

Letter from SASS, dated July 30, 2024

"We are the Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets (SASS). SASS is a coalition united by a common belief: None of us should rest until the streets are safe for everybody. We are pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers. We are able bodied and disabled, young and old, parents, caregivers, students, teachers, business owners, elected officials, residents, and commuters.

Since SASS published our declaration and call to action in early 2021, nearly 900 people have signed on to be part of the community. The core work of organizing and steering SASS is done by a committee of local volunteers who bring experience and connections to various advocacies and organizations within Somerville.

We write to you today in support of changes to Somerville's existing parking policy that will help remove dangerous vehicles from our streets, reduce the number of conflicts with vehicles, and ultimately make it easier to redesign our streets to be safer. We recommend the following:

- Implement the suggested policies from the Somerville Parking Task Force and the Citywide Parking and Curb Use [Study](#)
- **Off-street parking access (related to Parking and Curb Use Study strategy B3).** An address should not qualify for street permit parking if it has sufficient off-street parking for the number of vehicles owned at that address. In addition, we recommend that parking is most scarce at night, so that is the best time to incentivize people to use their driveways. Offer two parking permits: one that is 24-hours, and one that is only for daytime use. The daytime-use only should be significantly cheaper. That way residents with driveways will still be able to go other places in Somerville, but will park in their driveways during the times when parking is most scarce.

In addition, we suggest escalating cost structure by vehicle count per household/address (**Parking and Curb Use Study strategy B1**) For example, annual base costs for addresses with no off-street parking could follow this schedule:

- \$100 for first vehicle
- \$200 for second vehicle
- \$300 for third vehicle

- **Safe vehicle screening**

When applying for a parking permit, residents must answer one additional question about whether the vehicle has any of the following hazardous aftermarket modifications. If the answer is yes, the vehicle does not qualify for a permit. Examples are:

- Illegal lifted suspensions, more than 2 inches per MGL
- Bull bars

- Hub spikes
- Modified mufflers and tailpipes (used for "rolling coal" and for startling bicyclists/pedestrians/outdoor diners)
- License plates missing, defaced, or obscured by plate covers (used for ghost cars that can get away with hit and runs and to avoid paying tolls)
- Illegally tinted windows

In addition, we respectfully request that parking enforcement officers who find these unsafe modifications on parked vehicles begin to enforce these as parking violations.

- If an address has off-street parking access to store some but not all vehicles at that address, the first permit should be higher, for example starting at \$200 instead of \$100. (**Parking and Curb Use Study Strategies B2, B3**). This pricing is based on the assumption that the first car will be parked in the driveway and use parking permits when parked elsewhere in Somerville.

Permit cost could be discounted for low-income households. (**Parking study strategy B6**)

- **Consider initiating monthly instead of annual permits (Parking and Curb Use Study Strategies A5, A7, A8, A10).** The Parking Department could consider a different permit identification method for this item, for example a plate-based system instead of sticker. This could make monthly or more frequent pass duration possible. It also makes parking prices more salient to Somerville residents, which may encourage people on the fence about selling a car to do so.
- **Add an additional cost for increased vehicle weight.** For this, there could be \$100 extra added to the permit (or double the permit cost) for excessive weight (using Montreal's definition, defined as above 3500 lbs for gas cars or above 4500 lbs for EVs). We also suggest reviewing Chicago's program of four weight classes: less than 3500 lbs, 3500-5000, 5000-6000, and greater than 6000 lbs. ([Source](#))

By incorporating higher costs for heavier vehicles, the city will more easily be able to cover increased cost of pavement maintenance and more curb space occupied by those larger vehicles.

[See City of Cambridge city solicitor opinion memo](#) and [agenda item](#) evaluating the legality of adjusting transportation fees related to this recommendation. Below is a table of pricing in Chicago similar to this recommendation.

Vehicle Body Type	License Type	Annual Price (2021)	Annual Price (2022)*
Motorbike	Motorbike (MB)	\$48.11	\$50.52
Vehicle with curb weight of 4,500 lbs or less with a payload capacity of 2,499 lbs or less	Passenger (P)	\$90.88	\$95.42
Vehicle with curb weight of 4,501 lbs or more with a payload capacity of 2,499 lbs or less	Large Passenger (LP)	\$144.33	\$151.55
Vehicle, Truck, pickup truck with closed or open bed, or van with a gross weight of 16,000 lbs or less or with a payload capacity of 2,500 lbs or more	Small Truck (ST)	\$213.82	\$224.51
Truck or vehicle with a gross weight of 16,001 lbs or more with a payload capacity of 2,500 lbs or more	Large Truck (LT)	\$481.10	\$505.16

