



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 19, 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	Absent	

Others present: Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, Suzanne Rinfret- Parking, Brad Rawson-OSPCD Mobility, Viola Augustin-OSPCD Mobility, Adam Polinski-OSPCD Mobility, Lt. James Polito-Somerville Police Department, Sgt. John Gobel-Somerville Police Department and several residents from the community as listed on the sign in sheet.

The meeting was held in the Sub-Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Niedergang and adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Approval of the January 15, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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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 provided brief details from the meeting MassDOT held at the East Somerville Community School on February 12th. He discussed VisionZero and the public safety hazard with this area where two pedestrians were killed last year. The location is on state roads, out of the City's jurisdiction. The Mobility team is satisfied with the project for 2022 with new striping, new signage and teeing up for next level improvements. Mr. Rawson stated the number one concern is the right-hand turn off of McGrath Highway to get on to I-93. He stated that this area is of paramount concern and the Mobility division is looking for funding to make significant improvements and to address the most dangerous conditions before 2022.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209648: That the Director of SPCD use the \$220,000 in traffic mitigation funds paid by

Maxwell's Green in 2011 for a traffic-calming table on Lowell Street at the Albion Street crosswalk. (3rd request)

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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.

Items 209648 and 208031 were discussed together.

There were several residents in attendance from the immediate area. Residents stated there are too many close calls that endanger the safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles. One resident spoke about drivers hitting their retaining wall at the corner of Albion and Lowell. Mr. Rawson said they are collecting crash data to better understand behavior and working on a design development process. Mr. Polinski stated there are a lot of angle crashes with poor sight lines at Albion and Lowell. Ideas discussed included extending the curbs, flex posts and paint on the street to slow down drivers. Ms. Augustine wants to work with the community and neighbors to slow down traffic. A resident suggested putting two stop signs on Lowell Street. Mr. Rawson responded that the federal traffic manual prohibits stop signs on streets such as Lowell. The resident said that he had the MUTCD regulations and there is an exception for areas in which there have been multiple accidents. Mr. Rawson said that he would look at the area and the regulations and see if there is a creative way that the City could justify putting stop signs there. Chair Niedergang said that this has been a request from the community for at least six years, since he became the Ward 5 Alderman. Several residents pointed out that parked cars on Lowell Street contribute to the poor sight lines. Chair Niedergang said that he supports taking away any number of parking spots to make the area safer; in a conflict between safety and parking, safety should always win out. A resident asked for better police enforcement at that intersection. Lt. Polito stated that enforcement is really not the solution. For example, often when drivers are pulled over, they are unaware that they ran a red light, or went through a stop sign. He also stated that manpower is limited. He asked the resident for the times that most accidents occur and it was stated between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m. He said he would do what he can.

Chair Niedergang stated that the stop signs on Albion Street are too far back and maybe should be moved closer to the corner. There was discussion about the loading zone for Boston Closet. Ms. Rinfret stated there are two loading zones for this company. Councilor Clingan asked Mr. Rawson where this issue falls on the prioritization list. Mr. Rawson explained that there are many, many dangerous intersections that his staff is not large enough to address, but now that Mobility is at full strength, he hopes they can accomplish more this year. Chair Niedergang stated the \$220,000 has been sitting waiting to be used for over 10 years and can only be used in the Lowell St area near Maxwell's Green. Mr. Rawson, Mr. Polinski and Ms. Augustine described the process by which they planned to develop proposed improvements to the intersection; they want to get neighbors' feedback before implementation of any major changes. Chair Niedergang said he will organize a community meeting once Mr. Rawson and team have options for this area. A resident talked about Sundays, saying there are many cars parked for the two houses of worship and residents have called 311 but nothing happens, the cars are not ticketed or towed. A resident said that there is no Parking Dept staff available on Sundays so

