

Madalyn Letellier

From: K Molloy [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2026 10:36 PM
To: MassDOTMcgrathblvd@dot.state.ma.us
Cc: [REDACTED] Uyerhoeven, Erika - Rep. (HOU); Mayor; Jehlen, Patricia (SEN); Transportation; Public Comments; [REDACTED] All City Council; Brad Rawson; [REDACTED]; ADA; bkearney@walkmass.org; Somerville Safe Streets
Subject: Comments on the 25% design for the McGrath Blvd project
Attachments: McGrathCoalitionLetter2MassDOT-Jan2026.PDF
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Dear McGrath Boulevard project team (and elected and city officials),

Please see the attached letter expressing our support for the 25% design for McGrath Boulevard, which was unveiled publicly last month, along with a couple of safety comments.

Once again, we appreciate the time and effort that the project team has taken in responding to community feedback in this most recent design. We greatly look forward to seeing the resulting boulevard in the coming years.

Best regards,

Karen Molloy
On behalf of the McGrath Coalition Steering Committee

.....
Karen Molloy

[REDACTED]

January 26, 2026

McGrath Boulevard Project Team
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116

Dear McGrath Boulevard Project Team,

We appreciate your 25% design public presentations of the McGrath Boulevard project (project file # 607981) on December 4 and 9, 2025, and continue to be impressed by the evolution of the design of this critical infrastructure project in Somerville. Additionally, we greatly value the team's ongoing engagement with the community and inclusion of community input with the iterations that led to this 25% design. Overall, we continue to strongly support this project and thank you for your diligence and hard work.

With this letter we'd like to point out two elements of the most recent design that we find concerning from a safety standpoint: the target speed and traffic signalization at the Otis St. intersection.

Target speed should be 25mph. We are distressed by the proposed target speed limit of 30 mph. In the effort to transform McGrath into a human-scale boulevard that is safe, accessible, and comfortable for all road users traveling in all modes, we believe this speed is too high for the goals of the project, which include supporting the goals of Vision Zero. According to the [Federal Highway Administration](#), approximately half of all pedestrians (47 percent) struck at 30 mph sustained severe injury and one in five died. When the impact speed is 25 mph, the risk is lower - 30 percent of pedestrians sustained a severe injury, and about 12 percent were killed. This difference is material in ensuring that McGrath Boulevard is appropriate for a Vision Zero future.

We strongly recommend this target speed be set to the default speed limit in Somerville, which is 25 mph. There is precedent for a lower speed limit

on a state road on many roads in the Boston area, including right here in Somerville, on Mystic Ave/Rte 38, which has a speed limit of 25 mph as it crosses into a densely populated neighborhood from Medford into Somerville.

As mentioned in a previous letter, we ask that the speed must be safe for the most vulnerable users including children walking alone, older adults, and people with disabilities. This is why the City reduced the default speed in Somerville to 25 mph back in 2016. McGrath is an important arterial, but in Somerville it also serves as a neighborhood street, running past residents' homes and linking children and families to schools. We believe that the design should reinforce motorist behavior at times when the boulevard is lightly used (for example, on Sunday mornings) and especially in areas with heavy pedestrian use such as Otis Street and Prospect Hill.

Otis St. should have full signalization. We are also alarmed to see that the fully signalized intersection at Otis St., which was proposed in the March 2025 design, has been reverted to an RRFB or HAWK beacon proposed in the earlier design. Although we very much appreciate the addition of a raised crossing and acknowledge the policy hurdle to get to this addition, we firmly believe full signalization is also needed at this intersection, which will be used by many children daily to get to and from the Edgerly School, the East Somerville Community School, the Capuano School, and the playground. As you know, many parents are deeply concerned about the removal of the Otis St. footbridge, and the HAWK signal was considered insufficient by the community when it was previously proposed. We already have experience in Somerville with poor motorist compliance at HAWK signals; they seem to be more of a traffic-throughput measure rather than a safety measure. We understand that full signalization at this intersection is not recommended by the MUTCD, which focuses solely on 8 hr traffic volume on Otis St. and does not address the heavy foot traffic by children in a zone supporting routes to three schools, not to mention the traffic volume on McGrath. We understand that MUTCD would allow the use of a fully signalized traffic signal if an engineering study indicates that it would improve overall safety. If this were a municipal road,

with a children's park and two schools within 1,000 feet of this intersection, it would likely be considered a 20 mph slow zone with full signalization. We are open to creative solutions that ensure traffic flow outside of school and peak hours.

We strongly recommend that you reinstate full signalization at this intersection. As we stated in our letter of May 2025, a commitment to a fully signalized intersection at Otis St. helps address the community's serious concerns about safety.

As expressed in our two previous letters, we appreciate McGrath project team's support for goals that our coalition also endorses: safety and accessibility for all modes of travel; reconnection of East Somerville and Brickbottom to adjacent neighborhoods; support for sustainable transit and accommodation for possible future expansion of public transit options; and incorporation of resilient infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

McGrath Coalition Steering Committee:

Alessandra Seiter
Aili Contini-Field
Arah Schuur
Cynthia Stillinger
Jarred Johnson
Joan Liu
Karen Molloy
Karl Alexander
Maha Aslam
Mark Chase

CC: Senator Pat Jehlen

Representative Michael Connolly
Representative Erika Uytterhoeven
Mayor Jake Wilson
Somerville City Council
Director Brad Rawson
Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee
Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets
Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee
Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Somerville Council of PTAs
Walk Massachusetts