*Effective February 1, 2020 | *Effective January 1, 2022

- Implement Parking Benefit Districts for each neighborhood square based on income.** While Somerville doesn't currently have Parking Benefit Districts, we support implementing these where the money from on-street parking goes to support its own neighborhood. Oversight for this new parking approach could either come from existing bodies such as the neighborhood councils or new steering committee as Brookline Village has already done. Areas that have implemented Parking Benefit Districts, such as NW Portland, OR have already seen the benefits of being able to give out free transit passes to residents in the neighborhood, beautification projects, or even money for businesses to pay for their customers' parking. [Link to Brookline Village Parking Benefit District Ideas.](#)

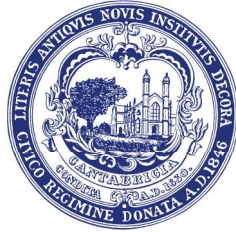
We encourage the city council, mayor, and city staff to start the discussion on what is possible for leveraging Somerville's parking policies as a tool to create safer streets for all. SASS welcomes a discussion with any elected official or city staff member that would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Alex Frieden on behalf of the Somerville Alliance of State Streets

Megan B. Bayer
Acting City Solicitor

Elliott J. Veloso
First Assistant City Solicitor



Assistant City Solicitors

Paul S. Kawai
Sean M. McKendry
Diane O. Pires
Kate M. Kleimola
Sydney M. Wright
Evan C. Bjorklund
Franziskus Lepionka
Andrea Carrillo-Rhoads

Public Records Access Officer
Seah Levy

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Office of the City Solicitor
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

March 4, 2024

Yi-An Huang
City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Response to Awaiting Report No. 24-4 of 1/22/24 Re: Report on recommendations and legal opinions for adjusting transportation related fees and other considered changes based on the conversations in committee on December 6, 2023.¹

Dear Mr. Huang:

I write in response to the above-referenced Council Order, which requests that the City Solicitor provide a legal opinion regarding the potential adjustment of transportation related fees and other considered changes to reduce carbon emissions in the City's transportation systems, as discussed in committee on December 6, 2023. During the Health and Environment and Transportation and Public Utilities Committees' December 6, 2023 meeting, the Committees inquired about the City Council's authority to impose or adjust parking permitting fees or other transportation related fees to reflect the costs associated with car travel within the City while continuing to support the needs of low-income residents. The Committees also inquired regarding whether fees structures could permissibly be placed on large vehicles, persons with multiple personal vehicles, and other similar issues. After review, the following presents considerations that the City Council may take into account when crafting more focused policy proposals along these goals.

¹ Policy Order No. 23-137 of 12/6/23 Re: That the Health and Environment and Transportation and Public Utilities Committees hold a public hearing to discuss options for amending parking fees and regulations throughout the city in order to further support the city's goals of low carbon travel.

DISCUSSION

I. Power of the City to Impose Taxes and Fees.

Under Massachusetts law, cities and towns do not have the power to levy tax unless expressly authorized by statute to do so.² Likewise, all property in Massachusetts is considered subject to taxation unless specifically exempted by the state legislature. For instance, specific statutes authorize cities and towns to institute real estate taxes, personal property taxes, and excise taxes. State law allows only for tax exemptions under specific instances, with the taxpayer bearing the burden of proving that they qualify.³ While cities and towns may not assess additional taxes without legislative authority, they may, however, exact fees.⁴ Whether or not a charge is considered a tax or a fee is determined by examining its operation, not by whether the municipality calls it a fee or a tax.⁵

A tax is a revenue-raising exaction imposed through generally applicable rates to defray public expense.⁶ Impact fees, on the other hand, tend to fall into one of two principal categories: “user fees, where a fee is assessed for the use of the governmental entity's property or services; and regulatory fees, where a fee is assessed as part of government regulation of private conduct” (including licensing and inspection fees), founded on a municipality’s police power to regulate particular business or activities.⁷ Impact fees are legitimate to the extent that the services for which they are imposed are sufficiently particularized to justify distribution of the costs among a limited group of beneficiaries or users of the services, rather than the general public.⁸

Affected parties have challenged fees assessed by municipalities on the grounds that they are not actually fees but rather taxes disguised as fees. In the seminal case of Emerson College v. Boston, the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) set forth three common traits distinguishing fees from taxes:

1. Fees are charged in exchange for a particular governmental service, which benefits the party paying the fee in a manner not shared by other members of society;
2. Fees are paid by choice, in that the party paying the fee has the option of not utilizing the governmental service and thereby avoiding the charge; and
3. Fees are collected not to raise revenue generally but to compensate the governmental entity providing the services for its expenses.⁹

² See Mass. Const. Art. 89, §7 (“Home Rule Amendment”) (“Nothing in this article shall be deemed to grant to any city or town the power to ... levy, assess and collect taxes...”); see also Commonwealth v. Caldwell, 25 Mass. App. Ct. 91, 92 (1987).

³ See e.g. M.G.L. c. 59, §5, clauses 3rd, 10th, and 11th.

⁴ See M.G.L. c. 40, §22F.