people should call the Police Dept non-emergency line. The Chair stated he is open to simple/quick changes in the area that could be flex posts and stop signs and that he believes the neighbors want such changes to be implemented as soon as possible, there is no need for a meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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 said that Central Street is an increasingly important commuting corridor for people who don't live in Somerville. There were 5,500 vehicle trips daily in 2017 and that increased to 7,500 in 2019. He said that the Hoyt-Sullivan Park area has become much safer with successful changes implemented a couple of years ago. They are looking at additional improvements. Mr. Polinski stated he has been working with the engineering team to tighten up the intersection on Central Street on to Medford Street, but due to the Rogers Foam trucks which need to turn there, there is only so much that can be done. In response to concern that there will soon be even more traffic on Central Street due to the coming closure of the School Street bridge, Ms. Augustin stated that Broadway Bridge will reopen in the summer, they are working on the School St. detours, Washington Street will reopen in late spring. She said that she will soon begin working with the GLX Team on the design for the Central Street crossing for the community path extension, that nothing had yet been done on this, and that she is confident that the GLX Team will work closely with City staff on making this crossing safe.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209445: That the Director of SPCD adjust the light signal timing at Central and Medford Streets so pedestrians have enough time to cross safely.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Traffic Calming

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

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209658: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on plans shared with the Ward 5 and Ward 4 Councilors in November for “expansions in the network of 20 MPH safety zones in December, January and February until all local streets are covered.”

Mr. Rawson stated that the City rolled out the 20 MPH safety zones around hospitals, schools, parks and places of worship. They also created safety zones in neighborhoods around the bridge closures -- Ball Square, Winter Hill and East Somerville. Ms. Rinfret stated they have a backlog of “20 MPH Safety Zone” signs to be installed along with wayfinding signs to install and signs that were knocked down. Mr. Rawson plans to have additional safety zones in place by the end of this year. He feels the approach of going neighborhood by neighborhood has been successful. Mr. Polinski added that it is more effective to do it neighborhood by neighborhood than for the entire City, because signs get put up in each neighborhood, whereas if the safety zone were the entire City, the only signs would be at the borders of the City.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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209372: That the Director of SPCD prepare a plan for congestion pricing tolls to address traffic and air pollution.

The Chair stated that 80% of traffic is passing through the City of Somerville and they should have to pay. Mr. Rawson stated there are some things going on at the state level that may be helpful in reducing cut-through traffic. It was also stated that the City of Somerville will not be able to put in gateways. Chair Niedergang will put this back on the agenda for later in the year.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Ride-share and package delivery issues

207368: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the contribution of ride-hailing services, including Uber and Lyft, to traffic congestion, and suggest policies to reduce this impact.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207491: That the Administration consider signage in high-usage areas directing ride share users to the existence and location of designated drop-off/pick-up areas.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207490: That the Administration update this Council on any agreements with ride share companies, including their designated drop-off/pick-up areas in Davis Square, and advise on any efforts to contract with additional companies or introduce additional designated areas, and discuss with this Council the enforcement of illegal parking in those areas.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208256: That the Director of SPCD identify both a temporary and longer-term Lyft/Uber

pick-up point in Union Square.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206695: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on any discussions with our state delegation to increase the per-ride assessment that ride-share companies pay, and how this Board could advocate for an increase.

Items 207368, 207491, 207490, 208256 and 206695 were discussed together.

Mr. Rawson stated that approximately 3.25 million ride-share trips originate in Somerville and 3.1 million end in Somerville. Ms. Rinfret and Mr. Rawson explained about the drop off/pick up areas and the behaviors of drivers blocking traffic lanes. Ms. Rinfret stated there are three pick up/drop off areas in the Davis Square area. Bow Market also has one and the City wants to add more in Union Square. Assembly Row has two on Canal Street and Assembly Row. It was stated that the space on Elm Street in Davis Square, which is the size of two parking spaces, works well. But there can be double parking there which can be a problem. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked how drivers/riders know about the drop off/pick up area and if this information is provided through the ride share app; Mr. Polinski testified that he had personally tested it out and the apps do work as they are intended to indicate to drivers and passengers where the pick up/drop off areas are. Mr. Rawson stated there are several bills advancing through the State Legislature with the hopes of increasing the \$.20 tax per ride. Councilor Ewen-Campen stated the Governor's budget proposed a \$1.00 fee per ride with municipalities receiving \$.30 per ride and the rest to go to the MBTA.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

209477: That the Director of SPCD consider strategies to reduce the volume and impact of package delivery vehicles, such as encouraging smaller or electric vehicles and cargo bike parking, as has been tried in Manhattan and Seattle.

