



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 23, 2022

### REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Jake Wilson	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Brad Rawson-OSPCDB, Brian Postlewaite-Engineering and Alan Moore-Friends of Community Path

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:08p.m. by Chairperson Gomez Mouakad and adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

#### Approval of the April 25, 2022 Minutes

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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#### Studies

**213814: That the Director of Mobility provide an updated report on the impact of bus lanes on traffic congestion, particularly on Broadway.**

Director Rawson stated in 2019 the safety measures and changes were for all road users. This would improve reliability and bus lanes to replace the general traffic lanes. During the process, they modeled the pros and cons from what they heard from the community's concerns and impacts. After the project was implemented, the traffic counts and the bus ridership responded positively. There were general drops with motorist reduced travel on Broadway. They are currently collecting traffic data.

Chair Gomez Mouakad asked if there will be a follow up with another report. Director Rawson stated they are collecting additional data to compare against 2019 data and the data will be out in fall 2022.

Councilor Ewen-Campen stated how thankful he and his constituents are for the bus and bike lanes. Director Rawson stated the sequencing in 2019 were not ideal. He stated they had difficult times with reduced lanes and had resolved this in 2019. There were staff members out in the field reviewing the traffic signaling. Ongoing signal management is one of their objectives.

Councilor Wilson asked about a possible ban on right turn on Temple from Mystic Avenue. He also asked about the bus redesign, which Director Rawson stated Mystic is state jurisdiction. They are still digesting the proposal submitted by MBTA last week, relating to the bus network redesign. They do not have metrics on the original planning scenario and proposed a 25% net increase on service hours. They are seeing more service on Broadway and Winter Hill areas. Councilor Wilson stated he has been asked about making bus lanes rush hours only.

Director Rawson stated they collect data on Saturdays and Sundays and looking at the settings and they may be able to set the traffic signaling. Councilor Wilson asked about lights on Temple and Broadway which do not seem right. He stated the lights skip the left turn onto Temple on left bound. Director Postlewaite stated they heard about a similar light situation and will review. Director Rawson talked about a 5-year traffic signal replacement program.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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### **Ongoing Projects - New Business**

**213602: That the Commissioner of Public Works update this Council on current processes to ensure safe and accessible pedestrian routes around work zones.**

Councilor Wilson stated this came from a number of constituents referencing a lack of protection and the work zones. He suggested training with DPW around temporary crosswalks. Director Postlewaite stated another one very similar came into DPW a few weeks ago. There was a lot of crossover with DPW and Engineering. He shared his comments from PUPW committee that there is a longer discussion with Commission DPW and should be as part of this agenda item. They manage the construction for internal construction like the high school construction and project on Holland and will be working on Pearl Street. The engineering division manages the traffic for each of the projects which includes pedestrian, cyclist, vehicle and must have a traffic management plan. The engineering division works with the construction team immediately if they see something that is not correct on site.

Councilor Ewen-Campen stated he has heard a lot about construction sites that have unsafe areas that do not have proper crossings for pedestrians which forces pedestrians off the sidewalk onto the street without a ramp. He also asked about incentives to reduce the duration of how long these projects can go on. Director Postlewaite stated there is a street occupancy fee and they can enforce with a maximum 3-month time period. After that time, they have to come back to get another permit. They can work on increasing the design component that may help resolve the issues. Director Postlewaite will check out Boynton Gateway as per Councilor Ewen-Campen's suggestion. Chair Gomez Mouakad would like to establish standards relating to wooden ramps in the winter vs. possibly using asphalt. She also asked about metal plates and should use asphalt to create a save edge to avoid tripping or bikes getting stuck. Chair Gomez Mouakad talked about construction sites obstructing the bike lanes. Director Postlewaite stated there is a permit standard book that contractors are required to review. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked Director Postlewaite to share an electronic copy of the permits guide book with the committee, which is also on the Engineering website.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**213603: That the Director of Parking instruct Parking Control Officers to enforce the ban**

**on license plate covers, in accordance with MGL c.90, §6.**

Director of T&P was not present to respond to this item.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**213605: That the Chief of Police provide the Ward an At-Large Councilors monthly motor vehicle accident reports, detailing pedestrian and bicycle accidents.**

Chief of Police was not present to respond to this item.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

### **Ongoing Projects - On Old Business**

**212867: That the Director of Mobility update this Council on efforts to establish a 20 MPH speed limit for all neighborhood residential streets.**

Director Rawson stated as discussed, a month ago, they were waiting for supplies to arrive. Traffic and Parking are keeping them in loop and will have continued progress in the spring time. Councilor Wilson asked Director Rawson, if there is there a way for the division to update the information in Google Maps. Director Rawson will investigate this matter further, also stating this has been discussed a couple of times in this committee. Councilor Wilson stated he knows the staff is understaffed and stated there are apps for residents to report those going above the limit.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**212966: That the Administration provide a report for all departments using city vehicles for non-emergency services, detailing the measures taken to ensure that staff follow traffic regulations, including the hands free while driving law, and maintain maximum traffic safety while driving.**

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

### **Traffic Calming - New Business**

**213608: That the Director of Engineering report on all traffic calming improvements and their scheduled implementation at all intersections for the new Community Path Extension.**

It was stated that the community path is opening soon and need to take traffic calming very seriously in these areas.

Mr. Alan Moore spoke to a presentation on the situation and stated the Friends of the Community Path should have raised crosswalks in these areas. There are areas where storm water may collect and could not put in raised crosswalk. The existing conditions without any drainage will cause storm water to collect against the crosswalk. They suggested solutions to extend the storm sewer under the crosswalk. The other way is to put a trench on both sides of the raised crosswalk so the storm water can go under and reach catch basin.

Director Postlewaite received the presentation from the Friends of Community Path and he stated completely agree with the goal of having a raised crossing and understand the safety concerns. The challenge of the proposal is not constructible without railroad bridges. The crossings overlap the footings of the bridge. They have had conversations with MassDot and was told cannot put in a raised crossing. Director Postlewaite stated a raised crossing is not practical. The engineering team is working to come up with speed humps for all of the crossings that are being constructed by the city with a comprehensive plan to reduce speed in these areas.

Chair Gomez Mouakad asked Director Postlewaite about the trench drain due to our winter conditions. Director Postlewaite stated the trench drain from the second alternative solutions, has worked before in the south. The problem in the winter conditions, is we get snow banks and water does not get into the trench drain. He stated you will also get some slush and it freezes. This could start breaking the concrete which is a much longer concern.

Chair Gomez Mouakad suggested to try the proposed option on Sycamore and Walnut streets. Director Postlewaite provided a drawing to demonstrate the concerns of the proposal. Councilor Ewen-Campen voiced his frustration about the discrepancies of the raised crosswalks in West Somerville vs. East Somerville. Councilor Ewen-Campen requested diagram of the speed humps in the areas. Chair Gomez Mouakad second the request to have diagrams that could be reviewed and shared with the community. The chair reminded everyone that the city is getting \$30M back from the GLX and should think about using the funds to create a safer area.

Director Rawson stated they are learning more about how to deliver raised crosswalks and humps. There is a dozen raised crosswalks and curb extensions in the Capuano School and other areas.

The chair requests Director Rawson and Director Postlewaite to come back next meeting to present possible solutions and invite the Friends of the Community Path for this meeting.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**Reference Material:**

- May 18 raised crosswalks evaluation (with 213608)