⁵ Thomson Elec. Welding C. v. Commonwealth, 275 Mass. 426, 429 (1931); Emerson College v. Boston, 391 Mass. 415, 424 (1984); Nuclear Metals, Inc. v. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Board, 421 Mass. 196, 201 (1995).

⁶ Opinion of the Justices, 393 Mass. 1209, 1216 (1984); German v. Commonwealth, 410 Mass. 445, 448 (1991).

⁷ Murphy v. Massachusetts Tpk. Auth., 462 Mass. 701, 705 (2012); Opinion of the Justices, 250 Mass. 591, 602 (1924); see also Boston v. Schaffer, 9 Pick. 415, 419 (1830); P. Nichols, Taxation in Massachusetts, 6-9 (3d. ed., 1938).

⁸ See Emerson College at 425.

⁹ See Emerson College at 424-25; Nuclear Metals at 202; Silva v. City of Attleboro, 454 Mass. 165 (2009).

II. Assessment of City Council December 6, 2023 Committee Proposals.

During the December 6, 2023 meeting, the Committees discussed a series of proposals. While no specific proposals were made, the following is offered to provide guidance to the City Council for future proposals or considerations.

A. Could the City provide its own tax incentives to its residents for the purchase of electric vehicles?

Cities or towns cannot issue new taxes unless authorized by state law. Conversely, municipalities may also not grant tax exemptions unless likewise authorized by the state legislature. Currently, tax incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles are only authorized under federal and state law. On the federal level, the Inflation Reduction Act (Public Law 117-169) authorizes a tax credit up to \$7,500 for the purchase of certain qualifying new electric vehicles. On the state level, Massachusetts authorizes rebates for qualifying owners of electric vehicles through the Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles (MOR-EV) program, 225 CMR 26.00. Neither state nor federal law have granted municipalities the authority to issue their own tax exemptions or rebates for the purchase or operation of electric vehicles. Such authorization could only be granted to the City either through 1) a new state or federal law, or 2) special legislation giving the City the authority to issue such tax incentives. Absent such legislation, the City does not have the authority to issue new taxes or tax exemptions on its own for electric vehicles.

B. Could the City lower property taxes for residents who possess an electric car or do not possess a residential parking permit? Likewise, could the City raise property taxes for those that do possess a residential parking permit?

The assessment of property taxes is dictated by state law. The procedures by which local boards of assessors determine the amount of the property tax levy for the fiscal year are set forth in G.L. c. 59, §§ 21, 23. The annual assessment of real property by municipal boards of assessors is conducted in accordance with state law. In order to calculate what property taxes are owed, assessors must take into account all land, buildings, and “other things thereon or affixed thereto,” unless expressly exempted. M.G.L. c. 59, § 2A. Personal property is not included in this assessment, unless such item is so firmly attached to or integrated into the land or buildings due to their bulk, size, special design, or permanence that it may be assessed as part of the real property. See e.g. Chelsea v. Richard T. Greene Co., 319 Mass. 162 (1946) (hoisting machinery necessary to operate marine railway); Town of Franklin v. Metcalfe, 307 Mass. 386 (1940) (lunch cart mounted on foundation belonging to the lessee). The valuation standard for property tax assessments is “fair cash valuation” (also referred to as “full and fair cash valuation”). G.L. c. 59, § 38.

The Massachusetts Constitution requires that property taxes be “proportional,” or apply equally to the class of property assessed. MA Const. pt. 2, c. 1, § 1, art. 4. The state legislature may grant reasonable exemptions without violating this constitutional requirement of proportionality. Opinion of the Justices, 324 Mass. 724 (1949). Most exemptions for particular categories of property or persons are found in G.L. c. 59, § 5. Exemption from taxation is a

privilege and a claimant must establish that it comes within the express words or necessary implication of the statute. Animal Rescue League of Boston v. Assessors of Boston, 310 Mass. 330 (1941).

In this case, the possession, or lack thereof, of a City issued residential parking pass would not be considered land, buildings, or other affixed property from which property taxes are assessed. Likewise, electric vehicles are considered personal property, which is subject to the excise tax. M.G.L. c. 60A. As such, neither can be considered when assessing the value of property. Additionally, neither are part of the exemptions from taxation found in M.G.L. c. 59, §5. As such, the only way residential parking permits or electric vehicle ownership could be taken into account to reduce property taxes is through either being listed as a category for a tax exemption under state law or the passage of special legislation authorizing the City's Board of Assessors to take such factors into consideration when assessing property taxes.

C. Could the City charge higher or lower fees for residential parking permits based on certain criteria such as vehicles size, type, number of vehicles per household, or income of the applicant?

Assessing whether a fee is valid and not an impermissible tax is a fact intensive process, and courts will assess a municipality's rationale and basis for the institution of fees. Any specific proposal from the City Council to raise residential parking permits on the criteria stated would require further study by TPT, CDD, the Law Department, and other applicable departments. The following is provided as general guidance on the issue.