Mr. Rawson stated there is not yet much institutional knowledge on this item, as it is a relatively new problem. But he understands it is real and growing. He stated that presently 5% of grocery store customers use deliveries and this is projected to increase to approximately 20% in 2025 instead of people shopping in stores. He will query the National Association of City Transportation Planners and get back to the Committee for further discussion.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Infrastructure and GLX issues

208249: That the Director of SPCD modify the Central Hill Campus plan to include an elevator from the new Gilman Square MBTA station to the Central Hill Campus, so that people with mobility issues are able to use the new station to access City Hall, the Library, and the High School.

Mr. Rawson is working with Mr. Raiche on this. There is an ADA accessible way to get up to the High School and the playing field from the GLX station and Gilman Square. However, there is not an accessible way to get from there up to City Hall. It is anticipated that an elevator will

be part of the plans for redevelopment of the 1895 building from its previous use for classrooms to City offices. However, Chair Niedergang said although the Council had approved a bond for an owner's project manager to begin design work on the 1895 building redevelopment, there is no clear timeline for when the substantial amount of money needed for this project will be available.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207890: That the Administration work with MassDOT and the GLX team to address the 3 primary safety issues with the Community Path Extension between Washington Street and Lechmere that have been identified by the Friends of the Community Path.

Mr. Rawson stated he's advocating with GLX for resting areas along the path, but he is not optimistic. Ms. Augustin stated the concerns with the width of the path have been heeded and the path will be 12 feet wide in all places. In terms of the requested improvement on the fencing and railings, she does not see the GLX Team providing that.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208684: That the Administration report on how the City could lobby for a wider width for the proposed bridge from Everett to Draw 7 Park.

There were discussions about a gondola system to Everett and to build out safety lanes, parkways and pathways. It was stated that Route 16 bridge area is safer to use. The casino operator is scheduled to begin study and has had a community meeting. Paid engineers working with MassDot with design work done. DCR is hosting a meeting on Draw 7 next week.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207449: That the Director of Traffic and Parking waive parking dumpster fees for property owners who are de-paving their driveways.

Ms. Rinfret stated this is ISD's responsibility, not Traffic and Parking. Chair Niedergang will discharge this item to another committee.

RESULT:	DISCHARGED W/NO RECOMMENDATION
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207713: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a NO OUTLET TO WASHINGTON STREET sign on the corner of George Street and Broadway to prevent cut through traffic due to the GLX bridge closures.

Ms. Rinfret stated GLX has already completed this request and she will check with Councilor McLaughlin to see if this is still an issue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207165: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a STOP sign at the intersection of Temple Road and Governor Winthrop Road.

Ms. Rinfret stated a new stop sign was installed at the top of the hill to slow down traffic.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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SomerVision 204 - Mobility

209657: That this Council's Committee on Traffic and Parking provide feedback on SomerVision 2040's chapter on Mobility.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Excise Taxes

209659: That the Director of Parking report to this Council how the City addresses residents who do not pay automobile excise taxes because they maintain out-of-state license plates on their vehicles.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Housekeeping

197981: That the Commissioner of Public Works determine if it is feasible to place a bump out at the corner of Bonner and Columbus Avenues.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199456: That the Director of Traffic and Parking conduct a traffic study on Lincoln and Perkins Streets and propose traffic calming measures.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199700: That the Traffic Commission consider installing a temporary speed bump on Governor Winthrop Road near Grimmons Park to protect children from speeding vehicles.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199846: That MASS DOT consider placing a pedestrian signal at Chester Street and McGrath Highway.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200223: That the Commissioner of Public Works create clearly defined lines along Walnut Street, by Pearl Street and Broadway, to eliminate two lane traffic problems.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200240: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a sign on Cross Street East

