



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Traffic and Parking Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 27, 2025

6:00 PM

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chair Sait and adjourned at 7:03 PM on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Burnley and Sait), none against and one absent (Councilor Wilson).

Others present:

Assistant Chief Sean Tierney – SFD, Director Brad Rawson – Mobility, Special Counsel Catherine Lester Salchert – Law, Director Suzanne Rinfret – Parking, , Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

The meeting experienced technical difficulties when the meeting went live, however, those were resolved after 24 minutes, at which time the meeting resumed.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait and City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.
Absent: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1519](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 29, 2025.

Clerk Forcellese noted that there was a scrivener's error in the description of this item as it listed the minutes being from the Legislative Matters Committee, when in fact the minutes are actually from the Traffic and Parking Committee. The item number (25-1519) is correct.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Ward Five City Councilor Sait and City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.
ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Wilson

2. Order (ID # [25-1564](#))

By Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Parking place NO PARKING HERE TO CORNER signs on Walnut Street at Sunnyside Avenue.

Director Rinfret informed the committee that a service request started when this item was received and reported that 3 tickets have been issued since October 24th. The area is being checked twice a day and it appears that there are not enough violations for warrant signage at this location. Enforcement will continue and if the situation does not improve, then signage may be installed.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Order
(ID # [25-1550](#))

By Councilor Sait

That the Director of Mobility install a speed bump on Ashland Street.

Director Rawson informed the committee that staff is aware of the matter and has contacted the resident who initiated the request and communicated the standard procedures for evaluating traffic calming requests, i.e., collecting data on the number of vehicles using that street and their speeds. He noted that there are more requests for traffic calming than staff can fill in a given year. The data collection for Ashland Street has been scheduled for the spring of 2026. Chair Sait noted that this street is near a school and she would like this matter prioritized for next fall.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [25-1502](#))

By Councilor Clingan and Councilor Strezo

That the Director of Mobility install a solar powered digital YOUR SPEED IS display sign on Shore Drive westbound.

Director Rawson reported that staff is working with the ward councilor and area residents on this matter and that data collection has begun. Staff will communicate with the ward councilor to provide him with an update. The director commented that the type of signage requested can be helpful, however, they are less effective than calming tables which might possibly be included in the Mystic Watershed Project in 2026. Councilor Burnley inquired about the city's inventory of solar signage and Director Rawson replied that the Parking Department maintains that inventory, however, he will ask that the current inventory be documented.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Resolution
(ID # [25-1019](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That this Council consider whether to ban or restrict autonomous vehicle testing locally, if permitted by law.

Items 25-1019, 25-1018, 25-1017 and 25-1016 were discussed together.

Special Counsel Catherine Lester Salchert explained that, at the present time, it is permissible to ban autonomous vehicle testing locally, however, there is pending legislation at the state and federal levels which would prevent banning it. She also said that if a locality imposed a ban, it would be challenged in court. Director Rawson commented that there are many reasons to be concerned and he noted that the use of autonomous vehicles tend to increase the number of miles traversed. He believes that fail-safes

need to be put in place and that questions about how first responders would interact with these vehicles need to be answered. In retrospect, he said that the city could have done a better job when planning for ride hailing.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

6. Order
(ID # [25-1018](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott

That the City Solicitor provide an opinion on whether an individual within a vehicle or the autonomous vehicle company would be responsible if issued a citation during autonomous driving testing.

Items 25-1019, 25-1018, 25-1017 and 25-1016 were discussed together.

A memo has been submitted regarding this item.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

7. Order
(ID # [25-1017](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott

That the City Solicitor provide an opinion on whether this Council can restrict the use of autonomous driving testing within city limits, either through an outright ban or through requirement of a special permit.

Items 25-1019, 25-1018, 25-1017 and 25-1016 were discussed together.

A memo has been submitted regarding this item.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

8. Resolution
(ID # [25-1016](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Mayor disclose to this Council any communication with Waymo or its parent company Google regarding autonomous driving tests within city limits.

Items 25-1019, 25-1018, 25-1017 and 25-1016 were discussed together.

A memo has been submitted regarding this item.

Councilor Burnley noted that Waymo has been doing testing in some cities, raising concerns about anything driving on city streets. He has concerns about responsibility and he is curious about the city's protocol regarding disclosure to the public about testing being done in the city. Special Counsel Catherine Lester Salchert stated that no vehicles may operate without a driver present and that the company was just collecting data. Director Rawson referred the committee to the submitted memo, saying that it describes the outreach that was performed. He also commented that

transparency is important and that people need to know what type of operator, if any, is present in a vehicle.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- T&P - 2025-10-27 Memo (with 25-1016, 25-1017, 25-1018)