Applying the Emerson College test to the City's residential parking permit fees, the courts would likely find the current fees charged for the residential parking permits valid. The fees are charged in exchange for a particular governmental service, residential parking registration and stickers, for the use of City property (its public ways) for parking, which only benefits the party paying for the service and is not shared by others. The fee is paid by choice; residents have the option of not utilizing the service if they so desire. Finally, the fee currently charged is not collected to generally raise revenue but to compensate the City for providing the service and managing the expenses related to it.

Whether the fees charged would still be found to be valid if they were adjusted under the Committees' proposals would depend on their nature and the basis supporting them. If the fee amount is changed in a manner unproportional to the use of the City's public ways for residential parking and the cost of operating the residential parking program because some vehicles are charged more based on type, the fee may be subject to challenge as an impermissible tax. Additionally, the fee may be subject to challenge if the purpose of the fee change is to meet the City's climate goals because then the purpose of the fee would be to benefit all members of society and not just the party paying the fee. On the other hand, it may be permissible to reduce the fee for lower-income residents with a policy in place regarding what income levels would qualify for a reduced fee and what supporting documentation would be required to ensure application of the reduced fee in a non-discriminatory manner.

We are happy to provide further analysis and guidance in response to specific proposals. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Megan B. Bayer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Megan B. Bayer
Acting City Solicitor

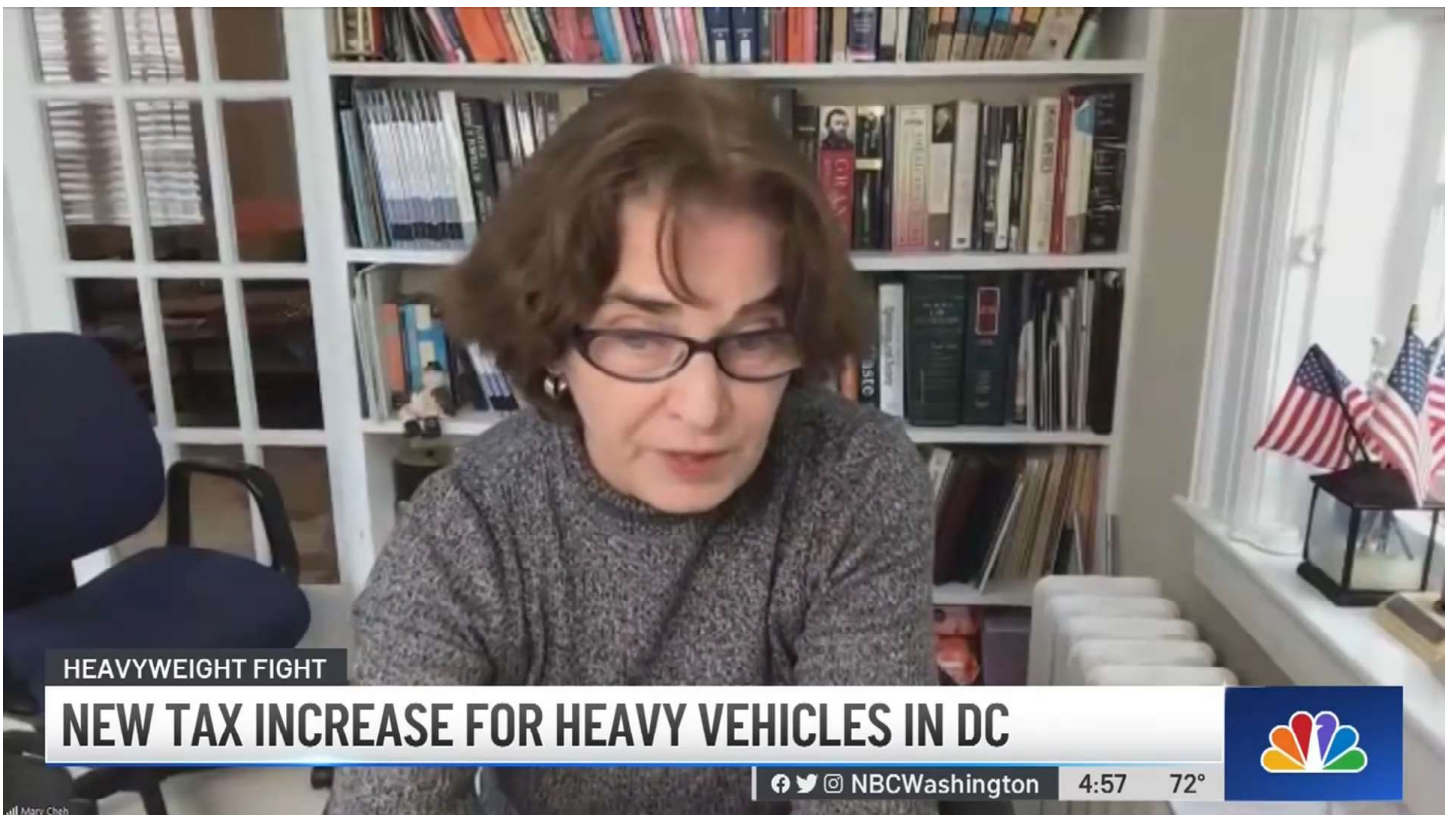


WASHINGTON DC

DC Vehicle Registration Will More Than Triple for Some SUVs, Trucks by 2024

Washington, D.C.'s annual registration fee for vehicles weighing more than 6,000 pounds will go from \$155 to \$500