prohibiting cutoff traffic onto I-93.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200290: That the Director of Traffic and Parking add an additional stop sign on Meacham Road facing Buena Vista Road to clarify that Buena Vista Road drivers must stop before turning onto Meacham Road.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200746: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a SLOW sign on the Cross Street bridge.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200856: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install signs at appropriate sections of Osgood Street indicating that it is not a through way.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201135: That the Director of Traffic and Parking investigate making Brook Street a one way street, going away from Cross Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201142: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install parking meters in front of 161 Broadway.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201377: That the Director of Traffic and Parking remove the NO TURN ON RED sign on the corner of Broadway and Franklin Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201406: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a DEAD END or NO THRU WAY sign at the entrance to Kent Court.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201407: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a PRIVATE WAY sign at the entrance to Kent Court.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201487: That the Director of Traffic and Parking devise a strategy to more forcefully

implement the DO NOT ENTER restriction on Perkins Street, by the Boston line.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201615: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the absence of parking regulations and signage on large portions of Somerville Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201694: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a flashing STOP sign on Buena Vista Road, where it meets Meacham Road.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201780: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider adding an "except Perkins Street abutters" note to the Do Not Enter sign on Perkins Street, on the Boston line.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201783: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a blinking SLOW - CHILDREN sign on Lincoln Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201785: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install YIELD signs along the rotary in Assembly Row, by Legal Seafood, as well as signage indicating who has the right of way.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201786: That the Director of Traffic and Parking address traffic issues at the intersection of Bonair, Dana and Edmands Streets.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201829: That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain the reason for the NO PARKING – DRIVEWAY sign at the West Branch Police sub-station.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202173: That the Director of Traffic and Parking put a DO NOT ENTER sign on the corner of Walnut Street and Medford street to stop cars from going the wrong way on Walnut Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202351: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a blinking SLOW sign at 240 Pearl

Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202791: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install reflective material on the STOP sign post at Governor Winthrop and Ten Hills Roads.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202799: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider placing warning signs at the entrance of East Broadway, at McGrath Highway, to let drivers know the street will merge to one lane.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202860: That the Chief of Police send a directed patrol to monitor Mount Vernon Street for wrong-way traffic 5-6PM.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202861: That the Chief of Police monitor lower Broadway regularly for illegal u-turns.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203054: That the Director of Traffic and Parking review the line of site for traffic turning from Summer Street onto Preston Road and recommend changes to parking and signage.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203055: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider a resident petition for a change to Merriam Street from 2-way to 1-way and provide residents with related information.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203067: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Director of Information Technology provide Parking Control Officers with the ability to review local infraction history by license plate.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203070: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with data on car ownership and parking issues at developments permitted in the past five years.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203074: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider prohibiting car traffic around

Artisan Way and Assembly Row to allow for increased pedestrian accessibility.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203274: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider placing a raised crosswalk at the intersection of Summer and Lowell Streets.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203363: That the Administration advise why speed dampening options were denied for Fairfax Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203372: That the Directors of SPCD and Traffic and Parking place appropriate signs and signals for safety zones in Ward 2, especially around the Argenziano School.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203396: That the Director of Traffic and Parking determine whether fire trucks and ambulances can safely access Maine, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island Avenues from Pennsylvania Avenue, and make appropriate recommendations to this Board.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203397: The Traffic Commission consider making Mt. Vernon Street an ABUTTERS ONLY roadway, from Pearl Street to Broadway, during peak travelling hours.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203488: That the Traffic Commission consider changing Merriam Street to a one way street, from Charlestown Street to Somerville Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203490: The Director of Traffic and Parking place a second DO NOT ENTER sign at the corner of Bolton and Oak Streets, and a one way arrow sign on top of the DO NOT ENTER signs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203578: That the Director of SPCD work with MA DOT to place a DO NOT BLOCK THE INTERSECTION sign and related street markings at the intersection of Linwood Street and McGrath Highway.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203591: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a sign at the entrance of Prentiss Street to indicate its Private Way status.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203993: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a NO PARKING sign between 129 and 133 Cross Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204228: That the Director of Traffic and Parking replace the speed signs on Florence Street with 20 MPH signs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208483: That the Director of Traffic and Parking provide an update on progress regarding processing residential permits.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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