



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

January 15, 2020

### 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 |         |

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order by Chair Niedergang at 6:00pm and adjourned at 8:04pm.

Others present: Suzanne Rinfret - Parking; Lieutenant Polito - Police; Sergeant Gobiell - Police; Brad Rawson - OSPCD; Justin Schreiber - OSPCD; Adam Polinski - OSPCD; Dan Amelin - IAM; Annie Connor - Mayor's Office; Ben Ewen-Campen - Ward 3 City Councilor; Angie Byrne - Vision Zero Committee; Enid Kumin - Vision Zero Committee; Tim Dineen; Kimberly Wells - Assistant Clerk of Committees

Chair Niedergang shared that he plans to hold meetings of this Committee on the third Wednesday of each month. He will try to find an alternative for school vacation weeks when necessary. The Chair also noted that members of the public are encouraged to participate when there is a small group in attendance. When the group is large, it is more difficult to allow this as he cannot discriminate and if one person is allowed to speak, all must be. His goal is to address larger structural issues, rather than specific street minutiae. Despite the lengthy agenda, he will try to address pressing issues first and try to stay within a two hour timeframe. Councilor Ballantyne noted that help from City staff is needed to address major safety issues.

Mr. Rawson thanked Councilors Ewen-Campen and Davis for their service on this Committee and shared that 2019 was a difficult year for crashes. The OSPCD has added a Senior Planner to the Mobility team to help allow for the needed analyses and actions to make more streets safer.

#### Approval of the November 20, 2019 Minutes

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
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#### Approval of the December 9, 2019 Minutes

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
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## **Vision Zero Report & Update**

### **208334: That the Vision Zero Task Force provide the City Council with an update on its activities.**

Mr. Schreiber introduced Vision Zero, which is a fundamentally different way of thinking about traffic safety that focuses on preventing serious injuries and deaths by looking at the entire system and understanding that things do not operate in a perfect world. The plan should be finalized within the next month, and details specific actions that the City will take over the next five years. The guiding principles of the plan are Equity, Data-Driven Decision Making, and Coordination and Accountability. The plan will be implemented through an Interdepartmental Working Group, which will include members of the Bicycle Committee, Pedestrian/Transit Advocacy Committee, and the public.

Councilor Ewen-Campen commented that the intersection of state roads is a concern and asked about the State's involvement. Mr. Rawson noted that the Department of Transportation (DOT) District 4 office is responsive and helpful, both on small-scale tactical issues and large-scale capital funding. Route 16 is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which does not have the resources that DOT has. It may have to be addressed separately. He also noted that the higher speed roads are designed for a different purpose than urban streets and are intended to move commuters from one place to another more quickly. Councilor Ballantyne noted that this road is a significant concern for safety and must be addressed.

The report is available at [www.somervillema.gov/visionzero](http://www.somervillema.gov/visionzero) and includes an interactive comment tool. Three open house meetings will be held to collect feedback. They are scheduled for: Tuesday 1/21 at the Somerville Community School; Thursday 1/30 at the Community Baptist Church; Wednesday 2/5 at the Somerville Public Library Auditorium; all at 6pm. Chair Niedergang asked Ms. Connor if this information could be shared widely to encourage public participation. Councilor Clingan asked if staff would be willing to attend a meeting organized by a ward Councilor and Mr. Rawson confirmed that those resources will be made available. Councilor Ballantyne added that it would be helpful to hold meetings close to senior and public housing, and the affected areas.

Councilor Niedergang asked whether the Working Group would be issuing any type of report for accountability and Mr. Schreiber noted that the intention is to release annual project reports, either by City staff or the MA Vision Zero Coalition. The Chair asked as well whether anyone would be hired to perform the traffic signal timing and Mr. Rawson noted that the timings will be modified, and the report does recommend adding resources to evaluate and modernize the traffic signals, beginning with completion of an inventory.

Ms. Byrne commented that Boston and Cambridge are also Vision Zero communities, which presents a tremendous opportunity to make stronger arguments for funding, communication, and other resources. Chair Niedergang expressed concern that there appears to be an under-emphasis on Police enforcement in the Vision Zero report. Education, Engineering, and Enforcement were the focal points and the enforcement component seems left out.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> |
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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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## **Traffic Calming & Enforcement**

### **209553: That the Chief of Police report to this Council on plans to assign more officers to the Traffic Enforcement Division, instruct patrol officers to make traffic enforcement a higher priority, and increase the ratio of payable to warning citations.**

Chair Niedergang noted that there are many detail officers on the streets, but they do not seem to engage in traffic enforcement. Lieutenant Polito shared that the Chief and his administration are working on a

plan to increase personnel in the Traffic Unit, which should be in place by the end of February. This will be shared with the Committee through Ms. Connor. Traffic enforcement will be a priority for the patrol officers, whether or not they are part of the Traffic Division. Individual officers, by law, are able to make their own determinations about whether to give verbal warnings, written warnings, or monetary citations.