By **Mark Segraves, News4 Reporter** • Published May 27, 2022 • Updated on May 27, 2022 at 8:37 pm



It's going to get a lot more expensive to own a big pickup truck or SUV in D.C. The new budget approved by the D.C. Council nearly quadruples the annual registration fee for heavy vehicles. News4's Mark Segraves explains how much it's going to cost you and where that money will go



TRUCKS.

The 2023 budget the D.C. Council approved includes a provision that raises the annual registration fee for most vehicles. The provision would take effect in 2024.

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Owners of vehicles that weigh more than 6,000 pounds will have to pay \$500 per year. That's more than triple the \$155 that those owners currently pay.

Fees will jump from \$155 to \$250 for vehicles that are more than 5,000 pounds. Vehicles weighing between 3,500 and 5,000 pounds will go from \$115 to \$175.

D.C. will not raise the \$72 fee, however, for cars weighing 3,500 pounds or less.

Council members said there are three reasons for the increases.

"One: It effects our roads greatly. Second: It's bad for the environment. Third, and here's something I want people to think about, if you are struck by one of these heavy vehicles ... you're two to three times more likely to die from that encounter if you're a pedestrian or a cyclist," Ward 3 Council Member Mary Cheh said.

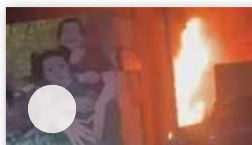
Local

Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia local news, events and information



8 HOURS AGO

Family begs for justice year after son was killed running errands for mother in DC



9 HOURS AGO

Police investigate fire and stabbing in Silver Spring

But some say the provision hurts the middle class.



CITIZENS. YOU KNOW, THESE TOYS THAT ARE DRY WALLERS OR PLUMBERS OR PAINTERS. YOU KNOW, THESE VANS THAT they need, they're all over 6,000 pounds," said David Comfort, the general manager of King Buick GMC in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Families who need larger vehicles will also have to pay the increased fees.

"So what am I supposed to do if I decide to have a family of five. What am I supposed to drive? So now I'm getting penalized because I want to have kids or if I have a child that needs a wheelchair and I have to put a wheelchair lift in a van," Comfort said.

Cheh said the fees are expected generate about \$40 million over the first five years.

"This money will be devoted our programs for safe streets to schools and to protect our school children," Cheh said.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser is expected to sign the budget in the next few weeks.

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Welcome to the Brookline Parking Benefit District Advisory Board Ideas page. This google document is the repository for ideas.

FP1:

ORGANIZE and fund rapid and complete snow removal from sidewalks and metered parking spaces, both in local lots and on the street, after a snow event so that customers of Brookline Village establishments can be confident of easy access by car and foot. Make this extend to encompass the TWO NEW HOTELS and to the TWO SCHOOLS (OLS and Pierce), thereby making the more than just the merchants happy. Rapid and complete snow removal from sidewalks and by meters is in contrast to current practice that leaves icy sidewalks and tractor banks of plowed snow on the street, sometimes indefinitely. Make Brookline Village an oasis of good parking and pedestrian mobility in the aftermath of a snow event and ask the local merchants to publicize this to the advantage of Village merchants over less well groomed shopping districts. Extend to include pedestrian access to and from other high impact locations for enhanced customer access.

FP2

PROVIDE some sort of parking token or credit to customers of Brookline Village businesses that are dispensed by the establishment at the consummation of a sale. Does NOT have to be for a meter; could be for a period in the huge parking garage on Pearl St at Brookline Place. Note that the PARK_BOSTON smartphone app has a provision to accept a VALIDATION_CODE for "a (1) one time discounted rate" so potentially it is simple to dispense these codes through the businesses.

FP3

IMPROVE seating etc in the triangle at intersection Harvard and Washington (rename that triangle?). Make room for a busker/street entertainer there?

BK1

INCREASE the parking supply in the Brookline Village area by working with Town administration to stop the practice of parking town-employee vehicles and town-owned vehicles at metered spaces (which are not paid) in the Brookline Village area. Numerous such vehicles park at meters on Washington Street near the public safety building, in the town hall lot, and on Holden Street. Free parking for town employees is available in the garage underneath town hall, and for public safety employees and vehicles in the lot behind the public safety building, on Thayer Street, and at designated, non-metered spots on Washington Street. Metered spaces filled, often all weekend, by town vehicles are spaces unavailable for Brookline Village businesses.

This is a no-cost, policy-driven change that will increase the parking supply in the area.

