

Madalyn Letellier

From: Elana Anastasio [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 6, 2026 2:50 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Submitting letter as a public comment
Attachments: Addressing Parking & Safety Issues.pdf

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Hi there,
I'm submitting the attached letter as a public comment to have these concerns raised in the Traffic & Parking Committee meeting on the 27th. Please let me know if you need anything more from me on this.
Thanks,
Elana

To: City Councilors, City Traffic and Parking Committee, and other Somerville City Officials

From: Concerned Neighbors on Oak / Houghton / Bolton / Prospect Streets

Subject: Action Required: Addressing Ongoing Parking and Safety Issues from Neighboring Construction Projects

We are writing to address the ongoing negative impacts caused by the numerous construction projects in our neighborhood. These have included illegal parking, blocked fire lanes and driveways, obstructions to pedestrian and cyclist passage, and interference with street cleaning.

We recognize your commitment to safer streets and increased housing. It is imperative that the city finds a way to manage construction projects to ensure the safety and well-being of existing residents while continuing development. The current situation is unacceptable and requires systemic changes.

The Problem: Insufficient Enforcement & Disruption to Daily Life

The current approach to enforcement is insufficient. While many illegally parked vehicles are repeatedly ticketed, these fines appear to be treated merely as the cost of doing business in Somerville. It has also been witnessed that some individuals working at the construction sites have avoided tickets by watching for an attendant and temporarily moving their cars until the attendant leaves.

This minimal enforcement has resulted in daily safety hazards and disruption to residents' lives, as well as preventing important city services like street sweeping. It is unacceptable that neighbors must constantly report these issues to the city in a reactive manner.

Specific neighborhood concerns include:

- **Obstruction of Private Property and Access:** Contractors frequently block private driveways, park on the sidewalks, and impede access, often during morning rush hour/school drop-off, creating safety issues for children and commuters.
- **Safety Hazards from Dumped Snow:** Contractors have been observed dumping snow onto sidewalks and driveways. The piles of snow at the end of Oak Street at Prospect Street effectively made the area a one-way street, creating a dangerous situation for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. Other piles

dumped at intersections around Oak, Bolton, and Houghton blocked previously cleared sidewalks and severely reduced visibility for both cars and pedestrians.

- **Traffic Gridlock:** The massive impact of construction on city-wide traffic is a major concern. Due to giant construction vehicles blocking one lane of traffic, the Prospect Street traffic often comes to a complete standstill, forcing northbound and southbound cars to alternate in the other lane. This backup routinely reaches into Union Square to the north and to Broadway in Cambridge to the south.
- **Contempt for Existing Regulations:** There is constant disregard for posted signs. Construction and delivery trucks consistently park in front of the "No Stopping" zones on Prospect Street and park beyond the "No Parking Anytime" signs at the end of Oak Street. During street sweeping months, vehicles routinely block the street sweeper.
- **Non-Compliance with Street Closure Protocols:** Contractors frequently obstruct or close roads for extended periods without adhering to Somerville's procedural requirements. Because city and resident responses are inherently reactive, enforcement arrives only after the streets have reopened, leaving the resulting disruptions unaddressed.

Our Request: Seeking Proactive and Systemic Solutions

The severity of the issue is compounded by the high concentration of projects: there are currently four large projects on Prospect Street, with two more residential development projects planned soon for Oak and Bolton Streets.

We request a move from the current reactive, fine-dependent model to a proactive, safety-first enforcement and policy strategy. No long-term activity, such as construction, should be allowed to disrupt the daily safety and well-being of a neighborhood to this extent.

We request the following actions:

- **Consistent Enforcement and Towing:** Implement consistent, daily enforcement of parking regulations, including towing and posting a detail to ensure vehicles don't return during scheduled street cleaning hours and where vehicles pose a clear safety hazard or block access, *without* residents needing to constantly report to 311.
- **Withhold Additional Parking Permits:** Withhold the issuance of additional temporary, on-street parking permits for construction projects in this densely affected neighborhood until the current issues are resolved and a better system is in place.
- **Proactive Contractor Parking Solutions:** Explore solutions that move contractor parking off of residential side streets, such as:

- Providing contractors with parking access to city-owned garages
- Not issuing parking permits for large construction projects on residential side streets
- **Enhanced Safety Protocols for Deliveries:** Ensure that construction sites proactively implement measures for large deliveries, including:
 - The installation of temporary 'No Parking' signs well in advance.
 - Requiring a police officer or detail present to manage traffic and ensure two-way flow during deliveries.
 - Requiring contractors to provide a materials delivery and storage management plan as part of the building permit submission
- **Stagger Construction Approvals:** Construction approvals should be staggered so that basic city services (street sweeping, bus service, snow removal) and the regular flow of traffic are not completely obstructed on the same corridors simultaneously.
- **Enhanced Punitive Action:** Issue Stop Work Orders to projects that disregard safety regulations and existing resident concerns.

We urge you to champion these necessary changes. We look forward to discussing these urgent matters further and seeing quick, effective changes implemented.

Sincerely,

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