Councilor Ewen-Campen asked how effective the enforcement actions are. Mr. Schreiber noted that the main priority for slowing traffic and enhanced safety is the design of streets. The goal is to create a transportation system that effectively forces people to obey the law. Sergeant Gobiell asked if there might be a way to coordinate with neighboring communities to make the speed limits uniform and Mr. Rawson will discuss with his counterparts. Councilor Ballantyne suggested that the Legislative Matters Committee prioritize passage of her proposed Home Rule Petition to decrease the speed limit on Broadway to 25mph. Mr. Rawson said that here is an active process looking at the legal and regulatory issues around getting this done between staff in OSPCD, the City Solicitor and the Mayor's office.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**206691: That the Director of SPCD prioritize for this Board the traffic calming projects in the City, and the process to determine those priorities.**

It would be helpful to have a prioritized list of traffic calming projects to share with constituents. Mr. Rawson shared that creation of a project list is underway, with physical construction projects as well as smaller projects such as pavement markings. His team will work to complete this by the end of February, but some major projects for the upcoming year include Medford Street, Holland Street, College Ave, Elm Street. Bicycle and pedestrian prioritization have been included in these designs. Route 16 and Powderhouse Boulevard design is underway. Shore Drive is also a priority. Councilor Ballantyne asked that a link be included to connect to this information through the City's website, similar to the pavement plan shared by Infrastructure & Asset Management.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**207499: That the Administration respond to the requests outlined in the attached resident petition, organized by the Pedestrian and Transit Advocacy Group, to accelerate traffic calming investments and improve coordination and oversight.**

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**207996: 8 residents submitting comments re: #207499, a proposal to accelerate traffic calming investments.**

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**209149: That the Mayor and the Director of SPCD immediately seek the approval of this Council for 2 new Mobility Division positions, and funding for traffic calming infrastructure, to address the many dangerous areas on our streets.**

Chair Niedergang asked for clarification on the reorganization of the Mobility Division mentioned by the Mayor in his inaugural address. Mr. Rawson stated that the first step of this was that the Parks and Urban Forestry Division was removed from Mr. Rawson's position so that he could focus exclusively on the Mobility Division. Phase two will be to consider growth options and management capacity, as well as interdepartmental coordination. A process is underway to assess what has worked well in other

municipalities across the country. Ms. Connor agreed that the proposal will be ready in time for the creation of the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**205936: That the Administration work with this Board on a fund for traffic calming and pedestrian/transit infrastructure pilot projects through such sources as demand pricing for meters in business districts and the creation of incentives for residents to forgo residential permits so as to create more business permits.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**Dangerous Intersections/Areas**

**208844: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council on actions, communications and collaboration with State agencies to improve pedestrian safety in the Mystic Avenue area by I-93, following the death of two pedestrians hit by motor vehicles there.**

Mr. Rawson shared that he will be meeting on February 12 meeting with the Department of Transportation and will be addressing a number of concerns, including financing and planning. He said there will be another community meeting after that following up on the one that was held in the fall.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**204965: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a crosswalk at Woods Avenue and Route 16.**

The DCR has been unwilling to advance a design. The state delegation is advocating and has acquired funding for preliminary planning work to commence in a couple of months.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**208031: That the Director of SPCD use the \$220,000 in traffic mitigation funds paid by Maxwell's Green in 2011 for traffic calming on Lowell Street, between Highland Avenue and Albion Street, by constructing a traffic-calming table at the Albion Street crosswalk.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**209421: That the Director of SPCD implement traffic-calming measures for Central Street between Highland Avenue and Broadway as soon as possible, since traffic has increased dramatically with the Broadway reconfiguration, and will increase even more with the coming School Street closure.**

Mr. Rawson shared that Central Street between Broadway and Medford Street has seen an increase in traffic of approximately 10-20%. Controlling volume is much more difficult than controlling speeds. Volume reduction strategies have not yet been developed, but recommendations will be forthcoming.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**207280: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a flexible "Yield to Pedestrians" sign in the crosswalk across Central Street at Willoughby Street.**