BK2

On select weekend days once per month, close Harvard Street between School/Aspinwall and Washington Street to traffic to hold a street fair. This would allow restaurants to expand outdoor seating into the street, and retail establishments to expand their area for sales. Closing the street could be supported by the temporary installation of picnic tables, corn hole, and other street type games, and other tools designed to attract people. In evenings, a large screen could be set up and movies shown with people bringing their own chairs, with restaurants in the region offering special take-out orders to patrons. Street performers, etc. could also be encouraged to attend as a draw. Shut-down days could have themes - winter carnival, etc.

The cost of this proposal would be the cost of police details and related costs to manage vehicle diversions around the area of Harvard Street between School/Aspinwall & Washington Street when streets are closed. Additional costs would be the purchase, maintenance, and storage of any street furniture for use on festival days, plus management and marketing costs to attract the public to these events.

LWS1

Install and maintain decorative lighting on street trees and/or light posts. This can be in place beyond the winter season to enhance evening walkability and a festive atmosphere for dining and shopping.

AT1

Work with Marijuana Mitigation Committee to develop a proposal to cover the chain link fence that separates White Place from the NETA waiting area/parking lot. This could be a mural, in which case working with the Brookline Arts Commission or the Public Arts Commission would be helpful. Funds could come from our commission, the Arts Commission or the NETA funds that are earmarked to be spent on the neighborhood.

AT2

Parking ideas: Explore parking alternatives including limited time (8:00 - 10:00 am?) residential parking on residential streets frequently used for business parking. Explore the possibility of using some parking spaces in the large parking garage under the Brookline Place building. Explore the possibility of a specified construction vehicle parking area in the village.

FP4

Jitney service - institute (autonomous?) shuttle service in and around the Village connecting parking lots and garages, hotels, and Town Hall to the center of the Village.

LL1

Finding a way for residents in the BV commercial area without parking spaces to rent overnight (and potentially 24/7) parking from the Town on designated streets or designated lots, these fees will be part of the benefit to BV.

FP5

Free WiFi for visitors. A limit of 2-3 hours per day per user?



Cambridge City MA

PLACED ON FILE
Mar 4, 2024 5:30 PM

City Manager's Agenda Item CMA 2024 #34

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 24-4, regarding recommendations and legal opinions for adjusting transportation related fees and other considered changes based on the conversations in committee on December 6, 2023.

Information

Department: City Manager's Office **Sponsors:**
Category: Awaiting Report Response

Links

Origin [AR-24-4 : Report on recommendations and legal opinions for adjusting transportation related fees and other considered changes based on the conversations in committee on December 6, 2023.](#)
Originating Order

Attachments

[Printout](#)
[Opinion - Awaiting Report No. 24-004 - Transportation Related Fees](#)

Body

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 24-4, regarding recommendations and legal opinions for adjusting transportation related fees and other considered changes based on the conversations in committee on December 6, 2023, please see attached communication from Acting City Solicitor Megan Bayer.

Meeting History

Mar 4, 2024 5:30 PM **City Council** **Regular Meeting**

RESULT: **PLACED ON FILE**

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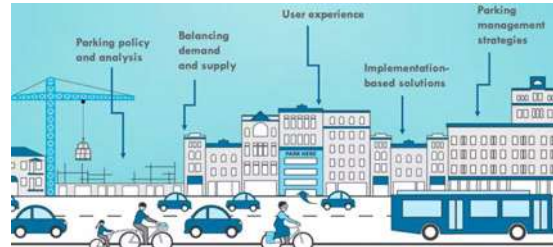


Home / Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study

Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study



The Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study is an effort to comprehensively understand the parking system in Somerville and make recommendations that will guide the City in bringing its parking policies in alignment with its city goals, community values, and future needs.



The city is seeking recommendations that will:

- Enhance mobility and access, improve the equity, safety, dependability, and sustainability of our transportation system, reduce our reliance on automobiles, allow for growth with less parking, and satisfy parking demand to the extent feasible and practical, recognizing that the city’s mode shift and climate goals will require less space dedicated to [Continue reading](#)

News feed

Parking & Curb Use Survey

Comment box

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and City staff invite you to read and discuss the Citywide Parking & Curb Use Final Report



04 Oct 2022

Meeting flyers available [English](#), [Español](#), [Português](#), [Kreyòl Ayisyen](#), [नेपाली](#), [简体中文版](#), [繁體中文版](#).

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and City staff invite you to discuss the Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study Final Report. **Please check out the final report available now on project website.**



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and City staff invite you to discuss



Wednesday, October 19, 6:00 pm - 7:30pm
Virtual Meeting Link: somervillema.gov/parkingstudy

Join the project team to learn more about:

- An overview of the final report
- Parking and curb policy key issues and opportunities
- Curb management strategies
- Public input on draft study recommendations
- And next steps for the City of Somerville

For any interpretation requests, contact 311(617-666-3311) or SomerViva@somervillema.gov. Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids or reasonable modifications should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.



