



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

November 20, 2019
REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Vice Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Councilor J.T. Scott, Councilor Matt McLaughlin, Lt. James Polito - SPD, Suzanne Rinfret - Parking, George Proakis - OSPCD, Dan Bartman - OSPCD, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Mayor's Office, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk, Tom Lamar - Chair, Somerville Bicycle Committee, John Taylor - resident. The meeting took place in the Sub Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Niedergang and adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Approval of the October 16, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Parking Issues

208321: That the Mayor convene a committee to make recommendations by early 2020 for changes in City and residential parking permit policies such as those suggested by the Nelson/Nygaard consultant, as presented to the Land Use Committee on April 30, 2019.

Ms. Connor reported that the Parking Study Task Force is in the process of finalizing its membership and that meetings should commence in December. Mr. Rawson told the Committee that a list of every available parking space is being compiled for analysis and that it should take about 3-6 months to collect and analyze the data and that an initial report would then be forthcoming. Councilor Davis expressed his frustration with the pace of action being taken on traffic items. Ms. Connor noted that policy decisions regarding restricting residential parking permits for new development in transit-oriented-districts (TOD) is on a different timeline and new policies are being proposed now.

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

Mr. Bartman explained how the program would work, saying that the concept is to prohibit parking in higher density TOD districts that are within a half-mile of a subway station by banning all resident and guest parking permits for any new units in those areas, unless a waiver is applied for and approved. Those living in affordable housing units and those having handicapped placards will be given waivers if they apply for them. In addition, OSPCD is gathering information from other departments to determine who else should be eligible for waivers (. Mr. Proakis explained that this program and the policies that enable it would be ‘owned’ by the Traffic Commission as the City body responsible for decisions about parking. Mr. Bartman reviewed a map showing the affected areas, which would include lots zoned in the proposed new zoning as Urban Residence (UR) and denser that are within walking distance (e.g. a half-mile) of a transit station. Lots in the neighborhoods, zoned Neighborhood Residential (NR), would not have restrictions on access to parking permits. He said that the map would be proposed to the Traffic Commission and if adopted would provide a reference. The list of affected addresses would be updated whenever new construction/development is given an actual address by the Engineering Department. Mr. Proakis noted that the program is a tool to help the City deal with the parking and the housing shortages and would cover approximately 95% of the units being built in TOD zones. Mr. Bartman asked for the Council’s input on the program and policy before presenting it to the Traffic Commission on December 12.

Both Mr. Bartman and Mr. Proakis acknowledged that the program could create an incentive for structured parking facilities, where allowed in the new zoning. Councilor Davis asked if mechanisms are in place to prohibit parking at certain addresses where developments have been officially proposed and Mr. Bartman said that they were. He also noted that any provision of the plan cannot violate the equal protection clause of the Constitution, so the restrictions have to be consistent. Councilor McLaughlin asked how the plan might affect marketability of properties. Neither Mr. Bartman nor Mr. Proakis had any concerns about the unavailability of residential parking permits hurting the marketability of new units. They noted that in some cases, developers are suggesting and offering to restrict new residents of the units they are building from getting permits to park on the street .

The day the policy is adopted, it gets applied to all new units coming on-line, whether or not a permit has been approved and whether construction has started or not. Contractors will be given the standard 3-week notice once the policy is adopted by the Traffic Commission. Restrictions would be recorded on the deeds and property owners would have to inform occupants prior to signing a lease or purchasing the unit that parking permits will not be issued.

Mr. Bartman and Mr. Proakis explained that for the several development applications that are before the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board in which non-issuance of residential parking permits is being considered as a condition of granting development permits, if those permits were approved before the Traffic Commission passes the general policy, the Traffic Commission would need to approve each of those conditions separately.

Mr. Bartman also discussed a mobility management program for commercial tenants designed to discourage employee parking and said that incentives for not driving are being considered.

Chairman Niedergang requested that the presentation be ready in time for the next meeting of the Traffic Commission and that a draft of the plan be forwarded to all Council members.