Chair Niedergang observed that this has been completed.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**209428: That the Director of Parking increase enforcement of the NO PARKING HERE TO CORNER regulations at the intersections of Central Street at Forster Street and Sycamore Street at Browning Road.**

Ms. Rinfret noted that this is underway and enforcement is happening. No sign is required for 20 feet from an intersection.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208378: That the Director of SPCD install traffic calming infrastructure on Morrison Avenue, such as a speed bump between Cedar Street and Willow Avenue, as soon as possible to protect pedestrians crossing Morrison Avenue, especially at Highland Road near Lexington Park and the Community Path.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**208117: That the Director of SPCD immediately install flex posts at the intersection of Holland Street and Cameron Avenue to ensure pedestrian safety.**

Mr. Rawson noted that the intention was to complete this last year, but there is a new plan to achieve the outcome with a more construction-intensive process.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208008: That the Director of SPCD implement traffic calming and pedestrian and cyclist safety measures on Broadway from Powder House Circle to Teele Square.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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### **Union Sq. Traffic Problems**

**208834: That the Chief of Police post a traffic detail at the intersection of Webster Avenue and Prospect Street for the duration of the traffic detours in Union Square that reroute Washington Street traffic through that intersection.**

Mr. Amelin, IAM, shared that the existing detour between Webster Avenue and Prospect Street will be ending on Friday.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208835: That the Director of SPCD return the intersection at Webster Avenue and Washington Street to an exclusive pedestrian crossing interval to increase safety for**

**schoolchildren and other pedestrians.**

The work on Webster Avenue will be completed, allowing pedestrian access.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208836: That the Director of Parking, the Director of SPCD and the Chief of Police increase traffic signage and enforcement at the intersection of Webster Avenue and Somerville Avenue to prevent northbound traffic on Webster Avenue from continuing north onto Bow Street or entering Somerville Avenue going in the wrong direction.**

This will no longer be an issue as the work is being completed by the end of this week.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208837: That the Commissioner of Public Works immediately reassess the signaling at the intersection of Webster Avenue and Prospect Street due to the current unsafe and frustrating conditions there.**

This will no longer be an issue with the work being completed by the end of this week.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206685: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on when various necessary improvements to the Union Square traffic pattern, including an "All-Walk" cycle and left-turn arrows at certain intersections, will be implemented.**

With the work being completed, the opportunity to work with a consultant to create a timing plan will be available. It is anticipated that this will take several weeks. Mr. Amelin stated that he believes that changes can be implemented by mid-February

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206687: That the Director of Engineering build a crosswalk to allow pedestrians to safely cross Washington Street at the Public Safety Building.**

Further analysis is needed to determine where this crosswalk could be located. Mr. Amelin shared that he believes that it is possible and he will discuss with the project team. Mr. Rawson noted that the curb cuts pose difficulty in finding an appropriate location. Mr. Polinski added that there is an added challenge due to sight lines and the fact that this is not at a traffic signal.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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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)**

Chair Niedergang asked that Mr. Amelin provide an update on the determination of location for this crosswalk at the Committee meeting in March.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> |
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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**206438: That the Director of SPCD address this Board regarding traffic congestion on Oak and Houghton Streets resulting from recent traffic pattern changes in Union Square.**

Mr. Rawson noted that this order is older and the end of the construction phase and updates to traffic patterns have been addressed with neighbors, including with Don't Block the Box signage.

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**Broadway Bus/Bike Lanes**

**209001: That the Administration provide an update addressing the Winter Hill in Motion project, including links to the educational materials created.**

With the construction of the pedestrian crosswalk at Fenwick Street, the Central Broadway project is complete, though monitoring and data collection will continue. Mr. Rawson noted that they will continue to address the concerns about Central, Jacques, Edgar Streets and others raised by residents at the Public Hearing. Lieutenant Polito added that most drivers are remaining out of the bus lanes snow and traffic flow seems reasonable. They continue to monitor daily but have not needed much enforcement.

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| <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208888: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council on the effectiveness of the Winter Hill in Motion plan and its impact on congestion.**

This was presented by Mr. Rawson at the Public Hearing on December 9.

