians at both perpendicular and parallel crossings.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210896: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 6 Councilor on the overdue new equipment necessary to improve signal timing in Davis Square.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210898: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 6 Councilor on any plans to further improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Willow Avenue, Elm Street and Beech Street, possibly with a center island and bump outs.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

210932: That the Director of SPCD replace the NO BICYCLES ON SIDEWALK decals in the city's business districts and work with the Pedestrian and Transit Advocacy Committee to reduce conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians on sidewalks.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

210985: That the Director of Parking discuss with the appropriate committee, implementing income-based parking ticket fines for residents, as well as "day-fine" scales to set ticket penalties according to an individual's daily income.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

210988: That the Directors of Finance, Infrastructure and Asset Management, and SPCD provide a progress report for the Vision Zero Action Plan 2020 as outlined in the attached spreadsheet.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

210989: That the Director of SPCD advise the Ward 7 Councilor when they will implement the Mobility Plan for West Broadway (from Route 16 to Holland Street), to create a dedicated bus lane.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

210992: That the Mayor and the Chief of Police discuss with this Council why there is so little traffic enforcement conducted by the Police Department, why its Traffic Division has so few officers, and how it plans to address the public safety crisis made obvious with 4 pedestrians killed by motor vehicles in the past 2 years.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

211227: That the Commissioner of Public Works install a temporary speed bump on Sycamore Street between the main entrance and the schoolyard entrance of the Winter Hill School.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

211243: That the Director of Mobility and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management collaborate to write responses to the questions contained within regarding the Spring Hill separation project.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

211256: That the Mayor direct department heads to prioritize the rapid construction of physical infrastructure to slow traffic, protect our most vulnerable residents, and bring our streets into compliance with the ADA, to address the killing of four pedestrians by motor vehicles in the last two years and prevent further traffic fatalities.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211307: 221 citizens from the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets submitting a Declaration and Call to Action re: safe streets.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211327: That the Traffic Commission examine using the "psych trick" pedestrian safety method, deployed in St. Paul, MN, to encourage drivers to stop for pedestrians crossing the street.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211339: That Director of Mobility and the Chief Fire Engineer discuss the potential impacts to the Teele Square Firehouse from the proposed Holland Street/Teele Square infrastructure and repaving work.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211710: That the Directors of SPCD and Communications work with the Police, the Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Transit Advisory Committee to implement a “Stop on the Line Every Time” traffic safety public education and enforcement campaign.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211711: That the Director of SPCD work with the Police Department, especially the Traffic Division, to train all Officers on Vision Zero.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211712: That the Chief of Police report to this Council on steps taken to train and incentivize Detail Officers to enforce traffic laws when they observe motorists driving unsafely.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

211713: That the Administration advise this Council on a plan to improve the consistency of staffing attendance for especially dangerous Traffic Management Plans, including the current Belmont Street traffic detour.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

211815: That the Director of SPCD re-convene the High School Parking Working Group and provide an update on what is being done to understand and address parking issues for teachers, staff, and residents.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

211823: Sharing with the Council, the Administration and the public a 6-page blogpost from State Representative Mike Connolly.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Material:

- Beacon & Buckingham HAWK - Lt. Polito Email 10-20 (with 212254, 209148)
- Email re Petition (with 212254, 209148)
- Online Petition to replace the HAWK signal on Beacon St near Buckingham St (with 212254, 209148)
- Petition signers HAWK Signal Buckingham and Beacon Sts (with 212254, 209148)