Councilor Davis’ motion **that the draft language for the deed-based parking permit restriction program be provided to the City Council for review and to the Traffic Commission for implementation**, was approved.

Councilor Davis' motion that the City Solicitor advise this Council as to the extent to which, and the process by which, the City Council may create ordinances regulating the issuance of parking permits, including without limitation prohibiting parking permits from being issued to residents of new construction or renovation that does not provide on-site parking, was approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208833: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Parking provide this Council with a timeline for implementing resident parking restrictions for certain new developments.

See item 208575

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207575: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking immediately implement "only onsite parking" requirements for those proposed projects which have been confirmed during neighborhood meetings as not being granted residential or guest parking permits.

See item 208575

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204876: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking meet with the Committee on Traffic and Parking to discuss policies and procedures to limit residential parking permits for residents of properties that are granted relief from parking requirements by the Zoning Board of Appeals or the Planning Board.

See item 208575

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209063: That the Director of SPCD, the Director of Parking, the Director of Mobility and/or the Director of SomerStat report to this Council on whether proposed restrictions on resident parking stickers for new developments in transit-oriented areas would also apply to guest passes.

See item 208575

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204874: That the Director of Traffic and Parking publish de-identified parking permit data in the city's open data portal so as to permit community analysis and discussion of issues related to the supply and demand of parking.

Ms. Rinfret reported that this is in process.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Union Square Traffic Problems

209147: That the Commissioner of Public Works immediately replace the missing signal at the intersection of Washington and Webster Streets.

Mr. Rawson reported that this signal was damaged over a month ago and is slated to be repaired next week. The signal re-timing is estimated to be performed in January.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

Mr. Rawson said that the Administration supports in principle the left hand turn but he explained that the signal is cycled at 2 minutes, which is already too long a time and invites drivers and pedestrians to not comply due to their impatience. Therefore, he is hesitant to extend the light cycle by adding the left-turn signal. The Mobility Dept is still assessing whether that change is desirable. If so, Engineering needs to do some additional work and equipment, which has yet to be ordered, is needed for the left hand turn process.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

Lt. Polito told the Committee that there may be problems filling the police detail due to the number of other details requested, adding that details are prioritized by the dangerousness of the site. Councilor Scott asked for a list of requested details and said that his request was submitted 5 weeks ago and hasn't been filled yet. Ms. Connor commented that the site was reviewed by the Engineering Department and it was felt that the police detail would be more beneficial at another area of the street. Lt. Polito will look into the matter and provide the Committee with some answers.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

Councilor Scott stated that it's difficult to get drivers to follow the assigned route and that as a result, there have been multiple accidents and an altercation. He would like to be apprised of a plan for the management of evening and overnight traffic. Mr. Rawson said that additional signage is needed and

will be available in January. Chairman Niedergang asked Mr. Rawson to come up with a temporary solution for the next month and a half.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

Councilor Scott said that a signal timing change was requested to make each direction of traffic have its own cycle. Mr. Rawson told the members that data was collected on this matter, but the analysis isn't completed yet. Chairman Niedergang asked Mr. Rawson to prioritize this item and update him and Councilor Scott the week after the Thanksgiving holiday.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200692: That the Director of Traffic and Parking evaluate all traffic signage at Webster Avenue and Prospect Street and restore the NO RIGHT TURN ON RED sign to its proper location where it is visible to vehicular traffic.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Mystic/McGrath/I-93/Kensington Area

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.

Councilor Scott stated that it's difficult to get drivers to follow the assigned route and that as a result, there have been multiple accidents and an altercation. He would like to be apprised of a plan for the management of evening and overnight traffic. Mr. Rawson said that additional signage is needed and will be available in January. Chairman Niedergang asked Mr. Rawson to come up with a temporary solution for the next month and a half.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200181: That the Director of Traffic and Parking communicate to MA DOT the need for painted lanes and signs to slow traffic along I-93 and Mystic Avenue along the underpass by Stop and Shop.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208694: That the Director of SPCD work with the City of Boston and MA DOT to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety at state highway intersections including Sullivan Square, McGrath Highway at Broadway and at Washington Street, and the Northern Expressway at the Kensington Avenue Underpass.