Scan here to check out the project website!



Join the project team to learn more about:

- An overview of the final report
- Parking and curb policy key issues and opportunities
- Curb management strategies
- Public input on draft study recommendations

- And next steps for the City of Somerville

The virtual community meeting will take place on **Wednesday, October 19, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm.**

Register for the meeting at

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_70QjWsMGQbCtcLDoYiOTqw

To join by phone:

- One tap mobile: US: [+13017158592](tel:+13017158592), [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799), [+185769718085](tel:+185769718085) or [+12532158782](tel:+12532158782)
- Or dial a number based on your current location and use the Webinar ID
 - For higher quality, dial a number based on your current location.
US: +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 720 707 2699 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799
 - Webinar ID: 857 6971 8085

For any questions, please email transportation@somervillema.gov

Interpretation into Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Kreyol, Nepali, Mandarin, and Cantonese may be available upon advance request by contacting the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs at somerviva@somervillema.gov or calling 311 at 617-666-3311.

Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (i.e., CART, ASL), written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures in order to access the programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.

Share your feedback about the study recommendations in our survey!



21 Jul 2022

In June 2022, the study project team shared curb regulations and occupancy data collected, key findings from data analysis, and potential policy and operations recommendations.

Check out the [recording](#) and [presentation slides](#) from that meeting.

We now want to hear from you about your feedback on the proposed recommendations to help guide the City in bringing its parking policies in alignment with city goals, community values, and future needs.

Please take a short survey available in:

- [English](#)
- [Español](#)
- [Kreyol Ayisyen](#)
- [Português](#)
- [नेपाली](#)
- [简体中文](#)
- [繁體中文](#)

You can also submit a comment in the [comment box](#), or email Jackie Stagnari at jstagnari@somervillema.gov, to let us know your thoughts. If you need help taking the survey contact 311(617-666-3311).

Join the project team to learn more about study findings!



14 Jun 2022

Meeting flyers available [English](#), [Español](#), [Portugues](#), [Kreyòl Ayisyen](#).

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and City staff invite you to discuss the Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study Findings.

Join the project team to learn more about:

- Curb regulations and occupancy data collected;
- Key findings from data analysis;
- Potential policy and operations recommendations to guide the City in bringing its parking policies in alignment with city goals, community values, and future needs.

Provide your feedback on the proposed recommendations to help inform next steps to policy changes.

There are two options to attend a virtual meeting:

Virtual Meeting - Evening

Date: Monday, June 27

Time: 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6WCbbJ1BSFSWaSi1GTrYeg

To join by phone:

- One tap mobile: US: [+13017158592](tel:+13017158592), [83979791163#](tel:+13126266799) or [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799), [83979791163#](tel:+13126266799)
- Or dial a number based on your current location and use the Webinar ID
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 - Webinar ID: 839 7979 1163

Virtual Meeting - Daytime

Date: Wednesday, June 29

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Virtual Meeting Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MLOsS2_qQlqvfrCxLy2PtW

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 - Webinar ID: 891 2155 3166

For any questions, please email transportation@somervillema.gov

Interpretation into Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Kreyol, or Nepali may be available upon advance request by contacting the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs at somerviva@somervillema.gov or calling 311 at 617-666-3311.

Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication (i.e., CART, ASL), written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures in order to access the

programs, activities, and meetings of the City of Somerville should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.

Study Update: Existing Conditions and Curb Profile



01 Jun 2022

The Citywide Parking and Curb-Use study continues. Over the winter, our project team continued to collect existing conditions data, including curbside regulation information for every public curb in the city and occupancy data for selected streets at different times of the day in each neighborhood to inform the Curb Profile. The Curb Profile is an assessment of the characteristics of curbs and on-street parking in distinct areas of the city. The Parking Study Taskforce met twice this spring to learn about the development of the Curb Profile and provide feedback on the framework for modeling parking demand to inform study recommendations. Learn more about the updates through the summary below or dive into the data collection in the [Curb Profile](#).

At the outset of the study, the Task Force worked with the consultant team to put together a list of goals. These goals include maximizing the effectiveness of the curb, improving pickup/drop-off safety and efficiency, improving commercial loading availability, decreasing drive alone mode share to further decarbonizations goals, expanding and improving safe walking and biking options, improving transit performance and access, advancing equity goals, and centering people in our public space. These goals shaped the approach to data collection and will inform any policy recommendations.

Existing Conditions

The project team gathered information on the supply, regulation, and use of Somerville's approximately 24,000 on-street parking spaces and curbs. Field data was collected for every curb in Somerville in order to establish a complete Curb Inventory that documents the supply of curb spaces, how they are regulated, and the presence of specific street assets such as fire hydrants, parking signs, curb cuts, and crosswalks.