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| <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**209363: That the Director of SPCD discuss implementing a "Don't Block the Box" campaign to ease intersection congestion at locations along Broadway, including McGrath Highway.**

Councilor Ballantyne asked about the most effective way to manage the traffic at this intersection and Lieutenant Polito noted that having officers in place seems to help as the issue is with motorists obeying the law and stopping at yellow and red lights. The crossing guards at Pearl and McGrath are also very helpful and Councilor Ballantyne wondered if a similar physical presence at Broadway and McGrath would have a positive impact. Sergeant Gobiell noted that the GLX project is funding the additional details at the intersection and the State has expressed that they are not willing to provide the funds to maintain this or pay for crossing guards. The State has agreed to paint the box, but the impact of that remains unknown. Lieutenant Polito added that the completion of construction should also ease this issue and the traffic in the intersection should return to a more normal pattern.

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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**207660: That the Commissioner of Public Works clean or replace the right turn signal at the corner of Broadway, turning onto Temple Street, as it is not visible during the day.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**208891: That the Director of SPCD deploy traffic calming measures on Jacques Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**209423: That the Director of Parking move the NO TURN ON RED sign at the corner of Broadway and Temple Street to a more visible location.**

Ms. Rinfret shared that an additional sign was added here.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206818: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a NO PARKING FROM HERE sign at the parking lot at 315 Broadway.**

Ms. Rinfret noted that this area is monitored often and the issue seems to have gone away.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206197: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a NO THRU TRAFFIC 7-9AM AND 4-6PM EXCEPT FOR ABUTTERS sign on Fenwick Street at Broadway.**

Councilor Clingan observed that this has been completed.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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#### **Housekeeping**

**203592: That the Chief of Police report to this Board the number of traffic violations issued to vehicles exiting Hawkins Street that need to access the far left lane, and work with the Traffic Engineer to address access issues for residents of Hawkins Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**203840: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider expanding the required time for notifying neighborhoods of street closures from 48 to 72 hours.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**203952: That the Director of Traffic and Parking repair the traffic signal at 66 Beacon Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**203953: That the Traffic Commission make Merriam Street a one way street from Somerville Avenue to Charlestown Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204257: That the Director of SPCD consider installing a rotary at Munroe Street and Prospect Hill Avenue and schedule a neighborhood meeting with Prospect Hill residents and the Ward 3 Alderman to discuss this measure.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204259: That the Director of SPCD place a radar feedback sign on Vinal Avenue.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204313: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install signs to limit parking at the corners of Oak and Prospect Streets.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204314: That the Director of Traffic and Parking replace all faded street signs on Oak Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204315: That the Director of Traffic and Parking restrict cut through traffic on Durham Street from Beacon Street, allowing access to abutters only from 7-9AM and 4-7PM, Monday through Friday.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204316: That the Director of Traffic and Parking increase parking enforcement in Ward 2, specifically at Oak, Houghton, Harrison, Tremont and Norfolk Streets.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204376: That the Traffic Commission place a temporary speed bump on Wigglesworth Street.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204385: That the Director of Traffic and Parking enforce the no parking on sidewalks regulation and install NO PARKING ON SIDEWALKS signs on Winter St.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204391: That the Director of SPCD consider making Kimball Street and Ibbettson Street safety zones.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204431: That the Director of Traffic and Parking remove or restrict parking at the intersection of Hammond Street and Concord Avenue.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204532: That the City Solicitor determine whether the City may issue a parking citation to vehicles parked on private property in violation of zoning provisions that prohibit such parking.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**204780: MA DOT Manager of Service Planning responding to #204536 re: an additional bus shelter under the Washington St overpass.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206234: That the Administration launch a smart traffic flow overhaul, reconsidering the direction of every street in the city.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**206270: That the Administration and the Traffic Commission implement an extensive 20mph Safety Zone across all of Ward 6.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**207573: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking install all signage needed to inform motorists exiting Route 16 onto Powder House Blvd. that they are entering a residential and school neighborhood.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208255: That the Administration consider implementing a Driveway Safety Program, modeled after one implemented by the New York City DOT.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208257: That the Director of SPCD identify all intersections with incomplete crosswalk crossings and suggest ways to remedy them.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208819: That the Director of SPCD discuss whether the opening of the casino has impacted**

car volume in East Somerville.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208845:** That the Director of SPCD report to this Council on the safety of pedestrians at the intersection of Broadway and Norwood Avenue, following serious injury to a pedestrian there, and whether a crosswalk is needed.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**208889:** That the Director of Parking install 4-hour maximum parking signs on Fellsway West.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**209303:** That the City Solicitor advise on how this Council can regulate by ordinance the issuance of parking permits, and prohibit the issuance of parking permits to residents of new construction or renovation that doesn't provide on-site parking,

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**209340:** Submitting draft language for residential permit parking restriction waivers.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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