Mr. Rawson informed the Committee that the City's coordination with its state partners is ongoing.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201510: That the Director of Traffic and Parking request that MA DOT address traffic hazards at the intersection of McGrath Highway and Mystic Avenue.

Mr. Rawson reported that the DOT held a community meeting on October 1 and has since installed signage and made some other improvements.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Other Dangerous Intersections/Areas

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.

Mr. Rawson has been discussing alternatives with the Engineering and Planning Departments and should have more information in 2 weeks.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206064: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board and the Ward 5 Alderman on plans to expend the \$220,000 contributed by the Maxwell's Green developer for traffic calming in the Lowell Street area.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

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.

Mr. Rawson reported that the on-call contractor that does street painting has cancelled 30 evenings of work due to rain and therefore painting at Highland Road and Morrison that had been planned has not been done. It is now too late in the year, the weather too cold, for street painting to be done. Mr. Rawson said that he will talk to DPW about installing additional flex posts in that location.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

208278: That the Director of SPCD advise the Committee on Traffic and Parking of any plans for traffic calming on Morrison Avenue between Cedar Street and Willow Avenue.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208814: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 3 City Councilor on placing a digital speed board on School Street, just south of Highland Avenue.

The speed board has been installed.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208253: That the Director of SPCD suggest traffic calming solutions for Sycamore Street between Highland Avenue and Medford Street. (2nd request)

Mr. Rawson said that Sycamore Street is an area of concern for his team. While some planters have been installed as part of the Neighborway at Willoughby and Sycamore, he acknowledged that these are not enough of an intervention to slow traffic sufficiently on that steep hill.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

207279: That the Chief of Police enforce the speed limit on Sycamore Street, between Highland Avenue and Medford Street, and inform the Ward 3 Alderman on the outcome.

Lt. Polito will assign officers to the location and inform Councilor Ewen-Campen of the outcome.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

208383: That the Director of SPCD install sturdy steel posts around the southeast corner of Nunziato Park, in light of the May 25 car crash that sent a vehicle through the fence and into the picnic tables where children often gather.

There was no progress to report on this item. Councilor Ewen-Campen would like the matter prioritized.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

208990: That the Commissioner of Public Works install traffic dampening tools at the intersection of Broadway and Simpson Avenue to slow the traffic speeding on Broadway.

Mr. Rawson will talk to DPW about installing flex posts.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

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

Councilor Scott commented that there are four HAWK signals in city and that two of them were sites of fatalities. He would like to return to pedestrian activated crossing lights. Mr. Rawson informed the members that the city commissioned a study and that his team will be processing the data. He will provide the results of the study during the winter. Chairman Niedergang asked for a report on this item by the next Traffic and Parking Committee meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206067: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install audible pedestrian signals so people can cross safely at the busy intersection of Highland Avenue and Central Street.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Broadway/Winter Hill Bus/Bike Lanes & Traffic Impact

209074: That the City Council and appropriate city staff hold a public hearing on the decision-making process, timing, and implementation of the Broadway bus lane, in response to resident requests and petitions.

Chairman Niedergang spoke about the upcoming public hearing which the Traffic Commission agreed to co-sponsor, saying that he envisions a presentation, with data, by the Mobility Department of OSPCD, as well as an assessment and acknowledgement of what didn't go well. After that, the floor would be open for public comment. Lt. Polito noted that he was asked if these types of changes on our streets could be advertised in multiple languages to make residents and others who don't speak English aware of important changes. Mr. Rawson explained the process used by OSPCD to inform residents of major actions and street changes. He also noted that the data collected so far is showing positive results, e.g., bus ridership is up significantly and travel time for buses is down.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209002: That the Director of SPCD assess the implementation of the Winter Hill in Motion project and how the city can better roll out such a new experimental set of changes.