Curb utilization data was collected in the field in key areas throughout the city to determine the demand for on-street parking. In order to observe peak parking conditions, utilization data was collected on early weekday mornings

in residential areas when residential parking is busiest. In commercial areas, data was collected on both weekdays and weekends from 12 PM – 8 PM when these areas are busiest and when metered parking is in effect. Utilization in mixed residential and commercial areas was also collected on weekdays from 10 AM – 6 PM to determine how daytime commercial demand impacts residential parking.

Analyzing current curb use conditions in the city along with permit data, the project team found that 52% of Somerville's curb space is dedicated to parking or loading for vehicles. Another 19% is used as driveway curb cuts totaling 71% of potential curb space being allocated solely to vehicles.

The vast majority (73%) of the 25,100 vehicle-accessible curb spaces in Somerville are primarily regulated to accommodate resident parking (Resident Permit Parking). Although only 36.7% of Somerville residents drive alone to work, 76% of households own vehicles.

Somerville's resident-permit spaces averaged 67% utilization across the city during overnight-peak occupancy counts. However, this varies between neighborhoods and among individual blocks. During daytime periods, these spaces averaged 57% utilization, indicating that many residents do not drive their vehicles daily.

The number of registered resident permits exceeds this supply by a ratio of 2.5 permits per space. Union Square, Prospect Hill, Duck Village, and East Somerville have the highest ratios of permits to space. In contrast, Magoun Square and Winter Hill feature only 2.2 permits per space, and observed utilization demonstrates that parking is less full in these areas. Areas with higher ratios of permits to spaces were observed to be fuller (70% full in Union Square and Prospect Hill) while areas with fewer permits were less full (59% full in Winter Hill).

Specialty permit programs such as Business Permits and School Permits facilitate parking for employees traveling into the city. Time-limited parking is used to share parking resources between residents and visitors in commercial areas and is highly utilized during the day in most areas where it exists. The density of resident permits per household strongly tracks with patterns of high-density and concentrations of low-income housing. Areas like East Somerville and Duck Village, where housing is dense and incomes are low, show the highest concentration of permits.

Parking Personas

People get around in different ways and delivery services continue to grow. The project team developed a set of personas to capture how this diversity might affect responsiveness to parking and mobility policy changes among Somerville residents, employees, and visitors. These personas do not encompass all our community's identities but gives us a representation of the variety of our community members. We can then look at potential needs and behaviors of these personas and model how different actions might impact them. Learn more about the personas identified in the [Curb Profile](#).

Public Survey Results

Following the virtual public meetings held in [November](#), the project team released an online survey from December 2021 to February 2022. We received over 1,700 responses. The input shared in the survey along with comments from the public meeting, emailed comments, and input heard at outreach events, in addition to the findings will serve as the basis for recommendations development in the final stages of the study. Summaries of the survey responses will be presented at the next public meeting. You can also review the [survey summary report](#).

Next Steps

The project team, in collaboration with the Task Force, will continue to put together a series of recommendations to be presented to City staff and the public. We will host another public meeting this summer to present those recommendations and gather feedback. [Subscribe to email updates](#) to receive an email notification for the next virtual public meeting in the coming weeks. Meeting information will be posted to this project website and City Calendar.

Take the Citywide Parking & Curb-Use Study! (Deadline January 14, 2022)



04 Jan 2022

The City of Somerville invites Somerville residents, workers, and visitors to take a survey to inform citywide parking policies.

Survey in [English](#), [Español](#), [Português](#), [Kreyòl Ayisyen](#), and [नेपाली](#).

This survey will provide vital insights into existing travel patterns and public priorities for parking management and curbside space. It is one component of the [Citywide Parking and Curb-Use Study](#), a multipronged effort to collect data and develop recommendations to make Somerville's parking system work more equitably, efficiently, and consistently for residents, businesses, and visitors.

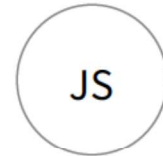
Responses will be accepted through January 14, 2022.

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Important Documents

-  [Parking Study Task Force Meeting - Sept 2021 \(6.25 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Somerville Residents - Means of Transportation to Work \(94.2 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Citywide Parking & Curb-Use Study Community Meeting 1 Presentation Slides.pdf \(8.62 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [CurbStudy_Community_Meeting_1_Menti_Questions_Session1.pdf \(245 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [CurbStudy_Community_Meeting_1_Menti_Questions_Session2.pdf \(2.49 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Somerville Curb Profile \(13.4 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Curb Use and Parking Study Survey Responses Summary Report \(1.48 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Public Meeting Flyers](#)

-  [Citywide Curb-Use and Parking Public Meeting #2 Presentation Slides \(5.96 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

-  [Draft Somerville Curb and Parking Recommendations June 2022 \(3.99 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

📁 Recommendations Survey Flyers

📁 Final Report Materials

📄 Citywide Parking and Curb Use Study Community Meeting #3 Presentation Slides (6.5 MB) (pdf)

📄 Citywide Parking Curb Use Study Recommendations Feedback Survey Report Fall 2022 (461 KB) (pdf)

Videos