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

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208991: That the Director of SPCD report on the bus and bike lanes on Broadway on Winter Hill, including an assessment of their effectiveness, a response to the many complaints that have been received, and a description of any changes that are planned or being investigated.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

Lt. Polito reported that the accident happened as a result of a vehicle making an illegal turn and there is no crosswalk there. Pedestrians have stated that the crosswalks on Broadway are too far away to use.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

Mr. Rawson will check on the status of this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207877: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider restricting parking along parts of Temple Street during morning and evening rush hours, on a temporary basis, to help the traffic flow during the city's bridge closures.

Mr. Rawson reported that data has been collected and that his Department is not recommending restricting parking at that location, as the parking there serves to narrow the street and slow traffic, enhancing safety in that location.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208891: That the Director of SPCD deploy traffic calming measures on Jacques Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207445: That the Director of SPCD make the intersection of Jacques Street and Edgar Avenue safer for both drivers and pedestrians.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207876: That the Director of Traffic and Parking deploy traffic calming measures on Jacques Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Traffic Commission Issues

209062: That the Director of Communications and the Director of Parking implement a plan to better publicize Traffic Commission meetings and decisions, and share that plan with this Council.

Chairman Niedergang spoke about having the Traffic Commission publicize important issues before a vote takes place so that members of the public can have input. Ms. Connor spoke with Communications Director Denise Taylor, who said that the Communications Department could handle the publicizing if they are given advance notice. Lt. Polito will check with the Police Department to see if the Traffic Commission agendas could be posted on the SPD website as one way of making more people aware of decisions that are being made.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Housekeeping (Items to be marked Completed)

202318: That the Director of Traffic and Parking appear before this Board to discuss the

issuance of business parking permits, especially between 5 PM and 3 AM, and the impact of those permits on residential streets.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

202764: That the Director of SPCD discuss the Inman Square intersection redesign with the Administration, Cambridge transportation planners, and the MBTA business group, and assign planning staff to address Somerville's concerns at Cambridge planning meetings, and direct said staff to brief this Board and organize with the Ward 2 Alderman a neighborhood meeting to share findings.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

202862: That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain its policy of reporting back to citizens who submit traffic calming petitions.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

202903: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking arrange a meeting with the Ward 2 Alderman to discuss a proposal for new parking regulations upon the completion of Beacon Street.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

202933: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking advise this Board whether diagonal crosswalk markings can be painted at certain intersections.

Mr. Rawson explained that often, despite bureaucratic traffic regulations imposed on the City by the state or federal government, an "engineering judgment" is possible to evaluate crosswalks on a case by case basis. He pointed out that diagonal crosswalks would be longer than straight ones, therefore the risk factors need to be considered.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

203921: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the policies for issuing business parking permits.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

203975: That the Director of SPCD consider making all neighborway locations, safety zones.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

204251: That the Director of SPCD and the City Engineer consider adding a crosswalk as part of the redevelopment of Cedar Street at Warwick or Clyde Streets, and include the

Bicycle Advisory Committee in any discussions.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204323: That the Director of SPCD, the Director of Traffic and Parking, and the Commissioner of Public Works suggest additional measures to slow the speeding traffic at the crosswalk in front of the West Somerville Neighborhood School.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204430: That the Director of Traffic and Parking review the intersection of School Street and Medford Street to determine whether traffic flow can be improved.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204972: That the Director of Traffic and Parking remove the leftover sign stump on Sycamore Street, at the corner of Evergreen Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205690: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on using trees in planters on streets instead of bump outs as a low-cost way to calm traffic and to place trees on streets where the sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate street trees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206077: That the Administration work with relevant department heads to create a written policy requiring written notifications to abutters regarding street closings.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206580: That the Director of SPCD install a crosswalk on Lowell Street at the Wilton Street bumpouts, as there is no crosswalk on Lowell Street between Magoun Square and the bridge.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206672: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the implementation of neighborhood safety zones. (2nd request)

The Chairman explained that the Mobility Dept told the Traffic Commission that over the next six months, the entire city will be evaluated to determine where safety zones could be added, and that their intention is to make all neighborhoods 20 mph safety zones next year.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- NR in a transit area-1 (with 208575)
- RPP Restriction Map-1 (with 208575)